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Summer fishing and summer time fun is what we all have to look forward to in late June, July and August. Picnics, trips, fishing excursions, museums, parades, parks, beaches all will be a part. This summer can be much more for all of us outdoors folks; it just takes a little effort. Many highlights this summer can have a

positive note and unfortunately chances are a few negative notes as well. How will your summer go?

We speak of taking a kid fishing here at ODU a lot. The opportunity to go fishing for some of our kid's friends is simpler than with kiddos who don't know a fisherman. These kiddos dream of fishing just like those who have a better chance at it, but because they live in more urban areas, downtown or sometimes just have a single parent they lose out. Here is an idea, call your local Cub Scout pack, kid's club or youth organization and offer to do a seminar at a local park pond for them. Get a bunch of your fellow anglers and their children to come out and help. Tell everyone to bring a rod and reel to pass. Have a fun time sharing the gift of fishing in a group. ODU is planning one right now. We are doing a morning fishing seminar on soft plastics, a safety meeting, a canoe trip on a nice protected body of water, a bunch of fishing and home for afternoon naps. Will you take this challenge?

This summer enjoy family, food, boating, fireworks etc. Keep it safe; Keep it fun and Keep America in your Heart. Fourth of July just passed and we need to support the good old USA.

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#### Thank You All!

**Photos:** Cover provided by Matzuo America and is of Steve Mui. Index page is courtesy of Hobie Cat. Rear cover is of Snag Proof pro Trevor Drake Prichard.

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Recently, ODU got wind of a bass derby in Maine that was a little different from your everyday bass tournament. The object of this event was to remove as many smallmouth bass, yellow perch and white perch as possible from Moosehead Lake. The event was promoted by the Moosehead Lake Fisheries Coalition who wants to ensure that the brook trout fishery is not harmed by these invasive species. Maine's Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Department has shown that brook trout are threatened by the voracious appetites of the perch, while smallmouth bass are only thought to be a direct competitor. Smallmouth bass have been residents of Moosehead Lake for well over 30 years and the fishery produces 4 and 5 pound fish. During this same time the brook trout fishery has improved. This lake is a gem. If the local communities in the Moosehead Lake region would embrace this resource of smallmouth bass, the economic impact from a world class fishery could be great for local businesses.



Groups like the Moosehead Lake Fisheries Coalition are using their local influence and miss information all across the country to change, harm or stop our outdoor way of life in fishing and hunting. This summer don't lose track of your local challenges, while the summer fly's by.

Politics is in the air. All major news programs can't avoid it. There are a lot of candidates for the upcoming presidential election and as outdoorsmen we need to make sure our voices are heard. These candidates will be visiting our local diners, town halls and malls to make their case. Don't avoid them. They will be speaking about those hot topics we all know, but we need to ensure that our outdoor way of life is part of the debate and the candidate who sites in the White House in the end next is our friend, not our adversary.

Call it a homework assignment, some of our kids got them for the summer.

This edition of ODU Magazine hits on bass, carp, salmon, perch, crappie, walleye and more. Summer is hot (and wet for many) and we have the solution to your summer time fishing fun. Read on.....

And please, enjoy the outdoors.

Larry Thornhill and William Schwarz
Co-Founders of OutDoors Unlimited Magazine. 207-310-3117





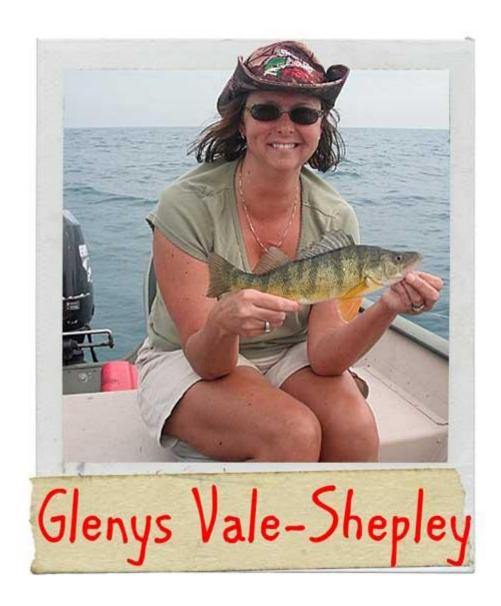
Now here's a lake that can put a mile long smile on many women and children, and it sure has put happy faces on the roughest, toughest, and burliest of well seasoned fishermen around it as well.

Why?

Perch, baby! Soft water perching at its finest!

Thanks to good water quality, a diverse habitat, abundant vegetation and plenty of food that make this pastime fishery a heluva jumping good time! St. Clair is a fine world class lake for walleye, small mouth, large mouth, yellow perch, crappie, northern pike, bluegill, silver bass and long known as one of the "Musky Capitals of the World".

Although St. Clair is not one of the "Great" lakes; however, it is part of the Erie basin and the connecting corridor between the Upper and Lower Great Lakes. It is a rather small lake in comparison to the others at only 430 square miles (about 17 times smaller than Lake Ontario). The average depth is only 10-12 feet, which kinda makes it a



shallow lake as well. The lake is fed through the St. Clair River which flows south from Lake Huron. Also, contributing flowage to the lake comes from the Thames, Sydenham and Clinton Rivers. The outflow is the Detroit River.

A commercial shipping channel and an international boundary line bisects the lake between Canada and





the United States. The deepest point can be found in the dugout shipping lane at about 28 or so feet, which is maintained on a 5 to 10 year dredging cycle by the U.S. Army of Corps Engineers.

In my opinion, the greatest contributing factor to such a fantastic fishery is the lake-water retention

fishery is the lake-water retention time. The lake flushes itself into Lake Erie on average of about 7 days, that depending on the wind direction and water circulation, but it may be as long as 30 days to push the flow from the St. Clair River, through the Detroit River. This incredible flushing effect is a contributor to providing nutrients to the small forage fish, which in turn provide the diet of our game fish. This flowage of water along with the shallower depth, help maintain good and constant oxygen levels, assisting in keeping the lake cooler then it would

Being shallow natured and with the seasons addition of longer sunny days only help accelerate the submergent aquatic vegetation boom. And that my friends, is our invitation to the soft-water Perch-a-palooza boat party festival!

actually be, especially during it's hot and humid summer months.

You can take the perch fishing as serious as you wish but keeping it simple seems to always work best on St Clair. First we have to find the fish and to find the fish is to find the weed beds. Like many species, yellow perch are closely associated with structure and one being, aquatic vegetation. Beds of weeds literally cover this entire lake in the summer months. Anywhere you find weeds; you can usually find some perch but don't over look those time-honored areas we've been told about all our lives either, like deep holes,

# Drop shot Rig

# 

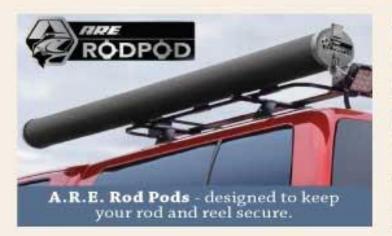
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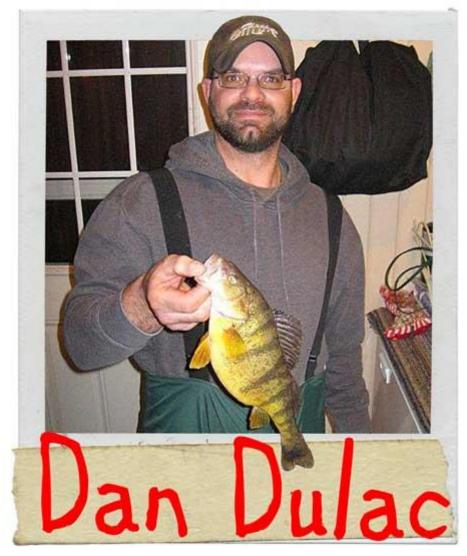


Toll Free: 800.649.4ARE www.4are.com/bassmaster humps, transitional areas etc etc etc... sometimes they're worth wetting a line.

Once the grasses have begun growing, it's as simple as cruising at a snail's-pace and searching with the naked eye for patches in the shallow flats. This is probably your best time to justify to your significant other why you nearly spent \$300 on a pair of polarized sunglasses (good luck with that). Keep in mind that shallow water can yield just as many perch as the deep. In fact, it's the combination of warm clear water and sunlight that help produce young weeds, which could be your winning ticket in the early season. But good times can be had all summer long in the shallows when targeting the cooler witchinghours, partial and overcast days.

I search for the tall weeds such as eelgrass, better known as wild celery. When mature its 3 to 4 foot tall and because of the slight current the lake has, these weeds gently willow over creating a protective dome-like pocket underneath and I'll be damned if there ain't one of those sexy olive-green striped orange finned beauties in there. Given the right conditions, St Clair can begin clear, but if persistent stiff winds do prevail, it can dirty this shallow bowl up in no time at all. As you accumulate found productive areas through trial and error, it would only be wise to drop waypoints on your GPS. Because when the clarity isn't there; you're gonna wish you did and the same for those deep-water haunts you find as well.

After locating a primo patch of grassed real estate, I essentially



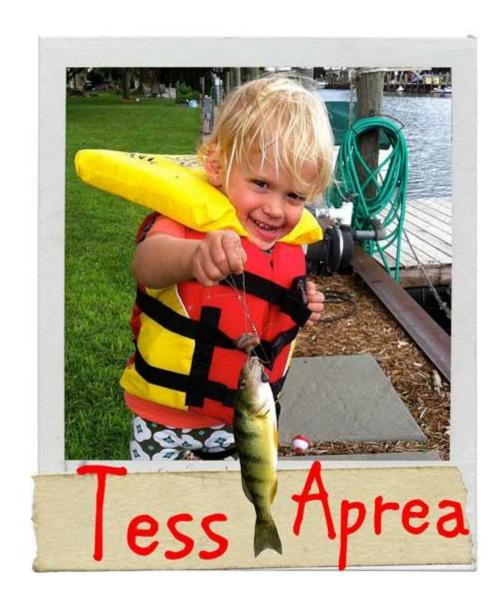
motor upwind of the weeds and gently lower my bow anchor. I then allow my boat to drift downwind going back over the weed bed but well onto the other side. I then gently lower my stern anchor, and with plenty of slack, I tie that off. I return to the bow anchor line and tighten up, such that the boat is somewhere in the middle of the two anchors. This is desired so that I have some wiggle room to adjust my boat (forward/backwards between the 2 anchors) to precisely fish the edge or pockets within and or around the weed bed. In addition, this prevents boat sway and movement caused by the wind and current.

With the boat set, it's now time to whip out the goods and start jerking up some of the best-tasting freshwater fish known to man! Like I've said before, you can make this as complicated or simple as you'd like but all you really need is a medium to light action spinning rod with a smaller-end

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spinning reel and some basic (inexpensive) tackle. But if it's a real good time you're looking for, than look no further than an ultralight such as the St Croix panfish series rods; it'll have you hopping around and searching for colored eggs with Peter Cottontail.

Rigging for perch is fairly simple on Lake St Clair. By far, the most popular and most preferred rig on this lake is the good old *pickerel rig*, also known as a crappie rig. This is one of the oldest bait rigs ever created to help anglers use live bait near bottom. It consists of a fairly stiff monofilament leader (usually 30lb test) to which there is attached, two swiveling steel arms, from there is a short length of mono line which is snelled to a single hook. The metal arms keep the snelled hooks away from the main leader. At the end of the leader is a snap, which is used to attach a weight of some sort. With this set up there is always a good chance of hooking up two fish at once. Nothing is more exciting then reeling up 2 jumbos in one shot and for those who have... know exactly what I'm talking about.



I for one prefer to tie up my own rigs for obvious reasons. I like 15lb fluorocarbon as a main leader with 8 to 10lb fluro line for the #2 bloodred, Tru-Turn hooks. I also use 4mm beads in my favorite pearl green color and pearl pink as a nicely added feminine touch for the ladies.

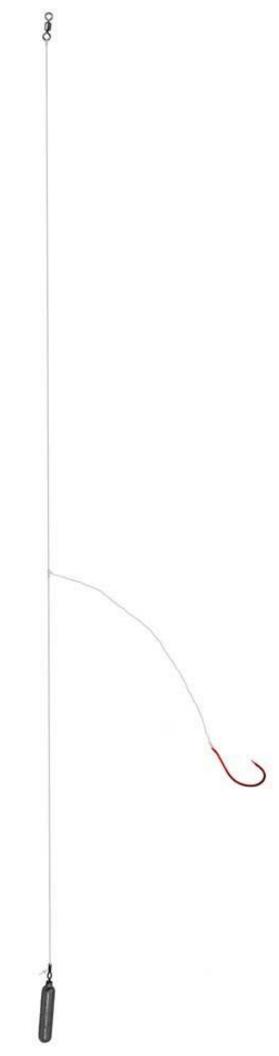
Of the few dedicated "perch jerkers" is the increasing popularity of the *drop-shot rig*, which is really a smoking hot topic on fire amongst the perching community lately. Also the use of slip floats has always had its place and it too has accounted for its catches of fish, but there is an enormous difference between these two rigs and that old pickerel rig. The advantage is clearly all in the feel, where strikes are felt directly up the line, giving anglers better hook sets. Because hooks are tied directly to the main line, they help create a better responsive rig where as the hooks on a pickerel rig are not, resulting in a lot of sloppy play.

These summertime perch can be caught on many different types of bait. Anything from worms to minnows to plastics, it's just a matter of diddling around to see what works best. Generally, I'll use live bait such as emerald shiners, which are for the most part, readily available from many local bait-shops around the lake. An often mistake I've made; is not bringing along enough bait, because at times, perch can be notorious little scandalous thieves. And there is absolutely nothing more disheartening then finding a cooperating school of yellow bellies and running out of bait.

Keeping your bait alive and healthy during the summer dog-day's heat is another problem one can expect to face, but easily manageable with a small cooler and a good aerator. The 19-quart Engel Bait Cooler works perfect for me and coupled with a Frabill Aqua-Life and 12-volt adapter proves to be a perfect marriage in my boat.

Keep in-mind that perch, like the walleye are schooling fish for the most part, and move around quite a bit. Just because you caught some in one

# Combination Drop shot Rig





enough ponderosa sized jumbos to keep mama happy.

St. Clair may not be a Simcoe, Erie or a Devils Lake, but she is a jewel to all of us who surround her. So with that I'd like to tip my hat and raise a glass, because she's been pretty darn good to me.



I love this lake.

spot certainly doesn't mean you'll catch them there tomorrow. And just the same, you may not get a nibble, then all of a sudden you find yourself smack dab in the middle of a perch-feasting circus and its fish-on baby-cakes! When you catch one, most likely you're gonna get another but don't waste time removing the hook and re-baiting, the school may not stay in one place for long, you need to fish fast before they move out.

If you are one of the millions of people who make fishing their favorite pastime, then you already know that yellow perch are sexy, ridiculously fun to catch and taste so cuckoo gosh-darn good! So if you ever find yourself in the opportunity, you might want to give Clair a whirl as it does support a bounty of eaters and



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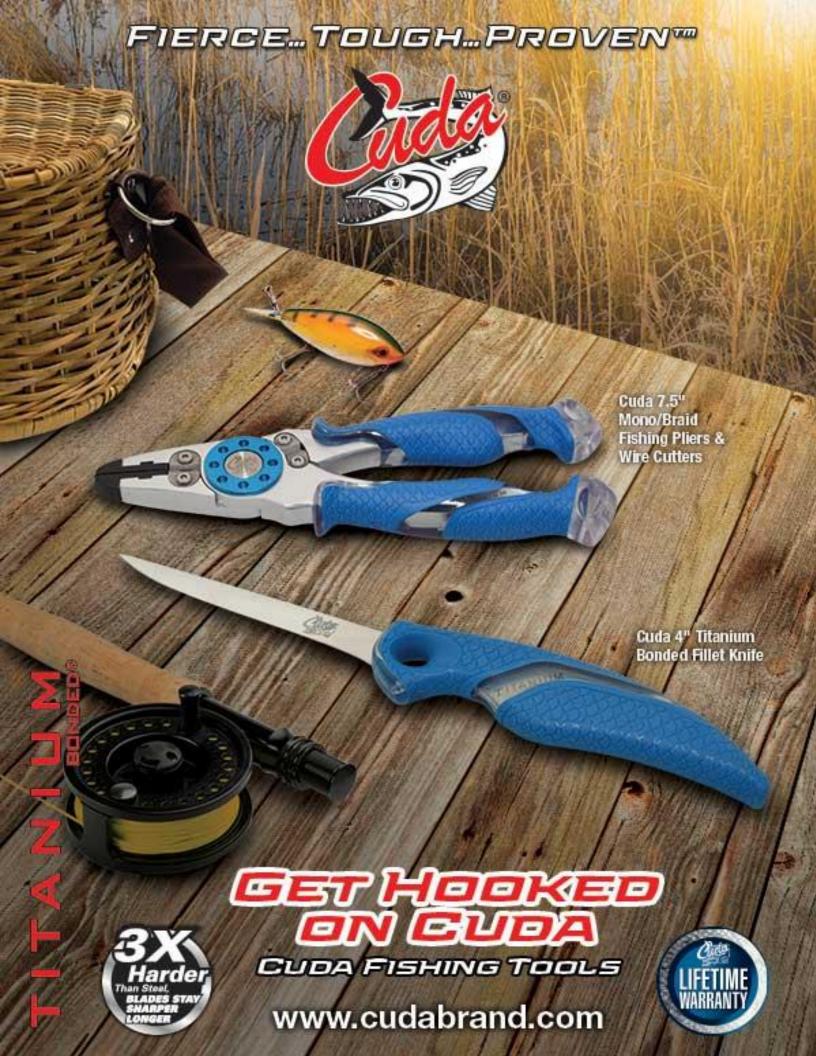
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# CLEAR LINE FOR CLEAR WATER? .....MAYBE NOT

By Bob Jensen



The line that we put on our reels when we go fishing is a very important consideration. Your line is the only connection between you and the fish. If your line doesn't do the job, you don't land the fish. But the line you choose, in the minds of many, will also play a role in getting a fish to bite the bait attached to your line.



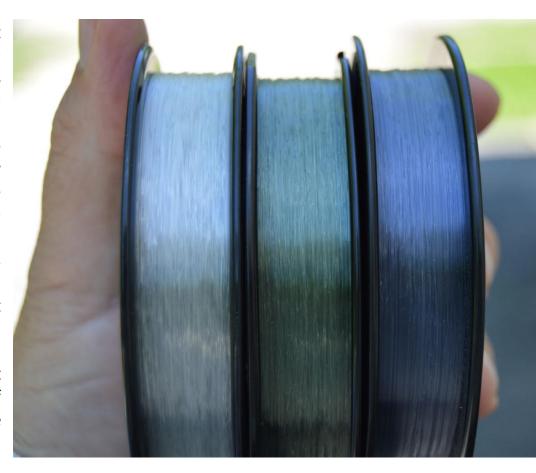
I spent a couple of days on the waters of Sturgeon Bay in Wisconsin with my friend Mike Gottheardt recently. Mike can catch smallmouth bass with the best of'em. His tournament successes prove that. Mike spends a lot of time on Sturgeon Bay because Sturgeon Bay is one of the best smallmouth fisheries in the world. Sturgeon Bay also has extremely clear water, and extremely clear water can make fish spooky. They can get line-shy. Mike likes to use line that will be hard for fish to see. His choice of line is Sunline. Sunline is a line of the highest quality. It comes in monofilament, fluorocarbon, and braid, and it comes in several colors. Mike has investigated the various colors, and much scientific research has also been done regarding line color and visibility. You might be surprised at the results of that research. I know I was.

We had three(3) different line colors with us: Clear, green, and gray. I assumed we would employ the clear line in the clear waters of The Bay for the ultimate in invisibility. Nope! Clear would have actually been our last choice. Gray is the least visible line under water, green is second, clear is third. Interesting stuff!

Line visibility, or more accurately, line invisibility, is most important when an angler is using a slow presentation. On Sturgeon Bay we were throwing tubes and marabou jigs, slower presentations, so the bass got a good chance to look at the baits. If we had been using crankbaits or spinnerbaits or buzz baits or any other faster moving bait, line color wouldn't have been as much of a consideration.

And, there are those folks who like a bright line. They know that a bright line is easier for them to see, so they can see their line "jump" on a soft strike, so they'll catch more of the soft biters. But with the sensitivity afforded by fluorocarbon, you're going to feel the strike regardless of how soft it is, and the fluorocarbon is less visible.

There are others who believe that a bright, very visible line that the fish can see better gets the fish's attention and attracts them to the bait. Maybe so,,,I don't know. I just know that I want to give myself as much of an opportunity as possible to get more fish to bite on my lure. In many waters, the fish are pressured and can be spooky. In waters that aren't as pressured, there are times when the fish get indifferent about eating: If your bait is presented in an appealing manner, they'll eat it, but if it isn't appealing, they won't eat it. And, it seems like much of the time, a bait on a too-visible line just isn't very appealing to fish.



To see all the newest episodes of Fishing the Midwest television, visit <u>www.fishingthemidwest.com</u>. If you do Facebook, check us out for a variety of fishing related things.





#### HOOKED ON SNOOK

By Lou Mintzer

My goal is to fish all over the country and many parts of the world. I have a bucket list of fish species and my goal is to have a great time and share my experience.

In May I had the opportunity to do some great fishing in Florida with my friend Tom Phelan in the Charlotte Harbor area; often called, "The Fishing Capital of the World." We wanted to catch some nice snook and cross them off our bucket list.

We stayed in a wonderful small resort on the beach, called the Weston WannaB Inn, located in Englewood between Lemon Bay and the Gulf, right next to Stump Pass Beach State Park. The area is

beautiful and our wives had a great time exploring, snorkeling and photographing birds and wildlife.

I had contacted Julie Huber, with The Charlotte Harbor Visitor's Bureau to help plan our trip. She told us about the resort, parks and restaurants in the area. Captain Van Hubbard was recommended for our snook trip.

Captain Van Hubbard has spent over 40 years chasing snook, tarpon, king and spanish mackerel, cobia, pompano and more along the coast and back country fishing around the Charlotte Harbor/Boca Grande, Venice, and Englewood area. His vast experience will help you enjoy your time on the water. He prefers to use live minnows or shrimp but also uses artificials, flies and lures when appropriate or if the anglers request them.

He really enjoys family fishing trips and loves to teach kids about fishing and nature.

Capt. Van picked us up at the WannaB dock on Lemon Bay at 7:30. The tide was going out. The



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bait tank was full of lively "white bait" or pilchards he had netted earlier. We only went a short distance and started fishing.

Capt. Van said he has been fishing these waters since the early 80s and it showed. "This is the first week



I have seen big snook in this bay. They are just starting to come in to spawn." he told us.

Tom and I were new to snook fishing and Capt. Van's good natured coaching was appreciated.

Capt. Van uses Quantum light spinning gear loaded with 20 pound Cortland Master Braid, red Daiichi, # 3/0 circle hooks and Target Beads to keep the bait

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We cast the baits close to the shore and started a painfully slow retrieve to the boat. Tom got the first hit and reeled in an 18 inch snook; I was next. We high-fived each other.

"Reel, reel, reel, no slack in the line," yelled Capt Van as we pulled in lots of small snook. Tom got a big hit, the snook jumped and peeled off line. Tom yelled, It's a big one!" It was 35 inches and weighed about 16 pounds. Wow, what a



fish! Minutes later he had a bigger one, 39 inches and 18 pounds.

Snook fight like largemouth bass; jumping, running and putting on a great show.

Next, Tom landed a ladyfish, another new fish for him. It went in the live well for crab bait.

We caught a few more snook at slack tide. Capt. Van backed the boat slowly south. I had a bait trailing far behind. "Fish On!" It hit hard, bent the rod almost in half and took off 50 yards of line before it jumped. I managed to get 20-30 yards back but then she went over a sunken log and snagged my line. She was huge.

"Keep your line tight, no slack, no slack," yelled the captain. His experience showed as he maneuvered



closer with the trolling motor. He hung way out over the bow and managed to free my line, yelling,"Reel, reel, no slack." She headed to deeper water and the fight was soon over.

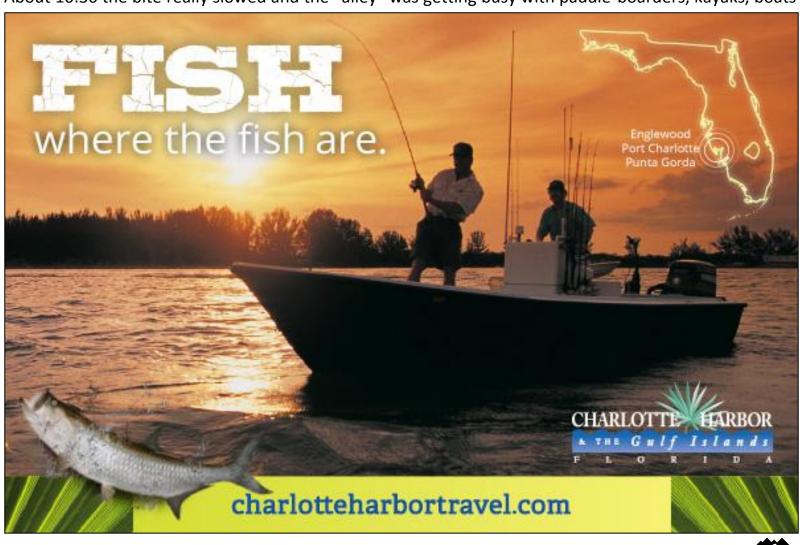
"She's huge, she's beautiful," I hollered as I got her near the boat. She was forty-five inches and about 24-25 pounds.

"You are very lucky and you may never get another snook that big," Capt. Van told me. I had to agree.





About 10:30 the bite really slowed and the "alley" was getting busy with paddle-boarders, kayaks, boats



and other anglers. Van made a call and talked to a buddy fishing for tarpon nearby. "Let's go try to catch some big tarpon," he suggested. We didn't object.

We went west through Stump Pass into the Gulf and headed north toward two boats working a small spot just down the beach from our condo about a quarter mile off shore.

We could see big tarpon tailing, jumping and rolling in a tight group. What a sight. Capt. Van asked if the other two captains minded us taking a shot.

We switched to big spinning rigs with 50 pound braid and larger hooks. We threw white baits right on top of the tarpon but they were having too much fun to eat our baits. The other anglers were using live crabs and not getting any action either.

We finally called it a day and headed back. Capt. Van suggested picking up our wives for lunch and we all had a great time talking about the big snook, tarpon and a great fishing day.

Next on my "hit" list; giant Goliath Grouper!

If you want to go to the Charlotte Harbor area contact Julie Huber and her staff at Charlotte Harbor Visitor's Bureau, 9417431900 or <a href="www.CharlotteHarborTravel.com">www.CharlotteHarborTravel.com</a>. Their service and information was just great.

For a wonderful inshore fishing trip contact Capt. Van Hubbard at <a href="www.captvan.com">www.captvan.com</a>.







As bass fishing transitions every year so do the tools we use to fish with; many of them are just toys that cost a lot of money and many are tools that define the sport. The year 2015 and for some years past in my mind has changed what we fish with and must have's in our tool box to be the best you can be. The change in our tool box unfortunately has increased vour investment in fishing this but technology and tools has only changed with the times and changed for the better.

# The Must Have's of Bass Fishing

By Captain Mike Gerry

I believe the most precious of the changes has been the 4 stroke motor, in my mind if your choice is a 2 stroke motor you're behind the times and wasting money on 2-strike motor oil for no real gain in performance. The Yamaha SHO is by far the best motor on the market and is a must for those looking to reduce costs, emissions,

maintain performance and keep up with the best technology available for today's boats.

The tool I never expected to become so vital to me fishing everyday is Power Poles, nothing has taken the bass boat industry so quickly like Power Poles, and the ability to anchor your boat in 8 to 10 ft. of water is unprecedented. As I have stated many times over the years in articles, fishing angles are everything and when you can anchor your position down so the wind does not push you off fish is just amazing. The added feature especially for those that are committed to keeping their boats free of scratches and nicks is the ability to pull up to a dock lock down and never touch the dock with your fiber glass rig. The reduction in scratches and marks from being bumped up against docks is well worth every dime to me.

Lastly if you haven't experienced the newest c technology available in the new HDS Gen 3 technology you have missed the clearest of bottom picturing available to man. What you can see when scanning the bottom is unprecedented and will be a trend and fishing setter for years to come. Lowrance Chirp

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#### **By Jim Bedford**

Crank baits, or diving plugs, have been a staple among steelhead lures for quite some time. The most popular varieties have been those with a compact banana shape with high action and the ability to dive fairly deep. Until recently, minnow lures, or stick baits, have rarely been used for steelhead in rivers. Typically such baits were used more often in situations such as trolling on the Great Lakes, especially in the spring for steelhead, brown trout and salmon that are shallow in the spring or fall and when steelhead concentrate near the surface at vertical temperature breaks in early summer. Based on my experience over the past six seasons, I think these baits definitely have a place in the river angler's arsenal for steelhead.

Just like with the typical high action, deep diving steelhead plugs, the minnow lures are best fished against the current. Casting them quartering downstream and then allowing them to sweep across the river is a great way to find and elicit a strike from a migrating steelhead. Once they swing below your position, keep fishing by slowly retrieving them upstream with an occasional pause, back down,



and then restart the retrieve. Suspending stick baits work especially well for this start-stop retrieve. Floating lures will also work, but may rise out of the strike zone when paused.

You will find several minnow imitating stick baits in my vest at all times now. My current favorites are the Matzuo Kinchou Minnow in the 9cm size and the Matzuo Snappy Minnow in the 10cm size. These baits dive to slightly different depths in the three to five feet range. Even though these lures don't dive very deep, they will still attract steelhead resting in six to eight feet of water. This shows again that, while steelhead still orient to the river bottom, they look forward and up. The prime strike zone is a foot or two above the substrate and it is better to be a bit high than to always be snagging up on the rocks and logs.

In addition to the above stick baits, I also carry a deeper diver, the Matzuo Zander Shad Deep Diver. This lure is also about 9cm and allows me to get deeper when needed. It is still possible to fish them in the shallower runs by slowing the retrieve and raising my rod tip. The big lipped baits will still have good action and get deep enough to catch fish at a slower retrieve. This feature makes them a good choice when the stream situation requires you to make upstream casts and downstream retrieves.

Since we are targeting steelies in relatively shallow water with minnow plugs and fishing for them downstream from our position, it's important to be stealthy. In small and medium sized streams it is best to wade upstream to keep from spooking the steelhead. You must plan ahead in order to get in the right spot above the holding water to cast your plugs. Usually it's just a matter of keeping tight to the bank on the opposite side of the river from where you expect the fish to hold. Sometimes it may be best to take to the bank to get above the fish. This is especially true when there is an eddy on the shallow side that may carry sand and silt upstream ahead of you and circle it back into the holding water. Regardless of the situation, it is critical that the steelies are not aware of your presence. While you may get lucky and catch a fish that has spotted you, when using artificial lures you are much more likely to catch steelhead that don't know you are there.

In most cases, stick baits should not be tied directly to your line, especially if you are using a fairly heavy pound test. A loose attachment allows the lures to have their maximum wobbling action. While there are special loop knots you can use to keep the line from being cinched down to the lure eye, I've



found a small, size 2 black duo-lock snap to be the better plan. Most quality minnow plugs come with split rings attached to the eye. While the split ring achieves the loose attachment goal, it is difficult to tie a good knot to the split ring and it doesn't allow you to change lures easily. I take off the split rings and save them for when I might have to replace a damaged one attached to a hook.

Not only does the snap help your plug work well, it makes you a more versatile angler because you can change your lure to match the holding water better. I change back and forth between stick baits and spinners many, many times in one outing. In addition to allowing me to match the lure to the depth and current speed of the water, it gives the steelhead a choice. The spinners are the first choice when the water is deep and fast and in pocket water while the plugs are perfect for the large, flat tail-outs



and long gravel runs.

Because it is so easy to switch lures with the duo-lock snap instead of retying it is easy to neglect checking your knot and line. If you are not checking your line, you can be sure that a steelhead will find the nick or fray for you and it won't be a happy ending. I routinely test the strength of the knot and last few inches of line with each lure change and usually retie the snap after each fish even if it seems strong and there is no noticeable fraying.

You can improve your success when fishing stick baits for steelhead by watching the lure or the area where you think the lure is located. Steelies will often make an initial pass at the lure without striking it. If you are keeping a close eye on the path of the plug you will see a flash or possibly a surface disturbance when they do this. Try several more casts in the same spot to see if the steelhead will come back and grab your plug. If this doesn't happen, it's time to switch lures and keep trying. You have found an active fish and you need to give the steelhead every opportunity to bend you rod.

My favorite stick baits imitate minnows, and typically have dark backs and silver or gold sides. This makes them difficult to see on and in the water. Placing a small circle or oval of a brightly colored lure tape on the top of the head of the plug makes it visible. more **Fluorescent** orange is a good choice for a color and, who knows, the steelhead



might even think it is a minnow stealing an egg. In any case, it really makes it easier to watch your lure swim a couple of feet under the surface. It also lets you see the lure as you float it down to a boulder or just the right distance above the lip of the tail out so you know just when to start retrieving or sweeping you lure.

Whether you are a drift angler or a metal tosser, put some stick baits in your vest and give them a try on your next time on the river. They most certainly will put additional steelhead on the end of your line. Summer steelheads are running now on the West Coast and will be soon in the Great Lakes tributaries. These fish are rarely concentrated so using lures to find them is a good plan.

#### **LONG-LINE SLABS**

By Bob Bohland

Spring crappie fishing is some of the easiest fishing most anglers will ever experience. Crappies move shallow and are more than willing to bite any offering that comes within reach. Yet, when the spawn come to an end a large majority of anglers have no clue how to target them once they move off of their shallow beds and spread out in the water column.

As the spawn wraps up, the crappies will push out onto mid-depth flats and spread out. They have expended a lot of energy and need to rest and regain the calories they burned. Luckily, the end of their breeding activities coincides with many bug hatches. So they can suspend along these flats and gorge themselves on insects and the baitfish that also come to feed. Finding areas that are holding these fish is fairly simple with today's electronics, cruise around adjacent to spawning areas and look for balls of bait and scattered marks.



Early in the season, a slow non-aggressive approach is best, as these slabs are simply looking for an easy meal. Later in the season, crankbaits and stickbaits can work wonders, however, before Mid-July I prefer a large plastic such as a Lindy Watsit Grub on a 1/32 or 1/48 ounce jig. The movement this seemingly oversized plastic gives with its six small insect-like arms on the sides and a thin tail that ripples and undulates in the water just demands crappies attack it. Trolling at speeds from .25 to .75 MPH seems to work best, but don't be afraid to experiment with speeds and turns. If you are getting bites on a rod on the inside of every turn that means you should slow down your presentation. Conversely, if you are getting a bite from the outside rod on turns, speed your boat up a bit.

One of, if not the most important aspect of this type of fishing is the action of your rod. A fast action rod, will cause you to lose a lot of fish. They are called "Papermouths" for a reason, and if your rod doesn't offer enough give, hooks will rip right out of the fish's mouth as you are reeling them in. While I prefer a longer rod (up to 11 feet), a six footer is plenty as long as it has almost the same action as a wet spaghetti noodle.



Most of the bites you get from crappies while trolling in this manner will not feel like a bite. There will just all of a sudden be weight as the rod bends back. At this point, you don't even have to set the hook, just simply start reeling the fish in. By using underwater cameras in clear water, we have been able to watch how the fish bite, and all they do is speed up a little to catch the bait, open their mouths and stop to look for the next easy meal to happen upon their location.

Color selection is generally based on water clarity. If the water you are fishing in is clear, go with more natural colors such as brown and orange or black and chartreuse. If your water is dirty or bog-stained you are going to want a color that attracts attention such as pink and white. Contrast of colors can also make a big difference, so I will tend to use a different color jighead that is different than the color of the Watsit Grub I am using. As a general rule, most of the crappies that you catch in this manner will be larger. It isn't very often that smaller fish will suspend on these flats due to the predators that will also inhabit these areas. The smaller fish tend to stick near the safety of the weed edges.

Now is the time to get out and explore those mid-depth flats. The larger crappies will hang out in these areas until the end of August, so get out there and establish your pattern for these big, lazy fish. Trolling for crappies means the difference between sorting through smaller fish for a meal and showing off photos of slabs to everyone back at the landing.



### SEARCHING THROUGH THE SLOP

By Brett McComas, HSM Outdoors

Thick slop, floating mats and dense lily pad patches. While these may not be your preferred bath time locations, they are precisely where Largemouth bass like to soak up the warm summer water. As the season progresses and water temperatures rise, slide up into the slop and pluck a few giants from the green.

Bass aren't the only ones drawn to these shallow water buffets; microorganisms, bugs/insects, baitfish





and panfish are all present and feeding on whomever is smaller. Dense vegetation also offers the necessary "safety blanket" for these big mouth feeders to keep their stress levels down. The thick cover keeps them out of sight from birds of prey and tucked away from all the loud activity of recreational boaters whom are out soaking up the sun. Before you just pick a patch and start casting, you need to do some homework to increase your chances of crossing paths with a true swamp donkey.

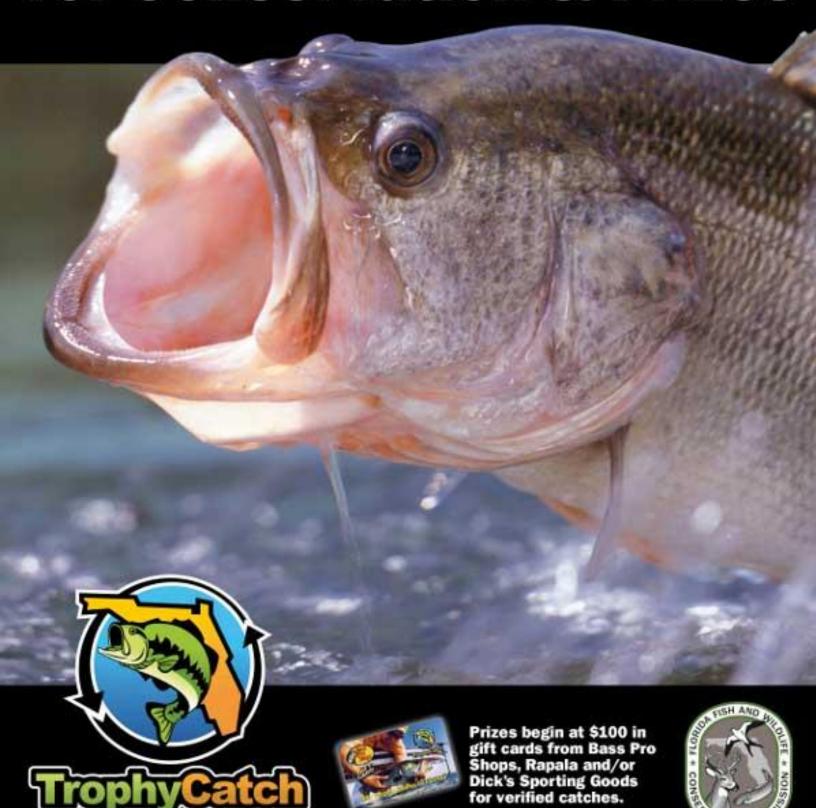
Not all slop is created equal, typically clean slop is king. Now this may sound like an oxymoron but bear with me. Sloppy areas are often times just that, slop from top to bottom. Look for "clean slop" to be areas where emergent vegetation and mats are in slightly deeper water. I like it to be at least 2 to 5 feet deep under the top mat, providing open fishable water and reasonably clear of submerged vegetation underneath. Studying the lakes contours and breaks makes it easier to locate areas of slop that have deep water access and are most likely cleaner below the surface. That being said, the only way you'll know for sure is trial and error, and of course picking a lot of weeds from your hooks.

Lilly pads and duckweed are common in these shallow water areas, but my favorite type of emergent vegetation is known at "Watershield". Watershield leaves look similar to lily pads but are typically only 2 to 5 inches long and oval shaped. One of the biggest differences is that watershield can grow as deep as 10 feet, whereas lily pads typically thrive in 4 feet of water or less and are more susceptible to being

choked out below. Areas where two or more different types of weeds converge great places to start. could This mean change bottom in composition as different weeds prefer different kinds of bottoms. Add some sort of moving water from an inlet or outlet and you're sure to find a swamp donkey lurking nearby. Be one with the bass. Visualize what's going on below the surface using the subtle hints from above and it will quickly become apparent which



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Len Andrews, Hall of Fame entrant, with a Florida largemouth bass.



P. Gabrielse holds a lunker bass, showing the fish with weight visible on a scale.

#### 3 Easy Steps

1- Photo with weight visible on scale, ENTIRE bass body visible







3- Submit entry at: TrophyCatchFlorida.com.

2- Bass must be released.



Recommended



As far as equipment goes, the first thing I do up-size everything. Braided line is crucial if you want to go home with your hands smelling like fish. 50lb braided fishing line gives me the edge I need to come out on top. Having just a 12 pound diameter it still works extremely well with low profile bait reels without casting sacrificing strength. will cut straight through the weeds instead of allowing the fish to get wrapped up and spit the hook. Make sure to have your drag cranked down tight enough that you can barely make budge. No stretch means solid hook sets which helps to lift the fish to

the surface instantly, where you can then skim the fish in on top of the weeds instead of giving it the opportunity to get buried in the bottom of the salad. Using a longer 7' to 7'10" rod will help with the same cause. Always keep the rod tip pointed to the sky and you'll be in good shape. A heavy action rod with an aggressive backbone is important to increase your hook setting power, but you don't necessarily want to use a 2X4 either. A soft rod tip will allow you to be much more accurate in flipping and picking

apart tiny holes in the weeds. I prefer to match my rods with what's known as a "burner" reel, those being reels that have a gear ratio of at least 7:1. The higher gear ratio allows you to pick up as much as 30+ inches of line with each crank of the handle. Simply put, you're in control of which direction that fish is going once he is hooked.

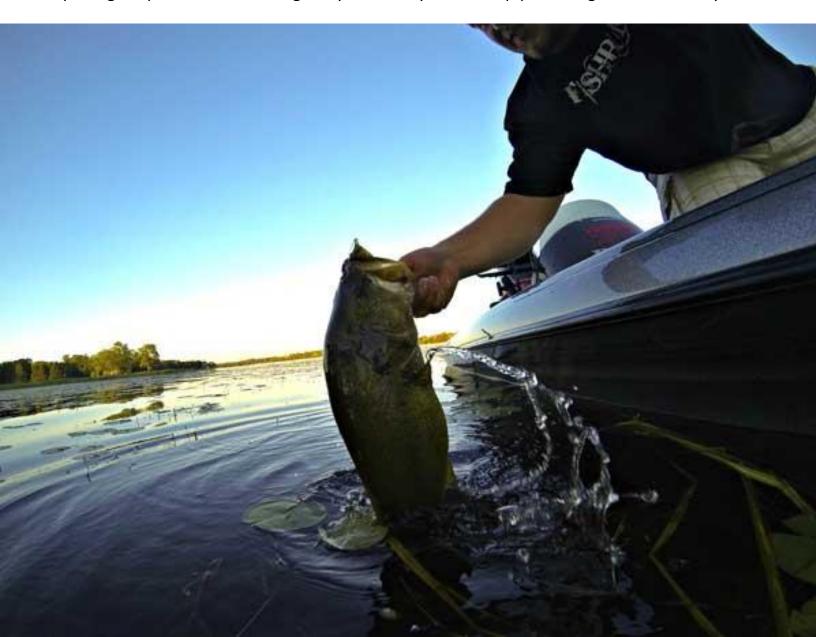
When fishing an area of "clean slop" that has openings and pockets, it's tough to beat a standard weedless bass jig. The majority of your bites will come on the fall with this type of presentation, meaning the fish will typically engulf your jig before it hits the lake bottom. For this reason I prefer to use a lighter 1/4oz or 3/8oz jig which allows me to slow down and keep that lure in the strike zone longer.





Upsize to heavier ¾oz or 1oz jigs if you need to punch the lure through the top weed mat in order to get to the fish below. Matching the perfect trailer to your jig will maximize your efficiency and draw in those big bites. Bass depend on sight, scent, and sound to survive. Taking away one of these senses means it's important to heavily exploit the remaining. Bass "hear" more so by feeling and picking up vibrations through their lateral line. Bulk those jig profiles up with large soft plastics that move a lot of water, giving off a ton of vibration. Some of my absolute favorite trailers for this application include: Berkley Powerbait Crazy Legs Chigger Craw, NetBait Paca Craw, Zoom Brush Hog or a Berkley Havoc Skeet's 4" Pit Chunk. All of the above have their own unique way of flapping, kicking, and calling fish in with their seductive falls and water moving abilities.

Sometimes things are just too sloppy to be able to effectively fish a jig, this is exactly when Kermit the Frog shines. Just like anything else, there are many different styles of topwater frogs on the market. To be honest, 90% of the time that I am throwing a topwater frog, I am actually trying to mimic something entirely different. That something happens to be a small bluegill. The Kroaker Frog made by Matzuo has a unique cupped mouth that pops and spits water just like a bluegill pecking at bugs on the surface would. Another favorite frog of mine is the Live Target Hollow Body Frog, which has the ability to switch directions from left to right upon a slightly slack line induced twitch. Both of these frogs come right out of the package super soft which will greatly increase your hookup percentage. The soft body allows the



hooks to more readily become exposed upon the pressure of a bite. There is no set-in-stone method for twitching or working a frog, it is completely up to the mood of the fish. Continue to vary with your retrieval speeds and methods until you finally have a blow up. Be sure to pay close attention to what you were doing that enticed the bite and duplicate.

The most common mistake people make when fishing with topwater frogs is setting the hook too early. This is completely understandable, we have all been there! Seeing a hefty water-pig explode on your lure is likely to make anyone a bit jumpy. After an explosion you simply need to reel up the slack and wait until you actually feel the fish before setting the hook. Often times a bass will hit your frog in such a fury that it will actually miss the lure with its mouth. If you were to set the hook upon seeing the blow up, you would risk pulling your frog from the strike zone. Usually this fish would have come back for seconds and provided you with another opportunity to get him in the boat.

Most people avoid fishing in the slop; let's face it, this technique of fishing is far from relaxing. To me it is well worth the effort, especially during those hot summer months as the season progresses and water temperatures rise. Every weed you pick off of your lure could very well be a massive Largemouth Bass you'll be taking off instead.



### EXPANDING YOUR COMFORT 20NE

UNLOCKING
THE
SECRETS
TO
LEADCORE
WALLEYE



For the past several years, I have been reading and watching TV shows on leadcore fishing for walleye's. I had been assuming that this style of fishing is difficult, expensive, and to mildly put it, quite over-rated. Now while this technique does require some specialized gear to get started, you can do it rather inexpensive by today's walleve equipment standards. This season, I took the plunge into unlocking the secrets to leadcore walleye's. After several conversations with fishing guides & other tournament walleye angler's such as Mille Lacs lake guide Brad northern Hawthorne, Minnesota guide Greg





Clusiau, lake Oahe guide Curt Reese III, and MTT Tournament angler Chad Carlson, began to understand what they with already knew leadcore regards to fishing. They were able to answer most of my questions and get me started with some confidence. In addition, while pre-fishing for the City Auto Glass Walleye Classic my partner Greg Clusiau and I did try leadcore fishing for a few hours. That's really all it took for me to know this something is

needed to add to my walleye fishing bag of tricks. Like anything else, having options you have confidence in makes you a better angler. For walleye's, especially on large lakes such as Minnesota's Mille Lacs Lake having options and knowing when to use them is what makes good angler's, great angler's...or great angler's, pro's in a lot of cases. If you hit on the 'pattern' for the day you can be in for a heck of an action packed day on the water. Some day's it will be the typical lindy rig that will be king.





I've seen adding color beads to your lindy rig, a colored hook, even the length of leader make all the difference between a few fish and 40 plus fish days. Same can be said for spinner rigs. The color/size of blade you use, even the color and size of the beads can make a difference. Likewise for slipbobber fishing. A colored hook, a small jig, how far off the bottom you set your rig can make all the difference between an OK day on the water, and a lights out day!

Trust me. In any of this, being able to recognize and duplicate a specific tactic is where it all starts. Leadcore fishing is no different I am finding out.

Now onto my leadcore set up, and what I have found to be true in a few hours of trying this new tactic. First of all, I was amazed how really simple this gear was to find, and relatively inexpensive it was to get started. My gear consists of a couple 7'10" leadcore trolling rods paired with Okuma line counter reels. These combo's I picked up at Mills Fleet Farm for under \$80 each a few weeks ago. A large spool of #18lb leadcore line was an additional \$16. So, I am set up complete with 2 rod/real combos for under \$200! That is cheap by today's walleye fishing gear standards.

Secondly, the assortment of today's crank baits in shape, color, and action can be mind boggling when you really think about it. You have the Lindy Shadling & River Rocker, Rapala Shad Rap & Tail Dancer, Berkley Flicker Shad and Salmo Hornet to name just a few. On the package of your favorite crank bait it will show the 'dive to' depth, which is one "key" to leadcore fishing. In addition, there are several books on trolling crank baits that can take some of the guess work out of this type of fishing. Even 'apps' for you tech savvy people I have been told. With everything though, it does take some trial and error. Some baits dive a little deeper than what the package states, or go a tad deeper with a slower trolling speed. I suggest keeping notes of what works for you on a particular day and duplicate that.

Third, are various brands of leadcore line, and various weights. However, each brand lists the sink rate similar...5'-7' per/color. The two most common I found were #18 lb and #27. The #18 was my choice because the line diameter was smaller, so I could spool on more colors to my reel. The leadcore is then tied with a surgeon knot (I added a dab of super glue for a little extra hold) to a 30' piece of #10 Trilene mono in my case. I chose mono because it has some stretch to it, which helps it act as a bit of a shock absorber (leadcore has ZERO stretch). Why 30' of mono? Well, it's simply keeping everything precise. Each color of leadcore is 30' so I know exactly where I'm at, at all times. Not to mention, if I get snagged and can't get out, mono is much easier to break.

"Remember that the line counter doesn't actually count the feet of line but rather how many times the spool turns. There is a big difference in diameter between a full spool and an empty spool. Keep

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your spools full and identical to each other. Use the same kind and amount of backing on each reel. Calibrate the reels in pairs and match up rod and reel combos that are very close. If the reels don't match each other, you will have a harder time duplicating what is working. The best test for calibration starts on land, clip two rod and reel combos to the same fence post and zero out the line counters, now walk up and see how close they are to each other. Calibrate your reels in sets." (Leadcore Trolling by Jason Mitchell).

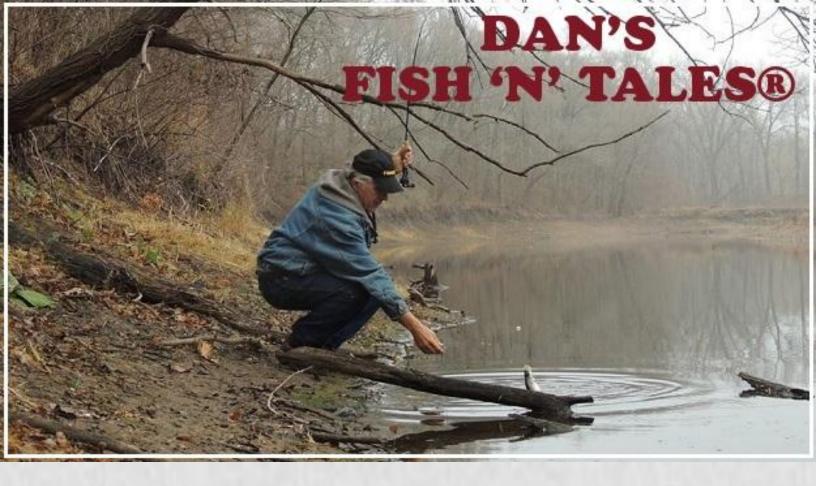
Finally, the other key gear to leadcore fishing or any fishing for that matter, are your electronics. Including a good GPS with mapping to mark your trolling run, and where you're catching fish. Your electronics will help you locate bait fish, schools of walleye's, provide you with water temperature readings, and speed. Speed is very critical to any form of trolling. You need to be able to duplicate successful trolling runs. This past weekend for example on Mille Lacs was my 1st attempt to catch walleye's on my own using leadcore. It didn't take long to locate a school of walleye's on my Vexilar Edge 2 on a break off of a large flat. This particular edge was between 26ft to 34ft in the basin. I tried to stay near the break in 27ft to 32ft of water where most of these walleye's were located. With 210 turns of line out on my line counter reels, and going between 1.7 mph to 2.2 mph I seemed to stay in the 'zone' I needed. Sometimes I would hit bottom, and need to reel in my lure to clean the muck off it, but the majority of the time it came into the boat with a feisty walleye attached to it! Another thing about this past weekend's leadcore trolling effort was color! It didn't take long for me to recognize that a #5 chrome/purple Shad Rap was king! I would safely say, 90% of the walleye's that came into the boat this weekend from leadcore trolling were caught on a chrome/purple #5 Shad Rap.

I'm still learning, and it will take a lot more trips to really fine tune this presentation but nothing makes you gain confidence in a NEW tactic like catching fish!!! Out of approximately 50 plus walleye's that came into my boat this past weekend, over half were caught on leadcore. Including Bruce Christensen's 28" walleye.

Tips: 1). With all trolling I do, whether it be fall crank baits, spinner's on 3-way rigs or leadcore now, I always keep a very loose drag. The fish hit like a ton of bricks typically, and I don't want to run the risk of pulling the hooks out when I'm fighting them. There is no need to 'set the hook' with any of these tactics, as the fish almost always hooks itself on the strike. 2). I got this one from Greg Clusiau with regards to a 'starting spot' for leadcore fishing. Block out the last digit on your line counter reel and that

will be how deep your take leadcore will your lure. Then all you have to do is add in the 'dive to' depth of your favorite crank bait to get a starting Example: 210 spot. of line (30')turns leader mono included)...21' + a #5 Shad Rap 6' = 27ftEST.





## Point Fishing

#### By Dan Galusha

There are many types of fishing structures - drop offs, creek beds, bluffs, road beds, and one of the best of all - points. Points are like ladders from deep to shallow.

Several years ago, during a Buck Perry seminar, it was learned that there are different types of points, but the best are those that have fish holding areas from top to bottom. These act like the steps on a ladder. The spots can be brush piles, weed beds, rocks, cuts, and anything that makes a holding area to break up a smooth bottom.

Points are good fishing areas at most any time of the year. The fish will use these as their migration routes between deep and shallow water.

Before spawning the mid-depths along the point serve as ideal staging areas. At this time Carolina rigs and deeper crankbaits can produce fish.

As spawning starts the fish will be in the shallower area of the point, or along shores close by. Those that provide a path to a shallow cove are some of the best.

After spawning, the fish will move out towards the staging area. Again, fishing deeper with slow moving lures will work best.

As the year progresses the fish will move up and down with feeding activity and temperatures. When the summer starts heating things up in the shallows, the point will be a great path to follow to the cooler water, or back up to weed cover and shoreline shade.

Points are long, short and sometimes curved. Those with a deeper drop-off on at least one side are best, and if they are somehow associated with a submerged creek bed then this is even better. This is especially true if there are creek beds running on both sides, and joining at the tip of the point.



Most points can be figured out by looking at the shore, as there will be a type of visible point. Anything that comes out on the end of some sort of shore, whether gravel, mud, sand or rock bluffs, can be points.

It must be noted that not all are productive. As was said earlier, the more fish holding areas on a point the better potential it has for being a good all-year-around fish holder.

Points should always be fished completely from top to bottom until a pattern is found. Then, in most cases, moving to other points of the same type, and fishing in the same way will make for a good day of fishing.

The way points are fished can change from day to day, and sometimes hour to hour. If the wind is blowing across a point, face into the wind and fish across it. Generally the fish will be hanging on the downwind side, waiting for any food being churned up and carried by the wind current in their direction.

Fishing across a point is always good, but working downward from the shallow to deep is also productive. Setting in deep water, making long casts towards shallower areas, and then working the lure outward is a good technique.

There is no single type of lure or rig that is most effective. It is like any other fishing - you must find a pattern. Fish can be holding towards the bottom, which is usually the case with points, or suspended over a fish holding area in the mid-depths to deepest areas.



I prefer to use something that crawls along the bottom. However, I will use crankbaits (Rat-L-Traps to start); Road Runner with Havoc Duece; Stanley willow spinnerbaits (1/8 to 3/8-ounce); and swim a Blitz Spyder Finesse jig, with a Havoc Pit Boss Jr. (pictured next page), 3" Chigger Craw or 3" Twin Tail Mannipulator, when casting across a point. The lure will be cast all the way across the point so that when it comes to the actual structure it will bump its way across and over. Many times the fish hit on one of the sides, or just as it rounds the top part coming from the deeper water.

If there is a creek bed on one side I'll parallel it with a Smash Tube, Texas rigged with a Xpoint Xgap, Daiichi Fat Gap or Copperhead Butt Dragger hook; Power Bait finesse worm; 4 or 5.5-inch Sidewinder; or again swim a Blitz jig with the above mentioned trailers. The best retrieve is a slow lift and fall. As the year gets later, this same spot can be a good one to pull out a vertical jigging spoon.

Some of the best action found on points is schooling fish. Many times it is thought that coves are the best, which can be true, but I've found as many or more schooling fish on points. They will bust shad all along its length, and once they are found on such structure, can be followed up and down as they come to the surface, and then go back down. In this situation I like using my favorite "search bait" a Rat-L-Trap. It is easy to cast long distances, moves fast, can be fished at different depths, and covers a lot of water.



A couple of items, which are critical to successful point fishing, are a depth finder and topographical lake map. These two items used in conjunction, will give every indication of how the point sets, and what may be along its length. In fact, a Vexilar flasher, which is mainly known for its benefits in ice fishing, many times will work better than a LCD to find the depths quickly, and give details on weeds and the type of bottom, whether hard or soft, while also displaying fish targets, especially

those suspended.

Anyone who has wondered why an angler is setting far away from shore, and casting in different directions will quickly find the answer if they have success when fishing points.

If you have never concentrated on these important pieces of bottom structure, give them a try. Many times a bad fishing day, can be turned into a good one by simply turning away from shore and working up and down points.

If you have any questions on this or another fishing subject, drop me a line through the Dan's Fish 'N' Tales® website, at www.dansfishntales.com, which also provides a link to the ODU Magazine website, and a "like" link to the Dan's Fish 'N' Tales® Facebook page.

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





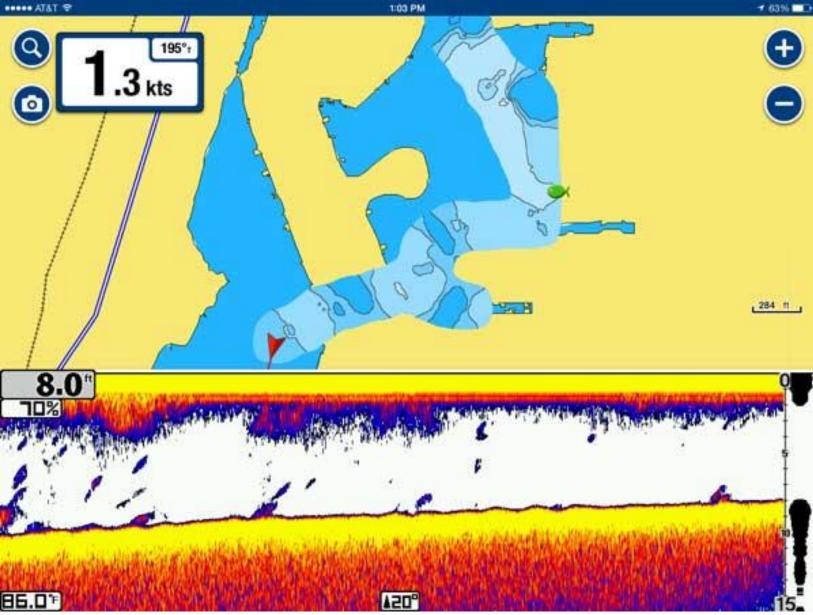
All bass anglers know and have experienced that when fishing a frog a bass will at times miss your Snag Proof Frog and you will need to have a follow up lure ready to go. Depending on the time of year and density of the vegetation that your frog is being brought over a bass will have two motives for hitting your frog; either to A. to eat it, or B. injure it for an easy meal. The second option here is when a follow up lure comes in handy. The other time when a follow up lure is needed is when a bass isn't able to hit the frog properly or if you don't get a solid hook up the first time.

Many times after a bass hits your topwater frog, there is a nice open pocket for you to pitch your bait into that "blow hole." I chose a Texas-rigged Zoom Super Hog because of its compact presentation, rigged on a 4/0 Lazer TroKar TK130 Flippin' hook with a ½ to 1 oz tungsten weight in front of it.

The other way I like to follow up a missed strike on a frog is to throw my Snag Proof Frog just beyond the area where I had my hit and slowly drag it across that area again. I will then dead stick in the hole and edges where that strike occurred. Many times a bass will think that this is the injured bait that it hit originally and is now wounded.

With both of these tactics I rely on your Minn Kota Talon as this shallow water anchor will keep me in that exact spot. This will increase your time fishing in the key area and also limit the need to use your trolling motor.

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



# PRODUCING REAL TIME LIVE DETAILED MAPS

advances in mapping electronics have advanced in these last few years at an incredible rate. Some examples being side scanning technology, down scanning, CHIRP sonar, updating of charts via Wi-Fi on plotters via apps, and more on the way giving fishermen more fish catching tools. The advancement on the mapping front is drawing live contours. These live contours can be used to update charts to new data, create data for difficult unmapped areas, map private lakes, or get a little more detailed information on sharper drop-offs, ledges or lumps.





once processed. This SonarCharts layer can then be seen on the plotter itself once updating the plug n play chart.

Mounting each of these units to record SonarCharts Live is a very simple set up for all options. The Go Free is either part of the Gen 3 HDS and just has to be activated and connected to the app or the Go Free unit is purchased and connected to the plotter. These can be purchased online at the Go Free website. Simply connect the mobile device/tablet to the Wi-Fi off Go Free and open the Navionics App. Digital Yacht works with NMEA connections. Set up directions with this product depend on your plotter and are included with the router. The Digital Yacht

One of the most recent releases is Navionics SonarCharts Live which is real time mapping by using an iPhone, iPad, Droid, or Droid tablet Navionics apps. Apps cost about \$10 and \$50 respectively. The app works in conjunction with a Vexilar SP200 transducer, Go Free for Navico plotters, Lowrance Gen 3 directly through Go Free, Digital Yacht, Raymarine Dragonfly Pro and the Wifish. The app is connected Wi-Fi to one of these options. Live charting is drawn as the fishermen boats along. The chart can draw as fast as the transducer will hold bottom accurately. The chart is displayed in a choice of colors and draws in detailed one foot contours. Once the app is disconnected from the plotter and the app is opened, the data is sent wirelessly to Navionics who then processes the data and creates new SonarCharts from the information which can be downloaded onto a plug n play SonarChart Layer or updated on the app



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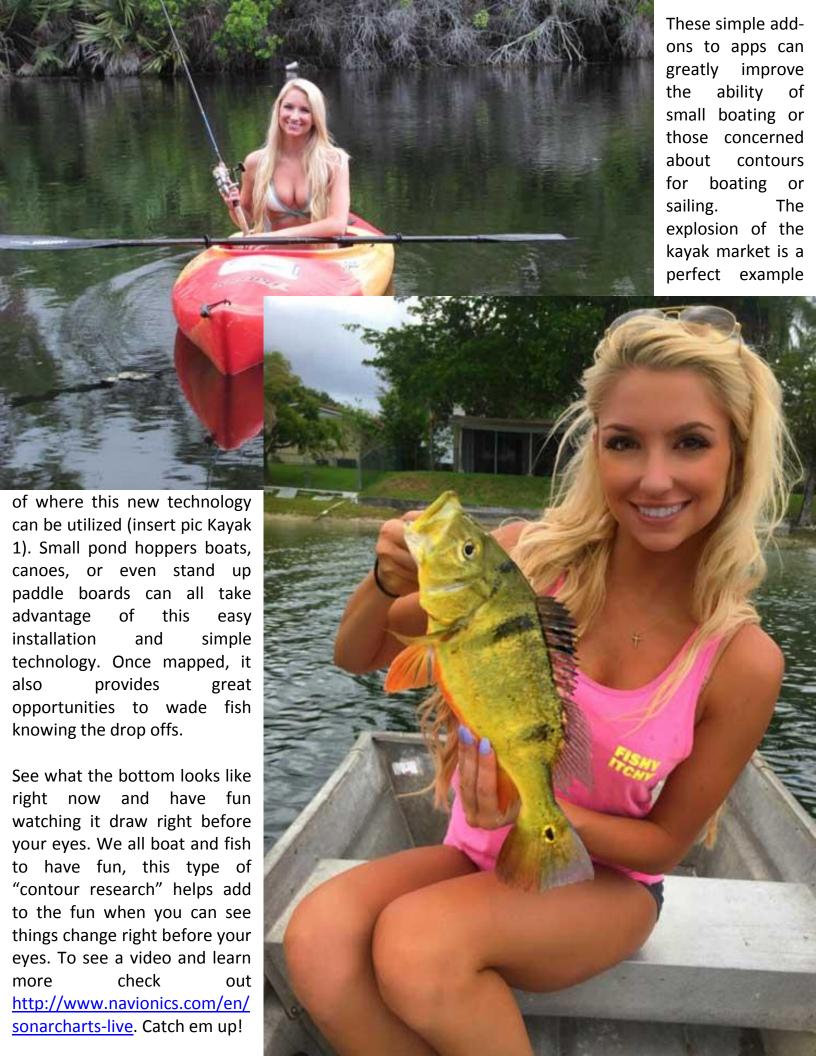
router can be purchased at <a href="www.digitalyachtamerica.com">www.digitalyachtamerica.com</a>. Raymarine is launching the Dragonfly Pro and Wifish at Icast in July. These products also work with SonarCharts Live in a very simple way. Connect the mobile device or tablet to the Raymarine Wi-Fi and then open the app. Live charting begins once you start boating.

Vexilar is a company that makes a Wi-Fi transducer that retails around \$150 and can be purchased online or at any major retailer. This can be a transom mount or on thinner material as a shoot through.

Mounting on a transom iust requires a couple and screws the placing waterline and running the wire. shoot For а simply through, mounting the transducer and box with some silicone (avoid any bubbles) to the bottom of the vessel. Mounting into the bilge also is an option for larger boats. Mine shoots through the fiberglass of my Andros Tarpon 26 can draw and SonarCharts Live at 30 mph.







# A NORTHWEST GEM

By Edward Chin

Spring Chinook Salmon Fishing on the Columbia River is one of the many sport fishing opportunities that can be found in the Pacific Northwest. From the tide waters near Astoria, Oregon to as far east as the Hanford Reach arm of the Columbia River near Ringold, Washington, the fishery usually starts around late February /early March and can run into June and sometimes into early July as anglers follow the migration of these fish upstream. As always, Mother Nature is

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one who determines when the fishery starts and we look forward to seeing these salmon return each year. Annual salmon returns vary based on the environmental conditions such as weather, water levels, current flows and survival rates at sea due to predation from both avian and aquatic predators.

The Spring Chinook Salmon is one of the most prized fish for the table. These spring fish are rich in flavor and have a high Omega 3 content in their meat. Chinook salmon are rich in flavor and can be enjoyed best on the grill or as sashimi.



These Spring Chinook Salmon tend to run on the smaller size around 10-15 pounds each, compared to their cousins the Fall Chinook Salmon which can reach upwards into the 70-80 pound class. Their smaller, yet powerful bodies test all anglers' skills each time they are hooked. These will be some of the most aggressive fish that a person can hook. Aggressive rod strikes, aerial acrobatics and drag testing speed often times compares these fish to Albacore Tuna. The science around catching these fish is exactly that a science. Many anglers have tried to perfect their own recipes for success, some have failed, but many have had great success.



Fishing guides in the Pacific Northwest pride themselves in creating the perfect formula for



success. Many have spent pain staking hours perfecting brine and egg cures, finding the specific lure colors and finding the right locations to maximize the hook up rates for their

clients. Guides also spent countless hours researching weather patterns; logging catch rates, monitoring hydroelectric dam discharge rates, and daily river levels. All of these factors are taken into account when and where the guides and anglers will start their day of fishing.



Tackle used for this fishery varies from location to location on the river, but most anglers and guides will use a medium to medium-heavy 8'6" – 11'6" rods with a medium sized (300-400 series) bait casting reel





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spooled with a heavy line test in either mono or a braided line. One of my favorite rod and reel combos to use is an SMR 905 Edge Rod by Gary Loomis (<a href="www.edgerods.com">www.edgerods.com</a>) paired with a Daiwa TD Luna 300 filled with Fins 60 pound XS Braided Spectra fishing line.(<a href="www.finsfishing.com">www.finsfishing.com</a>)

I enjoy either trolling for these Springers using a K15 Kwikfish wrapped in herring or sardines or just trolling with a cut plug herring behind a Lure Jensen Jet Diver to get the bait to the correct fishing depth.

Other techniques include back bouncing egg clusters behind the boat while anchored in specific fish travel lanes in the river. Fishing depths vary from as shallow as 5' to as deep as 60ft in these travel lanes in the river. The key is to find the right depth and locations where these fish want to be. Fish moods will change rapidly from day to day or even hour to hour, so an angler needs to be able to adjust to the fish's mood in order to be successful.

Some of the popular fishing locations near Portland, Oregon are just below Bonneville Dam, I-205 Bridge area along the Washington shoreline, Portco area along the Vancouver, Washington shoreline, and near the river mouths of the Lewis, Cowlitz, Willamette and Sandy Rivers. These locations will be hotspots as the salmon migrate upstream. There are many upstream location that are targeted such as the mouth of the famous Deschutes River, below each of the following dam projects – The Dalles, John Day, and McNary dams.

Whether fishing from the shoreline or hiring a local fishing guide, catching one of these prized spring Chinook will be one of your greatest rewards. To learn more about Pacific Northwest fisheries, please don't hesitate to contact me.

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#### Get Organized, Catch More Fish

#### **By Dan Johnson**

Managing tackle in a manner that engenders efficiency is no easy matter. But it's one of the most important things you can do to put more fish in the boat on every trip.

"Whether you're prepping for a trip or out on the water, scrambling to find lures, pliers or other gear wastes time and costs you fish," says veteran guide and obsessive organizer Bernie Keefe. "Investing a little time and effort to organize tackle eliminates such headaches and makes you an efficient fishing machine."

Keefe focuses on trout and salmon in high-country hotspots around his Granby, Colorado, home. But whether you target panfish, bass, walleyes or a multi-species mix of a little bit of everything, his organizational theories can help.

Step one is conquering chaos on the home front, which is the launching pad for every successful trip. "Tackle storage systems ranging from large bins to Berkley storage bags and pocket-sized Clam jig boxes make it easier than ever to organize your entire arsenal," says Keefe, who groups tackle





according to a blend of size, species and type for easy retrieval when packing for the next adventure.

Pint-sized tackle storage products like Clam's Dual Tray Jig Box help in organizing small lures and components.

"All my number 5 Berkley Frenzies are in one box, the number 7s are in another, and so forth," he says. "Everything is clearly labeled so there's no guesswork when it's go time." Likewise, rods are arranged by length and power. Line, too, has its specific staging area, in Keefe's case, a preferred cupboard, as do reels and other critical components.

Besides making it infinitely easier to prepare for a trip, Keefe notes that an organized garage or tackle shed reduces the odds of forgetting essential gear. "It also makes it easy to enjoy short trips, such as when you only have a couple of hours to hit a local lake after work," he adds. "Conversely, a disorganized mountain of tackle can be so intimidating to wrangle that it's tempting not to go fishing at all, especially when time is of the essence."

Keefe's system extends to the boat, where tackle and accessories are methodically stored in easy-to-access compartments for speedy deployment. "Clients say the boat is 'choreographed' because everything is right where it needs to be," he laughs. "But that's just a simple matter of figuring out where it makes sense to keep everything, and then having the discipline to put it all back where it belongs."





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Famous for softbaits and line, Berkley also makes a variety of handy storage solutions.

He notes that amenities such as Crestliner's SureMount gunnel accessory system make it easy to mount tool holders and other accessories at key points around the boat, without drilling. "For example, I keep three tool holders at strategic locations, each armed with a pliers, clippers and superline scissors," he says.

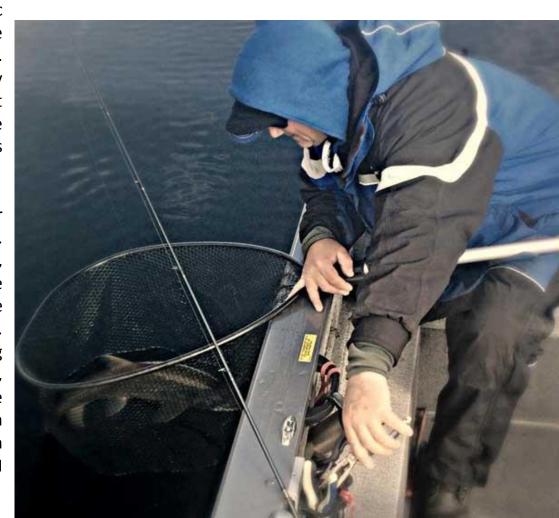
In fact, a look around Keefe's fishing platform reveals a study in organization. To aid in speedy leader tying, he keeps a 2,000-yard spool of Berkley Trilene 100% Fluorocarbon in a cloth bag beneath the front console. Hand towels are draped over the back of each fishing seat, and the landing net rests on the front deck, with the handle leaning on the windshield, so it's ready for action in a heartbeat.

"Everything is easy to grab and ready to go," Keefe says.

On a side note, while anchors and their accompanying ropes merit careful storage, Keefe sidesteps such

duties by relying on electronic positioning aids. "I don't use traditional anchors," he says. "The Pinpoint GPS system on my MotorGuide Xi5 holds the boat in anchoring mode with the push of a button. Now that's efficient."

Of course, maintaining order takes a little elbow grease. "During the course of the day, my boat accumulates its share of torn-up plastics, bits of line and other garbage," he admits. "But taking five minutes to bag it all up at the end of the day, and put all the gear back where it belongs, ensures the system will be ready for another session of high-efficiency fishing when I hit the water the next morning."





#### FISHING FOR TRASH – A SESSION FOR ROUGH FISH

#### **By Dean Brookes**

As an avid angler for both fresh water and salt water species I am always amazed when other anglers dismiss certain fish species as 'trash' and not worth fishing for! Whether you like to cast lures for bass, fish with ultra-light equipment for crappie, target stripers with bait every facet of angling should be appreciated on its own merits. There are specific skills involved with most styles of fishing and while many skills do crossover; such as watercraft, sometimes you have to experience a certain genre of fishing before you truly appreciate the merits.

Rough fish are a point in question. With lots of misinformation and misunderstanding many times they are labeled as 'trash' fish. What are rough fish? Basically they fall into a few different categories but for the sake of simplicity I'll focus on the species I currently target; those being carp, grass carp and buffalo fish. Firstly, let's take carp that were stocked by the US Government over 120 years ago as part

country wide scheme to use them as a food source. This was abandoned after a few decades and since then they have gone on to populated many of our ponds, lakes, rivers and waterways. Carp are a species and hardy generally if left alone will they spawn successfully, hence their presence in many of our waters. I won't get into a debate as to whether they are invasive or not as most of the information is anecdotal but simply



put, they are here to stay and a species that more and more anglers are discovering. Carp in the US have been seen to grow in excess of 60lb's.

Grass carp are a little different as in most places they are stocked by State agencies to reduce weed growth in lakes and rivers. Usually, the fish released are sterile and thus have a life span of 10-15 years





them. They are bottom feeders and can also grow in excess of 80lb's.

Having covered the types of 'rough' fish, let me take you through a recent session I enjoyed in Texas and hopefully you'll pick up some tips and tactics as well as seeing the enjoyment you can get from these species.

As I live on the East Coast and was planning a weeklong trip to Austin, Texas I had to first work out how to get my fishing equipment the 1900 miles without paying the ridiculous airport fees. After mailing my rods and making a few calls to loan some additional equipment I was all set. I arrived in Texas and loaded the rental car before making the journey to a dammed section of the Colorado River. The particular section had a healthy stock of common carp,

before they die. Grass carp can grow to very big sizes with 50lb fish common and fish up to 80lb's being possible. Grass carp as not as common in waters and usually it will take some researching before you can find the waters that they reside in.

Finally, we come to buffalo fish which are a native American species and from the sucker genus. They tend to be localized to certain states, with the Carolina's, Georgia and Texas being the most common places to find







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buffalo fish and lots of grass carp making for some pretty interesting session.

#### Tackle

For this particular session I would be using 12ft rods capable of casting 3-4 oz's over 100 meters. These were coupled with large big pit reels. This set up is similar to what you would use for a beach casting outfit. The 12ft rods allow for longer distance casts and also offer greater control when playing large fish.

The reels were loaded with 50lb braid to withstand the repeated force generated by big casts. The rods and reels were placed on individual rods rests with an electronic alarm, used to signal pick-ups. Other vital equipment included a large 42 inch landing net and a padded matt to unhook the fish on and avoid damage while out of the water. For the terminal tackle I used a 35lb braided hook-link and size 4 hooks specifically designed for these species.

#### **Bait**

While carp and grass carp will feed on the surface for this session I was concentrating on fishing on the bottom. All of these species are heavy feeders and when provided with a bait they like they will become pre-occupied and as such are less wary and easier to catch. My approach was to use several different baits and to chum with these baits to encourage the fish to feed heavily. The baits included a groundbait (a mixture of breadcrumbs, oats, sweetcorn and creamed corn), seed baits (a mixture of millet, hemp seed, maize and tiger nuts) and specialist carp baits (boilies, which are basically a hardened, flavored dough ball). Over the course of 3 days I used over 15 kilograms of bait and caught over 30 fish and if it hadn't been for a nasty turn in the weather I am sure I would have stayed and caught more.

#### Results

The first 24 hours of the session were fairly slow with only a few fish caught, but after moving a heavily chumming a new spot I sat back and awaited results. It wasn't until the early hours of the next morning that the fish decided to feed. And feed they did!! One of the reasons we use 'electronic' bite alarms is that sometimes this style of fishing is a waiting game. You chum and set a trap that you hope the fish will trip. Often times this will be in the middle of the night when every normal person is tucked into bed. If you plan to fish over 24 hours you need some of your home comforts; a decent tent, a





reclining chair to sleep on and cooking appliances all add to the experience and are vital to keep the spirits up when the fish are not biting.

Back to the session. At 4am I landed my first carp from this new spot and then spent the next several hours in a daze as the fishing went ballistic. Using three rods (allowed in Texas) all of them caught fish, sometimes going off at the same time, but as an experienced angler this was all manageable and I did not lose a single fish during the 3 days once they were hooked. I landed several common carp up to around 25lb's and then the grass carp moved in.

Once they are feeding the grass carp are voracious animals. I caught 35lb+ grass carp one after the other over 3 hours before finally I latched into a bigger specimen at over 43lbs. In general grass carp do not fight very hard in the water and come to the net fairly meekly. However, once on the bank they make up for it and are at times unmanageable.

A large padded unhooking mat is vital to ensure good fish care when practicing 'catch and release'

This is why we use large padded unhooking mats to protect the fish. As I am 100% a catch and release angler I try to make sure that every fish I return has the best chance to survive and the use of large landing nets (fish friendly mesh) and unhooking mats the stress the fish suffer is much less than if you are dragging them about on the bank.

After catching a glut of grass carp, all from fairly close range I decided to fish much further out over another chummed area in the hope of catching a few buffalo fish. These are primarily a bottom feeder and have a big appetite and so I chummed out another 3-5kg of bait and sat back for what I thought would be a several hour wait. Only an hour later the buffalo arrived and I caught a few nice fish close to 40lb's before I finally hooked the fish I was after; a 45lb buffalo. With carp the fight tends to be hard and fast with lots of drag stripping runs (especially with younger fish below 30lb's) and as I mentioned grass



carp tend to put up little resistance. However, buffalo fish are quite different. They use their weight and plow around for several minutes with larger specimens sometimes being hard to slow down. They stay deep and although they don't charge around like carp they put up a good account of themselves.

My session in Texas was started in 35 degree rainy temperatures that rose to 65 degrees before a big storm came in to drop the temperatures again to 40 degrees or so with heavy winds. Not the best fishing conditions for me, but the fish certainly did not seem to be that bothered.

To wrap up, I would encourage you to look around your local waters and I'm sure you'll discover one of more of these 'rough' species. They offer a different challenge and although





#### By Ted Pilgrim

ast time the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service took the temperature of licensed anglers, 7-million savvy souls1 named the catfish their favored species. By comparison, 10-million anglers preferred bass, while a meager million liked walleyes. America's love affair with catfish dates back decades, even centuries, with reports of 200- and 300-pound blues caught during the early 19th century. Mark Twain revered cats, too, frequently romanticizing the species in print, and once writing of "a Mississippi River catfish that was more than six feet long."

Rockwellian portraits of Americana commonly depict summertime scenes of kids and crusty characters alike sharing a bank and a bucket of

> ICHTALURIDS ON INDEPENDENCE DAY AND BEYOND

worms in hopes that a catfish might bite. Thank goodness all these years later, a visit to the local river or pond often reveals this same pastoral setting.

Meanwhile, on countless water bodies across the country, hot fishing for great big channel cats awaits any interested angler. Their abundance and potential size are just two among many reasons for the popularity of these barbel-faced fish. One other beautiful basis for a summertime catfish



adventure: there are as many ways to catch them as your imagination can concoct. Not only do any of the 7-million anglers stand a fair chance of taking home a catfish dinner, they're just as likely to land a whale today as during the days of Huck Finn.

#### **Current Thoughts on Catfish**

Brad Durick, popular catfish guide on the famed Red River of the North, might not wear a straw hat nor clench a corncob pipe, but he's as comfortable contending with current and catfish as Twain's historic hero, Huck Finn. The channel cats Durick hunts daily, from May through October, are some of the



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biggest on the planet. On this crazy good catfish river, current runs bizarrely south to north—rather than dropping toward the Gulf of Mexico—and drains into Lake Winnipeg following a 550-mile northbound run.

Most years, water flows have stabilized by mid July. Catfish have fully finished spawning and patterns become predictable. While most anglers during this time continue focusing on obvious areas, such as visible wood snags, rockpiles, deep holes or dams, Durick has

a whole other world of catfish spots to himself.



"Everything I do relates to current," says the Coast Guard licensed captain. "The best thing catfish anglers can do for themselves is learn to read the water. Every key change in the river bottom is revealed by things happening on the surface.

"Catfish flock to current seams—where two currents come together. On the surface, it's often a subtle sign. But once you know what it looks like, seams are as obvious as a downed oak tree. Current breaks and their underlying topography are incredibly overlooked, but they have everything a catfish needs—a break from current, oxygen and of course, food."

Durick says that while a big gnarly woodpile might look great, if it lies out of the main flow, anglers will struggle to catch catfish there. Conversely, even a small bush or a subtle hole can gather multiple whopper catfish—if it's associated with substantial current. One of Durick's better midsummer spots is a 4 to 10 foot trench cut into the outside of a river bend. His best troughs are often the shallowest ones.



"I really like 3 to 4 foot holes with a trough-like effect. Food is dropping into these spots all the time. And even though there might be strong current flowing into it, there are always areas of reduced water flow where cats can hold and wait for food."

Associated overlooked summer spots, Durick says, are small holes near a shoreline break, especially those with current seams running along



their edges. In higher water years, he's also had great fishing below dams all through summer.

In each instance, Durick baits with Carolina style rigs—a 2- to 5-ounce No-Roll sinker above a ball bearing swivel and a 10-inch leader of 30-pound test mono snelled to a 4/0 to 8/0 circle hook, depending on bait size and how catfish are striking. He prefers circle hooks by Rippin Lips and Bottom Dwellers Tackle. In heavier current, Durick says big cats routinely grab a bait and run aggressively, necessitating wider gap (larger size) hooks and shorter snells.

"Most of the time, I use suckers cut into small 'steaks'," offers Durick. "They're abundant, inexpensive and catfish gobble 'em up." When available, Durick also uses wild goldeye, fresh from the river. In wetter years, particularly during August and September, leopard frogs emerge en masse. The late summer frog bite can be exceptional, but prevailing dry weather sometimes eliminates this amphibious pattern.

Durick adds another observation about extra warm water. "In the hottest summer weather, for whatever reason, catfish often prefer to bite frozen bait over fresh cut specimens. I think maybe warmer water pulls the blood and oils out of fresh bait faster than frozen stuff. Regardless, I've found that marinating or dousing my cutbaits in an attractant called Scent Trail has significantly increased my bites. It's powerful stuff."

In most spots, Durick employs a special 20-pound Cat River Anchor, which he says holds in any type of bottom. He very rarely sits in a single spot for more than 15 minutes, unless he's fishing after a front, or

after a drop in water temperature, which slows catfish activity.

Still, most days produce electrifying action, with channel catfish in sizes you just can't find anywhere else. If you're in need of a serious string stretching, you might head the want to to Minnesota-North Dakota border right now, or for a quick fix, beeline straight for your neighborhood catfish river. Fun and big kitties await.



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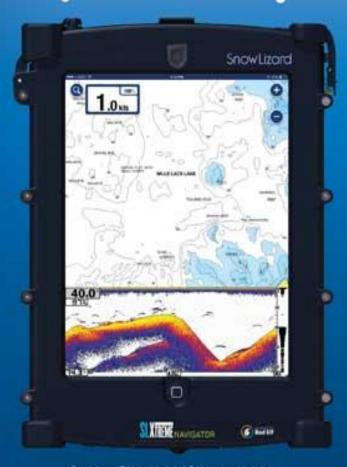
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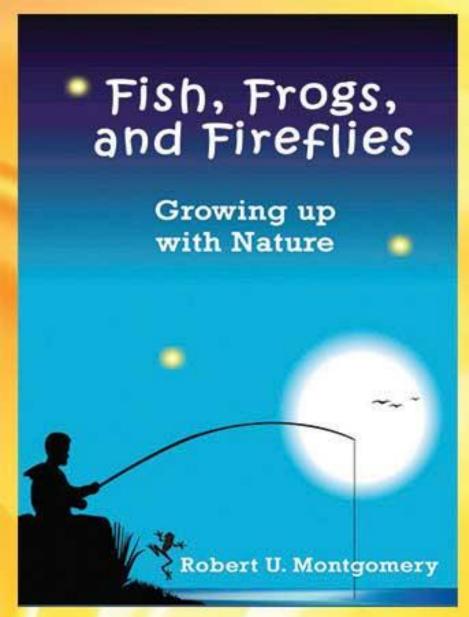
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#### PITCHING AND FLIPPING TIME

#### By Captain Mike Gerry

Every year as the high sunny days near, and the high pressure days become the norm on Guntersville we turn to flipping grass and docks and lay downs along some deep edges. There are some tips I can give you that will work anywhere whether you're flipping docks or pitching the grass on Guntersville, the basics are all the same.

One thing regardless of where your fishing there is shade somewhere either around the docks or trees or wood on the edges; don't miss the



shady areas this is where the fish are and where they sit to ambush bait on the high pressure sunny days. Look for the areas of slow change where darkness is near these areas of change, they hold fish, they may be in the dark area or just next to it as the position of the sun is everything in this situation. If your facing the sun the darkness may be farther out from the cover than if it's behind you; shade is everything fish it thoroughly and pick it apart from light to darkness.

Don't be a chicken, pitch the hardest most difficult areas to get too, if you're afraid to get hung up in cover or have to try to avoid difficult spots for one reason or another; learn to overcome your fears. Work your bait into the tightest spots, the most trying cover and you will be fishing where the fish are. Most often where you don't expect that hit is where it comes from, so pitch bravely and boldly until you gain confidence and you will be better off for it.

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Lastly in the bright sun the bass are most often on the bottom, let that bait drop to the fish as they can't eat if you pull it out of the drop zone. In my experience the initial pitch to the deepest cover or to the farthest spot under the dock is where the fish are; if you let it drop then that first spot is many times the best. Also, let it drop on a slack line; if you try to drop it on a tight line you are pulling the bait away

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from the very location you're trying to get too. A slack line allows the bait to drop down vertically and hit your spot as it should; be aggressive get to the tight spots, find the shade and you will become a seasoned fisherman flipping and pitching with the best.



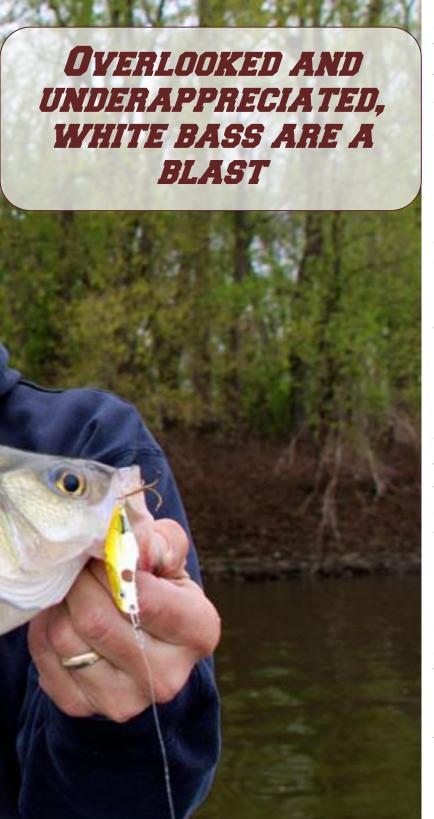


## A CAST TO THE OTHER BASS

By Mitch Eeagan

You'd be hard-pressed to find an avid angler who doesn't recognize bass as the most sought-after sport fish in North America. We all have our favorite fish, but statistics prove that bass are #1. Overlooked and underappreciated, however, is a bass of a different color. Its DNA differs from the most popular, yet the





species roams a majority of waterways throughout the lands. I'm talkin' white bass.... And they are a blast to catch.

White bass fans look forward to massive spring spawning runs in rivers that connect to the large natural lakes and reservoirs the fish call home during the rest of the year. But after the run, most anglers set their sights on other species.

So why are they summer's Rodney Dangerfield, earning such little respect?

It can't be their unwillingness to whack a vibrating or flashing lure. The fact is, white bass have voracious appetites, and once schools are located, the catching comes quite easy.

It's certainly not what they lack during battle. White bass zig-zag and power-dive straight for the fathoms. And, by far, it's not their poor table fare. On the contrary, white bass make for good eats if you ice 'em right away or keep them in a well-aerated livewell – and then remove all the red-colored flesh when filleted.

More than likely, it's simply because they aren't easy to find come summertime. Just like their saltwater cousins, the striped bass, white bass turn pelagic. They don't dwell near bottom or hug shoreline structure, making them more difficult to find. Instead, white bass rove high in the water column and create havoc with pods of nomadic baitfish.

Or maybe they're simply not trendy enough to target. But that's about to change.

#### When the lovin' is over

Enter ardent angler Jim Edlund, who is far from troubled to speak in favor of targeting white bass. The Minnesota-based outdoor writer says he fishes white bass every chance he gets, and now coaches his daughters on how to catch them year-round; even well after the massive spawning migrations have ended.

"Springtime is primetime, typically when water temps are in that 50 to 60 degree range. Fish a day or



two before, on, or immediate after a full moon and you're really rocking. That's when the spawn is in full-swing. It's the perfect bite to get kids really excited about fishing. Not surprising, my kids are big fans of white bass," says Edlund

Although spring can be easy pickings, Edlund says good electronics can help you find white bass the rest of the year.

"Despite all the pretty pictures of bridges and sunken boats you see in the advertising, what Side Imaging really does is minimize the amount of time it takes to find fish," says Edlund. "I simply idle around river points, sandbars, feeder creeks and watch for white splotches of bait and fish on my SI screen. Once I see life, I scroll the cursor over the spot and boom, there's the waypoint on my LakeMaster map. This lets me back off and idle into the spot from upwind with my Minn Kota and get the kids casting without spooking them."

A fan of river fishing from a small, aluminum Lund that's taken years of abuse, Edlund calls his system "high-tech, old-school."

"To think that a guy can get Side Imaging, Down Imaging, mapping and 2D sonar for under \$500 is awesome. Fishing with the Humminbird Helix SI GPS is like drinking Don Perignon on a Boone's Farm budget."

As Edlund nears the waypoints he marked on Side Imaging, he switches to split-screen view of 2D sonar and LakeMaster map, noting the depth marks start appearing, more than likely the same depth white bass will move into if the wind kicks up and waves roll over sunken islands or points adjacent to the deeper water.



"I can't tell you how many times I've stopped jigging walleyes on the Mississippi River to chase a school of white bass. I have buddies shake who iust their heads. Then out comes the casting stick for as long as the whities will play along. for Same goes North Dakota's Devils Lake. Take

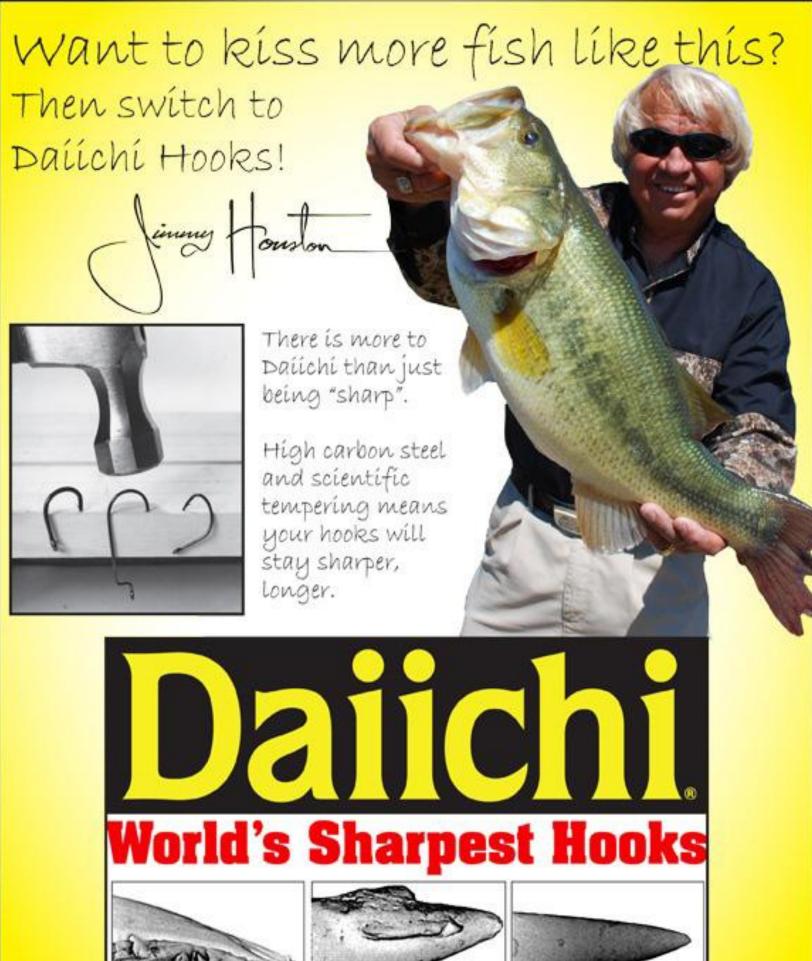


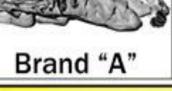
a break from walleyes and survey a few windswept shorelines with Side Imaging until we find fish; doesn't take long. And they're giants out there. They're just too much fun to be ignored, especially with kids in the boat. My new plan is throwing Clousers (pictured- <a href="http://www.clouserflyfishing.com">http://www.clouserflyfishing.com</a>) at 'em with a 4 or 5 weight fly rod. That should be a hoot!"

Overall, once white bass have spawned, they move out into the main lake and can be found in areas with a turbid layer over ultra-clear water. In reservoirs, both bait and bass are often found along the old river and creek channels. In natural lakes, white bass tend to hover over main-lake flats. It's in these areas you may see baitfish leaping for their lives, indicating there are white bass below attacking the clan.

ODU MAGAZINE VIDEO BLOCK (www.odumagazine.com)











"Although electronics are great, always pay attention to what's going on around you, like busting bait and surfacing fish. And watch where the birds are feeding on the water," says Edlund.

Once it's determined the bass are at the surface or just below, it's time to cast into the chaos.

#### **Gearing up**

Lures and gear should be beefed up from what one might expect when catching fish that range from 1-4 pounds. Because white bass feed on shad and shiners, lures that match the size of the baitfish are best. Vibration and flash are key as well.

Soft jerkbaits with large paddle tails, such as 3.5-inch Castaic Jerky J Swim Series and Custom Jigs & Spins 3.25-inch Pulse-R Paddle Tail, rigged onto a jig head with a narrow shape like an H20 Precision Jig, or the Rapala Ultra-Light Rippin' Rap are some of Edlund's favorite baits to cast. He throws them with 10-pound-test superline and an 8-pound-test fluorocarbon leader on a fast-action medium-power St. Croix AVID-X spinning rod.

"I could use lighter gear, but I don't like to baby 'em. Plus, it's a numbers thing; I want to boat the fish without any unnecessary ballet and get right back out to hot fish. Plus, these same river spots can produce some big 'eyes, smallies, cats ... when there's a lot of bait getting slashed, your next fish could be anything," says Edlund

Spinners are also a great choice for whities, with number-3 and -4 Mepps Aglia in-line spinners mainstays. Spoons with a wide wobble that can be fished both fast and slow and can be stopped and fluttered on the fall, such as a size-1 Fin-Wing or Custom Jigs & Spins Pro Series Slender Spoon (pictured), work wonders, too.

# Cast, retrieve, repeat

Overlooked and underappreciated? That's the white bass. Once located high in the water column, catching them is straightforward – just cast, retrieve and repeat. Once you land a few you'll realize just why white bass should rank right up there with black and brown bass.



Mitch Eeagan is a writer

that lives off the land and water, who resides in the heart of the mosquito-filled cedar swamps of Michigan's Upper Peninsula.



# Boat Rental or Ownership: An Angler's Dilemma

By Jasmine Howard

Fishing is one of the simplest joys in life — a pleasure that anyone, old or young, rich or poor, can enjoy. In fact, plenty of avid anglers don't own any gear at all, preferring to rent what they need from bait and tackle shops during their excursions. Fishing boats, too, can be leased on a daily or weekly basis at most fishing spots. However, is renting the right way to fish?

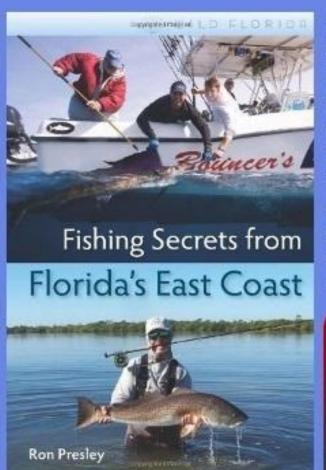
Fishers with enough resources may strongly consider purchasing a fishing boat, and there are plenty of reasons boat ownership is a rewarding experience. However, not every angler needs to start saving for a new craft, and some might even benefit by getting rid of the ones they have. If you are agonizing over buying a boat, here's what you need to know about the pros and cons of ownership and renting.





Ron Presley offers anglers valued fishing insight and information on Florida's saltwater angling opportunities, detailed in the following two books.

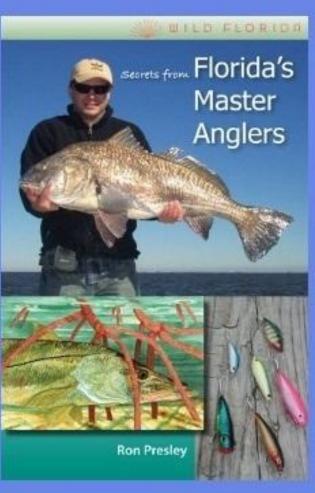
### FLORIDA FISHING AT IT'S BEST!



Author and experienced fishing guide Ron Presley offers practical information to anglers of all skill levels and interests in this clear, concise guide. He provides the essential information anglers need both to have a successful excursion and to protect the fishing resource for future generations. Also featuring valuable contributions from twenty-eight local guides and experts—all discussing the communities and waters they know best.

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Secrets from Florida's Master Anglers offers both tourists and natives a fishing resource like no other. Professional fishing guide Ron Presley conducted privileged interviews with twenty of the state's top charter boat captains. The result is this collection of tips and techniques sure to make your next excursion a success whether in Florida or your own home waters.



#### **Best Boats for Fishing**

Any floating bark will get you out on the water, but there are certain boats better suited to different kinds of fishing. If you are a fisher who prefers to engage in only one particular sport — recreational freshwater angling, for example — you may be confident investing in a single vessel. In this case, it is helpful to understand the intricacies of the wide world of fishing boats. Though most craft types are easily understood by their names alone, what follows is a short description of the most popular fishing vessels.



- Bass fishing boats. As the name indicates, these vessels are used in freshwater primarily by anglers looking to catch bass. The boats are low and sleek, and they measure between 16 and 26 feet.
- Center consoles. With the controls located in the center of the deck, a center console vessel offers plenty of space for multiple fishers. Uncovered yet particularly rugged, these boats are good for freshwater and marine waters alike.
- Bay or flats boats. Excellent for catching coastal fish like sea trout and redfish, flats boats can also float merrily in water as shallow as two feet, even with multiple people on board.
- Sportfishing boats. Designed specifically with big catches in mind, sportfishing vessels are large and well-equipped to handle multi-day fishing excursions on the ocean.

#### Costs of Ownership

Like a house or a car, a boat is much more than what is printed on the price tag. In fact, most boat owners have a joke: A boat is just a hole in the water you pour money into. <u>Boat ownership is undeniably expensive</u>; here are just a few of the biggest associated costs:

- Taxes. Varies by state; you should expect both sales and property taxes.
- Fuel. About \$400 to fill up the tank, depending on its size, and \$300 whenever you need an oil change.
- Insurance. About 1.5 percent your boat's value.
- Docking. Varies by state, marina, and boat size; between about \$40 and \$300 per day.
- Maintenance. About \$300 per year.
- Gear. Between \$70 and \$20,000, depending on the complexity.

Indeed, a boat costs much more than the sum of its parts. Worse, boats endure crippling depreciation, with a brand-new vessel losing 10 percent of its value every year. It should be no surprise that most boat owners forego selling in favor of other ways to get rid of their boats, including donation.

#### Costs of Renting

The amount you pay to rent a fishing vessel depends on multiple variables: where you are, what boat you want, how long you want it, and what your history is.



ODU MAGAZINE VIDEO BLOCK (www.odumagazine.com) In most places, you can rent a simple fishing boat, without any frills for as low as \$25; even a luxurious fishing vessel, upwards of 40 feet, goes for only about \$1000 per day. Still, no matter the dollar amount of each rental, many people believe that in the long run, renting will cost more than purchasing (though perhaps not owning), simply because they are not putting the money toward having sole possession.

#### **Conclusions**

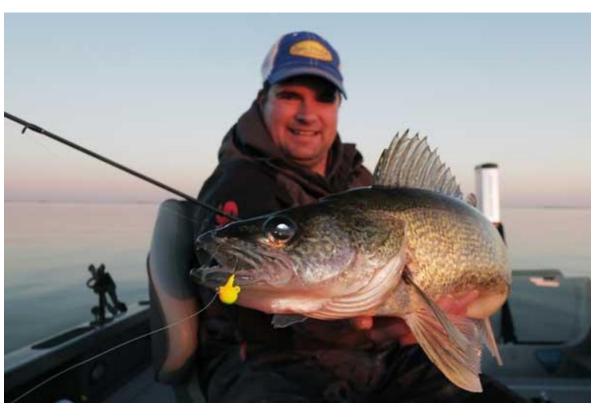
Most fishers enjoy a wide variety of fishing excursions, from deep sea to trapping to fly fishing and more. Even anglers who enjoy the sport for its promise of quiet tranquility likely hanker for a deepwater challenge every now and again. Unless you know you can commit to a single fishing style, and unless you plan to purchase a boat that affords more recreation opportunities than fishing (like a deck boat or bowrider) you might be better off donating any boat you currently own and renting to suit any future fishing vessel needs.





The Midwest is ground zero for walleye fishing popularity.

Midwesterners love their with the white tipped tails and luckily, there are several great walleve fishing destinations across the northern tier of the United States. Of course we couldn't put every great walleye fishery on this list and the list is in no particular order. This list is nothing more than some top-notch fisheries that are fishing extremely well right now. Healthy fish populations, trophy fish potential and catch ability all factor into some of the best walleye water we have seen in our travels that in our opinion offer some of the best walleye fishing in the region.



# THE MIDWEST'S TOP WALLEYE WATER

By Jason Mitchell



Leech Lake, Minnesota

This massive natural lake in northern Minnesota has gotten a lot of attention in recent years for great walleye fishing but this lake just

seems to get more solid each year. There are a lot of walleye in this lake with opportunities for both eater size fish and big fish. What is neat about this big lake is that you can fish so many different ways. From classic rigging and jigging presentations to lead core and swim baits, there is so much variety in this ecosystem that there are usually several solid patterns happing at once.

#### Lake Winnibigoshish, Minnesota

Another of the big natural lakes in northern Minnesota, Winnie has quietly developed into one of Minnesota's best walleye lakes. Perhaps at the expense of the Lake's



renowned perch population, the walleye population is healthy and thriving. Fun shallow weed patterns occur through the summer as well as classic structure fishing over deep gravel bars.

#### **Devils Lake, North Dakota**

This now massive natural lake is now nearly 200,000 acres of water when you look at the entire lake basin and include Stump Lake. With high water and a decade and a half of incredible recruitment, this lake continues to live up to its stellar reputation as a top tier walleye fishery. Several shallow patterns emerge that are fun for anglers. Top tactics include pitching crank baits and soft plastic swim baits into shallow water along with classic bottom bouncer and spinner presentations along weed bed edges.

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#### Bitter Lake, South Dakota

The Glacial Lakes Region of South Dakota is very similar to Devils Lake in terms of history and high water creating new fishing opportunities.

Bitter Lake is now the largest lake in the region and offers tremendous fishing. Anglers enjoy casting jigs and crank baits along weed bed edges or run the contours with bottom bouncer and spinners. Within sixty miles of Bitter Lake however are countless small lakes that also offer tremendous fishing and some of the lakes no doubt offer as good of fishing as you're going to find anywhere particular for numbers of fish.

#### Green Bay, Wisconsin

Probably the best fishery on the list for consistently producing trophy caliber fish. While some fisheries like the Western Basin of Lake Erie, Columbia River, Lake Winnipeg and Tobin Lake get a lot of attention for



producing big fish. Green Bay often gets overlooked. Classic Great Lakes harness and board fishing tactics often shine through the summer with many small boat fishing opportunities on the right days.

#### Lake Sakakawea, North Dakota

This reservoir on the Missouri River in western North Dakota has been on the upswing in recent years and has several good year classes of fish. Extremely high amounts of forage have actually slowed fishing down over the past few years but there are a lot of walleyes in this lake and they have been well fed. This is more of an anticipatory pick as this cyclic lake by nature is due to really turn on and the stars are lining up. Anglers often focus on classic reservoir structure with live bait rigs, jigs and bottom bouncer and spinner presentations along with trolling crankbaits.

#### Kabetogama Lake, Minnesota

A classic Minnesota north woods fishing experience. With much of the lake located within Voyageurs National Forest, this mostly undeveloped lake offers that cool wilderness experience. Classic deep structure jigging and rigging tactics shine on this lake. Much like a Canadian Shield fishing experience, this lake is full of sixteen to twenty four inch walleye.



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# FISHING



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#### Lake Winnebago, Wisconsin

Really some of Wisconsin's best inland walleye water. Great early season



opportunities exist on the Wolf River but as the season progresses, much of the attention shifts back to the basin of Winnebago. Another lake with so many different patterns, walleyes can be found in shallow reeds and rocks or suspended out over the deeper basins.

#### Mississippi River Pool Four, Minnesota

We would rate this fishery right behind Green Bay for big fish potential on this list. Probably one of the best places in Minnesota for consistently finding fish over twenty-nine inches. A variety of fun patterns emerge including wing dams, trolling lead core and blade baits.

#### Lake of the Woods/Rainy River, Minnesota

A very big lake with a huge population of walleyes. The Rainy River spring walleye run is one of the best fishing opportunities there is but what surprises some people are just how good the small boat opportunities are on the Rainy long after the crowds have left. Out on the big water, there are some phenomenal trolling bites that more recreational anglers are discovering with snap weights and lead core.

#### Missouri River, North Dakota

While the overall size of the fish has dropped off in recent years, the spring run up the Missouri River near Bismarck, North Dakota is still a walleye slug fest where anglers can sometimes score some big catches of walleyes with many fifteen to nineteen inch fish. Pitch jigs along shallow wood and sand bar current seams, slip jigs in faster water or pull crankbaits upstream.



All of these notable fisheries are

top tier destinations that attract legions of anglers each season. A sampling of some of the Midwest's top walleye fisheries but in no way is this a complete list of every great fishing opportunity. There are several smaller and more obscure fishing opportunities that fly under the radar and remember that a great day on a mediocre fishery is much better than a poor day on a great fishery. Is there a fishery we left off this list? Let us know what you think on the Jason Mitchell Outdoors Facebook Page, www.facebook.com/JasonMitchellOutdoors

ODU MAGAZINE

# Try This: Throw An Ice-Fishing Lure For Summer Bass

This summer, a winter walleye bait might be your best bet for bass. So say Bassmaster pros Brandon Palaniuk and Jacob Wheeler. Each has amassed big bags of open-water bass with a bait built for ice-fishing, the Rapala Jigging Rap.

"It's a little trick up my sleeve that I've kept

secret for a long time," says Palaniuk, who revealed the tactic after notching a top-10 finish with it last summer on New York's Lake Cayuga. "I always like doing something different. You can separate yourself from everyone else if you can find quality fish doing something that not every else is doing."

Wheeler agrees. A Jigging Rap was instrumental to his top-15 finish this February in the 2015 Bassmaster Classic on South Carolina's Lake Hartwell. "At times, the fish wouldn't eat a drop-shot or jigging spoon," he recalls. "That was when the Jigging Rap was key to me getting them to bite."

Featuring a balanced, weighted minnow profile, Jigging Raps swim in tantalizing circles on the fall, inimitably simulating the erratic characteristics of a wounded baitfish. When fished through the ice as they were designed for, they work best with a vertical pump-and-swim action. A successful open-water presentation, however, requires aggressive rod snaps throughout a horizontal retrieve.

"Snap your rod and it will dart a foot or two off to the right and then continue falling fast," Palaniuk instructs. "Snap it again and it might dart two feet back over to the left, or forwards, or backwards. For fish that are in a negative, inactive mood, that erratic action triggers a feeding response."

For Wheeler on Hartwell, the key was dropping a Jigging Rap to the bottom as fast as possible near the edges of flooded timber in 35 to 40 feet, giving it at least three vertical snaps and then letting it fall back down on the pause. "When you stop it, it doesn't just sit there still," Wheeler explains. "It still moves a

little bit. And that's why those fish would come up and eat it."

The Jigging Rap's unmistakable minnow profile features single reversed hooks on its nose and rear — so regardless of how a fish attacks, it's running into a hook. A center treble hook — hung from a belly eyelet — further increases your hook-up ratio. They are available in five sizes and 20 colors. Palaniuk and Wheeler's success both came on a No. 7 size in the Glow color pattern — white with a chartreuse head.



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# Even a Blind Catfish Can Smell a Nut

Catfish built are adversity. Consider spring's oft milky to doublecappuccino-tinted water conditions. Fish species lacking an acute sense of smell are rendered hopeless. Throw muddy floodwater at a bass and they can't catch a cold.



Panfish clump, or scatter like beads of mercury, and sit-one-out until the situation clears. Even the low-light masters of the waterways – walleyes – take rainchecks.

Not the case with catfish, however. Take away vision, throw in catastrophic flood-stage current, and catfish put all their eggs in the smell basket.

Consider, for example, recent surges on the Red River, a border water between northern Minnesota and North Dakota. It, arguably, is the best channel cat fishery in North America. But this spring, one look from the flotsam gridlocked landing, and the average angler wouldn't even consider "wasting" their time. Not the case with superstar guide Brad Durick, though. He's not inclined to cancel guide trips when there are bills to pay and catfish that can still be tracked and tapped.

"Sure, fishing is harder when the river is rising and chocolaty, but it's not impossible to locate a few biters," said Durick, as an entire, probably 50-year-old cottonwood floated by in the background. "You have to adjust your game, fish different areas, and rely on the fact that catfish can still smell a meal in fast water."

By far and away, Durick's top bait for these remarkable 10- to 25-pound channel catfish is a fresh cut sucker minnow. Kept thriving in a cooler supported by a Frabill Aqua Life Floating Pump, Durick doesn't knife a single sucker until the moment of truth. "Catfish will hit a wide variety of baits, but nothing beats fresh cut bait that's raw and red when it goes on a Rippin Lips Circle Hook."

But even deli-fresh bait struggles to lure catfish in dark and raging current. So Durick pulls an ace out of his fish-slimed cargo shorts: Rippin Lips Scent Trail. Before lobbing out the 3-ounce or better No-Roll



sinker and sucker chunk, Durick saturates the offering with Scent Trail. He pumps the tannish gel on the bait until it's coated like wet acrylic paint, dripping blobs onto the cutting board. (The puddle on the cutting board isn't wasted, either, as subsequent cuts are made right in the spill, soaking up the excess.)

Scent Trail comingles with the bait's inherent "bouquet" to create a blend that sends an invitation downstream like super-sized Mc Donald's fries to a fisherman. This, while the hunk of meat maintains the intense flavors that a feeding catfish instinctively can't drop.



The pinnacle of treating cut bait with Scent Trail is the full marinade program. Durick carries Plano Liqui-Bait Lockers™ to house and help catalyze the process. Either on the boat, or before launching, he stuffs a Bait Locker with sucker chunks and douses — more like drenches — the meat with Scent Trail and spins the lid tight. Shaking it like a carton of OJ, the bait is entombed with Scent Trail, elevating the permanence of the product on the bait. The same method is effective with nightcrawlers and commercial bait cubes like Rippin Lips' Leakin Livers.

What's that? Just the 426th plastic bottle drifting past, flanked by what looks like a trellis, maybe an old wooden highchair. And that, the dude in Crocs redirecting driftwood at the launch? That would be Brad Durick, making space for his boat, as well as the next dozen boats that wouldn't have launched without his Herculean efforts.

#### **Scent Trail FEATURES:**

- Based on the scientific precepts of preferred catfish scents and tastes
- Brewed with that most potent aquatic attractants, omega-3 rich fish oils
- Creates wafting cloud of thick oily aroma like a bleeding baitfish
- Spray directly on baits such as Rippin Lips Leakin Livers, cutbaits, shad, suckers or skipjack
- Has been proven on other predator fish, such as walleyes and pike
- Excellent for marinating bait before fishing



