

On the Water with Rick Daniels

Muskie Fishing for Beginners

Muskellunge have been called the *fish of a thousand casts* and a *fresh water barracuda* but they are not as elusive as you think. They're the largest member of the pike family.

The approximate "Rod Hours" (how long it takes the average person to catch the average targeted species) for a Muskie is 20 hours, where a Bass is just under two and a Walleye is just over two hours.

That said, if you are fishing for the whole weekend, you'll probably catch a whole boat-load of Bass or Walleye but no Muskie.

Here are some tips to increase your odds:

Muskies are notorious for following lures for long distances. How many times of you seen (or heard of) a Muskie following a lure right to the boat only to run out of real estate (and the Musky run the other way)?

Trolling is the trick and not slow. You need to troll between 4 – 8 kms per hour opposite the outside edges of the weed beds, working your rod (pull fast and relax) every so often. Using this presentation, working the rod, at a fair clip, you will never run out of real estate and you can cover more ground (water).

Don't waste your time with small lures. Buy a couple of big (at least 8") crank baits. A top producer in the Kawartha's is a Believer or Reef Hawg.

Next, you need an 18" to 24" heavy duty (50 lbs or more) leader tied onto at least 50 lb spider (or equivalent) line. Muskies can bite through almost any line and if they decide to roll, you're covered!

Since you are using heavy artillery, you don't need an expensive, sensitive graphite rod or bait casting reel. Muskies,

under these circumstances, hit like a freight train – there's no finessing here. You can use your grandfather's old Penn or a trolling reel and heavy duty fibreglass rod.

Boat-mounted rod holders are defiantly an asset unless you have Popeye arms.

When the fish does hit "You Still Must Set the Hook". I have seen countless people start reeling like crazy (thinking - they've got him) only to loose him a few seconds later! This is because Muskies have a thick bony jaw, unlike the soft fleshy jaw of a bass.

Finally, just as important as catching the fish is to you, getting it back into the water quickly is important to the longevity of the species and fishing in general. One of the biggest killers of this type of caught and released sport fish is exposure. So have your needle nose pliers, side cutters, handling gloves and especially your camera ready BEFORE the strike. If it's a small Muskie, not worthy of a photo, simply unhook the fish with your pliers without even taking the fish out of the water.

Happy Fishing!

Rick Daniels is the Owner/Operator of Chemong Lake Fishing Charters www.kawarthafishing.com MuskyGuide@bell.net

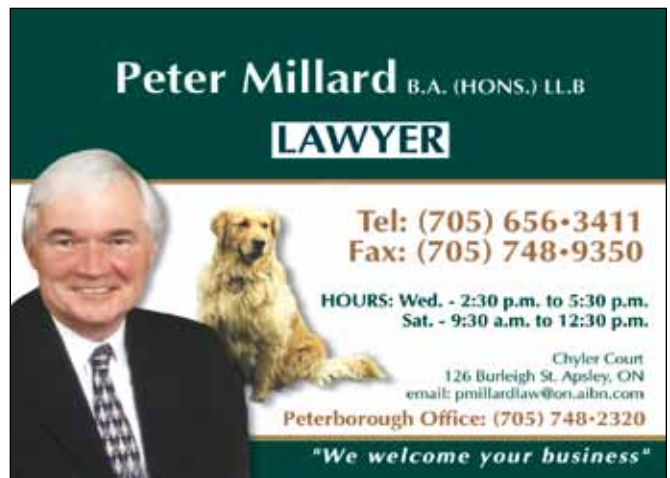


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