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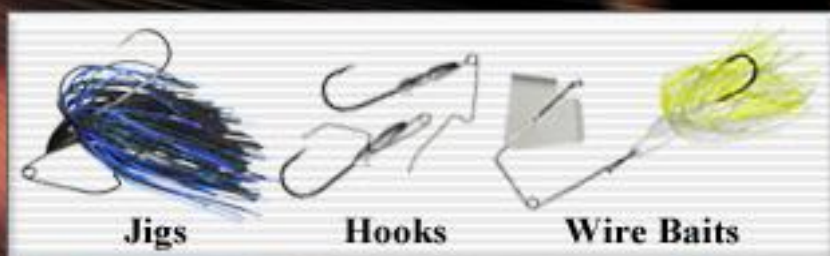
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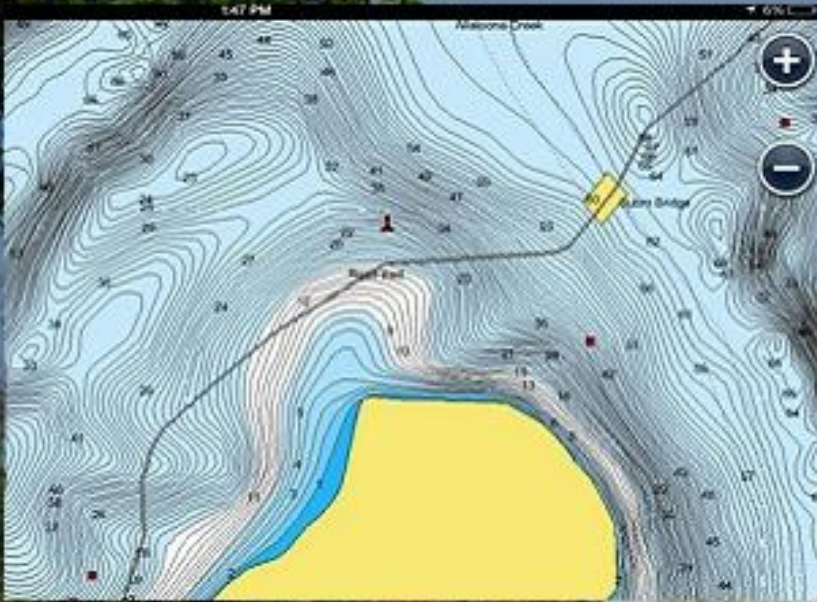


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I find it hard to believe that winter is still hanging on. I wrote last month on how crazy this year was and apparently it just don't want to go away. I just checked the long-range weather forecast and they are still calling for snow and freezing temperatures in North Carolina. That's just crazy. I checked with a few of my fishing partners and they said that the water temperatures are still ranging between 36 to 42 degrees. I was worried that I would miss per-spawn by delaying

my trip north until the first of April, but apparently I may have guessed right just in time for some great spring fishing.

Here is what I said last month that I have to believe will hold true whenever spring does arrive. I believe we are going to see some fantastic spring fishing. I will find it hard to believe the fish are not as excited about the arrival of spring as all of us couch potatoes. Just remember spring is just around the corner, and all the snow and cold weather will soon be a fond memory (NOT). So let's put this time to good use and get your tackle and fishing gear ready for some great spring fishing. Spring will be here before you know it. I HOPE!



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And please enjoy the outdoors,

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Lake Tawakoni Proven World Class Catfish Reservoir

By Brad Wiegmann

catfish weighed in for big fish.

Completed in 1960, Iron Bridge Dam impounds the Sabine River just 53 miles east of Dallas, Texas. The impoundment has 36,700 surface acre, 200 miles of shoreline with an average depth of 70 feet deep. It's under the operation of the Sabine River Authority of Texas.

It's named after historic Indians tribes that live on the land in the area. Translated Tawakoni means "river bend among red sand hills".

"Lake Tawakoni is the number one blue catfish reservoir west of the Mississippi. It's had huge limits of catfish weighed in at tournaments and my clients are amazed at how many big blues we catch," said Michael Littlejohn.

Whenever possible, Littlejohn uses fresh shad for catfishing for blues on Lake Tawakoni. He likes them to be between 5- to 12-inches long. "I cut off the tail and discard it then cut and scale the rest of a 8-inch shad into three large chunks," said Littlejohn.

Fresh shad is best, but Littlejohn doesn't just discard used pieces of cut shad chunks that have lost all of its blood and scent. "I like to put the shad chunks back in a Zip-Lock bag with half a bottle of Team Catfish Dead Red Blood Spray letting the pieces soak and reuse them," said Littlejohn.

Littlejohn (www.tawakoniguideservice.com) uses two different presentations

Few anglers probably have ever heard of Lake Tawakoni except for some serious tournament catfish anglers. Of course that all changed last spring when word spread over the internet about a catfish tournament where three teams brought in five fish limits of over 200 pounds. The huge weights didn't surprise catfish fishing guides Michael and Teri Littlejohn through because they had been putting clients on big catfish for years on Lake Tawakoni.

This year the nationally known Cabela's King Kat tournament trail begins the season on Lake Tawakoni. It's going to be a slugfest with many of the best catfish anglers in the nation competing. Last year teams were bring in huge limits of five fish including the winning weight of 239.8 pounds setting the new Cabela's King Kat Tournament Trail record; in addition to having a 67.84 pound monster blue



when fishing for catfish. "I fish a Carolina rig a lot on Lake Tawakoni for catching blue catfish. It's a easy rig to set up. For the main line, I use high visible Team Catfish (www.teamcatfish.com) Tug O War with a Team Catfish Sinker Slider that I attach a www.Cheapsinkers.com (www.cheapsinkers.com) 3-ounce sinker to then a swivel with a 30- to 60-pound Team Catfish Tug O War leader and 8/0 Team Catfish Double Action Hook," said Littlejohn.

"I use the Team Catfish Tug O War line because it is abrasion resistant. You need that because the big catfish are always around stumps, standing timber or just chewing on your line every time they bite your bait."

If Littlejohn isn't using a Carolina rig, he will have the rods rigged up with Santee Cooper Rigs. "I use the Santee Cooper rig that has a float to keep the bait off the bottom. Normally, I have about 36- to 48-inch leader on my Santee Cooper rig," said Littlejohn.

Before Littlejohn makes his first cast, he uses his graph to locate them. "I use the SideScan mode to find the catfish. Most of the time big blue catfish will be around



the ledges or humps where they can ambush the shad. Once, I locate them I will mark them on the GPS then anchor up the boat so we can make cast to them,” said Littlejohn. Littlejohn noted he usually anchors instead of drifting when fishing Lake Tawakoni.

Although it’s legal to keep a big blue catfish on Lake Tawakoni, Littlejohn practices strictly catch-and-release with any blue catfish over 10 pounds caught in his boat.

“Lake Tawakoni is loaded with 14- to 18-inch channel catfish that weigh 2- to 5-pounds if clients want to take home catfish to eat,” said Littlejohn.

For channel catfish, Littlejohn uses light 7’ spinning gear rigged with 50 pound Team Catfish Tug O War braid. He will use a Carolina rig set up with a ½-ounce egg weight and 4/0 treble hook or pinch a ¼-ounce worm weight about 6-inches above a 4/0 treble hook.

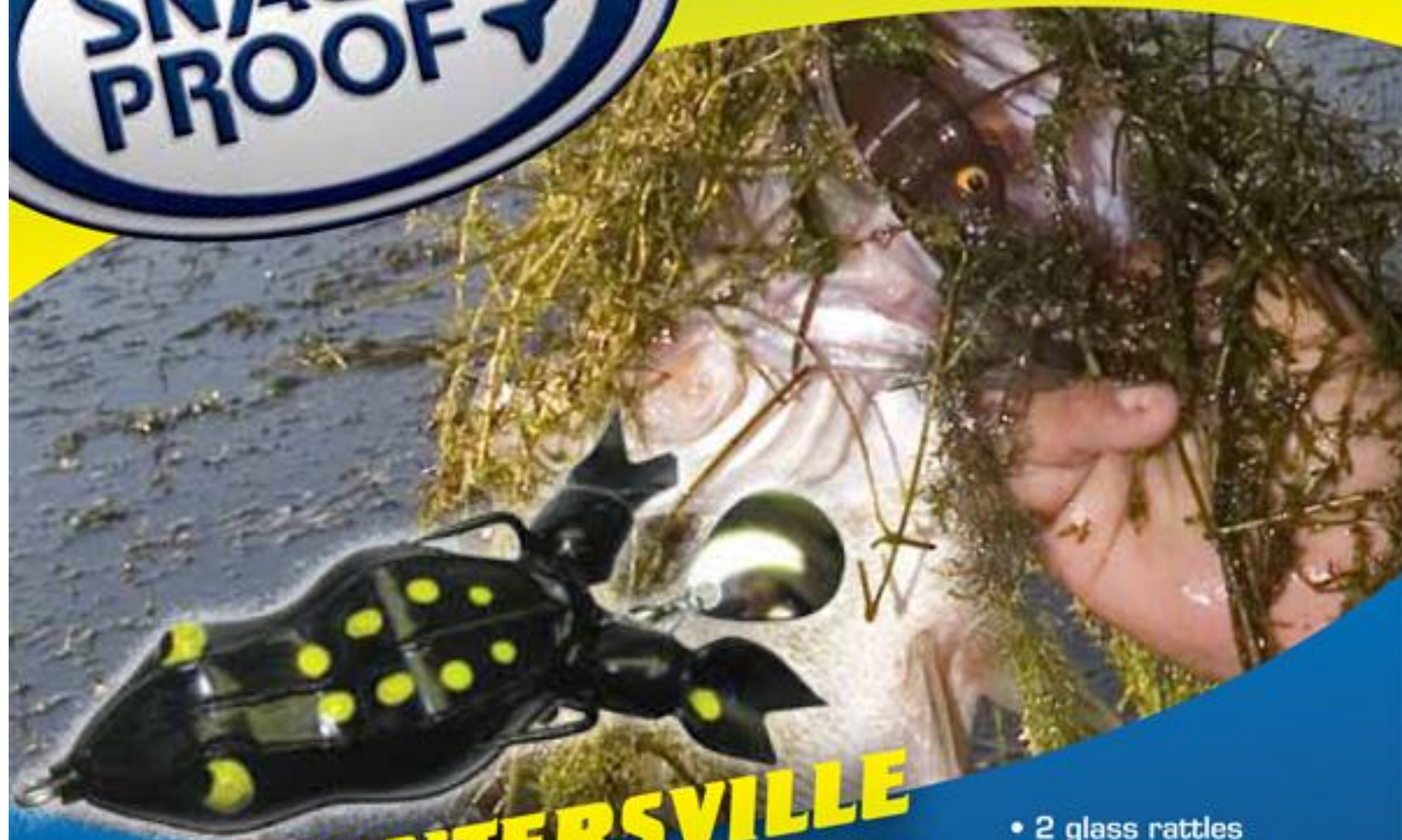
“We use Team Catfish Sudden Impact bait that’s enriched with fibers to keep the bait on the hook for fishing channel catfish,” said Littlejohn. He also baits the holes for the channel catfish to keep them around the areas there fishing.

Right now it doesn’t get any better than Lake Tawakoni when it comes to fishing for big blue catfish. Prime time is from Thanksgiving till when the water temperature gets up around 65 degrees and they go to spawning.





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Early Spring Bass Tactic's

By Capt. Jake Davis

The longer days of spring signal the start of some the best fishing of the year on area lakes. Here are some helpful hints for a great day on the lake.

Despite the sometimes unpredictable weather conditions, anglers can still manage to spend quality time on the water, catching fish on a variety of lures. First and foremost, dress for the conditions and "Always" wear your PFD! Second, is to emphasize a slow approach for just about every



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presentation would be an understatement; when you think you are fishing slow, slowdown!

Let's set the stage, over the last couple month's water temperatures dropped in some cases to the upper 30's. Bass became more lethargic to conserve energy. Starting in Mid February with day light hours increasing and the presents of bright sunny days can raise water temperatures by as much as 5 degrees in just a couple of hours; triggering feeding binges.

Considering, you'll find me fishing with water temps as low as 38 degrees; I'll start a typical day searching for fish to react to a jerkbait bite. This pattern is fairly steady, winter time presentation that can produce quality fish and adequate numbers. Later in the day, say after about 11am; we will go rattle baits. As we move through February into

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March rattle baits will be the name of the game for the most part.

Proper presentation is everything! While the water is still in the 45 to 52 degree range, I'll start a typical day with a jerkbait using a four or five count — that's one thousand one, one thousand two, and so forth — before you jerk it again. Sometimes it may not even be a jerk, just turning the handle of the reel and pausing it again. It's something you have to play with. The colder the water temperature, the longer the pause needs to be. If it's really cold, you have to make a cast and crank the bait down, stop and have drink of coffee before you move it."

I recommend using a variety of jerkbaits to reach different depths. Ideally, the lure reaches a depth at the top of the grass left over from the summer. I'll keep about four rods rigged up with different baits designed to reach a different depth, 1 to 3 (feet), 4 to 6, 6 to 8, and maybe one deeper.

I highly recommend utilizing a sensitive rod such as Duckett Micro Magic rods for most of these applications, normally spooling a LEW's 6.4-1 with 10- or 12-lb. Vicious Ultimate Copolymer, occasionally dropping to 8-lb. line when the fish are finicky. I favor a 6'9" or 7-foot, medium-heavy rod with a fast tip for jerkbaits. With this setup, I am slowing that jerkbait down and stopping it!

My primary jerkbait is a Rapala X-Rap in colors ranging from Glass Ghost (white) in clear water to clown in dirty water and in between, I'll throw a variety of natural colors. You need a slow, patient approach right now, but the fish will hit.

If the water warms up or if the fish prove they will chase a lure, I would actually rather see his clients throw traps. They are simply easier for the average fishermen to use. I find the trap bite in

many of the same places we'd might fish a jerkbait earlier in the day. The difference is these fish are more active, willing to pursue a moving bait.

The trap has got to tick that grass. Count it down until it's ticking that grass and then rip it loose. Also, you can catch fish burning it across a point or across the top of the grass. As the water warms up, the fish totally commit to the prespawn areas and feed up, put the feed bag on. They are chasing everything. That's when the water temperature has rise to 50 degrees and up. I'm not saying it has to be that high for the trap to produce, but that temperature has been most productive for me.

For rattle baits, I use a Duckett rod with a soft enough tip that he doesn't take the trap away from the fish. A rod that is too stiff will also result in lost fish after the hook set. I'm using anything from 12-lb. Ultimate to 65-lb. test braid both made by Vicious Fishing, depending on what we are



throwing it in and around. They will still hit it even when using braid. A key point is a rod with a fast tip that is still limber enough but with enough backbone to get the hook set."

I'll normally start trap fishing with a 1/2oz Bill Lewis Rat-L-Trap and XCalibur Xr50s or Xr75s. If the fish don't respond to the bigger baits, he has experienced success downsizing to a quarter ounce. What I use depends on the bait in the area. It's a match-the-hatch scenario. The smaller bait creates a slower presentation, and a

slower fall will trigger a bite at times when nothing else will.

While red traps are used extensively on Tennessee River impoundments such as Guntersville, I also like royal purple, sexy shad and I've experienced great success with gold with a black back.

If the fish don't respond to hard baits at all, then time to revert to plastics or a jig. I'll Texas rig or Carolina rig a D-Bomb or Tomahawk 8.75 worm from Missile Baits. The other go to is a 1/2-oz. Tightline football head jig in Guntersville special, which is green pumpkin with some black and blue mixed in or a Green Pumpkin Orange with a Turbo Tail Grub trailer from Missile Baits. The jig is particularly effective around deeper docks. I'll fish the perimeter posts first and flips underneath on sunny days.



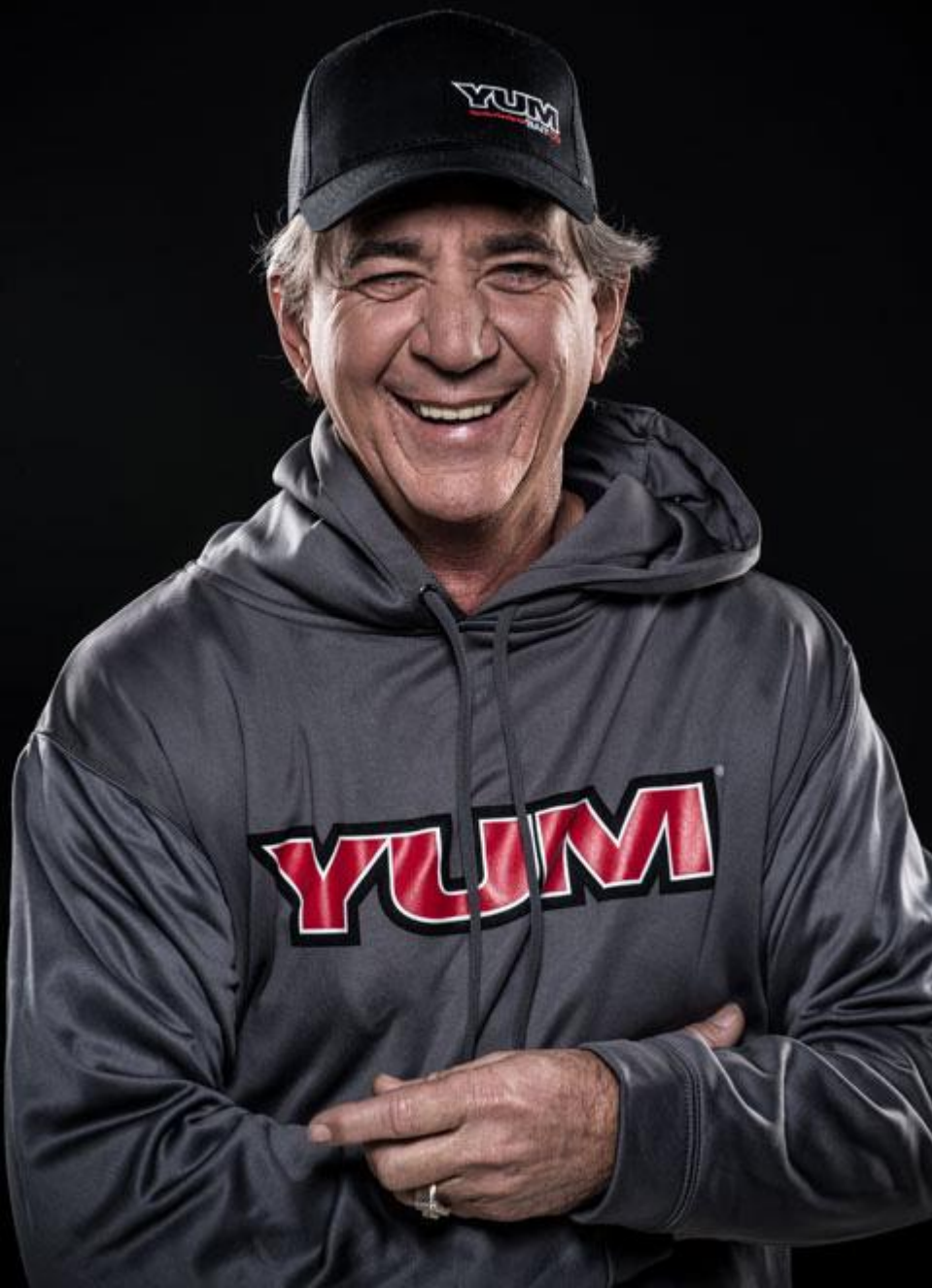
Slow that fall down, fish your Texas rigs with a 1/4-oz. tungsten weight. This is where a lot of anglers forget to slow down their presentation. Fish it slow, and then slow down some more.

Be prepared to throw any of the previously mentioned lures as the bite changes frequently in the early spring. As far as location is concerned, I'll spend a good bit of my time fishing the many large tributaries that feed the area lakes.

Generally, we're targeting grass in 4 to 10 feet of water. It's a classic pattern with one caveat. Keep a watchful eye on the super shallow water ranging from a few inches to 2 foot of water. You can catch bass 365 days of the year on most lakes in a foot of water as it warms up on sunny days.

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

Guntersville Lake Gets the Best, Worst of Zell Rowland



By Lawrence Taylor

Just mention “Guntersville” to Zell Rowland and you’ll see a grin spread across his weathered face about as wide as the Grand Canyon.

Rowland thumped Guntersville lake for 87 pounds over four days back in 2005 to win the Bassmaster Tour tournament held the final week of February. He caught 27 pounds on the final day and held off a hard charge from Morizo Shimizu, who was probing deeper water for “big mama” and brought in 30 pounds that afternoon.

Rowland’s win came as he battled a lung-rattling cold and worsening weather conditions. Heavy clouds rolled in, bringing a cold, bone-chilling rain. But Rowland’s series of docks and 5-pound bass, along with a shot at the win, kept him in good spirits. It still does, almost 10 years later.

“Things just got better each day,” Rowland said. “I’ve fished Guntersville for 30 years and have some favorite places, some areas where I’m comfortable and have caught fish, and know fish are going to be at certain times of the year. That tournament was just one of those times when

everything came together perfectly. I wasn’t the only one catching ‘em, though.”

The top five finishers each had 72 pounds or better, all caught in different ways. Rowland was throwing a Booyah jig and Smithwick Rogue. Shimizu was in deeper grasslines. David Fritts, who finished fifth, was cranking riprap, of course. The lake just set up perfectly at that time of the year for a prespawn bonanza, and Rowland was the one who capitalized the best.

"I caught 47 fish that weighed over 5 pounds the last day," he said. "The camera guy with me filming for the TV show freaked out. My best dock was pretty big. I pulled up, told him to get his stuff and get out on the dock and set up his camera, or do whatever to be ready to record when I said 'record.' He thought I was nuts, but I told him to be ready.

"I had four flippin' sticks on the bow. He got ready, I was ready, and I made four consecutive flips to the dock and flopped four 5-pounders into my Skeeter. He was about to pee on himself. It was just 'wham-wham-wham-wham.' That dock just one of those places where I knew they were going to be. I put the fish in the livewell and told him to get in the boat. He couldn't believe I wasn't going to pitch in there again, but I told him we were going to ride around and have fun. And we did."

Rowland's familiarity with Guntersville Lake and his penchant for shallow water combine for a big dose of confidence when he's on the Tennessee River impoundment. He's at ease with a Pop-R or Zell Pop, Booyah jig or spinnerbait, but it's the Yum Money Minnow that's made the biggest recent impression on him at that lake.

"The year Skeet Reese won on Guntersville (2010) was another big-fish event that just had everyone fired up," Rowland said. "I had about 25 pounds the first day on a Pop-R and was in about 50th place, so I knew I had to do something different. The next day I tied on a big Money Minnow and told my marshal I was going to sling it all day."

Rowland broke off two giant bass that inhaled the Money Minnow, two 9- to 10-pounders he and his marshal saw surface before they crushed his soul and swam away. The third was "at least a 13- to 15-pounder, and I'm not (joking). I've caught 12-pounders in Guntersville that I've never told anyone about, and this one was in a little 30-yard stretch that everyone overlooks, but it can be great.

"I walked this big fish around the entire boat twice, thinking it was a big catfish because it didn't come up. When it finally did, my marshal said it was the biggest bass he'd ever seen, and then I saw it. She was huge! And then she opened her mouth and my bait came out just as pretty as you please. She had clamped down so hard on the line I couldn't get a hook in her, and then she spit the bait."



Rowland sat in the boat, retied his bait and wondered what he had to do that day to put anything in the livewell. Three fish weighing more than 30 pounds had gotten away from him. It was just one of those days to file away under "Memories, Not So Good."

"Guntersville is a great lake, one of my favorites of all time," he said.

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The predawn quiet was overwhelming. Only the timeless sound of water rushing around the rocks of a mountain stream could be heard in the distance. The old man was relieved. It had taken him forty years to finally conclude that what he really wanted out of life was the simple beauty he had left behind so many seasons ago. The lure of Wall Street, big money and position had taken him away from his youthful loves and made him a financial giant.

Luckily, he had survived the high pressure of big business, and was finding that his memory was still intact as he carefully made his way down the tricky path to the stream with his old fly rod. After all, he was about to partake in the opening day of the trout season at a secret pool on a remote section of the creek.

A trout that had made its home there during the elderly gentleman's youth had been the fodder for many daydreams as he had gazed from his New York office into the dull, gray concrete of another building across the street. He fervently hoped that some of that trout's relatives were still in residence.

As the first streaks of light from the gathering dawn began to illuminate the scattered trees, the man heard a strange, but frighteningly familiar sound. The distant noise had the distinct ring of an unmuffled internal combustion engine, and it was getting louder. Within seconds, more like sounds could be heard. The old man began to visibly shake. He could only stand horrified as the shadows of several 4-wheel drive vehicles, sporting huge, incongruous tires and overflowing with people began pulling to a stop on the opposite bank of his "secret spot." Even worse, was the scene that was revealed by the full light of day. The ground around the once pristine wilderness area had been chewed up by years of big tires and too many people. The flashed reflection through the prism-like surface of the stream from a silver can that lay on the bottom brought an instant tear to the old man's eyes as he turned to walk away. The elderly angler had been confronted with the worst problem facing those concerned with the future of fishing...population explosion!



THE FUTURE OF FISHING IN OUR COUNTRY

By Bill Vanderford

Most experts agree that nearly all environmental issues, safety problems and fishery-related challenges in the future will be centered around the population boom. In fact, most projections conclude that the human population will double over the next fifty years.

My Uncle Bob saw it coming nearly 50 years ago. While fishing with him in the quiet serenity of a small mountain stream once, we were having a terrific time catching tiny eastern brook trout or "native specs" as the locals called them. I wanted to take home a limit of the scrappy little fish, but Uncle Bob wouldn't hear of it. "These are the only mountain trout that are native to our waters," he said. "Their habitat is slowly diminishing, and because of the growing human population, there won't be any left before you die. So, let's just keep the ones that are hurt badly with the hooks, and let the others go." I thought to myself, "He must be wrong. There are plenty of these fish." However, Uncle Bob was right. Even though I am far from the end of my allotted time on this earth, most of the "native specs"

have already disappeared. Only knowledgeable mountain people and a few biologists are able to find enough of the diminutive fish to fill a bucket. If Bob Moon were alive today, he would be appalled by the blatant abuse in the mountains. The beer cans and pop-tops laying on the bottom of our previously unspoiled streams would bring tears to the eyes of Bob Moon.

Luckily here in Georgia, we had a far-sighted Governor (Zell Miller) around the turn of this century who realized that more and more people were buying and developing important tracts of land near water and in the mountains. Therefore with the support of most hunters and fishermen in our state, he began Preservation 2000, which was a program to buy huge tracts of land that could be kept by the state so that future generations could still enjoy the outdoors. We are also very fortunate in Georgia to have some of the best wildlife and fishery biologists in the world looking out for our interests. Compared to the indifference in some other parts of the country, these experts are well aware of the seriousness of depleting or polluting our precious natural resources, and are already taking measures to correct future problems. Many of their solutions will put additional restrictions on how we fish and what fish we can keep. The length of fishing seasons may be changed,



and much “catch and release” will practiced, but the results will be positive for everyone.

With good planning in every part of the nation, excellent sport fishing can last through the coming decades. Like the old man observed in the opening

scenario, however, one can never go back and expect the world to stand still!

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



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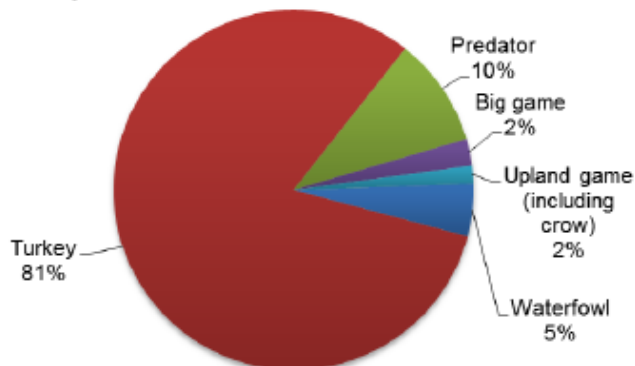


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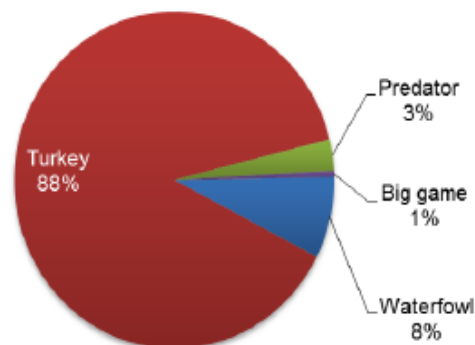


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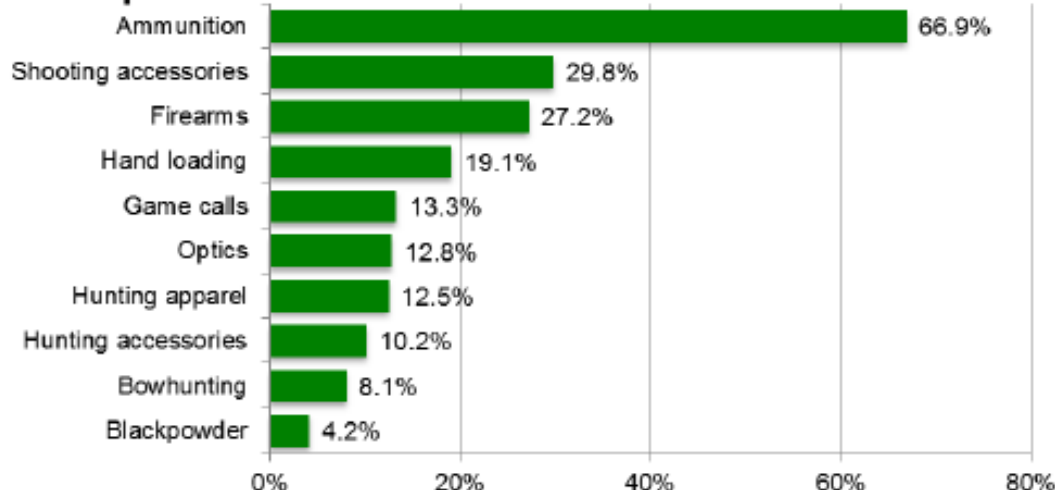
Types of game calls purchased in March - April 2013



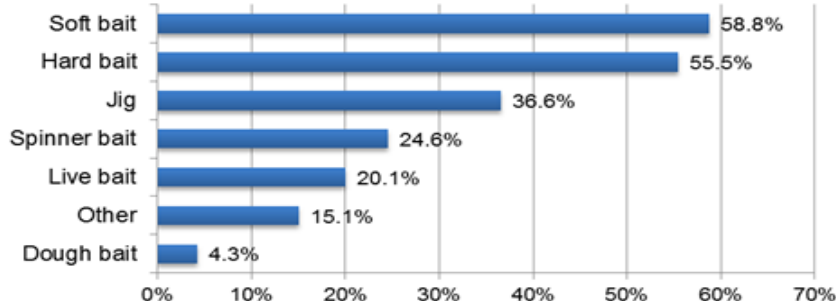
Types of decoys purchased in March - April 2013



Hunting/Shooting items purchased in March - April 2013

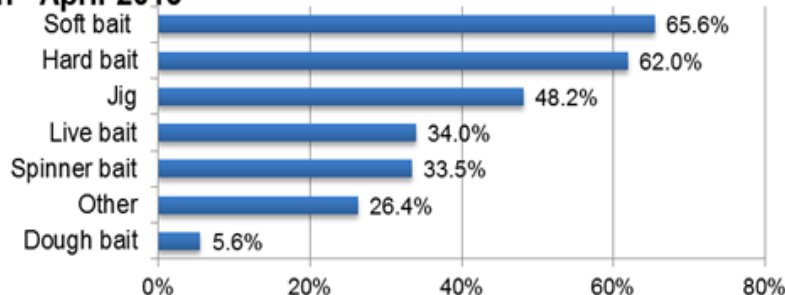


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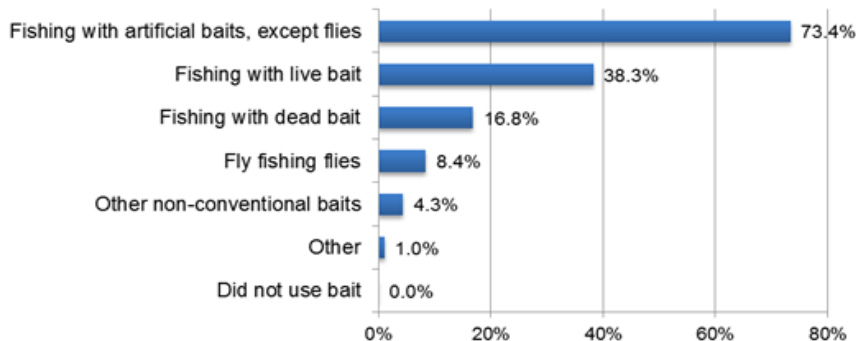
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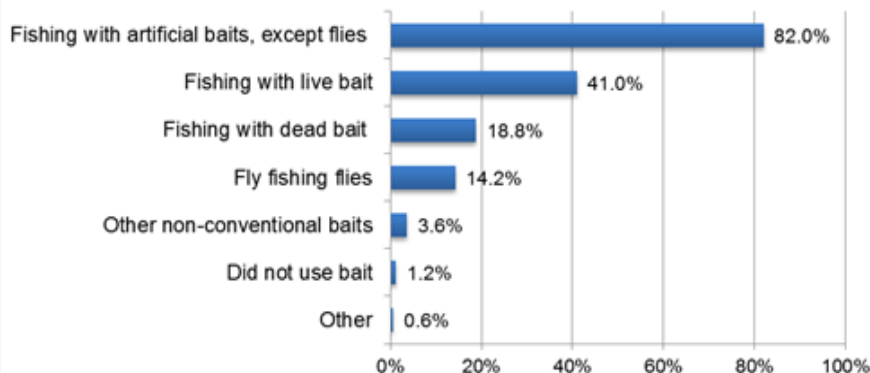
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Types of bait used when freshwater fishing in January - February 2013



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My Kid Brother

By Todd Staley

My family has a reunion every 5 years at a resort overlooking the inter-coastal waterway at Indian Rocks Beach Florida. Today is a bustling place with nightlife, an operating marina and boat traffic passing by all day long. The rest of the area is surrounded by hotels, condos, and nearly everyone is from somewhere else.

Fifty years ago it was a different world. It was nothing but mangroves. The traffic had to stop when the occasional sailboat passed so the bridge could rise. A cardboard box grabbed from Publix Super Market made a great sled to glide down the grassy banks of the bridge. The mangroves were full of fish and at low tide a sandbar was formed that you could wade out to cast for, snook, redfish, and trout. For two brothers aged 6 and 8, this was paradise. I was the sixth born out of seven children and my brother Kevin, the baby of the family. Our older siblings were already of the age to be interested in things like boys, girls, and teenage things. So Kevin and I spent a lot of time together and we loved to fish.

The tide had dropped enough to wade to the sandbar and horseshoe crabs were moving around everywhere. Blue crabs were easily taken by tying a chicken neck to a string and when the line went tight we slowly pulled it back and scooped them up with a dip net. On this day though there was something different. All the potholes on the flats were filled with sting rays. With practice we

learned if you did it just right, you could pick up a sting ray with your bare hands by pinching your thumb and fore finger in their eye sockets. I also learned that if you did it wrong, they would drive their spike in the soft web of skin between the same thumb and fore finger and it hurt like hell. Kevin almost fell over laughing.

Not far from our home were acres and acres of groves. There they grew, pink grapefruit, navel oranges, and tangerines. The groves served a duo purpose. Of course fishing was number one. The groves all had irrigation ponds that were full of largemouth bass and blue gill. The smallest piece of a rubber worm or a bread ball would supply plenty of action. I remember Kevin once took a 5 pound bass and I was so upset to get out fished by my little brother. When we tired of fishing we hunted for snakes. The whole time pigging out on whatever type of produce met our fancy. When it was time to go home, we loaded up to snack on later. We would take turns being the picker or the loader. The picker would shimmy up the tree and toss the fruit de jour down to the loader. The loader tucked his t-shirt into his pants and loaded from the top. It is amazing how many oranges can be carried by a small boy that way.

As we got a little older our mother allowed us to pass the whole day at Big Indian Rocks Fishing Pier. We could do something we loved doing and it gave my mom a break from us. We watched grown men fight giant fish like tarpon from the pier and even managed to catch some fish ourselves. Many of the old salts that hung out every weekend on the pier took the time to teach us how to be better anglers. Once we caught 40 mackerel together and made Bierre Keefer's fishing report in the St. Pete Times. We were big shots. Our name was in the paper. We took turns carrying that newspaper clip around in our pocket until it disintegrated. Years later, I was a writing student in one of Keefer's courses at Junior College.

Our first scrape with the law was a little before my 12th birthday and happened at the same Publix Supermarket that supplied the vehicles for our bridge slides. Pistachios were our downfall. Kevin and I were negotiating who was going to "buy" them first not knowing on the next aisle was

an employee stocking shelves, listening to our every word. We had been caught once before trying to taken army men out of a department store and will let off with a warning.

Sitting in the manager's office the, the man in charge scowled at us and ordered one of



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the employees to call the police. Remembering our previous experience, I leaned over to my brother and said not to be worried, he is just trying to scare us. What a surprise when a police officer walked in and put us in cuffs. Fortunately it was a more innocent time when the police had time to teach a young boy a lesson and I will always remember the ride to the police station and the chief asking, "Does your mother own a big brown belt, because I think I see her walking across the parking lot."

Shortly afterward we moved closer to my mothers work and soon discovered a mangrove creek near the house. There was lots of new territory to explore. We followed the creek until it turned to freshwater and finally entered a pond in a cemetery. It was a young kids fishing heaven. Baby tarpon, snook, largemouth bass, and lots of them. They also had a watchman. We had to schedule our clandestine visits to just before sunset when the fish bit better anyhow or Sunday morning when we were supposed to be in church. The creek was home to a giant snook with a notable scar on his back. After months of chasing him, Kevin finally hooked him one day and ran the length of the creek with the fish attached to his Zebco 202, until finally the line broke.

As we got into high school we took up shark fishing. It allowed us to do two things. One, fish for sharks which we loved to do and two, stay out all night because sharks of course feed better at night. We also discovered other temptations at this time and before you knew it we were packing more beer than bait.

As we moved into our twenties, we were doing weekend long trips to the Florida middle grounds pulling on big American red snapper and gag grouper. And of course packing lots of frothy

beverage. About this time Kevin made an effort at entrepreneurship and opened a smoke house, specializing in smoked mullet and oysters. It was appropriately named, "We smoke the Damnest Things."

By this time the demons possessed us both and we took turns being the black sheep of the family. Don't know how many times we broke mom's heart. More than a couple of decades ago my brother headed for Colorado and me to Costa Rica. We got caught up in our own lives and did not stay in very close touch, talking by phone on a rare occasion, and catching up at reunions.

Two nights ago the demons finally got the best of my brother and he sat in a chair in his living room and took his own life. For a day I walked around numb, wondering why God allows some to escape the demons and others never do. Today I went for a long walk.

This part of Costa Rica reminds a lot of where I grew up, not very crowded and estuaries to always be found. Today I found myself at the mouth of a small river at low tide. For some reason I started to trudge through the muck and head up the river. It was a lot more difficult than I remember when the mangroves were my brother and I's enchanted land. Halfway through my hike I stumbled upon two young boys who were busy trying to catch fiddle grabs for snapper bait. Tons of memories came racing back and the tears finally flowed.

The memory I have chosen to keep of my brother is when we were young. When we sprinted through mangrove muck and not struggled through it. When any fish, was a prize fish. Puerto Jimenez, where I live is surrounded by mangroves. Every time I go near them now, whether in search of a prize snook or just to enjoy the wildlife, I will be taking my kid brother with me. I love you Kevin.



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The Elusive Piranha Preta

(Part 1)

By Nici Haerter

“The dolphin are up the river today,” I heard the boat captain shout in broken English. He was referring to the endangered pink river dolphin unique to the waters of the Amazon. Before long, there was a pod rolling in front of the boat and to my astonishment they really were pink. Our journey into

the jungle began in Manaus, Brazil where we boarded a boat on the Rio Negro River and headed into the Amazon. As I looked at the lush forests, the occasional sloth hanging from a tree and monkeys jumping in the canopy, this was a surreal moment for me. It had been a lifelong dream to experience the Amazon rainforest. At times it seemed unattainable. The months of planning, packing and numerous calls to the Brazilian consulate for our visas seemed endless. I was finally here and wanted to absorb every moment.

We woke to the sound of chattering monkeys scampering across our porch in the tree house. No alarm clocks necessary as we were now on “jungle time.” It was our first night in the canopy of the rainforest and I could tell already that this was going to be the adventure of a lifetime. Our tree house hideaway and home for the next week was located deep in the jungle on the banks of the Rio Negro River. Enjoying the slower pace of jungle time my husband, Skip Haerter, and I watched the sunset from a rope bridge in the canopy, played with squirrel monkeys and watched the locals gather on the river banks with cane poles. What were they fishing for, I wondered, and why didn’t I pack my fishing pole? The next day Skip went in search of



some tackle and poles. He soon befriended a local named Fabio who was born in this dense tropical forest and grew up along the river. Fabio was kind enough to offer us the use of his personal fishing gear. He owned one of the few spinning rods in the jungle and lent us the use of a cane pole. No extra hooks or line as tackle is hard to come by here. You get one chance to land your fish so breaking a line or losing a hook on a snag is not an option. We were instructed to meet him on the river bank at sunset.



Fabio arrived carrying a cup of raw meat, the old spinning rod and cane pole. He spoke very little English, so he just looked down at the raw meat and said, “Piranha” nodding for us to follow him over to the water. We were going to get a quick lesson in angling jungle style. He baited a cane pole with meat and started slapping the bait on top of the water. Before long, the water started to roil with activity and he had landed a bright red piranha. They look like a very angry pan fish with many teeth. Fabio handed me the cane pole, jumped in a canoe and disappeared into the darkness of the jungle to go hunt for caimans. We were on our own to figure out this new style of angling.

Piranha are very aggressive and hunt for prey in large schools attacking from all sides and getting one on the hook turned out to be a little tricky. Fabio had made it look too easy. Following his example we both put some fresh cubes of raw meat on our hooks and started slapping the water. The more commotion in the water the more excited they become. We continued slapping the water with our bait and within a few minutes there was some activity in the water surrounding my husband’s line. Before I knew it, he had landed a red-bellied piranha. I continued slapping the water. Then he reeled in an eel and I was still getting nowhere. Unlike most anglers, I am not known for my

patience. I was getting frustrated and started beating the water with the tip of my cane pole hoping this method would get their attention. I tried slapping and beating but still no response, not even a ripple in the water so I decided to stick my pole in the water and make a stirring motion. My frustration mounting, I was now slapping, beating and stirring. Suddenly there was some churning and soon the water was boiling with a school of excited piranha. I threw my bait in the



middle of the frenzy and felt them attack. Fish on and I landed my first red-bellied piranha. I cast again and my pole bent in half. This was no piranha but something similar to a 12 inch gold catfish with black spots all over it. We snapped a photo and kept fishing. By the end of the night, we had landed at least a dozen brightly colored yellow and red piranha.

While we were packing up our fishing gear, Fabio reappeared to get the fishing report. A quick glance at his poles to make sure they were intact and he asked, "You catch Piranha Preta?" holding his hands

approximately 12 to 14 inches apart to demonstrate the size of the fish. I shook my head and gave him a puzzled look. He said, "Good to eat, very big piranha." When I showed him the pictures of our catch a big smile spread across his face and said, "I need glasses, those fish are tiny" and started laughing, slapped Skip on his back and walked into the jungle. What was the Piranha Preta? I was now on a quest to catch this elusive fish. From the view on the rope bridge, my husband and I spotted a sandy point on the beach where the Rio Negro River ran into a small canal and lagoon. As any angler knows, the point where two bodies of water meet usually indicates a good fishing spot. Tomorrow we would venture out of the canopy and into the lagoon in search of this mysterious fish.

OUTDOORS

TOM CRUENWALD





DAN'S FISH 'N' TALES®

Crankin' The Ozarks

By Dan Galusha

should be in the tackle box to cover changing light and weather conditions are crawdad, fire tiger and bone/orange.

Early spring can be a great time for “cranking” up some bass in the Ozark’s deep clear water reservoirs. Deep running crankbaits will produce largemouth, smallmouth and Kentucky spotted bass, along with some occasional white bass action in a variety of areas.

As mentioned, deep running lures are the first choice. Baits such as Norman’s DD22 and Deep Little N, Rebel’s Spoonbill Minnow, Storm’s Thunderstick and Wiggle Wart, and Mann’s Depth Plus and Deep Loudmouth are all productive designs for this type of fishing. Although not considered as a normal deep diver, a few Rat-L-Traps should be on hand to cover a variety of depths, especially if some quick schooling action appears on the surface.

My most productive colors in these areas have been chrome/black back, chrome/blue back, pearl/blue back, Tennessee shad, and blue shad. Other colors which

During the early spring some huge white bass can be found, such as this one that struck a chrome/black back Rat-L-Trap in the back of Little Sisters Creek in Bull Shoals Lake, AR.

At this time of year the bass are heading towards their spawning areas, and so they can be found along a variety of shoreline conditions. Gravel areas usually produce the best smallmouth action, with a few Kentucky spots along the points, while largemouth are more predominant in standing timber, shelf and chunk rock, and bluff areas. Kentucky bass also like the bluff areas, especially the bluff points. These are general areas in which these species are most likely to be found, but they can show up anywhere.

There are four basic retrieves, which can be used “as is” or combined. All four start with cranking the lure down to the desired depth as quickly as possible. These retrieves are the stop-and-go, steady speed, rip and stop-and-float. They are performed as follows:

Stop-and-go: While retrieving the lure at a steady speed add momentary pauses, which should usually be no longer than three seconds between each one second of cranking. Most strikes will come the lure’s motion starts again.

Steady speed: This is the easiest retrieve, as it is simply casting out and retrieving the lure at a constant speed. The only trick is finding the correct speed to trigger the fish to strike.

Rip: To rip the lure quickly, sweep the rod tip to the side at about 3 to 4 feet, and then crank up the slack without letting the line go limp. It sometimes helps to point the rod tip towards the water. Strikes normally happen as the “rip” is started, which makes it feel like the lure is hung up, but when fishing open, deeper water, you know it is a fish that has hit.

Stop-and-float: This is the most difficult of the retrieves, because it takes patients and a keen line watcher’s eye. It is a longer version of the stop-and-go, in that the pauses are much longer. During the pauses the bait is allowed to float all the way, or most of the way, to the surface. At times the retrieve is very productive in standing timber areas. The lure is cranked down along side standing timber, and allowed to float to the surface. The strikes usually come at one of three points - when the bait is stopped, as it is floating upward or immediately after it is being cranked back down. When the bait is floating upward the strike may only be detected by a slight line twitch, so be ready to reel up the slack and set the hook.

I learned these retrieves from “the master” of such fishing, Virgil Ward, who taught me on Truman Lake, Table Rock Lake and Bull Shoals Lake. In April, 1984, Virgil and I shot a TV show for his



A nice Bull Shoals Lake smallmouth bass that hit a deep diving Norman crankbait on a slow steady retrieve, after cranking it down fast.

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Championship Fishing series, using some of these retrieves on Bull Shoals Lake. This episode can be seen on the Dan's Fish 'N' Tales® You Tube Channel.

Earlier the Rat-L-Trap was mentioned. It is important to have a lure such as this tied on and ready for action. It is the perfect lure if surface action is spotted. Also, the Rat-L-Trap is a great lure for “ripping” and steady retrieves at a specified depth when heavy bait fish feeding is taking place, and when the water becomes murky. At this time of the year Ozark reservoirs can have some great white bass action, providing another reason for having a Rat-L-Trap at the ready.

Jig combinations, grubs, tubes and spinnerbaits will all work during the Ozark's spring time, but if you like fishing crankbaits, give them a try during the early spring for

This is the lure that takes a lot of the fish during the early spring, from late February into April, in the Ozarks when dying shad are crippling towards the surface – a “long billed” or “spoonbill” Rebel Minnow.

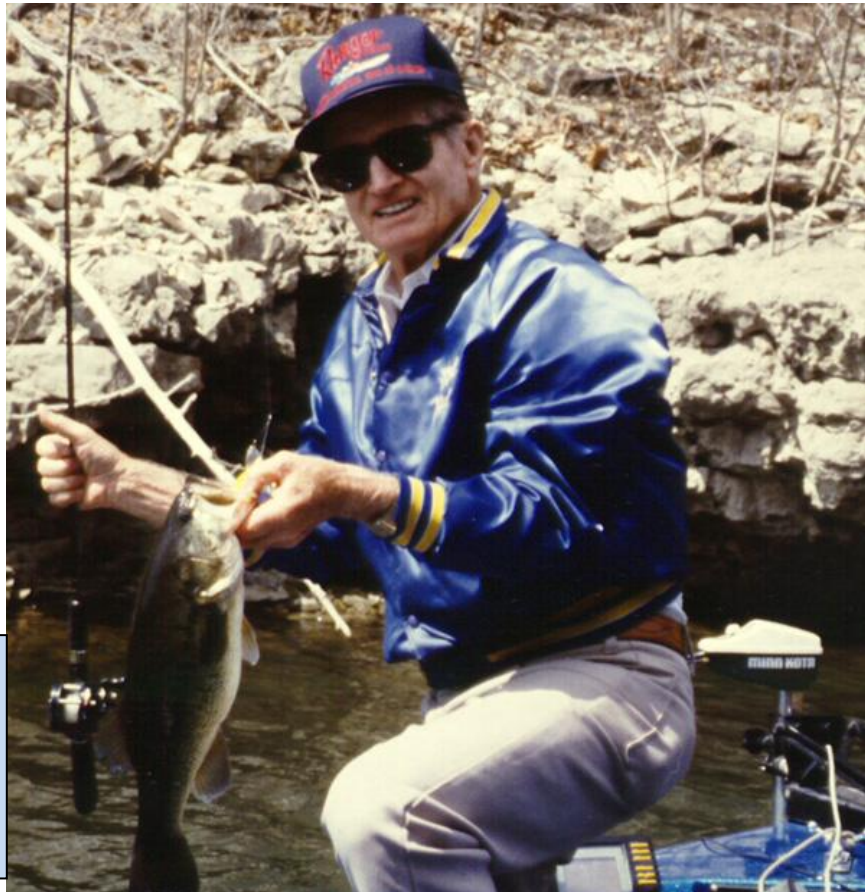
some dynamite bass action in deep, clear water reservoirs.

There are many lakes from which to select, but if I had one it would be Bull Shoals Lake, which is the largest of the chain along the Missouri/Arkansas border. You can keep up to date on the fishing by visiting the Bull Shoals Lake Boat Dock website at www.bullshoalslakeboatdock.com. Contact information is on the website, so give my old buddy, Rick Eastwold a call, or drop him an email. He'll be able to give you a report, or fix you up with whatever is needed.

If there are any questions about this or another fishing subject, contact me through the Dan's Fish 'N' Tales® web site at www.dansfishntales.com, which provides a link to the ODU Magazine web site, as well as the Bull Shoals Lake Boat Dock and some of the other companies mentioned in this article.

Until next time, get out on the water, and enjoy a great day of fishing.

Virgil Ward gained a big part of his reputation fishing the Ozarks, making it no surprise that he was a master of early spring fishing in that area.





**Tips from Rapala Pros Brandon Palaniuk and
James Holst for Early Spring Success**

No matter where you live or what species you target, there's a bait that will put fish in your boat this spring.

Bassmaster Elite Series angler and Rapala pro-staffer **Brandon Palaniuk** is looking forward to winning tournaments this spring with two baits he's come to trust from years of use: Rapala DT-4s and Rapala Rippin' Raps.

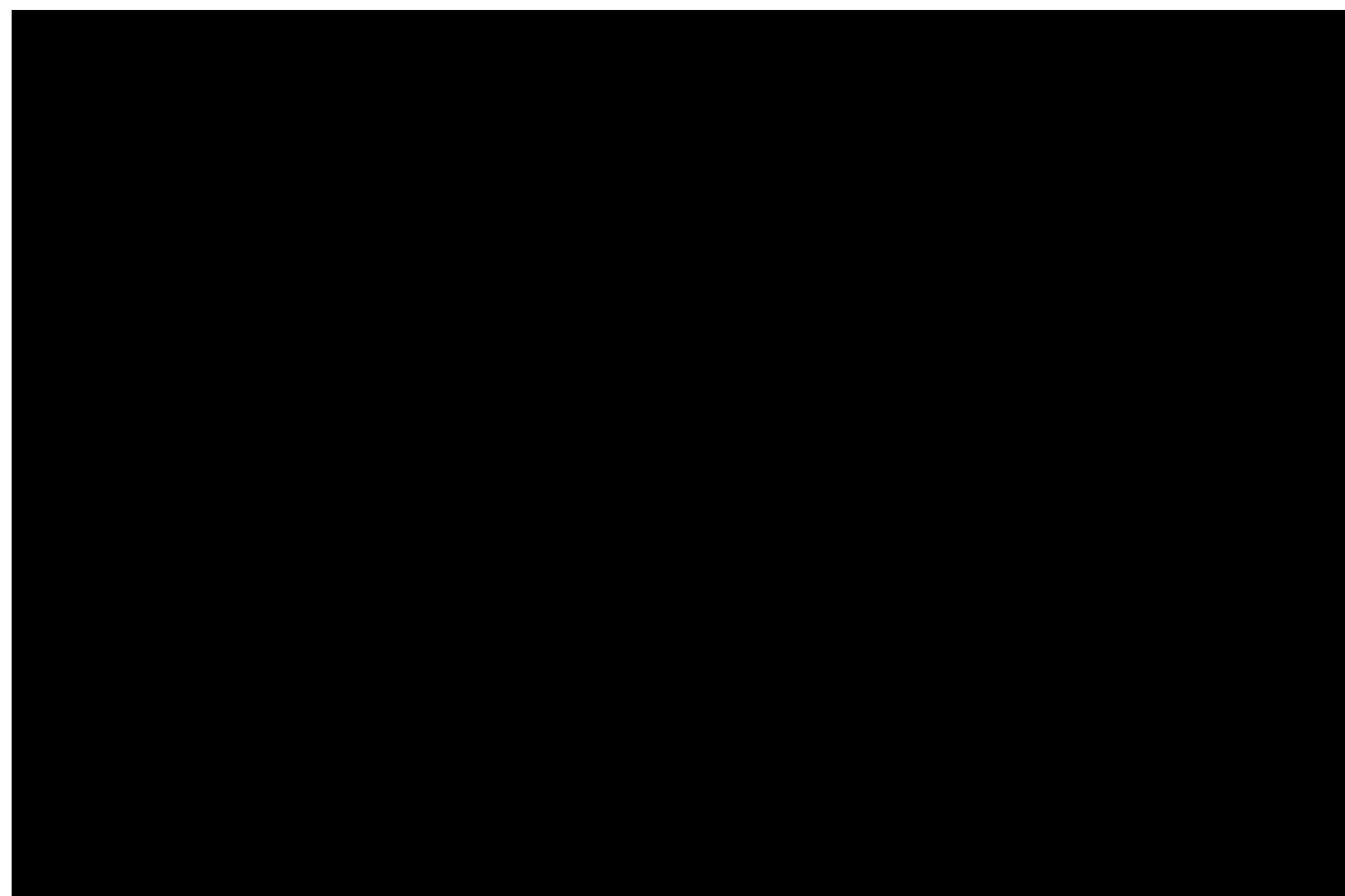
"I've got two favorite ways to catch fish in the early spring," says Palaniuk. "If you've got rock and

wood, I go with the DT-4, a crankbait that quickly dives to 4-feet and stays in the strike zone on the retrieve longer than nearly any other on the market. If you've got a lot of grass and big flats, then I'll tie on a Rippin Rap to take advantage of that type of structure. Both baits are great for coaxing bites out of finicky fish when the temperatures are still on the colder side."

While Palaniuk favors crankbaits early in the season, In-Depth Outdoors TV host and Rapala pro-staffer James Holst plans to catch huge walleyes in the early spring weeks with two favorite stickbaits, the Original Floating Rapala and the Rapala Husky Jerk.

"Stickbaits are one the best early-season baits going," he says. "They fish well shallow, where most early-season walleye can be found feeding, and an angler can pick up the pace a little in search mode."

Headquartered in the Twin Cities of Minnesota, not far from the banks of the mighty Mississippi – a trophy walleye fishery – Holst must first wait for what Ice Belt denizens call "ice out," when winter's ice melts from lakes and rivers, allowing open-water fishing again.



DT-4 for bass

In Rapala's DT series of baits, the letters stand for "dives to." The number represents the depth to which the baits will dive (when paired with the correct line, rod and reel). So, DT-4s dive to a maximum depth of four feet, making them great baits with which to target shallow-dwelling pre-spawn bass, especially on fisheries without much vegetation, according to Palaniuk.



When spring fishing in 45- to 49-degree water on rocky lakes, one of Palaniuk's go-to DT-4 tactics is targeting transition areas on sloping banks. He looks for 45- to 60-degree-angle banks with rock or wood - "something that those fish have to hold onto that's holding a little more heat," he explains.

When choosing bait colors, he matches the hatch, depending on bass' primary forage.

"If I'm Up North, I'm usually throwing some type of bluegill pattern," he said. "You can throw a crawdad pattern from north to south. I get into the shad patterns more down south."

Palaniuk throws his DT-4s on 15- to 17-pound fluorocarbon line. If bass are holding really

shallow, he'll up-size to 20-pound fluorocarbon line, which he says allows the lure to run higher in the water column, decreasing hang-ups.

If his electronics indicate that bass are holding deeper than shallower, Palaniuk will "go all the way up to a DT-16.

Rippin' Rap grass bass

On fisheries with predominant vegetation - generically referred to as "grass" by most bass pros - Palaniuk will tie on a Rippin' Rap.

“They put off a lot of sound and the lure comes through the grass really well,” he says. “And they’ve got a lot of really good finishes and color schemes.”

Upon locating a patch of thick vegetation, Palaniuk will “move outside of that and find the stuff that’s a little more sparse.” He casts to the sparser vegetation and retrieves his Rippin’ Rap over and through it, “just ticking the sides and top of those little grass patches.”



“As the Rippin’ Rap collides with vegetation on the retrieve, you almost just kind of let the rod load up a little bit - almost like you are shaking a worm there - and then as soon as that rod starts to load up, then you rip it out,” says Palaniuk. “Give it just a little bit of a pause and then keep it moving forward to trigger strikes.”

James Holst: As soon as late-winter temps creep north of freezing and begin the slow progress of knocking down the snow piles built up over a Minnesota winter, Holst has his first sign that the spring walleye spawning run is already in motion.

Catching early-season walleyes on rivers typically requires only simple presentations, Holst says. This time of year, finding fish is more difficult than enticing bites when found.

“Slowly rising water levels preceding the spawn will put schools of fish in perpetual motion, as they seek suitable current levels and food, all while making a slow upstream journey on their way to their final destination where they’ll eventually spawn,” Holst says.

So finding fish is job one. That means covering water efficiently, ruling out unproductive water.



“Once a pod of fish have been located, that’s when the stickbait really shines,” Holst says. “The Original Floating Rapala has likely caught more walleye than any other lure ever made, and for good reason. It has a very tight and subtle action that appeals to cold-water walleye that often have other things on their mind besides food.”

When Holst begins targeting spring walleyes on the Mississippi, water temps are in the low to mid thirties. He slows down his retrieve with a twitch-pause-twitch cadence, which “can be deadly on cold-water walleye.” At this time, he prefers No. 11 and No. 13 Original Floaters.

Holst ties on a Husky Jerk in stained water and at night, “when its rattles can help a hungry walleye find my bait.” In the spring, he favors No. 10 and No. 12 Husky Jerks.

In both baits, Holst’s favorite spring colors are silver-black, gold-black and firetiger. He fishes both on 10-pound Sufix 832 Braid with a 6-foot, 9-inch graphite rod.





Minnesota Bound

By D & B Ice Adventures

I got an invitation from good friend Andy Silovich to fish in the series championship for the North American Ice Fishing Circuit this past December. With all arrangements made well in advance, we arrived at our cabin on Mille Lacs close to 2pm after the 22 hour drive from Vermont. Andy and I barely could unpack before we geared up to hit the ice. Our first trip out was just to maximize our time on the water and maybe find an evening bite. We didn't find any fish that were worth trying to catch but we located some weeds and tons of perch using an underwater camera. As we left the ice, a bunch of guys were heading out for the evening walleye bite.

Our second day started with a scouting trip out onto Isle Bay. We debated on whether or not we should pack light and find fish or bring fishing rods and try to catch fish. We opted for packing just the basics so that we could leave the sleds at the cabin as there was about a foot of snow blanketing the ice. We ended up fishing a little bit after we found a nice thick milfoil patch with some crappies cruising through. Right off, I pulled up a crappie and bluegill but then nothing for the rest of the morning.

Why We Fish

Robert U. Montgomery

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Getting off the ice around noon, we made a 1.5 hour trek to Duluth for the Arrowhead Ice Fishing Winter Show. With just about every ice fishing item imaginable at the show, we were in awe of what the northeast lacks! After spending a few hours, we got back in the truck and started back to Isle. On the way, we got an invite from Keith Nelson to hit one of his favorite bodies of water for some panfish. After a slow start to our trip in Minnesota, the gracious offer from Keith was an opportunity we couldn't

refuse.

The following morning we got on the road early and met up a few miles from our destination. To say it was cold was an understatement. While us Vermonters experience some cold weather, I don't think that many people would be out at -20. We were warned at our rendezvous point that the road in was a rough one. Never in a million years did any of us imagine that we would be driving through the woods. Like actually through the woods! As the sun started to rise we got word that it was -27. Thankfully inside of our Clam shacks was nice and toasty with our heaters going!

Quality fish were cruising all around and much like Mille Lacs, these fish were tight lipped. Be it the full moon, big drop in temperature, or just an off day for the fish, we had to work for them. While sitting in the shack was warm, hole hopping was more productive for catching. For a few hours up until it was time to go, we went hole to hole looking



for active fish while braving the cold. We all caught fish and we even took a few crappie home for some surf and turf.

With the crazy weather that was plaguing Minnesota during our trip, our equipment took a beating. Most nights, we had to pull out all of our jigs to prevent rust and set up our shacks so that they could dry out and not just be a block of ice on the porch. At times our cabin was quite stuffed. Fortunately, the pellet stove



kept the front end of our house at a comfortable and drying 82!



ORG/WHITE



GLOW
WHITE/BLUE GLOW

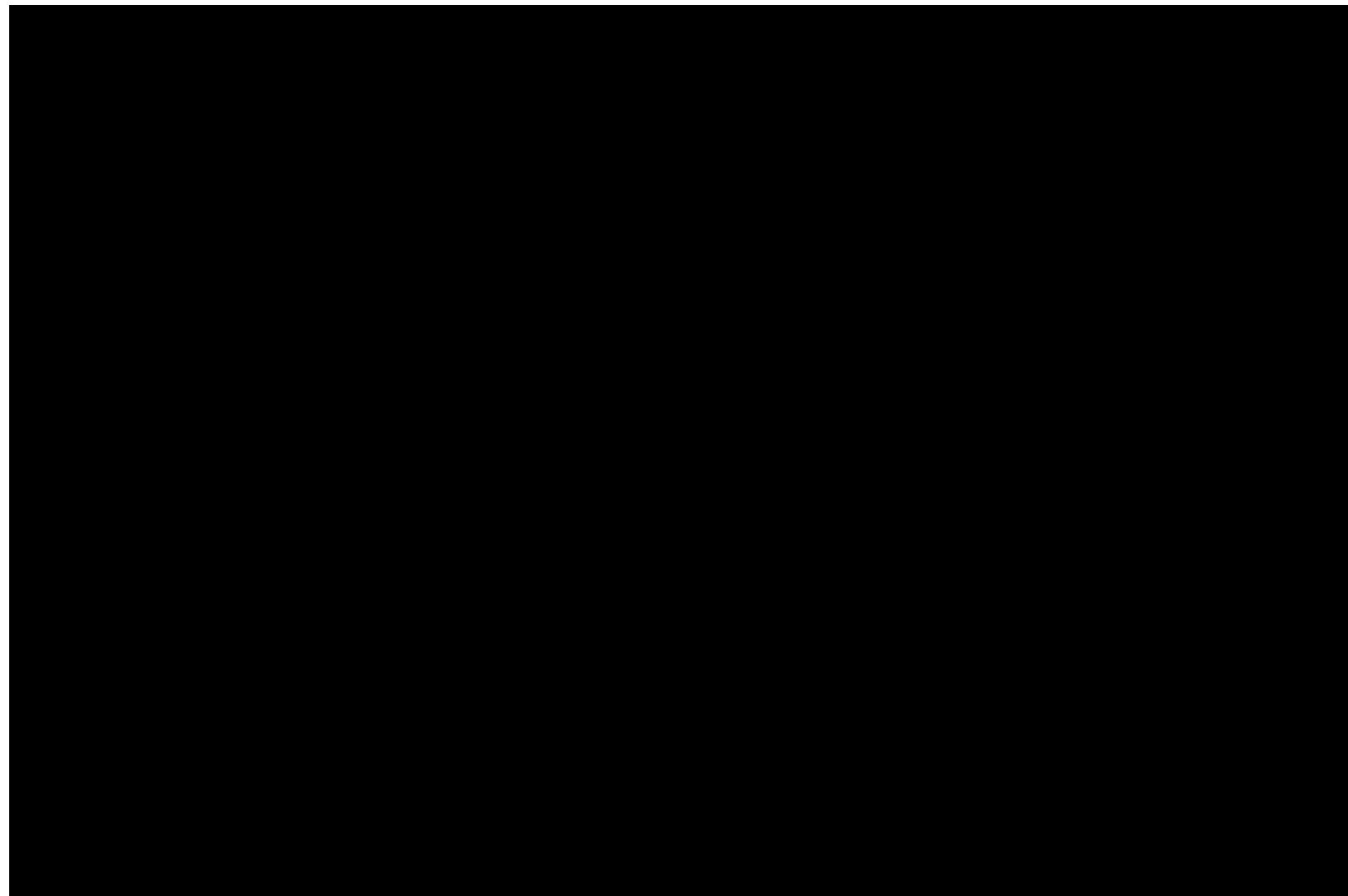
Finding fish on Mille Lacs wasn't a problem. It was the catching that has us stumped. We spent a great deal of time just trying to put some fish on the ice so we could get a pattern of what they were feeding on. After 6 days on the ice, we finally found a jig/plastic combo that worked somewhat consistently. We ran a white Clam Pro Tackle "Epoxy Drop" (pictured) with a pinched off tail of a motor oil "Stoni" from Maki Plastics. While this caught some fish it certainly didn't catch them all. They were beyond picky. Many fish would come in, put the jig right on their eye, and then swim along with it touching the entire length of their body. It was frustrating beyond belief! Probably the best feature of this large presentation was that it warded off the majority of the tiny perch that overwhelmed the shallows.

One afternoon while we were attempting to catch some fish, we set up a few tip ups for pike. Shortly after getting them out the first flag popped. About a minute later, Andy pulled a nice pike through the hole. Because of the freezing cold and wind, we didn't measure it but we figured it was in the high 30"s around 12 pounds. During our stay, we saw numerous pike of trophy size both looking down the hole sight fishing and on the underwater camera.

Having an underwater camera was a huge factor in locating effective patches of weeds and fish. While cabbage was abundant, it seemed that the crappie and bluegills were more

loyal towards the sparse patches of dense milfoil. Also, throughout the duration of our trip, the weeds took a serious turn for the worse. From tall green patches everywhere at the beginning to silt covered expanses for the tournament, the fish became even more concentrated.

The final leg of our trip was the tournament weekend. While we had spent quite a bit of time on the water, confidence in converting seeing them into hooking them wasn't all that high. With a few rods rigged up with presentations that had caught fish, there wasn't much else we could do other than fish like we do on any normal day. Day one fish species were bluegill and crappie. Eight of each. Day two was perch and crappie. Once again 8 and 8.



Day 1

With no points going into the event, we were at the back of the line with 76 other two man teams in front of us. The ride over to Wahkon Bay was around 7 miles in the dark. The slush and cold made the ride over take forever. With numerous four wheelers in front of us, the trail was pretty torn up as we rolled through. Once we reached the bay, pretty much every team in the competition was on the two weed patches that we had located pre fishing. Following the pack, we set up on the outer edge of the crowd. Right off we found a few bluegill on the camera and thought it would be a good start.

As fishing time approached, all the fish disappeared. Giving it a shot for a while, we couldn't seem to get a tight line so we plotted to move to our second location on the GPS. While people were near the mark, no one was on it. After punching some holes, we found no fish. Looking to

grind out the rest of the day in the area, we sat tight after seeing a few guys pull fish. While we saw a few on the underwater camera and sight fishing, it wasn't until 1:45 that Andy put our first and only fish in the bucket. It was a 9" crappie but by the looks and sounds of it, we weren't the only ones struggling. At the weigh in, 36

teams failed to bring in fish. For the day two line up, we made a jump from 77th to 37th place.

Day 2

Driving out it seem as if the line ahead of us was endless but turning the corner into the fishing area, not many people were in the area we pre fished. Pulling up on our mark, we punched holes, and started camering them. With the 8 am starting time ticking closer, we stopped searching and got our rods ready. Setting the shacks over the



top of the best looking holes, it was go time.

While the fishing started slow, the more noise that came in around us, the more fish we saw. Unfortunately, I caught a pile of bluegills a day late. Throughout my stellar bluegill bite, the crappie were cruising. Even though I had well over a dozen crappie come through my hole, I only rolled one and had one suck the head of my jig in several times. Andy had about the same luck.

Before the day began we decided that we needed to catch perch regardless of how the crappie bit. A little weight was better than none. When the time came, we headed out to a 20-30 foot flat. Having caught no decent perch while pre fishing, we settled for the first holes we got in. The perch were thick and about the time the jig reached the bottom, it was time to reel back up with one on. Unfortunately, they had no size to them. At the weigh in, we had no crappie but 8 perch. Our limit of perch weighed a whopping 0.92 pounds!

At the weigh in, there were some nice fish. While our weights weren't huge it was a great experience to fish against some of the guys that we have watched on TV for years. After congratulating the winners and saying our goodbyes, we hit the road to make the 24 hour drive home.

The drive home went smoothly other than snowy conditions from when we left until we passed through Wisconsin. These slow going conditions tacked on about 4 hours to our overall trip. By the time we neared Vermont, it was close to 8pm. After dropping other guys off, I pulled into my driveway at 11:30pm and unpacked just so I could pack it back up for the next morning. Yup... You guess it. I went fishing again!

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ROD SELECTION FOR OPEN WATER FISHING

By Bob Jensen

This is the time of year when many of us start thinking about new equipment for open water fishing. A lot of anglers are visiting sporting goods stores to

look at the options in fishing rods. It's good to go to a store that has a wide selection of rods so you can feel and shake the various offerings and determine which one best fits your needs. Following are some ideas for selecting a rod that will serve you in as many ways as possible.

First of all, you don't need a bunch of rods, and you don't need to spend a lot of money on a rod, although you certainly can. There are some rod models that are technique specific. In fact, there are some technique specific rods that are specific to a certain species of fish. Walleyes for example: There are rods out there that are created specifically for use with light jigs, or specifically for live bait rigging. These are outstanding rods and do the job they were designed for extremely well. If you're a hard core walleye angler, you might want to investigate these specie specific rods. However, if you're like most of us, you want to have a few rods that will work for a lot of different techniques. Here are some suggestions for accomplishing that.

Lots of anglers across the Midwest like to fish for walleyes, and there are a lot of techniques that will catch walleyes. If you're going to chase walleyes effectively, you'll probably need some different rods, but you don't need to break the bank to do so.

The first rod you'll want to consider is a jigging rod. Jigs are a great way to catch walleyes throughout the open water season. To simplify your walleye rod selection, consider a jigging rod that is medium action and six foot six inches or seven feet in length. A rod of these dimensions will be very good for jigging, but will also be very good for live-bait rigging, slip-bobbering, and trolling or throwing small to midsize crankbaits. It will also work for panfish and for jigworming largemouth bass, and will also serve well for many smallmouth bass techniques. This is really a versatile rod.

The other rod you'll probably want for walleyes will be a trolling rod. Most trollers like a longer rod, say seven and a half or eight and a half feet in length, and either telescopic or two piece for easy storage. You'll use this rod for trolling with boards especially, but also for flat-lining larger crankbaits and spinner rigs. Throughout the year, this rod will see a lot of use.



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If this is the year that you add a rod or two to your arsenal of rods, keep the above ideas in mind to help simplify the rod selection process a little bit.

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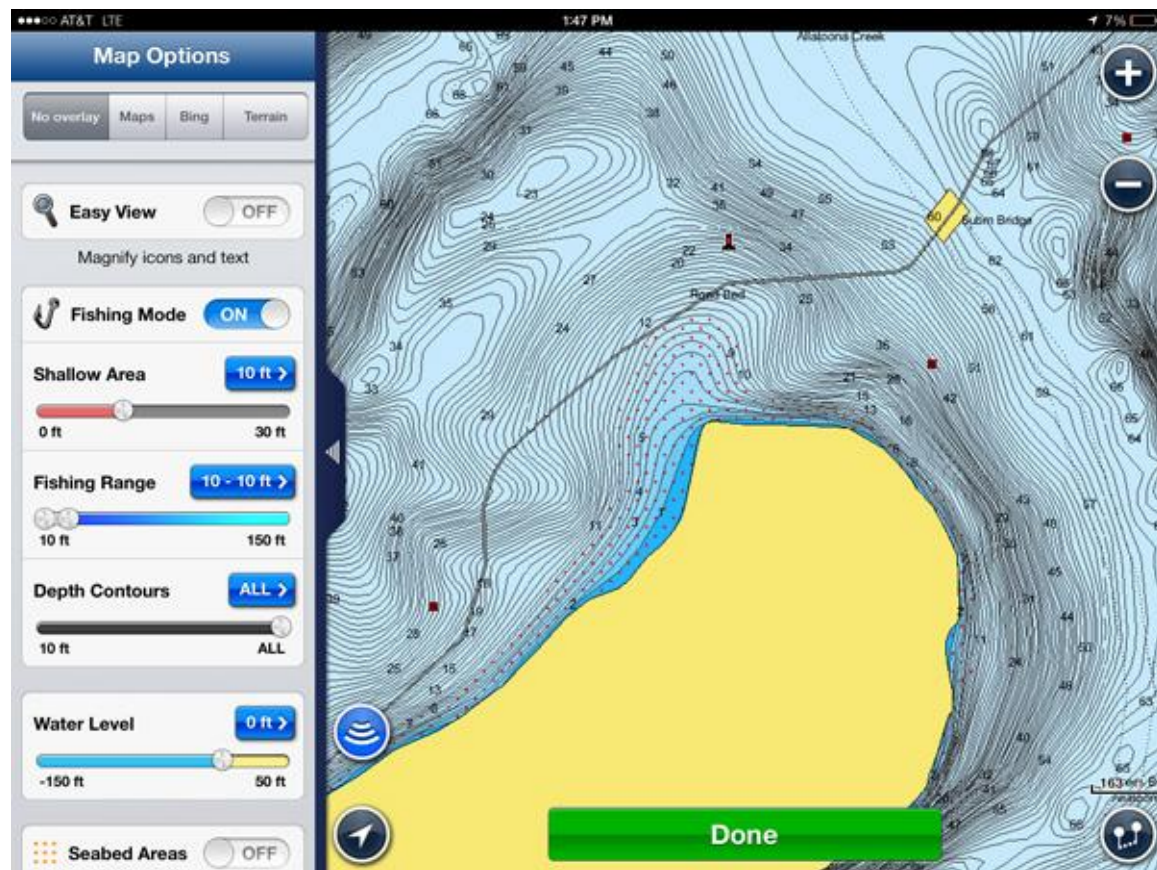
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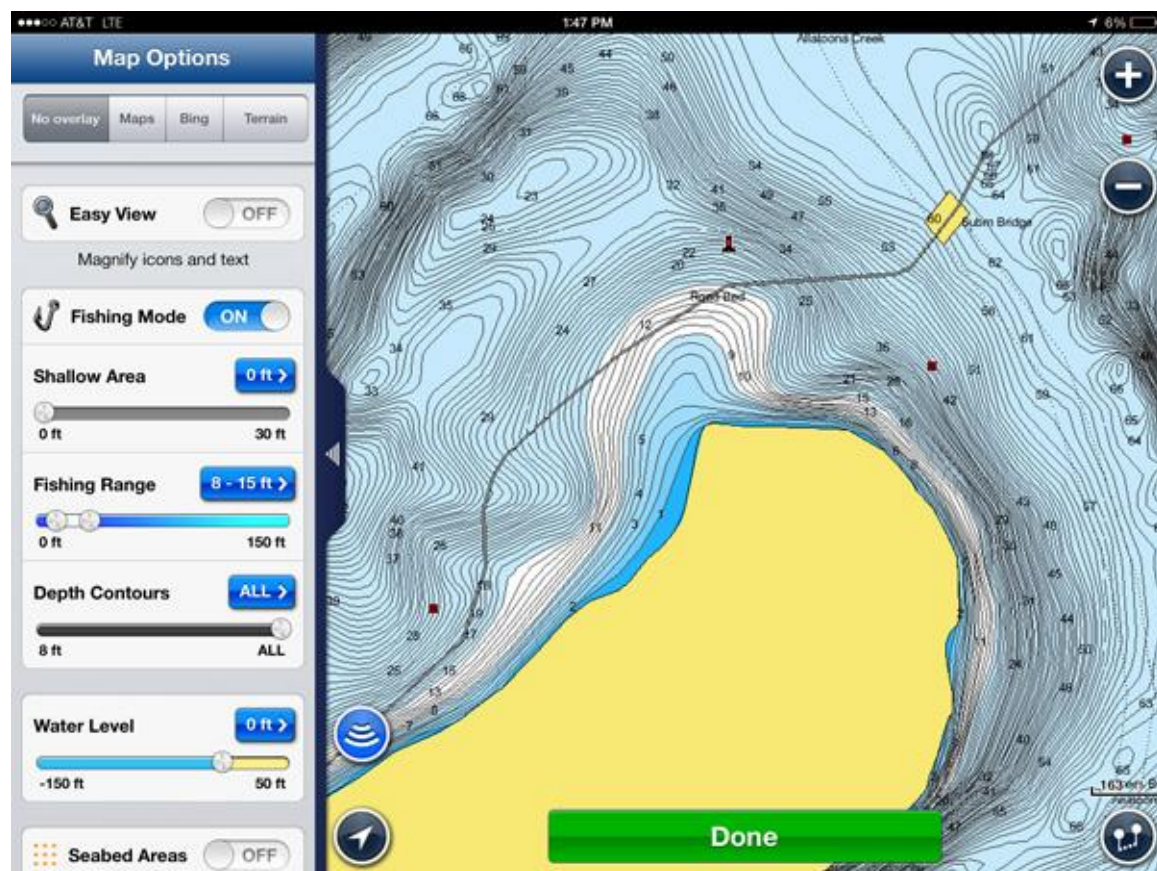


With today's smart phones and mobile technology improving, so do the advantages available to anglers using apps for fishing. Navionics has the #1 marine navigation app available today with app details the same as on their award winning charts. With smart phone apps, some features can be added quickly to further enhance the use of the charts both on and off the boat. Some can be extremely helpful based on your fishing strategy.

Using Advanced Map Options On "Mobile" Fishing

By Paul Michele

The idea of the Navionics app is to enjoy your time on and off the water. Planning purposes, searching new spots, showing friends where you/they have been, or in some cases where one might not own a boat as a GPS or back up GPS. On the app, if an area is downloaded first, it will work even without a signal giving GPS location and full map use. All smart phones with data plans come with a built in GPS. It first looks for cell towers to triangulate but if unavailable will use satellite locations. Now look at some advanced features that can be added to the chart to enhance the data?



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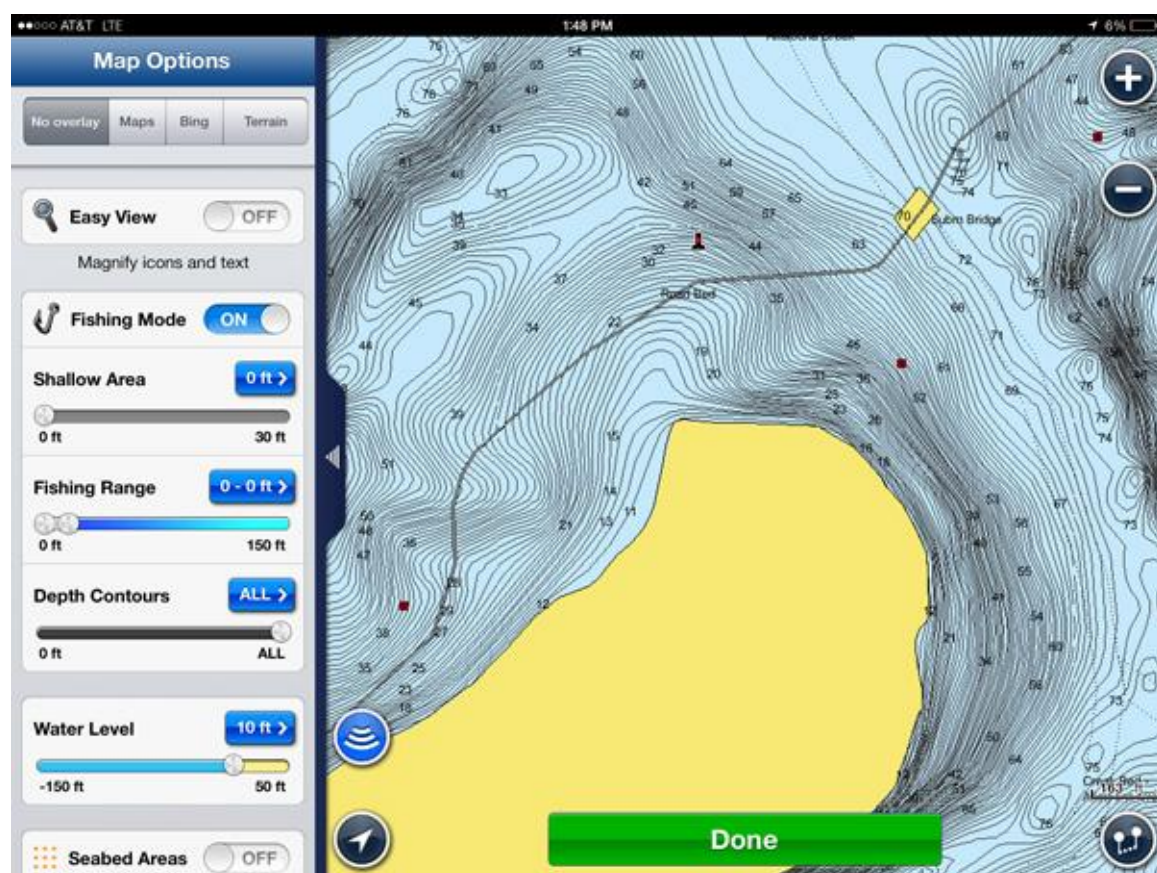
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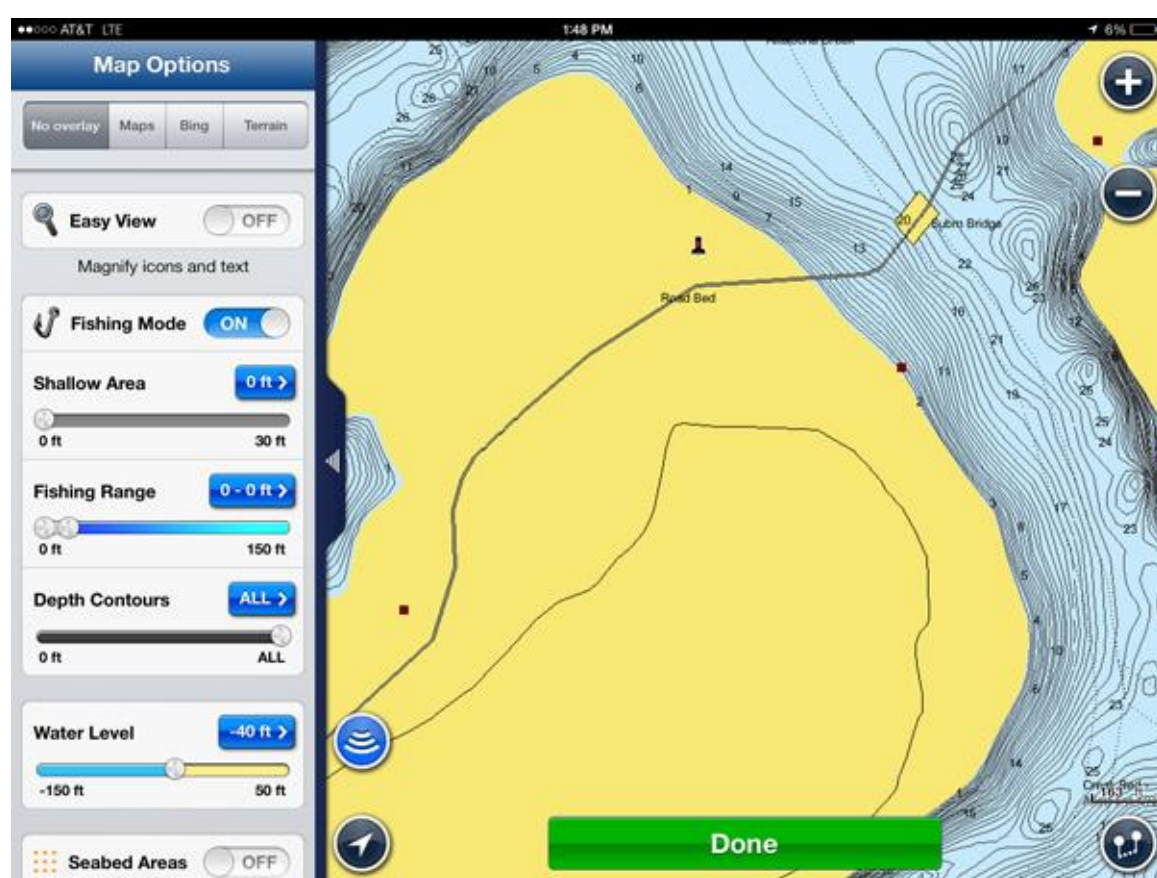
an in-app purchase within the app. This allows some navigation help with shallow water shading to know where not to run by adding in red icons to avoid those areas and stay in deep waters (see 1st image). When turning on the Fishing Mode, this opens up two useful tools- Fishing Range and Water Level. Fishing Range is where an angler can highlight a specific Depth that they want to either fish or navigate in. Let's say crappie are biting in the 8-15' range, this feature will highlight in white all depths on the chart that fall between these locations thus allowing better planning in accessing these spots. (see 2nd image) A helpful hint here, use the SonarChart layer to really dial the depths in with the one foot contours in more recent areas.



Water Level adjustment allows for adjustment of the lake level. If there have been heavy rains and the water is up 10', the contours and spot soundings can be adjusted to show that 10' change actually all the way up to 50' if there was some serious flooding (see 3rd image). Out



West where lake levels can fluctuate down in severe depths, the level can be adjusted as far as 150' low. This is very unique to Navionics with allowing a 150' maximum depth change. Regardless of the depth, if its 40' down, the map adjusts in both land mass, contours and spot soundings to show the 40' lake change. Again, more opportunity to adjust to lake conditions and plan your fishing. Perhaps note a new location that appeared as of the change, save it as a



waypoint, and then when on your boat add it to the plotter (figure 4).

Speaking of low lake levels, when water levels are low, many times new underwater structures appear, log jams, rock piles, etc. Since your boat can't go on land, hop out of the boat and walk over to that structure. Use the phone GPS to then mark that location. When you walk back to your boat, access it and save the lat/long to your plotter. New spot found! In fact, if you want to be really savvy, take a picture of the

structure on the app and it will be geo-referenced to that lat/long.

Nav+ is a recent launch as an additional feature. Nav+ gives the user one year of free updates to the charts on the phone. This gives the Freshest Data to anywhere the user draws the download box and redownloads the area. With areas changing and new data being released, this gives one year of simple updates. Along with that program, comes SonarCharts. This is a small "sonar-like" icon that appears in the bottom left of the screen. When zoomed in and selected, this icon changes the map to the latest SonarChart information. SonarCharts is all new one foot contours to 80', six foot contours from 80-250 and ten foot contours from 250-1000. This area is updated by boaters who have submitted sonar logs in their boating/fishing to help update the lake or map new areas. Sonar logs are recorded by the plotter and submitted to Navionics. These logs then get converted into new data and released to all Navionics users to provide better, more recent and more accurate lake maps. Keep in mind; this is contour information only which helps in fishing, your buddies waypoints and brush piles stay secret with him!

Lastly is a feature that will launch most likely in May of 2014. This feature is called Plotter-sync. Plotter sync will work on Raymarine units that are wifi built in (new Raymarine systems) or with Lowrance plotters through the use of a Go Free Wi-Fi product. How it works is using the iPhone or iPad, connect to the proper Wi-Fi for the plotter. On the Navionics app, draw a box around the area you want to update with freshest data. The iPad/iPhone will then update to your chart via the Wi-Fi connection and app to give you the freshest data for that area and latest SonarCharts. This allows the charting on the app to be updated at home and then seamlessly transferred to the plotter on the boat with that area of update. PLUS any waypoints you have created in looking at charts will also transfer to the plotter so you can do your "homework" away from the boat.

Decide which features work best for you. If you have any suggestions or tips, please share with us at Navionics so we can add to our wiki page and social media. We would love to hear how YOU use the app. Good fishing!!



Open Season Walleyes

Soft Plastic fluke tails, paddle tails and ring worms have dominated the river fishing scene in recent years. Pictured is the Impulse Paddle Tail Minnow.

By Jason Mitchell

Some of the earliest open water walleye fishing opportunities occur each season on river systems and flowages or bottle neck areas that open up because of current. Open seasons and open water are necessary and there are so many good early season fishing opportunities. The Mississippi River, Rainy River, Fox River and the Missouri River all come to mind. Each of these fisheries are drastically different with different terrain features, different forage and ultimately different fishing strategies. While there are differences from one fishery to the next, there are also many similarities. The beauty of fishing rivers is that fish location does get dictated by current... or a lack there of.

Across the board on a variety of river systems, we find some really big walleyes on shallow current seams. Current seams are obvious current edges that form where faster water meets slow water. Often when trying to dial in river locations, there will be a pattern as to how fish are positioned in the current.

If there is a general rule of thumb most of the time, it is this. Most walleyes will not be in dead water very far away from current and will also not be in the primary flow where the current is strongest. The sweet spot is often that edge or seam where the faster water meets slow or dead water. You can often feel the boat getting pushed in or out of this seam where you either come to a stop when hitting the dead water or get pulled through when you hit the fast water. Often, catching walleyes is a matter of getting the jig in the groove and then chasing after the jig with the boat or rod in order to keep the line vertical.

Of course there are always exceptions. We have found fish way up in real slack water a considerable distance from any current, especially big fish up shallow when the water is warming up. There are other occasions when the fish are holding in stronger current or darting in and out grabbing at food that sweeps by.

Slipping the current to keep the presentation vertical is also not the end all presentation on river systems either. Don't overlook dragging jigs upstream or hovering back and forth cutting across the current seam. In most current, you will have to use a heavier jig if you don't chase the jig but these different boat maneuvering options can be the ticket some days.

My favorite strategy for fishing isolated current seams is to cast or pitch my way through it because I feel like I can find fish faster and contact more fish with a cast. Where fish are positioned in relation to current flow is a moving target. I feel like I can look through a lot of water in a hurry by pitching and finally, I have a lot of confidence for big fish especially in shallow water. Drifts that enable me to pitch up into shallow water and then work back towards the deeper water underneath the boat really do cover a lot of bases at once.

This general rule of reading moving water and putting together the pattern is pretty universal but what can change drastically from one body of water to the next is the terrain and structure that causes these breaks and changes in current.

Across the Midwest, fishing with several top walleye anglers... what becomes interesting to me



as an angler is that several patterns or rules of thumb often keep reappearing. Different water, different day and different angler but same story.

For example, despite the popularity for braid and super lines, many top river rats still sing praise to the virtues of monofilament for some jig fishing applications. Easier to break off after becoming snagged and

easier to see were a few common reasons but the ultimate reason is how fish react to the presentation itself.

Whether pitching jigs out from the boat or fishing jigs below the boat, monofilament gives the jig some subtleness and fluidness in the water that early season walleyes often prefer. The other factor many top river anglers debate is the fact that early in the season when the water is still cold, the fish can hold on the jig without such abrupt resistance. In other words, you can feel fish more quickly and the fish can feel you when using braided line or a super line and at times, that can be a disadvantage.

If there is a general trend that really shows up on river systems it is this... many river rats still prefer monofilament and stiffer rod actions than anglers fishing still water on

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natural lakes or reservoirs. A perfect rod action we designed for pitching jigs in moving water is the Jason Mitchell Pro Walleye Series JM721MS which is a seven foot, two inch medium fast action blank.

Classic structure and big fish spots on rivers can also be surprisingly universal. Wing dams for example seem to attract and hold walleyes regardless

of river. Stretches of rip rap are always worth checking. Log jams also seem to have a universal appeal as big walleyes love wood. Clam beds also have a certain mystique.

Across the Midwest and beyond, one theme often keeps repeating. Some of the biggest walleyes caught each season are often caught in shallow water. This big fish pattern keeps repeating from one river to the next. Often these big fish are alone and these shallow patterns produce far fewer fish than the mainstream channel patterns that are often responsible for producing numbers of fish. You won't find piles of fish up shallow necessarily but when you are looking for one big bite, many top river anglers agree that one big bite will often come out of less than three feet of water.

Pitching jigs tipped with either hair or soft plastic has dominated the river scene for several years. For faster current, both hair jigs and ring worms fish very well. Paddle tails and fluke tails with more bulk often get preferred when fishing slower water. For casting and working a jig back through the seams where the current can change in velocity dramatically, I feel that I am usually much more successful if I error on the side of heavy in regards to jig weight.

Most days, I feel like I catch more fish if I use a heavy enough jig where I can still maintain bottom contact when the jig gets swept into the faster water. This also allows me some flexibility where I can drag or move upstream with the jig and also detect bites by watching the line. If the jig is too light where it is getting swept up off the bottom or if there is a lot of bow in the line caused by current, bite detection becomes much more difficult.

Walleye bites taking place on river systems right now offer some great fishing opportunities. Catching more river walleyes this spring is all about reading current and understanding current. Once you learn how to read water, you can not only identify key locations that typically hold fish and also repeat productive patterns.

Death Threats, Phone Calls and Harassment

Average Woman Hunters Being Targeted by Antis

By Kali Parmley, U.S. Sportsmen's Alliance

On average, 13.7 million hunters hit the field every year in pursuit of game with 11 percent of that figure being women. Celebrity sportswomen are commonplace on television, Internet and more and have recently come under fire by the anti-hunting community for promoting an outdoor lifestyle. However, in recent months, average women hunters are finding themselves in the crosshairs, being threatened and harassed by people from around the globe.

As is the case with Charisa Argys, a Colorado native and avid huntress who recently came under attack after a photo of her with a trophy mountain lion was shared on Facebook by an animal rights activist. That person, Silvia Wadhwa, is a German financial journalist currently working in Frankfurt, Germany.

"I posted a photo of my daughter with her recently adopted housecat on our local Humane Society Facebook page," explained Argys. "The next thing I knew, this Silvia person commented on and posted a link to my

personal page with a photo of my mountain lion. I have no idea how she found me."

The comment in question referred to Argys' mountain lion photo saying "Sadly, you don't love ALL cats, Madame..."

Different anti-hunting organizations quickly picked up on the photo and it was then posted to dozens of Facebook pages including the International Animal Rescue Foundation World Action (World Action), which includes numerous branches representing different countries around the world. According to World Action's Facebook page, they specialize in environmental welfare, conservation, preservation, and anti-poaching.

A fire storm of comments surfaced targeting Argys, often negatively referring to her physical appearance as well as threats to her life and family.

"I have never been called so many horrible, hateful names in my life," said Argys. "They even went as far as to post my full name, address and directions to my house."



Comments included:

- “Let’s hunt her!”
- “This ugly woman is an embarrassment and shame to all women around the world;”
- and, “I hope she knows how much she’s hated. Male or female, I hope they all suffer horrible hunting accidents.”

After a flood of comments, mostly by sportsmen to World Action in support of Argys, the photo of her and the mountain lion were removed. However, it was soon replaced with an article about women hunters on their sister site, www.speakupforthevoiceless.com.



Focusing on sportswomen, the article entitled “Hunting is Not Conservation,” attacks women hunters, and at times men, referring to hunters as having “antisocial personality disorder or sociopathology.”

According to the unknown author, women posing with their kill, specifically mentioning women wearing bikinis, is “behavior typical of serial killers that feel they need to prove themselves to their family or victims.” The author goes on to say that hunting gives women a “form of sexual gratification, a feeling of power and lust” and claims that women hunters wish “they were sexually abusing women, or maybe themselves.”

These types of articles may seem laughable but the threats Argys continues to receive are not a joke.



“I went on my first hunt when I was three years old,” said Argys. “I have been hunting with my dad ever since and it is a family tradition to us. I really can’t believe this is happening to me and my family.”

Argys is not alone, as women hunters across the country are finding themselves under attack like never before. As reported by the U.S. Sportsmen’s Alliance (USSA) in an earlier publication titled “Hunters in the Crosshairs,” celebrity women such as Melissa Bachman, Olympian Corey Cogdell, Olivia Opre and others have come under scrutiny from the anti-hunting community in recent months.

Why are animal rights activists targeting women hunters?

“They’ve seen an increase in women hunters over the past several years and that makes them nervous,” said Nick Pinizzotto, USSA president and CEO. The increase in women hunters, shows that our hunting heritage is not only being passed on from the father of the family, but from both parents. Certainly something that the anti’s don’t want to see as it puts their agenda in great jeopardy.

Numerous photos of women hunters with downed game can be found on all branches of World Action Facebook pages, and at times, full names of individuals along with locations of where to find them are posted.

“This is just the beginning,” says Pinizzotto. “The anti-hunters are attacking all methods of hunting to spread their radical agenda. Women, unfortunately, are just their next target. We have to come together as a community to make them stand down and to protect not only our hunting heritage, but all who enjoy it.”

About the U.S. Sportsmen’s Alliance: U.S. Sportsmen’s Alliance (USSA) provides direct lobbying and grassroots coalition to support, protect and advance the rights of hunters, trappers, anglers and scientific wildlife management professionals. The USSA is the only organization exclusively devoted to combating the attacks made on America’s sportsman traditions by anti-hunting and animal rights extremists. USSA is a 501(c)4 organization.



DRIVING 3500 MILES TO FISH, A NEW DEFINITION OF “CRAZY”

By Jake Bussolini

For more than 30 years I owned and piloted my own airplane. During those years when someone suggested that I might fish a new lake 1700 miles from my home in North Carolina, I didn't think twice about it because I simply would plan to hop into my aircraft and head for those fishing grounds. I sold that airplane last April, but I still had Devils Lake North Dakota on my bucket list. I had read great reports about that lake and its over-population of walleye, pike and yellow perch, so I had a choice to make. I could take the lake off my list, or make other arrangements to get there.

If it were simple a matter of economics, I would decide to make airline reservations to some nearby city close to the lake. But it wasn't simple economics, I had a full bag of equipment and several rods and reels that I also needed to bring along. Add to that the fact that my brother-in-law and fishing partner lived outside Chicago, so I would have to make a stop there to pick him up. I had just returned from a vacation trip to Alaska and I was hit with some very stiff over-weight fees for my luggage and the additional baggage charges were outrageous. The only option left was to drive.



Devils Lake is a massive lake in central North Dakota, about 90 miles west of Grand Forks. The lake covers more than 104,000 acres, with 386 miles of shore line and a maximum depth of about 55 feet. There are a couple of unusual features of this lake that interested me. The lake has no rivers or streams that feed or drain it, so its water comes only from topographical run-off of rain water. This also means that the lake contains no current. Because of the amounts of rainfall received in that area of the mid west over the past few years, Devils Lake grows in size each year. This growth is very visible by the massive levies that have been built along many of the shore lines. The growth of the lake has also resulted in many underwater wooded areas along the shore, and underwater plant life that offers shelter to the big fish that the lake holds.

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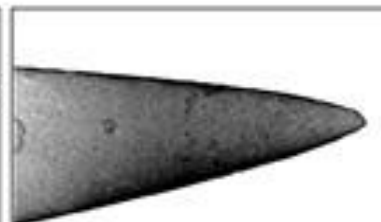
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I also felt that Devils Lake contains an interesting mixture of different species of fish, producing walleye and northern pike, which would be expected from this type of northern lake, but also housing white bass and huge yellow perch. In the winter months many anglers travel great distances to catch these unusually large yellow perch through the ice. The aspect of huge yellow perch intrigued me because I had not caught large yellow perch since I was a youngster.

I had received one warning about Devils Lake. Because it is surrounded by flat land, winds play a large part in the fishing experience. Unfortunately I did not know how big a part. There were also a couple of other facts that never came up in my

research. The perch are normally considered a winter fish are not normally plentiful in the summer months. Also since the lake has very few coves, channels and creeks, the walleye roam constantly and are rarely in the same place two days in a row. The most important factor which became a negative one was the reputation that the lake has for producing relatively small fish, especially walleye. Walleye are plentiful but they are small.

I put aside eight days in my schedule to get three full days of fishing. The other five days were for travel, since I was driving. We planned to use the first day for exploratory trolling around the edges of the underwater weeds. That turned out to be wasted time since the weeds and grass were so thick and covered with algae slime that most of the time was spent cleaning off the crank bait lures. Casting the wooded areas produced some small northern pike, but nothing to write home about. At the end of the first day we lowered our standards and tried jigging for walleye with leeches, but that also produced few results. Perhaps the most disturbing fact of the first day was the winds that blew about 25 knots all day. On a wide open lake like this, boat control with those winds made fishing very difficult.

A new strategy was needed for the remainder of the trip. We discovered by talking to other anglers, that the walleye were only biting night crawlers when jigged very close to the bottom. Most other anglers were catching walleye from an anchored position, a procedure that we rarely used. But action was needed so we decided to use that strategy the second day. We also decided to work with the wind by fishing the morning hours, breaking at mid day, then returning to fish until nightfall. This strategy seemed to work fairly well. We caught our limit of walleye (5 each per day) and a lot of big yellow perch. Nearly all of the perch were bigger and fatter than the walleye. We also found that the pike were more interested in hitting the worm tipped jigs than they were in hitting casted lures. My brother-in-law is shown here with one of many pike that we caught on jigs.

These pike were not monsters but it was fun catching them on a jig, a small hook and monofilament line with no wire leader.

An interesting side-light to this experience took place before we started the second day with night crawlers as bait. I went to the bait shop and asked to purchase night crawlers. The attendant asked me how many dozen I wanted. I thought he was joking and I said I needed only one dozen. He looked at me with a strange snicker on his face like he was thinking, "here's another stranger to this lake". We found that the small size of the walleye and the movement of the



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anchored boat in the high winds made the initial bite feel very light. The fish had also developed a knack of taking the entire night crawler off of the hook on the first bite. By the time we sensed the bite, the fish was gone and so was the night crawler. Within about 30 minutes we had gone through the dozen crawlers with only one fish to show for it. We had to boat back to the bait shop, this time buying five dozen crawlers that lasted the rest of the day and resulted in catching our limit of walleye. Using a half crawler with a small part of the tail showing seemed to be just as effective and a whole crawler, and the hook up rate was much higher.

The perch activity was surprisingly heavy considering the fact that it was late in July. We easily caught 10 perch each on a daily basis. Two of the average size yellow perch are shown in this photo.

In almost every case, the perch that we kept were larger than the walleye.

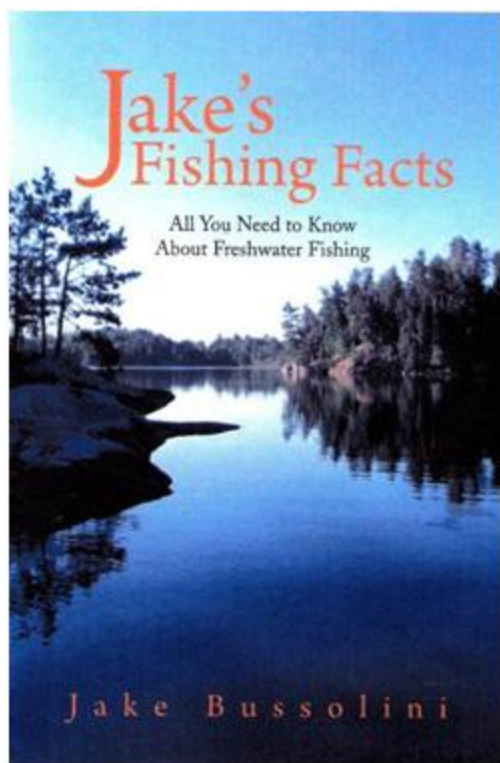
Even with the mid-day break and night fishing,

we could never escape the wind. On the last day the winds blew all day in excess of 25 knots. On both of the last two days, even with the high winds, we both caught our limit of walleye and a good number of fat perch. A typical half day stringer is shown in this photo.

I am usually a catch and release angler, so this photo is one of the rare ones that will ever show me holding a stringer of fish. The reason is simple, walleye are the exception. On our annual fishing trips to Canada we are limited on the number of walleye we can bring home. Since perch and walleye are members of the same family of fish, we wanted to mix the filets to see if we could taste the difference. We could not.

Considering the price of gasoline, one would have to question the actual cost of a pound of walleye on this trip. But all of us anglers know that we never base success on economics. Everyone has to do at least one "crazy" thing in their life so I will list this as my crazy 3500 mile drive to catch a few good eating fish.

Jake Bussolini is the author of five books about freshwater fishing. His latest book was recently released titled, "Jake's Fishing Facts". This book and all of his other writings can be examined and purchased at his web site, www.jakestakeonfishing.com.



Wild Rose Musky Habitat Study Delayed

By David Ewald

Last fall at the Wild Rose State Fish Hatchery in Wild Rose, Wi, State WDNR Biologists,

Supervisors and staff, eagerly awaited the start of a new pilot study, incorporating artificial habitat in rearing ponds with musky, walleye and other species. Multiple offices within the WDNR, jockeyed for position to decide just what to study first.

WDNR Biologists and staff discussed the various benefits of incorporating habitat in their Hatcheries and which species to use them on first. Musky were the first in line, with musky being the State fish. Being an ambush predator, Musky instinctually seek cover to hide and attack their prey. The grow ponds lacked anything to hide and learn to hunt around. Typically, the fish would circle the rubber lined 2 acre ponds, relating to the only physical form available, the water's edge.



Original story.

When I began discussions with Steven Fajfer, Natural Resources Operations Supervisor at Wild Rose, he explained they had been studying musky raised on pellets indoors and then switched to minnows when put in the grow ponds outside. This would be in comparison to fish that were fed minnows exclusively from start to finish. Next, they would stock pre-designated lakes with both groups of fish and track them.



Because this study was already underway, by incorporating habitat into the above feeding parameters, this would give the Biologists even more and improved data for comparison. Although discussions and plans to use the habitat with Walleye and other species present at the Hatchery, those fish would have to wait until the Musky study was completed. Next, the hatchery had to select the best option for them in artificial habitat.

Fishing Artificial Fish Habitat is produced using reclaimed PVC vinyl siding. Multiple pieces of durable, flat, strips of material are held together by cement, forming the base. These patented, multi-textured, bush like units, provide shade and surface area, forming a fuzz of aquatic growth when placed underwater. This natural process is nature's pristine way of converting over abundant nutrients into periphyton, (fuzz/algae) which is then consumed by the small fish by a process called "grazing". All fish eat this exclusively as fry.



Each unit is unfolded and bent by hand, to abstract shapes. When placed on the lake or pond bottom, they simulate something like an artificial Christmas tree, providing hiding and feeding areas. The mid-sized Safehouse model was selected as the preferred size for the staff to work with. Standing just under 4' tall and opening up to over 7' in diameter, each unit stays in place with the weighted base, coming in at about 15 pounds total.

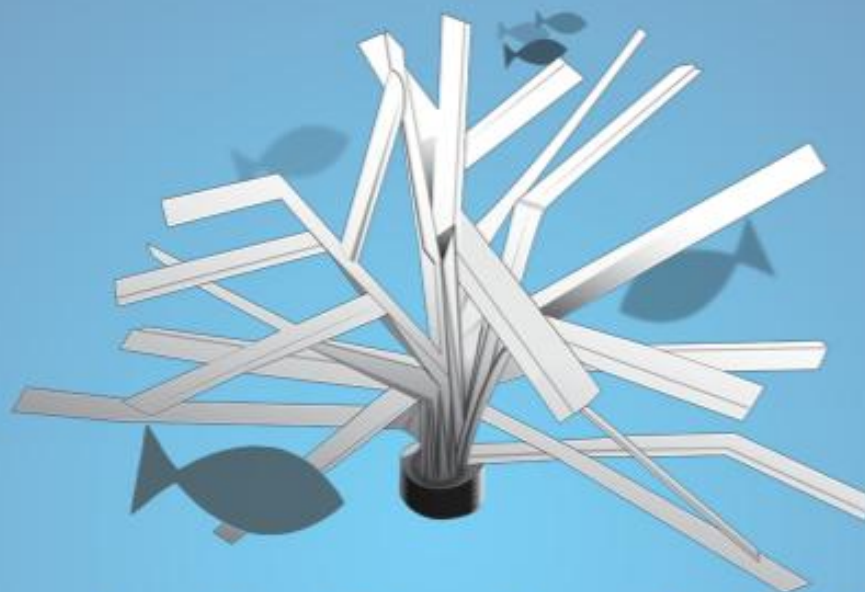
The ability to wash, disinfect and re-use over and over again, made it the easy choice for the many studies the State has planned. 300 units were delivered, 75 in each of the grow ponds, awaiting delivery of the musky from the Michigan DNR.

When we left Wild Rose last fall after setting up the habitat, we could hardly wait to hear that the ponds had been filled and the Musky had been put in the grow ponds. After a number of months passed with no confirmed delivery, the anticipation turned to disappointment. The musky wouldn't be stocked with the habitat this year. Bummer yes, but with good reason as the details unfolded.

Steven explained a great deal of the background of the State's current and past stocking efforts with Musky. Back in the early 1900's, the Great lakes spotted musky were common in Green Bay and the surrounding waters of Lake Michigan. Unfortunately, poor water quality and over fishing wiped them out. Starting in 1989, Wisconsin received eggs from the Michigan DNR and began restocking them in Green Bay. When those fish became mature and attempted to spawn

naturally, they became the source of eggs for the stocking program, since there was very limited natural reproduction. With the outbreak of VHS in 2007, that was no longer an option.

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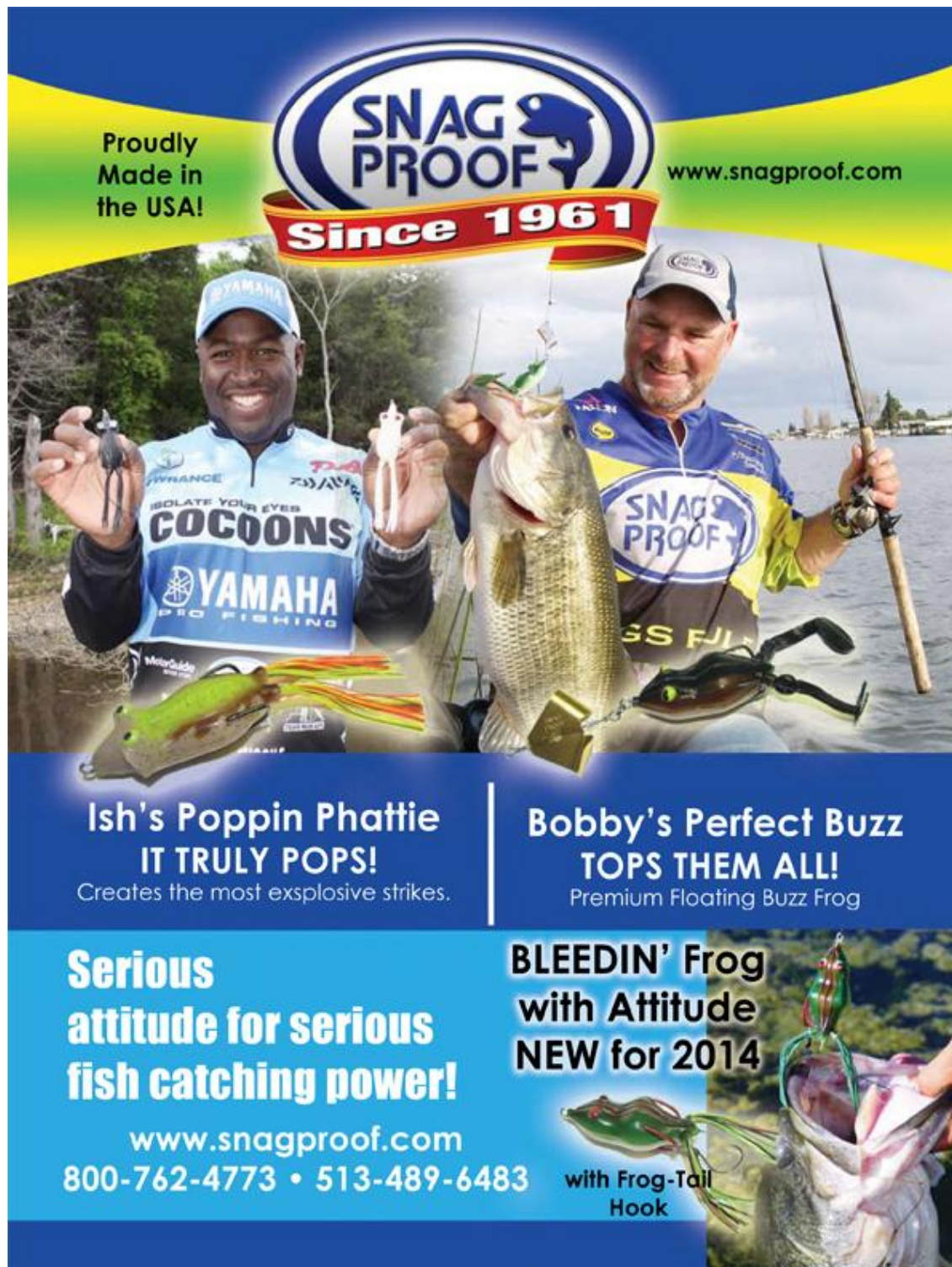
With the local fish not viable to use for brood stock anymore per VHS, that wasn't the only problem with local stock as the genetic diversity was lacking. About 2007, the State began looking for other outlets to acquire the Great Lake Strain. For a few years, WDNR worked with Ontario, purchasing fingerlings from Georgian Bay stock, which had been raised on pellets. This worked ok, with most fish being stocked directly into Wisconsin inland lakes and a few grown at

the Westford Hatchery to about 12" and then stocked. The biggest problem was the red tape getting them across the border each time, resulting in lengthy delays and increased costs.

Back in 1989, the WDNR began working with the Michigan DNR Fisheries department, stocking Great Lakes Musky in places like the Indian River, Burt and Mullet lakes. to name just a few. Michigan also has a top notch program and cool water facility. Easy to transport, healthy and close to home, the two States work well together on each other's experience and knowledge. Michigan has a wonderful and robust fishery, with plans to improve the State's fishing opportunities even more. Recently, \$1,000,000 in Grant money has been made available for habitat improvement and installation projects.

The Musky that are to be brought in to Wild Rose for the habitat study are coming from Michigan.....at some point. About a week before the fish were to be delivered they were tested one more time by the Michigan DNR staff. There was a problem. The biologists discovered Piscirickettsia-like organisms, or something called P.L.O disease in the Musky.

The presence and importance of Piscirickettsia - like bacteria in mammals have been long recognized, but only in recent years could they be identified and characterized in aquatic animals. For this reason, it was not until the late 1980s that Rickettsia agents were linked with major diseases in fish, and subsequently attributed as the cause of substantial economic losses due to disease-related mortality in the 1990s. Piscirickettsiosis and piscirickettsiosis-like diseases have affected aquaculture productivity, profitability, species compatibility with commercial rearing, and fish transport.



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Musky with the disease were first discovered in Lake St. Clair in the early 2000's. It can appear as red spots or blotches on the fish. The WDNR asked them to hold onto the fish for further testing, which showed no definitive results of where or how they were infected. Although the fish appeared healthy, robust and happy, the Wisconsin officials regrettably had to decline the importation. A sincere feeling of disappointment spread through the various department offices, as the realization of waiting another year to begin the study solidified.

"The risk is simply too high to utilize fish with ANY known issues or problems." That is the standpoint the WDNR had to take. "The investment in time and money to study diet and habitat with any potentially skewed fish stock is not an option." It's not known what the Michigan Hatchery did or will do with the infected fish, but a new, fresh batch of Great Lakes Strain Spotted Musky are already growing fat, planning to come to Wisconsin this fall of 2014.

The Wisconsin DNR Fisheries Department and their own state of the art Wild Rose State Fish Hatchery, will continue to draw attention. Known as one of the finest run Hatchery programs in the Nation, all eyes are on the leaders, the ones to watch.

It's tough decisions like these, that ensures that anglers all across the state will continue to enjoy some of the World's finest freshwater fishing. Plans to utilize the habitat are taking place with walleye, while the musky mature for delivery. "We have plenty of fish that we are eager to study within the habitat. We just wanted to start first with our well known and much loved Musky."



Patience and adjustment to ever changing issues in the aquatic realm is a stark reality today. Learning from past experience and pushing for new ways to grow better, stronger and more sustainable fisheries, the Musky habitat study will happen. This fall, Wisconsin's plans to grow smarter, stronger, "super" muskies will begin.

Fishing Salmon has never been so easy!

If freshwater fishing is what you are looking for, you will be delighted of the abundance of your catch. The five species of salmon you can find in this area of Vancouver Island, Canada, are: Chinook, Coho, Sockeye, Pink and Chum. Because Campbell River is situated on a southern migration route for all of these species, fishing for salmon in this area is great. A fishing expert from Go Fish

Destination Campbell River – The Salmon Capital Of The World

By Rocco Bellosta

Canada will give you the information to go to spectacular fishing locations: lakes, rivers, creeks, where you are able to catch salmon and trout and – why not? – do some wildlife sightseeing!

Before you start fishing in British Columbia, you need to purchase and carry a fishing license and other additional conservation surcharges; your license is also used as your identification and because catches of some species are required to be recorded, you will do it on your license.

With Go Fish Canada, your whole family will enjoy the vacation!

If you'd like to bring along your family and friends for a great gateway, Campbell River offers a wide range of wildlife adventures and it's well known as top-notch sightseeing. Many visitors from all around the World come here every year for whale watching and Eco-





tourism. An important wildlife protection program and an abundance of amazing, natural habitat have meant that the Island boasts a diverse and healthy population of killer whales (orcas), grey whales, bald eagles, seals, black bears, salmon and cougars.

Go Fish Canada offers a wide range

of sport fishing packages, tailored to your needs. Whether you travel alone or with your family and friends, we can organize activities for everyone. The Campbell River area offers so much to do!

Go Fish Canada basic sport fishing package includes:

- transfers from/to Campbell River airport
- accommodation at "Lodge Right on the River"
- facilities: kitchen; full bathroom; laundry; Wi-Fi; BBQ; fishing storage with everything you need for fly fishing and spin casting; smoker; cleaning, smoking, packing of your catch; garden.
- transfers from/to the fishing locations (gas excluded)
- a sport fishing expert, that will give you the information to go to amazing lakes and rivers all around Vancouver Island. He has been sport fishing in the Campbell River area for more than 20 years and he knows all of the best spots!
- fish from your own private beach right on the river – fly fishing or spin fishing.

PRICE: starting from \$2200 CAN, one person, 8 days. Prices can vary depending on number of people and length of stay. DEPOSIT: We require 30% deposit on booking and final payment at your arrival at Lodge Right on the River. Book or ask for more information at booking@gofishcanada.com. Our fishing experts will answer all your questions!



CAROLINA RIG DOES HAVE OPTIONS

By Captain Mike Gerry

Every year as we move to this transition time where the bass are staging a lot and it seems very difficult to get a consistent bite the Carolina rig comes into play. It's the kind of bait that has much more versatility than most people imagine, you just have to be creative when you set it up and when you fish it.



If you're an old timer like me you probably learned that the Carolina rig is a bait that can be dragged on the bottom with a heavy weight about two feet from the end of the line. In fact we use to throw 2 of them out and drag one on each arm moving them slowly with the power of the trolling motor; it was called fishing a ball and chain! Many times being very successful working back and forth from one side of a creek bed to the other. Today the options to change it are wide and many!

We first made the rig more versatile by changing the bait you were dragging, for many years it was just common place to rig it with a Do-Nothing worm. It had 3 hooks the bait was very short and any novice could catch fish with it, as it hooked a fish without a hook set. We then changed the weight from a heavy 1oz. to a variety of weights addressing different depths and different situations.

Today the options have become endless, with just a slight change in leader length, weight and type of bait you can address many different situations and fish it deep, shallow around grass, rock and stumps. If you change the bait on the end it also gives you options, you can fish floating baits and fish it off the bottom, fish a long worms and give it more action with many possibilities. Today you can go to fluorocarbon line that sinks and also change its presentation. The point is use your imagination and a Carolina Rig can address about any situation and catch you fish!

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Captain Mike Gerry



Trolling Systems

By Ted Takasaki and
Scott Richardson

The term, "Like father, like son," aptly describes Bruce and Nick DeShano, the men behind Off Shore Tackle. For example, Nick has his father's enthusiasm for drag racing. But he can't take part like his dad because Bruce has more free time now that Nick is taking over day to day operations.

Nick also has his father's love of fishing and trolling is his favorite tactic. And why not? It works to find fish fast on big water like Saginaw Bay and Lake Erie, where the pair have spent hours in search of walleyes. And Bruce has spent a lifetime helping make trolling easier and more productive for everyone.

Bruce DeShano had no trouble convincing Nick to follow in his footsteps.

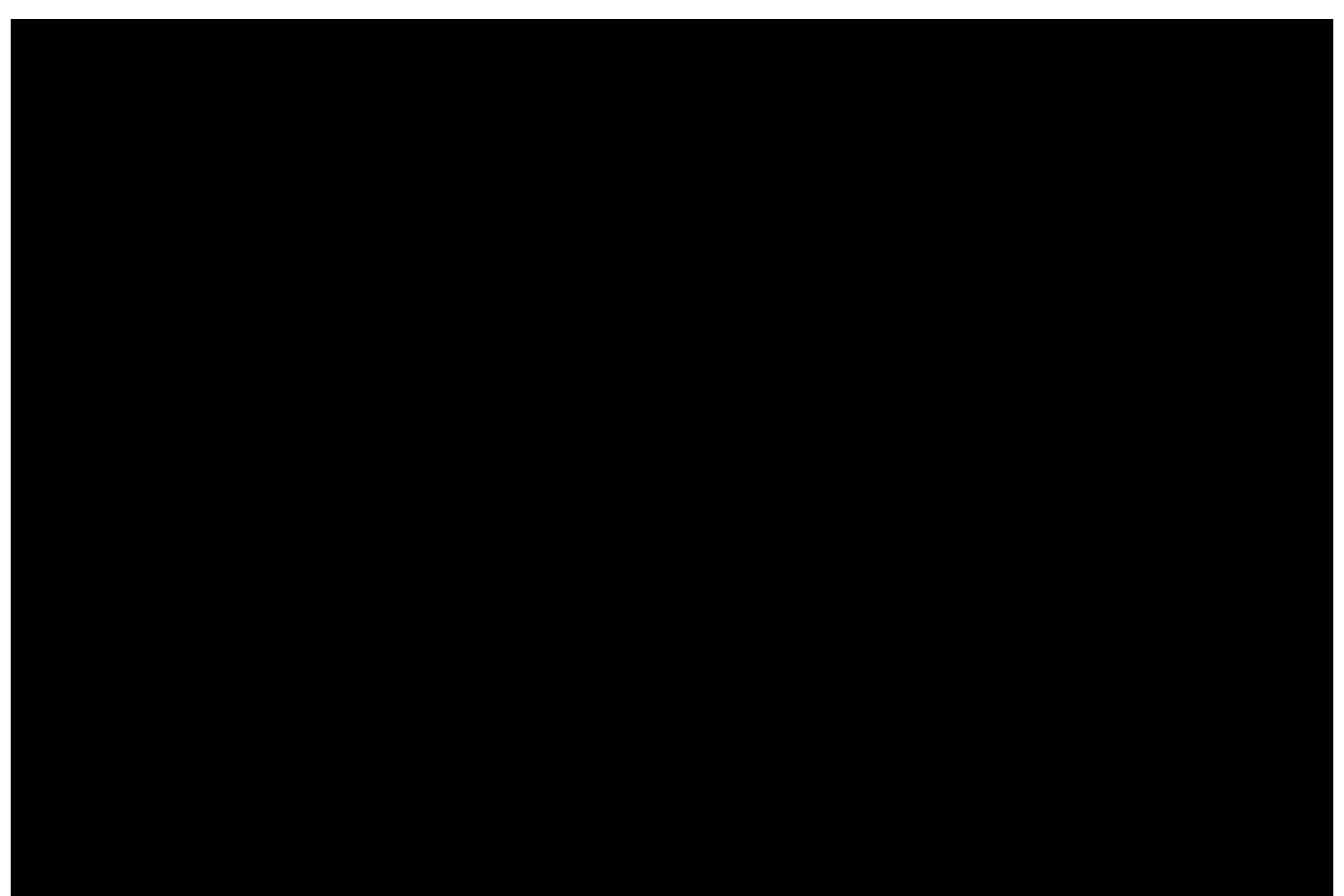
"I was free to choose what I wanted to do," said Nick DeShano, 38. "But the industry is a pretty fun business to be in. And the people you get to work with are some of the greatest anglers in the country as well as the up-and-coming guys. It was easy to convince me to stay in the business." As a teenager, Nick was first mate on his dad's charter boat while trolling for huge king salmon. That was about the time Bruce began developing the first products that would eventually make Off Shore Tackle into a leader in the fishing industry. Its mission: to provide anglers with everything they need for trolling successfully.

Nick remembers watching his mom and dad put together the clip releases that were the first products. Bruce hoped to sell them to companies already making downriggers. Unlike the downriggers on the market at that time, his clip release allowed fishermen to see the rod load up when they had a hit. When other companies weren't interested, Bruce used the idea to start Off Shore Tackle.

Later, Bruce designed trolling boards with the help of walleye pros at the time. He also added snap weights to Off Shore's arsenal. From that time forward, Off Shore was able to help anglers sift through the water column up and down and side to side to find fish fast. Off Shore was taking off when professional walleye tournament circuits, including the Professional Walleye Trail, were growing. Trolling was effective and became popular.

"It was the hot new thing to do," he said. "Sometimes, timing is perfect."





As Nick grew older, father and son fished together on the Michigan Walleye Trail, which was a proving ground for some of the best competitive anglers in North America. When they had free time they would troll Saginaw Bay near their Michigan home for big 'eyes. In fact, 5-to 7-pounders were so common that Nick was surprised when they competed on lakes other than Saginaw Bay that produced limits of just 17 inchers. "I didn't know that walleyes even grew that small," said Nick, laughing.

Still, walleye fishing is Nick's favorite.

"It's hard to beat reeling in a big king salmon. But walleyes are fun. If you get one, you usually get a lot. They're a lot easier on equipment (than big salmon), and you don't have to go as far from shore. Walleyes are a hard fish to beat as far as just going and fishing," Nick said.

Trolling offers several advantages over other methods of fishing, he added. Though it's fun to catch walleyes by jigging or rigging, the fact is the fish tend to be smaller than walleyes brought to the scales by trolling. Trolling is also a great way to introduce newcomers to the sport. It's easy to notice when a planer board darts back signaling fish-on, whereas it takes time to develop the "feel" of a fussy walleye softly inhaling a jig.

"You can take people who have never fished before," said Nick, "and they can see a (Tattle) flag go back. They know a fish is on."



For tournament anglers fishing new water or big water, trolling helps find fish in the limited time they have to prepare. Due to that factor, trolling also appeals to weekend warriors who have to find fish fast or go home with empty livewells.

Nick on New Waters

When fishing a lake for the first time, Nick advises to start at local bait shops. The staff will point you toward the “community spots,” the ones that everyone knows about. Go there first, check out the action and see how deep fish seem to be. But don’t stop there. Study the lake map to find similar places with similar structure farther from the ramp, where crowds will thin.

If you’re in the Great Lakes, dropoffs may be extremely subtle. Even a foot or two is enough to hold fish. Electronic mapping coupled with GPS is a great tool to find and follow breaks in the middle of nowhere far from shore.

Next, look for baitfish. If shiners are the main food source for that body of water, they’ll be closer to the surface. Shad will be in the middle zone. Suckers and creek chubs will be on the bottom. Walleyes will be nearby.

For weighting systems, Guppy Weights and Tadpoles are two excellent choices. Guppy Weights can be used as snap weights and/or as in-line weights and Tadpoles will take crankbaits or spinners down to extraordinary depths.

Start with snap weights and Guppies. Put on a lure or a crawler rig, let out 50 feet of line on the line-counter reel, snap on a weight, then let out 50 more feet, then add an Off Shore planer board and run it to the side. Off Shore has made its trolling boards even better in 2014 by adding an OR-16 release to the back of the board. The OR-16 release has a pin in it which makes it almost impossible to lose the board. Repeat the process while changing only the size of the weight each time from 1 ounce, 1.5, 2 and 2.5 ounces. Four baits are now running at different depths in the water column. Guppy weights also come in 1/2-ounce, and up to 3 ounces.

Off Shore’s Tadpole weights work for deep fish which are down 30 feet or more. They can also be used to run lures shallower with less line out. See www.offshoretackle.com for a video that will show you how to rig it. The weights are made of zinc, a metal that allows Off Shore to be more exact about the weight than lead, which tends to vary considerably. In addition, zinc is more environmentally friendly.

If using crankbaits, troll fast at first, say 2 to 2.5 mph. Make “S” turns to speed up the outside boards and slow the inside ones. Spinners work best at 0.8 mph to 1.7 mph. Slow down a bit when you get a fish to see if the speed change triggers more bites. To stay on the school, mark

the location on the GPS and electronic mapping system (if the boat is equipped with either or both). When fishing big water, GPS is a must for safety reasons. If a storm or fog rolls in, you have to be able to find your way back to the ramp.

Pay attention when a fish strikes. Where was the bait in the water column and how fast was it moving? If a certain weight produces a fish or two, change one of the other lines to that particular weight. If you get another fish at that depth, change another line to run at that spot in the water column. With three lines at the same depth, use the fourth line to experiment with depth and different lure shapes, spinner shapes and sizes and colors. Never stop experimenting! Although one color may be catching fish, switching to another color might produce more or larger fish or both. Some uninformed anglers believe that trolling is a lazy way to fish. Not so. Something always needs to be done, whether trying new colors or lures or blades or clearing weeds off lines. Stay busy.

“Don’t fall into the mindset you have to do it ‘this way,’” Nick said. “Try other ways. Everybody thinks this is the way they have to do it. But fish have don’t rules. They’re just looking for something to eat.”

If the action slows, reset the lines at four different depths until fish are located again.

Switch to inline weights if fish stay at the same depth for a long time or when walleyes are shallow. The baits can be set just 10 to 12 feet back from the boards, which allows for tighter turns.

Nick said he and his dad are aware some anglers are put off to trolling because they think they need lots of expensive gear, including line-counter reels, special trolling rods and planer boards. But Off Shore’s Mini boards are made to be used with the rods you already own. These mini boards are small so storage is not an issue. They’ll fit into a coat pocket if need be for Canadian fly-in trips. The Mini Boards are perfect for smaller lakes, but they work on big water too if the weather is calm. The trick is to just to keep them moving so they don’t sink – and keep the rod tip close to the lake surface to prevent the boards from popping out of water. Another advantage: mini boards are extremely sensitive to strikes, even more than Tattle flags, Nick said. He’s used them with as many as five colors of leadcore line.

“They are quite the little tool,” he said.

Honestly, he loves anything that helps troll more effectively. Like father, like son.



"GET YOUR FROG ON"



Lake Cherokee, TN June 21- Potomac River, MD July 26
California Delta, August 2,3- Lake Guntersville, AL August 9