

Fishing has been really good so far this year. Had a good run early in Baffin. Several highlights happened, including Caleb McCumber catching a 32 incher on a pink Fat Boy, Jeremy Rhodes catching over 22 pounds on three fish...HIS FIRST THREE FISH EVER on a Fat Boy. In fact, his first bite ever on a Fat Boy was a 30 inch 8.75! I told him, "That's just wrong, dude! People have fished for years trying to catch a 30 on a Corky, and you catch one on your first bite. It's just wrong!" He knew I was messing with him....it was all smiles.

Another highlight had occurred just before he caught those three. I caught a 10 on a Catch 5. We had been getting a few bites on plum Bass Assassins. I threw out there and got another, and could tell the fish was heavy, but it pulled off. "HmMMM," I thought. "These fish are pretty easy to catch. Maybe I can get one to bite a twitch bait." First cast with the Catch 5 produced the 10. Never got another bite on it. Oh well, at least Jeremy figured out how to use his Fat Boy.

Beau Blackard's 28 inch 9 pounder provided another thrill to all involved in that day. The pics I took of his fish are the best I've ever taken, in my opinion. They are just stupid good! That fish's head was enormous, and the pics did her justice. Beau knows how to smile too; he seems to catch big every year when they come down. Unfortunately for him, the bet he had with his partners that day was based on length. His buddy Tommy Marik caught a 29.5 that day to win the wager! LOL. Poor Beau. Yeah right....

Moved north more recently and had three great days in a row. Caught another 30 up this way, on a white Skitterwalk during that little run. Overall, I've had a bunch of guys catch their personal best trout while fishing with me lately, and that's a good thing. Hell, Clayton Runyan did it twice over in 15 minutes. Gotta love that.

On another note, I've been painting plenty of birds when I'm not fishing. Currently working on a series I'm calling North America's Iconic Birds. To date, I've finished five pieces: Northern Cardinal, Bald Eagle, American Robin, Common Raven and Ruby-throated Hummingbird. I do them all with acrylic paints and map pencils, on various sized canvases and art boards. The birds are all life-sized in the paintings, so they range from 3-4 inches (Hummers) to 37 inches (Eagle). I intend to do at least 12 for the series, so I can make a 2015 calendar, using jpegs made off the originals. Planning on including the following birds....Eastern Bluebird, Whooping Crane, Baltimore Oriole, Mallard, Wild Turkey. Not sure about the others. I have solicited suggestions about that on FaceBook, and received a bunch of input...which I greatly appreciated. Just lovin' the work. I'll paste a couple of jpegs of the pieces below.

