July 2016 Summer Fishing Edition

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TROUT IN HISTORY'S SHADOW BOBBER DOWN ON SUMMER BREAM BEST SEEDS TO PLANT FOR SUMMER FOOD PLOTS



As this edition of ODU Magazine hits your email boxes or you find it posted on the internet, the Sportfishing industry has just finished its annual pilgrimage to the ICAST Show.

Every year when writers and editors gather in their small crowds, as I have for now nine years, one typical theme you hear – is there

really something earth shattering at the New Product Show Case? There were several standouts and in the August edition of ODU Magazine we will deliver our "Top 25 of ICAST."

There were a boat load of new crankbaits, some of which have found their way into my inbox to pre-inspect.

Yes the kayak world has a few new introductions, yawn. Fishing line can it really change that much that I would contort my body in full body reversal to see...probably not. And I could go on. My point is simple we looked at 119 new products and 25 really stood out. Some are in the office and will be in or on the water this week.

This edition of ODU Magazine hits on some real great story's every outdoorsman can enjoy and of course we have hit on many seasonal fishing tips.... bass, walleye and panfish are all covered. Our Hunting Zone hits on food plots and it is a must read for deer hunters.

> And please, enjoy the outdoors. Larry Thornhill and William Schwarz Co-Founders of ODU Magazine

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Thank You All!

Did You Miss ODU Magazine's Last Three Editions?



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under the exhausted fish. When the fly line went slack, the tiny fly fell from the trout's jaw.

The sun soon sunk low in the west, casting long shadows from the remains of a long-dilapidated presettlement ironworks furnace nearby. I relished the

Trout In History's Shadow

By Bill Cooper

A slightly noticeable dimple appeared in the slick water of Maramec Spring Branch when the plump, 2-pound trout sipped the surface for the tiny mosquito imitation.

The trout appeared healthy and strong. The well-colored fish powered its way upstream and quartered into current. I grimaced as my fly line peeled from the reel. My 1-pound leader remained intact, even through four spectacular jumps, which the trout executed in quick fashion. All too soon, I slid my landing net

Maramec became one of four trout parks in Missouri in 1958. moment. My mind wandered from the pleasures of the stream's trout fishing to times long past, when hardy pioneers struggled to eke out a living from a frontier business venture, the Maramec Iron Works.

In 1825, The Courtois Hills region of southeast Missouri remained one of the most formidable wilderness areas in the new state of Missouri. Mile after mile of hog-backed ridges lay between Maramec Spring and the St. Louis region, almost 100 miles away. The vast wilderness long remained a physical barrier to settlement, transportation and communication.

A few pioneer attempts had been made to mine the unusual sinkhole iron ore deposits found in what is now Phelps, Crawford and Dent counties. All had failed, however, until an Ohio ironmonger by the name of Thomas James explored the area after learning about hematite deposits from a ban of Shawnee Indians. The tribe's members camped on James' Ohio property while on their way to Washington, D.C.

Alongside Maramec Spring, James managed to establish the first successful ironworks west of the Mississippi River. An entire company-owned village developed around the endeavor, which lasted from 1826 to 1876. The legacy and romance of the frontier business are still alive today within the boundaries of Maramec Spring Park, owned and operated by The James Foundation.

The rushing waters of Maramec Spring, the seventh largest spring in the state, once powered trip hammers and grist mills. Now, thousands of park visitors and trout fishermen find tantalizing, Maramec Spring Park is stocked with rainbow trout daily from March until October.



Thousands of anglers enjoy trout fishing each year at Maramec Spring Park in the shadow of the Maramec Iron Works history.

breathtaking beauty in its waters as it winds its way downstream.

As it does with three other trout parks - Bennett Springs State park, Montauk State Park and Roaring River State Park - the Missouri of Conservation Department maintains а put-and-take trout fishery in Maramec Spring Park. MDC personnel stock the stream each evening with 2 1/4 fish per estimated fishermen for the following day.

The trout fishing season in all the parks runs from March1 to October 31. The daily limit at Maramec Spring Park is four fish. Anglers are required to carry a fishing license and a daily trout tag. Both can be purchased at the reception building at the park entrance. The James Foundation also charges a \$5 per day parking fee, or an annual pass for \$35.

Trout have long been a part of the attractions at Maramec Spring Park.



50 FEET OF FREEDOM

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According to Spence Turner, a former fisheries research biologist with the Missouri Department of Conservation, trout were stocked at Maramec Spring as early as 1880. "The original stock came from the McCloud River in California. Eggs ere shipped un-iced by train to a hatchery in St. Joseph. There, the eggs hatched and the were resultant fry were shipped in milk cans to St. Louis by railroad. Crews were given instructions to stock a few streams on the return trip, which ended in Joplin. The Meramec River, Maramec Spring Branch, Crane Creek and Spring River were the first



place to receive rainbows. Three more stockings took place between 1880 and 1890," he said.

According to Mark Benton, regional manager of the James Foundation, "Mrs. Lucy Wortham James wrote about feeding trout in Maramec Spring Branch in the early 1920's. She reportedly stocked more rainbows in the branch in 1922. The James family never allowed any fishing above the county road crossing, now the road bridge."

Then in 1942 the MDC and the James Foundation entered into a cooperative agreement for managing the stream's trout fishery. The agreement advanced through several stages until the establishment of Maramec Spring Park as a daily tag trout fishing area in 1958.

During the early 1970's, I conducted my graduate research at Maramec Spring. Trout fishermen told me they came to Maramec for a variety of reasons. They were drawn by the area's outstanding beauty, the cleanliness of the park and the opportunity to enjoy the romantic history of a lifestyle gone by. The trout park's proximity to St. Louis was another reason. In fact, more than 60 percent of the fishermen I interviewed for my study were from St. Louis. Metro anglers reach the park after driving an hour and a half southwestward on Interstate 44. From St. James, Maramec Spring lies 8 miles southeast on Highway 8.

Taking a limit of scrappy rainbows at Maramec may be a cinch on opening day, and for a couple of months thereafter. However, as spring rains subside, the flows from the spring become crystal clear. A flurry of fast action is enjoyed by anglers at the whistle, which marks the beginning of the fishing day. Fishing success subsides quickly and anglers settle in for the day. Trout spook easily in the clear water and stealth becomes important.

For a real summer time trout fishing treat, try fly fishing during the last two hours of the day at Maramec. Bug hatches are common this time of day. A light rod and tippet equals great fly fishing fun.

Each year, millions of gallons of cold, crystal-clear spring water flow past the remains of the Maramec Iron Works. And more than a few anglers pause each year from their fishing on cool summer evenings

to ponder what life must have been like for the pioneer fishermen of Maramec Spring.

For more information on Maramec Spring park and trout fishing, call the park office at (573) 265-7387. Incidentally, the spelling of "Maramec" is an Anglicized version of the Indian word mirimiguoa, meaning catfish.

Bill Cooper may be followed at: <u>www.aoutdoorstv.com</u>, <u>www.facebook.com/Outsidealways</u> and <u>www.outsideagainadventures.blogspot</u> <u>.com</u>. As early as 1880, railroad crews stocked McCloud strain rainbow trout in cold water streams of the Missouri Ozarks.



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NEW

GROUND



So far the fishing this year, is a lot like many past years... phenomenal! Of course I do live on the Detroit River/Lake St Clair waterway and just that alone is a phenomenon itself but what made this spring special was a phone call from Derrick Soulliere, a LUNKERHUNT prostaff team member. I was excited that he suggested that we have a go on the river together; so we set a date and guess what? We smashed the walleye! We caught one after another, I on nothing other than the Bento Bait Sassy Shad and he on the newer Core Strength Limit Worm. What an amazing day.

I would like to state for the record with my clothes on, that I am freakishly amazed with these bento baits! So awed that I cannot, just not say something about them and the success I have been having.

Blessed to have been born and raised jigging the mouth of the Detroit River I can truthfully say I have used nothing but live bait for over 30 years to catch walleyes. Because growing up, that's all that was instilled, "you can't catch fish without bait" they said, and that's how I became trapped into this way of thinking.

I didn't go fishing unless I had live bait and thank goodness that was really never an issue. Yes, at times it was difficult to get the larger size minnows and many anglers compensated by using twister tails tipped with a smaller minnow but I didn't like that. I was stubborn. I wanted to utilize my stinger hook and in doing so I needed, at the very least a 4 incher. Luckily for me, bait was easily available, as there were 3 bait shops all within walking or cycling distance of my childhood home. UNIX EERHADO

The problems came during the warmer months when getting the right size was scarce but my passion to fish found the perfect solution in having my own tank and supply of emerald shiners stored at Bob's Baits, bait and tackle shop. For many years I literally had my own private source and stock of live bait but as they say "all good things do come to an end", and things unfortunately did change. Sadly, today there are no more small business bait shops around me that keep a good stock of emeralds.

I had no choice but to start dipping for bait and so I did. It was fun for a while but soon became a burdensome task.



It was difficult to manage dipping in the wee hours of the morning while having to work for a living. Trying to keep a healthy supply of bait proved to be more difficult than I had imagined. Getting the temperature, oxygen levels and water treated was nearly fruitless. I gave up. I just wanted to go fishing, not farm minnows.

I knew there was a day to come, but I did not expect that it would change my life and the way I fish walleyes forever. And 3 years ago, that day came. Why? Because I simply couldn't score the right sized shiners.

I do remember panicking and franticly searching for an answer and one day I found it, in the aisles of my local Canadian Tire store. Right in front of my face was the most stunningly realistic plastic bait I had ever set my eyes on. They were gorgeous! All 5 of them. A far cry from the twister tails of old. I ripped open a package of LUNKERHUNT BENTO BAITS in the Dace color before even paying for them. At four and a half inches long, I knew these would work. I bought all 7 packages.

Since that day, I have not touched one stinking minnow. Confidence is key and it didn't take long to find it, a few fish and I believed. The hardest element in using plastics is trusting them. It's so easy to simply go back to using minnows. You must learn to believe that plastics work and you owe it to yourself to give them an honest try because they do. I use them religiously for jigging eyes today.

The lifelike color scheme of the Dace is perhaps the most realistic soft-plastic bait out there. I haven't seen anything like it. I love the big eyes to the holographic core to the tapered split tail... this fake is alive! The texture is just right and yet durable enough that I've caught upwards to a dozen eyes before having to changing it. There's something about threading it on your jig hook just right and through that holographic strip that makes it tough and prevents it from tearing. Walleyes munch this thing and why not? It is the winner of the best soft lure from the 2012 Orlando Florida ICAST show.

Today I'm much happier and educated. Thanks to founder Dave MacDonald for not only helping change the way I thought of soft plastic baits but for freeing me of the the hassles associated with running around to several bait stores searching for the "right size" minnows. And the pains I was having in my heinie to catch and maintain my own bait. Cheaper, cleaner, hassle free and not like I've been told... they catch fish! And they do it well.

TODAY'S PANFISH TRENDS

By Jason Mitchell

There is always an increased level of intensity whenever you are fishing for your next meal. When you know and other that you people are relying on what you put on a stringer or in a live well, you have your game face on. For so many anglers, harvesting fish for the table often involves panfish. In so many regions, crappie, perch or sunfish still allow some harvest where anglers can proceed to keep some fish for a meal.



Panfish are sometimes considered a fish for kids... sunfish off the dock and a three-foot long snoopy rod but lets face it, adults love panfish as well. Big panfish are especially coveted and big crappie, sunfish or perch get anglers as excited as big bass or walleye. Match wits with these fish with the right tackle and you have every bit of a challenge with a fish that can just as easily break your line. Some of the most popular television episodes we have ever done were crappie and sunfish segments. Anglers love big panfish.

Some of the biggest panfish I have ever personally caught were caught accidently while targeting bass or walleye. Over the years, I have caught fifteen-inch crappie on Carolina Rigs intended for bass; ten-



inch bluegills have hit top water poppers that were meant to target bass. Big perch have been caught on spinner and night crawler setups meant for walleye. These accidental catches tell me a few things... first off when it comes to finding big panfish and narrowing down lakes that have big panfish, anglers are often going to find these fish by accident while targeting other species. Some of the best Intel I get comes from talking to bass anglers. What also becomes obvious is that big panfish become predators and these larger fish have no issue hitting a presentation that may be three inches or longer.

Panfish angling has evolved over the past ten years with a lot of changes happening in the last five years. Anglers targeting panfish are becoming more selective with their harvest. In many regions, limits along with size limits particularly on heavy use crappie lakes have made anglers realize that panfish populations are not ever ending. Anglers are starting to understand the importance of releasing some of the largest size fish. New technology and equipment is making anglers more lethal and efficient than ever before. The catch and release ethic for trophy caliber panfish is gaining in practice.

In my opinion, few technological advances have changed crappie fishing more than side scan or side imaging. Suspended schools of crappie glow like lights on a Christmas tree and finding fish suspended in brush piles or under docks is so incredibly simple today. Hard to believe how we used to have to work to find these fish and also how long it used to take. Today, most anglers won't stop to fish until they see fish on their electronics.

A lot of tackle refinements for open water panfish have crossed over from the ice fishing industry. Tungsten first became popular with ice anglers in Europe and has exploded in popularity on the American front. Anglers are discovering that the same advantages that tungsten has over lead in the winter can also be used for open water applications where panfish anglers need that extra sensitivity and weight., particularly for finesse vertical presentations. Other presentation tweaks like using dropper chains below fast falling spoons are becoming more popular amongst open water panfish anglers. The Clam Tackle Speed Spoon is an extremely popular perch lure for ice anglers searching for perch over deep water; boat anglers in the same locations for the same species are using this same lure over open water.

Our Jason Mitchell Elite Series 48 inch Meat Stick rod was originally designed as an ice fishing rod that was built with a two-piece finesse tip action that loaded up to a fast backbone. Ice anglers used this rod

for hole hopping shallow water panfish. Open water panfish anglers have discovered this same rod action and length is a perfect vertical jigging rod whenever anglers need extra finesse and the 48 inch rod length keeps the presentation in the sonar cone angle when fishing vertically over deep water. Not to mention that a four-foot rod is a lot of fun to fish with when vertically jigging for panfish.

Few presentations have caught more panfish than traditional cork and jig combinations slowly retrieved back to the boat. Soft plastic options really shine for crappie in particular. A classic two-inch lunker grub has caught countless crappie. For slow speeds and slow pendulum affect on the jig when fishing a jig below a classic slip bobber or casting bubble, the Kalins 1.75 inch Crappie Scrub is a twin paddle tail that has tremendous vibration at extremely slow speeds.

Slow fishing speeds might be popular when water temperatures remain low in the early spring when fish first come up in the shallows to spawn but another situation where slow rolling these soft plastics works extremely well is around heavy brush and docks because the fish have more time to respond. Too fast of presentations in heavy cover can sometimes miss fish particularly when fish have turn around or leave the cover to hit the jig.

Micro size crank baits and trolling equipment is also changing the game in some regions. While panfish are notorious for slamming bass or walleye size lures, smaller profiled hard baits like Salmo's H4F Hornet is a tremendous lure for panfish. As panfish equipment and methods continue to evolve, what we also see happening is regional tactics and hacks getting shared across a much wider region. Spider rigging or long poles might be regionally popular on one particular fishery where as something else becomes popular right down the road. As more anglers discover the joys of targeting panfish and more information gets shared, we begin to see small scale regional tactics like trolling small crank baits behind inline planer boards become more mainstream.

Panfish presentations are quickly evolving. Soft plastic designs and shapes continue to evolve on one front. Applying ice fishing jigs to open water vertical fishing situations is another trend. Trolling

crankbaits is another growing Slip presentation. bobbers and live bait still works but more anglers are discovering that versatility and confidence in numerous presentations allow anglers to catch more fish as panfish anglers take on new tactics and equipment.





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TOP WATER TIME

By Capt. Mike Gerry

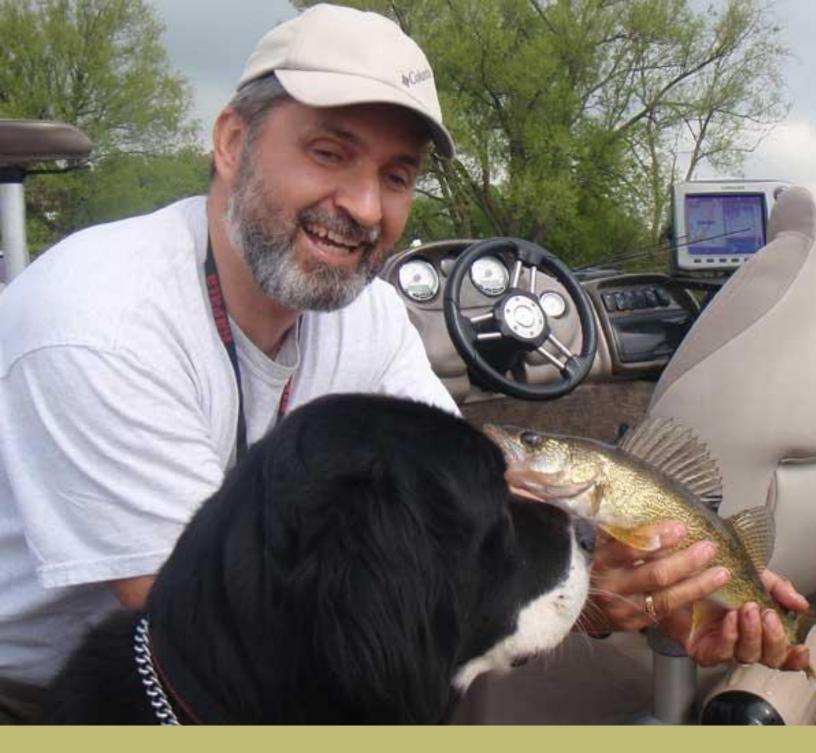
With all the change in the lake we have seen this year, record numbers of fishermen, water temperatures going up and down; and a spawn that was hardly recognizable the one constant has been top water action! Yes believe it or not even the early frog bite was constant all you had to do was find the Primrose weed and you could fish a frog over the top and catch fish.

We several different are now into presentations on top water that is producing during different times of the day. The early bite on top is all about buzz baits; find a little grass and grab some noisy buzz baits and you can catch fish in those areas. I like the Picasso Lure buzz bait their dual bladed buzz bait is producing very well. Find some bait being chased and you open up a variety of possibilities for catching fish on top water. My favorite is a spook like bait, whether it's the traditional Zara Spook, or Lucky Craft Sammy or even the Duo Pencil these baits with their walk the dog action and tantalizing movement are catching fish over bait balls being targeted by bass. Persistence is the key you have to be committed to getting in a rhythm with your top water presentation, making it a go to bait for some extended period of the day; if you do you will reap the benefits.

It is also true that the never forgotten pop-r bait is as good as ever, it just catches fish; this

bait has a tantalizing sound that is just irresistible and has forever been a top water fishermen bait of choice. If you take a poll of top water fishermen you will find that 75% of those that fish top water prefer a pop-r; it's an easy bait to fish, experience is not necessary and even a young child can catch a fish on a pop-r! Lastly as we progress to the fall of the year the SPRO frog bite will take hold; it's an addiction, that explosion gives you a feeling second to none and is an addiction for many professional fishermen, and nothing is better than a SPRO frog!

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FIVE DIFFERENT DROP SHOT FISHING RODS AND TECHNIQUES

By Lawrence Gunther

I recently received an inquiry from an angler about to purchase his first dropshot rod and was looking for advice on whether he could use a regular rod, or would need something more specific. I had to stop myself several times from pounding out a quick reply, and after reflecting more thoroughly on the question, I realized there's no one answer.

ODU MAGAZINE VIDEO BLOCK (www.odumagazine.com)

I personally have and use five different rods for dropshotting. Each is different, and each was adopted over time to address specific needs. And, I'm not even talking about power-shotting large plastics, which is simply a different style of flip-pitching baits. Let me explain.

Dropshot rods mostly all have one thing in common, and that's a soft tip. Matched up with a strong lower 2/3's of the blank, and that's pretty much it. The soft tip is there so you can check for bites without necessarily lifting your dropshot weight off the bottom and pulling the bait away from the target. It also allows fish to engage your bait without the fish detecting artificial or un-due resistance. All of this is based on a stationary bait presentation, which is not always the case.

Dragging dropshot baits behind the boat is never a great idea, but sometimes it's the only way. Specifically, I'm thinking about rivers with current and being swept along in a boat. Trying to maintain a stationary position is impossible, which is why you instead execute a sort of controlled drift while keeping your line as near vertical as possible. Detecting the difference between bites and what you're drifting over is crucial. Hard flat featureless bottom and you're probably wasting your time. Rocks, transitions, drops, etc. are different and often present ambush points for fish. This is when a more typical spinning rod comes into play. Again, a good stiff bottom 2/3's, but a more typical extra-fast tip found on your worm and jig rods. Heavier weights like ½ or ¾ might also mean going medium-heavy power. Thus, drifting deep over transitioning bottom can be accomplished with any decent spinning rod with the power and action needed to manage lighter 10-15lb braid, heavier dropshot weights and stronger river fish – often Smallmouth Bass.

Dropshotting for Largemouth bass is different than dropshotting for Smallmouth. Largies like a bit of action, which means you can either swing the bait out, let it sink, then work it back to the boat. Or, if fishing beds, target your bed and then apply action to the bait without pulling it out of the strike zone.

Both these styles of fishing can be done with either a medium or medium-action casting or spinning rod that has an extra fast tip. Since you aren't dead-sticking the bait so much as imparting action, the rod doesn't need to have an especially soft tip. You will be fishing near structure though, so a rod with sufficient power to control hooked fish is important.

In both the above examples I'm not suggesting fast or moderate action rods as this isn't a reaction bite that fish slam. It's more often a lazy bite, or something opportunistic as the baits just right there taunting them. You will need a rod suited to setting thinner gage wire hooks, but setting hooks never-the-less.

Smallmouth prefer presentations that are as close to still as possible. This is when a true dropshot rod comes into play with its far softer tip section. The rod allows you to check for soft bites without imparting sudden or strong action to the bait. You're simply checking for wait. No resistance -- let it sit. Smallmouth quite often even chew on your bait without your even knowing, for how long, who knows, but the fact that they experience no artificial resistance to their meal choice is important. This style of motionless or dead-sticking presentation is when the true dropshot rods come into play. A good solid backbone for driving home thin wire hooks, and a soft tip for subtle bite detection.

Walleye, on the other hand, are masters at stripping minnows off hooks. When they feel the metal of the hook, they simply back off, clamp down and tug, and off comes your minnow. Dropshotting for Walleye involves one of two approaches, either you leave a tremendous amount of slack in your line so unsuspecting Walleye can slurp in your entire minnow or worm under zero resistance, or you maintain just the barest of tension on the line needed to execute snappy hooksets. My preference in both cases is an extra fast medium-light spinning rod that has a fast rate of recovery. No sloppy tip needed for this sort of fishing, just good line watching focus on the



part of the angler. Step up to a medium action rod with a similar action and you can go to a double hook dropshot system, more commonly known as a pickerel rig.

Power-shotting is simply moving your pegged weight from in front of the bait to the tag end of the line. Some even separate the bait from the weight with as much as 3-5 feet. It's a technique meant to suspend large plastics just below surface cover, or at the very least, above thicker weed growth at the bottom when fish are feeling a little neutral and require some enticing. Either way, flipping rods are still the best option given the size of weights and plastics, and the proximity to heavy cover.

Lastly, what follows is my own version of presenting stick baits wacky style in and around heavy cover. It takes a 6', 6" or 7' extra-fast medium-heavy rod; either spinning or casting. 40lb to 50lb braid is recommended along with a 12lb floral leader. The idea is to use a 1/8 or 3/16 oz. pencil weight about 18" below your wacky presentation. The technique entails long casts over shallow submerged weed and then stopping the bait from sinking completely down into the weeds by establishing pressure on the line after the weight has had a chance to make contact with the weeds. By maintaining only the slightest pressure on the line so the weight doesn't pull free, you can suspend your bait just above the submerged weed tops and keep it in the strike zone longer. Bites can be both aggressive and passive so focus on line movement is essential.

There you go, five – O.K. six, techniques that each call for slightly different styles of rods, and only one references the traditional dropshot spinning rod known for their incredibly soft upper 1/3 tip section. I hope I haven't blurred the lines too much, but let's face it; every new fishing technique is little more than a re-imagining of something old, so keep on experimenting and adjusting to fit ever-changing circumstances.

CK THER



TRANSITION WALLEYES

By Bob Jensen

In many areas of the Midwest, walleye fishing for the next while will be kind of in-between seasons depending on where you're fishing. In the southern and middle regions of walleye country, the fish have completed their annual spawning ritual and are starting to move in the direction of their summer feeding areas. However, this movement usually takes a little while. While they are in this period of moving away from spawning areas and to feeding locations, the fish can be a little difficult to stay on. They could be in one spot today and somewhere completely different a couple of days later. Here are some ideas for catching more walleyes during this transition period.



Remember that the male fish usually start biting a little sooner than the females after the spawn. The spawn is more exhausting for the females so they take longer to recover from it. The males go on the bite right after the spawn. Males are usually smaller than females in the fish world, but that doesn't mean you won't catch any big fish. You might, but it's more likely that your catch will be dominated by smaller fish.

It works well to continue to fish near the areas where the spawn occurred. Walleyes generally spawn on sand or rubble areas that taper gradually. Current is good. After the spawn they'll hang around these areas for a little while. If you can find a drop-off or an emerging weedbed near the spawning area, be sure to work that area over.

There are several presentations that will get walleyes to bite this time of year. I prefer to use a faster presentation to locate the fish, then once they're located it works well to slow down.

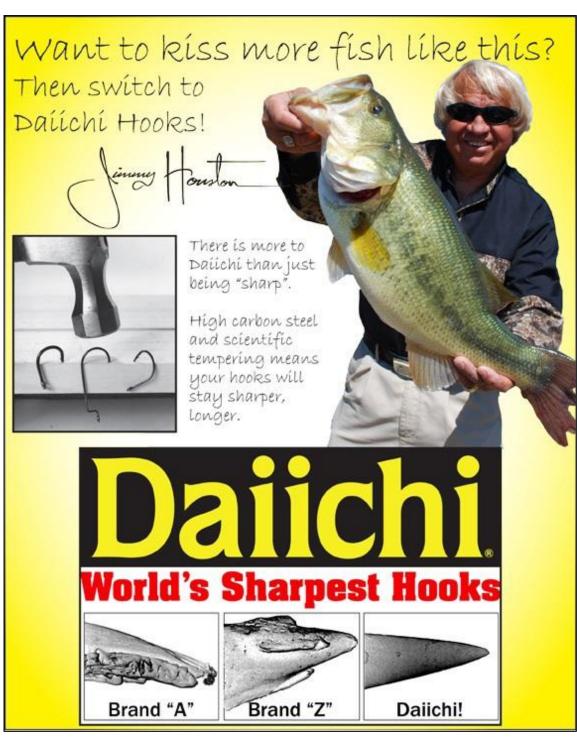
The fish will still be shallow, especially in stained water lakes. Casting will often be most productive, but if you prefer trolling or drifting, get your baits away from the boat to prevent spooking. This is even more important in clear water.

Start off throwing a crankbait to shallow areas that you suspect hold fish. Much of the time seven or eight foot of depth and even less will be where the fish are holding. A #5 Salmo Hornet has become my go-to crankbait this time of year, although the newer 4.5 Rattlin' Hornet has also been very good.

When you find an area that has some fish, and when the aggressive biters have all caught been on the crankbait, work a jig/plastic combination through the This slower area. presentation will take some fish that wouldn't respond to the crankbait. A Rock-It Jig tipped with a three inch Impulse Swim'N Grub or Paddle Shad will catch those fish, as will the new UV Mimic Minnows. In fact, the UV Mimic Minnow accounted for my biggest jig-caught walleyes last year. The Pink Tiger pattern was my most productive color.

When that action slows down, put a leech under a slip-bobber and let is swim around in the area a little while. That will take even the most lethargic walleyes.

Right now, or least very soon, the walleyes are or will be moving from their spring areas to their summer locations. You can



intercept that movement if you keep these simple ideas in mind.

To see all the most recent episodes of the Fishing the Midwest television series, new fishing related tips and fishing articles from the past, visit <u>www.fishingthemidwest.com</u>. If you do Facebook, check us out for a variety of fishing related things.

When to Set the Hook with a Frog

By Glenn Walker

Regardless of how often you fish a topwater hollow bodied frog, like the Snag Proof Bobby's Perfect or the Wobbletron, every angler in the back of their head always has that nagging question, "when should I set the hook when fishing a frog?"

Many anglers when first are being taught to fish topwater frogs by another angler, the common rule that is taught, is to count to two or three, then set the hook. I feel that for the first time frog fisherman this rule is both good and bad. It is good, because it does work, but it is bad on the other hand because it instills this rule in that angler's head and there are sometimes down the road in that angler's frog fishing future that abiding by this rule will cost them fish.

I feel that the two or three count method does well when you are fishing your frog over a thick mat of vegetation. This is because waiting this long does allow the bass to eat your frog and get it down in his mouth.

But if you are fishing more scattered vegetation or get a strike on your frog in open water, waiting this long will sometimes have your frog already been in and out of that bass's mouth. In these situations you'll want to set the hook when you feel the pressure of the bass on your line.



Another variable that angler's need to think about when frog fishing and more specifically on when they should be setting the hook, is how the bass are eating the bait today. Sometimes bass won't be engulfing your topwater frog, so you'll need to give them some more time to get the bait into their mouth, other times they are hammering it and if you wait too long, your frog could be so far down the bass's throat, it may have an unfortunate result.

So the next time you are targeting bass with Snag Proof Frogs and having a hard time hooking a bass, think about when you have been setting the hook and what you can change up. More than likely a simple change to your hook setting approach will yield more bass in your boat!

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 <u>www.glennwalkerfishing.com</u> or on Facebook at <u>www.facebook.com/glennwalkerfishing</u>.

Bobber Down on Summer Bream

By Ron Presley

Summer bream fishing with bobbers and worms is a meaningful and joyful memory in most anglers' history. For many the fun of bream (some say brim) fishing has followed them to adulthood. "I like bream fishing because it is a way to catch a lot of fish consistently through the early months of



summer," says avid bream angler Matt Outlaw. "It is also a great way to spend time with friends and family. In reality there is no better thing than to see the cork go down."

Matt grew up in the swamp of Santee Cooper South in Carolina fishing on the shirttails of his angling pro dad, Whitey Outlaw. Long and numerous days on the swamp made quite a fisherman out of Matt who has a passion for real bream fishing. The techniques he uses on Santee will work the anywhere in country to catch quality bream.

Bluegills are the most common of the bream, but the term includes many other freshwater sunfish. Other bream include



redear sunfish (aka shellcracker), spotted sunfish (aka stumpknocker), redbreast sunfish and warmouth. Bream by any name translates into fishing fun.

Matt, a pro crappie angler himself now, uses the Whitey Outlaw signature rod called the B'n'M Double Duty. The name comes from the fact that it is equally good on crappie and bream. Matt actually had

input into the design of the B'n'M Poles Double Duty Rod.

"We had discussions about what we wanted fishing pole in а designed specifically for the bigger bream and the giant shellcrackers catch in the we swamp," explained Matt. "We talked about it and thought about how we wanted a pole perform for the to bigger fish. The main thing was to have enough backbone to lift the really big ones out."





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Matt rigs the Double Duty with Vicious Fishing 10-pound test mono, a small cork, a split shot and a #4 gold Tru-Turn hook. Since there is no reel on the Double Duty the line is run through the tip guide and knotted to a tiedown on the rod blank near the handle end. "I use line about a foot longer than the 10-foot pole," instructed Matt. "That is the right length so I can flip it around from spot to spot."

"On Santee I mostly fish the upper end in the swamp," reported Matt. "For bream I target dead structure, such as stumps and dead trees and logs. For shellcracker I target clusters of live cypress trees or tupelo trees. I will also target large clumps of saw grass."

Although Matt prefers the slap em' and stack em' method with the Double Duty any lightweight tackle will work. Matt's method of bream fishing is a very active way to fish, because you are always casting. A small spinning outfit with 6- to 10pound Vicious Fishing

Line capable of casting the small cork and weight all day without wearing you out will do just fine.

Another thing about bream fishing is the simplicity of the bait. "As far as bait is concerned I like red worms, blue worms, or sometimes crickets," offered Matt. "With shellcrackers I would rather use worms, I feel like they eat the worms better than crickets."

Some anglers like to use artificial baits to catch the frisky bream. Small crappie jigs and flashy lures like Road Runners will do the job. Cast the lures into the same likely spots and let them fall. The bite often occurs as the bait falls toward the bottom.

The best technique moves the bait often from spot to spot. The bream are ambush feeders and if the bite does not come pretty quickly from the cast, pick it up and cast to a slightly different spot. Sometimes moving it 6 inches will result in a bite.



Bedding Bream

The most exciting time of the year for bream fishing is when they are on the beds. "On Santee the shellcracker normally bed the first full moon in April and typically will bed on every full moon all the way through June," reported Matt. "They will also bed on the new moon. Bream on the other hand will bed the first moon in May. They then bed almost the entire summer with the moons in May and June as the best fishing. Spawning activity congregates the fish in tighter areas making them easier to catch and great family fun."

"If you catch one in a spot you are gonna' catch another in the same spot," says Matt. "New anglers should understand that they can be out there a half a day and not catch a fish, but when you find them you can set there and have the most fun you ever had fishing in your life. During those bedding times, every time the bait hits the water they will smoke it."

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Matt simply positions the boat in relation to his target so a simple overhand flip sends the cricket or worm to its likely demise. Since the length of the fishing line is fixed you can slide down a grassline and continuously flip the bait in the strike zone.

The bait should be worked all around a vertical stump to every side you can reach. On laydowns be sure to work both sides from the outside in. If you fish nearest the bank first and catch a big one it can easily spook the others that may be further out on the log. Try to catch the outside fish first and work your way in. When fishing grasslines look for small pockets or any variation in the grass to target. The key to successful bream fishing is to keep it moving from spot to spot.

Matt also advises bream anglers to get them in quickly. "One of the keys to successful bream fishing is to get them in fast," recommended Matt. "If you get one of them big shellcrackers that don't wanna' come in, they will spook off the others. They just pull around out there stirring things up and maybe hanging you up. That is were the B'n'M Double Duty comes in. With the backbone built into that rod you can just snatch em' out of the water and put em' in the boat without leaving anything but a ring in the water."

Matt also had some advice for catching bream in the nation's rivers. "I mostly fish for bream in the lake, but occasionally I do fish in the Congaree River. Rivers usually have current, so I change my tactics slightly. I look for any kind of structure that will create an eddy spot where there is less current. When I fish in the river for bream I usually fish on the bottom."

"Just like in the lake I move around a lot looking for different areas in the river at different depths until I find a particular pattern. My focus is on spots where there is a current break, like a sand bar or a bend in the river. The rig is basically the same, but without a cork. I will sometimes use a little heavier weight, up to ½ ounce, depending on the current."

Bream basically are everywhere in our lakes That rivers. and abundance and the fact that they are great on the dinner table are reasons for their popularity. Bream fishing is simple, inexpensive and loads of fun. Summer is a good time to pack up the family and, enjoy some bream fishing. Watching that bobber go down will take you back to your childhood while creating a lifetime of memories.





Wildlife Viewing in Florida J Important for Being an Outdoorsperson

By Dana Benner

I like to consider myself a well-rounded outdoorsperson. I love to hunt and fish, but I also enjoy camping, hiking and whitewater rafting. One thing I really like to do is spend time in the outdoors armed with my camera and watch the wildlife in the area I am in. In this case I was in the state of Florida and this is what I saw.

My trip started with my plane landing in Ft. Lauderdale and to be honest, I was very happy to get out of there. As soon as I could I headed south towards the Keys with my first destination being Marathon Key. In Marathon my first stop was the Dolphin Research Center (DRC) where I met up with Mary Stella. Here I hoped to learn affected marine how humans have the environment and what people today are trying to learn from these amazing creatures. The work being done here is simply amazing. The goal here is to learn as much as can be learned about these mammals, their relation to their environment and





how humans interact and affect that environment.

My next stop was the National Key Deer Refuge located on Big Pine Key. While the main attraction and purpose, is the Endangered Florida Key deer and its protection (there are only about 800 left in the wild), like all National Refuges, the protection of the environment as a whole, is equally important. Despite the human population growth in the Keys, they are doing a very good job.

The refuge is so much more than just the deer. It

shows how the entire ecosystem works together with each other, with each part being equally important. I parked the car and started hiking the trails. Here I came to a freshwater pond where I

heard an alligator calling (I knew it was an alligator by watching "Swamp People"). It wasn't long before an alligator emerged. Along with the alligators, this pond was home to numerous turtles and birds. I continued my hike and soon came upon a Black racer sitting contently in the leaf litter. Other than the deer, this snake was the highlight of my visit.

Florida, especially the Keys, is widely known for its fishing, but why is the fishing so good? What lies beneath the surface of the water that feeds those barracuda, marlin, mahi and snapper? To get a better understanding of this environment and



hopefully to get information that will make me a better saltwater angler, I jumped aboard with the people at Sebago Watersports for a morning of snorkeling in Key West. While there were other people onboard, I donned my fins and explored on my own. The coral reef that surrounds the Keys is the backbone of life. Small fish and lobsters use the reef as cover and for food. These small fish in turn



attract the much larger fish, like the barracuda that hung around under our boat.

Soon I was leaving the Keys and heading north and west to the area around Naples along the Gulf Coast. My first adventure upon arriving came aboard one of the pontoon boats of Manatee Sightseeing Adventure in the waterways of Port of the Islands. This trip was amazing. Within the first 15 minutes we had seen at least three manatees. As our captain motored his way through the different canals we came upon a small group of Bottlenose dolphins herding and feeding on fish found in the brackish water of the canals. Capt. Kent informed me that we were only about seven miles from the Gulf of Mexico. Other animals seen along the way included a Red-shouldered hawk, an alligator, an osprey and many different wading birds.

My second adventure was a visit to the Audubon Society's Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary and Blair Center. The sanctuary covers 13,000 acres, but there is a 2.25 mile boardwalk that allows the visitor to experience the different environments that make up this unique place. The wildlife seen here changes all of the time. When I arrived there



were numerous reports of water moccasin sightings and while I knew they were there, I never saw any



the people at Boggy Creek Airboat Tours. Though this area is now a mixture of cattle ranches and hotels, historically it was one of swampy marsh. There are still of those areas left and the only way to experience them is to be on the water. With an average depth of only six or seven feet an airboat is the only way to get in there. All sorts of wildlife can be found in this environment. Everything from alligators and snakes to wading birds like egrets and herons were spotted.

Some of the best places to spot wildlife actually are the hotels that dot both the Keys and other tourist areas. While in Marathon, the hotel I stayed at, the Holiday Inn Express, was located right near a dock. Walking out to the dock early in the morning revealed all sorts of birds and other animals. While at the Hampton Inn in the Naples area there were during my visit. What I did see were numerous non-venomous snakes, frogs, turtles and birds of all sorts. The sanctuary is also home to whitetailed deer and alligators, but I never saw any of those either. Recently a rare Florida panther was seen and filmed on the boardwalk, so you just never know what you will find.

Moving north to Kissimmee I enlisted the aid of



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all sorts of wildlife in the area to include rabbits, snakes and alligators. According to hotel personal there have been reports of panthers and wild boar in the area. You just never know what you will find and where you will find it.

Every time I venture out I learn something and my trip to this part of Florida was no different. Being an outdoorsperson is much more than just hunting and fishing. Good hunters and anglers learn as much as they can about the environment. This learning is an ongoing process, even without a gun or fishing rod in your hand. Dolphin Research Center www.dolphins.org

Sebago Watersports www.keywestsebago.com

Manatee Sightseeing Adventure <u>www.see-manatees.com</u>

Audubon Society Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary www.corkscrew.audubon.org

> Boggy Creek Airboat Rides www.bcairboats.com

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By Jason Mitchell

I make no secret for my love for shallow weed pattern walleyes. These fish are aggressive and will hit baits with force. Spend any time chasing muskies and sooner or later, don't be surprised to find your retrieve interrupted by a big old "Walter" smashing down on a bucktail or spinnerbait. These weed fish don't even act like the walleyes many of us were groomed to catch in our youth when we thought we had to use six pound test and fish as slowly as possible as close to the bottom as possible. These fish play by a different set of rules and more anglers have discovered that weed walleye patterns happen throughout the entirety of each summer.

As a general rule of thumb, most walleye do seem to follow the old play book that is move out over deep structure and basins as summer progresses but there always seems to be a percentage of fish that stay in shallow weeds throughout the season. These patterns can be as fickle and fleeting as any other pattern but what makes weed patterns appealing to this angler is that they are often overlooked because many walleye anglers hate fishing weeds. We are essentially zigging when everybody else seems to be zagging. On so many fisheries from Saginaw Bay to the Missouri River reservoirs and many natural lakes in between, these populations of fish don't get touched and that is what makes these patterns so good.

Both flats and contours can hold fish and there are many ways to fish weed walleyes but there are a couple of presentations that really shine depending on the profile of the weed bed. Day in and day out, a swim bait with a large plastic paddle tail is tough to beat. The reason swim baits are so deadly around weeds is because of the large gap single hook that can be snapped and shredded through weed stalks and because the larger hook allows you to put more pressure on the fish and keep them hooked up. Now fluke style and curl tail baits can all work well but I have always been a fan of a large paddle tail because of the vibration and thump that comes off these baits. I believe this thumping tail does the best job of pulling fish up out of weeds because fish can feel the vibration.

Fishing these baits is merely swimming and sliding along the edges and open pockets or swimming over the tops of emerging weeds while snapping or popping the lure when you make contact. This snap or pop not only cleans off hooks but also triggers fish. If anglers make a common mistake with swim baits and weeds, I would dare say that many anglers use too small of a swim bait. Four to five inch or sometimes larger swim bait bodies present an easy target, move water and slide and glide more slowly towards the bottom so that the bait can be swam just over the tops or through the edges of the weeds. Soft plastic swim bait options that have large paddles and offer that exaggerated vibration like Kalin's Sizmic Shad are the meal ticket.



The biggest challenge I find when targeting weed walleye through the summer is that weeds can grow amazingly fast through the summer and you often have to relearn even familiar locations. There are times when the weeds can literally grow six more inches in a matter of a few days. Early in the season when the weeds are just starting to grow, fishing is relatively easy. As the weeds begin to reach for the surface, the windows of clean water become more precise and narrow. A particular size of swim bait or jig hook that was perfect a week ago can become obsolete when the profile of the weed bed changes.

Finding the right lure and fishing the right angle so that the lure can be worked clean through the correct zone takes a somewhat methodical approach. When the fish are aggressive and cruising higher in the water column or roaming the open pockets or open water above the weeds, these fish are easy. When fish are tighter to the bottom or along the bottom edge of the weeds where they become deeper and sparser, the window is much more limited because you are going to need a presentation that lands in front of the fish. This is exactly why swim baits shine day in and day out because the depth can be manipulated and controlled so that the bait fishes down to the fish.

In my opinion, swim baits are the perfect one-two punch when you combine hard baits into the repertoire. For covering water or picking off the aggressive fish that are riding high in the weed bed,

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Toll Free: 800.649.4ARE www.4are.com/bassmaster you can use crankbaits or stick baits with a tremendous amount of success. Last summer, we filmed an episode in northeastern South Dakota's Glacial Lakes Region near Webster where we caught some really big fish rolling Salmo Stings over seven to nine foot weed flats. The weeds nearly reached the surface and this particular shallow running suspending twitch bait proved deadly. You can cover more water with a faster trolling motor speed when using hard baits and most definitely wear out the aggressive easy to reach fish in a particular weed bed.

What always shocks me however is the number of fish that can be tallied by going through the same weed bed at a slower more methodical speed with swim baits. Swim baits catch the fish that the crank baits miss.

Why these two lure categories complement each other so well stems from the dive curve each bait possesses. Imagine a standard crank bait or stick bait going through the water column during a retrieve. The dive curve is going to be half circle shaped. Snap the lure to get it down and the lure is going to be at the deepest about half way through a retrieve before it begins to rise towards the boat. With hard lures, you can clip the tops or sides of the weeds at a faster rate. Hard lures typically have more noise; more flash and can probably pull fish in from greater distances. These characteristics make them shine for finding fish, eliminating water and catching fish that are on.

The swim bait takes a different route back to the boat that can be manipulated much more so than



hard baits. The swim bait can be retrieved to take a similar half circle shaped route back to the boat in a much more subtler fashion but it can also be lifted or dropped to cover a portion of the water column that hard baits will miss and do so at a slower speed. When fish are tucked in tight to the bottom of the weed bed or holding tight along an inside or outside edge, you can reach these fish with a swim bait. The single hook is also easier to clean and free when you make contact versus the multiple hooks on a crank bait or stick bait.

What is really neat about weed walleye is that they are typically homebodies in that they don't move like fish on other patterns. When conditions change, these fish simply lay in the bottom of the weeds and don't as often show the vertical or horizontal movement of moving up and down like structure fish that might move from twenty feet of water up into ten feet of water. Weed fish seem to hold in the same depth of water but merely move up or down in that specific depth. In other words, these fish don't always seem to slide out over deep water or slide down the break, they merely quit swimming and drop to the bottom when they are off. Weed fish are often dark and brilliant in color, which points to a resident lifestyle where as washed out appearing fish are fish on the move.

When these fish are on, they are extremely under rated predators that can out compete both bass and pike on many bodies of water. These fish won't need finesse and that is what makes this style of fishing so much fun. Combine the aggressive nature of these shallow fish with warm water temperatures and you have a hard hitting, hard fighting fish that surprises you no matter how many you catch. Every year, I catch a few of these fish where the hit is so abrupt and sudden... the fight is so determined that I say to myself, "this can't be a walleye." Weed walleye are not your ordinary walleye.



DEEP Cranking Tips

Capt. Mike Gerry

Nothing is more fun than getting a deep school of fish competing for your crank bait, when your running crank baits 20 ft. down you can make magic happen you just have to be creative. Creative crank baiting is just easy to do, you just have to imagine what that bait is doing and make it do different



things, present different looks and be a little different.

I know many people get frustrated when they are throwing crank bait and not getting bites then they get in a boat with someone who does it differently and it seems easy; well it is. A creative crank bait fisherman just uses all the possible parts of crank baiting to their advantage. They change the tip high, they work it in the upward position then point it downward, work the tip with long pulls, short pulls, they stop it and pause it and use their wrist to change the speed. All these are just elements of becoming a good crank bait fishermen, the key is to understand what these changes do to the bait and how they create strikes.

The tip of your rod is a key element to fishing a crank bait, you can change the depth by several feet just by changing the tip if you point it down it runs deeper, if you keep it high it runs shallower. Making long pulls with your rod tip also adds creativity to your bait; if you want the bait to bounce and dig the bottom, long pulls will add that element to your retrieve. Short pulls give the bait a different look, it digs then it quickly suspends or raises this causes a pause as well as a short pull adds a cadence to your retrieve. Your wrist is a key element of crank baiting as it can make movement changes in the bait just by moving your wrist, quick movements become erratic changes while cadence movement become rhythm movement.

There are many things you can do to be a creative crank bait fisherman, just use your knowledge do different things with the bait and see what offers the best results.

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LISTEN TO THE PADS

By Glenn Walker

A popular spot for anglers to fish a topwater frog, like a Snag Proof Bobby's Perfect or Ish's Poppin' Phattie, is around lily pads. When you are looking for bass in lily pads, be sure to listen very closely to the noises coming from those lily pads. What you want to be listening for is the sound of bluegills or other sunfish popping those lily pads; this means there is food there for the bass to eat. Another sound you want to be listening for is there are bullfrogs croaking up near shore. Any time I'm fishing lily pad fields, I like to run my Hydrowave unit from T-H Marine on the Active Pad mode, this helps emulate those noises.

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



FROM ONE EXTREME VACATION TO THE OTHER

Part 2: On To Sunny Beach's, Baseball and Fishin'. <u>Link to</u> Part 1

By Wil Wegman

In late February, my brother Marcel aka "Red', his 21 year old son Josh, my son Tyler (30), my other son Izaak

(28) and myself were sitting around at a family function discussing how nice it would be to get down to Florida. For the last several years we have spoken about a trip to Dunedin to watch some of the Blue Jay Spring Training games but with the Canadian dollar hovering near \$1.35 US we didn't think it was in the cards for this year. Until this: "What about if we drove down in our new car instead of flying?" Josh asked? "And we could camp instead of staying at a hotel!" he added. Then Izaak chipped in ... "If we

cooked our own meals instead of eating out – we'd save even more". "Hmm... and gas prices are even cheaper in the US than they are here ... so that could reduce our costs even more," said Red - adding ... "And Wil we can even go fishing down there as long as you make us a whole bunch of buns with cold meats and munchies for our drive, so we wouldn't have to waste time or extra money stopping to eat either!"

Well, if it sounds like we were just trying to convince ourselves into going on this trip ... then you're 100% right ... that's exactly what we did. We all agreed then and there that we gotta make it happen. After examining several campgrounds on line, we pre-booked our campsite and chose Sherwood Forest Resort – less than a 15 minute drive from the ball park. Before we left, we ordered Blue Jay tickets for two games, and booked kayak rentals at Top Water Kayaks in Fort De Soto State Park about 45 minutes away. We also checked out various fishing opportunities off government piers, beaches to swim, golf course for some of our crew and other sites in the area to see. We would decide what else to do while

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Buy them online at: http://www.georgiafishing.com/ swirleybird-spinners we were down there.

After a great winter trip up north, I got home, packed and the Wegman clan headed from the Toronto Ontario region, south to Florida ... bright and early at 4am. In total, the drive down to Dunedin via I-75 Hwy is about 22 hours nonstop which we divided into two days, sleeping over at one of the many hotels along the way just south of Atlanta for around \$75. With all of us pitching in for gas and taking turns at the wheel it was surprising to all of us how fast the drive went. The back seat crew would typically relax by watching various shows and movies on the laptop.

On the 2nd day, we drove straight to the ball park in Dunedin and even though the game was already in the 3rd inning we were hoping to get tickets— but it was completely sold out. So, off we went to our Sherwood Forest Resort to set up camp and prepare supper.



We were impressed with the campground and the friendly folks who ran it and stayed there. The large tent sites were at the very

back of the resort and the RV's and trailers were up front. It was ironic that our only next door neighbors were also from Ontario ... a pleasant retired couple from London. We were delighted to learn from them that raccoons and skunks or other critters were not an issue at all ... so that was a treat. Mosquitoes were almost non-existent. Besides the squirrels in all the trees and all the shore birds that were on site because of the pond, the only other critters we saw were these small, rather cute and harmless lizards that blended in so well with their natural surroundings.

The lizards we saw around camp were called Brown anoles and were first introduced to Florida from Cuba and the Bahamas and are now found throughout the state. This one, is a male characterized by its orange throat flap.

We pitched the tents and then quickly filled up our new Coleman air beds with an electric pump and inverter hooked up to the vehicle. Man these mattresses were about 18 inches high and it felt great to be so comfortable and that far off the ground. We then pulled out our cooking supplies and food. Although there is a misconception that you can't take most foods across the border, we checked beforehand here so although some items were not permitted, others were and we brought some of those along for convenience and extra savings. That night we enjoyed a steak dinner over the BBQ with all the fixins along with some typically inexpensive American beer.

The next day the Blue Jays were off, so we had planned on a trip over to Fort De Soto Park about 45 minutes away. At just \$5 for a day use pass, entry into the park was a bargain, especially when we're used to paying \$20 at some of our provincial parks back home!



Kayaking at Fort De Soto Park:

When we arrived at Top Water Kayaks, the friendly staff there told us the dolphins hadn't been in to the lagoons for a couple of days ... but that if we saw fish jumping then it would be a good indication that the dolphins were not far behind and had come in from the Gulf, to feed. If we were real lucky we would also catch a glimpse of a manatee! We were excited therefore not only for a chance to see dolphins and manatee but also to do some fishing in these saltwater canals. We were each supplied with an open kayak and provided with a guide on local features and a map on the route we would travel.



Within a few minutes of paddling ... all five of us saw fish jumping ... that I figured would be mullets, so expectations to see dolphins chasing this and other forage were high. Not long afterwards though, the skies opened up and a heavy downpour came upon us. Fortunately it didn't last long and before we knew it, the sun was back out and we were in great spirits.

ODU MAGAZINE VIDEO BLOCK (www.odumagazine.com)

The warm rain was soon followed by bright sunny skies and there was no need to head for cover.

Here Tyler relaxes moments after the heavy rains.

My brother Red was the first one to hook into a fish not long after the rain. He had several hits before that and finally connected with his first flounder ever ... a nice 'sammich-sized' one of about 12 inches that we live-released instead of cooking later and slapping between two slices of bread.

Wil's Brother Marcel with his first flounder ... and his son Josh looking on.

After that fish, we all fished a little harder as we paddled towards the Gulf and mouth of the canals. "Manatee ... Manatee right down here!" Izaak yelled And almost simultaneously he turned around to do battle with a big fish that tore drag from his spinning reel. We quickly paddled over to catch a glimpse of this iconic Floridian symbol of tranquility known as a 'sea-cow'. While Izaak continued to try and catch his big fish, we all saw this marvelous creature in the same area. After a couple of minutes



Izaak's fish suddenly came loose but as a more-than-adequate consolation prize, the manatee we saw headed right toward him and he ended up seeing it better than any of us!

At the mouth of the Gulf, we saw even more shorebirds, osprey and other waterfowl as we rounded a nearby island and headed back down the other side of the canal along the mangroves.

Although I thought most of the fish would be hiding in the shade provided by the mangroves, my attempts to fish beneath them did not yield the desired results so on the way back I changed tactics and fished in the open.

Here I threw a jig and Storm swimbait on my economy-priced Rapala Griffin Baitcaster combo. I used a two piece medium heavy action rod and had 14 lb. Suffix Sege monofilament tied on. Eventually I hooked into a fish that surprised me by leaping three feet into the air! I could see it wasn't all that big, but you'd never know it by the battle it was giving me. It may not have been the Redfish I was hoping for but it was fun, none-the-less.

This 'lady-fish' sort of resembles our cisco back home in Ontario ... but with a larger eye, and a more spirited battle at the end of an angler's line.

It was not until our paddle back that we all began to have our own personal encounters with the marvelous dolphins we desperately wanted to see. We would typically catch a glimpse of one jumping and it didn't take long to figure out which direction and the route it would take in its determined effort to chow down on all the fish available. They would swim under water for 20 yards or so, jump and then head back down.

My close encounter was of the jaw-dropping kind and came after my brother was about 75 meters

ahead of me watching а dolphin of his own. "Wil ... stay there, it's coming your way!" I did and less than а minute later, that awesome 8-10 foot marine mammal jumped right in front of me and then dove down and swam directly below my kayak! T could have touched her I was so close ...



and for a split second, thought it may tip my kayak – but recall thinking that "I really don't care if it didas I'd then have an even more awesome memory."

Following that great kayak excursion, we headed for the famed Fort De Soto beach that stretched for miles and miles along the coast. This beach was recently named America's best family beach by Parents magazine. Here we caught a few quick rays and then jumped in and swam the salty seas.

After relaxing on the beach we headed over to the most incredible fishing pier I have ever been on.

There are actually two piers in the park and the Gulf Fishing Pier is the longest at more than 1,000 feet. A popular spot there is no charge to fish on the pier and thanks to Friends of Fort Desoto Park who purchased a 'pier fishing license', you will not need to have a Florida fishing license to fish from the pier. The pier closes at 11 p.m. and has plenty of lighting at night. Fish cleaning tables with running water are also available for cleaning your catch. Although we didn't carry our fishing rods with us, we saw several others catch fish of all sorts. We thoroughly enjoyed watching more dolphins up close though and could see thousands of baitfish boiling beneath the pier.



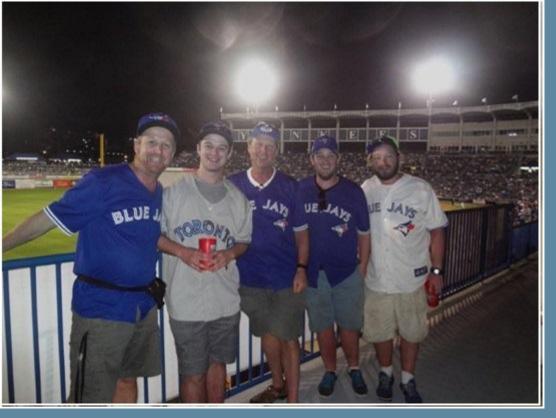
Let's Play Ball:

After an unforgettable day at Fort De Soto, most of the rest of our trip was focused on baseball and the Blue Jays Spring Training games. In total we saw three games ... two of which were right in Dunedin that we pre-purchased tickets for, and the other was over at Steinbrenner Field to watch the Yankees play in Tampa. This truly was a beautiful ball park and we bought tickets on line thru Stub Hub.

At the Yankee Stadium there were still plenty of die-hard Canadian Blue Jay Fan's ... including these Wegman's from left to right: Marcel ... aka Red, his son Josh, Wil in the middle, Wil's oldest son Tyler and Wil's youngest son Izaak.

Back at The Florida Auto Exchange Center in Dunedin where the Blue Jays play, Marcel and Josh met up with the familiar Jay's mascot – 'Ace'.

Getting in and out of both ball parks was quick and easy ... in Tampa we actually found a spot 5 minutes away to park at no charge and in Dunedin we felt compelled to park at a local establishment that provided all five of us this incentive shown below to park there for just 10 bucks. With a ticket stub ...



drinks after the ball games were two for the price of one ... and when beer was just a couple of bucks a can it lent itself well to our budget-oriented trip.

Between ball games, Red, Tyler and Josh enjoyed a great game of golf over at the Wentworth Golf Club near Tarpon Springs about 25 minutes away from our camp. By checking on line for any deals first, they found the Tee Time specials and prebooked as early birds. The 18 hole course meanders through beautifully manicured, rolling terrain and they said each hole

was challenging and fun, despite their different skill levels.

Josh Wegman, the youngest of the Wegman clan, showed his older cousin Tyler and his much older dad ... how it's done on the back nine. The front nine winds through a typical Florida woodlands and provides plenty of water and sand, long and short. Wentworth and its famed Mulligan's Irish Pub comes highly recommended by all 3 Wegman's

While they golfed, Izaak and I drove to Clearwater to fish off another public pier. This one was a



little more commercial – as it charged \$8.00 a head, but it also had a 'pier



fishing license', fish cleaning stations and even a wonderful volunteer to help the younger kids catch fish. Izaak and I soon found that our larger artificial baits were not the ticket to catch the smaller pan-sized pin fish, so we downsized our lures to small jigs – and squid or shrimp, both of which was graciously supplied by other visitors who were leaving. I watched how the volunteer cut the bait for the kids and duplicated that for the two larger Wegman kids and before we knew it we were catching one after the other.

Pinfish like these came fast and furious once we got the hang of it off the Clearwater Pier 60

Other Notables About Our Economy Priced Florida Vacation:

 On the Clearwater Pier, we met up with a nice family from out Chatham Ontario way. Carson ... who was the avid young angler in the group didn't have a fishing rod with him, so I lent him mine, gave him a quick run-down on how the pinfish were hitting, and he soon too started catching and having a ball.



- To get the pesky pelicans off the pier, we were encouraged by the volunteer to dispatch the odd pinfish and throw it far and away. To everyone's delight the pelicans would sense the easy meal and instantly swoop down and nab their next meal.
- There's another pier right in Dunedin on the way to the ballpark that we didn't have a chance to fish but we did see sea turtles here.
- After a long day out and about, it was great to relax under the lighted gazeebo by the pond at Sherwood Forest. Here we would re-charge our devices, plug in the laptop and watch taped TV shows and movies. We fished the pond on and off, as reportedly there were some big Florida strain largemouth in there, but never hooked up with any.
- During all of the many hours the five of us spent in Red's Hyundai Santé Fe driving to/from Florida and getting around Dunedin, we did actually make room for an additional passenger we all became very fond of. "Mulva," as we affectionately called her, was the magical Magellan GPS Navigator that not only kept us from being horribly lost and on track to our destinations, but provided us with the quickest route, each and every time. This allowed us to see different parts

of Florida, kept off the us interstates when there were accidents or delays, warned when us we exceeded the limit (a speed handy feature the dad's really liked when their sons were driving) and she told us about upcoming landmarks (like stations) gas where we should Mulva turn.



definitely earned her keep amongst us five lads.

• There are basically two routes from the Toronto area that most visitors choose from. We took the western route (I-75) on the way down that brought us across the border in Detroit. The I-75 is actually about 100 km longer than 'the other'



route because it west from Knoxville to Chattanooga in Tennessee, but then heads back south on the way to Atlanta, Georgia. It is recognized however as being better 'weather-wise' because it avoids most mountain ranges. For the drive back home we took the central mountain route (I-79 / I-77 / I-26 / I-95 / I-4). This one doesn't have as many rest-stops, hotels and restaurants and brought us thru the gorgeous Appalachian Mountains in West Virginia where we saw plenty of deer, wild turkey and even a big black bear feeding on the green grassy side of a mountain. This route brought us thru Pennsylvania and New York so we crossed at Fort Erie. By the time we reached home, we had travelled over 5,000km!

- We had warm sunny weather during our entire stay and even at night all we really needed were sheets and a light blanket.
- One of the ball games we saw was the Juniors from Team Canada who took on the Blue Jays and of course the pros won handily. The Yankees beat us in Tampa, and we saw an uncommon tie game against the Baltimore Orioles.
- There are lots of great website for those visiting the Dunedin, St Pete's Clearwater area but this local tourism site is your best start with plenty of links to various fun activities: visit St Pete's, Clearwater

Now that our trip is over, the Wegman clan can fully appreciate why so many Canadians and other Northerners visit Florida and the St Pete's Clearwater area every winter. We had a great time, didn't break the bank and look forward to future visits.

Wil Wegman is an award winning outdoor writer from Ontario Canada who loves to write about his fishing, camping, kayaking adventures. Along with the rest of the Wegman's he's also a Blue Jay fan. You can follow will on Facebook or twitter- or read more of his articles on his Focus on Fishing site at www.wilwegman.com

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Shake-Up the Bite with Ziptailz



By Bernard Williams

Being an outdoor writer I get to test lots of new and innovative products. Some don't work for me, some work good, and some are unbelievable. I ran across a product in the unbelievable category... it's

Picture above: Clay Blair with John Harrison Guide Service on a trip with Les

called Ziptailz "Ultimate Fishing Skirts". It's a silicon skirt that can be placed on a hook, jig or treble hook. Ziptailz was grouped as one of "ICAST's Best" at ICAST 2013 in Las Vegas, NV.



Ziptailz comes in 50+ Color Combinations

I'm an ICAST person; I review and get to test most products that win the "Best in Show" contest. It's my duty as a writer to report my experiences with various products. I don't endorse products that don't work for me and my fishing style. I don't condemn them, or talk bad about them; I just don't mention them in my writings.

A few months ago, a good friend, Leslie Smith of Como, MS called. Les was ecstatic, "Bernard, you've got to get you some Ziptailz. I ordered an assortment of colors to try. I got them in on Tuesday and got my first opportunity to use them a couple of days later pre-fishing for Crappie Masters MS State Championship at Grenada Lake. As most fisherman know "we always need one more bait in our arsenal" ha, ha. I had a friend Harry Riddle in the boat with me and we put Ziptailz on two minnow hooks just to try. I got to admit they sure looked good, but the jury



Les Smith showing a Ziptailz Slab was still out. The weather was horrible, raining, cloudy and overcast. Before we got our eight poles out, one of the Ziptailz poles had a fish on, 3+ pounds. We landed that fish, then a few minutes later, bam, another 2.5+ pound fish on the other Ziptailz pole. Harry and I started scrambling for the bag of Ziptailz and began putting them on all of our minnow hooks, jig heads, road runners and walleye jigs, and the bite was on. It did not seem to matter whether it was a road runner, jig head or just plain minnow hook, they just worked. We ended a horrible weather day with a 30 fish limit and our top 7 fish were pushing 17 lbs.

All I can say is that from that day forward Ziptailz made a believer out of me. I have shared this wonderful product with several of my fishing buddies and they would all say the same. No matter whether I am slow trolling or power trolling a Ziptailz combination of some sort has been on my pole since that day. Ziptailz have become a vital part of my fishing techniques and to be honest, I don't go fishing without them"

says Les. "When I find a combination that catches fish, I seldom make any changes. I keep on trucking with what's working for me."

Les, what makes Ziptailz catch fish? First of all, its unique rubber neck allows you to run the skirt up on any style of hook or jig head and it stays there, the skirt is easily interchangeable for certain color combinations due to sunny or cloudy days, stained or clear water, just slide the skirt off and put

another color on, the silicone skirt has a pulsating motion in the water that attracts attention, the umbrella skirt is designed to run by itself or run any type of curly tail combination under it, the crappie color combinations are unbelievable, It gives your bait a bigger profile in the water. If you've ever watched minnows in an aquarium closely, you can see the gills opening and closing. That's the effect I see when I put a Ziptailz on a jig or hook and put it in the water. Another feature is the Ziptailz doesn't collapse when you pull it at high speeds like a hair jig or bass squirt. It maintains its continuity no matter how fast you push it or pull it."

I asked Smith about his power trolling setup, he said, "I love Power-Trolling, it's my favorite way of fishing", I use a 16' Walleye Marshall Troll Tech with a 3 oz. egg weight. I run a double jig setup 36 inches apart using a 1/8 oz. Road Runner or walleye spinner Jig on top and ¼ oz. on bottom with Ziptailz and 3" Curly Tails in different colors. I look for schooling fish on ledges, points and drop offs where fish are staging and feeding on shad. I watch my electronics closely to see what depth the fish are holding. I want my rigs running no more than a foot above the





John Mayo with Grenada Lake Charters fishing with Les

fish. I always make an allowance for how deep my transducer is in the water. My 112 Terrova has universal sonar; it's usually about 3' under the surface. My trolling speed averages around .9 to 1.2 mph. Some days I find the fish on the river channel, some days in the flats and creeks connected to the river."

"I fish from a 22' Skeeter Bay Boat with a 250 4-Stroke Yamaha. It can take that rough water. I don't get a lot of pole bounce. The 3 oz. weights really hold your baits vertical and in the strike zone. The Ziptailz adds color and motion to any lure. I am sold on Ziptailz, they work on any lure, from crankbaits to jigs. My advice to any crappie fishermen, take some with you but don't tell your fishing partner. It won't take long for your partner to realize you're doing something different. The Ziptailz prices get real high on the water", says Smith.

Professional Tournament Fisherman, David McWilliams says, "I picked up a few prototypes at the Crappie

Master National Championship at Lake Washington a year or so ago. I forgot I had them till one day out on the lake I saw them in my tackle bag. I slid on a couple and low and behold, my bite turned on. It's the perfect addition for a dry spell. I'm totally sold on Ziptailz. I use a lot of soft plastics, mostly Bobby

Garland, power trolling and long lining. Ziptailz adds to the profile causing more reaction bites on my soft plastics and crankbaits. Just ask Wayne, my last order was almost \$300 worth."

My experience with Ziptailz is they work, they are almost indestructible, and they add a different profile to my lures. This review is focused on crappie fishing, after reading the reviews about this product; Ziptailz "Ultimate Fishing Skirts" are effective with many other species, both fresh and saltwater gamefish. If you're a Walleye, Bass, Musky, Salmon, Northern Pike, Lake Trout, Inshore, Offshore, or Ice Fisherman, you need to try Ziptailz.

This little skirt is available in 50 colors and you can purchase Ziptailz directly from Wayne and Patti Rossi at <u>www.ziptailz.com</u>. Tell Wayne Les and I told you about them and he'll add a free skirt to your order! Try them on your next fishing outing, post this to your social media site. I promise you one thing; you'll see the results in your livewell. Bernard



Les Smith with a Huge Enid Slab



Crappie Kayak Fishing

By Brad Wiegmann

What is it that motivates you to go fishing? Is it the thrill of baiting up, casting, setting the hook or landing your personal best crappie? For a growing population of crappie anglers it's not just about the fishing, but the thrill of fishing for crappie from a kayak.

Traditionally, crappie anglers load up and head out to a local honey-hole. It's a first come, first serve on the community hole. In reality that's the reason so many crappie anglers are taking to chasing crappie from kayaks. They want to get away from the crowds and community holes; way back to super shallow areas or areas in lakes and ponds where boats can't get to.

Not surprising many crappie anglers fishing out of kayaks are converted bass anglers. Jackson Kayak pro and Sales Manager for Strike King Lure Company Crispin Powley happens to be one of these anglers.

"I grew up on Kentucky Lake and went crappie fishing like everyone else fishing spider rigs, pulling crankbaits and of course using a single pole technique. In fact, casting a single pole is my favorite way to fish for crappie. I really love to feel the thump when they bite the lure," said Powley.

In the past year, Powley's passion for crappie fishing has taken him out of a traditional boat and into a kayak. "There are several reasons, I love fishing out of a kayak when crappie fishing. First, being close to the water brings a certain intimacy to fishing you don't get fishing out of a boat. Secondly, it's not a lot of hassle; you just slip it in, paddle out to the spot and go fishing," said Powley.

Living in the mid-lake area of Kentucky Lake around New Johnsonville, Powley noted there was an abundance of manmade cover including stake beds and brush piles he fishes using a single pole technique. As for lures, Powley keeps it simple. One of his favorites when single pole fishing is the Strike King Mr. Crappie Sausage Head jigs especially around brush or cover. Powley will cast the jig with or without a bobber attached to his fishing line depending on the depth he wants to fish the lure.

"Sausage Head jigs have almost a football shape head and when you pull it through a stake bed where a round ball head jig will often roll when bumping a stake causing the round ball head's hook to hang up on a stake; the Sausage Head's football shape actually will kick the jig away from the stake keeping it from hanging up. I also believe that the unique shape of the Sausage Head jig with its bigger profile catches better quality of crappie," said Powley.

Powley's pimped out Big Rig Jackson kayak (www.jacksonkayak.com) has a massive beam of 34inches and measures more than twelve feet long making a super stable ride and stand up platform. When not fishing standing up, Powley can sit down in a super comfortable, adjustable seat that's rigged with a line Cutterz attached to it. Other features and accessories in Powley's kayak include removable center console, rod tip protectors, under seat tackle with Plano boxes, rod stagers, Yakattack Gear Tracks, JKrate by Jackson Kayak, flush mount rod holders, hull storage, removable skid plate and SealLine Seat Pouch attached to the seat back.

As for electronics on his kayak, Powley has his kayak rigged out with a Micro Anchor Power-Pole, RayMarine sonar unit and Hydrowave Mini. It has everything some of the most expensive boats have, but without the expense or initial cost of purchasing a boat.

"I think fishing out of a kayak is a nice change of pace for crappie fishermen and even for the crappie. Crappie get conditioned to anglers running up on them, around them, through them and pass them with the trolling motor in a boat. I have honestly had my catch rate increase exponentially since fishing out of a kayak," said Powley.





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SO HOW BOUT THEM WALLEYES

By Captain Adam Walton

When it comes to maintaining great walleye fisheries throughout Wisconsin, some systems are natural fish factories and others need a guiding hand, usually provided through stocking and/or stricter harvest regulations. On waters that require a little help, efforts made by the DNR,

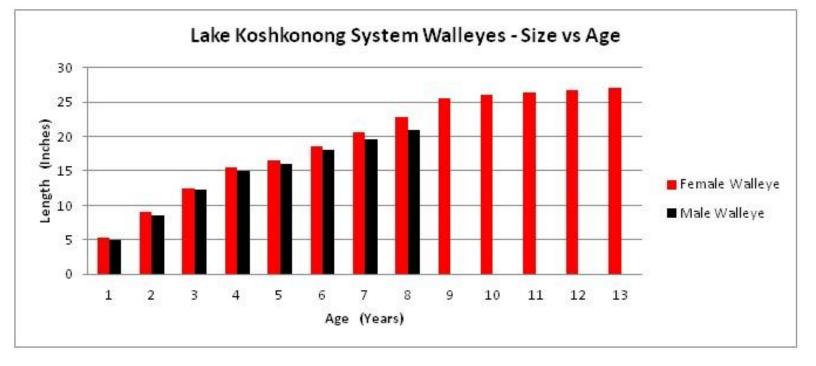
numerous fishing clubs and other private organizations often go unnoticed...until things turn for the worse, that is. Usually when things turn poor, usually DNR regulations are first to take the blame, but it goes much deeper than that.

Take the Lake Koshkonong / Rock River system for example. This system is open to fishing year round and gets plenty of pressure from anglers. The current daily limit here is five walleyes or saugers, which both must be a minimum of 15" to harvest. The walleye population here can fluctuate, with large fish present for a few seasons and then suddenly the only walleyes that seem to bite are "short" fish that don't hit the magic 15" mark. Many anglers find themselves asking how one year can be a banger season and the next is a bust. Some point to over harvest when things were good, others blame a lack of a slot limit, and yet others see it as an ongoing up and down cycle caused by conditions such as weather, natural spawn, stocking, and water levels, etc...

Looking at the entire situation, all of the things mentioned above may be contributing factors, but it's hard to point to just one. If stocking and natural spawn produce huge numbers of walleyes year after

year, fish will continually replace each other and over harvest is hard to blame. However, if there is a poor spawn year and stocking efforts are also affected, lack of new fish coming into a system, along with excessive harvest of legal fish, can unquestionably cause problems. If these spawning problems occur in consecutive seasons, it can cause a potential long term dilemma. Since it is unrealistic to change DNR harvest regulations seasonally in order to adjust for a poor spawn/stocking year, it makes for a difficult line to walk.





Slot limits are also a tricky subject. Generally speaking, a common example of an imposed slot limit allows walleyes between 15" to 18" to be harvested, while walleyes between 18" to 25" are protected and must be released. Once fish grow out of the protected slot sizes and reach over 25", they are allowed be harvested again. Since females don't typically mature and spawn until they grow to 18", this slot limit concept protects the main spawning classes of walleyes. In some systems the concept of protecting 18" to 25" fish thrives, but in other systems it can set up a fishery for future failure. For example, in lakes that are heavily pressured and have consistent poor natural spawning occur, a slot limit can cause potential long term problems. DNR studies have shown a majority of smaller legal walleyes tend to get plucked before they reach the protected slot sizes. This leaves a low number of fish that would have eventually replaced the large fish currently protected in the slot size. Slot limits may initially work to protect bigger fish, but years down the road, a lack of "replacements" can cause a complete collapse of the large fish population.

To get a better understanding of what it takes to manage a fishery, I recently had the opportunity to sit down with DNR fish biologist, Laura Stremick-Thompson, retired DNR fish biologist, Don Bush, and DNR fishery technician, Doug Lubke, whom all have fish management experience on numerous systems throughout Wisconsin. Although much of the following information below applies to many DNR managed systems, we took data compiled from years of tracking the Lake Koshkonong/Rock River system.

The first thing Stremick-Thompson, Bush, and Lubke mentioned was to understand three important driving factors of system management; Recruitment, Growth, and Mortality. These three factors are the foundation of how a system is managed and show where success has occurred or where improvement is needed.



When it comes to the term "Recruitment", we're talking about both natural spawn and stocking efforts that produce fry walleye. It should be noted, the Lake Koshkonong/Rock River system does not have a great natural spawn compared to other systems and requires assistance from the Bark River Fish Hatchery/DNR stocking program. The recruitment factor is a little tricky for a few reasons. Again, looking at the Lake Koshkonong system specifically, Lubke stated that over the past several years natural spawning locations have changed, making it difficult to estimate how productive a season was. Changing spawning locations also make it difficult to locate females needed for egg harvesting used in stocking. Stremick-Thompson noted, the Bark and Crawfish Rivers, which are tributaries to the Rock River, allow walleyes to travel large areas. With such a large amount of water available, walleyes can be hard to track and net with limited DNR staffing.

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Other factors, such as weather, can also play a key role in "Recruitment". For example, the 2016 spring was anything but. Walleyes generally spawn in 44 to 48 degree water, but weather here seemed to drastically change between winter and summer, causing a roller coaster in water temperature. This factor alone made for not only a poor natural spawn, but it also caused an unsuccessful DNR netting operation used to harvest female eggs for stocking. Although females were netted and some had spawned out, many of their eggs were not ready to harvest and likely did not drop this season. These eggs would simply be reabsorbed, which is not a very common occurrence seen in big groups of walleyes.

Generally, walleye "Recruitment" is best measured by tracking year classes well after the spawn. For example, there is currently an abundance of 12"-14" walleye in the Lake Koshkonong system, which

indicates that the combination of natural spawn and stocking during the 2012 – 2014 seasons was successful. In contrast, with the poor natural spawn and stocking effort seen this season, 2016 class of the walleyes will be very Anglers small. won't however, typically see this effect until several seasons later.

The second driving factor in fishery management is "Growth". This factor is much more constant and easier to follow.



Let's start at the beginning and look at fry growth. Stremick-Thompson first pointed out that abnormal cold spring weather can cause a poor supply of zooplankton, a food source fry walleye depend on. With limited zooplankton, fry may die or grow slower than normal. Once walleye grow larger, their main forage in the Lake Koshkonong / Rock River system changes to river shiners, small white bass, perch, and small sheephead. Of course seasonal occurrences such as mayfly and bug hatches also come into play. This forage base sets the stage on how fast walleyes develop. Since the forage base remains fairly constant here, walleye growth can be charted fairly accurately. From data collected in past surveys, two important sizes are noted. We first look at 15" because this is the minimum legal limit to harvest and 18" because this is the size a female walleye fully matures and is able to spawn. Growth rates indicate a 15" walleye is roughly 4 years old while an 18" walleye is roughly 6 years old. After a walleye hits the magic 18" mark, gender will play a larger factor in growth rate. Females will grow faster and bigger than males. For comparison purpose, the length of numerous 7 year-old males and 7 year-old females were averaged out and females were 1.1" larger. Data also shows male walleyes generally topping out around 20" while females can exceed 27" if allowed to by anglers. However, once a female grows to 25", her growth rate will slow tremendously. Data shows 9 year old females averaging 25.6", while 12 year old females average 26.7". With a fluctuating slow growth rate of fish above 27", their estimated age can be anywhere between 13 to 18+ years old.

The third and most controversial driving factor in fishery management is "Mortality". With natural mortality low, the main cause of walleye death is anglers. Stremick-Thompson and Lubke both agreed this is where things can get really complicated. On the Lake Koshkonong system, walleye fishing is open year round and it's heavily pressured. Some anglers are pushing for a slot limit, but enacting that

regulation will only move the problem Stremick-Thompson stated. If 18" to 25" fish are protected like on other systems, data has shown there is a huge drop in the 15" to 17.5" walleye population due to harvest. With smaller fish being taken out of the system, there are few fish left that actually grow up into the protected slot. If a minimum 18" size limited regulation is enacted, fish will grow to that size, but are no longer protected after that. A change in size limit from 15" to 18" would allow females to grow into maturity and may possibly improve natural spawning. However, studies have shown in waters with an 18" minimum size limit, there is still a significant drop in large walleyes over 18" due to angler harvesting.

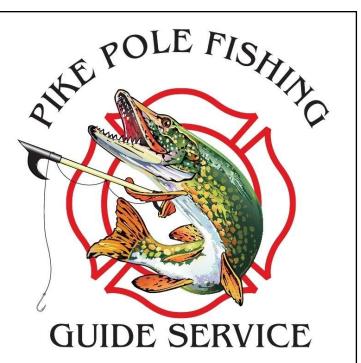
Although certain regulation changes may help some, Stremick-Thompson, Bush, and Lubke all agreed, the most import way to help a fishery succeed is for anglers to change their fishing habits. Bush made a

great comparison between walleye fishing and deer hunting. Many hunters practice deer management and allow small bucks to develop into trophy size animals before harvesting them. However, when it comes to walleye fishing, a majority of anglers do not practice this theory and harvest a large amount of legal, but immature fish. Bush stated the Lake Koshkonong system can easily hold a large population of trophy walleyes, but most fish are harvested before they grow to trophy size. With that said, harvesting a large number of big mature breeding fish can hurt the natural spawn and stocking efforts as well. Maintaining a healthy balance of both size and quantity of fish in any given system is truly up to anglers.

There is no shame in keeping a few walleyes for the freezer, but anglers must realize there is a lot involved maintaining a true successful fishery. As the owner of a fishing guide service, we try to help by practicing selective harvest. On the Lake Koshkonong system for example, walleyes over 18" on get released and only a handful of legal fish below 18" are harvested by our clients. We call it "Release breeders, keep a few eaters". This is a principal I have believed in since understanding how fisheries operate. So what is important to you? Are you happy with your current walleye fishery or would you like to see it improve? The choice is yours.

Good luck on the water this season and stay safe.

Captain Adam Walton Pike Pole Fishing Guide Service www.pikepolefishing.com



Adam Walton is the owner of Pike Pole Fishing Guide Service, located in Southern Wisconsin. As a USCG charter Captain, he enjoys taking clients out on a variety of Wisconsin waters, including the Lake Koshkonong system, the Madison Chain of Lakes, Green Bay, and the Lake Winnebago system. Adam specializes in year round multi-species fishing, but walleye and pan fish are his favorite. He also enjoys sharing and learning fishing knowledge by speaking at seminars, writing articles for an assortment of outdoor media agencies, and helping with sponsor promotions at various venues. For more information on Pike Pole Fishing Guide Service, check them out on Facebook or online at <u>www.pikepolefishing.com</u>.

THE FISHING EXPLOSION

By Capt. Mike Gerry

I know most folks are well aware of the increase in the number of fishermen on the water; the numbers of people fishing has really exploded in the last couple of years is really an understatement! The thing about it is; the expansion of the fishing industry is just starting as there is plenty more to come. Yes, don't get fooled by today's numbers as we have yet to see what is really ahead.

The change ahead is just now starting to show, as the introduction of high school fishing teams is just in the start-up phase and there is plenty more to come. Only about 5% of today's high schools are engaged in competitive fishing with that number expected to double every 3 years this will really show big increases on the water over the next 10 years. Today's high school tournaments have an average of 250 boats in them now and that number appears to quickly increasing every time a high school tournament has an event. You couple the high-school events with the normal tournament traffic on today's lakes and you have a bonanza of events increasing substantially every year.

I remember when hunting took on this rapid rate of new participants, but with the amount of huntable property for ever decreasing most families is turning to fishing as the family sport of choice. Couple that change from hunting to fishing and families with more disposable income than ever, more and more families are engaging in boat related sports with fishing being at the top of the things to do. We all want our children to have what we didn't and add that desire to please, to the pressure of high school young adults wanting to participate in tournaments the expansion is massive; and we are just at the beginning. Mark my words the increase in fishermen is just starting, this industry will double in value through fishing related sales over and over and we will deal with more crowded ramps, lakes and ponds like never before; get ready!

Fish Lake Guntersville Guide Service, <u>www.fishlakeguntersvilleguideservice.com</u> <u>www.facebook.com/FishGuntersville</u>, Email: <u>bassguide@comcast.net</u>, Call: 256 759 2270



8 NEW MUST-HAVE ADDITIONS TO YOUR MULTI-SPECIES ARSENAL THAT ALL START WITH RAPALA

1. VMC[®] Gliding Jig

Seen it all when it comes to finesse baits? Take a closer look at VMC's Gliding Jig.

"You need to see it in the water to see the action that it has," says Randall Tharp, a three-time Bassmaster Classic qualifier and the 2013 Forrest Wood Cup champion. "Fish have never seen anything like it."

Available in Oklahoma and Willow styles, Gliding Jigs are finesse baits for both deep and shallow water. The Oklahoma and Willow models feature slow and fast side-to-side fluttering action, respectively. Rig them with soft-plastic trailers like straight-tail worms, ribbon-tail worms and minnow-shape baits.

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"It's part jig, it's part spoon," says Rapala[®] Director of Field Promotions Mark Fisher, who designed the Gliding Jig. "Fish it wherever you would fish a small jig, shaky head or mushroom head."

Gliding Jigs feature a 1/0 extra-wide-gap VMC hook, a fine-wire double-hook bait keeper and come two per-pack in two sizes, 1/8 oz. and 3/16 oz. Each is available in seven colors: Antique Copper, Antique Gold, Antique White, Candy Black, Candy Red, Gold and Silver.

2. Rapala® crank baits in Custom HD colors

For better multi-species success in clear to lightly-stained water, throw Rapala baits in the new Custom HD color patterns. Available in the DT[®] series, Scatter Rap Shads,Scatter Rap[®] Minnows, Shad Rap[®]s and Original Floating[®] Minnows, Custom HD finishes feature ultra-realistic color and scale details printed on classic Rapala foil.

"Printing on foil gives the HD finishes that reflective quality fish have in nature," says Ott DeFoe, a 5time Bassmaster Classic qualifier.

Angling legend Al Lindner catches North Country walleyes, smallmouth and largemouth on Rapala baits in Custom HD colors. "These finishes look as live as can be, perfectly mimicking real-live forage," he says.

Custom HD finishes are especially effective on fisheries that sustain heavy pressure. "Once you figure out the forage those fish are keyed in on and tie on the matching pattern, it's going to be a big difference-maker in those situations," DeFoe says.

Shad Raps, DTs and Scatter Rap Shads are available in five Custom HD color patterns: Live Bluegill, Live Smallmouth Bass, Live Pumpkinseed, Live River Shad and Live Largemouth Bass.

Scatter Rap Minnows and Original Floating Rapalas are available in four Custom HD patterns: Live Smelt, Live Walleye, Live Rainbow Trout and Live Pike.

3. Rapala® Jigging Rap®s new open-water colors

Jigging Raps, among Rapala's predominant ice-fishing lures, are now available in six color patterns designed for open water — Pearl White, Bluegill, Regal Shad, Helsinki Shad, Redfire Crawdad and Purpledescent.

Featuring a balanced, weighted minnow profile, Jigging Raps swim in tantalizing circles on the fall. Fishing them successfully in open water requires aggressive rod snaps throughout a horizontal retrieve.

"When you snap the rod, it will dart a foot or two off to the right, and then it falls super fast," says Brandon Palaniuk, a five-time Bassmaster Classic qualifier. "And then you snap it again and it might dart two feet back over to the left — or forwards, or backwards. It's a constant change of direction."

The new colors are available in five sizes -02, 03, 05, 07 and 09.



4. Scatter Rap[®] Crank 07

Rapala's Scatter Rap Crank 07 covers the deeper side of the mid-depth range. The Scatter Rap Crank Shallow 07 covers the deeper side of shallow water.

Featuring what's best described as evasive action, a Scatter Rap perfectly mimics a spooked baitfish fleeing attack, moving from one side to the

next, triggering reactive bites. Built on classic Rapala balsa body shapes, Scatter Raps derive their name and signature sweeping action from an innovative, patent-pending, curved Scatter Lip.

Measuring 2 3/4 inches and weighing 9/16th of an ounce, the Scatter Rap Crank 07 runs 8 to 13 feet deep. The Scatter Rap Crank Shallow 07 measures 2 3/4 inches, weighs 1/2 an ounce and runs 5 to 8 feet deep.

5. Scatter Rap[®] Tail Dancer[®]

Combining the wild, wide-tail action of a banana-shaped, balsa body with the erratic action of a Scatter Lip, Rapala's Scatter Rap Tail Dancer is the ultimate deep-diving multi-species trolling lure.

"If you troll, it's one of the most exciting baits to come out in a long time," says James Holst, host of "In Depth Outdoors" on the Fox Sports North channel. "For trolling, that banana profile is just so productive."

Featuring a tapered tail, internal rattle and two No. 4 VMC[®] black-nickel, round-bend hooks, the Scatter Rap Tail Dancer runs 11 to 19 feet, depending on line size and boat speed.



"When trolled, it will move five, six, seven feet to either side, off the center line, without changing depth or the quality of the action of the bait — just like baitfish do," Holst explains. "Baitfish don't just monotonously, endlessly swim in a straight line."

Measuring 3 1/2 inches and weighing 7/16th of an ounce, the Scatter Rap Tail Dancer is available in 16 color patterns: Blue Flash, Perch, Flash Perch, Firetiger, Gold, Golden Alburnus, Red Tiger, Clown, Bleak, Yellow Perch, Rainbow Trout, Purpledescent, Pink Tiger UV, Green Tiger UV, Orange Tiger UV and Silver. "Many of the color patterns imitate forage species found in larger water bodies like Lake of the Woods, Green Bay and the Great Lakes," Holst says. "It's quite a game-changing bait for these areas."

6. Scatter Rap[®] Shad Deep

Combining a deep-diving Scatter Lip with the inimitable balsa buoyancy and baitfish profile of the best multi-species, all-season crankbait body of all time, the Scatter Rap Shad Deep brings evasive action to strike zones in 9 to 12 feet.

"It's really the best of both worlds now in one bait," says DeFoe, an avowed Shad Rap fanatic. "In shape and swimming motion, nothing imitates a shad better than a Shad Rap — and now that comes with the addition of erratic 'hunting' action in deeper water. I couldn't have asked for a better combination."

Measuring 2 2/4 inches and weighing 1/4 ounce, the Scatter Rap Shad Deep features two No. 6 VMC black-nickel treble hooks. It runs silently, floats when paused and comes in 16 color patterns: Firetiger, Helsinki Shad, Yellow Perch, Bleak, Dark Brown Crawdad, Perch, Shad, Bluegill, Hot Steel, Mardi Gras, Silver, Demon, Golden Alburnus, Purpledescent, Blue Back Herring and Caribbean Shad.

7. Terminator[®] Walking Frog

Terminator's Walking Frog was designed tip to tail to convert blow-ups into hook-ups.

"A good frog needs more than just a fancy paint job," says DeFoe. "It needs to walk right on every cast and its hooks and weight need to stay out of each other's way."

Designed for both heavy cover and open water, the Terminator Walking Frog features lifelike detail from nose to skirt. Tail-weighted to increase casting distance and stability on the retrieve, it features a custom VMC frog-gap hook.

An ability to shed water in between casts is another feature that sets apart the Walking Frog. A waterlogged frog is hobbled by added weight and unbalanced action, throwing off its cadence and causing big bass to take a pass.

Measuring three inches long, the Terminator Walking Frog weighs 11/16 oz. It comes in eight color patterns: White Camo, Cocoa Camo, Black Camo, Hot Mud Camo, Brown Leopard, Yellow Leopard, Lime Leopard and Green Leopard.

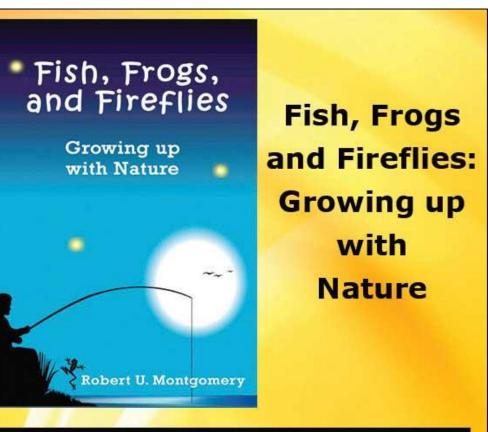
8. Arashi[®] Top Walker

A long-glide walk-the-dog action, a powerful wake and a multiple-rattle sound combine to help the Arashi Top Walker call in the biggest bass from the farthest distances.

"It's the best walk-the-dog bait, by far," says Brandon Palaniuk, a fivetime Bassmaster Classic qualifier. "It's going to up my odds of putting more fish in the boat."

Available in both a 4 1/4- and 5 1/8-inch size, the Top Walker strides true even when retrieved fast, having been purpose-built to eliminate the missed opportunities all too common with lesser top-water options. Rotated hook hangers, a feature of all baits in the Arashi line-up, ensure that all of the Top Walker's three sticky-sharp VMC trebles will grab fish and not let go.

The 4 1/4-inch Top Walker weighs 3/4 of an ounce. The 5 1/8-inch model weighs 1 1/8th ounces. Both models come in ten color patterns, most of them slightly translucent: Green Gold Shad, Hot Blue Shad, Pearl Ayu, Bluegill, Blue Back Herring, Wakasagi, Ghost Hitch, Pro Blue, Ghost Pearl Shad and Black Silver Shad.



A book for all nature lovers

Award-winning outdoors writer Robert Montgomery and 12 friends explore what and how we learn about life from the everyday miracles of nature

www.fishfrogsfirelies.info





By Gerald Almy

If you planted food plots early this year or last fall, they are likely thriving now. Those include perennial plants such as clover and alfalfa that give whitetail deer, bears, turkey, rabbits, ducks, and geese lots of quality forage to munch on during March and April.

Now that warmer soil temperatures are starting to arrive, it's time to think about late spring and early summer food plot crops that will thrive well into fall. You want something that will grow well during the heat of July and August with minimal moisture. That's the type of weather summers typically produce for most parts of the country.

Over many years of food plotting, I've learned that the best choices for this type of planting are annuals. Choose crops that come up quickly, grow fast, offer protein-rich forage, and are tolerant of dry weather. Sure, clover, chicory and alfalfa will still provide some forage. But these plants tend to dry out and become less appealing to deer during July, August, and early September, especially the clover and alfalfa.

Three annual plants are good choices for this time period: cowpeas, soybeans, and lablab. These plants are all legumes. They provide large quantities of forage and often grow so thick and tall that they offer cover as well as food--particularly soybeans and lablab. They also benefit the soil by adding nitrogen.



Cover these seeds ½ to 1 inch deep, after making sure the pH level is adequate (6.0 or higher). In general, a fertilizer such as 5-10-10 or similar will be helpful. But doing a soil test is the best way to proceed. You may also need sulfur or micronutrients such as boron, zinc, or manganese besides the main three fertilizer ingredients—nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium.

Soybeans provide high tonnage of forage and high protein levels for does nursing fawns and bucks growing antlers.

Cowpeas are the summer annual selected by some food plotters. But these plants don't grow particularly tall or produce enough forage to be the very best choice. Lablab is also a good plant for deer, but it can be damaged easily by over-grazing. It's not available in a Round-Up ready version, either. That fact makes it harder to control weeds. The first hard frost of the year will also kill lablab.

This brings us to the one best plant for summer food plots--soybeans. It's important to realize, however, that there are two types of beans—those



traditionally grown for seeds and seed products and those grown for forage. The latter are best for deer plantings, because they are bred to be resistant to foraging and continually produce more green leaves as deer or cattle eat them down.

Several companies make forage soybeans, but I have yet to find any that match those sold by Eagle Seeds, a company based in Arkansas. Eagle is unique in being run and owned by a husband and wife team, Brad and Joyce Doyle, both of whom have doctoral degrees in the science of soybeans.

While Eagle Seeds has produced a number of different varieties of soybeans, the two that I've found most impressive for deer are their Large Lad and Big Fellow. A mixture of the two called Gamekeeper is also excellent. The names are well chosen. These beans grow especially large leaves— up to seven inches or longer. That provides plenty of valuable forage for deer.

They don't just grow big leaves, though. The plants

also grow very tall and thick. They can reach seven feet or higher, and can grow so densely that deer not only feed in

Eagle Seeds soybeans are one of the author's favorite summer food plot choices.



the plots, but actually bed in them at times because they offer great security cover. Offering deer both food and cover in a small area is the best way I know to make them content during the summer.



Scientific studies have shown production of up to 7-10 tons of forage per acre with Big Fellow and Large Lad plantings, with the protein level typically 35-42 percent. That the just what is doctor ordered for healthy growing does, fawns and bucks with large antlers. The



Mississippi Department of Wildlife has chosen Large Lad as its "official" soybean for use on public game lands.

Both types of seeds--Large Lad and Big Fellow are Round-Up Ready. That means they can be treated periodically with a glyphosate herbicide without harming the plants to keep weeds controlled.

Prepare the seed bed well and kill all weeds, till the ground smooth before planting.

Soybeans of this type grow well even during dry periods because of a deep taproot. They are also resistant to most foliar diseases, root rot, and stem canker. I've planted these beans for many years now and am amazed at how fast and large they grow.

Plant the soybeans at a rate of 50-75 pounds per acre, at a depth of ½-1 inch.

Another plus of these beans is that they produce forage far longer into the fall than most other varieties, which go to seed in late summer. Large Lad and Big Fellow mature later and continue to produce high-protein green forage for 4-8 weeks after the leaves of most soybeans have turned yellow. Once they turn yellow, deer will not eat them.

There's one important thing you need to know, though, before planting. If you only put in a small amount of soybeans, deer will likely destroy them. Try to plant at least an acre, preferably several acres, to overwhelm the animals with food.

If you can't do that, protect young plants for 4-6 weeks with either electric fencing or repellents such as Plot Saver, P2 Plot Protector, and Milorganite fertilizer. After 4-6 weeks of growth, animals can feed on them all they want and the plants will continue to thrive and produce more leaves and protein-rich forage.

Another way to help protect the young plants is to mix in sunflower, corn, sorghum, or Sunn hemp with the beans. These will help protect the young soybeans and divert some feeding pressure to those plants while they establish themselves.

This is the strategy most wildlife seed companies use in the products they sell for summer food plots. Companies such as Whitetail Institute, <u>www.Plantbiologic.com</u>, Evolved Harvests, Tecomate, and Pennington all include mixtures of these cover plants to help protect the soybeans in their offerings. The Whitetail Institute's Power Plant and Biologic's BioMass are both excellent choices that have produced well for me over the years.

If you want more details on forage soybeans you can find it at <u>www.eagleseed.com</u>. For information on other types of soybeans, cowpeas and lablab for summer wildlife plots you can visit websites such as basspro.com, cabelas.com, sportsmansguide.com, whitetailinstitute.com, or plantbiologic.com.

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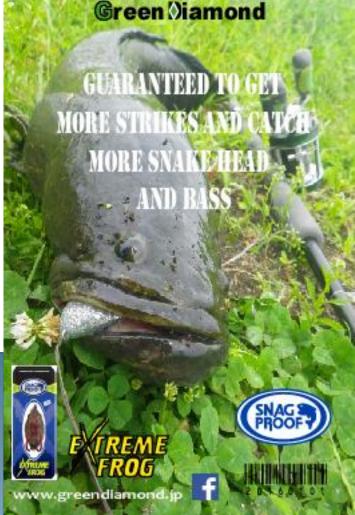
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Gerald Almy has been a full-time outdoor writer for over 35 years, with articles published in over 200 publications. He has written hunting and fishing columns for many newspapers both in Virginia and Texas, as well as the Washington Post. He has written two books on fishing and contributed chapters to a number of hunting books. He has won many awards for his writing. In 2008, a feature he developed for Field & Stream and wrote for five years called "Best Days of the Rut," was nominated for a National Magazine Award.



The environmental impact on energy production

Vearly amount of CDr produced per houshold

Any kind of burning in order to generate 4 8251 energy will pollute the environment. It is now possible to limit and reduce the environmental 401 impact of lighting through using more efficient light bulbs such as LEDs.

What is light pollution?



Light Trespass:

Over-Illumination:

or castle at night.

This is when unwanted light enters a person's property. For example, a street lamp illuminating a house and garden. Light trespass has been linked to sleep deprivation.

Excessive use of light, for example when used to light up an important building such as a town hall, museum



Glarer

Whereby light from one source reduces visibility and reduces contrast, for example lights in the fog or car lights blinding cyclists.



Light Clutter:

Lights being grouped together in such a way it causes distraction and a lack of concentration in people navigating an area. Particularly related to neon and strip lighting.

Skyglow:

Where there are so many lights in a built up area that it makes the night seem lighter and reduces visibility of the right sky, making stars and constellations dimmer or invisible.

LIGHTING AFFECTS WILDLIFE

By Phoebe Parlade

Environmentally friendly lighting sounds good in theory but can be problematic for local wildlife populations. Power Plants are a major source of pollution, so on the surface, energy efficient bulbs seem to have a positive environmental impact by reducing overall energy use. LED bulbs in particular are non-toxic and can be recycled, which may result in fewer bulbs ending up in landfills. There is no doubt that energy efficient lighting saves money, but energy efficient bulbs tend to burn brighter than traditional light bulbs. Light pollution causes a major disruption of natural wildlife habitats, and wildlife conservationists agree that this is cause for serious concern.

Light and dark cycles are an important factor in wildlife health and behavior. Although there is no real substitute for naturally dark nights, experts recommend switching to yellow LEDs for outdoor lighting since it is less detrimental to local wildlife than bluer bulbs. Seemingly longer days mimicked

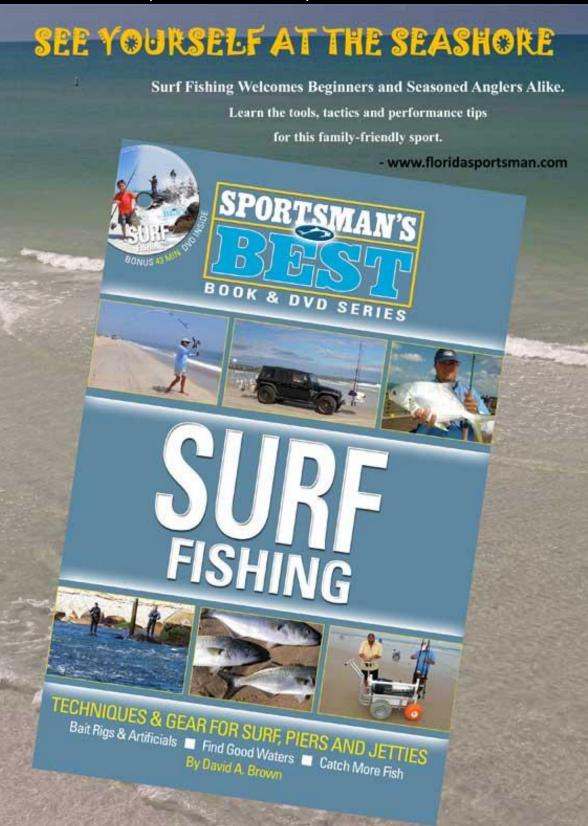
by bright lighting can affect animal mating habits by stimulating some species to breed during a less than optimal time of year.

This is why artificial lighting is used with laying hens raised in captivity. The chickens think it's always spring or summer, which is fine since they are kept in a climate controlled facility. These hens do still experience a somewhat natural cycle of light and dark periods since lights are turned off at night.

Studies in laboratory rats have shown that 24-hour lighting can increase mammary tumors, which is the equivalent of breast cancer in humans. Disruption of circadian rhythms and decreased melatonin levels

are likely to blame. A similar study involving nurses working graveyard shifts also confirmed dangers the of prolonged exposure to light. The extent of the negative ramifications of bright LED lighting can be difficult to assess, but scientists do predict that an LED increase in lighting will decrease local wildlife populations.

Light pollution poses a threat to natural habitats, and this factor needs to be considered as part of the bigger picture. There are serious health concerns since most energy efficient bulbs are shown to be harmful to both humans and animals. Any benefits of energy efficient lighting need to be weighed against the risks.





Versions of the Poor Man's Food Plot

By Jason Herbert

Nose to the air, with a face full of my apple flavored DUI, the lead doe carelessly entered my foodplot. Minutes later she lay dead not 60 yards away, having fallen prey to a well placed heart shot arrow. After a few celebratory texts, and also checking the score of the Michigan vs. Michigan State football game, I heard more noise in the woods. This time the buck chose a different path to enter the plot, because his priorities were different. He scent checked the entire field, noticing the dead doe who wasn't in heat, and then committed to dinner. I double lunged him less than 20 minutes after I had shot the doe. The date was October 18th and I had two mature deer dead well before sundown.

I'm hooked on my "poor man's foodplots" for several reasons. First they're cheap in terms of money and time invested. Second, I can plant them just about anywhere. Lastly, if designed properly, they are deer



magnets. When discussing food plots, I like to think of them in two different ways. Feeding plots are big and help supplement the local herd's nutritional needs. Most of the deer feed in these near or after dark. I do not hunt feeding plots. Killing plots are small, and deer feel comfortable feeding in these during shooting hours. I do hunt killing plots.

When creating a food plot I always consider two things. First, am I going to hunt it? And second, if so, how am I going to access it? Also, what wind do I need? This in itself is a entirely different topic, but always consider these questions before selecting a location for your food plot. There's no sense making a sweet killing plot that I can't hunt. Or a feeding plot that I can't walk by without bumping all of the deer out of it.

First on the list is considering safety. I depend on Bug Blocker sprays to protect my family from insect borne illnesses that seem to be on the rise, and enjoy the spring and summer months outdoors. I'll spray all of my ScentBlocker Recon Shirt and Pant or Featherlite work gear with Bug Blocker for Ticks, and douse myself with the mosquito spray before embarking on any summer work project.

My first style of poor man's plot is what I call the "mow-n-grow". Basically I find a likely area and clear it of any brush and trees. Then, I get in with an old push mower that is past it's prime and knock down all of the growth to a more manageable height. About two weeks later, I wait until the natural growth has regrown and "greened up". I then return with a highly concentrated mixture of weed killer in my pump sprayer. It's important to check the weather forecast to make sure it won't rain anytime soon. The weed killer needs a certain amount of time to soak up and be effective. After saturating all of the weeks.

When I return, I bring the appropriate amount of seed to plant the desired area. I usually do this sometime between July and August and am then planting turnips, canola, forage radish, and possibly



oats. The food plot offerings will depend on the time of year. If the weeds are good and dead, I'll simply hand spread the seed by throwing it, or by using a small seed broadcaster. Ideally I seed the plot before a rain storm. The dried up dead weeds act as a mulch, and the rains not only help germinate the seed, but they knock it down to the ground for the desired seed to soil contact. If the weeds are not quite dead yet, I'll re-spray and return in another two weeks to seed. Whitetail Institute has developed three products, Secret Spot, BowStand and No-Plow that are all designed specifically for these type plots.



The second poor man's food plot idea I like to use involves either a late summer standing corn or bean field. In this one, I only use turnips and radish. Three excellent products for this situation are Whitetail Institutes, Tall Tine Tubers, Winter-Greens and No-Plow. With farmer or landowner permission, I simply walk around in the rows where I want my plot to grow and spread the tiny seeds on the exposed soil. The fields are generally weed free and irrigated. As the corn and beans dry, the sunlight hits the soil and helps the tiny turnips and radish grow. Once the field is picked, I have a beautifully manicured food plot in place. After the first frosts of fall, the starches in their leaves turn to sugars. The deer hammer the greens all fall, and dig for the rest of the plant in the winter. The turnips and radish have no effect on the combines at all, and a few will get run over but it's no big deal.

The last, and simplest plot I do requires a bit of fertilizer and... that's it. I will find potential treestand or feeding areas and fertilize them. Yep, it's that simple, I fertilize the native weeds. Deer know where their food is the healthiest and will easily find these areas. Their nutrient rich weeds will become preferred food sources and the results are impressive. I like to use a bag of 12-12-12 fertilizer mix from my local Home Depot. I prefer to fertilize them in the spring and summer, but sometimes wait for the fertilizer to go on clearance in late spring.

Once my plots are growing well and it is nearing the fall, I start to monitor them. By going into complete scent free mode, the deer have no reason for alarm as I maintain my summer trail camera routine. I'll put out my cameras in easy to access places, and begin to condition the local deer with DUI – Deer Under the Influence attractant spray. The DUI sprays are very habit forming, and deer love them. I'll spray a bit each time to check a camera, and soon after the deer will curiously arrive for a sniff, and a picture. Eventually the deer form the habit of checking the spot in front of the camera each day or night. If I set everything up properly, I have a huntable treestand nearby. If not I quickly figure out where to hang one.

That's it... short, sweet and simple, just like this article. Get out this year and try a poor man's plot. You don't need to spend a lot of money creating an effective food plot. As always, be safe and have fun. And send us pictures of your plot... and your trophies.





Ruger & Lipsey's Introduce 6 New Ruger No. 1 Rifle Configurations

Lipsey's, the exclusive distributor of the Ruger No. 1 single-shot rifle, has announced the release of six new configurations. For those not familiar with the Ruger No. 1, it is touted as the ultimate "classic" rifle. The weapon is centered on a falling-block breach mechanism with ejector. The safety is tangmounted and the barrels are banded for sling mounts.

The new configurations spread the gamut of calibers, barrel lengths, and finishes. The two center-fire options include a .308 rifle with a stainless barrel and a 6.5 Creedmoor with a whopping 28" barrel.

The new configurations are:

- 1B Sporter chambered in 6.5 Creedmoor with 28" barrel, blued with walnut furniture.
- · 1S Sporter chambered in 35 Whelen with 24" barrel, blued with walnut furniture.
- · 1S Sporter chambered in 44 Magnum with 20" barrel, blued with walnut furniture.

• 1V Varmint chambered in .243 Win with 26" barrel, blued with walnut furniture and 1-in-7.7" twist.

• K1RSI International chambered in .308 Win 20" barrel, stainless with walnut furniture.

• 1A Light Sporter chambered in .275 Rigby with 24" barrel, blued with walnut furniture and express sights.

All rifles feature Ruger's patented Scope Mounting System, with quarter-rib integral scope bases. Ruger states they "never shoot loose and accomodate Ruger scope rings, which are included with each rifle.





Browning Crossbows Introduces the OneSixTwo Crossbow

In the tradition of Browning Firearms, Browning Crossbows is pleased to announce the OneSixTwo Crossbow from the line of ZeroSeven Crossbows. The OneSixTwo will feature Mossy Oak Break-Up Country camouflage and will be made in the U.S.A.

Built for speed and accuracy, the OneSixTwo is rated to shoot at 370 FPS. The crossbow is also packed with industry leading patent pending technologies.

The Browning Crossbow OneSixTwo ships fully assembled. Additionally it will have the Browning patent pending Crank Cocking Device (CCD) installed from the factory and will ship in the Browning TPS (Total Protection System) Travel Case. The heavy duty case has large latches and balanced carry handles to keep the bow protected in storage or travel. The bow also comes equipped with a bore sighted Cross 1.5-5 x 32 mm push button illuminated crossbow scope with auto shut off. Three 22" Browning carbon arrows are also included

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Hunters familiar to the quality of a rifle's trigger will appreciate the Triggertech trigger system in the OneSixTwo crossbow. The trigger has only a 3 lbs pull weight and with the Frictionless Release Technology, a responsive and smooth release. The frictionless sear on the trigger allows for a smooth feel without any trigger creep.

For added safety, the ADF (Anti-Dry Fire) feature will not allow the safety to be off if an arrow hasn't been loaded. In addition, the Triggertech designed trigger won't fire unless the arrow has been loaded with the proper vane facing down. This ensures positive contact between the arrow and the string.

The patented flight track hook groove keeps the cams aligned when cocking the bow. This design allows for an even and consistent draw and results in better timing for the cams when fired producing repeatable accuracy.

The OneSixTwo comes with the Browning Crank Cocking Device. This easy to use cranking system reduces the draw to just 17 lbs. and stores in the cheek piece of the bow for easy deployment and cocking. Simply press the button on the butt stock and the check piece lifts up revealing the cocking mechanism.

The soft touch rubber textured feel Comfort Ledge Palm rest has proprietary rubber finger reminders that help with vibration, sound suppression and added safety for the user when firing.

The quiver can be placed on either side of the bow and lines up parallel to the stock using the left or right picatinny rails. There is also a rail on the bottom of the forearm for added custom ability of a grip or other accessories.

ODU MAGAZINE"