

Arlington Anglers

Smallmouth: Pound For Pound, The Gamest Fish In The Midwest



Bob Diebold Arlington Anglers Fishing Club

Smallmouth bass fishing is not for the faint at heart. It could be a nice, peaceful day out on the water and all of a sudden, all HECK breaks loose. The first hit feels like a freight train ripping off some drag. You know what is coming next. That's right, the smallie comes flying out of the water multiple times. Look out for lures sling-shotting back towards your head. You finally get him to the boat, thinking the end is near, and that smallie makes another run around your trolling motor. IT DOES-N'T GET ANY BETTER THAN THIS.

Arlington Anglers was fortunate to have writer and smallmouth bass expert, Andrew Ragas present one of the most in-depth and informative talks on the smallmouth bass. Everyone came away with a better understanding of the smallmouth, where to find them, and how to fish for them:

BEHAVIOR AND CHARACTERISTICS: Normally colored brown but will be affected by water color, robust and aggressive, pound for pound is the gamest fish, can live up to 16 years.

GEAR AND EQUIPMENT: Does not have to be sophisticated, spinning/bait casting/fly all good, use a 6.5' to 7.5' rod with some backbone for some tussles, must have a good drag system, can use braided super line/copolymer/monofilament, 6# to 10#, get rid of old line and bad knots.

BEST SPOTS TO CATCH: Northern Illinois Rivers (Des Plaines, Fox, Du Page, Kankakee, Rock, Kishwaukee), Central Illinois Impound-

ments (Shelbyville, Clinton), Lake Michigan and downtown, Upper Midwest, Great Lakes States, Lake Erie, Lake St. Claire, and numerous southern impoundments.

WHAT CREATES A GOOD SMALL MOUTH FISHERY?: Big water rears big fish, diverse forage base especially with crayfish, closed breeding season (early spring), ability to withstand fishing pressure, habitat abundance (contour, reefs, cool climates), healthy water with high oxygen content.

HABITAT IN RIVERS: Require cool water and healthy water quality, will use current runs, log jams, eddies, holes, pools, sand, and eelgrass.

HABITAT IN LAKES: Rocky shoals, steep contours, off-shore ledges and islands, cool clear water preferred, deep water oriented.

SEASONAL STRATEGY

SPRING: Right after ice out, water 40 to 60 degrees, 5' to 15' zone, oriented on structure, shallow locations (rocky shoals, sand, downed wood, sun exposed and windward shores), fish aggressively, use jerk baits and crank baits.

SUMMER: Not much feeding during spawn (60 degrees), 60 to 75 degree water, 5' to 30', lots of movement dictated by feeding and weather, using mid-lake structure (contours, deep rocks, suspended for baitfish), use baits such as



Andrew Ragas holds one of his hefty small mouth bass taken using some of his river techniques.

PHOTO BY: ARLINGTON ANGLERS

tube jigs (best), stick baits, minnow baits and spinner baits.

FALL: After first cool down after Labor Day, 60 to 45 degree water, 5' to 50', try weed lines and steep breaks where they chase perch, on warm days try shallow, on cool days try deep, for bait try swim jigs, vertical jigging, or live bait.

Andrew Ragas is a young, up and coming multi-species fisherman. He produces a great fishing publication, Fishing HQ (www.fishing-headquarters.com).

Find out more about Andrew at www.ragasfishing.com.

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It's that time of the year and Arlington Anglers had their booth at the Schaumburg Fishing, Travel and Outdoor Expo. We met a lot of many interested fishermen and their families whom we hope to see at our next meeting. Or stop by at our booth at the Rolling Meadows Fishing Flea Market.

A fishing club will introduce you to a large number of new friends that share the same interests and hobbies. The club will provide outings and trips that you never would have even thought about. It will put together people that are looking for fishing buddies when the "bite is on". You'll find yourself fishing more frequently and in a lot of new places.

March is a great time to seek out and try out a new club after you hit the big fishing shows. You have a no-risk opportunity to see first-hand what a club can do for you.

Attend our *New Member Night* on March 18th. **Our speaker will be Mark O'Neil, providing a seminar on Fishing Lake Geneva.** Mark is an expert on fishing structure and the use of fish finders (aka Dr. Sonar). Don't miss this seminar if you want to learn more about Geneva, a great but very challenging fishery.

Dates to remember:

Mar 8 – Club Booth at the Rolling Meadows H S Fishing Flea Market

**Mar 18 – Meeting
Mark O'Neil on Fishing Lake Geneva**

**Apr 4-6 – Outing
Wisconsin River, River's Edge Resort**

**Apr 15 – Meeting
Jim Kopjo on Spring Crappie Techniques**

**May 20 – Meeting
Keith Cortopassi on Indiana Musky Fishing**

Come to one of our meetings to find out more about our club, activities, and outings.

Meetings are held on the third Tuesday of every month from 6:30 to 9:00 PM.

We meet at Cabela's which is located at 5225 Prairie Stone Pkwy, Hoffman Estates, IL just off I-90 at Illinois Rt. 59. Door prizes, speaker, raffles, fishing reports: Give it a try!

For further information call our President Tom Curtin at 312-560-9876 or visit our website at:
<http://arlingtonanglers.com>



Speaker Andrew Ragas show one of his small mouth bass set-ups to Pat Harrison at the February Anglers .
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