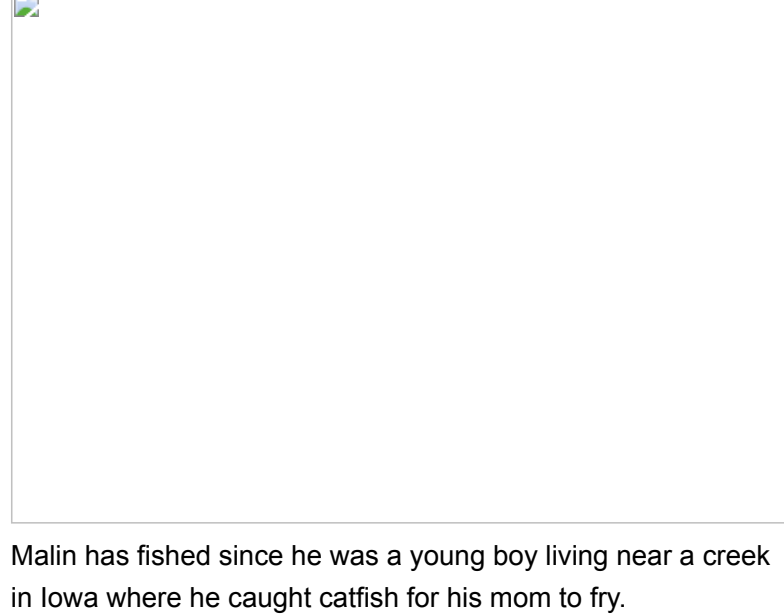


Fishing Guide Art Malin and the ‘one that got away’

By Kathy Hanson
Contributing Writer

Interviewing a fishing guide is a bit like trying to reel in a fish—you must remain calm, stay in control and have the net ready. I was in over my head when I interviewed fishing guide Art Malin mid-morning over coffee at the Northern Lakes Co-op Cabin Stop. I don't fish.



Malin has fished since he was a young boy living near a creek in Iowa where he caught catfish for his mom to fry.

From there, as a young man, he first learned to musky fish in Arbor Vitae Lake near Minocqua. The man who took him out that day wanted to try out a new lure made by Robert Vander Velden in the 1930s. “Bobbie Bait,” as it came to be called, is still the leading musky bait. That day Malin caught his first musky—32 inches long doing a figure eight by the boat without casting.

“I was hooked,” Malin said.

Today Malin, 84, is one of the region's most experienced and well-regarded fishing guides and co-host of the popular Sunday morning Wisconsin Northland Outdoor Radio Show with John Myhre.

He didn't plan to land in Hayward. He and his wife Jackie originally planned to retire in the Minocqua area, but they visited a friend who lived on Lac Courte Oreilles and “caught two nice muskies” that day. His friend then showed him one of the world record musky fish caught on Moccasin Bar and mounted on the wall of the Moccasin Bar in Hayward.

Malin said that same weekend they walked around Victory Heights, saw a three-season property for sale, and bought it. “That is how it started—in just one weekend,” Malin said.

The cottage they bought was built in 1920. They built 800 square feet around it, keeping the original cottage and stone fireplace intact, which now serves as their living room.

Malin's primary occupation was as a psychiatric social worker in Madison and later, for a brief time, a realtor in Stoughton, Wisconsin.

He and Jackie have now lived on Lac Courte Oreilles 22 years, and Malin has fished all of those years in pretty much all of the lakes, except Round, which he avoids because there is too much traffic on the lake and it doesn't have a lot of “structure,” Malin explained.

Three years after moving here Malin joined the Hayward Area Guides Association and got his guide's license, guiding three days a week, leaving a little time for golfing.

Much about the lakes has changed in those 22 years and Malin can describe it in the plainest terms, particularly Lac Courte Oreilles:

“The walleye population has yo-yoed up and down in Lac Courte Oreilles; five years ago there weren't many walleye but today it's a very good walleye lake,” Malin said. He also said there has been a tremendous increase in largemouth bass in Lac Courte Oreilles, and they eat the walleye. “When we first moved here you could hardly catch a largemouth bass,” Malin said.

There's also so many areas where there are weeds, Malin explained, adding that some of the two-tiered lakes—Lac Courte Oreilles being one—are losing oxygen due to global warming and phosphorous.

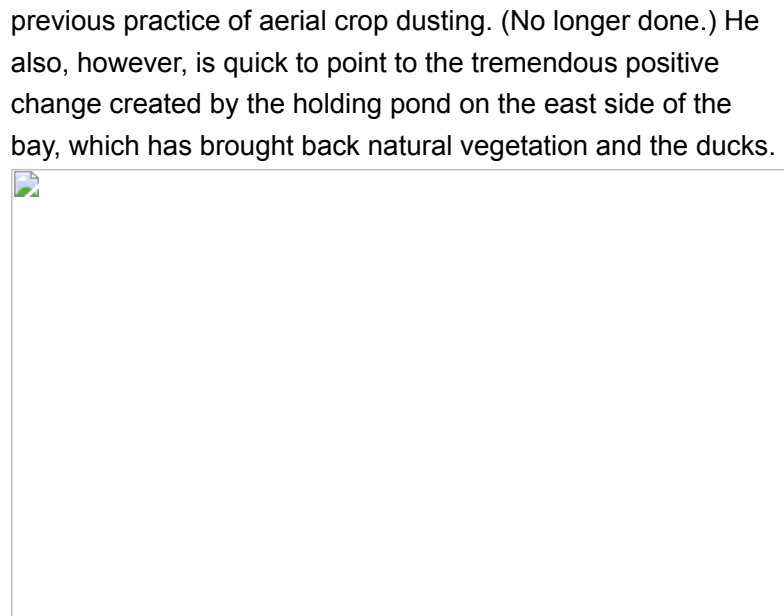
“There is little or no musky reproduction because of the eutrophication of Musky Bay. Consequently, the musky population is adversely affected because the eggs sink into the muck and die. There is no oxygen,” Malin said.

Malin said it used to be that 60 to 80 percent of his guiding was for musky fishing in Lac Courte Oreilles. “Now it's 30 percent,” said Malin.

Malin has also witnessed a substantial shift in what people who live on the lake or visit want. “They want action from walleye, crappie and blue gills, along with the smallmouth bass,” Malin said, adding that the Minnesota musky fishery has drawn those who just want big fish.

Malin said the levels of muck in Musky Bay can range from two feet to sometimes nine feet.

“In the 1930s Musky Bay was 90 percent wild rice and it had been that way for thousands of years. Today there's not one stem,” said Malin, who points to what he calls the “obvious cause and effect” of cranberry marshes and the previous practice of aerial crop dusting. (No longer done.) He also, however, is quick to point to the tremendous positive change created by the holding pond on the east side of the bay, which has brought back natural vegetation and the ducks.



As a fishing guide, Malin's emphasis is on educating the customers, who are primarily from the Chicago and Twin Cities areas, but he's had clients from as far away as Hawaii. He recalls teaching a man how to set a slip bobber for the first time. The client caught a 19-inch smallmouth bass within a minute. He mounted it.

Malin said people love to catch big smallmouth bass because the fish are so “sporty.” They fight like mad, Malin explained. They catch and release them, a practice Malin refers to as “CPR,” which means “catch, picture, release.” Smallmouth bass fishing is a great resource for tourism, Malin said.

Malin also tells the story of taking a client out on the Chippewa Flowage where the client got a 50+ inch musky. Malin was helping land the fish with a net and tried to get it while it was “too green.” The fish got off the hook.

“I was devastated,” Malin said. His client, however, was not, telling Malin, “I don't care we didn't get it into the boat—I had the experience.”

Bob Weininger is a retired attorney who splits the year between Hayward and Phoenix. In the summers they live on Lac Courte Oreilles on Chicago Bay. Weininger said he met Art a few years ago at Angler's Haven.

“I enjoy spending time on the lake with Art because he is so generous in sharing his wealth of knowledge about the lake, its history, its ecology and its demons of the deep,” Weininger said.

Asked if he fishes often with Malin, Weininger replied, “Not as often as I would like. Art finds plenty of fish, but that's secondary to the experience.”

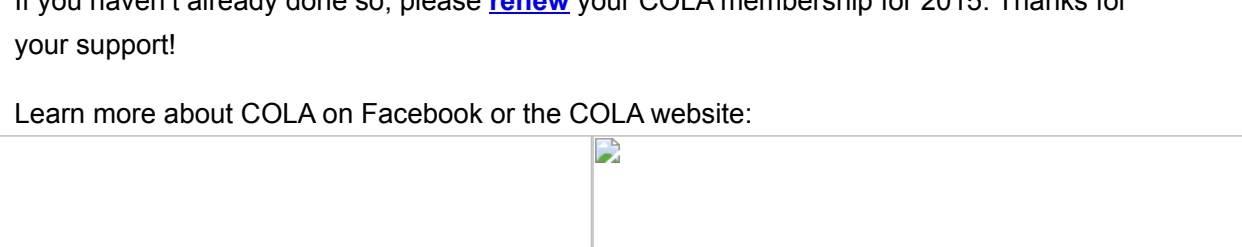
Malin has caught an estimated 400 legal musky fish since 1964. His largest musky was just under 50 inches, caught in Lac Courte Oreilles in 2000.

Malin continues to guide one or two times a week.

Kathy Hanson is a free-lance reporter for the Sawyer County Gazette, the Sawyer County Field Editor for Our Wisconsin magazine, and Copy Editor for the Bayfield County Journal. She has also served as Staff Reporter, Business Feature Writer, Columnist, and Copy Editor for the Sawyer County Record.

If you haven't already done so, please [renew](#) your COLA membership for 2015. Thanks for your support!

Learn more about COLA on Facebook or the COLA website:



COLA Mission: 1) to protect, preserve and enhance the quality of Lac Courte Oreilles and Little Lac Courte Oreilles, their shorelands and surrounding areas, while respecting the interests of property owners and the rights of the general public; and 2) to consider, study, survey and respond to issues deemed relevant by COLA's membership.

This eNewsletter was sent to &It;&It;Email Address>>

[Unsubscribe](#) from future **Short Ears, Long Tales**

The eNewsletter Editor can be reached at:

COLA
P.O. Box 702
Hayward, WI 54843
courte.oreilles.lakes.association@gmail.com

COLA releases its Total Maximum Daily Load Report

[more information](#)

COLA finalizes its strategy to address the future health of our lakes

[more information](#)

Help COLA spread the good news - Like us on Facebook & share COLA's posts

UPCOMING EVENTS

LCO Foundation and COLA Charity Golf Tournament
August 15, 2015
Big Fish Golf Club
Registration 12 pm

Shotgun Start 1 pm
[Register Now!](#)

NOTICES

Native Aquatic Plants are Good!

Native aquatic plants play a key role in the ecology of a lake. They can help to maintain water quality, prevent shoreline erosion and provide habitat for a wide diversity of species from fish to amphibians to mammals. A few things to note about aquatic plant control in our lakes:

1. It is illegal to use any herbicide on aquatic native plants unless a permit is obtained from the WDNR.
2. The maximum area someone can hand pull or rake aquatic plants is 30 feet by their dock or along their shore. If more area is to be cleared, a WDNR permit is required. Plants must be removed from the water and disposed of on land.
3. Eurasian Water Milfoil (EWM) has been found in Little LCO. Invasive plants like Curly Leaf Pondweed (CLP) or EWM can be hand pulled without a permit. In fact, immediate action is encouraged to limit weed increase. However, CLP and EWM can spread by plant fragments, so great care is needed to remove all plant material.

Some helpful resources for hand-pulling EWM can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

Are your neighbors and extended family members of COLA?
If not, please ask them to [join](#).

Support COLA by contributing to the Lac Courte Oreilles Foundation

Why “Short Ears, ...?”

Lac Courte Oreilles, or Lake Short Ears, was the name used by the first French traders who visited what was then known as Ottawa Lake. A local band of Ottawas observed the custom of cutting off a portion of their ears.

Tales of Lac Courte Oreilles

This book, edited by Tom and Sue Burgess, together with COLA's history committee, compiled a detailed history of Lac Courte Oreilles. The book is available through [COLA](#) and the Sherman & Ruth Weiss Community Library in Hayward.

History Comes Alive

This 2004 publication, compiled and written by Caryl A. Pfaff and Ann Marie Penskofer, is a compilation of community and history center photographs available from the [Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa Community Library](#).

Thanks to all for a great COLA picnic!

[Past issues of Short Ears, Long Tales](#)

COLA Mission: 1) to protect, preserve and enhance the quality of Lac Courte Oreilles and Little Lac Courte Oreilles, their shorelands and surrounding areas, while respecting the interests of property owners and the rights of the general public; and 2) to consider, study, survey and respond to issues deemed relevant by COLA's membership.

This eNewsletter was sent to &It;&It;Email Address>>

[Unsubscribe](#) from future **Short Ears, Long Tales**

The eNewsletter Editor can be reached at:

COLA
P.O. Box 702
Hayward, WI 54843
courte.oreilles.lakes.association@gmail.com