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[00:00:00] **Speaker 1** Yeah, I was thinking one thing that is hard when you mention about the people, you know, catching the walleyes, especially watching them on television and you know they're catching these giants and let them go and it's for sport and and that's cool. But like I'd say like up here, it's really hard to expect people to let a walleye go that is legal, that could go in the frying pan, you know. And around here, like most of the lakes have the seeded territory regulations, right? And where you've got the 15 to 20 inches you can keep, 20 to 24 have to go back, and one over 24 you can keep. And you know if someone catches a nice 18 inch walleye, most people up here are going to keep it. I mean it's just good eating fish and it's a really nice fish to take deep.

[00:00:49] **Speaker 2** And we've got to put faith in the DNR and the scientists to make those rules and regulations to help that we can keep them, and they're not going to hurt the population. We kind of feel like, well, then, yeah, we're almost going to have to stick around.

[00:01:02] **Speaker 1** Well, and bass too. You know, you catch some bass, smallmouth, like out of these rivers and lakes, we don't keep the smallmouth. But if we hook one bad, like we're using plastic and we hook it and we know that fish, I mean, chance of it making, you know. We keep it and if it's legal and we filet it up and it's as good at eating you know especially didn't freeze it came out of cold water that's really good eating you know so we we encourage that if instead of just letting that fish float belly up you know why let's keep it in um but uh but walleyes that's a prize you know people aren't going to usually let those go.

[00:01:38] **Speaker 2** And I think some people are just more food-driven. You ask, what's the difference in these two populations of people that walleye fish? And I use my grandson as a good example. Last year, he got to have his alone time with his grandparents. And we went, yeah, I want to go catch a great big fish. We're like, OK, cool. So we go out. We end up. He catches a great, big musk.

[00:01:59] **Speaker 1** I mean, for, I don't know, this little lake here. He's three years old.

[00:02:01] **Speaker 2** He's three years old, and it's like this big. And we get all done, we let it go, and now he looks up and he goes, Mimi, now can we go get one we can eat?

[00:02:09] **Speaker 1** Yeah, so.

[00:02:09] **Speaker 2** You know, in his mind, he's like, he has had fish. He wants to just get one that we can eat because that's a special thing to him, you know. So...

[00:02:18] **Speaker 1** And there's a lot, we do get a lot of people like that, that they're very surprised when we tell them, you know, like, no, we're going to do catching a lease on the bass and the muskies. Um, but if we catch a walleye, you can keep a couple of walleyes, like oh, okay. You know, pretty excited about that.

[00:02:34] **Speaker 3** I'm sure you've eaten plenty of fish over the years is walleye. I mean what makes walleye different or special is there you can

[00:02:41] **Speaker 1** tell the difference? Well, I always said for most people, you know, because it doesn't taste like fish. I mean like most people you've got trout and salmon species that are you know they're very distinct and then you get into the other fish but but I it's yeah it's firm it's it's white yeah the thickness is even I think the thicknesses good it's not like a you know like you get a bluegill and unless it's a really big one by the time you you know you fry it is thin and And it's good, but there's not a lot of meat there, right? But I think the size is good, you know what I think that? And I think you can cook it a bunch, we do a lot experimenting on cooking, especially when we're in canoe country and we don't have all the, you don't always wanna have to fry them and whatever. And we cook, we poach some in butter and we broil them and we do bake them and we all sorts of stuff, so.

[00:03:34] **Speaker 3** Is there a wrong way to eat them?

[00:03:37] **Speaker 1** I just don't overcook them.

[00:03:39] **Speaker 2** No, and there's really creative ways to make them. You can make walleye cheek nachos.

[00:03:45] **Speaker 1** Yes, she did, yes she did.

[00:03:46] **Speaker 2** You'd play out and when you have a big enough wall you'd get the cheek out of it and perched one on each little tortilla.

[00:03:53] **Speaker 1** Yes you did, yes you did.

[00:03:55] **Speaker 2** Canadian wilderness, we did that.

[00:03:58] **Speaker 3** So tell me a little bit about the decision to mount a fish, what goes into that? Because obviously taxidermy is a big thing and like you talk about, you're making memories. So what's the difference between taking a picture versus like having something hang on the wall?

[00:04:15] **Speaker 1** Yeah, it's a kind of a controversial thing. I think when you're a professional, you have a responsibility to kind of set a standard for people and what you expect. But at the same time, you know, there are a lot of really good options now with replicas and so forth. Um, and, and we encourage replicas a lot. Every once in a while you get a fish that, um, you feel like it'd be hard to capture that fish with a replica, whether it's, uh, paint or size or whatever. And it's usually the story around that fish that really means the most. And like this fish here, you know, like Brenda said, she's caught bigger walleyes, you know in Schwalmian Bay and Green Bay and.

[00:05:00] **Speaker 2** Was just barely 30 inches, but for our 25th wedding anniversary, you know, he was like, well, what do you want to do? How do you wanna celebrate? You know, I'm pretty low maintenance. I said, can we go up to Canada on a canoe trip for 10 days? And so we did, and we went to a lake that I'd always wanted to go to, that we never had gone to. Because then I caught this fish, it was like a bonus at the end of the trip.

[00:05:24] **Speaker 1** It's on our way out, we're almost getting ready to get picked up.

[00:05:27] **Speaker 2** And if you look at the color, it's so unique. It was almost black in color. In fact, the taxidermist, I had spent a lot of time with him with pictures that we had taken and we were out in this bright sun with a good camera. So we had really good pictures. And I said, if you give it back to me and it looks like a walleye from Northern Wisconsin, I'm not gonna be happy because I need to have it look like this. And he did a really good job. But, you know, obviously we liked our taxiderma. There's just the memory there that sits with it, that surrounds you. I picture myself getting old here, and I have all those warm fuzzies that go with all the things that make me happy. And I grew up with it. I grew in this environment with, I ate wild game since I was a little kid, and fish, and John did, too. So for us.

[00:06:15] **Speaker 1** So we've honoring it in a way too. I think sometimes, you know, and some of the fish, you know, they have, you know, their prime spawning years with fish, you know? And once they're past that, you know, it's like, it does not nearly that kind of an impact that you might think. Now, with that said, again, we encourage rep, because muskies, you know, we have never actually caught it. Kept them, you know, all of our years guiding, we've never kept a muskie to get mounted. You take pictures, you take measurements of the girth and so forth, you know, everybody, we always encourage that. She caught a smallmouth bass that was almost 24 inches, just a hair under 24 inch smallmouth in a little river like that. That's going to be a replica someday. You don't have to do it right away either. Taking a fish to get mounted is a very stressful thing, because you give it to them. And then when you get back, that's what you get back and it's like, you have to make sure that they capture that fish and it is hard. It's out of your hands. You have to find the taxidermist that is really going to do justice to that fish.

[00:07:19] **Speaker 2** I like what you said though about honoring it, because that's the way I feel about it. And like, I have a friend, my friend is a retired fish biologist, and he's like, you know, that fish is ready to be turtle food, that's not, that not making little walleyes anymore. And

[00:07:33] **Speaker 3** Absolutely.

[00:07:34] **Speaker 2** There's some of that that goes into the thinking too, and of all the fishing, you know, I'm 64 years old and that's the only fish I've had mounted that I caught.

[00:07:44] **Speaker 1** Yep, and I've had two. The deer and doozle difference, once you shoot them, can't really let them go, so you know.

[00:07:55] **Speaker 2** We eat all of innocent and make things with the parts.

[00:07:59] **Speaker 1** Yeah, he'll do just that, so yeah.

[00:08:02] **Speaker 3** All right, anything else that you guys want to talk about or reference?

[00:08:06] **Speaker 1** Um. I think the only thing that I would say is we just are really at strange times, us being pretty familiar with kids and having gone through with our kids and seeing with our clients and their kids, figure out a way to get your kids involved with the fishing in nature, the whole experience, and try and get that fire lit because We are, our fishing numbers are declining. We need, we need people in the sport. And we need, it's just such a good, healthy connection you can have with your kids. So that's why I say, when do you hire a guide, hire a guy that can, that is going to be about, about your kids or your spouse having a really good time because it might not be a quest for catching as many fish as possible, but an experience they won't forget. And once you light that fire, it's exciting. I mean, that's a lifelong, that is a lifelong thing, so.

[00:09:14] **Speaker 3** Absolutely. All right. Can I get you to say and spell your names and the title of the business just so I have it all correct on tape?

[00:09:24] **Speaker 1** Sure. John, J-O-H-N, Meyer, M-A-I-E-R, and the business is True North Guiding and Outfitters.

[00:09:32] **Speaker 2** And I'm Brenda.

[00:09:36] **Speaker 1** Thanks a lot, you guys.

[00:09:37] **Speaker 2** This was great!