MUSKELLUNGE - NORTHERN PIKE **Know How To Tell The Difference!** NOTE: Faint indication of marking pattern is sometimes present on posterior 1/2 of body in "clear" variation of muskellunge. CLEAR Caudal fin with Paired fins having more pointed tips pointed tips MUSKELLUNGE (Esox masquinongy) **3 COMMON PATTERN** VARIATIONS SPOTTED Coloration with vertical dark markings on a light background (Juvenile pattern similar to that of adults) NOTE: Background colors of fish can vary slightly depending on environmental characteristics of the water body and its geographic location. One marking pat-BARRED tern may dominate in an area, but all 3 can be pre-Caudal fin with Coloration having irregular narrow vertical dark markings on a rounded tips light background with stripes merging onto the back in an interlocking pattern HYBRID "TIGER" MUSKELLUNGE (Esox masquinongy X Esox lucius) NOTE: Sides sometimes exhibit an alternating pattern of stripes and spots, or narrow paired-bars on a light Paired fins having background. Pattern never resemrounded tips bles that of northern pike. Caudal fin with more rounded tips Coloration with pattern of horizontal rows of light round to oval spots on a dark background NOTE: Some areas may contain NORTHERN PIKE 'Silver Pike" which is a (Esox lucius) mutant color variation of northern pike that lack the characteristic spots and have dark to light greyish/ blue sides. Fin coloration normal for northern pike is exhibited in the "silver" (Juvenile pattern has white, oblique bars Color illustrations by: Paired fins having which extend from the

IN MOST AREAS THESE FISH HAVE MINIMUM SIZE RESTRICTIONS, MAXIMUM POSSESSION LIMITS,

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How To Release Fish Land the fish quickly.

- Hold the fish firmly, but gently.
- Grasp the fish at the back of the head, just behind (not under) the gill covers. Do not hold a fish by the eyes—it can blind or kill them. 3. Use a needlenose pliers to remove hooks. If your pliers has a side
- cutters, snip deeply imbedded hooks. Cut the line if the fish is throat-hooked.
- Don't remove body slime.

more rounded tips

white belly)

- Gently slide the fish into the water.
- Release in shallow water, not over deep water.
- In streams, release fish into calm water. 8. Revive a tired fish by gently moving it back and forth in the water.
- The water moving through the gills will resuscitate the fish. **Extra Helpers:**

Use barbless hooks (flatten with pliers or file down).

Use artificial lures.

Clip one of the three treble hooks.

Use proper equipment so you can bring the fish in more quickly.

DON'T:

Don't drop the fish in the boat.

Don't net or handle a fish if you can leave it in the water.

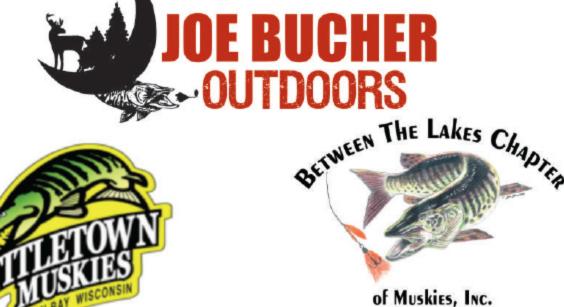
Don't release a fish that can't right itself and bobs to the surface. Any fish not of legal size must be released regardless of its condition.

Don't place fish you plan to release on a stringer or in a live-well.

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