

**NORTHERN
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fishing facts

THE Freshwater Fishing Authority For The 90's

BIGGEST IN 26 YEARS!

**Mammoth
65 Pound
Musky!!**

**Prime Winter
Walleyes Can
Be Yours!**

**Ice Fishing For
Lunkers** see page 12

**Land Of The
Giant Trout**



WILEY MILLER



**No-Minnow
Crappie
Tactics**

Muskie anglers rejoice! There may still be a chance to catch a new World Record Musky! On October 16, 1988, musky history was made as a 65-pound monster was pulled from the Moon River basin of Ontario's Georgian Bay by Toronto angler Ken O'Brien.

Musky anglers rejoice! I wonder? Let's set the stage by referring back to a quote from Spence Petros' March, 1980 *Fishing Facts* article, "There Ain't No Justice In Musky Fishing": "Want to catch a big musky? Dull your hooks, kink your leaders (or better still don't use any), replace your new line with old, but most important don't even try for one . . . you might catch a record fish!"

In that article Spence had fun reporting about many big muskies that had been caught by anglers fishing for other species. Based on that article, plus many other stories I had heard and the happenings of the past couple of seasons, I'm beginning to wonder if his quote might become the rule rather than the exception!

In the June, 1985 issue of *Fishing Facts*, my article, "Monster of the Manitou," reported a 56-pound 11-oz. musky caught in 1984; and my article in the January, 1986 *Fishing Facts*, "Eagle Lake Giant Musky," told of the capture of a 55-pounder. In both cases these huge monsters were actually caught by anglers fishing for muskies! However, since that time such has not been the case with giant

Hartman's 61-pounder caught in November of 1964); the largest caught in 26 years (since Len Hartman's 65-pounder caught in November of 1962); the 8th (tie) largest musky EVER caught (legally and verified); the only 60-plus EVER for Georgian Bay; and only the 3rd EVER 60-plus from inland Ontario (and Canada) — the only one in the past 48 years (since Ed Waldons's 61-9 from Eagle Lake in 1940)! And yes, it was caught by a NON-MUSKY fishing angler. The monster fish is also a new Ontario and

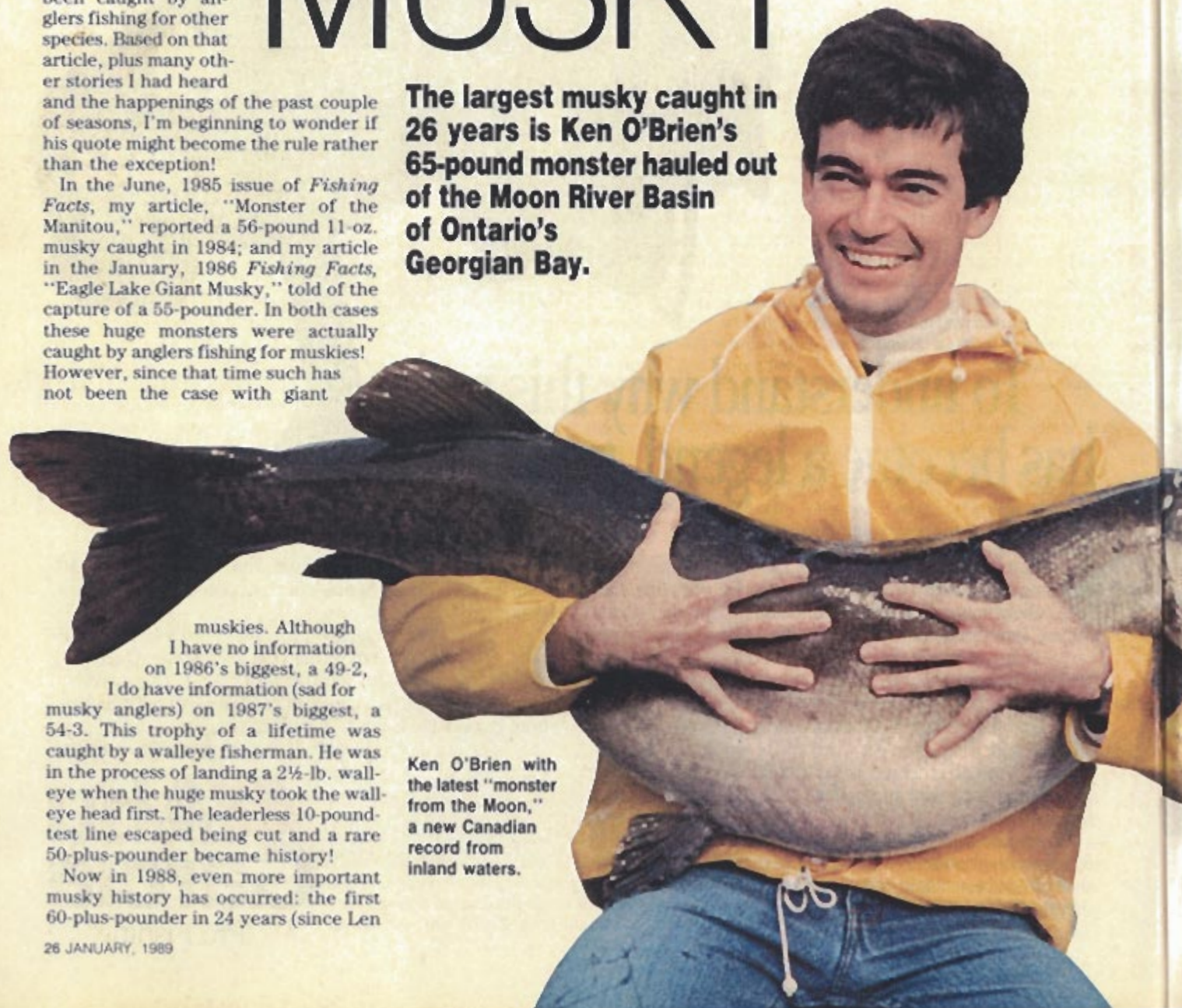
Canadian record.

Before we get into the facts of the 65-pounder, let's review the BIG MUSKY history of Georgian Bay's Moon River basin. In the past 25 years, the "Moon" has produced — on record — 21 muskies over 40 pounds; 3 of them over 50 and now 1 over 60! In talking with guides and anglers in the area I'm sure there have been other big muskies caught in years past, such as a 58-incher that was cut up and eaten! The first recorded 50-plus was a 51-pounder

MAMMOTH MUSKY

BY LARRY RAMSELL

The largest musky caught in 26 years is Ken O'Brien's 65-pound monster hauled out of the Moon River Basin of Ontario's Georgian Bay.



muskies. Although I have no information on 1986's biggest, a 49-2, I do have information (sad for musky anglers) on 1987's biggest, a 54-3. This trophy of a lifetime was caught by a walleye fisherman. He was in the process of landing a 2½-lb. walleye when the huge musky took the walleye head first. The leaderless 10-pound-test line escaped being cut and a rare 50-plus-pounder became history!

Now in 1988, even more important musky history has occurred: the first 60-plus-pounder in 24 years (since Len

Ken O'Brien with the latest "monster from the Moon," a new Canadian record from inland waters.

taken in 1963. In 1977, a 54-8½ was a musky angler's 1st legal (but he had at least been fishing for them for 8 years)! See "I Caught The Moon River Mauler" in August, 1978 *Fishing Facts*.

In 1981, Zeke Ishii went on his third ever musky fishing trip. Yes, he caught his 1st legal musky. It was a 55-pounder! The only saving grace for us diehard musky anglers is the fact that Zeke's guide was his brother-in-law, Gary Finkler, a seasoned veteran who frequently chased Moon River muskies.

When my "musky pipeline" alerted me to the capture of Ken O'Brien's 65-pounder within hours of the catch, I passed the information on to Spence Petros at *Fishing Facts*. He quickly hustled me off to Toronto to get the story: **Moon River 'Mothers Club' Gives Up One Of Their Fraternity**

As is always the case, truly BIG muskies are females. This 65-pound behemoth was aged at about 29 years using the cleithrum method (the boomerang-shaped "collar bone" at the back of the head under the gill plate) at the Royal Ontario Museum. This most accurate of aging processes was developed by Dr. John Casselman, of the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources.

Toronto accountant Ken O'Brien and his fishing partners Mark Airstone and Rob Yamamoto, plied the waters of the Moon on Saturday and came away empty. On Sunday they were "fishing for anything," and at 11:30 a.m. the 65-pounder was landed. Ken was trolling a 4-inch long countdown Rapala on a 4-inch wire leader tied to 8-pound-test Trilene line. Four split-shot were clamped on the line just above the leader. Some fish attractant had also been put on the lure. Ken related that he had considerable fishing experience on other parts of Georgian Bay, but was fairly inexperienced on the Moon.

MOON RIVER TROPHY MUSKY CHART			
YEAR	WEIGHT	YEAR	WEIGHT
1963	51 lb.	1980	45 lb.
1965	40 lb.	1980	40 lb. 2 oz.
1968	42 lb. 2 oz.	1981	55 lb.
1968	43 lb.	1982	46 lb.
1969	46 lb.	1983	41 lb. 15 oz.
1974	43 lb. 4 oz.	1983	41 lb.
1976	48 lb. 8 oz.	1984	40 lb. 2 oz.
1977	54 lb. 8½ oz.	1985	43 lb.
1977	41 lb. 8 oz.	1986	43 lb. 5 oz.
1979	57 lb.	1988	65 lb.
1979	41 lb. 8 oz.		

Upon hooking the goliath musky O'Brien thought he was snagged on the bottom, until the "bottom" started to move. After 15 minutes of battling the unseen lunker it finally surfaced. O'Brien still wasn't sure about what the near 5-foot fish was, because he had never before seen a live musky. I asked him about his trolling speed and he said; "I was going slow. In fact, all the other boats were passing me by." At any rate, the battle with the 65-pounder took about 25 minutes, apparently without much trouble. Ken was fortunate that one of his fishing partners had a gaff along (even if it was a light, 3-piece, screw-together type) which they used to land the fish. Rob first missed the fish with the gaff, then Mark gaffed it and had a heck of a time pulling it in, in spite of being a weightlifter.

The big "old" gal was probably reaching the end of her life span. I was told that she had only 2 of her big teeth left. Approximately 400 people gathered to see the MAMMOTH history-making fish when it was brought in. The huge fish was 56½ inches lying down (which is the proper way to measure them) and 58 inches hanging and stretching, which, unfortunately, is the way many to-be-released fish are measured.

Fellow musky anglers, there seems to be a message here — SLOW and DEEP! Len Hartman, in his *Fishing Facts* interview by Spence Petros in the February, 1986 article, "World Record Muskies," stated big muskies are DEEP. During my trips with Len on the St. Lawrence River and Ontario's Upper Manitou and Eagle Lake, he drummed into me repeatedly, SLOW and DEEP!

It is fervently hoped by this avid musky fisherman that the capture of this huge fish from the Moon River doesn't create another "Wabigoon," with thousands of anglers descending on a particular lake or area and killing hundreds of muskies. When Wabigoon Lake in northwest Ontario started producing numbers of trophy muskies in 1979 and 1980, the word got out and "HORDES" of anglers descended upon



Zeke Ishii and his 55-pound Moon River monster caught in 1981.

the lake. It has been conservatively estimated that over 200 muskies between 25 and 35 pounds were caught and killed between 1980 and 1982, not to mention 19 (on record — I'm sure there were more) from 35 to 51½ pounds. Wabigoon will take many, many years to recover from this onslaught, and we don't need the same thing happening to the "Moon"! Thirty, and yes, even some 40-pound fish MUST BE RELEASED if we are to have more 60-plus-pounders in the future! 🐟

Author Larry Ramsell is a highly-respected and skilled musky angler, and the leading musky historian in the world. He developed the world record program for the National Fresh Water Fishing Hall of Fame, is past president of Muskies Inc. International, and is also a representative of the International Game Fish Association. When we got the word about this giant fish, we knew nobody would check it out more carefully and honestly than Larry. Must reading for any musky angler is Ramsell's 420-page classic book: "A Compendium of Muskie Angling History." Book is available for \$20.00 plus \$2.00 postage from Larry Ramsell, Rt. 1, Box 229, Galesburg, IL 61401.



He said he figured his lure was running "about 15 to 20 feet down." When I asked him what depth water he was fishing he said he didn't know since he didn't have a depth finder.