

# Summer On The River 2022



Despite the unstable weather patterns 2022 was and banner year on the Menominee River for smallmouth bass fishing. The month of May was a bit dicey thanks to the numerous cold fronts and high winds. In mid-May I was wondering if the water temperatures not only on the Menominee River but on area lakes were ever going to rise. The week before Memorial Day the water temperature, was on the rise and fish were on the move.

The action really began to heat up after the fourth of July. During July we experience a sporadic topwater bite depending on the winds, cold fronts and the mood of the smallmouth. When the topwater bite was on fishing was exceptional. When the topwater bite shut down, we switched to Case Magic Stiks rigged wacky style with Spearpoint 1/0 Finesse hooks. Another deadly option was a Case Sinking Salted Shad. While the fishing in July was great in August the summer action peaked. The lack of rain resulted in lower water level and increased water clarity. Add it all up and it signals TOPWATER!.

There were several memorable topwater days on the Menominee River like August 23 when I was joined by Danny May. Danny boated several 18–19-inch smallmouth with prop baits. Smallmouth preferred a short pop and stop retrieve which is one of my favorite river smallmouth presentation. We were blessed to have perfect conditions and were able to tap into a hatch. Small minnows were



chasing the hatch. When a minnow surfaces a properly positioned cast resulted in a big river smallmouth crushing the topwater bait. After crushing the topwater bait it is common for smallmouth to lunge 2-3 foot out of the water. The only problem I have with topwater river smallmouth is its very addicting. However, that it is a good thing to have. Danny can't wait to return to the Menominee River in 2023

On August 18, I picked up my grandson in Wausaukee and we headed for the Menominee River. After launching my boat, we headed upriver to our hotspot which Jax recognized having. We began catching fish almost immediately with a wacky worm. We had plenty of action with 14-15 inchers smallmouth, but the larger smallmouth were avoiding our soft plastics. I moved upriver to another spot and repeated our success.

In hopes of catching bigger smallmouth, I rigged up a nightcrawler on a plain live bait hook and clinched a small split shot up about 12-inches. After a few casts Jax caught a few smallmouth that were around 17-inches. They were getting bigger but not what we were looking for. We moved a few more times but I opted to return to our first spot since it was a big fish area. We had big fish on our minds.

Once I position my boat over a mid-river rock ridge which was upstream from a deep hole. Jax cast his nightcrawler into the hole waiting for a strike. It took a while, but he connected with a 17-inch smallmouth. About five minutes later he had another fish on that we knew was bigger. It didn't break water and I told him it was not a smallmouth.



Eventually we got the fish to the boat and it was a big walleye about 28-inches. Unfortunately, it made a quick run towards the boat and the hook repelled the hook.

I replaced the live bait hook with a number 1 Spearpoint finesse hook and rigged up the nightcrawler. After about 10 minutes Jax had another fish that broke water immediately. It was a big smallmouth, and the fight was on. This time we boated a nice 20-inch smallmouth. This time the VGrip on the Spearpoint hook kept the hook in place even though the big smallmouth broke water four times. Give the Spearpoint hook a try when fishing nightcrawlers or leeches in the summer.

Towards the end of August, I fished with John and Ed, and we caught a bunch of quality smallmouth with a variety of presentation. When you fish on a river plan to adapt to the day so bring along plenty of options. I rigged Ed up with a topwater prop bait and handed John a medium action Grandt rod rigged with a 3.5-inch paddle tail swimbait. The topwater bait scored first with an 18-incher on the second cast. Ed caught four more quality smallmouth the first 20 minutes. I was beginning to tie a topwater bait on another rod for John when he yelled, "Fish ON!" I was a nice 16-incher. We Fished swimbaits and topwater baits over rocks, weeds and wood and caught smallmouth. We boated over 50 smallmouth that day with 70 percent caught with a swimbait. However all sthe smallmouth over 18-inches were caught with topwater. Topwater might not catch the most smallmouth but often it catches the big fish of the day on the Menominee River.



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A few years ago, I managed to convince long-time client Pat into booking an early season pike trip. While we were fishing for smallmouth on the river the previous summer Pat caught a 36-inch pike on a Case sinking shad. He said it was the largest pike he had ever caught and inquired when would be a good time to book a pike trip. I told Pat to book a date the first week of May and he would not be disappointed. As we drove to the river one May morning, I knew we would catch pike, but the day exceeded not only Pats expectations but mine as well.

The conditions were perfect, no wind, stable weather for the past few days and approaching cold front. However, I have fished on many a day when the conditions seemed perfect, but the fish did not agree. Putting the odds in my favor once we hit the water, I pointed my boat upstream heading for my favorite creek channel that had never done me wrong.

When we arrived at our destination, I handed Pat a rod rigged with a white spinnerbait. Next, I suggested that he target the mouth of the creek channel. On the second cast I watched Pat set the hook and by the bend in the medium/heavy casting rod I knew it was a big fish. The pike resisted but Pat eventually led a big fat pike alongside the boat and I lifted a 43-inch northern pike into the boat. Pat exclaimed, “That is the largest pike I ever caught”

After we took some photos and released the big pike I said to Pat, “I am glad you caught the big pike on the second cast and not the first cast.” Pat looked puzzled and did not respond.

I quickly informed him that it is a bad omen on a guide trip to catch a big fish on the first cast. We continued to fish the creek channel and caught seven more pike but they did not measure up to the first one.

Pat continued to cast the spinnerbait covering every inch of the creek several times. Realizing we had worn out our welcome at the creek we made a move, and I knew that whatever happened the rest of the day I already had a happy client. Little did I know it would be one of those days when everything went as planned.

We fished a few more creeks, sloughs and weed beds and caught pike everywhere. Pat caught another big pike just shy of 40 inches and several more that would have made any angler delighted. Pat ended up with 25 pike all caught on the same spinnerbait which I gave to him to add to his memories.

Both casting and spinning rods work fine with personal preference being the deciding factor. When casting spinnerbaits, spoons, bucktails and twitch baits I prefer a six-foot-six or seven-foot medium heavy action casting rod. I spool my bait casting reel with 20-pound braided line with a seven-strand wire leader. If the rod is too soft you will not be able to get a good hook set.

Fall is also prime for catching pike on the Menominee River. Once the water temperature drops below 45 degrees regardless of the type of structure you are fishing, there is no better way to catch big pike than with suckers or redbtail chubs. Medium sized chubs are best rigged with a leadhead jig. Suckers and larger chubs are

# River Pike

best fished on a live bait hook. It is important to fish both shallow and deep in the water column when fishing minnows. Pike will remain active in rivers through ice up.

Big pike will school up in the same location as smallmouth bass as Rick Leiberg found out one cold October day. We found a load of big smallmouth stacked up in one of my favorite spots and the action was fast and furious. The action came to a halt and the smallmouth seemed to disappear. We were just about to make a move when Rick yelled, “Fish On!

We quickly realized it was not a smallmouth since the medium action rod was stressed and the drag was screaming. I thought it was probably a musky. Eventually I could see the fish and realized it was not a musky but a huge northern pike. I told Rick that the pike was too large for my net and that I would grab it at boatside. Suddenly the pike dropped the smallmouth and swam away. The 17-inch smallmouth was still hooked and I told Rick to open the bale and let the smallmouth swim. In less than a minute the pike attacked the smallmouth and the fight continued. This time I was more prepared and grabbed the pike under the gill plat and brought it into the boat. The massive 45-inch pike T-Boned the smallmouth and never had a hook in its mouth. After a few photos both the Pike and the smallmouth were released to swim another day.

If you are looking for quality northern pike on the Menominee River in May, October and early November.



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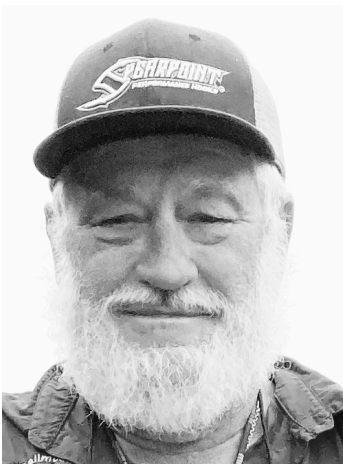
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# GUIDE TALES

Over the years I have been a strong advocate of catch and release. I do support the selective harvest theory that a few fish can be kept for a meal. I also see nothing wrong with keeping the occasional big fish for a trophy. However, when fish are kept they need to be of legal size and in season. It is amazing how many people think the regulations are for other people, especially when it comes to keeping a big fish.

Some people just want to catch fish and are willing to fish for whatever is biting. This is actually not a bad way to approach a vacation, especially if you have limited time as many people do. I had a family staying at a resort who just wanted to catch some fish and have a fish fry, or so I thought.

I met a man at the dock and he inquired if I would break up the day and take his family members fishing for a few days. I will do this on occasion, especially if kids are involved. I did not know they had 2 cabins rented and filled to capacity. Now, they were Hispanic, but the man setting this up and his son spoke English so we could communicate. Since they did not care what kind of fish they caught, I thought this was going to be easy.

First, I took the man and his brother to a weedbed and caught several nice bluegills. After about two hours the man asked if we could go back and drop them off and pick up a few more people. Anyway, I continued to do this and ended up taking eight people fishing that day. To make matters worse, when we got back to the dock they all piled into rental boats and returned back to the spots thosespots to fish. I guess I don't want to know how many fish they kept.

When we met the next day, the man said just he and his son would be fishing with me today. They knew bass season was closed but said they would like to catch some smallmouth since they had plenty of fish to eat. Sounded fine to me and we headed for a

rocky shoreline and where we began catching nice 12–16-inch smallmouth. Everything was great, and I thought it was about to get better as the man set the hook on a big smallmouth. A 20-inch fish came flying out of the water and everyone was excited. The man was all smiles as I netted the smallmouth, but I was unaware that we would have a problem. While the man and his son had no problem releasing the smaller smallmouth, he said he wanted to keep this fish.

I told him several times that I did not make the rules but in my boat we follow them. Even after I assured him that if the season was open I would let him keep the big smallmouth, he was still fit to be tied. He lifted my storage compartments and said we could hide the fish there. He even suggested I wrap the fish up with my raincoat and put it in my duffle bag. By the time I released the big smallmouth, he was ready to explode.

Now, keep in mind the man and his son had spoken perfect English and we had no problems communicating. After I released the big fish they began yelling back and forth in Spanish. Who knows what they said, and I was probably better off I did not know. We fished for a few more hours and they did not say another word in English. He handed me the money and walked away. It is amazing how one big fish caught out of season could change things.

I am pretty easy going, but every now and then I will get somebody in the boat and I know it is not going to work out well. These tend to be people who have been everywhere and done everything. In other words, they are the expert. The only thing worse is to have two of these guys in the boat.

We hit the water and the guy was instantly complaining that we should have been out earlier. Normally, I would not have said anything, but this guy was already getting under my skin. I replied, "I said these are my hours and that is the way I operate." Next, he told me to get the boat moving, as I navigated through a stump flat.

I moved into the fishing spot and his brother began telling me about his boat and

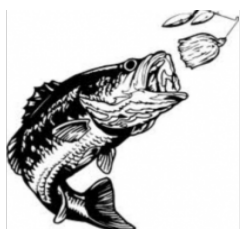
how it was the best river boat ever made. Rule number one, *Never criticize a guide's boat*. As I put the trolling motor down, they both began discussing what type of baits to use. I suggested a medium depth crankbait but they wanted to use deep divers and spinnerbaits. Finally, after catching nothing, one of them put on my Yo-Zuri medium depth crankbait and connected with a smallmouth almost immediately.

As long as we were catching fish things went well. However, during the dry periods I had to listen to their stories about how they had to teach everyone how to fish every time they went on a trip. I directed the guy in the front of the boat to toss his crankbait towards a rock outcropping. He made a cast and a big smallmouth engulfed the crankbait. The fish measured 20 ½ inches and he said that he should keep that fish for his cabin. I assured him that the fish was going back in the river since this was the early catch and release season.

That's when things started to get a little rough. He said that he would release that fish but if he caught one 21 inches he was going to keep it. I replied, "if you catch one 21 inches and want to keep it I will drop you off on the shoreline and you will walk home". He exploded and said he is paying me and the customer is always right. His brother had a big smile on his face and I was about to put them both on the shoreline.

The only good thing was that they shut up the rest of the day. We did catch more smallmouth, but nothing that was 21 inches. The bad part was that I had to fish with them the next day on a flowage for walleye. The fishing was slow and that only made matters worse. I suppose if I would have listened to them we would have boated a limit of 10-pound walleyes. I hope I never run into these guys again.

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# Fishing High Falls Flowage



The walleye fishery on High Falls Flowage is in excellent shape due to stockings along with good natural reproduction. Anglers can experience action with eater size walleye and a chance at catching a trophy. The flowage can be intimidating for first time anglers due to the abundant structure. In spring the secret to success is in knowing walleye location after the spawn. This is dictated by weather along with the amount of water flowing through the flowage. Over the years I would watch people fish the same areas on the flowage. One year they caught lots of walleyes and the next year they would get skunked. Although the water level of the reservoir was the same each year, the volume of water flowing through the reservoir caused walleyes to move to a different location.

One Early May morning I chose to start fishing a few shoreline points on the southern end of the flowage. I was dealing with a cold front which is common in early May. The points were out of the main force of the wind and current would be nonexistent. If walleyes were present, it was usually a no brainer to boat some legal walleyes for my clients. Well, the fish were on the deep edge of the first point that we fished, and the current pushed them tight to cover. The only active fish was a 20-inch northern pike that nailed a fathead minnow tipped on a 1/16 orange leadhead jig. After the pike it was time to move onto the next point.

The locator showed walleyes holding on the deep edge of the

point but there were some fish suspended about two feet off the bottom. Since the fish were suspended a few feet off the bottom, I told my clients that there was a good chance that these fish would be slightly more aggressive. Suspending walleyes also told me that there was very little current present, my clients made a couple of casts and each of them had a fish. We ended up catching a dozen walleyes and one 28-incher.

Fall is an excellent time to fish High Falls Flowage. Walleyes put on the feed as they bulk up for winter. The last three Octobers have been especially productive for catching big walleye as I broke the 30-inch mark on several occasions. All but one of the big walleyes was released. Along with catching these Hawg walleyes we caught plenty of 15–18-inch walleyes for the frying pan. My go to bait is an orange or chartreuse leadhead jig tipped with a medium size red tail chub. For big walleyes use larger red tail chubs. So, if you are looking to experience quality walleye fishing with a shot at a trophy, October is prime on High Falls Flowage.

May is an excellent time to fish for smallmouth bass on High Falls Flowage. Once the water temperature hits 50 degrees big pre-spawn smallmouth relate to rocky shorelines and points. Due to the abundance of structure much of the flowage receives limited fishing pressure. Some of the largest smallmouth I have caught over the years were caught fishing small, isolated points.

It is important to cover water and my bait of choice is a swimbait. When fishing swimbaits for smallmouth bass I prefer a six foot-six or seven foot medium or medium/heavy action Grandt casting rod. I combine the rod with a low-profile baitcaster with about a 6.3:1 mid-range retrieve speed spooled with 10-pound fluorocarbon line. I rig a ribbed body paddle tail swimbait like a Case Lil Magic Swimbait on a 1/8-ounce or 1/4-ounce jighead. Hot colors are albino shad and pearl shiner. If the conditions call for smaller swimbaits I switch to a spinning rod and slow down retrieve.

By the third week of May the water temperature holds around 59 degrees and I continue to use swimbaits to locate smallmouth. Once I catch smallmouth on a point or shoreline I will I switch to a Case Magic Stik rigged on a Spearpoint 1/0 Finesse Hook. Watermelon Red and Green Pumpkin/gold are the hot colors. Be ready because smallmouth will often hammer the Magic Stik as it hits the water. The water is stained on High Falls and smallmouth can hold in 1-2 foot of water so it is important to cast tight to the shoreline.

Topwater is another option for pre-spawn smallmouth on High Falls Flowage. I have had my best success with prop baits but poppers can also be productive. Again, it is important to cast tight to the shoreline but don't be in a hurry to start your retrieve. I cast a 3-inch Hubs Chub tight to the shoreline, wait a few second and

then give it a short pop. Wait a few seconds and let the rear of the bait sink. Repeat this presentation for the first 10-feet. The vertical drop of the Hubs Chub is deadly for pre-spawn smallmouth. Once day last May a client caught 30 dandy smallmouth with this presentation. If the topwater bites shuts down it doesn't mean smallmouth have moved. Switch over to soft plastic and use finesse presentations.

Smallmouth bass action can be spotty in summer with mornings and evenings being most productive. During stable weather conditions there is a good topwater bite at dusk. If the smallmouth fishing is tough, switch to largemouth bass. Largemouth bass offer anglers with a variety of options. They can choose to fish wood, weedlines, slop, or rocks. On some days, a variety of areas will produce largemouth bass but on other days you need to focus only on one type of structure and a specific presentation.

High Falls Flowages has a long reputation for producing trophy class muskies. The 50-inch size limit has only enhanced this excellent fishery. By the Memorial Day weekend when the muskie season opens muskies relate to fresh weeds. As summer progresses muskies roam the weedlines along with rock humps and points. If you are looking for a trophy musky plan a trip in October. It is important to practice catch and release with 50-inch plus muskies.



**High Falls October Walleye**





Pre-spawn Smallmouth

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# Soft Plastics Catch Loads Of River Smallmouth



One of my favorite go to baits for river smallmouth when the bite slows down is the four-inch Jacks Worm made by Case Plastics. The Case Jacks Worm takes finesse fishing to a whole new level. The unique Jacks Worm spike tail design quivers in the water with even the slightest motion, driving fish crazy!

There are many ways to present the Jacks worm, but I prefer to either use a split shot rig or partner it with a finesse jig. I have used the split shot rig successfully for years on natural lakes and reservoirs, and with a few modifications it performs well in rivers when fishing less than 5 feet of water. At first glance the split shot rig might resemble a Carolina rig, but it is different in that you eliminate the swivel and large sinker. I crimp a Water Gremlin Bull Shot weight 18 to 24 inches above a 2/0 Spearpoint Offset Worm Hook. With snags being common on the river it is important to rig the Jacks worm weedless. The Bull Shot sinker is a bullet weight, and as such, it is more snag resistant and picks up less debris than a round split shot. The size of the sinker will be determined by the amount of current.

A six-foot six-inch medium light Grandt spinning rod is ideal for finessing river smallmouth. I spool the spinning reel with 8-pound fluorocarbon. While the split shot rig is deadly in moderate current, it excels in slack water along grass edges, rocks, and wood where neutral smallmouth stack up under tough conditions. Even in slack water there is usually a slight current.

Position your boat with the aid of the spot lock on your trolling

motor so you can cast parallel to the grass or shoreline. Crawl the split shot rig along the bottom for a few feet and then pause. Smallmouth will follow the split shot rig but on the pause the spike tail of the Jacks Worm will continue to quiver in the slight current and trigger the strike. Continue the crawl and pause retrieve back to the boat. Patience is the key to this presentation. I will often let the bait sit for up to one minute on the pause. You can't fish the split shot rig too slowly.



**Penny Bowser**  
**Wacky Jack Smallmouth**

One day I had a client get a snarl in his spinning reel. He was frustrated to say the least, and the fact that his buddy was catching fish only made matters worse. He was finally back in business and reeled in all the slack line. Much to his surprise, he felt resistance on the end of the line. After a few choice words assuming he was snagged, I pointed out that the line was moving upstream, and he had better set the hook. He set the hook and a massive 20-inch river smallmouth rocketed out of the water. We landed the smallmouth, took some photos, and released the big smallmouth to swim another day. Proof that you can't fish the split shot rig too slowly.

In summer hordes of hungry smallmouth will gravitate around

mid-river rock structure to gorge on crayfish.

Aggressive smallmouth in shallow water makes for a great day or both clients and a fishing guide. On many days, the topwater bite can be explosive with both prop baits and poppers getting the job done. The problem is the topwater bite can shut down at anytime so you need a backup plan.

On July 29, 2022, we experienced a hot topwater bite from 10 am to noon. My clients were having a blast catching 15–18-inch smallmouth in 3-foot of water with prop baits and poppers. Suddenly the topwater bite came to an abrupt halt and for 15 minutes we did not have a strike. One of my clients replied, “The smallmouth are gone.” I said “Maybe, but they are probably focusing in on the crayfish.” I handed him a 6’ 6” medium-light action Grandt All American Rod and rigged up a Case Wacky Jack on a 1/0 Spearpoint Finesse hook. I told him to cast towards the rocks and let the Wacky Jack drop and count to five. If you don’t feel a strike raise you rod a few feet and let the wacky jack drop again. It did not take long for him to connect with a 17 incher. Soon his buddy switched and was also catching more fish.

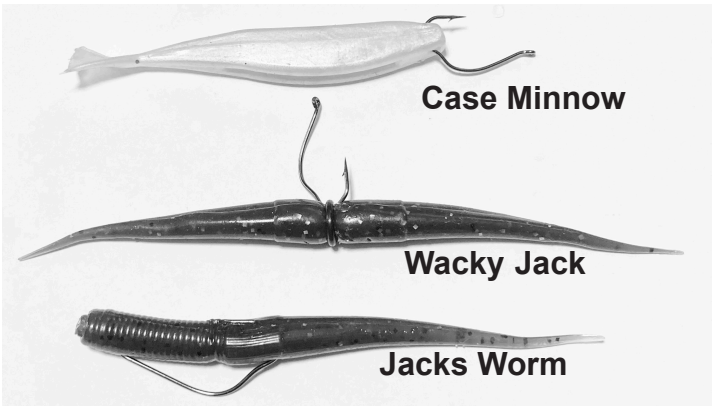
The Wacky Jack is similar to the Jacks Worm but it is tapered on both ends giving a lifelike action, especially in current. Most of the time a smallmouth will hammer the baits when it hits the water. If I am dealing with current I will place a small tungsten nail weight in the center of the Wacky Jack. Watch you line for any movement because smallmouth will move towards the boat. When fishing in current with a Wacky Jack and you have slack in your line you probably have a smallmouth on the other

end of you line. It is important to make sure you have a tight line before setting the hook!

A three-inch Case sinking minnow is another deadly presentation when river smallmouth are cruising mid-river rocks. Smallmouth will hit the minnow bait harder that they will the Wacky Jack so be prepared for the strike. Rig the Case minnow with a Spearpoint 3/0 wide Gap Hook and use a twitch and pause retrieve. This will allow the minnow to sink slowly and suspend a few feet below the surface. Another presentation is to nose hook the Case minnow with a 1/0 Spearpoint Gp Finesse hook. This will give the minnow side to side action along with a vertical drop. On many days the more action the more aggressive the strike.



**1/0 Spearpoint Finesse**  
**Hook with the deadly VGrip**





# The Fall Migration



**Allison with a  
Menominee River Monster**

If you are looking to catch big river smallmouth, there is no better time to fish the Menominee River than from mid-September through October. In 2022 the Menominee River exceeded its reputation. In early September, river smallmouth are in transition from summer to a fall pattern so it is important to cover water. Smallmouth can be stacked up in an area one day and vanish the next. We fished with topwater baits, soft plastics, crankbaits, and spinnerbaits. The bite varied from day to day depending on the weather and fish location. Most of the smallmouth encountered were in the weeds feeding on minnows. After cold fronts we would concentrate on wood. Rocks were also productive, especially during mid-day. The good news was the catch of quality fish.

The action heated up by the middle of September. On September 22 I fished with Mike and Allison who had a great time in 2021. They booked the same dates in 2022. The plan was to meet at Popp's Resort to pick up some red tail chubs. We returned to the same stretch of the Menominee River that we fished in 2021. Mike and Allison recognized our first stop and it did not let them down. The smallmouth were stacked up like cordwood in nine-foot of water. I set the trolling motor on spot lock holding my boat in the current and we let the fun begin. Allison caught a 19-incher on the first cast. They both kept me busy netting fish and taking pictures. Allison caught the big smallmouth with a 20.5 incher. Most of the day the action was spotty. We found smallmouth we found several and they were all big and hungry.



**J R Harbeck  
Fall Topwater Smallmouth**

The next day I fished alone with Mike and chose another section of river. Even though yesterday was a great day, I explained that it's not wise to fish a honey hole 2 days in a row knowing you have several to choose from. After about a four-mile ride upriver, zig zagging around rocks, I slowed down to an idle and came to an abrupt halt in 3-foot of water. I put down the trolling motor and hit the spot lock. Mike rigged up a red tail chub. He made a cast slightly upstream and connected with a 19-inch smallmouth. After we released the smallmouth, he made another cast resulting in another big smallmouth. Mike asked, "How did you know the fish were here?"

I replied, "Time on the water!" Then I pointed to the 3 birch trees on Michigan shoreline and the pine tree on the Wisconsin shoreline. Next I explained that at its only one-foot deep in front of the boat and behind the boat it drops down to seven-foot. The smallmouth were stacked up out of the current behind the rock ledge. I told Mike that most anglers today don't know how to read a river and they spend too much time watching their electronics. I chuckle as they pass up good fishing spots or destroy a prop by not reading the river.

We got back to fishing and Mike continued to catch big river smallmouth. Looking for a trophy I positioned the boat over the seven-foot hole, he made a good cast, and the battle was on. The current was swift and the big smallmouth jumped several times. The 21-inch behemoth was his big fish of the trip. Mike and Allison booked the same two days for 2023 and look forward to more good times on the Menominee River.

I had a few days off from guiding so I called my friend Bob Decker and told him that the Menominee River was on fire. On September 30th, we launched my boat and headed upriver to some weeds adjacent to a rock point. We had stable weather so I decided to try topwater and Bob chose a Case Sinking Shad. He caught an 18-inch smallmouth on the 5th or 6th cast but I continued to use topwater. After Bob caught another quality smallmouth I surrendered my topwater bait and grabbed another rod that just so happened to have a Case Sinking Shad tied on. Soon I was on the board and the first half hour we caught several quality Menominee River smallmouth.

I told Bob that we would return to the weeds later in the day and that I wanted to head upriver where Mike and I pounded the big smallmouth the previous week. We arrived at the honey hole and both of us got into the action. The smallmouth were crushing the Case Sinking Shad. Fighting the current and after bone shaking leaps we did not lose one smallmouth. The 3/0 Spearpoint



**Mike had another Great Day  
on The Menominee River**

wide gap hook with the VGip got the job done. That day we boated 22 smallmouth between 18-20 inches in one spot. We hit the weeds on the way back to the boat landing and we caught five more smallmouth. Life is good on the Menominee River.

The smallmouth action remained great throughout the month of October. I had to deal with extreme weather conditions including cold fronts, high winds, and some snow but it was worth the effort. On October 31st, I was joined by Bob Johnston and his son. We caught smallmouth in the rocks but the big smallmouth were in the weeds feeding on minnows. Any day you catch a 20-inch river smallmouth is a good day.

By mid-September, the walleye action also begins to heat up on the Menominee River. Since we practice catch and release with smallmouth, some of my clients like to bring some fish home for a meal. There are plenty of 15-20-inch walleyes in the river with few anglers taking advantage of this fishery. It's the best of both worlds, a meal of fresh walleye after a fun day battling Menominee River smallmouth.



**Marc Erickson  
Jumbo River Smallmouth**





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