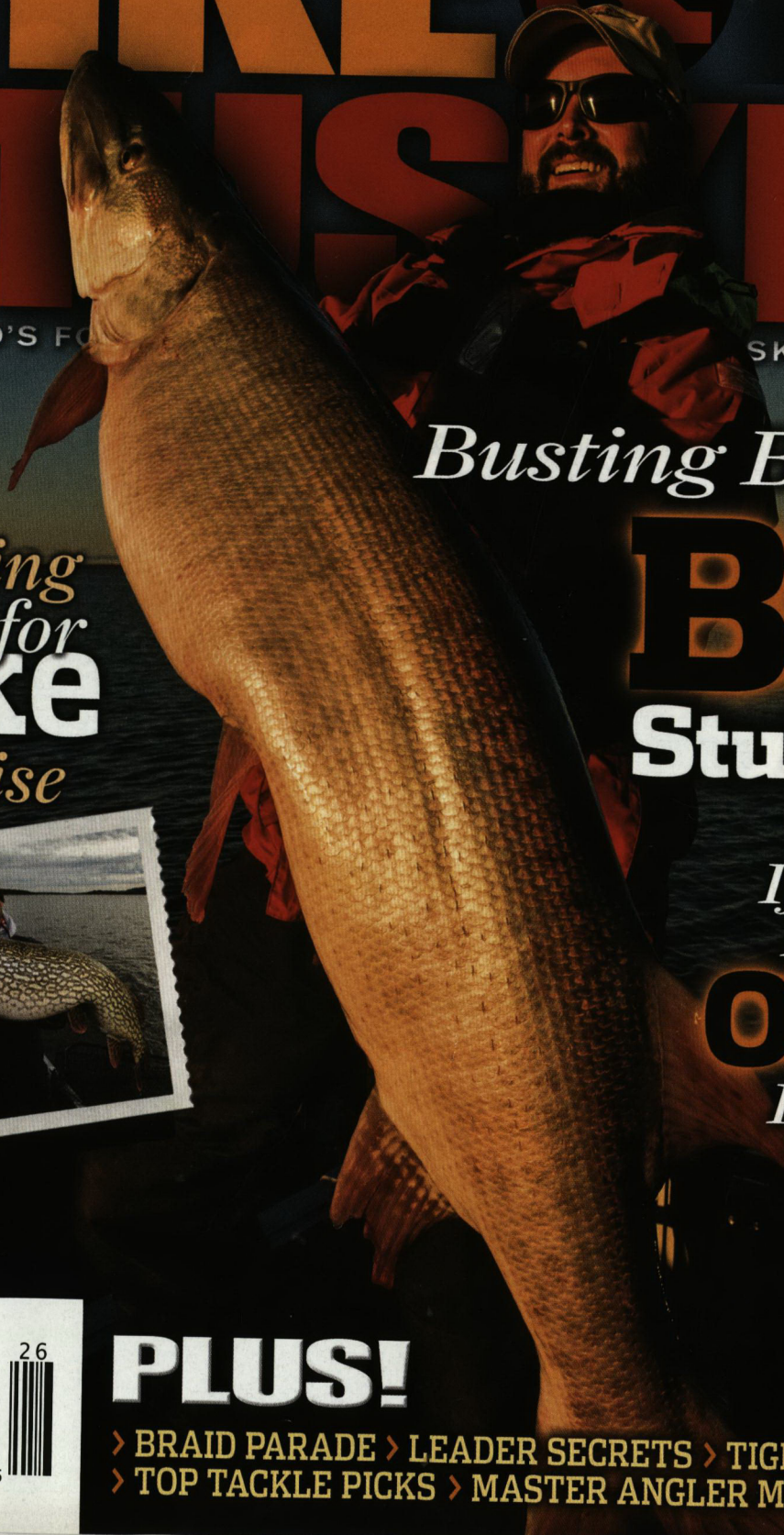


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2016 GUIDE

# PIKE & MUSKIE

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Choosing the best material can be complicated. How heavy is the lure? How much freedom of movement does it require? Might it damage fish? Are you casting or trolling?

## HERBIE AND THE FG KNOT

"You need different levels of stiffness or suppleness for various applications," says veteran muskie Guide Steve "Herbie" Herbeck—former owner of Andy Myers Lodge on Eagle Lake in Ontario (now at the lodge in as consultant and master guide). "I keep it simple for clients, but I believe muskies become more cautious in some conditions so I often use long fluorocarbon leaders, often 2 to 4 feet of 80-pound Seaguar Premier Fluorocarbon for casting. I use double uni knots to connect that to 14 inches of 130-pound fluoro at the business end, depending on how stealthy I want to get. I can cast with this leader because the 80-pound is tied to my Seaguar Threadlock mainline with an FG knot, which slides smoothly through even the smallest guides on my St. Croix muskie rods."

When using small lures, he goes with something tougher. "I use some baits that are smaller than 8 inches," he says. "Tubes, Bull Dawgs, swim-baits, and anything under 8 inches seems to get bit toward the head. They bite larger lures from the side, but for those under 8 inches long, I use 100-pound fluoro above 4 inches of 174-pound wire, tied with an Albright knot."

For guests, he uses 18 to 20 inches of 130-pound fluorocarbon or 174-pound Berkley Sevenstrand Wire. "That's the right length for a figure-eight," Herbeck says. "I tie a Mustad swivel to one end and a Mustad snap at the other with a loop knot to give the clip room to swing, particularly important with tubes. I tie my own knots with wire, an over-hand knot into a half hitch with 7 or 8 barrel wraps up the line and Sevenstrand has never failed, from 18- to 170-pound wire. My rule is, wire for dark water, fluorocarbon for clear water. I always use a doubled line to tie the knot connecting the swivel to the mainline. Creating 4 feet of doubled line with a spider hitch has saved me big fish over the years because braid can be nicked easily when you snap a jig or a jerk-bait across rocks."

## COMMERCIAL Leaders



## MOTOR CITY CONNECTIONS

Don Miller, owner of Motor City Muskies Charter Service, put his clients on 383 Lake St. Clair muskies up to 38 pounds in 2014 and did even better last year. St. Clair is famous for its massive flats where trolling beckons, so Miller knows the value of sturdy long leaders. "I tie 6- to 8-foot leaders using 80-pound test Seaguar Premier Fluorocarbon. Our catch rates increase about 30 percent when we use fluoro instead of wire or

100-pound mono. But if I pull a sentimental bait that's caught a lot of fish, I use 100-pound mono because there's a 99-percent chance I won't lose it. I use 100- to 140-pound Sampo swivels and snaps because their welded split rings never fail.

Miller uses a Trilene Knot to make connections with fluorocarbon and monofilament. "After thousands of muskies, we haven't had that knot break," he says. "I've had lines break, but never a Trilene Knot. I use Sampo Coastlock Snaps with no bearings for