



Muskie fishing is a rewarding and frustrating sport. Nothing is more frustrating than to have a muskie follow your lure all the way to the boat and simply swim away lazily never to be seen again. Feeling the incredible brute power of an acrobatic muskie on the end of your line while you fight to get him into your net is quite a reward.

If you want to get into muskie fishing we suggest that you join your local Muskies Inc chapter or hire a local guide. One of the many benefits of joining your local chapter is that you can learn from your fellow chapter members, guides usually are more than happy to educate you concerning muskie fishing.

The Pomme De Terre Chapter has numerous opportunities to learn how to fish for muskies. We have Musky Mayhem in May where new members get acclimated to Pomme De Terre Lake by passing-on our knowledge of musky fishing at Pomme by pairing them up with seasoned members. In July and August professional muskie guide club members give a tour of Pomme De Terre Lake and pass on their knowledge of muskie fishing. We have monthly outings at selected lakes and camaraderie is good among club members. All of our members are always willing to have a new guy in the boat.

Our members would be happy to share equipment, lures and lure tips with you before you purchase a bunch of stuff that isn't quite right. We all have rods that are too short and reels we don't like and lures that never see the water. We all own thousands of dollars (really) of muskie equipment and are more than willing to share our knowledge to help a newbie get the right stuff from the beginning. Ask lots of questions, take along a map, and write stuff down.

Musky Equipment Advice

Muskie lures generally are heavy, so anglers who cast or troll them need stout equipment. That means heavy-action rods and reels that are equipped to hold heavy line and to take abuse from fish that can reach 50 lbs. Bass Pro and Cabelas have muskie stuff, most muskie fisherman buy a majority of equipment from Rollie and Helens Muskie Shop www.muskishop.com or Thorne Brothers. www.thornebrothers.com. Contacting one or two muskie fisherman to see what they like prior to making any purchases is a good idea, you can learn a lot from their experience.

REELS

Abu Garcia brand bait casters are durable and reliable inexpensive reels. C4 Series minimum C5 or C6 Series best. Shimano Calcutta & Curado bait caster reels are a big step up in price.

Both brands have their following and are widely used.

Look for reels that have a minimum of 12 pounds of drag, 15 pounds of drag is adequate, any more than that is probably a waste of money. Any less than 12 pounds, the reel won't last very long before it needs repair.

Ratio's of 6.3:1 works for most baits although you may want to a 5.3:1 ratio with a power handle for big bladed baits such as double cowgirls or big rubber baits.

Open face reels do not give adequate lure control needed for muskie fishing is not typically used.

LINE

Braided line is used because of its high strength to diameter ratio, 30 pound minimum, 60 pound is very common. Brand of line is a personal preference; it's all about the same.

Leaders have lots of individual preference, following are common types.

Fluorocarbon: 80 pound minimum test strength. 120 pound preferred by a majority of muskie fisherman. Heavier test strength than steel because they tend to get nicked up, the heavier test gives a little extra just in case.

Steel Braid or Stranded: 60 pound minimum test strength. 100 pound preferred by a majority of muskie fisherman. These tend to get twisted up and become unusable after fighting a fish.

Length of leaders are also a preference, typical is 6 to 12 inches in length.

RODS

Manufacture is a personal preference, St Croix are excellent rods but very pricey. Abu Garcia rods are good rods and reasonably priced. Look for the best one you can afford, even if it's a little stretch on your budget. Make sure the line guides are ceramic or designed to work with braided line. Braided line is very abrasive.

Rods less than 6 1/2 feet are simply too short for effective figure-8ing. Add a raised casting platform, common to most boats sold today, and the problem is compounded. The two following lengths of rods will suit all fishing lure types.

6-foot-9 Heavy that has fast action delivers on all types of lures. It is a good musky rod for tight wrist action snaps on minnow baits and traditional jerk baits, as well as the longer sweep-like pull that is preferred with many of the new glide baits. But, also works well for crank baits and top water lures where a short, pinpoint cast is more important.

7-foot-6 Medium Heavy rod is good for bucktail spinners or an in-line spinner. Both of these lures are best fished on a longer rod that has some tip bend. The tip bend is essential for casting these lighter weight lures effectively. One advantage of the 7-foot-6 medium heavy is at the boat in the figure-8. Rods of this length are far superior to shorter versions when attempting to make a large figure-8 effectively on a following fish

When you choose a rod, try to think of it from two perspectives. The first, of course, is to consider how the rod will cast and work a lure. Rods have lure weight rating, muskie baits can weigh from 1 ounce to 6 ounces. But the second perspective is to ponder how this particular rod will set a hook and fight a fish. Hook setting and fish fighting are key elements to success in landing a musky.

Lures

There are too many variable to consider when recommending lure type and colors. Best advice for novices is to hire a guide, join a club, or read as much as possible on tactics. Time of year, weather conditions, water clarity and temperature are the most common variables involved.

Must Have Fish Release Tools

The following are items you need at a minimum. By having these items, you greatly improve the fish's survival and you are less likely to be injured by the fish.

There are several different tools that you may need when handling a muskie and removing hooks from the fish. Before making your first cast of the day these tools should be placed where they will be easily accessible. When you have a fish in the net is not the time to be rummaging around boat compartments looking for tools you need. This is even more important if you are fishing alone, or if you are unfortunate to become hooked to the fish. Please keep your tools handy at all times, and be sure to keep them from falling into the lake while you are working with them. Many anglers tie small sections of looped rope around the handle that they put around their wrist to avoid losing any of their tools.

- One pair 10" or longer needle nose pliers
- Knotless Landing net, (hoop or bag style") fin proof (small mesh opening), Minimum size 36" x 38" x 42" deep
- Jaw spreaders

- Knipex Brand hook cutters. *Spend the money!!* These are the best investment you will ever make.



Average price around \$60

- Bump Board to measure fish in the boat or floating ruler to measure fish in landing net.
(if using a bump board, make sure to wet the bump board prior to measuring fish, this preserves the slime on the fish)
A cradle seems like a good thing until the fish, jumps or slides out before you want it to! If you're by yourself, you will need a bag net anyway.

Nice to Have Tools

- 2nd pair 10" or longer needle nose pliers
- Fish handling gloves
- Boga grip with swivel head
- Retractable "soft" measuring tape (for measuring the girth)

A small plastic container with a lid or a roll up tool bag good for keeping release tools handy and organized

