

## **Catch and Release “How’s and Whys”**

Some friends and I saw the real need for a factual, usable release manual that could be utilized to educate and incorporate real C&R practices, this is our compilation; I hope it aids you in the release of Muskie and Pike bringing some philosophical understanding of the principals and the needs for conserving some of our greatest resources "ESOX".

We feel it's paramount to teach and learn from others when it comes to Catch and Release(C&R) no matter what State, Province, Country or species we seek, releasing your trophy is the kindest act you can impart on your favorite activity and to the future of fishing.

The bottom line is C&R works; here are some things to keep in mind when implementing the practice, also some food for thought if you are not convinced that C&R may be the best option for you, your family and friends.

The first written mention of sport fishing (C&R) was in ancient Chinese history between 1122-221 B.C., imagine being 20+ century's ahead of the times considering most conservation efforts are within the last 50 years, we now jump forward 2-3000+ years, during the last century Trout anglers took the forefront on this practice knowing it was the only way to maintain and manage the fragile native trout fisheries, it was from one of these fishing experiences that Ray Scott founder of B.A.S.S. started the "Don't Kill Your Catch" program and implemented the first C&R Tournament in the early 70's, it was a stunning success.

Muskie Angler and conservationist Hugh Becker started a tagging system of his own many years before the Muskies Inc C&R program was started, he also commissioned and funded the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MNDNR) to conduct Catch and Release tagging surveys in the mid seventy's, that effort established the MNDNR's acceptance of using C&R as a management tool that they have endorsed and promoted for all species of game fish since, he also used this information to assist Dr Crossman of the Ontario Royal Museum and Mr. Art Oemcke of the Wisconsin DNR, Hugh made many positive impacts on our fisheries and in his passing he is still making a positive impact on the entire Muskie world through the Hugh Becker Trust and Foundation.

During the 1970's milestones were occurring in Muskie fishing around Minnesota, Dr.Gerald Jurgens released a 50 inch fish in 1972 that made many reconsider their harvest practices, Mr. Becker funded a study were the MNDNR commissioned Leech Lake guides to tag fish for release, at this time the MN DNR felt all the fish died after release rendering C&R useless for management purposes, they were astounded at the number of recaptured fish including a few fish that survived against the odds, one fish in particular that Roger Larson a long time Leech Lake Guide caught was he felt as good as gone, he said "I knew the fish wasn't going to make it" till it was recaptured larger and healthier the following year by another guide.

Chan "Doc" Cotton released over 100 fish from Leech Lake in one season during the late 70's, that act was a milestone in Muskie C&R, some that didn't know Doc thought it was

impossible and ridiculous, but it was the fuel for the future of Muskie fishing.

By the Mid 80's some Muskies Inc. members and the Muskies Magazine Editor Rod Ramsell took C&R and conservation to the next level, Mr. Ramsell Stating in Muskies magazine that "Pictures of released fish will always take top priority over kept fish as long as I am editor" and setting specific guidelines along with his perception of a good release photo.

Muskies magazine was also publishing articles such as "Too Big To Keep" by Dave Johnson after Catching and Releasing a Huge 55 inch Monster from the St. Lawrence River, this release was unprecedented at the time, Muskies magazine and a growing number of the members were evermore rethinking their approach to harvested fish, how they promoted the fish on the cover, in the content and in the tournaments they sponsored.

A small but growing number of Muskies Inc members were preaching "Total C&R" touting the phrase's "Release'em All", "Dead Fish Don't Breed" (D.F.D.B.) and "Catch Photo and Release(CPR)"; these ideas and actions were seen by some as "Too much", many of these men were labeled "Elitists" or "Muskie Nazi's", but the fish responded by growing larger and in greater numbers, one memorable quote of the time from these men stated "Dead Muskies don't follow, dead Muskies don't hit, dead Muskies don't fight and escape, dead Muskies don't give you the thrill of a lifetime and dead Muskies don't reproduce. They just hang there: dead worthless curiosities."

The In-Fishermen guys were now showing Huge Muskies and fish of every species being released every week on television along with Muskie angler Bob Mehsikomer on Simply Fishing, these men took C&R to the masses along with Bass anglers Roland Martin, Bill Dance and many other Bass fishing celebrity's.

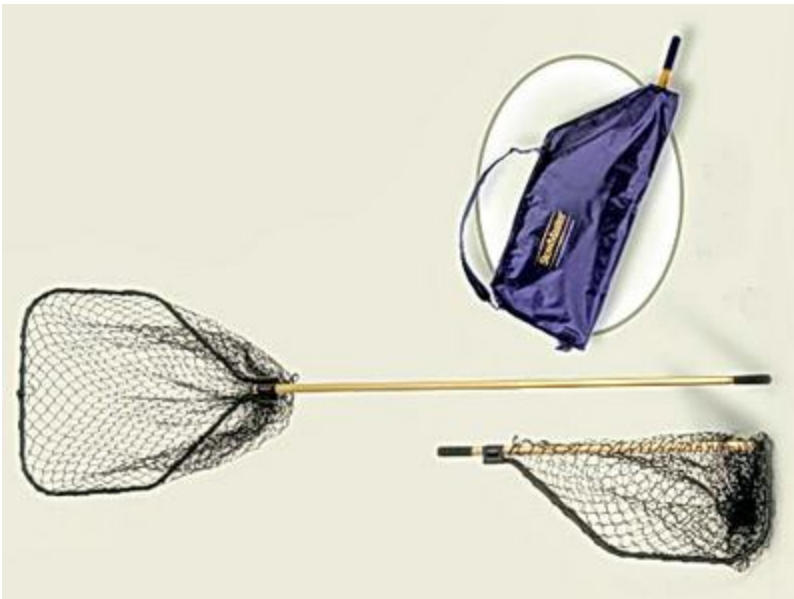
Today Muskies Inc Members releases 99.9% of all the fish they catch and are at the forefront of stocking and regulatory changes to improve the resource, knowing that C&R and regulation are the only management tools that effectively grow Big Muskies, many anglers have shown without regulations to accompany conservation and education these fragile fisheries can be destroyed within a very short time and in some cases may never return to their former glory, there are hundreds of these examples across North America that include every species of fish, so when you see a size limit, slot limit, license fee increase or a possession decrease you should understand this is done to improve your fishery.

Catch and release is one of the most important tools in fisheries management of Muskie, Large Pike, and other species, its benefits are lauded around the world are endorsed by most nations and is practiced from pole to pole to preserve the resources we all enjoy, for this reason its very important to implement the practices correctly with as few mistakes for the benefit of the fish and your safety.

I'm going to go over some tools and techniques that we use to get fish back in the water with little or no harm, some say delayed mortality is 10% some feel 5%, with all kinds of numbers floating around most are based on hear say, I would bet the actual number is less than 1% if proper methods and tools are used, some studies show just over 1% for what they call "Optimized (Reduced mortality) techniques", that amounts to artificial lures and typically shallow hooking occurrences; live bait and single hook rigs are considered high mortality tactics according to C&R studies.

So here it is and please remember we use these tools because they work best for my friends and me and are the best we've found for the application, not for any other reason, we have bought all of these tools with our own hard earned money.

### **Net**



I really like the Stowmaster, it has a great bag is very compact and its made completely in the U.S.A. and Canada; it requires some manipulation to make happen though, everyone should know how to make it open and lock in before you head out; the bag is a coated small mesh netting.

I've never had a problem with the bait winding up in the net or the fishes fins being damaged, there are allot of nets out there just do some home work before you make a choice, take in all the factors before plunking down 150+ bones for something you will not like.

### **Lanyards**

Attach Lanyards and tethers to all your tools and bring spares, you never know when the tool you need is going to end up a Crayfish Castle.

## Bolt Cutters



I like the Knipex because it is the best quality cutter on the market, they make some cheaper and they may work for awhile; the problem is with the pins and quality of the steel cutting edges on these low cost tools, Knipex has a lifetime guarantee so keep that in mind; if it means spending an extra 25 bucks to assure the hooks are gonna be cut on the first squeeze it's worth it to me, I know I can cut the shank of any hook in my box fast and clean.

## Cut Hooks from two good days on the water



## The Diagonal Cutter



These are great tools to keep with you because of the angled cutting head, they will reach places at goofy angles that straight cutters cannot go; the models shown are recommended by good friend Kevin Van Cleave, they are Snap-On 11 inch and will provide some good leverage and protection for yourself, I use a 8 inch pair of Klein's but they are pretty short for a deep hook.

## Pliers



There are several pliers that come to mind, all with a place in the C&R box, first the ol' standby the **Baker Hookout**, I've used them for many years and they do work but you have limited leverage and grip with them; these can also be modified to assure your safety by cutting a hole in the bottom of a coffee can and using the can as a shield for your hand called the "Lac Seul Butternut", this was particularly important in the early days on Lac Seul due to the wild nature of the fish when hooked; I've also seen one

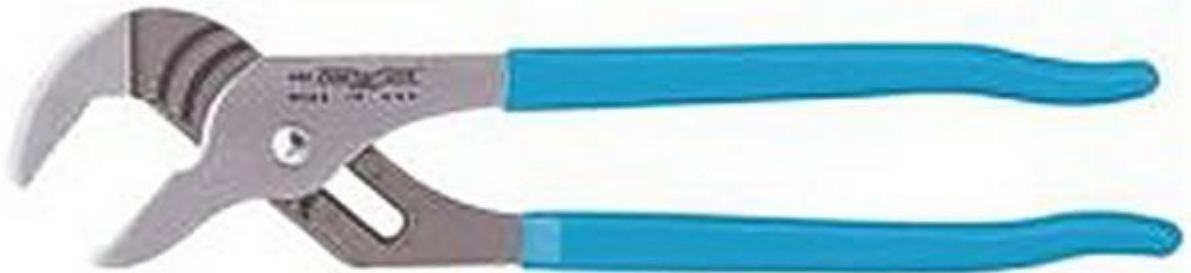
modified with a longer neck by Leech Lake Guide and friend Roger Larson, typically they are plenty good enough but there are times when the next level of tools is needed such as.

### **The Linesman's,**



These are great, the picture shown is of the new 9.5 inch Knipex, they have tons of leverage and a cutting edge that will snap the hook point off in a jiff, I've had a pair of 9 inch in the boat for years and they have seen some action but they do suffer from length limitations; so that's when these baby's come into play.

### **Channellocks**



These are great for the boat just as long as you get a model that's long enough like the 430's or 440's; these provide tons of leverage and power, I've had a pair in the boat for many years, they aren't required often but when you need them nothing else fits the bill like a Channellock

## The Long Nose Pliers



I've used the standard needle nose many times but these are a new one for me; they are 13 inch Gear Wrench with articulating jaws and a killer grip with tons of leverage, these I can see being a fish saving tool and a new "Must Have" in the C&R box, not that the 8 inch pliers are gonna go overboard but for a deep hook situation I think these will save many fish over the years compared to the other 8-13 inch non articulated pliers; these have solved the loss of leverage issue with the old style; I love em, thanks to Dan Crooms for hooking me up, now were going into a very specialized area.

## The Hook Pick



I've heard several stories about the mouth being pinned and the fish dieing or the Double 10 spinner baits hooking deep, this is the proverbial ticket, you have a 13.5 inch tool specially made for large hooks placed deep in the fishes mouth or pinned shut, I was shown this by Mr. Steve Jonesi this fall and got one as soon as I got home from the trip; all you do if the mouth is pinned is push the end of the tool into the mouth (3/16th of a inch diameter wire) and push the hook back then open the mouth so you can start to work, sure the fish may lose a tooth but it will save it's life, a worth while trade to any of us who value the fish; I really love this baby and it leads us into the tools minor(lesser).

## Boga Grip



I'm not a big fan of it but it does have a purpose and it isn't weighing big fish, I like it to handle small fish (1-2# pike) at boats side for water release, also allot of the guys use them for releasing fish if they run high sided boats to gently tow them boat side which is better than torpedoing the fish over the side, lower the fish in the net to the water so the fish isn't suspended by the lower mandible for any longer than necessary, I don't

recommend holding the fish by the lip with this tool when they get over 4 pounds it can cause terrible injury to the fish.

**Paul Lalonde releasing a fish from a high sided boat on Lake St. Clair**



## Gloves



I like them for cold water and handling small aggressive fish like Pike, otherwise I prefer to have a skin on skin feel; I think it avoids possible damage due to not being able to feel what you have in your hands; the gills seem to stick to the fabric and I think that may get nasty.

My friend Dave Overland uses these Gates Angler Gold Edition gloves and has had very good luck with them, they are form fitting and you get a feel unlike the others; if you get a pair you won't be disappointed.

## Scales & Tales of the Tape



This is a great tool if you want to know what the fish actually weighs, We would recommend a "Chatillion IN" fish scale in the 60 or 100# model, I haven't used one yet but our friend and contributor to the north Johnny Dadson swears by them and their effectiveness as a release tool, Kevin Van Cleave also has one that he uses, the beauty is that you can keep the fish in the net lift the whole fish and net up and never have to remove the fish from the net, **"NEVER HANG A FISH FROM IT'S JAW OR GILL PLATE"** this can be very damaging, as long as you have a tare weight on the net your going to be accurate and effective, but please use a quality coated net so damage to the fish is reduced or eliminated, these scales can be certified by the IGFA or your state if record hunting is your game.

## Johnny Dadson weighing a fish in the net



## Floating stick Ruler



So simple even I can use it, just hold the fish along side the boat put the tip on her nose and read the south bound end; its quick, simple and easy on the fish; there are some that use a giant bump board and its probably not going to injure the fish too badly but we have concerns about slime loss, the possibility's dropping her and the extra time out of the water.



clean release from yourself and the fish.

We have gone totally barbless Trout fishing for about 6-8 years and I must conquer with Mr.Kimms and Mr.Hollbrooks results on losing fish, It Happens with both, one thing I do with Trout hooks that I will do with Muskie is rotate the hook points like the Excalibur hooks, they really grab and hold for me and push out clean and easy.

### **Foresight and the Fight**

I assess what I'm going to need before the fish ever sees the net, I look at hook placement and the condition of the fish also consider the fight (Time), water temps (High), if I'm alone or who I'm with and their proficiency with the tools and release, there's guys I will just assist because I know they are going to go right at it and do the right thing the first time to get her on her way to your bait on the next trip.

I always keep my rod low to keep the fish from jumping, this is very hard on fish especially big fish, I've had several on a long line that jump and there's just nothing you can do but hope for the best, In high surface temp situations a jumping fish can be a death sentence, it takes too much out of them, one gentleman has seen big fish break its back on the jump, this was confirmed by the Taxidermist doing the vivisection, so do all you can to keep'em low in the water and save the show for T.V. hosts, play her quickly to reduce stress and trauma.

### **Ounce of Prevention**

It's a good idea to cut all hooks on the bait to avoid the fish rolling a point into her Eyes, Gills or potentially the Ventral Artery, hooks are cheap, the fish and possibly your own hands will appreciate those few points drifting to the bottom instead of the lesser forgiving possibility's of the Taxidermist or the E.R. along with a lost day or two on the water.

### **Rough Conditions**



When high winds and water mix this can be a great opportunity to catch fish and inadvertently kill them; this is generally done by drowning the fish from the water flowing in reverse through the gills, it has been necessary for me to kick my trolling motor in gear and run parallel with the waves (Fishing partners are great for this) to

revive fish on the leeward side of the boat, this is a very tricky condition to fish in especially in high surface temperatures or cold water under freezing conditions, aside from the possibility of you going overboard this time of year is dangerous and not worth it, by all means don't go out alone and wear your PFD (life jacket) no matter what.

One common misconception is that PFD's are not cool, unfortunately when they drag your body out of 30 feet of water you'll be about 39 degrees cool so do yourself and everyone that cares about you coming home a favor and buy an inflatable, you'll never even know its on.

A few other things that can be done depending on how rough the conditions are, one can also drop an anchor as described by Paul Leitelt of Lakeshore Lure Co., you'll have opportunity to point the fish to the current and get her going back just like you were never there, this does depend upon the boat and the waves, never drop anchor of the rear of your boat.

Another rough condition tactic that may or may not be legal in your State or Province (that may not matter to you if the release depends on the fish and your safety), one good option is to put her in the livewell and run to calm water, this may at times be the best option for all concerned participants, always remember your safety is #1 and the fish deserves another chance too.

### **Time Out Of The Water and Handling**

Always keep fish in the water during cold weather to avoid the freezing air on the Gills, Skin (Slime Coat) and Eyes, especially giving her protection from the wind, remember you have a Jacket and you can blink to heat and lubricate your eyes, the fish cant, also you may be able to find a person to feed you and train you when you go blind but the fish isn't as lucky as us so keep'em in the drink.

Also keep in mind your physical limitations, everything is 3 times harder to do in at or below freezing temps, without help to unhook and work the fish this type of fishing could also be considered a suicide mission in the sense that if you do fall in there is no possible way to get back in the boat and get home during the onset of hypothermia, consider your Family, Friends and the Fish.

**Measured in the water in freezing conditions**



Limit any time out of the water to 10 seconds or less under optimal conditions (35-76 deg air and water temps) over and under that keep'em wet please; don't be afraid to take the week or two off when surface temps get over 78 to 80+ Degrees, it's a undue stress on the fish and we usually need to fulfill a honey do list by then anyway.

**Popping out the hooks from a barely hooked fish**



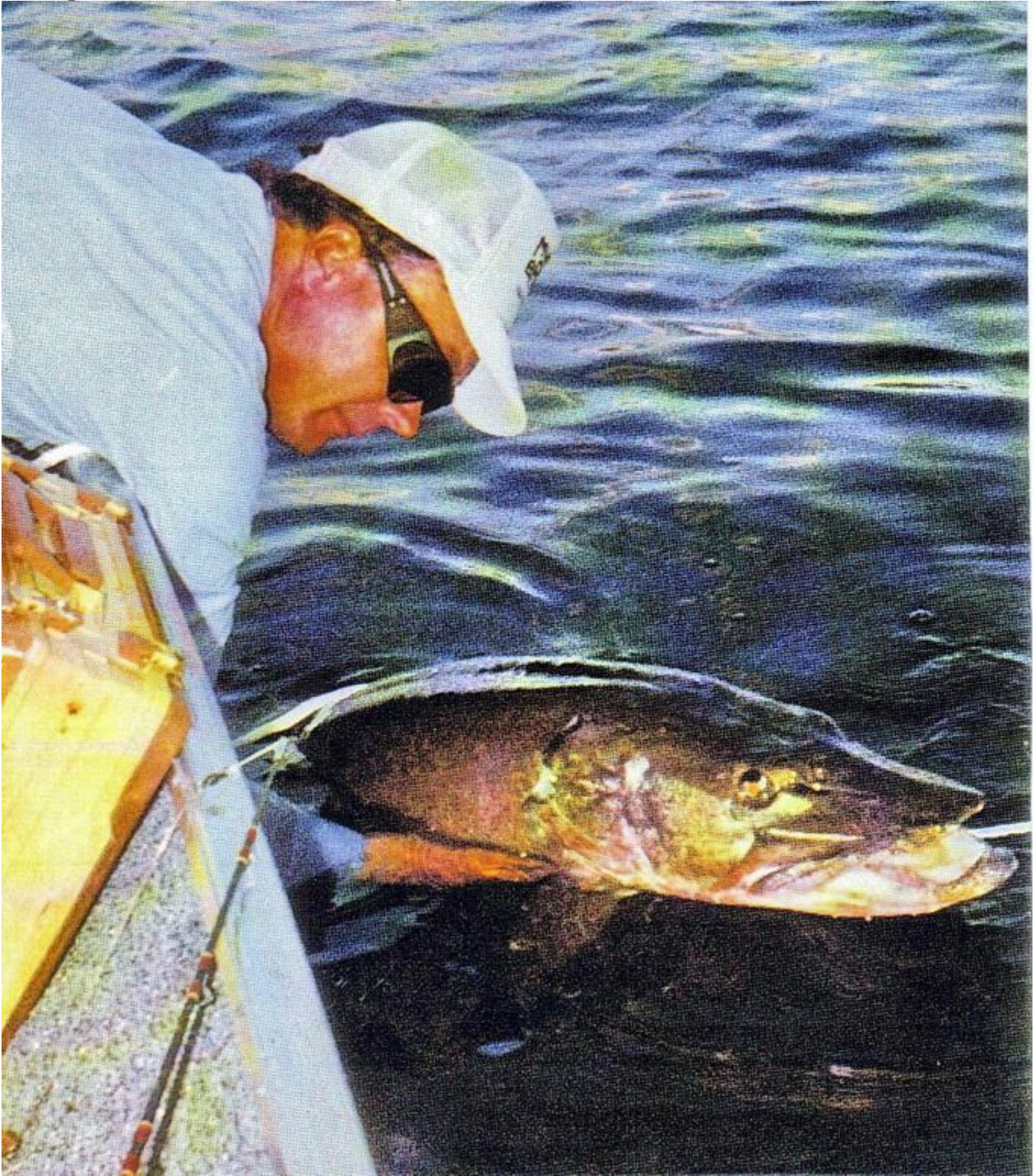
**Handling for a Photo** *{Photo is her going back in}*



As soon as the hooks are out I make sure that the Camera Man or Woman is ready to go, the camera is on, the LCD is working so it can be a point and shoot scenario, at this time I remind them that there will be time for 2 quick shots and she goes back, if we don't get it we have a good memory anyway and a nice release shot.

One of my favorite angles is the fish in the water looking at the Camera along with the Angler, Mr. Steve Voigt has some incredible shots like this with some of the biggest fish I've seen, definitely a winner because she never leaves the lake.

**Great photo of a 1980s release of a large Muskie**



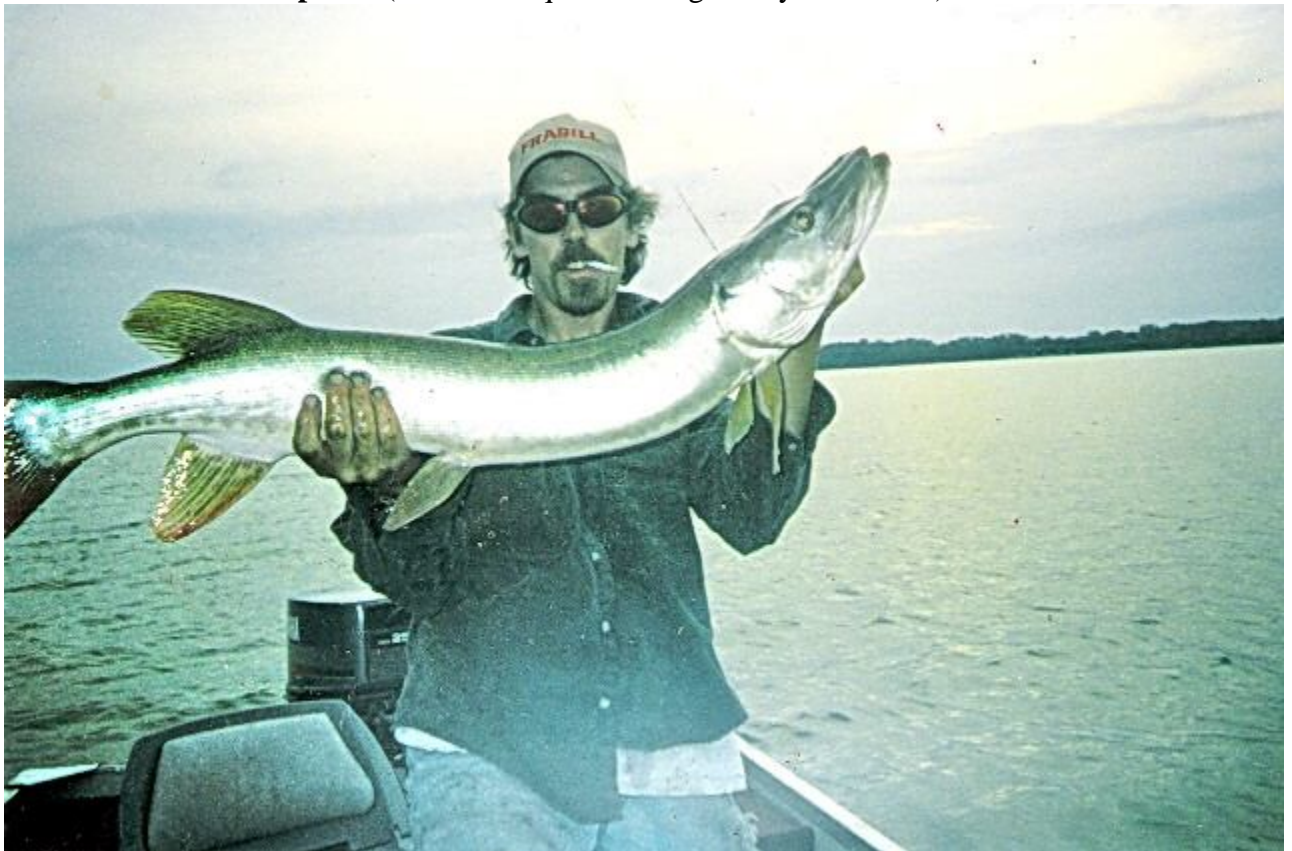
Back to the lifting and cradling, there is a short time that the fish will be vertical and supported by her jaw, that's the real downside of this hold so try to keep it to a minimum,

start supporting the fish with both hands while on your knees(This is hard on your back but it's necessary with Big fish to avoid breaking or stretching their neck and dislocating the jaw), to pick up the fish turn her on her side for a moment this will relax the ol' girl and give you a second to get her accustomed to your hand being there without her going crazy, be very gentle with her and treat her like a lady; if you control the tail also you can easily control the fish, when you turn her and you get her grasped firmly in your hand bring her up easy, turn for the photo and lower her the same.

### **Life size Photo reproductions**

Now we have another alternative to skin and fiberglass reproductions, a life sized photo of your catch this is a great alternative for those that don't have the space for a reproduction or a spouse that's willing to dust it off for you, these are available from custom fish and well worth consideration until your reproduction is ready or till you can do some convincing at home.

### **Dan Crooms in a self photo (He's since quit smoking to buy more baits)**



### **Self Shots**

If you use a timer set it to 10 seconds hit the button reach down lift her out turn and get the shot, this works great and trust me 10 seconds is long enough for a delay, just make a few practice shots before you go out fishing and your gonna like the results, even a slightly out of frame shot can become a very cool picture.

## **A Muskie that wants to go back**



### **She Goes Nuts In Your Hand**

I've had this a few times and all I can recommend is to stay cool and let your elbows relieve the shock, do not go rigid and do not drop the fish !,

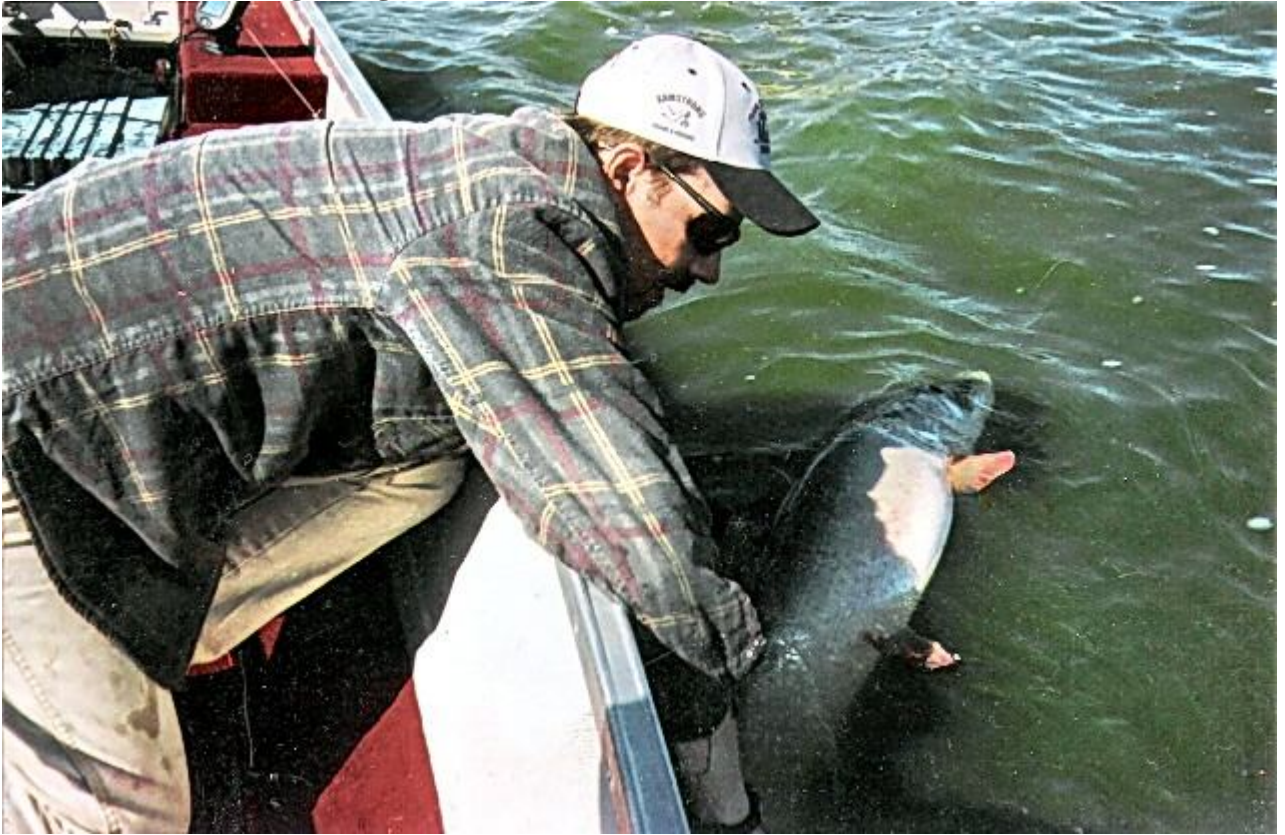
I had a nice fish do this to me last summer, she gave no warning, I never felt her load up, she just went coiling away from my body, the picture above is in the middle of this fight; it's not a photo I'm proud of but it illustrates what the fish is capable of and how to move with her and not fight her to death.

I always hold a fish close so I can use my body to direct her and roll with her, this is impossible to accomplish if you are holding her at arms length to make her appear larger than she really is in the picture, remember to go with her not against her and you'll reduce the damage dramatically, especially if you dump her on her head on the carpet trying to get that arms length photo; This fish owned me and it happened in a instant even doing everything I could to reduce the occurrence, I followed her head up with her force and rolled back to the seat as she twisted and still maintained some support on her body; always try to control the tail first and her head will fallow, this can sometimes be difficult with large fish with a two fisted stub (Tail), I should have never taken her out of the water, lesson learned.

### **Mindset**

The most important things are; use your head, don't panic, rationalize, be safe and always put the fish ahead of your ego and your needs, the fish needs to swim so you can provide the ultimate gift to someone else; the fish of their lifetime, it's the most unselfish act ever perpetrated by sportsman and it makes you a better angler and person in the end.

### **Dan Crooms releasing a large Muskie**



### **Measurements**

The time before you lift the fish when she's just relaxing in the net is my opportunity to get a girth measurement on her without adding additional stress to her and it takes about 2 seconds, just try not to rake the tape up and down her, OK now you've got your Picture and your ready to let her swim, this is where you want to have the Measuring Stick at your knees so when you set her in you can do your measuring, this action is also dependent on the condition of the fish, the environment and yourself, if the stick looks like 50.5, call it 51 if you like, remember it's your fish and your memory; as far as getting the exact bump board measurement I prefer the water although the bump board is a widely practiced method it does add to some possible negative impacts on the fish and potentially yourself if she is dropped or her gill plate cuts you.

### **No Need For Size**

Many anglers myself included care less about the size of the fish and more about the experience, a growing trend to release the fish and take no measurements of size or weight, that is the next level of C&R and you'll grow into it naturally; I feel the fish needs all my attention on release and that effort can be hindered by the measuring process, "ALL" of my fish are measured in the water if in fact I do take time to do so depending on the fish's, the environmental and my condition; more often SIZE means little to many experienced Muskie anglers, it's more about the enjoyment and the time on the water.

### **Steve Veiator and Grandson Dillon with his first Muskie**



### **Kids of Catch and Release**

For children its especially important to teach them the true meaning of protecting the resource, be it Bluegills or Muskie and the difference between different species of fish and their part in the food chain also how they enhance our lives and the ecology of a lake.

Unfortunately I think some use their kids as an excuse to harvest fish that typically should be released by saying it was his or her first or biggest.

I show the kids in my family the value of eating a meal through selective harvest of smaller sized schooling species like Walleye and panfish and particularly the need to release top predators like Muskie, Pike and large fish of all species to perpetuate their existence.

I always encourage release when the kids are small and typically so is the catch (but never underestimate a child's ability to out fish you they have a knack), showing them that release is just as exhilarating as the catch; they always enjoy seeing them swim off more than killing them.

I was fishing with my nieces 9 and 11; when the 11 year old got a Walleye about 25 - 26 inches, I unfortunately forgot my camera, she was so worried whether or not the fish was going to die and I should hurry releasing it she didn't care about my camera issue, she just wanted to touch her and let her swim, it was so natural for her, it was magical to her, I was as proud as I'll ever be, I never said a word she made the decisions and she understood how important that fish was and will be, it started with our previous conversations and preparation, we still remember and talk about her first Walleye and will as long as we live.

Dan Crooms takes his girls out as often as possible, they love fishing ice or open water, they just like being outdoors with Mom and Dad, they also prefer catch and release so much that when the girls fish with other family members they often remark on the girls "Need" to release their catch, so sometimes the kids are helping the adults to just let some swim.

I feel its important not to pressure them into release but to show them and let them learn what fish are table fare and what fish are more valuable to all of us swimming and possibly being caught again, maybe by their own children; the funny thing is kids understand this more easily and readily than many adults.

### **Kurt Schulz reviving a stressed fish**



### **She Died On Me**

Things don't always go as planned, very rarely fish die from the fight, it can happen, if you have done all you can do to save the fish don't regret it but try to learn from it, if you made mistakes that cost the fish please think about what happened so you will not duplicate your disasters but multiply your success in the future; if your looking for a skin mount that is the one to stuff, if you already have a mount donate it to a club or DNR office for educational reasons, seriously reconsider before you intentionally kill another for the wall if you already have one; please think before you act, with the quality of reproductions and the negative effect on the fishery due to incremental harvest and just not necessary, a reproduction will last you a lifetime the skin will eventually change and not for the best.

### **Dead Fish Etiquette**

These actions will help insure that the death of your fish is not perceived as intentional or irresponsible and will not perpetuate interest in harvesting large fish.

~Do Not take pictures of the dead fish on land away from the water, the worst case involves taking pictures in the kitchen or bathtub.

~Respect yourself and the fish by not publicizing dead fish pictures in Magazines or on the Internet, if you do use the photo don't emphasize the death as many have in the past but tell the story to better educate others.

~Use this occurrence to help educate others about the experience.

~Do not defend the ill fated actions of others today because of your intentional or unintentional harvest in the past, use those experiences to make a better future, condoning the actions are not going to make anyone a better fisherman or save a future catch.

### **Skin vs. Replica**

This issue has more often than not come down to the additional cost of getting a replica, fortunately Joe Fittante and Rick Lax have stepped up for the sake of the fisheries and now charge the same for a high quality replica as they do skin mounts. This is a big step in the right direction and we applaud you for your continued efforts.

A replica is a cast of a fish that was previously harvested or found dead, they make a cast, create the form, mold it paint it add the eyes teeth and other details, that mold can be used time after time without need to harvest another fish of the same size and shape.

This is particularly important today due to the cost and labor intensity surrounding Muskie management and stocking efforts both State and private considering it could take as many as 750 stocked to replace your fish in 20 years or more.

A Skin mount such as the one pictured above was at one time a prized possession of one lucky angler but over a couple years the head started leaching oil, the fins started to shrink and the head began to crack, this coupled along with the smell from the head it drove this fish to the basement, then to the garage.

A new skin mount is basically a replica with skin, they have removed some of the issues discussed above with the exception of the impact on the resource due to harvest, that impact has all but destroyed lakes in the past such as Wabigoon and potentially Lac Seul, also Elk Lake in MN, if not for the Ministry and MNDNR stepping up and shutting down the harvest they would be lost to the trophy hunters.

The new skin mounts start as your entire fish, they then wash the fish down to remove the slime; then comes the skinning and removal of the head fins and flesh; they then form the body from foam or from a mold just as a replica, the head and fins are molded as well from synthetic materials; the skin is chemically treated to prevent the past problems with oil leaching, then its reconstructed with putty's, adhesives and painted. So in the end a good skin mount is less than 1% the actual fish you caught, seemingly the glass eyes are windows into a plastic soul, totally void of the essence that surrounded that fish the day you caught her.

**A Joe Fittante Replica 51" Thank You for supporting Muskies Inc and C&R Joe!!**



**Skin Mounted Lake of the Woods 51" from 1977, oil leaching through the skin, head and fins have shrunk considerably.**



**Remember 100% release is always a good choice for you, the fish and the future, the day you are blessed with the Muskie of your life think for a second and thank the men and women that let her swim before you and do the same in return.**

**[b]Joe Fittante is charging the same for a replica as he would a skin mount!!! Thank You Joe for helping the resource and the future of our sport.**

**Happy Swimming fish**



**Scott Webster with a nice pike**



**The Other ESOX**

Remember to treat small fish and fish of other species with the same respect you afford the larger ones, a nice pike is a valuable fish, even more so than a trophy Muskie throughout many body's of water, in many country's these are prized fish and should be viewed the same in your home waters as they do abroad, Pike are a wonderful bonus fish and highly susceptible to over harvest since it takes many years for them to reach maturity.

They are a wonderful fight and a beautiful fish, we need to protect Large Northern Pike the same way we protect Muskies, it's so very important to the future of the lakes and sport fishing, Pike and Muskie are the key components to stabilizing and controlling undesirable fish, maintaining good water quality and we NEED them for a healthy lake, so give "Pike" a break.

### **Your Memories**

A dead fish in a picture is nothing more than that; a dead fish, it shows none of the life and vitality that you were overwhelmed with when you touched her for the first time, at the fatal moment you make the decision to keep her there is still time to stop, listen to your heart, we have all struggled with these decisions, "We Are Human", when you see her swim away you will never regret making the right choice, its our human nature, its a natural human behavior to feel the need to reap and sow, to provide, to hunt gather, to own and acquire but you must also be able to show mercy, care and humanity; let your memories be filled with images of her survival, her rejuvenation and your care for things help make life worth living.

### **Dead fish photo**



**Muskie Conservationist and Friend Steve Voigt with an Epic Release Photo**



**Muskies have changed my life I hope they will change yours too.**