

To assist in the preservation of muskellunge in the St. Lawrence River, Save The River and the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry (SUNY-ESF) Thousand Islands Biological Station (TIBS) sponsor a Muskellunge Release Award.

Releasing legal-size muskies ensures a future supply of naturally reproduced muskies as well as larger trophies for years to come. Since the inception of the release award in 1987, over 1,000 muskies have been successfully released. Studies by TIBS indicate recent increases in muskellunge reproductive success and in average fish size by over three inches have followed the promotion of "catch and release".

To encourage catch and release, anglers who release a muskie 54" or larger during the fishing season (third Saturday in June through December 15th) are eligible to receive a limited edition, 16" x 20" print *Sovereign* by St. Lawrence River artist Michael Ringer (shown on the front of this brochure). The print is available only through Save The River's Muskellunge Release Award program and cannot be purchased.

A secondary goal of the program is to gather information from muskie anglers to be used in studies conducted by SUNY-ESF and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). These two agencies are cooperating in research aimed at locating and protecting muskellunge spawning and nursery habitat, and improving management to protect the species and the fishery.

We are asking for your help by voluntarily completing Section 2 of the attached Muskie Release Affidavit.

This information, received and compiled by Save The River, will be considered confidential and only forwarded to biologists with ESF and DEC to assist in their monitoring of muskellunge population status.

Good luck and good fishing!



## Muskellunge Release Affidavit SECTION 1

Please print clearly.

Information must be legible in order to qualify.

I, \_\_\_\_\_ a licensed  
PRINT NAME  
angler and sportsperson caught a 54" (or over)  
muskellunge in \_\_\_\_\_ on  
BODY OF WATER  
\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_.  
DAY MONTH YEAR

In releasing the fish, I observed the following recommended procedures for a proper release in order to insure the well-being of the muskie:

- I unhooked the fish without removing it from the water.
- I cut the hooks with wire snips because the fish was hooked badly.
- Because the fish had to be removed from the water, I laid it on a wet surface and covered the eyes of the fish with a wet cloth to reduce thrashing.
- I did not hang or hold the fish vertically for photos or weighing, as it would damage the fish's internal organs.

I have honestly reported this 54"-or-larger muskellunge release in order to qualify for the Muskie Release Award.

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE/PROVINCE \_\_\_\_\_  
ZIP/POSTAL \_\_\_\_\_ COUNTRY \_\_\_\_\_  
TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_  
EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_  
VALID FISHING LIC. # \_\_\_\_\_  
PLACE ISSUED \_\_\_\_\_

### Two witnesses present at time of release:

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_  
NAME (PRINTED) \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_  
NAME (PRINTED) \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_

## Muskellunge Information SECTION 2

APPROXIMATE LENGTH OF FISH\* \_\_\_\_\_ INCHES  
\*Please do not actually weigh or measure the fish, since it puts extreme stress on the fish thus reducing its chance for survival (see "Muskie Handling 101")

LOCATION OF CATCH \_\_\_\_\_  
NEAREST BAY, POINT OF LAND, ETC.

TIME \_\_\_\_\_ WEATHER \_\_\_\_\_  
SUNNY, OVERCAST, RAINING, ETC.

TYPE OF BAIT/LURE USED \_\_\_\_\_

WEIGHT OF LINE USED \_\_\_\_\_  
# POUND TEST

APPROXIMATE WATER DEPTH \_\_\_\_\_  
FEET

TIME SPENT FISHING MUSKIE \_\_\_\_\_  
HOURS SPENT MUSKIE FISHING THIS YEAR

# OF MUSKIES CAUGHT THIS YEAR \_\_\_\_\_  
LEGAL AND SUB-LEGAL

I am interested in participating in the SUNY-ESF Thousand Islands Biological Station Muskellunge Angler Diary Program

Feel free to include the enclosed photograph of me and my muskie in future publications and muskie release publicity.\*  
\*Photos should identify those pictured in the photograph. Pictures of fish held incorrectly (vertically, for instance) will not be used (see "Muskie Handling 101").

I am a member of Save The River.

I am not currently a Save The River member. Please send me membership literature.

PLEASE RETURN AFFIDAVIT WITHIN 30 DAYS  
OF SEASON CLOSE TO:

SAVE THE RIVER  
409 Riverside Drive  
Clayton, NY 13624



## Muskie Management in Action

For many years Save The River, the SUNY-ESF Thousand Islands Biological Station, and dedicated anglers, guides, and citizens have worked together to protect the muskellunge population by promoting “catch and release” fishing practices.

The St. Lawrence River is home to a unique genetic strain of Muskellunge and consistently produces some of the largest muskies caught each year. The release of muskellunge over the legal size limit of 54” will help protect this threatened population in the St. Lawrence River.

Female muskellunge grow faster and live longer than males, and the number of eggs produced by a female increases with fish size. “Trophy muskellunge,” therefore, are old, large females who may contribute significantly to the reproduction of young.

Female muskies begin spawning at four or five years of age when they are approximately 34-38” in length. At seven or eight years of age, some females will have reached the 54” size limit but they are capable of living 30 years or more.

If we want trophy muskellunge to catch in the future, sub-legal & legal-size muskies have to be released when caught. The future of the muskellunge in the River is in our hands. Please help inform other anglers about the importance of properly releasing muskies.

***Thank You***

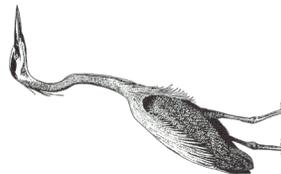
### MUSKIE HANDLING 101:

- Try to unhook the fish without removing it from the water.
- Never hold a muskie vertically.
- Put a damp towel over the fish’s head to prevent thrashing.
- Take your measurements and photos quickly.

***Muskies prefer water to air!***



FIRST  
CLASS  
POSTAGE  
REQUIRED



Save The River  
409 Riverside Drive  
Clayton, NY 13624

## The St. Lawrence River Muskellunge Release Award



Catch and release a legal-sized muskie,  
and claim your special edition  
Michael Ringer print.



In partnership with SUNY-ESF  
Thousand Islands Biological Station (TIBS)  
Muskellunge Research Program at Governors Island