

Program:

Our next meeting is Wednesday, April 2.

Future Programs and Scheduled Events:

May 7 – regular meeting.

June 4 – regular meeting. This will be the workshop prior to the Kids Fishing Derby on June 7.

June 7 – Kids Fishing Derby at the clubhouse pond. Volunteers are needed to help with setup and running the events.

June 7 to 10 – Free Fishing Days in Illinois.

June 7 to 8 – Free Fishing Days in Wisconsin.

June 7 to 8 – Free Fishing Days in Michigan.

June 12 – Salmon Fishing out of Kenosha. Drive in groups, meet at the gas station. We will depart the harbor at about 12:00 Noon. Cost is about \$100 for each of six people to cover fishing. A Wisconsin license is required. Call or see Joe Kubica for details

July 18 – Salmon Fishing out of Kenosha. Drive in groups, meet at the gas station. We will depart the harbor at about 12:00 Noon. Cost is about \$100 for each of six people to cover fishing. A Wisconsin license is required. Call or see Joe Kubica for details

September 3 – regular meeting.

September 12 – Salmon Fishing out of Kenosha. Drive in groups, meet at the gas station. We will depart the harbor at about 6:00AM. Cost is about \$100 for each of six people to cover fishing. A Wisconsin license is required. Call or see Joe Kubica for details

October 1 – regular meeting.

November 5 – regular meeting.

December 3 – This will be our Christmas Party. Bring a dish to share. The Club will supply ham, sodas, and coffee.

BYOB Fishing:

Where's your favorite fishing hole? Call and we'll set up a meet; Joe Nutt (630)961-1513 or Gary Buehre (630)279-0696 or Adolph Janke (630)843-7193.

Check out our web site: www.great-lakes.org/vpsc.

You are just a click away from pictures of Salmon and Walleye trips, previous news letters and more about our Villa Park Sportsmen's Club. You may also send information to be posted on the web site to webmaster@great-lakes.org.

From the 'Midwest Outdoors' web site. <http://midwestoutdoors.com/magazine>

From the March 2014 issue

March Right Into Catfishin' This Spring

By John Bennett

When I was a lad, my high school chums and I used to camp on the banks of a nearby river. We'd impale garden-dug nightcrawlers on long-shanked number six hooks that were tied onto monofilament line, which also sported a heavy chunk of lead or an old rusty nut for a weight, and fling the whole apparatus out into the stream. Then, we'd spend the better portion of the night eating potato chips, drinking Pepsis and catching eight- to ten-inch-long bullhead catfish. Occasionally, someone would hook a sleek channel cat, and after a spirited fight, it would be brought to the bank, unhooked and placed on a stringer to be fried and eaten the next day.

Over the past decades (way too many!), I've never lost my love of catchin' cats, though for one reason or another I don't pursue them as actively as I did in those halcyon days of my youth. Too many pike, bass, walleye and saugeye got in the way, I guess. Even so, there still are many catfish abounding in Ohio's waters and too little time to catch them all.

Considered to be just a rough fish by many, and placed in the same category as carp or suckers, the catfish is a great treat on the end of a line, and an even greater treat on the table. In addition, it is a very interesting species of fish.

The yellow bullhead, which is one of the most commonly caught species in lakes and sluggish streams, especially in areas where there is a soft mud bottom, is a true scavenger and ingests almost anything that it can see or detect with its sensitive barbels (whiskers). Its diet may include minnows, crayfish, insects, worms, or snails. Even though it is a bottom feeder, its light-colored flesh makes a tasty treat on the platter.

Its larger cousin, the channel cat, the only spotted catfish with a forked tail, is prone to be found in clearer streams or lakes with rocky bottoms. As with the other catfish species, it is primarily a night-roaming bottom feeder, but it is prized by anglers for its propensity to hit artificial lures and for its strong fight on the line. Plus, it tastes pretty darned good.

As an avid stream smallmouth angler, I am always delighted when I hook into an unexpected channel cat, and consider it to be a bonus fish rather than an object of scorn. On more than one occasion, I have had a good-sized channel cat nearly tear up whatever lure I happened to be using.

Several years ago, I was walleye fishing in Lake Erie when I hooked a big channel in deep water. I don't recall how big the fish was, but by the time I fought it to the boat my wrist was aching. It reminded me of those old, stupid arm-wrestling matches from my high school days. Don't ever let anyone say that catfish don't fight.

If the truth were known, I would much rather catch a channel cat on artificial lures than I would on live bait, even though it usually is just a fluke of luck when I do. As a case in point, one day I was casting a small spinnerbait that sported a red Gulp Minnow as a trailer, hoping to catch a bass or two in a private pond. After experiencing only moderate luck with the reluctant largemouth, the lure was engulfed in about four feet of water. After a short but hard fought battle, I landed a good-sized channel cat. Both the pond manager and myself were surprised to see a big catfish where none were known to exist. This was a strong, clean, sleek fish and I promptly returned it to the pond.

I surprised myself when I ice fished my own small farm pond a few years ago. After pulling up several small bluegill, my wax worm-tipped jig/bobber combo took a fast dive into the depths and up came a two-pound channel cat. Though I had stocked this pond long ago with a few channels, I had not caught one for years. Once again, I considered this to be a fortunate bonus and returned it quickly, hopefully to be caught again.

It is a great thrill to tempt a channel cat into hitting an artificial lure, but I must admit that it is often much easier to catch them on live bait. This is one of the features that makes cat fishing so much fun. Chicken livers, dead or live minnows, frozen shrimp, crickets, hot dog chunks, wax worms, or almost anything that smells, at one time or another has been used to catch them. Still, to my way of thinking, cat fishing isn't done right unless it involves big, fat nightcrawlers under a bobber or tight-lined on the bottom.

If you're not sure where to find them, try fishing log jams on the bends of rivers or under bridge pilings, at both the head and base of riffles in flowing streams, over the deepest portions of gravel or sand beaches, near the mouths of tributaries flowing into rivers or lakes, under

blown-down trees or any other place where they can lie in wait for food to pass by. Don't spend too much time probing weed beds for channel cats, there may be some there, but they prefer flowing waters.

Cat fishing can be therapeutic. I have spent countless hours sitting on the bank of an old, slowly meandering river, pole in hand, hauling in an occasional fish, not keeping count, and have come away as relaxed and happy as I ever wanted to be. It's a great way to work out the knots!

Have fun with your cat fishin'.

+++++

We meet the first Wednesday of each month (except July and August) at 7:30 PM at the North Terrace Pond Clubhouse on Westmont and Terrace (approximately 6 blocks south of North Avenue and 3 blocks west of Addison) in Villa Park. Annual dues are \$30. Visitors or prospective new members are welcome - a \$3 fee is requested. If you are interested in attending or becoming a member please contact: Marty Kapolczynski at (630) 932-1923.