Bio

Captain Don Miller

Don’s love of fishing began when he was four years old, like any other kid with a worm and a hook and a pole, catching bluegills and sunfish in a nearby river. By the time he was ten, he had read Homer LeBlanc’s book If You Want to Catch a Muskie, You have to Fish Hard and Think Like a Muskie. By the age of 15, he was fishing in a 14’ aluminum boat with a 10 hp Johnson outboard motor in the Detroit River for walleyes, and having incidental hookups with muskies. Throughout high school Don began venturing out in Lake St. Clair in an 18’ boat and targeting muskies. At the end of every outing, he would take time to analyze what was successful and what wasn’t, and made sure to use his mistakes as a learning experience for the next time. Back then, if you even hooked a muskie and didn’t boat it, your day was still considered a success.

Don’s study of the fish kingdom led him to believe that you either ARE lunch or are HAVING lunch. He began to see that muskies were the top of the food chain, and chose to pursue the fish that was most difficult, most elusive, and most prestigious to catch in fresh water. Shortly thereafter, Don decided to take things to the next level and pursue a charter captain’s license and became a charter captain at the age of 28. By his mid-thirties, he had fished with legends John Miner off the Canadian shoreline, and also Bob Brunner, Hank Bradley, and Homer LeBlanc in Michigan. He was under the tutelage of Homer LeBlanc for 10 years while his boat was moored behind Homer’s house in St. Clair Shores.

Don began to take a more innovative approach to fishing by using a software program to create a digital database of fish caught, with search criteria such as time of year, air and water temperature, barometric pressure, value, and state, wind direction, weather conditions, and water clarity. All fish strikes were recorded according to GPS coordinates. After enough data was acquired, he applied the database criteria to determine where to go in the lake that day for best possible action. This method cut to the chase, put the crosshairs on probable muskie location, and allowed premeditation of activity before the day began.

As an educator, Don utilized technology by using a multi-media, highly engaging PowerPoint presentation for his in-demand seminars, including the why and how of catching muskies, setups, the importance of catch-and-release, and how to prevent the spread of diseases affecting the fishery. He continues to reach out to the community via his website and his social media. Don has volunteered his boat, his expertise, and his time for numerous charitable foundations, research and studies on muskies, VHS and conservation studies for the DNR, and contributions to wildlife organizations.

In the course of his 40-year career, Don has fished with such notables as Bob Garner, Jerry Chipetta, Mike Avery, former Detroit Tiger pitcher Jack Morris, hockey stars Darian and Kevin Hatcher, Mike Norris, Jim Grandt, Bob Gwizdz, Mark Rominack, Tom Huggler, Eric Sharp, Chuck Lichon, George Richey, Tom Irwin, and Jim Saric. Unofficially, the biggest catch of his career (using the hall of Fame formula) was 56” by 25 ¾“ girth and 46.4 pounds, caught by a 12-year-old boy on a one-fish day, and successfully released.

Having obtained media coverage throughout the State of Michigan and Canada, Don has also authored several articles about muskie fishing, and had numerous stories written about him by other sportswriters and outdoor columnists. He has been featured in multiple TV shows, radio podcasts, and interviews throughout his career. Enthusiastic anglers from 33 different states across the nation, and from 14 different countries have come to Lake St. Clair to fish with Captain Miller and catch their trophy muskie. An impressive listing of features and articles about Captain Miller can be found on his website, <http://www.motorcitymuskies.com>.

His fishing career was highlighted by his enjoyment of being with and sharing his knowledge with other people, and learning from others as well. His personable characteristics, idiosyncratic sayings, and self-effacing attitude have contributed to his considerable backstory and repeat clientele. Don has gained a reputation that is a tough act to follow, and his “Motor City Muskies” reputation is irrefutable. Fishing with him has proven that the elusive game fish of the Great Lakes, the muskie, does not have to be a “once-in--a-lifetime” catch for the average angler.