

# Wisconsin Youth Conservation Congress Update

## December 2023

YCC delegates and mentors,

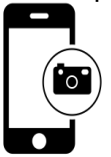
The year is coming to a close, and it is a great time to reflect on all of the amazing accomplishments and individuals who make up the Youth Conservation Congress program. We have a wonderful group of YCC delegates, alumni, mentors, committee members, supporters, and parents who are all crucial and important parts of this incredible program.

I love the fact that while many share common goals and interests, each individual brings a wide range of personal experience, unique skillsets, and internal motivation to the table. YCC learning often consists of a blend of instruction and discovery from mentors, professionals, and peers alike. Everyone has value and brings something meaningful to the process.

A huge thanks to all of you who have supported and been a part of the YCC in 2023. We are grateful for all of the energy, ideas, passion and hope you have shared.

Wishing you the best as you close out 2023, and welcome the new year ahead!  
~Kyle Zenz, YCC Coordinator

We want to feature YCC delegates in our monthly newsletters. Email or text outdoor pictures of yourself to: [kyle.zenz@wisconsin.gov](mailto:kyle.zenz@wisconsin.gov) or 715.299.0925



Visit the [WCC Facebook site](#) to see what's new



## YCC Delegates in Action



Owen, YCC delegate from Bayfield County had a successful pheasant hunt.



Brody, YCC delegate from Racine County enjoyed several duck hunting opportunities this fall.



Gabby, YCC delegate from Jefferson County points to the spot at the top of the bluff where she hiked up to her hunting spot.



Caleb, YCC delegate from St. Croix County enjoyed a great pheasant hunt with his dad, and dog Gunner.



### Wisconsin Youth Conservation Contacts

YCC Oversight Committee Chair: Trent Tonn (262) 534-1962 / [ttonn@basd.k12.wi.us](mailto:ttonn@basd.k12.wi.us)

YCC Oversight Committee Vice Chair: Reed Kabelowsky (920) 242-3144 / [r.kabelowsky@sbcglobal.net](mailto:r.kabelowsky@sbcglobal.net)

YCC Oversight Committee Secretary: Frank Pratt (715) 699-3974 / [fpratt32@gmail.com](mailto:fpratt32@gmail.com)

YCC Coordinator: Kyle Zenz (715) 299-0925 / [kyle.zenz@wisconsin.gov](mailto:kyle.zenz@wisconsin.gov)

WCC Liaison: Kari Lee-Zimmermann (608) 266-0580 / [Kari.LeeZimmermann@Wisconsin.gov](mailto:Kari.LeeZimmermann@Wisconsin.gov)



## YCC Delegates in Action (continued)



Evan, YCC delegate from Fond du Lac Co. participated in a job shadow experience with a local fisheries biologist. He helped DNR staff with shocking, measuring, and transferring brown trout.



Easton, YCC delegate from Green Lake Co. harvested a wigeon.



Colton, YCC delegate from Green Lake Co.

Brothers, Easton and Colton participated in the Learn to Hunt waterfowl program at Horicon Marsh. This program was hosted by the US Fish & Wildlife Service, WI Wildlife Federation, Friends of Horicon National Wildlife Refuge, WI DNR and Ducks Unlimited. This program was a combination of in-classroom education and a mentored marsh hunt.



Josh (left), YCC delegate from Columbia Co. helped stock pheasants. He wrote "I had the opportunity to spend the day stocking pheasants with Wildlife Technician Nick in Columbia County. We stocked a total of 200 pheasants at several hunting sites. I learned a lot about pheasants and different careers with the DNR. It was an awesome and fun experience!"

## YCC Summer Fishing Contest

YCC delegates participated in a virtual fishing contest from May 7 through November 1. The virtual platform was through the app: FishDonkey. The summer contest focused on catching multiple fish of the same species. Winners were selected based on the "stringers" they caught throughout the summer. Fish caught in any state or around the world were eligible.

YCC fishing extraordinaire, Tommy, ran away with most of the categories this summer, including the random draw for the wild card entry. Congrats Tommy! Winning categories described below:



Stringer of 5 bass: Tommy  
87.5" total, biggest was 18.25"



Stringer of 5 bluegill/sunfish: Tommy  
41.00" total, biggest was 9"



Stringer of 5 crappie: Shawn  
50.5" total, biggest was 11.5"



Stringer of 5 perch: Tommy  
51.5" total, biggest was 11.25"



Stringer of 5 inland trout: Tommy  
52.75" total, biggest was 11.25"



Stringer of 5 walleye: Tommy  
91.25" total, biggest was 20.5"



Wildcard (random draw): Tommy  
16.25" sheepshead



FISH (Friends Into Spooner Hatchery) sponsored this event. Learn more about FISH: [www.spoonerhatchery.com](http://www.spoonerhatchery.com)

Thanks to Larry Damman,  
(WCC delegate) for  
coordinating the contest

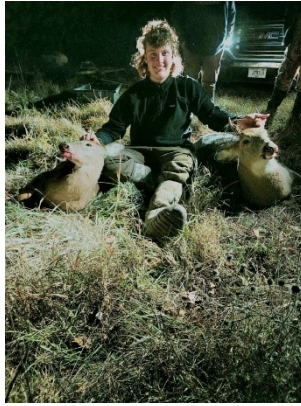


# Deer Season

16 YCC delegates shared a glimpse of their deer hunting experience. All YCC delegates who submitted a picture of the deer they harvested, or a selfie in the deer stand, or a picture documenting their personal deer season experience were entered in a drawing.

Gabby, from Jefferson County, and Owen, from Bayfield County were randomly chosen as the winners. Congrats!

Great job to everyone who got out during the deer season, and especially to those who will be adding meat to their freezers this year.



Shawn, Racine Co.



Tommy, Vilas Co.



Lillian, Eau Claire Co.



Jack, Dodge Co.



Olivia (left), Chippewa Co.



Tavin, Racine Co.



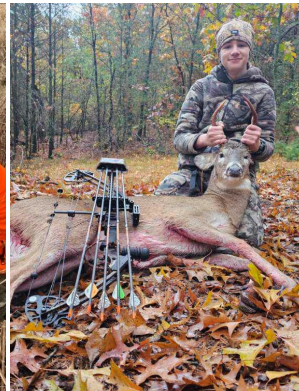
Gabby, Jefferson Co.



Allison, Fond du Lac Co.



Zachary, Fond du Lac Co.



Brody, Racine Co.



Caleb, St. Croix Co.



Brooke, Dodge Co.



Evan, Fond du Lac Co.



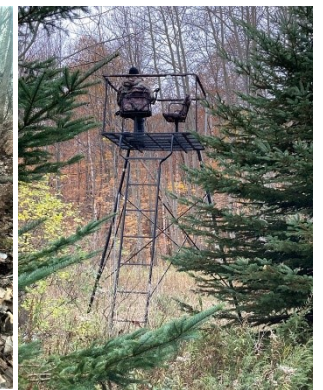
Andrew, Fond du Lac Co.



Owen, Bayfield Co.



Easton, Green Lake Co.



Ava, Racine Co.





Evan, duck banding at Collins Marsh



## Featured YCC Delegate

**Name:** Evan Casper  
**Grade in school:** Senior  
**Name of school:** Lomira High School  
**County:** Fond Du Lac  
**Mentor:** Harold Drake

**How long have you been involved in the YCC?**  
6 months

### Why did you join the YCC?

The reason why I joined the YCC is because I wanted to explore possible careers in the natural resources field and spend more times outdoors.

### Share an experience from a YCC program that was memorable:

One memorable moment I had with the YCC program was when we worked with the TU team to restore and improve the habitat on the Onion River. I enjoyed meeting the TU team and learning about trout habitat and the different improvement techniques.

### Aside from your interest in the outdoors, are there other personal activities that you enjoy?

One of my favorite hobbies is carving wooden waterfowl decoys and then painting them. I also love to learn how to cook new things and try different ways to prepare wild game. Being the president of my school's outdoor club and teaching other kids about the outdoors and how to hunt is also very rewarding.

### What would you say to encourage someone to join the YCC?

If you're thinking about the daunting question of what you want to do after high school, I encourage you to join the YCC and participate in job shadows, YCC events, and the various other opportunities that are provided. Even if you don't want to go into the natural resource field, the YCC is an amazing opportunity to learn more. One thing I can testify to is all of the YCC events I have gone to have taught me something new and gave me a better idea of what I want to do after high school.

I appreciate the amount of time that the WCC delegates contribute to all the youth delegates, setting them up for a bright future ahead!

“ I have enjoyed getting to know Evan. He is a bright student with great potential. I only wish he had joined the Youth Conservation Congress sooner. I believe he will find success in his future, and he would make a great Conservation Congress delegate someday. ” ~Harold Drake, YCC Mentor



Evan (right) helping at Trout Unlimited work day.



Duck hunting in Oneida County.



Bow fishing target practice at YCC Summer Program.



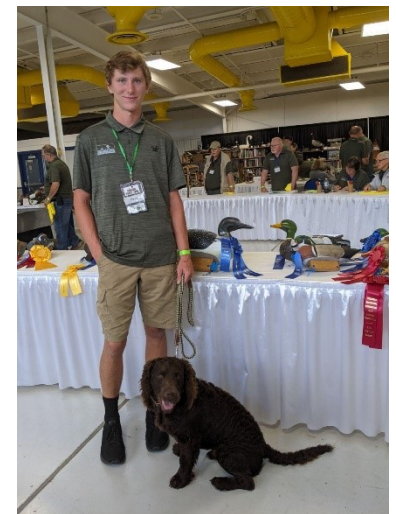
Evan (standing, left) at the Waterfowl Hunters Expo with the youth decoy painting contest winners.



Evan (center), YCC Summer Program archery course.



Duck hunting blind. Harvested a teal.



Evan's prize winning decoys at the WI Waterfowl Hunters Expo.



# 2023 Youth Conservation Congress Year in Review





## GIFTS TO THE YCC

The YCC is incredibly grateful for the generous monetary gifts donated by Wisconsin conservation organizations and individuals. Thanks to these organizations who invested in the future of the YCC during 2023:

- [Outdoors Inc. of New Holstein](#)
- [Calumet Co. Conservation Alliance](#)
- [Taking Wing Stewardship Inc.](#)
- [Viking Bow & Gun Club Inc.](#)
- [The Clarks Mills Sportsmans](#)
- [Lincoln County Sports Club](#)
- [Koenigs Conservation Association LLC](#)
- [Pheasants Forever Chapter 590](#)
- [Calumet Co. Youth Safety](#)
- [Manitowoc Unit, Manitowoc County Fish & Game Protective Association](#)
- [Manitowoc County Fish & Game Protective Association](#)
- [Trout Unlimited, Lakeshore Chapter](#)
- [Wisconsin Waterfowl Association, Expo](#)



Financial gifts help provide opportunities for YCC delegates to participate in mentored hunting programs, engage with resource professionals to learn about habitat conservation, join peers and mentors for group fishing outings, engage in volunteer service projects and much more!

## TREE FELLING COURSE AT UW-STEVENS POINT

**Who can apply?** High school junior and senior students.

**When:** March 22-24, 2024, Treehaven, Tomahawk, Wisconsin

**Application deadline:** February 2



In this course, high schoolers will join UW-Stevens Point forestry undergraduate students and industry professionals in a 3-day, field-intensive chainsaw training. As part of this course, you will work directly with more than 10 industry professionals to gain the knowledge, skills, and experience needed to safely fell a tree.

Through guided field training you will learn how to safely cut down, delimb, and buck a tree while earning an industry-recognized certificate and college credit. Specifically, you will learn directional felling and chainsaw safety while earning 1 credit in FOR 396 from UWSP and Tree Felling certification from UWSP and Husqvarna.

All participants will receive a complimentary set of personal protective equipment, donated by Husqvarna, including chainsaw chaps, hard hat with hearing protection, and safety glasses. All costs are covered by program sponsors. *(Please note that on-site lodging will not be available for high school participants).*

Learn more and apply: [Science of Tree Felling course - Wisconsin Forestry Center | UWSP](#)

## BEAR DEN REPORTING

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources' Office of Applied Science is asking for your help this fall and winter to identify potentially active bear dens.



Den location data is being collected as part of the ongoing Black Bear Litter and Diet Survey, which seeks to estimate bear reproductive rates within management zones and monitor the effects that the consumption of human food might have on them. The information gathered will then be used to inform bear management decisions, including harvest quotas, throughout the state.

If you see a potentially active black bear den, you can report its location to the scientists leading this project using [this survey link](#).

The public is encouraged to report as much information about occupied black bear dens as possible without approaching or disturbing the dens.

To learn more, you can check out [this video](#) discussing the project.

# YCC Upcoming Opportunities

## DECEMBER

- Dec 13 - YCC virtual gathering, 7:30-8:30 pm. Learn about Sturgeon Spearing in Wisconsin, Margaret Stadig, WDNR.

## JANUARY

- Jan 1 - First day hike.
- Jan 10 - YCC virtual gathering, 7:30-8:30 pm. Learn about taxidermy.
- Jan 20 - YCC ice fishing event, Lake Onalaska.
- Jan 20-21 - Free fishing weekend in Wisconsin.

## FEBRUARY

- Feb 7 - YCC virtual gathering, 7:30-8:30 pm. Learn about perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl (PFAS) chemicals and their impacts to the environment.

## SAVE THE DATE

- March 9, YCC Oversight Committee meeting and YCC program at UW-Stevens Point.
- May 11-13, WCC Convention, Appleton.
- June 22, YCC career day field trip.
- August 8-11, YCC Summer Program.
- August 24, Volunteer at the Youth Zone - Waterfowl Hunter's Expo, Oshkosh.
- October 5-6, YCC Oversight Committee meeting, YCC Learn to Hunt pheasants at Poynette.

## GIFT IDEA

Wisconsin Natural Resources magazine announced special holiday pricing of five issues for \$5 during the holiday season. This special pricing will be available for all subscribers, including renewals and gifts, through Jan. 2, 2024. A subscription is normally \$8.97 for four issues.



[Subscribe now](#) to start a subscription with the winter issue, which includes a beautiful 2024 Wisconsin state parks calendar. Go to [wnrmag.com](http://wnrmag.com) to give a gift or subscribe.

Wisconsin Natural Resources magazine keeps the public updated and informed about DNR programs, recreational opportunities, partner news and the state's bountiful and beautiful natural resources. The magazine is published quarterly in spring, summer, fall and winter.

## YCC ICE FISHING EVENT - Saturday, January 20th 2024 Lake Onalaska

Join other YCC delegates and WCC mentors for a day of ice fishing. This day will be focused on enjoying time on the ice while learning new techniques for a successful day of fishing. We will also discuss safety considerations, regulations, winter adaptations for fish, ecology, and specific characteristics of Lake Onalaska and the Mississippi River.



**New to ice fishing?** No problem! Mentors will be on hand to teach you everything you need to get started. Extra equipment will also be available.

**Experienced with ice fishing?** Great! Share your tips with others and learn more about the ecology of the pools on the Mississippi.

This is the FREE fishing weekend in Wisconsin. We encourage you to bring a friend or relative who is new to fishing or hasn't gone fishing in years!

Please check your email for additional information and a RSVP link.

## VIRTUAL ICE FISHING CONTEST

All YCC delegates are invited to join an ice fishing contest using the Fishdonkey app.

**This contest runs through April 14.** You can join anytime throughout the contest.

**Contest winners will need to catch multiple fish of the same species to qualify for a "stringer":** bass, bluegill/sunfish, crappie, northern pike, walleye) **and wildcard (ANY other fish).**

- Download the FishDonkey app: [fishdonkey.com/app](http://fishdonkey.com/app)
- Tap: Fish in a Tournament • Join: YCC

Please read all rules. All fish must be entered through the FishDonkey app. **A photo of the fish (on a measuring board/tape) AND a photo of you holding the fish are required for the caught fish to be verified.**