

# ODU Magazine™

March 2013 Boat House

USING  
SOUND  
TO CATCH  
FISH

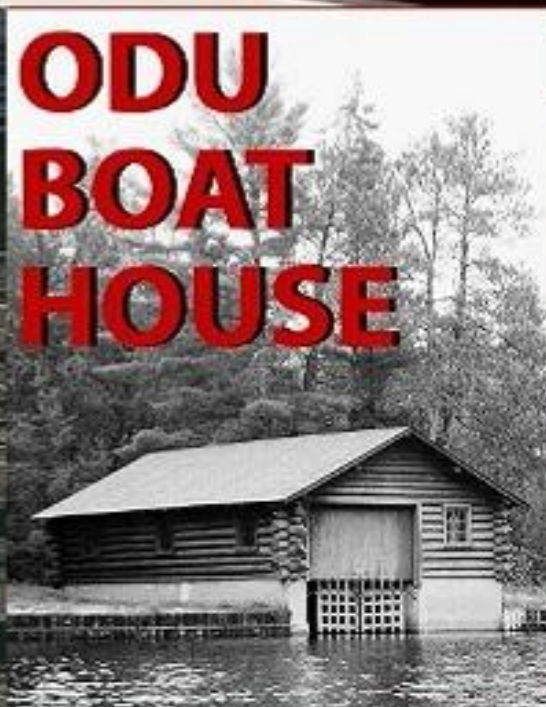


Accessorizing  
Your Boat

Northeast  
River Walleye

Winter Strategies  
For Spring Success

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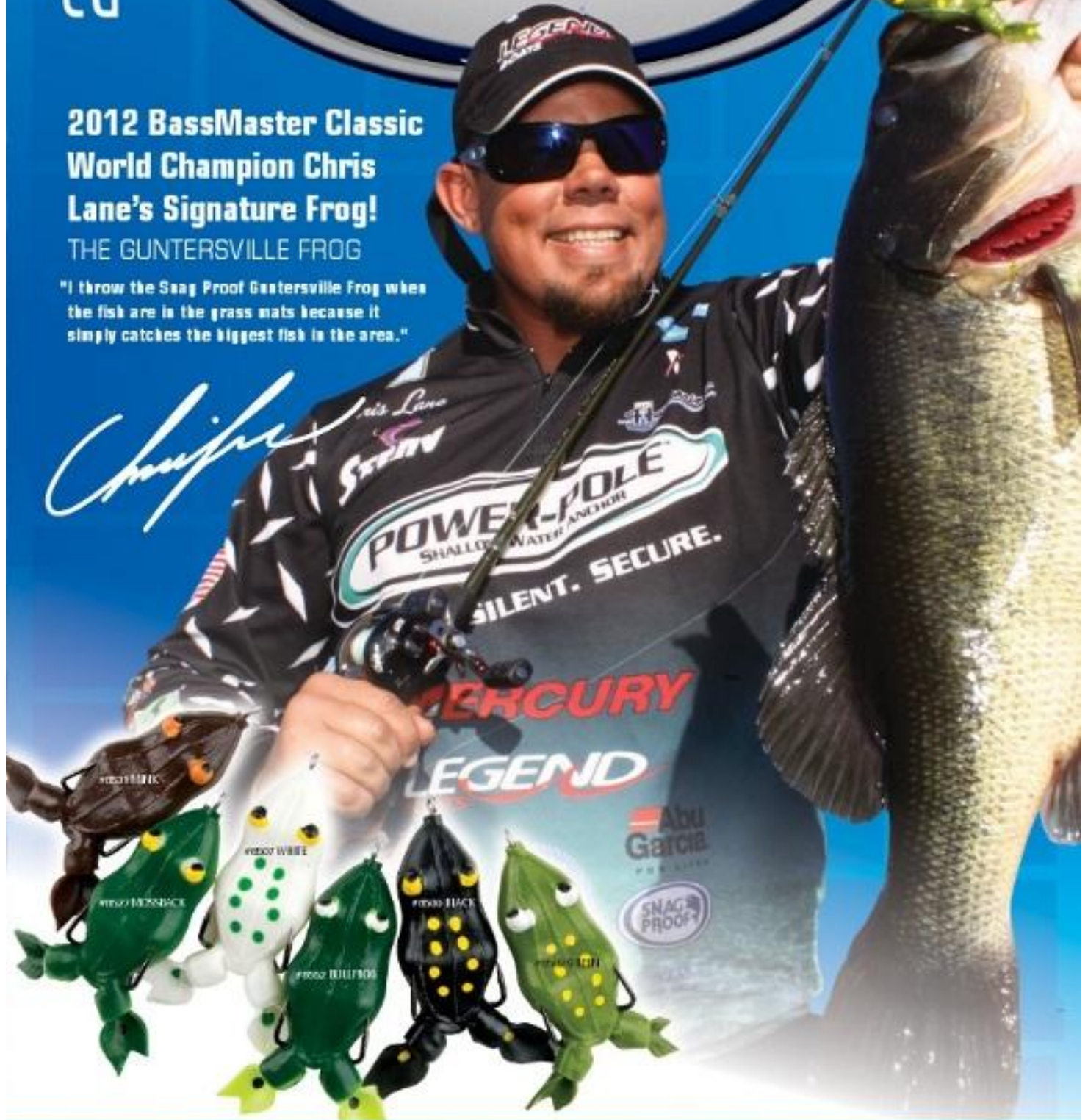
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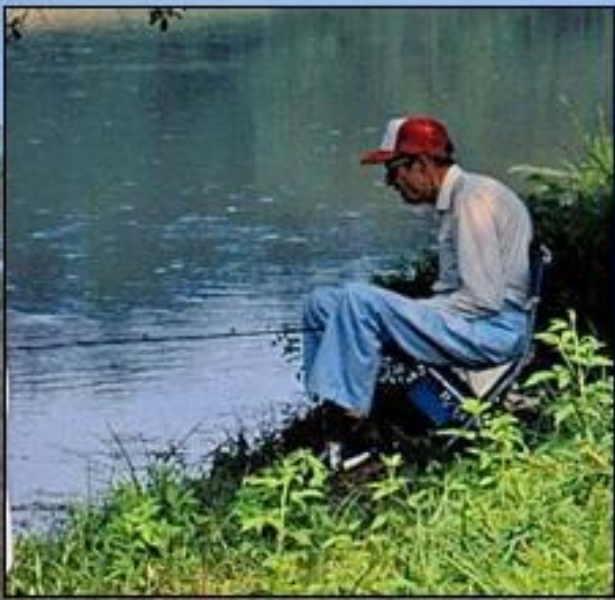
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*Chris Lane*







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My Heart With Wonderful  
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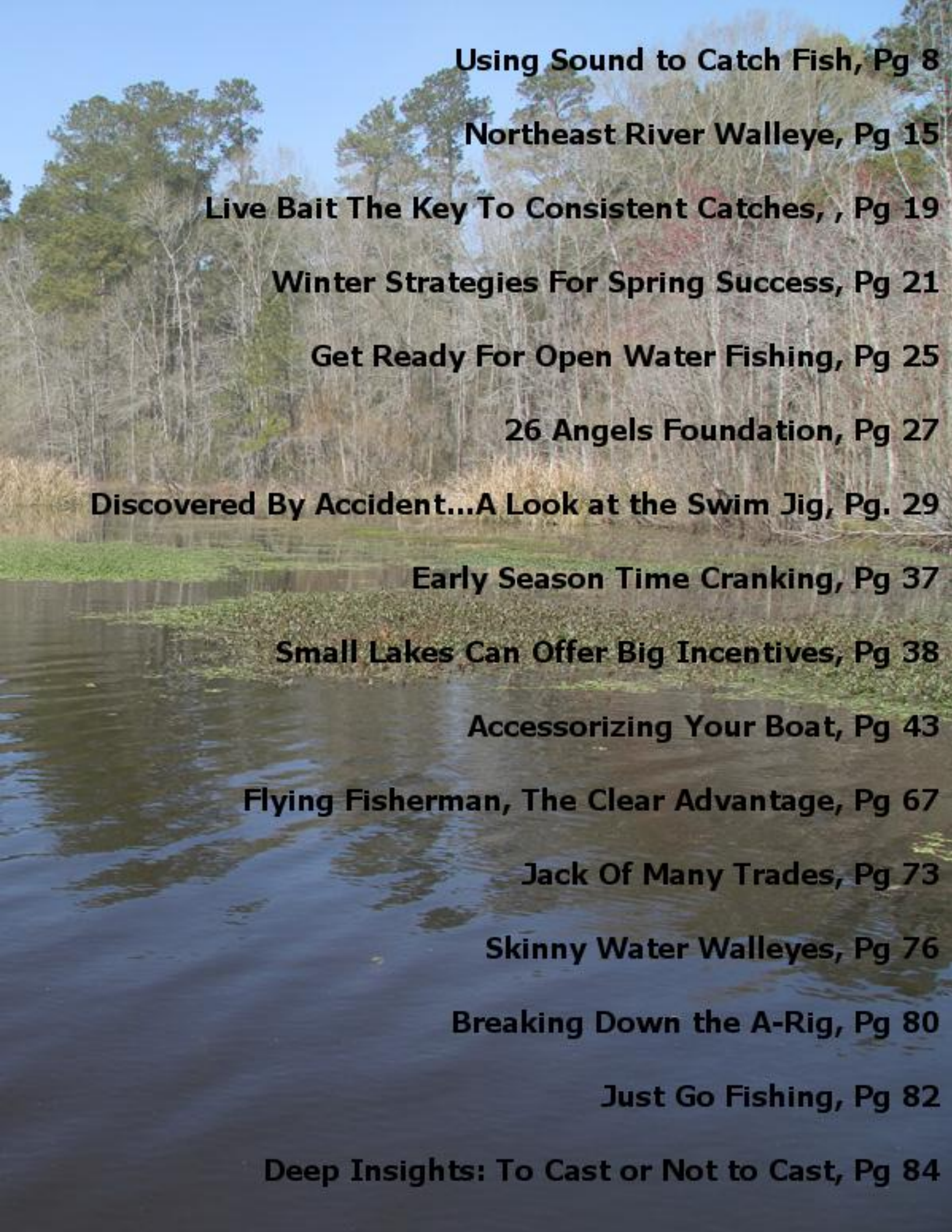
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Spring's fishing for many of us is always an adventure. Not only do you have to adapt to the changing weather conditions you have to figure how those changes are going to affect the fishing. Just recently I had the opportunity to go fishing with Sean Lewis (Twin Lake Outfitters, 434-447-2710) and Terry Monteleone (Picasso Lures, 724-313-8014; [www.picassooutdoors.com](http://www.picassooutdoors.com)) on Kerr Lake and Lake Gaston both of which are on the Virginia/North Carolina border. In the period of a few days, we experienced everything from sunny 78-degree weather to high winds, and a torrential down pour to snow and a white out. The water temperature between the two lakes was surprisingly close with temperatures ranging from 44 to 51 degrees. The wind blew so hard every day that we had very little opportunity to fish the main lake, just knowing they

**Editor:** Larry Thornhill  
[Larry@odumagazine.com](mailto:Larry@odumagazine.com)

**Assistant Editor:**  
 Bill Schwarz, [bill@odumagazine.com](mailto:bill@odumagazine.com)

**Publishing Team:** Bill Schwarz & Richard Barker

**Photographer:** Kathy Barker

Advertising inquirers for our Fishing Magazines, ODU Fishing News or ODU Hunting News should be e-mailed to:  
[webmaster@odumagazine.com](mailto:webmaster@odumagazine.com)

**Contributing Writers:** Lawrence Gunther, Bill Vanderford, D&B Ice Adventures, Capt. Bill Miller, Garrett Svir, Bob Jensen, Glenn Walker, Captain Mike Gerry, Bob Wattendorf, Drew Dutterer, Bill Pouder, Ted Takasaki, Scott Richardson, Chris Jenkins, Noel Vick, Brian "Bro" Brosdahl, Jason Mitchell

Business Address: 4315 Cross Ridge Ct., Valrico, FL 33594

**Photos:** Cover photo is of a Yar-Craft 186 TFX. Index photo provided by ODU Magazine/Larry Thornhill of Santee Cooper Lake in late winter.

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were staging just waiting to head back into the creeks for the spring spawn.

As you can tell Mother Nature was not being kind to us this time around and gave us plenty of opportunities to overcome. However, with a little patience, we knew we were going to hopefully persevere, the emphasis in this case being on hopefully. We threw just about everything in our arsenal before we gave up and went back to our tried and true baits that we always resort to when everything else fails. Do you want to take a wild guess what the top three producing baits were? Would you have guessed a ½ oz. Copper/Brown Rat-L-Trap™, ½ oz. Picasso Chartreuse White spinner bait with gold silver willow blades, and the Picasso School-e-Rig? Every one of us just knew we could catch fish with these baits, and guess what? We did!

I guess the moral to this story is be prepared for the unexpected. And when all else fails return to your tried and true time tested baits. Confidence is an amazing thing, without it, you easily get frustrated. With it, you somehow manage to persevere. In this case, you just know that you will catch fish. You may not slay them but to me catching fish is a lot better option then getting skunked.

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Enjoy the outdoors,

Larry Thornhill  
Editor Chief  
813-230-2346

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# Using Sound to Catch Fish

By Lawrence Gunther



Fish would not survive if they had to depend on sight alone to locate prey. Low light, water turbidity, dense aquatic weed growth and clever camouflage all work against fish finding food with their eyes. Even under optimum conditions water transmits light so weakly all colors in the visible spectrum appear black by the depth of 75 feet (25 meters). Consequently,

much of a fish's life is spent technically "blind", (details people see at 20 feet above water are seen by fish at 2 feet or less under water).

Even those saltwater predatory fish living in the crystal clear oceans along the equator capable of seeing extremely long distances need to swim miles each day to find food, and the way they find those humungous bait balls surrounded by every living thing in the sea for miles around is by listening.

Water conducts sound at a rate of 4,818 feet per second, almost five times the speed of sound traveling through air. However, since water is 800 times denser than air, it only allows one ten-thousandth of air-borne sound to penetrate. For fishers this means fish most likely won't hear our conversations, but they do hear any sound generated in direct contact with water such as lures landing on the surface, the hum of trolling motors, and anything that causes a boat to resonate such as heavy footsteps, dropped tackle, or compartment doors slamming shut.

Fish possess two distinct senses to detect and track prey by the sound waves they produce. The first is a lateral line that runs down the center of each side of their body. The seconds are actual ears sealed inside their heads.

The ears of a fish are enclosed in a bony structure in the skull just behind the eyes. Because fish are made up mostly of water and of the same density, sounds pass easily through a fish's body to their inner ear. Sounds are also magnified by a fish's swim bladder, which is an elastic membrane filled





with gas that resonates from sound like a drum. Fish can discern the smallest sounds in their ears such as minnows busting on the surface and crawfish scrabbling over rocks from as far away as 50 feet).

When we listen to underwater sounds seem to originate from between our ears. Because we are used to processing sound that travels at one-fifth the speed, our brains are unprepared to make sense of what our ears are sensing. However, since fish have evolved into a world where sound carries quickly, their processing and reaction speeds have also developed accordingly, which explains why our baits can be engulfed almost immediately upon contacting water.

Fish are attracted to things they hear that resemble potential food. They will often move closer to satisfy their curiosity; even if they aren't hungry. Like a baby, their mouths are their primary tool for directly exploring their world through senses such as smell, feel and taste.



The lateral lines on the sides of fish made up of tiny jelly filled sacks can detect sound vibrations (hertz) from 80 all the way down to one hertz (one vibration per second). A human with typical hearing begins to perceive sound waves at 20,000 hertz, and can hear low frequency sound down to 20 hertz.

High-frequency sound waves can best be described as many tall pointed mountain peaks close together, where as low-frequency sound waves can be described more as low hills spread a long way apart.





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A quick snap shot of a few of our 2013 classes



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Pictured: Strike King Premium 3/8 oz  
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Scientists believe that whales can transmit and receive low-frequency sound waves (40 hertz) over distances a long way in excess of 1,000 miles.

Fish can detect unseen sources of low frequency sounds such as those produced by wobbling crankbaits long before they see them. They can also use their lateral lines to determine baits' trajectory fairly accurately, which explains how species such as Walleye are able to swim considerable distances in stained water and then accurately intercept vibrating artificial baits being trolled.

Artificial baits making noise under ideal visibility conditions will draw a fish's attention, but can be a disadvantage if it provides fish

with sufficient time to move in close and rule out the source of the sound as being an unknown food source. Reaction baits depend on the element of surprise; causing fish to respond

compulsively, which is why hard-body baits aren't required to be exact visual reproductions of prey.

For example, willow leaves on spinner bait transmit maximum visual flash and almost no sound, which is why they are used for burning in water with moderate to high clarity. A single large Colorado blade, on the other hand, emits a throbbing low-frequency sound intended to provide fish with an audible target.

Use sound to your advantage by working baits in ways that mimic sounds given off by prey. Alerting fish that prey is in the area is also the premise of tools such as the "Hydro Wave", as well as other less technical ploys such as rhythmically thumping the bottom of the boat, revving an outboard motor, slapping the surface of the water, adjusting the throttles on boats equipped with dual engines to create harmonic resonance, etc. More directly, we can bounce jigs off the bottom, crash crankbaits into structure, flutter soft plastics through the water column, or select baits with internal noise makers.

The important variable when determining just how much noise you want your bait to make is the distance fish are able to see at any one time. The idea is to draw fish, in so they react impulsively. If a fish can visually target your bait at between five to ten feet out, then minimal sound is best. If conditions call for deploying baits that allow fish to target your bait using





**Pictured: Picasso Lures ½ oz. Double Willow Painted Blades Spinnerbait**

hearing exclusively, such as in heavily stained water or at night, then baits that emit steady sounds fished in a predictable (non-erratic) fashion are more appropriate. More is not always better.

The challenge for us fishers is to avoid creating totally unnatural sounds that cause predatory fish to drop their habitual offensive posture. Apex predators fear little in their underwater world and are

always curious to learn. However, they also remember what it was like to be pursued as a fry by something much larger, and it's these sonic reminders that can turn fish off from feeding.

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## **A New Fishing Season Fills My Heart With Wonderful Memories Of The Best Man I Ever Knew**

**By Bill Vanderford**

He was born during that magical period of spring when the fishing is best, the trees and wild flowers are beginning to bloom, and life is full of promise. My first encounter with this tall man, who proudly portrayed his Cherokee ancestry with coal-black hair and high cheekbones, was in the maternity ward of a hospital in the suburbs of Spokane, Washington. Though he was already 40 years old and had been sent out west to battle an insect problem for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, even the doctors knew of his love for fishing and his excitement to be having a son. So, when the old bearded doctor handed me to my father a few minutes after my birth, he smilingly said, "Here he is, all's wrong is he's a fisherman." The old Doc never knew how prophetic those words would come to be.

I was introduced to fishing in the beautiful outdoors of the Pacific Northwest before my first birthday, but fishing had started differently for my Dad. His folks were poor farmers and had 12 children, so any fish; they caught meant food on the table during those dark days of the Great Depression.

Dad and his brothers would quietly wade the muddy Mississippi streams and rivers while feeling for catfish in the holes and cuts under the banks with deft fingers.



"You could always tell the difference between a catfish and a water moccasin by feeling the water movement near the gill openings of a cat," Dad explained. Nevertheless, he almost died at 10 years old from a mistake he made with a poisonous cottonmouth.

Because he had to work so hard to help his family, he was almost 40 years old before he had the chance to fish for fun. The opportunity came when the Department of Agriculture sent him to Spokane, Washington. During that time, most of the west was a sportsman's paradise.

I can still see vivid pictures in my mind from the stories Dad told of battles with huge Kamloop's trout at Lake Pend Oreille in northern Idaho, or the beauty of the salmon and steelhead of British Columbia, Canada to the north. As early as my first birthday, however, he would pass up those more exciting trips to go trolling with me on some of Washington's picturesque lakes.

Many were the days that I would sit on the board-seat between his legs clutching a fishing rod. I would watch with wide eyes as his strong arms often rowed the wooden boat from daylight until dark without a break. It was during one of those peaceful days on Lake Chelan that I caught my first fish. I was only 3 years old at the time, but the memory of fighting and landing that 13-inch rainbow trout is still fresh today.

Beginning with those early days in Washington, Dad and I shared many exciting outdoor experiences in a multitude of unforgettable settings. We explored the spectacular trout rivers and streams of northern Georgia, South Carolina, and North Carolina, the coastal islands, marshes, rivers, and bays of Georgia and Florida, and the inland rivers, ponds, and lakes of Georgia.

During those wonderful days together, Dad taught me to respect nature and the environment, remember the sacrifice of those who paid with their lives for the freedom we enjoy, to pass on what I had learned to those who will mold our future, and to enjoy the present to the fullest. I have tried my best to live up to those high standards that he set for me.

Though he has been gone now for more than 20 years, my life and those of many others, including a bubbly Grandaughter named PJ, were greatly affected by the teachings of this wonderful man. He enlightened us all through his knowledge of nature and his love of angling to see and appreciate a better, more positive side of life. He was the finest man I ever knew,

and when the trees and flowers begin to bloom again, and a new fishing season is on the horizon, I miss him so much! Bill Vanderford has won numerous awards for his writing and photography, and has been inducted into the National Freshwater Fishing Hall of Fame as a Legendary Guide. He can be reached at 770-289-1543, at [jfish51@aol.com](mailto:jfish51@aol.com) or at his web site: [www.georgiafishing.com](http://www.georgiafishing.com).





## Northeast River Walleye (In The Wood)

By D&B Ice  
Adventures



The Connecticut River is a vast body of water stretching 407 miles. The river offers up some great fishing and often times an underestimated fishery. The winter months offer anglers early ice on the setbacks in late December with chances to catch panfish, walleyes, pike, white perch and bass. The northern region also holds some very respectable trout. Fishing the river can sometimes be a challenge as one must learn how to read the river and its flow. Whether you're fishing the main river or a setback, the current can make or break your day.

Summer time walleye fishing is one of our favorite times to fish. The method we use for catching great numbers of walleye is fishing them in the "wood". Most of our vertical jigging has been for crappies when they move out onto a deep structure in the summer months, we used this same pattern to locate and catch walleye on the Connecticut River.

Walleye can be found throughout the Connecticut River as far north to the first dam. There is no doubt that some areas offer better fishing than others but there are certain things we look for in any stretch of the river to be successful. Bends in the river create debris and logs to jam up during high-water times; these areas become great ambush points for walleye. They also





offer up shade for the fish during the warm summer months. The most productive jams are those that are found in 15 feet or water or more. We use our side Hummingbird imaging locating these jams, but most of them are visible above the water. Hurricane Irene last spring left us with a lot of this. Old logs and timber will float downstream and literally pile up on these bends.

Once you have located these areas it's just a matter of positioning the boat so you can fish them consistently. We use a simple lead jig head tipped with a crawler to entice the fish into biting. Dark and neutral colors usually work the best when fishing this river system. More times than not the water is at best stained and dark colors produce a silhouette enabling the fish to detect them. My two favorites are simple, black and white. We'll use up to a half ounce jig when there is a quick current,





when the current is slack we'd prefer a ¼ ounce. The trick is getting the bait down through the timber and back up with a walleye without losing too many jigs. The technique is nothing special; drop your jig to the bottom, bounce, pause repeat. The closer to the structure you can get the better. Once the sun comes up, fish the shaded side of the logs, the walleye will lay right under them. The goal is to drop your jig in front of their face, so they have no choice but to eat.

Like we mentioned before, reading the river, and the current is the biggest key to our success. We can catch fish at most hours of the day in any weather condition, water clarity, etc. . . but if the current is wrong, then you won't stand a chance. Little to no current is best when using this method to catch walleye. The

fish will use this time to their advantage to maximize their efficiency when feeding, less current means less energy they have to use while feeding. It is important to have a few spots in your area. We have noticed that it doesn't take long for the fish to become conditioned to our presentation. Having multiple spots to run back and forth to allow us to stay on active aggressive fish all day long. (all photos from: [D&B Ice Adventures](#))





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# Live Bait The Key To Consistent Catches

By Capt. Bill Miller

For overall consistency and productivity, you can't beat live bait for most inshore pursuits. My live baits of choice are scaled sardines (whitebait), live shrimp and pinfish. I try to have all of them in my bait well if I can. Threadfin herring (greenbacks) will also work, but their weakness and low endurance makes them a lesser preference.

Whitebait is my No 1 choice, although at times, it can be hard to find and catch. Castnetting is the primary method, but some may lack the interest and/or ability to throw a net.

Shrimp is my second choice for live bait. They're commonly available at most bait shops, but you do have to budget for the extra cost. For many, that's a fair trade-off to avoid getting wet and dirty from castnet duties. Leaving the dock with bait in your well is also a psychological benefit.



*Photo: By David A Brown*

Next on my bait list are hand-size pinfish – because you never know when you might run into cobia, tarpon, shark, grouper, etc. Catch these hardy baits with a trap set near the edge of a grass flat or by anchoring along the edge of the flat and using a small piece of squid on a No. 10 hook. Smaller pinfish can also be used the same as the whitebait for trout, reds, snook, etc.

Whatever baitfish I'm catching, I like the bigger ones when I head offshore because I'm usually going for bigger fish like grouper, snapper, amberjacks or bigger kings. Larger whitebait and threadfins hang around bridges so I'll look there first. I will also use sabikis around channel markers and bridges for bigger baits.



Pictured: One Style Of A Sabiki Rig





## Whitebait Roundup

The most common places to find whitebait are over grass flats and around bridges. On the flats, bait schools often dimple the surface like rain, but also watch for sea gulls and pelicans' diving on this food source. Ease in slowly, quietly anchor or drop your Power Poles and coax the baitfish into net range by chumming.

Options include dry chum, available at bait shops in zippered plastic bags, or jack mackerel and wheat bread. Mixing either of these recipes with sea water forms a smelly paste that forms a scent trail when scattered across the grass flat. When the baitfish gather in the chum, toss the net and load the live well.

Another way to find bait is the rodeo technique. Ride slowly over the grass and when you see bait throw your net. If no other boats are in the area this works fine. If there is other boats anchored and chumming, do not rodeo. It will scare and push the bait around and off the flats and irritate other anglers.

For catching bait on the flats, a ½-inch stretched mesh cast net with standard weight will do the job. A 6-foot net will work, but I prefer an 8- to 10-foot net for the flats.

Another good place to catch white bait is around bridges and big channel markers. The bait can be found raining on top, or it can be found with your depth recorder. Look for a cloud of bait in the water column. Anchoring and chumming will work here but water depth and tide movement make it harder. I like to ride around the marker or the bridge pilings and when I see the bait marking on my screen, I throw the net.

For deeper water, use a 1-inch stretched. You may gill a few baits in the larger mesh, but the net will sink faster so fewer baits will escape. Bait schools are harder to hit in deeper water, so use a 10- to 12-foot net, which will catch more on each throw. In either case – flats or deeper water – handle your baits carefully so they justify all the effort by lasting for a full day of fishing.

For fishing videos, catch photos and lots of angling resources, visit [www.fishingwithbillmiller.com](http://www.fishingwithbillmiller.com). For fishing charters in the Tampa Bay area, call (813) 363-9927.





## Winter Strategies for Spring Success

By Garrett Svir

The ice season has come to an end but don't throw out the larva or put away the ice fishing jigs quite yet. You might find success using winter strategies for spring success. After ice out, crappies will start to make their way from the deep water haunts of winter to shallow black bottom bays. It's not spawning time. These fish are searching for the buffet line. Black bottom bays soak up the heat of the sun like a sponge and hold bug hatches necessary to start the food chain. Crappies sneak in on warm days for a quick meal long before the spawn begins. While minnows are a great producer once water temperatures have warmed, ice out slabs require finesse presentations. I think the experiment stemmed from my unpreparedness for the coming season. Winter jig boxes and larva somehow made their way into the boat one spring morning. Now I never leave them behind and don't think you will want to either.

Predictable locations make searching for crappies at ice out fairly basic. Bays located on the northern end of lakes warm up first and see the first signs of life. Feeder creeks can also hold insect life and draw in crappies for a

Pictured Above: A spring crappie caught using winter strategies.



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quick bite. Soft bottom shorelines on the northern end of lakes are also areas worth exploring. Look for anything that will transfer heat into the water like tree branches, cattails or wood dock pillars. We pay close attention to the temperature reading on the graph when scoping out areas. It's amazing what a difference a few degrees make to crappies this time of year. On one outing last year after searching out several bays we learned an important lesson in temperature. The first bay we fished was void of fish.



Normally, after striking out, we would start to search different types of areas and abandon black bottom bays altogether.

Calf tail jigs can tempt even the most discerning customers.

On this particular day, we decided to check out a similar bay in the other basin of the lake. We headed to some overhanging tree branches in the far back section and were greeted with a water temperature 3 degrees higher than in the first bay. We found crappies stacked up against tree limbs and when we didn't get snagged, we hooked fish. Just that small change in temperature made all the difference. Another important lesson we learned was that while it's easy to overlook the really snag infested areas; these areas often hold some of the largest specimens. Looking through old fishing log books, I also uncovered that many of my biggest crappies have been caught right after ice out, long before the spawn.



Stealth is equally as important in the spring as during late ice. We use the electric motor to slip into bays and deploy the anchor quietly. Excess commotion will push shallow water slabs deeper into unreachable cover. Cold fronts may

When water temps are low consider downsizing presentations.



also push fish deep into heavy cover or into the deepest part of bays. Fronts will sometimes push fish out of bays altogether but don't fret because they seldom go far. The first break line outside of the bay will offer crappies the security they need to wait out a front. Once the weather stabilizes, fish will make their way back to the buffet line.



Float fishing brings out the kid in all of us. If your childhood was anything like mine, many hours were devoted to watching a float and patiently waiting for it to slip beneath the water's surface. My level of excitement hasn't changed much since those early days. I still love the anticipation of float fishing. Ice out crappie fishing is a great opportunity to release that inner child. The round bobbers of your childhood may lead to light strikes going unnoticed but adult versions do exist. I started using small clear floats that attach with surgical tubing. My favorite is the 2.4 gram Drennan Crystal Loafer. These floats are used by tournament anglers in the UK because of their incredible sensitivity. These floats can be perfectly weighted to achieve neutral buoyance. The goal is to have enough weight so only the orange top of the float is above water. If a crappie as much as thinks about sampling your offering, these floats will alert you. Crappies are still biting just as light as when you left them a few weeks ago during late ice. Many anglers abandon small presentations at ice out and go straight to large bobbers and minnows while anglers in the know stick with cold water presentations.

Jigs for early season success should be small. Some of my favorites are the 3 mm tungsten jigs from Fiskas. They cast with ease and weight floats to that sensitive level of neutral buoyancy. I also like the 2.5 mm Hole-In Jig from Fiskas. I tend to tip these with micro plastics and use a slow retrieve to swim them back to the boat. Hole-In Jigs, by design, stay perfectly horizontal without having to position knots. The poor crappies don't have a chance. Some other stealthy options include 1/64th oz calf tail jigs. Calf tail jigs take on a life of their own under water. They can be tipped with a single wax worm and fished in a stationary manner or worked back to the boat without bait. Experience has taught me that cold water crappies prefer a smooth gliding motion over jerky up and down movements. Experiment with float depth and speed of retrieve until you crack the code.

It feels great to be back in the boat, feeling the heat from the spring sun, but before you race to put away your ice fishing gear give winter strategies a try. It's a great technique to tempt cold water slabs and make you a more versatile angler. If you would like more information on catching ice out crappies check out our website at <http://www.slabseekerfishing.com>.  
Photography: Kim Svir



# Get Ready For Open Water Fishing

By Bob Jensen

For some anglers in the southern states and some of the western states, open water fishing season has arrived.

For those of us in the Upper Midwest, northeast, northwest, and Canada, open water fishing is still weeks or months away.

For all of us though, now is a good time to think about the fishing we'll be doing in open water this season. Sports and boat shows are going on right now in many areas, and many retail sporting goods and marine dealerships are having open houses and other events that will appeal to anyone who likes to go fishing. These events are great opportunities to learn how you can be more successful on the water this



fishing season. Here's why.

Most retail events and sport shows feature fishing seminars. Some of the presenters are nationally known fishing authorities; others are regional, and there will also be some local experts. The national folks will be presenting seminars that will include information that perhaps hasn't reached your area yet, but will help your fishing.

The regional and local anglers will have some very good insight to the lakes and rivers that you fish. Some of these presenters will be guides who fish the exact same areas that you do, but they're on the water every day. Think of the help they can provide you regarding fishing. Just keep in mind that some of these folks might want to protect some of their best fishing spots and tricks. They'll give you good information, but maybe not great information. Nonetheless, good information from an expert angler will help your fishing.



Also, most of these anglers will be around before and after their seminars. That's a great time to speak with them one-on-one and maybe get some ideas that you can apply to your specific needs. Just remember that there are other anglers who would like some time with the expert. Ask your question, then give someone else a chance.

There will also probably be representatives from the various manufacturers. They're there to help you learn more about their products. Most of these reps know their product lines inside and out. If you're looking for a rod or reel or line or whatever, they can help you determine which product in their line-up would best fit your needs. If a new rod is in your future, ask several of the different rod reps what they would suggest for you. Once you have that information, you can make an informed decision.

And, in addition to all the stuff, you can learn from these events, many folks find it fun to just hang out with other people who enjoy fishing. For many, camaraderie is an appealing part of fishing, and you can certainly find opportunities to socialize at sportshows and dealer events. Cabela's Spring Great Outdoor Days events take place in March. Other retailer's events and sportshows are also held in March. So, if the weather is too cold to go open water fishing, or too warm to go ice-fishing, you've still got a great opportunity to learn more about fishing when you do go. Attend a sportshow or retailer event. You'll have a good time, and you'll learn more about fishing. We'll see you there.

To see all the newest episodes of Fishing the Midwest television, visit [www.fishingthemidwest.com](http://www.fishingthemidwest.com) Join us at [www.Facebook.com/fishingthemidwest](http://www.Facebook.com/fishingthemidwest)

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# 26 ANGELS FOUNDATION

and causes, within the Newtown community, and offer assistance through the foundation's fundraising efforts. The hope of the foundation is to provide peace of mind and support to all children, families, residents and the overall community of Newtown.

On May 5, 2013, the foundation's 1st annual benevolent bass fishing tournament will be held on Candlewood Lake. During the tournament, the children and families of the Sandy Hook School and the Newtown community will be invited to enjoy a day of fun at Danbury Town Park.

The 26 Angels Foundation, Inc. is currently seeking financial donations and/or the donation of goods/services that would be used the day of the event or in the future to help raise money for the foundation. Any amount of contribution is greatly appreciated.

Any monetary donations can be mailed to: 26 Angels Foundation, P. O. Box 356, North Haven, CT 06473.

Any merchandise or product donations can be sent to: 26 Angels Foundation Benefit Tournament, C/O Sylvia Morris, 35 Orient Avenue, Milford, CT 06460.

Don Barone, who works for Bassmaster.com, wrote a great piece on this event and we want to share that with you as well, (top photo courtesy of Bassmaster.com)

<http://www.bassmaster.com/blog/green-jerseys-sandy-hook>.

The 26 Angels Foundation, Inc., will be holding the 1st Annual Non-Tournament (Fishing) Tournament on May 5, 2013. The event will be held at Danbury Town Park, in Danbury CT. The organization has recently applied for and expects to be granted 501(c)(3) non-profit status.

The 26 Angels Foundation, Inc. is the dream of a survivor and her spouse of the tragedy that took place at The Sandy Hook Elementary School, in Newtown, CT, on December 14, 2012. The foundation was established by a group of fishermen who have the goal of helping the Newtown community. The 26 Angels Foundation, Inc. will identify specific individuals, groups







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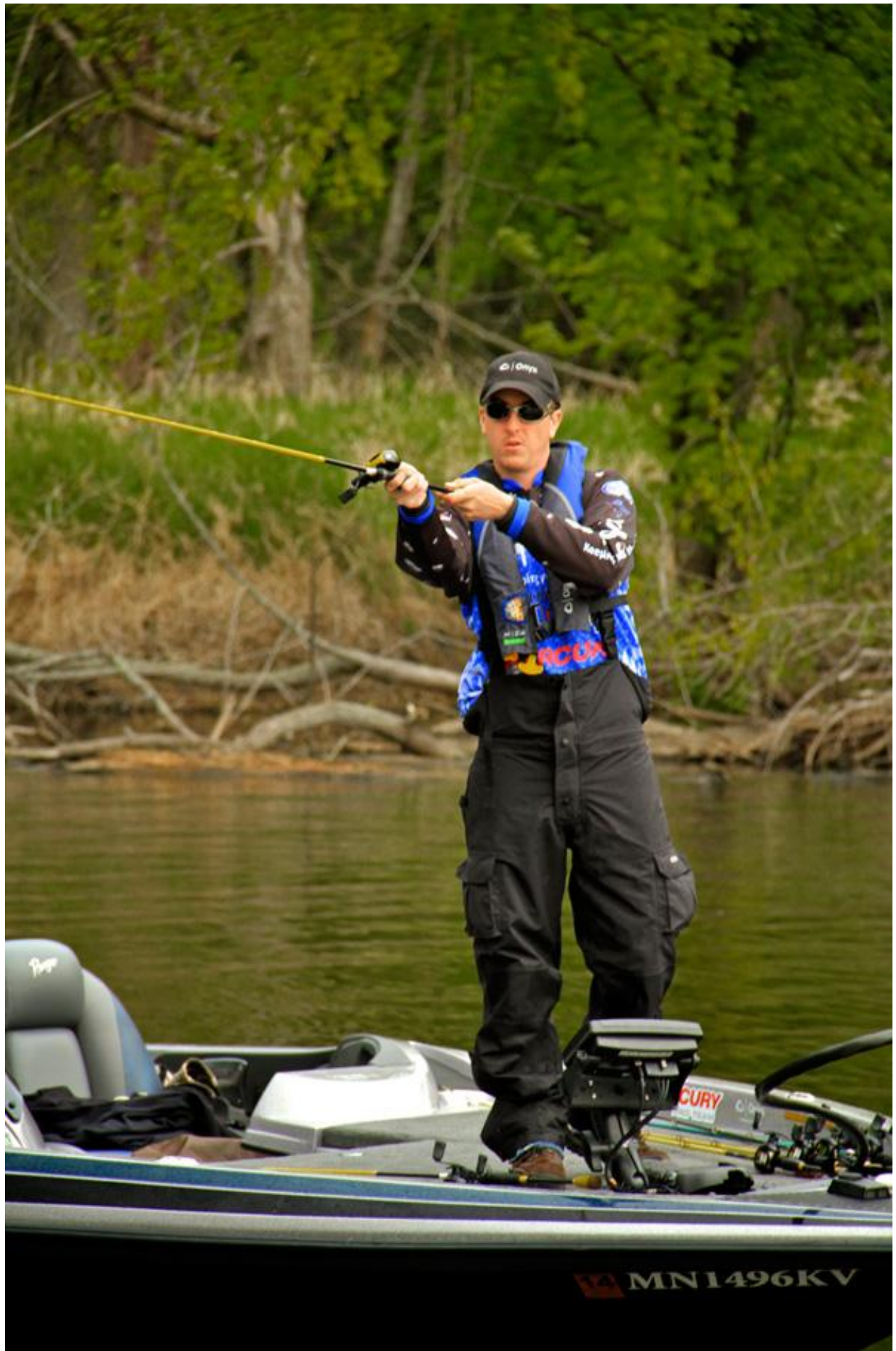
# Discovered By Accident, Proven Fish Catcher Now...A Look at the Swim Jig

By Glenn Walker

Tournament bass anglers began making their own swimming jigs after they realized that the jig, a proven bass catching lure worked well when it swam back to the boat. Through numerous prototypes and countless hours on the water, the swim jig and the technique that accompanies it took the Midwest bass tournament scene by storm.

For an angler to become successful with this technique, they will need to garner the knowledge of how versatile swimming a jig is and all the components that help make a successful day on the water.

Pictured:  
Brandon Wikman





## The Swim Jig

The key components of a swim jig include a bend in the hook eye that is around 30 degrees. This allows the jig to swim through the vegetation and not get hung up. A balanced head is important because you do not want your swim jig to roll when it is being retrieved; a rolling swim jig destroys the natural-looking appeal that a swim jig has.



A look at some of my top swim jig colors.


Numerous manufacturers are now producing a “swim jig,” but I rely on an RC Tackle Swim Jig. Above I talked about the importance of a well-balanced head, and the RC Tackle jig has just that. The eyes of this jig are drilled out to help remove the weight that would cause the jig to wobble and roll.

Some swim jigs have a wire plastic keeper; others rely on the angler to use super glue to keep their trailer in place. The jig I like to use has a custom made ribbed section of lead on the shaft of the hook to keep the plastic securely in place. The weight of the plastic keeper is on the shaft of the hook and again helps keep your swim jig running true in the water column. The weed guard is another important component of the swim jig. You do need nor want the heavy weed guards that come on a standard flipping jig, so it is important to look at the weed guard and trim it down to your desired thickness. It is important not to flare out the weed guard

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because it acts as a keel, and if it is flared too much on one side or the other it will make the jig roll.

As with all fishing lures the hook is the key component that will dictate if you are able to get that bass into the boat. On the ¼ oz. RC Tackle Swim Jig, a 5/0 super sharp hook is used, and this hook not only allows for the angler to make long casts and still gets superior penetration, but this hook will not bend.

## Trailers

The most commonly used swim jig trailer is the single tail grub. The majority of the year I use a 5-inch grub on my swim jigs. If the fish are in a sluggish mood or are feeding on smaller baitfish, then I will down size to a 4-inch grub. This makes your lure presentation more compact and matches the hatch in a situation where the bite is tough. It is important that the tail of the grub is pointed away from the hook. This will increase its action and decrease the chances of it getting hung up on the jig's hook.

The double tail grub is a good choice when you want to add some bulk to your jig and create a larger profile for the bass to key in on when feeding. The double tail grub is my choice when I am retrieving my swim jig slow and letting it crawl along the bottom to mimic a crawfish.

Other, popular and creative swim jig trailers included using soft plastic frogs, Zoom Swimming Chunks, Zoom UltraVibe Speed Craw and soft plastic swimbaits. (Purchase Zoom UltraVibe Speed Craw @ [www.bassnbait.com](http://www.bassnbait.com))



## Technique

The retrieve and technique of swimming a jig is based on how the bass are feeding and what they tell you on the water about how they want the bait to be retrieved. There are three basic retrieves that I employ when throwing an RC Tackle swim jig. Those retrieves include: a steady retrieve, a reel and twitch and finally, a slow roll.





When starting the day out a steady retrieve is a good choice, because it allows the bass to react to the bait and in turn will tell you the angler more details on how the bass wants the bait presented. If the bass are following up, your swim jig on the slow and steady retrieve, but not biting I will switch over to the reel and twitch.

Mississippi  
River bass just  
love a swim jig!  
(Photo: Greg  
Walker)

The reel and twitch requires the angler to do as the name implies, retrieve the swim jig and every so often twitch your rod tip. What this does is it puts a natural-looking action to your swim jig and entices a following bass to strike your bait. This technique works extremely well in the late summer and fall when the bass are feeding heavily on baitfish, because when you twitch your swim jig, it mimics the baitfish perfectly.

A slow roll retrieve is perfect for when the bass are holding tight to structure that is bottom oriented. I use this technique a lot when I am fishing rock flats with scattered vegetation in 6 to 10 feet of water. I'll cast the jig out, let it sink down and just retrieve it just fast enough to keep the tail of the grub moving. The slow roll retrieves also works very well when bass are feeding on crawfish. A slow moving swim jig along the bottom does a great job mimicking a crawfish.





A detailed look at the  
RC Tackle Swim Jig.

## Colors

Selecting the color of your swim jig comes down to several things, the first and most important in my mind is water clarity. If the water clarity is good, then I will select a jig color that looks natural and portrays the forage that the bass are feeding on. When you go to a new body of water, it is important to determine what the bass are feeding on and to evaluate what the water clarity is like. If the water clarity is poor and the bass aren't able to zero in on the swim jig before biting it, I will select a color that catches the bass's attention and stands out in the tinted water. Here is a list of my top color picks and the time of the year that I use them.

- Spring: Black/Blue, Chartreuse/White, Bluegill
  - Summer: White, Black/Blue, Chartreuse/White, Bluegill
  - Fall: Shad patterns (White, Splatterback Shad and Sexy Shad)
- When selecting the trailer color, there are two ways you can go about selecting one, the first is to pick a color that compliments the jig color, this creates a very natural-looking presentation. I tend to follow this idea when the bass are feeding on shad in the late summer and fall, bluegills throughout the year and crawfish.

The second idea behind picking out a trailer color is to use one that contrasts the jig color. Early in the

season I like to use trailers that grab the bass's attention, especially if the water clarity is poor I use colors like white and sapphire blue.

Location, location, location!

The majority of areas and situations that a RC Tackle swimming jig will shine revolves around shallow water structured filled waters. One of my favorite and productive times to use a swim





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Bass Pro Shops is a proud sponsor of TrophyCatch, a conservation program of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. TrophyCatch rewards anglers for reporting and releasing bass over 8 pounds, ensuring that these valuable fish are enjoyed by anglers over and over again. Release your trophy bass and you can proudly state that "My Trophy Swims in Florida"!



jig is following the spawn when the bass are guarding their fry. A swim jig does a great job imitating something trying to disrupt those fry, and bass will destroy your jig. A similar situation that the swim jig is a good lure choice is when the bluegill and other pan fish spawn. Bass will stalk the shallows looking for an easy meal, and a swim jig brought through the pan fish spawning areas will pay off.

Ambush points are obvious in many areas, whether they funnel down in weeds, channel openings, current breaks, docks, lay downs or bottom composition changes they all are great areas to catch bass. Fishing these areas is where swimming jigs shine because you can present your lure effectively through the cover, and you can cover a vast amount of water in a short amount of time.

One of my favorite ways to fish a swim jig on the Mississippi River is to throw it on top of weed mats. The key to fishing weed mats with a swim jig is to get the bait coming across the mat to the edge and then dropping it. Anything that was watching it come across the mat will track it to the edge and strike as your jig falls into the open water.

Off-shore locations are also prime spots for the swim jig, by switching from my standard ¼ oz. jig and going to the 3/8 oz. size allowed me to get my lure deeper in the water column where the bass were holding tight to the bottom.

Two areas where I found the deep swim jig bite to be successful are flats and weed lines. The flats could be a rock or weed flat, but just retrieving the swim jig back and letting it tick the tops of the weeds or bump into the rocks worked very well.

When I use the swim jig to fish deep weed lines, I will cast the jig out beyond the edge of the weed line, then quickly engage my reel and bring the swim jig back in so it would tick the top of the weeds and then when my jig got to the edge I would let it fall down the face of the weed line. If I could make a cast parallel to the weed line, I would let the jig sink down to the edge of the weeds and steadily bring it back to make sure it stayed in the strike zone.



### Proper Gear for Swimming Jigs

**Reel:** It is important to use a reel that can quickly pick up the slack in your line, because many times the bass will run directly at you and picking up the slack line is crucial. I like to use a Wright McGill Victory reel with a high speed 7.01:1 gear ratio to accomplish this. (pictured)

**Rod:** The size of the rod an angler uses for fishing swim jigs is a personal preference. Some anglers prefer a shorter rod, while others rely on a 7' rod. I'm now using the 7'2" Wright McGill Tessera Series Jig/Worm rod, the extra length allows me to make longer casts and with its soft tip, I have the ability to work the swim jig, but it also has plenty of back bone.

**Line:** Depending on the cover, I am fishing my swim jig in, will dictate the line I choose. If I am throwing my jig on top of the slop or around lily pads, I will use 30 lb. Seaguar Kanzen Braid, but if I'm fishing in open water with sparse vegetation I'll use 15 lb. TATSU fluorocarbon.





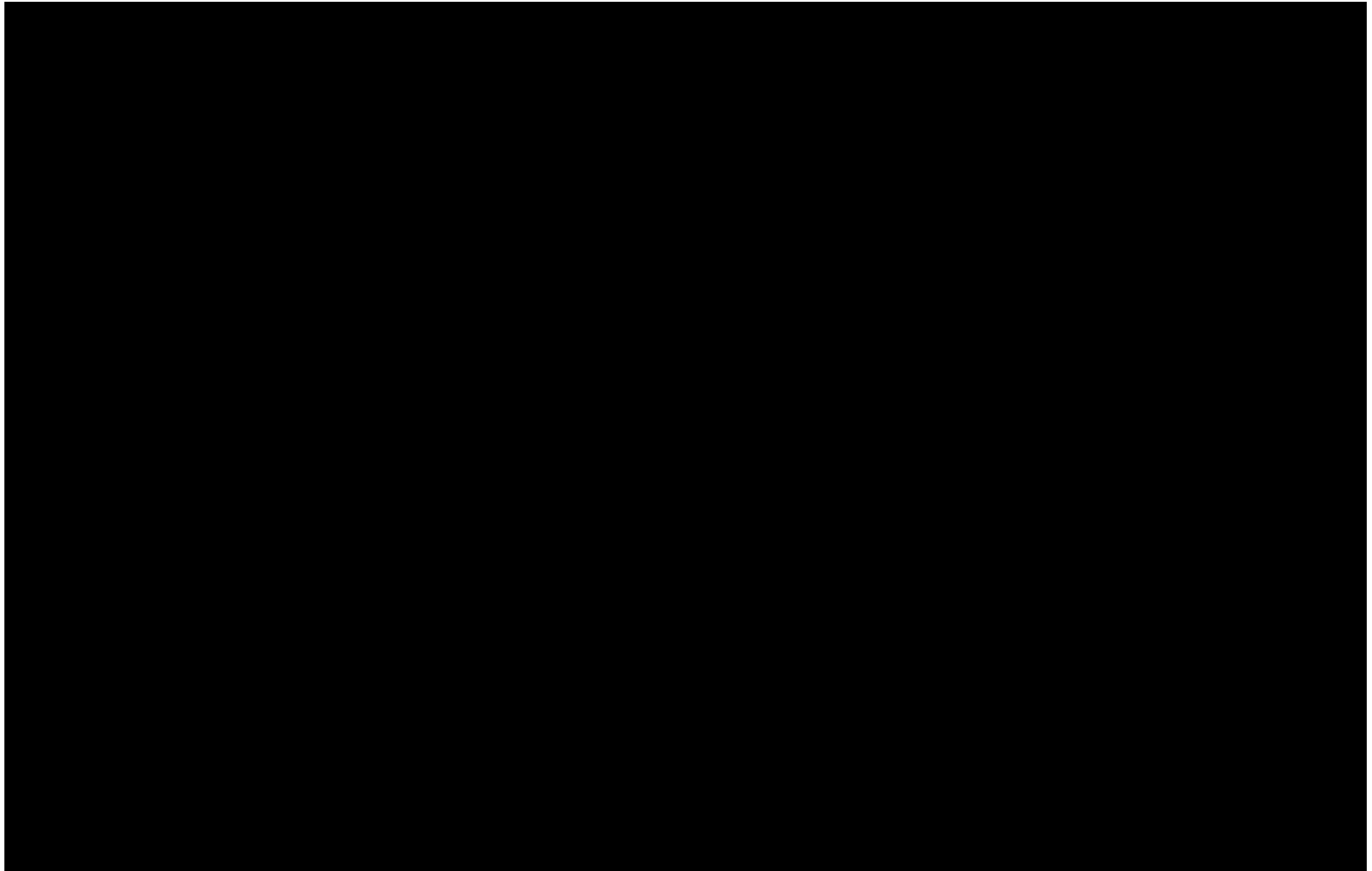
The Swim Jig, it is such a versatile lure and technique that by understanding it and putting it to use on your next fishing trip, you will become a more versatile angler and put more bass in your boat!

Glenn has been fishing tournaments for ten years, spreading his passion and knowledge of the sport via articles and videos. He keeps busy fishing events across Minnesota and on the Mississippi River.

**Finding healthy green vegetation is always a great area to give swim jigs a try.**  
(Photo: Kristen Walker)

Glenn's sponsors include: Humminbird, Jeff Belzer Chevrolet, Lakemaster, Mercury Marine, Minn Kota, Onyx, Plano, Rayjus, RC Tackle, Seaguar, Snag Proof, The Rod Glove, Trokar and Wright McGill. For more information check out [glennwalkerfishing.com](http://glennwalkerfishing.com) or on

Facebook at [www.facebook.com/glennwalkerfishing](https://www.facebook.com/glennwalkerfishing)



# Early Season Time Cranking

By Captain Mike Gerry



As the winter moves on, and we start to get some warming sun against the east banks and shoreline working a small crank bait becomes a very effective presentation! There might be no better bait with high 40 and low 50-degree water temperatures, there are, however, a few keys to making it work for you.

The first and the most obvious key is that the winter time crank baiting is all about warming banks, so the east side of the river in the afternoon becomes the target area to fish with the crank baits. Having riprap on the bank is also a big key as rock warms in the sun and attracts the bass. Also, lay downs and red clay banks all warm in the afternoon so these are as

well good target areas to catch fish.

Another key is the type of crank bait you are using in the winter, the wobble and the size of your crank bait can have a big effect on catching fish; I personally like a tight wobble in a winter time crank bait. Small, something you can fish slowly around the rock and banks you are fishing, colors vary, but I like sexy shad or Colorado shad in colors; if the water is muddy, then I go to a crawfish color or chartreuse. With the on-set of the square bill crank baits in the last few years, they have also become a good option for the winter cranking bite. The key is choosing the correct manufacturer, must square bills are fat and have a wide wobble; Spro square bill is flatter on the side and hence a tighter wobble and that is a difference maker for the slow presentation needed.

Lastly, there is a target area that I like to fish; I think working directly from the bank out gets you your best opportunity to catch a fish, especially the first five feet off the bank. You will be surprised how shallow the fish are in cold water.

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## Small Lakes Can Offer Big Incentives

**By Bob Wattendorf, Drew Dutterer and Bill Pouder**

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) works hard to maintain our status as the “Fishing Capital of the World” by actively managing fishery resources to foster the best fishing opportunities possible.

For obvious reasons, the FWC focuses a large amount of effort on big, marquee water bodies, such as the Kissimee Chain of Lakes or Lake Okeechobee, that are widely known and heavily utilized by anglers. But, we don’t overlook smaller water bodies that have great fishing potential, and neither should you. In many instances, smaller lakes may have fisheries that parallel or exceed those of big lakes when it comes to catch rates and size structure of fish. Just check out some of the recent results on [TrophyCatchFlorida.com](https://www.trophycatchflorida.com) for proof.

Small lakes offer an alternative experience, accommodate smaller boats and are less crowded. Here, we offer a sampling of five smaller, public lakes around the state (one from each FWC management region) that might be flying a bit under the radar but are well worth exploring with rod and reel.



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## **Lake Gibson – Southwest Region**

Location: Polk County (just north of Interstate 4 and Lakeland)

Surface area: 480 acres

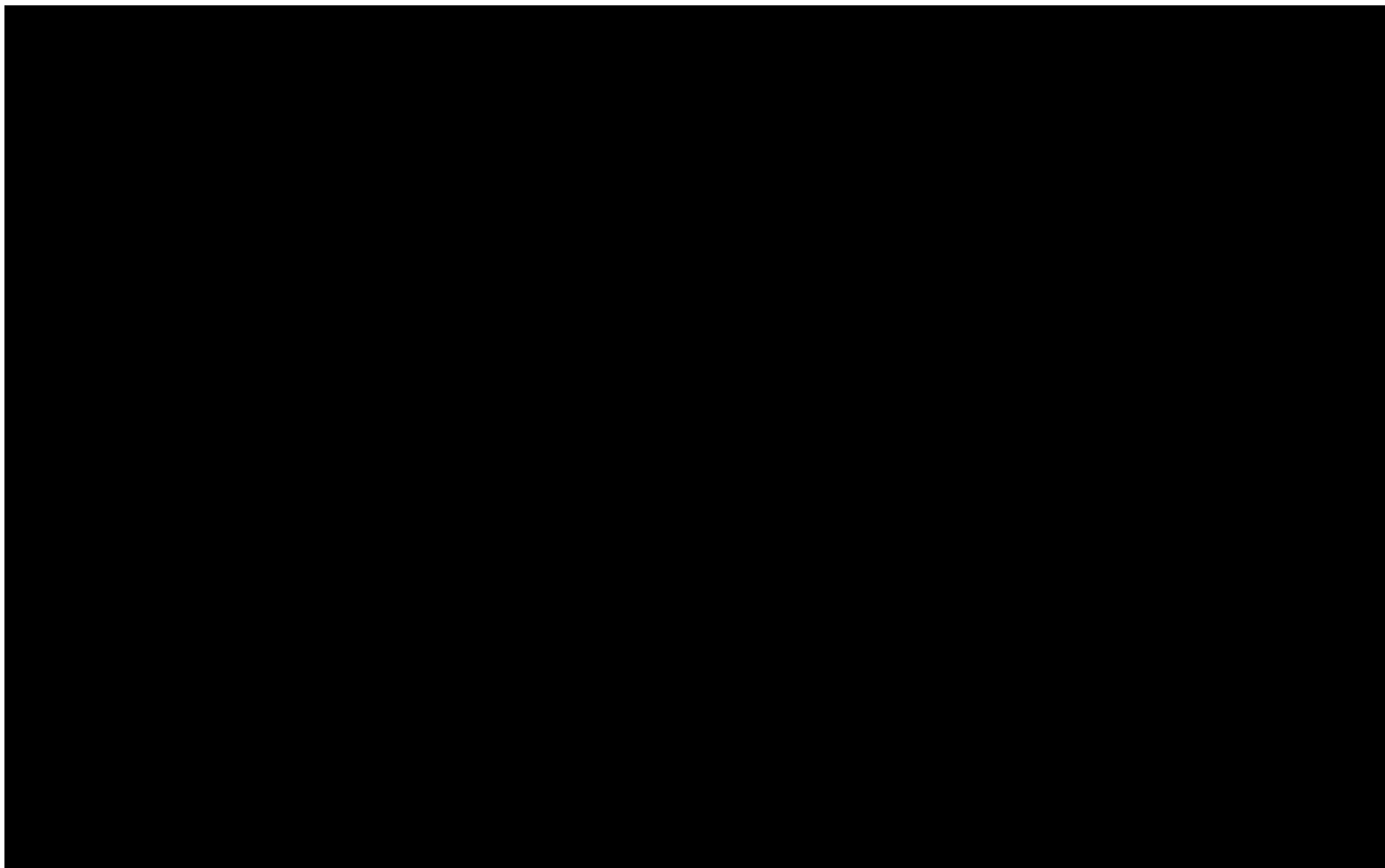
Lake Gibson touts a productive bass fishery, which has been hot lately for anglers in the Lakeland area. Recent monitoring suggests the bass fishery excels in terms of both the number and size of bass. This has been evident through FWC's current angler survey; anglers are reporting an average catch of one bass per hour, which is more than double the statewide average. Electrofishing surveys on Lake Gibson paint a similar picture. Sizes of these bass ranged from a few inches (a welcome sign of successful spawning) up to a respectable 9 pounds. Several bass over 8 pounds were tagged in the last year as part of an FWC study evaluating catch of trophy largemouth bass in Florida. A tagged bass (9.5 pounds) has already been caught and released by a local angler. Lake Gibson is also home to quality sunfish and catfish populations, offering an opportunity for a multispecies approach to fishing on smaller waters. Lake Gibson has a single, public boat ramp off Socrum Loop Road and Lake Gibson Drive.

## **Alligator Lake – North Central Region**

Location: Columbia County (east of U.S. Highway 441 – inside city limits of Lake City)

Surface area: 300-800 acres

Fans of Alligator Lake have not had much to be excited about in recent years. As with many lakes in Florida's North Central region, it has been plagued by low water issues during the last decade. However, now anglers have good reason to be optimistic, as Tropical Storm Debby



refilled it last June. The FWC was quick to take advantage of the lake's restored water levels by stocking redear sunfish and bluegill in September 2012, and a stocking of largemouth bass is planned for this spring. Despite persistent low water conditions, there were a handful of deep areas that held water throughout the drought. These holes likely sustained enough fish to renew the fishery, as fish will grow rapidly due to



newly available habitat and resulting forage. In August 2012, Bernard Donnell Jr. provided compelling evidence that at least one bass not only survived but flourished: He caught a 17-pound, 1-ounce trophy bass from Alligator Lake. If rainfall keeps Alligator Lake full, look for this fishery to quickly re-establish itself as a winner.

### **Lake Baldwin – Northeast Region**

Location: Orange County (just north of State Road 50 and the Orlando Executive Airport)

Surface area: 225 acres

Among the hubbub of sprawling Orlando, you'll find that Orange County is peppered with scores of lakes. Some are more deserving of your attention than others, and Lake Baldwin is one you should try. There, bass anglers have been experiencing some of the highest catch rates in the area. Bass are averaging 2 pounds or less; however, high catch rates are great for developing an interest in bass fishing for younger anglers. FWC staff has planted eelgrass recently, and the city built two fishing piers. There is also bank fishing in Baldwin Park, but a boat does the best fishing. A public boat ramp is on the south shore, and boaters with motors greater than 10 horsepower have to abide by a "no wake" restriction.

### **Lake Osborne – South Region**

Location: Palm Beach County (just west of Interstate 95 and Lake Worth)

Surface area: 356 acres

Amid canals and the urban backdrop of south Florida, Lake Osborne provides exceptional opportunities for freshwater fishing. Here, anglers can target a myriad of species (largemouth bass, sunshine bass, black crappie, bluegill, redear sunfish, catfish, and Mayan cichlids). Lake Osborne's sunshine bass fishery is a favorite among locals and is a blast when the bite is on. Sunshine bass are hybrids (produced and stocked by FWC hatcheries) of striped bass and white bass and handle the warmer waters of Florida much better than their parents. Look for them in open-water portions of the lake or deep, constricted areas such as the 6th Avenue pass that can funnel migrating fish. A large stocking of hybrids last spring should have this



fishery primed this spring. FWC installed nine fish attractors throughout the lake, which congregate other species. John Prince Park provides bank access, a fishing pier and a public boat ramp.

### **Merritt's Mill Pond – Northwest Region**

Location: Jackson County (east of Marianna and U.S. Highway 90)

Surface area: 202 acres

Merritt's Mill Pond is a spring-filled impoundment characterized by crystal clear water and lots of submerged plants. The pond is known for having produced Florida's state record (4.86 pounds) redear sunfish in 1986. The redear fishery has subsided somewhat but still produces quality redear, plus bluegill and spotted sunfish. The water clarity that makes Merritt's Mill Pond a scenic gem makes sport fish exceptionally shy, which can present challenges to anglers and biologists. Despite the challenge, biologists routinely collect quality bass, and sampling over recent years indicates an increasing average weight of bass. With three access points and lots of protection from wind, Merritt's Mill Pond is a small-craft-friendly lake, and paddlers may have an advantage in catching more and bigger fish.

Let us and others know about your fishing successes, whether they occur on the small or big waters of Florida. Register at [TrophyCatchFlorida.com](http://TrophyCatchFlorida.com) (you'll be eligible to win a \$40,000 Phoenix bass boat and Mercury motor when you do) and report your big catches. Remember to take a camera, scale and tape measure along so that if you catch and release a bass over 8 pounds, you can be rewarded and say, "My Trophy Swims in Florida."





# Accessorizing Your Boat

By Ted Takasaki and  
Scott Richardson

As you get ready for another season on the water, efficiency, durability and comfort should be your number-one goal when adding final touches to a boat you just bought or to one you've had for a while.

The timing is always wrong for key equipment to break. Plus, you'll be spending too many hours on the water to have a seat, which needs to be endured rather than enjoyed.

That's where Mark Lozelle, his dad Jim, and sister Lise come in. They own Tempress, makers of Fish-ON Rod Holders and mounts, Tempress Seating and Hatches and Boatmates Storage and Organization.

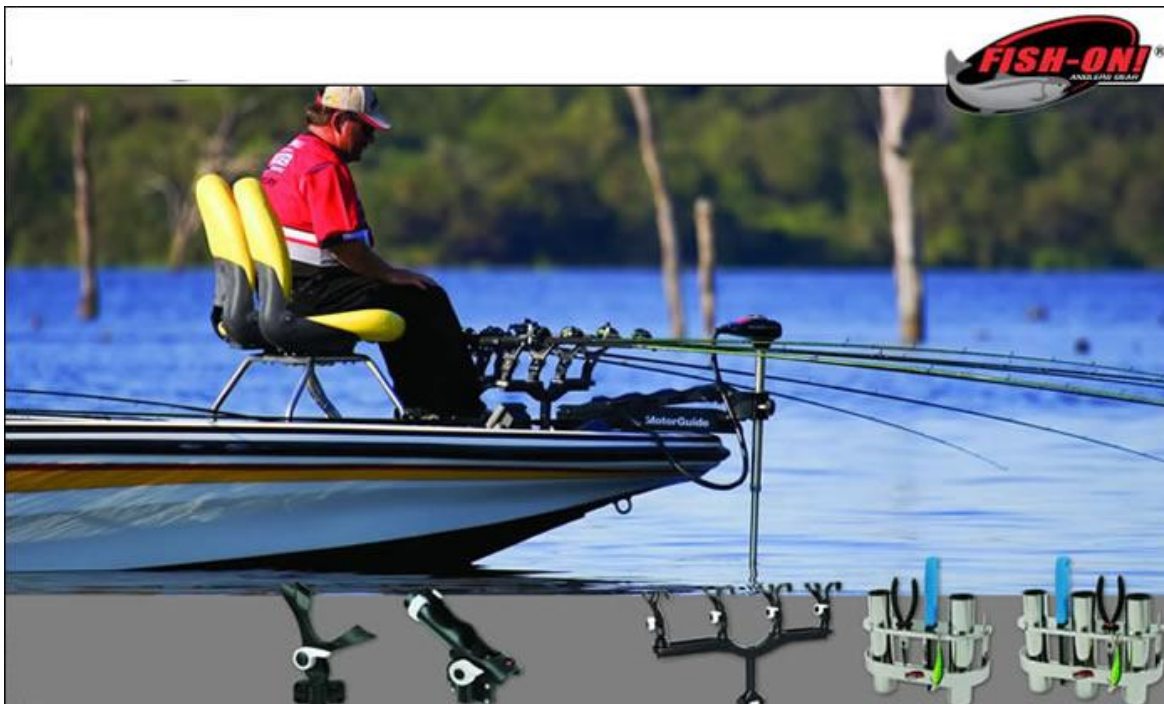
"We are a USA company that's making a USA-based product line which helps the weekend warrior have more success on the water," said Lozelle, president, CEO and "general handyman" of the business.

A fishing family from Michigan, the Lozelles purchased Tempress in 1999. The company was

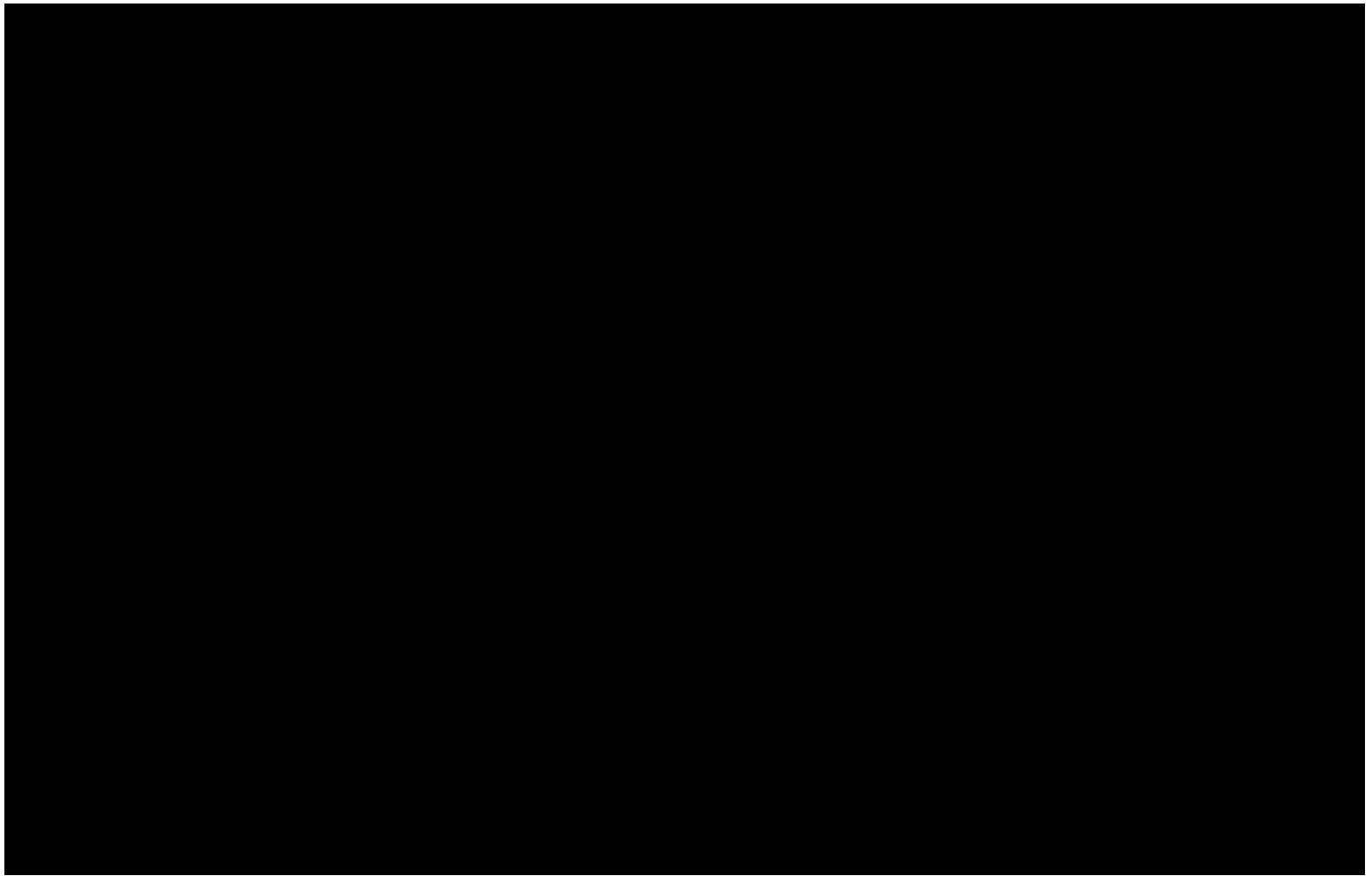
started 30 years before, by a guy who loved to fish for salmon. When he wasn't at work overseeing a Seattle-based company that focused on pressure-molded dashboards for semi trucks, he used the same technology that combines temperature and pressure (Tem-press, get it?) to create



Lund's unique Sport Trak system allows you to position rod holders anywhere in the boat, without having to drill any holes to install them. Here, Hall of Fame fisherman Ted Takasaki is handling the controls for he and a fishing partner, who snapped the photo. They are each allowed two rods, which lets them set up a spread of lines and test various presentations.







Fish-ON rod holders. He even trademarked the brand name, “Fish-ON!” Remember that next time you shout those words whenever you get a bite.

Rod holders are essential when fish are scattered over large expanses of water. Many species, from walleyes to salmon to crappie, do just that at different times of the year to feed on suspended baitfish. On huge waters like the Great Lakes, trolling allows anglers to try a variety of baits in different styles and colors at various depths. Baits can be spread out to the sides of the boat, or even farther, with in-line Off Shore trolling boards to find active fish fast. Modern sonar with side imaging gives detailed views to each side and downward, making the search even simpler.

Even river species like sauger can be targeted effectively with trolling. Floating baits are attached to leaders on three-way rigs with weights to make sure they are on the bottom and trolled along contours. Or, leadcore line can be used with larger shad-style lures like Shadlings or Wally Divers. The rods are set so the lure runs just off the bottom at two mph, placed in rod holders and trolled fast upstream.

The Fish-ON has 360 degrees of horizontal adjustment and 90 degrees of vertical adjustments. A sliding locking ring secures the rod. The enlarged opening makes removing a rod easier when a strike occurs.

Trolling for big fish like muskies is even more exciting – and taxing on the rod holder when a strike happens. Lozelle fishes for salmon at the family retreat in Michigan. He knows how

important a rod holder that can withstand the assault of a big fish is. “The key is that the rod holder is strong and durable,” he said. Tempress has sold more than a million Fish-ON rod holders.

For crappies, which are at the other end of the size spectrum, Tempress created the Mr. Crappie Pro Series Rod Holder Kit, which allows the use of up to four rods per unit while slow trolling, or spider-rigging. The kit was designed in conjunction with Wally Marshall, aka. Mr. Crappie, one of the most recognized figures in professional crappie fishing today.

In addition to Fish-ON Rod Holders and Mounts, the Lozelles also acquired Tempress’ boat-seat business. At the time of acquisition, the company provided regional upholsterers with just the molded plastic shells to build the chairs. The Lozelles soon started to make the durable seats from start to finish. Today, in addition to the aftermarket products, the company supplies boat seats to prestigious companies such as Lund, Bass Pro, Stratos and Triton, to name a few. There are cheaper seats for your boat, Lozelle admits. Nevertheless, you get what you pay for, and in many cases, a cheap seat is one that grows more uncomfortable by the day and may barely last a season. Tempress seats are built to withstand serious loads without breaking or wearing out.

“A \$59 seat is a solution, but not if you are on the water 100 days a year,” says Lozelle. “Boat seats must be dependable and hold up over time. You can’t afford to have something break – something that is cheapened up just because the economy changed. There is a better way.” Have you ever noticed the difference between pro fishermen and weekend anglers? Much of the success of the pros depends on being organized and paying attention to detail. Boatmates, a company Tempress acquired in 2005, helps with that by manufacturing neat plastic storage systems to organize everything from fishing tools to crankbaits and more. Many adhere to the side of a boat with suction cups. Others, such as the pedestal cooler and the pedestal gear bag, clip together under pedestal seats to create 360 degrees of useable storage out of former dead space. When you discover one lure color is hot that day while trolling, you can easily find another within a Boatmate storage unit. A functional organizer, the Tournament Series Knife and Pliers Caddy keep essential tools out of the way yet convenient to get to.

To help you plan your own boat accessorizing, visit [www.tempress.com](http://www.tempress.com).







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Massive 4.2 litre displacement and incredible light weight from the use of the latest materials set these engines apart from the competition. And with the efficiency and reliability of a four stroke engine, the VMAX SHO is leaving the others in its wake.

**Performance, innovation and reliability.**

That's why Yamaha outboard motors go the distance like no other.



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[www.yamaha-motor.com.au](http://www.yamaha-motor.com.au)





# ODU BOAT HOUSE

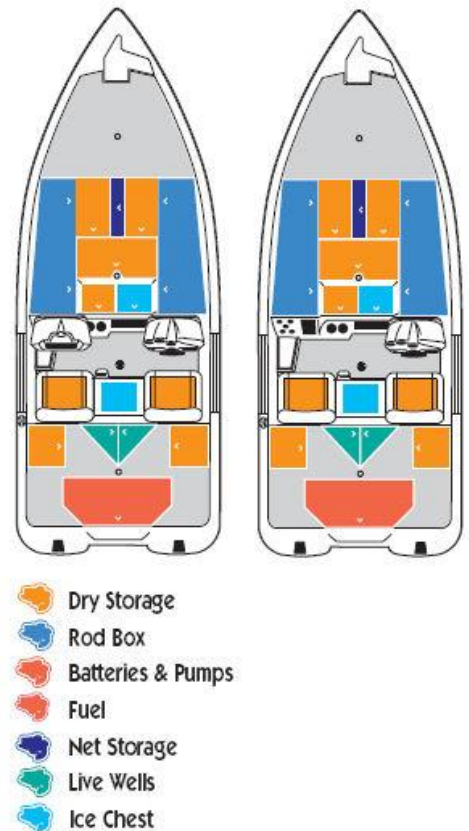




# BIG RIGS – Bass Boats Over 19 Feet



The **BassCat Puma FTD** might just be the "baddest" fishing rig in the BassCat line up! They simply took the front half of the Puma and married it to the back half of the Cougar FTD; the best characteristics of both boats... resulting in one awesome bass boat. You have a 20 foot 4 inch hull with a 94 inch beam; it's rock solid and will cut the water's surface with ease. This new hull is found on the Puma FTD, as well as, all of our 20 foot models. Cool graphic striping is found on the hull, as well as, the option for a second hull graphic. This hull has been tweaked to be quicker, more stable, and provide an even softer ride. <http://www.basscat.com/pumaftd.html>



The **Legend Alpha 211** was built to shatter the misconception that you can't have it all in one package. This boat is the ultimate predator on the water. The blistering holeshot, blazing top-end speed, exhilarating handling, and the unmatched smooth, dry ride truly form the 211 into a prodigious athlete on the water; but the benefits don't stop with the hull. With the trolling motor down and two guys up front, the broad deck of the 211 offers an



oversized platform that is rock-solid and incredibly stable even in the roughest water. The efficient and functional layout makes every aspect of the fishing experience seem natural from the moment you step into the boat. <http://legendmarine.com/alpha211/>





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IN CONTINGENCY WITH  
A NEW LEGEND BOAT.



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BOATS

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3. No More Runny Nose!
4. No More Flapping Cheeks!
5. No More Frozen Face!

Use Special Offer Code **ODU** on our  
website and receive 30% off any purchase!







The **Carbon Z Anniversary Package Z520C** combines the brand's newest flagship with today's most coveted accessories and a technologically advanced, head-turning exterior. Highlighted by the strikingly unique paint process wherein Ranger's custom Viper Silver Metallic paint is applied to the top of the gel coat for a rich, show-quality appearance, the custom look and feel is complemented by a carbon fiber lamination package, red LED lighting and red anodized appointments throughout the boat. [www.rangerboats.com](http://www.rangerboats.com)

"Forty-five years is a milestone of which we are very proud," said Ranger Boats President, Randy Hopper. "We felt the best way to pay tribute to this anniversary year was to produce a one-of-a-kind boat that combines our latest innovations with the finest materials, craftsmanship and accessories. The result is a cutting edge representation of the Ranger brand and serves as the perfect platform to celebrate our forty-fifth anniversary."

The competition better look out. There's a new player on the water. The **Charger Pro Team 296** packs all the features you want into a serious high-performance bass boat-at an affordable price. [www.chargerboats.com](http://www.chargerboats.com) (Right)



The **Allison XB-21 BasSport Pro Bass Boat**, the result of nine years of research and development, gives the professional fisherman more features, conveniences, and innovations



than all other bass boat brands combined. When it comes to Performance, Efficiency, Comfort, Convenience, Versatility, Durability, and Fishability, the BasSport Pro beats the competition in all categories! [www.allisonboats.com](http://www.allisonboats.com) (Left)



There way of saying thanks to the men and women who have put their lives on the line for their country, then the **Legend Alpha Tactical**, a military version of the **Legend Alpha ONLY** for



those who have served their country. Equipped for battle, the Legend Alpha Tactical model includes all of the options the Alpha would normally have but Legend has added and customized some features to make this mean machine really stand out.

<http://legendmarine.com/boats/tactical/>



The second you pick up your new **NITRO Z-8** performance bass boat is the second you've earned the right to brag to your buddies about how awesome your boat is. And brag you will! [www.nitro.com](http://www.nitro.com) (Left)

The **Phoenix 921 Pro XP** is 21'6" in length, with a wide 96" beam. "Its design is the same as the 721 Pro XP with a wider and longer front deck. The 921 Pro XP has a 250 HP rating and touts the same running surface as the 721 Pro XP, which has been the most talked about boat in the past two years." "The 921 will be another in the lineup for the serious bass angler," says Hank Baker, VP of Sales. "I would challenge anyone who is interested in a new bass boat this year to take a test drive in a Phoenix. We are confident you will love the performance!"

[www.phoenixbassboats.com](http://www.phoenixbassboats.com) (Right)





# Bass Boats Under 19 Feet



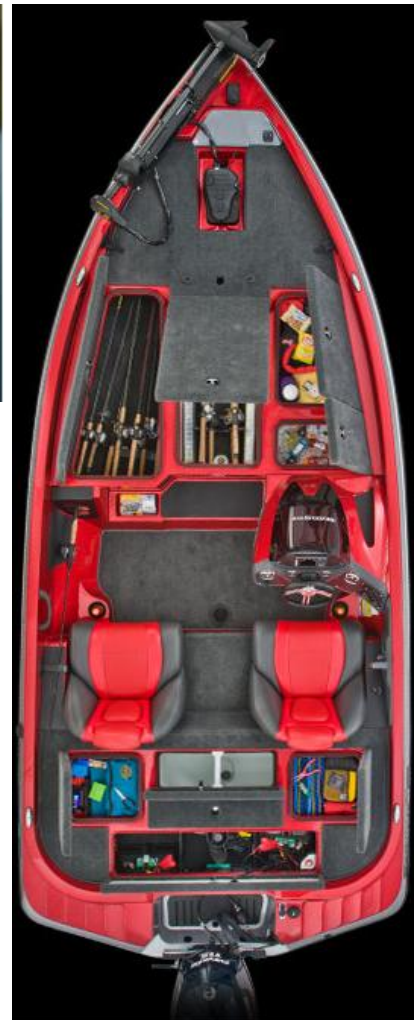
From stem to stern, the **Nitro Z-7** performance bass boat crams more value into its 18' 8" (5.69 m) length than any other boat in its class! Whether you take yours out on a weekend run with a buddy (don't forget to install the optional removable port console at home!)

or use it to compete in a fast-paced tournament on a lake in your area, you'll have all the gear, electronics and accessories you need. [www.nitro.com](http://www.nitro.com)



Measuring 17 feet, 6 inches and rated for 115 horsepower, the all-new **Ranger Z117** is available with a wide range of precision-matched outboards and delivers the advanced fishability and best-in-class heritage of the Ranger Z Series for under \$30,000. In addition to the incredible price tag, show-stopping great looks and Ranger's well-known resale values, this boat and matching single-axle trailer can be easily towed with compact trucks and SUVs and will fit into most garages.

Plus, the popular 115-horsepower designation consumes less fuel and oil – making the Ranger Z117 accessible to anglers who would otherwise be forced to purchase used boats or boats that lack Ranger's reputation for quality and fishability. [www.rangerboats.com](http://www.rangerboats.com)





The newest edition to the **Phoenix lineup is the 618 Pro**. If you are looking for a 18' 6" boat that has all the standard features of a 21, look no further. Standard with the totally enclosed driver console, rotating tackle system, under-seat net storage and buddy rod locker. This boat is sure to be the talk of the season. The knit type construction is the same as all boats that we build. Add to that the same stainless latches and fittings and you will not find a better boat for your dollar. [www.phoenixbassboats.com](http://www.phoenixbassboats.com)



Measuring 18 feet, 9 inches, the **Stratos 189 VLO** is rated for 150 horsepower and available with a host of precision-matched, factory-rigged outboards. This future-inspired fishing machine flexes its muscles on the water with a strong hole shot and top-end

speed to quickly deliver serious anglers wherever they need to go. The 189 VLO balances its appetite for power with ultra-responsive hydraulic steering and an intuitive layout that delivers sportscar-like handling in rough waters. [www.stratosboats.com](http://www.stratosboats.com) (above)



The **BassCat Sabre** is truly fun to drive, a quick throttle response will keep you in the fast lane right from the instantaneous "hole shot". Plus, this Sabre handles like a dream... you know you are always in control, and it will take a turn smoothly, no hopping or skipping. [www.basscat.com](http://www.basscat.com)



The **Skeeter TZX180** offers the serious fisherman an entry-level opportunity to experience the unparalleled performance of a top-of-the-line Skeeter, as well as the luxurious accents of the TZX line, at an affordable price. It's time to step up and hit the water in style. [www.skeeterboats.com](http://www.skeeterboats.com)



# Metal Bass Boats

**Xpress Boats**, the original all-welded aluminum boat company and the inventor of the Hyper-Lift® performance hull is proud to announce its xciting FISHING TEAM PROGRAM. This Xclusive opportunity is not for everyone. If you are interested in paying too much to purchase, operate, or trailer a new tournament boat, then this program is not for you.

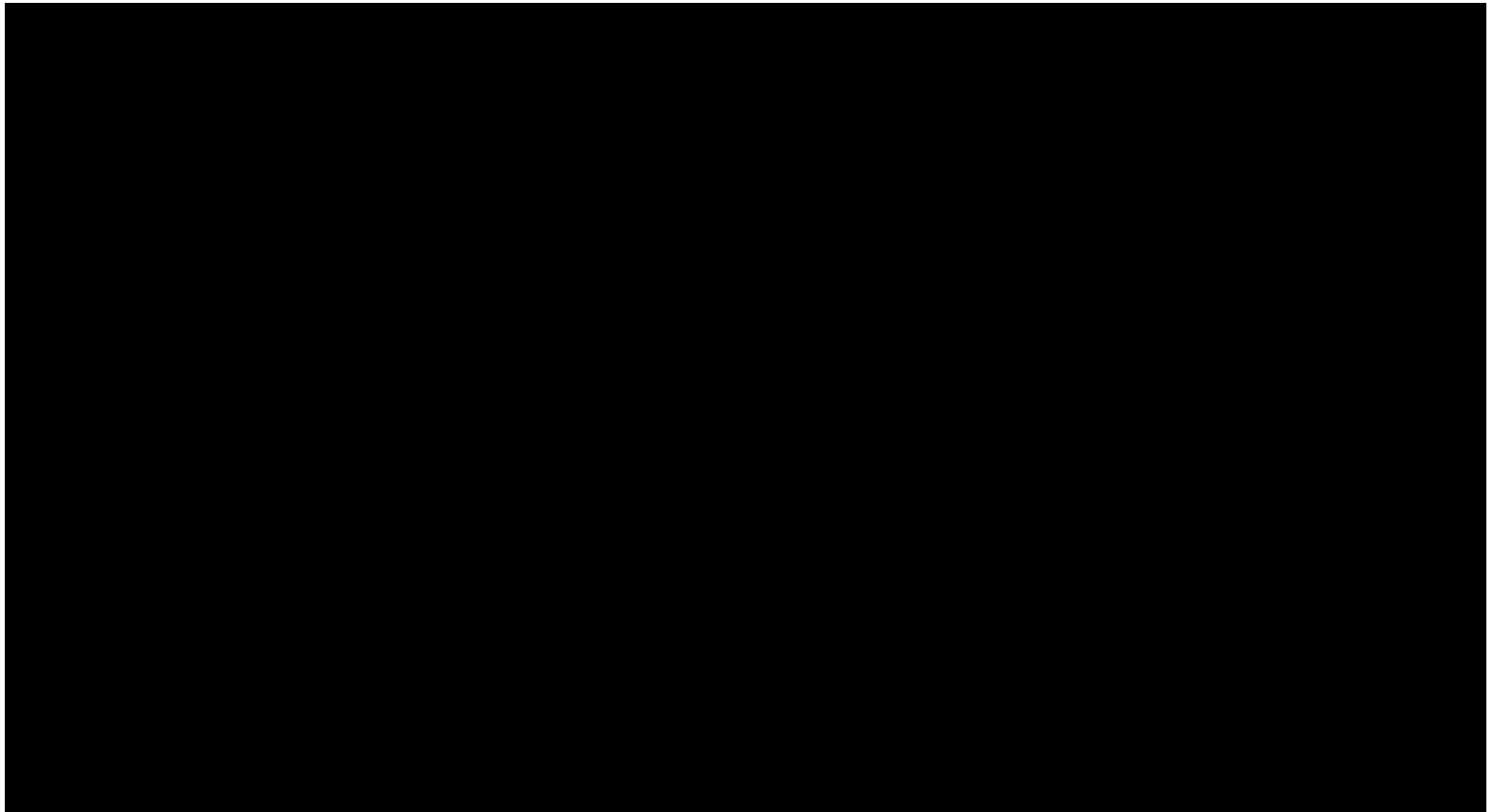
The **Xpress Boats X21 and X19**: Huge casting decks provide the platform for comfort and ease of operation giving you



that xtra advantage to get you to your pre-fished areas quicker, without the worry of obstacles that send fear down the spine of fragile boat owners. Xpress Boats has partnered with leaders in the fishing industry like Yamaha®, Minn Kota®, Humminbird® and others to ensure you the greatest advantage in performance and equipment to get you where the big ones live. [www.xpressboats.com/view/bass](http://www.xpressboats.com/view/bass)



**G3 Eagle Talon 19 DLX:** The Eagle Talon series of bass boats provides anglers new options in G3 quality and performance. The Talon's all-aluminum construction is enhanced by superior features, including a wide body 92" beam, exceptional lockable storage, 33 gallon livewell, and head-turning graphics. The deluxe model also includes upgraded electronics, 24 volt trolling motor, three bank battery charger and custom mooring cover. Find your edge with the Eagle Talon and feel the satisfaction that comes with the quality of G3 and Yamaha. [www.g3boats.com/eagle-talon-19-dlx-aluminum-fishing-boat](http://www.g3boats.com/eagle-talon-19-dlx-aluminum-fishing-boat)







**Ranger 178c:** Whether you're chasing crappie, catching bait, running jugs or tracking down a school of white bass, the all-new 178C is a true fishing machine, built for whatever's bitin'! The broad 92" beam means more room inside. More room to fish and more room for gear. Combined with a horsepower range of 50-75, this rig is responsive and priced to get you on the water in a hurry.

[www.rangeraluminum.com](http://www.rangeraluminum.com)



**Tracker Pro team 175 TF:** Share the fun of multi-species fishing, and catch more than your share of crappie, bass and even walleye! Its lower bow deck with two seat locations, two cockpit-level fishing positions and an elevated aft deck give you more places to fish than a traditional bass boat. You'll love the convenience of dual livewells and baitwells, tackle trays, bow accessory trays and drink holders—as well as the smooth, dry-riding Revolution™ hull. [www.trackerboats.com](http://www.trackerboats.com)



**Lowe ST195 DC:** Designed with performance, versatility and comfort in mind, the ST 195 DC features a dual console layout that lets you and your fishing buddy enjoy the ride and slay the fish. Spacious and incredibly durable, the ST 195 DC includes an expansive deck. [www.loveboats.com](http://www.loveboats.com)



**G3 Gator 1860 CCJ DLX:** Usually, it takes getting away from the places that everyone knows, the popular spots that are talked about around water-coolers on Monday. G3 Tunnel hull boats are designed to get you away from the ordinary and into the outer reaches of your favorite shallows.

[www.g3boats.com](http://www.g3boats.com)

# Big V's and Little V's



**Yar-Craft 219TFX:** Some anglers believe in fishing big or going home. For anglers who compete at the highest professional level or for anglers who just live by the concept that bigger is better, this top of the line twenty one and a half foot hull is complimented with the ultimate multi-species, walleye fishing platform. Some anglers swing for average, some hit for power. This boat is a home run. [www.yarcraft.com](http://www.yarcraft.com)

**Lund 208 Pro-V GL:** Our fiberglass boat series is designed with all the features that only a Lund can offer. IPS™2 hull, pronounced keel for unbelievable tracking, everything you'd expect from a Lund wrapped in a fiberglass skin. With an excellent look and finish, its form is unmistakable: smooth, sleek, and dry. With low maintenance and sleek design, our glass boats provide an unmistakable ride creating an enjoyable and productive day on the water. [www.lundboats.com](http://www.lundboats.com)







“This year the **Legend Boats 16 Xterminator** brings an extremely high value in features and it is being introduced in 2013 with an additional one thousand dollar savings.” The experts at Legend Boats feel that the 16Xterminator will be one of this year’s customer favorites because it delivers extremely high value and strong

appeal while delivering everything you could want in a fishing boat. Its distinct lines, new colors and bold new graphics give the 2013 Xterminator an updated and modern look. The Xterminator comes equipped with huge front and rear casting decks, ample floor space with a tough Dura-Deck vinyl floor, room for 4 on the floor seating, an aerated 30 gallon live well, a large bait bucket and lockable portside rod storage. The Xterminator offers a lot of upgraded features that are unique to Legend in this type of fishing boat such as a removable tinted windscreen and EZ-reset circuit breakers that you just press to reset instead of glass fuses. The Xterminator boasts a deluxe full-view custom-molded console design with gauges that are easy to read even at night with their bright backlighting. [www.legendboats.com](http://www.legendboats.com)



**Stratos 386XF:** 386XF can do anything. It's a ferocious fishing machine and a fabulous choice for family fun. It's rated to 200 hp and has eight seating locations, including rear seats that move out of the way when it's time to chase scaly lake monsters. Up front, a flip-up deck extension provides spacious fishing room, near its Minn Kota® trolling motor. [www.stratosboats.com](http://www.stratosboats.com)



**Tracker Targa V-18:** When fishing is your business—or a passion you live for—the Targa™ V-18 Walk Thru comes with more standard equipment and unique, pro-level fishing features than any boat in its class. For instance, a full 8-1/2-foot (2.59 m) beam for unparalleled fishing room above deck—and cavernous livewells and storage below. Tilt steering. Upgraded trolling motor and fishfinder. [www.trackerboats.com](http://www.trackerboats.com)



**Nitro ZV 21:** Using input from the world's leading walleye anglers, NITRO® is bringing its celebrated performance fiberglass boat heritage to a whole new group of anglers with the NEW 2014 ZV 21. Big, bold and extremely beefy, this multi-species boat packs all the punch and rugged seaworthiness you need when heading out onto bigger waters. [www.nitro.com](http://www.nitro.com)



**Skeeter WX2190:** With power to spare and storage large enough to carry every essential piece of equipment you need, the WX2190 is a fisherman's dream come true. Even in the worst conditions the WX2190 excels at trolling and drifting. The new REACT™ Keel design virtually locks the hull to the water making it easier than ever to trace a contour line. [www.skeeterboats.com](http://www.skeeterboats.com)





**G3 Angler V175 FS:** Versatility is the catch-word for the multi-purpose V175 FS. A great running platform with performance to spare doesn't hide the fact that this is one boat the family will love for skiing, tubing and lake day fun. Two large livewells serve the angler, while rear flipup jump-seats add room to carry family and friends. [www.g3boats.com](http://www.g3boats.com)



**Lowe FM175 Pro WT:** The FM175 Pro WT is built to satisfy the needs and preferences of hardcore anglers and experienced boaters. Fully equipped, this tough-and-ready mid-sized fishing boat features a stylish dual console with plug & play gauges. [www.loweboats.com](http://www.loweboats.com)



**Alumaweld Super Vee Pro 25:** Seating for 9. Alumaweld's Super Vee Pro has earned many titles, "the ultimate fishing machine", "The Guide's Choice", and, "the choice of professionals", to name a few. Developed by, and for, Western fishing guides, the Super Vee Pro reflects the very highest standards of design, construction and performance.



**Lund 2010 Predator:** Muskie, Bass, Walleye and Crappie...this is the boat. Strong, skilled, and agile are just a few ways we define a Predator. Its spacious deck creates generous casting room. The Predator also includes an enormous livewell, allowing room for more prized catches. Its construction gives it a stability and quickness that is unmatched on the water. [www.lundboats.com](http://www.lundboats.com)

# Fishing and Skiing

**LEGEND 20 Xcalibur:** The days of owning one boat for water sports and another for fishing are over. In just a few seconds, an Xcalibur converts from a racy runabout with removable bow cushions and a comfy rear bench seat to a serious fishing machine with deluxe removable fishing seats, an aerated livewell, lockable rod storage, and an extended rear casting deck. So whether you want to cruise, fish, tube, ski, or entertain, one Legend is all you need. The 20 footer shows high level of craftsmanship pair with a big boat feel for all type of family fun! [www.legendboats.com](http://www.legendboats.com)



**Triton190 Escape:** Here's the ideal boat for your active family! While a conservative 19 feet in length, its super-wide beam gives our new 190 Escape the interior room of longer boats. With its luxurious cockpit seating, ergonomic console, walk-through windshield, huge casting decks, tournament rod box, removable trolling motor, and hot performance, it's perfectly suited for fishing, skiing and cruising.



**Stratos 486SF:** Want to max family fun and minimize impact on family funds? 486XF is

your new boat. The deep-sided hull is stable and keeps passengers dry in big water. 486XF is rated to 150 hp, so it's fast across the lake and powerful enough to pull people on the way. It features a spacious front deck, loads of lockable storage, including a huge center compartment for skis and wakeboards, an aerated livewell and retractable ladder. Rig your boat for total family fun with optional equipment like the Sirius satellite®-capable CD/ AM/FM stereo system and high-fidelity speakers. [www.stratosboats.com](http://www.stratosboats.com)







**Nitro Z-7 Sport:** Start the day trolling. When the bite ends, don't call it a day. Instead, take a break and enjoy a nice relaxing picnic on the water as you fuel up for an afternoon of fun. Then, crank up the action with plenty of water sports action the rest of the day. [www.nitro.com](http://www.nitro.com)



**Skeeter SL 210:** Whether you are looking for a day of fun in the sun or fishing your favorite "hot spot," the SL210 offers something few others can—versatility without compromise. At over 20 feet long and loaded with amenities, this craft is spacious, stable and comfortable. Equipped with the all new Yamaha SHO 200HP, the SL210 offers endless possibilities to satisfy your hunger for adventure. [www.skeeterboats.com](http://www.skeeterboats.com)



**Lowe FS185:** For families who love to do it all, the FS185 is the best aluminum boat for the job. Designed to satisfy the requirements for practically every on-water activity, the FS185 is fully equipped for fun—and with a variety of color options to choose from, this fish & ski boat looks great, too. [www.loweboats.com](http://www.loweboats.com)



**Yar-Craft 186 FSX:** Yar-Craft Boats have always been all about fishing but that doesn't mean we believe you cannot have alternate interests and motives. They have padded up and added some classy features to their legendary eighteen and half foot high performance fishing boat...comfort for all, storage, a trolling motor, swim ladder and much more. [www.yarcraft.com](http://www.yarcraft.com)



# Ducks Boats



**Xpress Bayou 18:** Go where few dare to go with, your surface drive motor and your Xpress Bayou Series boat. Hunt those that haven't been hunted and catch those that previously couldn't be caught with the knowledge that you have years of fun ahead of you! Xpress Boats' rugged

hull construction, the option of either a flat bottom or "V" bottom hull, coupled with cutting-edge design means one thing, the journey is as exciting as the destination in a Bayou Series Xpress Boat. [www.xpressboats.com](http://www.xpressboats.com)

Built on a solid and spacious 90" beam, the total performance design and wide open layout of the **1862 Ranger Apache** is engineered to excel every time you hit the water. The roomy interior is loaded with standard features. At the helm, instrumentation



and switching is complemented by the added strength, legroom, and precision-matched styling of a fiberglass console. There's an amazing amount of storage positioned beneath the handcrafted cockpit seating and even more room for gear beneath the front deck. Also up front, the huge livewell is aerated and includes a built-in timer for even more confidence and convenience. An extruded rail system along the gunnels provides even more room to customize your rig with slide-and-lock fishing and hunting accessories. [www.rangeraluminum.com](http://www.rangeraluminum.com)





The **Crestliner Retriever** series boasts a model just for you, whether you need the side console (SC) for equal parts hunting and fishing or the center console (CC) all purpose workhorse. Our exclusive Lock Track gunnel system allows accessories to be quickly mounted, adjusted, and removed, ensuring you're always properly outfitted. A large, 23-gal. livewell and two in-floor storage compartments in the bow. Versatile Seating Options (SC). Choose from standard dual cockpit seats or an optional bench seats, and enjoy the versatility of centrally located pedestal bases at both the bow and stern platforms. [www.crestliner.com](http://www.crestliner.com)

**Xpress Xplorer Bass – Jet Series:** SHALLOW RUNNING XCITEMENT! River level is dropping and the fish are on a feeding frenzy. Its go time! Rest assured navigating the shallow, boulder infested, smallmouth or trout streams in your Xpress Jet Series Boat is no problem. We will get you to and from your favorite seam or pocket where the big ones reside! When others may so NO, Xpress says GO! Need to navigate skinny skinny water to find your favorite duck blind, here is your answer! [www.xpressboats.com](http://www.xpressboats.com)








# Jon Boats

When you need a boat that's built to take a beating, take you through shallower waters and take you fishing and hunting, you want a **GRIZZLY utility boat**. Thanks to our exclusive VERSATRACK® gunnel mounting system, you can quickly attach, remove or relocate optional accessories on the gunnels. [www.trackerboats.com](http://www.trackerboats.com)



**Lowe Riveted Jon:** These boats don't mind getting their hands dirty. For high-quality, high-value, and rugged-utility, you won't find a better Lowe Jon. Lowe Jons have propelled thousands of anglers, duck hunters and commercial boaters. Lowe Jons battle the elements with 5052-H34 aluminum alloy and durable acrylic olive drab paint. [www.loweboats.com](http://www.loweboats.com)



## I am more than a weekend warrior.

I'm also a dad. Soon my kids will be old enough to be out here with me. That's why I switched to lead-free weights and biodegradable baits. I pick up and recycle used fishing line. I never dump unused live bait into my lake. It's SAFE Angling, and it will ensure that my kids enjoy a clean and healthy lake. Now I'm more than a weekend warrior.

I am a steward.





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SAVE UP TO

## \$3,000

**FREE Cockpit Covers** on

1625 & 1650 Rebel XL,

1675 Impact and 1775 Crossover XS

**MARCH / APRIL**

Model	2011/2012	2013
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Pro V (1975/2075)	\$900	\$700
Tyee (all models)	\$900	\$700
Fiberglass (all models)	\$900	\$700
Pro V (1775/1875)	\$650	\$500
Crossover XS (1775*/1875)	\$650	\$500
Impact (1675*/1775/1875/2025)	\$650	\$500
Rebel XL (1625*/1650*/1825)	\$650	\$500
Sport Angler (all models)	\$500	\$400
Pro Guide (all models)	\$500	\$400
Predator (all models)	\$500	\$400
Alaskan (all models)	\$500	\$400
Fury (1400/1600)	\$200	\$100

**Plus** Mercury "Pro" Bonus

**SAVE \$500** on a 250 HP Pro XS or 250/300 Pro Verado

\* **FREE Cockpit Covers** on

1625 & 1650 Rebel XL, 1675 Impact and 1775 Crossover XS

Offer valid 12/17/12 to 4/15/2013. Incentive amounts vary by model. Offer is only good with the purchase of eligible Lund boats. All incentives are in U.S. dollars. Participating dealers are responsible for a portion of the incentive, and may effect final negotiated price. Dealer sets actual price and prices may vary. Other limitations may apply. Void where prohibited. See [lundboats.com](http://lundboats.com) or visit your participating dealer for details.

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## **Flying Fisherman, The Clear Advantage**

**By Chris Jenkins**

This Past January I had the pleasure of attending The Big Rock Sports East Dealer Show in Raleigh North Carolina. The place was jammed with about 9,000 dealer attendees from all over the world and 900 vendors showcasing the best of the best. I spent two days reuniting with old friends and making new ones along the way. I also had the opportunity to see what's new for 2013 and check out some cutting-edge products as well. A lot of things are merely repeats of years past and companies trying piggy back on other company's products. Years ago, I discovered that there is no "Magic bullet" when it comes to fishing lures. That being said, I found myself standing in front of a booth that displayed a very eye catching array of body armor. No it wasn't chain mail, but rather tools to combat the sun's harmful rays. A company called Flying Fisherman, which is located in the Florida Keys, was utilizing the booth. The co-owner, Linda Sheldon was busy writing orders as fast as humanly possible, so I waited for my turn to inquire about a product called the SunBandit. I had seen people wearing these on TV, but the colors and patterns that this company offered were amazing. As described by Linda, the SunBandit falls into the protective headwear category. It's a unique and versatile





garment because it can be worn as a face shield, a neck shield, or a hat to protect you against the sun, wind, and cold. It's made of 100% polyester and is breathable, wind resistant, absorbs moisture, and fits perfectly to the contour of any head. My decision to buy one was already made, but what was unclear was which of the 22 patterns they offered was I going to walk away with. Well, due to my lack of self-control, I ended up with a dozen. It's easy to understand why my wife doesn't like for me to go shopping without adult supervision.

After wrapping up the sale of the SunBantits my attention was quickly turned onto one of my favorite items, sunglasses. I am very particular about my shades and generally don't deviate once I find a suitable quality eye lens. However, when I picked up, a pair of the Master Angler series glasses I was amazed at how light they were. Come to find out, sunglasses are what built the impressive reputation for Flying Fisherman. For the past

twenty-five years, this company has been honing polarized eyewear to perfection. The sun and harsh conditions of the Florida Keys have been the testing grounds, and these shades are built by fisherman for fisherman. This company is not a branch or division of a larger mother company, so they are able to offer a high quality, stylish line of glasses at a very affordable price to the consumer. How affordable you ask? Price range varies between \$15.00 and \$140.00. There are more than 50 styles to choose from and three different polarized lens materials to consider. All of which provide maximum protection from UVA and UVB rays. They offer seven different lens colors to enhance visual acuity under every situation that Mother Nature throws our way. As I see it, glasses are an investment. For me, they are a necessity both on the water and off. If you value your eyes, and you love to fish, make the time to check out Flying Fisherman's website. I think you will find that comfort, and quality can be achieved at a very reasonable price

I know I found more than I bargained for on that day at the show as I opted for The Clear Advantage.

# POLARIZED EYEWEAR & ANGLER ACCESSORIES

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## Floodwaters Point to Spring Crappies

By Noel Vick with  
Brian “Bro” Brosdahl



Put yourself in contact with spring crappies by earmarking tributaries that present marshy drainage features and standing vegetation. Photo courtesy of Frabill FXE Storm suit

Utter the word ‘flood’ in some low-lying neighborhoods and folks wince. Real flood victims might go into sandbagging mode. Flooding is a normal occurrence, however, typically benign and predictable. From the simplest flooding model, we learn how water collects via tributaries, overland melt and seepage; how the occurrence influences fish location and activity levels. And crappies, more than any other species, are suckers for the flood.

Lifelong buddy Brian Brosdahl – aka the acclaimed rodsman ‘Bro’ – patterns his spring fishing after the flooding phenomenon. The intrepid fishing guide studies individual bodies of water and identifies stretches where spring flowage pools to become a primo crappie haunt.

Tributaries get dibs. An inflowing creek or small river brings with it tepid temperatures, as a result kick-starting an entire food-chain overture. The warmer, energized water carries with it foodstuffs that drain in from higher ground. Everything from earthworms to

expired baitfish to insect-life strum together, presenting Hungry-Man options for panfish...as well as the baitfish they eat. Swarms of baitfish gravitate to the flow and its micro tablefare, individual members succumbing to gulping crappies.

And as Bro recognizes, not only mapped tributaries bring forth warmed water. “Bog and wetland melt and spring rain seepage are major warm water influxes. As water flows over and through the vegetation it’s literally heated. Combine that with stained water, which gathers light and warms faster, and the key ingredients are in place.”

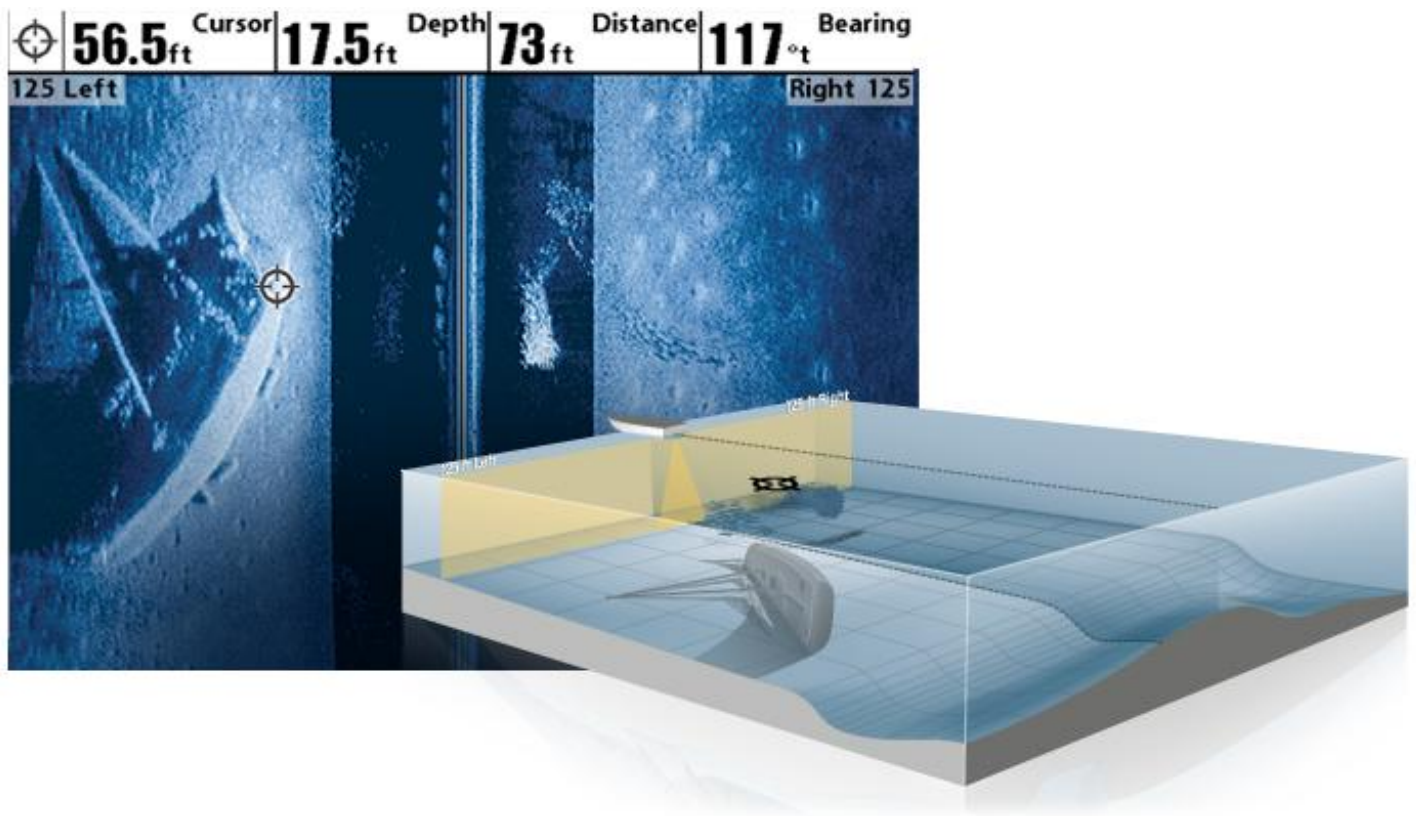
So look for weedy, saturated shorelines that taper into shallow-water – soft bottoms preferably, as they’re rife with life and warms the fastest. Along those lines, Bro is particularly



keen on cattail and bulrush edges that end abruptly in a root mass. The ‘tuck under garage’ feature is a preferred spot for springtime crappies, offering warmth, shelter and eats.

The crème de la crème in Bro’s watery world is a tributary that spills through lowland vegetation. He has been several such as places on speed dial. His favorite, unnamed for this exercise, is a creek that wanders into an upper bay on a supersized lake. (Keep it under the hood if you know the one.) The narrow flow opens gradually into the bay, gaining size and depth along its path.

Bro tames it annually. Nevertheless, every year is different, its superstructure modified by the seriousness of the melt or intensity of spring rains. So before dipping a bait, the techno geek picks the area apart with his electronics package. Humminbird Side Imaging drills sideways 100-plus feet, spying for actual fish – described as a “tornado of leaves” – as well as pods of nutritious baitfish. Down Imaging paints a picture of the bottom, even yielding info such as bottom softness.



Exploration centers on channel bends, particularly eddies forming on the backside of inside turns. Deep carving outside bends also warrant a scan. However, those backside pools are the main event. Bro says panfish, which are not physically designed to buck current, will establish on slackwater seams where they loiter and wait for the next trick or treat. Baitfish can’t brave the current, either, so they also amass in the less mercurial water and fall victim to ‘ol papermouth.

Downstream from the eddies, Bro hopes to find standing rushes or wild rice, perhaps even retired cabbage. Washed clean, the vegetation becomes the structure. No longer are the dead vegetation’s oxygen consuming traits a concern, as the fresh flow brings with it breathable water. Downstream logs, docks and rocks add to the rich fish holding environment.

Depth-wise, Bro says it's more important for the spot to be feature-rich than deep. Five feet of water will do, even less if everything else sets up properly relative to the current seam, structure and presence of baitfish.

Conditions call for holding and casting. Anchoring mid-channel and pitching baits is an option. Nevertheless, in the best of all possible worlds, Bro recommends locking down and slowly slipping with a Minn Kota electric motor. Bow aimed at incoming water, he tempers speed to a stalemate. Cast – cast – cast. No enchilada? The control freak slides downstream a couple boat length and peppers the water again.

If crappies are sprinkled throughout, he hits the repeat button, motoring back to the top of the eddy and re-slips. In an all-points-bulletin bite, Bro hits Spot-Lock, which tells the trolling motor to stay put. "Minn Kota's Spot-Lock is a modern day marvel. Grab the remote. Push a button. And it's like deploying an anchor without rope or that whiny fishing partner."

Bro's lure selections are based on a test of crappie cooperativeness. A Northland Thumper Jig, with its garish underbelly blade, ferrets out the aggressors. He tips a 1/32-ounce Thumper with an Impulse Waterbug, a scented soft plastic, or foolproof live minnow. Contrasting colors perform best, particularly in darkish water. He might also purposely mismatch the Thumper and Impulse creature to manufacture the same effect.

Technique is guided by a philosophy of fishing slow and steady. Bro throws long and rolls the jig back leisurely, mixing in a cadence of mellow lifts.

The test ends there if bites come with frequency. However, if strikes are short; hits are few; or crappies are layered in a tight spot, Bro moves to a slip-bobber and jig. Ice fishing's broad universe of detailed, realistic baits get bit in the spring, no questions asked. Northland's Bro Bug, Mud Bug and Slug Bug are top choices. Each is adorned with an Impulse Tapeworm or banana-bunch of live maggots, which he manages in a Frabill Crawler Can.

Bro further defines

Outfitted like a stealth fighter, Bro's Humminbird-based console gets a workout simultaneously running LakeMaster digital maps and Side Imaging to locate and then document spring crappie locations.  
Photo by Bill Lindner





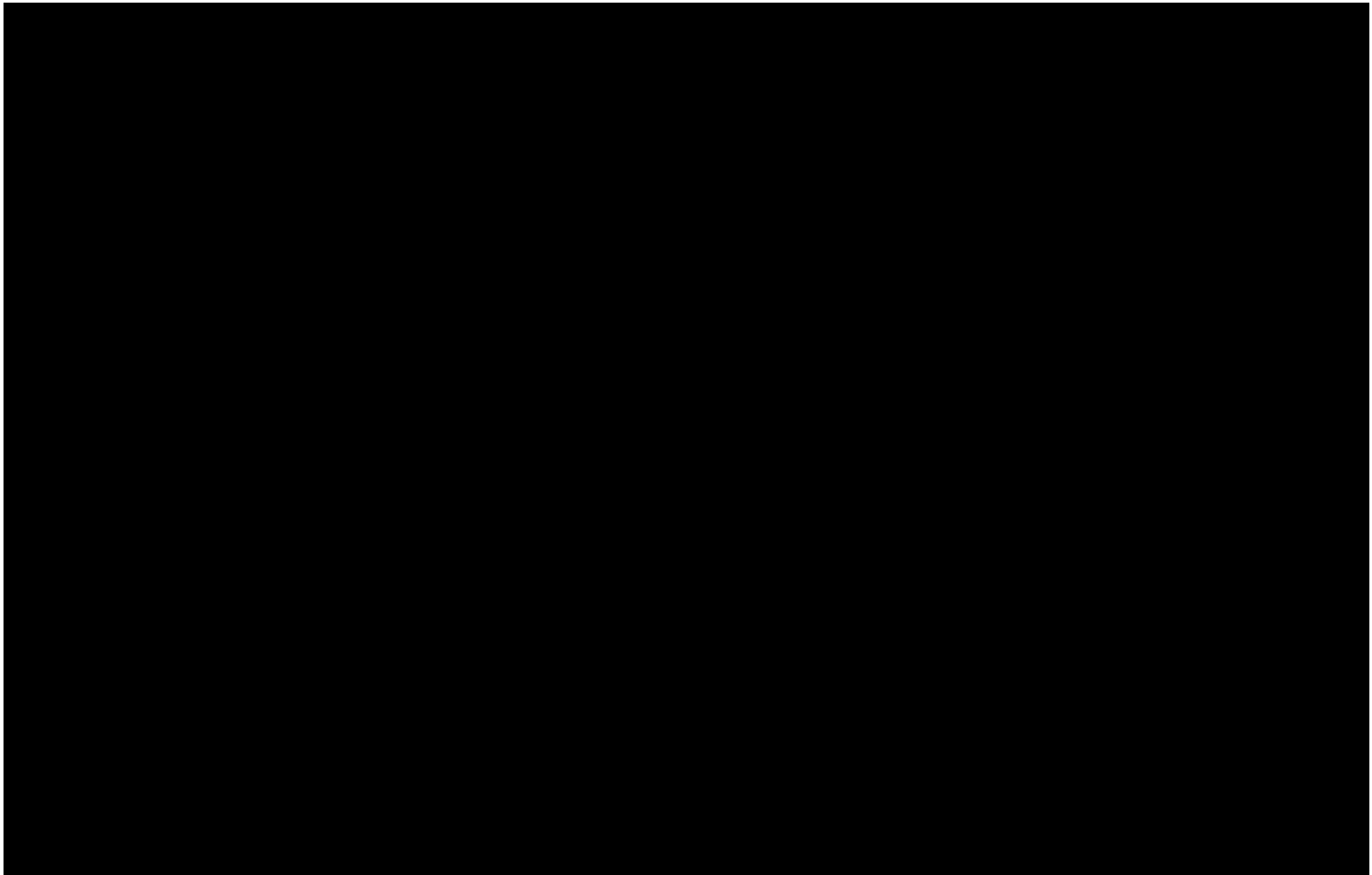
the rig and technique: “Set the bait halfway down the water column under a slip-float. Give it a whip and let the bobber and jig settle. If you knock a crappie on the noggin, you might get dunked immediately.

Next, give it two gentle pops, or short pulls if you will, and then pause a few seconds. If the water’s really cold, say still in the 40’s, I extend the pauses.”

The wand Bro wields is selected with thoughtfulness as well. “St. Croix developed the Panfish Series for ‘round fish.’ The lengths and actions’ marry-up with common techniques for taking crappies, bluegills and perch. For early crappies, I work a 7-foot medium-light – it casts like the dickens. In a wind, I go with the 5-foot, 4-inch light action – fewer chances of line ending up in a dust devil.”

Bro’s package concludes with a spooling of 2-pound Bionic Ice braid and 24-inch span of the 3-pound fluorocarbon leader line, affixed to the main line with an uniknot or micro-swivel. The slick braid yields casting distance, strength and sensitivity, while the fluoro leader material softens the hookset and ‘goes missing’ regardless of water clarity.

Embrace the floods this spring. The world prays the heavens won’t rain down and cause catastrophic flooding. Nevertheless, a miniature lakeside flood turns Bro’s boat into an ark – crappies boated in pairs with me hopefully onboard as his ark-mate.





## Jack Of Many Trades

Though the boy, Bill Vanderford, excelled in several sports, he only dreamed of flying airplanes as a youngster. He accomplished that by the age of 12 and went on to fly many World War II era airplanes during his teens. He even had a period of flying crop dusters before he turned 17, and later became a highly skilled air traffic controller during his Air Force days.

After a successful auto racing career in Europe, Bill turned to professional bass tournament fishing and simultaneously started his guide service in 1971 on Georgia's Lake Lanier. Though he won local tournaments and placed well in national events sponsored by BASS, BCA, and Project Sports, Inc., his love was the slower-paced pleasure of taking other people fishing. So, in 1977, he gave up competitive fishing to concentrate on his flourishing guide business. Since then, Bill has become a fishing legend in this area, and in 1993, was inducted into the National Freshwater Fishing Hall of Fame in Hayward, Wisconsin as a legendary guide . . . the first southerner to receive this honor.

Despite being recognized as "The Expert" on Lake Lanier,





Bill has also become well-known as an editor, writer, videographer, and photographer. He has won hundreds of awards for these efforts as a member of the Outdoor Writers Association of America (OWAA), the Society of American Travel Writers (SATW), the Southeastern Outdoor Press Association (SEOPA), and the Georgia Outdoor Writers Association (GOWA). Bill's byline and photography have appeared in well-known publications, including Field and Stream, Sports Afield, Bassin', North American Fisherman, In-Fisherman, several Game and Fish Publications magazines, and he served as the Georgia Editor for Outdoor Life Magazine. In addition, he has recorded fishing segments for national and local radio and television shows, and produced educational video tapes on many facets of fishing, travel, and nature.

Bill has written 5 books during his career that has taught anglers the habits and habitats of the most popular fish found in Lake Lanier. Readers also discovered many of the tricks and tactics that Bill has employed during his more than forty years of fishing and guiding on Lake Lanier.

After more than thirty years away from the sport, Bill returned to road racing with sports cars in 2004 and won a championship.

However, his active racing is slowing down, and he spends quite a few days each year teaching the art of going fast on racetracks to newcomers.

Bill Vanderford has lived much more than his dream, and now spends much of his time passing his knowledge on to others. He talks, teaches, and writes about his many and varied subjects throughout the Southeast and much of the country. It has truly been a good life for this "Jack of Many Trades!"





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# Skinny Water Walleyes

By Jason Mitchell

No secret that walleyes move into shallow water come spring but a lesson, I have had to relearn a handful of times over the years is simple, don't be afraid to look for fish in a foot or two of water come spring. Many anglers will fish shallow, particularly early in the year but often stop at that three-foot mark. There are probably many reasons that cause walleyes to position themselves into a foot or two of water, but I think most of the time, warmer water temperatures and baitfish are the two biggest motivators for pulling walleyes into such skinny water.

When it comes to finding walleyes in really shallow water, less than three feet... there does seem to be some misconceptions at least from my own personal experiences. Wind is probably one of the biggest misconceptions I have found from my time on the water. Wind and shallow-water walleyes are almost cliché but I seldom find fish less than three feet of water during a strong wind that is crashing in. The fish may be active, and they may be shallow but they typically duck right below the reverse current that is rolling back off the shoreline.



The author Jason Mitchell shares some wisdom on how to catch walleyes in ultra shallow water early in the year.

In three-foot rollers, for example, I seldom catch fish in two feet of water; typically they are a touch deeper like five feet. When I often do find walleyes in this same location, however, in a foot or two of water is the next day. After the wind dies or switches, and the water is still stained from yesterdays wind. That might be one of the biggest misconceptions about catching fish in a foot or two of water is that it takes a wind. Some of my best days in this ultra shallow water are in fact when there is little or no wind or wind in fact blowing off the bank, fishing the calm side of the lake. I think one of the reasons for this is that walleyes don't like to

position right up into the turbulence. In really strong winds, I have actually seen fish like white suckers, bullheads and even northern pike gets washed up into rip rap, but I have never seen a walleye get washed up.

What also surprises some angler is that sunny days often pull fish shallowest, especially during the pre spawn period. I have seen this on natural lakes, river systems and reservoirs. Furthermore, this can be a big fish pattern, as it sometimes seems like big females will slide up into a foot or two of water just to warm up. It almost seems like some of these big fish will move up so shallow that the sun can hit their backs.

The locations where we have seen these skinny water patterns unfold run the gamut. On river systems, for example, most fish locate near current breaks and seem much of the time. Fish move out into fast water and they move back into quiet water, but many fish are caught on the edge where faster water meets slower water. I have caught some really big fish in rivers, however, far from this edge quite a ways back into quiet water up along shallow gravel and sand bars or rip rap. Typically, during normal flows, these fish might have only been fifty to a hundred yards or less from faster water but where they were sitting was slack enough for a largemouth bass to live.

On natural lakes and reservoirs, gradual sloping shorelines that had firm gravel to sand bottoms to have been good. Rip rap is another solid option at times and shallow sand or gravel bars that have pencil reeds can be dynamite and are one of my favorite locations for finding walleye ultra shallow. Shallow rocks can also be really good but on many natural lakes and reservoirs I have fished, the rocks were often right on the shoreline in a foot or two of water and then out a little way, the rocks either got much smaller or the bottom turned to sand and sometimes, the fish seemed to hold right on the bottom edge of the rocks. The bigger the rocks, the more I found this to be the case.

With these really shallow fish, you almost have to cast to the fish and there is nothing better than a jig because jigs only have one hook. Most of the time, you have to slide into spots and slip the jig up into this shallow water without making a lot of commotions. Big bomb casts with heavy artillery are typically not going to work. In fact, there have been many times where I had to pitch the jig up on the bank and just slide the jig into the water. That is why the single hook on a jig shines as they don't catch as much debris or get hung up so much.

From my experiences, there are two basic maneuvers that really trigger these fish with a jig in







such shallow water. The first is to cast the jig up on to shore and just slide the jig into the water and slowly slide the jig through the zone with a drag or swim where the jig is just above the bottom maybe halfway through the water column. The other method that has worked really well for me is to pitch the jig up into the shallow water, feathering the line with your finger as it hits the water and keeping the line semi tight as it falls.

With either method, the key is often using really light jigs with lots of bulk to slow that jig descent way down. You can fish a heavy jig slow, but the slide and descent are still going to fast and not give the fish as much time to respond. The hits,

however, can be bone jarring so once these fish find and turn on the jig; they sometimes really chomp down on it.

Typically, either 1/8th ounce or 1/16th ounce will suffice, but you have to bulk up the jig by either adding plastic or a larger minnow so that the jig is easier to cast further distances and then slowly sinks once it hits the water.

Favorite jigs for this presentation include the 1/8th-ounce Northland Tackle Rocket Jig for dragging, and the 1/16th-ounce Northland Tackle Fire Ball bulked up with minnow or plastic for the slow fall. There are times as well when a 1/32nd-ounce Fire Ball tipped



with a live minnow is a killer in really shallow water. With the lighter jig, hook, the minnow on so that it stays alive and after casting the minnow up on the bank, let it swim around in the shallow water on semi tight line. This method is a little slower and takes more time but can often pull a few more fish off the spot.

By far, I do much better using monofilament when targeting really shallow fish early in the season. I

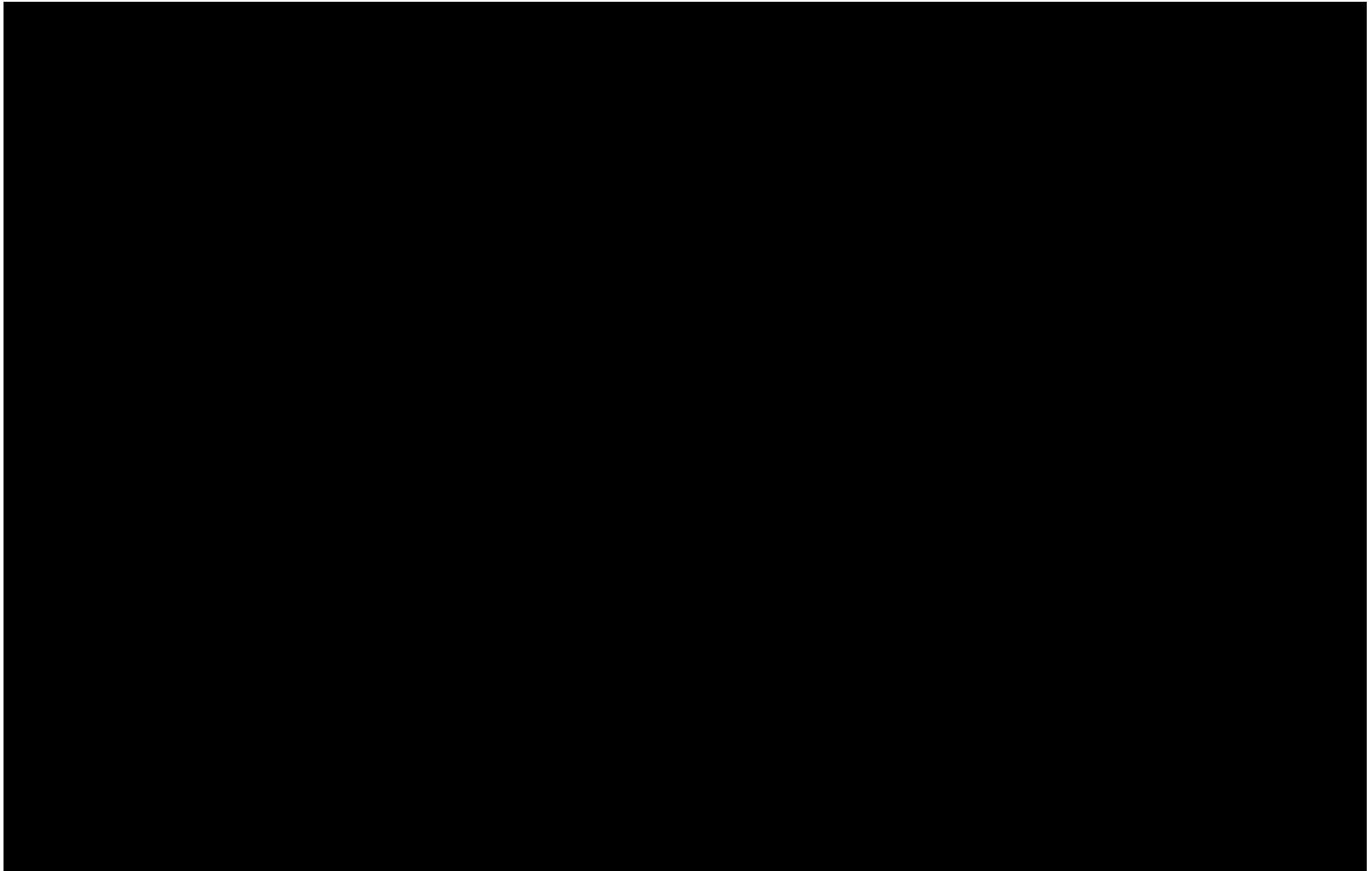


think mono slows the rate of fall for the jig and adds some subtleness to the glide and falls that just cause the jig to hang in the water longer which the fish seem to like. Perfect line for this application is seven-pound Bionic mono. This particular line is easy to cast with lighter jigs but slows the jig down dramatically in the water.



Depending on your height, a six to seven foot medium light fast action rod is about perfect for leveraging small jigs up onto the shoreline and the extra length lets you get a good hook set when the tip of the rod is high. We have a new line-up of walleye rods for this season ([www.jasonmitchellrods.com](http://www.jasonmitchellrods.com)) that are really impressive in that they retail for less than sixty dollars, feature; IM8 graphite construction, lifetime warranty and Fuji guide train. The weight and action of the JM641MLS spinning rod is perfect for pitching light jigs on light line.

Early in the season, do not overlook sliding up into really shallow water when conditions dictate and at least check really shallow water. There have been many days in the past where the most aggressive and hardest hits I had all day were in water less than three feet. To fish such water effectively however, takes some modification and technique but is definitely worth your time.







## Breaking Down the A-Rig

By Captain Mike Gerry

The craze of the A-Rig has spread to other parts of the country with Oklahoma being the latest with a state record bass of 14.13 lbs. caught on the A-Rig. There has also been several fish on Guntersville caught over 10 lbs. recently with one over 13 lbs. weighted in during a local tournament. In Tennessee, there was a tournament won recently with a total weight of 44 lbs. All caught on their five-prong version with only 3 hooks allowed. The stringer included two 10 plus pound fish plus 24 lbs. of 3 smaller fish. Can you imagine a 44 lb. stringer; it just wow's me to think about it! (pictured above is a Picasso Lures School-E-Rig: [www.picassooutdoors.com](http://www.picassooutdoors.com))



Even though for me this winter the A-rig has not been as productive as other baits, this has been of my own choosing not to fish it as much because of the danger of all the hooks in the boat with customers. I also think that the different manufacturers of the A-rigs are starting to create different versions of it so the bait can be fished at different depths with more flash and for a variety of fish species. Many of the manufacturers have taken the weight out of the bait



and reduced the size of the wire and added willow leaf blades for flash, to improve presentation.

The other change is that the A-rig is being fished in more types of cover, and at different depths than the original use presented. Anglers have found that the bass had not moved to the bridges as they did last year. I believe this is a by-product of the rig beating up the fish and changing some of their normal migration paths. Allowing anglers to move to creeks, shallow water, points and river ledge areas to find the fish that will hit it. The good news is that as the migration path changed the A-rig manufacturer was ahead of the curve and did many of the things stated above to allow the bait to take on more water other than the 20 to 30 ft. drops, we all fished last year. The thing that hasn't changed on the A-rig is it is a young

man's bait as most average and older fishermen are physically challenged to fish with.

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## Just Go Fishing

By Bob Jensen

Here in north Iowa we got a foot of snow dumped on us overnight. Nevertheless, the snow is melting fairly quickly, and the small streams are running again, which is a welcome sight. Our creeks and rivers have been very low due to minimal rainfall this past summer. The running water makes me more than anxious to get back on the water fishing. Something that I've always been an advocate of is not to get locked in to a particular species of fish or a certain technique. Wherever you fish, there are fishing options, and most people find that if they keep an open mind and consider the various options, they'll enjoy their fishing more. Here's what I mean.

In the Midwest, walleyes are very popular, and for a good reasons. Walleyes will respond to a



variety of techniques, in many areas the walleye fishing is better than ever, and they're great on the table.

However, sometimes walleyes get more difficult to catch. You can usually find a way to get a few to bite, but some days the walleye catching just isn't as good. Those slow bite walleye days are the days when you should pursue another species of fish, maybe largemouth bass. The bass bite in many bodies of water across the Midwest is tremendous, and if more anglers would give the bass a chance, they might enjoy their fishing even more.



Same thing holds true in southern states where bass are king. If the bass bite goes south, tie on a small jig and catch some crappies, or attach a bigger hook and a sinker to your line and throw something out there for a catfish to eat. For most anglers, it's more fun to catch a bunch of crappies than not to catch any bass.

Let's say you've got a few friends or family members, maybe some youngsters, who just want to catch some fish: Here's a good way to do that. Tie some crank baits onto your lines and start trolling over flats, points, sunken islands, along a weed line, anywhere there's fish-holding structure, troll those crankbaits. This is a great summer technique. Select a crankbait that will run close to the bottom, but also have one out there that runs a bit higher. In stained water, you want your bait bumping against the bottom and making noise, in clear water you can get it farther off the bottom. (pictured above are crankbaits from [www.basscraftcrankbaits.com](http://www.basscraftcrankbaits.com))

You want to be covering water and showing the fish different colors and shapes. It works really well to attach a planer board to a rod or two and get the bait out away from the boat. Off-Shore planer boards are easy to use and will result in more hook-ups, as they enable you to spread your lines and fish more efficiently.

If the crankbaits don't do the job, tie on some jigs and tip them with plastic. Slow your speed down a bit, use a ripping action with the jigs, and again, use different colors and bodies until the fish show you what they want.

Fishing is different things to different people. If you're one of those folks that wants to key in on a particular species of fish or employ a certain technique, that's great, you should do so. However, if you just want to feel a fish throbbing on the end of your line, consider what we've just talked about. If you do, you're going to catch more fish this year. To see all the newest episodes of Fishing the Midwest television, visit [www.fishingthemidwest.com](http://www.fishingthemidwest.com). Join us at [www.facebook.com/fishingthemidwest](https://www.facebook.com/fishingthemidwest)



## Deep Insights: To Cast or Not to Cast

How bass-fishing's Ott DeFoe uses Humminbird Side Imaging, and soon to be 360, in deep water to decide whether to fish or move on.

Grand Lake, Oklahoma (02/19/2013) - Time is always of the essence during tournaments.

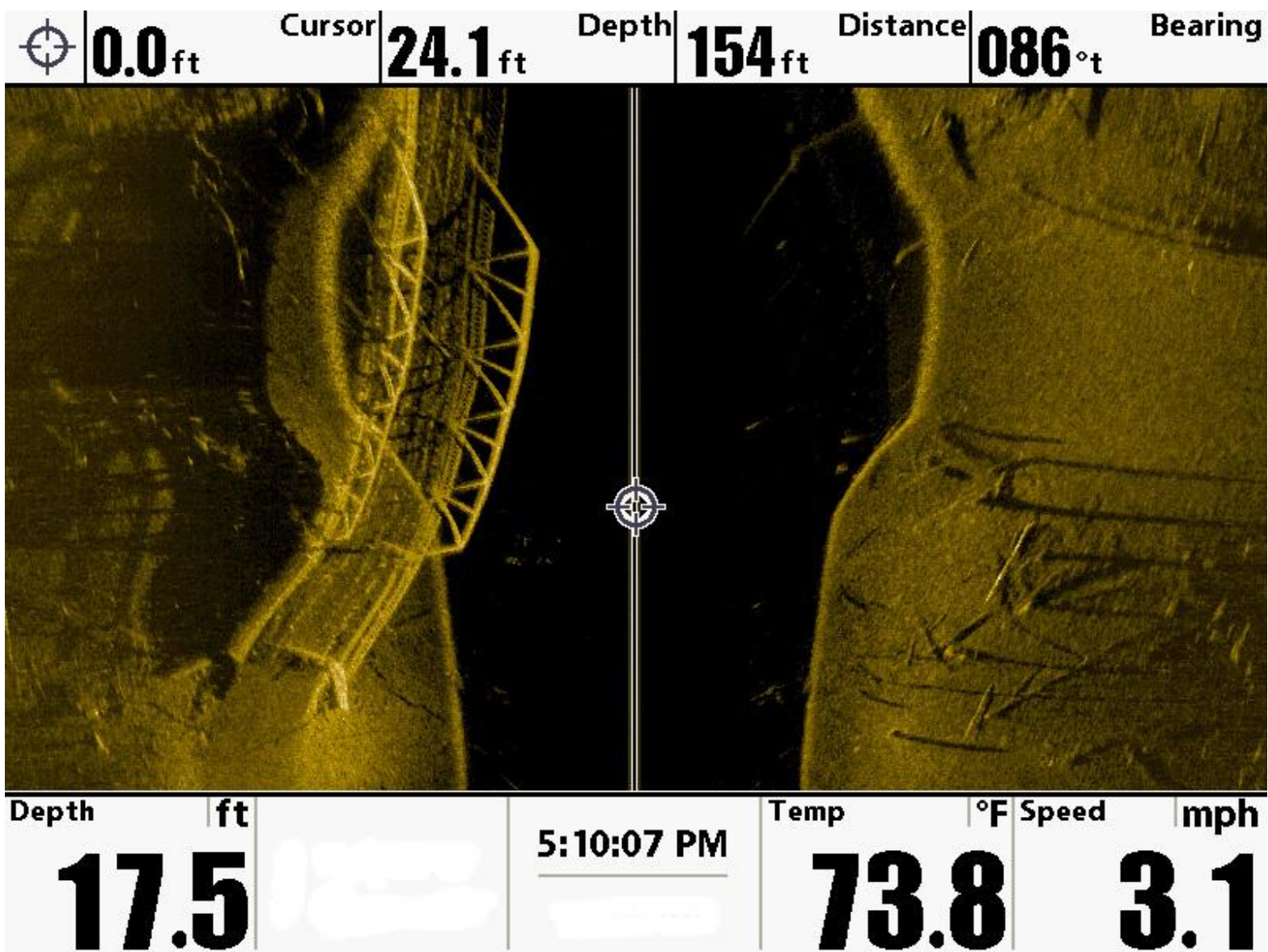


Fish found throughout pre-fishing still might be there. Then again... maybe not.

There was an era when countless hours were exhausted casting into deep-water just to figure out whether the fish were in the area or had turned tail and absconded with the scene. Not anymore, however, when using Humminbird Side Imaging and new 360.

Enter Tennessee Elite pro Ott DeFoe - Bassmaster's 2011 Rookie of the Year, coming in 4th for Angler of the Year during that same time frame, as well as an astonishing 2nd runner-up for the esteemed title in 2012. The 27-year-old has been using Side Imaging, and will be using 360 in the future, to literally see firsthand whether he will be making a cast or





moving, on.

One fish two fish

"I first realized how crucial Side Imaging was in 2010, the only year I didn't have it on my boat," DeFoe says. "Immediately I noticed the amount of time I was spending fishing for bass that weren't even there. And then I confirmed the importance of this technology in one single cast."

It was in 2012 when DeFoe was pre-fishing his home waters of Douglas Lake, Tennessee, and came to a deep water area off a point that usually holds fish. "But I could see on Side Imaging there were no fish there, so I didn't make a cast" he added. "And then I went around the corner and saw one single fish, made a cast to it and Wham! It whacked my bladebait. One fish. A single cast." DeFoe now understood the power of Side Imaging. A few feet down the rock-strewn bottom in deep-water and he spied another single fish. Three lobes later and that fish was in the boat, as well."

Point made.

"Nowadays, during tournaments with a deep-water bite, I find myself moving along at idle speed looking for fish while watching the screen of my Humminbird in Side Imaging mode



more than I am casting,” DeFoe claims. “If I don’t see fish, I don’t cast. The technology’s that good. I’m covering more water and catching more fish because of it. Basically, if I’m in someone else’s boat without it, I feel like a golfer’s lost ball in high weeds.”

Look out below... and above

DeFoe’s probed the depths with Side Imaging for bass in water as deep as 70 feet—the technology working wonders in water fathoms deeper for fish that live lower yet.

Nevertheless, the majority of his deep water casts are made in water up to 40 feet, where he sets his sonar to search 100 feet to the sides for a better defined look at what lies below. If DeFoe finds heavy cover like a freshly made crib or brush pile he’ll still make a few cast, just in case fish are tucked deep within its innards. However, if cruising over open water with structure like rocks or slab wood, he’ll move on until he marks fish.

The Elite pro has also used Side Imaging to scan the upper reaches of the water column for schooling fish suspended over deep water flats, as well. “Humminbird’s new 360 is really going to open up this bite to anyone willing to use it,” he says.

Thank goodness for catch and release.

Believer

Although Ott Defoe’s career hasn’t been long in the making, he’s the rich cream that’s instantaneously risen to the top. And Humminbird Side Imaging has been there the majority of his professional time on the water. Seeing fish firsthand, casting to them and catching them has made a believer out of this phenomenal bass fisher. And it will for you, too.





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