

“Cast About” – Volume #10 – January 1st, 2022

Happy “Fish On’ New Year From: Chicagoland Muskie Hunters, Flatlanders, Fox River Valley, Illinois Muskie Tournament Trail, Lake Shelbyville Muskie Club, Midwest Muskie Club, Mississippi Valley Muskies, Quad County Hawg Hunters, Shawnee Muskie Hunters, Southside Muskie Hawks – Representing 837 plus Muskie Anglers!!

First things first, lets’ do a lot of casting in 2022 to reach an all around membership goal of 1,000 Muskie anglers. We know they exist, lets’ make a dynamic effort to “snag ‘em”!

I know, it’s starting to sound like a broken record but – the Illini Muskies Alliance will not be holding the January IDNR/IMA meeting due to a variety of reasons (such as availability of meeting room, Covid concerns and significant number of participants unable to attend). A new 2022 IMA meeting schedule will soon be developed and distributed for your consideration. However, we can use this time to use whatever means we have to stay in touch with each other. Communicating is important as the hard water will soon be gone and it will be “fish on” time again. We do have fishable waters in Illinois all year (most of the time).

Thanks Lee Bartolini (former Illinois resident now Wisconsin) and LSMC member for part of the quiz included in this newsletter.

We all should be proud of the various youth activities the various groups sponsor or participate in. Why not dedicate 2022 to the **year of the youth!** Lets’ do what we can to involve the young – future – muskie anglers as much as we can.

Congratulations to **Muskies Inc.** for the 2022 calendar. Really nice document and hope you received a copy and supported this fund raising effort.

Check it Out – a Muskie every month during 2021 – see last two pages!

IMPORTANT that for sure we have your organization directory information for IMA voting purposes and information distribution **please take care of this.** .

JUST FOR FUN; Hope you might enjoy filling the winter time period with the following quiz.

1. Some lakes in Illinois have special regulations regarding the minimum length limit for keeping Muskies (I know we don't keep muskies, but this is a question about legal minimum lengths.) What is the "general inland waters" minimum length statewide for keeping muskies in those bodies of water that don't have a special regulation?
 - a. The minimum length is 26"
 - b. The minimum length is 30"
 - c. The minimum length is 36"
 - d. The minimum length is 40"
2. Which of the following is the correct way to measure fish?
 - a. Fish must be measured in a straight line from the tip of the snout with the mouth open to the end of the compressed tail.
 - b. Fish must be measured in a straight line from the tip of the snout with the mouth closed to the end of the compressed tail.
 - c. Fish must be measured in a straight line from the tip of the snout with the mouth open to the end of the longest part of the tail when spread apart.
 - d. Fish must be measured in a straight line from the tip of the snout with the mouth closed to the end of the longest part of the tail when spread apart.
3. The Musky Mayhem, Detonator, the Shumway Funky Chicken, and the Mepps Giant Killer are examples of
 - a. Bucktails
 - b. Jerkbaits
 - c. Topwater Baits
 - d. Glide Baits
4. Which of the following fishing knots is most often used for tying the ends of two lines together?
 - a. The Trilene knot
 - b. The improved Clinch knot
 - c. The Palomar knot
 - d. The Double Uni knot
5. It's not advisable to fish for Muskie when water temperature reaches _____ degrees
 - a. 95 degrees
 - b. 90 degrees
 - c. 85 degrees
 - d. 80 degrees
6. In 2022 the Illini Muskies Alliance will be ____ years old. Happy Birthday IMA.
 - a. 20 years old
 - b. 30 years old
 - c. 40 years old
 - d. 50 years old

Answers included in this newsletter – cast for them.....

From Jake Wolf “Attached is the invoice for the microbubble diffusers we ordered. We came close to using all the money. We really appreciate the IMA purchasing the bubblers for us. We will now have an extra bubbler for every hauling truck in case one goes bad during a stocking (it does happen). Make sure the IMA knows we appreciate your support.”

Muskies and fly rodding. Do any of our members use a fly rod for Muskies or Pike? Give me a shout if you do.

YOUTH – An opportunity to put our words into action!! Please check out the “NEW YOUTH ANGLER OFFER” presented on the March page of Muskies Inc 2022 calendar. On the surface it looks like a good program if YOU really want to encourage more youth involvement and membership numbers at the same time.

Quad County Hawg Hunters will have a booth at the Chicago Muskie Show and be raffling a 9 foot St. Croix Legend rod and a 400 tranx. Also a homemade wooden bump board will be second place.

Also, **Fox River Valley** will have a booth at the Chicago Show and **Shawnee Muskie Hunters** will have a booth at the Carbondale Show. These are only booths I am aware of. Please make sure you stop by for a visit.

Illinois Muskie Tournament Trail will also be at Chicago Show with 2022 tournament schedule, entry forms and a new fund raiser.

2022 IMA Meeting Schedule: So very difficult, yet so very important. Unusual times result in perhaps out of the ordinary actions. We’re in the process of trying to set up a “doable” meeting schedule for 2022. I’m sure it won’t please all, but it will be the best that we can come up with. We’ll announce the new-revised meeting schedule in the February issue of Cast About.

Plan Ahead: First printing of 500 copies of “Got Muskies, Illinois Has” are all gone. We could get another printing if any Clubs would like to hand out at meetings or events. A good publicity tool for Muskie fishing in Illinois and the good work your group and other IMA member organizations are doing and have done.

When I heard of this, just had to ask Jim (Lucky) Beaty for more information.

“

FISH ILLINOIS
WATERS!



Have you put
YOUR BOAT
AWAY FOR THE
WINTER?????

“At this time of year most Muskie anglers resort to trolling. But we like to cast vs troll if the conditions are right. On Sunday, December 12, 2021, James Dingus and I headed to our favorite lake, Kinkaid. At this time of year we know the bite window is small. We headed to the north end of the lake and we’re able to confirm the bait fish were present. A few weeks earlier we caught a Muskie casting around noon when the moon was setting. Today the moon rise was around 1:30pm. Usually if you are within an hour of that your chances improve to catch a Muskie. Today, at about 12:15 pm, when casting rubber bait, the Muskie hit in 2 feet of water. After a short fight, she was in the net. The 48 incher was really fat with a girth of 20 inches. Released quickly back into the lake to grow some more”. Jim Beaty

As we celebrate the 40th birthday of Illini Muskies Inc., can you name the long time chairman of the IMA? _____

Quiz Answers: 1 – C, 2 – B, 3 -A, 4 – D , 5 – D, 6 - C

WOWZA – Shawnee Muskie Hunters have agreed to purchase 1000 floy tags for Shawn Hirst use.

Illinois Muskie Tournament Trail is announcing a special 2022 fundraiser benefiting Youth and Educational Programs by raffling off a “Mountain redhorse Crane Bait” painting by Rodd Umlauf, Artist. Framed and mated artist proof #2 of 10 2017 Musky Hunter Collectible Lure Print Sketch. Print is signed by Bill and Sharon Crane. Includes Redhorse Crane 208 Bait.(lure is not part of the Musky Hunter Collectible series and is not numbered or signed). See them at IMTT Booth, thru their web site and at our first four events.

IMTT TOURNAMENT SCHEDULE:

1. April 16th – Spring Classic @ Spring Lake North
2. May 21st & 22nd – Jake Wolf Memorial @ Banner Marsh (Johnson Lake & Wheel Lake)
3. June 4th & 5th – Summer Classic @ Mill Creek Lake
4. June 11th – Mike Sule Memorial @ Fox Chain of Lakes
5. October 1st – Gregg Tichacek Memorial @ Lake McMaster
6. October 22nd & 23rd – Fall Classic @ Prairie lake
7. November 5th & 6th State Championship @ Kinkaid Lake

Shawnee Muskie Hunters:

1. March 12 & 13 Shawnee Muskie Hunters Spring Fling Tournament Kinkaid Lake
2. April 30th 9th Annual Ill. Scholastic Muskie Tournament @ Mill Creek
3. October 15 & 16 Shawnee Muskie Hunters Fall Brawl Tournament Kinkaid Lake

Sure hope others will send in significant event dates as we will do our best to help spread the word.

Items stressed! We’ve all heard too often that to many folks just don’t know about the IMA. That’s our fault and our responsibility to change. **Please** distribute our news letter to your groups’ membership and **Please** take time to make sure either Ron or I have your directory information. Really, that’s not too much to ask!

*The fish pictured is a good “poster child”, and Walt Krause report are great examples of what is being raised in **OUR** waters and with **OUR** help!*

Bob Kerans, IMA Chairman, Cast About editor

Thanks to Walt Krause for sharing his story and his “quest” for 2021. His story is on the following two pages ENJOY!!

The Quest by Walt Krause

Webster's dictionary states the word quest is as follows: A journey in search of adventure. This is my journey in the pursuit of catching a muskie in every month of a calendar year. To bring it into perspective, the muskie is one of the top predators in the water system they inhabit. They are also the lowest in number compared to other fish that inhabit their system. They eat what they want, when they want it. They have the title of a fish of 10,000 cast in the best of waters, it is not uncommon to put in 18 to 24 hours to catch one. Now add ice that can cover lakes and rivers from Nov. to April on a lot of the water they inhabit. Add the closed seasons in a lot of those waters till May or June and areas where there is no closed season, have water too hot to fish for them for 3 months in the summer. Finding a place to legally catch one is only part of the challenge. Other factors are, family emergencies, boat break downs, work schedules and lake and border closures can make it more challenging.

I have been fishing for the mighty muskie for more than 60 years. At the beginning of every year, I put that on the top of my to do list. Every year I come up short. If you miss either of the first two months, you are already out of the game. If you live up north, you are already out since ice will be covering your waters and then have the closed seasons to contend with. In the south you might be able to fish in Jan, and Feb. but come June to mid Sept. or Oct. the waters are above 80 degrees. This is my story of how I managed to accomplish this task.

My home water is Lake Kinkaid in southern Illinois. A beautiful lake of 2600 or so acres sitting in the Shawnee National Forest. I am also a full time guide on this lake for the many species of fish that inhabit the lake. The Muskie is one of those species.

January of 2021, was a very mild weather month. I caught 7 muskies in this month on the best days. Being retired and having the time to choose my days and hours on those days is a big help. My client schedule did not start till March.....

February 1, I had to break ice in the two areas I wanted to concentrate my efforts. I managed a nice fat 40 inch muskie in the same place I caught a 40 the day before. It's always a great feeling to get that first fish early in the month. Feb 2nd brought in the polar vortex and air temps dropped to 0. Ice covered the lake till March 1, I dodged the bullet and succeeded in by Feb fish.

March brought a full schedule of guided trips. I don't fish when I have clients so finding time to fish for myself can be a challenge in itself. I did manage to catch a few in March with a 38 inch muskie as my largest this month.

April was also a busy month with guided trips, family obligations and a lot of cold fronts. I did manage a 32 inch muskie in one of the better months.

May was another month loaded with guided trips. Many of my clients caught their personal best in this month but I only managed a 30 inch fish this month. Still, I continue my quest with 5 months with a muskie. Only 7 more to go.

June is a tough month because the water temps will exceed 80 degrees by the second week, A cooler spring kept the temperatures below 80 for two weeks. With guided trips the first week, I got a break when a client only wanted a 1/2 day trip. I took advantage of that 1/2 day to put a 39 inch muskie in the net. Six months in and 6 months with at least 3 muskie. I had been having motors problems in the second week of this month and took it in to get it resolved. In the shop for most of the next 7

weeks I was told parts were the issue. These next 2 to 3 months are the hardest How am I going to pull this off with a boat? Our Shawnee Muskie Hunters had a week on Green Bay the second week of July. I was invited to fish with another member in his boat for the week. I wish I could say I got my July fish here but only pike came to the net for me. My brother wanted to fish Lake St.Clair for a few days and I told him I was game but I did not have my boat back. I made a call to a good friend, Frank Beels, and told him of our intentions to fish Lake St.Clair July 31 and August 1 and ask if he was available for those dates. He said he was open and we made arrangements to fish with him on July 31. With the border still closed, we knew it would not be easy with Michigan waters our only option, July 31st, I caught 4 fish from his boat. July in the books. August 1st we again were on Lake St. Clair. This day proved that weather has a big impact on muskie fishing. We fished most of the day going from area to area using about every bait and trick that we could think of, Late in the day I caught a 41 inch muskie. It happened to be the only one I caught that day but August was in the books. Now what to do about Sept. I had my boat back and biding my time waiting for the water to cool Would it cool down before the end of Sept? A luck would have it and I do mean luck in getting this far on my quest. The water temp dropped below 80. It was 78 and I was trying for some of the hard to catch walleyes that live in the lake when a nice fat 48 inch muskie decided to come to the net. No matter what the rest of the week had in store for me, month number 9 was in the books, only 3 months left. October was another month full of guided trips. I managed to catch a 34 inch muskie to pout Oct. in the books. I now had another setback. My motor quit on me and I had to use my kicker motor for my last 7 guided trips. Having it checked out, I was told it was toast, a piston had blown apart. Not good with two months to go. The dealer finally found me a replacement but not of the brand I had. He could not get it in before Thanksgiving, not what I wanted to hear. Nov. came and I was again and bound. I had a client call and wanted to know if I was available to fish out of his boat to teach him how to use his new electronics and learn boat control. I told him I would under one condition, I do not want paid and that I will be fishing with him for the two day. He agreed. I caught three muskie and Nov. was in the books. Dec. came in any my boat was in the shop to have new motor installed. Two weeks went by and no boat. I got the call to pick it up on the 18th. It took me the rest of that day to get it ready to fish out of. Monday morning, I took the boat out to break in the new motor and try for the Dec. Muskie. I lost the first one around noon on the 20th, I not a good feeling to have a mid 30 inch muskie get off only a foot or so from the net. At 2 pm I caught a 30 inch muskie. Dec in the books. On the 21st I had a long time fishing partner and friend in the boat. That day I added 2 more muskies to Dec to end the month.

The quest was complete. At let 1 muskie in the 12 calendars months of the same year. I had a lot of luck and the stars and moon were aligned just right to accomplish it. Will I ever do it again is not really up to me. It took me 60 years to do it but I will put it on my list every year.

Editor note: Thanks Walt for sharing this fantastic experience.