

**Catching
Crappie in
the Cold**

**Holiday
Shopping
Guide**

**The Descent on Panfish
Winter Smallmouth Tactics
A Variety of Fish at Hatteras**



Christmas Eve Crappie, Pg 17



Bass Fishing Hall Of Fame Inductees, Pg 53



Treasure Trove Of Trout In Georgia, Pg 32

Catching Crappie in the Cold, Pg 6

Zip Line Adventure, Pg 9

Season Finale For Winter Bass, Pg 13

Improvise, Overcome and Adapt, Pg 19

Winter Smallmouth Tactics and Tips, Pg 22

Maine Starts Down A Slippery Slope, Pg 26

The 10 steps of a Bassaholic, Pg 28

BrushpileS For Crappie, Pg 35

Holiday Shopping Guide, Pg 41

It's Not Sexy But It Is Effective!, Pg 44

TrophyCatch Winner Announced, Pg 48

A Variety of Fish at Hatteras, Pg 51

Frabill Eliminates Biggest Frustrations, Pg 56

Safe Ice Fishing, Part 2, Pg 60

Be More Productive On The Ice, Pg 65

Focus on Styles of Fishing, Pg 67

Matching Up for Ice Walleyes, Pg 73

Competitive Ice Fishing With An Edge, Pg 77

Ice Travel, Pg 79

The Descent on Panfish, Pg 80



I hope everyone enjoyed their Thanksgiving dinner, ate more than they intended, and enjoyed the time they had with their family and friends. A lot of people seem to share the same opinion that I have and feel that society as a whole has forgotten what

Thanksgiving is all about. This is the time of year when we should look forward to spending time with our family and friends. I feel that a lot of the big box stores are more concerned about the all mighty dollar than they are about preserving the spirit of Thanksgiving and the family.

My daughter and I started our Black Friday tradition over twenty years ago, when Black Friday was truly Black Friday. We looked forward to searching through all the ads, finding the best prices

for each item and planning our shopping strategy. We had to figure out who was going to what store, what each of us had to purchase, what was our first stop and what time we had to leave the house. Yes, it was a sleepless night, and we always looked forward to our afternoon nap and what movie we were going to see when we woke up from our well-deserved nap. We were talking the

Editor: Larry Thornhill
Larry@odumagazine.com

Assistant Editor:
 Bill Schwarz,
Bill@odumagazine.com

Publishing Team: Bill Schwarz & Richard Barker

Photographer: Kathy Barker

Advertising inquirers for our Fishing Magazines, ODU Fishing and Hunting News should be e-mailed to:
webmaster@odumagazine.com

Contributing Writers: Keith Sutton, Larry Thornhill, Chris Jenkins, Bill Vanderford, D & B Ice Adventures, Ron Stallings, Capt. Jake Davis, Lawrence Taylor, Glenn Walker, Bob Wattendorf, Jake Bussolini, Dan Galusha, Bob Jensen, Mark Strand, Jason Mitchell, Libby Yranski, Tim Thomas & Jud Peck

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

Photos: Cover provided by TTI Blakemore and TJ Stallings. Index photo of a lake in Maine this fall.

Register To Receive ODU Magazines:



Funny Shirt. Important cause.
 For every one of these we sell, we can get 30 gallons of trash off the ice and put 30 fish back under the ice - alive and swimming. Not a bad shake for \$25.
 Score yours at RecycledFish.org/store

The Recycled Fish "On Ice" Tour is supported by:

...and contributions from anglers like you.

Pro



FishMate®
the *ultimate* app for anglers!®



other night and we both agreed that we may just be able to sleep-in get up and go to breakfast and stop by my local Apple store and see what they have on sale, since they are one of the few companies that is trying to save and preserve the Thanksgiving tradition. May you all have a "Merry Christmas & Happy New Year"

Next month will be our "Ice Fishing" issue and as usual, the February issue will be a Classic update and our New Product Tackle Box.

Let's all make some time to enjoy the blessings that the good Lord has given us! Get outside and enjoy life. You may not be able to, tomorrow.

Enjoy the outdoors,

Larry Thornhill
Editor & Chief

ODU Magazine™



Find us on
Facebook

**FISHING
NEWS
HUNTING
NEWS**

twitter 
ODUFishing

twitter 
ODUHunting

Get Connected With ODU!

Catching Crappie in The Cold



By Keith Sutton

The air was icy when we left the ramp, but when we arrived at our fishing hole, calm air and warm sun made the morning pleasant despite the 25-degree temperature. My son Josh and I, bundled up like Eskimos, basked like turtles while waiting for a bite. We didn't wait long.



"One on red!" our friend Jerry Blake snapped.

Each of us was watching "color-coded" bobbers above our minnow baits. Josh had red and white. I had green and yellow. Jerry had black and blue. Josh's red bobber had sunk slowly out of sight, indicating a bite.

"Dadgummit!" Josh exclaimed as he snapped his pole upward without

Like fishing guide Jerry Blake, you may have to bundle up in extra clothes to stay warm, but winter days can be good times to be on the water if you're a crappie fan.



Josh Sutton shows off one of the nice slabs he caught while on a winter crappie trip with his father

hooking a fish.

“One on green!” Jerry said.

Red was back under, too, and Jerry had a hit on the black bobber. Fortunately, we managed to land three fish.

“They feel like ice,” I said, feeling the sides of the crappie I caught. “I don’t know how they can be so lively and so cold.”

Lively they were, though. Although most crappie we caught barely wiggled our bobbers, each fought hard when hooked. And plenty were hooked.

Catching winter crappie can be challenging. If the water temperature falls extremely low, crappie become lethargic. Those feeding may bite so gingerly they are almost undetectable. Nevertheless, crappie are commonly caught in winter by those who know tips for success.

Most winter crappie hold on deep cover and structure, but they can be pinpointed on brushpiles, fish attractors, creek channel edges and other hotspots using a fish-finder.

The depth at which the crappie are holding may vary from one location to another. Some crappie may be 15 feet deep, others 25 feet. But if you

use the rigs we use, adjustments are easy.

Each rig consists of a minnow fished on a No. 6 Tru-Turn bronze Aberdeen panfish hook beneath a Thill pencil-style slip float. On the line above the float is a bobber stop. Moving

A crappie pulled from the water in winter feels like ice, but despite frigid temperatures, crappie feed actively this season, providing action for hardcore anglers who don’t mind being out.



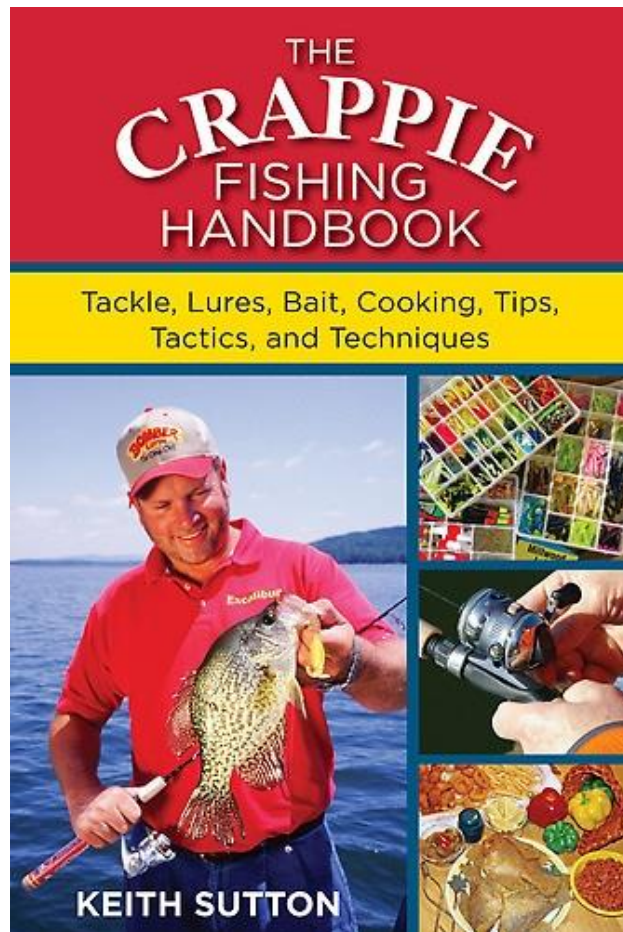
the bobber stop up or down is all it takes to change the bait's depth. A split shot to sink the bait completes each rig.

Many winter crappie anglers also fish with jigs. Each should be tied so it hangs perpendicular to the line. The lure then is lowered to the depth crappie are holding and is held almost motionless until a fish strikes. Tipping the jig hook with a live minnow increases the lure's attractiveness.

Although in frigid water, the crappie we caught that day were hungry and hitting hard. I usually miss as many as I hook, but that day, lots of crappie were hooking themselves. Before lunch, we had 53 in the livewell.

Winter fishing isn't for everybody. For most of us, a warm fireplace is much more attractive than a frigid outing on a cold lake.

If the fishing itch gets too intense to bear, though, give winter crappie a try. Fishing for these sassy panfish is a sure remedy for what ails you. All photos by Keith Sutton



Our Zip Line Adventure

Crocodile Bay Lodge - Costa Rica
My Return, Part 3

By Larry Thornhill



I believe that while on vacation, we all have a tendency to try to cram everything into that proverbial five-pound bag. My daughter and I are no exception. We saw a brief opening on our first day to go Zip Lining, and we jumped at the opportunity. Both of us have always wanted to go Zip Lining, and neither one of us had ever done anything quite this crazy, and what an adventure it proved to be.

We met our guides at the lodge and off went for a forty-five-minute drive up the mountain, and when I say up the mountain, I really mean up the mountain. It was definitely a trip of over the mountain, through the woods, bridges and streams and around washed-out sections of roads, but we were not heading to Grandma's house.

If we had met someone coming down the mountain, I have no idea how far either one of us would have had to either back up or down to pass one another. When we finally got to the mountaintop, we saw a sign "Welcome Canopy Tour Bosque Mar". The native who lived on the mountaintop and had told our guides that he has just been down the Zip Line and cleared a path for us.

We signed our release forms, donned our safety harnesses, and went over what was about to happen i.e. how to stop on the next platform, how not to let yourself start spinning around, where not to place your hands to avoid getting them caught in the rollers, etc. Off we went to the starting platform. Keep in





mind that once you take those first steps, there is no turning back. No climbing down at the next platform, you either finish or become like Robison Caruso' and start living in the tree's tops in the jungle of Costa Rica.

Thank god my daughter is the adventurous type and has a little dare devil in her. I have to believe the average woman would never leave that first platform. Now remember you are not in the states, and nothing has been OSHA inspected or approved.

We went to the starting platform took in a breath taking view and away we went. The first leg was not too bad there was just a slight drop, and you could see the next platform and if you looked down you could see the jungle floor. So it was not too hard on the nerves. Trying to remember where to place your hands and keeping your feet up and how to stop when you hit the next platform was the interesting part and just added to the rush. After our first successful landing, Kree and I agreed that was not so bad.

Our guides removed our harness from the first line and prepared us for the second leg of our adventure, i.e. they told us that this was the longest, fastest and steepest of all. This one I have to admit had the potential to be a little more of a challenge. Picture yourself 150 feet up in the trees' tops, both the tree and your platform swaying back in forth, you cannot see the jungle floor you could not follow your zip line to the next platform. Your zip line just disappears into the jungles' canopy. Keep in mind that there is no escape route; no ladder down to the jungle floor. Your only way out is to continue your adventure. And yes my heart was pounding a little harder and a lot faster. I can't honestly say whether I was scared or not, but at this moment, I can say that I questioned my own sanity and the lack there of.

One of our guides went first, and as we watch him disappear into the jungles' canopy pictures of past "Twilight Zone" episode passed through my mind wondering what was on the other side. Next it was my turn. I have to admit it was quite a rush just thinking about stepping off the platform heading into god knows what. Awe, I





forgot to mention that it just started to rain, which added a little twist to our adventure. While obviously, I took that step, and it definitely was one of the biggest adrenalin rushes that I have had in years. I have no idea how fast I was going, but I do know it was faster than I ever intended to go. The Zip line was swaying; I was whisking through,

over and around treetops and wondering were in the XXX was the platform? I started to apply the break, knowing that I was fast approaching the platform and knew that I'd better start applying the break. Awe, I forgot to tell you that the break was a 9" x 9" piece of leather that was draped over the Zip Line, and you held in place with your hand. And when you wanted to slow down or stop you pulled down to add pressure to the line thus slowing you down.

I have to admit that of all five stages of the adventure this was the most invigorating, thrilling, heart pound, stomach in your throat ride of all. The next three legs were thrilling but in no way compared with the excitement we just endured. The light rain turned into a heavy down pour, and as we departed the final platform, and we were standing on solid ground again the skies open up, and we had to fight a steady stream of water heading down the mountain as we worked our way up to the top. We were grabbing trees, roots, and rock anything that we could grab, just to stop us sliding back down the mountain. By the time we reached top we were hot, tired, sweaty, soaked to the bone, and I was definitely ready for a cold beer.

For more information visit <http://www.crocodilebay.com/resort>



I can honestly say that this was one of my most exhilarating rushes that I have had in years. Keep in mind that I have been down numerous class five rapids ranging from the Snake River in Colorado to the Olympic course on the Ocoee River in Georgia in my lifetime and this is right up there with them.

Tie on a Maniac, the fish'll go crazy!

MANIAC

CUSTOM LURES



May 4th, 2013 was the morning of a tournament. I had decided to switch all of my soft plastics to Maniac baits including the Black'n Blue Cut'r Bug as a trailer on my jigs. I had just pulled up to my first spot with excitement running through my blood. As I got closer to the fish I had caught during the pre-fish, my adrenaline started to pump even harder. I flipped my jig into the bushes and WHACK, the first one was on! My partner, seeing that I had caught one, then flipped his jig into the same spot - WHACK, he had one on as well.

After we had our limits with our jigs that included the Maniac CUt'r Bugs as trailers, it was time to switch it up a bit. Farther into the trees and bushes we went. To our surprise, we saw a giant bass just sitting there sunning. My partner flipped a Maniac Salt Stick and it was ferociously attacked by that big bass. With that fish in the boat, we had a pretty good limit for that particular lake. We ended up winning the tournament that day, and what a glorious moment that was. I will forever use Maniac CUt'r Bugs as trailers on my jigs, and will always have Maniac Salt Sticks on hand.

Thank you, Maniac Custom Lures, for the great baits and for helping me win when others struggled to catch a fish. For us, the catching never stopped.



3.5" Cut'r Bug as a jig trailer
#030 - June Bug

Tim (BIG DOG) Rawlings



5" Maniac Salt Stick
#013 - Changeable Craw



3.5" Cut'r Bug
#070 - Mother Craw



Season Finale For Winter Bass



By Chris Jenkins

Most people will tell you that living in the past is not the wisest decision, but what else do we as fishermen have to go on? Past decisions and more importantly past results are what enable us to make the correct decisions on a daily basis. There can be a fine line when that theory is applied to fishing however. What may work today or even this year, may not work the next. I have even fished with someone in the same boat that had better success with the same lure as I had tied on. Generally that is due to line size, lure presentation, and or the angle the lure is being presented at. But I remember one late fall season fishing a reservoir and loading the boat with a Bomber Fat A model # B06F in the color Citreux (pictured). I experienced a two week window that was unforgettable. The next year during the same time frame and same water temps, I attempted to repeat history and failed miserably. I am sure there is some logical explanation for it, but I am yet to discover the reason. I think we can also all agree that when it comes to fishing, its best to leave logic at the boat ramp. I have dozens of similar situations logged in my fishing journal that are unexplainable. Despite the plethora of unexplained mysteries, I still rely on history to dictate many of my choices on the water today. That's not to say that I don't try to keep an open mind along the way though. Thinking outside the box can be difficult for most of us, and it gets harder to do as you get old.

The next couple of months I will do the majority of my fishing in deep reservoirs. So what I offer in the way of advice may not be for everyone. As with any advice though, take what you need and discard the rest. Even though it's November, don't assume all the fish are deep. I have caught bass in three feet of water on a buzz bait in November. That just sounds crazy to say I know. But bass are not always predictable and can amaze us with the stunts they pull. Again, thinking outside the box afforded me the ability to say that I have caught bass in November on a buzz bait. And by all means please don't assume that just because the water is cold, you need to drag a Carolina Rig or slow your presentation down to a crawl. That type of fishing is a last resort for me regardless the time of year. Rather, I am going to leave the dock with moving baits tied on. Crankbaits are a great tool this month and should be pushed hard, especially prior to a front. I keep various models that will allow me to comb depths of 3 to 5 feet, 8 to 12 feet, and



deep divers as well. There are times when I have picked a brush pile apart with a jig or soft plastic bait and had no takers. Then I throw right back in the same spot with a crankbait and have a bass engulf it. That's a telltale sign that the fish want moving baits. If you catch a couple that are hooked close to the outer mouth

area that usually means to stick with the moving bait, but change colors. When they fully commit and engulf the bait, you are spot on with size and color. A lipless crank, or often referred to a rattle trap, is another option that has proven to be very effective in cold water. Rather than burning these baits or even implementing a slow retrieve, I prefer to pump and wind in the late fall and winter months. Simply cast out past the desired location and let the bait fall to the desired depth. I am typically fishing some form of structure with the lipless bait (pictured above is a Vagabond Vibration and below is a Rat-L-Trap) so I let it sink to the bottom. Then I merely wind in the slack while lowering the rod. Then I raise the rod to about a twelve O clock position. Drop the rod and repeat until the desired effect occurs. That means until you get a hit. The majority of your bites will occur as the lure free fall back down through the water column. So when you go to pump or raise the rod, you will feel dead weight on the other end. That's your signal to set the hook my friend.

Remember, hook sets are free. So exercise your rights when in doubt.

Slow rolling spinner baits around and through cover such as laydowns and brush piles has its place as well. This method seems to shine when the lake is in its turn over stage or when there is some stain to the water. As with the aforementioned lipless bait, spinner baits can also be

fished in the same Yo-Yo style pump and wind fashion at certain times. Because of the spinner baits gaudy appearance, I feel as though it works best when fish don't have adequate time to study it.



The last moving bait I will touch on does have a lifelike appearance and is best fished in clear water. I am referring to the swimbait. To most anglers the use of this bait requires not only thinking outside the box, but may border on an outer body

experience. That's a shame because once you start connecting with these big baits, its difficult to go back to your standard lures. For example: I can rest assured that 8 out 10 fish I catch on wacky rig or

Bill Vanderford's Guide Service, Inc.

*Georgia's Oldest and Inductee of the
National Freshwater Fishing Hall of Fame*
Lake Lanier and Chattahoochee River

Home of the Famous Swirleybird

770-289-1543

www.fishinglanier.com

<http://twitter.com/#!/BillVanderford>

<http://www.youtube.com/user/fishyracer>

<http://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=867260415>

shaky head will be small. Small to me is under five pounds. On the other hand, I can rest assured that 8 out of 10 fish that I catch on a swimbait will exceed the five pound mark. The only sacrifice is in numbers of fish. I will have to forego catching all those smaller fish. To me it's worth it because I have already been there and done that as it pertains to little fish. Adapting

the right mentality is the most difficult aspect of fishing swimbaits. When it comes to choosing the right bait for the job, there are several things to consider. Natural forage, water clarity, season, and the size of the bass you are targeting are just to name a few. There are hard baits, jointed hard baits, and soft baits to choose from. With the limited space I have left, let's just keep it simple. Strike King's King Shad may not be considered a swimbait, but it will get you started and it is easy to use and it will catch

fish. I love Castaic's Catch -22 Shad and Blue Gill (pictured). I have caught countless bass from 2 to 10 pounds on these lures so they are worth every penny I spend on them.

The Huddleston 68 Special is another lure I would recommend investing in. These three recommendations work year around, but I suggest a handmade stinger hook to improve hook up ratio with the Castaic and Hudd baits. Email me for photos and info on stinger hooks or swimbait questions. These three baits will get you started this season and will prove to be phenomenal in March and April.

This article seems incomplete without mentioning a jig though. I do love a jig and have ripped many a lip using them. When bass are holding tight to cover, the jig is hard to beat when it comes to sticking pigs. If moving baits don't seem to get their attention, I will start picking every rock pile and piece of wood apart with these crayfish imitators.

Just remember to keep an open mind and don't throw in the towel just yet.

This is the season finale for big bass so swing for the fences!!



Christmas Eve Crappie

By D & B Ice Adventures

Between Christmas parties and work, our holiday season this year was on a pretty tight schedule. We did find one morning to squeeze in a fishing trip to search for some crappie in a spot that we had no reports of ice conditions. The weather

forecast said we would endure a morning of bluebird skies with temperatures in the mid to high 20's with a slight chance of snow in the late morning. We figured, with the change in the atmosphere coming, the fish would be feeding hard.

The long ride to the fishing hole was nervously paired with anticipation of whether or not the ice would hold our weight. We knew if it allowed us on, we would be able to find the fish. Upon our arrival, we found a group of tip-up fishermen had already set up their pop-up shelter and tip-ups. Inching out to our destination in the opposite direction, our spud bar revealed a solid 4 " of hard black ice the entire way.

We began our day by punching holes in a grid formation over a large area. This allows us to cover a big area and quickly find what depth contour the fish are running at. In this body of water, the crappie seemed to have a structured size separation. When you find them usually the biggest fish are leading the way. Just about every trip, we have been able to locate the front of the school and follow the slabs around the basin with small yearling fish being the indicator that it is time to move.

As we worked our way through the grid, we had drilled, there were fish in just about every hole. We were looking for large marks on our electronics, trying to determine where the larger fish were holding. On this day, our theory that the large fish lead the way didn't play in our favor. We found that the fish were spread out and roaming independently of each other. On a normal trip, you can catch several fish out of one hole pretty easy before having to move. If we were lucky, we would get two fish before they had a tight lip.





Most times while fishing suspended crappie, there is an active feeding zone in which only aggressive fish will be located. Outside this zone, the fish will hardly even react to anything that is put in front of them. Typically, the zone for this pond is twelve feet of water up to the bottom of the ice. On this day, the fish were suspending a little deeper than normal. They were either in the top few feet of the water column right below the ice or well into the usual inactive zone of 14'+. This may have had something to do with the full moon that was only a few days away.

This pond is usually one where you can drop your bait down and the fish do the rest, but the Christmas Eve crappie made us work for them. We both like using a soft but fast jigging motion. To achieve this, we slowly bounce the tip of the rod, trying to move our heavy tungsten jigs ever so slightly causing our small micro plastic quiver in the water column. A spring bobber often times enhance the technique giving you much more of a finesse presentation as it will slow your presentation down even when fished aggressively.

One other effective method to select for larger fish is to present them with a bigger bait. Crappie, even small crappie has a large mouth which makes it easy for them to feed on larger-sized pray. We have used this trick a few times when the fish were feeding on minnows. Last year that move made the difference and helped me (Bobby) win a tournament by catching the largest crappie and heaviest bag for the day. My go to bait for this situation is the Spiiki by Maki Plastics.

Close to 11 am, the weatherman's forecast came full circle. A snow squall rolled in, and the fish seemed almost disappear from the area. We went from hole to hole scratching our heads wondering where they went. After a bit of frustration, we decided our best bet was to call the trip a success and head home for some family time.

Overall, teamwork paid off for us on this trip. While the fish were relatively lethargic, they were still cruising looking for pods of bait. With such a large area drilled out, we were able to spread out and stay on the areas that the large fish were cruising through. At one point, we found a series of three consecutive holes that had many active, aggressive fish. We actually took turns catching them, while the other video tapped and took pictures.



IMPROVISE, OVERCOME AND ADAPT

Marines live by it, Tournament anglers should too

By Ron Stallings

We have all been there. The bite turns off during the tournament. The weather becomes less than perfect. Four hours remain in the tournament, what do you do to catch the winning creel?

You have to improvise, overcome and adapt. Break out all the ammo you came with. Look around your boat. You have brought every conceivable lure with you. Tie something else on and find a pattern that will cause a fish to strike. Stop casting the same lure that worked two hours ago. It is hard to do, we all know. Most anglers are accustomed to “sticking with what works” but that changes throughout the day.



Opaque (left) is better in darker waters or cloudy conditions.

Translucent (right) works well in clear water or brighter skies.

through the lateral lines in their bodies.

So, how many profiles are in your tackle box? Pick a few types and try them out. Start out with one type, say plastic. There are thousands of plastic profiles on the market. Cast eight or ten different profiles. Before you change each one out, tip it with a minnow first to add a scented enticement. Make sure to change the head style too. Round heads will put out a different frequency than an arrowhead. Different head shapes in the same



You must adapt to these changes. For instance, that double minnow rig was working great in the morning. The strike stops. Fish are covering the depth finder. The weather has changed and the cloud cover is increasing.

You are confident they will continue to hit the same rig. Then it happens...you are at the weigh-in with a less than average creel. How do you combat this?

Start improvising, overcoming and adapting.

As the weather or terrain changes, tactics must change. This starts with lures in your tackle box and choosing “profiles” that will induce a strike. Profiles are different types or shapes of lures. There are plastics and hair that create different shapes inducing a strike. In addition, these baits will create a “frequency” that fish will pick up



The images above clearly show the differences in some of the hair jigs available. You will also notice the difference in the head of the second jig. It is a basic round head versus the Road Runners' classic shape. Also notice the hair configurations.

size descend at different speeds, which could trigger a strike.

Color may be the trigger. If you are using a round jig head with a minnow profile plastic body, try three or four colors of that same body. Try opaque (non-translucent) colors versus clear. The water clarity and cloud cover may determine which one works best. If the minnow profile fails, go to a tube or button tail.

When it comes to hair jigs, the amount, color and type of hair could be the trigger. Some jigs have enough hair to hold a scent. Add a drop or two of scent on these jigs to give fish something to target. Use the same theory as with the plastics. Try different colors and head types to induce strikes.



The images above show the differences in some of the plastic bodies available. Take a close look at the first three bodies. You will notice, not only the tails are different, but, the ridges in the bodies themselves. These ridges provide three different ranges of frequencies that may make the difference in getting fish in the boat.

Look at how many changes racecar drivers make just to gain one-tenth of a second in speed. What will a half-pound difference in air pressure in your right front tire mean to you on the highway? Not much, right? That same pressure adjustment on a racecar could mean the difference between first and ninth place.

Are you going to WAIT for something to happen, or, are you going to MAKE something happen?

.....Improvise, overcome and adapt to ALL situations.



ROAD RUNNER®
by BLAKEMORE
SLOW PRESENTATION + FLASH + VIBRATION = MORE FISH!



Two BANG SHAD lures are shown. They are yellow with black spots and have a white head with a large black eye. They have a silver spinner and a brass willow blade.

BANG SHAD



BANG LURES
BASS ASSASSIN

The BANG SHAD Buffet features:

- Two servings on every cast!
- Prism eyes, Brass willow blades.
- New BanG Shad body with opposing triangulation body.
- Easy to fish 1/4 ounce weight.
- Available in 11-colors.

Great for Bass, Spots, & BIG Crappie!

NORTH ALABAMA ROAD TRIPS



Get
HOOKED!

800-648-5381 • NORTHALABAMA.ORG

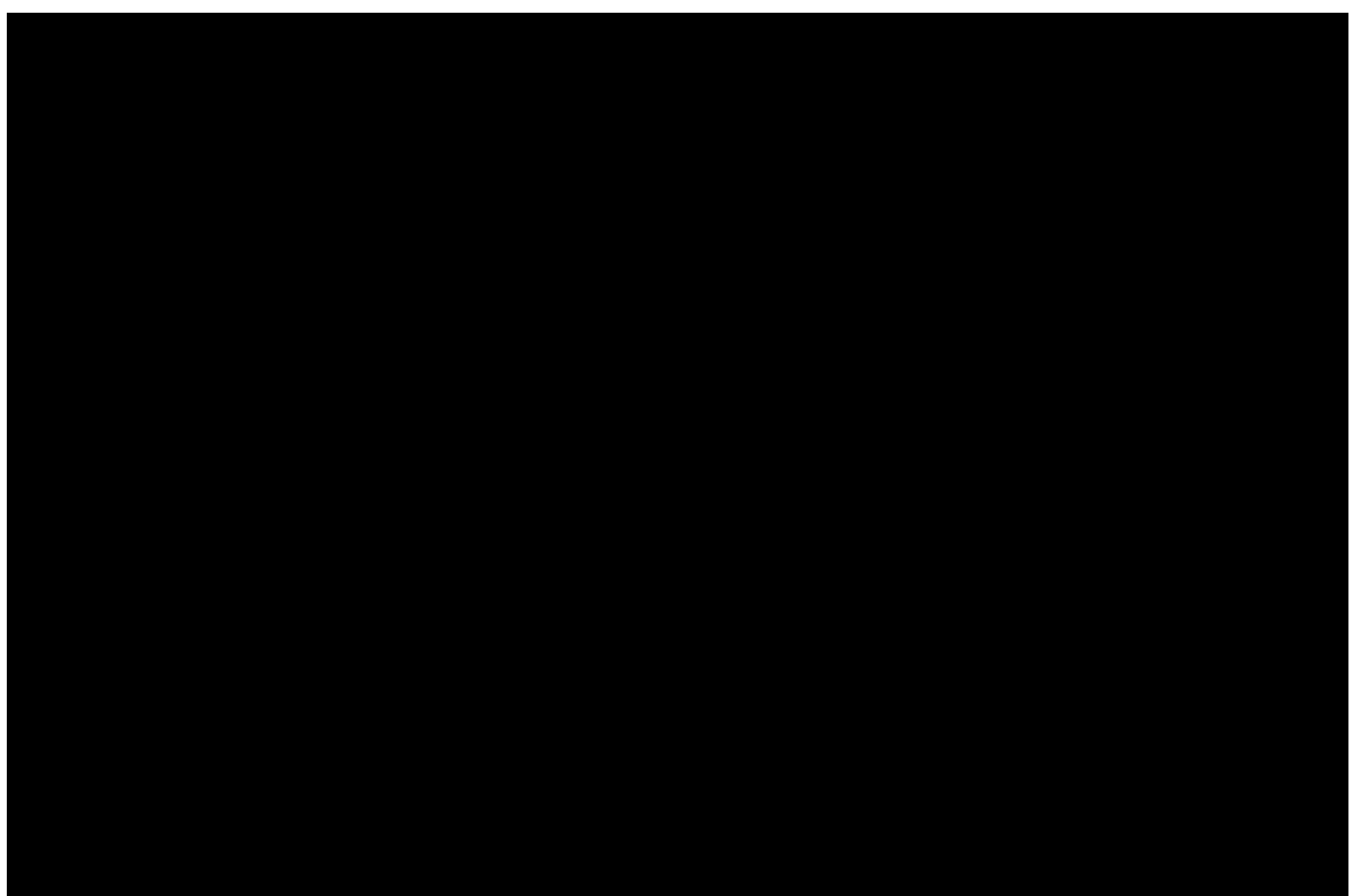
Winter Smallmouth Tactics and Tips

Capt. Jake Davis

So, you're thinking of planning a trip for Winter Smallmouth. It's the time of year that a lot of smallmouth bass fishermen look forward to each year. Mid-south lakes such as Tim's Ford,



Dale Hollow, Pickwick, and Wilson are some of the best in the nation for winter fishing, and they are on fire. It's over the next couple of months, when the air temps are cold and the water temps reaches that magical 48 to 53 degree range. This may sound like a cold time of the year and it is, but to a smallmouth bass angler, it means that some of the hottest fishing of the year is here. The smallmouth unlike the large mouth will remain active in the cooler winter water. After the water temps fall below the 50 degree range, the largemouth bass will become much



less active and will move to deeper warmer areas of the lake to hold till spring. But the smallmouth bass will remain active all winter, and this is also a big fish season.

During this time of the year, the small mouth in the deeper clear lakes will start to school up on main lake structure and points. Areas like steep sloping points, deep chunk rock banks with transition areas to gravel and under-water humps and where two or more Creek channels meet are prime areas for winter smallies.

As for bait choices, you can use the water temps as a guide. When the water temperatures range between 56 to 64, you can throw top water baits, Jigs, Spinnerbaits and start testing crankbaits. Top water lures such as SPRO Dawg 100's (pictured on following page) or Pop-R's can produce some explosive top water strikes. As the water cools down the crank bait action will really heat up. Also this whole time you can also use jigs, tubes, live bait like a shiner or chubs if you prefer.

Next time you're planning a trip to the water try these 5 tips for winter smallmouth bass fishing!

Locating Winter Smallmouth: While fishing breaks in the current is always a good idea, it is especially true during the winter. In the cold, fish need to conserve energy to survive the difficult conditions. This will cause smallmouth to stay out of the current behind rocks and logs, and in wider areas along the river where the current is slower. Any area that is receiving sunlight on cold days is likely to hold bass as well. Banks that descend at 45 degrees are great places to start.



Watch the Weather: While I'm a firm believer that anytime on the water is a good time! If your time is limited than plan your trips around weather changes. The best days might be any unseasonably warm

day during the winter, but fishing before a cold front or any other weather change can also be productive.

Lure Selection

In general, when pursuing winter smallmouth you should use a variety of different lures until you establish a pattern "it can change daily" and fish them in 5 to 30 foot of water. Fish the lures slowly as winter smallies are made somewhat lethargic by the cold water. Stay aware of the lure's action in the water as well, as winter strikes are light, and if you are not careful, you might miss a strike. Again, as when fishing anytime of the year, switch lure size and tactics until you find something that works for the winter smallmouth in your area. I typically start with ½ ounce Football Head Jigs, SPRO Little John DD Crankbaits (pictured in the beginning) and Spot Removers with small plastics such as a Missile Baits Baby D-Bomb (pictured).

Stay Out of Sight

Winter water is often crystal clear. It is important to take steps to stay out of sight of the smallmouth bass in this clear water. When fishing from the bank, stay back from the water as far as possible and avoid casting your shadow over the water. When boat fishing, slowly approach areas where you want to fish and use your boat's motor sparingly. Use the lightest practical line on your reel as the line will be more visible to the fish in the clear water. Do not wear bright-colored clothing such as hunters orange or white!

Safety and Comfort

You should avoid fishing solo in cold weather. As a fall into freezing water can be deadly, you should bring a fishing buddy along on your winter fishing trips. In addition to having someone along to help out in case of an emergency, you should dress well to protect against the cold. Always, let someone know what area(s) of the lake you'll be fishing and expected time of your return home!!!

While winter smallmouth bass fishing can be miserable, the cold weather of winter can often be the most productive time of the year for giant smallmouth. Let's Go Fish 'in

Capt Jake Davis is a USCG Licensed professional fishing guide on Lake Gunterville, Tim's Ford Lake and Nickajack Lake; to reserve your "Day on the Lake" visit www.midsouthbassguide.com or call/email 615-613-2382, msbassguide@comcast.net



Proudly
Made in
the USA!



www.snagproof.com



Ish's Poppin Phattie IT TRULY POPS!

Creates the most explosive strikes.

Bobby's Perfect Buzz TOPS THEM ALL!

Premium Floating Buzz Frog

**Serious
attitude for serious
fish catching power!**

www.snagproof.com

800-762-4773 • 513-489-6483

**BLEEDIN' Frog
with Attitude
NEW for 2014**



with Frog-Tail
Hook





Maine Starts Down the Treacherous, Emotional Slippery Slope of Bans and Restrictions

**By Libby Yranski,
Policy Fellow, American Sportfishing Association**

Lead sinker and jig use is already greatly restricted in Maine and now comes a threat against the use of soft baits. After starting with these restrictions, it's just a hop, skip and a jump before Maine ends up as the first state to become anti-fishing.

I learned to fish in the backcountry of Maine with my best friend's family. Her family has been going to the same camp to fish and hunt for almost seventy years. Her dad taught me as much as he could that week – right down to what colors on our soft baits would work best. I, of course knowing nothing about what colors would work best, chose the one that looked like a ladybug. My friend's father tried to talk me out of it because it had never worked for him, but after my third fish was caught off of that lure he stopped trying to convince me to choose a new color. There's not a summer that goes by since where I don't wish I could go back with them. The backcountry of Maine is some of the most beautiful country that the Nation has to offer in my opinion, but soon freshwater fishing in Maine might be a thing of the past.

In early 2013, Maine's Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife ruled that an official departmental study was needed to study the effects of soft baits on fish. Soft baits have been used since the 1950's as a way to mimic a fish's natural prey. Soft baits come in an incredible array of colors, sizes, shapes, and are extremely valuable to anglers. Maine's Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife are primarily using online research, ice-angling reports and litter assessments to determine if there are adverse effects on fish and the environment in the lakes of Maine from soft baits.



tight lines®

WITH SAMMY LEE

A DIVISION OF SAMMY LEE ENTERPRISES, INC.

join us, weekdays, or
subscribe
to our podcast!

www.tightlinesradio.com
click on "podcast"

The soft bait industry does test their products in laboratories and these studies have shown that on average fish pass or regurgitate soft baits and these soft baits do not cause any harm to the fish. While no scientific studies have been conducted to date on the effects of soft baits on fish in the wild, there's also no evidence, anecdotal or otherwise, that might suggest that soft baits are causing population-level impacts on fish or wildlife.

The study language morphed out of legislation introduced in January 2013 that would ban soft baits outright. The study also includes the impact of hooks. If soft baits are banned then what's next? Other types of lures can also end up on the bottom of lakes and streams. Maine is on a slippery slope! Recreational fishing is a family friendly activity and as wholesome as apple pie. It's a way to get our youngsters away from their phones/computers/tablets and actually enjoy the outdoors! It's also a way for lessons, family-fishing secrets and stories to be passed down from

generation to generation. This tradition should not and cannot be put into jeopardy!

KeepAmericaFishing™ is once again asking you to sign a petition to "Stop the Ban on Soft Baits." At the end of January over 19,000 KeepAmericaFishing members had signed the petition, help us grow that number by asking your friends and family nationwide to protect the use of soft baits. Do not let the Maine legislature take away our traditions!

KEEPAMERICA FISHING™

The Voice of the American Angler

Did you know
people want to stop
us from fishing?

Get Involved Today!

www.KeepAmericaFishing.org

KeepAmericaFishing™ is a registered trademark of the American Sportfishing Association.

The 10 Steps of a Bassaholic

By Chris Jenkins

I am not a big fan of wintertime, never have been. Although, it gives us time to celebrate the holidays and spend some quality time with the family without the constant urge to fish. Don't get me wrong, the urge never subsides completely, but lessens to a degree when it's hovering around freezing outside. Of course there is always the "honey-do-list" that I have been promising to do all year as well. It has not only grown, but I have run out of excuses as to why I haven't gotten around to doing it. Well it so happens that as I was doing the first item on my list, clean the office, I came across a stack of index cards. These cards were used as bullet points or topics during a lecture I gave many moons ago at a fishing expo. As I looked over them I realized that despite the fact that they were from years ago,

the points they made were still valid to this day. The reason I say that is because often I look back at some of the things I did and said and wonder what I was thinking. That's not just related to fishing by the way. That being said, I thought I would dust off the cards and speak a little about what they contained. There were ten cards, but I only found 9 of them. So I suppose I can add lib for the missing # 5 card.

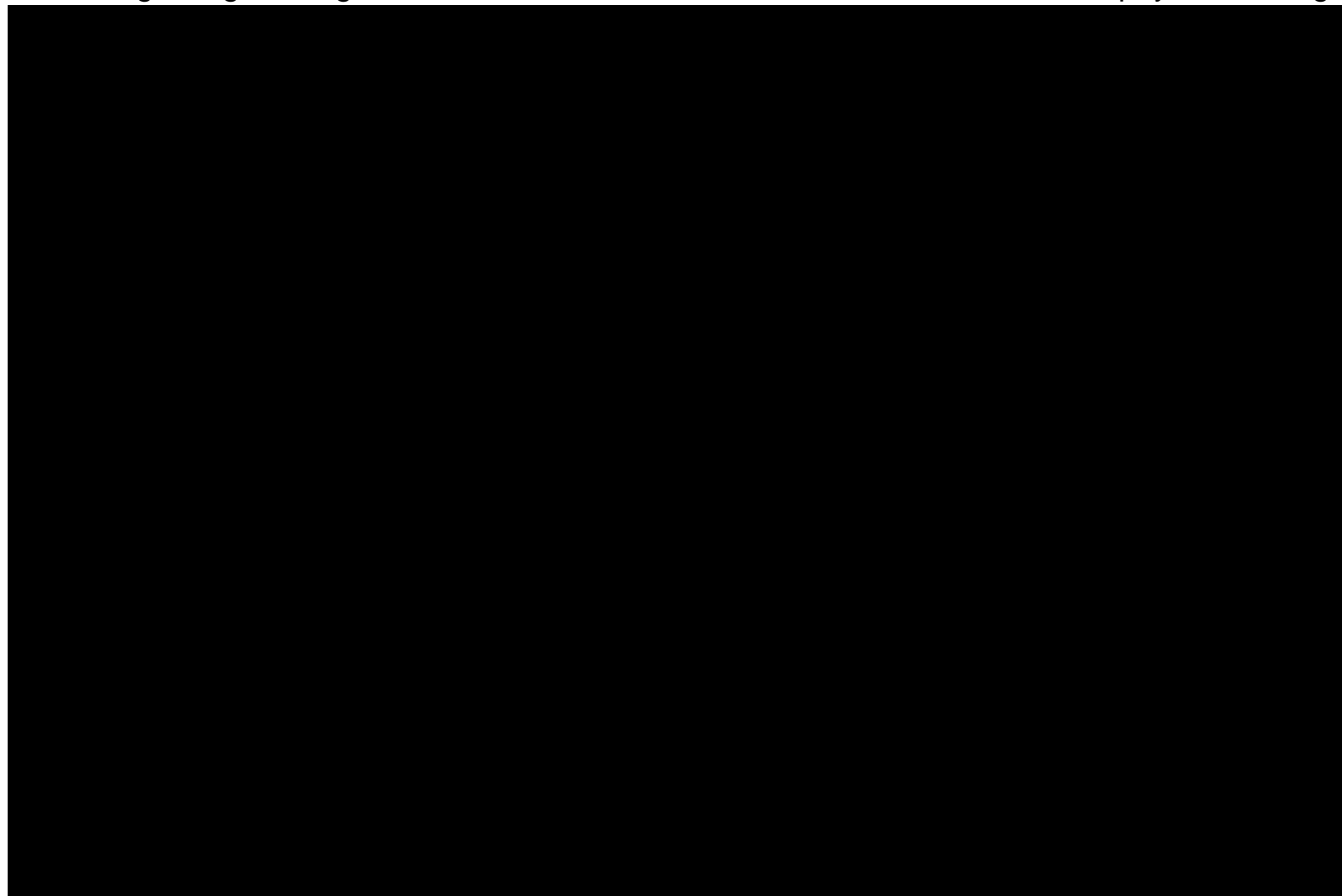


Card # 1. Designated water, fish where big fish live, and stay committed.

Breakdown: I found that it makes sense to pick a couple of bodies of water that are known to produce big fish and stay committed to fishing them. I obtained records for all citation bass that were caught and reported in Virginia. I laid out page after page and eliminated waters until I came up with the three top producers of citations. Reports associated with private ponds were disregarded. Now with the three top in my crosshairs I looked at the most productive months in which citations were reported. March and April dominated of course. Armed with this information, I would no longer waste my time fishing second rate bodies of water. Rather I would focus all my attention on these three lakes and stay committed.

#2 Use the right gear for the job.

Breakdown: Don't bring a butter knife to a gun fight. If you are after the biggest bass in the lake, be prepared for all-out war. There is nothing worse than losing a big fish do to stupidity. If something can go wrong, it will do so when the fish of a lifetime decides to accept your offering.



Use the right rod, reel and line for the job. Make sure your hooks are sharp and sturdy. Make sure every knot is tied flawlessly and there are no abrasions in your line. I see far too many people skimp and cut corners to save a few bucks, too many simple mistakes that in turn ultimately hit them where it hurts.

#3 Learn season patterns

Bass are somewhat predictable when it comes to their migration. Learning where they will be during the spring, summer, fall, and winter allows you be one step ahead of them and hopefully head them off at the pass. This spring I will be waiting for the big girls to move up on the spawning flats as soon as the water temps approach 45 degrees. I know that they are driven to spawn and will eventually move shallow. The same route they used to move up to the flats is the same route they will use to vacate them. Learn about the thermocline and use it to your advantage in the summer and winter months. Learn about the turnover that takes place in the fall/winter transition. Don't limit yourself to pounding the shoreline all year long, use the seasons to your advantage.

#4 Big fish think and act differently.

I have noticed that big fish tend to be in a class all their own. They don't wonder around in schools and compete for food. They are generally loners and tend to be wiser than their

Santee Cooper Country

is where you will find South Carolina's
"Great Lakes", Marion & Moultrie

Our lakes cover 171,000 acres and hold 8 state and one world record. Our fishing is great all year long so, come and see if you can catch the next record fish. What are you waiting for?

For information on fishing, guides, marinas, camping, restaurants and motels in Berkeley, Calhoun, Clarendon, Orangeburg and Sumter counties call, email or visit us on the web.

Outside SC 1-800-227-8510
in SC (803) 854-2131

www.santeecoopercountry.org
tourscc@oburg.net



brethren. They didn't make it to that size being foolish. I have found that by thinking outside the box, it has enabled me to catch close to 100 citation bass. This may entail fishing in 2 feet of water in December, or a creek channel or hump in the middle of the lake. Remember, there are no rules in fishing. The biggest bass I ever hooked was on a spawning flat on January. Big bass are very unpredictable and it's required that you too become unpredictable to catch them. Forget about tournament tactics and all the other propaganda. Only 2% of all anglers catch 95% of the big bass.

#5 For some reason I was missing #5 in my stack of index cards. However, I am usually not at a loss for words when it comes to bass. That being said, allow me to add lib and pretend #5 pertained to fishing deep water. (Deep being a relative term of course). I am sure you have noticed and may also be guilty of being a bank pounder. I watch anglers follow one behind the other like ants, pounding the shoreline. I don't understand the logic in that. Most fish with any size to them are not comfortable being pinned between the shoreline and your boat. No animal likes to have their escape route blocked. Deep water represents safety to a fish and big bass rarely stray far from the security of it unless it's to spawn. That's not to say I haven't caught fish along the bank, thousands of them in fact. But when 20 boats launch and they all proceed to hit every visible nook and cranny along the shoreline, I think I will take my chances elsewhere. I can also honestly say that the vast majority of my big fish were not caught along the shoreline. It's very important to be comfortable fishing offshore structure if you want to step up your game. Points, humps, and creek channels are big bass magnets. Locating them requires doing some homework and spending time on the water looking at your electronics. Its time well spent though.

If you are hell bent on fishing visible cover, try sinking some brush piles on your favorite lake and gradually wean yourself off the bank and visible targets. Probing the depths also coincides with my earlier mention of finding and utilizing the thermocline. Believe me; you are only limiting yourself by staying handcuffed to the bank. So shove off and catch that big bass buzz. Well it seems I am out of time and space here with only 5 of my 10 steps completed. I apologize for cutting this article short, but if you care to join me next month I will finish what I started and hopefully provide some serenity in the madness of big bass fishing for the 2014 season. If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to email me at sowbelly.hunter@yahoo.com





Treasure Trove Of Trout In Georgia

By Bill Vanderford

Having fished the North Georgia hills since I was in diapers, discovering a new trout fishing paradise was astonishing to this old redneck angler. This treasure trove is the creation of Bobby Still near the headwaters of the Toccoa River, and was christened the Valley at Suches after the nearby mountain village.

From an overgrown and almost impenetrable wilderness, Bobby Still lovingly developed the perfect habitat to grow and maintain a trophy population of numerous species of trout in both the river and his two rearing ponds. It has taken years of hard work and dedication to build this beautiful and very productive trout Mecca into a place where people can come to experience the way the fishing in North Georgia was during the days of my youth. The angling is all catch and release and Bobby requires that one of his knowledgeable guides is always with anglers to both protect the trout and make sure that each fly fisherman has a memorable visit.

The more than 2,000 feet of frontage on the Toccoa River is manicured of hazards like overhanging limbs in a way that doesn't damage the ecology but allows easier angling. The fly

casting pond and the river are open and easy for experts or beginners, and all equipment and casting lessons are included at no extra charge.



The trout in these waters have been raised from small fry and include huge adult rainbow, brown and brook Trout. The most prevalent species is the rainbow, but even with those, Bobby researched the many sub-species to find the best one for the North Georgia climate and water quality. He chose the Kamloops that is originally from Central British Columbia, Canada, and the Shasta from the Sierra Nevada Mountains in the Western USA.

“The Kamloops is a much slower growing strain, but well worth the wait,” stated

Bobby Still. “They are extremely acrobatic and perfect for our kind of fishing operation.”

“In my opinion,” continued Mr. Still, “the Shasta is the most colorful of all the rainbow trout strains. They are very aggressive feeders, making them ideal for our visitors.”

Brown trout from these waters are beautifully colored and feed heavily on the rich aquatic insect population and fingerling trout. They grow to more than 10 pounds, but are not caught as often as the rainbows.



The brook trout in the Valley at Suches are quite different from the native Eastern brook trout that were the only trout in these mountains when the white man came. Those originals were



known to the locals as “native specs” and rarely exceeded 12 inches in length. Bobby Still’s brook trout are raised in nearby hatcheries, grow very fast and are strong fighters...especially on a fly rod. This is an unforgettable place to wet a hook, but reservations are necessary. For more information or bookings, call Bobby Still at 706-747-9750, or go to his web site at: www.gatrophyltrout.com.

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 or at his web site: www.georgiafishing.com.



The goal of The Bass University is to help each angler, from beginner to expert, to take their fishing skills to the next level! The Bass University classes and On-Water Training provide top notch bass fishing education to our students from the TOP professional anglers in bass fishing!

New for 2014, The Bass University is creating an all new stellar line-up of class speakers with the latest topics to focus on the geographical location of each class with emphasis on patterns and techniques that are winning on the professional tournament trails. Also, On-Water Training trips taught by the instructors on many bodies of water across the country are now available!

The Bass University's instructors feature many of the greatest professional anglers in the world, that include Mike Iaconelli, Brent Ehrler, Greg Hackney, Shaw Grigsby, David Dudley, Ish Monroe, Gerald Swindle, George Cochran, Ott DeFoe, Scott Martin, Davy Hite, Brandon Palaniuk, Larry Nixon and many more.



2014 Class Schedule:

- Raleigh, NC- Jan. 11-12. North Carolina State Fairgrounds
- Edison, NJ- Jan. 11-12. New Jersey Convention & Exposition Center
- Niagara Falls, NY- Jan. 25-26. Convention and Event Center Niagara Falls
- *Worcester, MA- Feb. 8-9. DCU Center **SAVE 25% through Oct. 27th!***

Classes run from 8am to 5pm on both Saturday and Sunday. Each day there is a hands-on break out session with the instructors as well as a question and answer round table discussion. All students receive a course booklet, t-shirt, and a loaded tackle gift bag! There will also be tons of great raffle and contest prizes!

**Register at www.thebassuniversity.com
Never Stop Learning!**

**Special Thanks to
Our Sponsors**

ODUMagazine™



A Guide's No. 1 Technique For Brushpile Crappie

By Lawrence Taylor

Fishing over or at the top of a brushpile may catch a few slabs, but the key to catching a mess often means fishing within the pile itself. Here's one guide's approach to getting down through the brush without constant snags.

"Hey, my church group is coming over, and I need some fillets for a fish fry," said Bruce Stanton, General Manager for legendary fishing

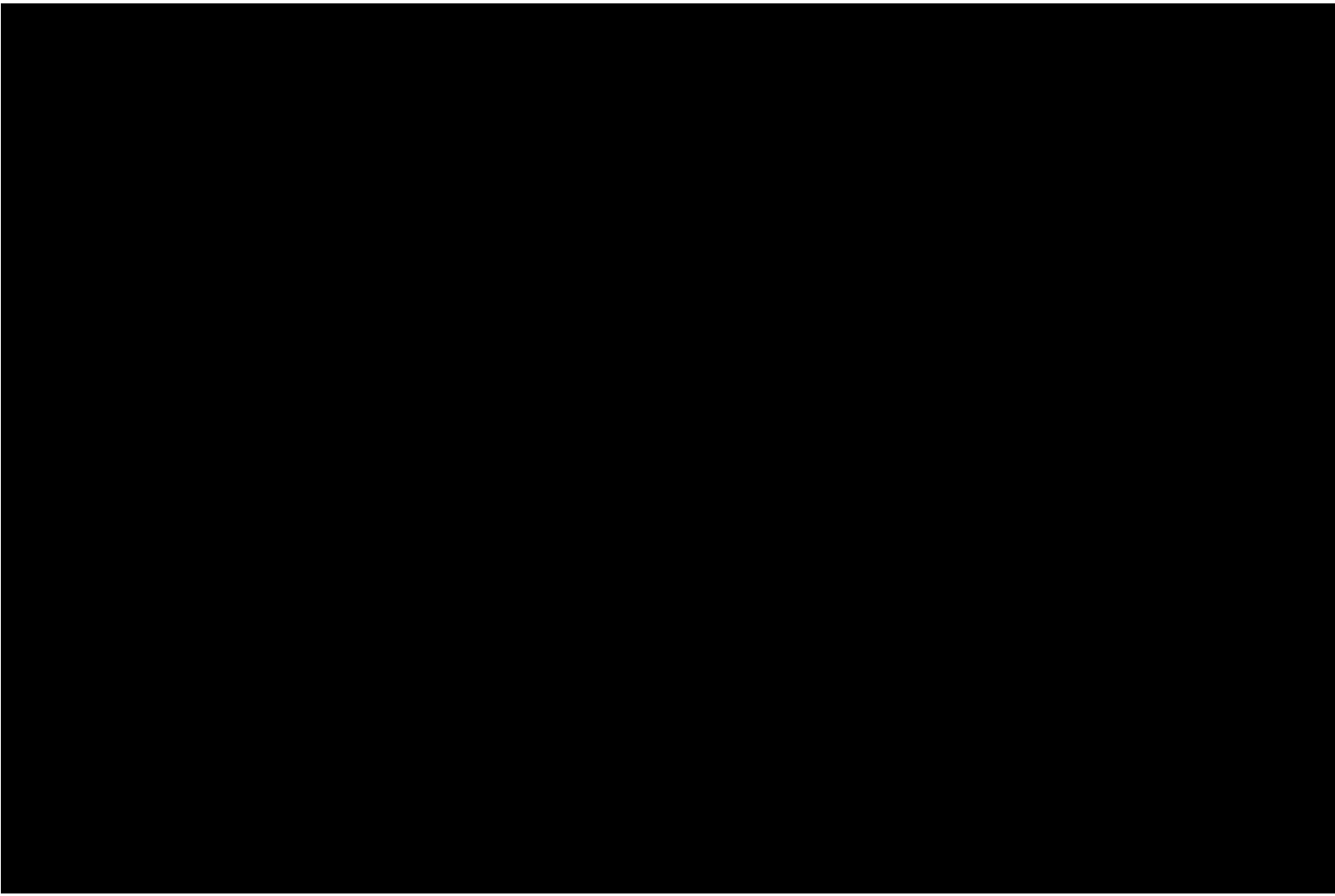


brands like Bomber, YUM and Cotton Cordell.

He dropped this tidbit into the conversation in the middle of a fishing trip to Arkansas' spectacular Lake Ouachita. We were fishing with Mount Ida guide Chris Elder, so the chances were pretty good that we could catch a bunch of crappies, even with Stanton in the boat.

Elder grew up on the lake, guides there and fishes it like most of us wished we fished. We'd been catching bass all day, but after Stanton's meat request we





decided to shift gears and go after crappies.

It was going to be easy pickings. Elder has a milk run of brushpiles throughout the lake that draw crappies any time of year. The fish are there because the brush is a great hiding place for minnows, the crappies' own idea of a fish dinner. Ouachita is a highland, clear-water reservoir lacking a whole lot of natural cover, so brushpiles are key to catching a variety of species.

The thing about fishing for crappies in brushpiles is that you can lose a lot of gear, and that's especially so with the traditional minnow rig. But Elder had a plan.

"What we're doing is a bit different from what you'll read about," Elder said. "We're going to use structure spoons and fish right smack dab in the brush."

Fishing in brush with anything that has treble hooks is asking for trouble, or so you might think. But Elder had it down.

"Here's a rod," he said to Stanton, handing him a medium-heavy casting rod with a reel spooled with 12-pound line. It had a 3/8-ounce CC Spoon (pictured) tied on the end of the line.

He handed me a similar outfit while he picked up another. Then he sidled the boat up to a tree that was his marker for this particular brushpile.



Catch and Release a trophy bass in Florida to earn great prizes while supporting conservation.

Register at TrophyCatchFlorida.com for details on rules, prizes and competitive catch updates



PROUD SPONSORS





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"!

"Here's the program," said Elder. "Drop your spoon, but do it a bit slowly, feeling for the brush and for a bite. Try to work the spoon down into the pile, because you never can tell what depth the crappies are using. Don't jerk hard or try to muscle your way out of trouble, just kind of work things slow."

On the first drop, I could tell when the spoon hit a branch, and with a little lift and drop, I worked it off the limb and dropped it again, working my way down into the pile without a hit. Then I worked it back up again, stopping when I felt the heavy

resistance of a snag.

One reason the spoon works so well is that when the treble hook snags in wood, you can give it some quick slack and the weight of the spoon pulls the hooks free. Just be gentle with your upward twitches so you don't slam the hooks deep into the wood.

The second drop didn't last long. The spoon hit the first piece of brush, dropped off it, and then a crappie took it. I used a soft sweep-set to hook the fish, worked it up through the brush and swung it into the boat. Elder swung his fish in at the same time. Stanton watched.

We took a couple more crappies off that brushpile and then moved on to the next.

"What we've done," Elder said, "is build brushpiles generally starting around 40 feet deep. That's the depth where the crappies tend to congregate during late summer and winter. The piles will maybe top out at 20 feet or even just 10 feet below the surface. It's important to place them in areas where you will normally find crappies, of course."

While the next brushpile wasn't holding crappies, we moved on to another where Elder and I each picked up a couple of pounders and a small bass.

ODUM Magazine™

Ice Fishing January 2013

**THE SECRET OF
THE PIKE**

**Icing
Trout**

**Perch
on Ice**

**Punching
Bluegills**

**Developing a Touch
for Bite Detection**



ODUM Magazine™

Pre-Spring Fishing 2013

**Redfish In
The Marsh**

**Cranking
Up The
Spring
Bass Bite**

**Deep
Adjustment
for Walleyes**

LAST ICE: Bluegill Secrets Revealed



ODUM Magazine™

Winter Fishing 2012

**Fishing.....
The Good
Old Days
Are Now**

**Chasing
The
Ellusive
Pompano**

**Artificial Sounds
To Activate Fish**

**Cold
Water**

Swimbaiting



ODUM Magazine™

Ice Fishing November 2012

**Ice Fishing's
Future
is Now!**

**IceFishing:
A Family
Pastime**

**Eat
Baby,
Eat!**

**2013 World
Ice Fishing
Championship**

**Lake
Champlain
Has The Ice
Anglers
Crave**



Crappie**NOW**

On-Line Magazine

fishhound Crappie.com

December 2013 - Issue #34



**Cold Water
Slowing It
Down**



"You'll find just about every kind of fish on these piles," Elder said. "Obviously, crappie and bass use them, but so will walleyes, catfish and occasionally white bass. However, if you run into stripers on a pile, you might as well go to the next one because the crappies have already left."

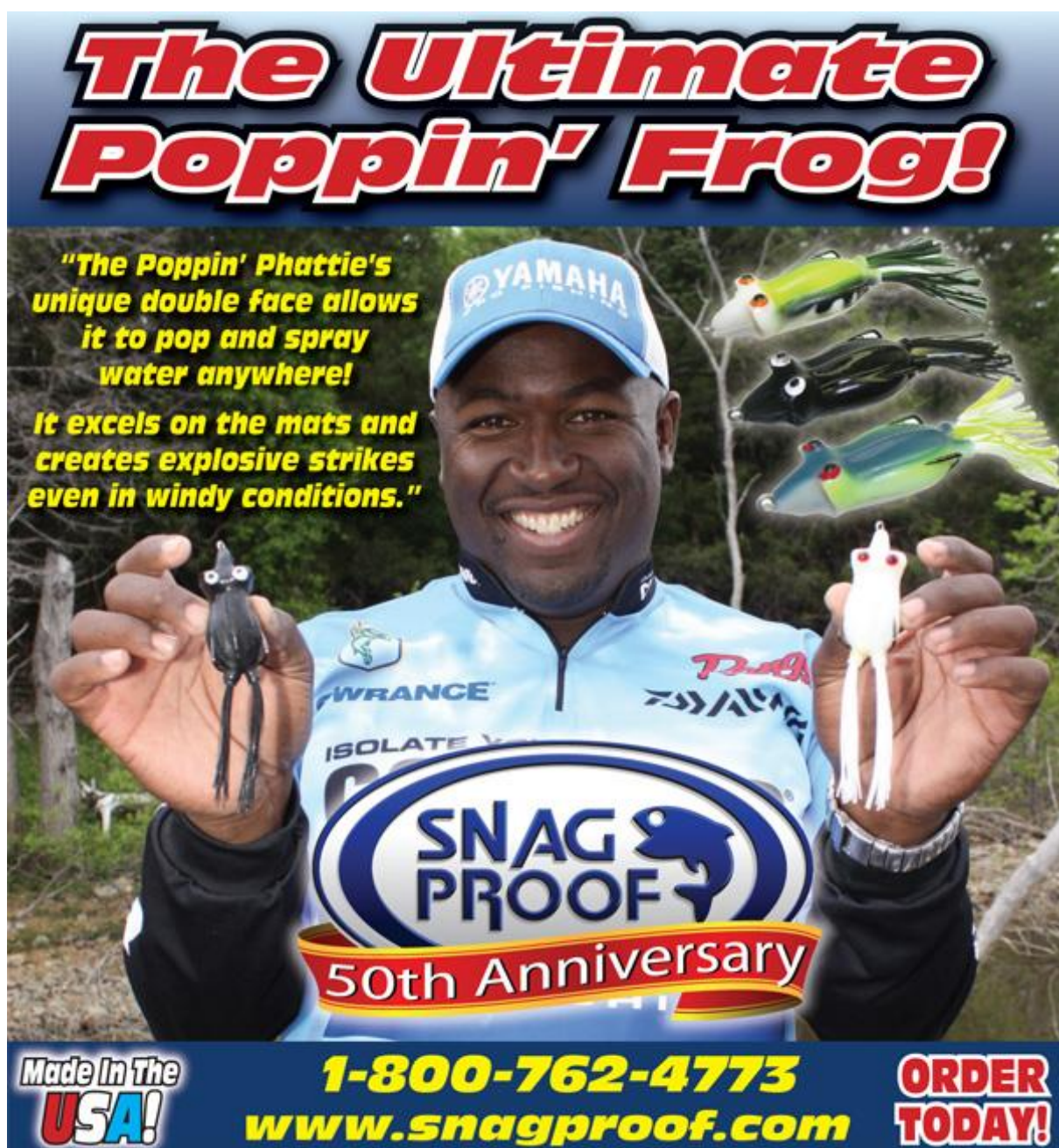
You will also find times when the crappies are schooled in open water but still associated with the brushpile. Pay attention to what the electronics on the boat tell you in regards to the presence of fish as well as the depth at which they're holding.

On the next pile, we caught fish again; well, almost everyone in the boat did. Stanton wasn't saying much, and finally asked what he was doing wrong.

"Maybe you're trying too hard," said Elder. "Or maybe you just don't have the feel. Or maybe, you've got the rod rigged with monofilament while we're using fluorocarbon. Fluorocarbon lines are more sensitive because they don't stretch as much as mono."

Elder swung another big crappie into the livewell. The fluorocarbon did prove to be an advantage. It's more sensitive and much more abrasion-resistant, and aids in shaking spoons loose from snags mostly because the angler can more easily tell the difference between a bite and a limb. It also helped drag a 25-pound flathead catfish out of a brushpile.

That pretty much sums up the technique: find or build a good brushpile, make sure crappies are on it and use minnow imitating spoons to vertically jig your way through the brush. With fluorocarbon line and a sensitive rod, you can wiggle and shake your way through the limbs to the fish, and feeling a bite is relatively easy with the right gear.



The Ultimate Poppin' Frog!

"The Poppin' Phattie's unique double face allows it to pop and spray water anywhere!"

It excels on the mats and creates explosive strikes even in windy conditions."

SNAG PROOF

50th Anniversary

Made In The USA!

1-800-762-4773

www.snagproof.com

ORDER TODAY!

Holiday Shopping Guide

As you begin or look to finish up your Christmas shopping and are in need of that perfect gift for a family member or friend that is an avid angler, or looking to put something underneath the Christmas tree for yourself, then here are some helpful suggestions for you to make Christmas shopping easier for you this Holiday season.



New Camo Patterned Pro Series Rod Glove

Anglers have come to understand the importance of protecting their investment, especially when it comes to expensive items, like today's high

priced fishing rods. The Pro Series Rod Glove is constructed out of high quality neoprene that goes on/off your rods with ease. Using these allow an angler to store more rods in an organized manner, whether it be in their rod locker, vehicle or garage. New for this year is an eye appealing camo patterned model that is available in a standard (fits rods up to 7'6") and an extra-long model (fits rods up to 8'6"). For more information check out www.therodglove.com.



Lay the Smackdown on Your Next Trophy

Seaguar, the inventor and world leader in fluorocarbon and premium fishing line, has expanded its braid fishing lines with the launch of Smackdown. This new line is made with 8 ultra-thin, micro-weave strands in a round, smooth-casting profile. This sleek line is extremely sensitive, and provides exceptional knot and tensile strength along with unparalleled abrasion

resistance. Available in 150 yard spools, in either green or yellow and 10 to 65 lb. test, this line will be sure to get your next trophy in the boat next season. For more information check www.Seaguar.com.



Hands Free Deployment

The popular Minn Kota Talon's have been keeping anglers in place and focused on fishing for several years now. With the new Wireless Foot Switch, Minn Kota now allows anglers to stow and deploy hands free, by

tapping a single button with their foot. You can control up to two Talons' simultaneously or independently after easily installing this waterproof switch on the deck of your boat. For more information check out www.minnkotamotors.com.

Gift Idea - Snag Proof Frog Kit, Includes - Guntersville Frog in Mink (translucent brown with red flake), Bobby's Perfect Frog in Mossback (white belly, green back), Ish's Phat in Ballin' (yellow belly, red throat, brown and green back) & Bleedin Frog in Chicklet (yellow head, white body). This is over a forty-dollar value for only \$29.95 - [LINK](#).

Gift Idea - Bass Grabber Jigs, Includes - two- Bass Grabber Jigs in Black/Blue (1) 3/8 oz & (1) 1/2 oz, two- Bass Grabber Jigs in Green Pumpkin (1) 3/8 oz. & (1) 1/2 oz & two- Bass Grabber Jigs in Cajun (1) 3/8 oz. & (1) 1/2 oz. All for only \$24.95 - [LINK](#).

Stock Up By Stuffing Your Stocking

The Lazer TroKar hook line has quickly become a staple in fishing aisles across America and for good reason, they are made in America, they are incredibly sharp and they are durable. Well now die hard bass anglers can stock up on these



hooks because they are available in an XL package that is filled with 15 TroKar hooks. Don't get caught without the right hook for the job next season and stock up on your favorite TroKar hook today. For more information check out www.lazertrokar.com.



Air Out Your Baits

The new 3505 Hydro-Flo Hanging Bait Stowaway is an easy to access box that holds up to 72 spinnerbaits. With its Hydro-Flo ports, wet baits will dry naturally, eliminating rust and extending the life of the skirt materials used, this way when you go to grab your favorite bass catching spinnerbait, you won't be heartbroken to find it rusty and with a gnarled up skirt. Each bait is given an adequate amount of room, so baits can be neatly organized by size, blade style, etc. For more information check out www.planomolding.com.

A Bleedin' Bait with Attitude

The popular Snag Proof Bleedin' Frog brings bass in with its appealing, wounded-prey like red wide gap hooks. Now to help increase your hooking percentage and put more bass in your boat is the Attitude Trailer Hook, which is a 3/0 Premium EWG hook. By slipping the wire hook holders over your existing hook in your frog, you now will have a total of three hooks on your favorite frog. For more information check out www.snagproof.com.



Do All, Be All Fishing Tool

Buck Knives with the help of Elite Series Pro's has developed a fishing tool like none other, The Splizzors. Made from 420HC stainless steel, this hybrid tool, will cut any braided fishing line with ease, remove hooks from a fish's mouth, crimp or snip anything you can come up with and even open up a bottle of your favorite beverage. Don't be caught out on the water without this helpful tool. For more information check out www.buckknives.com.

A Twist on a Classic

No matter what body of water, from large lakes and rivers, to small streams has one soft plastic lure been used to target bass, the Zoom Super Fluke is a classic for many anglers. Zoom has taken this classic and combined it with another popular soft plastic, the stickbait. Now anglers can have the best of both worlds with the Zoom Fluke Stick. This 6.25" bait, has a ribbed body and forked tail, which work together to create dynamic action. Don't be left in the dust when your buddies are catching fish on this new bait. For more information check out www.zoombait.com.



Stay Cool All Season Long

Despite it being cold and chilly right now, it won't be too long before we are in the midst of another hot and humid Midwestern summer (hopefully sooner, than later) and keeping things cold is a must. From beverages and snacks for you and your fishing partners, to keeping bait fresh and lively, the ORCA 26-quart cooler will do the trick. With its durable roto-molded construction and integrated insulation, this product will hold up to the toughest of conditions and keep ice for up to ten days! A snug fitting lid gasket ensures a perfect seal every time and the easy-flow drainage spout will let all the unwanted water to drain quickly. For more information check out www.orcacoolers.com.



I hope all of you have a great Holiday Season and spend it with your friends and family reliving the memories of this past fishing season and making plans for next!

Created by Glenn Walker. Glenn has been fishing tournaments for over ten years, spreading his passion and knowledge of the sport via articles and videos. For more information check out www.glennwalkerfishing.com or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/glennwalkerfishing.

A Berkley Lightning Rod fishing rod, featuring a wooden handle and a black shaft. The Berkley logo and "LIGHTNING ROD" text are prominently displayed above the rod.

Gift Idea – Berkley Lightning Rod Series - From bass to inshore species and everything in between, anglers turn to superline when they need a near-zero-stretch line with plenty of strength in a small diameter. Berkley designed the Lightning Rod® Shock family of rods specifically for superline fishing. [LINK](#).



The Original “Rig”- it’s not sexy but it is Effective!

By Capt. Jake Davis

In today’s world of bass angling the number of methods that will catch fish are endless. Over the years, anglers have taken many basic lure presentations and have refined them to suit their needs when faced with a particular situation on the water. Every time we turn on the computer or open a fishing magazine we read about the newest, latest or next “Greatest” technique or lure to put fish in the boat. Bass Anglers will go to no ends to get an advantage over those little green and brown fish. This is especially true when searching out trophy bass or competing in tournaments, whether it’s the Classic or the local “Stump Jumper” open.

Don’t take what I’m about to say the wrong way...because I’m as guilty as the next angler, we like our new improved sexy lures. But just take a minute and the next time you get a chance; take a peek at what the “Old Guy” in the 1984 Venture, who everyone says he’s the stick to watch has tied on. I bet you will find a Carolina Rig some place in the boat.

Now, before you get the impression that you cannot miss using this lure, there are particular

ways to fish a Carolina Rig. You should take some time to learn this method, and it will help increase your overall catch ratio dramatically. With a little practice, it's an easy method to master.

From my own personal experiences gained over many years, I am a firm believer that Carolina rig fishing is just about the most effective tactic that anglers can use when searching out that trophy bass. The reason is Carolina's rig fishing is not only very easy,

but it is also an extremely versatile method of angling. It is essential that when you are using this method that you have patience.

The most important aspect is to stay in constant contact with the bottom, and learn how to read the bottom structure you are fishing through feel. By developing this skill, you will be able to catch many more fish that you otherwise might not. The best part is not really that difficult, but it will take a commitment on your part to stick with the learning. If you do, the results will become evident in your increased fish catching ability.

When out on the water with the Carolina rig I can maintain bottom contact at all times, no matter what the wind, current or weather conditions may be on that particular day. Also, by using a longer leader behind my weight, I can feel the bottom without taking away from the action of bait. Another benefit is that the lure looks more natural to the fish with this setup. Experience has shown that when using this natural-looking appearance, the bass is more likely to strike at it.

Earlier, I mentioned patience. Having patience is very critical to the Carolina rig angler. The reason I say this is that patience allows you to fish much slower and also to pay greater attention to what you are feeling at the other end of your line.

You have to keep in mind that when you are looking for bass using a Carolina rig, you are also, in most cases, searching for a particular type of bottom structure that the fish are using. This is why the slow presentation and feeling your way across the bottom is so very important in helping to identify the structure you are fishing. Without a doubt, feel is the most important aspect of Carolina rig fishing. Once you learn to identify the bottom and cover by feel, you will be able to realize when you are presenting your lure through a high percentage fish holding area. Bass relate heavily to transition zones. An example of this would be an area of the bottom where mud transitions to sand, or rock to gravel. Any place that two different bottom type come together is a transition area and can hold fish. For this, slower is always better to identify the structure. To help insure being able to read the bottom through the feel in my hands, I like to

use a heavy weight on my Carolina rig. I found that using a heavier weight, it does not deaden the feel but actually increases it. When using a heavy weight, the line also stays tight with the sinker on the bottom all the way to the rod tip. The tighter the line stays, the more information that it relays back to my hands.

Remember that the ability to feel through your line and rod means being able to gain an understanding of what kind of bottom you are fishing. I and my client use a Duckett White Ice or Micro Magic Rod 7'0" to 7'6" Heavy Action.



In most conditions encountered, you can start out with a good-quality line such as Vicious Ultimate in 15-17-pound test range for most applications. If you are fishing in waters that have current, drop down to a line in the 10- to 12-pound-test range for best results.

Another item which I want to mention when you are using a Carolina rig, vary the length of your leader. A good rule of thumb I use is to use a short leader (18 to 24 inches) in cool water conditions, and a longer leader (24 to 48 inches) in warm water conditions.

You can still vary the line size you use for leaders. If you find the bass are finicky, go with a lighter line for a leader. When you do this, remember that you have a bigger chance of a break-off on the hook set, to compensate for this, use a sweep hook-set rather than a quick wrist snap hook set.

As for lures, my favorites are plastics. To be more specific, B-

Bombs, Tomahawk Worms from Missile baits, other critter baits such as the Fuse from Missile Baits or some type of a soft plastic lizard or a minnow type bait such as a Swim'in Senko or Fluke.

Capt Jake Davis is a USCG Licensed Professional Fishing Guide on Lake Guntersville and Tim's Ford. Visit www.midsouthbassguide.com or call/email 615-613-2382, msbassguide@comcast.net

Daiichi®

World's Sharpest Hooks

\$500,000

**I.G.F.A. All-Tackle
World Record Rewards**

- Walleye
- Largemouth Bass
- Saltwater Striper
- Speckled Trout*

***AKA: Spotted Sea Trout**

**Register
NOW!**



**or visit: worldrecordhooks.com
for details and to register.**



TrophyCatch Boat Giveaway Winner Announced

By Bob Wattendorf



With the holidays here, many thoughts are turning towards gifts. Rather than visions of sugar plums, five lucky anglers who signed up at TrophyCatchFlorida.com were anxiously awaiting their own special Santa, and he delivered big, with a boat and motor, or fishing trip and gift cards.

TrophyCatch is a special reward-driven angler recognition program that encourages Florida anglers to take extra care to document and live-release largemouth bass heavier than 8 pounds. The program is conducted by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) and supported by corporate partners, who provide the incentives.

By simply registering, more than 4,000 anglers became eligible the first year in a drawing for a Phoenix 619 Pro bass boat powered by a Mercury 200SX outboard. In October, a random drawing was conducted to select five finalists for the boat and special consolation prizes. The finalists were announced by Teresa Johnson, Phoenix's chief operating officer, along with Tom Champeau, director of the FWC's Division of Freshwater Fisheries Management and KP Clements, TrophyCatch coordinator (see video at YouTube.Com/TrophyCatchFlorida). Here is a profile of the winner who won the boat, and the runners-up who each won a trip to Bienville Plantation, and \$100 gift cards (\$300 total) from FWC TrophyCatch partners, including Bass Pro Shops, Dick's Sporting Goods and Rapala lures, as well as a Bass King T-shirt. Frank Ay, the grand prize winner, originally learned about TrophyCatch through an email sent out by FWC (Note: Anglers can sign up for custom emails at MyFWC.com by selecting the red envelope in the top banner). Ay lives in North Lauderdale and works at Sy Katz Produce as an inspector, where his boss sympathizes with Ay's bass fishing addiction. Ay is a member of Big Reel Bassmasters of Margate which is known for its charity Ghosts & Goblins fishing event. Ay said his biggest largemouth bass was 10 pounds, 2 ounces. He caught it in a small pond in Coconut Creek.

Ay was surprised at a "Big Reel Bassmasters" club tournament on Lake Okeechobee on Nov. 24, 2013 by pro angler Bobby Lane, Champeau, Clements and television celebrity and producer Keith Alan, where he was awarded the \$40,000 Phoenix 619 Pro Bass Boat



powered by a Mercury 200 horsepower outboard (see video at bit.ly/Phoenix-giveaway).

The first of the four runners-up in the TrophyCatch registration giveaway was Rocco Cantalupo from Clearwater. Late last year, Cantalupo was online looking at California bass fishing programs and stumbled onto Florida's TrophyCatch Facebook page. Luckily for him, he registered. Though Cantalupo enjoys both salt and freshwater fishing, he says his passion is chasing largemouth bass, and he goes fishing about three times a week. Rocco has been following the TrophyCatch Facebook page and really likes seeing the submissions that are posted there.



Cantalupo has a 4-year old son and fishing buddy, Rocco Jr. and a newborn daughter, Gianna Marie. Rocco's personal best was a bass reaching double digits, but a scale wasn't part of his tackle box – at least not until registering for TrophyCatch.

Mark Frost the next runner up is from Melrose. Frost learned about TrophyCatch from the Sean Rush, the guide that helped Bob Williams, the season-one TrophyCatch winner, land his the winning 13 pound, 14 ounce bass. Frost's lifetime record was a 10 pound, 4 ounce bass. Frost is an avid angler who gets on the water three or four times a week.

Jason Haynes is from Lady Lake, in Lake County and must be thinking it was "Lady Luck" who shone on him when he learned he was a finalist. Jason is a member of the Harris Chain Bass Masters Club. He heard about and registered for TrophyCatch when FWC staff showed up for a club meeting to talk about the new program. Haynes says he has had a very good fishing year having caught eight or nine bass larger than 8 pounds, before learning about TrophyCatch!

Haynes' current lifetime catch was an 11 pound, 6 ounce bass from Orange Lake.

The last finalist, Andrew Walton, is serious about fishing. He lives in Toronto where bass fishing is only from late June to mid-September. He escapes to Cape Coral every chance he gets to go fishing, which has him coming to Florida almost monthly. Walton likes fishing both salt and freshwater, and his largest bass to date is an 8 pounder from Kissimmee. Since Walton doesn't live here, he will sometimes hire a professional guide to take him out in search of largemouth bass or saltwater sport fish. His next



Trophy Bass Fact



Many important factors including forage size and availability determine bass growth rate – and how quickly an individual fish will reach trophy weight. This almost round "football" bass has obviously been eating well, and is well ahead of its companion of almost the same length on the road to trophy status. (Fish sampled in the L-67A Canal, Broward County.)



freshwater guide trip will be on the famous Lake Okeechobee, hopefully with Scott Martin.

Be sure that every angler in a household registers separately, since Phoenix and

Mercury will be providing another boat for a lucky angler for season two (Oct. 1, 2013-Sep. 30, 2014), whether you catch a fish or not, you are eligible for the drawing. If you are already registered, you do not need to register again. However, this year, for every bass you have verified in TrophyCatch, you'll get 10 additional chances to win the boat. So register, go fishing and document your catches at www.TrophyCatchFlorida.com.

By submitting photos for verification online, anglers also become eligible for a custom certificate and decal, plus awards based on the bass' weight. Lunker Club entrants (8-9.9 pounds) each receive a \$50 Bass Pro Shops gift card and Bass King T-shirt. Trophy Club participants (10-12.9 pounds) earn a total of \$150 worth of gift cards (Bass Pro Shops, Dick's Sporting Goods and/or Rapala), plus a long-sleeve T-shirt. To be entered into the Hall of Fame, anglers must catch, carefully document and release a bass weighing more than 13 pounds – but it's worth it. Hall-of-Fame entrants also receive a free \$500 fiberglass mount of their fish from New Waves Taxidermy, \$200 in gift cards, a duffle bag full of Bass King apparel, a Glen Lau video library and other prizes worth a total of \$1,000. The biggest bass of the year, for the second season will again win a TrophyCatch championship ring, from the American Outdoor Fund.

'Nuff said! Register, grab your license and rod-and-reel, make sure you have a scale and camera and go catch 'em—then release them and say proudly "My Trophy Swims in Florida."

A Variety of Fish at Hatteras

By Jake Bussolini



A group of Mooresville NC anglers once again took to the waters of the Outer Banks for three days of Gulfstream fishing with Capt. Buddy Hooper on the 54-foot Hatteras Fever II. Rich Doering once again organized this semi-annual fishing experience and like all other pre- and post- season trips- it was a rousing success. Three days at the edge of the Gulfstream, about 25 miles out from Hatteras produced

more than 700 pounds of eatable fish (dolphin, tuna and wahoo) plus a few fish (false albacore) caught for bait. One of the two sailfish caught is shown here, a trophy 50 pounder caught by Doering on the first day of fishing. A second sailfish was caught later in the week by Skip Weber. Both were released.

First mate, Chase Hooper, shown here helping Doering release the fish was busy preparing ballyhoo and rigging four types of rigs. The ballyhoo was attached to sea witch rigs, sail lures, Hawaiian eyes and express rigs. One of the favorites that brought in most of the big fish was the Hawaiian eye rig shown here.

The ballyhoo shown above the lure is typical of the size bait used, about 10 inches long. Hooper removes the eyes before hooking up the rig so that the bait will swim better as it is trolled.

This rig produced the sailfish in addition to seven wahoo, seven yellow fin tuna, three black fin tuna, a shark and one false albacore.

On two of the three days of fishing, Capt. Hooper got the team into schools of mahi-mahi (dolphins), catching twenty seven dolphin one day and twenty six the second day. Action with the mahi-mahi was fast and furious piling up more than twenty at a time before they could be put into the freezer (fish box). The scene below was typical of the mahi-mahi catch.



Once the school of mahi-mahi was spotted near a NOAA weather buoy, the mate quickly switched gear, going to a lighter rod and reel. With cut tuna (false albacore) as bait, the mate became the orchestrator of organized chaos. Each angler jigged small cut bait, which almost immediately hooked a fish. The mate systematically worked the stern of the boat gaffing or “bailing” the fish into the boat as the anglers waited their turn. The process of

“bailing” refers to “flipping” the fish over into the boat by grasping the leader. Gaffing is reserved for the larger fish. This process lasts until the school moves on. In one case, a 6-foot hammerhead shark moved through the school, causing it to disperse. The chaos lasted for forty minutes. When it was over, it was time to move on, with a lot of work left for the mate to pack the fish and clean up the boat.



Doering was the star of the trip also bringing in several tunas like the nice yellow fin tuna shown here.



It wasn't all fun and games for the Mooresville team, however. The last day of fishing offered a challenge to the Captain, crew and the fishing team. The winds were from the northeast, blowing between 25 and 30 knots and the seas were sometimes breaking at to 10 feet. The Hatteras Fever II was the only boat to sail that day but the catch of more than 26 Mahi-mahi and some Wahoo made the rough trip well worthwhile for the Mooresville anglers.

THE REEL HOLIDAY GIFT



**POWERFISH'N™ PRO
POWER ASSIST REEL**

BRINGING POWER
TO FRESHWATER FISHING

WWW.POWERFISHN.COM

STRONG. QUIET. ELECTRIC.
ATTACHES QUICKLY, EASILY.
IT'S STRONG. IT'S RUGGED.
FISH LONGER, EASIER.
PERFECT FOR THE DISABLED ANGLER.





BASS FISHING HALL OF FAME ANNOUNCES 2014 INDUCTEES

The Bass Fishing Hall of Fame Board of Directors announced recently the Hall's 2014 inductees. All four persons selected are being recognized for their profound and lasting impacts upon the world of bass fishing. The 2014 class includes Bassmaster Classic champion Rayo Breckenridge, legendary lady angler Penny Berryman, innovator, educator and communicator Doug Hannon and technology pioneer Blake Honeycutt. The former three are being inducted posthumously, while Honeycutt will attend the Hall of Fame's Induction Dinner, taking place Thursday evening, February 20, 2014 in Birmingham, Ala. – a date and time that marks the eve of competition at the 2014 Bassmaster Classic.

Breckenridge, a cotton farmer from Paragould, Ark., qualified for the 1973 Bassmaster Classic at Clarks Hill Reservoir during his first year of professional competition on the Bassmaster Tournament Trail. His 52 1/2-pound total bested runner-up Bill Dance by more than 3 pounds and Breckenridge was crowned Classic champion as a rookie. He then parlayed his \$15,000 Classic purse and sudden notoriety into a long and successful TV career in which his program, "Rayo Breckenridge Outdoors," aired from 1974 to 1985 and shared programming blocks with shows by fellow BFHOF inductees Bill Dance, Tom Mann and Roland Martin. Breckenridge, who was born in 1928 in northeast Arkansas, fished club and regional tournaments since their inception in the 1960s and competed in 62 professional events. He qualified for six Classics in a 7-year stretch between 1973 and 1979. One of the most popular and respected anglers of his time – a "gentleman's gentleman," as one of his peers described him – Breckenridge died in 1995.



Berryman was born to be a champion. Among her pre-fishing achievements, she was first runner-up for Miss Kansas in the Miss USA Pageant and qualified for three professional waterskiing national championships. She then set her sights on bass fishing and became a full-time professional bass angler, seminar speaker and fishing instructor and enjoyed a



career that spanned more than 25 years. She qualified for more than 20 Women's Pro Tour Classic World Championships, claimed three National Championship titles and won the prestigious Bass N' Gal Classic in 1992 and the Bass N' Gal Angler-of-the-Year title in 1997. Berryman's career was sidelined in 2008 when, at the age of 58, she was diagnosed with meningioma, which claimed her life 4 years later.

Hannon is known throughout the bass-fishing world as "The Bass

Professor." Across a career of writing, studying, publishing and education, Hannon caught and released more than 800 bass over 10 pounds. He was also an inventor with nearly 20 patents, as well as a diver, underwater photographer and musician. Alongside authorship of hundreds of articles published in newspapers and outdoor magazines, he was also co-host of an internationally syndicated TV show for more than 15 years. Hannon patented the weedless propeller, which revolutionized the trolling-motor industry and allowed anglers to fish vast areas of previously inaccessible weedbeds. He also invented the award winning WaveSpin System for spinning reels, as well as the MicroWave line-control system – a new train of rod guides for spinning rods. Hannon died in March 2013 at the age of 66.

Most fans remember Honeycutt of Hickory, N.C., as the holder of the all-time heaviest winning weight in a B.A.S.S. tournament – 138 pounds, 6 ounces at the 3-day Eufaula National in July 1969. A standout angler in the seminal years of the sport, Honeycutt qualified for three Bassmaster Classics and ranked in the top-20 in half the events he entered. But his contributions to the sport run much deeper. As a teenager, he helped Buck Perry test, design and market Perry's Spoonplugs. Honeycutt later partnered with Tom Mann and Yank Dean to launch Humminbird. As the East Coast rep for Ranger Boats for 20 years, Honeycutt also helped design layouts for the Ranger TR series and developed an electric anchor for bass boats. Like his mentor, Buck Perry, Honeycutt is considered one of the fathers of structure fishing.



"Where better than Birmingham and the soon-to-be permanent home state of the Bass Fishing Hall of Fame to induct the Class of 2014?" said Hall of Fame president Sammy Lee. "This will be the first Bassmaster Classic at Lake Guntersville in 38 years. With our induction dinner slated for Thursday night – the eve of competition – the atmosphere is sure to be electric. Although three of the four members are no longer with us, we'll honor them with members of their families present so they'll know how much the bass fishing world respects their passion for the sport, and the memories they have

left us will live on forever with their induction. This is one ceremony no fan of bass fishing will want to miss."

In addition to the formal induction ceremonies, the Hall of Fame's banquet also includes an exceptional silent auction featuring bucket-list fishing trips, premium rods and reels, hunting gear and special fishing-celebrity memorabilia visit www.BassFishingHOF.com for more details, or call 888-690-2277.

About The Hall of Fame

The Bass Fishing Hall of Fame is a nonprofit organization dedicated to all anglers, manufacturers, tackle dealers, media and other related companies who further the sport of bass fishing. In February 2013 the board of directors announced the completion of a decade-long, exhaustive quest to secure a permanent home with the selection of Cullman, Alabama as the future site of the Hall, with work to commence immediately. The permanent Hall site will be constructed as a joint project with the City of Cullman, Cullman County and the City of Good Hope – a project that includes an adjacent civic/convention center, all of which will be housed on the 110-acre parcel known as the Burrow property. The Hall will enjoy a dedicated 30 acres of the property, which will include ponds, gardens and an aquatic-education center. The entire project is estimated to cost in excess \$17 million with structures that will encompass 101,000 square feet. Support the BFHOF by becoming a member. Call 888.690.2277 for more information.



Frabill Eliminates One of Fishing's Biggest Frustrations



Heartening to know some new product ideas are still born on the water. Sure, modern design programs convert concepts into digital drawings and prototypes are passed around boardroom tables. But it's finding solutions to real world fishing challenges that plant the seeds of true innovation.

Such was the case not many moons ago when Plano V.P. of Engineering Ryan Kleckner hit the water with his better half Heidi and Frabill pro staff Tom Neustrom. Objective: pry loose a few walleyes.

That's where the story begins.

"We were absolutely pounding the walleyes," said Kleckner, harkening back to the amazing fishing they experienced on Minnesota's Lake Winnibigoshish. In the interest of experimentation, however, the trio set aside the credentialed jig and minnow tandem and decided to do a little trolling. As it went, the grand march of walleyes continued, fish after fish smashing the crankbait offerings.

Could it get any better? Probably not. How about worse? Well, yes...relatively speaking. "Almost every time we netted a walleye or pike it'd go into a death roll and the baits and their hooks would get totally tangled. It was frustrating. Really chewed up our fishing time."

So like any good inventor, Kleckner sought a solution. He looked up from a cocooned crankbait into Neustrom's animated eyes and said, "Tom, I'll find a fix."

Back to the laboratory in Plano, Illinois, Kleckner went. And for the next 18-months, while Neustrom rigorously tested prototypes on the water, he watched a notion evolve into what is now the most advanced landing net in fishing.

What makes the current configuration so extraordinary? “Hooks don’t get snagged,” said Kleckner, sounding like Benjamin Franklin issuing a major ‘well, duh!’ “And even if the hooks go through the holes, they come right back out without knotting everything up.”

Those very holes are principle to the effectiveness of Frabill’s Crankbait Net. Rather than round or oval, they’re hexagonal. Kleckner and Neustrom tried every geometrical shape known to man, and found that a six-sided hole best staved off snags.

Those distinctively shaped holes are only half the story. The other primary objective is preventing the hook points from piercing the woven mesh fabric. Frabill has for years coated the mesh on its premium landing nets. Not only do the vinyl coatings fight snagging, they offer fish TLC by saving protective slime coats and not battering fins, scales or gills.

For his signature Crankbait Net, however, Kleckner demanded a more substantial vinyl dipped coating. And on top of that, to further control the dipping process, the net material is treated before manufacturing. This superior technique is unique to Frabill landing nets.



Frabill’s Crankbait Netting is available on five models within the Conservation Series, ranging in price from \$59.99 to \$109.99.

It’s said that ‘necessity’ is the mother of invention. But if you ask Kleckner and Neustrom, they’ll say it was ‘frustration.’







DAN'S FISH 'N' TALES®

10 Steps To Successful and Safe Ice Fishing, Part 2, By Dan Galusha

Last month this column told of the first of 10 steps to successful and safe ice fishing, which touched on safety and equipment. This month we will continue with the final 5 steps. These steps pertain mainly to strike detection, the selection and use of lures/baits, and locating fish.

Strike Indicators

Most anglers use some sort of strike indicator. In open water, it would be floats, but in ice fishing, it is small floats and spring bobbers. Both have even changed through the years. Floats used to be the sponge type that would be squeezed to remove ice, and spring bobbers were a strip of metal or wire. Now the floats have become more high-tech, with Mick Thill's designs, and springs are now a simple coil spring, similar to what is in an ink pen, or an adjustable Frabill Titanium Spring Bobber, both of which are much more sensitive. These can indicate any sort of bite – jerk, take down, or lift – as with a normal float.

Above photo: This nice size bass hit on a Ratfinkee with a Gulp Waxie, while being fished with a Frabill Straight Line rod/reel combo and coil spring bobber.

Most of my fishing is straight line without any sort of indicator. With this, my strikes are detected by watching the line for any sort of movement, or stiffness, or tip action with a lighter. I also feel for heaviness on the line as it is lifted and jigged.

While I have my best success without a float or spring, any of these types of indicators will work, and each can be equally productive. If I do you an indicator, it would be a spring type since it allows me to change depths quickly as I'm watching fish movement on my Vexilar flasher unit.



Lures and Baits

Just like open water, confidence is a key factor in using a lure and/or bait. The best thing a person can do is to purchase a basic selection of proven jigs and baits, in a few colors known to be productive.

For jigs, I use all Custom Jigs and Spins products. My favorites are the Ratfinkee, Ratso, Demon, Gill Pill and Diamond, with a Striper Special coming into play for bass. As for colors, my favorites are glow, lime/glow, black and chartreuse, with nickel being added for the Striper Special.

More crappie can be seen on the Vexilar, waiting to hit the glow lime Demon jig with Crappie Nibble that this nice fish took.

There are several types of baits to add to the jigs, but for live bait, I prefer wax worms, and for prepared a white or chartreuse Crappie Nibble or Gulp Alive Waxie, and a shad colored 1" Gulp Alive Minnow. When not used as a trailer on a Diamond Jig or larger Ratfinkee, the minnow is used as a jig body on a plain lead head without a keeper collar, which works well for crappie, and big bluegill, with an occasional bass.

Jigging Techniques

Even with all the rods, reels and jigs, it still won't help a person be successful without learning jigging techniques. A simple technique with which to start is a slow downward, rocking of the rod – moving down 6 inches to a foot between a series of rocking motions. The best way is to rock the rod tip about 6 inches, three times, then a short pause, before dropping about 6 inches to a foot, and rocking three times again. Once there is a strike work this area a foot above and below.

This is only a basic technique from which an angler can build and learn others. There are lift and drop, upward jerk from the bottom, and the list goes on. Experiment, as techniques can change from hour to hour, or day to day. There are even days when long pauses between jigging, or absolutely no movement will produce fish.



The author's top selection of ice jigs are Custom Jigs & Spins (top) Ratso and Ratfinkee, (middle) Gill Pill, (bottom) Diamond Jig and Demon.

As the season grows longer the technique becomes more critical, as fish become very dormant.

Locator

To me, the most important piece of equipment in producing success is having a good flasher unit. For this, I would not be without my Vexilar color unit. The colors are a vital key to finding and identifying active fish. It also helps develop the aforementioned jigging techniques, as an angler can see the jig/bait as a small green line, and the fish can be seen approaching the jig. As the fish gets closer to the jig, the signal gets stronger and changes to red. If the fish flash moves quickly

towards the jig, then it is most likely a very active fish. If it moves slowly and then backs off, then it is more inactive, and the technique may have to be slowed down, or changed somehow.

Transducer selection is also a key to success. A 19-degree cone will show a larger area, but can miss some fish if they are close to a ledge, or other obstacle that would create a shorter bottom signal. The wider-angle cone is good for open areas, while a 12-degree is better for narrowing and seeing past ledges or weeds. An 8-degree cone is perfect for seeing straight down below the hole, but does nothing for seeing what fish may be a little more to the side. If

there were only one angle to be used, then the 12 would be the selection, otherwise if a new unit is in the budget, try the Vexilar FLX-28, which comes with a Pro View transducer, that can be adjusted like a volume control of a radio. This unit also has five colors, digital depth indicator, 20 interference filters, two zooms, and auto depth scale adjustment from 10 to 300 feet. In other words, this is an ice angler's dream machine.

I've used the Vexilar FL-8 and 12, and 22HD, and this year the FLX-28. All will help fishing success, so if the budget is smaller, and can't afford more than the cheaper unit, don't worry, as it will still do a great job of locating fish, showing fish activity, and helping to find the correct technique.



Two of the author's favorite baits for tipping jigs are Berkley Power Crappie Nibbles and Gulp! Alive! Waxies.

Location

This is one step that can baffle even the experienced angler, especially in late-season — locating the fish. Again, a good flasher, such as mentioned previously, will play a major role in helping with this task, but it also helps know the bottom of the lake from previous open water trips and maps. If this isn't known, then look for visible structure first, and then use the flasher to move out towards deeper water, and pick up what structure may be tied to the visible area.

If the exact location is not known, then it is best to drill several single holes, then drop the transducer in each to see what can be found. Once an area with brush, and possible fish is found, then drill another hole or two close by before getting ready to fish. Once a possible area is found drill two more holes, one on either side of the one with the flasher. This will provide a view of what is going on in both holes, especially if you have a partner who is sharing your flasher. Just remember, there will be two little green flashes for your lures/baits, so you will have to remember who has which “flash” for when the fish start moving at them.

This has been the final part to my 10 steps to successful and safe ice fishing. I'm sure others would have been different, but perhaps similar ideas.

If you have a question about this or another fishing subject, contact me through the Dan's Fish 'N' Tales® website at www.dansfishntales.com, which also provides a link to the Midwest Outdoors website.

I wish you all a very safe and successful ice fishing season. Until next time, get out on the water and have a great day of fishing.

Introducing the FLX-28™

This is *not* your Grandpa's Sonar

Vexilar flasher technology is still helping Grandpa catch fish, but now he might be looking for an upgrade.

The re-designed FLX-28 sets a new standard for performance other sonar technology only dreams of doing.



FLX-28

*Shown in the Vexilar
Ultra Pack Fishing System*

- Digital depth readout
- Battery voltage display and alerts
- 20 Interference rejection settings
- Brushless data transfer technology
- Auto range setting
- Special weed fishing mode
- Low power shallow water mode
- Five foot depth range settings in auto mode
- 300 foot max range
- 1/4" Target ID
- Two zoom zones
- Day/night mode
- Five color palette selection
- Industry leading 525 lines of resolution
- Soft pack carry case
- Two year warranty



All these features are all found in one sonar system—the FLX-28. Backed by Vexilar's unwavering dedication to reliability and performance, there is little doubt Grandpa would love to have one!

Vexilar, Inc. • 6667 West Old Shakopee Road, Suite 101, Minneapolis, MN 55438 • 952-884-5291 • www.vexilar.com



Be More Productive On The Ice

By Bob Jensen

Ice fishing is in full swing across the Midwest. Although you still have to be careful out there, anglers are on the ice and they're getting bit. Following are some ideas on how you can get bit on the ice more often this winter.

On early ice it's a good idea not to move around too much. The ice is thin and often there's not much snow on it. The fish are right below us, and often times they're not too deep. They can detect us much easier, and when they know we're there, they sometimes get spooky.

That all changes as we get farther into the year. The ice is thicker, there's usually snow cover, and the fish are deeper. There's also the possibility that the fish become conditioned to the noise and movement directly overhead. Now is when you want to be mobile. It works well to pop a bunch of holes in an area and move from hole to hole. Let your depth-finder determine how long you fish a hole. If your sonar reveals fish, fish them awhile. If it doesn't, keep moving.

If you don't see activity within five minutes, move to the next hole. Lots of experienced ice anglers won't even wait five minutes.

If you see fish, but they won't bite, you have two options. You can move to another hole in search of biters, or you can try to make them bite. Usually if the fish are just looking, it works well to try a different size lure, a different color, or employ a different action. My all-time favorite ice-fishing lure for walleyes or perch is a

Buck-Shot Rattle spoon, but even this bait doesn't produce all the time. That's when you start experimenting with other baits, maybe something quiet that doesn't rattle, something like a Forage Minnow spoon, or maybe a plain hook/split-shot/ minnow under a slip bobber. Try different stuff when you know the fish are down there but they won't bite.



The Impulse plastics are extremely productive under the ice and are making it easier to try different looks for your baits. Be sure to check out the Impulse Minnow Heads for walleyes and perch, and the Mini Smelt for perch and crappies. The Mini Smelt was very good last ice-season.

Last thing: Ice-fishing is not as much fun if you're cold. With the clothing and footwear available today, there is no reason to be uncomfortable on the ice. You can be warm yet be able to move normally if you dress wisely. Start off with a base layer of Cabela's Polartec underwear. This stuff wicks' moisture away from your body, and moisture is what will make you get cold. After that, layer your clothing so you can adjust to weather conditions during the day. Now all you have to do is get on the ice. Ice-fishing is just starting, and there are lots of fish to catch. Keep the things we just talked about in mind and you'll catch some of those fish.

To see new episodes of Fishing the Midwest television go to



Adding to the Ice Revolution,
Part 2

Focus on Styles of Fishing

By Mark Strand



The classic Genz style of ice fishing is defined by moving a lot, dropping your bait into as many holes as possible until you catch the fish you came for. Staying in one spot longer can be effective, but the premium becomes dropping a wider variety of baits down to try to tempt what are often the “same fish.” Whatever style you choose, gear up for success. As you can see here, the line between shelter and clothing has been blurred, making it easier to “fish outside” while remaining comfortable.

(Photo: www.davegenz.com)

When it comes to modern ice fishing, there is a direct connection between tools and techniques. The tools make the techniques possible. And yet, when it comes to talking about the tools, we often lose the direct connection to the techniques.

That all ends here. When you talk ice fishing tools with Dave Genz, the discussion always starts and ends with what the tools get used for. Approach it,

this way and your equipment selection is simplified. This time, we focus on styles of fishing. When you know what kind of angler, you are, you can do a better job of gathering up the right tools.

“So, rather than just talking about new products and their features,” begins Genz, “let’s talk about how you’re going to use whatever you use.”

He begins thinking out loud, talking about how some ice anglers – himself included – head to the ice with a game plan that includes remaining mobile. That is, the primary strategy is to drill lots of holes and fish them quickly, looking for active biters. Other anglers – and it can be a function of the type of ice shelter, they use – tend to drill fewer holes, and focus mainly on catching whatever fish are under them. As time passes, it’s often the same fish (that have already seen your initial offering) that you’re trying to catch.

“It’s those two different styles of fishing,” says Genz, “and both are effective. Which one do you want to be? If you’re fishing out of a hub-style house or a wheeled fish house or a permanent shack, you aren’t going to move as much. Maybe not at all. So you need lots of rods, all rigged with something different, to try to catch the fish that are camped under your house.”

He talks about top competitors in ice tournaments, and how they want to be mobile and move to many holes, looking for biters, but the crowd on the spots makes it hard to fish that way.

“Tournament guys are faced with that a lot,” he says. “There are people on all the spots, so you’re forced to make those fish bite that are in your area.”

MonsterOutdoors.com

Reel Weeds™ Fish Structure!
4' strand plus an ice-free float only \$5.00!

New

7:00:51

Turn this....

7:05:33

7:15:43

... into this

Create a fish magnet ... bring the bite to you!

The Zack Shack
Save hundreds of \$\$ buying on-line!



- 30 second set-up
- Haul an ATV – Pull with an ATV
- Multiple designs and accessories
- And... It floats!

Generator Fuel Extenders
Extend your run time to 72 hours!!



NO MORE!!



NEW!

A few more of over 15,000 products:

✓ Teaser Leaders™	✓ Robotic Deer Decoys	✓ Camping Supplies	✓ Truck/Trailer Ramps
✓ Pet Supplies	✓ Firearm accessories	✓ Game Feeders	✓ Cooking supplies

MONSTER
OUTDOORS.COM

Shop On-Line and save money and time!
Safe, Secure check-out!
Exemplary Customer Service!

MONSTER
OUTDOORS.COM

MonsterOutdoors.com

He talks about pressured fish and how they tend to be harder to tempt. He brings up Jim Martin, a Michigan fisherman known for his ability to catch fish in crowds during tournament hours. “Jim Martin is the master at having lots of rods rigged up ahead of time,” says Dave. “He puts a lot of effort into tying up all these rods the night before. His plan is to get those fish to bite by dropping a different bait down there. Something new.”

The point is clear: if your mobility is limited, either by choice or circumstance, it becomes more important to try to coax a few reluctant fish into biting. It's more likely that you are going to be sitting over fish that are slow to react. Active biters get caught quickly, then you settle into a period of working over tough customers.

In this scenario, it's more likely that the bites are going to be soft and hard to detect. The fish tend to ease up to your bait and perhaps half-heartedly suck at them, maybe just getting the bait to

ODU

► FISHOUFLAGE® AMBUSH DLX
with SIDESTEP ENTRY™

FRABILL


**THE MORE YOU PUT INTO IT,
THE MORE YOU GET OUT OF IT**

**The NEW Frabill Ambush
Ice Shelter Series with SideStep Entry™**

This breakthrough new shelter design allows you to strategically set up your gear without stumbling over stuff. Two large, full-size side doors and increased headroom put you in full command, giving you better mobility, increased safety and unmatched in-and-out access.

**GET YOUR
ICE IN
GEAR**



 FRABILL.COM

touch the outside of their lips. There is a theory in fishing that you “get what you ask for” from the fish, meaning that if you fish slow and subtle, you get timid bites. If you fish more aggressively, you tend to trigger more aggressive bites. Nevertheless, even that aside, in many cases when you’re camped on a spot, Genz says, the bites become harder to detect.

This is one of the reasons that spring bobbers are effective tools for a lot of people. “But you have to realize,” says Genz, “that putting a spring bobber on your rod limits what you can do with the presentation.” We’ve talked about this before, but a spring bobber generally ‘smooths out’ the presentation, making it more of a swimming thing rather than a rapidly-vibrating thing as with the Genz Pound.

The good news is that, if you like to fish with spring bobbers, and they match your style well, that your rods are going to cost less. You don’t need a great rod with a spring bobber. The rod can’t be a mushy train wreck, but any reasonable rod will do when paired with a spring. So it makes it more affordable to gather up an arsenal of rods, allowing you to do the Jim Martin thing and hit the ice with lots of rods, pre-rigged with different style and color baits.

Sight Fishing

Next stop: sight fishing. Dave goes into his thoughts on gear and outlook when you can see the fish. “And remember, these days we can sight-fish at any depth,” he says, “because you can use an underwater camera and see deep fish, too, as long as the water is clear enough.”

After watching countless others sight-fish, and doing plenty of it himself, Genz came to the following conclusion: when you can see the fish, you tend to slow down, or stop, your presentation as the fish gets closer. “It’s like you want to make it easy for the fish to catch your bait,” theorizes Dave. “So you slow everything down or stop. That’s when your line starts untwisting, so the bait starts spinning. Most fish lose interest when the bait is spinning.”

This has been a long-standing issue. Some sight fishermen have learned to grab the line to keep it from spinning. However, now you have a hook-setting problem, because your line is in one hand, and there’s probably slack line between your hand and the rod. The fish sucks in the bait; you deal with the mess, and the fish has long since spit it back out before you get the hook set.

The best answer to the whole spinning bait thing has been the introduction of ‘fly reels for ice fishing,’ so the line peels straight off without twisting. Genz was instrumental in designing the





Ice Spooler series for Clam (pictured), which features a longer 'reel stem' so the reel doesn't sit tight to the rod, as a true fly reel would. This lets you get your hand in there and hold it like a traditional reel.

You can use a rod with a spring bobber on it for sight fishing, but the spring bobber is not useful for detecting bites when you can already see the fish, and the spring limits your presentation options. So perhaps the ultimate sight rod is one that allows you to either 'pound it' or swim it smoothly, and minimizes line twist

so the bait won't spin around as you slow down or stop the presentation.

Mobile Attack

Genz's favorite style of ice fishing, the style he built the modern ice revolution around, is sometimes called run and gun. This is where you attack the lake, drilling holes on many promising spots, fishing quickly, looking for active biters, moving on. You keep moving, in most cases, even when you catch fish, because the theory is that there are only so many active biters in an area at any given point in time.

As soon as the action slows, you're on the move, drilling more holes.

Fishing this style was the inspiration for what became the original 'blue suit' by Clam, which has evolved into a series of ice fishing-specific suits that block the wind, let you kneel down on the ice, and just generally keep you comfortable while fishing 'outside' in the elements. It has become part of ice fishing lingo to say that you're wearing your portable shelter, using tools like Fish Traps primarily to block the wind better, to see better for sight fishing, and to get warm before going out on the next attack.



NEW YORK STATE ICE PRO-AM TOURNAMENT SERIES

Over \$40,000 in Cash & Prizes!!

The tournament for anglers of all skill levels!

Chautauqua Lake: January 18-19
Tupper Lake: February 15 & 16
Sodus Bay: February 22 & 23

www.NYSiceproam.com

The theory behind this fishing style has been proven so many times that it's no longer a theory. On most days, this approach produces the most fish, and the biggest fish. It places a premium on the first drop down a new hole, a time when the most aggressive fish is likely to rise up out of the pack and beat the others to your bait. These are often the biggest fish in the area.

"Our style of fishing," says Dave, "is we use the same jig and fish it in a lot of holes."

It's not that he never changes baits. In fact, he brings about four pre-rigged rods with baits he thinks should produce. Nevertheless, it's common for him to keep dropping the same jig down many holes. His classic presentation style is called the Genz Pound. To execute it, you need a high-quality rod that lets you remain in control of many rapid, tiny vibration-like movements you impart to the bait, and distinctly feel each cycle. What you are feeling is the 'bottom of each bounce,' and you train your hands and brain to notice when the cycle of boomp-boomp-boomp gets interrupted. That usually means a fish has sucked it in, and it's already past time to set the hook!

It's difficult or impossible to fish this style without a top-quality rod. This is the style we talked about last time that has Genz so excited about the new Legacy rods. "They're the most affordable rods ever," he says, "that let you fish this way."

That's it for today. There's always a reason for the gear selections, if you think of the style of fishing you plan to do. Hopefully, this will help you gather up the right stuff before you head out onto the ice.



Jammin Jigs
 www.jamminjigs.com

We are your one stop online shop for all your jig fishing needs.
 Every jig is hand-made and hand painted, and is guaranteed not to chip or crack or we will replace it for FREE. We are your home for: Walleye, Bass, Trout, Perch, Crappie, Bluegill, Panfish, and Sunfish Fishing Jigs. We have an excellent assortment of ice fishing jigs, glow in the dark jigs, & novelty jigs.

Try out **Jammin Jigs**
 Today & Receive **10% OFF** your entire order
 just use **JAMMINJIGS10** as the coupon code when you checkout.

Neon Tiger Jig (Pearl/Blue)
 #6 Candy Stripe Teardrop
 Neon Tiger Jig (Green/Chartreuse)
 #10 Striper Teardrop
 Neon Glow Grub
 Bobber Fry
 Neon Ant
 #6 Glitter Teardrop
 Flipper Teardrop
 Neon Tiger Jig (Orange)
 #10 Neon Moon Glow
 #2 Crippled Willow Supreme

Note: Dave Genz, known as Mr. Ice Fishing, was the primary driver of the modern ice fishing revolution. He has been enshrined in the National Fresh Water Fishing Hall of Fame and Minnesota Fishing Hall of Fame for his contributions to the sport. For more fishing tips and to order his new info-packed book, Ice Revolution, go to www.davegenz.com.

An Eye for an Eye Matching Up for Ice Walleyes

By Jason Mitchell

When fish are moving, you can sit on a good spot and catch fish as they push through. When fish quit moving, you have to push through a spot to keep contacting fish. This can really be evident when targeting both walleye and perch. Especially with shallower water patterns on many lakes where we are finding fish in less than fifteen feet of water, these fish movements typically revolve around sunrise and sunset.

Anglers sometimes assume that they should fish aggressively during the prime times when fish roll through a spot and snap at lures but fishing aggressively can also save the doldrums of the midday. What is fishing aggressively? Fishing aggressively is mostly attitude. Fishing through spots, checking multiple holes and moving that lure to call in and trigger an aggressive reaction. Fishing aggressively however, also has to be controlled and refined depending upon the conditions. You can be ambitious but you also have to be smart.

During that prime time window when fish are reacting and making you look good; you can typically be more successful with larger lures and more aggressive jigging. The added profile and flash pull's fish in from further away and these fish basically find you and eat. These are the fish that really make you look good as an angler. When these fish see the presentation, they accelerate and attempt to catch the lure. One thing you will notice about these fish is that they accelerate fast, and they actually want the lure rocking, pounding, lifting or falling. If you back off and make the lure subtle as the fish approaches, you can see the fish losing interest immediately. This is why the top anglers on the ice swear by a Vexilar (Model FL-20 Pro Pack pictured next page). That raw analog signal gives you that intimacy with the signal representing the fish, you can read the attitude of the fish versus just seeing a line.



The Shoulder Season

Most tourism destinations have what is referred to as a shoulder season. That little bit of a lull time that is before, and after things are busy. Each day of fishing also typically has that lull where the traffic starts to slow down. As the sun climbs a little higher in the sky, the intensity of this bite typically drops off. The first thing that typically happens is that the fish are still moving in but become much more hesitant. The acceleration up to the lure isn't as fast. These fish will typically pause right at the lure, and the movements of the fish near the lure become slower and more deliberate. If you don't make any adjustment from what was working during the prime time window, you will typically catch fewer fish. The first adjustment I like to make isn't so much with the jigging action itself but with the lures. Scale back to smaller and more subtle lures. Downsizing with the same technique can often pay big dividends.



The Lull

During the prime time window and that shoulder where the intensity of the fish drops off, but the fish are still patrolling; you can sit on key spots and let fish come to you. Sitting on a good location or making small moves through a good spot is often the most effective strategy. When you quit seeing traffic on your electronics, however, you have two options. Wait until the fish starts moving again or move through and contact more fish.

When the sun gets high in the sky, I basically believe that the fish just lay on the bottom and quit patrolling their environment. Ironically, aggressive fishing presentations often shine for these fish but there has to be a method behind the madness. Aggressively jigging inactive fish is a top strategy because often, you have to turn or move the fish to catch it.



Imagine drilling a line of ten holes along a break line and there are fish laying along the break. The odds of drilling a hole right over the top of and in front of a fish are pretty slim even when you drill a lot of holes. If however, you can drill a hole within ten feet of where a fish is laying, you can sometimes turn the fish because there is a good chance that the fish might be facing away from you. Again, downsizing during the middle of the day and fishing aggressively can pick

off fish during the lull period during the day. The key, however, during the lull is to drill enough holes over a spot where you can pick it apart. In shallow water, I also believe the drilling can move the fish just enough to make them easier to catch at times.

Aggressive Versus Passive

Most of the time, I feel I am much more efficient and effective if I stick to this basic premise of fishing lures aggressively and being strategic in how I sit and move as the day progresses. There are always exceptions, however. There are days when fishing aggressively just doesn't work, and you can typically come to this conclusion fairly quickly by how these fish respond. If fish flirt the edge of the cone angle and actually dart away when you move the lure, you are going to have to dead stick with a live minnow and have some patients. Most of the time, I feel like I can catch more fish with one rod and a Vexilar but when the fish are in a funk, put your hands in your pockets and dunk as many minnows as you can legally do so.

The intensity of fish movements that revolve around the low light of sunrise, and sunset is pretty universal but there are also many exceptions. Lake of the Woods and Lake Winnipeg are a couple of noteworthy exceptions where the bite can pick up in tempo during the middle of the day. Stained water or nonexistent fishing pressure and in some cases light penetration reduced by overcast skies or cloud cover can alter this basic pattern.



HOW IT'S DONE.

PROVEN RELIABILITY MEETS HIGH PERFORMANCE.

The razor sharp heat annealed blades on Polar Fire's Power Augers cut quickly and effortlessly—no matter how thick the ice. Available with 33, 43 or 52 cc two cycle or 35 cc four cycle engines, Polar Fire delivers powerful torque and a reliable design that is built to last. Constructed of durable steel alloy with a rugged cast aluminum gear housing, Polar Fire Power Augers get the job done!

Visit PolarFireGear.com to find your nearest Polar Fire retailer.



TOM GRUENWALD
"Tom Gruenwald
Outdoors"



POLAR FIRE

POLARFIREGEAR.com | 920-533-5080

Competitive Ice Fishing With An Edge

By Tim Thomas

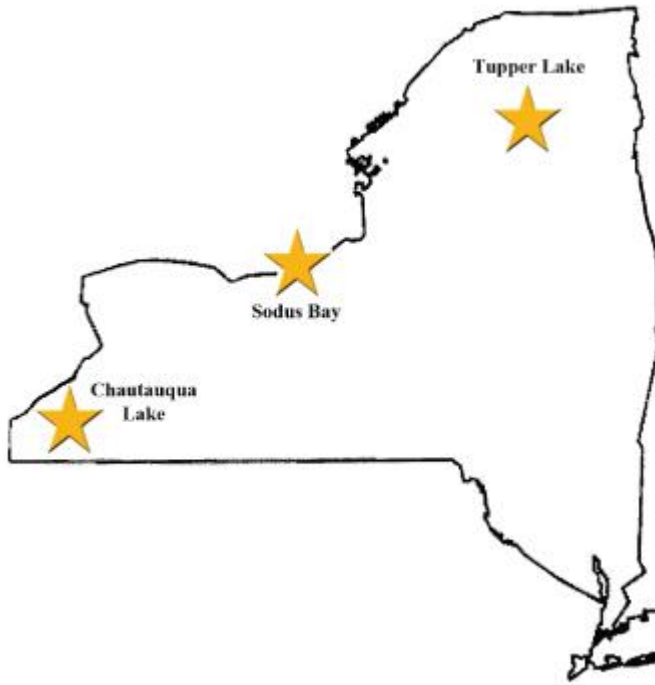
The NYS Ice Pro-Am Tournament Series made its debut across NYS in 2013, blowing away those who fished the events with an exhilarating shotgun-style start each day and formal awards ceremonies with piles of gear stacked up unlike anything before. Anglers really liked the challenging format of the Pro-Am Team Division. "It really makes you think about your strategy to target the different species" commented Duane Kniskern from Team Eat Me. In addition to the format, anglers also liked how smoothly the events ran overall, and the prize structure is larger than any other tournament in the Northeast. "We have jumped through some major hoops just to be able to fish them (the tournament events) because they are that awesome!!! You will not fish a better run tournament and meet nicer people than these guys!!!" stated members of Team Brotherhoods. Despite very poor fishing during the Sodus Event, both events had 100% C R success with only the largest fish being kept to be displayed at the awards ceremonies, including perch, northern pike, walleye, and lake trout.



Conceptualized by brothers Tim & Jeff Thomas, Professional Anglers and Co-Captains of the Finders Keepers Professional Sportfishing Team, the NYS Ice Pro-Am Tournament Series (NYS IPA) was originally created to highlight the world-class fishery in NYS and offer anglers the opportunity to compete in a never before seen event of this magnitude in NYS. Using the motto "Go BIG, or Go Home!", they pulled resources from their extensive network of professional contacts, sponsoring companies, angler surveys, and years of tournament experience to put together a series of events that had never been tried on the ice before: a 2-day, multi-level, multi-event, catch-and-release series that targets all the major species of each waterway featuring a shotgun style start to each event and a formal awards ceremony. Each event fields two divisions:



Open Division (\$30 entry fee): This is the general tournament where every angler is considered a competitor. Anglers are looking to catch the largest (by weight) of each



NEW YORK STATE ICE PRO-AM TOURNAMENT SERIES



species (varies by waterway) with the top 5 largest of each species placing in the event. No professional anglers are allowed to fish this Division.

Pro-Am Team Division (\$160 entry fee): This is the specialized tournament for professional anglers and those die-hard ice fishermen that crave the highest level of competition.

Anyone can fish in this division, but professional anglers must fish in this division. Teams can consist of one or two anglers, and will target all of the tournament fish species. The team's largest of each species plus their largest 12 panfish score points in the tournament each day, and the 5 teams with the highest 2-day totals place.

This year Plano and Frabill will once again be the headlining sponsors, with Clam Corporation, Bass Pro Shops, HT Enterprises, Indian Hill Ice Traps, and Gator Power Augers joining the Series as major sponsors along with returning sponsors Aqua-Vu, Automatic Fisherman, Jammin' Jigs, PolyStic Glo, Fox Rochester, and Stacked Graphics. The series will be running on the same waterways with just a few changes based upon angler feedback from the 2013 events (see website for rules & regulations). Anglers are urged to Pre-Register on the tournament website (www.NYSiceproam.com) to be entered into the promotional drawings and to streamline registration when they arrive.



Ice Travel, By Jud Peck

Yes, I know the ice season is just around the corner, and this retired critter cop has procrastinated again!! I have some ideas for ice travel that I would like to pass along. In New York, the laws on ATV's and snowmobiles are somewhat restrictive, and many ice fisherman don't like them. ATV's and snowmobiles have to be licensed, insured, also you must wear a helmet. I have used my ATV for ice fishing, and as it is licensed and insured, I never had a problem. The one thing that was a pain in the backside was the helmet. Cold, snowing and blowing it's not fun to wear and when you are fishing it seemed impossible to keep snow out of it making the next ride a wet and cold trip.



The advertisement features a black background with a large, glowing green oval at the top containing the text "FISHING LIGHTS" and "HYDRO GLOW" in large, bold, green letters, with "DOCK LIGHTS" in smaller white letters below. Below the oval, the text "Ice fishing can be really cool ... at night !" is written in white. The central image shows two people in winter gear sitting on a frozen lake at night, illuminated by several bright green lights. At the bottom, white text reads: "Ask for it at your local tackle supplier or call 877.895.4569 or www.hydroglow.com".

may just be your ticket to easy travel.

The bottom line as I see it is economics, only a couple hundred bucks invested, no regulations (check your states laws), and if you do happen to lose it through the ice, you are only out a couple hundred instead of several thousand for the ATV or snowmobile, in any case you may have to deal with the pollution aspect !! Good luck and stay dry.

Solution: Why not a ride mower or garden tractor? I made one into a ice-fishing machine many years ago. In New York, no regulations!! That's right, no license, insurance or helmet. Now what I did was find a good running ride mower for \$100.00, another \$50.00 for a good set of chains and you are ready for the ice. I even went one step further and found a junk to set of front wheels then welded an old set of snowmobile skis to them. Furthermore, I always carried a bottle of ether and had a new battery, never used the ether, but it was available!! Now, I would like to add that if you are the type of ice fishermen who is found on the ice several days a week you just may want to go with a snowmobile, really they are the best as the pounds per square inch that they place on the ice is by far the least of all forms of travel !! However, for the weekend ice warrior, the ride mower

The advertisement has a dark purple background with white lightning bolts. A large yellow lightning bolt graphic is on the left. The text "LURE" is in large yellow letters, and "LIGHTNING" is in large yellow letters to its right. Below "LURE" is the word "FISH" in red, and below "LIGHTNING" is the word "BEWARE" in red. The text "Super Charges Glow Jigs Fits Conveniently on Your Fish Finder" is in red. In the top right corner, it says "Made In The USA" in white. In the bottom right corner, there is a white oval containing the text "Hands Free Illumination" in black. At the bottom, the website "www.lurelightning.com" is written in white.

The Descent on Panfish

By Jason Mitchell



Probably, the biggest tackle trend the past five years for ice fishing panfish has been incorporating tungsten into the presentation. Ice anglers have embraced tungsten. The physical properties make tungsten much heavier than traditional lead and as a result, a jig made with tungsten falls through the water faster and essentially fishes much heavier.

Now what are the advantages of using tungsten? When getting a jig back down through the water column, you can rifle through unproductive water faster and get back down to the fish. The weight of tungsten allows the jig to be physically smaller, which might be an advantage regarding profile or water resistance. The weight of tungsten also imparts a nice hard quiver to soft plastics, making a tail dance with little effort. A tungsten jig is also more sensitive as you can feel the jig easier and even use a heavier line which can make you more efficient.

Now let's take a time out now that we have the tungsten cool aid stirred up. With such a heavy emphasis on tungsten jigs right now, I also want to stress that every advantage listed above can also be a disadvantage depending on the day. Tungsten is not an end, all or a material that is better than lead. Tungsten compliments lead because there are still a time and place for slow falling and gliding presentations. There are situations where you can indeed catch more pan fish by using tungsten and there are also situations where you will catch fewer fish by using tungsten.

Sliding and gliding presentations with tear drop shaped ice jigs or other slow falling profiles were bread and butter presentations for ice anglers for years but the fish heavy trend has caused many anglers to forget about the effectiveness at times of ice jigs that do fall through

SKANDIA® TUNGSTEN ICE JIGS



the water column slow and are hard to feel. There is a place where both ends of the spectrum shine.

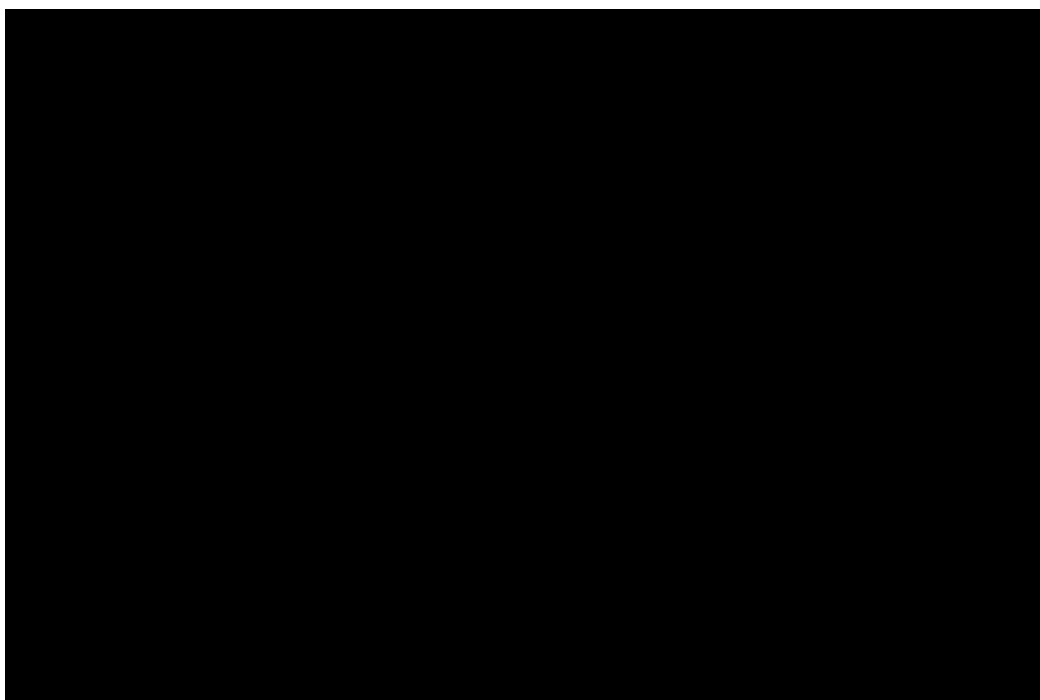
A couple of situations where you can leave tungsten behind come to mind. When fish are cruising right below the ice, the slide and glide of flat lead profiles or slow falling soft plastic riggings just have more hang time and seem to catch more fish. Other situations include any time the fish are sporadically suspended through the water column, and you have to fish from the ice all the way down. On really tough bites with the exception of deep water of more than twenty feet, I almost always

have to give up tungsten and slide and glide my way to fish.

What is sliding and gliding? Using slow falling presentations that momentarily cannot be felt as they fall and drift through the water. The sense of feel is lost but there is a touch to this presentation. What happens is that the line is not perfectly straight up and down, there is a coil, there is a bow in the line as you momentarily lose contact with the jig. What also happens is that the jig often slides and moves slightly horizontally. Between the slide and cushion in the line, you can pick off really tough fish that just don't move much water as they suck in the jig. The bite indication is just more slack in the line. On really tough bites, this can be the ticket.

With this presentation mindset, soft plastics work extremely well and can be part of the experimentation to get the slide and glide just right. There is little quiver or dance with this technique, the soft plastic just creates a sliding profile that seems to hang in the twilight zone. The jig almost works like a panfish mini version of a horizontal swim lure that swims in a circle on the upstroke and glides on the drop. You just cannot duplicate this presentation with tungsten.

As you prepare for this upcoming ice season, recognize the situations where tungsten can give you an advantage but don't replace every jig in your box with tungsten, there are many situations on the ice where you can catch more fish by not using tungsten. Both elements give you two different presentations that complement each other, and if you can recognize when to use each tool and mindset, you can catch more panfish this winter.



TRASH WALKIN leads to TRASH TALKIN.

