

October 2014
Fall Fishing
Double Edition



ODU MAGAZINE™

*Secret Schooling
Bass Lures*

Fall Back Walleyes



**Here, Kitty Kitty
and
Musky Mayhem**

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October is by far the best time of the year for outdoor sportsmen. Our lakes, ponds and rivers have been left to the anglers, hunters are in the woods for their quarry of choice and ice anglers are readying their equipment for their season to begin. What else can you ask for? For some of us it a great World Series, pro football or hockey for our viewing pleasure. October sure is great.

This is our first time releasing an October edition. And we hope it touches all outdoorsmen in some way. This edition will be an annual combination issue that mixes fall fishing, hunting, ice fishing and an ice fishing product guide. Please enjoy.

In the following month many of us will have an opportunity to cast a vote or two that can affect our outdoor way of life. Here at home it seems that I am getting daily reminders from pollsters that I better get out and vote. And that is a good reminder, if you can get past the inevitable call at dinner time. So for us sportsmen and gun owners we have a lot on our plate. There are national Senate races that can affect how we possess firearms and which ones we can.

We have many gubernatorial races that can shape our statewide hunting and fishing laws down the road. In Maine, there is a chance that trapping, bear baiting and hunting with dogs could be banned. Other States face a challenge by allowing the wrong candidate into office can lead to limiting our access to public lands, when we can hunt or fish, which ammo we can use, which lures we are allowed to throw and a host many other scary situations can affect us outdoor hunting and fishing rights.

This past weekend I was at a little get together and heard something that totally surprised me. I met an adult, with kids who loves the outdoors, who has never voted. Really, I had asked the man. And sure as I write this, it was true. It made me think how many of us who love the outdoors totally ignore or leave themselves out of the local, statewide or national elections? So, in the next week be helpful to those who can get to the voting booths and offer to drive them. Strike up a conversation to fairly educate those who have tuned themselves out about the issues. But, by all means get out and vote.

You can also follow us on [Facebook \(NEW PAGE Just Launched\)](#), [Twitter](#), [Pinterest](#) and [Google Plus](#).

And please, enjoy the outdoors.

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Photos: *Cover provided by Pradco Fishing. Index
page provided by Vexilar. Inside hunting cover
provided by Andy Westcott. Thank You All!*

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Finding The Bait

By D & B
Ice Adventures



Fall can be a tricky time of year to fish. Sure it is nice as the seasons change and the cool air starts to invade but many times, we have come off the water wondering what happened. The old saying "here today, gone tomorrow" really comes to light. One thing that is true for all days on the water, especially those in the fall, bait is key. Everything will be feeding as they try to prepare for the long winter coming.

One of the most important thoughts to consider in the fall is that fish are just confused as we are. They have just spent the last several months basking in the warm water and are now stuck trying to decide what they are suppose to be doing. The cold nights and warm days

have the fish constantly moving. As an angler, this gives us a new opportunity. If you do your homework and put your time in, you can have some very successful outings. A little luck along the way doesn't hurt either.

Since the major focus for any fish at this time of year is food, you should focus on bait. In most cases where you find one, you'll find the other. Depending on where you fish, this can be an extremely daunting task. We have learned that a good place to start is actually close to spring spawning grounds. Most of these areas offer key features that draw the bait in during the early fall. In most cases these features are: flowing water, cover for protection (weeds, brush, rocks), and warm water. Keep in mind water temperature fluctuates often with cooler nighttime temperatures and warm days, therefore making a mid day bite when the sun is at its warmest. Now, if the body of water you are one doesn't provide much for bait in shallow water, understanding your electronics is huge. Being able to properly identify bait balls will often lead you to fish if you can keep up with them!

On a recent trip, we hit a new body of water. Not knowing what to expect, we focused in on finding bait and structure. We scanned close to 6 miles of shoreline and when we saw bait breaking the surface near structure, we fished just long enough to identify what species were present and then moved on. We ended up with 42 crappie and a GPS loaded with positive waypoints for next time. Trips like these not only build confidence but provide us with insight that we can apply to other bodies of water.

This time of year, the fish are really feeding so fishing fast is not necessarily a bad thing. While swimming small plastics works well, throwing crankbaits produces some hard hitting bites. For most

lakes, we have found that "Crappie Crankbaits" from Arkie Jigs not only have the right action to entice the fish but match the size profile here in the northeast that they are looking for. It's also important to remember that the bait is always moving, so don't get hung up in one spot. If you land on a decent bite for an hour and it slows quickly, the bait has probably moved on with the fish in tow. Use fan casting in hopes of locating the bait pod again or else get back to searching on your electronics. Most times a small move is all that is necessary.



Weeds lines near sharp breaks are also another great place to find crappies during this period. Distinct weed edges and breaks create a barrier for crappie to push bait. They can also use them as ambush points patiently waiting for a ball of bait to pass by. When fishing weed edges, we like to use two methods. Depending on the movement of the fish we'll use bobbers or swim a jig. If the fish seem to be somewhat stationary, a bobber will help to pinpoint the largest concentration of fish and keep your bait in the strike zone longer. If the fish are actively chasing the bait trying to fish parallel to the weed line while maneuvering boat just behind them. With enough waypoints, you could also troll the edge.

While crappies keep us busy most of the year, we do spend time chasing other species. In many of the bass lakes that we fish, fall seems to produce some of the largest fish of the year. Finding them can be tricky but if you are fortunate enough to piece together a pattern, the bite can last for hours and sometimes days. Early morning bites seem to be the best bet because the bait rises to the surface soaking up the sun. In bodies of water with roaming bait, start your search off scanning the surface over large flats in 10-15 feet of water. When there is a rise it is usually followed by many more. Be sure to stay far enough away so you don't spook them but make sure your cast clears the active zone.

Our main pattern for targeting walleye in wood seems to hold pretty steady up until the boats are stored away for winter but last fall we found that fan casting plastics and worms along ledge and gravel shorelines will produce. As with everything else, this is a movement that is enacted because of bait. Finding the magic speed that constantly just ticks along bottom is key but short pops also has its time. Mess around with jig head weight until you find one that agrees with environmental factors like wind and current.



Don't rule out any water without trying. Just recently, I spent a few days fishing for big black crappie. While we were sitting over 9 feet of water, our casts could reach shore where two pound plus fish were cruising and crushing bait that was skipping along the rocks. This is just the time of year to start thinking out of the box. Don't be ashamed of a few bad days on the water the bite will only get better as winter approaches. If you stay at it, you will soon be rewarded with a bite all to yourself while the rest of the outdoorsmen are in the woods!

Secret Schooling Bass Lures

By Brad Wiegmann

Bass are exploding around your boat frothing the surface chasing shad everywhere. It would be impossible not to catch one, but that is exactly what is happening. You can't get a sniff, nibble or strike on any of your favorite topwater lures.

Scratching your head in disbelief, you do what any angler would do. You just keep changing your lures in hopes of one being the magical lure bass will bite. However, it's not likely to happen with the bigger lures you are trying to catch them on.

Why big topwater lures don't catch bass during certain times of the year has to do with several factors. One reason is bass are so keyed into size they will only bite on the exact sized lure. It's the typical match-the-hatch scenario where bass only bite the same size lure.

Another factor is an abundance of smaller shad due to a recent shad spawn. Small shad in the fall will bunch up in schools in the back of major feeder creeks and pockets making them easy prey for bass.

Fishing pressure can also influence bass to be extremely cautious. That happens even when there are hundreds of shad swimming around. A loud splashing lure will send wary, high-pressured bass scattering.

To catch bass, an angler has to use smaller, downsized versions of bigger lures. Downsizing the lure allows anglers better match-the-hatch and give bass what they want. However, there is one catch to fishing with smaller, downsized lures and that's anglers have to use lightweight fishing tackle.

For many anglers using lightweight tackle when fishing with smaller lures brings the fun and excitement back to angling. In many situations, it's maybe the only way and angler is going to catch any or fish efficiently. High quality spinning reels like the WaveSpin Reels Legend 250 or DHxL (www.wavespinreel.com) rigged with small diameter 6 pound test monofilament or Fluorocarbon fishing line on a 7 foot light action rods make the perfect combination when casting lightweight lures.

Over the years, frustrated anglers have slowly figured out what special downsized lures catch schooling bass that refuse bigger lures. Most anglers keep it a secret unwilling to share with anyone including their best fishing buddies. However, a few anglers are willing to share their secret lure and the following four lures consistently get mentioned.



Interestingly, the list is made up of these secret lures covering the three zones where fish can be caught when schooling. Topwater zone is where bass can actively be seen feeding on the surface. Middle zone is where fish feed on schools of shad being pushed up towards the surface or trying to evade packs of bass chasing them. Bottom zone is where injured and dying shad slowly fall after being attacked by a school of fish.

At the top of the list is a topwater lure. The Heddon Zara Puppy may only measure 3-inches, but it appeals to schooling bass no matter where you are fishing it. Just like the larger walk-the-dog style lures, an angler has to master the technique of walking-the-dog to incite bass to strike it.

Fishing a topwater lure is simple. Just cast to where the fish are breaking the surface then walking the lure back to the boat. Some days it takes a fast retrieve and other days a slower side to side walking action. There will be days when bass will only strike even downsized lures casted accurately to a certain spot.

It may be fun to watch a bass explode on a topwater lure, but reluctant bass normally will bite lures fished in the middle and bottom zone more aggressively increasing the number of strikes and bass caught. The middle zone ranges anywhere from just below the surface to almost on the bottom. It's the zone where schooling bass are chasing balls of baitfish or feeding on individual shad away from the school.

Two of the secret lures are designed for fishing in the middle zone. It's not surprising since bass spend most of the time chasing schools of baitfish below the surface. The Worden's Rooster Tail, an in-line single spin lure often catches bass when no other lure can.

All of the action comes from just a single willow leaf spinner blade. It's subtle action and small profile matches even the smallest shad.

The other middle zone lure is a Rapala Countdown Minnow that's shaped just like a small baitfish. It can be casted or even trolled. Both of these lures can be counted down to where the bass are feeding.

While oversized magnum spoons are all the rage in bass fishing right now, however, bass in the bottom zone may not want these large oversized magnum spoons. When bass are being finicky, the smaller Cotton Cordell 1/4-ounce Little Mickey spoon is the perfect size and catches everything from small bass to big bass.

These secret lures are all too lightweight for using a baitcaster. Ultralight spinning tackle is perfect, however, using the right one can make your day fishing these lightweight lures.

Most people don't like spinning gear because of line twist and tangles. Using a WaveSpin Reel with the patented "Wave" spool and guaranteed no tangle technology allows loops to come off





the spool. This eliminates the dreaded bird's nest created with traditional reels.

Anglers will also need a superior drag system when fishing with these smaller lures. Both WaveSpin Reels Legend 250 and DHxL have an exclusive 10 disc drag system for a silky smooth release of line from the spool. This

eliminates the catching effect that would break the line or rip the hooks free from the fish when it makes a run. The smooth exclusive WaveSpin Reels 10 disc drag system also decreases stretching the line that would otherwise result in the fishing line twisting and tangling.

Now you know the secret lures to catching reluctant schooling bass. Just tie on one of the secret lures mentioned above to a spinning rod and reel. They maybe small lures, but the results will amaze you and your fishing buddies.

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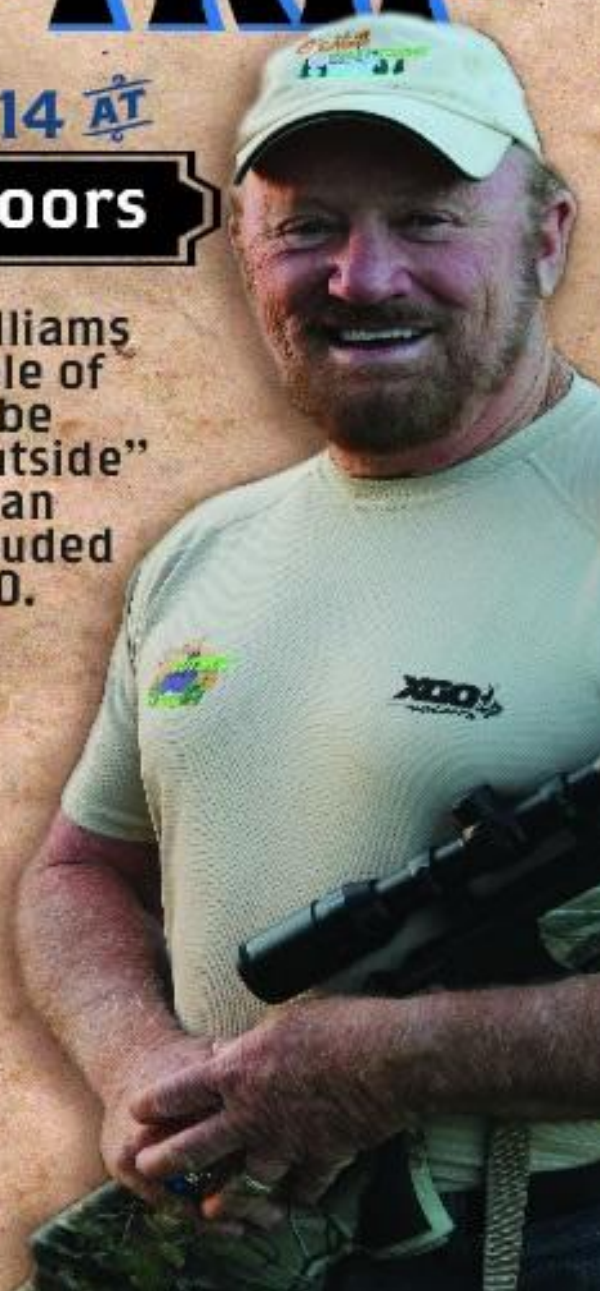
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Georgia
On My Mind





Fall Trolling Tactics for Walleyes

By Jason Mitchell

When I look back at past years, there are several patterns that really stand out in the fall. Vertical jigging over deep rock piles. Casting stick baits after dark over shallow rocks. Pitching jigs tipped with soft plastic swim baits into remaining weed beds. Live bait rigging with big chubs. Trolling crank baits along main lake contours. The locations can vary from current areas and bottle necks to classic sharp breaking structure and rock, either deep or shallow.

For much of the fall, trolling crankbaits dominates much of the fishing I do. The location (and how the fish are using a particular location) determines the most efficient presentation. So often, we find fish in transition relating to big pieces of structure. What I love about trolling crankbaits when fish are transitioning in the fall is that trolling is fluid, trolling allows you to see how and where the fish are moving much more effectively especially if you are on the water every day. Big schools of fish might be pushing up or down a reservoir. Fish might be filtering out of back bays and moving across the mouths of bays over deeper holes and main lake structure. Usually, there is a general movement, could be fish moving up or down, in or out but they are collectively moving somewhere and trolling allows you to

sample the water and keep tabs on these often nomadic fish much easier than any other presentation I can think of. On big bodies of water, this is especially true.



There is an old adage with fall walleye fishing that bigger baits work better in the fall. From my experiences, this is usually true. Most days, larger baits seem to be much more effective. Anglers theorize that young of the year baitfish are larger in the fall and the other reasoning held by anglers is that fish want to bulk up on food in the fall and a bigger bait makes bulking up much

easier. Don't know the why's exactly but it is usually a good starting point. I start out with big baits that move water but there are exceptions to everything. There are a handful of baits that are confidence baits for me... Salmo H6F Hornet and Jointed Shad Raps in the size five or seven for inland lakes. Salmo 8SDR Bullheads and Reef Runner Deep Rippers on reservoirs. All of these baits leave a good footprint and move water, these are baits I always try when I am on the water come fall. Each fishery however is unique. Deep Diving Husky Jerks are popular on some Great Lake fisheries in the fall for example and



these baits have a pretty subtle shimmy as they move through the water. One particular lure that I have used with great success just about everywhere I have fished in the fall is the Salmo 8SDR Perch. If it came down to just one lure, that would be it for me during October and November when I am trolling for walleyes.

There are many nuances with trolling and there are a few wrinkles I like to incorporate into my trolling that I think helps me catch more fish in the fall. You can adjust the footprint or vibration of a deep diving lure by how much line you let out. When you run a lure close to the boat, the lure will run more up and down, bill down and tail up where the bait puts off the most vibration and looks the largest from the rear. As you let out more line and the dive curve flattens out, the lure will level off where the bait runs more horizontal. As the bait levels, the lure still displaces water and rolls but the vibration and foot print gets toned down. Many anglers will troll cranks and let out line to get the lure to dive to the depth and that factor dictates how much line they let out. In the fall, there are many times where the fish really seem to like the vibration and look of a lure running bill down and tail up that happens when a lure hasn't peaked the dive curve. Learn to manipulate that and you will catch more fish this fall.

In deeper water, I often accomplish this task with lead core. You don't need lead core to get a Salmo 8SDR Bullhead to tick bottom in twenty three feet but if you want that lure moving an optimum amount of water with the bill down and tail up, you will not be able to do that by simply long lining the lure. If you long line the lure, the lure will flatten out as it reaches the bottom of the dive curve. Now there are days when the fish want the lure flattened out and as a general rule of thumb, the fish seem to prefer the lure running more horizontal earlier in the season but this is something to experiment with that can make a big difference in the fall from my own experiences.

The other factor I love about lead core in the fall is that it will snake behind the boat and follow the contour much better, sticking that lure right along the break where it needs to be for longer periods of

time. The changes in direction often seem to trigger fish each time you turn the boat. What I don't like about lead core is that it just takes longer to roll off a spool compared to the speed of sticking a lure down with a snap weight or even a down rigger. You have to have more set up time, you need to approach your zone from further away as it takes a little while to roll off more than three colors of lead.

One thing I have been doing with a lot of success especially when I am trolling tighter or shorter runs where I am in and out of the zone fairly quickly before I have to pick back up and set back out is to use a snap weight in conjunction with the lead core. Typically, I will clip a snap weight right on the leader above the crank about twelve feet, two arm lengths. If I go further than two arm lengths, it becomes hard to net fish without removing the weight. By adding a little lead to the lead core, it rolls off the spool super fast and cuts the amount of line out in about half.

Kind of combines the best of both worlds regarding lead core and snap weights. Gets down fast and still get some snaking and direction change behind the boat. The pendulum effect where the lead core rises and sinks as you speed up or slows down becomes more exaggerated as well which seems to bode well in the fall for triggering fish. There have been times where for whatever reason, this system didn't work well and I had to go back to traditional lead core but there have been many times where I know I caught a lot more fish by using this system so it is something to experiment with.



When fish are moving on big water, trolling allows you to land on the "x" each day like nothing else. You can just get a feel for where they should be tomorrow because you can see where the fish have been and track that movement much easier. As shared in the first paragraph, it bears repeating. Trolling is a very fluid presentation where you can get a really good pulse of how large the school is, whether you are dealing with fragmented groups of scattered fish or one large school of fish, you can figure out the bearing or direction these fish seem to be heading, you can almost guess where they will be. You gather an incredible amount of information when trolling because you just go over so much water. Come fall, trolling remains one of the most efficient tactics for catching walleyes on many large inland lakes, reservoirs and Great Lakes fisheries.

First, I will ask you this. “Support our troops”, what exactly does this mean? Do we give money? Do we display a yellow ribbon decal on our vehicles? Do we say thank you to some random stranger that is proudly displaying their military service on their hat? Do we pay for a uniformed service persons lunch? The answer is “Yes”. Yes you should do all of the above. I have done all “of the above”, but I wanted to do something more. This past weekend I was able to” give back”, and honestly, I got so much more in return.

For the past several years, I have dedicated some my time to “Simply Outdoor Experiences”, a non-profit that helps Veterans, Terminally Ill children and their families, Developmental challenged adults and children and just about anyone who wants to enjoy and learn about the outdoors through activities such as fishing, hunting and exploring. Every year we host an event called, “Hero’s on the Water”. It’s a way that we can give back to our veterans by taking them fishing. I like this event for 2 reasons, I get to meet and thank some real hero’s and I get to give back the best way I know how, fishing. I was also excited to learn that a Veteran, whom I became friends with at last year’s event, was flying in from Oregon to be at this year’s event. Andy is a veteran of Iraq and Afghanistan who lost half of his leg to an IED explosion. Andy and I became good friends and along with his dad, Jake, a veteran himself, caught many fish at last year’s event.

This year’s event was being held at Geiger’s Trails End Resort on Bowstring Lake in Deer River, Minnesota. Erin and Bill Charlton graciously donated their resort for a full week. Erin and Bill have a daughter who is in the military and they felt that this was the best way they could give their support to the veterans. Deer River is approximately 3.5 hours away from my house so I was lucky enough to have Andy, Who was staying at another volunteer’s house, ride with me. I picked him up early Wednesday



“Giving Back” To The Troops

By Brian Koshenina



morning for the long drive north. I hadn't seen Andy since last year's event but once we hugged and shook hands, it's like we saw each yesterday. We talked the whole way up to Deer River which made the trip pass by quickly.

We arrived in Deer River, which I now affectionately call "God's Country" around noon. We were greeted by Bill and Erin and their daughter Amanda and given our cabin assignments. The resort itself is nestled on the northwest side of Bowstring Lake. The grounds were immaculate, the cabins, recently updated, were very clean and well kept, and the launch and docks were conveniently located next to the lodge. We were eager to pre-fish the lake which none of us had fished before, so we threw our stuff in our rooms and headed out. Before we headed out, Bill gave us some tips on some spots that he knew would produce fish so we took his advice and boated to those spots.

Bowstring Lake is well known as one of the best Walleye lakes in the state so anticipation was high. Andy and I rigged up and started fishing. We had several fronts come through the area so the Walleye bite wasn't at its prime so we decided to try our luck on some Crappies and Northern. Andy is known as the "Pike Whisperer" from last year's trip and he once again lived up to that name by catching 5 average sized pike in the 3 hours we were out. After a while we decided to head in for dinner, brats and burgers were on the menu. It's hard to pass up a good Brat, even if it means going off the lake a little early. We shared fishing tips with a few of the other guides over dinner. After dinner we spent some time with Bill and Erin and find out what the plan was for the next day and when the Veterans were to arrive. We stayed up until 2 am talking at the lodge and sharing some of Erin's famous salsa. Erin and Bill are some of the nicest, down to earth people you will ever meet. We went back to our cabin around 2:30 am and finally went to bed around 3.

Thursday morning came fast. We had a lot to do before the Veterans arrived. Woody, who is the Executive Director of Simply Outdoor Experiences, arrived late the night before along with Jim Dempsey, a volunteer and guide. Woody had with him a big tent that we were supposed to put up the day before, but couldn't that need to be erected. Several of us erected the tent and set up the table and chairs that were to be used for meals and such. Joanne Zacharias set up tables where we could greet the Veterans as they arrived. The veterans started to arrive around 9 am. They were given Blue shirts to establish that they were veterans; red shirts were given to the volunteers. One of the first vets to arrive was an older gentleman. I greeted him with a hand shake, identified myself and thanked him



for his service. Little did I know that this 92 year old veteran would make this event so memorable for me. His name is Lowell Laager, a Navy veteran of D-Day, World War 2. He proudly displays a hat that says just that. He was eager to go out and fish and after I finished up with what I was doing, I grabbed Andy and we all headed out.

I was a little concerned about taking a frail, 92 year old man on my boat. I thought that I would have to watch him closely but after we launched my whole perception changed. He was sharp,

whit and had a story for just about everything. He could also fish! Andy and I knew that we had someone special with us, not only the fact that he is a veteran of D-Day but he is very personable and friendly. We all decided to try and catch some Walleye even though the bite was not the best. We started to slow troll with some spinner rigs, night crawlers and a weight. We were getting bites but the Walleye just weren't that aggressive. We did however catch some nice Jumbo Perch along the way. During this time we were all getting to know one another. Andy and Lowell had a natural bond being Veterans who both saw combat. I however am not a Veteran but I have an interest in the military, a bit of a history buff. I felt it was an honor to have these men on my boat and the pressure to find and catch fish was immense.

As the day rolled on Lowell was cracking jokes with Andy and I. We all became very comfortable with each other sharing stories about ourselves. That is when I came to realize that, to them, catching fish



was not as important as becoming friends and sharing time together. This was a relief. I had put so much pressure on myself and I didn't want to let these honorable men down. I thought that "Giving Back" meant catching as many fish as possible.

I didn't expect that they would share their War stories with me. I felt that it might bring up some bad memories so I decided that I wouldn't bring it up. Little by little, as we spent more time on the boat, their stories began to unfold. Lowell was 22 when he took part in D-Day, June 6th 1944. He was a LCT boat operator. Their mission was to bring Tanks ashore on the beach and pick up the wounded Marines and bring them back to a hospital ship anchored just off the beach. He described that day like it happened yesterday. I felt honored that he would share his story with me. It was at this time that I realized that I was more than just a guide to him, I was becoming a friend. I knew a lot about Andy's

service, being that he was on my boat last year, so he really didn't have to talk too much about it. He did however swap stories with Lowell and I just sat back and listened.

I didn't get to greet the rest of the Veterans as they showed up. We spent most of the day in the boat. By the time we were done it was dinner time. I started to greet the vets as they came in from their trips on the lake. We swapped tips with the ones who had a successful day of fishing. It's amazing to me how fishing can open up a conversation with someone whom you had never met before. It's like an unspoken bond between fisherman, "If you fish, you must be a good person". It's also amazing that 31 veterans, many who had never met each other, can give one another a look and instantly know what one another has went through. I have personally, never seen anything like it. Slowly over the course of a few days, I met some really great people like Bill and Trish. Bill served in the Army, had a stroke when he was 44 years old which paralyzed part of his body. Trish, his wife, is his care giver. Ben, who after nine years, retired from the Army decided to re-enlist with the Marines. Dan Hoyt, who was nice enough to come up from Iowa to help guide the vets on Bowstring, the lake he knows so well. Although I only spent a few day's with these people, I now consider them friends for life.

Fast forward to Sunday, the last day of the event. This was a hard day for me. After countless hours in the boat with Lowell and many conversations with the other veterans and volunteers, it was time to pack up and leave. We shared "quality" time together which many of us will cherish for the rest of our lives. The veterans were able to climb out from their shells and relax for a few days. The stories told and the memories made will be passed on for years to come. Many of the veterans did not want to leave nor did I, but as the old saying goes, "all good things must come to an end".

It was hard to say goodbye to my new friend Lowell. He cried and we hugged. He gave me some of his personal lures and I gave him my one and only Guide Service hat which I took back from my dad after he passed away. Age does not matter when you form a bond and a friendship like we have now. We must have said goodbye 3 or 4 times before he finally drove off. It's hard to imagine that a group of us, at a resort in the middle of the woods, on a lake teaming with fish could have such an unforgettable time.

As I reflect on the past weekend I realized that even though I am "Giving Back" I am actually getting so much in return. I have learned that people are still "good" and friendships will last forever even though we might only get to see each other one time a year. I look forward to next year and I can't wait to see my friends, especially Lowell.



Sources- www.geigerstrailsend.com,
www.simplyoutdoorexperiences.org.
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LITTLE ST. SIMONS ISLAND IS GEORGIA'S COASTAL FISHING PARADISE

By Bill Vanderford

Unobstructed by any dam, the fertile soils drift down the Altamaha River from the center of Georgia to be deposited along the shores of Little St. Simons Island on the Atlantic Coast. Such a constant flow of rich top soils makes this pristine island the fastest growing land mass on the Eastern seaboard of the USA and a prime location for great fishing. Therefore, as fall approaches, Little St. Simons Island becomes an angler's paradise as redfish, seatrout, flounder and other species. These saltwater predators migrate through the tidal creeks and near-shore waters to forage on the many schools of baitfish. Surf casting is especially popular and productive along the seven miles of private beach facing the open ocean.

Both day trips and longer stays are available through the Lodge on Little St. Simons Island by visiting their web site (www.LittleSSI.com) or calling 912-638-7472 for reservations. This privately owned, 10,000 acre, all-inclusive historical hunting lodge was built in 1917 and is accessible only by boat. The island features a seven mile beach for surf casting and twenty miles of wilderness trails that makes the meandering tidal creeks available to visiting anglers.

With the help of naturalists employed by the Lodge, it is possible to receive instruction or guidance in fly fishing, surf casting or creek fishing. For those who stay at the Lodge on Little St. Simons Island, all tackle, bait and box lunches are provided. They also offer the use of kayaks or outboard-powered fiberglass skiffs for roaming the tidal creeks in search of other great fishing.

Redfish, red drum, spottail bass, bull reds or



whatever you want to call them are the big draw on this part of the Georgia Coast during early fall. You can catch these fish in the surf when they are cruising the beaches chasing the larger schools of menhaden and finger mullet. Big reds often hang around schools for bluefish and wait until those toothy predators chop the bait into small pieces before dining on the remnants. When this occurs, cut bait on the bottom is always the best bet for enticing the opportunistic reds as they feed behind and below the blues.



Recent Georgia regulations limit fishermen to five redfish daily, and those that are kept must be between 14 and 23 inches in total length. For a complete guide to Georgia's Coastal fishing, go to www.eregulations.com/georgia/fishing for detailed information.



Despite the strenuous exercise required to wade or walk all day, catching reds or other fish in the shallows around Little St. Simons Island can be one of the most electrifying saltwater fishing adventures. Stalking these fish in such a beautiful environment

stimulates most of the senses, and the results can be unforgettable!

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 ifish51@aol.com or at his web site: www.georgiafishing.com.



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Here, Kitty Kitty

By Ted Takasaki and Scott Richardson

Big catfish, like channels, flatheads and blues, are chased by thousands of anglers across North America. There are even catfish that grow to be hundreds of pounds in the Amazon River Basin of South America.

There are good reasons the whiskered beasts are popular:

- Their range, which covered much of the United States naturally, has been extended through stocking. Most anglers have access to the lakes, rivers, small streams and reservoirs which catfish inhabit close to home.
- They're great eating.
- They can be caught from the bank or from a boat.
- You only need simple tackle to land them – a handful of weights, some hooks, a few floats, a sturdy rod and reel and strong line.
- An added attraction is that catfish won't stunt no matter how many there are in a body of water. They'll keep growing as long as there's food. This means fishing for catfish offers the opportunity to catch big fish and lots of them.



Popular thought says summer is the time to catch catfish. But catfish can be caught during any season, spring, summer, fall and winter.

True, certain times of year can be better than others. Another attraction to catfish is that they have one of the longest pre-spawn feeding periods of any game fish. When weather and water levels are stable, fish will set up on predictable spots. This can be a cat fight that lasts for several weeks. Post-spawn offers steady action, and fall is good for big fish as they fatten for winter.

No matter what the season, location is the key. But first, a word about tackle and bait.

How it works

Catfish are heavily muscled. Light line and limp rods will not cut it when doing battle with these brutes. Use long rods with lots of backbone for good hooksets. A musky type rod, 20- to 30-pound-test TUF Line braid and a heavy-duty reel are good choices for flatheads.

The best rig is simple. Thread an egg sinker or flat pancake sinker onto the line, then add a bead and tie on a barrel swivel. Add a 25-pound fluorocarbon leader. The stronger the current, the shorter the leader should be. Tie on a circle hook of 2/0 or larger and you're set. Circle hooks are best because the point winds up in the corner of a fish's mouth more often than not. No gut-hooking and you can release the fish you don't want to keep.



For fishing on flats, use a large slip float, balanced with an egg sinker, and add a circle hook. Set the depth so it just ticks bottom.

Catfish are omnivorous, which means they will eat crawfish, hellgrammites, fish, even wild grapes and cotton from cottonwood trees. They often live where water is murky and light is scarce. As a result, nature has provided them with keenly developed lateral lines for sensing vibrations in the water and a highly-developed sense of taste, with taste buds spread over their bodies.

Best bait for channel cats is fresh cut bait to allow the flavor to permeate the water. Simply fillet the sides of shad or other large baitfish and pierce a fillet with the hook close to the edge to insure the hook point is exposed. They'll also take a variety of baits manufactured to give off odors, such as cheese bait and blood bait. Dip baits spread on dip worms also are great at times. Rig them on a three-way rig or a simple bottom rig described above.

Flatheads want their dinner alive. Where legal, catch bluegills and suckers and use them on big hooks. Tail hook them on big sinkers if you want them to stay put. Lip hook them on a slip-bobber rig if you want them to cover a larger area of water. Check conservation laws. Most states require that live bait comes from the lake, river or reservoir you're fishing.



Bait up, cast to your target, put the rod into a rod holder and watch the tip.

Location

Streams can be divided into holes, riffles and runs. Where to look? Holes are often the best spots in current oriented areas.

When actively feeding, channel catfish will move up to the upstream side and feed at will on dead or sickly minnows and crayfish moving downstream in the current.

Anchor upstream, cast your bait to the hole and wait 5 to 10 minutes. If nothing, move on to the next. In high water, check the current breaks, like fallen logs, along the shore.

In larger rivers, catfish in early spring follow baitfish into



PRODUCT SHOWCASE – FISHBUM OUTFITTERS

Mark Twain said “Clothes make the man. Naked people have little or no influence on society.” In today’s society of self-expression and freedom of speech I have no doubt that someone is going to argue that naked people can influence society and for the minority that will carry the argument that clothes are not important to our self-image, the majority will argue the opposite and champion that you are in fact defined by what you wear. When it comes to what we put on our bodies society is extremely finicky and choose based not just on style, but also on quality and trend. FISHBUM™ Outfitters fills that interest and understands the mentality that clothing that looks good, is high quality and embraces the love of fishing is needed and wanted by the consumer.

FISHBUM™ Outfitters was founded on friendship, fishing and the desire to create something better than was currently available in the industry. Its founder, Matt Rimmer, never in his wildest dreams envisioned that his passion and inspiring style would become a company that is now one of the top apparel brands nationwide and a staple among fishing enthusiasts, top anglers and the average person alike. As part of the FISHBUM™ Outfitters family, and our employees do become as close as family, I am lucky enough to interact with clients from all these walks of life, from the weekend fisherman to the retailer to the fishing lodge owner. The one constant I hear every day is that clients love our unique style and quality of clothing. If you need to see the proof in the pudding firsthand then check out our products for yourself or read our customer comments on our Facebook page, which has almost 45,000 followers. Further proof that FISHBUM™ Outfitters is not just a fly-by-night operation is that in 2012, barely a year after opening its doors and from over 600 companies nominated, Matt Rimmer and FISHBUM™ Outfitters won Entrepreneur of the Year and Best New Business of the Year for the South Simcoe area and our clothing is now carried across the nation in lodges, marinas and retailers - from the small grassroots store to chains such as Cabela’s. Now 2 years later FISHBUM™ Outfitters continues to build on the attributes that won those awards and is growing, innovating and flourishing at lightning speed.

So what does FISHBUM™ Outfitters actually make you ask? Clothing for all seasons, shapes and sizes is the simple answer. From our children’s line to our edgy looking and much needed ladies line to our wicked looking men’s line, there is something for everyone. I once had a customer tell me that although she thought our clothing looked amazing it was too “edgy” for her, she couldn’t see herself wearing a “skeleton” anything. All I had to do was show her some of our apparel that had expertly designed full fish on it and she was hooked. On the opposite end of the spectrum are the customers that love the edgy and daring look. Don’t let the popular T-shirts fool you though! FISHBUM™ Outfitters is much more than just a T-shirt company. In fact our Dye Sublimated shirts, hoodies and jackets have such fine detail on them that people are blown away by how artistic our gear is and often ask how we do it. Our more extensive designs are created using this process called Dye sublimation. Dye Sublimation is an amazing process for clothing because the material is laid out and the ink is soaked right into the fabric prior to any cutting. This process not only allows a flawless image to wrap around from front to back but it never fades or washes out because the image becomes part of the fabric. If you are looking to pick up one of our jackets and select pullover hoodies, we have taken it a step further and treated them with 3M scotch guard giving you outerwear that is both wind resistant and water resistant.

feeder creeks where the water warms first. Look for neckdowns, rapids and other obstructions, such as bridges. Fish the downstream sides.

Fish will migrate with baitfish to the main river as the water warms. The cats will then move back into the tributaries to spawn when water reaches about 70 degrees. After hatching, small catfish stay in the streams. But, adult fish move back to the main river and seek out holes at mid depths, often on the outside river bends and especially in spots that feature cover. They’ll also set up on the outside edges of wingdams.

Radio studies show flatheads love the hottest water they can find, even in the 90s. It’s unlikely you’ll find them in the strongest current.

Night fishing, especially for flatheads, can be awesome. Scout the area in daylight for hazards. Keep the floor of the boat free of clutter and take several sources of light along.

Blue catfish reside primarily in big rivers of the Mississippi Basin. Resort to big 3-ounce weights, 7/0 circle hooks and cut bait for blues.

Catfish are great food. But, remember to practice selective harvest. Biologists have found many small fish in specific areas of big rivers with heavy commercial and recreational fishing pressure.

All big fish are popular in many systems, but catfish are one of the biggest and truly fun to catch.

Production style isn't the only thing that makes our clothing high quality. Great clothing starts from the blank canvas and ends with the finished product. We have carefully handpicked who we allow to take our creative vision and make it a tangible product. The owners of FISHBUM™ Outfitters personally researched, tested and chose only the best manufacturers and suppliers available to us on North American soil and put all our products and processes through rigorous Quality Assurance testing. Does it cost more than your average shirt? Yes

Do our customers care? No! Our pricing is on par with any quality product line available and at the end of the day our customers know they are supporting our local economy while getting the best possible clothing they can get their hands on. We still get asked a lot why we do not manufacture overseas. It's so much cheaper they say. Everyone does it they say. At the end of the day we sleep soundly knowing that we are helping provide jobs here in Canada and the United States, and by keeping our manufacturing in our backyard it also allows us to police the quality we pride ourselves on. Additionally, by manufacturing our clothing in North America we can create custom clothing and bring new ideas to life in a very short period of time.

Last year, with FISHBUM™ Outfitters being so widely loved, we launched our sister company BUSHBUM™. So many anglers are hunters too and we ourselves are hunters and explorers so it was a natural evolution to delve into the needs of a clothing line that embodied the same qualities and ideologies as FISHBUM™ Outfitters. BUSHBUM™ has been eagerly embraced by the outdoors industry since its initial launch and a full product line will be launching this fall that can't wait to unveil.

Everything that has been discovered, tested and evolved these last years with FISHBUM™ Outfitters is now going to be as equally innovative and creative with BUSHBUM™. You can expect to see the same great quality, same creative graphics and same appreciation for the customers' needs. Keep an eye on www.bushbum.com and the BUSHBUM™ Facebook page for launch information and exciting designs.

Ultimately what sets FISHBUM™ Outfitters and BUSHBUM™ apart from the rest of the apparel companies in the outdoor industry is our graphics and our love for our customers. Our designers are brilliant and creative artists to the core, trained in animal and skeletal drawing, have won awards, been published in a variety of venues and are giving our clothing a look and feel that is unable to be replicated. Others have tried but they have not been able to match what we have been able to produce. We whole heartedly believe that providing our customers with amazing service and something they can wear with pride is of the utmost importance. All of us at FISHBUM™ Outfitters are regular people, average anglers and enjoy being able to work in an industry filled with the best people you can find. The outdoors industry is built on comradery, word of mouth, tall tales of the "big fish" or the one that got away and our loved ones that support our passion. It is for this special type of customer and hard to find mentality that we strive to only provide the best for the people that embrace our industry and support us on a daily basis, not just by purchasing our products but by embracing us into their daily lives and making us a part of their fishing and hunting history. Visit FISHBUM at www.Fishbumoutfitters.com or on [Facebook at this link](#). By Tamar Spina.



Bluegills...

Aren't Just For Kids Anymore

By Mike Borovic



Now and then bluegills piss me off! How is it that one day I'm hauling them in one after another and the next... nothing? For a fish that's relatively easy to catch during spring, summer and fall, occasionally can be a stubborn biotch in the frozen months.

This morning I threw at them vertical jigs, horizontal jigs, artificial bait, live bait and in every color over the rainbow. I gave it to 'em fast, slow, falling and dead sticking, and still nothing.

It can be said that bluegills are the easiest to catch of any fish but we 'gillers' know that's far from the truth, because there are bluegills and then there are Bluegills.

I've been a bluegill bum since the day I was wiggling my willie. There is no fish



that I can think of that's flesh is so sweet, flaky and firm. The gill is extremely and numerously widespread across North America. They are feisty and quite aggressive for their size; and rightfully referred to as the fresh water piranha.

During my youth, the pinnacle of every summer was my parents allowing me to sail the raft (a 10-foot Achilles dingy) which was powered by an eight horse outboard, across the Fleming Channel to fish Peche Island. I didn't know of anyone else at that age that was navigating the waters at the mouth of the Detroit River. So with that, came the feeling of enthusiasm and self-worth. I felt proud; proud that my folks felt I was responsible enough to operate a motorized watercraft. Those high school summers were some of the best times of my life. It was then; that I truly realised chasing bluegills was more important than chasing girls or hanging out with buds playing video games.

Back then the island was much larger than we know it today. Years of erosion have seriously taken its toll, and that is unfortunate, because all

the areas I grew up fishing - are no more. On the western end, there were two inlet-like areas that led to a sheltered nook that my buddy, and I referred to as the back lagoons. There, is where all the magic happened. To get to these spots, we needed to raise the motor and paddle through some of the thickest weeds and lily pads while dodging sunken trees and over hanging shoreline brush. For a couple of young kids, this was nothing short of an Indiana Jones style adventure.

At that age, we didn't realize what we truly had nor could we have truthfully appreciated it; we were just kids. For those summers, those back lagoons were ours, our own secret spot, a bluegill oasis that nobody knew of. We caught gill after gill – I kid you not – every single time we fished there. Unimaginable numbers of ten-inch bluegills were the norm, and nothing less. Sometimes a 16-inch crappie would materialize from the lilies. Everybody wanted to know where, but we never told.

On the sunny days, the biggest of gills came from the shade of the lilies and under the shore brush. If it was overcast, it didn't matter; we just fished in the open areas. The water was no deeper than a couple of feet, so we needed to be stealthy. Most of the time we tied the dinghy off to an overhanging branch and crept along the shoreline. A small single hook with a split-shot; tipped with a piece of leaf worm and the smallest red and white beach-ball bobber did the trick.

By the following summer, we were professionals in our own minds. We now adorned ultra-light rods and reels, 4-lb test line, tiny tear-drop jigs, pencil thin balsam floats and forceps. And let's not forget the sunglasses... we were cool, confident and very composed. We smoked cigarettes, drank coffee and hung

out at the local bait shop, but more importantly we gained recognition. We weren't just a couple of kids in a bait store anymore; we were two neighborhood kids who knew how to catch fish. Being known at the local bait stores... now that was cool.

Sadly, it wasn't long after graduation our bluegill haven was washed out and gone forever. Regardless, I continued to fish the island and to this day, I still fish the island. Although it's never been the same, but some decent fish can still be found.

I remember seeing gills hovering in the shallowest of water over a plate size depression in the sand (little did I know at the time; these were spawning beds). They would just hang there fanning their pectoral fins seemingly doing nothing, but these were the biggest of the big hog-daddies I've ever seen. Sometimes when I'd pitch my bait, they would scatter, then leisurely return only to attack my offering, like a piranha. Casting beyond them and slowly working the bait towards them seemed to always work best. Keeping a low profile on the bank and most importantly not casting a shadow on them during high noon was very critical. This was so important that it made the difference of catching them, and not.

Taking that newly gained experience and with that spark of ingenuity, only teenagers could conjure up; we attempted to create several spawning areas. From the northeast side of the island, we gathered

buckets of gravel and sand. By dumping and spreading the gravel in shallower water adjacent to the deep water, cover and shade, we surprisingly achieved our goal. As a matter of fact, even today the bluegills use the areas that remain, and I still catch gills off of these gravel beds.

With all these years of experience now, (which is nothing more than just trial and errors), I've matured, and come to appreciate what I had. I wish I knew then, what I do now, and not for catching more fish but for the simple fact of respect and value. As time and seasons continue to pass by, I feel the need to somewhat protect these fishing spots, not for my purpose to hoard but to protect them from the abusers, the ones who think there is an endless supply of fish and who would, in no time, take every single one of them.

For myself, there is nothing I like better than pulling big gills through a hole in the ice. Actually, I am extremely passionate about fishing hard water over soft... any day! As a five-gallon bucket sitter, I don't



even know how to explain the feeling, the feeling I get catching fish through the ice. I apologize to all that have never done it, as I am incapable of explaining it. I just can't do it; there is no appropriate declaration in the English language that permits my arousal.

How does one explain that initial smack of an aggressive hit?

How about that tugging thump of a 10-inch bluegill pounding on the end of your line, 10 feet below the ice?

What's that feeling called again? You know, that one that runs up the line and through the bending of an ultra-light rod?

And that sound, that click-click sound of a reel's drag coming undone?

How in the world does one explain this?

There is perhaps not a more prolific fish that swims in our local waters than the bluegill. Okay, so we do have a spectacular perch fishery too... and some walleyes... bass, musky, crappie, heck we even have sturgeon! However, the truth is... bluegills fascinate me; they always have, and I suppose forevermore they will.

How fortunate am I to be surround by such a fishery; the Great Lakes? www.thingsithinkiknow.com

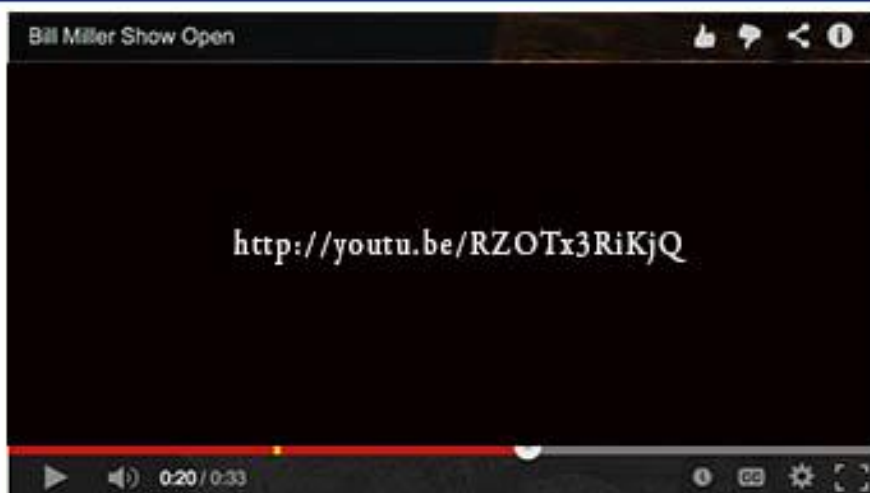


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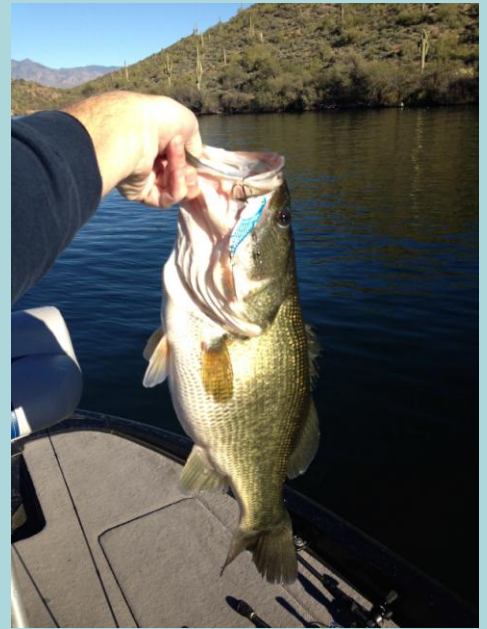
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The Battle for Bass Supremacy Heats Up In Africa

By Delina Alwanger



After our publication of the impressive weights achieved at Chicamba Dam in Mozambique, we didn't think we could top those scores, but it seems we have, this time in Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe is the home of various species of fish, the most famous of which is the Tiger Fish, *Hydrocynus Vittatus*. The country is a prime destination for Bream, Barbel and Bass fishing too.

Zimbabwe has an impressive bass pedigree. A small but vibrant community of recreational anglers are spoilt for choice. Numerous lakes and dams offer Florida and Black Bass, species which have been bred at a local fishery since 1940 when they were first brought into the country from South Africa. Bass were first brought to South Africa in 1927.

Situated in the midst of the sugar plantations of Hippo Valley is Lake Mteri. Built in 1996, it covers an area of 975 hectares and is

a primary source of irrigation for the surrounding cane fields. The Florida Bass, *Micropterus Floridianis*, was introduced in the nineties and flourishes in the hot tropical conditions of the lowveld, achieving growth rates of up to 2kg per year.

The resort itself offers accommodation for up to 40 guests in rustic, but very well appointed chalets, with air conditioning. The conservancy is home to large herds of buffalo, which roam the area freely and offer opportunities for game viewing.



The resort record was set by Justin Booth with a 14.625 pound largemouth caught on a surface lure in 2006. Justin is a private guide with many years of experience working with foreign clientele. He lived and worked at Mteri Lodge for 12 years. Catches of over 10 pounds are regular occurrences on this lake. In a local competition held in July this year, the winning duo caught 10 fish weighing in at 43.56 pounds, with the heaviest being a 10.44 pound largemouth.

Local angler, Marc Ribeiro is definitely a candidate for the club Hall of Fame. Featured here he poses with three trophy size catches of Florida Bass and Nilo Bream, *Oreochromis Niloticus*. Marc caught this Largemouth weighing 13.19 pounds on a silver Mepps spinner while casting for Bream in August this



year. This was his personal best. He has been fishing these waters since the dam was built and finds no reason to venture from his favourite hunting grounds. "I think the Largemouth and other species grow at such an impressive rate because of the climate down here. The area records summer temperatures of plus 40 degrees Celsius and enjoys warm, mild winters. Fishing at Mteri is good all year round," he said. "The Nilo grow to sizes above 3kg which means any day can be a trophy day at Mteri."

Finding the right bass fishing rod can be challenging. An angler has to decide on blank action, power, rod components, reel seat, rod grip and price. It can be overwhelming, but how far would you go to find the perfect bass fishing rod?

For most anglers it's just a matter of checking out different rods online or going to several stores before settling on a fishing rod. That isn't the situation with Shane Cox. As fate intervened and his destiny changed forever after a chance encounter.

It all started with Cox going over to pick up a fishing rod being donated by the previous owner of Hammer Fishing Rods Carl Graham. "I knew it was a good rod and it had been around for awhile, but the next thing I knew after visiting with him, I ended up buying Hammer Fishing Rods," said Cox.

Cox had obviously gone as far as an angler could go when it comes to buying the perfect bass fishing rod. It's been over two years now and Cox couldn't be more excited about the changes made to the design, construction, sales and direction Hammer Fishing Rods are going. However, it's just the beginning as Cox continues to build Hammer Fishing Rods into a nationally known fishing rod company.



The Perfect Bass Rod

By Brad Wiegmann



Building the perfect bass rod doesn't just happen. There are so many different factors playing a part. Anglers make a decision on buying a fishing rod mostly on power and action.

Power is defined as strength required to move a lure or fish. Rod blanks are built from a number of different blends of material and rated to indicate its power rating. Power ratings are designed to assist anglers with selecting a fishing rod

according to size of fish and fishing conditions like cover or structure. Common rod powers include UL-ultra light, L-light, ML-medium light, M-medium, MH-medium heavy, H-heavy, XH-extra heavy and XXH-extra extra heavy.

On the other hand, action is described as where the rod flexes during the cast and retrieve. Action and power rating determine how the rod is going to perform. Technique specific rods are built to have the correct action and power without the angler having to decide the right action and power to get.

Action also describes the flex in a fishing rod. A fishing rod that flexes in the middle section would be slow. As the flex point moves towards the rod tip it changes to medium, medium fast, fast and extra fast where just the upper rod tip flexes. Common rod action includes S-slow, M-medium, MF-medium, F-fast and XF-extra fast.

Components are another factor in the overall quality of a fishing rod. Fishing line guide rings, rod grip and reel seat are major components. Prices and quality depends on materials and craftsmanship which is different for every component.

Fishing line guide rings are mounted to the blank keeping the line in place and away from the rod blank. Hammer Fishing Rods feature a micro guide system although the first two fishing line guide rings are #6 size ring to reduce line drag when casting. "Hammer Fishing Rods use micro rings because it makes the

rod lighter and increases the angler's casting accuracy," said Cox.

One of the biggest changes to Hammer Fishing Rods since Cox took over was the rod grip. Except for the spinning rods, Hammer Fishing Rods have Winn Grips. Winn Grips are built with superior Advanced Integration technology. "The change to Winn Grips was a no-brainer, I had fished with a custom built fishing rod and could just feel how much more comfortable it was along with gripping the rod so much better," said Cox.

All Hammer Fishing Rods (www.hammerrods.com) feature the Winn Grips except the spinning rod models with EVA foam handles. "Everyone loves the Winn Grips. Of course, I have to admit the pink Winn Split Grips was my wife Sandie's idea. It's without a doubt the most popular rod we sell to female anglers," said Cox.

Another change Cox made was with the rod blanks. "I completely redesigned our rod blanks. Our focus now is on building and selling the perfect bass rod. For us that means long rods and actions that can



stand up to big bass in aquatic vegetation to fishing offshore structure, but also be lightweight and extremely sensitive," said Cox.

Currently, Hammer Fishing Rods are available in local retailers across Southern states like Texas, Alabama, Mississippi, Kentucky, Louisiana, Tennessee and South Carolina. "Our goal is for Hammer Fishing Rods to become a nationally recognized company with fishing rods made in America," said Cox.

Managing a profitable, growing fishing rod company is impossible for one person. "It's a family run business. I rely tremendously on Sandie. If it wasn't for her doing the paperwork and social media," Shane continued, "we wouldn't be where we are right now."

However, Shane is also looking to the future. "I'm hoping my son Ty will come and take over the business one day," said Shane.

Ty is currently a high school senior. He is infatuated with the sport of angling and fishing bass tournaments. Last year, Ty proved his angling skills by finishing as the top student angling team in the Alabama Bass Trail circuit. Only time will tell if Ty takes over, but for now Hammer Fishing Rods will continue on course.

Finding the perfect bass fishing rod is challenging. An angler has to look at all the factors from power, action, rod components, rod blank composition to cost before making a final decision. In the end, it usually comes down to the angler's preference and fishing conditions.

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DAN'S FISH 'N' TALES®

Finger Jigging

By Dan Galusha



If you have ever looked for a productive and easy way to jig with a spinning outfit, then try a technique that I call “finger jigging”. There is nothing special to learn other than which equipment works best, and the depth and speed of the retrieve.

This technique has been in my fishing tactics for many years, but for some reason I have never filmed a TV show about it. It works for about anything that swims, but most of the fish caught have been bass, bluegill and crappie.

During the past few years a combination of tackle has come out that has worked better for this technique than any I have found. The reel can be any spinning model that feels comfortable in the hand, which will be learned why after a short time of fishing. Any light-action tip rod will work, but I’ve found the 7’ Shakespeare Agility and 6’8” Fenwick River Runner to be a couple of the best for action, playing fish, strike detection, and casting distance with lighter weight jigs. These same factors apply to the choice of line, which is NanoFil in 8 pound test that also provides better jigging with its “no stretch” attribute.

This 10 inch bluegill hit a 2” Power Minnow on a 1/16 oz chartreuse/blue head, while finger jigged on a 7’ Shakespeare Agility rod.

Many jig heads are available, but again, there is one that has topped the list. This is B-Fish-N's H2O Precision Jig in 1/16, 3/32, 1/8 and 3/16 ounce sizes. Teamed with this is a body with some sort of straight tail, which is usually a Berkley Power or Gulp Alive Minnow in the 1.5 and 2.5-inch length for the 1/16 and 3/32 ounce heads; and the same lures, plus a Twitchtail Minnow in the 3 and 4-inch length for the 1/8 and 3/16 ounce heads.

Other soft plastics like Beetle bodies and finesse worms will work, but the technique shines at its best with the minnow bodies.

It should also be mentioned that for extra flash to use a 1/16 to 1/4-ounce Road Runner head with any of the bodies mentioned. While either style of blade will work it seems like the willow does the best with this technique. It should also be mentioned that any type of Road Runner, especially the Reality Shad, works great with this technique.

Another combination is the new rubber skirted Blitz Finesse Spyder Jig with a 2.5 or 3" Power Minnow. This not only bounces the minnow's tail, but makes the skirt pulsate, which adds something different to "swimming a jig".

Matching the bodies with the color of jig heads has also been important on those days when fishing is a little tougher. For example, the Emerald Shiner Power Minnow combines perfectly with the Pyro Keet and Purple Pearl colored heads; and the Smelt or Black Shad colored minnows will combine with the white and black heads. If unsure as to what to use try the unpainted, white (Road Runner) or black heads, and for a different combination try a chartreuse head. For the Blitz Finesse Jig, go with the white skirt when using any of the minnow bodies.

The basic part of the technique is no more than reeling and sticking your index finger straight down to bump the line. Every time the line makes a revolution it will bump the finger, and make the rod tip



Finger jigging a Road Runner Reality Shad on a hot day, around shallow weeds, produced this nice black crappie.

jump, thus jiggging the lure. A faster retrieve will make the jig bounce in shorter jumps, while slowing it down will give it a slightly longer rhythm.

A uniform rhythm, quicker/natural bouncing to the jigging action is the major reason for this technique’s success. That same sort of action is next to impossible to achieve through regular jigging when moving the rod tip up and down. Once used the difference in action can clearly be seen as the line and rod tip jump with each turn of the reel.

Only two things need to be varied – speed and depth. The jig can be allowed to fall to any depth before the retrieve is start, and then the speed can be determined after the first strikes have been felt. It is also very good to use in shallow water situations, making sure the retrieve is kept at the correct speed to stay above the bottom or structure.

I’ve also found that if the retrieve is made through an area several times, where fish have been caught, or strikes produced - another cast to that same area that allows the lure to slowly sink to the bottom without a retrieve, will sometimes produce a strike on the fall.

For beginners two things may be a problem. First, the hand holding the reel may become tired, and the index finger may get a little sore. Secondly, it may take a little time to distinguish a strike from the line bumping the finger, as the jump of the line and rod tip, can feel very much like a strike. However, many times the strike comes as a full stop of the retrieve, which feels much like hanging up in weeds.

When I showed this technique to fellow outdoor writer, Don Banning, he was impressed with the simplicity of the technique, and success produced. The same sort of feedback has come from other anglers to whom I’ve demonstrated this technique.



Some of the favorite jig heads and bodies that are mentioned in the article.



Finger jigging is an easy and productive way to use jigs on an open face spinning rig, by simply extending the index finger to different lengths to create harder or softer jigging, by allowing the line

Finger jigging has been used in all sorts of waters from the shallow areas of a farm pond and the Hennepin Canal to the depths of Bull Shoals Lake.

Don Banning would say, “If you want to finger a fish, use this technique”.

Any questions on this, or another fishing subject, can be sent to me through a link on the Dan’s Fish ‘N’ Tales® website at www.dansfishntales.com. This site also contains a link back to the ODU Magazine site.

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



Central Florida's Best Kept Secret

By Nici Haerter

It's been over 20 years since I first laid eyes on the Wekiva River. Captivating me with spring fed waters and exotic wildlife; it was love at first sight. Nestled in between urbanized neighborhoods, this winding river is truly one of central Florida's best kept secrets. The surrounding forest hosts black bear, deer, night herons, Limpkins, coots, and wild boar just to name a few. Curious otters frolic along the shore, delighting boaters with their playful antics. Alligators and turtles line the path, lounging lazily on logs while soaking up the Florida sunshine.

The Wekiva River is also an angler's paradise and today I seek bass. An adventuresome spirit is required to pursue the super- sized monsters that hide up stream. If you don't mind wading through flats, motoring around submerged trees, or side-stepping the occasional, territorial alligator, then this is the place for you. The bass run big and hit hard so rig your poles with heavy tackle. Using dramatic acrobatics, they are known for their signature "leap and dash" across the surface prior to running under the boat and wrapping your line around a log. As a self proclaimed adrenaline junkie, this kind of angling is what I live for.



After an hour of motoring, we finally reached our secret spot in the spawning flats. My husband, Skip and I sat in our well-worn john boat, pole-in-hand, gently bobbing in the rivers current. Content in listening to the water's movement around us, there was no need to talk. Nature supplied us with plenty of conversation; gators grunted from beneath lily pads, frogs croaked in unison, and a chorus of indigenous birds serenaded us from the shoreline. It was during this serene moment that I broke one of fishing's fundamental rules: Never leave your pole unattended. She struck when I least expected it. I had laid my pole down to get comfortable,

prop my feet up, and drink a bottle of water. I should have known better. With horror I watched, as if in slow motion, while my pole jerked across the bottom of the boat, threatening to go overboard. I was able to snatch the rod mid air, rescuing it before flying over the side. The drag groaned in protest as I tightened my grip. That's when I got the first glimpse of my adversary. She broke the surface, taunting me with her dance across the lily pads before diving deep and zigzagging through submerged debris. She was a beauty; a perfect specimen of the largemouth bass that lie below the rivers softly flowing current. Laden with eggs, she had an extra stout girth and an aggressive attitude.

Practicing some basic tried-and-true angling techniques, I kept the line tight, the tip up, and eventually wore her down. Before we could get her settled into our live well for a future photo op, Skip had already hooked another one. The bass were on fire that morning. Before sun up, we had managed to land a total of nine decent sized large mouths and two super sized monsters, all released safely back into their beloved river.

After a successful morning of angling, we decided to motor back down the river and head home. The morning sun was just beginning to peek through the cypress trees. Casting an almost mystical glow on the bubbling current, it provided the perfect backdrop for the awakening forest. We paused a few times to admire an elusive river otter, playfully darting in and out of lily pads. Gators were now brazenly stretched across logs, taking full advantage of the steamy, hot temperatures. Deep in the canopy, we spotted a boat trolling slowly, bow fishing for tilapia. Another solo angler sat bobbing in a kayak, cane pole in hand. He proudly held up a stringer of plate-sized pan fish as we motored by.



Whether its sport fishing for bass, or grocery fishing for large bream, tilapia, and catfish, the river has it all. So next time you visit the sunshine state, I urge you to look beyond the concrete walls of amusement parks. Take a break from the crowds and traffic. Explore the real Florida. The Wekiva River offers a diverse environment, appropriate for serious anglers and nature enthusiasts alike. Touted as one of the most bountiful, natural treasures Central Florida has to offer, you will not be disappointed.

Nici is a freelance writer, professional musician, and avid angler. She may be contacted at www.harpbynici.com



Many people over the years have claimed that “I have the best job in the world”. Some have also claimed that it’s an “Easy” job and anyone who fishes can do it. Yes, I have run into a few people that would probably make good guides but the majority of them, probably not. I can tell you first hand, it is not easy, not just anyone can do it and if you want to become a guide, keep this in mind.

Years of fishing experience does NOT qualify you as a guide. Just because you catch fish on a regular basis does not mean that you will do it all day, every day. If you hang your livelihood on this notion you have failed already. You must learn about each and every species that you are trying to catch, Habits, patterns and prey. All fish follow what they eat just like we humans do. We plan our days around food as do fish. Think of structure as a fast food restaurant. Everyone knows where a fast food restaurant is and they know they can get a fast meal. Just like us, Fish know that structure will hold baitfish and at certain times of the day they will find structure for a convenient meal. You need to know fish patterns. If you don’t know where fish are located, where and when they are feeding, and what they are feeding on you need to fire up the old computer and do as much research as possible. Do not even entertain the idea of becoming a guide until you have done so.

So, You Think You Want To Be A Guide?

By Brian Koshenina

I get to fish all day, every day. I laugh at this one. I do not get to fish all day, every day. Don’t get me wrong, I would love to but the reality is, when I’m guiding I do not. Your first responsibility as guide is to insure the safety of your clients. When I guide, I rarely ever fish. I am too busy giving instructions, untangling lines, baiting hooks, running the boat and more importantly, making sure my clients do not fall overboard. The last thing you want is to get sued. Clients often take their PFD’s off

and I constantly remind them that they have to wear their PFDs when the boat is moving. One wrong step can mean life or death. If you have young kids in the boat, you often end up being a baby sitter so that mom and dad get to wet a line with no distractions. The only time I get to fish when I guide is when I have just one client in the boat, which is pretty much a rarity. So if you have your mind set on fishing every day, you will be very disappointed.

You have a very nice boat and good equipment; you must get it for free? This is another good one that makes me chuckle. Many people have the perception that Guides get everything for free. Nothing is for free. I pay for my boat, my insurance, my rods, reels and lures. I do how ever have sponsors who I represent that help me out but I also have to work hard to promote their products. Some guides use Sponsor provided boats but they usually have to sell them or give them back at the end of each year. I personally prefer using my own boat but it does take a beating and so does my equipment. I usually turn over my rods and reels every 2 years, but I sell them for a fraction of what they originally cost. My basement looks like a tackle shop. Every time I buy a lure or soft plastics I have to buy 2 or more. If the lure I buy catches fish chances are I am going to need a lot of them. Every trip I lose at least 1 lure so

you can see that, when you are a guide you do not get everything for free and more often times than not your profit margins are very slim. With replacements and maintenance you're lucky to have any profit at all.



You get to enjoy the beautiful weather. Yes, I often do but the weather can change very quickly. Case in point, Last year a very good friend of mine Woody, asked me to guide for a big corporate event on Gull Lake in Nissawa, Minnesota. Gull Lake is a very large, open lake and conditions can change in minutes. When we arrived, the lake was rough but manageable. We arrived late and a few of us missed our guide trips but Woody was able to get the last few remaining clients out. My buddy Jim and I decided to stick it out and wait for Woody to be done. As we waited the wind picked up and the waves started to roll. Jim and I escaped the rough conditions in a secluded bay. We soon saw Woody heading back to the resort to drop his clients off, conditions were becoming unsafe. When Jim and I started to head out the winds were howling around 30 mph. When we got to the main part of the lake, there were 4 to 6 foot waves crashing over the hull of our boats. It started to rain a little which really didn't help matters. By the time we reached the launch site the wind and waves were gaining momentum. We drove around in a circle for awhile trying to figure out how we were going to get our boats out of the lake. The waves were crashing into the shore with force and we knew if we docked our boats to go get our trucks, our boats would surely be swamped by the waves. I decided to take a chance and I beached my boat and quickly headed to get my truck and trailer. By the time I backed my trailer into the water the back end of my boat was nearly under water. I had my bilge pump on but it was taking on more water than it could pump out. I managed to back my boat out and get it safely on the trailer. That day was a complete nightmare for all of us. The day started out beautiful but within a few hours turned very ugly. You have to anticipate that every time you are on the water, this can happen. There are beautiful days and then there are days like this.

You're so lucky to be able to do what you do. I hear this often. Yes, I am lucky to be a guide, I am lucky to have an office outside, I am lucky to be on the lake, but you also have to understand that I also wake up early and go to bed late. The work doesn't stop when I am off the lake. I have to prepare for the next day. This means refueling on the way home and getting something to eat, which usually means that I am eating "crappy" food from gas stations, not really too healthy but it's quick. I usually get home late and I am too tired to make anything. When I get home I have to stock up for the next day. I also have to repair everything that broke during the day. I have become quite a "Mr. Fix it" over the years and I try to keep cost down by fixing everything I can. I also go through my calls from the day that I miss and I read and return emails. By the time I set my alarm clock and get to sleep my mind starts to "race" and I start thinking about the "could haves" during the day. This is a bad habit to fall into and a very hard habit to break. It has caused many, many nights with little or no sleep. Then my alarm goes off and my day starts. I get a quick breakfast, usually a dough nut or cereal, then I unplug the boat from the charger and I'm on the road to the lake. Keep in mind that it is still dark so I fight to keep my eye lids open.



Don't get me wrong, guiding can be very rewarding. I get to meet new and interesting people every day. I get to do what I love to do



and I get to share my passion with others. I get to spend every day, enjoying what nature has to offer. But some days can also be tough, so if you're thinking about becoming a guide think it through. Do your research, talk to other guides, get ready to spend money and definitely learn to plan ahead. It may look glamorous but there is a lot of work that goes into it that others do not see. Oh, and if you like to fish, guiding is not the job for you! You are better off trying your luck at tournament fishing.

Sources: www.nisswa.com. Brian Koshenina is a professional guide www.muskiesandmore.com, radio host www.knsiradio.com, outdoor writer, tournament angler, mentor and volunteer in Minnesota www.implyoutdoorexperiences.org.

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Musky Mayhem

By Carrie Cartwright



The muskellunge is the largest predator in fresh water lakes and rivers existing in 31 States and 4 Provinces. The current I.G.F.A (International Game Fish Association) record musky was caught on July 24th, 1949 in Lake Oreilles, Hayward, Wisconsin U.S.A. The fish weighed 67 pounds 8 ounces. Muskies are known as the fish of ten thousand casts, I thought it was only a thousand! But, when you are out chucking big baits for big toothy musky's it can feel like you have thrown a million casts by the end of the day. Some of the largest muskies have been caught by accident like Ken O'Briens of Toronto, Ontario. His 58 inch beauty which weighed 65 pounds and was caught off of Blackstone Harbour in Georgian Bay, Ontario and remains the 8th largest musky in the world to be caught and holds the Ontario record. He was using a spinning rod with 8 pound test line, tied up with a tiny plug, four inch

leader and 3 split shot weights. I was 15 years old when I read about Ken's catch in the local newspaper. I cut the article out and still have it tucked away in my Ontario Fishing Guide book which I read faithfully as a kid. I have always been mesmerized by stories and pictures of large fish; my book is a testament to that. As, I pulled it out to look for the newspaper article the book fell apart in my hands. With the constant business of life it made me take a moment to open the book and look at the pictures that once intrigued me as a child and made me dream of catching big fish.



On my last trip to Thaddeus Lake, Ontario www.thaddeuslodelodge.com. I boated my personal best musky at 39 inches. The weather wasn't the greatest for the week, a tornado touched down not far from camp along with a few wind and rainstorms which kept us off the water for a few days. I went out in the evening with Perry the owner of Thaddeus Lake Lodge and my good fishing friend Mike Pullen. I like to use black in the evening when the sun has been bright all day. The fish seem to locate a dark color better at that time. I had a follow up and caught three small northern pike. So, I knew the fish could see my bait clearly and I felt confident in what I was



using. My 39 inch musky hit and broke water almost immediately. I set the hook and closed my eyes when I got sight of the fish and said "I can't look". I opened my eyes stayed focused and landed the fish! Thaddeus Lake is well known as a superb walleye fishery which draws anglers from both sides of the border. It also produces trophy musky. The largest musky to come out of Thaddeus Lake was caught by Tom Crawford and measured 58 inches which actually ties Ken O'Briens musky for length.

I have had the opportunity to fish with some seriously good angler's at Thaddeus Lake. First time I met Tom Kozoil from Nebraska it was a quick handshake and we got in the boat. This guy ropes musky like a kid does fishing a school of bluegills. His most recent catch came from a lake in Minnesota. He and his friend Perry were night fishing the full moon in September. They were equipped with spot lights and hand lamps for night fishing. This is something I have to try! Tom had already boated a 51.5 inch musky on the trip but, still was looking for more. They decided to go and fish the same point. With four cranks of the reel Tom had a feeling that this was a big fish! "It felt big, but they all feel big". Through his head lamp "it was like tunnel vision". The fish made three runs, after nearly pulling Tom into the water and Perry grabbing him by the rain suit they landed the 54 inch



fish! "There is something about those fish" says Tom Kozoil "they make a person realize what fishing is all about". I couldn't agree more! It's also about the people. Spending time in the boat with someone is a great way to get to know them even if few words are spoken. I have made some lifelong friends by being involved in the fishing community and look forward to the future of big fish and new friendships.

Carrie Cartwright is from Brantford, Ontario and has been fishing since she was 7 years old. Sponsored by FISHBUM Outfitters, X-Zone Lures, Okuma High Performance Rods and Reels, CL Fishin', World Fishing Network Ambassador and an instructor for Fishing 101 for Women.



Tennessee Stripers are Hot at Fort Loudon Dam

By Jake Bussolini

This was my third fishing trip to this part of the Tennessee River system but my first mid-summer attempt at catching big stripers there. Both of the other two trips were in the Spring or Fall. I always fish this area with Bo Rice, who many feel is the best fishing guide in Tennessee. Bo has studied the Striper movements and habits in these waters and seems to know how the big fish change their behavior as the various surrounding elements change. The biggest factor at this time of the year seems to be the flow of water that is passed through the dam. The faster the water flows, the better the bite.



My step Son, Keith Caminiti had never caught a big freshwater fish and I felt that a Tennessee striper would give him a fine lesson in retrieving a big fish. We scheduled a two day trip from Mooresville North Carolina and the four hour drive gave us a good look at the mountains and valleys of western North Carolina.

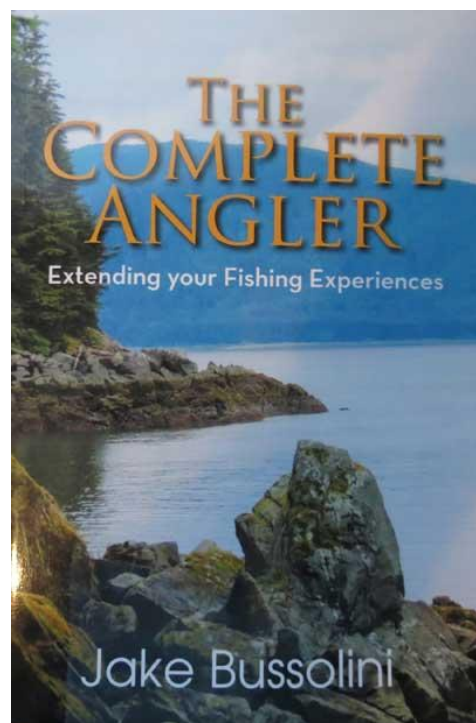
We were on the water at 6am the first day and within five minutes of

casting the 4 inch threadfin shad into the churning water beneath the dam Keith hooked a nice seven pound striper. He was thrilled with this fish but we warned him that seven pounds was not what we were looking for. Not five minutes later he hooked a much bigger fish and he suddenly became a fisherman who had a fishing story to tell. He boated a nice 25 pounder, and found out for the first time how tired his arms could get retrieving a big fish in fast flowing water.

On the first day we caught 12 stripers, several large catfish and a few drum. The second day produced about the same numbers of fish but on both days the bite was best between 6 am and 11 am. I landed a nice 30 pound striper on the second day which measured 41 inches.

The afternoon bite was less than expected due to slower water flow through the dam. The preferred bait for the bigger fish seemed to be the four inch threadfin shad. The larger gizzard shad did not seem to attract the attention of the stripers.

The shad were very plentiful near the boat launch in the early morning hours. It only took three cast net attempts to catch enough bait for our two day experience.



Fishing mostly in the morning, we caught a total of 35 fish in two days, 24 stripers, 4 drum and 7 catfish. I was surprised that the catfish were holding in the fast water beneath the dam. I managed to pull out this 20 pound blue catfish right up against the wall of the dam and I also lost two that seemed much bigger than this one.

If you are looking for a great experience fishing for stripers, try this area of the Tennessee River system. Bo Rice and his fishing experiences can be seen at www.fishingwithbo.com.

Jake Bussolini is a freelance writer who has written five books about freshwater fishing. His books can be reviewed on his web site www.jakestakeonfishing.com. His most recent book "The Complete Angler" contains descriptions of several US and Canadian waters that have produced fine fishing.

TrophyCatch Builds On Success, Launches Season 3

By Bob Wattendorf



Season two of TrophyCatch was a huge success. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), anglers and fishing-related businesses around the state are celebrating the success and kicking off season three. For the second season, which just ended, more than \$200,000 worth of individual prizes will be rewarded, thanks to TrophyCatch's valued corporate partners.

"In season two alone, we documented about a thousand trophy-sized bass caught in Florida and released to continue growing, spawning and challenging anglers," said Tom Champeau, director of the FWC's Division of Freshwater Fisheries Management. Included were five Hall of Fame bass weighing more than 13 pounds. Those anglers each receive a hand-painted replica of their catch (a \$500 value), as well as \$200 in gift cards from Bass Pro Shops, Rapala and/or Dick's Sporting Goods.

There is more: Another 229 anglers joined the Trophy Club in season two by submitting photos documenting bass 10 to 12.9 pounds that they caught and released. Each earned \$150 in gift cards, plus



a long-sleeve custom shirt from Bass King Clothing. A remarkable 758 bass weighing 8 to 9.9 pounds were entered in the Lunker Club, and each generated \$100 in gifts cards and a short-sleeve Bass King T-shirt. Finally, 386 bass over 8 pounds were submitted that did

not have the required information to be accepted into TrophyCatch but received certificates as Big Catches.

Although all bass must have been caught between Oct. 1, 2013, and Sep. 30, 2014, to be included in the season two competition, anglers have until Oct. 15 to get their catch submitted and approved. After that the annual champion will be



announced and win the Championship Ring, provided by the Americans Outdoor Fund. The current leader is Joseph Morrell, who caught, documented and released a 14-pound, 9-ounce Florida largemouth on March 8 in Kingsley Lake, Clay County.

Every angler who registered, free of cost, at www.TrophyCatchFlorida.com is entered into an annual drawing for a \$40,000 bass boat package. Phoenix boats donated a 619 Pro, powered by Mercury Marine and equipped with a Power-Pole shallow-water anchoring system. In addition, every time an angler has a TrophyCatch verified, he or she earned 10 more chances to win the boat. "Like" us at www.FaceBook.com/TrophyCatchFlorida to see who the finalists are for this year's random drawing and



to learn when and where the boat will be given away. By subscribing to www.YouTube.com/TrophyCatchFlorida you can check out the winners from the first year and be notified when the new winners' videos are posted.

"Year two produced five times as many winners as the first year," said KP Clements, TrophyCatch director. "We know there are many more trophy bass that were caught and released but not documented because anglers did not have the necessary tools to verify the weight or didn't yet

know about the program.”

Remember, season three (Oct.1, 2014 – Sep. 30, 2015) is underway, so take a camera and scale fishing with you. Be sure to get the required photo of the entire bass, head-to-tail on the scale, with the weight legible, and the scale held properly by the handle. The photo of the whole fish on the scale is critical to being approved for rewards, so the higher the resolution and sharper the image the better. You may also submit supplemental photos that aren't required. Consider including a close-up of the scale to make it easier to read the weight, a photo of the length and maybe girth, and a photo of the angler holding or releasing the catch. You can upload up to five photos or an MP4 video with each submission.

Tournament anglers can participate by submitting a photo of themselves with their catch and a link to the official tournament results showing their name, the weight of the individual bass, date and water body. Another option for large-tournament anglers is to include a photo of a digital scale printout that has that data imprinted on it.

Fishing guides around the state are finding this a great way to promote their business by helping customers get the required weight photos and telling them how easy it is to register and submit their catch.

All of this activity helps achieve the TrophyCatch goals, which are to preserve these valuable fish, learn how to enhance their abundance and promote recreational fishing. To see all the catches, go to www.TrophyCatchFlorida.com and click on “View Gallery” or “Search.” The latter allows you to narrow down results by angler, county, water body or date. Also be sure to follow TrophyCatchFlorida on Facebook and YouTube, and the Freshwater Fishing Blog on FloridaSportsman/freshwater to learn more about trophy bass fishing in Florida – the Fishing Capital of the World.



Fall Back Walleyes



By Jason Mitchell

Fall patterns run the gamut from shallow to deep. Depending on the body of water, there might be walleyes on shallow rocks or weeds, deep structure, deep rocks, open water or current bottlenecks.

Sometimes what is old will again become new in that locations, bays and shorelines that held fish early in the season suddenly load up with fish as water temperatures cool. Some of the best fall spots are often just a matter of going back to where you caught fish during the spring or early summer.

The reality is that there will be different populations of fish on different programs so it is impossible to say that most fish slide out deep in the fall or push up shallow. If only finding fish were that easy. Throw in the seasonal big moves that some fish make as they search out current or position next to bottleneck areas with moving water and the reality is that fall walleyes can be found just about anywhere.

What is a sure thing however is that fish will be moving and change will be a constant? Because fish do move so much in the fall, I have wrote in the past how much I love large community spots late in the year... big locations that intersect the route of many transient fish during the fall when fishing pressure drops off to practically nothing. That is a good recipe for success.

Another good recipe for success is to target smaller lakes that were really good earlier in the year. Now why small lakes versus big lakes? Don't get me wrong, big lakes often fish really well in the fall and



often fish much later into the fall as they take longer to freeze over but there are things I really like about lakes that are less than a couple thousand acres as fall turns ugly.

Small lakes seem to fish better during periods of strong winds. Tough weather is a reality as the open water season comes to a close and too much

wind will sometimes make the fishing on big bodies of water much more difficult. Wind pounding hard bottom areas and the fact that water temperatures cool down with each passing front often are good for fishing but everything is better in moderation.

On smaller bodies of water or at least protected bays, you can sometimes fast forward or rewind on the patterns by either looking for protected areas that have avoided the brunt of the fronts and wind or you can look for area that are getting hit. Small lakes are sometimes going to be more controlled than the wide open all or nothing atmosphere of big water.

Not always but often, small lakes start out hot and then get tough as the summer progresses while large lakes often start out slower but then typically offer good fishing through the summer. So often however, we watch these small lakes become really productive again in the fall.

Often as well, cooling water temperatures drive good fishing in that falling water temps only make most patterns better, where as unusually warm trends actually seem to scatter fish. Determining whether the fish are on the scatter routine versus the loading up routine often dictates the strategy.... ie: trolling crank baits covering a lot of water versus fishing vertically on a specific location. As a rule of thumb, pale washed out fish are fish on the run while darker fish are more stable residents of a particular location.

Fall walleye fishing can be some of the best fishing of the season. Classic patterns unfold each season on many bodies of water and there is often very little fishing pressure. Fall fishing however can also be extremely frustrating when fish are not watching the calendar. There can be times when it seems like the fall pattern is no pattern.... fish are scattered everywhere but there isn't a concentration anywhere.

You can put the odds in your favor this fall by either targeting a smaller or larger lake with some strategy just like you would early in the year. Adjust your strategy and presentation to the fish and not the calendar. Warm trends and scattered fish call for a completely different game plan than cooling temperatures and concentrating fish. Look at the conditions and not the calendar.



Advertisements and web site photos made my recent trip to Emo Ontario, Canada very inviting. The Clearwater Lake facility offered fishing in interconnecting waterways covering nearly 55 miles of good fishing for nearly every species of Canadian freshwater fish.

Our group consisting of three experienced anglers and a first time teen angler was expecting exciting catches of walleye, pike and bass, after all, how could we miss with that much water?

Soon after arriving we realized that fishing a Canadian facility before Labor Day might have been a mistake. Vacationers were still very abundant with all of the lake activity that comes with lake-side vacations. We immediately realized that it would be necessary to portage to one or more adjacent lakes to get the seclusion we were after and also better catch rates.

Portage, as we understood it involved carrying our gear over land to the adjacent lake. Much to our pleasant surprise the situation was different here.

Both the north and south end of Clearwater Lake contained motorized rail transportation as a portage. We never even had to leave our boat. We simply drove the boat on to the hauler, much like driving it on to a trailer. The hauler did the rest as shown in this photo.

Moving into Weld Lake at the North end of Clearwater Lake offered a better catch rate, but the fish were generally smaller than desired. The clear water in both lakes provided an excellent opportunity for me to try my new Go Pro camera. Filming videos containing shots like the one shown here made catching the smaller fish more exciting.



Portage and Camera Improve Canadian Fishing Trip

By Jake Bussolini

Despite catching mostly smaller fish than we expected, I did manage to get my long awaited five pound small mouth bass on a small crank bait.

Again my GoPro provided the opportunity to film this fish before it came into the boat.

Clearwater is great for filming underwater activity but not necessarily good for catching big fish.



We fished four of the five interconnected lakes catching bass and northern pike. Our catch rate per boat was about 25 fish per day, mostly bass, and the walleye were nowhere to be had. There seems to be



no substitute for fly-in fishing in Canadian waters.

Jake Bussolini is a freelance writer who has written five books about freshwater fishing. His work can be viewed on www.jakestakeonfishing.com.

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Featured Hunting Section



WATERFOWL AND BIRD HUNTING IN THE COOL OF ICELAND

By Bill Vanderford





Goose Hunting - The goose hunting season starts the 20th of August and continues until they depart for the south during winter. Most

Sitting on a broken place in the Earth's crust that pushed through the surface to form an island some 8 million years ago, constantly flowing with molten rocks within reach of the surface and inhabited by the descendants of war mongering Vikings, Iceland is an ideal place for people with guns in the fall and winter! Unlike the rest of the world who would run when a volcano erupts, the Icelanders look for long sticks to roast hot dogs over the lava flows! It's certainly my kind of place!

With only 300,000 hardy residents, the purest water in the world flowing from every stream, river and waterfall, free geothermal heating throughout the country and thousands of geese, ducks, sea birds and upland game birds like rock ptarmigan, Iceland can be a bird hunter's paradise at different times of the year. The best periods for these different species are as follows:



hunting happens from blinds as the geese come into the fields early in the morning or when they return to the waters late in the evening.

Duck Hunting - The duck hunting season begins on the 1st of September and continues until the 15th of March. Most ducks consist of mallard, teal and widgeon. Duck hunting in Iceland is accomplished around lakes or streams by setting decoys.



Sea Bird Hunting - This unique type of hunting kicks off on the 1st of September and ends on the 25th of April. Icelanders hunt auks from boats in the open seas, but also pursue common murre and thick-billed murre along the coastlines.

Rock Ptarmigan Hunting - These upland game birds are hunted in Iceland from the 15th of October until the 22nd December. Rock ptarmigan are mostly found in the wide open spaces of the mountains and forest fields. Guides will put you in the right areas, but the hunter has to find the bird alone by walking through the fields until they are flushed. It's an exciting way to hunt!



Though a hunting trip to such of a remote area of the world sounds like a logistical nightmare...it really isn't if you know the right people...and I do! All you have to do is contact Harpa and Stefan of Iceland Outfitters (harpa@icelandoutfitters.com), and they can take care of your every need. Stefan can arrange the licenses needed, all guns and hunting gear and the best places to hunt. Harpa can even set up interesting tours for the ladies, find them the best geothermal

spas, direct anyone to the best shopping venues or anything else they might desire in Iceland. Contact website for Iceland Outfitters is www.icelandoutfitters.com.

Another misconception about Iceland is that it's a hard place to reach...not so! Reykjavik, the capital of Iceland, is a five-hour direct flight from Boston, Washington, DC and New York on Icelandair. The airline has direct flights from Iceland to seven major airports in North America including Seattle, Orlando, Toronto, Minneapolis and Denver. Flights are normally less expensive than you might imagine, and Icelandair allows passengers to stop in Iceland at no extra cost en route to over 18 cities in Europe and Scandinavia including London, Paris, Madrid, Milan and Copenhagen.

The unique geological beauty of Iceland is akin to looking in a kaleidoscope that changes multiple times with every mile traveled. Icelanders are a friendly and physically beautiful people who all speak English as a second language, include tips

in all purchases and offer free Wi-Fi throughout the country. They have the Northern Lights, Icelandic horses, millions of sheep, fantastic seafood and great hunting and fishing. So, if you haven't added this magnificent place to your "Bucket List"...it's high time that you do!

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 ifish51@aol.com or at his web site: www.georgiafishing.com.





HuntMate Apps Help Hunters

We've all heard the Boy Scout motto "Be Prepared," and nothing could be more appropriate in helping prepare hunters with better planning than having essential information in the palm of their hand with HuntMate® or HuntMate®Pro iPhone apps. No matter where in the world they're at hunters with iPhones (and soon other "smartphones" listed below), can take advantage of the latest advancements in technology they offer for use all at a onetime charge of \$3.99 for HuntMate® or \$7.99 for HuntMate®Pro. Each packs an incredible array of data into an easy-to-use handheld iPhone application – or "app" in tech-speak -- designed specifically to help hunters in the field.

Developed by Sammy Lee, an outdoor industry veteran of over 30 years, the HuntMate® apps are finding popularity worldwide since going "live," following the success of Lee's fishing apps called FishMate®, FishMate®Pro and FirstMate® all launched in the spring of 2010. "Every hunter knows to increase their odds of taking that trophy, they need to be in the woods or fields when game are most active," said Lee. "HuntMate® and HuntMate®Pro show you the best "Hunting Times" for the day based on the Solunar Times. And it works."

Features and benefits are plenty. A touch of the numerous screens include the "Hunting Times" page with the times for moonrise and moonset, sunrise and sunset, plus the major and minor feeding times and the current moon phase. The Weather page has the current weather conditions and long range forecast for the next six days at their immediate location or worldwide for optimal planning. There's also a "Trophies" page to store photos to send to their buddies and record pertinent information for future trips.

"For even more offerings," said Lee, "the advanced HuntMate®Pro includes color weather radar with a near 100 mile range updated every 15 minutes; an extended forecast prepared for your current location or anywhere else including temperature, humidity, heat index, barometric pressure, wind speed and direction. Another touch of the screen loads you up with hunting tips and delicious game recipes from the most informed sources in the industry, plus Geo-Tracking and GPS location coordinates data.

"When a hunter uploads a photo to the Trophies page, on HuntMate®Pro, immediately after taking their game, they'll find an 'i' on the Google Map. When the 'i' is touched, the Google Map opens up and will take the hunter from anywhere in the world directly back to the exact spot where the photo was taken and posted. Geo-Tracking helps get the hunter back to their 'Secret Spot'!

"Both hunting apps give you all the information you need to plan a trip anywhere in the world," said Lee, "and we plan to have more user friendly and essential updates along the way." Each app can be purchased online at Apple's iTunes Store in the Apps section. They require either an iPod Touch, iPad, iPhone OS 3.0 or higher and iTunes. A version for Android smartphones may be downloaded in the Google site.

HuntMate® and HuntMate®Pro along with FirstMate®, FishMate® and FishMate®Pro are designed by Connected LLC. For more information go to: www.connectedllcapps.com.

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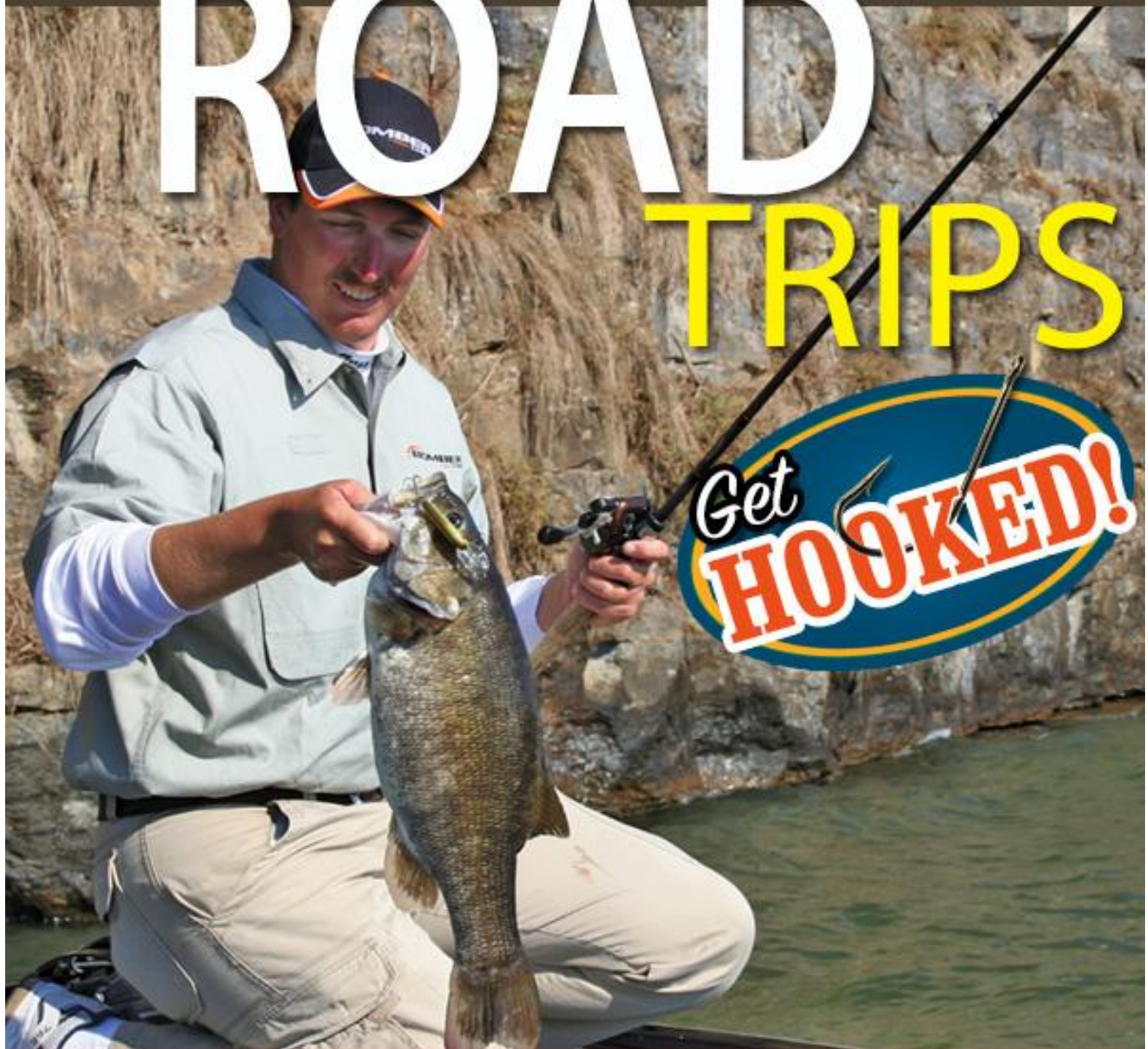
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Dos and Don'ts of Tree Stand and Game Camera Placement

By Josh Lantz with Ralph and Vicki Cianciarulo

While many whitetail hunters place their game cameras in the springtime, most of these set-ups require fine-tuning by late summer. Cameras are expensive and take valuable time to monitor. Get the most out of them by making critical adjustments now, and avoid disturbing your deer during the critical few weeks before the hunting season begins.

Tree stands, too, require attention in late summer. New stands erected in the spring or early summer when vegetation is sparse generally look quite different by August. It's why some hunters don't hang or relocate stands at all until this time of year. Regardless of when they were placed, all stands should be double-checked during late summer for safety and general huntability.

Game Cameras

Known as "America's Favorite Hunting Couple," Illinois-based Ralph and Vicki Cianciarulo host the hit television shows *The Choice* and *Archer's Choice* on Outdoor Channel. Like most whitetail hunters, Ralph and Vicki advise placing cameras in the early spring if you can, in order to monitor deer throughout the full antler-growing cycle. But while antler growth is useful and fun to observe, the duo agrees that the weeks leading up to the season opener are most important for observing deer. "Opening day is always a hunter's best chance for success," Ralph says, "and our game cameras are the single most helpful scouting tool we have for patterning mature bucks and breeding-age does during the critical days and weeks before hunting begins," he concludes.



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Ralph and Vicki suggest the following dos and don'ts for making sure your cameras are all dialed in.



Do use enough cameras to cover the critical areas of your hunting property. “We have a 20-acre property we hunt, and two cameras placed along the main game trail are adequate,” Vicki says. “On a different 33-acre piece we run four – three on the primary trails in and out, and one on a food plot in the center of the property,” she continues. Let the size and individual features of the property you’ll hunt dictate the number of cameras you use.

Do place your cameras in key locations, such as on trails between bedding and feeding areas, at natural funnels, next to scrapes, and in daytime browsing areas used by high numbers of does. These high-percentage travel areas will produce the most usable images and, therefore, provide the best information about your deer herd.

Do not enter bedding areas to place or maintain game cameras during the few weeks before hunting season begins. As tempting as it may be, avoid disturbing bedding areas. Instead, place your cameras along the trails leading in and out of these sanctuaries.

Do keep your cameras and all related gear including straps, fresh batteries, saws and pruning shears organized. “Vicki and I keep all our cameras and supplies organized inside a dedicated Plano Sportsman’s Trunk,” says Ralph. “We also keep a map showing all our camera numbers and locations taped inside the lid,” he adds.

Do not neglect previously placed cameras and assume they will continue to deliver good performance. Now is the time to replace batteries and trim vegetation – not after hunting season begins. Tenzing pro Jonathan Turner reminds hunters that weeds, leaves and even branches can grow relatively fast over the summer. Just because your frame was clear yesterday does not mean it will be today. “Keep your camera frame free of vegetation that can be moved by the wind and repeatedly trigger the shutter,” he says. “It’s unnecessary, annoying and drains your batteries.”

Turner offers a final tip on game camera placement. He avoids putting them in areas with prolonged exposure to the sun. “Place and position your cameras to protect them from the sun,” he advises. “Infrared cameras can be triggered by the sun, which – as with wind – can also be annoying and deplete your batteries, but the sun can actually damage your cameras too,” Turner continues. Like point-and-shoot cameras that lack a viewfinder, most game cameras keep the shutter open with no mirror to redirect the sun’s rays. “If your game camera is pointed towards the sun for any significant amount of time, you are probably damaging the sensor,” advises Turner.



Tree Stands and Blinds

You haven’t placed your hunting stands or blinds yet? No worries. Many experienced hunters will move their tree stands throughout the actual hunting season as deer travel patterns change due to shifting food sources, watering habits, and breeding activity. So, placing your stands during late summer is actually a pretty good strategy.

Aside from many of the same considerations used for game camera placement discussed previously, fundamental decisions concerning tree stand and blind placement should be based on prevailing wind patterns, access, and concealment. Start with those basics when placing stands on a new or unfamiliar property.

Do scout and study your hunting property. “Take a day or two and scout from a high vantage point without disturbing the area,” Ralph Cianciarulo says. “Study satellite photos and use your knowledge of deer movement to best figure out placement based on obvious bedding and feeding areas, then consider your routes in and out of those areas.” The best stand locations will be along travel corridors like game trails, ditches, ridges and draws between primary bedding and feeding areas. Bow hunting stands will need to be closer to those travel corridors, while firearm stands can be set back further. Additionally, firearm hunters have more flexibility when placing stands along food plots or fields because of their increased effective range.

Do bring the right stuff. Be prepared with all the gear and equipment you'll need to place and fine-tune your stands and blinds safely and efficiently – including climbing harnesses and a helper. “Vicki and I each keep Tenzing TC1260 packs fully set up with harnesses, ropes, ratchet straps, pruning saws and ratchet cutters, first aid kits, reflectors, haul lines, screw in steps and hangers, and wind checker bottles,” says Ralph, who wants to know what the wind is doing at any stand location he is setting up. “Sometimes you have to move your location due to dense woods or shrubs that funnel your wind where you didn't think it was actually going,” he says. “Small smoke bombs work great for this, because they provide a strong visual that travels a long way,” continues Cianciarulo, who has been using smoke bombs during tree stand placement since the 1980's with great results.

Don't over-trim. Cutting brush and limbs in and around your stands and blinds is important, but don't overdo it. You'll want to leave some vegetation for concealment, especially around the bottom of the stand and your lower body. Try to picture what your stand will look like once the trees drop their leaves in the fall, then trim accordingly. You can always remove more later. Remove enough brush at the base of the ladder or the entrance to the blind to remain quiet during entry and exit. Shooting lanes should be cleared as well. “Sit in your stand or blind and try to draw your bow or shoulder your gun in the directions you believe deer are most likely to appear,” suggests Turner. “Then cut away any limb or twig that might contact you, your gun barrel, arrow or bow – including the small stuff that might get caught between your cam and bow string,” he continues. While still in the stand, identify any major limbs that might deflect your arrow or bullet on the way to its target and do your best to eliminate those as well.



Do think seriously about shooting lanes. Our initial thoughts on the places we believe shot opportunities will occur are often dead wrong. Think about the bucks you've observed approaching a field or food plot. Did they stroll up the trail and stop at the very edge? Rarely. Recall past encounters and you'll realize that bucks typically stop well short of those defined edges, remaining close to the comfort of thick cover as they scent check and look for other deer. Look for windows five to ten yards back from field and clearing openings, then clear appropriate shooting lanes.

Don't neglect your trimmings. Trimmed limbs and twigs should not be allowed to lie on the ground, as they may be stepped on and alert deer. Instead, use them for extra concealment around the lower portion of your stand or on the outside of your blind.

Do plan your ingress and egress. Consider the prevailing winds, then plan primary and secondary routes to and from each stand location. Once you identify your routes, clean a trail into your stand sites. “I get so mad at myself when I bump game,” Vicki says. “Sometimes it is unavoidable, but you can reduce the odds by taking time to clear your paths of sticks you might step on or noisy brush that may catch you or your gear.”

Do keep them quiet. Squeaks and creaks alert deer and tend to happen at the worst possible times. Climb each of your stands before the season begins and give them the silent treatment. All squeaks on all stands are different. Some are due to over tightening and others are due to under tightening. Others can be rectified with additional ratchet straps. Many people use vegetable oil spray to lubricate their stands. “Odor free” oils marketed by most major gun cleaning supply companies are another option.

Game cameras and hunting stands are key tools for the whitetail hunter, and knowing where and how to best place them will dramatically increase a hunter’s chances for success. Late summer is the best time to fine-tune your camera and stand set-ups to make sure they perform at their best once the upcoming hunting season begins. It is still early enough to minimize concerns about disturbing deer, but close enough to the opener to put your latest observations on deer movement to work. Most important, perhaps, is that this work also provides a great scouting opportunity. “Don’t think you know it all,” says Vicki. “You’ll always learn something if you take the time to listen and observe,” she continues. “So, take the time to get out and sit in your stands in the weeks leading into the season. Stay flexible, and don’t think twice about changing your set-ups.” Come hunting season, you’ll be glad you did.

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Weatherby PA-459 TR Pump Shotgun Model With Larger Magazine Capacity

Weatherby's® PA-459 TR 8-Shot pump shotgun features a magazine capacity of seven 2 ¾-inch shells (plus one in chamber), providing an extra measure of assurance for personal/home defense situations as well as more firepower for three-gun and other competitive shooting events.



“Our PA-459 TR pump shotguns are designed for threat response and with the larger magazine capacity, they

become an even better option for three-gun competitors,” said Mike Schwiebert, vice president, marketing for Weatherby, Inc. “The short length of pull provides for quick, snag-free target acquisition, and is ideal for use in close quarters. Because dependability is so important for these shotguns, all PA-459 TR models are endurance tested and field proven in accordance with our rigorous standards.”

Available in 12 gauge, the PA-459 TR 8-Shot has an ergonomic pistol grip-style buttstock and short 13 1/2-inch length of pull. Other key features include a black lightweight injection-molded stock, and a matte black finish on all metalwork to reduce glare. The rubber-textured grip area and a low-density recoil pad help minimize felt recoil. Picatinny rails (pictured) on the bottom of the forearm and on top of the receiver allow mounting of optics, sights or lights.

The shotgun's 18 1/2-inch barrel is chrome lined to withstand years of high-volume shooting. It has a screw-in cylinder bore choke. The barrel has a winged fiber optic front sight for quick target acquisition. A rear LPA-style ghost ring sight is adjustable for windage and elevation.

Located ahead of the trigger guard, an extended and enlarged slide release allows quick and dependable function of the action. The oversized release makes it easy to find by feel, even in the dark. Constructed of aircraft-grade alloys to reduce overall weight without compromising strength, the CNC-machined receiver is designed to improve the balance of the shotgun for better handling.

With 3-inch shells, the PA-459 TR 8-Shot has a magazine capacity of six plus one in chamber. The shotgun weighs 6.5 pounds. Overall length is 39 inches. Swivel studs are included.

Founded in 1945, Weatherby, Inc.'s line features the new WBY-X™ products as well as the popular Vanguard® Series 2 and legendary Mark V® rifles (production and custom), Threat Response® shotguns and rifles, semi-auto and pump shotguns, premium ammunition and security/shooting accessories. For more information, go to www.weatherby.com. The company is based in Paso Robles, Calif., and invites all hunters and shooters to visit its free online community at www.weatherbynation.com or Facebook page at www.facebook.com/Weatherbyinc.







**ICE
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TOM'S TOP TEN SAFETY GUIDELINES

By Tom Gruenwald

Anytime you decide to go ice fishing, the first concern must ALWAYS be safety. Here are ten things you should think about before setting out.

1. KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Always research your destination thoroughly.

When planning any ice fishing trip, it's critical to understand ice conditions are subject to variance. You're taking an extreme personal risk, so it's critical to take every precaution possible to ensure you're minimizing danger.

Smart ice anglers, even under seemingly ideal conditions, research their waters to minimize danger and come fully prepared for a potential emergency. Most important is having knowledgeable local contacts intimately familiar with the area available to provide current evaluations of ice conditions. Even if you receive favorable reports, you must understand ice conditions can change or deteriorate rapidly. Beware! Traveling on ice, anywhere at any time, presents inherent risk and danger.

It's also a good idea to inform someone remaining on shore when your party is leaving, where you're going and when you plan to return.

2. TRAVEL IN PAIRS, PREFERABLY WITH A KNOWLEDGABLE SOURCE

At minimum, always travel in pairs—a small group is preferable--and when possible, arrange for someone familiar with your target waters to travel with your crew.

3. CARRY A CELL PHONE

Always pack a fully charged cell phone, and keep it in an easily accessible pocket. For best results, demand a water resistant model, and for added security, place it in a water resistant case such as an Otter or Pelican. Just for good measure, slide your phone inside a zip-lock style storage bag to ensure it will remain dry—then use it sparingly to ensure you always have an adequately charged, operable device.

Besides allowing you to call for assistance, most smart phones feature full GPS functionality, something authorities can use to track your location, while also providing a convenient light source that can be used to help guide you through darkness or unexpected, inclement conditions—and an easily identifiable beacon if rescuers are trying to locate you in the dark.

4. KEEP SAFETY PICKS READILY ACCESSIBLE

ALWAYS bring safety picks AND have them readily accessible. After all, a set of these won't do you much good should you fall through and the picks are packed in your sled twenty feet away.

5. BRING A ROPE

Never leave shore without having a length of rope handy, or better yet, a safety throw rope that can be pitched from a distance to pull someone who breaks through back to safety. Again, keep yours handy at all times.

6. CONSIDER WEARING A PERSONAL FLOATATION DEVICE (P.F.D.)

I know, I know...this sounds outlandish. However, it is rather ironic that P.F.D.'s are required in most instances for open water use while boating, but haven't been mandated for those traversing the same waters once they freeze over.

While I understand this may not always be practical or comfortable, consider at least wearing one while initially traveling out, moving from location to location and again on the return trip to shore--especially early and late in the season, or when venturing around on unfamiliar waters.

Secondarily, snowmobiles and four wheelers should be equipped with emergency safety floatation devices such as a Nebulus system. Not only does the Nebulus provide life raft style floatation for users in an emergency, but also suspends your snowmobile or four-wheeler below, eliminating the related stress and expenses involved with retrieving a sunken machine.

Just pull the ripcord. CO2 activated canisters inflate the raft within thirty seconds, providing a safety float for you, your passenger, and machine.

7. UTILIZE GPS

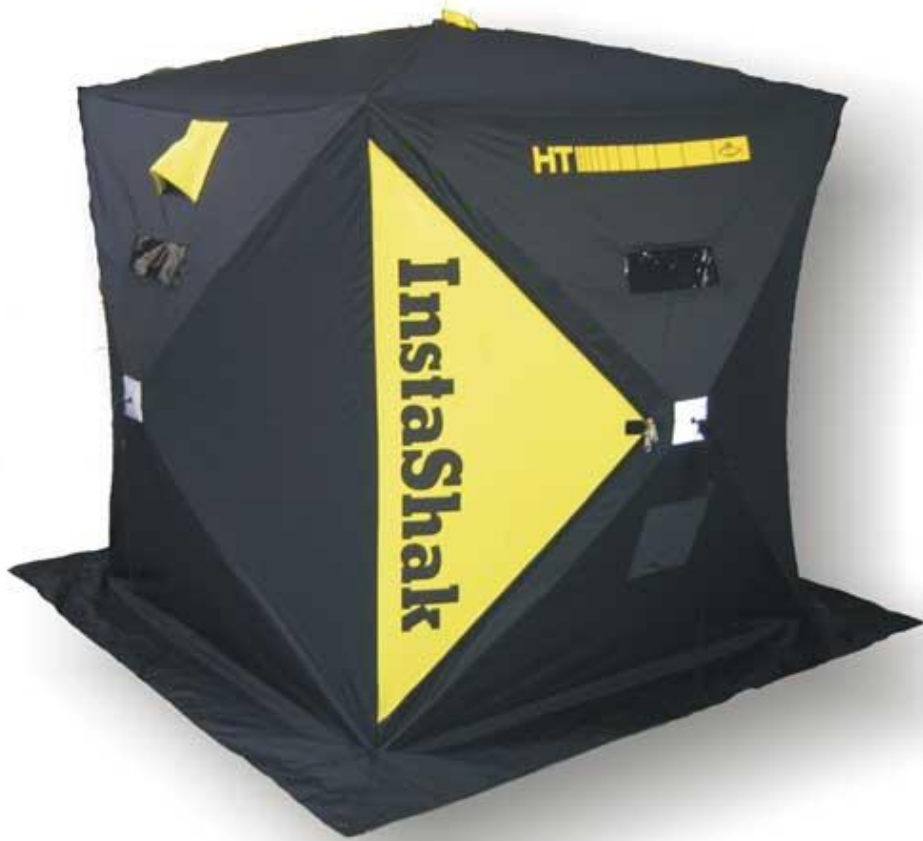
Since GPS accessibility is readily available on today's mobile devices, there's really no reason why ice anglers shouldn't be taking full advantage of the technology. Use it to mark your launch site as a saved waypoint and electronically formulate and track your intended route.

In the event you become disoriented in fog, a whiteout snowstorm or darkness, your GPS can help guide you back—and by sharing these pre-planned routes with your shoreline contacts prior to leaving, rescue efforts are made significantly easier in the event an emergency situation should arise.

8. INVEST IN A PORTABLE SHELTER AND PROPANE HEATER

I also recommend investing in some form of compact, lightweight, easily assembled portable shelter (today's hub designs are ideal) and a propane





heater as well. Not only will these help keep you comfortable while fishing, but provide life saving, heated protection in an emergency, too.

This next suggestion may sound a bit extreme, but bringing along an absorbent bath towel and change of dry clothes, both stored in a waterproof storage bag, isn't a bad idea either. The practice could ultimately save a life—maybe yours.

9. MAKE YOUR WAY ONTO THE ICE USING A CHISEL TO CHECK ICE THICKNESS

Use extreme caution as you set out onto the pack. Walk out first, without gear. If traveling on bare ice, wear sturdy cleats, and cautiously work your

way along one small step at a time, carefully chipping at the ice ahead with a chisel to check thickness before progressing. In the event the chisel breaks through indicating thin ice, carefully backtrack, tracing your previous path directly back to shore.

10. MAINTAIN A SAFE DISTANCE APART

Finally, maintain reasonable distances between each other as you proceed, while at the same time keeping everyone within your rope length for added safety. If, after a thorough check, the ice appears thick enough to support your gear, a snowmobile or four wheeler and you decide to set out, continue cautiously.

Maintain a reasonable distance of separation, having the leader of your group stop regularly to conduct secondary ice thickness checks. If driving, avoid excessive speeds, which create ice wakes that can weaken the ice. Be especially careful when traveling in darkness, where excessive speeds could mean your stopping distance exceeds the coverage span of your headlights—a dangerous situation you should never risk.

SUMMARY

While following these safety precautions won't eliminate emergencies, proper advance preparation significantly reduces the chances, and means you'll be better prepared in the event something serious should happen.

And now that we're all ready, here's to a long, productive and safe ice fishing season!

Tom Gruenwald is recognized as one of the world's foremost authorities on the sport of ice fishing. He is a prominent outdoor communicator, writer, and host of the TGO, Tom Gruenwald Outdoors television series, the first program of its kind dedicated solely to ice fishing. For more information, visit WWW.TGOFISHING.COM.

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Flaaaaag!!!

By Robert Conley

This has got to be the most anticipated cry on the ice. There is no sweeter sight then a bright orange flag pointing up towards to the skies.

With winter coming to an end, it's time for us to put some pressure on our favorite species, big old northern's. *Esox Lucius* will begin to pre-spawn and they are desperate for some much needed extra calories.



The weapons of choice when targeting these beasts are clearly a dead stinky bait and a tip up. It is simply the easiest way to present a succulent meal that no predator could ever resist. Tip ups are not just a filler for the second line slot, for us they are the big guns, the ace up the sleeve and we would never venture without them. Perhaps it's the low tech, the no hustle approach to this simple method that is so appealing or maybe just its endless track record to produce big trophy pike.

Welcome to the Tip Up Guide - Big Boy Edition.

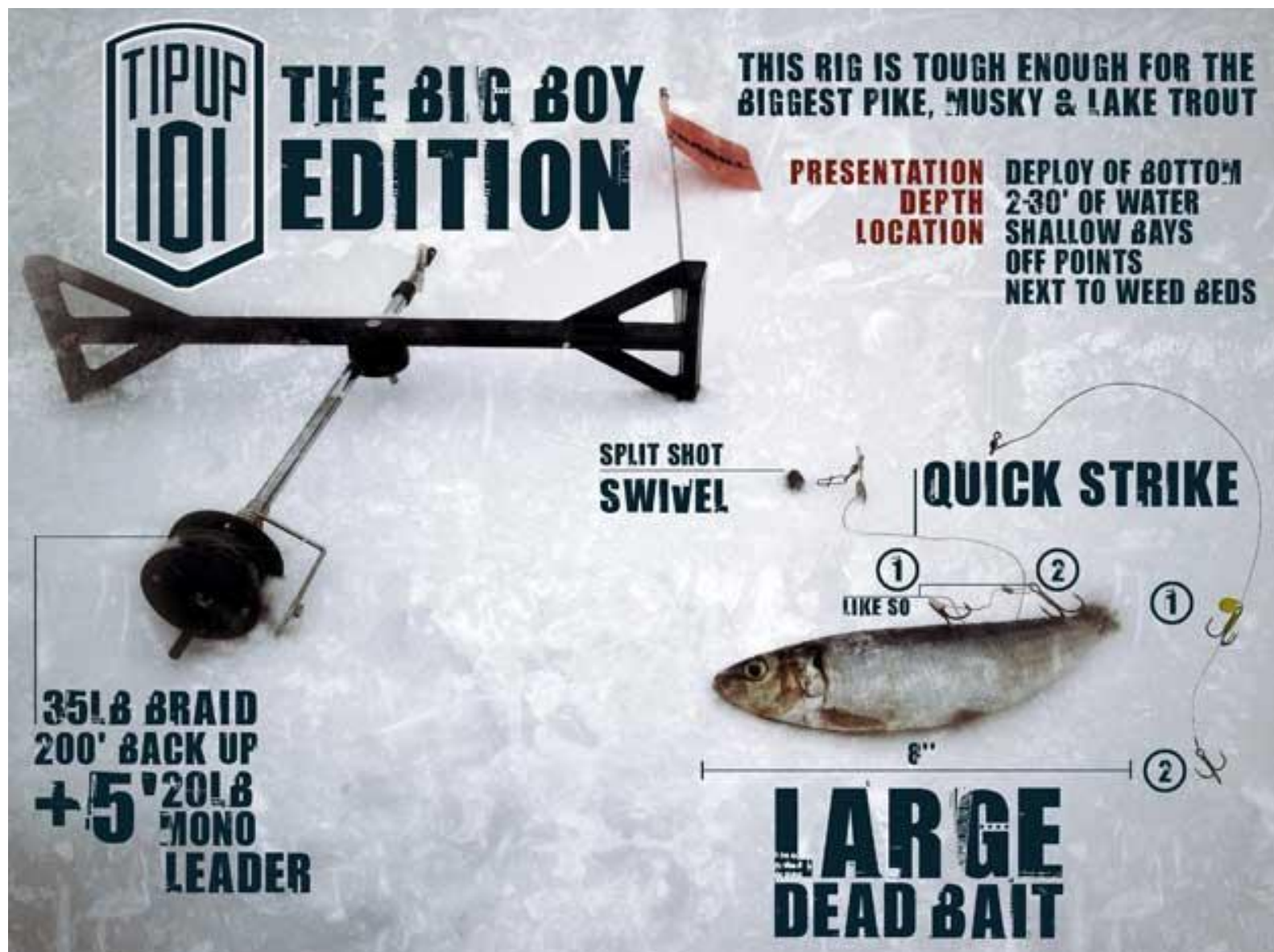
Equipment:

The market is flooded with tip ups and everyone has his own personal preferences, essentially any type will do. Brand or build doesn't really matter as they all accomplishing the exact same thing. The goal is to have the bait suspended off bottom, preferably a foot or two. The flag is triggered once line gets peeled off the spool, indicating a bite. It is as simple as that. A few ground rules however shall be established.

First and foremost, the line.

Standard tip up braid in the 30lb ranger will work just fine. It's thicker than regular braid and gives you a good grip when push comes to shove. Don't be discouraged by the large diameter as pike are not too shy at all. If however clear water or a lot of fishing pressure are present, you can switch to a regular 30lb instead.

This should fill about 90% of the spool and is your main line.





Let's talk about the business end.

A good old swivel connects the braid to a mono leader which should be around 25 -30lb test and about 3' to 5' in lengths.

When we fish super shallow, let's say crawlspace with less than 3' of water the leader is quite a bit shorter because you don't want the swivel getting snagged on the spool guide. This could potentially block the line and will result in a lost fish or broken equipment. A second swivel is tied on and a small split shot can be placed above if you are fishing in deeper waters or if a current is present. Next the star of the whole rig, the quick strike.

We can't stress the importance of this presentation, we catch and release so the fishes well being and health means everything to us. The quick strike usually launches itself right in front of the jar and makes for a fast remove and quick release. Especially in friggid temperatures, sensitive fins and eyes can freeze

over within seconds, the less time spend out of water the greater the chances are for a second rendezvous another time. Quick strikes also allow the bait to sit perfectly horizontal which makes for a more natural presentation.

The Bait!

We prefer large dead bait and when we say large we mean it.

The weapon of choice for us is frankly quiet brilliant, it's effective and affordable, easy to get a hold of and easy to store for the whole season.

Xxl frozen sardines, herrings and mackerels.

Any Asian food store generally sells a dozen for 3 or 4 dollars. Wal-Mart has them too and any local fishmonger will be happy to hand you a bunch for next to nothing.

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Out of experience, the smellier they are the better they work. We like to take ours out of the freezer a few days before the trip. Let them thaw and get nice and stinky. The natural oils will leave a wicked scent trail that will make your wife's angry but draws fish in from a mile away.

Location!

Now we got the bare bones covered, let's find a suitable location to deploy this mean machine. Just because its winter it doesn't mean the fish will completely 180* change their behavior. Feeding patterns will carry over throughout the year.

With this said use your own knowledge to your advantage and target them toothy critters in the same spots as you would do in spring and summer.

Shallow bays, the edges of weed beds, flats with access to drop-offs, the mouth of a river or a creek, Pike like to cruise along points and structure, ready to ambush any prey.

Once the perfect location is chosen we like to drill and prepare all the holes at once, pick a few promising spots and go. Make all the noise now and give them some time to settle while you set up camp for the day. On super cold days it pays off to carve a good sized trench and punch a hole at one end so it fills up with water. These are used as a makeshift life well to keep our trophies safe and sound while we handle them.



How to:

For an optimum presentation the rule of thumb is to be 1' or 2' off bottom. If there are a lot of weeds make sure to be at least a foot above those too. Most predators look up and a suspended bait will be easier to spot and attack.

Knowing how deep you are is crucial, we use our flashers to find the optimum spot and depth. There is nothing worse than lowering your bait into mud and weeds only to pull it up later in the day covered in green like a Christmas tree, fancy but useless. Once the desired depth is found we like to mark the line with a colored sharpie or such, this will make resetting the trap a breeze later on. After every fight the line should be spooled back in a neatly fashion, messy loops could potentially block the line at some point and will result in tragedy.

Baiting the rig is easy, attach the last treble to the base of the tail and the second treble in to the back, slightly closer to the head to balance the bait properly. Using one point only and just tucking it under the skin will make the bait come off easily during the fight and sets the stage for a clean hook removal. Now gently lower it down the hole towards the bottom, once it's at the desired depth, set the trigger. Attaching a bell to the flag will ensure you never miss a bite and being able to observe your traps from the get go is a crucial factor to success.



The waiting game begins and in the mean time we will always be actively fishing the area for perch, crappie, walleye or lakers. Keeping schools of panfish busy nearby is not just fun but also often attracts bigger predators.

It's a good idea to frequently slush the trap holes to prevent them from freezing over. There is nothing worse than a trophy pike spooling off line and your tip up is frozen solid in the hole.

All over sudden, there it is, ding ding and a flag is up!

Excitement levels are high but it is important to not just storm over and start yanking the line. Cool, calm and collected.

Grab your pliers, camera and quietly walk over. Even though the flag is triggered, it doesn't mean we got a pot of gold quite yet. Loud stomping could spook the perp and he might drop the loot and takes off, leaving both parties empty handed.

A pike generally T-bones the bait and retreats to a better spot where he can turn it around and starts swallowing. A little patience will increase the odds of a secure hook set.

When the fish takes off again, the little pin on top of the spool starts to turn again. If it doesn't it means either one of two things, there is no fish or most likely the pike has stopped to get a better hold of its prey. This can be nerve wracking but one must wait till the pin goes again. If you set the hook right now, chances are you will rip it right out of its toothy embrace.

Alright if everything goes according to plan we have some action and line is peeling, lift the tip up out, place it away from the hole while grabbing the line with your other hand. A sharp jerk will set the hook just right. Fighting a big northern on a hand line in shallow water is tremendous fun but must be executed with some caution.

Often the pike will just come along side and all you feel is its weight but be prepared for its explosive long runs. When he takes off, let him go, your hands are the drag, adjusting the pressure on the line with your fingers should ensure that there is always just enough contact to the fish and never any slack. Laying the gained line on the ice should be done with care to prevent messy knots.

The last challenge is to guide the head through the hole but I find hand lining gives you great control over this issue, care should be exercised that no hooks get stuck on the edges.

And that's it, pliers and the live well should make unhooking a breeze, a quick picture and it's time for the release.

Bait and set the trap again, wait, fight, release, repeat.

Whoever is lucky enough to be able to enjoy safe ice this time a year, is in for a real treat. Late season ice can bring some of the best fishing opportunities of the year. Mild temperatures make the experience a lot more fun and the big guys are out on the hunt, hungry and feisty.

So next time, tip up the scale for the big boys.

Tight lines.



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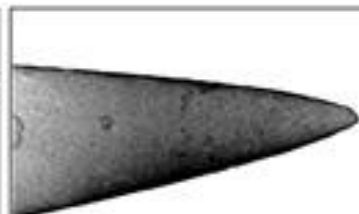
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ICE FISHING PRODUCT GUIDE



Polar Fire Power Augers

Ice fishing. The conditions can be brutal, ice thick, challenges immense.

To find fish, you need to be smart. Mobile. Cover water intelligently, efficiently, confidently.

Serious ice anglers know this is accomplished by integrating the right equipment into their strategies, and a fully reliable, fast cutting ice auger plays a mandatory role in any successful approach.

There's no time for heavy, clunky power augers featuring engines with sticky recoil mechanisms that start hard, take forever to warm up, misfire or cut poorly. Premium Polar Fire augers have been engineered to eliminate such frustrations, are being met with rave reviews—and they're now available in both 8" and 10" models powered by a powerful, yet lightweight 37.7 cc, 4 stroke engine!

These all new, high performance, 4-Stroke Polar Fire power heads fire quickly and run smoothly, even in the most extreme cold, warm to full speed throttle operation within seconds and operate quietly, with unsurpassed reliability. Polar Fire power augers are efficient, too, sipping gas while minimizing exhaust fumes.

The cutting edge features a solid base centering ring and point system surrounding deluxe, razor sharp heat-annealed blades; you'll be pleased with the outstanding stability, powerful torque and efficient cut, right through to the water.

Each Polar Fire power 4-stroke also features durable, cast aluminum gear housing and all steel flighting, so they're built to last. Add an ergonomic, comfort grip foam handle for supreme handling, a see through gas tank to easily view fuel level, a protective muffler guard and blade protector, and it's easy to see the Polar Fire auger was built for performance.

Just another reason why Polar Fire gear is your cold weather solution!

For more information, write: HT Enterprises, Inc., P.O. Box 909, Campbellsport, WI, 53010, or visit WWW.POLARFIREGEAR.COM.

THE ICE AUGER CONVERSION KIT CHANGED THE WAY ANGLERS THINK OF DRILLING HOLES

So hot last year it took the industry by storm, the Ice Auger Conversion Kit from Clam was a huge industry success, and completely changed the way people thought of drilling holes. While not a new item this year, a few subtle tweaks have made the use-your-own-18-volt-cordless-drill product even better this next season.



A quick reminder on the concept. Industrial ball bearings absorb the load from the auger, allowing the power to come from any high-torque, 18-volt lithium battery-powered drill that most folks already have in the garage. New this year, rubber-dipped handles and trigger make for a better grip and touch point, easier handling and overall comfort in use. Longer, upright brackets accommodate more drill types, even some older and larger drills. The kit creates an auger that is affordable, lightweight and portable, and weighs in at a mere 14 pounds, providing the ultimate in maneuverability and ease when drilling a lot of holes.

“It was nice! I used the conversion kit the entire season last year, with an extension for late-season ice,” said Dave Genz, the Godfather of ice fishing. “At my age, the 14-pounds made drilling holes a lot easier. The changes to the handles and the bracket just means that more people can do this just as easily, fitting more drills and making the handles more comfortable.”

The Drill Plate is Model #9497 and sells with an MSRP of \$69.99. The Drill Plate works with most current 18-volt, 1/2" chuck, cordless drills and includes all the hardware to mount your drill. With the auger bit, Model #9498 (suggested retail on the 6-inch tempered steel blade is \$79.99); together the complete combination is Model #9578 with a MSRP of \$169.99.



The standard auger is most popular in the parts of the country where ice is less than 24 inches thick, however, an extension is also available (Model #9561 with MSRP of \$14.99) for thicker ice conditions. For more information on Clam Outdoors go to <http://clamoutdoors.com>

NEW STRIKEMASTER® CHIPPER LITE AUGER HANDLES ROUGH ICE WITH EASE

Designed to handle rough ice with ease, the new StrikeMaster® Chipper Lite 8-1/4 inch auger features a pointed steel chipper blade tip that prevents it from jumping around the hole.

Powered by an economical two-stroke, 32cc, 1.5-horsepower Solo® Powerhead motor with a two-year warranty, the Chipper Lite makes fast work of punching new holes and reopening holes that have frozen over.

When fish move, they don't bring baggage, but ice anglers don't have that option. That's why StrikeMaster uses high-end materials to keep the weight of their augers significantly lighter than the competition.

Weighing in at a mere 24 pounds, the Chipper Lite features an American-made 40:1 transmission with heat-treated steel gears. Polymer gear casting yields lightweight power, and its VANDAR long-filament high-impact handles provide comfortable operation for anglers who spend long days on the ice.

When the snow flies this winter, equip yourself with the new StrikeMaster Chipper Lite. You'll drill more holes in less time with a StrikeMaster — the fastest, lightest, most powerful augers on the ice.



TWO NEW HUB-STYLE SHELTERS GO THERMAL WITH CLAM



Roomy, easy to set and easy to store, the Vista Thermal for two to three anglers and the Six Pack 1660 Mag Thermal hub-style shelter for five to seven anglers, join the roster of Clam's full thermal shelters. Great for keeping the family warm and comfortable in even the harshest winter conditions, these two new full thermal options will be a huge hit for the new ice season.

A full thermal skin on the Vista Thermal hits an attractive, family-fishing price point of \$319.99 MSRP. The super-tough 600-Denier fabric and Full Thermal Trap Technology retains heat and reduces condensation for a comfort on the ice with 36 square feet of fishable space. Super-duty construction of 11mm flex-tested poles and the sturdiest hub assemblies in the marketplace, means the Clam shelter will last for years of fun. The oversized skirt makes for ample snow banking to reduce drafts, and convenient ice-anchor straps fit in the four new strap pockets. Ice anchors included. Set up size is 72"x72" with a center height a whopping 84" and only weighs 39 pounds. The oversized carry bag makes repacking at the end of the day a breeze. The Vista Thermal packs small but fishes big.

"We test the thermal and know that it increases the temperature inside a shelter by 25 degrees. Ice fishermen get it now," said Steve Geertsen, President and CEO of Clam Outdoors. Thermal shelters market share increased significantly the last few years and Clam certainly heard from anglers that they wanted even more thermal options. "Customers told us they wanted a thermal version of the most popular portable shelter and a thermal version of the best family shelter. That's what these two new items cover."



When ice fishing adventures are a big event, you need the Six Pack 1660 Mag Thermal to keep the whole crew toasty and warm. "Anglers asked for the popular 1660 in full thermal," said Geertsen. "We listened."

With a whopping 94 square feet of fishable area and 90" (7 ½ feet) of center height, the Six Pack 1660 fishes five to seven anglers comfortably. The super-tough 600-total-Denier fabric utilizes advanced Full Thermal Trap Technology to retain heat while keeping condensation at bay. Same sturdy design of 11mm, flex-tested poles and triple-layer corner pockets, along with the largest hub assemblies in the industry, make this a sturdy ice shelter even in windy conditions. Six convenient ice anchor straps and new strap pockets assist to keep it anchored securely, as does the oversized skirt for snow banking. Big and roomy and now fully thermal, the MSRP of \$499.99 makes this a big deal for groups or families who like to get out all winter. "When you want to get the crew out ice fishing, you need a shelter that's roomy and warm so everyone is comfortable and happy," said Geertsen. "This is the right shelter for even the harshest winter conditions."

For more information on Clam Outdoors go to <http://clamoutdoors.com>

THE NEW "POLAR FIRE XT" DELUXE ICE FLY REEL

POLAR FIRE premium ice tackle is engineered to provide the highest level of performance, and the new POLAR FIRE XT deluxe ice fly reel is no exception.

Make no mistake, POLAR FIRE XT deluxe ice fly reels are premium straight line systems. POLAR FIRE XT deluxe ice fly reels feature intricately machined aluminum frames and spools, so they're lightweight, yet durable. A liquid-smooth four bearing drive system combined with a multi-setting drag enhance



performance even during the worst winter conditions. The straight line retrieve system minimizes coiling and eliminates line twist allowing more realistic, better controlled presentations, and a 2:1 gear ratio results in fast line pick-up after the hooks are set. Oversized double handles allow easy operation in the cold, and elongated necks provide easy handling and comfortable retrieves even on the shortest ice rods. Each comes with a deluxe storage pouch to help protect your reel during transport or off-season storage, too. For more information, write:
HT Enterprises, Inc., P.O. Box 909, Campbellsport, WI, 53010.

DAVE GENZ AND JASON MITCHELL ADD NEW PRODUCTS TO THEIR ELITE SERIES

All the rage these days, fly fishing style reels help many anglers across the ice belt with productivity and success. Now an Ice Spooler Elite Series SKU joins the Dave Genz Ice Spooler line with an increased rate of retrieval. The upgrade provides the utmost in comfort and speed. Even more anglers will want to get in on the Ice Spooler craze, when they feel the longer reel foot in their hand and experience the 2.3:1 gear ratio; the multiplier makes it smoother and faster. When it comes to fishing many hours and looking for comfort in gear, count on Dave Genz to design it.



“This is the first multiplier that Clam has offered.

Using it while pan fishing, I caught a 25” walleye,” said Matt Breuer a member of Ice Team and Clam Pro Staff. “The drag system is completely unique from the original ice spooler. You can rely on the drag rather than using your palm against the spool or having to back reel.” Breuer is a fan of the variety in lengths and actions. “The choices make them work for everything from panfish to walleyes and northern pike, or even the elusive eel pout.”

In three sizes (22”, 25” and 28”), boasting ultra light-, light- and medium light-action combos, the Dave Genz Ice Spooler Elite Series rods are constructed of solid graphite blank with a woven graphic butt section that overlay with an up-locking reel seat. Cork composition in the rear handle and fore grip provides the perfect balance with lightweight guides and hook keeper. Included in the combos (and available separately with an MSRP of \$39.99) the Ice Spooler Elite Reel provides a more comfortable rate of retrieval. The composite reel with a 2.3:1 gear ratio adjusts easily for either left- or right-hand retrieval. The extended reel foot is comfortable for a slightly larger hand. The dial drag and EVA reel handle make using the 2+1 ball bearing reel a dream. MSRP on the three sizes of Dave Genz Ice Spooler Elite Series rod and reel combos at \$69.99.

New “Targeted Species” combos join the Jason Mitchell Gen7 Elite Series with two 24” panfish combos, a 26” perch combo and 24” and 28” combos for walleye with varying actions from light to medium. Designed by one of the top ice fishing guides in the country, a man who eats, sleeps and breathes ice

fishing, Jason Mitchell. Crafting these Hyper Modulus Graphite rods with a yellow-and-black high visibility tip increased bite detection. The silver frame Dynaflow guides, with fine-silver inserts, decrease the weight of the rod and increase the sensitivity for better bite detection. The 5+1 ball bearings, and the infinite, anti-reverse, provide a smooth retrieval and the push button flip handle makes it easy to adjust for left- or right-handed anglers. Drag system is located on the front of the reel, and the reel itself is available as a separate SKU with a suggested MSRP of \$39.99. “

The biggest thing is everything is turnkey with these combos. We used very high quality rod action, from our best products, and finished them with new technology in guides, graphite and handle,” said Jason Mitchell, guide in North Dakota and television host of Jason Mitchell Outdoors. “We took some of the most popular rod actions and put them in affordable combos.”

For more information on Clam Outdoors go to <http://clamoutdoors.com>

NEW RAPALA® ACCESSORIES READY FOR THE ICE

Not only does Rapala® make the world’s best lures, but it also makes industry-leading accessories to complement any excursion on the ice. New for next winter are two new slush scoops, a Charge-N-Glow Rod Mount and a Titanium Spring Bobber.

Mega Scoop

A large fold-in model, the new Rapala Mega Scoop removes the maximum amount of slush with the minimum amount of effort. At 34 inches, it’s just the right length to allow anglers to scoop a hole without bending over. Additional features include a 30-inch ruler on the handle and an adjustable wrist lanyard. Suggested retail price: \$17.99

Retractable Mega Scoop

Designed to remove the slush from your holes with unrivaled ease, the handle of Rapala’s new Retractable Mega Scoop extends from 15 to 34 inches, eliminating the need to bend over. Extremely lightweight for a fold-in model, this is the scoop of choice for ice trollers who stay on the move. It comes ready for action with a convenient adjustable wrist lanyard. Suggested retail price: \$34.99

WE ARE ICE FISHING.



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Same jig. Bigger, wider-gapped hook. When the Drop™ pounded onto the scene last year, the ice fishing world fell in love with it. You already know the tungsten craftsmanship, killer colors and angled hook orientation for better hooking percentage. But sometimes the hook itself can be a bit on the small side, when you want to bulk up with waxies or maggots or a Maki™ plastic. We needed Drop™ jigs with bigger hooks, so we made them. This is a big deal. It opens up a whole new world for the Drop™ Jig.

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Drop Jig XL

NEW FOR
2014-15

SEE IT IN ACTION!



Charge-N-Glow Rod Mount

A big idea in a small package, the new Rapala Charge-N-Glow Rod Mount attaches directly to your rod handle for quick and convenient charging of glow baits. Its powerful ultraviolet LEDs deliver peak brightness to give your glow baits a maximum charge. Its compact design allows anglers to fish like it's not even there. Suggested retail price: \$14.99



Titanium Spring Bobber

With Rapala's new Titanium Spring Bobber, it's easy to add unmatched sensitivity to any ice rod. Featuring a snap-back titanium design that will not kink or break, the Spring Bobber also boasts adjustable tension and a high-visibility indicator bead that telegraphs even the lightest of bites. The Rapala Titanium Spring Bobber is designed to fit most ice rods. Suggested retail price: \$14.99 (2 pack)

Vexilar Launches DVR recorder for Fish Scout Camera

Over the past five years, Vexilar Marine Electronics has generated a very popular line of underwater camera systems called the Fish Scout series. These color/black and white camera systems set new performance standards for anglers with 50% less battery drain than any similar camera technology on the market. Now the Fish Scout systems can be equipped with a rugged DVR recorder. With a touch of the wireless key fob control, you can record the fish you see below and share it with your friends.



"The DVR100 is really a slick way to record the action you see", stated Corey Studer of Vexilar. "The DVR easily connects to the Fish Scout system in about 10 seconds. Simply place the DVR connections between the camera and the monitor. Since it runs off the power in the camera system, it's barely noticeable, one streamlined connection. A wireless key fob remote controls the recorder which allows me to put the DVR100 inside my carry case, out of harm's way and I really never need to touch it again unless I want to pull out the mini-SD card that stores the footage or still images." The DVR100 is designed ONLY for Vexilar Fish Scout Camera systems. The suggested retail for the DVR100 is only \$89.95 and will be available at your local Vexilar Dealer this winter or go to www.vexilar.com to learn more.



MARCUM® 485C UNDERWATER CAMERA OFFERS TOP-OF-THE-LINE PICTURE FOR VALUE PRICE

The MarCum® 485C underwater viewing system proves that top-of-the-line performance doesn't have to come with a top-shelf price tag.

With a 7-inch, high-resolution flat-panel LCD screen with 800 x 480 pixel resolution, and an industry-best Sony Super HAD II CCD 1/3-inch Image Sensor 01 Lux Camera, the 485C system provides an underwater viewing performance that, dollar for dollar, is unmatched by any other ice-fishing camera system available today.

Fishing in clear water under bluebird skies? Use the 485C in full-color mode to see the underwater world the way nature intended. Fishing in stained water or in low-light conditions? Color Kill Technology allows you to switch over to black-and-white mode for an amazingly crisp and clear image.

"When you've got dingy green water, going to black and white often produces better depth of field, allowing you to see better," says MarCum Brand Manager Steve Hanson. "With the 485C, you can switch over to that with ease."

The 485C will not, however, switch from color to black and white automatically, as will some inferior cameras. "If you put a camera in a low-light situation with a foot of snow and 24 inches of ice, the last thing you want to have happen is your color camera to go to black and white when its 6 inches under the water," says MarCum Brand Manager Jon Marshall.

And, for those times when the sun dips low on the horizon, the 485C features MarCum's exclusive Darkwater LED lights to help turn night into day below the hole.

Vexilar Moves the Bar Higher with the Launch of FLX-28 Sonar Technology

Vexilar, the world leader in three-color flasher sonar technology has blended classic Vexilar Flasher performance with a cutting edge brushless data transfer technology to create a new generation of sonar for anglers to use for the next thirty years... the FLX-28. This addition to the Vexilar family will be the new flagship product for Vexilar and will be featured on two of their successful ice fishing packages, the Pro Pack and the Ultra Pack.

The features found in the FLX-28 read like the wish list of avid ice anglers starting with digital depth, Auto Range,



Two zoom zones, battery status, FIVE color palettes to select from for maximum visibility, five foot depth range adjustments starting at 10 feet, Maximum range of 300, Day and Night display brightness settings, Low power options for fishing in super shallow water, a unique Weed Mode for better performance while fishing in weeds. And to top it all off, the unit even has its own Demo mode so you can show non-Vexilar fans how the system works with a lifelike fish catching simulation to watch.

“What most people will not see with the FLX-28 is the advanced technology that has gone into the making of this system,” stated Corey Studer, Vexilar Pro Staff Manager. “Vexilar has been working for years to develop a unique brushless data transfer system which is the heart of what customers will be seeing in many future Vexilar sonar systems in the years to come. The new data transfer system opens flasher technology to do so much more than just show depth. For sure this will continue Vexilar’s dominance as the world’s first and best ice fishing sonar systems. If you would like to learn more about the FLX-28 and the other Products Vexilar is offering, just go to WWW.VEXILAR.COM.

THE NEW "POLAR FIRE XTREME" DELUXE ICE ROD COMBO CASES

POLAR FIRE premium ice tackle is engineered to provide the highest level of performance, and the new 43" POLAR FIRE XTREME deluxe ice rod case is something no serious ice angler will want to overlook.



The POLAR FIRE XTREME deluxe ice rod cases feature durable denier shells and cushioned reel pouches to protect your reels from even the roughest ride on the ice, while the inside hard tube lining provides the ultimate protection for your rods, guides and rod tips. The 3.5" diameter tubes easily accommodate two combos, and two outside zippered accessory storage pouches are great for neatly packing away extra spools of line, tools or lure boxes. A removable, adjustable shoulder strap allows for hands free transport, and best of all, POLAR FIRE XTREME deluxe rod cases are also made 43" long to accommodate longer rods up to 42"! They're great for protecting your combos during off-season storage, too. For more information, write: HT Enterprises, Inc., P.O. Box 909, Campbellsport, WI, 53010.



MINO™ AND MINO HEAD™ FROM CLAM PRO TACKLE™ JOIN THE MAKI PLASTIC LINE

Ice anglers love the super-soft, hand-poured baits from Clam's Maki Plastics, and now there are two more reasons: the Mino™ the Mino Head™. Perfect in its tiny, one-inch size, the soft Mino is designed to tip your favorite panfish lure, or rig it split-tail flat or vertical, t-bone or wacky-rig it. The Mino's tail showcases incredible action to dial in on crappie, bluegill, perch,

trout, sauger and walleye. Both items are available in white-red flake, red, pink glow, watermelon-red flake, fathead and shiner colors; the Mino and Mino Head come eight in a bag for a MSRP of \$2.99.

The Mino Head is a 1 ½" minnow head for gamefish jigs or treble-hook spoons. No more freezing fingers from nipping off a minnow head in ice-cold water, the super-soft bait is perfect for a tube rig on a 90-degree horizontal jig.

"Hand poured is key because it provides the best action," said John Crane, developer of the Maki Plastics lineup for Clam. "Its micro size and versatility in rigging is key. The soft Makis stay on and will out fish live bait in most conditions." Crane knows how frustrating it can be to go back to the live bait bucket and nurse cold hands throughout the day. That's why he likes the soft Maki plastics that he can store in his warm pockets. "Natural baits have a tendency to fly off and are only good for a few fish, and then you're back out of the water again. The Mino and Mino Head will be good three- or four-times longer. That's good time management on the ice," continued Crane.

Maki Plastics from Clam continue to impress anglers across the ice belt. The new SKUs will be welcome additions to this exceptional new line. For more information on Clam Outdoors go to <http://clamoutdoors.com>.

VMC® JIGS & PRE-RIGGED JIGS ARE READY TO FISH RIGHT OFF THE RACK

Ready to fish right off the rack, new VMC® ice jigs, available in ultra-convenient pre-rigged models, are designed to meet the needs of the Ice Belt's most serious slab seekers and 'eye enthusiasts.

Tungsten Tubby Jig

Perhaps the perfect panfish jig, VMC's Tungsten

Tubby Jig boasts a super-fast drop speed, allowing ice anglers to deliver their favorite baits to the strike zone faster.

"The advantage of Tungsten is that it sinks faster than lead," says VMC pro-staffer Brad Hawthorne. "So a smaller-profile jig can get down to the fish much faster than your traditional lead jig. You'll be blown away by how quickly they sink. It's a noticeably faster option on the fall." The Tungsten Tubby Jig's exclusive VMC Power Gap hook features a wider round gap than other micro-jigs of equal weight, greatly increasing your hookup percentage.

"Aside from its falling speed, the Tubby Jig's most important feature is that Power Gap hook," Hawthorne says. "The hooks on most other Tungsten jigs out there are really, really small — like fly hooks — and it's dang near impossible to rig plastics on them, or the type of live bait the fish want."

And, thanks to the precision balance of its 90-degree hook eye, which ensures an optimal horizontal position of the jig, ice anglers can expect to convert more hits into solid hook sets, and lose fewer fish at the hole.



Tungsten Tubby Jigs come two per pack and are available in three sizes: 1/64 ounce (size 14 hook); 1/32 ounce (size 12 hook); and 1/16 ounce (size 10 hook). They come in two natural color patterns, Crappie Minnow and Mayfly, and six Ultra Glow patterns: Glow, Green Orange Glow, Orange Chartreuse Glow, Pink Chartreuse Glow, Glow Chartreuse and Glow Red. Ultra Glow plastics will glow for as many as 15 minutes on a full charge. Suggested retail price: \$3.99-\$4.99



Flap Tail Jig

The Flap Tail Jig is pre-rigged with a Trigger X® Flap Tail Grub (also sold separately), which features a thin-profile, beaver-like tail that creates a flapping action similar to a leech. Split the tail and it will mimic the swimming action of a wounded minnow.

“You get a lot of action with minimal effort when jigging the Flap Tail Jig and Grub,” says Hawthorne. Like all VMC ice jigs, the Flap Tail Jig features a Power Gap design and 90-degree hook eye. It weighs 1/50 of an ounce, features a size 8 hook, comes two per pack, and is available in two natural color patterns — Crappie Minnow and Mayfly — and six Ultra Glow patterns: Glow, Green Orange Glow, Orange Chartreuse Glow, Pink Chartreuse Glow, Glow Chartreuse and Glow Red. Ultra Glow plastics will glow for as many as 15 minutes after charging. Suggested retail price: \$2.49



Nymph Jig

Pre-rigged with a Trigger X Nymph soft bait (also sold separately) a VMC Nymph Jig resembles the small aquatic insects that fish feed on year-round.

“The Nymph works really well as a primary panfish presentation and a finesse walleye offering,” says VMC pro-staffer Joel Nelson, a regular on the “In-Depth Outdoors” TV show on Fox Sports North.

Like all VMC ice jigs, the Nymph Jig is equipped with a Power Gap design and 90-degree hook eye. It weighs 1/50 of an ounce, features a size 8 hook, and comes two per pack in two natural color patterns — Crappie Minnow and Mayfly — and six Ultra Glow patterns: Glow, Green Orange Glow, Orange Chartreuse Glow, Pink Chartreuse Glow, Glow Chartreuse, Glow Red. Ultra Glow plastics will glow for as many as 15 minutes on a full charge. Suggested retail price: \$2.49

NEW TIMEBOMB™ RATTLING SPOON FROM CLAM PRO TACKLE™ PREDICTED TO EXPLODE IN POPULARITY

The sought-after line of Pro Tackle from Clam continues to expand due to ice-angler demand. Always fine-tuning for more applications, Clam is proud to introduce the new, compact (but noisy!) bait that will deliver pan fish and walleyes—the Time Bomb. Baited with a minnow head, eurolarvae, waxi or spike (as well as Clam’s



handpoured Maki plastics) makes the new rattling spoon the bomb. The Time Bomb plummets to the bottom to fish hard and fish fast, with a Swarovski gem eye and glowing epoxy treble.

This is the noisiest, loudest rattle spoon on the market, said John Crane, developer of the Pro Tackle line for Clam. —You hear it go tick, tick, tick and you never know when it is going to go—BAM. Fish on. The noise imitates crayfish crawling on the rocks or minnows feeding. The key is in the exposed, noisy brass washer that travels along the bead, in contrast with other baits that have an enclosed brass rattle. Pressured fish are bound to respond to something new, with a unique silhouette never seen before and a tiger-bar pattern in all six color schemes (silver tiger, gold tiger, glow firetiger, glow chart tiger, glow rainbow and glow red tiger). With a natural-looking dark back and light belly, the Time Bomb rattling spoon is also available in hook sizes 12 and eight with 1/8 oz and 1/4 weights. Suggested retail is \$4.79 to \$4.99 each. For more information on Clam Outdoors go to <http://clamoutdoors.com>

“Flashbacks” From the Past Custom Jigs and Spins’ Slender Spoon gets hammered “old school” style



Sparkle... Flicker... Shimmer... Flash... Those little glimmers of light really grab your attention. Instinctively, you turn your head to investigate their origin. Oftentimes, it's nothing more than sunlight popping through the tree limbs or a reflection in your side view mirror.

No matter the source, the point is you spontaneously took a look.

All creatures are curious of what's glistening in the distance; even more so fish. And it's not just

a curiosity factor for them; it's the likelihood the flash was emitted by a food source. After all, the scales of shiners, shad, young-of-the-year fishes and even the exoskeletons of aquatic insects can reflect light in multiple directions.

Now this is not new earth-shattering news, however. It was many moon ago anglers took note of how a few depressions on the surface of a spoon would make light dance. Beams here, rays there, and sparkles everywhere – just like in the natural world.

And it's the throwback fish-attracting properties of dimpled metal that inspired Custom Jigs and Spins to forge their new Hammered Slender Spoons – the original shoehorn-shaped bait with a flutter like no other, whether jigged, cast or trolled.

“As soon as anglers started using and catching fish on the Slender Spoon, we started getting phone calls and emails asking us to add a hammered version to the line,” says Bob Gillespie, proprietor of CustomJigs and Spins. “So we’ve gone for the gusto and added an entire series with a hammered exterior in all four weights, three lengths and the top three metallic finishes.”

ODU MAGAZINE VIDEO BLOCK (www.odumagazine.com)

Available this season are a 2-1/4-incher weighing in at ¼-ounce, two 1-1/2-inchers in 1/8- and 5/8-ounce weights, and a 1-incher that tips the scale at a mere 1/16-ounce. And the original-finish Hammered Slender Spoons shine brightly with metallic gold-, silver- and copper-plated hues to cover every grade of water clarity and baitfish hatch-matching situation.

Each Hammered Slender Spoon comes rigged with an appropriately size-matched, super-sharp treble hook, which can be easily removed and replaced with a Pro Finesse Drop Chain when extra dropper bling is the needed thing. And a high-quality snap comes packed to promote every waggle the Slender Spoon was designed to produce.

Like a welcomed flashback from the past, the Hammered Slender Spoon is a year-round must have to catch fish today.

ABOUT CUSTOM JIGS & SPINS, Inc.

Custom Jigs & Spins started almost 30 years ago producing high quality ice fishing lures. We continue today by improving our existing lures and developing new ones with input from our Pro-Staff and suggestions from serious ice anglers. We're extremely proud that some of our newest lures, as well as many of our tried and true favorites like the Ratso, Shrimpo, Nuclear Ant and Rat Finkee, have crossed over into the open water market.

We at Custom Jigs & Spins, Inc. use only the highest quality raw materials including Owner and Mustad hooks. Most all of our lures are hand painted with a super hard finish and paint free eyes."

Our other quality brands include B FISH N Tackle, Flu Flu®, The Worm® and Vertigo Tackle®.

