

Pelican

Targeting trophy Pike and Muskie in ND and MN.

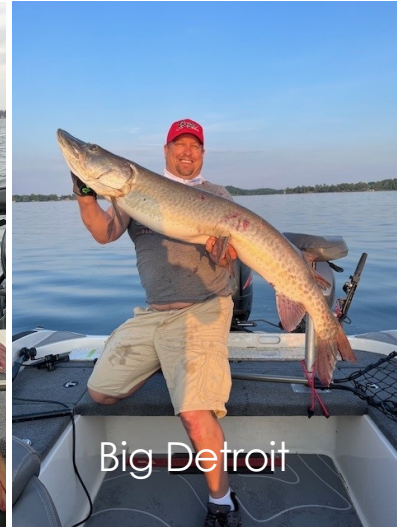




Pelican



Big Detroit



Big Detroit



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A little about Me: Brett Waldera

- Avid Angler-been fishing for 50 years - I spend hundreds of hours a year fishing. Mainly muskies but I enjoy fishing all species
- Personally, I have caught over 1200 muskies and 89 over 50". Over 2000 in my boat and 136 over 50" total. I have a 43.5" pike on the wall from a small slough south of Lidgerwood,ND. I have caught about 25 pike over 40" up to 44". Most from CA, but about 10 from ND from MN.
- I typically fish ND, SD, WI, and Ontario, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan in Canada

Where to find trophy Pike in ND. These are a few of my favorite locations.

Ashtabula and Sheyenne River –shore fishing
opportunities
Lake Lamoure
Sakakawea
Southern ND sloughs Lidgerwood/Hankinson area
Missouri River
Ashley/Kulm area-Dry Lake, Coldwater, Green
Lake

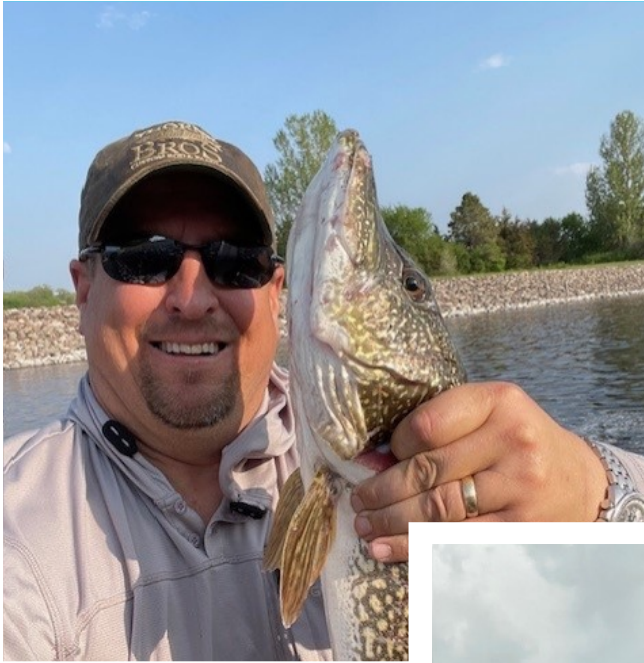


Where to find Muskie in ND. These are a few of my favorite locations.

Ashtabula and Sheyenne River –shore fishing
opportunities
Lake Audubon- Hybrid and Pure strain
Red Willow?
New John's/ Heckers lakes



► Sheyenne River –shore fishing and kayak opportunities for Pike and Muskies



Where to find trophy Pike in MN. These are a few of my favorite lakes.

Lake Mille Lacs- 4 pike over 40" from ML
Upper Red Lake
League Lakes
Pelican Lake- Last year landed this 40" pike
Lake Mellissa and Lake Sallie-Decent pop of 32"-38" pike.
Lake of the Woods- Buffalo Bay ice/ Canada side
Vermilion-40"



WHERE TO FIND MUSKIES IN MN. THESE ARE A FEW AREA LAKES.

- Pelican
- Detroit Lakes
- Beers Lake
- West Battle
- Sallie
- Lizzie



Time of year and effective presentations

Spring- Great time for trophy pike!

Shallow spawning areas and staging areas. Deadbait rules!!!!

Smelt, Herring, or other 8"-12" deadbaits.

Muskie season open in ND and SD. Closed in MN until June 7th.

Muskie- Glidebaits and cranks water under 70 degrees. Big plastics and jigs 40-50 degree water!

Summer

Breaklines-most pike will be deeper. Biggest pike like cool water

Cabbage weeds are key weeds for pike and muskies

8-15' of water is good range.

Bucktails, spinnerbaits, rubber jerkbaits, and topwater.

Fall

Look for baitfish on electronics- Shiner/ Cisco spawn late fall

Steep hard bottom breaks

inside turns in fall

Jerkbaits and crankbaits for muskies. Livebait season starts 60 degree water.

Winter

Muskie season closes Dec 1st.

Ice fishing for Pike

Super effective technique to target trophy pike is tip-up fishing in staging areas



- ▶ What to look for in a Pike and Muskie Rod and Reel
- ▶ Reel- Baitcaster- #22 drag –Smooth drag 6.1:Gear Ratio- good all around
- ▶ Rod-7' flippin stick for bass minimum
- ▶ 8' to 10" bucktail rod – Longer and lighter rod will be less fatiguing for you. Important when spending hours casting.
- ▶ Line #65-#80 good for muskies. Live bait- #130
- ▶ Leaders- leaders are a must!! #175 Fluoro for muskies #90 steel
- ▶ #50 Fluoro for pike. #30 steel for pike
- ▶ Landing net- holding pen to get hooks out. Safer for you and the fish!!
- ▶ Release tools- Protect yourself from razor sharp teeth.
- ▶ Long handled pliers
- ▶ Handling glove
- ▶ Jaw spreaders
- ▶ Knipex Hook Cutters- for sure for muskies!

GEAR AND RELEASE TOOLS



Two main styles of presentations of fishing. "Search and Finesse".

I don't care what species of fish you are targeting these 2 methods will catch you more fish! Unless you know you are on a school of fish...you should be covering water with search style presentations. If you take one thing away from tonight's presentation...this methodology should be it!!!

Presentation: Search Lures

Intent of search lures is to fish fast and cover water fast. Find fish and then consider adjusting presentation. If fish are scattered...continue with search type presentation to cover water and find active fish. Speed of your bucktail can be a big trigger!

- Bucktails
- Spinnerbait
- Prop Topwater baits
- Fast moving jerkbaits
- Swimbbaits
- Spoons





The spinnerbait is one of my favorite baits for targeting big pike!
Other great pike lures are crankbaits, spoons, and jigs



Finesse Presentations

- Presentation: Finesse lures

Finesse lures are used to catch more fish once you find a fish or cluster of fish. Generally slower and more precise lure presentations. Good for when fish are not active and have a smaller strike zone.

- Zig-zag topwater
 - Glide baits
 - Twitchbait/Crankbaits
 - "Rubber" Bulldawgs/Medussas
 - Slower moving jerkbaits
 - Slow moving topwater
 - Big Jerkbait- often move muskies and you can go back during a peak time to catch them later
 - Jigs
- Spot lock to stay on small school of fish



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CISCO



LAHSFL LAKES

HOW CAN I SCORE POINTS ON THESE LAKES?

- Pelican
- Detroit Lakes
- Sallie
- Lizzie

When fishing league Lakes. Search mode- Casting Spinnerbaits, Chatterbaits, and twitching Crankbaits.



Pelican



Lizzie



Big Detroit



Lizzie



Big Detroit



Big Detroit

Anatomy of a good muskie/pike spot?



- Flats, points, humps, bars,- structure that baitfish will use. Muskies and pike will always be close to food sources.
- **Weeds/weed edges** are generally good spots
- **Tip* Good spots are generally good spots annually unless water level or weeds change significantly from one year to the next.**
- Wind/Current can bring a spot to life
- Big fish spots often have deep water access close by. Big fish often spend time in the safety of the basin. Big fish typically feed differently than small fish.
- Seasonality of spots- spots change as weed growth matures. Fish start the season suspended in the basin or in shallow warmest water and weed growth. As season progresses and weeds mature fish set up on key locations adjacent to deeper water. Muskie transition back to shallow water right after first big cool down in the fall. One of my favorite times of year. Lots of big muskies shallow. Fast topwater covering flats. September sand!

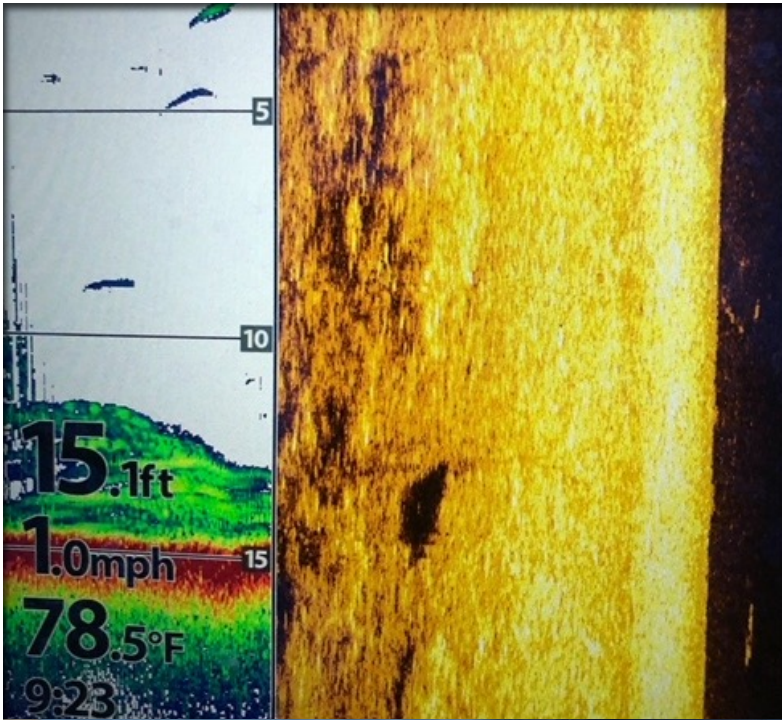
Here are a few key observations to catch more muskies based on my time spent on the water.

- Openwater trolling bite usually peaks around 4th of July. I believe it has more to do with mayfly hatch than water temp. (food chain) 72 degrees is generally when I quit and switch to breakline fishing more.
- East wind- generally poor but can get a big bite during peak moon times. If baro is high 30+hg...find something else to do!
- Sucker fishing bite starts pre-turnover 60-degrees and goes to freeze up. But trolling can be good after 45 degrees.
- Tip * Fish migration at 45 degrees from weeds to hard bottom and steep breaks.
- New moon good morning bite/ Full moon good evening bite
- There are lures and there are good lures, but no lure is the holy grail. Fish the lure according to the conditions.

TIP*Get a few lures and learn how they work and how to use them vs a lot of lures!**

- Muskie Follows-What did the follow tell you? Follow or bite right away on cast vs follow popping up late on cast. Fish positioned tight to cover vs off cover.





SPEND THE TIME TO GET TO KNOW YOUR ELECTRONICS!!! TROPHY PIKE AND MUSKIES ARE EASY TO SEE WITH SIDE IMAGING.



Late season trolling for big muskies is true trophy time. water temp below 40 degrees.
Keep baits close to bottom...20-25' depth zone very consistent.

Live Bait fishing-starts around 60 degree water temps
53.5" sucker fish the largest in my boat in 2023 and a heavy 51.5' from 2024 in November.
Use of livescope to control sucker depth over weeds and see following fish.



ICE SEASON IS A GREAT TIME TO TARGET PIKE

- ▶ Super effective technique to target trophy pike is tip-up fishing in staging areas
- ▶ What to look for?
- ▶ Close to creek or river mouths
- ▶ Outside marshy areas





Conclusion:

Be safe and enjoy your time on the water.

Learn about the lakes you plan to fish.

Fish with a purpose! Search vs finesse techniques

Follow the FLP Formula: Fish + Location + Presentation= Success

Questions??

