

OUTDOORS

Nothing beats the gift of togetherness

THERE are probably millions of potential Father's Day gifts in this world and I'm pretty sure they are all great because, as they say, it's the thought that counts.

The real lucky dads get to see and spend time with their children, but that's not always possible when it comes to grown children who may live hours away or in a distant state.

Some of those kids are dads and they are having a well-deserved celebration of their own. Sometimes phone calls and Face time are the only way to connect.

The scribbler was one of the lucky ones this year, as daughter Melissa had planned to escape Minnesota and hit the North Woods for a well-timed fishing weekend. What better reason for carving out time to share boat space and to wet a line?

It started late Friday afternoon with a trip to the national forest east of Three Lakes, where we found some dandy northern pike that were actively chasing bait balls — which are basically hundreds and thousands of small perch clustered together.

We were fishing sucker minnows with both slip bobber rigs and lead-head jigs, working sticks



Some dandy smallmouth bass were part of the action.

and rocks and weed edges, trying to locate active pike. As hard as it was to compete with all that natural food in the lake, those bait balls also worked in our favor by turning on the predators.

The most exciting moment of the evening came when a bobber

**In the
Outdoors**
By
Kurt Krueger



popped, screamed down, and fired off for deep water on the edge of a bar.

And Melissa's hook-set didn't change that fish's mind, only making it explode even faster toward the depths.

It was a minute or two of hearing the drag and maneuvering poles in the boat before I slid the net under a pike that measured 31 inches. It was a well-marked fish with solid girth, a prized catch for people who know how to filet out all the bones using the two-piece Canadian method.

We caught several more pike on both the slip bobber and the jig and minnow before the clock said it was time to get home, clean some fish, eat dinner and get ready for Saturday. Melissa suggested we get up by 5:30 to get some early walleye fishing in before chasing northerns and bass — music to my ears.

We found a few early walleyes in 12 feet of weeds, but that didn't steal the morning show. Abundant wildlife, including a family of red fox feeding along the shoreline, stole our attention for at least 20 minutes.

The fox pups were considerably smaller than the adults, but beautifully colored with that reddish-orange fur and white tips on the tails. The female looked mighty rough, with a couple patches of hair miss-

ing on her back, but the male fox was surprisingly well-furred for this time of year.

But that wasn't the end of the wildlife show. We watched two loons swimming underwater next to the boat, even criss-crossing as they dove right below us and swam above the weeds several times. Then there was the lone trumpeter swan feeding near us in a quiet bay.

The afternoon was spent once again chasing northern pike and big smallmouth bass. We got in plenty of fishing and plenty of hook-setting despite the bluebird skies, lack of wind and bright sunshine. We also got a little burned on the legs and arms.

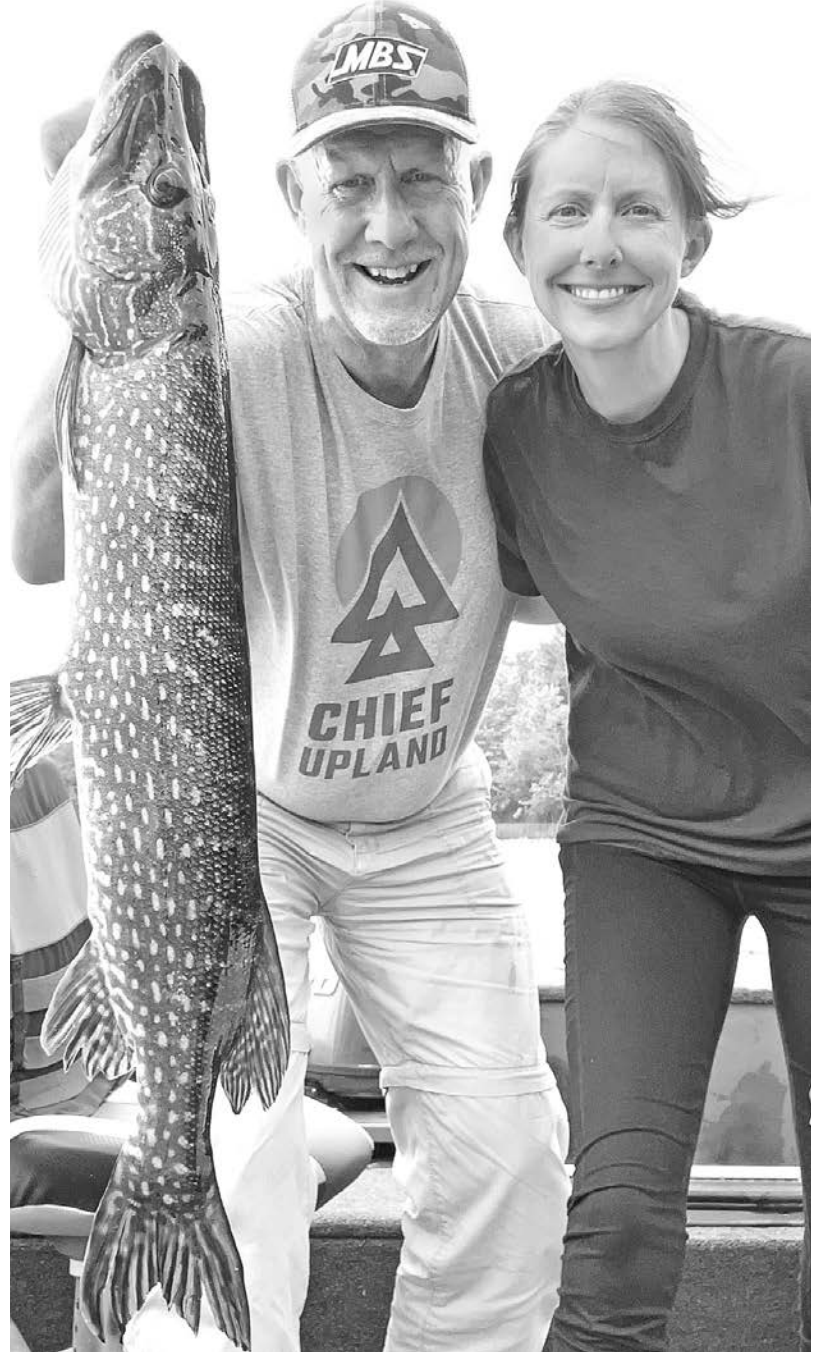
The evening consisted of some more fish cleaning, dinner and cards. We had done enough fishing, but of course Sunday was Father's Day, so we hit the lakes again. Several undersized walleyes, one slotter and one keeper highlighted the early morning hours, along with a couple of 19-inch smallmouth bass.

It took us five or six stops to finally locate an area holding some decent northerns in 13 feet of water. A healthy minnow supply of about three dozen only lasted into the mid-afternoon hours, and the northerns were still biting when we left.

As most dads know, there's nothing quite like sharing boat space with sons and daughters who return home to fish. That's when you not only appreciate the opportunity to spend time with them, but when you realize that you share a sport that brings people together for a lifetime.

Combine that togetherness with outdoor adventures in God's Country, where eagles and loons and other wildlife abound, and you're living some memorable moments.

There are a lot of great Father's Day gifts, but my daughter gave me the best of the best — the personal kind.



The scribbler and daughter Melissa spent a full weekend chasing fish in the North Woods, the gift of gifts for Father's Day. —Photo By The Author

That many of you can relate means that, like me, you have a lot for which to be thankful.
My daughter's comment

summed up the weekend quite well — lots of fishing, lots of hook-setting, lots of wildlife and lots of fun.

State celebrating Pollinator Week June 19-25 to raise awareness

BY MICHELLE DREW
EDITOR

Wisconsin is celebrating Pollinator Week June 19-25, in an effort to raise awareness through statewide and local activities and events to support National Pollinator Week.

According to UW-Madison entomology specialists, by increasing knowledge and adopting pollinator-friendly practices, individuals can improve pollinator health and habitats. National Pollinator Week is an annual event managed by the Pollinator Partnership to help spread the word about what people can do to protect pollinators.

A pollinator is any animal that visits flowering plants and moves pollen from flower to flower, which helps plants reproduce, making fruits and seeds.

In North America, pollinators include bees, butterflies, moths, flower flies, beetles, wasps, hummingbirds and, in some parts of the southwestern U.S. and Mexico, nectar-feeding bats.

Some animals, like butterflies, move pollen while they are feeding on plant nectar. Bees are the most efficient pollinators because they also collect pollen as a protein source for their offspring, so they move the pollen around as they visit flowering plants.

There are approximately 20,000 bee species in the world, 3,600 in the United States and more than 400 in Wisconsin, according to the Department of Agriculture,



Hummingbirds are very adept pollinators in the state that are facing a new danger. This ruby-throated hummingbird was one of three admitted to REGI earlier this month coated in grape jelly. This new feeding fad can cause real and extensive damage to the birds, making them unable to fly. —Contributed Photo

Trade and Consumer Protection Wisconsin Pollinator Protection Plan.

Worldwide, approximately 1,000 plants grown for food, beverages, fibers, spices, and medicines need to be pollinated by animals. These include blueberries, chocolate, coffee, melons, peaches, pumpkins, vanilla, and almonds.

In Wisconsin, crops such as apple, cranberry, cherry, green beans, cucumbers, and other fruits and vegetables depend on pollinators. Honey and beeswax are also important products made in Wisconsin.

Pollinators in Wisconsin

and around the world are facing population declines for many reasons, but individuals can get involved in a lot of ways.

By creating pollinator-friendly habitats, reducing or eliminating environmental contamination from pesticides, and spreading the word about pollinators within local communities, everyone can contribute to pollinator conservation.

Pollinators in decline

According to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR), many pollinators like bees, butterflies

and moths are in decline and their losses threaten Wisconsin wildflowers, ecosystems, agricultural crops and natural areas, which depend upon them.

Pollinators transfer pollen, which then helps plants produce fruits and seeds. Many native plants, as well as many food crops, rely on pollinators.

The main threats facing pollinators, in general, are habitat loss, degradation, and fragmentation, the DNR said.

As native vegetation is replaced by roadways, manicured lawns, crops and non-native gardens, pollinators lose the food and nesting sites necessary for survival. Migratory pollinators, such as monarchs, face unique challenges. As the distance between the suitable habitat patches and their migration route increases, more butterflies may die during their journey.

In Wisconsin, most pollinators are insects like bees, butterflies and moths. Wisconsin's pollinators also include hummingbirds, some beetles, and flies. The species of bats found in Wisconsin are not pollinators.

Wisconsin is home to many pollinators that are rare and in decline, including several state and federally-protected species, and other species of concern:

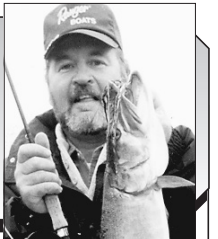
— Bees: Rusty patched bumble bee, yellow-banded bumble bee;

— Butterflies: Swamp metalmark, monarch, ottoe skipper, northern blue,

To POLLINATOR, Pg. 11A

Fishing with the Guides

By George Langley



Mayfly hatch arrives; bass are hitting well

The biggest change in the lakes now is that the mayfly hatch is on, which will have an effect on the fishing for several weeks. Let's hope that this general change to warmer weather keeps on. There are a lot of insects hatching and the mosquitoes, while a bit better, are still nasty so take some repellent along. With high water in the marshes, we'll be seeing a lot of mosquitoes this year.

Walleye fishing has actually been good, but this mayfly hatch will change walleye patterns significantly. If you notice any hatch, such as winged insects flying over the water or the shells of hatched ones floating on the water's surface, look for softer bottom areas to be more productive. Mayfly emerge from mud bottom areas and the larvae swim to the surface. This is when the fish feed on them, especially walleye. They really gorge on them, so they don't need to be chasing minnows during the hatch.

The best bait to use during the mayfly hatch are leeches. Small leeches imitate these larvae pretty well, and can be very effective at times. This hatch generally comes a little later on the larger, colder lakes. The whole population of walleye do not feed exclusively on mayfly, so anglers will still catch fish in rocks and weeds using leeches or minnows on a jig. Look for the hatches, though, and fish right in the middle of them if you see one happening.

Bass fishing has been fantastic lately, with both the smallies and the largemouth in post-spawn feeding mode. A simple pattern is to look for rocks and hard bottom for the smallies and softer bottom and cover for the largemouth. Bulrushes, lily pads, musky cabbage and piers all provide great cover for the largemouth. Plastics, surface baits and spinnerbaits all work very well for largemouth. For the smallies, look for them to be moving deeper and locating in hard bottom areas. Swim baits, crankbaits and plastics work well for them, as do bigger leeches. They love crawlers also, but it is hard to fish with them because the bluegills steal them so fast.

Northerns are hitting well now, mostly in the weeds. Most northerns seem to be caught by anglers actually

To LANGLEY, Pg. 11A

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