

Northwestern Ontario

FREE

# Outdoors



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OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO SPORTSMEN'S ALLIANCE



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# My Spring Fling!

By Amanda Lynn Mayhew

Personally I cannot wait to get my big game hunt on this early in the year. I have been hunting big game (moose, bear, deer) all together from August to December for as long as I can remember and with this new Spring Bear hunt pilot, it allows me to get out there earlier and enjoy a fresh freezer full of the most delicious wild game accessible to me instead of jamming all of my big game hunts into 4 months.

I had never experienced the spring bear hunt as I was going through a diagnosis of Graves' Disease (thyroid issues) back when the bear hunt was cancelled in 1999. Then, I had to gain control of my physical health in order to rely on myself in the bush especially on a solo hunt, or for if I had my then, young boys with me. Thus, fitness became a huge part of my life and turned me into the athlete I am today.

I thoroughly enjoy every aspect of the bear hunt from the set-up to the take down and the challenges in each season are different.

During the Spring Hunt the bears are fresh out of hibernation with little to no fat on them and they are hungry however, consuming heavy meals would be very hard on their digestive system so bears chew on vegetation for the first month and a half or so. Also, the weather is different, it's May - June so the weather isn't as hot and humid and you have a bit more time to pull that bear out of the bush after your harvest and cool the meat down. In the fall hunt, I tend to get up north for opening day and in August if you are going to take a bear down, you better be ready to track, field dress, clean and get that meat cooled down as soon as possible.

Growing up in Manitouwadge we sure had our share of run ins with bears. I remember walking home after hours and meeting up with bears right on the street (a little scarier than walking in downtown Hamilton) and the population of bears have been increasing quickly. In the past 4 years, my parents experienced bears right in their yards, and hanging out at their neighbours, a dangerous situation for anyone. Bringing back the Spring Bear Hunt is important to me, my family and the communities that are affected by them in Northern Ontario, I hear too many stories of attacks and sightings and it is about time something is being done about this. Not only is this animal a favourite to consume at our dinner table and in the smoker but hunting bears plays an important role in conservation and controlling the population.

My tools of the trade for this adventure are my Weatherby Vanguard 30.06 passed down from my Grandfather Audziss and is also the same rifle my son harvested his first bear with after 7.5 hours in a tree stand at the age of 12 with one shot. I choose to aim and fire with Winchester Super X 180 grain Power-Point, for a precision shot every time. I clean up well with my Gerber Gear Vital Skin & Gut knife for an experienced or novice hunter, and if you drop it, it's easy to find in their hunters orange encased rubber grip handle. However, this year I will be participating in the Spring Bear Hunt with my compound bow manufactured by Bear Archery set up with with Easton Arrows and WASP Broadheads all available at Cabela's.

May can't come soon enough to be loaded up and heading north on highway 17 to Manitouwadge and off-roading in my Polaris ACE scouting for the best spot to set up for my spring fling, fill the freezer and possibly capture some great footage for a potential hunting show.

So get out there, purchase your bear tag for an adventure in the making, a memory forever, and a story to share.

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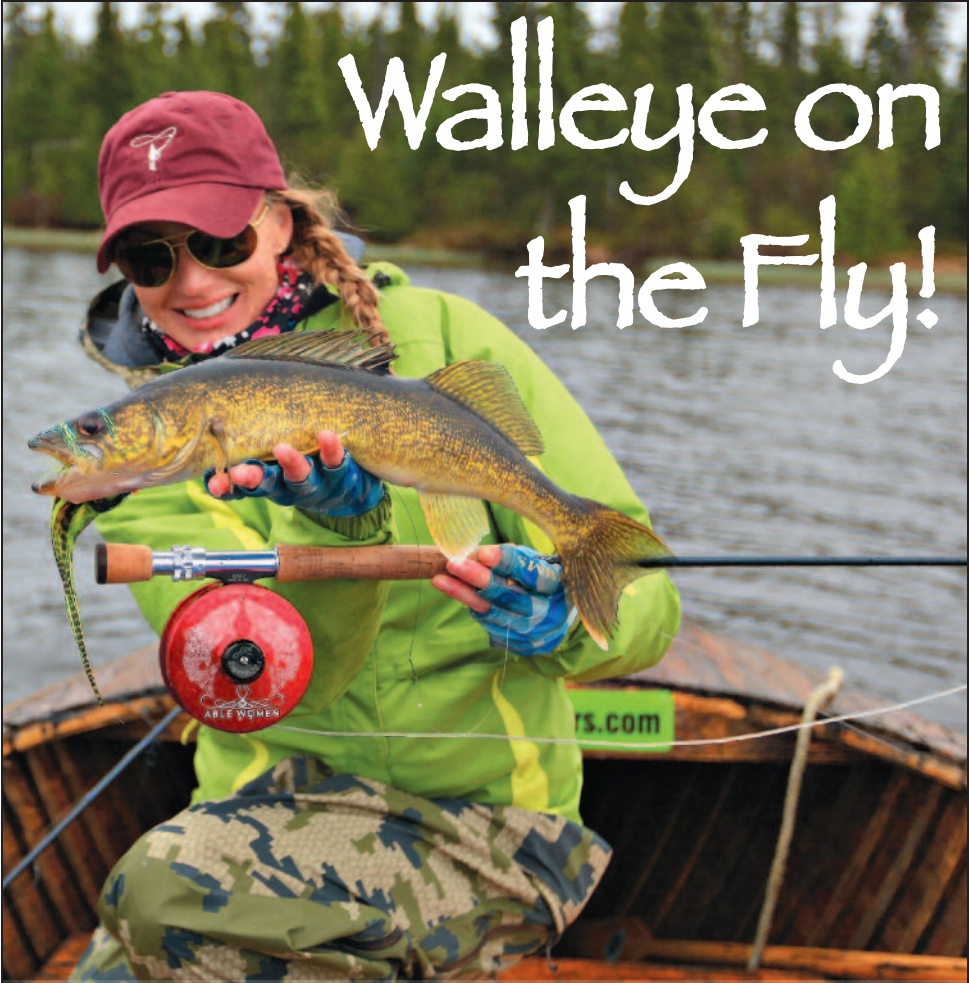
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# Walleye on the Fly!



# Myth or Fact?

By Rebekka Redd

The walleye! Whether it's called yellow pickerel, dore, or marble eyes, the hardy walleye is no doubt North America's most sought after fish. Anyone looking for a battle on his or her tackle will be disappointed! To quote Lefty Kreh: "No one ever got a heart attack fighting a walleye!"

This "twilight feeder" has specially designed eyes that allow them to see well during low light. They feed effectively any time of the day, but they are most successful during twilight, when the prey is still active but their ability to see is significantly less.

### Fooling the walleye:

The idea behind fly fishing is that we mimic the food that fish eat with some feathers, buck tale and a hook, (or close to that). Now, my most successful walleye fishing has been on the fly.

Walleye are apex predators that feed primarily on bait fish, such as ciscoes, shiners, sticklebacks, minnows, chubs, young perch and more. They also readily eat leaches, insect larvae, mayflies, damselflies, and dragonflies to crayfish. It's key to note the seasons and where the prey (food) is located in the water system. Doing a little research on your local river / lake and the bait fish to insects will help indicate what type of fly you will need to "match the hatch". For instance, if you understand that dace are plentiful in the area you are fishing – then you will want to use a streamer in the same color pattern, and size.

### The locations for walleye vary:

Walleye do very well in river systems and you can typically locate them by casting a streamer with in the water column behind a large structure like a big rock. I have great success in rivers, especially in the "transition periods" meaning late evening or early morning with my "go-to fly" a white and bright green clouser (2 to 3 inches in size). Using floating line, I cast it out across the current, with a medium to fast retrieve. In lakes you will want to target walleye just as you would when gear fishing, such as looking for structure and drop zones. For lakes you will need a 300 - 350 grain full sinking line, along with bait fish patterns, or if the water temps are warm, switch up to a leach pattern (leaches become more active in warmer water and walleye will feed extensively on them).

### Techniques for walleye on the fly:

Once you get a strike from a walleye, be sure to "strip set", a style of hook setting on a fish with a hard mouth. It's not hard to do, just takes a little practice, it's the opposite of "trout setting". With rod tip low, pull the fly line on the striking fish, then lift. Practice makes perfect, and it's a subtle yet effective technique versus the typical trout set (lifting the rod to set the hook). "Trout set" is used on soft-mouthed fish such as trout.

There is the odd time you will be able to dry fly fish for walleye – this is really fun! It takes some entomology knowledge (knowing the hatch), watching what's rising on the surface, and keenly observing for rising walleye in the transition times of day. If all goes well, dropping your dry fly in the feeding zone should get you a nice eye' on a dry!

### Walleye on the fly is a fact!

You can accomplish it with some simple walleye feeding knowledge, how to read the water of the river and lake you are on, and fishing in the transition periods. They may not fight like a sought after trophy fish, but it is a challenge and one to certainly accept on the fly rod!

### Gear Guide:

ROD: 6 to 7 weight 4 piece 9 foot fly rod – medium to fast action

REEL: Smooth drag fly reel matching the rod weight with a spare spool.

LINE: Weighted forward, floating line that matches the rod weight (ie: 7 weight rod, you will need 7 weight line) and full sinking line (300- 350 grain) – a spare spool is handy to switch out sinking to floating. Or you can buy 2 rods and 2 reels – one for floating and one for sinking – depending on your budget.

LEADER: I recommend 10 lb test toothy critter line from RIO lines, it's knotless, tapered with a wire bite tippet and comes with a snap for easy fly change out – Many times walleye fly's are eaten by pike! Prevent fly loss by using a specialized toothy critter leader.

FLY'S: I use 1 to 3 inch streamer bait fish patterns in a wide variety of color combinations such as: silver, white and bright green, black, blue, and chartreuse – as you explore fly's you will find what works. Don't forget leech and crayfish patterns in sizes 2 and 4. Also, an excellent fly to add to any fly box is the classic "woolly bugger". Where there are perch, use perch patterns! I have had walleye eat 8 inch perch pattern pike fly's – Walleye are not shy if they want it! Dry fly's that are used for trout are also good for walleye: Take note of the hatches in your area, and match them in fly's. A good dry fly box has a large variety of fly's for the seasons.

### ETHICS:

Let's talk quickly on ethics in fishing. Regardless of taking home walleye for dinner, fish are sentient beings and they deserve respect. In my humble opinion, keeping fish on a stringer for hours on end till you catch your limit is not ok. If you are fishing to keep, then ethically harvest your fish and store in a cooler, bucket, etc. Another practice I have seen is keeping walleye dangling on a stringer till a bigger one is caught – and then switched out. No matter how "hardy" walleye may seem, that released fish is exhausted, probably has gill damage, and it likely won't live.



# Catch and Release Tips

By *Rebekka Redd*

Fishing and keeping fish for dinner is part of our world, and these days we have incredible fish finding technology that allows us to stalk and catch fish like never before. Over fishing can take a toll on our fish populations, but we can do our part by practicing catch and release – but even catch & release can be harmful to the fish.

Some key tips for successful C&R:

#1 : Keep your fingers out of the gills, the filaments within the gills are very sensitive and can easily be injured. This is why fish that are kept on a rope type stringer will stress and die quickly when kept in this manner, therefore do not attempt to “trade” up on your limit by releasing fish that have been put on to a rope or chain stringer. This does not fit the definition of “catch and release”!

#2: Pinch the barb on your hooks. A barbless hook is easily removed from the mouth, causing less damage, meaning it’s better for the fish and if the hook ever lands into human skin, it’ll be easy to remove! Contrary to popular belief: Barbless hooks actually hook a fish easier then with a barb.

#3: Have the camera ready before taking the fish out of the water.

#4: Wet your hands.

Most fish have a delicate protective “slimy” coating that when removed by dry hands, a towel, or the flopping around on the carpeted boat floor, can later on summon infection in the fishes skin and attract predators. Wet your hands in water before handling your fish that you plan to release, and make sure they are clean and free of sunblock, etc. Never pull your fish up on land to roll around in the sand and rocks.

#5: If possible, keep your fish in the water and practice the “no touch” release – remove hook with pliers/ forceps while it’s next to boat. Easy.

#6: Land your fish quickly.

Try to land your fish as quickly as possible and don’t play it till exhaustion. This is particularly important when fishing in warmer water temps. Shorten fight times to increase survival because a fish angled to exhaustion is more vulnerable to predators such as birds of prey, and other fish.

#7: Don’t keep a fish out of water any longer than you can hold your breath after a run. Your fish just fought hard on the end of your line, then it’s taken out of the water. Think about how hard it is to hold your breath after you run.



#8: Revive your fish before releasing. Never throw “chuck” your fish back to the water, instead take a couple minutes to hold the fish in the water, cradle it and move it forward to help get oxygen flowing into gills – the fish will swim away when ready.

#9: If using a net, it should be soft rubber or coated mesh net.

#10: Never lift a fish that you intend to release by the jaw. Fish live in a near zero gravity world and holding a big hefty walleye with or any other fish vertically causes harm to the jaw. It’s all too common amongst pro bass anglers. Instead: Lift your fish from the water horizontally by hand under around tail and the other cradling the underbelly. Massive fish should not be taken out of the water to flop around in the boat or river side rocks. Instead, keep in rubber net/ rubber long “cradle net” to remove hook and then release. If a “grip and grin “ photo is a must, then prepare the proper holding methods while fish is in the water – wait till camera is ready. Walleye are normally really easy to hold and “puff up” and are still for a quick photo. I can easily hold a big walleye with one hand around tail and the other under the belly.

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## THIS MONTH'S NEWS

# NOSA and D&R to Co-Sponsor 3D Archery Shoot



On June 4 and 5 the NOSA/D&R Sporting Goods 3D Rubber Boot Shoot will be held at the Lakehead Archery Club shooting facility on Vibert Road. There will be plenty of prizes for various categories and ages plus BBQ lunch items are available for sale on both days of the event. For full details visit [LakeheadArchers.com](http://LakeheadArchers.com) or find them on their facebook page. Information will also be posted at D&R Sporting Goods.

# NOSA Sportsman and Sportswoman of the Year Awards handed out

During the 19th Annual NOSA Fundraising Dinner and Awards ceremony, the annual Sportsman and Sportswoman awards were announced by Exec. Director John Kaplanis. These awards go to two individuals that are hand picked each year to accept the award which is given in recognition of exceptional effort to assist the Exec. Director with assisting in carrying out the objectives and goals of the organization.



The 2017 NOSA Sportsman of the Year Award went to Adrian Hagar. Adrian is the owner of D&R Sporting Goods and he always works co-operatively with John Kaplanis and the NOSA Board of Directors to make sure that our various events are well stocked with quality prizes for attendees and our other sponsors. Adrian always strives to give back to the clubs and organizations that work for us in our community. Adrian is also an active outdoorsman, a hunter and sport angler who understands the challenges we face as stakeholders.



The 2017 NOSA Sportswoman of the Year award went to Kirsti Harris. Kirsti is new to the organization however in the past year since her involvement, NOSA's social media profile has been highlighted extensively and she's coached John Kaplanis on how to become more active on social media also! But she is also active at events, volunteering her time often to assist in sharing of the work load among the other board members. Kirsti is well known in the outdoor community in the region, via her own outdoor/social media presence.



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## THIS MONTH'S NEWS

# NOSA Sponsors Police Youth Marksmanship Award



NOSA Executive Director John Kaplanis attended the annual Parade and Awards presentations for the Thunder Bay Police Youth Corps where he presented the NOSA Marksmanship Award to youth Constable Tina Harri. The award is sponsored by NOSA. Also at the event, Kaplanis announced that NOSA will be providing a monetary donation to assist with equipment upgrades to the Police Youth Corps Marksmanship Program.

# NOSA and Trapping Partners build Duck nest boxes

By Katie Ball, President/NWFTA



The Northwestern Fur Trappers Assoc. (NWFTA) recently hosted a Duck Nest building project as part of their 2017 conservation objectives. NOSA and other partners pitched in to help with financial and volunteer assistance. The duck nest project was about giving back to our outdoors and the community.

Whether you are a hunter, hiker or someone who simply enjoys nature, this is just one way trappers help to ensure a healthy breeding population of mallard ducks is maintained for future generations. This project brought together a great combination of volunteers from NOSA, OFAH, OMNRF, Ducks Unlimited, D&R and the local trappers council.

Without all of these sponsors and volunteers, this family based event would have never come together like it did. When groups like this come together anything is possible.

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

The Northwestern Ontario Sportsmen's Alliance (NOSA) Annual General Membership meeting will be held June 21st at 7pm at the Westfort Prosvita Hall on Gore St. This meeting is for members only paid up in full. The meeting will address member concerns and interests as well as voting on proposed changes to by-laws and/or elections of Directors as required. Attendance prize for this year is members choice of a NOSA hoodie OR new Team NOSA Sponsor Jersey. For questions and inquiries about this meeting please contact NOSA Exec. Director John Kaplanis at 624-6143.

# TEAM NOSA



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# Bear Essentials

*By Rich Brochu, NOSA Member*

Spring bear hunting is now in its fourth year and has become a seasonal ritual for those who enjoy the excitement of harvesting bears across Ontario. Northern Ontario can offer great hunting opportunities and is an area many hunters visit to try their hand at harvesting a mature bruin. Now that spring is here, the bears will look for any edible food as well as breeding partners. Since bears are creatures of habit, they can easily be patterned by hunters. Knowing the essentials will help you become more successful in finding your quarry.

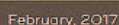
My favourite ways to hunt bears include the spot and stalk approach as well as the traditional bait and wait technique. Both have advantages and can offer a great hunting experience. The bait and wait approach has a better success rate as the animals will be easily conditioned to be drawn to the food when they are hungry. Another advantage is the ability to identify the sex of the animal, as well as whether it is a sow with cubs or not. Spot and stalk will offer a more challenging experience with more time needed to identify the bruins.

The materials needed for a bait and wait set up includes a trail camera, a barrel with chain for feed, a smaller bucket you can place high in a tree and a tree stand or ground blind to hunt from. The bait needed can include old bread, old donuts, deer feed, molasses, cookie dough, meat scraps, sweets or anything else you may feel bears would want to eat. Some hunters utilize popcorn as it is light to carry- and like humans ; buttered please.

Once you have these items, you will need to find a spot to set up. We have vast amounts of crown land to choose from, so check the Ministry of Natural Resource site to ensure your bait site is lawful and complies with new baiting regulations. Once you’ve decided where the site will be, you can place a bait barrel and secure it to a tree. Ensure you have a small opening in the barrel for the bruin to put his paw in to get at the food. Fill the barrel with bait and set up your camera and ground blind/tree stand at the appropriate distance. Place meat or fish scraps in a small bucket and hoist it high in a tree near the bait site. The smells of the meat/fish in the bucket will attract the bruins from a distance and the birds will not be able to steal the bait. Double check shooting lanes to ensure no obstacles are hindering your aim. I prefer thirty to forty yards depending on which firearm I choose to utilize. Regularly check on bait and replace as needed. The camera will help you pattern the bears coming in to feed and give you a time frame of when you should be sitting in your blind/tree stand.

The spot and stalk approach relies more on Mother Nature’s way of keeping the bruins full. River edges/swamps also provide them with skunk cabbage that they enjoy eating after a long hibernation. Spring time will find bears eating a lot of grass, grubs, ants and other feed they can find. The fact that they are looking for mates also has them moving around and offers a good opportunity of running into them. Old and newer cuts are good locations to start. Early morning and evening will offer the best opportunities of observing a bruin in the open. Spot and stalk type of hunting is exciting and challenging and worth a try. Sows with cubs are prohibited and illegal to hunt during the spring bear hunt. Get out and enjoy the vast wilderness we are so blessed to have.





Draft for Public Comment



# MNR to target use of live bait in Ontario

MNR is proposing significant changes to the acquisition, transport, storage and use of live bait in Ontario. Their Draft policy document is currently posted on the Ontario EBR for a 120 day comment period allowing comment by the public until the end of June: visit <http://www.ebr.gov.on.ca> and in the search engine simply type in words “live bait policy” to navigate to the proposed document. For additional assistance visit NOSA’s website at [www.teamnosa.com](http://www.teamnosa.com) for the complete listing of OMNRF links to this proposal.

Please take the time to review this document and submit your comments.

It is NOSA's opinion that the draft policy represents an ineffective and broad-brush solution for what is primarily a southern Ontario problem. NOSA believes that at least for Northern Ontario, we need to ask for the status quo on rules and regulations governing the use of live bait in northern Ontario.

Here are a few key sticking points from the Draft Policy:

- For purchased bait, anglers would be required to retain a receipt in their possession for two weeks to demonstrate that the bait was purchased within the respective BMZ within the previous two weeks.
- Anglers would be required to use or lawfully dispose of all commercially harvested bait (including leeches) within two weeks of purchase.
- Possession of bait in wilderness, nature reserve, natural environment, waterway and cultural heritage class provincial parks to be prohibited.
- Prohibitions on bait use and bait harvest in native Brook Trout lakes
- Resident anglers with a valid sport fishing licence will continue to be allowed to harvest their own bait, but will be restricted in the degree to which self-harvested bait can be moved.
- In northern Ontario, personally-harvested bait may be moved beyond the waterbody where it was caught, provided that the angler possesses the appropriate documentation allowing the overland transport and the bait stays within the BMZ where it was harvested. Documentation may be in the form of either a personal harvest licence or a personal log. (Note: Personal Harvest Licence and Personal Log are not defined, or discussed. Obviously, more paperwork/ record keeping and likely a new licence)
- Number of fish species that may be used as bait has been reduced.

Clearly this proposed bait policy is just another means to further restrict and burden sport anglers in Northern Ontario and it could easily affect many small businesses that rely on the bait industry to support sport angling and fishing tourism in Northern Ontario.

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In loving Memory of  
*Sandro Fragale*

1961-2017

*Sandro Fragale passed away Saturday May 13. He was an avid supporter of many conservation groups and clubs in Thunder Bay and region as the outdoors, hunting and fishing were perhaps his number one passion aside from his beloved family. NOSA was very fortunate to enjoy Sandro's guidance and support over many years. Sandro's passing is a loss that will be felt by many of us because he was such a strong "behind the scenes" supporter of what we all do. May he rest in peace*

