

CONFESSIONS OF A
TROPHY MUSKY HUNTER

6 PIECES OF THE BIG MUSKY PUZZLE

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JUNE/JULY 2003



North America's Musky Authority

- DILEMMA OF WORLD RECORD PROPORTIONS
- THE LESSONS OF GIANT MUSKIES
- EXTREME SPINNERBAITS, SLIDER RIGS, MAYFLY MAYHEM, & MORE





St. Clair Sliders

*Maximize your lines to
maximize your musky
catching opportunities*

By DON MILLER

There aren't too many musky fishing comrades who don't want to cover as many angles on the boat as they possibly can to increase the opportunity for success. I belong to that crowd, and I constantly evaluate and analyze things around the boat while on the lake fishing.

Water clarity, temperature, thermoclines, barometric pressure and fishing rod placement are included in this practice, as the day proceeds. As you re-evaluate your effort at the end of the day, have you wondered if you covered the water effectively enough, and what would have happened if you could have placed another bait into the water? This fits with the old cliché, "so many baits and so little time."

Let's look at a 4-rod scenario (Illustration 1). You are currently pulling a planer board on each side of the boat with about a 40-foot tow to the outside, and have a 40-foot lead on your bait, which is about 5 feet behind the board. You and your partner also have an 8- to 10-foot graphite or fiberglass rod on each corner of the boat, with a 15-foot lead on the bait. It's a pretty good spread for trolling, easy to use for covering water. But it could be better — there's no line in the center propwash of the boat, and the inside pocket between the planer board and the corner rod was not covered. With just a little ingenuity, other presentations can take place with the same amount of rods and reels, by using what St. Clair fishermen call a "slider."

With the same set-up as previously mentioned, we could have six to eight baits in the water, broadening the opportunity, with just four rods. You might think this is absurd, but I refuse to leave a lake without knowing what is happening around my boat, and you won't chuckle about the results either. Muskies hooked count, and missed fish don't.

You probably already have the tackle on your boat, if you

DON MILLER; ILLUSTRATIONS BY JIM BORTZ

AREAS NOT COVERED WITH CONVENTIONAL
PLANER BOARD SET UP

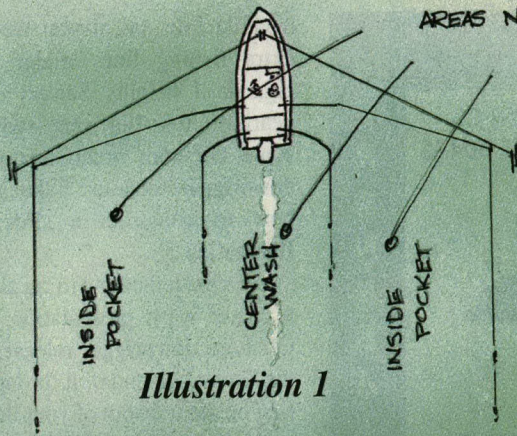


Illustration 1

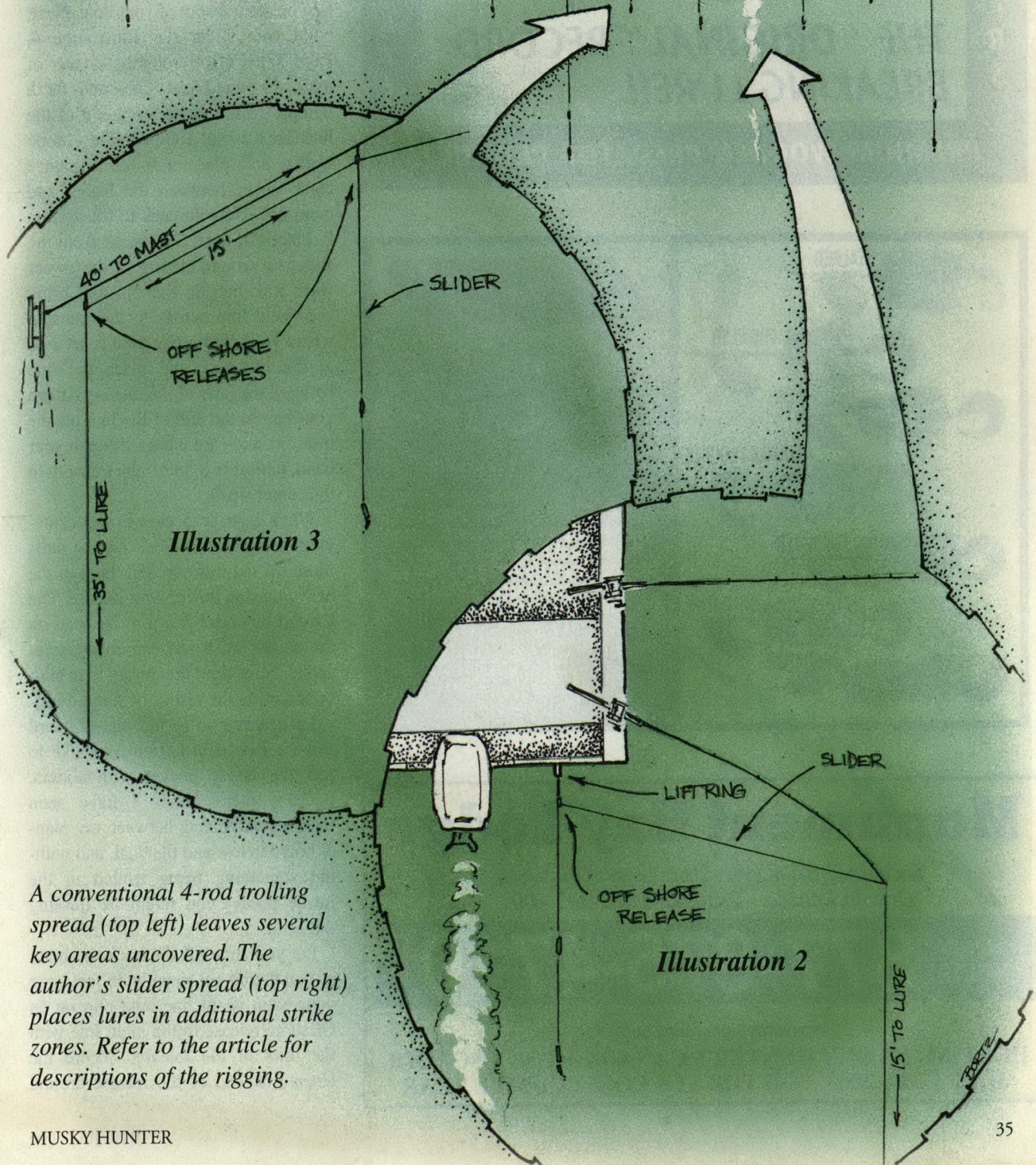
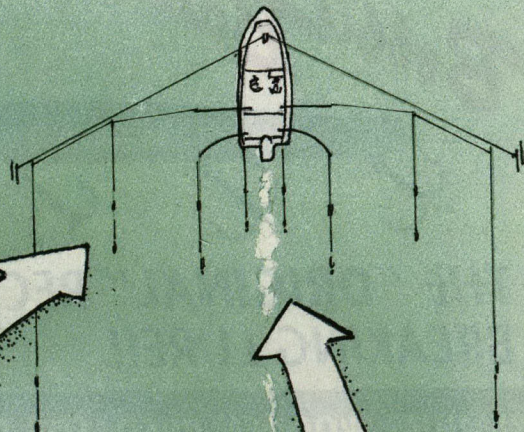


Illustration 3

A conventional 4-rod trolling spread (top left) leaves several key areas uncovered. The author's slider spread (top right) places lures in additional strike zones. Refer to the article for descriptions of the rigging.