

The Albany Anglers Tackle Box

by Gord Ellis

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Fishing the Albany River is one of the most unique experiences an angler can enjoy in Northern Ontario. The river, its lakes and countless tributaries are home to three of Canada prized sport fish: northern pike, walleye and brook trout. Not only are these fish living together in this legendary river system, they all can achieve trophy size as well. Being well stocked with the right lures can be the difference between having just good fishing, and having the trip of your life.

Here are the things I pack in my tackle box when heading to the Albany.

Brook Trout Spoons

A selection of casting spoons from one quarter to five eighths of an ounce will cover most brook trout needs. The selection should include several types including Little Cleo, Krocodile, EGB, Tor-P-Do, Little Jewel, Devle Dog and Koho.

Tops colours for specs include silver/red; brass/orange/ silver/brass, fire tiger and brass. Fish these lures with a 7 or 8 foot medium action spinning rod, and a reel loaded with 8 pound monofilament line.

Spinners: The lures are a must for any serious speckled trout angler. A selection of spinners from small and light weight, to rather large (three quarters of an ounce), makes sense on big water like the Albany. In fast current, or high winds, you will need a spinner with heft. Best brands include the #3, #4 Mepps Aglia, Panther Martin, Double Loon, Vibrax, and Rooster Tail. Dressed bucktails tails are nice but not always necessary. Blade colours that work include silver, brass, fire tiger, blue, and hot red.

Jigs: An unusual choice for trout, but one of my favourite lures for brookies anywhere they are found. Bucktail or hair jigs of about one quarter to three eighths of an ounce are strong medicine for brookies. In shallow water, a lighter jig of one eighths of an ounce are a good best. Best colours for twister bodies are white, black and orange. Multi-coloured streamer hair jigs are especially deadly in current.

Flies: One of the most effective choices for Albany brook trout are wet flies like the Muddler Minnow, Clouser Minnow Mickey Finn and Strip Leech. Larger sizes in #6 - #4 will attract big trout. Go with dark coloured flies like black brown or olive. In late June and early July, dry flies such as the Stimulator are deadly for brook trout that are targeting stoneflies and mayflies on top. As for terminal tackle. A 7 weight fly rod with weight forward floating line will serve you well on the Albany and its tributaries.

Spoons- a couple dozen 1/2 to 1 ounce spoons from 3 to 6 inches will cover most situations. You should have a varied selection including Eppinger Daredevle red and white; Len Thompson five of diamonds (yellow and black); Lucky Strike Toronto Spoons (silver/brass); Northland Jaw Beakers and a few Gator Spoons (fire tiger).

Spinners

- You'll need a handful of the following: Mepps Musky Killers (silver/black) ; Lindy Musky Roller (red blade, black tail); 1 1/2 ounce Buchertails (black body/silver blade), Giant Tandem Spin (chart/yellow) and Northland Buzz-Ard Buzzer (white/silver).

Soft Plastic –

mostly big stuff, like 6-8 inch Berkley Power Grubs; Power Lizards; Jerk Shads and Inshore Minnows. The Lindy Gator Tube is worth a try in deep water. Best plastic colours are white, pearl and chartreuse bodies in that order. Bring a selection of Northland Buckshot Rattle Jigs and Swimming jigs in 1/2 ounce to 1 ounce plus some 5/0 worm hooks .

Flies - If you are fly fishing, have some Dahlberg Divers, Lefty Deceivers and any large white streamer of 3 to 5 inches. The flies should be tied on quality hooks from 2/0 to 5/0. Weed guards on a fly never hurt. Bring lots of thin wire leader material.

Cranks and Jerks: Rapala Super Shad Raps in pearl and red/white and Lindy Big M in fire tiger or silver shiner are both deadly pike trolling lures; Rapala Husky Jerk is a great shallow water pike bait; the 8 inch Suick in sucker is a classic jerk bait best used over weed beds or rock reefs.

Topwater:- The Rapala Skitter Pop (largest size), Zara Spook (4 inch) and Rebel Pop R are all deadly on pike. White, silver or frog are top water colours of choice for pike. Rubber weedless frogs or popular for largemouth bass fishing are also a good choice for pike in heavy sloop and reeds.

Steel leaders: – 2 dozen good quality 12- 18 inch steel leaders of no less than 50 lb. test or fluorocarbon of 80lb test. Make sure the snaps are Berkley Cross Lok. A good leader is an absolute must when fishing for pike.

Other pike fishing tools (non - tackle) - needle nose pliers, surgical hemostats, bolt cutters, jaw spreaders, file, 60 inch measuring tape, slime towel Lindy Fish Handling Glove, waterproof camera and first aid kit.

Walleye Jigs –

You should have a good selection of ball head jigs from one quarter to a half ounce heads. Bullet head jigs heads are great if you are fishing in heavier current. Use good quality jigs that have a long hook shank and wide gap. Jig head colours of red, orange, pink, tallow and chartreuse are effective.

Twister/grub bodies of 3 to 4 inches in length are standard for walleye. Scented bodies like the Berkley Power Grub, Berkley Gulp, Yum and Exude have the flavour advantage over plain plastic. Top twister colours include white, yellow, chartreuse, yellow, pink, orange and black with silver tail. Bucktail or hair jigs are a classic choice on the big northern rivers. Yellow, orange and white bucktail will catch you many walleye.

Crankbaits

In the tail out of the large pools on the Albany, or on the windswept lakes of Makok and Miminiska, crankbaits are a deadly lure for trophy walleye. The 4 or 5 inch Rapala Husky Jerk is tough to beat in most conditions, and will attract some very large fish when cast or trolled. Other good lures for trolling include the Rapala Shad Rap, the Cotton Cordell Shad and the Wally Diver. When trolling on a long leader behind a heavy bottom bouncer, floating minnow shaped crank baits like the classic floating Rapala or Rebel are very effective. A crankbait with a dark top and light side will add a natural looking flash. Good basic colours are black/silver, black/gold, black/ orange, perch and fire tiger.

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Spoons -

Vertical jigging spoons are an excellent and unusual choice for walleye in deeper water. Top types of jigging spoons include Hopkins, Swedish Pimple, Snake spoon and Krocodile in half ounce. Silver or brass spoons are the best choice. Attach the spoon with a single metal clip, and jerk the spoon aggressively over reefs and at drop offs. Very good on sunny, flat days. Casting 4 inch spoons like the Little Cleo, Aqua Spoon and Krocodile will often catch walleye when trolled in lakes, or worked in large pools. Top colours are black/white, orange/brass and red/ white.

The Albany walleye is an aggressive strain of walleye, and love spinners. Larger in-line spinners like the #3-4 Mepps Aglia, Panther Martin, Vibrax and Double Loon are very effective when fish are tucked behind boulders or at tail out of large pools. You can also troll spinners in lakes but need to add some weight to get the spinner down. A good ball bearing snap swivel will reduce line twist.

This and other articles prepared by Gord Ellis, are a free information service of Ontario Canada's Premier Outdoor Adventure Provider. Information about Fly In Fishing Adventures is available at www.wildernessnorth.com or 888-465-3474.