

Becky O'Connor proudly displays her catch of a 33 ½" Muskie that she caught while on vacation in northern Wisconsin with her husband Terry. The Muskie is often considered by sport fishermen to be the pinnacle of North American game fish, it is the largest predatory fish in fresh water in this continent and the largest catch on record was 72 inches in length weighing in at 70 pounds.

This particular Muskie put up quite a fight and Becky had sore muscles later from the fight while reeling it in. Becky is wearing a Kevlar glove on her right hand to protect her from the razor sharp teeth and very rough gills of the Muskie. Kevlar is the material that the military uses in bullet resistant materials such as helmets issued to Marines and soldiers. The Muskie in addition to the sharpness of its teeth has strong jaws that it uses in a clamp and grind motion to kill its prey and extreme caution must be used to unhook this awesome predatory fish.

The fishing guide, John Carlson of Ross's Sport Shop of Phillips, Wisconsin, recalled one incident where a client disregarded his sage advice on how to handle a Muskie that he caught; the client unhooked the Muskie in the manner common to unhooking a largemouth bass by placing his thumb in the fish's mouth to unhook it without Kevlar gloves. The Muskie immediately bit him and made a laceration that went clear down to the bone, which resulted in a trip to the E.R. for sutures.

The Muskie deserves proper respect and this fine specimen was gently returned to the lake where it was caught. The minimum length to keep the Muskie in the lake where Becky O'Connor caught it was 40 inches.

The Muskie wasn't the only thing hooked that day as Becky is now an enthusiastic fisherwoman with two new rod and reels and many new lures to show for it. One rod and reel is dedicated to future Muskie fishing.