

Junior Angler of the Month — Meet Claira Bonin

"My sister and I are very competitive with each other – not just with fishing but many other things in life like games and sports – but it's all just good fun."

I first met Claira in the Shimano booth at the Toronto Sportsmen's Show about three years ago and, since that time, have watched her "fishing career" explode! Recently passing her Pleasure Boat Operator's test, this feisty 10-year-old is well on her way to becoming another famous Bonin on the water.



Living near Port Rowan, Claira is the youngest of three children in the Bonin family and sister to Averie Rose Bonin, host of her fishing show "Hooked" on Bell Fibe TV. Claira has joined Averie in one of the Hooked episodes and in a number of her YouTube videos. One of my favourite videos is of Claira and Averie having a pan-

fish competition called "Fall Panfish Major League Fishing Challenge!" where the loser had to buy ice cream for the winner. <https://youtu.be/NYQOPyrN1ko> Claira's fun and competition nature is really quite entertaining. "Claira has a lot of fun fishing with Averie and she provides a lot of comedic relief," say dad, Ryan.

"I don't remember how old I was when I first started but I've fished a lot and love when we get to keep the fish and eat them," says Claira, "My favour-



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ites are perch and walleye.” Clairra is a multi-species, multi-technique angler with a passion for panfish. “They’re plentiful and provide all-day action, when they’re biting,” she says, “I much prefer casting over trolling when I’m on the water although catching bigger fish while trolling can be thrilling when they hit”.

Ice fishing is a big favourite too and Lake Erie, when it freezes, can provide some great perch-fishing opportunities. With the lake so close to home, it’s nothing to pack up the gear and hit the ice for a couple of hours after school, on the weekends and on the days when she’s not playing hockey. Winter 2021 was a short season as the ice was not very reliable and the Bonin’s headed to more northern destinations for other ice fishing adventures.



Back home, she often fishes with neighbourhood friends and her cousin for panfish, bass and pike when they are in season. Her grandma is teaching her how to clean fish and Clairra says that pike are hard because they have so many bones. “You wouldn’t get much meat if I was cleaning a fish!” she laughs.

Clairra would like to explore new lakes and target new species like muskie. She’d like to try Hamilton Harbour for carp next year, for example. Her favourite

lures are wacky worms because “you can catch anything with those” and top-water fishing frogs “where the bass just explode out of the lily pads”. Clairra thinks biggest fish she has caught is a carp or salmon that was over 10 lbs. There are a lot of sheepshead in her area too and her sister was lucky enough to catch one over 10 pounds. “I need to learn how to find spots and areas that hold fish,”



Clairra has taken part in a few kids’ fishing derbies including her dad’s initiative “Fish-a-Thon for a Cure” which was started in 2009 to help raise funds for cancer research. She would like to try some bass tournaments in future “for the money” provided that dad will pay half of the entry fees! Her sister Averie started a kids’ fishing derby a couple of years ago but had to be put on hold in 2020 due to COVID-19.

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"What I would tell girls just getting started in fishing is to use worms," Clairra advises, "They catch the most fish. Starting with panfish instead of bigger species at first will help keep new anglers engaged. Get the hang of baiting the hook, holding the fishing and taking the hook out. You definitely don't want to learn how to fish by targeting species with teeth – I almost thumbed a fish before realizing it had teeth!"

Clairra has already started mentoring friends that don't fish often by showing them some of the tips and tricks she's learned along the way. She feels that she's been given a head's start in her own fishing education through the exposure she gets from Averie and her dad. "Like how many people get to fish every day and have an older sister with her own TV show and YouTube channel?" She thinks that she might like to have her own channel in the near future. "I'd also like to see more girls get involved in the sport as it's mostly boys right now."

What's in the future for young Miss Clairra? Perhaps a project with Averie and definitely more YouTube fishing videos. She's interested in getting some sort of job in the outdoors when she's older, like a Conservation Officer and would also like to learn how to hunt someday.

But, for now, fishing is fun and provides new learning opportunities every time she is on the water. "What I really like the best is fun fishing with my aunt and cousins and then going out for French fries and a swim at Bluff Bar", says Clairra.



Invasive Fish: The Asian Carp

Invasive Species are defined as “non-native species, whose introduction or spread negatively impacts native biodiversity, the economy and/or society, including human health” (Canadian Council on Invasive Species). Non-native species refers to any plants, animals and microorganisms that have been accidentally or deliberately introduced into areas beyond their normal range (Canadian Council on Invasive Species). Invasive species can be any living organism, from plants to birds to insects to fish. There are several species of invasive fish in Ontario.

When you hear the term “Asian Carp” this is actually referring to four different species of Asian Carp: the Bighead Carp, Silver Carp, Grass Carp and Black Carp. The Bighead and Silver Carp pose the biggest threat to Ontario’s waters. Bighead Carp are generally 2-4 kg in weight, but can grow up to 40kg. They have large heads, with no teeth and their eye sits below their mouth. They are usually dark grey with some darker markings. The Silver Carp is much smaller than the Bighead Carp, is lighter grey in colour with a white belly and its eye also sits below its mouth.



Bighead Carp (left) and Silver Carp (right)

Photos from Ontario.ca

Asian Carps were brought from Asia to North America around 1960. They are moving towards the Great Lakes and keeping them out of the Great Lakes is critical. If Asian Carps become established in Ontario waters, they are likely to cause devastating impacts to our native fish species by eating the food supply that our native fish species depend on. There are serious invasions of Asian Carp in the Illinois River and it is now expected that Asian Carp make up over 50% of the fish biomass in the river! They also reproduce rapidly and eat up to 20 percent of their body weight in a day. So that’s like if you as a human were 100 lbs and ate 20 lbs of food a day! Now that is a lot of food!

What can you do to help?

Ontario is working hard to keep Asian Carp out. Possessing any Asian Carp is illegal. The province has also partnered with the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters to spread awareness about invasive species in Ontario.

The best thing YOU can do is be a responsible angler. Don’t dump your live bait. Always empty your bait bucket on dry land. It’s illegal to dump live bait within 30 m of any body of water. Always check your bait! It’s your responsibility to know what is in your bait bucket. Learn to identify Asian Carps and know how to tell them apart from other Ontario species.

To learn more about Asian Carp, including some look-alikes, check out: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/asian-carps#section-5>

Storing Fishing Gear for the Winter

Late fall is usually the time that I begin to tuck away my spring/summer/fall fishing gear and get ready for winter fishing. I find it a relaxing and exciting activity as I organize my gear and bring out my gear for the winter.

There are certain things we can do to both take care of our gear and to keep it organized so that next season we will be ready-set-go! As you get older and more experienced, and if you are an avid and passionate fisher, you will find you will accumulate more gear, so learning to care for it now is important.

One thing that is important is to get your gear as dry as possible before storing it. I store my rods on a specific fishing rod rack in an area where I know they will not get bumped or banged. This also helps to keep them off the ground and away from any objects that can fall on them or crush them.



I keep my reels on my rods but make sure that the tension is released (the drag is loosened) and that any hooks or lures are removed. Some people take off their reels and check them out to make sure they are not in need of any service, but I tend to leave mine on the rods and cover them with a reel cover.



There are also rod covers that you can purchase that help to protect your fishing rods. Remember to store rods in a straight and vertical way, without bending at the tip. Check your rods to make sure the guides are in good shape and there is no breakage or broken parts. Some people store them in their garage, others prefer to store them in the warmth of the indoors.



With your reels, you will want to check them over to make sure there are no issues. This is also a time to grease the gears of your reel and oil the moving parts. Often the oil is included by the manufacturer when purchase the reel. If not, you will need to buy some at your local tackle shop, and it is not expensive. If you do not know how to do this, ask a knowledgeable adult to help you, research it on the internet, or ask where you buy the oil. Your local tackle shop can be a great resource.

With the line, some people will unspool their line, especially if it has fluorocarbon or monofilament portions, as these have a “memory”, and you may notice a coiling effect if the line is left on for a long

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period of time. If the line is several years old, you will want to put on a new line next season. You don't want it to break when you have a fish on!

However you choose to organize your equipment, if it is kept clean and dry, and you store it properly, it will last longer and be ready to go in the spring!

Organize your gear for storage however you wish. You can use a standard tackle box or some basic plastic Plano container boxes or purchase small bins or containers from a dollar store to organize your tackle (I have found some of these in their craft section). You can do this by type of tackle or style of fishing. Keeping all your gear in one area will ensure that you will know where things are, and it will be there and ready for you for next season. Keeping your tackle dry will prevent rust and mold and ensure everything is in good shape. This is also a good time to clean out the dirt that gets into your tackle box. Check any lures for damage and make sure they are placed properly in their boxes so they stay in good shape – some plastic or rubberized lures can change shape if not placed



properly during storage. I also organize my plastic baits and make sure their packages are sealed and old worn-out baits and damaged lures are thrown out.

One thing I like to have on hand is a few extra plastic Plano boxes to organize my tackle, and rather than buying new boxes, I keep my ice fishing lures in one of my older standard tackle boxes and simply transfer these to the plastic containers for the winter season.

Nets should be up off the floor, so they are protected. I keep mine hanging on a hook in the garage. It is also a time to look over the nets to make sure that they are not in need of repair. I also hang up my life jackets either in the garage or a closet, making sure they are dry, to prevent mold and mildew.

Any of my electronics (for those of you who have any fish finders or fish viewers), are kept indoors where so they do not freeze and are safe from theft. This goes for batteries as well. Another tip for those with fish finders or electronic gear with screens, is to find a good screen protector that can be replaced if scratched or damaged. These are similar to protectors for cell phones and can be ordered on-line.

I also take time to clean and organize items such as my measuring board as well as a separate tool bag I have for gear such as scissors, jaw grippers, plyers etc. However you choose to organize your equipment, if it is kept clean and dry, and you store it properly, it will last longer and be ready to go in the spring!



Fishing with Spoons

We will be featuring different types of lures in upcoming issues. In today's edition, we will be looking at the Spoon. Spoons have been around since the mid 1800's and no doubt are a very popular lure. Most likely, you could find some in your great-grandparents' tackle box, they've been around that long!



Spoons are oblong and are usually concave, made of metal and shaped like the bowl of a spoon. They are usually made of brass, copper or steel, but may also be lead, plastic or wood. Colours can range from simple silver and/or gold, to being brightly coloured on one side with the shiny metal surface on the opposite side. Some are smooth and others are dimpled. This type of lure works by reflecting light and moving in different ways in the water. They usually have a single hook or a treble hook with a ring on the opposite end to attach a barrel swivel with snap connector. This type of attachment allows the Spoon to move in the water in different ways, depending on its design.

Originally very simple, Spoons are now available in a variety shapes and sizes for targeting different types of fish. At first, these lures were only used to cast and retrieve, but over time have been modified and can be used to jig or troll. Spoons mimic the look of bait fish through the flashy shine they give in the water from the reflection of light on the lure. Depending on their size and shape, these lures can wobble in a variety of ways, some with a more erratic, darting motion, some vibrate, others move more smoothly. Thinner spoons tend to be used for trolling, while the heavier ones are more for casting and retrieving. You may also choose to fish with a heavier spoon in strong wind or current.

Spoons can be used any time of the year and work best for larger fish such as pike, muskie, walleye, salmon, trout, or bass. There are five different kinds of Spoons, depending on the type of fishing that you want to do: casting, trolling, weedless, jigging and the surface Spoon. Below are examples of each type – you will notice there are different shapes for each.



Casting



Trolling



Weedless



Jigging



Surface

For casting, cast your Spoon about 3 to 6 metres beyond your target zone and reel it back. Speed has a lot to do with how it wobbles in the water. A slow, steady retrieve is usually best, but you can also try varying the speed and movement of the Spoon.

When trolling from a boat, some anglers use a weight to get the Spoon down to a desired depth, or a downrigger or planer for deeper water. These Spoons tend to be thinner and lighter than casting.

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Weedless Spoons are used for fishing in weedy areas, where baitfish hide. They have a guard that prevents the hook from getting snagged. You can retrieve these lures in a variety of ways, by casting and letting them fall, by twitching the Spoon and pausing before letting it fall, or even simple cast and retrieve.

For jigging spoons, if you have a fish finder, look for a school of baitfish in deep water and drop your line to the bottom and then jig with short jerking motions. This is done usually for walleye, trout or bass. These Spoons tend to be flat, thick and heavy and have a bit of a flash. Their weight allows you to get the lure down to the fish quickly, and with the jigging movement of your rod, using short jerks, you may attract a fish. Fish may also strike when you bring up the lure and let it fall. These techniques can be used any time of the year; however, are also commonly used when ice fishing – and that season is coming up soon! When using Spoons for ice fishing, you may find it helpful to attach a minnow or minnow head to your lure.

Surface Spoons are great for predatory fish like pike, muskie or bass, and casting over areas where these fish may be hiding below the surface. Cast over the surface of the water and reel the Spoon in fast enough to keep the lure on the surface.

In addition to the type of fishing you want to do, there are three important factors when it comes to selecting a Spoon: action, colour and size.

There are many different colours of Spoons out there, so stick to a few to start with. In clear or slightly stained water, the best colours are red and white, yellow with red, black with white, and combinations of nickel/silver and gold/brass are best. In stained or darker water try using brighter colours like orange/yellow with brass or nickel on the back. Having a few standard gold or silver coloured spoons in your tackle box is a good bet. There are a variety of sizes as well, so pick according to the fish you will be targeting. The shape of the spoon will also affect how it falls or moves through the water.

Here are some examples of some common Spoons - you will notice they are all brightly coloured and come in a variety of sizes.

For more information on how to connect spoons to your line and types of rods to use, explore the internet and refer to the websites below. Don't be afraid to experiment and try new things. You may be surprized and get a fish to bite!



Resources:

<http://learninghowtofish.com/fishing-equiptment/fishing-spoons/>

<https://gearweare.net/tips-for-fishing-with-spoons/>

<https://www.takemefishing.org/how-to-fish/fishing-with-lures/how-to-fish-a-spoon/>

<http://www.lovetheoutdoors.com/freshwater-fishing/Spoons/Spoons.html>

Keeping your Phone Safe & Dry While Fishing

There is nothing worse than losing a big fish other than maybe watching your cell phone go for a swim. It happens and it has happened to me. I watched as my cell phone slipped off the bench beside me, in the nice toasty warm ice hut to flutter to the bottom of Lake Simcoe. I watched as texts came in unanswered and eventually as my phone shut off. Luckily it was retrieved from its 20-foot depth, but it was never the same again.

After investing in a new expensive phone, I decided to do some intense research and find a great phone case so that wouldn't ever happen again. This meant finding a phone case that would not only keep it dry but also can fasten it to me in case it did try to go swimming again.

The first case I tried was a floating soft clear vinyl case. I purchased a MAKO case which my phone slid into and had a flip latch on the top to seal it. There is a small amount of floating foam on the edge of the case and a lanyard to attach the case to my life jacket or belt loop. Because this case floats and acts more like a dry bag for your phone, there is no depth rating. It costs around \$15, and I found it adequate for a year. However, opening and closing the case to remove my cell phone caused cracking in the vinyl after some time. If your hands are cold, the screen doesn't sense your fingers and it must be very clean inside with

very little air for the camera to take good photos.



The second case I tried was a Lifeproof case. At a whopping \$84 I found this case to be very effective at keeping your phone safe; however, it does not float and there was nowhere at the time to attach a lanyard. The waterproof rating of the case was only to 2m and often I was fishing in water much, much deeper than that. After not being able to put this into my pocket due to how bulky it was, I sold it as used and invested in a sleeker case.

This brings me to my current and repeated case (I have since upgraded my phone as well as purchased a second case) – the Lanheim case. The Lanhiem case is waterproof to 6m – one of the deepest on the markets for its bulkiness. It is also the sleek-est of waterproof/shockproof/and snow proof cases. It comes with a

lanyard attachment and a strong seal on the charging port. I can still slip my phone into my pocket as well as attach it easily to my life vest or belt loop. I have taken underwater videos with this case as it seals on all 6 sides. I can even use this with cold fingers with its specially designed screen protector. It holds a 12-month replacement warranty and lifetime support. The cost of a Lanheim case runs between \$20-\$55 depending on your phone. For me, this case



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ticked the most boxes. It does not float but I solved that problem by attaching a boat key float to the lanyard when I need it. My phone does get wet during all my outdoor activities, and I never have to worry about it. As a note, recently I took my phone in to replace the battery and when the associate removed my phone from the case he said looked like it was just taken out of the box brand new! A great reselling feature if you choose to sell your phone when you upgrade.

There are hundreds of cases on the market. No matter which case you choose for your cell phone, do your research beforehand. Figure out what features are most important and gear those to your outdoor activities. Your phone case is an insurance policy for your phone. You will be glad you have it the first time your phone goes for a swim.



Jr Angler - Shimano Reel Giveaway

Get ready for ice fishing by entering into a **FREE** contest for a Shimano Sienna 500 fishing reel valued at \$50. Moms and dads — send in a picture of your child fishing to: jrclub.owa101@gmail.com to enter the draw. The draw is open to children 17 years old and younger.



Name: _____ Date: _____



All About Fish

Word Search

DIRECTIONS:
Find and circle the
vocabulary words
in the grid. Look
for them in all
directions including
backwards and
diagonally.



BONY
CAMOUFLAGE
CARNIVORE
CARTILAGINOUS
COLD-BLOODED
DIVERSE
EELS
EGGS
FINGERLING
FINS
FRESHWATER
GILLS
HERBIVORE
ICHTHYOLOGIST
JAWLESS

LATERAL LINE
OCEAN
OVERFISHING
OXYGEN
PREDATORS
SCALES
SCHOOL
SHARKS
SHOAL

SPINE
SWIM BLADDER
VERTEBRATE



Name: _____

Christmas Eve Secret Code

Each number stands for a letter of the alphabet. Write the correct letter in the blank to find the secret Christmas phrase.

Key Code

A 1	D 4	G 7	J 10	M 13	P 16	S 19	V 22	Y 25
B 2	E 5	H 8	K 11	N 14	Q 17	T 20	W 23	Z 26
C 3	F 6	I 9	L 12	O 15	R 18	U 21	X 24	

19 1 14 20 1

3 12 1 21 19

9 19

3 15 13 9 14 7

20 15

20 15 23 14



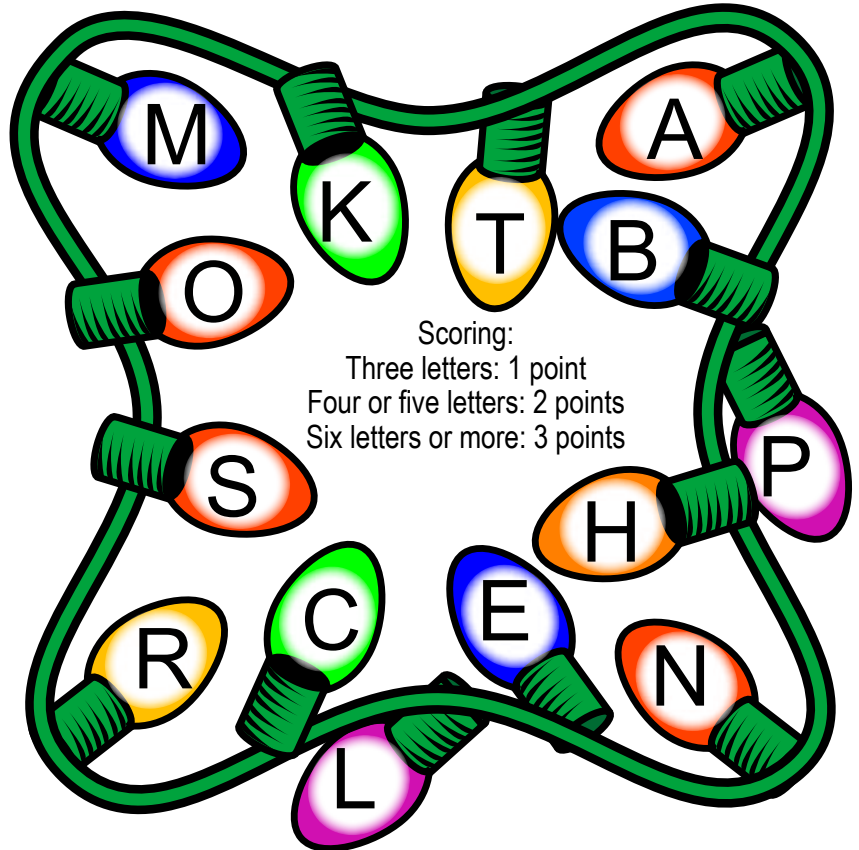
CLUE: You should be good because

Name: _____



Christmas Lights: Make a Word!

Each Christmas light below has a letter on it. Make as many words as you can in the time allowed by your teacher. The letters do not need to be touching each other. Each word must be at least three letters long.



Scoring:

Three letters: 1 point

Four or five letters: 2 points

Six letters or more: 3 points

Name: _____

My Christmas Stocking





CHRISTMAS WORD SEARCH

Search for the words going up, down
left, and right..



TREE



SANTA



ELF



GINGERBREAD



CANDY CANE



STOCKING



ORNAMENT



SLEIGH



REINDEER



PRESENT



WREATH



STAR

P	S	T	A	R	E	U	J	O	Q	R	Z	I	Z	S
T	G	I	N	G	E	R	B	R	E	A	D	T	J	A
D	O	B	Y	O	S	L	E	I	G	H	J	R	G	N
R	Y	T	Q	I	R	E	S	V	T	F	T	E	A	T
E	J	C	R	X	Q	G	T	E	G	G	N	E	C	A
I	Z	O	Z	L	R	G	O	O	X	Q	E	J	V	L
N	N	H	G	F	Y	N	C	J	H	O	S	C	X	X
D	F	V	Z	A	I	F	K	Y	S	C	E	P	B	G
E	E	F	S	F	S	G	I	I	O	C	R	G	B	C
E	K	Q	O	K	J	N	N	S	F	T	P	A	L	P
R	K	B	Z	E	L	F	G	B	S	K	O	Q	T	P
K	F	C	U	E	N	A	C	Y	D	N	A	C	K	F
F	L	O	R	N	A	M	E	N	T	V	X	Q	Z	N
C	W	O	D	Y	Y	Y	W	R	V	V	R	I	T	T
J	B	F	J	H	T	A	E	R	W	E	L	A	J	H

Name: _____

Candy Cane Maze

Find your way through the candy maze.

