

The Dogumentary

25th Year

The Waterdogs Fishing Club

November 2007

The 2007 Banquet is Thursday!

By now you should have sent your RSVP and money to Chips. We're looking forward to another great show at the Midland Hills Country Club. See you then!

The 2007-2008 Waterdogs Fishing Club Calendar

Nov 1	Annual Banquet!
Dec 6	Monthly Meeting--All Members
Jan 4	Monthly Meeting
Feb 1	Monthly Meeting
Mar 7	Monthly Meeting
July 19-26	Rock&Roll Musky Tour

President's Corner

James Ferstenou



The weather has started to cool down and it is starting to feel like fall should. Unfortunately all of the rain that we've had recently has made the fishing more difficult. There should still be a few more nice days left to get out on the water before ice up though, so don't put your open water fishing gear away yet. Fall can be a great time to fish (especially for muskies) if you get the a few consecutive days of consistent weather.

I've gotten out musky fishing in Wisconsin a few times in the past month, but have not had much success. The water level in the lakes near my parents has risen nearly two feet since Labor Day, making for some more challenging fishing. I hope to get out again over the next few weekends. The hardest thing for me this time of year is trying to split my free time between fishing and scouting for the Wisconsin deer hunting season. I should be able to set up my last two deer stands this weekend though, so then I'll have a little more time to fish again.

This year has gone by in a flash and another annual banquet is fast approaching. I hope that everyone can attend. I look forward to seeing you all there.

That's all for now. Until next month, keep your lures in the water and your hooks sharp.

Griz

2008 Officers Nominated

The officers and other award nominations were made at the October meeting. For 2008 VP and 2009 president, Dr. Meat (John Schaffhausen), Bud Nubbins (Kevin Miller), and Helen (Tom Keller) were nominated for this highest club position. We look forward to their campaign speeches at the December meeting and look forward to their lavish campaign spending over the next month.

One of the highlights of the banquet will be the prestigious awards for the most gallant efforts of 2007. There was a heated discussion about the potential Weenie Award nominations, with Dr. Sticky and Suzy each receiving two

nominations and Juan and Fluffy (as usual) each getting a nomination. There still could be another nomination or two as the finalists are considered. The final decision will be made by the banquet committee and the award will be presented at the banquet.

Other nominations for '07 include 'Captain of the Year' – Sticky, Shatner and Kojak, 'Little Buddy of the Year' – Meat, Greenstick, and Wags, and 'Waterdog of the Year' – Greenstick, Perp, and Janitor.

The tournament Committee will be headed up by Shatner – Kirk Duholm. He is looking for your comments, ideas and help in running next year's tournament series. Get hold of Kirk to be a part of this important club function.

2008 Dues and Such

The dues for next year will stay the same at \$75, and are due starting in January. The LOTW trip deposit will be \$150 this year, and are also due at the January meeting for all that are going. If you will not be attending the 2008 Rock N Roll Musky Tour, a contribution of \$150 towards the gas bill would really be appreciated by those on the trip.

Waterdog Tales

Dust to Dust, Water to Water

By Helen

Last year Chainsaw and I were partners for the Carver County Bass Shoot Out. We talked a lot about where to start the first day, but in the end we settled on Lotus Lake. We start fishing the west shore of the lake, working docks, the deeper weed edge, etc. I was tossing a pumpkin Senko hooked wacky style, my favorite bait for bass. If I recall, Chainsaw was tossing a spinner bait.

I think it was about 8 am when we reached a smallish point just before a public beach. I tossed my bait just under a nearby willow tree that hung over the water. I slowly worked the worm, raising it and letting sink. When using this technique I always set the hook any time I see my line move, straighten or feel weight. I don't care if I get a great hook set on a weed, log or bicycle because it could always be a fish. Anyways, while raising my lure I felt some

weight and set the hook, but quickly realized I had a snag. I reeled up and to my surprise I had a very nice G Loomis rod with a Shimano reel. The combo was clean and in great shape, in fact Chainsaw used it part of the day. It was a good first day, we were in a great standing, I think 2nd or 3rd, and I had a nice new rod and reel.

That event was a year ago. I didn't fish Carver County event this year. I scheduled some family vacation time up at our cabin on the Whitefish Chain and couldn't attend.

Whitefish is an awesome bass lake, especially during the post spawn period in June. 30 fish days are the norm and the walleye bite is really strong too, with easy limits if you know where to look.

In any case, I was fishing at about 8 am on a Friday, which happened to be on the first day of this year's Carver County Shoot Out. Whitefish was like glass, so I was tossing top water baits (Chug Buggs) above the "cabbage patch", a little spot I favor in June. I think I took Fish Dick there a few years ago and we caught several fish on this spot.

The fish were active, I was getting bit about every 5 casts. The fish nice, most in the 15 inch range and I sure was having a lot of fun. The other nice thing about this spot is there is Bald Eagle that hangs out in one of the near by trees. It flies around in the morning, scanning the water for an easy meal. The whole spot is kind of idealistic, in a feng shui sort of way.

I make it a habit to cast on the other side of the boat once in a while, not sure why, just think it's the right thing to do. I swung around and took a quick cast and to my horror I hooked a rod on my back swing and saw "my" G Loomis with a Shimano reel fly out over the bow of the boat and land in the water about 10 yards away. It was too far away to dive for it, so I marked the spot on my GPS and let out a few colorful expletives. I came back later in the day with my dive gear, but the lake gods had gobbled it up.

The whole event amazed me, one year to the day and approximate time I pulled the rod out of the water on Lotus Lake it gracefully reentered on Whitefish. I was a little

disappointed, but at the same time felt a higher power was calling it back. I guess it was meant to be - Dust to Dust, Water to Water.

Helen



The



and twenty four!

By Fluffee

It is a month gone by when 6 brave souls faced an onslaught of 324 of Canada's most ferocious pike. In the face of overwhelming odds, a half dozen of America's most mediocre fisherman took on Ontario's finest.

Enough of the analogies to Hollywood epics (I finally just got around to seeing 300). My 31st annual trip with some very old friends to Rainy Lake did indeed prove to be a slaughter. And unlike the Spartans, we won.

Many of you are familiar with my tales of this trip; the nexus of which reaches back to 1976. Not all of our adventures have been to Rainy Lake, but in the last 10 years or so they have been Rainy exclusively save every 5th year when we make a point of trying something new. Our 25th year of fishing together had us pike fishing in Alaska (awesome) in 2001. 30 years had us on Lower Manitou Lake in Ontario (dead). With all due respect to Manitou, we are nothing but a bunch of pike hounds and Manitou is a deep (200 ft+) cold, clear Lake Trout lake. So now it's 2007 and we are back at Rainy.

Our posse arrived in the Twin Cities on Friday September 14 from points east that included New Jersey, Pittsburgh and Tampa. On Saturday the 15th we were already half way to International Falls by time the Waterdogs

launched the Pike/Muskie Tournament. The history of my group reaches back to Junior High School and in one case back to early grammar school. It's curious that of 6 friends who met 30+ years ago in New Jersey, 3 now live in Minnesota. The other 3 we don't get to see but once a year, on our pike trip. Yet like true good friends, we always pick right up where we left off.

Our trip is about PIKE, nothing more, nothing less. Yes there are some great walleyes, crappie and smallies on Rainy. There are even purported Muskies. We don't care. It's pike we want and lot's of them. Size is important but it's the average size that we care about. In our group we have three awards of note, each coveted to a varying degree. First is for the largest non-pike. This almost always goes towards "by-catch"; some incidentally caught smallie or walleye (trip record 28"). Our second award is Big Mike, which is the plaque for largest fish. Yes, we consider this award somewhat important. Those who take home the plaque for Big Mike hang it with pride. The most coveted award however is Tonnage Master. This is the award for most pounds of pike caught by an angler over the trip. Not the most numbers but the most pounds. To take this prize you really need to crank out volume and size. Just one or the other won't do it.

Enough foreplay, how was the trip you want to know. In a hyphenated word it was "record-breaking". The six of us did indeed boat 324 pike. The total combined weight came in at 2,688 pounds (yes, over a ton). The overwhelming majority of our fish were in the 32 to 36 inch range. The trip's best fish came in at 41" (see photo) for my friend Brad from Lake Elmo. These fish are as fine a fight as anything. The 41 was nearly a 15 minute fish.

Our best day overall was Tuesday when 99 fish were boated. 30% of our take in one day was an absolute hoot. This is the day Brad took his 41 and I was fortunate enough to boat 25 fish. Try as we might, well past dark, we kept trying to crack triple digits, but to no avail. The weather conditions on this way were very unusual. A heavy fog greeted us in the morning and never left. Visibilities ranged from a quarter mile to a mile at best throughout the day. With no wind a warm air we had a very unusual heavy algae bloom as well.

Over the years we've paired down our tackle requirements to 3 basic lure types; wood (Smity is the trip favorite), a heavy 1 ¼ ounce Little Cleo and the Vibrax. All but 15 or so fish were caught on the Vibrax this year. We found most of our pike back deep in shallow cabbage-bed bays. Running the Vibrax over the weed tops was just the trick. I was fortunate enough to boat 80 pike, all but 3 on a Vibrax. My 25 fish Tuesday had every fish on one lure; one lure that has earned it's retirement rights. I have 11 more months to stock up on a few replacements.



Fluffee helps a friend



Mississippi Smallmouth

by Kojak

I attended a business conference at the Riverwood Conference Center, located on the Mississippi River in Otsego, on October 13th. Part of the conference included an afternoon of leisure activities. My choice was golfing or fishing.

I assumed the fishing would be on the Mississippi for smallmouth, so chose that option. A few days in advance of the meeting I checked the weather forecast and saw it looked favorable, sunny and warm. I was excited to think I could get on the river with someone who has fished the area. I had heard it was supposed to be great smallmouth fishing. As my personal is a 14" smallmouth, I was really looking forward to the possibility of increasing that personal best.

Saturday the 13th, the day of the fishing event, turned out to be a great weather day, it was on the one day of sun after about 5 days of clouds. Then again on Sunday it got cloudy again. My excitement was somewhat dampened when I got to the conference and found the people who fished Friday got a few fish, but only one fish greater than about 12 inches. It measured 16 inches.

The six of us going fishing gathered in the parking lot at 12:30 PM. Three mid-size SUV's pulled up towing the strangest fishing boats I have ever seen. They were about 14 feet long and about 4 feet wide. The boats are made for two fishermen, one in front, and one in the rear. The guide (Kip) sat in the middle and rowed. The boat had no motor. The boat was designed to float in 4 inches of water. Kip basically used the oars to keep the boat parallel to the banks. Apparently these are the same type boats used in Montana by guides floating the shallow rivers.

We were on the water by 1:00 PM. I had the seat in the rear, behind Kip. It was strange to be casting for bass from a sitting position. The boat did have a place to brace you and stand to cast, but I chose to try the sitting position (a lot more stable).



Practicing the 'Sitting Position'

The guide felt the sun would turn the smallmouth on. However, he said the fish were running on the small side and not to expect anything large. It took about 10 minutes to catch the first fish. The guy in the front seat (Jim) got about a 10" fish on a small white mepps, I think a 3 or 4. Kip said that was the size of fish to expect. We were using Kip's gear, 6'-6" medium action spinning rods and reels. Kip gave me the rod with the small yellow mepps. As we continued to cast to the edge of the slack and moving water, Jim

caught 3 more fish. I did not have a bite on the yellow mepps.

Kip switched me to a plastic worm. Tried that for awhile, still no fish. Jim got a couple more. The line on the plastic worm got snarled so I went back to the yellow mepps. This time it worked and I picked up another small fish, again about 10 inches. We continued to float the river until about 3 PM, then we took a short break. During the first two hours I caught about 10 fish, 12 inches being the largest.

Just after the break I caught a 14" fish. It was interesting, each time Kip needed to tend to some tackle or net a bigger fish, he dropped a big lead anchor from the stern of the boat. He had a system of rope and pulleys that ran along the bottom of the boat right between my feet. Each time he dropped the thing it would startle me and I would nearly jump out of my seat into the water. Most of the fish we caught were really feisty, at times jumping 3 to 4 feet out of the water.

The yellow mepps started out fishing the white. So Jim switched to a black and yellow mepps and we pretty much kept the same pace the rest of the float. Several time we had a double. Jim hooked a really nice fish, turned out to be 16 inches. I hooked a similar size fish but it got off as Kip tried to net it. It would have been my personal best. I was not happy.

A few minutes later I hooked a big fish, it stayed down. As it came up, it looked huge. I thought this might be large enough for a patch. We did get it in the net, it measured 18 inches, I was ecstatic even if it did not earn a patch. Naturally, I forgot my camera, but Kip had one and took a picture.

It was just about 4 PM, and we had caught a lot of fish. I hooked another large fish, this one was all over the place and jumped out of the water several times, it looked to be bigger than the 18. It went down under the boat and stayed there, which was typical for the larger fish, it clearly did not want to come up. Eventually, I got it up to the surface and just as Kip tried to net the fish, the net hit the oar and the fish came off. I could have cried. But, I

was having a great day and achieved a personal best. I think Kip felt worse than me.

In the last half hour of the trip I hooked several nice fish I caught 3 more 16" fish and lost another about that size. When we in sight of the landing I hooked another big fish. We could see it was probably the biggest fish we had on all day. This time Kip rowed the boat to calm water before dropping the anchor. After I had lost the last big fish, I had loosened the drag a little as I felt it was too tight. This time the fish took line, had a chance to tire the fish before it was netted. It measured 19 inches and another Kodak moment was at hand. This fish was number 25 for the day for me and Jim caught over 30 smallmouth, a walleye and two northerns.



A Big Smallie Crashes the Business Meeting

I finished the day right in front of the boat ramp by catching a 17 inch fish. That was fish number 27, what a great way to end the day. We were off the water about 5 PM after floating about 4 miles. The other 2 boats and 4 anglers did not do as well as Jim and me. It sounded like they each got about 15 fish, 16 inches being their largest.

Kip does this full time, from opener to mid-October. The day I fished with him was his last float of the year. I plan to take my son with me next summer. If anyone is interested in doing this trip, I just can not say enough about how terrific of an experience it was for me. If you are interested, I can give you the name and number of the guides.