

# Newsletter

## Family Fishing Fun

Family Day weekend was a blustery one for many but lots of OWA members still made it out on the ice with family and friends!



Inside this issue

- Family Fishing Fun.....1
- Family Fishing in Temagami..... 2
- Steelhead fishing.....5
- Ready, Set, Go.....7
- Clean, Drain, Dry.....11
- Arbor Knot.....13
- Junior Corner.....14

**Newsletter Contributors**

- Amanda Tracey
- Yvonne Brown
- Patricia Merka
- Tanya MacLean
- Jen Brooks
- Dawn Hill



# Family Day Fishing in Temagami: Tangled Lines, Wolves, and Hooks in Hands... oh my!

By Dawn Young

We knew that our family fishing getaway was going to be quite the adventure, about forty minutes into the drive, when we came upon a wooden kitchen chair in the middle of the oncoming lane, holding up some hydro lines which were hanging precariously from a pole. We managed to drive safely underneath the low-lying wires on our side of the road and carried on. Next up, we spent a good deal of time discussing all of the tracks we could see in the ditches and fields along Highway 407. We debated whether the tracks belonged to deer or coyote until, lo and behold, there was a coyote sauntering between the tall grasses, leaving a trail of footprints in the snow behind it.

When we finally arrived at our destination, the end of Temagami Lake Access Road, we were afraid we might get stuck as there was a ton of snow and the parking lot hadn't been plowed. Soon, we were met by a man on a snowmobile who waved us over and told us where to park (without getting stuck). He pulled up behind our SUV with a huge wooden sleigh and instructed us to put all of our stuff inside



and close the lid (it was like a giant chest on skis). At the back of the sleigh was a small square, approximately 4' by 4'. The outfitter instructed us to climb aboard. Once on board, my son Brady and I sat down inside the sleigh which was filled with snow and had holes in the floor so I could see the ground; my husband perched precariously on the lid of the chest which held our belongings. After about a fifteen minute trek across the ice, we arrived safely at our ice bungalow.

The hut was exactly as we'd expected: four bunks, a small table and chairs, a couple of propane lights and a fully functioning stove. There were five holes and we quickly got our lines in the water before unpacking or setting anything else up. The first few hours were uneventful and we only caught one burbot (or ling) before it was time for bed. We set all of our lines up with bells and turned out the lights. It wasn't long before the bells starting ringing and my husband and I were leaping out of our beds. Actually, I didn't exactly leap – I was zipped into my mummy sleeping bag and wrapped in three blankets so I did more of a slow roll. My husband was laying on top of his sleeping bag in just his underwear as our internal temperatures run at very different degrees.

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Anyway, as soon as Dan started reeling in the fish, other bells started ringing too. We quickly realized that all the lines (but one) were tangled. I reeled in the one clear line and Dan hand over handed the line with the fish. When the fish got to the hole, Dan reached in to grab it amongst all the tangled line, shining his headlamp into the dark waters. He looked up at me, blinding me in the process, and said, "Hook in hand! Hook in hand!". Then he said, "Get the fish!". The large whitefish had spit the hook and was laying close to the hole ready to make its great escape. I quickly grabbed it and tossed it out the door with the previously caught burbot.

Now to deal with four tangled lines and a hook, connected to a three-way spreader, deeply embedded in the fleshy part between Dan's thumb and index finger on his right hand. The barbed



hook was buried so deep in Dan's flesh that he didn't think he could push it through and out; plus we

knew our pliers weren't sharp enough to cut the metal anyway. Dan was sure that there was a way to push down on the skin and pull it out the way it had gone in but he'd never done it before. (Also when we arrived at the ice hut, the operator had informed us that there was no cell-phone service – so we couldn't just Google the procedure and watch a YouTube video). In the end, we managed to cut the nylon line connecting the hook to the spreader and Dan sat on his bunk, pondering his next move, while I untangled the four lines that had become the biggest rat's nest I'd ever encountered.



We put some antibacterial cream around the hook and covered it with three Band-Aids so it wouldn't catch on anything. Dan curled up and dozed off. I was too wound up to sleep. The fish didn't cooperate and we didn't catch any more that night.

The next morning, when I ventured to the outhouse, I was shocked to discover that the burbot we'd thrown out the door was missing and the whitefish had been moved about ten feet from the cabin and was missing its head! There were tracks circling our hut but no culprits in sight.

(Continued on page 4)

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Around 11am, the outfitter stopped to check on us and we told him all about our night and the disappearing fish. He advised us that it had likely been wolves and we were not to put any food or fish outside again. Then we showed him Dan's "hook in hand." He explained that he had removed many hooks from his own hands but never from someone else. He was willing to give it a try and just needed some braided line. (\*don't try this at home folks!)

The outfitter tied the braided line to the end of the hook that was sticking out of Dan's hand, turned it over itself and then wrapped it tightly around his own finger. He spread his feet apart, bent his knees and leaned back like he was about to start a lawnmower. In shock, Dan blurted out, "How hard do you have to pull?" and the reply was, "As hard as I can!"



Dan held up his other hand and exclaimed, "Whoa, whoa, whoa... I need a minute here..."

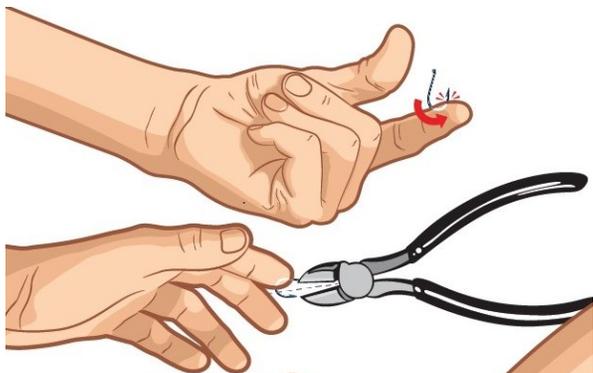
After sitting down and composing himself, he decided he was ready and the outfitter got into his ready stance: feet shoulder width apart, knees bent, arm cocked. "Ready?" Dan leapt to his feet and announced that he'd changed his mind and wanted to go to shore. "No problem," the outfitter replied.

Three hours later, Dan returned to the hut, no worse for wear, with the hook securely locked in a urine sample jar and a Band-Aid over the wound. My son and I hadn't caught any fish while he was gone but we'd had a dance party to the only radio station that didn't have static and eaten a lot of snacks.

The rest of our stay was less climactic. We caught many more burbot (to make up for the one the wolves ate), three whitefish and a lake trout. The burbot and whitefish were my son's first through the ice and it was his first time ever staying on the ice in a bungalow. The memories made will never be forgotten – what an adventure!

Thanks to OWA member Dawn Young for sharing this memorable story!

**Reminder:** Taking a first aid kit with you is always important when fishing on ice or open water, from shore or a boat. If you find yourself with a hook in your hand, if possible, cut the hook from the fishing lure/line while leaving as much of the hook exposed as possible. For deeply embedded hooks, it's best to simply cover the remaining hook in the hand, keep it clear of infectious agents, and seek medical attention - just as Dan did in the end!



# Steelhead Fishing: The Basics

By Tanya MacLean

Ontario Steelhead are hard fighting, acrobatic fish. Steelhead are migratory rainbow trout. Their silvery sides are from spending time in the clear waters of the great lakes. As they travel up the river system to spawn or feed, they start to take on more colourful markings similar to a resident rainbow trout.

We are fortunate in Ontario to have Steelhead in many of our rivers that drain into the great lakes, from September until the end of May - Ganaraska, Bowmanville, Wilmot, Duffins, Oshawa, Credit, Grand, Saugeen, Bighead, Beaver, and Nottawasaga are just a few of the better known Ontario steelhead rivers.



## Spring Steelhead

Spring Steelhead fishing in the spring starts in the early part of March and can be great for fresh run steelhead. Spring fishing is more difficult because of unpredictable water levels with the snowmelt and rain. It is harder to predict the steelhead runs but they generally will enter the river system during high water. Focus on the deeper, slower runs and pools ... the water is still very cold. The fish up on the shallow gravel are spawning and so it's best to leave them alone.

## Fall Steelhead



The peak steelhead runs often occur in October, especially after a rain. Then smaller runs will continue with each rain until the river freezes or it just gets too cold. Increased water flows from the rainfall are a primary trigger for the steelhead to enter and move up the river. Some of the best days of steelhead fishing are when the river has just started to drop after a significant rainfall.

This fall migration is a “false run” and there are lots of theories as to why they do this. Many will say it's because they follow salmon up to feed on eggs but no one is really 100% sure why.

In the fall, steelhead will position themselves in different spots during different conditions at certain times of the year. Early fall, most fish will be at the head of a pool and in the faster, shallower water. As the water gets colder, they will spend more time in the deeper, slower parts of the pools.

*(Continued on page 6)*

### Steelhead Baits

Anglers fishing for steelhead have many different baits they can try. It takes some practice and experimenting to figure out what they want on any particular day, on any particular river, so don't be afraid to switch up your presentation:

- Roe/Spawn Bags - most popular; smaller bags & natural colours when water is low & clear; larger, brighter bags when the water is high & dirty
- Steelhead Beads - follow same guidelines as roe for size & colour
- Plastic worms - pink, red, chartreuse, natural, white
- Flies - variety of patterns but stoneflies are popular
- Lures - spinners and spoons can be effective for fresh run steelhead



### Float Fishing

Float fishing or centerpin fishing, under the right conditions, can be a very productive method for catching steelhead. It is a way to present your bait to steelhead below a "float" to keep the bait just ticking bottom as it drifts down the river. Just like a "bobber", it is your visual indicator of a hit when it's properly weighted. It takes some time to learn the casting techniques and how to present your bait but it is very effective. You can use a float rod and centerpin reel, or some will use spinning gear with a long creek rod. Fly fishing is also very popular. The key is to have a long, flexible float rod or creek rod - usually 9' or longer. It is necessary for line control on the water and fighting big fish on lighter tackle.



# Ready, Set, Go!

By Yvonne Brown

There is nothing more frustrating than rushing to get everything ready the night before your first fishing trip of the year only to find that a guide is broken on your favourite rod, your reel grinds like it has sand in it or moisture left in your tackle trays over the winter has caused your hooks to rust. While being ready for this season often starts with packing your gear away properly the previous fall, there are still many things that you can do to get ready before you hit the water this year.

Inspect your rods to make sure the guides are still in good shape, none of the tips have been broken during winter storage and reel seats are clear of any dirt or dust. If you've had a problem with frayed line in the past, take a Q-Tip and run it inside each guide to see if there are any nicks or scratches in the ceramic. If you do find a guide that needs replaced, contact your local tackle store to see if they provide that service or if they know someone local who can do that kind of repair.

Reels should be serviced every two to three years, depending on how often you use them and what type of fishing you do. The best time of the year to have them looked at is during the off-season when repair centres are not as busy. If you have Shimano reels, you can ship or drop them off at the Service Centre in Peterborough or at A. Aikman Sporting Goods & Repair in Mississauga, where, for a very reasonable cost, you can have them serviced and cleaned.

- Spinning Reel \$40
- Baitcasting Reel \$45
- Conventional \$50

However, as amazing as the Chris and his team are at Shimano, expecting to get your Tranx 400AHG looked at a week before muskie opener would not allow for a reasonable turn around time. [https://fish.shimano.com/content/fish/northamerica/us/en/homepage/REEL\\_SUPPORT\\_SERVICES/Shimano-Authorized-Service-Centers.html](https://fish.shimano.com/content/fish/northamerica/us/en/homepage/REEL_SUPPORT_SERVICES/Shimano-Authorized-Service-Centers.html)



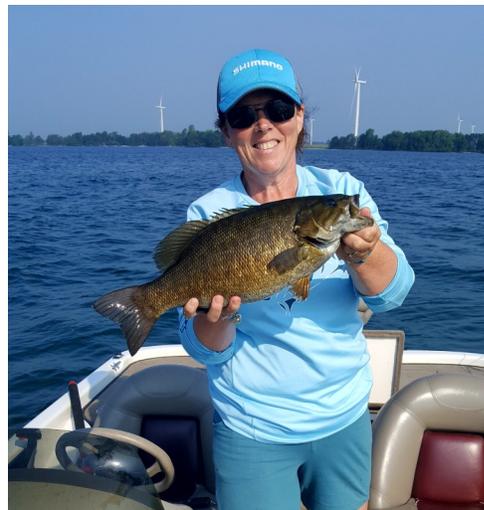
Monofilament line should be replaced annually as it breaks down more often in comparison to other types of line. Exposure to water, sun, temperature variances and stress can make the line brittle or cause weakness in areas. While monofilament is still the most popular line used, it also has “memory” and the older the line, the worse the “curlicues” will be when you're trying to fish with it.

Braided line, while the price tag may be higher, is a better investment with regards to performance and longevity. It's no stretch, no memory properties make it ideal for feeling even the most subtle bites and for increasing your chances of getting a good hook set.

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(Continued from page 7)

After a few years of use, you can transfer the line to an empty reel. Then the older line will be on the inside against the spool and the unused part of the line will be on top. Learn how to attach a fluorocarbon leader to braided line for a presentation that offers both strength and near invisibility. Then the older line will be on the inside against the spool and the unused part of the line will be on top. Learn how to attach a fluorocarbon leader to braided line for a presentation that offers both strength and near invisibility.



### Tips from Yvonne

- Repurpose silica packs that you find in shoe boxes and other retail goods. Put them in your tackle trays to help absorb moisture and reduce the chance of rust on your hooks and lures.
- Don't cheap out on a reel. Make sure you buy one with a good drag system as this is one of your most important tools in fishing. Focus on quality products that are within your budget.
- Every new angler should make sure they have a spinnerbait and curly tail grubs on ball-head jigs in their tackle bag.
- Master the following knots:
  - Palomar
  - Improved Clinch
  - Double-Uni (for tying a fluoro leader onto braided line)



Visit [Animated Knots](#) or [Netknots.com](#) for instructions on how to do these and many other types of knots.



Alicia Raytrowsky, a multi-species angler from Delaware, ON, frequently fishes Lake St. Clair, Lake Erie (Rondeau Bay and Long Point) and a number of rivers and ponds in her area. She began fishing as a little girl with her father and is currently a member of the Forest City Bassmasters as well as an avid tournament angler.

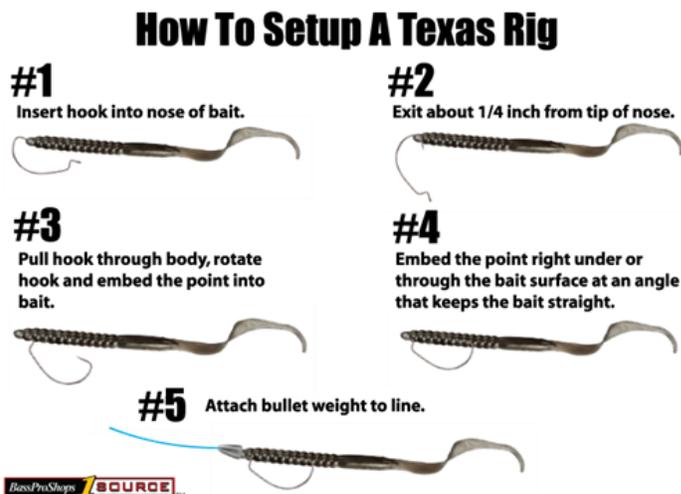
“Keep it simple in the beginning”, advises Alicia. “You can even just start with a simple worm hook and bobber on monofilament line. This presentation catches a variety of fish. Then, as you build confidence in fishing, casting and catching fish, you can start adding plastic baits as

(Continued on page 9)

well as hard baits like crank baits or spoons to your collection”. One of her favourite presentations for large-mouth bass is a Texas-rigged plastic worm on braided line.

“It’s perfect for catching bass in heavy cover like weeds, trees and lily pads”.

For newer anglers just starting out, Alicia recommends a 6’6 medium spinning rod with fast or extra fast action and a size 20 or 2500 spinning reel. “That kind of rod and reel combo will catch and handle almost anything from a tiny panfish to a big catfish or pike and will also allow you to feel the bites. It’s also easier to learn to fish on a spinning reel as opposed to a baitcasting reel. You can always upgrade to a baitcaster once you are confident catching fish with the spinning reel set up”.



### Tips from Alicia

- Always wear sunscreen! I recommend wearing light, long sleeve shirts and light pants as well as a hat and sunglasses as the reflection from the water can burn skin fast and damage your eyes.
- Remember to stay hydrated while fishing! I like to bring along a drink with electrolytes.
- Pick up your trash and take home your extra line and used baits to throw in the garbage.
- For women in particular - while there are lots of great guys out there that support women anglers, always be cautious. Go fishing with a friend or a guide. Don’t go out alone with random people you’ve met online.



Janet Quesnelle has been fishing competitively for the past four years and was introduced to the sport by her father at a young age. She targets bass and walleye mainly in the Kawartha and Muskoka regions.

“A good all-round rod and reel combo would be a medium/medium heavy fast action spinning rod paired with a good quality spinning reel”, says Janet. “Learn how to use your tackle properly before moving on to other gear”. For beginners, Janet advises that they should focus on

three types of lures: one for top water fishing, a mid-range lure like a spinner bait, and a lure you can use on the bottom like a ball head jig with a plastic grub.

*(Continued on page 10)*

### Tips from Janet

- Try to find a mentor - someone who has experience and is willing to share their fishing knowledge.
- It's very important to invest in a quality pair of polarized sunglasses so you can see into the water.
- Pay attention to your surroundings when you catch your fish. What were the weather conditions? How deep was the water? What time of year was it? Were there rocks, weeds, bait fish, etc?
- Pay attention to everything you feel. If you feel a little tick, set the hook!



Sephora Ashan was taught how to cast at age seven by her late father. Twenty years later, she fishes for walleye, bass and pike on the French River and on Kawartha and Muskoka Lakes. “For beginners, it is very important to practice the skill of hook setting and adjusting the drag in your reel,” advises Sephora. “Getting a good hook set and learning how to “gauge” the fish by loosening or tightening the drag will physically allow you to play the fish and not just pull in dead weight. A properly adjusted drag will help reduce line breakage and allow you to set the hook without pulling the lure out of the fish’s grasp. Lastly, adjusting your drag will ultimately protect your equipment as well by reducing the load on your rod, and loosening the pull on your reel’s gears”.

When fishing top-water for bass and pike, Sephora recommends walking baits, jitterbugs and buzz baits. Other “must haves” in her tackle bag include stick baits in pearl, navy blue and red, in-line spinners such as size 3 and 4 Mepps, jig heads with white or chartreuse curly-tailed grubs and spoons in gold or chrome with red accents.

### Tips from Sephora



- Pike, muskie and walleye are all “toothy” fish. When targeting them, make sure to use steel leaders or a good, heavy fluorocarbon leader.
- Spinning combos are very versatile and easy to use in comparison to bait-casting set ups. When practicing casting accuracy, spinning reels are a great start. They help in reducing tangles and allow greater control of distance in casting and controlling drag.
- A good start for a spinning set up is a medium power rod, moderate action between 6’ and 7’ feet long. Combine it with a reel approximately 2500 or 35 size.
- A good casting combo would be a low-profile bait-casting reel (with a 6.0+ retrieve) paired with a 6’6” or 7’ foot medium-heavy rod, moderate or fast action.

# Introducing: Clean, Drain, Dry

By Jen Brooks

As the ice melts away and we prepare for the open water fishing season, it is important for boaters to educate themselves on the new rules related to Clean, Drain, Dry. Clean, Drain, Dry aims to slow the spread of invasive species between waterbodies. These new rules came into effect on January 1, 2022.

In simple terms, the rules state: "It is unlawful to deposit, release or spread or cause to be spread, any prohibited aquatic species in Ontario."

To mitigate this, they have introduced the requirement to:

- remove or open drain plugs to allow water to drain from the boat or boat equipment
- take reasonable precautions to remove all aquatic plants (weeds), animals and algae from any boat, boat equipment, vehicle or trailer

It is expected that if a watercraft is out of water, the bail plug and livewell plugs will be removed, with exception of those few individuals that are licensed to transport live fish overland. The requirement to remove drain plugs does not apply to drinking water systems, marine sanitary systems or closed engine cooling systems.

It is important to note that this applies to all watercraft, including but not limited to kayaks, canoes, pedal boats, personal watercraft, fishing boats, leisure craft and ships alike.

*Photo: Ontario Federation of Cottagers Associations, 2019*

**CLEAN + DRAIN + DRY  
YOUR BOAT**



(Continued from page 11)

Before transporting your boat overland, clean any mud, vegetation, algae, mussels or any other animals from your boat, motor, trailer, vehicle or equipment. Other precautions you could take are using hot water to pressure wash your boat, trailer etc. after each use and letting it dry in the sun between uses.

We contacted Jeremy Downe, Senior Invasive Species Policy Advisor with the Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry (NDMNRF) with a few questions to get some clarification:

**Who will be enforcing this regulation?**

Ontario Conservation Officers will be responsible for the enforcement of this regulation.

**What would the fine be for failing to follow the rule?**

If a person is convicted an offence through the issuance of ticket, the fines range from \$100 to \$350.



<https://www.sudbury.com/local-news/reminder-from-mnrf-hunting-fishing-regulations-remain-unchanged-amid-pandemic-2217073>



[https://www.boat-ed.com/indiana/studyGuide/Retrieving-Your-Boat-Onto-a-Trailer/10101602\\_35153/](https://www.boat-ed.com/indiana/studyGuide/Retrieving-Your-Boat-Onto-a-Trailer/10101602_35153/)

**If the live well has not been used and is still dry and used for storage, would I still be required to pull the plug every trip?**

Yes, even if dry, the drain plug should be removed or opened.

**If I leave my dry marina to the ramp after winter storage, should I be traveling with the bail plug out of the boat?**

Yes, drain plugs must be removed when transporting watercraft overland regardless of the situation or time of year.

Food for thought from a fellow boat owner: have a spare drain plug and if it applies, livewell plug in your boat or tow vehicle for those awkward times at the ramp when you've misplaced your plug or if one should fall apart as you install it before your launch.

Happy boating! And don't forget your drain plug!

For more information, check out:

<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/s15022>

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/invasive-species-action-plans>

# The Arbor Knot

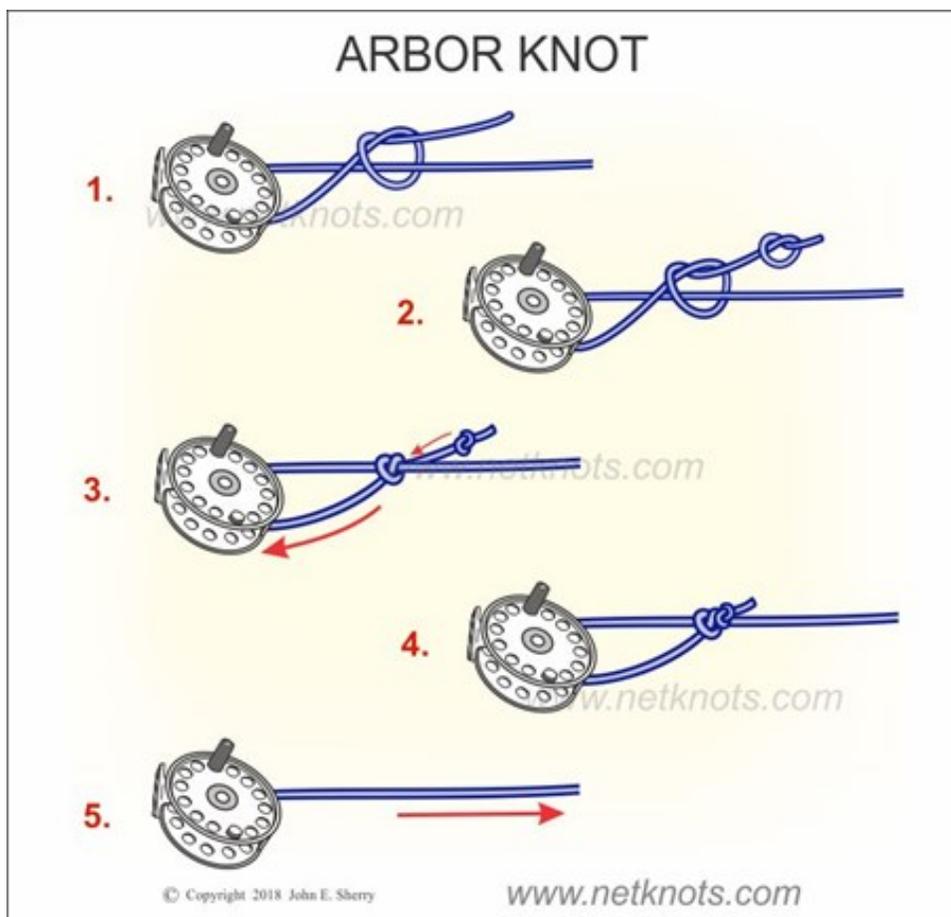
By Patricia Merka

The Arbor Knot is a very basic knot but important to know. Its main use is to attach fishing line to the spool or 'arbor' of a fishing reel. It is meant to keep your line snug to your reel and to prevent it from loosely spinning around it. This knot can be used to tie any line to any type of fishing reel.

The following instructions for tying this knot are taken from [www.netknots.com](http://www.netknots.com). There are also helpful videos to watch on the internet such as [https://www.netknots.com/fishing\\_knots/arbor-knot](https://www.netknots.com/fishing_knots/arbor-knot) and <https://www.animatedknots.com/arbor-knot>

## Arbor Knot steps:

1. Wrap the end of the line (called the 'tag' end) around your spool and then tie a simple overhand knot with the tag end (see picture below).
2. Tie a second overhand knot in the tag end just an inch or two from the first overhand knot. This knot will act as a stopper.
3. Pull the standing part of the line to slide the first overhand knot down to the spool and the second knot to jam against the first. Trim the tag end close. When this line is pulled and tightened, it jams the one knot against the other. You can also tie a double knot to the end so that it does not slip through, making it even sturdier.



# OWA Junior Corner

By Amanda Tracey

## Five Ways to Prepare for Open Water Fishing Season

Stuck at home in between seasons? You can still learn about fishing right from home!

### 1. Learn about fish species that live in Ontario

Learning about the fish that live in Ontario is a great way for those new to fishing to understand the sport as well as for those who are avid fisherman to refresh their memories. A great place to start is in the Learn to Fish program found on the Ontario government's website: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/learn-fish>. Here you can find out about the different species of fish in Ontario and choose some you want to target. Understanding fish species and how to identify them is the first step in learning to fish!

### 2. Think about where fish live

Learning about fish habitat is very important for catching fish. The Learn to Fish program will help you learn the basics of fish habitat. To find out what fish live where, you can check out Fish ON line. This is a great resource to learn what fish species are in bodies of water in Ontario! <https://www.lioapplications.lrc.gov.on.ca/fishonline/Index.html?viewer=FishONLine.FishONLine&locale=en-CA>

### 3. Practice tying knots

To be prepared, learning how to tie knots in advance is really helpful! Try out the Arbor Knot on page 12 to learn how to tie line to a fishing reel. You can check out previous issues of the newsletter to find information about other knots including the: palomar, uni, double-uni, improved clinch, easy snell, loop, and blood knots. Previous issues of our newsletter can be found here:

<https://www.ontariowomenanglers.ca/jr-club>

### 4. Make sure you understand the regulations for your area.

Ontario has an annual guide to the rules and regulations for recreational fishing in Ontario. It contains information about recreational fishing licences, open seasons and catch limits, as well as up-to-date fishing regulations for each fishing zone. The current regulations are effective January 1, 2022. You can find them here: <https://www.ontario.ca/document/ontario-fishing-regulations-summary>

### 5. Understand fishing safety.

Never fish alone. Wear life jackets whenever necessary. Be careful when using sharp objects like knives or scissors and ask an adult for help when you need it. Also, never forget that fish are living creatures, many with teeth, barbs, or spines, so handle them with care and respect!



# OWA Junior Corner: Fish Scramble



**KLACB PIEPRCA**

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**EWAYLEL**

\_\_\_\_\_



**MLOAREGUHT SABS**

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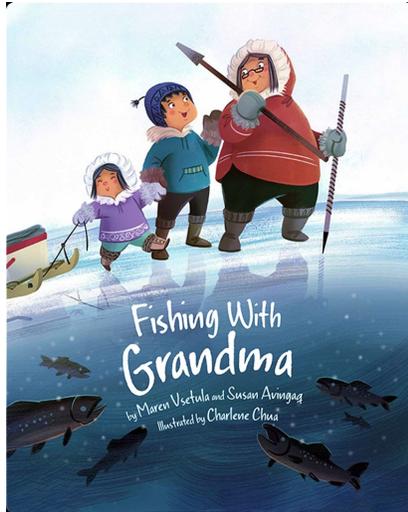
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# OWA Junior Corner: Hook a Book

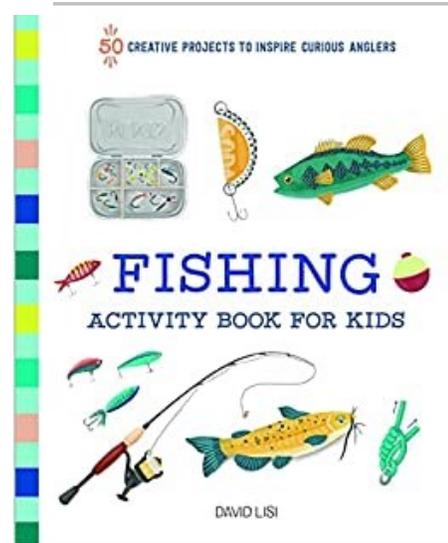


All titles are available on Amazon, some at Indigo, and many at local book stores and libraries! Remember that many libraries take suggestions for purchases if you can't find a title in their collection!



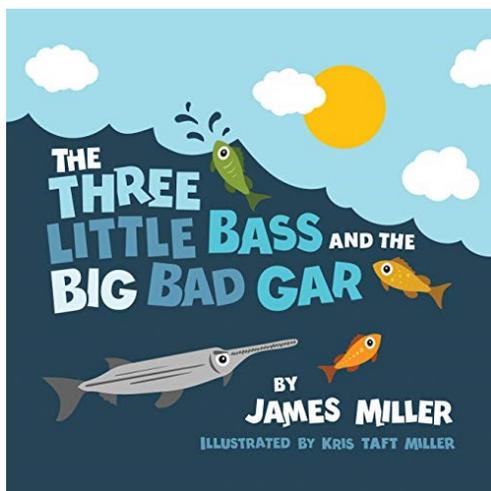
## Fishing with Grandma

By: Susan Avingaq (Author), Maren Vsetula (Author), Charlene Chua (illustrator)  
Ages 6-8



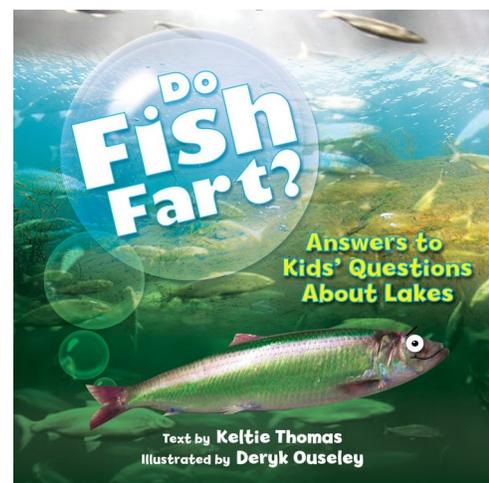
## Fishing Activity Book for Kids: 50 Creative Projects to Inspire Curious Anglers

By: David Lisi  
Ages 8-12



## The Three Little Bass and the Big, Bad Gar

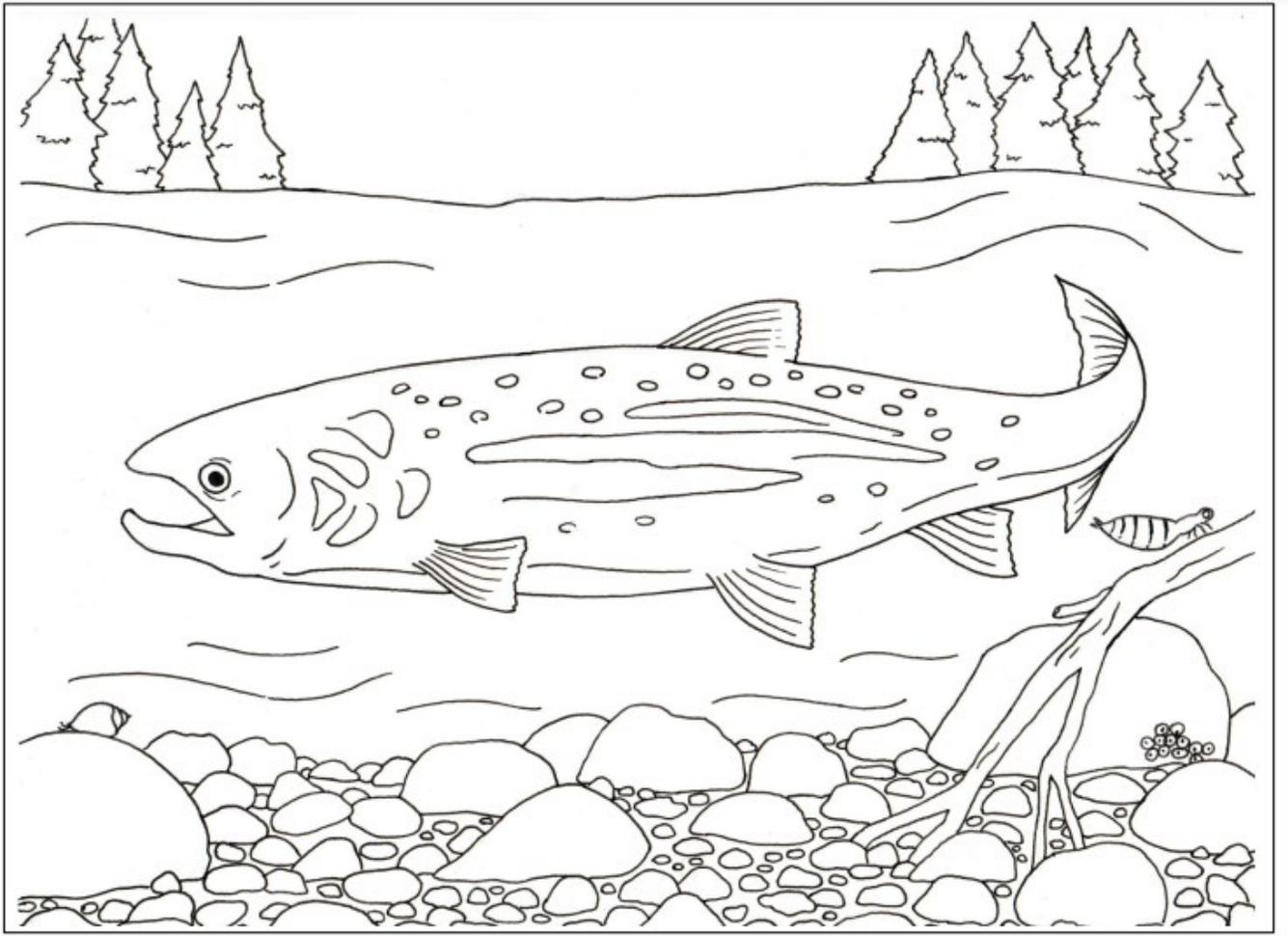
By: James Miller & Kris Miller  
Ages 3-6



## Do fish fart? Answers to kids' questions about lakes

By: Keltie Thomas and Deryk Ouseley  
Ages 8-12

## OWA Junior Corner: Colour Me!



### Start Them Young: Homemade Magnetic Fishing Game!

Check out this video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ErbM4i8655g> to learn how to make a homemade magnetic fishing game. This is a great way to help toddlers and young children develop the motor skills and coordination to fish.

