Jan/Feb 2017 **Fishing Edition**

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vexilar Ice Cold Kokes Wandering Walleyes **Cats Playing In The Snow**

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grow, not only to sustain our popularity, but to ensure that our promotional partnerships continue to get new exposure. This affects our current and new readership in one over great way..... We will continue to bring you news, articles and story's to entertain, educated and inform.

PARTERSHIPS... Who have we partnered with? ODU Magazine, as many know, is the largest 100% digital fishing magazine out there. Again we would like to stress 100% digital. For digital magazines to gain ground, growth in exposure and readership we need to support one another. ODU has reached out to three other 100% digital outdoor magazines to cross share to our readership bases and I hope our readership has a chance to visit these three magazines: CrappieNOW (www.crappienow.com), **Adventuress** (www.betheadventuress.com) and CatfishNOW (www.catfishnow.com).

A SAD DAY... A couple weeks ago our industry lost a supportive and inspiring gentlemen to cancer, who I personal considered a friend and a sincere mentor. TJ Stallings, was the first professional media person in the industry I meet, way back in 2004. He was there then and yearly to lend a hand, a funny joke, his blessings,

GROWTH... Welcome

back to ODU Magazine. 2017 might have started out slow for all of us here at ODU, but this year will our pace 2016. In the coming month we will announce more partnerships to help grow

our readership and our community of fishermen and hunters. As a free publication it is important that we continue to



and his opinions. He was a friend to all anglers, even if you didn't know him, because his work always extended into our boats without many of us knowing it.

Please take a moment and read a wonderful story about TJ, written by our friend Ken Duke... http://fishingtackleretailer.com/passing-t-j-stallings/ God be with you TJ Stallings, Rest In Peace Dear Friend!

Did You Miss ODU Magazine's Last

Editions?





Hay 2016 Late Spring

April 16'

May 16'

UMAGAZINE



Jun/Jul 16'



Top 25 Product



Sept/Oct 16'



Dec 16'

THIS EDITION OF ODU MAGAZINE

••• Ice fishing heads up this edition with



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

coverage on panfish, trout, walleye, catfish, tournament play and ice safety. For the open water anglers you have bass, panfish and a great article on how to target halibut from a kayak. Also, check out the Hunting Zone.

Facebook... Our readers have mostly come from our Twitter accounts (35,000 @ODUFishing and ODU Hunting) over the years and for 2017 we are happy to say that Facebook has been growing a little as well. In early January our private group page on Facebook had a little over 1000 followers, and now we are at nearly 2800. Welcome all and of fell free link course to ioin at this https://www.facebook.com/groups/ODUMagazine/

Email us at <u>odu.media@odumagazine.com</u> if you have a story we should share, a video that everyone needs to see or if you want to be a monthly contributor on the website. We were founded as a website and digital publication for fishermen /hunters/outdoorsmen by fishermen/hunters/outdoorsmen. We are the ones on the water and in the woods all the time, so let us share your stories.

....WS

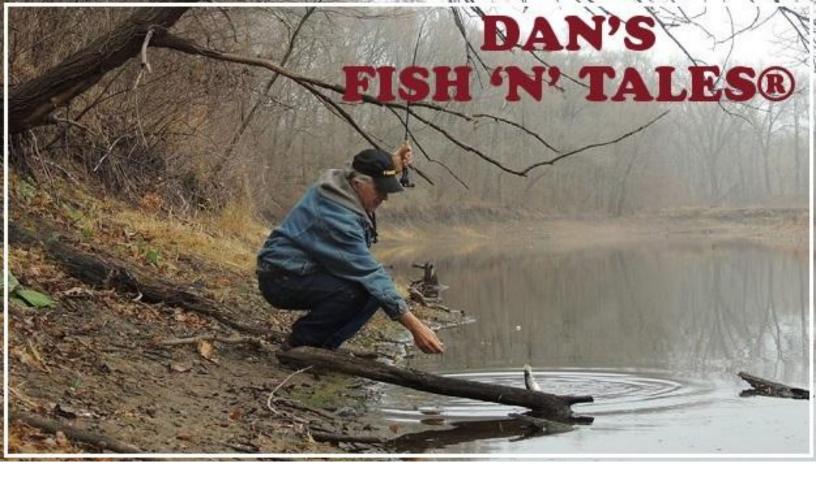
Thank you to all who have contributed to make this and past editions a success! And please, enjoy the outdoors. Larry Thornhill and William Schwarz Co-Founders of ODU Magazine

Ice Fishing Section: Flashing on the Ice, Pg 7 Using a Bait Jig, Ice Cold Kokes, Pg 14 Ice Cold Kokes, Pg 18 Wandering Walleyes, Pg 26 Cats Play In The Snow, TOO!, Pg 31 First Ice Trout, Pg 35 HT Ice Blue Ultralight System, Pg 38 Hypothermia – The Silent Enemy, Pg 39 **Tournament Strategies On Ice, Pg 45** Improve Your Ice Fishing by 50%, Pg 50 Ace in the Hole, Pg 57 Lake Trout Insights, Pg 60 Ice Bluegills Deep, Pg 64 Safety on the Hard Water, Pg 67 Easy Ideas For Increased Ice-Fishing Success, Pg 69 **Open Water Fishing Section:** Throw it out and reel it back or just do nothing, Pg 74 A Better Way For Cold Water Panfish, Pg 77 Just Go Fishing, Pg 80 Winter Locations for Big Largemouth, Pg 82 Winter Bassin' On Man-Made Reservoirs, Pg 84 **Jig Fishing For Bass, Pg 88** Team Sewer's Halibut Tips and Tricks, Pg 96 **Jigging Spoon Craze, Pg 100 Hunting Section:** Ethical Hunting Will Maintain The Tradition, Pg 103 Henry .30-30, Pg 105 The Plight or Flight of the Crossbow, Pg 107



Cover image of Clam Outdoors Pro Staffer, Tony Mariotti. Cover courtesy of Clam Outdoors (<u>http://www.clamoutdoors.com/</u>).

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Flashing on the Ice

By Dan Galusha

Part ONE "Ice Fishing This Season"

A piece of equipment that every ice angler needs to be more productive is an electronic flasher. In years past it was all one color, and the lines could be a little confusing. For the past several years color has been added and improved, along with much more sensitive, better interference and



noise rejection, and a zoom in some higher level units.

The best way to describe the flasher is that it is the angler's eyes beneath the surface. The unit will show the complete column of water rather than just areas like an underwater camera will do, and make it much easier to use when "hole hopping" and trying to find fish. It can also show if fish are active, which is important whenever fishing, but even more so in ice fishing. This is why the units with color are the best choice. These show fish, bottom and lures in different colors, and with the FLX-28 there are 5 colors available. You can see your lure fall, and the fish movement around it. If fish are coming off the bottom as the lure is dropping, then it is a good chance they are ready to bite.

In some cases there will be heavy weeds on the bottom that block out fish movement closer to the bottom. For this it is recommended to have a unit with a low power switch, which will reduce the weeds, and allow fish movement to be seen. I've found this setting on my FLX-28 to be very beneficial in these circumstances, but that is the only time I've used it.



Along this same line of thought is the use of a zoom feature. I like using this when the fish are holding very tight to the bottom. It provides great separation and target viewing of the jig's position, but at the same time has one side that shows the normal view.

Heavy red lines indicate the bottom, top and heavier structures/cover. Weaker signals, such as the lure are shown as a green line, while fish are normally orange or yellow. Fish can also be indicated in green, if they are small, such as baitfish, or if they are on the edge of the cone angle. They can also be red when larger ones move into range, or if a fish is directly under the cone and closer. Another fish signal is orange with a thin green line on either side.



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Using the lines is very easy. Once fish are seen in the hole, drop the lure, and turn up the gain until you have a good signal, without clutter, and can watch it fall to the area of the fish. If active, fish should rise to the lure. If not, drop the lure below the fish, and bring it back up. There are times when the fish your lure passes does not hit, but fish below will. Many times I've noticed that when a fish takes the lure the flasher's line will turn red. There have been times when I've set the hook on this occurrence, in that there was no other indication of a strike, other than a slight weight feeling when I pulled up on the rod.



Normally I use a Frabill Straight Line rod/reel combo, which does not use a float, for three main reasons. One is it is easier to cover a lot more water of various depths and locations from top to bottom. Secondly, it is easier and more fun to fight fish. The third is staying in practice for the feel I need in open water when fishing soft plastics and jigs. By using the color flasher it all but eliminates the need for a float.

From time to time there will be interference, or what is called "cross talk" from another angler's unit. Fellow outdoor writer, Don Banning and I had this problem a few years ago, when we had the same manufacturer's units, and the only way to avoid it was to turn one unit off, or separate in our fishing areas. Now, with my Vexilar, this problem is solved with a double interference rejection system, and even more interference settings in the FLX-28.

Along the same line, it is important to know how to use the gain control. A person should use no more gain than is necessary to see the lure, and fish. Too much gain can create clutter. Think of the gain as a volume control – too much volume on a radio can cause distortion and buzzing – the same is true on the



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TESTS ARE IN! - IRILL THROUGH OVER TOO INCHES OF ICE WITH OTE CHARKED BATTERY.

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flasher, only that it is seen as unwanted lines.

Another

important factor is the position of the transducer. Be sure the bottom of the transducer is positioned at the bottom edge of the ice; otherwise it can reflections get from the sides of the hole.

Batteries should always be maintained to their peak charge. Use a digital automatic

charger. One with a red and green light, such as Vexilar's, is ideal. The red light comes on after being plugged in indicate the to battery is being charged. When fully charged a light will green come on. At this point the charger can be removed, left or on to the maintain The charge. reason it is important to use a fully charged



battery is to assure top performance of the unit, as many things can happen, from "spinning" lines as in inference, to no lines at all.

It was mentioned at the first that this piece of equipment is very important to an angler's productivity. I found out first hand just how important it can be. Several years ago I was fishing without a flasher, and was having poor to fair results. Then I moved up to a single color flasher, and had some improvement,



but when I went color, with an FL-8SE, the improvement was dramatic. The FL-8se is the lower end of the product line. I've also used the FL-12 and FL-22HD, and now use the ultimate in ice fishing flashers, the FLX-28. The FLX-28 also has a digital depth read out, and two zoom zones. It should be noted that you don't have to go "whole hog" when purchasing a unit. Look at the depth of areas you fish, and what you actually need. While all the "bells and whistles" are nice, and can help greatly in making for a successful trip, the lower end can still do the basics to help find fish, show the lure, and indicate active fish. Plus, Vexilar has an accessory for anglers wanting to add digital depth capabilities to their older or lower end units.

When "flashing on the ice", make sure it is colorful. I'm sure you will be glad you did.

For further information about color flashers visit the Vexilar website at <u>www.vexilar.com</u>.

If you have any questions about this, or another fishing subject, drop me a line through the DAN'S FISH 'N' TALES[®] website at <u>www.dansfishntales.com</u>, and Facebook at <u>www.facebook.com/dansfishntales</u>.

Until next time get out on the ice, and have a great day of fishing.





Using a Bait Jig

By Dan Galusha

Part TWO "Ice Fishing This Season"

There are many ice fishing jigs on the market, but one that is very effective can't be purchased as a preassembled product. It is what can be called, a "bait jig".

While components for this jig are simple – a lead head jig, and bait – it can be expanded upon to provide its full definition. Here is the list of components, and how they are used in assembling the jig:

JIG HEAD

Use a 1/100 to 1/8 ounce lead head, with a thin wire hook. It is best to use a jig without a keeper barb collar, such as made by J-

Mac Lures. There can be a slight exception to the collar, by using a thin-bodied Ratfinkee jig, which

doesn't have the barb. The thin body acts like a thicker wired hook. I'll use the Ratfinkee in the smaller number 12 and 10 sizes, with the occasional number 8. Also, there are times when the body of a Ratfinkee or Ratso become damage, but will still have a good head. Don't discard them. Use them for the "bait jig", or replacement Ratso bodies. BAIT

The bait for this jig acts as the body. This is the reason that I



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FLX-28 Ultra Pack

FL-20 Ultra Pack

FL-22 HD Ice Pro

FL-18 ProPack II

FL-12 Genz Pack

FL-8'SE Genz Pack



prefer about three different types of Power Bait – the Wiggler, Honey Worm and Crappie Nibble. Live bait, which would be a wax worm or spike, would be used as with anv other jig for "tipping".

ASSEMBLY

Honey Worm – Slide the worm on to the shank of a jig with a number 8 hook, as would be done with any plastic body. This can be either the plain shank or Ratfinkee jig. The jig can then be tipped with a Crappie Nibble, wax worm or spike.

Wiggler – Do the same as above, but with a smaller number 10 or 12 hook. For this I would prefer tipping it with a Crappie Nibble or spike, but a wax worm will also work.

Crappie Nibble - These are a bit different when using as bodies. One or two can be placed on the shank of a number 10 or 12 hook, while you may get 3 or 4 on a number 8 or 6 hook. With the colors available an angler can mix by alternating one color behind the other,



or use all of the same color. One that is already mixed is the rainbow color. I will use it alone, or stagger it with a white, chartreuse or chartreuse/glitter between two rainbow Nibbles. The same can be done with the aforementioned chartreuse/glitter Nibble, which adds a flash to any combination until the glitter is washed off. As with the others, these can be tipped with live bait. Also, remember the Nibbles will need to be replaced quicker than the Honey Worm or Wiggler.

USEAGE

The Honey Worm and Wiggler bodies are best when the fish are moderately to heavily active. Use the Crappie Nibbles as a body for when fish need the water chummed, as these will milk heavily in the water, and create a feeding stimulation.

When using any of these bodies, especially the Crappie Nibble, be sure to have a plain Ratfinkee, Gill Pill, Diamond Jig or Demon, tipped with live bait, a Crappie Nibble, or Gulp Maggot or Waxie, rigged and ready to drop in the same hole. If the fishing starts getting hot and heavy, there won't be time to keep rebuilding the Crappie Nibble bodies. Of course, if the fishing is so tough that only that type of body is producing fish, then you will have to take the time, or make sure an extra is pre-rigged on another rod. This is another reason I carry at least four Frabill Straight Line rod/reel combos that are rigged and ready to go with a variety of jigs.

To all of the above mentioned rigs I apply Kick'N Bass Crappie and Java scents. This adds that extra "punch" needed to create a strong "odor zone" to attract fish, and entice them to strike quicker and harder.

It should be mentioned that this same jig can be used for open water season, especially with the Honey Worm body, and when working brush piles or bobbing a jig under a float. So, don't put away the components once the ice is gone, since it can often be a great producer as the ice is leaving and has melting edges.

If you have any questions about this or another fishing subject, contact me through the Dan's Fish 'N' Tales[®] website at <u>www.dansfishntales.com</u> or Facebook page at <u>www.facebook.com/dansfishntales</u>.

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





ICE COLD KOKES

A ICE FISHING STORY FROM TOM GRUENWALD OUTDOORS FROM A FEW YEARS BACK

By Tom Gruenwald

"Compared with our normal weather here in it's Montana, quite a bit windier than usual," Mike Howe comments, as we load the last of our gear into his truck. "I wasn't really expecting this, but I think we'll stick with my plan."

His plan involves heading out to Bitterroot Lake in search of kokanee salmon. ľm fired especially up, because this will be my first time fishing for this species through the ice, and I've heard nothing except how much fun these scrappy salmonids little are to catch.

Often called the "pan fish of the west" because of their often compact size and plentiful abundance, they

sound like an entertaining species. Still, Mike has explained they are strong, muscular fish that fight hard for their size—and assured me they aren't all small, either, which has me intrigued.

"And when you tie into a feisty four pound kokanee," he smiled, "you'd better hang on."

"Most of the ones we'll likely catch here in the Kalispell area will average 6-10", he advises, "but I've caught them significantly bigger." As I slip my Vexilar into the back of Mike's truck and shut the door, my mind daydreams back to past conversations where he's referenced bigger kokanee, and Mike seems to read my mind. "And when you tie into a feisty four pound kokanee," he smiled, "you'd better hang on."

Walking around and getting into the driver's seat, Mike reverts the subject back to the wind.

"Provided this wind maintains its present direction, the area I'm planning to fish should be somewhat protected, so we should be okay." Clay Anderson, Mike's friend and assistant at A-Able/Howe's Fishing Outfitters agrees. "And with these relatively mild temperatures, even if it switches, I don't think it will affect things much."

For Sean and I, these above freezing temperatures couldn't be more welcomed. Winter temperatures have been absolutely ferocious, and made our filming efforts throughout the 2014 season the ultimate challenge. Sean has been dealing with a host of issues when trying to keep his camera, tri-pod, audio equipment, transmitters, receivers, batteries and his full gamut of other electronics functioning, while I've been doing all I can to come up with innovative ways to be quick and concise in an effort to get things done efficiently.

So when I initially let him know we were heading into western Montana to film in the heart of the Rocky Mountains, he just scratched his head and grinned. "You just can't get enough, can you?"

I need not respond. He already knows I can't.



GRUENWALD OUTDOORS ALL ICE FISHING, ALL THE TIME

Fortunately, however, if the winds don't get too strong, things appear to be okay. With today's highs predicted to rise well into the upper 30's (Fahrenheit), we're both feeling pretty good.

In the truck, I settle into a conversation about kokanee with Mike and Clay. "You've already explained how you like to use longer, ultra light action rods and light tackle for these fish. How deep do you expect we'll be fishing?" I question.

"We'll have to find them, of course, but I would guess anywhere from 100 to 200 feet," Mike answers. The biggest concentrations of kokanee will usually be the smaller fish, and they typically suspend and school heavily."

"You just can't get enough, can you?"

Our conversation is interrupted as Mike's cell rings—it's Chancy Jeschke, the fishing department manager from over at Snappy's Sports Senter here in Kalispell and—yes, that's center with an "S"— don't ask me why, that's just how it is.

Anyway, Chancy is calling to let us know that he and local angler Pete Jellar of Pete's Tackle are packed





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INTERNATION MAKE A DIFFERENCE. FEATURES LIKE SUREFLOTE" INSULATION THAT CAN KEEP YOU AFLOAT FOR



UP TO TWO KOURS IF YOU WENT TOO EARLY OR TOO LATE. STRIKER ICE... GO PREPARED.

GO EARLY. GO LATE. GO PREPARED.

up and anxious to fish, they just want to confirm we're still planning on heading out to fish Bitterroot. Mike acknowledges, then gets quiet.

"Mmmmm," he utters, nodding, "I see. Okay, well let's stick with the plan. If it gets too bad we can always move." He looks down briefly to end the call, sets his phone on the dash and puts the truck in gear.

I look over, awaiting whatever news is about to be revealed. "Chancy says the warm temperatures have created quite a bit of slush on the ice," Mike shares. "The ice pack is plenty thick and it's not hazardous, but we may have to deal with some water on top of the ice."

"How bad is it, Mike?" I ask.

Sounds like several inches of standing water in places," he reports. "Could get interesting." These aren't welcome words to guys transporting sensitive electronic camera equipment, and fishing while soaking our feet in several inches of ice water—waterproof boots or not—is not exactly pleasant, either. But

thankfully, the temperatures are relatively mild and we've been forewarned so the proper precautions can be taken.

I turn back to Mike, ready to continue our prior conversation. "So, you were saying the majority of these kokes will suspend?

"Yup," he confirms. "What's interesting is most of the kokanee will rise to feed on clouds of plankton, but these are normally the smaller fish. The biggest kokes will often feed on freshwater shrimp called Mysis, which you'll typically find holding in deeper water near bottom."

Mike pauses to check his rear view mirror, then takes a sip of coffee before continuing. "These deeper fish are present in significantly smaller quantities than their massive schools of suspended counterparts, but they're a challenge and really fun to catch. The plan will be to have you, Clay, Chancy and Pete use finesse rods and tactics to work the more numerous, suspended fish. I'm going to try using a longer, 6-7' open water combo and work a different rig deep and see if I might be able to hook one of those larger fish. While doing so, I might even catch a native pygmy whitefish."

I've heard of pygmy whitefish, but never actually seen one, so I suddenly get a bit excited.

"You catch pygmy whitefish out here?"

"Sure do. It's a whitefish species native to the region, and feeds almost exclusively on bottom, so if I put some time in we may tie into a couple." I hope he does, simply because I'd like to see one.

...driving along surrounded by classic, snow covered Rocky Mountain." crags seems almost surreal."

In the meantime, I settle back to enjoy the scenery of Kalispell, Montana. Being from Wisconsin, driving along surrounded by classic, snow covered Rocky Mountain crags seems almost surreal. But beautiful it



is.

We arrive at the lake, where we find Chancy and Pete already there unloading their gear. We acknowledge each other enthusiastically hand with brief shakes, but don't really stop to talk. We're all anxious to

fish.

Our four wheelers idle as we load and hook up the sleds. Once again, I take in the gorgeous high country scenery, and glance across the ice, looking for evidence of water or slush. From the launch, it doesn't look too bad at all, but I'll soon learn looks can be deceiving.

Driving onto the ice, all is well—for a distance of about 500 yards. I'm looking ahead, following Mike, Clay and Chancy, when I notice Mike's four wheeler tracks turn gray as the tires dig. The engine groans noticeably as the machine begins to fish tail, sending plumes of water and ice spraying from the tires.

Clay follows Mike's path in an effort to avoid plowing through fresh slush, and Chancy follows suit.

"I hit the area and my machine drops a good 10" into thick slush...and I can smell slush sizzling on the hot exhaust."

I pull off to the side, hoping maybe it's only a pocket and I can avoid the slop. No such luck. I hit the area and my machine drops a good 10" into thick slush. I respond by shifting down and pressing the throttle as far as it will go. Good thing, too, because the machine barely keeps moving. Water and slush are spattering over the entire machine. My bibs and coat are covered in a wet, shiny glaze and I can smell slush sizzling on the hot exhaust.

Continue reading this great ice fishing story at this link -<u>http://www.tgofishing.com/ic</u> <u>e-cold-kokes/4</u>



We all love fishing, but our sport is brought to a higher level when we get to see a kiddo catch a giant. This past week in North Dakota Avery caught this 2 lbs, 9 oz, 16" long yellow perch, which was 6 ounces shy of the state record. Congratulations to Avery for this fantastic catch. Wish we knew the lucky lure that made it happen!





WANDERING WALLEYES

By Joel Nelsen

Most of us who fish walleyes today don't remember Buck Perry's Spoonplug or structure fishing instruction, myself included. Though it was before my time, I, like anglers in mv most generation definitely came to appreciate the teachings and technology to follow. The idea that 80% of the fish live in 20% of the water gave way to detailed contour maps and eventually GPS/Sonar units that brought us there, along with a bevy of baits and techniques that helped us fish it more effectively. That said, especially for ice anglers there are many esteemed walleye factories that "Buck" that trend, with broad basin areas and walleyes scattered and stretched to the horizon. Famed fisheries like Upper Red Lake, Lake of the Woods, and Winnipeg simply don't align with our structure specific view of finding 'eyes,



at least in the traditional sense. Here's how to track down and catch those fish that roam more than they remain.

My first trip to Upper Red Lake was a confusing one. We were after crappies, but no matter where we drilled and how we fished, there were far more walleyes to be found. Thousands of anglers were all over the crappie boom that resulted from an empty biological niche the heavily overfished walleye





population had left. However, by the time I had gotten there, the walleyes were doing quite well, and though they were to be immediately released for some years to come, those fish were coming on strong. Hole after hole, move after move, walleye, not crappies came to the jig. It got to the point where we became far more efficient at the walleye game, and began to take note of some of the finer points that were working well.

First, we're talking about fish that are truly spread out over a

vast area. Just as you'd cover ground in a boat and troll across the wide open expanse, so too we drove and drilled, covering areas in a quarter mile grid. Every few hundred yards we'd spread out and drill, catch what lived below those holes, and move on, drilling and fishing without rest unless multiple fish per hole started to come in shorter bursts. That's part of the key to fishing basin areas in general, don't camp out unless you've found schools of fish and the all-important bait they're chasing.

Another key is paying attention to small details and differences from location to location. Remember that these areas are generally as flat as a pancake, and boring below water as a desert is above. Fish are

spread across а relatively equal range for depth miles and miles in all directions. making tiny differences in substrate and bottom depth of great importance. On many occasions I've found broad areas or swaths that for whatever reason seem to be better than the surrounding area. Often, with enough underwater camera work or





later in open water with the boat can we crack the code.

One such time was on Lake Mille Lacs, which is known for its varying structural components that range from rock and gravel, to sand and mud with all kinds of shapes and sizes to the many humps, saddles, and piles that line its lake bottom. Still, even here, we were on a basin perch and walleye bite over mud in an area that stretched literally a mile or more. All of it looked the same on the map, but a summer recon trip told the story that has this spot being great even today. In the middle of the basin, but in direct line with an underwater rock and gravel point, is an area with sand lenses. These small pockets and lines of sand are interspersed throughout the mud, and for some reason this patchwork of differing substrate seems to hold far more invertebrates than many parts of the lake. I couldn't see it without looking at bottom hardness on my open-water sonar, but marked the area well and returned in the winter.

Simple mobility alone isn't enough to keep the bite going however. I'm convinced that especially in a generally plain area where fish are used to roving about for food, you need to call fish in to your setup. Basin walleyes are very used to covering territory, as they're not relying on structural elements and the biological activity that's perpetually present there to constantly bring them food. They have to work for it, they have to find it themselves. That makes aggressive jigging patterns with search baits like Slab Raps, Rippin' Raps, or other noisy lures ultra-important. In basin situations when you're both covering ice, and you expect the wandering walleyes to cover it too, there are few baits too loud and proud. Rattling spoons and baits in bright colors are great here, even when they fail to elicit a strike. While it's difficult to stay mobile with live bait, sometimes you have to fish two holes at a time, calling them with the dinner bell bait, and catching them on a plain hook with a free-swimming minnow below a bobber. When the bite is like this, I've learned the hard way to never argue with the fish, you'll never win.

Now that you're an aggressive ice-pounder that fishes fast, when is enough, enough? How many holes must you punch, and how often must you move? I let the fish decide that as I drill my way across the ice-scape. If walleyes are only being caught when you mark one, drop on it, and catch it, you'll find a direct correlation between the number of walleyes you catch to the numbers of holes you drill. On days like these, which is so often the case, fish need to be drilled on top of, and directly fished. Keep moving and moving until you're either too tired, or have ceased to be angry with the walleyes. On days where you're calling in fish from a distance, or there are active pods of fish chasing bait, you're much better off making small moves directly adjacent to where you're already being successful. The quarter





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mile hops aren't required unless that area is dead. Rather, spread out radially away from the last point of activity and be ready to saddle up and re-drill should you or a friend find them again.

This kind of fishing is fun and rewarding, with your effort often being the primary obstacle to the number of fish you'll catch that day. Pay attention to the details, but don't be afraid to keep moving should the grass prove greener, or ice be whiter just a short drill away.

About Joel: Thirty-some years ago, I was lucky to be born into a farm family with a strong work ethic and love for the land. My folks were too busy farming and raising three boys to spend much time hunting and fishing, but they were encouraging towards my passion for the woods and water that took root in me from a young age. Some of my first memories of the outdoors include chasing squirrels and rabbits up the hill, and fishing for chubs in the "crick" below our house. From there, Grandpa Stanley honed some skills and taught patience while I'm sure exercising plenty of his own. Those first memories were fuel for a fire that burned from the hills of northern Wisconsin to the mountains of Yellowstone. From the small farm ponds of the south, to the big windswept waters of the north, I fished wherever I could.

I learned then more than I thought there was to know, and have come to understand that the only true way to preserve knowledge is to share it. Now, I find myself trying to follow in their footsteps, as I teach my own children the lessons that have been so graciously handed down to me. In the process, I've found joy and satisfaction in not only the pursuit, but the partnerships. In not just the acts, but the experience. I feel a strong sense of purpose in sharing those adventures with fellow sportsmen and outdoors-women. Without the people that did so for me, I am confident that my life would somehow be less whole for it. Link to his site - <u>http://www.joelnelsonoutdoors.com</u>

Joel Nelson Outdoors

www.joelnelsonoutdoors.com

Cats Play In The Snow,

By Matt Johnson

When we think about ice fishing, we typically picture walleyes, crappies, sunfish, perch, pike, maybe even a lake trout or eel pout. Not many people think of catfish. Even the mere idea of catching a catfish under the ice results in scowls — sometimes even laughter. But for those who venture out to chase these whiskered critters find themselves smack-dab in the middle of not only an incredible tussle, but also one of the tastiest winter fish across the ice belt.

Before getting into the details, I want to stress the importance of safety. Ice safety should be on the forefront of every outing, but with additional diligence when hunting catfish. Catfish and currents go together. Current — or areas where current is nearby — make up a lot of the locational patterns. Please keep ice safety a top priority as you read the following locational tips for finding catfish.

So where do catfish spend their winters? As a general rule, catfish will locate in deeper water or areas where current catches their attention. These fish will hold in those deeper pockets, but I've also found them as shallow as 5 feet. It all depends on the body of water. Shallower ponds and lakes will have catfish holding in the deepest parts — providing there aren't areas where there is an influx of water. I prefer to target bodies of water that are connected to rivers or creeks and streams. Offshoots from major rivers that pool into lakes and systems are excellent places to target, as well. Finding catfish can be relatively easy if you just spend a few minutes studying a lake map before punching any holes, but here are a few ideas to narrow down the search.

In lakes or reservoirs with deep water, I like to search out the channel. Most of these reservoirs and lake systems have main channels where rivers (at one point in history) ran strong and may still provide some current. These channel areas oftentimes create burrows along the bottom that

give way to cuts and depressions where catfish gather for comfort. It's almost as if these cuts are roads for catfish to follow. The tough part about this equation is that it can be hard to pick up fish on the Vexilar in these areas unless you're right on top of them. Though some catfish will suspend, many of them will relate to the bottom and need a little coaxing to come up. I see this happen more in lakes with less current, as in current systems I tend to find more suspended fish.

Sometimes these cuts are only a few feet wide, while in other situations you can find them several hundred feet in width. It all varies on the given body of water and from spot to spot. I prefer areas where I can find deep water leading from a shallow inlet — meaning water coming in. These areas seem to create the best rut for these fish to hold in. If I am fortunate enough to have some current (more than the natural current of a lake) then I might have found myself a gold mine. I typically expect to see fish stacked up in these situations.

Other areas of interest include spots where parts of a lake neck-down, causing current. Flats just adjacent to these areas will generally hold catfish, especially if those flats are deeper or even create a hole. Catfish rely heavily on their sense of smell and will move with current to grab the bait once detected. This is why we fish just upstream from snags during the open water months, so when a fish smells what's cooking, they come out to take a taste. The scent travels downstream and pulls the fish out. While this doesn't give you the end-all answer for winter catfish, it does give you a few more chances and can narrow the search when looking at a map.

Some of my personal favorite spots to target winter catfish are holes along the main river (if ice is





safe). A warning, and to reiterate safety: these spots rarely see more than a foot of ice so proceed with the utmost caution. Check the ice constantly and don't make an attempt to target these spots at early ice. Leave these spots for mid-winter, as even during extreme winters we might still only see a few inches of ice over these areas because of current conditions. But if you are fortunate enough to take advantage of these situations, then the rewards can be great. Heavy spoons packed with pieces of minnow will do the trick and hold on — the fish seem to find you.

"Catfish rely heavily on their sense of smell and will move with current to grab the bait once detected. This is why we fish just upstream from snags during the open water months, so when a fish smells what's cooking, they come out to take a taste. The scent travels downstream and pulls the fish out."

There are spots, similar to the above-mentioned holes, along stretches of lakes where there is less current and safer ice. Lake systems that form off of rivers will present similar spots and can be fished in the same way. In all actuality, if you can find spots off the main river that are pushed back into lake chains and backwaters, then you're going to also find consistent action for fish of all sizes — not to mention much safer ice conditions.

Presentations for these whiskered fish are simple: Rely on scent as your main weapon and don't think for a second that these fish won't chase an active presentation. Use multiple pieces of minnow and don't be afraid to have entrails hanging out. Walleye anglers are supposed to be more sophisticated when attaching just a minnow head or tail, but for catfish, you just gob those babies on. There are times when just a small piece is all they want, but I oftentimes error on the side of excess and give them meat.

Jigging spoons are a great tool for these situations, in my opinion. You can pack a treble hook and present a nice "bait ball" for the fish to grab onto. I always replace my trebles with a size larger and with a forged hook if possible. They pull tough and can straighten-out hooks if you let them. The Clam Outdoors Rattlin' Blade Spoon in 1/8 oz tipped with a few pieces of minnow is tough to beat. Otherwise a larger panfish jig like the Drop XXL packed with maggots can coax finicky catfish into biting, as well. For the most part, fathead and crappie minnows are all that are necessary, and are an easy find at most bait shops.

Techniques for getting these fish to bite can at times depend on their mood — much like all species. Let your Vexilar be your fish's mood indicator, and let it tell you what type of action they prefer. Oftentimes you won't have kamikaze catfish, but rather light biters like we often experience with our crappies. Subtle shakes and quivers will sometimes be more than enough, and then just watch your line.



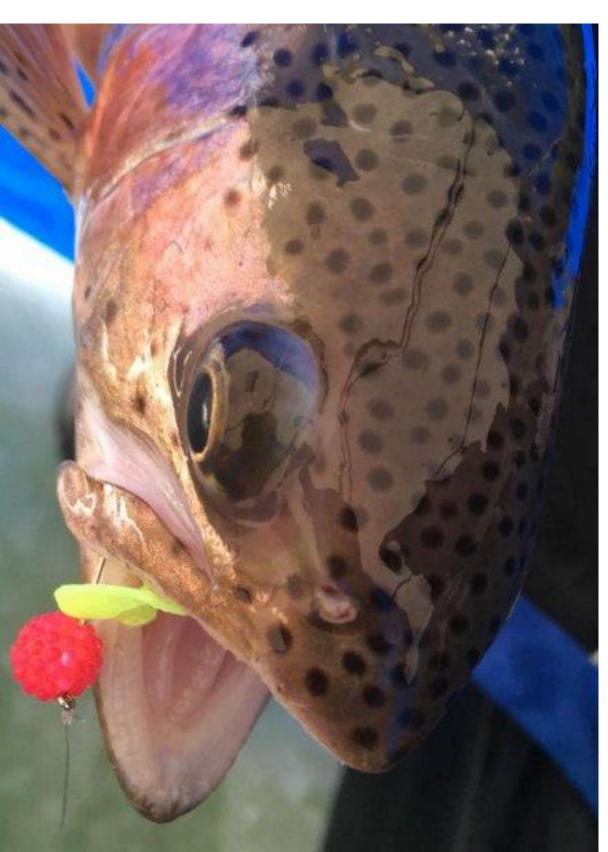
These fish are notorious for just sucking in the bait without anyone knowing, or tasting the bait with their whiskers. Spring bobbers definitely help, but by constantly moving your rod tip you can tell when a fish has the bait, as there will be an abrupt deadening of the rod tip. When that happens, you better set the hook into that cinderblock and get ready for a fight. Finesse isn't the only technique that works. I generally deploy a more aggressive jigging sequence to begin my day, and work down from there to find the desired results.

There's no doubt that catfish can provide a lot of action and excitement out on the ice. Most areas across the ice belt have lakes nearby where catfish are abundant. Like all fish species though, practice selective harvest, as catfish can and will school-up in the winter, and over-harvesting can still take a toll on the catfish species. But if you do decide to take home some catfish for a meal, there is nothing better than a nice Cajun-battered catfish fillet from cold water.

Matt Johnson is the Ice Team Manager and fishing guide in the greater Minneapolis area. <u>www.mattjohnsonoutdoors.com</u>.

FIRST ICE TROUT

By Dan Johnson



First ice is a magical time to pursue many species of gamefish, and members of the trout family are no exception. Just ask veteran trout and salmon guide Bernie Keefe, who plies the high-country lakes around Granby, Colorado.

"Rainbows, brookies and browns are all hungry right now," he says. "The spawn is over and trout are feeding up before the winter crunch settles in."

As a bonus, a lack of fishing pressure in recent months often has trout at ease. "Nobody's fished them for awhile, so they're 'dumbed down' a little bit compared to the rest of the year," he laughs.

Keefe targets skinny water in early winter, where trout pursue crayfish, baitfish and other sizeable sources of sustenance.



"They eat insects, too, of course," he concedes. "But trout have big appetites this time of year and prefer larger forage when they can get it."

He focuses on depths of four to seven feet, especially where bottom transitions sweeten the pot. "Changes from rock to sand or muck can be trout magnets," he offers. "And green weeds can be a plus where available."

On the flip side, vertical inclines are out. "Forget steep drop-offs," he says. "Gentle slopes and flats in the backs of bays or alongside points are ideal."

When he finds a promising fishing area, Keefe quickly pops a trio of holes and sets up shop. "I drill two holes 30 inches apart, which allow me to fish two lines," he explains. "Then I add a third hole in between, so I can sight-fish both outer holes simultaneously."

To maximize comfort and manual dexterity while fishing, he pops a Clam portable shelter over the work zone and fires up a Mr. Heater to ward off the chill. "I like fishing without gloves for better feel, as well as the ability to quickly unhook fish, rebait hooks and retie lines," he says.

In one hole, Keefe drops a flashy attractor lure like an 1/8-ounce Clam Leech Flutter Spoon. In the other, he deploys a more subtle presentation, such as Clam's tungsten Caviar Drop Jig. Spoons are often fished without tippings, but traditional jigs are tricked out with a small soft-plastic or live bait dressing. "Berkley Gulp! and Maki Plastics work very well," he says. "Mealworms and waxies are always good choices if you like live bait."

Spoons are fished with flair. "Give the spoon a 6- to 8-inch lift, then let it flutter back down," he says.

"Dance it in place, pause and repeat the process. When you see a trout rush in, kill the theatrics. Most fish prefer to crush it on the pause."

Keefe cautions to keep your spoon performances well grounded. "You don't have to pound the rocks or stir the mud, but





always keep the spoon within a foot of the bottom," he says.

Jigs are fished with a slower hand, tighter to bottom. "Jigs like the Caviar Drop Jig imitate fish eggs, which don't jump around a whole lot," he says. "But you have to add a little movement to get trout's attention. I favor slow, methodical, 1-inch lift-and-drops, but nervous shakes also have their moments. With either approach, keep the jig within an inch of the bottom."

Whether jigging or spooning, Keefe wields a 28-inch, medium-light Jason Mitchell Meat Stick ice rod, which he says offers a great balance between strength and sensitivity. "The high-vis tip also makes it easy to see light bites when you can't see the lure," he adds, noting that 4-pound Berkley Trilene 100 Percent Fluorocarbon is his line of choice.

Since trout are on the bite, Keefe rarely lingers in an unproductive area. "If you don't get bit within 10 minutes, move," he says.

Most days, the bulk of the action comes early in the day. "Under clear skies, it's usually over by the time the sun hits the ice," he says. "But it's a great way to spend a morning. And cloudy conditions can prolong the action until noon or later."

Keefe says the first-ice flurry usually lasts around three to four weeks, depending on fishing pressure. "When crowds move in, trout slide out to deeper haunts," he says. "They're still catchable, but the early season magic is over for another winter."



HT ICE BLUE ULTRALIGHT SYSTEM

Here's one of many big gills recently caught by HT Pro Staffer @Brian Koshenina. Brian's been doing well all season—as in many winters past--using his HT Ice Blue ultralight system!

"When pan fish are on the move, you need a rod and reel that will perform as hard as you do to track them down," Brian said. "I chose HT's Ice Blues. Not only can I trust my Ice Blue combo to



perform well, but it doesn't break my bank account, either!"

TRIKER

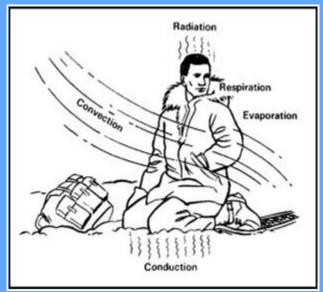
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Recently, Brian decided to try a new lake and it paid off. "This was one of many big gills I caught with my HT Ice Blue rod--I paired it with an HT Accucast 6 bearing spinning reel spooled with 3 pound test to create the ultimate system," he revealed. "My Ice Blue system works flawlessly. and handles all the big pan fish I catch with ease!"

HYPOTHERMIA The Silent Enemy

By Captain Adam Walton

It's 3:00 pm on a frigid day and you just shot a nice buck. A half hour later you get down from your tree stand and find a blood trail left by your trophy. As you track after him, you come across a shallow narrow creek, which the buck apparently crossed. After checking the depth, you determine the 1 foot of water can easily be crossed.



However, as you step in, you trip on a rock and fall belly first into the water. You quickly get back to your feet and brush off the inconvenience before continuing on with tracking your buck. The blood trail leads you deeper into the woods and before long dusk moves in.

A short time later, you find your dead buck and proceed to field dress the animal. By this time darkness has set in, but your familiarity of the area leaves you feeling confident there will be no problems getting home. As you lug the buck through the woods, you begin to sweat from the hard work of dragging the carcass. The weight of the deer is heavier than expected and dragging it out is taking much longer than





anticipated. You soon begin to get cold and start shivering mildly. You continue forward, shivering more and more, to the point it becomes uncontrollable. Shortly after, you start to become confused and can't remember the exact way out of the woods. You move on, but your confusion now has you going the wrong direction and you soon become disoriented. At this point, your shivering has stopped and you become so confused you leave the buck carcass. As you stagger through the woods aimlessly, your body becomes more and more tired, while your mental state deteriorates even more. Well into the evening now, all your rational thought is nonexistent as you stop to sit near a downed tree. After sitting a short time, weakness and tiredness completely take over...You easily slip into a deep sleep. Later that night, worried family members form a search party and they head out to your last known location.

It's 3:00 pm and you haven't seen a thing pass your tree stand all day. A strong cold front has begun to move in, so you decide to head in early. As you begin your decent down the tree, you slip and fall 15 feet to the frozen ground. Immediate pain shoots through your right leg and you quickly realize it is badly broken. As you lay on the frozen ground, you remember your cell phone is sitting inside on the console of your truck. After helplessly laying on the ground for over an hour, coldness sets in and you begin to shiver. Thankfully, you have a few survival items in your coat pocket, including a small knife, matches, and a whistle. Although the pain is immense, you're able to move enough to gather some small nearby tree branches. It takes a few attempts, but you light a small fire with the matches and are able to keep it burning with old foliage around you. Later that night, worried family members form a



search party and they head out to your last known location. The scenarios above both have very different outcomes. Before we conclude those stories, let's first take an in-depth look at hypothermia.

Hypothermia is defined as: "The condition of having an abnormally low body temperature, typically one that is dangerously low."

Hypothermia occurs when heat escapes from your body faster than it can warm itself. Body temperature that is too low affects the brain, causing confusion, poor decision making, and the inability to move well. This makes hypothermia very dangerous since a person may not know it is occurring to them. Most people tend to associate cold outdoor weather with hypothermia; however it can occur in any situation where temperatures are below normal human body temperature. Victims of hypothermia often are elderly people, in fact from the 700 annual deaths; half of the victims are over 65 years old. People who remain outdoors for long periods such as ice anglers, hikers, hunters, etc. and people who drink alcohol are also prone to hypothermia.

Depending on the speed of body heat loss, hypothermia can occur rapidly or develop very slowly. Rapid onset can occur within minutes, while delayed onset can build up over days. Five ways the body can lose heat take place through Convection, Conduction, Radiation, Respiration, and Evaporation. Convection is commonly caused from strong cool winds, while conduction occurs from direct contact,

such as lying on frozen ground or being submerged in cold water. Radiation, respiration, and evaporation of body heat occur naturally. Radiation of body heat can be controlled by wearing proper clothing, while respirations and evaporation (sweating) can be controlled by minimizing over exertion. Recognizing the signs and symptoms of hypothermia are important not only to you, but also to those around you since onset often goes unnoticed until it's too late. Depending on the severity, symptoms of hypothermia may include shivering, confusion, uncoordinated movements, tiredness, memory loss, and poor speech.

The three stages of hypothermia are discussed below. Their temperature ranges can vary some depending on your reference, but generally they are in agreement of a few degrees. This data came from a recent cold weather presentation Dr. Ken Hanson* gave to healthcare providers. Also, please remember a victim can go through each stage very rapidly if conditions allow.



- Mild hypothermia Body temperature ranges between 90 F to 95 F and the victim typically shivers to maintain body temperature.
- Moderate hypothermia Body temperature ranges between 86 F to 90 F and shivering gives way to slight confusion, uncoordinated behavior, and tiredness. Metabolism and body functions slow considerably.

Severe hypothermia - Body temperature is below 86 F and all shivering stops. Mild confusion leads to complete disorientation, irrational thought process, and then into lethargy. The victim will slip into a

coma and die if help does not arrive.

Treatment for hypothermia depends on the severity or stage the victim is in. In cases of mild to moderate hypothermia, remove any wet clothing and get the victim to a warm area. Gradually rewarm them by applying a mild source of heat to the groin, head, neck and sides of the chest. Do not rapidly rewarm any victim of hypothermia. Warm beverages can also help increase the body temperature, but do not give alcoholic beverages. Alcohol actually lowers the body's temperature.

Treatment for severe hypothermia is true medical emergency and will need to be handled by trained If you medical professionals. come across this situation, first call 911. People who have severe hypothermia must be carefully re-warmed and their temperatures monitored. lf applicable, remove all wet clothing and wrap the person warmly. Do not rub the person and try to keep movement of them to a minimum. Do not use direct heat or hot water to warm the person. Warming a victim of severe hypothermia too fast will cause cardiac arrest. If the victim is unconscious, check for a pulse. This should take no longer than 10 seconds and if there is no pulse detected or if you're unsure, begin CPR efforts. CPR should be continued while the victim is being the warmed, until victim

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ADVENTURESS HUNT. FISH. EXPLORE. LIVE.

~ FREE DIGITAL MAGAZINE ~ betheadventuress.com responds, or medical aid becomes available.

The hunter who tracked his trophy buck at the beginning of this article did numerous things wrong. Hypothermia was able to quickly set in after he got wet from tripping in the small creek and over exerted himself while dragging the deer. Since the victim didn't even realize a major problem was developing, hypothermia was able to take hold without him knowing. Unfortunately a search party found his lifeless body the next morning...propped up against the tree he sat down by.

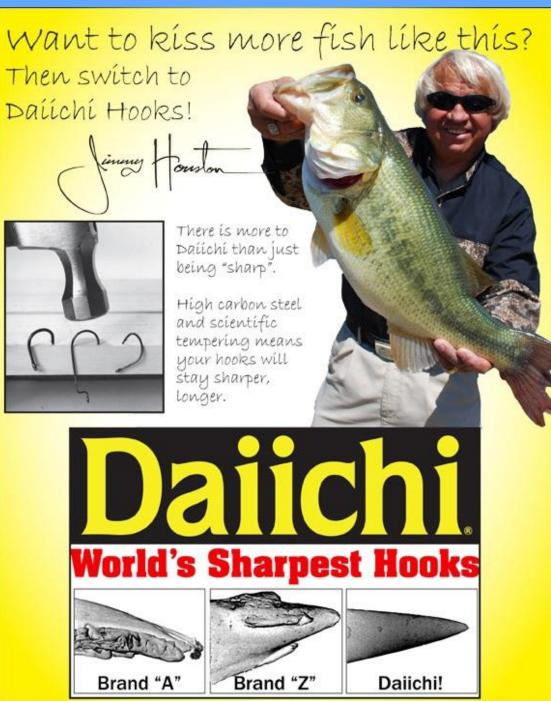
Although moderately hypothermic, the hunter who fell from the tree stand and broke his leg was found alive thanks to a little preplanning. Carrying a small survival kit or a few important items shouldn't be overlooked. A simple kit may include a waterproof fire starting device, Swiss Army knife, 6' parachute cord, and signaling device. These items take up little space and can easily be carried in a large coat pocket.

Please plan accordingly for your next outdoor adventure and remember hypothermia can sneak up on its victims. The slightest sign or symptom shouldn't be ignored...especially if you're alone. Don't become a victim and stay safe!

For more information on cold water exposure, check out our video demonstration. See how cold affects the body in real time and learn a few ways of getting out of the water if you were to fall through thin ice. Video link: https://www.youtube.com/wa tch?v=QKpAzvXSIdA

Reference Assistance *

Dr. Ken Hanson is an **Emergency Medicine Physician** subspecialty who is also boarded in EMS. He currently works for the Mercy Health Systems MD-1 program in Walworth county Wisconsin. https://ems.mercyhealthsyste m.org/team/ Dr. Hanson also has 20+ year of military experience as both a Diving Medical Officer for the US Navy and as a Flight Surgeon for the Air National Guard. He also has interest an in Wilderness Medicine.





TOURNAMENT STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE YOUR PANFISH GAME

By Garett Svir

Competition drives anglers to fish at the top of their game. Human beings are competitive by nature and when anglers compete, great ideas are born. Tournament anglers learn how to manage inefficiencies. They find fish that other anglers overlook. They learn how to catch discerning fish, and not just accept that they are not biting. In a winter panfish tournament, success is measured by ounces rather than pounds. Missing a single bluegill could be the difference between cashing a check or leaving empty handed. Even if you don't want to approach your next ice outing like its tournament day, the techniques that are developed in the heat of battle can help all of us have more fun on the ice this winter. Here are some tournament winning strategies that will make you more successful on the hard water this winter.

Schooley Reels (pictured next page) - Michael Thompson, from the USA Ice Fishing Team, has been using Schooley Reels since the 1980's. He likes the fact that these reels do not twist line. The twists that are caused from line being spun around a fixed spool can be a panfish deterrent. Picky panfish want a jig that will rock and kick seductively but not spin. Schooley Reels have a plastic spool that revolves on a pin and wraps line on straight without twisting it. They are also extremely light weight and comfortable to jig with. The cost effectiveness of the Schooley allows an angler to rig multiple rods and switch presentations quickly.



Mormyshka Jigs- These jigs have been a guarded secret among tournament pros for a long time. Instead of having an eye where line is tied on, these jigs have a hole that runs through the center. The line is then snelled around the hook at the base of the jig. This imparts an action that is irresistible to bluegills. These jigs also stay horizontal and eliminate the need to reposition your knot after every fish.

Tricked out Buckets- Michael Thompson's fishing bucket is not something you will find in a sporting goods store. It is rigged up with a Ram mounted Vexilar. The flasher is mounted in an ergonomic position that allows him to see how fish are reacting to his presentation and watch his line for bites in the same field of vision. Looking back and forth between line and electronics could cost an angler that



tournament winning bite. A clip on the bottom of the bucket holds excess transducer cable in place for ease of moving between holes. This is taking efficiency to an entirely new level. He can walk up, set his bucket next to the hole and begin fishing right away with no set-up required. According to Thompson, you are not catching fish when your jig is not in the water so a tournament angler must learn to limit down time.

Michigan Rigs- This season, I have become obsessed with Michigan rigs. It's really nothing more than a drop shot rig for ice fishing. I start out by attaching a piece of leader material to my line with a blood knot. This leaves me with two tag ends. I pick the straighter of the two ends and attach a fly. The other end is then trimmed off and discarded. On the bottom of the leader I attach a split shot. Where it's legal to use two hooks, a small horizontal jig like the Genz Bug can also be very effective. I've been using a #14 soft hackle from Jeff's Jigs and Flies. com with great success. The slightest shake of the rod handle will bring these flies to life and allow them to swim perfectly in a horizontal manner.

Shallow Cover- I have had some of my best day's bluegill fishing in less than 7 feet of water. Predator



fish, along with heavy fishing pressure, will often push the biggest bluegills into heavy cover. The key is to find small open areas near green healthy weeds. An underwater camera allows an angler to search out these openings and judge the quality of the weeds. I have also noticed that bluegills will often use specific "highways" to navigate through cover. I've had days where we hooked fish all day in a highway through heavy cover while anglers 10 feet away never seen a fish. Finding these pathways is not magic. It comes down to lots of drilling and camera work.



Speed Fishing- Tournament anglers' fish fast. Fishing with a partner allows one angler to drill and the other to scope things out with the flasher. If no fish are present, the transducer is swung in the hole like a pendulum in all directions. If any suspended lines are seen this will give you an idea which direction to drill. The goal is to cover as much water as possible and connect with aggressive fish. Tungsten jigs fish fast and





allow angler s to

punch through slush without wasting time slush scooping holes.

Consider fishing a tournament this winter. Competing with other anglers will get you thinking like an innovator and will improve your panfish game. Just make sure to share some of those great concepts with me.









IMPROUE YOUR ICE FISHING BY 50%

If you are thinking about getting into ice fishing in a bigger way this season, it is high time you start thinking about the modern way of ice fishing. To most anglers, the goal is to catch more fish, plain and simple. The modern way of ice fishing is a style of fishing designed to improve your ice fishing success by catching more fish. If you want to that is. Please understand it is NOT based on the moon phase or some new brand of fishing line.

This being said, there will be no easy shortcuts or magic pill to suddenly put fish in your bucket. Today's modern ice anglers relay on a systematic and very logical way to improve their overall ice fishing success by 50% or more! Sound interesting? Sounds like something worth trying? You bet! Here is how it works.

The Modern ice fishing revolution comes from a new perspective of the sport, and new way of looking at a day on the ice. For some anglers who take to the ice, the tip-up is the tool of choice for catching fish through the ice. In many pockets of the ice belt, the tip-up defines the sport of ice fishing. For many generations of ice anglers, the art of placing a series of set lines in holes and watching for the flag is what ice fishing is all about.

The modern way of ice fishing is a more involved, aggressive approach to fishing when you compare it to the traditional tip-up tactics. If you understand the winter wonderland that exists under a frozen lake, you soon realize that if you plan on the fish coming to you, it can be a long wait, but by going to the fish, your odds greatly increase. This is the basis for the modern fishing tactics you're going to learn about.

The primary tool for this modern day way of ice fishing is the Vexilar three-color, flasher sonar system. A Vexilar sonar system allows you to do more than just tell you how deep the water is and this was the real breakthrough for winter anglers. With any of the Vexilar Ice Pack Systems, you can seek-out fish or fish holding structures and not stop until you actually find yourself over a school of fish. Vexilar makes four models of three-color sonar, the classic FL8, which is the world's most popular and best selling flasher for both summer and winter use. The FL-12, which is basically the next generation to the FL-8, but with a unique flat panel screen and some other small performance differences. The FL-18 was a real breakthrough to winter fishermen since it was the first flasher sonar with the ability to zoom in and display just the bottom six feet of the water column. This made for unbelievable resolution. Then you have the top of the line, the Vexilar FL-20.

Like the FL-12 is to the FL-8, the FL-20 is the next generation of the FL-18. The FL-20 has multiple zoom zones and much more. This being said, it comes down to performance features to make your sonar

system easier to use in different special or fishing situations. The way I look at it is that the higher the FL number, the more features you get. So it really comes down to asking vourself how and what you fish and finding a Vexilar to get fit your style of fishing. If you only one species of fish on one lake, then it is best to select unit with the features the that fits your needs. This being said, I will tell you there is



little doubt that if you use a sonar to perform in any ice fishing environment for any species, then the FL-20 is the one unit that does it all!

Using a sonar depth finder for ice fishing is nothing new, anglers have been using them since the 1960s, but never understood what the sonar systems were capable of giving the fishermen the detail needed to see fish, weeds and changes in bottom content. The first sonar systems for fishing were design here in the United States. When engineers asked the fishermen what they wanted, they said we want to know how deep the water is. Sonar systems are capable of many things, so if you ask the right questions, you can literally make the sonar tell you anything you wish. Nearly all sonar on the market today is designed for summer use. Finding depth is still the key sonar requirement 40 years later. For this reason, the sonar display you see is not nearly as detailed or exact as you would like or need for use



while ice fishing. It takes a very demanding type of sonar technology to enable you to see three tiny split-shot one inch apart in 30 feet of water. The demands of winter fishing is where Vexilar excels, since their three-color flasher sonar display is not affected by temperature, and can display even the smallest of objects suspended below you while watching things move around in real-time.

The ice angler will use a Vexilar unit to look at the water blow their feet. This tool is capable of telling you if there are fish below, plus you will be able to see evidence of bottom content to give you clues to places that may or may not be holding fish. This is where it really gets hard for some people to understand the modern way of thinking about ice fishing. Traditional ice fishing methods and for sure the image given to the ice fishing experience by Hollywood movies shows grumpy old men looking at a hole in the ice waiting for a fish to show up. In their world, it's a big deal to drill or chop one hole in the



ice. This thinking is WRONG in so many ways, but mostly the old way of ice fishing relies on the fish to coming to you in order to catch them. The goal with a Vexilar is to find the fish, THEN figure out how to catch them.

The Modern Ice Angler MUST accept what the Vexilar is telling you and use this information to help you catch more of those fish below or it also tells you to keep looking if no fish are found. A Vexilar has become the ultimate fish finding AND catching tool for any winter angler.



A Modern ice fisherman continues to drill hole after hole LOOKING for fish targets below. Only a Vexilar can give you this type of 100% reliability of spotting fish targets. Some might think that an underwater camera is a great asset for this purpose, but it's not. Underwater Cameras, while a fun toy for the kids to play with, has some serious limitations. For example, the camera cannot check the entire water column at one time. Cameras do not work in low light conditions like dawn and dusk or at night. Forget about using them in dirty or stained water lakes and a camera with 50 feet of cable can be a tangled mess if you try to move from hole to hole.

Once you identify fish holding areas, now is when the fun begins since a Vexilar is the ultimate tool for putting more fish on the ice once you have found them.

With the Ice-Ducer transducer of the Vexilar suspended in your fishing hole, you are able to get a realtime signal of what is going on below. Green signal lights on your Vexilar display tells you there are weak targets in the area directly below you. As the targets get stronger, the signals on your display



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will change from Green to Orange. The strongest signal, like bottom will be shown in red. With this three-color technology, you will be able to see how a fish say five feet away from your lure turns and approaches your bait as the signals will turn from green, to orange and then to red. Knowing what the different color lights are telling you is a very exciting and important part of using your Vexilar.

It is critical to set your gain level so your lure or bait is displayed as a green signal. If the gain is set too high, the ultra powerful receivers of the Vexilar unit will make everything suspended below you look like one big flashing mass of colored lights. When set properly, you clearly know where your lure is, and where it is in relation to all the other targets you also see on your display. The ideal scenario is that when you drop your lure down to a fish target, you see the fish signal move upward to meet your falling lure. You see it all in real-time as it happens, and it is VERY exciting to see and experience for the first time. When you see this happen, you will never go back to fishing with a tip-up again.

To support this active approach to winter angling, a good gas auger is important. How big of a hole do you need to drill? Most feel the larger the hole the better, but experience has shown you can actually land larger fish in much smaller holes than you might think if you take some time as the fish approaches the bottom of the hole. Panfish can often be caught in 4 and 6 inch holes, walleye an 8 inch hole and of course monster pike will require 12 inch holes, but most of the time anglers are after panfish or walleye and a 6 or 8 inch hole can handle most of the fish you will ever catch. It is just common sense, the smaller the hole, the easier and quicker you can punch a hole in the ice, and thus making it a lot less effort if you need to drill a lot of holes to explore a new body of water.

Knowing that a Vexilar can show you a tiny target or any fish swimming below you, it is now time we look at your fishing technique. For one, you don't need a bobber on your line any more due to the fact that now you may need to adjust your bait offerings to fish swimming anywhere in the water column and not just the bottom. For this reason, it is very logical to get one of those new style short ice fishing rods with a spinning reel. No reason to hand over your line or get your line tangled in the ice around your hole. With a miniature version of a summertime fishing outfit, you will be able to get your lures up and down quickly and easily. A Vexilar makes this type of fishing rig possible, and adds a great deal more fun to the sport since you don't have to sit and stare at a bobber any more.

There are thousands of ice flies and jigging spoons that can possibly make-up the lures for winter angler. Remember, it is not some secret lure that catches you more fish, it is the knowledge of knowing how the fish responds to the offerings you present them; that is the real secret to success and a Vexilar makes that possible. Will one lure catch more fish than other? Possibly. Will all lures work the same for catching fish? No way, but now you are able to eliminate unproductive lures, colors and baits to reap amazing results.

The pro-active approach to winter fishing extends to how you are organized as well. Remember, the goal is to move from hole to hole looking for fish. You want to make it easy to move from hole to hole. It is only human nature to want to sit back and not find fish if none are shown on your Vexilar. That is why the small portable shelters like the Dave Genz Fish Traps are so popular with avid winter anglers looking for a simple but effective way to stay warm on those winter days. These portable houses are mounted on small plastic sleds and have a canvas cover that can be pulled over the fishermans head in about two seconds. To move, you simply flip back the cover and now you have a small compact plastic tub to put your gear into and be ready to drag to the next hole. It is a practical and logical outcome of using a

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Vexilar and to find ways to stay comfortable once you find them.

I hope that by now you start to see a trend in what makes a Modern Ice fisherman more productive than a traditional ice angler. With the use of a Vexilar you can make the best of every moment you have on the ice. You seek-out and find fish, then you find ways to catch as many of the fish you see as possible. Will it double your ice fishing success? In a recent survey of 500 ice anglers, an amazing 80% of them said their ice fishing success doubled when they started using a Vexilar. The day of the modern ice angler is here, they know now that with a Vexilar, and a little work, they can catch the fish faster and with more consistency than ever before. This is your time to take ice fishing to the next level give it a try!

ACE IN THE HOLE



By The Northland Tackle Staffer, Jason Mitchell

Even on lakes with good structure and good weed growth, it seems like a percentage of panfish, both crappies and bluegills will pull out and suspend over holes and troughs at first ice. On many bodies of water, most of the panfish will be suspending over these deeper basin areas by mid winter. A



good starting point is to simply look for the hole or basin that is close to the lush weed growth or flooded timber where many of these fish summer. In years past, these deep basin fish were often a big fish pattern as finding suspended fish that were roaming through this wide water column were difficult for anglers to target, like finding a needle in a haystack. With technology and better equipment however, finding these nomadic trophies has gotten much easier.

Both sonar along with GPS mapping are crucial tools for finding basin orientated suspended fish. The advantage a flasher gives you is pretty obvious. Not only does a flasher indicate how far off the bottom to fish but also the mood of the fish. When fishing suspended fish, I like to watch the whole water column as there are many times where it seems like I am reeling up or dropping down to different fish that are coming through at staggered depths so I avoid the zoom features. What is really important however is reading the mood or aggressiveness of the fish with your flasher. In my opinion, nothing beats a Vexilar for indicating how the fish is reacting to the presentation. The Vexilar units do an excellent job of displaying the mood of the fish because the dial has more lines of resolution and the signal is unfiltered. In a nutshell, when a fish moves through the cone angle on a Vexilar, the signal will flutter. When the fish stops, the signal will steady and darken. This is why you don't get the choppy lines when you are dropping a lure down through the water fast when using a Vexilar. By reading this signal, you can really react to the mood of the fish much more so which can be crucial for these deep suspended fish.

Another piece of electronics that I just have a hard time leaving home without is a GPS with a lake contour map if available. By just having my position in correlation to a contour lake map seems to help me not only break down this open water but also focus on edges, contours and funnels where the density of fish might be higher. Besides giving you the big picture in regards to your exact location on a big sheet of ice, GPS allows you to save and remember the subtle sweet spots. Small depressions or bumps on the bottom can often focus fish movements and good locations or holes can be saved and returned to. Even with fish that are suspending over basins or holes... irregular features on the bottom just makes some zones fishy.



As far as the nuts and bolts of the presentation, I firmly believe that these fish can and will move a considerable distance to check something out. I like to start on the large side of the lure spectrum just to gauge the general reaction. Particularly for crappie, I like to start with small swim lures like Northland Tackle Puppet Minnows or the tiny Salmo CD3 Chubby Darters and when I fish these tiny swim lures, I am making an effort to see how high I can get fish to shoot up. If I can get a school or even an individual fish to rise vertically and gain speed, the fish often turn aggressive. One of the best things you can do for getting fish wound up below you is raise them and get the school to







stack vertically. This same concept can also be applied to sunfish but you might have to switch the presentation to a small spoon like a Forage Minnow packed with wax worms.

If fish won't raise more than a few feet and seem hesitant, you might have to back off of the aggressive presentations and use more finesse. Particularly when the sun gets higher, you might have to rely on some smaller finesse presentations at some point each day. For this deep water fishing where you might have to get down over twenty feet of water or more, tungsten is tough to beat for getting down fast and the extra weight also enables you a little better control and feel when fishing small profile jigs in deep water. A sweet combination is a Northland Tackle Mooska Jig tipped with an Impulse plastic tail. The extra weight of the tungsten really brings the tail to life and basically the action you are looking for is just a quiver that causes the tail to dance in place. We actually developed a spring bobber rod in the Jason Mitchell Elite Series line up called the Micro Bite which was built for using plastics in this type of situation as the light spring adds a lot of subtle action to the tail which triggers panfish.



The other secret weapon for presenting small jigs into deep water is the use of Fluorocarbon line. Some people have embraced fluorocarbon because of the zero visibility characteristics of this line but what I like is the weight of the line. Fluorocarbon is heavy and sinks through the water faster than monofilament. The best fluorocarbon line on the market for ice anglers is the Bionic Fluorosilk which is actually a monofilament line with a fluorocarbon sheath or covering which makes the line sink faster. Combine this line with a tungsten jig and use with the right rod action/ spring bobber and you have a deadly presentation for deep crappies and bluegills when some subtleness and finesse is required.

There is no doubt that these tools have revolutionized and opened up this basin exploration. With the right equipment, some of the largest and most difficult schools of fish become accessible to anglers.

Editors Note: The author, Jason Mitchell is credited with pioneering several of the advanced ice fishing tactics on the ice right now. Jason Mitchell also hosts the outdoor program, Jason Mitchell Outdoors which airs on Fox Sports North and Fox Sports Midwest at 9:00 am Sunday mornings.





LAKE TROUT INSIGHTS

By Jason Mitchell Outdoors

Midwinter means Lake Trout for many ice anglers across North America. From upstate New York to the Rocky Mountains, lake trout are an apex predator on many lakes and reservoirs. These top of the line predators are fast and powerful. A fish that can actually become more active under the ice. We picked the brains of ice anglers who obsess over these fish to offer interesting insights.

1) A room with a view. How Colorado Ice Team Pro Bernie Keefe describes the best locations for finding lake trout. Find ledges, points, reefs and shelves that drop off into deep water. The type of location that would provide an incredible view if the location was not on the bottom of the lake. No matter where lake trout swim, primary structure coming out of deep water seems to attract trout.

Ice Team Pro Bernie Keefe with a Colorado lake trout. Lake trout are an apex predator that offer an incredibly exciting ice fishing experience.

2) Don't be afraid to use finesse. While these powerful predators are notorious for slamming

seven inch tube baits that are getting reeled up as fast as you can reel, don't be afraid to down size to smaller flutter spoons and fluke tails when the bit is off. Some bodies of water also seem more conductive to requiring finesse which often seems dictated by the forage.

3) Watch your angle. Lake trout are often found on big bodies of water. Whether you are targeting fish on the Great Lakes, big Reservoirs or large natural lakes, there is often a pulsing current that moves through these deep water abysses. Trout often turn on as the current starts or stops and this current can often be seen on your fishing line. On some bodies of water, the current can become so strong that finding the lure can be difficult on your electronics where a second hole is needed to get the transducer over the jig or spoon. When the current stops, the jig or lure will settle right below the hole but good

fishing often coincides with a swing in current. Watch the angle of your line to anticipate these feeding windows.

4) More lake trout have been caught with a classic white tube jig than any other presentation across North America, particularly in the Canadian Shield but don't over look other soft plastic baits and colors. Dark colors like purple, motor oil and pumpkinseed can be very productive. Remember as well that classic lake trout forage like kokanee, ciscoes, lake herring and whitefish are common but lake trout are a versatile predator that will also target yellow perch, burbot, rainbow trout, suckers or even invertebrates.

5) The right hook set with the right line can mean more lake trout. Across many fisheries, braided line has dominated winter lake trout fishing because of the depth. Setting the hook on a fish that is fifty feet below is much more efficient and effective with a no stretch line. If you haven't switched over to braid yet, try it. When setting the hook, back away from the hole as you set the hook. Depending on the depth of water, take two to four steps backward as you set and this will allow you to catch up to the fish and get the hook set when fishing over deep water.

Baitcasting rod and reels are often preferred by lake trout anglers who have to fish deeper than fifty feet while spinning rod and reels can work extremely well on inland water where fish can often be found.



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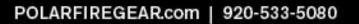
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POLAR FIRE







By Dave Duwe

After first ice, the bluegills will migrate from the shallow water of early season ice and suspend over the main lake basin. The best time to catch deepwater bluegills is usually late January through February.

I consider deepwater any water depth over 15 feet of water. Deep water bluegills are roaming and don't concentrate in any area for a long period of time. When they move they are usually in small schools of 5 or 6 fish. I will always catch the upper fish in the school first not to spook the fish that are lower in the water column. I find that the upper fish in the water column seem to bite better the fish that remain tight to the bottom. The greatest asset to the deepwater gill bite is a fish locator; my choice is a Vexilar FL-12.

The equipment needed is a medium action jigging rod with ultra-light spinning reel spooled the 1 or



2lb test monofilament line. The most important part of the rod and reel combo is a sensitive spring bobber. Frabill's tungsten spring bobber is a great choice. The better the spring bobber the easier the angler can detect the shy biters.

I will use two approaches for the deepwater bluegills. My favorite is a double jig dropper rig and for the real shy biters a small ice jig without a sinker using light line. The double jig dropper rig is a simple rig; it's putting two jigs on one line. I tie a flying gold ant approximately 10 inches to a foot above a waxie rig made by Synders Lure's. To attach the ant I will tie it on the line using a Palomar knot leaving the tag end about a foot long to tie on the waxie rig. The ant works best if it hangs horizontal, also making it easy to detect on the Vexilar. By using the two jig rig, it allows the angler to add extra weight to the line getting the lures into the strike zone faster. The two jigs allow you two opportunities to get bit. Using a sinker also works; however, it doesn't give you two chances for a bluegill. I will always use two different baits on the double

SNYDERS GOLD FLIPPER -GREAT FOR BIG CRAPPIES AND BLUEGILLS, THE GOLD FLIPPER IS SECOND TO NONE. MADE WITH A STRONG HOOK AND PLATED WITH GOLD, THE TWO FLIPPER BLADES AND COLORED DOT ON THE BACK GIVE THIS LURE REAL FISH APPEAL. THERE ARE SIX COLOR PATTERNS WITH A #8 HOOK SIZE.



jig rig. The flying ant will get a waxworm or wiggler, the waxie rig gets one or two spikes. This gives you a subtle presentation. Getting a small jig down to 20-30 feet of water can take some time but some days that is the only way to get bit. Patience and fresh line is the only way that it can work. I bait the jig with two spikes which can help you pick the jig up on the fish locator.



This year I have been catching most of my bluegills on Turtle Lake and Pleasant Lake in Walworth County and Little Cedar in Washington County all lakes are in Southern Wisconsin.

The lake determines the depth I will start fishing. I usually start deep 30 to 32 feet of water searching for fish. If I can't locate them I will move shallower, I will seldom go any shallower then 20 feet of water. A lot of times you will need to fish an area before ruling out that there are no fish. Sometimes the fish are so tight to the bottom you can't pick them up on the locator. A lot of time you send a jig down the hole and the fish will fly off the bottom coming up 10 or 15 feet to inhale the falling jig. The deep water bluegills bite will last through February and this year most likely into March. The deepwater bluegills have a tendency to be a larger size then there shallow water counter parts. Ice depths can vary and ice heaves can create a dangerous situation, so be careful venturing out in the main lake basin.



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Dn-Line Magazine



Safety on the Hard Water

By Captain Adam Walton

As ice takes hold on waters to the north, anglers are venturing onto the hard water. Although many anglers look forward to this season, some forget about the inherent danger associated with it. Unfortunately, every year numerous anglers fall through the ice and all too often, some tragically parish. Before heading out, knowing a few simple precautions and understanding basic survival skills may make the difference between life and death.

Let's first discuss the effects of cold water shock to the human body. When a person first falls through the ice, the body's initial reaction to abrupt cold water immersion is to gasp. The cold water shock will literally suck the breath out of your lungs, causing many people to panic and inhale water. This factor alone causes many drowning deaths, compared to hypothermia which is discussed later. Understanding that gasping and losing your breath is a short term normal response, keeping calm and treading water the first minute after falling in should be your only priority. (Figure 1) Attempting to escape the water while unable to control your breathing is difficult and dangerous. After a short time, your body will become accustom to the cold water and your breathing will return to normal. Once your breathing is controlled, focus on quickly getting out. First, get your bearings and try to locate the tracks you left prior to falling through. This points you in the general direction of safe ice, since it was able to hold your weight before falling through. After you have quickly located the direction of escape, prop you body onto the ice and kick hard while pulling yourself up. If ice breaks off, push away broken pieces and continue going until solid ice is found. Once your entire body is onto solid ice, roll safely away from the hole. Rolling away disperses your weight and helps to not fall through again. If you carry ice picks, use them to pull yourself onto safe ice. Ice picks are inexpensive and make a huge difference when attempting to pull your body onto safe ice. (Figure 2) Although is it may seem insane, once out of the water, remove as much heavy wet clothing as possible and head towards help. Since cold wet clothing pulls away body heat much faster than cold air, removing items will keep you warmer compared to keeping them on.

Along with drowning, hypothermia is a secondary, but just as import threat. If you are unable to get out of the water, or if you do get out but are far away from help, hypothermia will quickly set in and may cause death. The first stage of hypothermia is body shivers. As time passes, numbness will begin to set in, eventually making it difficult or impossible to control your body movements. Continued cold

exposure will lead to advanced stages of hypothermia, which include alter mental status and poor decision making. If no help is found, unconsciousness will eventually occur, which can lead to death. Both the water and air temperature will affect how quickly these stages occur, but generally speaking, the human body has roughly 10 minutes of purposeful movement before hypothermia begins to set in and 1 hour before unconsciousness occurs.



After this time frame passes, it becomes very difficult to rescue victims.

If you are able to rescue someone, be aware of the advanced stages of hypothermia. It is important to rewarm a victim, but do so slowly. Rapid rewarming, like submersion into a hot bath, can cause a victim of advanced hypothermia to go into cardiac arrest. Never hesitate to call your emergency response number if you see someone in distress, even if you are able to rescue the victim. Advance care is usually necessary even after the subject is pulled from the water.

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One can see the importance of traveling with a fishing partner and letting others know your location prior to heading out. If alone, self rescue can be very difficult and hypothermia effects can take hold before you reach help. Some other things to think about are wearing equipment such as ice picks or a life jacket and carrying items such as a throw

rope, extra gloves/stocking hats, flares, etc... which all can help in emergency situations. Please be safe this season and plan accordingly. Ice fishing is a blast, but understanding the dangers that go with it and how to handle them may save your life!

For more information and to see our cold water immersion / self rescuevideo,checkoutthelinkbelow:https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QKpAzvXSIdA

Captain Adam Walton operates Pike Pole Fishing Guide Service and is a certified firefighter paramedic for the State of Wisconsin.



Easy ideas For increased ice-Fishing Success

By Bob Jensen

I saw a skim of ice on the pond this morning. Certainly not enough to walk on, but enough to provide hope that icefishing is not far away. Some folks just enjoy the social aspect of sharing an ice shelter with a friend or family member, but we all want to catch a fish, or a bunch of fish. If you keep these ideas in mind when you're on the ice, your chances for catching a fish, or a bunch of fish, will go up.

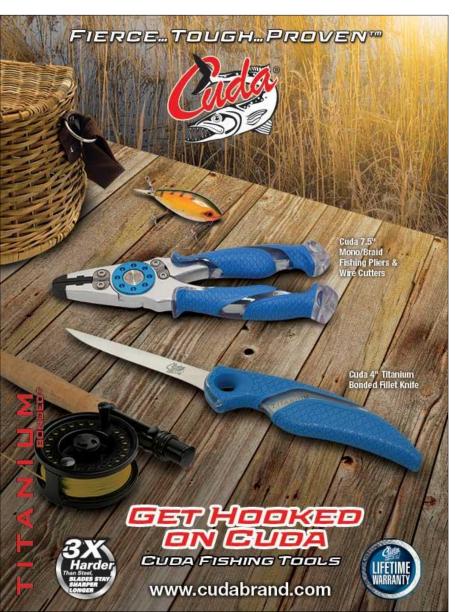
When fishing is slow, get as many lines in the water as possible. Be very sure that you know the rules of where you're fishing when it comes to the number of lines you can have in the water. Some states in the Midwest allow two lines, others permit more. Know how many you can have, then get that number down there.



When you're fishing from a shelter, hold a rod in your hand, and have another line with a slip-bobber on it. Work the rod in your hand more aggressively with a spoon or a jig, and let the slip-bobber rod with just a minnow or wiggler on it work more passively. Let the fish show you the presentation they want.

Another thing. Keep the bait above the fish. Fish see up better than they see down, so if your bait is above them, they have a better chance of seeing it.

It works well to "pound" the bottom with your bait a couple of times to get the fish's attention, but when you see a fish on the sonar, get your bait a couple of feet above it. If it won't come up for the bait, lower it just a bit. Many of the sonar units that are available today do an outstanding job of showing fish and even the tiniest lures. The Vexilar FLX-28 that I use does everything that an ice-angler needs to see what's going on down there and will even help you figure out how the fish want the bait presented.



Try new lures. Fish get conditioned to the same lure day after day. Be sure to give the new Forage Minnow Dart from Northland a try this year. It's brand

new, and it's different.

When fishing pressured fish, less action on your bait is usually better.

Hard-to-see line is also usually better on finicky fish. Many anglers tie a short fluorocarbon leader to their main line because fluorocarbon is as close to invisible under the water as it gets.

When it comes to fishing, there are no guarantees, but if you keep the above ideas in mind, you'll improve your odds for getting bit through the ice.

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





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OPEN WATER FISHING ZONE





THROW IT OUT AND REEL IT BACK OR JUST DO NOTHING

By O'Neill Williams

Good grief! What bait or lure is that? It's a Road Runner. Ever used one? Betcha you have and not even known it.

A Road Runner is a brand of lures that will catch Bass, Crappie, Stripers, Walleye, Northern Pike, and a bunch of other critters from freshwater and then Redfish, Sea Trout, Blues and more from Saltwater. It's a funny shaped painted lead head jig with a little spinner on the bottom. You can vary the sizes,

colors and trailers to make it what you want. Good.

Ok, so what's the point here?

Doing nothing? When's that? From late December through February, an angler can catch buckets of Crappie from underneath the major marina docks on the reservoirs across the South, East Coast and Midwest. In most states, the limit is liberal up to 35 to 50 per day. The Crappie will gather there by the thousands. Doing Nothing? Just rig up to three or even four tiny 1/64th ounce Road Runners in bright colors on a single light action soft tip rod with 6-pound test line and drop it down to the giant schools of Crappie and do nothing. Think about it. Test yourself. Put a Road Runner on a light action rod and hold it still in the water where you can see it. Is it still? No, it's kinda just vibrating. If it were a minnow, it would not be scurrying around hopping and darting in the frigid winter temperatures. So, drop it down on the 'Christmas Tree Rig' I described and you'll get bit. In this case, less is more. When one bites, leave it down a few counts and others will get aggressive and bite another of the jigs. So why not use minnows instead? You don't need to spend the time rigging the minnow on the hooks. You'll catch plenty without the trouble of minnow managing.

Before I go to something else, here's a tip to double your catch doing this wintertime jigging. Tag your Road Runner with something stinky. It'll permeate through the water level where you've located the Crappie, help hold the fish at that level and depth and encourage the bite. What to use? I like either tagging the hook with a piece of leach or a mealworm. Action is not required, only the smell. Pick up a few little Fisher's Choice cans of the stinky stuff and you're in business. Another thing, keep your noise down to a minimum. Don't jump up and down on the dock celebrating you catch. It'll spook the school. See? Doing nothing with the bait will work.

Ok, what else? Road Runners for Northern Pike and Walleye. Yes, but this time, since Northern Pike are so aggressive, all you do with your Road Runner is cast it out and reel it back. Northern will follow it in and bite it at the boat so don't give up on the cast until it's over. Walleye will compete for it when fished down in those deep summer time holes and it'll work even better if you slow it down and add the leach for smell. The little spinner below the jig head is an attractor and the trailer in your choice in colors will

match the bait fish in the waters where your casting. Be sure and use a wire leader or those toothy thieves will cut you off every time.

Stripers? Absolutely. Cast it out and reel it back. Just locate the depth of the school and there you are. When you've have them on the surface feeding, you'll hook up three times to one over a surface bait.

Need a bigger bait or profile for Redfish? Use a big Road Runner





at over seventy-five pounds on the first three casts. Throw it out and reel it back.

Travis and I visited Cajun Vista Lodge a couple of Falls ago. I fished with Captain Wayne and, using Road Runners with light colored swim tails that come in the package, caught plenty of representative Redfish. We fileted them for dinner that night at the lodge. I believe Road Runner calls that size a Salt-Runner. Anyway, Redfish love'm.

No longer a rookie in fishing for Northern Pike since he has visited with me to Carroll Lake Lodge several times, Travis caught his largest Pike last time up, a forty-eight incher. Combination: Road Runner with large gold spinner to match the color of the yellow perch bait fish, swim tailed trailer, wire leader, throw it out and reel it back technique.

Maybe if you want to turn in fishing for catching sometime, stock your tackle box with Road Runners in a multitude of colors and sizes, cans of Fisher's Choice leaches and mealworms that were once alive but now aren't, and don't try to overdo the presentation. Give it a try.

References;

www.neworleansfishing.com www.carrolllakelodge.com www.fullnetcharters.com with a large curly tail trailer. My goodness, the number of Reds caught on a jig with a trailer on the Gulf Coast year-round would sink a battleship. Again, cast it out and reel it back. Mr. Red will get it.

I fished with Eddie Woodall at Full Net Charters December a year ago and using Road Runners tagged with extra-large curly tailed plastics, we caught 25 huge Reds in two hours with many doubles. That was for a television show and that exercise usually cuts your catch in half with all there is to do to make it look natural. I caught three that weighed totaled



A BETTER WAY FOR COLD WATER PANFISH



By Chip Leer

When fall crappies and sunfish roam deep weed edges and structural sweet spots such as points and bars, fishermen adept at precisely positioning subtle presentations in front of fish's noses can enjoy banner catches other anglers miss.

One of the best ways to reap the harvest and indeed, catch panfish anytime they favor deep habitat is working a small jig on a modified threeway rig similar to those used by walleye anglers.

It's a simple yet deadly setup. You'll want to keep the jig in or close to the sonar cone, so leave the long rods in the locker. I favor a 6'-3" medium-light



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spinning rod such as 13 Fishing's Muse Gold (<u>http://www.13fishing.com/muse-gold/</u>), strung with 6-pound Bionic Braid (<u>https://shop.northlandtackle.com</u>/line/bionic-walleye-braid/).

Tie a three-way swivel to the end of the mainline, then add a relatively long dropper (say, 24 inches) of 4-pound BIONIC mono. A 3/16- to ¹/₄-ounce dropshot



weight should do the trick on the tag end. Tip: By adjusting the weight's location on the dropper, you can raise or lower the jig in the water column to position it slightly above the level of the panfish.

Tie a 12- to 16-inch tagline of similar 4-pound mono to the swivel's trailing eye, then add a small jig. Northland Tackle's Helium Stonefly (<u>https://shop.northlandtackle.com/seasonal-tackle/ice-fishing/impulse-helium-stonefly/</u>) is my favorite choice, but any of the neutrally buoyant Helium Series heads work fine. Don't worry about adding meat. The IMPULSE body adds all the scent and animation you'll need.

Armed with this rig, you can inch your way along weed edges and breaklines, or hover over a school of fish. Either way, keep rod motions to a minimum. The jig and softbait's natural subtle action is perfect for panfish that typically aren't overly aggressive and not inclined to chase down prey.



The light jig is easy for fish to inhale, and you typically don't feel the fish until it turns to swim away with your lure. When you feel a light tug, execute a gentle, sweeping hookset and chances are good you'll be firmly hooked up to another fat fall panfish.

Based in Walker, Minnesota, noted fishing authority and outdoor communicator Chip Leer operates Fishing the WildSide, which offers a full suite of promotional,

product development and consultation services. For more information, call (218) 547-4714 or email Chip@fishingthewildside.net





Just Go Fishing

By Bob Jensen

I've had the good fortune over the past several decades to go fishing in lots of interesting places. I've also had the good fortune to have used lots of different fishing products, from rods and reels to lures to boats to whatever else anglers use to fool more fish. This past year was an unusual one: I didn't get to go fishing quite as much as I have in the past. When I did get to go fishing, I paid more attention to details than I have in previous seasons. I discovered something that I found interesting. Here's what I discovered.

Just as a carpenter uses specific tools for specific tasks, anglers have specific tools for specific tasks. An angler's tools are rods, reels, sonar, lures, boats, and on and on. A good number of anglers are almost obsessive about their gear: They need to have the exact right rod and reel and line for a specific application. For instance, they have a rod/reel combo designed for throwing quarter ounce

spinnerbaits. That's fine, but maybe not necessary.

I was on Kabetogama Lake recently chasing smallmouth bass with some friends. The bass were eating, among other things, drop-shot rigs. I wanted to use a Drop-Shot Rig, and I have a wonderful Cabela's Tournament ZX Drop-Shot Rod. But I had forgotten it at home. With resignation, I tied a drop-shot rig onto another rod I had, a Fish Eagle medium-light action rod: A great rod that's maybe the best value in rods out there, but medium-light was probably a bit light for drop-shotting. It wasn't the best tool for the task at hand, but you know what? The bass didn't care: They ate my baits as frequently as they ate my friends baits who had drop-shot rods. And I landed just as many of the ones that bit. Even though I didn't have exactly the right tool for the task, I caught just as many fish as the others and had a great time.

I'm a lucky guy: I've owned a lot of boats through the years. Some of those boats were inexpensive jonboats, others were high- end, top-dollar rigs. The high-end boats were great to fish from, and the inexpensive boats enabled me to get to places where I couldn't with the top-dollar rigs. I have fond memories from both ends of the spectrum when it comes to fishing. For the past several years I've run Larson FX boats. They're not the most expensive boat on the water, but they have all the features I want or need. They do an outstanding job in any rough water that I've encountered.

Same thing with line. I've seen so many changes in line in the past years. I remember when monofilament was our only option. Then we were introduced to different monofilaments that were designed for specific applications. Then came superlines and fluorocarbon. Most were improvements on the previous stuff, but the cost kept going up also. This summer I was introduced to P-Line and was immediately impressed. P-Line performed way up to my needs, and it was very reasonably priced. It's available in mono, fluoro, and braid: Something for everyone, but not overwhelming or confusing options. I like that.

This summer I re-discovered that fishing is a wonderful thing that almost anyone can enjoy. You don't need to overthink things unless you want to. You can have fishing success without a bunch of expensive equipment, but if you enjoy fine-tuning your gear selections to specific techniques, you can do that also. My suggestion for maximum fishing enjoyment: Just go fishing.

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



Winter Locations for Big Largemouth

By Capt. Mike Gerry

The bravest of hearts and determination is the only thing that can lead you to the right spot on a cold winter day; and even in North Alabama we can see winter time morning temperatures in the teens forcing you to pick the correct targets. I have personally put my boat in the water with the temperature about 17 degrees and the wind blowing out of the north and believe me it's not for chickens; couple that with fishing for just a few bites can really test your fortitude.



The good news is when you do land a fish its one you have been looking for all year; as 2013 proved to me one day in early February with 3 bites and 34 pounds of bass that it is all worth it. The key is getting to the right locations; the old saying fish where the fish are and here are a few places to look.

I have three types of bottom locations I go to regularly in the cold; the first being rocky areas, rocky hard bottom areas of the lake are ideal spots for those big winter time fish. Its easy feeding for bass as most crawfish hold around rock and bass find safety around bottom structure that has constant depth change like a rocky bottom does. Next are ditches, and road beds these bottom areas create highways for bass to feed and move along the bottom when it's cold. The coldest nastiest winter days these roadbeds and ditches are always where the bass move too as bass get right on the bottom when the weather is at its worse. Look for the change in the roadbed where it dips or comes up or ends to find where the bass will be located. My 2013 haul of 34 lbs. came off a road bed, the road bed ended at a rocky bank and the bass were all within 20 yards of each other. It was about 15 casts in this short area that produced this enormous stringer. Lastly I look for quick drops where steep depth change and current come together to give bass an ambush point along a river channel or at the end of a quick dropping point; step drops are ideal when we find a winter day with weather really cold early but some warming as the day moves on.

If you brave the cold, and find the right locations those nasty winter days can be worth it!

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Winter Bassin' On Man-Made Reservoirs

By Bill Vanderford

As the waves from the cold northwest wind of an approaching front slapped steadily against the side of the boat, the old fishing guide asked himself, "What in the world am I doing out here?" Before he could think of a possible answer, his graph begin painting a picture of life down in the depths of the cold underwater world that warmed his blood by 10 degrees!

The unmistakable inverted "V," duplicated more than a dozen times...indicating a tightly packed school of bass was there before him on the graph. The experienced guide had been trying to maintain a steady course over the top of an underwater ridge near the main channel portion of a feeder creek that had treetops extending upwards to near 345 feet from the surface when the visual sonar unit started revealing this underwater piscatorial treasure.

In an instant he made a mad dash to the trolling motor with his spooning rod in hand! He pushed

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the button on the baitcaster as soon as the blips began showing on the graph, and with great anticipation, started counting down the revolutions of the spool as the spoon fell toward the magic 45 foot level.

Even before this slowly falling spoon reached the planned depth, the telltale flick of the line indicated that something had interfered with its fall. He swept the rod quickly upwards and was immediately hooked into a solid fish. The ensuing action was fast and furious, and within 15 minutes the livewell was filled with a 10 bass limit that would average over 3 pounds each.

Advantages to fishing a busy lake during the colder months include less boat traffic, the fish are less spooky and the cold water retards their metabolism. Therefore, they tend to move slower and much less often. Predator fish like bass also seem to congregate in bigger schools and may remain together in a smaller area for as long as three months during the winter.

Catching the slowed, deep, winter bass requires some knowledge of one of the oldest and most used artificial baits in the history of angling...the spoon. The accepted outfit for vertical spooning is a 5 to 6 foot medium action rod with a baitcasting reel that has some method of counting down the line to the proper depth. Spoons come in so many different weights, shapes and colors, choosing the right one can be difficult for a newcomer to this deepwater fishing. Straight spoons are the best when jigging in water deeper than 25 feet. Curved spoons tend to flutter so much that positive control is lost in the deeper waters, and strikes are hard to detect.

Two specific areas seem to always work best for winter bass in deep water lakes: long, deep coves extending off the main river channels on the end of the lake farthest from the dam or structures midway up a major creek channel on the end of the lake towards the dam.

In man-made reservoirs on the upper end of the lake, look for any long, narrow, deep cove that connects directly to the main river channel. Watching the graph closely, follow any submerged trees that may be down the middle of the cove...crisscrossing the deepest until part suspended fish are located or the trees run out. If the trees run out before the fish are spotted, begin spooning in the tops of the last trees nearest the back of the cove.

Bass residing near the of dam areas major reservoirs with wide open expanses of water, can be better located near the channels of tributaries. major Usually midway into a the creek is most productive Old part. homesites, humps and underwater points along channels these creek could hold deep fish. However, with areas single trees or smaller





patches of woods are the best.

After locating a school of winter bass, catching them is fairly easy. Drop the spoon straight down to the desired depth and jig it sharply upwards 12 to 24 inches, allowing it to fall back on a tight line. Since most strikes come as the spoon is falling, it's necessary to watch the line carefully as it falls for any sign of movement. If any difference is noted, sweep the rod up quickly in an effort to set the hook.

Deepwater spooning can be either "feast or famine." However, feasts from the icy, winter waters are so electrifying that one soon forgets the minor discomfort from the almost always inclement weather.

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

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Jig Fishing For Bass Written by Tyler Brinks

No lure is more versatile for bass fishing than the skirted jig. The jig-head with a rubber skirt combination has been around for years, and it continues to catch bass across all seasons and anywhere bass swim. Over the years, jigs have evolved and become more specialized, which has only added to their effectiveness. In this article, we will cover the major categories of jigs, the gear needed, how to fish them, and some modifications that enable you to get the most out of these lures. Gear Required

Jig fishing works best on baitcasting equipment for several reasons: they are generally used with heavier line around thicker cover, and the weight of the lures makes them better on heavier baitcasting gear. A rod that is between 7' and 7'6" in length with a medium-heavy action is an ideal jig rod. A baitcasting reel spooled with 12–17lb test fluorocarbon line rounds out the entire combination. The rod and reel should be sensitive enough to detect bites yet strong enough to get a good hookset when a bass bites your jig.

Jig Types

Standard Jig

The standard jig works great for short casts to submerged cover, but it works equally well in deeper water fished along the bottom after a long cast. These jigs are among the most versatile and common of all bass lures. The 3/8oz and 1/2oz sizes work well in nearly all situations, but sometimes heavier or lighter jigs are better. The lighter style works better in shallower water or when anglers want a slower fall from their jig, and the heavier models are better for deeper water.

Football Head Jigs

Like the name implies, the football head has a unique head design that resembles the shape of a football. This design allows great contact with the bottom, enabling you to stay in touch with your lure while not hanging up as much as with other jigs due to the head design. These jigs excel around rocks, and they work well from mid-range depths to much deeper water. Ideally, a football head works best in



water between 10 and 50 feet deep. When it comes to sizes, the 1/2oz football head will cover most situations, but lighter jigs will allow an angler to get a slower fall. Heavier jigs, from 1/2oz to over 1oz, work well in heavy current or deep water.

Swim Jigs

Any jig could theoretically be used with a swimming retrieve, but the swim jig is specially designed with a pointed head to come through grass and cover while being retrieved. While most jigs are best when contact with making the bottom, the swim jig is best in motion in the middle of the water column. The swim jig is effective in shallow water less than ten feet deep and anywhere there is grass or wooden cover in the water. Since swim jigs are normally fished in shallow water, they are often much lighter than other popular jig types. Swim jigs sized 3/16 or 1/4oz are popular sizes, with 3/8oz being among the heaviest swim jigs bass anglers use.

Trailers

The trailer added to the end affects the action of the bait, the forage it is emulating, and the overall appearance of the jig. Soft plastic trailers are the

JIGS

STANDARD

Versatile, great for short casts, works well in deeper water fished along the bottom after a long cast.

FOOTBALL HEAD

Head design allows for great contact with the bottom, excels around rocks and works well from mid-range depths to much deeper water.

SWIM

Pointed head is designed to come through grass and cover while being retrieved, works best while in motion in the middle of the water column.

TRAILERS Adds a natural color & action to your jig.

CRAW: Two styles; craw and flapping craw. Craw hops with little action through the water, flapping craw has wild, flapping action. CHUNK: Helps create a slow fall. Tail flaps like a flag on descent, imparting enticing action to your jig.

DOUBLE TAIL GRUB: Works well in cool and warm water. Works best with constant movement.

most popular option for their convenience and array of styles and colors available. When rigging the trailer to your jig, it is important to make sure it is rigged straight on the hook of the jig so the action is not affected and it appears natural.

CREATURE:

Larger profile

than some other

trailers. Can

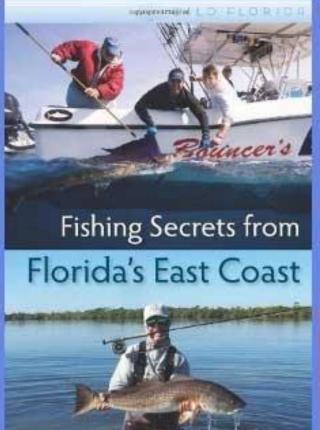
appeal to much

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The

KNOW YOUR RETRIEVES



Once the bait hits the bottom, use short hops to keep the bait near the bottom during your retrieve.

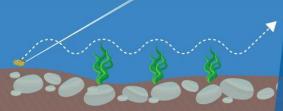
BASIC DRAGGING

RETRIEVE

With this retrieve, the rod imparts the action instead of the reel. To move the bait along the bottom, move your rod tip parallel to the water slowly enough for the jig to stay in contact with the bottom.

BASIC SWIMMING RETRIEVE





Cast and keep the rod tip at the 11:30 position, then lower the rod to 10:30 and lift back to 11:30. This pumping action will impact action to the bait and keep it above the vegetation and submerged cover.

<u>Creatures</u>

There are many creature baits on the market with multiple arms and appendages. While they may not look exactly like something in nature, the movement attracts bass. These work well when used as a trailer for all types of jigs, especially swim jigs.

<u>Craws</u>

The jig can look just like a crawfish moving along the bottom when paired with a soft plastic crawfish. They come in many colors to match all jig skirts, and the added appeal of the claws creates a total package. These work well for all styles of jigs.

<u>Chunks</u>

Soft plastic chunks also imitate a crawfish, with the two arms of the bait undulating with each movement of the jig. Chunks are a good option for standard jigs.

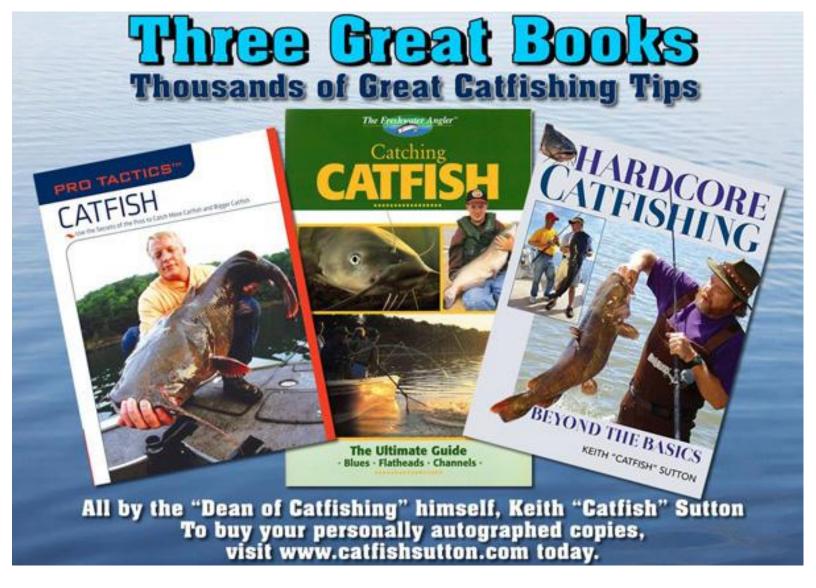
<u>Grubs</u>

The double-tail grub is another way to make your jig look like a crawfish or small fish swimming along. The tails look like a fleeing crawfish, and they create an enticing movement underwater. Grubs are an excellent choice for all types of jigs.

Selecting Colors

Jigs most often imitate crawfish, so colors that resemble them work well for most situations. Green pumpkin, watermelon, and other similar natural colors are good choices for most jig fishing. When fishing dirty or stained water, a black and blue jig and trailer work well to ensure that the fish can see the bait.





Jigs also imitate bluegill, sunfish, and shad if the colors match the forage. When imitating bluegill, a green pumpkin or jig with shades of blues will help "match the hatch" of what the bass are eating. When trying to imitate shad, white skirts with a white trailer work well.

Where to Use Them

The appeal of jigs when fishing for bass is that they can effectively be used in many situations. Their weedless design allows them to be fished in heavy cover. There is no wrong place to use them, but they are among the best choices for bass anglers around rocks, grass, wood, and docks.

Retrieves

The jig works great with short casts, pitches, and flips to visible cover. Often, the bass will grab the lure as it falls, so it is always important to watch your line as the jig is falling. Once the bait hits the bottom, short hops that keep the bait near the bottom during your retrieve are best.

One of the best ways to use a football head is also the simplest: drag the jig along the bottom. Cast it out, let it sink, and then use your rod to slowly move the bait along the bottom before you reel to pull in the slack. The football head can also be used with short hops along the bottom.



The swim jig can be fished with a steady retrieve back to you. Small movements with your rod and pumps with your rod will allow the bait to move up and down in the water column as you retrieve your bait.

Modifications

A jig right out of the package is ready to catch fish, but two simple modifications can increase hookups and change the action of the lure: trimming the weedguard and skirt.

Most jigs come equipped with weedguards to protect the hook

MODIFICATIONS TO MAKE



Cut a small length of the weed guard off until the end of the weed guard extends just past the point of the hook.

SKIRT: Trim skirt just below the bottom of the hook while the jig is vertical.

from weeds, rocks, and debris. They work great for keeping you from snagging into cover, but they are often stiff and too long. To adjust the length of the weedguard, cut a small length of the weedguard off with scissors. An approximately ¼-inch section is usually best as long as the end of the weedguard is still longer than the point of the hook.

Another modification many bass anglers use is to trim the length of the skirt. By cutting it just below the bottom of the hook while the jig is vertical, you can get a more compact appearance for your jig.

The three major types of jigs will allow you to fish nearly all depths and catch bass in all seasons. The jig



is one of the most versatile bass lures. and it has а reputation as being one of the best ways to catch a big bass. By selecting the right style of jig, utilizing the correct retrieve, and matching the appropriate skirt color and trailer, you can maximize your success when fishing jigs.

Source <u>www.fix.com</u>





Team Sewer's Halibut Tips and Tricks

By Jim Salazar 2017 Hobie Fishing Top Gun

The affectionately and jokingly named Team Sewer has generously offered up a few tips and tricks on how they have dominated the competition up and down the Southern California coast when it comes to catching trophy California halibut from Hobie kayaks.

These guys know their stuff. Tony Park won the decades-old Marina Del Rey Halibut Derby last summer. Jorge Villegas took top honors in the season-long Western Outdoor News tournament. To win these impressive achievements, they beat powerboats of all sizes.

BAIT:

Big bait, big fish is an axiom not wasted on trophy halibut. Most big fish are caught on an 8- to 14-inch live greenback mackerel, although any hungry halibut will eat a live sardine or squid when it's presented properly. Jorge's tournament winner was caught on, of all baits, a lowly lizardfish. It proves the halibut is an opportunistic ambush feeder and will prey on anything placed in front of those lurking eyes.

RIGGING:

When fishing live bait, most serious halibut anglers use a trap rig. The traditional trap rig is a snelled single hook tied about six inches above a treble hook. I like the octopus style hook with the offset eye but the Team prefers a



circle or J hook. The single hook is placed through the nose of the bait then the treble is set near the tail or anal cavity of the bait, or in the case of a live squid, the treble is hooked between the eyes by the tentacles.

This leader is usually about 24 to 36 inches long and is tied to a three-way swivel, along with the main line. An additional 12 inches of leader is attached to the swivel with a torpedo or ball type lead weight at the end. Your choice of lead can vary from a 6- to 12-ounce weight. The amount of weight used will depend on how windy the conditions are, your speed of drift, and the size of the bait you've caught. Drop shot and dropper loop rigging also work well and both keep the bait in the bite zone.

There are two important tips to remember when fishing live baits. First, your weight should be heavy enough to maintain contact with the sand and bounce along while creating an attention getting cloud while you're drifting. Secondly, the bait should be moving about 1 to 3 feet above the sea floor so that the halibut can see the bait.

Halibut are very strange creatures. They are born like all fish with an eye on either side of their bodies. As the fish grows older, one eye migrates next to the other and the fish ends up with both eyes on one side of its body. The eyes are now on the top of the fish and this topside is usually colored a shade of brown with numerous spots. The underside of a California halibut is pure white and there are both right eyed and left eyed fish found in the wild.

These delicious oddities of the sea spend most of their lives partially covered in the sand with only their eyeballs exposed while waiting to ambush their prey, and it's for this reason that we use a 12inch leader on the weight in order to get that bait up off the ocean floor where it can be seen by this upward gazing bottom feeder.

GEAR:

You won't need a mile of line on your reel. Unlike many game fish, the California halibut doesn't make blistering line-peeling surface runs. A big fish will get stubborn and hug the bottom, so often times you'll need a rod with enough backbone to lift a 35-pound flattie out of the sand, yet have enough flexibility to withstand their violent headshakes.

A 7- or 8-foot medium weight rod with a 400 or larger sized reel loaded with 25- to 40-pound mono or fluorocarbon and backed with 50-pound spectra should handle just about most fish, even if that stray yellowtail or white seabass should bite. I like the stretch that the mono provides when pulling on a big head thrashing flatfish although a fluorocarbon leader can prevent some line abrasion.

TECHNIQUES AND TIPS:

To increase their coverage, most halibut hunters fish with two rods while wind drifting or power drifting. The reels are usually fished in-gear and with the drag backed-off just enough to set the hook on a fish, yet not strong enough to pull the kayak over when snagged on kelp or a rock.

The track or breadcrumb feature on your GPS is an important part of any arsenal as is your sonar. Halibut can be very depth specific during various seasons so working a particular depth zone can increase your catches. The flatfish seem to congregate in bunches on the bottom and you'll often find a few smaller males in the area of a big female. Once you hook a fish you should work that spot and retrace your last drift until you are sure that there are no more hungry 'butts in that location before moving on. "Don't leave fish to find fish".

Unlike many top of the food chain game fish this ambush feeder will usually be in the sand along the



sides of structure or kelp rather than hunting up in the rocks or reef. Match the hatch and use the local bait that the fish are feeding on.

A Sabiki or Lucky Joe bait catcher is just as important as any other part of your quiver when hunting our big flat fish. Halibut don't get too far from the cafeteria, so work the bottom in the areas where the bait is concentrated and you'll often be rewarded with a quality 'butt.

Spring and early summer are usually the best times in Southern California to look for your barn door as the big ones are called up in Alaska. Targeting a barn door is often a winning tactic when



tournament fishing an open event and many a cash side pot has been won with a large halibut.

KAYAK CHOICE:

The Hobie hands-free MirageDrive kayaks are the choice of many California anglers, including Team Sewer's Tony and Jorge, for the perfect halibut hunting machine. The Mirage Pro Angler is also my



preferred vessel. Roomy, comfortable, and fishy are the words I use to describe my ride. Power drifting into the wind or current is a so easy with the pedal drive system and clearing a second rod while adjusting your position is a breeze especially with the new reversing 180 feature.

There is plenty of room behind that comfortable Vantage seat for a live bait tank that is big enough to hold a dozen mackerel and enough space on the deck to hold a trophy halibut or two.



JIGGING SPOON CRAZE

By Captain Mike Gerry

In the last five or so years jigging spoon fishing has progressed into many tackle boxes, with it has brought many changes to fishing a jigging spoon. The progression has changed not only the way we fish the spoon but also the look of the jigging spoon. As I remember jigging spoons from the early onset they were small, not really flashy and certainly plain as could be and designed to drop over the edge of your boat.

Today when a fishermen pulls out a spoon he has many options to choose from, there are still the traditional small 2 inch or so spoon, but changes have made the spoon a big flashy 6 to 8 inch or more in size bait that are heavy and curved to really accentuate the flashy side to side movement. The weights are all over the map in size ranging from ¼oz. to as big as 3 oz. in weight allowing you to cast the bait a long way and make long accentuated pulls to get the bait to move and flash while it slowly drops to the bottom, as you work it back. The difference and variety of spoons allow you to choose a variety of action, some spoons are built to fall fast to the bottom while others are made to flutter rapidly and move slowly to the bottom. Hence the difference in short wide type spoons, making a big flashy side to side movement as it falls

slowly to the bottom. While the shorter, narrow spoon drops quicker with less with less movement; a good beta point is to remember the wider the spoon the more action it will have.

The jigging spoon craze has progressed mainly because anglers have discovered that a spoon worked over fish can really fire up a school of fish and big fish; many of today's most successful anglers have won many tournaments by putting the jigging spoon to work for them. You don't really need to be the most experienced angler to get this bait to produce and it has made some novice fishermen look like seasoned pros out on the water. The jigging spoon can be addicting try it, you'll easily see it produce for you.





Fishing Boat



Fish Catching Boat

HUNTING ZONE

15

Ethical Hunting Will Maintain The Tradition

 William

Though a mostly solitary sport that is a result of man's need to feed himself and his family, hunting seems to attract an enormous amount of attention from people with varying points of view. For the hunter, the most important measure of success should be how he feels about himself, which must encompass all aspects of the sport including the planning of a trip, the hunt, the kill and how the experience is remembered and relayed to others.

Ethics is probably the most important facet in the pursuit of hunting or killing any wild game. It is a lifelong learning process that seems to grow with a person's age. Even the best young hunter will often make a poor decision that is based more on the excitement of the moment. As time goes by, he will find his values and behavior change dramatically. These changes bring much greater satisfaction.

Though hunting is a right of citizenship in our country, one must also remember that the hunted animals are a direct result of extensive conservation efforts by recreational hunters who stopped market hunting and commerce with wildlife. Also, many early hunters began restoration and conservation of wildlife that continues today. Therefore, as hunters, we have a responsibility to future generations to continue the conservation of the animals that we hunt. The most important responsibility is to be safe and ethical hunters.

Despite the excellent overall conservation record of modern hunters, some people argue that hunting,



as we know it, should be stopped. Some of their arguments are rightfully based on the behavior of hunters. So, if we want to maintain the opportunity to hunt, we must remember that our wildlife belongs to all people...not just hunters, and the future of hunting relies heavily on how hunters are viewed by the majority of other people.

Ethical hunting begins with the idea that all animals have a sporting chance to avoid being taken or killed. That was an easy concept to maintain during the early years of our country when single hunters pursued game over vast areas of wilderness. In our modern world, technology, population and restricted areas for hunting have tended to take away the animal's advantage. Nevertheless, part of that situation has been equalized by the rationing of available wildlife through protective laws, regulations and refuges. Habitat protection, land acquisitions and wildlife management activities were added to bolster wildlife populations, which have sustained hunting, but have not addressed fairness between the hunter and his quarry.

The perception of a fair chase is important to hunting because the general public will never tolerate hunting under any other circumstance. Ethical hunting environments and fair chase principles are normally addressed as part of any resource management policy. Since the hunted animal has no choice, deciding what is fair is the personal responsibility of each hunter.

Feeling right about killing an animal that one respects is something each hunter should consider every time an opportunity arises. Though he has hunted for years and killed plenty of game animals, if the hunter suddenly feels a change of heart about killing a certain animal, he should respect his feelings and let the animal pass unharmed.

As my Cherokee ancestors did, when any animal is killed during a hunt, an ethical hunter will always pause for a few moments to reflect on the hunt and the wild creature that he has taken. One should be thankful for the efforts of many people who have protected our privilege to hunt, and the wonderful creation of many centuries of natural evolution that was killed.

Hunting is a gift that has been handed down from the original cavemen to native hunters in every land, and has been protected by both conservationists and those who gave their lives for our independence. Therefore, it is our duty as ethical hunters to pass along this gift to the next generation with the same reverence and respect for the sport and animals as those before us showed.

Bill Vanderford has won numerous awards for his writing and photography, and has been inducted into the National Freshwater Fishing Hall of Fame as a Legendary Guide. He can be reached at 770-289-1543, at <u>ifish51@aol.com</u> or at his web site: www.georgiafishing.com.



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Henry .30-30

By Dana Benner

In a recent piece I wrote for Outdoors Unlimited I gave my "All American Christmas List". At the top of that list was a Henry Repeating Arms .30-30. For the first time in my life someone read my list and I soon found myself at Bass Pro Shops picking up my new Henry rifle. I got Model #H009B; the brass model with the classic octagon barrel.

Why a Henry and why a .30-30 you may ask? There are a few reasons. First, Henry Repeating Arms rifles are all American made, not just assembled, but made. They use all American sourced materials and parts; "lock, stock and barrel" as they say. They also have a very rich history in American firearms. The lever action repeating rifle is an American rifle, with Benjamin Tyler Henry perfecting the design and getting a patent for it, while working with Winchester.

I decided on a .30-30 because it is the perfect rifle for use here in the northern New England woods. It is lightweight, doesn't kick like an army mule and it has plenty of power to take down the large game animals that we have here, namely deer and bear. In New Hampshire we also have boar and a properly placed .30-30 round will take down these critters as well. While I don't think I would use a .30-30 for moose, moose have been successfully harvested with this round.

Weighing in at 8.3 pounds (the blued steel model only weighs 7 pounds) this rifle comes quick and easy to the shoulder. The straight grip American walnut stock feels good in the hands, allowing me to acquire a perfect sight picture immediately. The receiver is pre-drilled for mounting a scope, though I doubt I will be doing that.

Here in New England we don't get those shots of 200 yards or more. Most shots are made at 150 yards or less, through dense brush. The Henry .30-30, with its 20-inch barrel and five shot tubular magazine, is perfect

for moving through that dense cover. The .30-30 round is accurate up to about 150 yards, so it is more than enough when that deer walks by at 60 yards.

My choice of rounds varies depending on what I am hunting. If I'm after boar or bear then I generally use a heavier 170 grain bullet, like the Federal Fusion. If deer are the name of the game, then I tend to go with the standard 150 grain bullet, like the Federal Premium Trophy Copper.

So Christmas came early for me this year. I can hardly wait for deer season to start next year. I plan on putting my new Henry .30-30 to use at my favorite deer spot in Vermont. Hopefully it brings me luck.



THE PLIGHT OR FLIGHT OF THE CROSSBOW

By John Simeone

Early this season I decided to go out with my old Horton Crossbow and met up with John Roberts who was also hunting with a Crossbow. He was a young man and had done very well with his weapon taking several deer. He



hunts with a regular bow and with different firearms. Fred Bear called this the all season hunter. Like me, John hunted with the Crossbow just because he likes to. In our discussion in the field he admitted it was the most difficult hunting instrument he had ever tried, a challenge indeed once you find out the hype associated with the Crossbow is generally false and bias.

Dan Hendricks and Leone Russo contacted me circa 2005, they are both Editors of the two major Crossbow chronicles Horizontal Bow Hunter and Crossbow Connection Magazines, and asked me to promoted the Crossbow in Louisiana. At the time you had to be physically challenged or be over 60 years old to use a crossbow to deer hunt with. I didn't know anything about a crossbow so Dan and Leone took me to school. A Criminal/Fraud investigator by trade I was a person that left no stone uncovered when I smelled a rat.

I started a full scale investigation just like a crime; you wouldn't believe what I found. At first I was just ignored by archery experts I had known for years while a major bow hunting state association hung up on me and wouldn't explain why they were against the crossbow hunting alongside standard archers. Phase one culminated into mass confusion of why wouldn't you want people to hunt with a crossbow.

I have always been somewhat politically connected as I write for individuals that run for office. I went to my State Representative and asked him what the deal was considering it made sense in the outdoor world. Being an outdoorsmen himself he told me about the underlying caste system in the outdoor world, dealing with sponsors and the privileged. It boiled down to just plain jealousy, as the vertical bow hunters didn't want the horizontal bow hunters to invade their woods. Its not their woods it belongs to the state if its public land and if its private land they don't own the game that walks through; but many think they do. The first year my state rep. introduced the bill and we lost; lessons learned.

The opposition saw this as a great victory which emboldened them to further their efforts to trash the



crossbowmen everywhere they went. My political mentors told me to remain observant and look for the openings. The openings came like wildfire as nothing the anti-crossbow advocates related coincided with mainstream hunting sportsmanship. The detractors were sounding more like anti-hunters than sportsmen. They just didn't want to share the woods with the crossbowmen to the point of childish selfishness, and the legislators picked up on this.

First they said the crossbow was a poacher's weapon a silent 30-30 and the deer population would be depleted to a nonexistent level. Well I don't know if you ever tried to shoot a crossbow out the window of a vehicle but its not the weapon of choice as it is the most awkward hunting weapon of all. The real choice is a 22 rifle, and now the craze is to attach a legal suppressor but no one is complaining about that. (Give me a break).

Then there chimed the traditionalist complaining the crossbow was too modern. Yea Right. The Chinese invented the crossbow six thousand years ago as to the vertical bow being about ten thousand years old, as far as we know. Just for the record the first Compound Bow was invented circa 1968 and I got to shoot one of the first ones. To me it seemed awkward and I was not impressed; with improvements it became very popular. History shows the Long bow out classed the Crossbow in the days of old when knights were bold and the English Long bowmen ran the French crossbowmen right off the battle field. They kept the rate of fire 5 to 1 turning the sky dark with arrows and outranged the Crossbow bolts as well.

It was said the crossbow bolts would ruin target butts by over penetrating (tests showed this was ridicules) the crossbow of 175 pounds penetrated slightly less than a 70 pound Compound bow. At the time it was almost impossible to silence a crossbow, shooting a deer past 40 yards only meant it would jump the string. That really happened to me with a lazed 45 yard shot. The bolt hit perfectly, the fact remained the buck wasn't there any more even at 305 feet per second. Now a 100 yard plus shot with a Compound bow is common place.

The battle became logic vs selfishness with a million man march against the crossbow. I even lost friends

and received threats, somehow I found a way to ignore this while the contentions made it a challenge. The when State reality came my Representative elected State was Senator. We tried a more direct approach after logic only brought us stalemate. Simply it was money and the need to bring more youth hunters into the world of hunting, this in turn would bring more money into the state through the purchases of hunting licenses, it was simple as that. When the bill was entered again the point of the anti-crossbow individuals was too weak to stand debate, the bill was





signed into law and I went hunting long before I turned 60 years old.

Today all the Archery Pro-Shops will be glad to sell you a seriously improved Compound Bow, or you can pick up a premium price Crossbow hanging thick from the ceiling. I suppose if you listen hard enough you will still hear someone trash a crossbow. Others took it out and tried it finding it took a lot more getting use to as well practice, much the same way with other hunting equipment. Somehow I think the hype against the crossbow made

it out to be too easy, anything but the real truth.

At this point in time you can find someone with a Compound Bow or a Crossbow of cutting edge technology, that is expert enough to make a shot on a big game animal at 100 yards plus. That is amazing no matter how you look at it but the truth relates the average bow hunter isn't that good and shouldn't try half that distance. However when they see the expert do it, the ego takes over and two thing will happen. Either the neophyte will be inspired to become the expert through proper practice or they will arm themselves with superior technology under the impression this will alone make them invincible.

My State Senator John Smith is a wise man. I learned that we had to deal with the human elements of selfishness, jealousy, and territorialism with knowledge, patience and logic. We won for the hunters of Louisiana. At a huge gathering of Outdoorsmen in Woodworth Louisiana for National Hunting and Fishing Day our LADWF Hunting Heritage Director, John Sturgis insured that one thousand plus boys and girls got to shoot donated Barnett Youth Crossbows at the event. This alone greatly inspired the youth outdoorsmen to get into Archery, or Hunting, while it was just plain good fun even for me. The promotion of the next generation of hunters far outweighed the idea of who will be sitting in a tree stand with what kind of bow. The results were clear and a success, introducing the crossbow did in fact produce more youth outdoorsmen. Otherwise its all about personal choice. Sometimes I like to hunt with a crossbow and sometimes I like something else. I'm glad John Roberts didn't have to wait until he was 60 years old to use his crossbow.

The same old story still exists in hold out states that don't allow crossbow hunting. I will quote the most famous American Bow Hunter, Fred Bear, "If you are not working to promote hunting, you are working against it." That very clearly states the simple facts. Everyone that ever read an Uncle John article knows my special catch phrase that ends all my reports or stories and I'm going to use it with emphasis this time for the Crossbow experts in those states that don't have it yet. Take this information and use it, talk to your legislators and...Pass it on.





