

The 2008 Anglers Resolutions By Gord Ellis

It,s a New Year, and for many of us that means it,s time for our annual resolutions. I,d like to meet the person who first floated the idea of doing New Years resolutions. A couple choice words would be coming their way. What a self defeating way to start the year. Sadly the resolution horse is long out of the barn, and we,re all suckers for them anyway. New Years resolutions traditionally focus around things like improving spousal communication, quitting smoking or losing weight. Bo-ring! Why not focus on the things that really matter, like fishing. With that in mind here are a few angling resolutions I came up with for 2008. Feel free to make them your own.

In 2008...

1. I Will Fish More - This is an easy one. We all need to fish more. It really is good for us. Yes, there are those who believe some of us are already fishing too much. There are even some people who think fishing is a waste of time. These folks believe there are more useful ways to use a spring morning, like cleaning out the shed or flipping the garden. The fact is fishing more will add years to your life, even if you are overweight, anti-social and smoke. I,m sure there are studies out there to prove it, but until I find them, just say it,s from a reliable source. I,ve had some regrets in my life, but I,ve never regretted fishing more. You won,t either.

2. I Will Refrigerate Those Worms - The year is 1998. It is a hot, muggy August day. A certain Canadian angler comes home from a day of walleye fishing and unloads his gear. The tackle goes in the shed. The boat is backed up, plugged in and unloaded.

The fish are cleaned, the guts carefully wrapped up and frozen until garbage day. The worms? Well they somehow are left inside the patio of the house. The average day time temperature in that patio? About 100 F. A week later, the same Canadian angler is looking around the patio and accidentally knocks a white styro-foam container off the bench. The container cracks opens and the liquid contents ooze out onto the rug. The smell is not easily described, but if you were to try, the words putrid, skunk and vomit would be included. For the next year, visitors to the Canadian anglers house are asked to take the front entrance. Refrigerate those worms.

3. I Will Take Longer Shore lunches - Fishing is great. We all love it. It,s tough to beat fighting a big pike in a thick weed bed, or waiting to see just how big that walleye thumping below the boat is. However, the mid-day pause for shore lunch is often the very best part of the angling day. Partially it is because the food is so good. Crispy walleye, hot baked beans, a fat slice of bread and a cup of coffee. Tough to beat that menu anywhere. Yet shore lunch also provides a nice chance to sit back with friends and loved ones and talk about the good stuff. And when I say the good stuff, I mean everything but the mundane junk we usually talk about : work, chores, neighbours etc. Shore lunch is best shared with family, and friends old and new. Surrounded by the beauty of the north, with the lake lapping up on the shore, there is no better way to get to know someone. Don,t rush that shore lunch in 2008.

4. I Will Catch and Release More Fish - When I was growing up, we killed every fish we caught. Didn,t matter how big or small, it was what you did. As the years have gone on, most of us have been selectively releasing more of our fish. Partially it has been due to regulation, and partially education.

Yet in 2008, it is more obvious than ever that releasing fish is the single best way to ensure good fishing in the future. No longer is it necessary to kill a trophy pike, walleye or brook trout for a mount. You can have a brilliant graphite replica done and it will likely be better than a skin mount. Plus that big trophy will go back to do its thing. Fishing has improved in many parts of Canada thanks to the catch and release. Oddly enough, releasing more fish ultimately equals catching more fish. How cool is that?

5. I Will Pinch My Barb - The Year is 1986. A certain Canadian angler is fishing with another, older Canadian angler on a Northwestern Ontario Lake. They are fishing for muskie. The older Canadian angler hooks a nice muskie and the other Canadian angler starts to click action photos. One of the photos the Canadian angler would like is of the other older Canadian angler picking up the muskie by hand. The lucky Canadian angler agrees, but the muskie swings and buries a giant treble hook in the top of his hand. The trip ends with the Canadian angler driving the other older Canadian angler to the hospital to have the hook removed. The Sioux Lookout based doctor takes the lure and puts it on a wall with about 100 others he,s taken out of people over the years.

In 1996, the Canadian angler is fishing the Albany River with his brother. The fishing is good and many walleye are caught. At one point, the Canadian angler,s brother reaches down to pick up a walleye that has a Rapala sideways in its mouth. The walleye buries a treble in the brothers hand. Since no hospital is close by, the Canadian angler pushes the treble hook in his brothers hand through and cuts the barbs. The brother says it hurts.

In 2007, the Canadian angler is back on the Albany watershed, this time fly fishing the Keezhik River, at Wilderness North. The Canadian angler is casting his fly pretty well, and is pleased with himself.

Sadly, not all the Canadian angler,s loops are that nice as he sinks a rather large muddler fly into his neck. The Canadian angler is quite appalled by this, but reaches back and easily pulls the barbless hook out of his neck. He bleeds a little but he carries on catching brookies.

In 2008, pinch your barb.

All the best in the New Year.