

September 2013  
Fall Fishing

A photograph of two men on a boat. The man in the foreground is wearing a black long-sleeved shirt and a grey baseball cap, leaning over the side of the boat. The man behind him is wearing a white long-sleeved shirt with the text 'PROTECT OUR PASSION' and a black baseball cap, holding a large bluegill fish. The background shows a body of water and a boat.

**What Are  
Bass Eating  
Right Now?**

**Overshadowed  
Bluegills**

**Fall For  
Big Pike**

**Bowfin Blast On  
Lake Champlain**





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it's Tiger  
Time!,  
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Have any of you noticed what I see as a new trend in bass tournaments? i.e. product or company specific tournaments. I didn't think a whole lot about it in the late 90's early 2000 when "Picasso Lures" got involved with a rod company and rep group out west. I know for a few years Picasso sold a lot of products because of this one tournament. It was an annual event, and they had huge turnouts. If my memory serves me correctly in a period of

a few short years, we went from the initial tournament to somewhere in the neighborhood of 500 boats. Just think about that for a minute, that's 1,000 anglers on the lake fishing with specific product and everyone purchasing the product for one tournament. Then the economy went downhill, and they died. Now almost a decade later, they are popping up all over the country. I know the "Snag Proof Open" that I fished on Guntersville a few weeks ago had a great turn out, and I expect that the Rat-L-Trap tournament on Lake Fork next month will have a huge turnout.

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

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

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

**Photographer:** Kathy Barker

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

**Contributing Writers:** Brad Wiegmann, Chris Jenkins, Garrett Svir, RC Cook SR, Jake Bussolini, Bob Jensen, D & B Ice Adventures, Brian Wingard, Jason Mitchell, Mitch Eeagan, Ron Presley, Ted Takasaki, Scott Richardson, Bill Vanderford, Capt. Jake Davis and Delina Alwanger

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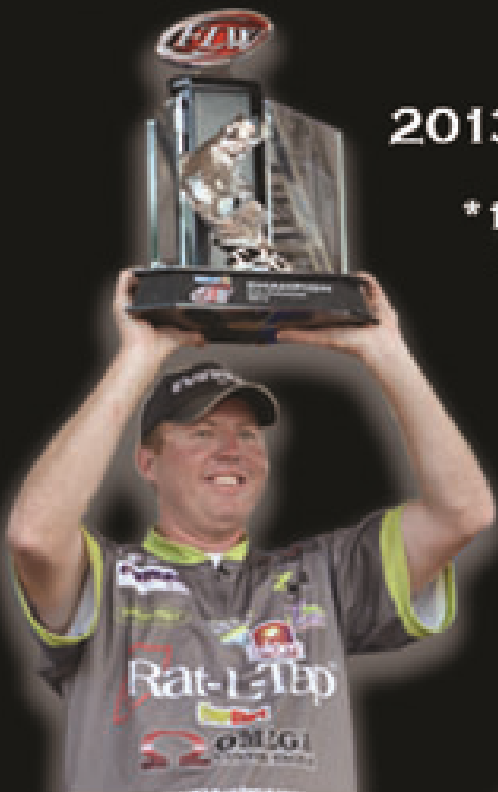
Talk about leveling the playing field! Now, just think about this for a minute, everyone fishing the tournament has to use the identical product from the same company. I recently fished the Snag Proof tournament on Guntersville, Ala. the only thing; you could use was one of their frogs, no other products that the company had just their frog. Now in my mind this does just about as good a job leveling the playing field as anyone can possibly expect. And, no I am not naive enough to think that some anglers may not have a home-field advantage, but these types of tournaments greatly reduce their odds and start shifting it a little more in your favor.

If you want to fish a unique tournament, I would give one of these a shot. I know I plan on fishing a few more this coming year.

Please do me a favor whenever possible take a kid fishing. Remember they are our future, and you will never regret putting a smile on their face.

Please enjoy the Outdoors,

Larry Thornhill  
Editor & Chief



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## Dirty Little Crappie Secrets

By Brad Wiegmann

Professional crappie fishing angler Dan Dannenmueller has some little secrets when it comes to catching crappie. He will probably live to regret it, but recently Dannenmueller let slip three different secrets for catching more and bigger crappie.

Unveiling the secrets, Dannenmueller, let it slip that the key was to enhance what the crappie was smelling, seeing and hearing.

Begrudgingly, Dannenmueller explained, "Often lures need more action, sound or smell to get the attention of crappie. Once you have their attention it's easier to catch them," insisted Dannenmueller, 2011-2012 Bass Pro Shops Crappie Master Points Champion.

One of Dannenmueller's biggest secret is using scent on artificial lures for crappie. "Scent applied to lures not only results in better bites, but leaves a trail to attract crappie," revealed Dannenmueller.

His favorite scent is Bobby Garland Mo' Glo Slab Jam. "This gel scent is made with natural amino-acid based grounded up minnows," Dannenmueller went on, "it's also a gel it will adhere

to all surfaces so you can use them on Bobby Garland Mo' Glo jig head or even Blakemore Road Runners."

Another reason Dannenmueller uses Mo' Glo Slab Jam is it glows. "You can charge it up by putting it on the deck of your boat during the day or an angler can use a flashlight at night to charge it up and make it glow," revealed Dannenmueller.

There are several ways to apply scent to crappie lures. Most come in a squeeze bottle and can be squirted on. "I like to put scent on the lure then work it into the lure with my fingers," Dannenmueller continued, "although it's not a secret way of doing it, I often put this scent into a ziplock baggie with Bobby Garland Minnow Mind'R or Baby Shad then let it sit overnight infusing the scent into the lures."

Two lakes where Dannenmueller especially likes to use Mo' Glo Slab Jam is Kentucky Lake and Truman Lake.

"Kentucky Lake's water clarity is normally good so crappie don't have trouble finding the lure during the day in open water, but in low light situations like early morning and in the evening or when crappie are in stake beds putting Slab Jam on a lure makes it easy for them to see it," explained Dannenmueller.

"On Truman Lake in Missouri I use Slab Jam for a different reason. The crappie population up there is bombarded with lures every day and gets conditioned to lure colors. By putting on Slab Jam it gives the crappie a different color lure to strike," said Dannenmueller.

Besides adding scent, Dannenmueller's next secret was to enhance what the crappie was seeing by adding tiny attractor blades to lures and jig heads. "I like Bobby Garland Slab Ticklers. They can be added on to your line through the blade's hole before you tie on your lure like a Road Runner or Mo' Glo jig head," confided Dannenmueller.





Bobby Garland Slab Ticklers come in blade sizes 0 and 1, with three each of every color per package. They are available in four different colors including chartreuse, pink, nickel and 24k gold plated

“I use the Slab Ticklers above the weight to draw crappie from a distance especially when trolling,” stated Dannenmueller.

His last secret was adding sound to his lures. “Adding sound just makes sense. It calls them in muddy water or when there is algae floating around making it hard for crappie to see,” divulged Dannenmueller. Dannenmueller uses Bobby Garland Glass Rattles because they are small enough to fit in soft plastic crappie lures and extremely loud with three stainless steel ball bearings in each of the glass housing. “The stainless steel ball bearings inside glass make these rattles louder than any other rattles out there,” declared Dannenmueller.

Depending on the technique, Dannenmueller will use all or some of the secrets above to catch more or bigger crappie. “Knowing when to add scent, flash or sound depends on the aggressiveness of the crappie. It’s important to use the right combination of scent, flash or sound when long lining or spider rigging. It’s just like having the combination of equipment for a technique like Tite-Lok rod holder to keep my B’n’M rods in place when longing or spider rigging,” admitted Dannenmueller.

It’s not a surprise that Dannenmueller was reluctant to divulge his secrets to catching more and bigger crappie. Little did most crappie anglers know that by just enhancing their lures they could catch more crappie. I wonder if they will now keep that their own little secret.





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# Is It Time To Crank Yet?

By Chris Jenkins

I remember some fifteen years ago that September would be the time frame in which we would be switching over to crank baits. The seasons have changed though, and September is no more than a repeat of August. That's not to say that crankbaits won't work for you this month, it just doesn't seem to be my "go to" bait just yet. There are anglers out there that rely on cranks all year long and some that make a living doing so.

Great names like Rick Clunn, Timmy Horton, KVD, and who can forget Paul Elias's 132 pounds winning stringer on Falcon Lake with the aid of a couple of deep divers (Mann's Deep Diver pictured). These and many more top pros know and understand the effectiveness of these baits when used in the right conditions.

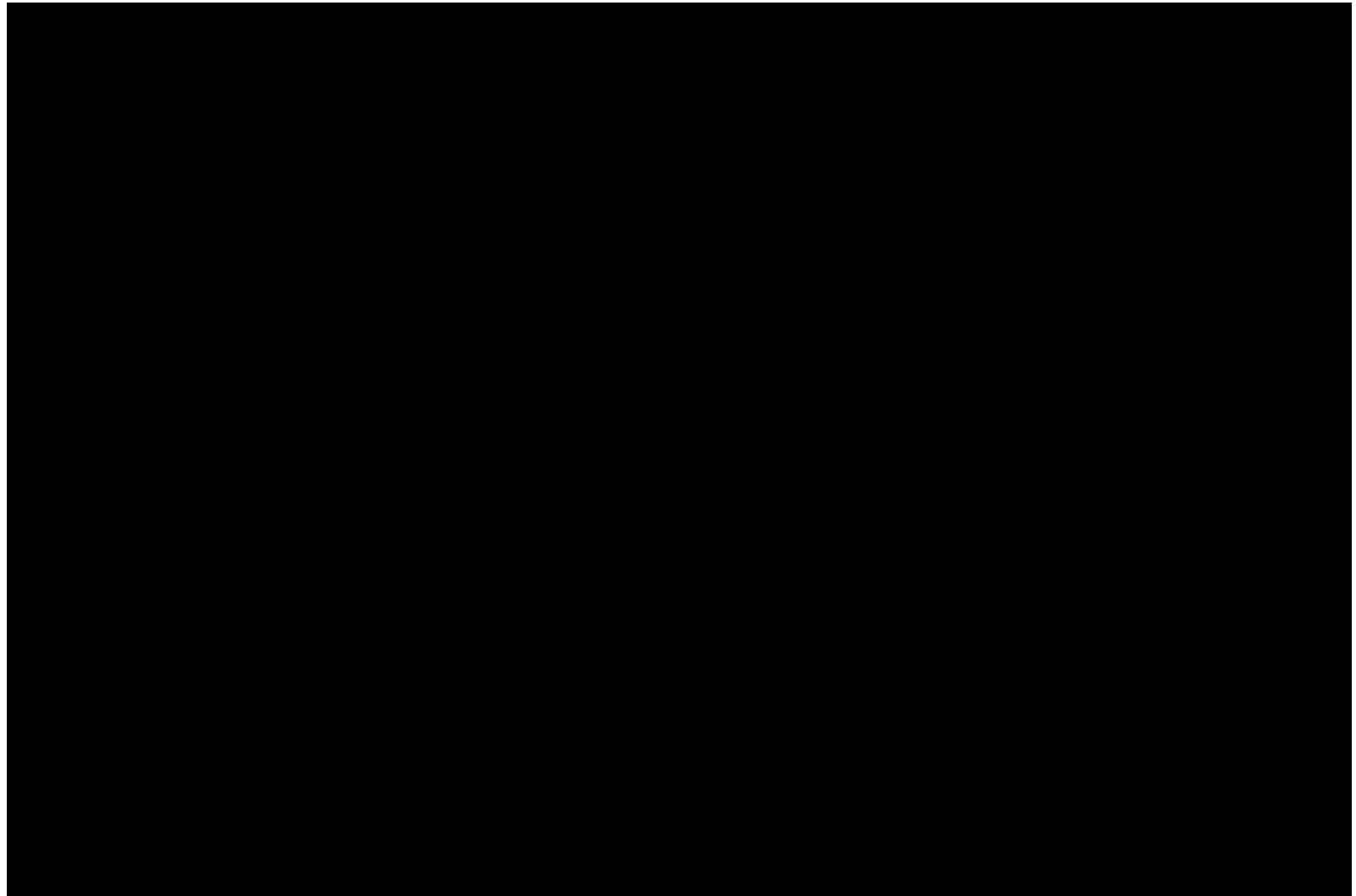


This month the bass will still be relating to the thermocline. The thermocline, in short, is a layer of water that is conducive to the fishes liking. It will be a comfortable temp, and it will contain higher levels of oxygen. The bait will be drawn to it, and therefore, the bass will be also. Shallow rivers, streams, and ponds do not stratify and form a definitive thermocline. Lakes and reservoirs will and have already formed a definitive thermocline. If you have a depth finder,



even a relatively inexpensive, one will show an area on the screen that is slightly different in color. Choose menu, options, and adjust your sensitivity (generally up) to look for an area on the screen that looks a little darker. That area is where you will locate the majority of your bass. That does not mean you will catch them, but that is definitely where you want to focus your attention. The best thing to do is look for cover and or structure that lies within the thermocline. For example: if you can find a point, hump, rock pile, or some form of drop off that lies within the thermocline, you have a "hot spot". Not hot in temp, but hot as in high probability area. If you can locate the cover in the form of vegetation or wood, you have a "hot spot". Now if you are lucky enough to find an area that contains both structure and cover within the thermocline, you have a potential "inferno". Even I had to laugh at that one. Most of the bodies of water I fish have depths of roughly 40 feet. The thermocline will





typically set up a zone between 16 and 24 feet deep give or take. That my friend is where I want my lure to be as much as possible once the sun comes up. One of the most effective ways to cover this area is to use a crankbait. Whether you choose to cast, troll, or long line your cranks, you are able to cover a lot of water rather quickly and keep your bait in the zone for an extended period of time. Line size will affect the running depth of your bait, so choose wisely. I indicated running depths on baits are general determined using ten-pound test line. The smaller the line diameter, the deeper your bait will run. Personally, I never go below ten-pound test, and prefer something in the 17-pound test range. If my line is going to be coming into contact with rocks, pilings, or wood, I prefer to use a fluorocarbon line. If I am out in the open, I may just use monofilament. Matching the right rod to the technique is very important and should not be overlooked. Treble hooks do have a tendency to rip free from the fish's mouth, although they will frequently snag everything else they come in contact with. You need a rod that will flex and give when I fish surges or jumps. That's why we created cranking rods. One of the good things about monofilament line is that it also flexes when pressure is applied to it. Use these things to your advantage.

When it comes to lures, I like them big!! I don't usually mess with little crankbaits, unless I am fishing for river smallmouth. Deep divers typically provide the largest profile. And right now I need a bait that can reach the thermocline. I can also vary the running depth by as much as seven feet by using different line diameters. A deep diver tied to 10-pound test may run 18 feet. That same bait may only 14 feet on 17-pound test and 12 feet deep on the 20-pound test. So I need not sacrifice the size of my bait to exploit different depths.

Light penetration from the sun only reaches about ten feet in stained water, and less in dingy to muddy water. That being said, pretty colors and detail don't make a lot of difference when fishing deep. White, chartreuse, or citrus colors will suffice. As the fish move into shallow water later this year I will pay more attention to detail and colors, but for now, I just focus on getting a target in front of the fish.



A lot of avid crankers feel the need for their baits to be bumping and grinding and deflecting off of objects. In all honestly I have witnessed some great action by doing this, especially the deflection aspect. I think this sudden directional change the bait incurs causes the fish to attack it. I also like to vary my retrieve. The pause and retrieve method has always been good to me. Rarely do you see a bait fish just swimming from one side of the lake to the other nonstop.

Rather, there would be quick bursts and pauses, or a swim and pauses method of travel. Fleeing or scared bait is always erratic and unpredictable. Vary your retrieval speed and methods until something works. Always try to remember how you were holding your mouth when you do get a hit also so you can repeat it. I am on a roll today.



So it is written, so shall it be done. History has shown us that as the year progresses, moving baits like the crankbait, spinnerbait, and swimbait will become key components to our success in the water. So now is the time to prepare to deal out a boatload of sore lips and get some great pics. Hook sets are

free, so swing hard and swing often. To contact Chris Jenkins: [sowbelly.hunter@yahoo.com](mailto:sowbelly.hunter@yahoo.com) (lures pictured top to bottom - Livingston Lures Dive Master 20, Bomber Fat Free Shad Jr Deep Diving and Rapala Dive DT16)





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# Overshadowed Bluegills

By Garrett Svir



Fall is a time of plenty for the outdoor enthusiast. While many pass the days in tree stands waiting for a wily buck to slip up, others wait in fields for fall migrants to pass overhead. Serious walleye anglers are experiencing their best big fish bite of the year over sharp breaks and deep water. Days are devoted to spending quality time with family over a warm bowl of chili

while cheering on a favorite team. Families make pilgrimages north to view fall colors or hunt grouse. The fall wish list can get pretty long but for serious panfish aficionados, the fall signals a time of large concentrations of hungry panfish in predictable patterns. Fall brings an opportunity to target some of the largest specimens in a particular body of water. You'll find that locating and catching bluegills in the fall is not much different than at first ice.

As late summer rolls around and water temperatures get high, big bluegills often evacuate shallow water leaving behind their smaller counterparts. These fish typically stay suspended on the thermocline until fall turnover. Once the water turns over, some of these large fish will return to the weeds while others stay suspended over deep water. Here they generally stay together in small schools of 10-20 fish. These sight feeders are always moving and grazing on anything that catches their eye. Bluegill's food sources include such things as algae, aquatic vegetation, zooplankton, insect larvae, insects, fish eggs and occasionally minnows. In the fall, packing on pounds for leaner times becomes a priority. Some studies show fish eating up to 35% of their body weight weekly. As water temperatures begin to drop, fish tend to stay more active during daytime hours, not limiting anglers to first and last light.

I recently had the opportunity to spend some time on one of my favorite big bluegill haunts, by none other than legendary angler Dave Genz. When I picked him up at the dock, he was armed



with his trusted Vexilar FLX-28, a pocket full of euro larvae and an assortment of his favorite ice jigs. As we made our way out into the basin, familiar lines began to show up on our flashers, reminiscent of being on the ice. Dave knew how to interpret these lines very well as it only took moments before he was tussling with his first bluegill.

Genz suggested anchoring in both the front and back of the boat to keep presentations vertical and visible on electronics. Too much boat sway would bring jigs outside the view of our electronics and leave us fishing blind. He showed me a new tungsten jig that will be available later this fall, called the Dropper. The heavy tungsten allowed him to use a small profile jig that stayed vertical and dropped quickly to feeding fish.

Chad “Crappie Sniffer” Peterson, owner of HSM Outdoors, says fall is his favorite time of year to hunt big bluegills. The lakes he fishes around Alexandria, Minnesota, all have very different and distinct patterns. He relies heavily on the use of his electronics while searching out basin







areas in close proximity to structure. Once fish are located, the trolling motor is deployed and used to hover over suspended schools of gills. He likes the freedom to be able to move and

react quickly. He also advocates keeping log books that include information like date, water temperature, clarity of water and depth which he considers invaluable to patterning and locating fish on new bodies of water.

HSM Pro Staffer, Mike Raetz, also professes to catch his largest bluegills during fall, suspended over deep water. Mike often uses his ice rods to jig vertically over the side of the boat. He likes how shorter rods keep his jig inside the cone angle and visible on his Vexilar. "One big split shot, about a foot above my jig, is all I need to maintain depth control," says Raetz. Mike employs a single anchor off the front of the boat once fish are located. This keeps him swaying and working different fish, picking off the most aggressive ones before moving to his next location.

Fall is a busy time indeed with hunting and family, but if you do find some spare-time don't forget the often overshadowed bluegills. Finding large concentrations of big bluegills in predictable locations is a great reason to enjoy some of the last open water fishing for the year. Trust me when I say... you'll be glad you did.



HSM Outdoors is a group of anglers from around the United States and Canada dedicated to making you more successful in the field and on the water. For more information on fall bluegills visit <http://www.hsmutdoors.com>.

Photos by Kim Svir.



# Fishing with RC COOK SR

## The Rat-L-Trap guy

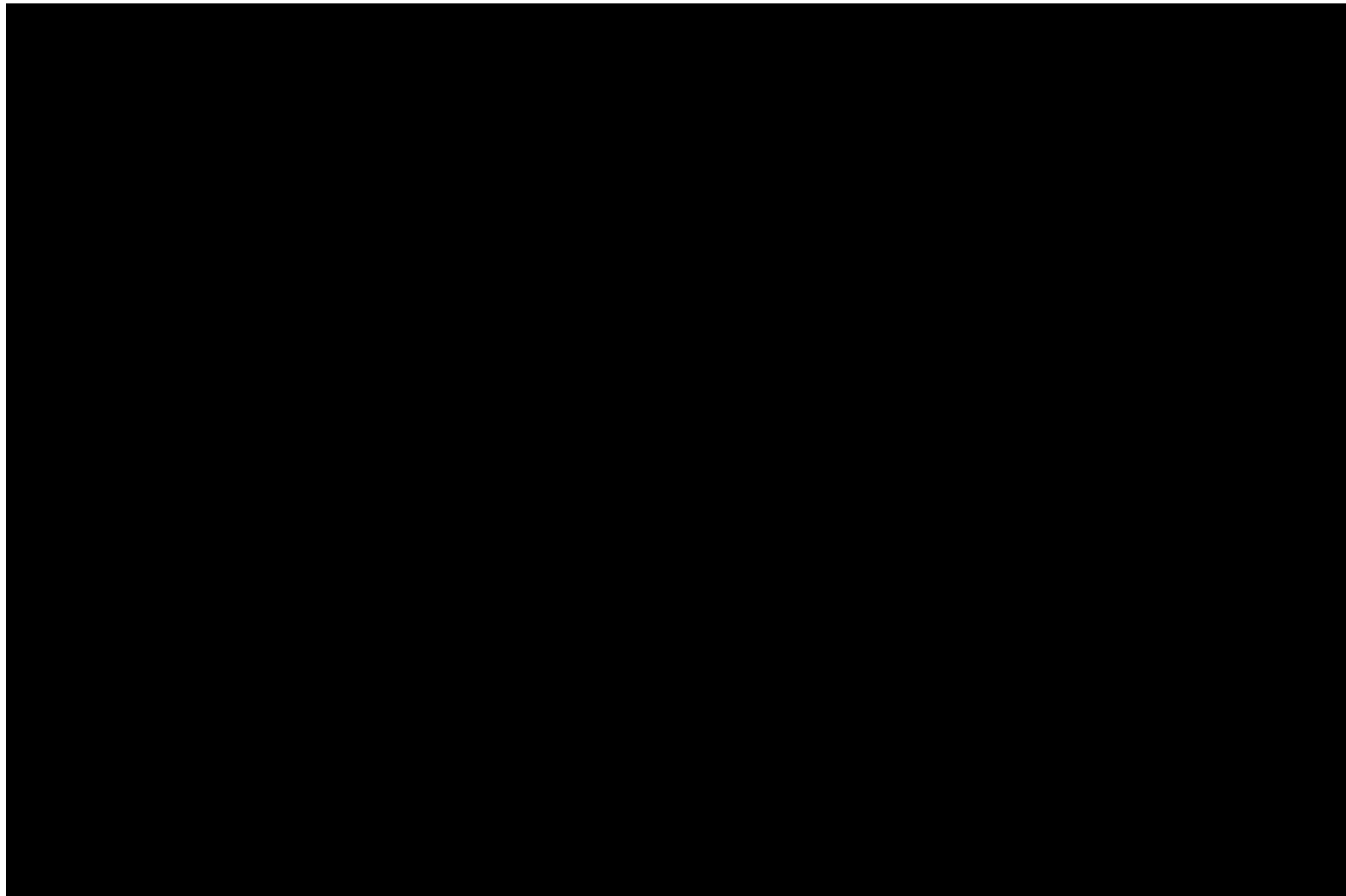
Here is a technique that has that has been used by fishermen, for as long as I can remember and still works today. A 1-ounce silver Rat-L-Trap is ideal when you're wanting to fish deeper water. It's just a question of throwing it out, □ counting for five or a six-second countdown, giving it a chance to sink deeper in the water before starting your retrieve. Yes, it's a pretty big lure, but you know what they say the larger the lure the bigger the fish. As we all know for each crank of the handle, we are shortening the line and bringing it closer to the surface □ So if you want to cover more deep water on the same cast, real a few wines, then let the lure sink again and then reel again. And you might be surprised at how many strikes you get just as the lure is settling back down again. However, like catching any fish you need to always be alert to a strike and ready to set the hook.

There's probably not a fisherman living that hasn't had a fish, specially bass, throw a lure after you thought you had him hooked.

You can prevent most of that by always keeping a tight line as you reel in your fish.

I'm totally sure that there are some old salts out there that have forgotten more about fishing than I ever knew. However, I believe some of my tips will cause some of the older hands to renew some good fishing habits that they have even forgot about. And certainly for the beginner or the fishermen who have not spent that much time on the





water they will pick up some new ideas. Over my lifetime, I have caught probably 98% of my fish in 2 to 10 foot of water. Can I tell you where the fish are going to be at any given time??? Maybe I can do so 10% of the time. That's why I love making those long cast covering lots of water and let the lure find the fish. If I get a strike, I go right back out to the same general area and maybe do so several times. Fish are not necessarily the brightest creatures on earth. If you get a bump, or even a nice strike but not a hook up, don't be afraid to go right back to the same area and try again. I'm reasonably sure I've caught the same fish on the second try.

Here is a little fish story that will get your fishing buddies shaking their heads at you and then laughing. Hold your hands out about 3 feet apart. Then say to your buddies, I caught a bass yesterday [then pause]. They'll be looking at the distance you have your hands spread apart [pause again] then calmly say about that this far from the bank. This one's always good for a laugh. Fishing has always been a pleasure to me whether I'm actually on the water, tending to my fishing gear, or just talking about fishing.





# Help Create the New Generation of Anglers

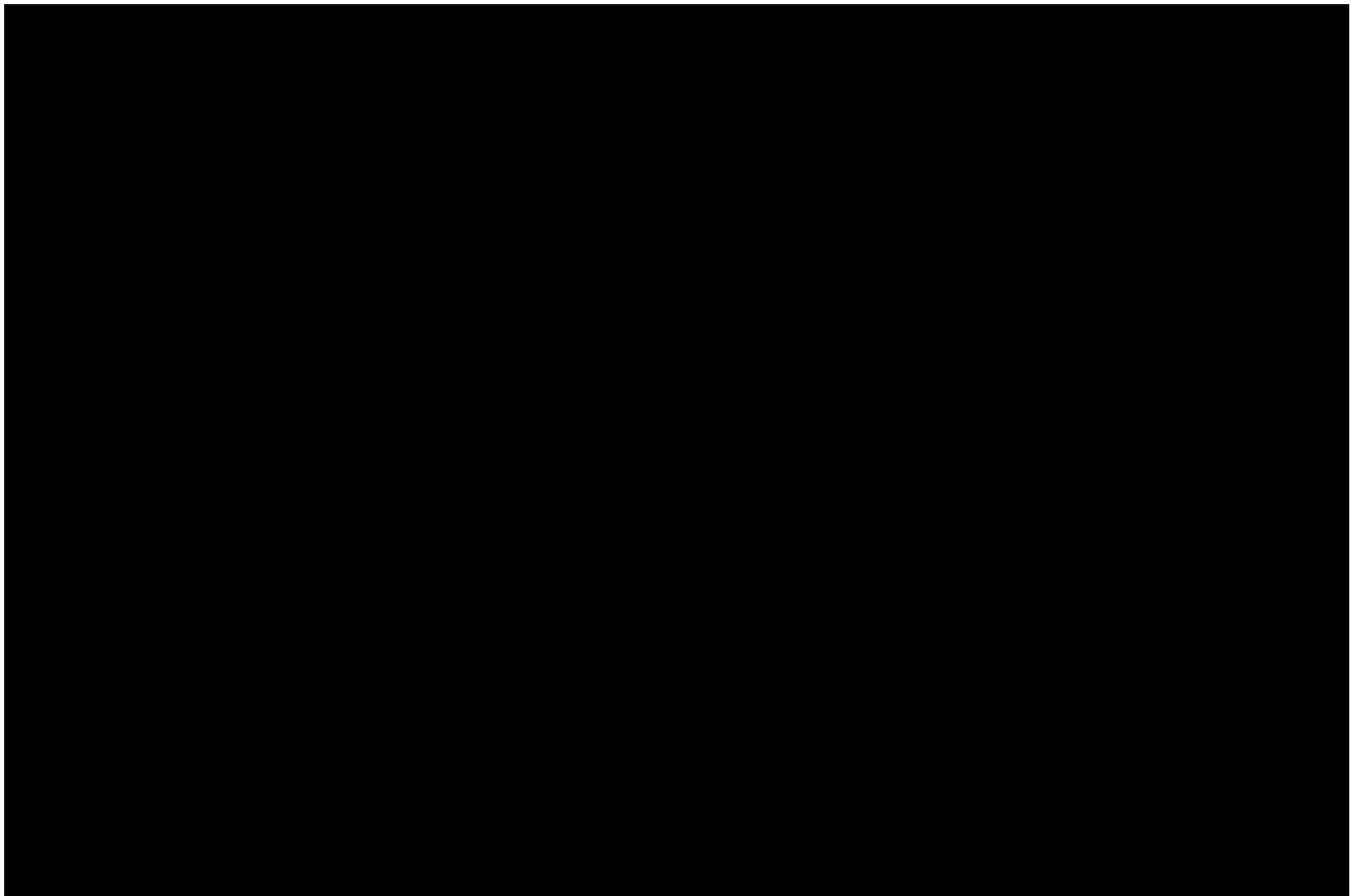
By Jake Bussolini



As I get older, I seem to get more upset at the little things that are happening all around us that are changing our lifestyle and even our American culture. There seem to be groups of people that are against just about everything that forms the bedrock of our society and our heritage. Where are the groups speaking out to protect some of our

basic lifestyle habits, I keep asking myself? When I was a youngster, I remember that fishing with my Dad on a Saturday morning was a ritual that I cherished. The memories of those fishing trips are still vivid in my mind today, more than 70 years later.

Each year, I see fewer and fewer youngsters participating in outdoor sports like hunting and fishing. They seem to have lost interest in these activities, in favor of computer games, texting and tweeting. I pad, and I phones seemed to be replacing the rods and reels. For years, the number of youngsters participating enthusiastically as anglers and hunters were dropping off. Then in 2012, for the first time in recorded history, the number of people entering these two



outdoor sports outnumbered the number being lost. This did not happen by accident; it happened because hundreds of hunters and anglers got involved. Clubs and other groups were being organized to bring the youngsters into the fold of angling enthusiasts. Fishing clubs began to pop up in the schools and today many colleges and universities have been active competitive angling programs.

I belong to The Harbor Fishing Club of Mooresville North Carolina. This club is one of hundreds of similar organizations that sponsors fishing programs for the youngsters. We require parent participation so that our activities do not become babysitting opportunities. To my surprise, each event that we have run has attracted more girls than boys and more mothers than fathers. As part of that program, I offer any parent-free fishing instruction for the child, as long as a parent is present. Over a four-year period, female participation has grown to nearly 70% of the participants, both in terms of youngsters and their parents. I find this change in gender participation both interesting and encouraging.



The “Take a Kid Fishing” programs are popping up all over the country. Experienced anglers are getting involved for the first time in this movement to attract new youngsters to our sport. I was recently asked, at what age should a child begin fishing? My answer was, as soon as you can find a life jacket that fits the child. Our club started our program five years ago setting the lower age at seven. We dropped it to six the second year, and now it is at five years old.

This program is growing every year both in terms of participants and adult volunteers. Where is the reward for all the hard work? Could you possibly not be touched by the smile on five-year-old Gracie Caminiti shown above?

The six-inch bream that she caught was a monster to her since it was the first fish that she ever caught. The experience was so significant to her that her three-year-old sister Gemma asked me to take her fishing, and her first fish was this three pound spotted bass.



It's these types of smiles that become our reward for spending a few hours out of our lives giving back to the youngsters. It doesn't have to be part of an organized club activity. Any one of us can make time to do our part to build this new breed of anglers, the future of our sport. Don't be a bystander. Get involved!

Jake Bussolini is a freelance writer of books about freshwater fishing. His work can be viewed at his web site [www.jakestakeonfishing.com](http://www.jakestakeonfishing.com).





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**1st Schedule From June to the 1st half of September 2014**

River Region: Madeira, Madeirinha, Sucunduri, Pineapples, Acari, Uatumã, and more. Price per person: \$3550,00 Includes: Air Ticket round-trip Manaus/Olinda/Manaus and one night hotel stay in Manaus. Groups of 16 to 18 people for 6 days of fishing.

**2nd Schedule From the 2nd half of September to the 1st half of October/2014**

Regions: Rio Negro Mid Section, Jufaris, Demeni, Branco, and more. Closest city: Moura-AM. Price per person: \$3550.00 Includes: Ferry Boat round-trip to Manaus/fishing spots/Manaus and one night hotel stay in Manaus. Groups of 16 to 18 people for 6 days of fishing.

**3rd Schedule D From the 2nd half of the October/2014 to March/2015**

Regions: Barcelos and Santa Isabel do Rio Negro. Rivers: Negro, Caures, Cuiunim, Paduari, Preto, and more. Closest city: Barcelos-AM. Price per person: \$3850.00 Includes: Air Ticket round-trip Manaus/Barcelos/Manaus and one night hotel stay in Manaus. Groups of 16 to 18 people for 6 days of fishing.



## ATTENTION

The above information is subject to change due to region's water level.  
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## 5 Spots for Bass Year-Round on Any Lake

Anglers should always remember the words of bass fishing legend Bill Dance, who told me many years ago that “Sometimes they’re just not biting.” But, that doesn’t mean the fish have left the building. They’re still there in the water, and here are five spots on any lake where you can find bass year-round.

### NO. 1 – VEGETATION

Although aquatic vegetation dies off in winter up north, nearly every lake features some type of grass. As long as it’s not brown and dying, that vegetation holds bass.

Aquatic weeds are home to smaller insects that baitfish and other aquatic critters feed on. Crawfish and baitfish are attracted by the buffet and the safety the weeds provide. As top-tier predators, bass frequent weeds to eat the baitfish, crawfish and other prey.

Several types of vegetation are important. Shoreline weeds and lily pads are anchored on the bottom by a root system. Floating weeds are normally attached to a root system originating near shore, but grow away from the bank on top of the water. Aquatic weeds like hydrilla and milfoil begin their life cycles beneath the waves but can “top out” to provide a mat at the surface.

Shoreline weeds grow along the banks and stop when the water becomes too deep. This edge is often on the first drop-off away from the bank, another hotspot for bass. When feeding, bass move from the deeper edge into the weeds.

Floating weeds that originate near shore and spread outward can grow over any depth. They attract insects and baitfish, but also provide shade attractive to bass during the warmer months. Floating weeds are strongest in late-spring, summer and fall.

Aquatic vegetation such as hydrilla and others can dominate a lake, like it does at Alabama’s Guntersville and many natural lakes of the North Country, or it may come in smaller patches







that can only be located via electronics. Regardless, from the moment it begins growing until it dies out, this vegetation can be the key to bass fishing success.

Lures for fishing shoreline grass include spinnerbaits and hollow-body frogs like the Booyah Poppin' Pad Crasher. If the fish won't take a moving lure or a topwater, flip a Texas-rigged YUM Woolly Bug.

Mitch Looper, a lure designer and big-bass expert, turns on the speed when fishing shoreline weeds, especially during spring and into early summer. With the Booyah Swim'N Jig he designed; he catches giant bass working windblown weed patches at a break-neck pace.

"Cast, point the rod at the jig and crank like mad," he said.

Keep the jig just under the surface and big bass hit simply out of reaction. Looper uses a Money Craw trailer, and strikes are always violent.

For aquatic vegetation that has topped out, a hollow-body frog is the best option. It may not look like it, but under that roof of weeds it opens up and bass hold there waiting to strike frogs or baitfish struggling on top. If no topwater fish are willing, "punch" through the vegetation with a 1-ounce bullet weight pegged to a Texas-rigged Big Show Craw.

## NO. 2 – WOOD COVER

Wood is good. Laydown trees along the shore, brushpiles, stump fields, flooded buckbrush -- it doesn't matter how it got there; it just matters that bass love it.

Shoreline wood can be fished with any type of lure appropriate to season. Bass guide Brad Wiegmann says the most important aspect to catching bass from laydowns or flooded brush is repeating the same cast over and over to promising wood.

"I was just saying to a client, 'Sometimes you've got to hit a tree four or five times,' when a big 4-





pounder came out and ate the XCalibur Square Lip I was throwing,” he said. “That was the fifth time in a row I’d run the bait along that laydown.”

Brushpiles can hold fish year-round depending on water depth. A crankbait that runs deep enough to dig into, and ricochet off the wood is a good choice for brushpile bass, or slow down and work a Texas-rigged worm or a jig to really pick it apart.

Stumpy flats hold bass and can be quickly fished with crankbaits like the Fat-Free Shad (pictured prior page). Bang the bait into the stumps to draw strikes. Depending on the size of the flat, anglers can slow down with weedless soft plastics and jigs.

### NO. 3 BRIDGE PILINGS/CROSSINGS

When a toll road is the best way to drive somewhere, everyone stops at the tollbooth. A bridge crossing a lake is similar. It funnels fish down to a narrow area when migrating, but it also provides increased current and oxygen and features structure such as riprap and the pilings themselves. Quite often, wood cover gathers (or is placed by crappie anglers) along the pilings as well, further increasing the attractiveness to bass.

Concrete bridge pilings and the “stuff” below grows algae that





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attract baitfish, which attract bass. Quickly check the pilings for fish by pitching a jigging spoon like the Cordell CC Spoon and working the pilings from various angles.

B.A.S.S. pro Cliff Prince rates bridges high on the list of bass hotspots anyone can find. During his rookie season on the Elites, he mined a Toledo Bend bridge to a fifth-place finish. He'd never been on the famed Texas lake and didn't even look at a map until he arrived there. He worked a Booyah Pigskin Jig along the pilings for his impressive limits. Prince says to use a heavier-than-usual line when fishing pilings because they feature plenty of sharp edges.

A point to remember – it was bridge crossings that led to the explosion of castable umbrella rigs. By locating suspended schools of bass near the crossing, anglers can count down a YUMbrella to the level of the fish and catch bass that likely cannot be caught with any other technique.

#### **NO. 4 – POINTS**

Every lake has points in one form or another. Points that extend out from the shoreline are easy to see, but even round, natural lakes have points – they're just under the surface.

Points create ridges under the water, and fish can hold on both sides. One of the hardest lessons for many anglers to learn is that the point does not end where dirt meets water, but can extend a long way into the lake, and fish can hold anywhere along it or off the tip where it



meets a channel.

If current is present, a main-lake underwater ridge catches or disorients bait swept along and makes for a great ambush site. In very early spring, the point leading into a spawning cove is a stopping point for bass. A point that drops off into the main channel is especially attractive almost year-round because resting fish can suspend in the deep water and head to the buffet with a short swim.



Lures for fishing points run the gamut from topwaters to bottom-bumping jigs. Let the water clarity, depth and other conditions determine your fishing technique



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## NO. 5 - CURRENT

Current flow can be the most-important factor or of little importance, depending on a variety of conditions. Rivers and creeks flowing into a lake are prime areas to find current, but don't neglect wind current or the increased flow in funnel areas.

In summer, current flow is important for quality water as well as forage. On natural lakes, anglers are well served to check all inflows and outflows. The current in reservoirs featuring power-generating dams is controlled by the release of water from the gates. In this environment, it pays to check the release schedule and fish prime areas when the flow kicks in.

Prime spots for these reservoirs are often associated with the main lake where the current is strongest. Shallow, rocky flats are perfect. Dig a big, shallow running square lip crankbait like the Cotton Cordell Big O (pictured) or XCalibur Xcs300 across the rocks is while the dam is pulling water.

Largemouth and smallmouth bass stay near current because it stimulates the food chain, bringing microscopic food for baitfish and keeping it stirred up. While largemouth may hang outside the main current, feeding smallmouth are often right in the strongest flow.

In current areas, look for anything that breaks the flow. Seams and eddies also produce fish. In some rivers, dams or "low-water" dams exaggerate the current, and these spots can be productive all day long any time during the year. Story and photo by staff at [www.Lurenet.com](http://www.Lurenet.com).



# Fall For Big Pike

By Bob Jensen

The fall fishing season is approaching quickly. The autumn months offer a wide variety of fishing opportunities, for big fish and lots of fish. Many anglers plan annual trophy trips for bass, walleyes, and muskies for the fall. One species of fish, northern pike, can be very susceptible this time of year. If you fish a lake that has a good population of northern pike, you should take advantage of this opportunity. Here's how.

First of all, you need to be on a lake that has the potential to produce the big guys. Some lakes have lots of northerns in the two to the four-pound range. These lakes usually won't have very many big ones.

The best pike lakes are usually deep and have cisco, whitefish, smelt or some sort of oily baitfish. Pike, walleyes, and muskies that eat these baitfish grow big.

During much of the year, these baitfish hang out over deeper water, and the pike hold close to them. Very few anglers chase pike when they're suspended near the baitfish.

In the fall, many of these baitfish will move shallow, and the pike follows them. This is when they become most accessible to an angler's lure. The pike are shallow and they're hungry.





That's a winning situation for an angler who wants to catch a big northern.

There are several places to catch these pikes in a lake, and it all depends on where the baitfish are. Look at shorelines that have gravel that the baitfish can spawn on. Furthermore, look for rock reefs in water four to twelve feet deep.

However, in many bodies of water, beds of green cabbage weed in seven to about fifteen feet of water can produce memorable action. Cabbage holds pike year 'round, but in the fall, the big ones move in. Trolling will work, but casting probably works better. You'll spook fewer fish, and it's a thrill to have a pike as long as your leg attack a bait at boatside.

There are a variety of baits that will do the job. A Boobie Trap in-line spinner will produce, but so will a Booty Call Spinnerbait (pictured) and a Stud Finder Swimbait. Salmo's Maas Marauder has also proven itself to be attractive to giant pike.

Cloudy days with some chop on the water are good, but pike will eat when the sun is shining also. At this time of year, the big ones are very opportunistic: When they get a chance to eat, they will. If catching a truly big pike is something you want to do, you should be on big pike water whenever you get the chance.



Big pike are kind of a rarity. Landing the fish and releasing it as quickly as possible is important. Netting the fish with the proper net will enable you to effectively release these trophies. Frabill has created a couple of nets, specifically for big fish that will protect the fish and enhance the release. Check out Frabill's Big Kahuna net.

If you want to catch a truly big pike, the next couple of months will be the time to do so. Plan now to make northern pike memories.

To see the new 2013 episodes of Fishing the Midwest on-line, go to [www.fishingthemidwest.com](http://www.fishingthemidwest.com). Join us at [www.facebook.com/fishingthemidwest.com](https://www.facebook.com/fishingthemidwest.com)



## Bowfin Blast On Lake Champlain

### D & B Ice Adventures

Lake Champlain has so much to offer fishermen. Big fish, small fish, and everything in between. On any given day, you might see action from little kids hopping rocks in small tributaries catching brookies to big-money events from the Bassmaster tournament trail. Although, the fishing for our normal species like crappie and bass is phenomenal, switching it up at times can lead to big payoffs! On one recent trip, I did just that!

Bowfin was the name of the game for this day and in recent years, they have gained quite a following throughout the area. Through the creation of the Vermont Master Angler program, awareness of their abundance and great sporting opportunities have progressed in the eyes of many anglers. Although these fish don't take a ton skill or super-secret spots to put quality in your hand, several key factors can help you be successful.

Before ever targeting these fish, I heard stories about people catching them accidentally by throwing spinnerbaits, crankbaits, and senkos in shallow weedy areas while looking for bass. Other than accidental catch, I don't believe these fish get much attention. Once I finally went out and targeted them for a trip, I got to see how aggressive and addicting they actually were!





Bowfin prefers to live in shallow, vegetated areas. If you can find a break in the weeds or better yet, a main weed edge, there is a good chance that a bowfin or two will be around. A large portion of the time I have spent targeting these fish is on edges of milfoil and pond weed. Preferably, adjacent to the thickest weeds possible.

Now, the set up for these fish is nothing fancy. With my main limitations due to the tackle that I have, I fish them with a medium action rod. This would normally be my bait fishing rod that I would use for bass. I have it equipped with 20-pound braid and when possible, I will avoid steel leaders. The only time I use steel leaders is when the pike are running shallow. As for hooks, circle and treble hooks are the only options that I have used thus far but have proven to be mostly successful. In theory, circle hooks are the best option because they will slide into the corner of their mouth, avoiding gut hooking and the upper and lower jaws that are hard to penetrate.

For this particular trip, the weather was ideal to start. Calm water is the friend to a bowfin fisherman as these fish rises to gulp air making them very easy to locate. Having a few spots in mind, we began the day by getting the most important part; bait! Up until this year, bait options were limited to mainly perch but with recent updates to baitfish regulations, many of the panfish are now useable. After quickly picking up a dozen perch and bluegill, we were ready to get after them!



After a short run, we putted the boat into a shallow, weedy bay that was active earlier in the summer. With the speedometer not even registering a speed, our nerves rose as there were fish boiling everywhere. The final 100 yards seemed to drag on and on. On a positive note, we were able to rig up our rods with bobbers, hooks, and bait during this excruciating wait. After picking a spot to anchor it didn't take us long to get into the fish.

Although we caught fish everywhere we anchored in this bay, certain angles allowed us to get far more bites than others. On this day, in particular, we had two weed lines that intersected each other perpendicularly. We anchored up on the deep side and paralleled our baits as close to the weedline as we could. This presentation allowed the bowfin to feed they way they want to. Although these fish are powerful swimmers, they prefer to ambush their prey. Most times, while drifting quietly over weedbeds, these fish are seen sitting stationary.



Trying to always improve my techniques and theories, one of my biggest problems with these fish is hooking up. In past trips, I would let the fish take the bait for a bit until I felt it was time then reel up my slack until I felt the fish tugging. Back then I lost a lot of fish shortly after striking. On this trip, maybe the stars were aligned, but I was able to up my hook up ratio significantly. I will admit that being able to see the bobber and at times the fish helped me identify when to set the hook but there is more to it than that. I missed two fish all day, and I am confident that it was due to letting the fish feel me. In order to hook these fish properly, I would reel up the slack and set the hook when I felt there was only a foot or two of slack between my rod and the fish. To better my odds, and maybe look a little funny, I would extend my arm as far as possible to obtain the longest hookset possible.

Up until about noon, the fishing was phenomenal but because the weeds, we were setting over were so thick, the anchor was having a hard time grabbing once the wind picked up. Each time we reset, we would catch a fish before the wind blew us off our mark again. Not being able to see the fish surface or stay in one spot pretty much concluded our morning of bowfin action.

The rest of the day was a grind. We worked hard for the few extra fish we caught and even switched species to better our odds. I wouldn't you know it though, even the pike and bass were slow going. Towards the dark, we tried for a short while to locate some bowfin, but the wind was still making it difficult so what was left to do? Well target panfish on docks of course! A full day on the water wrapped up with some fast action... Does it get any better?!?!







## Breaking Down Carp Fishing

By Brian Wingard

Welcome to what will become the first of many carp fishing articles. Most all anglers have seen the common carp cruising about the lake while out fishing at some point. Have you ever wondered how to target them, specifically and most importantly being able to do so consistently? Over time, I plan to start from a beginner's standpoint and work my way up to a more expert approach and most of all learn how to catch fish over and over again.

I have fished for various species from bass, trout, catfish, pike and many others since the age of 3. What you learn from one type of fish often can be used later while fishing for other species. It all comes down to being observant with your surroundings and taking advantage of the opportunities when they present themselves. You may be thinking to yourself how can bass fishing even be compared to carp fishing? I thought the same thing when I first started to carp fish, and the patterns between the two fish are quite remarkable. Right after the thaw in the spring both bass and carp will move from the areas where the ice has melted □ on the lake and finding streams that come into the lake are the main food source until the water continues to



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warm. The shallows are always the first to warm up the fastest and also provide the most available food. Both the bass and carp spawn in very similar water temperatures, so they both gorge themselves with food and often times are the most vulnerable. After carping for a few years I stumbled across something quite amusing that the fact the bass will follow around the carp in the distant while it feeds. I often find myself taking a bass rod out while I fish for carp because the larger bass often tail the carp's path because there is an abundance of food left over as the carp moves through. Carp are extremely powerful and move rocks and other debris on the bottom, and this becomes a free meal for other species following in their path.

The biggest mistake that I see most often is that both new and experienced anglers make when they choose to fish for carp is the fact they just pick a spot and hope for the best. Often times I find myself watching the water for a good hour to look for signs of carp movement. You can watch the bubble trail move slowly as they are feeding on the bottom and also looking for rolling fish. This is often a sign of feeding as they jump to force the water through the gills to clean them out as they land back into the water. When they feed they do so by inhaling and exhaling. They keep the food and return any sediment or debris that was not deemed worthy of their diet. It is best to spend an hour searching for visible signs of carp than to pick a spot and hope for the best. You will waste more time sitting than catching, and if you are a newer angler, it can become very frustrating.

When it comes to the carp, they are very similar to the way a bass will position themselves. When the wind is blowing they move and have the wind blowing towards them thus bringing the food them. Moreover, the one that surprised me the most is the fact that even though carp are



extremely large and do not have very many predators they often have the mindset of a smaller fish. They hide in the hard to get to areas such as down trees and bush as well around depth changes in the water that way if danger does present itself; they have an escape route to deeper areas quickly. Sometimes these two features can be the best fishing but also the most challenging because you will need gear that can handle the pressure of pulling a large fish away from the snags or rocky drop offs.

Once you have located some signs of fish, and even before you set up it is best to do a little chumming. The two best methods are Spombing, which is a container that is shaped like a missile, and you put in your loose feed and cast out. When it hits the water, it triggers a mechanism that will open it up and drop your bait into a specific spot. The other very good and easy to use the technique is using a catapult. It has a pouch on the end, and you fill it with the bait of your choice and launch it out to your desired location. What this does is hold the fish in an exact spot and slowly adding more over time keeping the carp there while allowing you to catch them over and over again. The problem that can occur is over chumming an area because they become fixated on the chum and not your bait. This takes a while to get a good feel for how much to put out, but a good rule of thumb is little and often. I start out with 2 golf ball size loads over each rod and fire out a single pouch every 30-45 minutes. If you get a run or a fish, I fire out about three pouches full. Normally more times than not there will be other fishing feeding and competing over the top of your free offerings. I usually chum a little before setting up because it will draw in fish while I am spending time doing the set up. Usually what happens is smaller fish are attracted to the chum and over time that disturbance will draw in the carp to investigate the area.

Ok next comes the hard part for most anglers and that is deciding what bait to use or not use. Most guys who have never fished for carp will often say corn or dough ball. Not that there is anything wrong with that, but you are about 90% sure to catch smaller fish. You may get lucky once in a while with a larger fish but more times than not it will result in a smaller fish compared to other baits. I use CC Moore products, and they have had extensive testing and research done on them to result in the most attractive bait possible. For most Americans carp fishing is not very popular of a sport but carp fishing overseas is a billions dollar market. Everything that is put out is





tested to achieve the finest result. If you saw the ingredients on a lot of the baits, you would think they are for a body builder because the same ingredients that body builders use for nutrition and also bulking are often found in carp baits to achieve the level of nutrition that a carp requires an after being introduced to better baits the carp will sometimes search them out over and over again looking for more. The most popular bait is called a boilie and to make it easy as possible to understand is this. It is a bait that has countless nutritional ingredients in the mix, and once it is all mixed up like a dough would be it is rolled and then finally boiled hence the name boilie. The boiling process creates a harder outside that will slowly leak flavor and smell into the area. The fish find them irresistible on most lakes but some take a little more time because they are not used to seeing them. After being introduced to them, they often search over and over for them and become a top bait choice. Chumming a small handful in an area will

yield better results than a single hook bait alone with no free offerings.

One cool piece of equipment that carp angler uses is called a bait alarm. The fishing line passes through this and when a fish pulls or runs it will sound off to let the angler know immediately. The nice thing is if you are hanging out with your buddies or even camping this will alert you so you don't have to constantly stare at the line all night hoping you don't miss a fish.

I also have a youtube channel that goes over the basics to the more advanced methods, and I am here to help any angler who wants

to give it a try or needs advice in improving their catch rate. My channel is <http://www.youtube.co>





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m/user/bwingy I will be going over various techniques in the future but wanted to touch base on the basics in this article to get anglers started.

One interesting thing to watch will be going on YouTube and typing in Jerome Moison and carp. You will see how various rigs and be inhaled and ejected by the carp without the angler ever knowing anything was going on. That is why it is extremely important to check your hook constantly for maximum sharpness every time you reel in. It can make the difference between a fish or no fish. The standard rig will be what is called the hair rig and I have a how to video showing how to properly tie and use one. The way the rig works is the bait is not directly on the hook but in front of the hook leaving the hook exposed. When the carp inhales the bait and hook and goes to exhale the hook will flip over and hook the carp in the lower mouth area.



One thing that most often is never talked about is proper carp care. Anglers often feel because a carp is a huge fish you can treat them differently when, in reality, they are quite the fragile fish. We use specially made fine mesh nets to avoid removing any scales, which can lead to disease. When we finally land the fish, we have what is called an unhooking mat to safely remove the hook, and the mat is cushioned to avoid any damage to the fish. The mat itself is wet to avoid removing



the carps protective slime and give it a greater chance of survival as it swims away to be caught another day. Now finally the hugest mistake that is made never lift a carp by the gills because that is how they breathe. When you lift them in this manner, you basically tear the gills and suffocate the fish. They make a sling that the fish can be weighed in and a lot of musky fishermen are now starting to see the advantages of using a sling for the fishes safety. In the photo in this article, you can see how I am positioning and holding the fish with my hands. This will support the full body weight of the fish without any harm or damage. Most of us are catch and release for most all species and it is essential to treat the fish with respect, so they can be caught again someday.

The other form of carp fishing that is really taking off is that fly fishermen are getting into the scene. It is spreading like wildfire as your typical fly fisherman quickly has learned to appreciate just how weary of a fish the carp is. They are extremely finicky and if your fly is not presented correctly the fish will just ignore it and won't give you the time of the day. They are often called the fresh water bonefish from the fact they are one of the hardest fighting fresh water fish around, and the nice thing is they are located in all bodies of water.

As the temperature starts to drop and fall comes creeping in you will find the carp start to go into feeding mode. They will put on a good portion of their winter weight that they use to make it through the cold months. They often become dormant but will feed lightly through winter. Now is your chance of catching big carp as they compete for food. Fall fishing will yield greater results as they are basically at an all you can eat buffet with endless appetites. In my future articles, we will go in depth with certain techniques so you can incorporate them into your fishing and more than likely improve your catch rates.

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# LOCK N LOAD, IT'S TIGER TIME!

By Delina Alwanger

Preparations are well underway for the 2013 Kariba Invitation Tiger Fish Tournament, which is hosted annually by Zimbabwe. Now in its 52nd year, the tournament is the highlight of the fishing calendar and showcases the best in freshwater fishing in Southern Africa. Lake Kariba, along the Zambezi River, and the resort town by the same name host the tournament. The lake is an expanse of water covering 5000 square kilometres, teeming with fish, crocodiles and hippos. Of course, the crocodiles and hippos are along only for company.

*(Pictured- Gideon Benade with his winning fish @ 11.47kg)*

As anglers prep their equipment and strategies, the hardworking committee finalizes arrangements for another busy competition. This

year the three-day event will take place from 2 to 4 October. The Kariba Invitation Tiger Fish Tournament is open to anglers from anywhere in the world and is governed by the IGFA rules. International clubs/societies must be properly constituted and must be affiliated and paid-up members of the Anglers Association of their own country. Costs of participation are nominal at usd 360 for a four man team with an additional usd90 for a driver/reserve. The organizers would like to see greater participation from foreign anglers. The closing date for entries will be 1 October 2013. Travel to Africa does entail a long-haul flight, but it is so worth the cost. On the ground accommodation, facilities can cater for every budget, ranging from self-catering lodges to exclusive star rated resorts. Kariba is best known for its houseboats, which offer great access to the lake and chances to fish off the beaten path.







The Tiger Fish, *Hydrocynus vittatus*, is a predatory fish with a ferocious set of razor-sharp teeth. It has distinguishing black/blue lateral tiger stripes and bright yellow to red caudal fins. It is probably Africa's most iconic game fish, renowned for its aggression and power. Its primary food source is the kapenta [of the sardine family], bream, catfish, squeaker and even other tiger fish up to 40% of their own body weight. Females are larger than their male counterparts. There are several members within the tiger fish family found throughout Africa. The most notable being that of the Goliath, *H. Goliath*, found in the Congo [Zaire] system.



Catching a tiger fish will test the skill of even a seasoned angler. It is the ultimate prize and a worthy adversary. The Tiger Tournament attracts anglers of every age. Women fish as enthusiastically and competitively as the men.

The 2012 tournament saw 124 teams participate, the majority of those being local anglers. In years gone by this number has reached more than 300. The total mass of







fish caught was 6 238.285kg and total fish numbered 3,033. The winning teams were Charter X Africom whose catch weighed in at 151.165kg. The biggest fish of 2012 was caught by Gideon Benade, weighing in at 11.47kg. This achievement won him the Nissan NP200 vehicle. Only fish weighing over 10kg are eligible for the grand prize. The tournament record is held by Martinus van Rensburg, who landed a 12.756kg fish in 2009. The current world record stands at 16.1kg caught in Kariba in 2001.

The top ten teams from this tournament will qualify to fish the Test of The Best competition scheduled to take place from 28 February to 1 March 2014. This will be a two day Catch 'n Release event, again governed by IGFA rules. For both events anglers must adhere to rules governing equipment and etiquette. The maximum breaking strength of any class of braid shall not exceed 10kg. There is no restriction on the number of rods a competitor may use and the use of electric reels is strictly prohibited. See you in Kariba for a memorable fishing experience. Download entry forms from [www.KITFT.co.zw](http://www.KITFT.co.zw).

Delina Alwanger of Zimbabwe. Call of the Wild Safaris run customized fishing trips to Southern Africa. For travel advice or any assistance contact her on [fishinginzim@gmail.com](mailto:fishinginzim@gmail.com). (Pictured- Winning team in 2012. Charter X Africom). Prior panoramic photo is of a Lake Kariba morning.







# Cool Down Walleyes, By Jason Mitchell

Cooling water temperatures often make the classic fall bite better. As water temperatures steadily cool comes fall and sink below seventy degrees, solid patterns seem to develop. My favorite patterns are classic breaks and hard bottoms over a deeper off-shore structure, along with current or bottlenecks and shallow rock and weeds. What is kind of interesting regarding fall fishing is that the triggers that make the bite good are the exact opposite of spring?

During the spring, warming water temperatures and stable weather seem to ignite the bite. When water temperatures steadily rise, the fishing gets easy, good and predictable. When the water temperature crashes even a few degrees because of a front, the bite typically becomes tougher, unpredictable and changing. A thirty mile per hour wind and cold front that drops the water temperature six degree over a twenty-four-hour time period is the worst thing that can happen to you in May on most natural lakes and reservoirs.

Fast-forward to fall and the worst thing that can happen to most patterns is the opposite, a hot stretch of unseasonably warm weather that warms up the water temperature and reverses the cool down. When the nights start getting cool and the water temps to start dropping, the fish start chomping but watch that pattern change when the cool down comes to a temporary halt.

Where you are in relation to water temps should play a key role in your strategy for finding and catching walleyes come fall. As a general rule of thumb, I find fish scattered and more

(Above photo: Jason Mitchell with a great walleye. Top fall locations include shallow weeds and rocks along with classic sharp breaking main lake structure and deep rocks when water temperatures begin to cool off.)

unpredictable when the water temperature spikes upward in the fall. When temperatures slowly drop, the fish seem to concentrate and become more predictable. Often, however, the bite will get better during the fall in the the afternoon when the water temperature warms slightly through the day just like in the spring but what you are looking for during the fall cool down is colder water temperature during the morning from cooler nights that keep that water temperature dropping despite the sun during the day. If the nights are not cool enough to chill the water enough to keep that temperature down, patterns can unravel quickly.

We can't control the weather so all we can do is adjust our strategies and mindset so that we can hopefully make good decisions and catch fish. When fish are scattered and patterns seem to be in disarray, you can still catch fish. Sometimes in the fall, it seems like the pattern is that there is no pattern. You will find fish scattered, and nothing emerges as a sure deal. When this happens, cover water and fish as many good spots as possible. Know going into the day that you are probably not going to find a spot that has so many fish where you catch several fish off of one spot.



After you catch the fish or two that lives on a particular spot, keep moving but keep the spot in mind for your milk run. A milk run is exactly what you need when



fishing gets tough. Fish as many good spots as possible and keep moving. Over the course of the day, the fish add up.

If I had to pick just one presentation for this scenario, I would break out the lead core and troll crank baits. The reason I like lead core so much for this situation is because of the variation in depth control for finding scattered fish. I can slide up shallower and drop down deeper and make fast adjustments to my running depth while covering a lot of water. I also like to puller larger baits. Wide wobbling baits that have a larger profile and move water are often the key. My favorite crank for this time is the Salmo Bullhead 8SDR (pictured prior page), but some other good cranks that I have also caught a lot



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of fish with include the Reef Runner Deep Ripper (pictured below) and the Bomber Long A (pictured prior page). Another lure I have fallen in love with over the past couple years that is kind of hard to find, but a real

walleye killer for me is the Salmo 8SDR Perch, that lure catches fish.

Lead core and crank baits will accumulate fish when the going gets tough but when things get good and easy, focus on sitting on top of concentrations of fish. Trolling can still be an important part of the game plan but instead of covering water, the focus changes to pulling cranks back and forth over the same zone until your GPS gets hard to read. When fish do get piled up on specific spots, different presentations also come into play. Namely, presentations that make you more efficient. If fish are tucked along a specific break or structure, sitting over the spot and fishing vertically is tough beat. Vertically jigging is obviously productive but for big fish, I don't know if there is anything more effective than rigging big red tail chubs.

We filmed a segment with guide, Toby Kvalevog of Leisure Outdoor Adventures on Leech Lake last fall, and something that Toby said made a lot of sense and stuck with me. Toby stressed that when rigging with big chubs, it is important to fish extremely slow and let the chub do the work.

That big chub struggling in front of a fish is hard to resist. Obviously, in order for these types of presentations to be really effective, you have to have fish dialed on to the spot and the fish have to be concentrated or sitting on a spot is a bad use of time.

Besides classic sharp breaking main lake structure and deep rocks were rigging and jigging can truly shine, another great overlooked bet when temps do cool down is shallow weeds and rocks. Bull rushes can get really good again in the fall and cabbage, and coon tail can both hold fish. Particularly, a top location in weeds in the fall are subtle dish bowls or troughs where slightly deeper water forms open pockets in weeds. These locations load up with fish as well in the fall when water temperatures start dropping.

By monitoring the environment where fish are living and making good decisions, you can capitalize on great fall fishing but remember that the date on the calendar means nothing. Everything revolves around cool nights and cold mornings.

Editor's Note: The author Jason Mitchell hosts the outdoor program Jason Mitchell Outdoors which airs on Fox Sports North and Fox Sports Midwest. More information on Jason Mitchell Outdoors can be found online at [www.jasonmitchelloutdoors.com](http://www.jasonmitchelloutdoors.com).







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# Fish The Weedline In The Fall

By Bob Jensen



The weedline is a great place to throw a bait during the fishing season. As soon as the weedline is established, and even before, predator fish will be there looking for something to eat.

In the autumn months a variety of fish will be lurking along the weedline. You might have a school of crappies suspended just off the edge of the deep weedline, there might be a group of largemouth on a corner of the weedline, and just a little farther down the weedline where the vegetation juts out a bit and forms a point, there could be some walleyes. And it's not unusual to find a bonus musky or northern pike roaming over the tops of the weeds or along the deep edge. Although there may be more fish grouped tighter in different areas, the deep weedline in the fall will often provide a smorgasbord of fishing action.

Lots of techniques will take fish along the weedline in the fall, but if you're just looking for something to pull back, you

can't beat a jig and soft bait or live bait combo. Start with a jig tipped with Impulse plastic. The species of fish being targeted will help determine the shape of bait to use.

If largemouth bass are the target, tie on a Jungle Jig and attach an Impulse Brush Beaver or Ribbon Worm. The Brush Beaver and Jungle Jig are preferred because they are bulkier and will appeal to larger fish. Work the jig/soft-bait combos along the deep edge of the weeds. If you want walleyes, use a four inch Smelt Minnow on a Slurp! Jig. Slurp! Jigs were designed to be used with soft baits. Rip the jig/plastic combo through the base of the weeds pretty quickly.

If the walleyes want a slower presentation, you can't beat a redbtail chub in the four to six-inch size. In the fall, we almost always have some redbtails in the boat: They'll turn a slow day into a productive day. However, redbtails can be expensive. Keep them in one of the aerated Frabill minnow containers to make sure they'll stay lively.

If it's a calm late afternoon or early evening when you start fishing, and you see fish dimpling the surface near the weedline, move very quietly toward the dimpling and throw a sixteenth




ounce jig tipped with an Impulse Water Bug. Swim it slowly through the area being dimpled and you'll probably catch some crappies. The dimples are created by crappies sucking bugs off the surface. Since the crappies are feeding on the surface, you'll want to swim your bait just a couple of feet below the surface of the water.

The weedline can provide lots of fall actions. Make sure you're fishing healthy green weeds and keep moving until you find the fish. Catch a few, then when action slows move farther along the weedline. You'll get bit, you'll have a good time, and that's what fishing is all about. To see the new 2013 episodes of Fishing the Midwest on-line, go to [www.fishingthemidwest.com](http://www.fishingthemidwest.com). Join us at [www.facebook.com/fishingthemidwest.com](http://www.facebook.com/fishingthemidwest.com)

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# King Me a River

By Mitch Eeagan

Chinook salmon are brutes in size as well brawny in battle; especially when fresh from the inland seas. It's well-known fact the environment of a river is ever changing. Trees tumble. Rains fall and load the riverbed. Slowly, holes fill-in while others take shape.

This time of year, though, Great Lakes tributaries can be altered so abruptly that you can actually smell the difference in the air. At least, that's what happens when some of the Great Lake's largest and most vicious predators invade them overnight. Yes, there is such a thing as a migration of fish so massive you can literally smell their unique scent wafting from the surface.

The species? Chinook salmon.... Or king salmon as they're known on the West Coast and Alaska. These fish are brutes in size as

well brawny in battle; especially when fresh run from the inland seas. It's all you can do to land one in a fast-flowing river any time during the year, let alone when they are ticked. Why the all rage? Because just the night before they were suspended over deep water near the mouth of the inlet; contented and atop the food chain. Suddenly, they're in less than 10 feet of water; quickly using stored energy in the current, and getting more aggressive by the moment, preparing to defend their right to spawn.

## Tactical facets

Techniques for hooking up with the king of Great Lakes salmon are seemingly endless. The two most popular tactics, however, are drifting with fish roe under a float and casting hardware like bodybaits, spoons and spinners.

Enter guide Kyle McClelland, high-school student from Fife Lake, Michigan. He spends countless hours chasing trout and salmon of the rivers (<http://www.chrome chasing.com/>). This

*(Above picture - Strikes are often savage when spawn-run Chinook salmon get hatin'-on shallow running bodybaits. Photo by Mitch Eeagan)*







young gun's a guru of drifting big chunks of skein (fish eggs still bunched tight in their membrane) under a float, which Chinook have a hard time passing up.

"Even though golf-ball-size globs of eggs are not naturally found drifting in the current this time of year, salmon will eat it. However, you still have to make the skein flow downstream perfectly with the current," McClelland insists.

His go to? With a 9-foot medium-action, St. Croix Wild River in hand, McClelland drifts chunks of skein—wrapped onto a razor-sharp size-2 treble tied to a 2-foot leader of 10-pound-test fluorocarbon—with just enough weight pinched onto 12-pound-test monofilament mainline so his float rides fifty-percent submerged.

Unlike when bobber fishing for panfish—when you want your float to be neutrally buoyant for detecting light biters—fishing large bait in current requires extra buoyancy so that the swirling eddies don't falsely pull the entire rig under.

Lob the bait upstream of a hole, letting it drift along with the current, all the while reeling in any slack. The smack is quick and poorly managed line will be cause for bites missed. Slack line also has a tendency to get caught up in the surface current and will pull your offering downriver faster than what nature intended.

Set the hook hard and be prepared to chase that fish downstream. Chances are you'll lose it in a log jam, but that's okay... you'll hook another. These fish are aggressive, and if one thug's ready to strike, a new one will more than likely be right behind.

*(Above picture - There's no messing around with salmon on the spawn. Be prepared with a stout and reliable landing net, such as a selection from Frabill's Conservation Series. Photo by Mitch Eeagan)*

### Cast away

Rummaging through my own Plano tackle totes, I'll first grab a Bomber Long A, which has the side-to side wide wobble that attracts vicious strikes. Banana-shaped lures like Yakima



Bait's Flatfish and Reef Runner Ripsticks fit this bill as well.

You might also consider in-line spinners sized for muskies, such as a size-5 Mepps Aglia (picture at bottom of page) and size-6 Blue Fox Classic Vibrax (pictured just below). Wide-bodied spoons that ride higher in the water column, like Acme's 3/4-ounce Little Cleo and Lindy's 4-inch Original Viking spoon (pictured right), for instance, also waggle through the water just right.



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Overall, a lure requires a cast slightly up and far across the stream, with a retrieve just fast enough to allow the bait to run with its built-in action. The abovementioned lures don't run very deep; however, not to worry, Chinook are known for rising to the occasion.

When casting lures, light- and medium-action rods are not going to be enough. This is time to break out the medium-heavy to heavy-action sticks or chance a shattered blank and a broken heart. Beefed-up line and a heavy-duty reel are in order, too.

St. Croix's series of Premier rods have the strength to land powerhouse salmon. The 7-foot models are just the right length for precision casting (shorter rods better for accuracy, longer better for distance) and have the backbone to land big fish.

In general, 30-pound-test superline has the valor to withstand the shock of the strike, yet with a diameter thin enough that the current won't affect the drift. Heavy monofilament is thick, making it hard to cast and easily seized by the current.

### Missing in action

So what do you do if you get to the river and find you're in-between runs? Hit the mouth of





the river; it's where salmon congregate and stage before making their mad dash.

The same artificial lures work wonders here, too. When it comes to rods, however, this is where the longer St. Croix Premiers will achieve the casting distance needed. The real key to success is making sure every cast land where the fish are schooled up. And this is where today's electronics comes into play.

Humminbird's Side Imaging was a real game changer when it came to seeing and catching Great Lakes salmon; and now even more so with the new 360 Imaging. With either technology, you can literally see fish suspended high in the water column, and then following by plugging a waypoint over the school without ever having to motor over them.

### **Grand finally**

A word of warning: Catching a limit of Chinook salmon, or even one, for that matter, goes well beyond line, lures, rods and reels. Once hooked and the fight is close to over, you need to get that fish in the net. And these fish are big. A wimpy net will cause nothing but chaos.

A net with a heavy-duty handle, yoke and mesh is needed to scoop and lift these bullies from the drink; my overall choice is a Frabill 26-inch by 30-inch Conservation Series landing net. The frame can withstand a twisting, turning 20-plus-pounder, and the makeup of the meshing and shape of the net promotes a live release, if that's your choice.

### **Hit it!**

If the fight of your life is on your to-do list, consider fishing tributaries of the Great Lakes this fall. Drift a chunk of skein or cast a lure through a hole and hang on. (And I mean hang on!) Mitch

Eeagan is an outdoor writer who lives amongst the cedar trees in the swamps of Michigan's Upper Peninsula.

(Pictured -  
Salmon savant  
Kyle  
McClelland  
uses golf-sized-  
gobs of eggs to  
attract  
aggressive  
Chinook  
salmon. Photo  
by Mitch  
Eeagan)



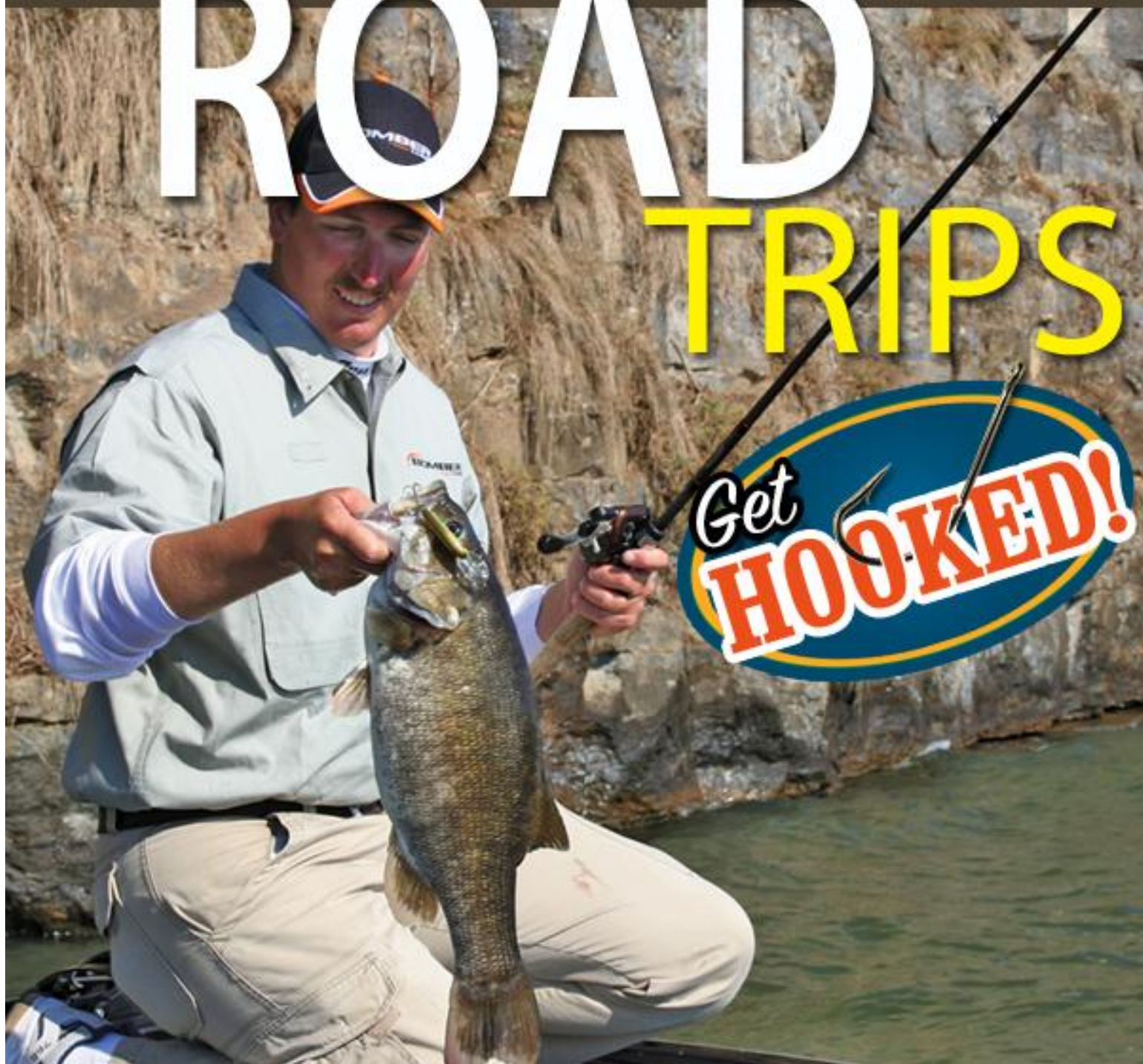


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## Scott Martin's Lucky Bass Hook - By Ron Presley

Stories of superstition and luck are not uncommon in the lore of the fishing community. One such story involves a lucky hook. Scott Martin is a bass fishing pro. He also hosts his own TV show, The Scott Martin Challenge. His tournament travels take him all over the place in search of big bags of bass. On one particular tournament trail he was heading toward Washington, D.C. to fish the 2012 FLW event on the Potomac River.

Like many conscientious tournament anglers he spent the evening before leaving for the Potomac in preparation. "As I was packing, getting ready to go to the tournament, getting my tackle in order, getting all my lures in order, getting all my hooks in order, I realized I was basically out of a particular size hook." The missing hook was a Trokar TK130 4/0. A little bit of panic came over Scott as he realized he didn't have a single one of his favorite worm hooks.

Scott immediately called Trokar with an urgent request. "Hey guys, overnight me some TK130's immediately, I am leaving for the Potomac tomorrow and I am completely out." The guys at Trokar responded, "no problem," and Scott thought the dilemma was solved.

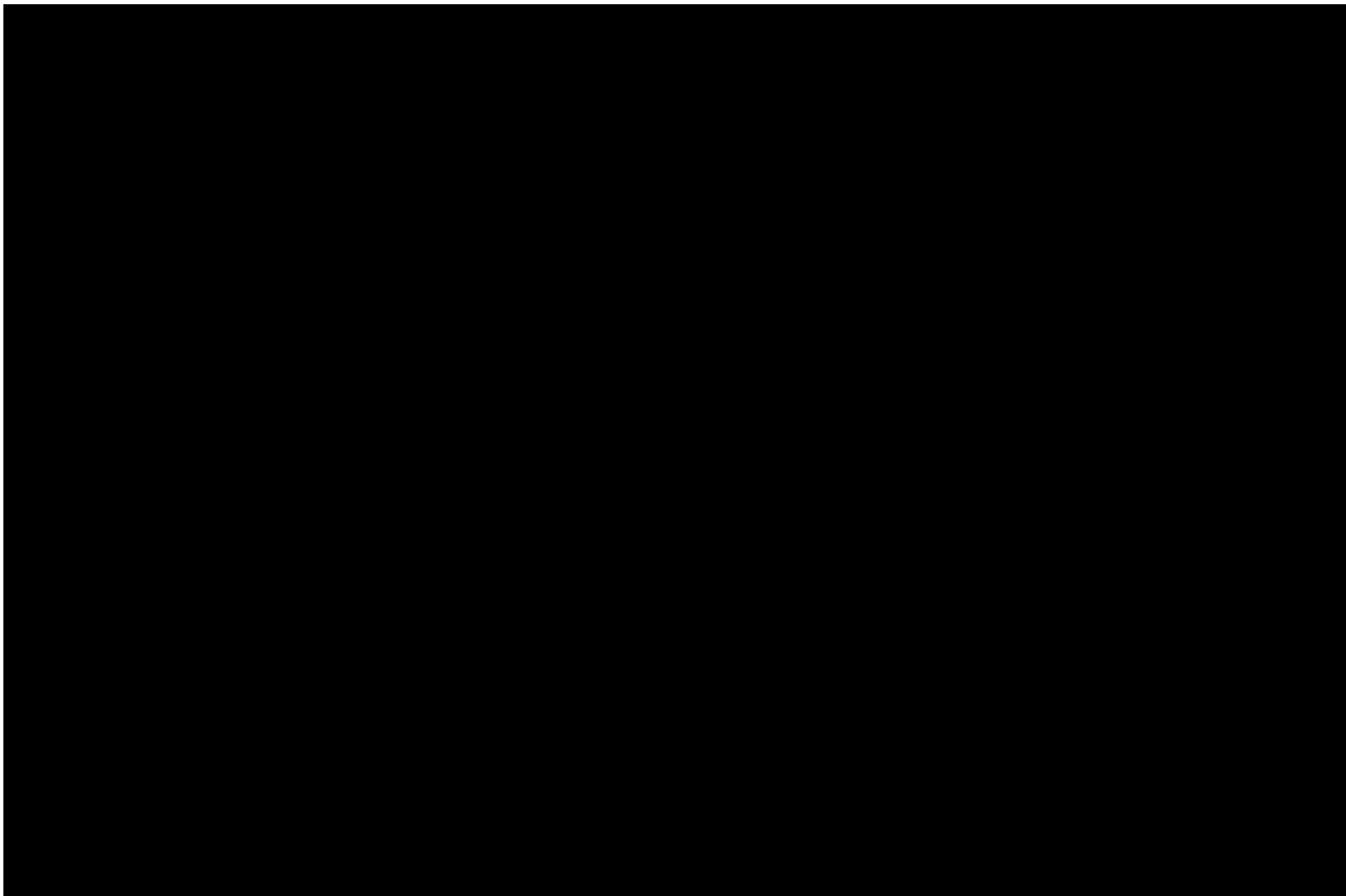
Morning came and in anticipation of the tournament he ended up taking off from his home in Clewiston, FL a little early. By the time the package of hooks showed up at Scott's home he was on the highway travelling through north Florida. Decision making is a prominent part of

tournament angling and in this case Scott had to make a decision to have his wife overnight the package again, at a personal cost of nearly \$100, or pick up some hooks on the way. “The fact that I even considered overnight delivery tells you just how bad I wanted those hooks,” says Scott.

With that decision made in favor of picking up some hooks on the way, Scott’s thoughts turned to prefishing. “Knowing that I had practice to complete I decided to stop at Bass Pro Shops. They carry Trokar and I planned to buy a couple packages to get me through the week.” Passing a few BPS along the way he waited until Washington D.C., where he walks into Bass Pro Shops the day before practice begins, looking for his hooks.

“I go to the Trokar Hook section,” says Scott, “and they have one pack of 4/0 hooks left.” There are five hooks in a pack, so Scott figures every thing is OK, at least for the next day of practice. “I was happy to find the one pack of TK130’s (pictured) and I felt ready for practice the next day.”

Scott launched on the Potomac the next morning and wasted no time catching some nice fish. “I was flippin’ a worm rigged on a TK130 and the bass were tearing it up.” Scott likes the TK130 because it is a straight shank hook with a bait keeper on it. The offset





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hooks will sometimes grab pieces of slime or pieces of grass which fouls the presentation. The straight shank TK130 eliminates that. "It is a very weedless way of fishing a worm and contributed to my success on the Potomac."

It is on the river that the suspense thickens. If there are two anglers in a boat and one is catching fish and the other isn't, the one that's not wants what the other one has, right? "So here we are," says Scott, "catching some nice fish. My fishing buddy wanted a hook or two so I gave him a couple of hooks." Scott thinks nothing about it, since he still has some spare hooks.

What he hadn't planned on was what happened when he met up with his dad. When he did, he mentioned that he was catching a few fish on his worm rig and you guessed it, dad wanted a couple hooks too. Of course Scott obliged. "The next thing you know I am down to one hook. I've given all my hooks away except for the original one I tied on that morning. My idea was that I would run back to Bass Pro and hope they have some more in stock. I thought I would be OK."



The first day of practice ends, but he doesn't go to Bass Pro Shops to replenish his supply of hooks. The second day of practice ends and he still hasn't been to Bass Pro. The third day of practice ends without Scott returning to Bass Pro Shops. "I kept checking that point on the only TK130 I had, and it felt super sharp, just like it did when I pulled it out of the package."

Day one of the tournament starts and Scott has one hook. It is the same



“special” hook, on the same exact rod, that he fished all three days of practice with.

Scott goes out the first day of the Potomac River event and catches the biggest bag of the tournament at 22 pounds. He was leading by several pounds over his nearest competitor. “Now, I am getting a little panic stricken over this hook situation. I check the point again, realizing that Bass Pro Shops is an hour drive away; I am tired, the hook feels just like it did when I put it on. At this point it has become my lucky hook.”

So here he is, worried but tired. He caught a big giant bag of fish on his lucky hook. It is still



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sharp. He decides, “I am not going to change anything. It is kind of like not changing your underwear; I don’t think I changed that or my socks that day either. Call me superstitious.”

Now the one hook saga continues. The second day of the tournament comes around and Scott finished that day with the same TK130. Then the third and fourth day of the tournament come to an end. “At the end of the fourth day I am holding up a

trophy with a \$100,000 check in my hand, Potomac River champion, 2012. I caught every one of my bass on that TK130 4/0 hook.”

Scott Martin’s lucky hook now resides in a glass case at Eagle Claw headquarters in Denver, CO. Scott sums up the whole story by saying, “That’s why I love Trokar.”

Learn more about Scott Martin and The Scott Martin Challenge by visiting the website at <http://www.scottmartinchallenge.com>.



# Go “All In”, in Deadwood

By Ted Takasaki and Scott Richardson

Discovering rich variety and hidden fishing gems in western South Dakota

It's a safe bet Wild Bill Hickok would have been better off holding a fly rod on the bank of one of the streams around Deadwood, S.D., then he was sitting in a saloon holding two pairs of aces and eights, the deadman's hand.

Deadwood still offers plenty of gambling opportunities, but the town also deals out plenty of chances to anglers for a full house of trout, walleye, perch, smallmouth bass and other fish. Lee Harstad learned what a great spot Deadwood was for fishing when he arrived six years ago to be marketing director of the Deadwood Chamber of Commerce.





“Everybody knows about Wild Bill and Deadwood,” said Harstad. “There are so many stories like that, about how lawless it really was. It’s entertaining history, the Wild West and the girls and the guns. However, from an outdoor perspective, the biggest thing about Deadwood is that it is a base camp, a perfect place to go on a fishing adventure no matter what the season. Within an hour, you can be on walleye, trout or bass.”

At first, Harstad, a native of Grand Forks, North Dakota, felt out of his element. His favorite fishing involved live-bait rigging for walleyes. However, the first opportunity that presented itself at Deadwood centered on fly fishing or spinners for trout.

It turns out that gold isn’t the only thing sparkling in legendary Whitewood Creek, which runs through town. Those quick flashes are sunlight playing off the sides of brook, brown and rainbow trout.

“The key,” says Harstad, “is to find the pools, be very patient and quiet.”

Spearfish Creek, which lies a few miles away and higher up in the Black Hills, has “phenomenal trout fishing,” Harstad adds. Rapid Creek has a catch-and-release-only stretch below Pactola Reservoir that is rich in trophy trout. Harstad said overlooking other creeks, like Castle, Crow, Sand, Box Elder and French inside the Black Hills National Forest would be a mistake.

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where you can ‘play solitaire,’ just you and the fish. Stream fishing is best in spring when water is fresh and flows are good, and again in fall.

If you’d rather fish trout on reservoirs, check out Pactola, Sheridan and Deerfield. They all offer good trout populations. An added bonus is that they lie within the national forest so commercial and housing development is severely limited. Their shores are largely pristine, but they have good boat launches, camp grounds and fishing amenities.

Sheridan is more of the recreational-type lake for boating and water skiing. Pactola has big pike and lake trout in addition to the other trout species. Deerfield is accessible by gravel roads and entirely no-wake so anglers do not have to compete with skiers or other water users. Still, the lake is large enough to hold splake and brook trout.

“The perch population is on a boom at Deerfield, too,” Harstad said. “All area anglers have their favorite spots and anywhere on Deerfield would be mine.”

Fly fishing is done from shorelines. Boaters use spinners and jigs or they troll. The water is crystal clear. Trout like the flashy presentations.

Harstad did a little exploring and eventually found Belle Fourche Reservoir, located within an hour of Deadwood on the prairie surrounding the northern Black Hills near the reservoir’s namesake town in western South Dakota. Created by Orman Dam, Belle Fourche means “beautiful fork.” Harstad calls it a “walleye factory.”

“Limits are common,” he said. A slot limit is in force, which means any fish from 15 to 18 inches must be released. “We’re catching a lot in the slot this year, but seeing some into the mid 20s,” Harstad said.

Harstad feels right at home there. He grew up on North Dakota reservoirs fishing for walleyes with rigs, a tactic that is effective at Belle Fourche. As with all reservoirs, structure normally consists of points. The reservoir level has been down the past couple years, allowing weeds to grow. This year’s weather brought ample water, thus flooding the vegetation. Rigging the weed edges with ‘crawlers or leeches is effective, Harstad noted. A half-ounce weight is usually enough unless the wind deals itself into the game. Belle Fourche is a wide, round lake and storms can come rolling seemingly out of nowhere.

“You can be in for a ride,” Harstad said. On rough days, you might need three-quarters of an ounce to an ounce of weight. “You have to feel the bottom,” he said. Drift or use a trolling motor to stay fairly vertical over the fish.

Other anglers have had luck trolling crankbaits along the contours and over a couple of large flats. Perch and shad are the primary forage fish. The state allows two rods per angler.

“You’ll see guys doing it all,” says Harstad. “I believe the key to that reservoir is being able to fish what you are comfortable with. If you do, you can catch more fish.” If walleyes aren’t your favorite fish to bet on, deal yourself into some of the reservoir’s yellow perch, catfish or smallmouth bass. Perch are also targeted on winter outings.

Not all Deadwood fun involves water. The area is rich in Western history. Many of the old-time buildings have survived, including Saloon Number 10, where Hickok was gunned down. Hickok’s killer was acquitted by an unofficial miners’ court after lying by claiming Hickok had killed his brother. His killer was later tried in an official court of law and hanged.

Hickok is buried in Deadwood. The townspeople buried Calamity Jane next to him. She had a crush on Hickok, who had been married to someone else. The area also offers miners’ camps and museums to visit. Just 15 miles away sits the town of Sturgis, the famous motorcycle destination that attracts 500,000 cyclists every August.

In Deadwood, “you’re in the entertainment center of the region,” Harstad said. “We have great restaurants, great hotels, great casinos with a lot of variety in the games and gambling. There are plenty of places to go and eat and enjoy fine dining. And bring a fishing pole. It is a great base camp, a great place to hang out.”

Odds are you’ll have more fun than Wild Bill, even if you are... holding aces and eights.







# Fabulous Fishing In Upstate New York

By Bill Vanderford

The beautiful blond lady stumbled through the underwater rocks of the fast Salmon River with her fly rod bent to the breaking point as she tried to slow the explosive run of a huge king salmon! Other nearby anglers stopped their casting to marvel at the diminutive woman doing battle with such a huge fish in the fast-moving waters. It was truly a sight to behold, but she skillfully landed, photographed and released the big, migratory salmonids as we all watched.

Most of Oswego County borders Lake Ontario slightly south and west of the 1000 Islands and is world renowned for its fishing possibilities...especially salmon and trout. Throughout the fall and





winter, different species of these fish migrate up the famous Salmon River through the old village of Pulaski. Anglers can be seen lining the banks of the river with every imaginable type

of rod and reel and at any open place where they can reach the water. Purist fly fishermen with the finest tackle in the world can be observed, but

you will also see the cheapest basic fishing gear available.

Because of the continuing runs of kings, cohos, brown trout, and steelhead through the fall and winter months, and the landlocked Atlantic salmon in the spring, the action never seems to cease in the Salmon River. Though the river is small compared to other nearby streams that flow into Lake Ontario, it is considered by many to be the best tributary for salmonids in the lower USA.

Pulaski is a mad house of activity and people during the salmon runs, but it is also a quaint little village throughout the year. During the hectic fishing season, many visitors seek out places to stay with private sections of the Salmon River for fishing like Salmon Acres Fishing Lodge (315-298-6173) that offers very basic lodging for groups or individuals. Others choose more upscale digs in the middle of the action in downtown Pulaski like the 1880 House Bed and Breakfast. This historic dwelling offers much more than the comforts of home with





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mouthwatering breakfasts and homemade soups in the afternoon that are awesome! Check them out on their web site at: [www.1880house.com](http://www.1880house.com).

Just outside the city of Oswego is a fabulous place to stay that has one of the best eateries in the area. The K & G Lodge and the 1881 Steakhouse are part of a charter fishing business that was started back in 1984 by Kris and Greg Gehrig. Today this cedar and stone lodge has 8 large hotel style rooms that join the restaurant. For more information, call them toll-free at: (800-346-6533).



No trip to Oswego would be complete without visiting the Fort Ontario State Historic Site. This old, star-shaped fort dates back to the 1840s, but is actually the fourth fort built on the same site. The previous three were involved in the French and Indian War, the Revolutionary War, and the War of 1812. Views from the fort of Lake Ontario, the Oswego Harbor, and the Oswego West Pierhead

Lighthouse are spectacular! Oswego is an Iroquois Indian word meaning “the small water pouring into that which is large.”

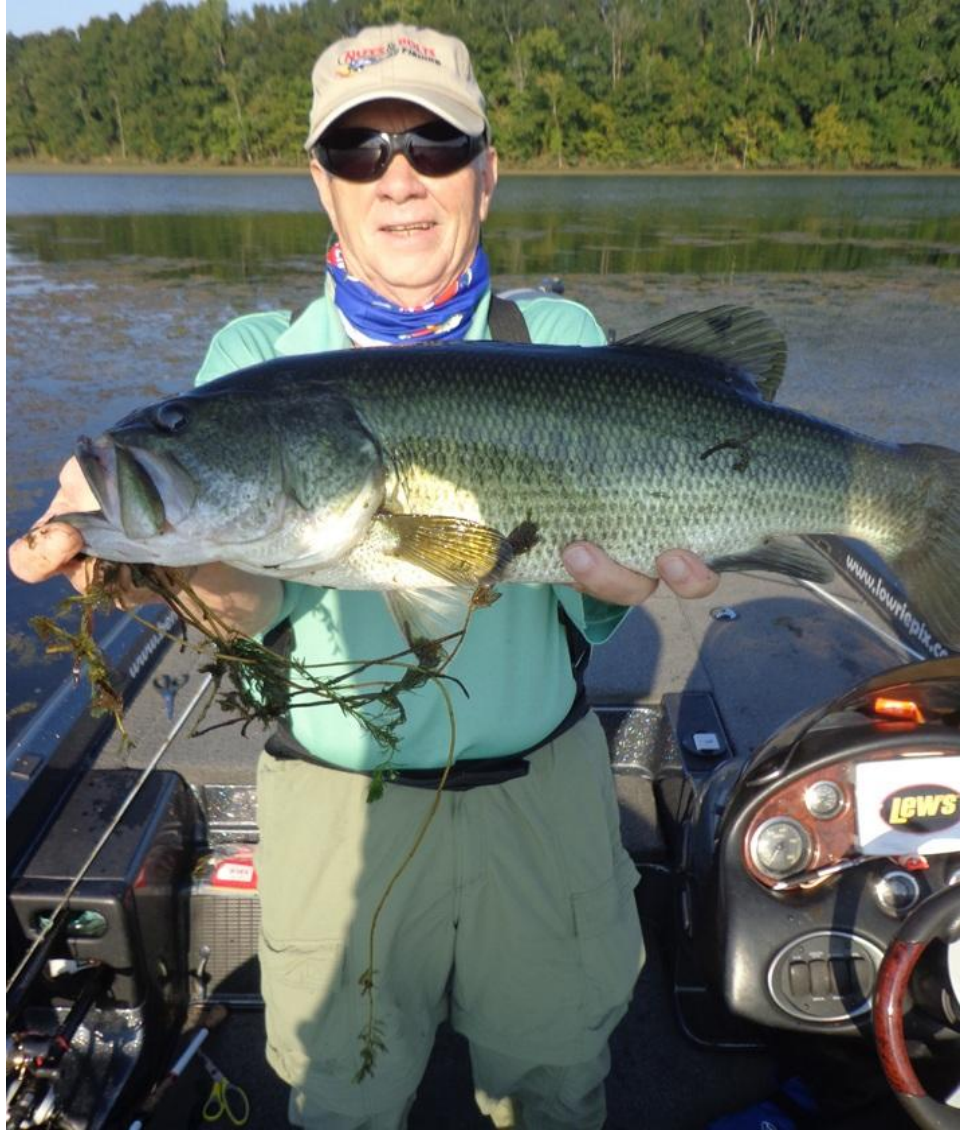
Bill Vanderford has won numerous awards for his writing and photography, and has been inducted into the National Freshwater Fishing Hall of Fame as a Legendary Guide. He can be reached at 770-289-1543, at [jfish51@aol.com](mailto:jfish51@aol.com) or at his web site: [www.georgiafishing.com](http://www.georgiafishing.com).



# Fall Transition Tactics for Bass

By Capt.  
Jake Davis

The second wave of great bass fishing for the year is upon us. The leaves are turning and the air is getting crisp, hunting seasons is opening, and the bass are biting again. Bass feed heavy in the Fall preparing for the lean winter months that lay ahead. Fall fishing can be very similar to spring fishing with a couple of twists. My intention here is to share with you some of the techniques and patterns that help me put fish in the boat during this time of the year. It doesn't always mean that there will be a hungry bass next to every log, under every boat house, hiding in every weed bed or suspended off every Creek channel point. However, under normal circumstances it does mean...Bass will almost always use the same migration routes that they used in the spring. If you think about that for a moment, it will give you some real insight where you can begin your search for Fall Transition Bass.



I start my search in creeks and pockets in the upper region of the lake that has a lot of cover and where fresh water runs into the Creek. This is an important fact that many anglers either overlook or don't understand completely. Keep in mind "Spawn" and "Fall Transition" bass patterns will always appear nearer where the river comes in verses areas nearer the dam. The larger the body of water the truer this fact becomes. I prefer creeks that have plenty of cover such as lay downs, stump rows, chunk rock, sunken brush around boat docks and when possible grass and other aquatic weeds. The ideal creek would be one where this structure is close to the dominate channel. The other factor to be on the watch for is schools of shad or other bait fish. A good shad population is a vital link in being successful. The Fall transition means only one thing to bass; it's time to eat and get fat for the winter ahead and the primary source of food in most reservoirs is shad.

Around rip-rap, bridges or points in the fall its crank baits and spinner baits. My favorite cranks for covering deep water are SPRO Little John Series 70 which dives to 16-20 foot, Series 70 that dives to 9-12 feet and the Series 50 which dives to 6-9 Foot. My go to colors are Chartreuse Nasty, Chartreuse Blue, Cell Mate, Nasty Shad and Home Boy. Color select really depends upon water clarity and sunlight penetration. As for spinner baits, a Punisher or





Assassinator ½ ounce double willow leaf in a white or chartreuse works great worked along grass or lay downs. When employing any crank baits it is imperative to have the proper rod and reel set up. For crank baits, I use Duckett White Ice Cranking Rod; 7'11" Medium Heavy action with a 5.4-1 LEW's reel and for spinner baits I use 6'9" or 7'0" Medium Heavy Action Micro Magic armed with a 6.4-1 LEW's reel, both set ups with 8 to 12 pound test Vicious Ultimate or Pro Elite fluorocarbon.

If the bite slows, a football head jig is the go to set up. I prefer a ½ ounce Tightline

football head matched to a Missile Baits Twin Turbo Tail or D-Bomb when they want a bulked up profile. Another excellent go to tactic is a Texas Rigged plastic such a 8.75-inch Tomahawk Worm or Creature Bait like the D-Bomb. Both of these plastics will move lots of water during a slow presentation. My Texas Rig is made up of a 3/8-ounce tungsten weight followed by a bead and 4/0 Hook. I recommend a 7' to 7'6" Heavy Action Micro Magic or White Ice rod from Duckett Fishing paired with a LEW's 7:1 reel with either Vicious Ultimate or Pro Elite fluorocarbon in 15 to 17-pound test.



Grass/scum mats call for a hollow-bodied frog from SPRO. As for colors, I like to keep it simple by using Blacks/Red, Black/Blue or Black/Yellow. Arm yourself to the teeth...7'0" to 7'6" Heavy or Extra Heavy rod with a fast reel like a LEW's 7.1:1 with nothing less than 50 pound test Vicious Braid!

I can't emphasize enough the importance of staying in the creeks and on the bait fish during the Fall transition period. Your chances of loading the boat or having a very few strike almost always hinges upon the presence of shad in the areas your fishing. As Fall begins to give way to early winter, and the water temperatures lowers even more I begin to work my way back out further and further toward the mouth of the creeks until the water temperatures reach 50 degrees then it's winter fishing time and everything changes again. Let's Go Fish'in...Capt Jake Davis

Capt Jake Davis is a USCG Licensed professional fishing guide on Lake Guntersville, Tims Ford Lake and Nickajack Lake; to reserve your "Day on the Lake" visit [www.midsouthbassguide.com](http://www.midsouthbassguide.com) or call/email 615-613-2382, [msbassguide@comcast.net](mailto:msbassguide@comcast.net)



# Fall River Walleyes

By Bob Jensen



Across the Midwest, many anglers are putting their open-water fishing gear away. Some are going hunting, others are getting ready to go ice-fishing. However, there are some, probably more than you would think, that look forward to this time of the year for open water fishing. They know that right now, in rivers throughout the

Midwest, there are lots of opportunities to catch walleyes. In fact, a very knowledgeable river angler recently told me that the period between November 15th, and December 15th is his favorite time to catch walleyes. Here are some tips for getting in on this action.

Number One Tip: Be prepared for any weather. It can be twenty degrees or seventy degrees. If you're cold, you're not going to enjoy being out there no matter how well the fish are biting. Start out dressed for cold conditions: You can always take clothes off, but you can't put on clothes you don't have. No matter, the forecast, I put on long underwear. I also always take my Cabela's Outfitter fleece parka. This parka is so warm and comfortable I wouldn't be without it. Next tip: Tie some rigs in advance. If you have a couple of rod and reel set-ups, tie a jig on one and a three-way rig on another. Even though you may need to change when you get there too much water conditions, it's easier to tie rigs in the house the night before where it's warm.

Most days on the river this time of the year will be very pleasant, made even more pleasant by walleyes and sauger that want to eat. Different areas will produce. Sand flats, wingdams, mid-river holes, current breaks, they'll all hold fish. You need to keep moving around until you find the areas that have the most biters.

Slurp! Jigs tipped with three or four inch Impulse Smelt or Paddle Minnows will be good, as will Fire-Ball jigs tipped with live minnows. Soft bait is becoming more and more popular every year because it flat out catches fish, but there are days when the fish show a preference to minnows. When the fish are in the deeper areas, it works well to hover directly over them and hold the bait right in their face. These fish don't want to chase a bait, but if it is wiggling right there on their nose, they're going to eat it.

There are times when you'll see a flurry of activity early or late in the day, but much of the time the best bite will be from mid-morning to mid-afternoon.

There are lots of rivers, big and small, across the Midwest that hold walleyes and sauger. Most of them can be fished from a boat or from shore. You'll have the opportunity to catch eaters and trophies. I'll bet you can think of a river not too far away from where you live that has walleyes in it. Now would be a great time to go there and see if you can catch a few.

To see the new episodes of Fishing the Midwest go to [www.fishingthemidwest.com](http://www.fishingthemidwest.com). Join us at [www.facebook.com/fishingthemidwest.com](https://www.facebook.com/fishingthemidwest.com)



## **I am more than a weekend warrior.**

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

## **I am a steward.**





# What Are Bass Eating Right Now? How to Match Lures to the Forage Base

Largemouth and smallmouth bass belly up to the buffet of baitfish, frogs, crawfish, insects and other forage available, but often key-in on a specific “bite.” When bass are focused on a specific type of forage, it’s usually because that prey is available in big numbers

and easy to catch and eat. If you’re not fishing a lure that mimics what they’re eating, you might as well be home watching the ballgame.

So, what is the bass eating at your home waters right now? Here’s a guide to help you catch more fish this weekend.

## Late-Spawning Threadfin Shad

Threadfin shad are a prime forage base in many Southern reservoirs. Many anglers look forward to the threadfin shad spawn that occurs in late April or May, but forget that this baitfish often spawn again later in summer. They may spawn three times in a year if the conditions are favorable.

Look for late-spawning areas in vegetation, around boat docks and along rip rap banks, and catch the bass feeding on them with a small, clear topwater lure. B.A.S.S. Elite pro Matt Reed says the smallest sized Heddon Torpedo (above) is his top pick.

“The clear bait doesn’t let bass get a good look it, so they’re hitting the action of it on top,” he said.



Other top lures include the Rebel Teeny Pop-R (left) and Heddon Zara Puppy (both in clear color pattern).

## Go Gizzard After Dark

Gizzard shad are bigger than threadfins and make up the lion's share of forage in many reservoirs and rivers throughout the country, but are especially prevalent in the north and northeast. Normal spawn is in May and June, and because they're a fast-growing species, by now they're approximately 5-inches long and make a good meal for bass.

Gizzard shad are pelagic filter feeders, which means they eat mostly plankton, algae and suspended organic material, but tend to roam and "graze" on bottom in deep water during the summer. Anglers can capitalize on bass feeding on gizzards during the day by watching for surface schooling action, but waiting until after dark is your best bet. At night they head to the shallows to feed, and bass are right there with them.

Mimic late-summer gizzard shad at night with a big, Colorado-blade spinnerbait like the Moon Talker, or simply swim a 5-inch YUM Money Minnow on a jighead. The venerable Heddon Spook also duplicates the size of the gizzards now.



## Rooftop Frogs

If your waters feature mats of aquatic grass or patches of lily pads, a hollow body frog is the key to successful bass fishing. Mats of hydrilla and other aquatic grasses can be relatively solid at the surface, but thin out below the waterline. This vegetation and lily pads provide a roof that creates shade and cooler water temperatures – two things bass need during late-summer heat.

While under the thatch roof, bass aren't just sitting on the couch watching TV. They're looking up watching for frogs, baitfish, rodents or other prey to hop, flip or scurry across the top. When that happens, they blast through the grass to attack.

Frogs are almost full-grown now, so a standard size BOOYAH Pad Crasher is a good choice. Use braided line to cut through the weeds and provide the strength needed to pull out fish that dig deep into the salad.



## Crawfish Boil

Bright sunshine and hot water temp often means that smallmouth and largemouth head to deep water. If your fishing hole is a highland-type reservoir with clear water





and rocky bottom, finding deep-water structure is a good first step to catching fish. One of the best locations is an area with big, Volkswagon-sized boulders, and crunchy crawfish is likely a top bite there, especially if you're after smallmouth bass.

A jig or Texas rigged soft plastic craw best mimics a crawfish, and these lures are easiest to effectively fish in deep water. The BOOYAH Pigskin Jig (pictured on prior page) features a football-shaped head that doesn't get hung in the cracks and crevices of rockpiles. For clear water and depths less than 15 feet or so, go with a natural crawfish color. Deeper structure or stained water calls for the traditional black/blue jig or soft plastic. Most crawfish are adult-sized in late summer; so don't be afraid to use big bait.

If the jig and Texas rig doesn't produce, a drop-shot rig can suspend the bait right in the fish's face. Note the depth of the fish and bottom depth on your electronics, and then adjust the drop shot so the hook and soft plastic is just above the fish. Try a YUM Craw Papi (pictured above) hooked through the tail and fish it slow.

## Back To (Bait) School

The castable umbrella rig (CUR) burst on the scene in mid-October of 2011, and since then it's been solidified into an established and accepted technique that catches bass even when they won't hit anything else. The fish caught in that October FLW tournament were suspended and inactive, but it didn't matter. The sight of a small school of baitfish provokes even the most-lethargic fish into striking.

If your lake features shad as a forage base, the CUR will catch bass right now, but it's not as simple as casting and winding. You need to match the size and color of prevalent forage. For reservoirs and lakes containing only the smaller threadfin shad, a Flash Mob Jr. rigged with 3-inch swimbait or 4-inch Walleye Grubs is generally the most effective. If gizzard shads are present, standard YUMbrella rigged with 5-inch Money Minnows is a good choice for big bass.

Look for suspended bass with your electronics before fishing. Funnel areas like bridge crossings are good places to start, and submerged roadbeds, mainlake humps and off the ends of long points also produce big bass in late summer. Countdown to the level of the fish and begin a slow, steady retrieve. Story and photo by staff at [www.Lurenet.com](http://www.Lurenet.com)



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# Precision Makes Tip-Ups Perfect



Frabill's Universal Calibrator Line Counter Kit converts tip-ups into cyber fish-catching machines

An Alberta Clipper's rolling in; the temperature is plummeting and wind steadily gaining strength. Not only is it cold enough for your fingers to go numb while fine-tuning another tip-up, but your eyelashes are now frosting and fusing together with every blink. (Remember an iced-over Johnny at the end of the movie *The Shining*?)

If only there was a way to release the perfect amount of line from your tip-up and not fumble with feeling-free fingers; know how much line a running fish has stripped, or when exactly the strike occurred. All of these characteristics would universally enhance the tip-up fishing experience.

Well, it's here. Introducing the Universal Calibrator Line Counter Kit from Frabill – a complete system of easy-to-assemble parts that'll convert nearly any tip-up into a techno, line-counting, cyber fish-catching weapon. And as sure as the Calibrator Tip-Up was flagged as last season's new product sensation, the Universal Calibrator Line Counter Kit is certain to earn an immediate following.

"With the Calibrator Line Counter, there's no second guessing anything about fishing with tip-ups. Everything from the amount of line out, to the time of day and how long it's been since the hit occurred as well how much line has been stripped from the spool is all spelled out with





pinpoint accuracy,” says Pat Kalmerton, Frabill prostaff and proprietor of Wolf Pack Adventures – a Wisconsin-based multi-species guide service.

“And with all those statistics at your fingertips, you can even get an idea of what species just ate your offering, which dictates how much line to feed it and whether you need a soft or firm hookset.”

The Universal Calibrator Line Counter Kit includes everything needed to upgrade virtually any tip-up to a precision performance appliance for catching more fish. The package includes universal mounting brackets and hardware to mount the easy-to-read LCD monitor and Frabill’s exclusive magnetic calibrator. Heck, the battery is already installed so the device is ready to rock the moment you set boots on the ice.

No matter how basic tip-up fishing was thought to be, Frabill’s new Universal Calibrator Line Counter Kit will turn the timeless tactic into a precision practice, and at the same time minimize your exposure to that impending Alberta Clipper.

#### ABOUT FRABILL

Frabill, Inc. (Plano, IL) is in its 75th year of engineering premium, trusted fishing equipment. Frabill’s ice fishing product lineup consists of portable ice fishing shelters, rod and reel combos, tip-ups, bait containers, portable aeration, and premium ice fishing apparel, including FXE Snosuit. Openwater products include landing nets, portable aeration, bait containers, bait care, bait traps and seines, accessories, and premium openwater apparel, such as FXE Stormsuit. Visit [www.frabill.com](http://www.frabill.com).



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