

Outdoors



OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO SPORTSMEN'S ALLIANCE



Inside this issue...

- **Kids and The Outdoors**

See page 3

- **NOSA News**

See page 4-5

- **Members in the Field**

See page 6

Icing Lake Trout

By Keegan Engstrom



Keegan Engstrom lands a nice Lake Superior Lake Trout

The depths of the winter season are upon us in northern Ontario. While this winter has been milder than past winters, the once fluid bodies of water are now covered in a blanket of ice. Congruent with the snow crested water bodies is the arrival of one of my favourite winter activities, ice fishing for lake trout. Ice fishing for these hard fighting fish can make for a very exciting day on the ice. Thanks to the lobby efforts of NOSA, when the calendar flipped to 2023, winter lake trout season opened in most FMZ's in the Northwest and anglers like me began to embark on the search for deep waters that lake trout call home.

These fish are creatures of the deep, residing in 40-100+ feet of water. This can offer a unique experience when you are kilometers from shore in the middle of the frozen expanses such as Lake Superior. When out there, you feel like a speck of

darkness in the middle of a white landscape. Lake trout are an aggressive species and unlike most other species actively chase baits up and down the water column. When these fish strike the bait, they hit hard. Anglers should prepare for the drag-peeling runs and heavy head shakes these fish are known for. Lake trout can grow quite large, especially on bigger and deeper bodies of water. It's possible to catch trout well over 20lbs when fishing on these lakes. The allure of possibly hooking into one of these giants adds to the challenge of catching them. The lake trout from bigger lakes have a white or silver colouring and can be relatively fat. Some anglers affectionately call them "greasy", due to the fattier physique; however, their inland lake cousins are more sleek and have a beautiful darker silver, sometimes brown coloured pattern to them.

Although electronics are not necessary, they offer a major advantage to anglers. The ability to see the depth of water allows anglers to find the mid lake humps and structure that lake trout inhabit. I find electronics invaluable in fishing lake trout. They provide equal parts of excitement and frustration. There is nothing more exciting than marking a fish and playing the game of keep away. It's not uncommon to watch a lake trout chase your bait 40 feet up the water column and then hammer it. Trout often start screaming up the water column but when they reach your bait, they come to a dead stop. Then, dropping the lure back down past the fish can trigger a second chase. This is where electronics can be frustrating. When you see those marks chase your bait all over the screen and then suddenly disappear, you are locked in a game of "keep-away" throughout the day. While this game may provide jolts of adrenaline, it is often disheartening to watch the mark vanish into thin air without a trace of a hit.

Fishing for lake trout can be as simple as a minnow on a jig, or artificial baits such as spoons, tubes, and rattle baits. The lure of choice for most anglers, however, is the tube jig. The most used sizes of tubes are 4-6" and are available in white, chartreuse, silver, or blue. Jig flies, such as the ones made by Mighty Mitch and Jungle Joe Jig Flies, come in similar sizes and colours, and are just as effective. Active rip-jigging techniques are another popular strategy. More aggressive baits such as spoons, and rattle baits work well for more active fish. When using any artificial baits, heavier weights are better. The heavier baits more quickly reach the depths that lake trout inhabit and allow anglers to better feel the bites. Using both live and dead minnows is another option. Simple hook and sinker or jig and minnow combinations work well, especially if the trout are fickle. Laying larger dead minnows on, or near the bottom is the most common strategy when targeting the giant lake trout.

As with any outdoor activity make sure you dress accordingly and check ice conditions to make sure they are safe. The thrill of spending a day on top of the frozen deep water, far out from shore while wrangling these hard fighting fish is what makes targeting them such a blast. I wish all northwestern Ontario anglers the best of luck on their icy lake trout endeavours this winter.

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The importance of fur and trapping in a modern world



*Beauty and the beast!
Trapper Katie Ball and a wolf
she trapped off her line.*

*By Katie Ball, President of the Northwestern Fur
Trappers Association and NOSA Member*

Trapping has a very long history in Canada. In fact, it is regarded in many ways as the oldest industry in the nation. The founding of this great nation began with exploration to expand the fur trade, and the trapping lifestyle is still very much a significant part of rural living in Canada. Here in Ontario, the fur management industry is a significant economic driver for many northern residents and first nations peoples. Income derived from trapping may supplement seasonal employment through the winter months. As well, can provide additional food sources of wild game from furbearers and other animals hunted while trapping.

Canada's fur trade contributes nearly \$1 billion to the Canadian economy annually either directly through the act of trapping and selling furs or through associated industries and suppliers linked to fur management. The fur trade employs an estimated 60,000 Canadians full and part-time. Indirect supply and service sectors include food and equipment suppliers, veterinary and research services, marketing firms, business services, transportation, crafts, and design and retail sectors. From traps to clothing, from fur dressers to retailers there are countless ways that trapping contributes to the economy which would suffer greatly without it.

Another indirect benefit to furbearer management is the protection of infrastructure such as roads, bridges, dykes, and ditches from damage due to overpopulations of beavers and muskrats. Every year millions are spent repairing infrastructure such as flooded roads, plugged culverts, damage to hydro lines due to downed trees etc... Crop and livestock damage can be mitigated by careful control of species such as raccoons, and canine predators. Healthy ungulate populations such as moose and deer can be maintained through predator management. This helps to ensure plenty of hunting opportunities which contributes billions of dollars annually through hunting tourism, license sales and associated costs of hunting activities.

Recently fur garments and accessories have become more visible in communities across the north and throughout Canada. Much of this can be attributed to a shift in perception of fur and its benefits amongst people looking for more natural, and eco-friendly products. Companies such as Canada Goose had huge success with fur trimmed parkas for many years. Although they bowed to the pressures of anti fur influence there are many more similar companies producing similar garments and innovating new products using fur. TV, movies, and social media have created and interest in trapping and the way of life many trappers enjoy. Although, most of these people may never be able to be trappers due to their living situations, owning a piece of fur allows them to remain connected to what they see on tv and enjoy the warmth and beauty of fur.

A rekindled interest in our past, as well as self-sufficiency, living off the land and a simplistic lifestyle have had positive impact on the increasing numbers of trappers as well as interest in furs. Through proper education and promotion of wild fur as a renewable resource using conscientious management practices the demand for fur is ever increasing. There are very few furriers today compared to a generation ago, years of misinformation and anti fur protests led to a decline in sales and businesses. However, more and more people such as I, skilled craftspeople and outdoor enthusiasts are keeping the tradition alive providing access to this beautiful, warm and sustainable medium.

With all this renewed interest in fur and our outdoor heritage and passion, why wouldn't you wear fur proudly?! Fur and trapping are not only relevant these days, but a necessity.

Proud to be a trapper - Take a kid trapping.

*Katie Ball poses
with a beautiful
custom fur garment*



Photo Courtesy of K. Ball - Silver Cedar Studio

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Kids and The Outdoors

By Rich Brochu, NOSA Member



Emerson Clark age 5, hoists a fine catch of fresh perch!

As a mental health professional, I'd like to acknowledge the importance that the outdoors can play in a young person's life. Despite all of today's distractions and worries, it's great to know we can rely on the outdoors to refresh our outlook on life and get a reprieve from the world around us. Kids need this outlet and will benefit greatly from our effort to help them connect with nature. I'd like to call these moments natural highs that fill you with excitement and wonder. Teaching young people this early can help them avoid pitfalls in life when negative influences attempt to deter them from their goals.

As a Child and Youth Worker for many years, I recall taking kids out on field-trips with co-workers to pick berries, ice fish or just to simply make a fire and cook smokies. The act of doing something outdoors always left the youth in an uplifted frame of mind and it was clear that they appreciated the outing. With my own children, I did the same.... go for a walk/ride in the bush bird hunting, stop and make a fire and cook a few hot dogs for lunch. So simple but very rewarding. The forest offers kids so many opportunities to explore and be aware of nature and its simplicities.

Fast forward to today's world and these simplicities are just as important. Getting kids involved is key to a healthy upbringing and is a great outlet for some of today's not so positive distractions. In today's world cell phones have become a crutch for many. Everyone pretty much everywhere is stuck to their phone. Some may call it a good distraction, but the human connection often is missing. Having kids and adults put their phones down for a bit to enjoy nature may have a positive benefit that is priceless. Kids who spend time with their parents enjoying outdoor activities will undoubtedly have a greater bond and connection. In my opinion it is something to strive for.

Two important aspects to consider in getting kids involved is comfort and safety. Nobody likes being out ice fishing when it's freezing or being out in the bush when mosquitoes have you 'on the menu. Some preparedness is important. Going over safety rules and expectations helps let everyone know what to expect. Packing warm clothing and spare mitts or hat during a winter outing or bug spray on those long summer days would be important. Anytime is a good time for an adventure in my book. Kids will love you for it and they will benefit from the comradery and most importantly memories that will last a lifetime. Often, I hear my kids (who are now adults) remind me of the adventures we enjoyed in their childhood. Those are moments I often think of and smile when I see other parents doing the same with their kids. My thoughts are..." they're going to love you for it."

Winter months can be long but there are many activities that can be done with kids to get their imaginations going. Ice fishing at Black Bay - like Emerson in the picture above in a heated ice shack, is something special for any kid never mind the adults...Snowshoeing, skiing or just going out in the bush for an adventure creates memories that help kids stay grounded and engaged. Kids that stay engaged in activities that bring them natural highs are more apt to return to those activities because they have brought them so much joy and inner peace. As I look at our circle of friends, I see kids who are now adults still going out in the bush, fishing, hunting, camping and enjoying what was instilled in them at a young age. That defines the true meaning of success and the hope that those lessons can be passed down to their children.



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NOSA adds voice to opposition of Bill C21

In December of 2022, NOSA Executive Director John Kaplanis sent a scathing letter to Thunder Bay’s two local MP’s (Patty Hajdu and Marcus Powlowski), basically accusing the Liberals of lying to law abiding firearms owners. Although it is no secret that a Liberal platform has always included some form of intent to restrict and control firearms ownership in Canada, Hajdu and Powlowski did previously go on record to claim that law abiding hunters would not be targeted by any Liberal plans to target gun violence in Canada. History now has shown, this was a lie. In the latter part of 2022 Bill C-21, which was originally a plan to ban hand guns in Canada, had morphed into something bigger – as the Liberals attempted to make sweeping changes to firearms laws that would have overnight made criminals out of millions of law abiding hunting rifle owners.

The Liberals penned two major amendments to the Bill, to claim to target “military style” firearms. However, this was an ill attempted gun grab that included everything from wooden stock shotguns to bolt action rifles. ALL OF WHICH WERE LEGAL TO OWN AND USE FOR HUNTING before the Liberals penned the amendments. Herein lies the single reason that millions of Canadian hunters, farmers, trappers rose up in recent months to voice opposition to the amendments contained in the Bill.

What the Liberals failed to explain to Canadians, is that there are already laws and protections in place that ban the ownership of military grade firearms and the use of magazine capacities that exceed five bullets. So they instead went after the “style” of various other firearms in order to lump them in all under the heading of “Restricted or Prohibited” rifles. In other words, any semi-auto rifle that had a black stock and looked a bit like a military rifle, would become illegal to own, even though by definition, it operated no differently than a similar actioned wooden stock semi-auto hunting rifle. Hence, hunting rifles of hundreds of models and types became included in this completely useless Liberal firearm grab.

Why is NOSA calling the Liberal gun grab useless? Because it doesn’t



THIS MONTH’S NEWS

do what the Liberals are claiming it will do – which is keep Canadians safe from firearms violence. Why won’t their Bill keep Canadians safe? Because **CRIMINALS DON’T CARE ABOUT LAWS AND REGULATIONS!** It really is that simple. When police Chiefs associations and police officers unions voice concern against Liberal gun laws, you can pretty much guarantee, the Liberals have got it wrong – AGAIN.

So, on Feb. 3 of 2023 – after mass opposition to the amendments contained in the Bill, the Liberals asked the Standing Committee on Public Safety and Nat’l Security to withdraw amendments G4 and G46 of Bill C21, thus eliminating all efforts to ban any of the rifles and shotguns that are currently legal to own in Canada. However, Bill C21 remains in place and with it will most certainly come future attempts by the Liberals to dial in a more targeted ban on “military style” firearms.

Firearms owners should beware. As the Liberals recognized the flaws in the amendments contained in the original Bill, they offered firearms owners a compromise by asking hunters to simply identify those guns on the list that are commonly used for hunting, so that the list could be edited thus protecting ownership of certain firearms. But gun owners recognized this as the divisive tactic that it was, and they told Liberal MP’s that they would not pick and choose which guns should or shouldn’t be listed in the ban. NOSA specifically iterated to MP Powlowski in a private meeting, that if there are guns on the list that were previously legal to own before the amendments were penned, then they should ALL be removed from the list and should remain legal to own – full stop.

For now, that is exactly what will happen. For now. Beware – this isn’t over and any gun owner must come to the eventual realization that the Liberal government under Justin Trudeau is intent on removing firearms from law abiding owners – more so than they seem intent on strengthening sentencing for gun related violent crimes. If the Liberals really wanted to reduce gun violence, they would go after the bad guys and leave law abiding duck hunters, trappers and farmers alone.

REGIONAL EVENTS

MARCH 3&4 – Northwestern Fur Trappers Association Convention CLE Thunder Bay

MARCH 18&19 – Nolalu Family Fishing Derby

MARCH 24 – North American Indigenous Games 3D team shoot at Lakehead Archers

MARCH 25 – NASP indoor 18m 3D tournament at Lakehead Archers

APRIL 11 – NASP 1st Annual indoor 3D tournament at Lakehead Archers Sponsored by NOSA

APRIL 14 – NOSA members fundraising dinner – Thunder Bay

JUNE – NOSA/D&R sponsored Rubber Boot 3D tournament Lakehead Archers

JUNE 17 – Dryden District Conservation Club 3D Archery shoot – Dryden

JULY 8 – Angler Young Angler tournament Thunder Bay

The Northwestern Ontario Sportsmen’s Alliance wishes to thank Newmont Musselwhite Mine for their generous support and sponsorship of NOSA’s conservation objectives in 2023.

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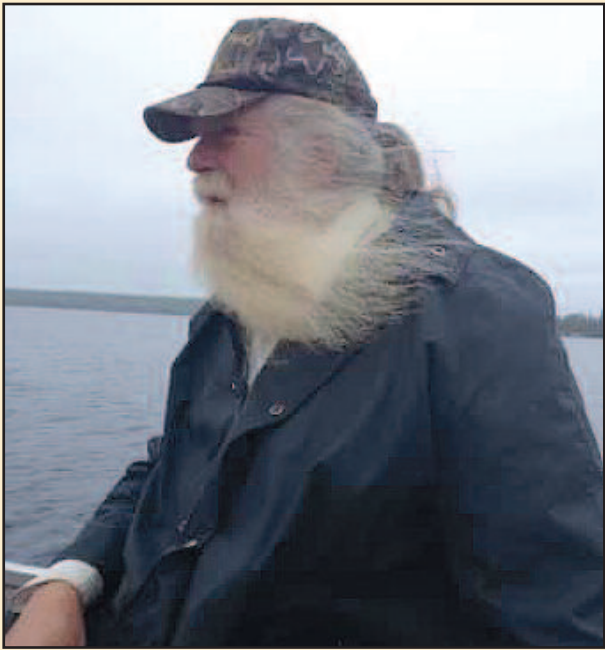
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NOSA Recognizes Passing of Northern Trapping Icon, Mr. Murray Monk

By John Kaplanis,
Executive Director/NOSA



On behalf of the entire membership and board of Directors of the Northwestern Ontario Sportsmen's Alliance, we are all saddened by the recent passing of a legendary icon of the north, Mr. Murray Monk.

Murray Monk was and will continue to be a household name among the trapping community in Ontario. But he was also a mentor and inspirational voice to those of us who strived to be the next leaders among the outdoors, who came along after he'd already done so much to advocate for our northern lifestyle, and hunting and fishing and trapping heritage.

Among many of Murray's most celebrated accomplishments is without question the role and influence he played in the founding of the Ontario Fur Managers Federation (OFMF) as he was a key advocate and negotiator for the business relationship between the OFMF and the Ontario Government. And that strong business relationship still exists today.

Murray also encouraged and fostered growth in the trapping community especially among the next generations of youth and adults who were new to this lifestyle. He insisted that the "old boys" club mentality among our outdoor board rooms be replaced and reshaped with new and youthful faces that included women as part of critical succession planning.

Murray lived a life outdoors that most of us only dream of. He was the last of those career trappers who quite literally lived off the land. He was the stuff of legend. Although an outspoken and imposing figure, he was also a most gentle soul with a kind heart and an incredible sense of humour always.

Our sincerest condolences to his family, his loving wife Becky and his two sons Nathan and Luke. Murray will be missed, but his contributions and his inspiration to the outdoor community of hunters, trappers and fishers will never be forgotten.

NOSA to offer FREE Membership and Renewals!

NOSA is offering Free memberships to new members and free renewals to all existing members who visit the NOSA booth March 3 & 4 at the Trappers Convention to be held in the CLE Heritage Building.

Come see our representatives at our booth, sign up for your free membership and be eligible for prizes to be drawn that weekend! It's a win/win for you and for NOSA! We will also have cool NOSA swag for sale, hats and hoodies! Hope to see you then!



THIS MONTH'S NEWS

Fish Management Zone Council 6 and Council 9 Update for 2023

By John Hay, NOSA Director

I am encouraged to let you know that work on FMZ 6 and FMZ9 has been re-initiated post covid. While there were some delays with government folks who had some change in roles due to various staffing changes and scheduling. We are now meeting face-to-face.

This a departure from the less effective video-conference style meeting of the COVID era. There will some better sense of urgency as new plans and possible new regulations are developed and presented to the ministry and eventually out for public comment.

FMZ 6 has met in January with a start up meeting and will be followed with additional meetings with a better frequency. FMZ 6 will begin by addressing a fisheries management plan with options for walleye management in the zone.

Walleye was deferred to status quo in the last iteration of the FMZ 6 Fish management plan to collect additional population data throughout the Zone for walleye.

That information is in hand and will be used to facilitate debate, along with angler opportunity and satisfaction and social economic impacts of this im-

portant fishery.

FMZ 9 will be meeting in late February 2023 with the same urgency. These meetings are expected to be face-to-face meetings as well and will use a similar process as FMZ 6.

Additionally, it was recommended that a working group under FMZ 9 be struck to provide government with a specific fish management for Black Bay on Lake Superior. This recommendation has been accepted. The working group has been populated and its recommendations will be submitted to FMZ 9 Council as part of its package of recommendations. Both FMZ 9 and the Working Group will work separately but concurrently.

FMZ and outdoors community Recent Loss:

I am saddened to inform you of the passing of Phil McGuire. Phil was an active on both FMZ 6 and FMZ 9 and always contributed to both groups with passion and energy. His presence will be missed.

Northwestern Ontario Sportsmen's Alliance Celebrates 25 Years



This year marks the 25th anniversary of the founding of the Northwestern Ontario Sportsmen's Alliance (NOSA). In 1998 our grassroots based organization began as a small upstart group that was not happy with how other provincial hunting and angling organizations were representing us here in the northwest. A small handful of likeminded hunters and sport anglers came together to form a board of directors to flesh out a plan to incorporate and grow a membership based out of Thunder Bay and the surrounding region, to hear and voice their concerns on common outdoor related concerns and interests.

One of the key factors that drove the creation of NOSA was an effort to reduce walleye catch limits from 6 fish to 4 fish limit, with absolutely no science to support the change! Also at the time, a growing threat to the spring bear hunt, in the form of well-funded anti-hunting elements, spurred NOSA to dig in for a political fight. Unfortunately, we were small and lacked the influence and funding to combat these things in the short term. However, we didn't back down. We

grew our membership base to represent over 5000 people through individual, family, and association memberships. And we remained steadfast in our effort to continue to fight for the north to represent hunters, anglers and trappers to push for common sense, science-based wildlife management and to keep political interests from hijacking our traditions and pastimes.

Since then, we have been influential in the decision to return the spring bear hunt to Ontario, and we are seated now at the table on many government committees and councils where our representatives and members can be part of the decision making processes to maintain and improve our hunting, fishing and trapping experiences. NOSA is politically active and our voice advocates for sound wildlife management at the provincial level, but we are also highly active at defending your firearms rights at the federal level. As you know, this has become a key battle front for hunters, farmers, trappers, and sport shooters, as the Liberal agenda of the current federal government continues to force an attack on law-abiding gun owners.

NOSA wishes to thank our members and especially our local and regional business supporters and sponsors for sticking with us, to make sure we have remained on the front lines to provide a voice for northern hunters, anglers, and trappers! Without their support we could not have done it for the past 25 years! And with that continued support, we look forward to celebrating with them again after the next 25 years. Because of them, NOSA is here to stay! Thank you!



Samantha Neureuther
*with a limit of
Black Bay perch
at Bear
Trak Outfitters*

Easy Access Ice Fishing Hot Spots

*By Samantha Neureuther,
NOSA Member*

Another ice fishing season is upon us and what a late start it has been this year with mild temps this January. Now with the cold weather coming back it will tighten the ice up and hopefully reduce the slush. Here are some well-known easily accessible “walk-on” spots to try ice fishing if you don’t have a snow machine or you’re simply looking to take the kids out for a fun outdoor excursion on foot or snow shoes! NOTE - Be sure to check ice conditions and fishing regulations before you head on out!

Lac Des Mille Lac - Walleye, Perch, Northern Pike

There are a few easily accessible spots on Lac Des Mille Lac. The closest from Thunder Bay is through Sawmill Bay Road off Highway 11/17 W at Shacks Landing. You will need to pay an access fee but will have full access to the ice road via your vehicle. Trucks are preferred but if you check ice conditions or give “Shacks Landing” a call ahead of time they can let you know the current ice and ice road conditions. There are many ice shacks off the road all the way out to coffin island where “Sugar Shack Ice Rentals” is usually located. Sugar Shacks ice rentals has even added a luxury RV ice hut rental to his fleet of shacks.

If fishing off the road, make sure to not drill holes right next to someone’s ice shack as it could flood it and cause other problems. Pick a spot well off the road and not directly on it or right next to it. There is a few other access points on the other end of the lake through Pine Point Road further down Highway 11/17. Open Bay Lodge or Pine Point Resort; You will need to pay a parking fee but can easily walk out to fish. Set up around nearby islands which offer a good structure and deeper water. This part of the lake is a lot deeper and you’ll be fishing bottom anywhere from 10 to 30 ft for Walleye, Perch, and Northern Pike. Call the resorts ahead of time for ice conditions and to make sure parking is available. The Walleye love to eat the sucker minnows here, set them up on treble hooks on set lines. Any jighead tipped with medium to large minnows works as well.

Black Bay Bear Track Outfitters - Perch

Down Highway 11/17 E just over 60km in Dorion is Bear Trak Outfitters, one of the best spots for Lake Superior Perch and Jumbo Perch in our area. Bear Trak Outfitters rent daily ice hut rentals provided by owner

Corey Hayward and family. The cost to rent is \$150 plus \$25 if you’re looking for a shuttle. His crew can take you by shuttle and snow machine directly to the ice hut. We had rented one this winter and it was worth every penny.

The limit of perch is 25 per person and they also taste delicious for a fish fry. We had rented one through Bear Trak this January, and the Perch fishing was fantastic. Corey had taken us by snowmachine at 8 am and we had until 530pm to fish the rest of the day. We picked up our snacks from Dorion Co Op and their delicious homemade shepherd’s pie that was heated directly in the wood stove. We had action on our flashers the entire day and caught about 25 perch. Use flashy spoons tipped with minnows, or worms, and jigs tipped with a minnow or worm!

Whitefish Lake Walleye - Perch, Northern Pike

Travelling off Highway 588 in Stanley then Cedar Sites Road, Whitefish is easily accessible straight from the main public boat launch which is usually plowed during the winter. You can drive right to load up your gear and walk right out. Areas off weed beds are the best and straight out near the islands in front of the launch. The lake is shallower, and most anglers fish around 5 to 10ft of water. Use jigs tipped with medium to large minnows or suckers on set lines. The Perch love worms here too!

Pass Lake Splake - Perch, Northern Pike

Heading on Highway 11/17 E from Thunder Bay a little over 30km will take you to Pass Lake Rd then to Pass Lake about 7km down the road. The target species is Splake and Perch. The lake is very small so fish the structure near the rock point areas and anywhere from 7 to 20 ft. Fishing with worms and smaller minnows on jigs and spoons works best here. While in the area take a drive further down to the Silver Islet General store or a quick hike up to the “Sea Lion”, Silver Islets best attractions.

Good luck on your ice fishing adventures this season and don’t forget to grab your bait at The Falls Bait and Tackle! And don’t forget to check ice conditions before venturing out! Always remember safety first!

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Members In The Field



Bear Trak Outfitters guide Cody Kuluski and a jumbo Lake Superior Perch



Greg Hankkio and his 2022 bull moose harvest



Dani Duquette with a fine northwestern Ontario whitetail



Carter Ukrainec with his 2022 whitetail Doe



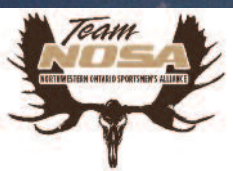
Dennis Ukrainec with 2022 whitetail buck



Sara Fisher and her big 2022 whitetail buck



4 year old Paisley Lynn Neureuther iced this chunky laker



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