

September 2017
Fall Fishing



ODU MAGAZINE™

**HADDOCK
OUT OF
RYE
HARBOR**

**WALLEYE
IN THE
SALAD**

**TACTICS FOR
SMALLMOUTH**

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HOW TO MASTER THE MOUSE RETRIEVE



EDITOR'S LETTER

women the woods, lakes, mountains and streams are out sactuary and we need to protect these gifts, enjoy them and seemingly these days escape to them for a time out.

Good luck to all our ODU friends this fall fishing and hunting season.

Lets talk ice fishing for a moment. I awoke this week in Maine with 40 plus degree temperatures. This means skim ice is closing in and some of us who enjoy ice fishing need to get ourselves into our ice equipment. Did we store it right, what do we need to replace etc. Starting in October ODU will have ice coverage on both our website and our next five digital fishing magazines.

This magazine is all about get us into the the fall mode. We have you covered: flyfishing, bass fishing, walleye fishing, musky fishing, haddock fishing, fishing with frogs and much more. Enjoy.

One thing I love about the outdoors, when you are walking down a trail or taking a canoe trip the outside world does not have to influence our gift of the outdoors. We don't need to listen or read about the presurres from social media we are bumbarred with. We can even reflect quietly, on what has already been sharred with us on the nightly news or Facebook. Simply stated, for us outdoorsmen and

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Thank You All!



....WS

Thank you to all who have contributed to make this and past editions a success!

And please, enjoy the outdoors.

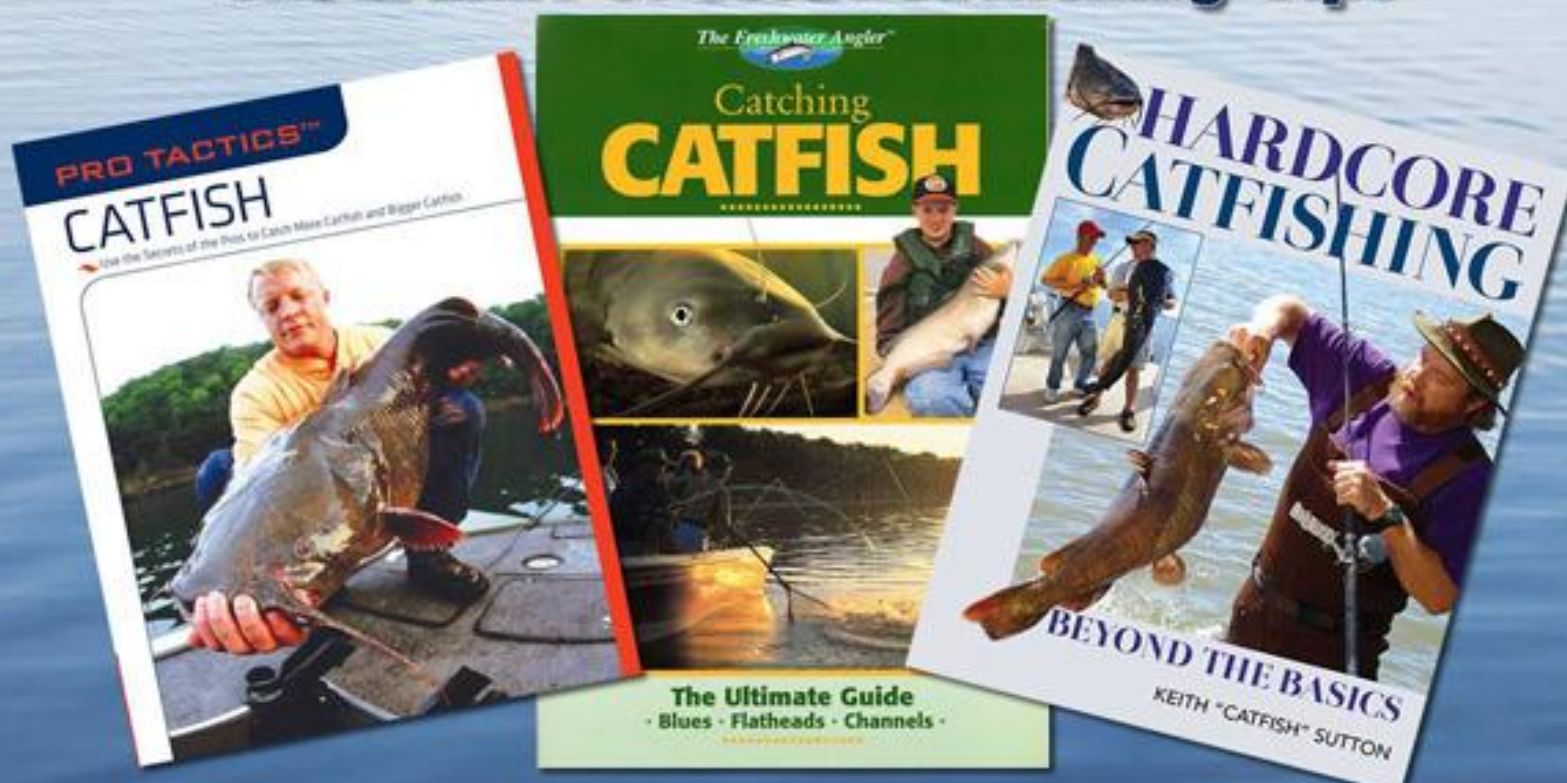
*Larry Thornhill and William Schwarz
Co-Founders of ODU Magazine*

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GET IN THE ZONE

From The Team at NextBite

The first rule of catching fish is being where the fish want to be. Not only does this mean being on the



right spot on the lake, but it also means getting your lure into the strike zone of the fish.

Too often people choose crank baits based on how deep they run. This is the not the right way to pick a bait! Baits should be chosen based on what action will catch a fish. For example, if you are targeting 2-3 pound walleye, you should use a smaller size, like a number 5 or 7 Berkley Flicker Shad or Flicker Minnow. For bigger fish, you should use a larger size.

Once you have the right bait, you need to know where to run the bait in the water column. If you are

fishing structure, the bait needs to be close to bottom. If you are trying to catch suspended fish, the lure should run just above the mark on your Lowrance HDS sonar.



There are several ways to get your lure into the "zone". Every style of lure and each size within that style, has a unique dive curve. To know how much line you need to let out to get a lure down to a particular depth, you can use the Precision Trolling Data App. You just dial up on the app how deep you want your lure to run and it will tell you how much line to let out.

In many cases, the lure may be able to get to the right depth just by letting line out. However, one way to get extra depth is by using a thinner line. Typically 10# Berkley Trilene is used for trolling. By going to 10# FireLine, you will be able to get the lure deeper since this line is the same diameter as 4# mono. The Precision Trolling Data App can tell you how much line will need to be let out.

A simple way to get extra depth is by using Off Shore Tackle Snap Weights in 2oz and 3oz sizes. We do this by letting the lure out 50 feet (the lead), attaching the snap weight, and then letting out additional line (the dropper) to get the lure to the right depth.

By creating a 50-foot lead between the lure and the snap weight, the lure will be able to dive "normally". It also keeps the snap from spooking the fish and gives the angler time to detach the weight and grab the net.

In extremely clear water, the walleyes tend to be spooked easily. In a case like this, you may have move

to a 1 oz. weight, and it may take 100 feet of dropper line to get the lure into the strike zone. While the same thing could be accomplished with a larger weight and shorter lead, chances are the large weight will scare the fish in these conditions. Also, the lighter weight will have less effect on the "line angle", meaning that the lead will run straighter, giving you a more direct line to the fish and better hook-ups.

A good way to determine the length of dropper line needed is with the "Bottom-up" technique. Once you've let out the lure and attached the snap weight, let out line until you can feel the crank bait ticking bottom. This will tell you the length



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of dropper line it takes to get that lure to the bottom.

Then, by taking into consideration the depth at which that particular bait runs with the amount of lead you have out, and the amount of dropper it takes to get that lure to a certain depth (in this case bottom), you can begin varying the dropper to put the lure into the zone where you're marking fish.

There are times when you'll want to run a short lead. Any time you're fishing on or very near the bottom, a short lead will give you more control of your presentation. Bottom hugging walleyes tend to be less "spooky" than fish higher in the water column, so the weight running 10 to 25 feet ahead of the lure doesn't pose any problems that way. This is a situation where you'll want to use a heavier snap weight, again to give you better control.

Choose a weight that will get the lure down to the desired depth while keeping the dropper line at about a 45-degree angle off the rod tip. You don't want to use a weight so heavy that your dropper is any more vertical than that due to the fact that the line angle would again affect hook setting.

Lead core line is another option for getting your lure into

the strike zone. Lead core line is a Dacron line with lead running through the center of it. The outside sleeve is color coded every thirty feet to help you keep track of the amount of line you have let out. The most common size used in walleye fishing is 18# test. Weights higher than 18# have the same size lead core, but a heavier Dacron coating. So the 18# has the thinnest diameter for the amount of lead used.

The thinner diameter will dive deeper and you will be able to spool more line on a reel. Since lead core is bulky, we recommend using a large capacity reel. The more line you let out, the deeper the lure will go. If you are fishing structure, you should use a 15 foot Fireline leader. This will allow you to monitor the lure. If you are fishing in open water, use a 50 foot 10lb. Trilene XT leader.

Trolling speed can be controlled with your kicker motor or by using "heading lock" on your MotorGuide Xi5 bow mount trolling motor. It is important to remember that when you are using a weighting system, such as a snap weight or lead core, your trolling speed will affect the depth of the lure. The slower you go, the deeper the lure will run. When you speed up, the lure will rise. By choosing the right bait and getting it in the right place in the water column, you are sure to get your Next Bite!

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TOP 2 TACTICS FOR SMALLMOUTH BASS TODAY

By Chip Leer

It's early summer and I love catching smallmouth bass. To keep things simple, I'm going to limit myself to just two rods and two presentations. What would you take? I'd bring a swimbait and a jerkbait, and here's where, when and how I'd fish them.

Big flats adjacent to deeper water are the place to be right now. Firm-bottom flats 3 to 7 feet deep, with a mix of materials including sand, gravel, boulders and smaller rocks are the best of the best.

Smallmouths move onto these flats to feed after they abandon deep wintering grounds. Many smallies also spawn here and will continue to utilize the area throughout summer when conditions are right, such as at dusk or dawn, and on windy days. So if you find a hotspot now, chances are good it will produce fish again and again.

When scouting potential flats, pay attention to the wind. A warm, gentle breeze blowing in helps warm

the water and is a big plus in the spring. Conversely, an outgoing wind can lower the water temperature and drive bass into deeper water.

To find bass fast, fancast soft-bodied swimbaits like LIVETARGET's 4-inch Trout Swimbait on top of the flat. Either drift or use your trolling motor while making long casts and slow, steady retrieves—letting the swimbait's tail provide the majority of the action.



LIVETARGET 4-inch Trout Swimbaits

Suspending jerkbaits excel for fishing the sides of the flat and over nearby deeper water. The 2¾-inch RS70S LIVETARGET Rainbow Smelt Jerkbait is a personal favorite. Fish it with a jerk-pause cadence, experimenting with the number of jerks and duration of pauses. Don't be afraid to pause the bait 10 to 15 seconds or more if bass are lethargic or you need to give deep fish time to come up and eat.

Clear or natural tones in lure color that mimic the lake's forage base are always great choices, but other natural colors can be killers in turbid water or cloudy conditions. I like to use more silver/blacks in clear water and go to pearl/flesh or Pear/Bright Green shades in turbid water.



LIVETARGET Emerald Shiner and Rainbow Smelt Jerkbait

As for the two rods, I recommend a 6'9", medium action Muse Gold spinning rod spooled with superbraid mainline and fluorocarbon leader for jerkbaits. A 7'0" medium-action casting rod with low-stretch, 12-pound monofilament or fluorocarbon is ideal for swimbaits because the rod loads nicely when a bass takes the bait.

Armed with these two presentations, you can catch hard-fighting smallmouths!

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Photo Anita Martin

PRACTICE VS TOURNAMENT DAY

By Glenn Walker

When I'm fishing a Snag Proof frog on tournament day, my goal obviously is to put my frog in as many places I can to catch the most bass as possible. But when I'm practicing for that tournament, my goal is to cover as much water as possible and get the bass to show me they are there. If I'm on a new lake or in a new area on a river I've never fished, I'll set the hook on a fish or two to see the quality of bass that live there, but for the most part I'll keep my Minn Kota Fortrex on high and work my Bobby's Perfect Frog quickly in effort to get the bass to boil on the



frog, but not strike it.

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

FIND THE FOOD, FIND THE FISH

By Bob Jensen

From now until the water gets hard again, if you want to be more successful in your fishing, there is one very basic thing to keep in mind: You've got to be fishing where your quarry's food is. Actually, as soon as the spawn was over finding what the fish wanted to eat was a very important consideration. As the summer progresses and we get into the fall months, staying near what the fish want to eat is very important. Following are some examples and how you can capitalize when you encounter some of these situations. Let's say you're on a body of water that has lots of white bass. White bass are fun to catch: They're great fighters and when they're on the bite, they'll eat almost anything you throw to them. Let's say you're trolling with crankbaits for white bass. Crankbaits in the smaller sizes are often very good for whites. Suddenly you notice lots of gulls diving in a certain area just a couple of hundred yards away. If you want to catch fish, you should get over to that area quickly but quietly. What's happening is a school of white bass has trapped a school of baitfish, probably shad, near the surface of the water. The white bass are eating the shad from below, the gulls are eating the shad from above. Get within casting range and throw a

bait that appeals to a white bass and you're going to get bit. However, we're not going to use that crankbait that we were trolling with. It will probably run under the bass. We want to choose a bait that can be fished on the surface or very close to the surface, something like a topwater bait or a



This big bass was near a school of bluegills and couldn't resist a spinnerbait fished slowly through the bluegills.

Thumper Jig tipped with an Impulse Swim'N Grub in the two or three inch size. My first choice would be the Thumper/Impulse combo. A topwater would work, but they have treble hooks so it takes longer to unhook the fish. Also, white bass like to flop, and a flopping fish and treble hooks can be hard on fingers and hands.

A few years ago I was fishing with Travis Peterson. Travis is an expert angler for any fish that swims near his home in Bemidji, Minnesota. On this day we were fishing bass in shallow vegetation. Fishing was pretty good. Travis then noticed that a dragonfly hatch was going on in a field of lily-pads nearby. We got over there quickly, but again, quietly. Every now and then we would see a bass slurp a dragonfly off the surface. We tied on Jaw-Breaker weedless spoons and started throwing them around. What had been good fishing changed to great fishing. The presence of the dragonflies got the bass into a feeding frenzy and we took advantage of it. If Travis hadn't noticed the dragonfly activity however, we could have missed out on the action.

If walleyes are your goal, pay close attention to your sonar for the presence of baitfish. You usually won't see the surface activity with walleyes that you might with bass, but locating the walleye's food is just as important to catching them as it is to white bass or largemouth bass. Something like the Raymarine Dragonfly 7 provides a very detailed picture of the bottom and reveals if baitfish are present or not. The Dragonfly 7 is a lot of sonar for not too much money. This time of year, if I don't see baitfish when I'm fishing for walleyes, I usually don't fish the spot. However, if the wind is blowing onto a point or shallow water structure, you might want to make a few casts to see if the fish are feeding shallow.

Remember that during the summer and fall months if you want to catch fish, you've got to be fishing where their food is. If you remember that, your chances for success will go way up.

To see the new and old episodes of Fishing the Midwest Television, fishing tip videos, current articles and those from the archives, go to www.fishingthemidwest.com.



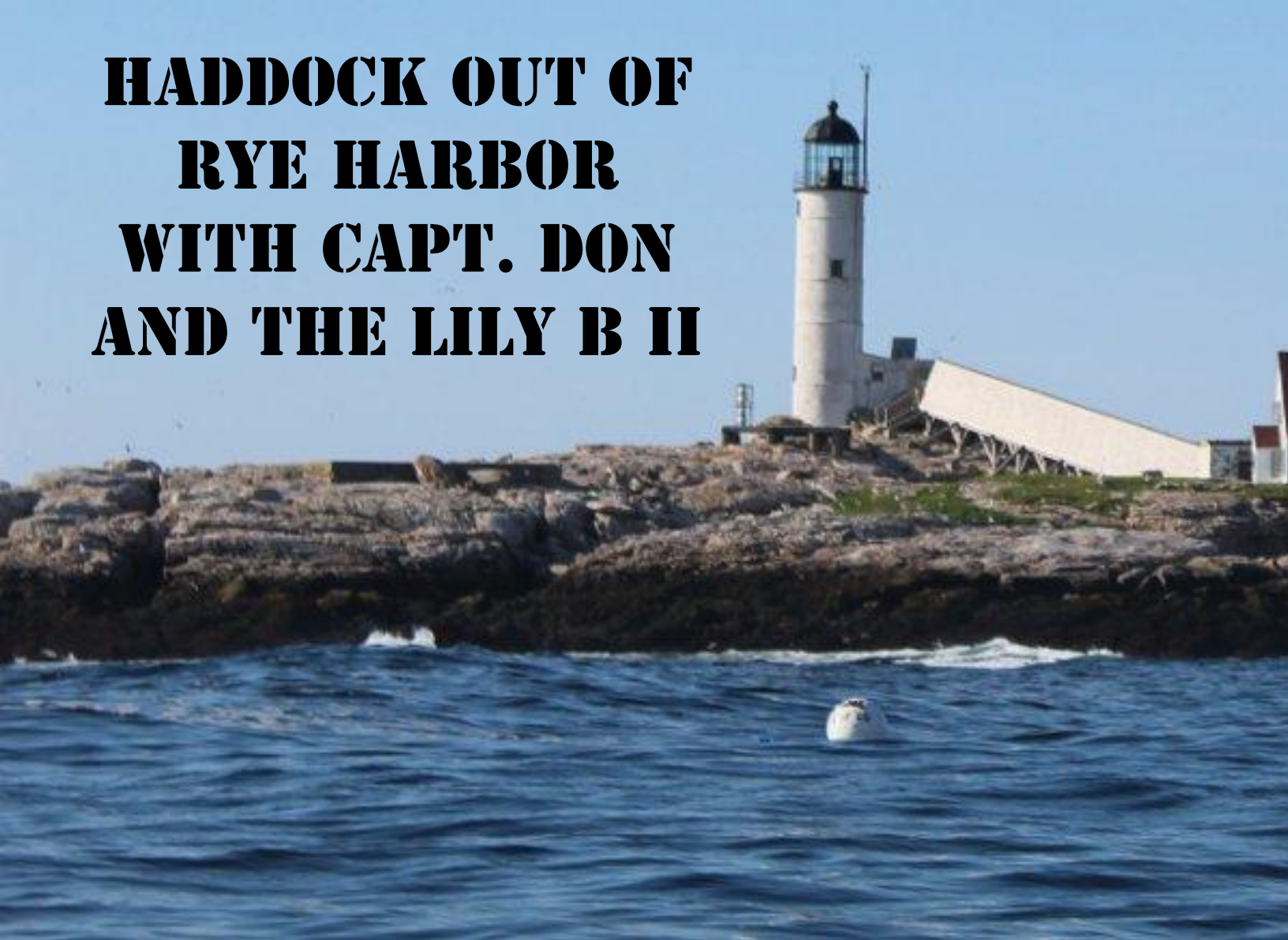
The image is a promotional banner for the National Professional Anglers Association (NPA). It features a central photograph of a male angler with sunglasses and a racing jersey, leaning over the side of a red and black boat to catch a fish. The boat has several sponsor logos, including 'FLOW-RITE', 'Douglas', and 'SKEET'. In the top left corner is the NPA logo, which consists of a blue square with 'NPA' in white and a silhouette of an angler. In the top right corner is a dark blue rectangular button with the text 'CLICK HERE TO JOIN' in white, accompanied by a smaller NPA logo. At the bottom, white text on a dark background reads: 'Welcome to the National Professional Anglers Association! If you make an income in the fishing business or want to, we are here to help you succeed. Click to Learn More!'

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HADDOCK OUT OF RYE HARBOR WITH CAPT. DON AND THE LILY B II



By Dana Benner

Though the New Hampshire coastline is the smallest in the United States, it provides access to some of the best groundfishing in the world; the Gulf of Maine. My goal was to tap into some of the bounty that this area offers. On this day I was to be fishing with [Capt. Don aboard the Lily B II](#).

I met up with [Capt. Don](#), along with the five other anglers, at about 7:00am at the marina in Rye, New Hampshire. By 7:30am we were all loaded and shoving off from the dock. As our captain piloted us out of the harbor, I took this time to take stock of the boat and the gear that we would be using on this day out on the Atlantic.

The [Lily B II](#) is a 27 foot Lobster Eastern style cuddy cabin built by Eastern Boats. It is designed to hold six anglers, which it seems to do with no real problems. The Lily B II is powered by an inboard 163hp Volvo diesel and it has a double hull for safety.

Capt. Don does provide his customers with rods, reels and bait, though you are welcome to bring your own gear. He will even fillet your catch for you at no extra charge. While some of the passengers on this trip did decide to bring their own gear, I opted to using the gear provided by the ship. The



equipment we would be using consisted of six foot, medium action rods. Each rod was paired with a level wind reel spooled with 50 pound test braided line. While we were using no leader, there was a length of monofilament tied to the main line. Onto the monofilament were tied two circle hooks, one above the other. At the end of the rig was either a 16 or 20 ounce lead weight. The size of the weight used all depended upon the position of the boat and speed of the current. As we would be drifting through and over likely spots, current and the speed of the drift was very important. Our bait consisted of medium sized whole shrimp and clams.

Speaking with Capt. Don I learned that our destination was an area about 15 miles out from the harbor, out past the Isles of Shoals. Though these waters hold a variety of groundfish, ranging from cod and haddock to pollack and hake, our target on this day would be haddock. While the waters of the Gulf of Maine are well known its cod fishery, this fishery has been overfished for so long that it has all been but closed down in efforts for the cod population to recover. Currently the cod season is closed from October 1st through July 31st and even when it does reopen you are only allowed to keep one fish and it has to measure 24 inches or better.

The haddock season on the other hand is only closed from March 1st to April 14th. When the season is open the angler is allowed 15 fish per day with a minimum length of 17 inches. That is the reason why we were targeting haddock.



Capt. Don told me that at this time of year, the first two weeks of June, the fish are moving, following the bait. With this said, there are certain things to look for, namely the ocean's topography. Cod seem to prefer muddy flat bottom areas, while haddock relate to structure, in this case the edges of underwater plateaus. Both species like deeper water, 200 feet or better, and they hug the bottom. Pollack on the other hand, stay suspended off of the bottom, ambushing bait as it sinks. The area we were to fish had all of this, so we actually could catch just about anything; and we did.

Within five minutes of arriving on scene most of the anglers had their lines in the water. We were drifting in about 210 feet of water and it didn't take long before we got the first hookup. Ralph got a nice haddock to take a shrimp with the fish being the first keeper of

the day, measuring 19 inches long. Soon other anglers were boating fish, some keepers and some shorts. This went on throughout the day, with some action being faster than others. When all was said and done there were nine keeper haddock in the cooler. Just as many, if not more were released due to their size. Some cod were also caught and promptly released. More than a few sculpin were caught as well as a fairly good sized wolfish, all of which were released.



At about 2:00pm we started to make our way back to port. What had started out as perfectly calm seas were starting to turn ugly real quick. Because of the weather conditions it took us a little longer to get in, but it was always better to play it safe. Once back to dock Capt. Don filleted the day's catch and we all spoke to the New Hampshire Fish and Game people who came down to the boat to check our catch.

Overall it was a great day on the water. We caught fish and had a good time doing it. It wasn't too cold and we didn't have to battle rough water while we were out there. As I left the harbor I realized that I had only eaten two sandwiches all day and I was hungry. I stopped at what I consider the best seafood restaurant in Hampton, New Hampshire; Little Jack's Seafood. I ordered up some clams and a cold Shoals Pale Ale, reflecting on my day. It was the perfect end to a wonderful time.



HI-TECH SOLUTIONS TO THE MUSKY PUZZLE

By Dr. Jason Halfen



Musky activity peaks in late summer, as warm water temperatures drive these apex predators to feed opportunistically on abundant natural forage, and to aggressively chase anglers' baits. Full-time musky devotees frequently drop their paychecks on custom topwaters and giant multi-blade bucktails, study the moon and sun charts, and target trophy waters to get their summer musky fix. Then, there are the



rest of us: anglers with families and jobs, who split limited fishing time among several different target species swimming in convenient locations. For us, the musky bug has yet to take complete hold. Nevertheless, we still enjoy the chase, and revel in its success as we lift muskies from the big Frabill net, snap a quick photo and send *Esox* back to the depths. How can we enjoy consistent summer musky success, without devoting our entire existence to catching them? For me, modern technology levels the playing field, and puts summer muskies in the boat when I'm not chasing river smallmouth, cleaning the cabin gutters or pulling the kids on the tube. Here are four "tech tips" to help you hoist more warm weather muskies this season.

1. Pick your spots. First, get away from the shoreline. You'll encounter more quality summer muskies on mid-lake structure than you will back in the shallow bays where you found them in the early part of the season. I gravitate toward humps and bars out on the main basin, and rely on the wind to help me pick my spots. Prime locations are long bars that run perpendicular to that day's prevailing wind. Barren sand bars will be, you guessed it, devoid of fish. Rocks for cover are good. Weeds are better. Sprinkle a few big boulders along a weedy bar or concentrated right on its tip, and you've got a winner! A modern fish finder equipped with side-scanning sonar technology is your friend here, eliminating dead water and putting you on prime musky spots, faster.

2. Use your eyes, too. Nothing beats visual confirmation of the new micro-spot that you've just identified electronically with your fish finder. One of the most powerful and versatile tools in my fish finding arsenal, for both soft and hard water, is my Aqua-Vu HD 700i underwater camera system. A high-definition perspective on the underwater world, courtesy of Aqua-Vu's high quality optics, allows me to fish with confidence, knowing that I am indeed targeting the right areas for the right fish. Beyond using the Aqua-Vu camera to probe structure, I frequently rely on the same system to confirm the identities of fish that sonar reveals in these same areas. On many of the lakes I frequent, muskies rely





on young panfish and related species for summer forage; visually identifying snack-sized sunnies and crappies with my Aqua-Vu camera tells me that the buffet is set for Esox.

3. String 'em up. Your line and leader are the most intimate, and most critical, connections linking you to your quarry. Stringing up with that cheap black Dacron line collecting dust on the baitshop's shelf is a recipe for failure. And that 50's-era wire leader designed to prevent bite offs by toothy Esox is also a significant health hazard to a hooked fish, slicing into flesh and scraping off protective slime during the fight. Twenty-first century technology, championed by passionate, conservation-minded anglers, provides solutions to both of these problems. First, spool up with a modern main line, like Seaguar Threadlock, a 16-strand braid engineered for amazing tensile and impact strength. A smooth casting line that effortlessly peels off the reel, Seaguar Threadlock features a hollow core, enabling quick attachment to an advanced leader material, like the 100% fluorocarbon Seaguar AbraxX Musky and Pike leader. Advanced by innovators in the musky fishing community, AbraxX Musky and Pike leader is highly abrasion resistant and delivers exceptional tensile and knot strength. While providing successful Musky fishing experiences to the angler, Seaguar Threadlock and AbraxX Musky and Pike leader also have Esox's welfare in mind, allowing fish to be landed quickly in summer's heat, and with far fewer leader-induced injuries than ever before.

4. Get your Mojo on. Technique-specific rods are all the rage. I admit to having rods in my walleye collection that I only use for rigging, others only for corking, and still others for each of a variety of jig-based presentations. My musky rod collection, however, relies on a "generalist" rather than a host of specialist rods. The rod that I reach for, every time, is my eight-foot Mojo Musky (MM80MHF) from St. Croix Rod. Relying on a generalist rod doesn't mean that I have to compromise on features or functionality. Whether I'm slow rolling a spinnerbait through the weeds, going over the top of the weeds with a Cowgirl, or riding the waves with a topwater, my Mojo Musky handles each presentation



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with the precision and toughness that summer muskies demand. The Mojo Musky's eight-foot length allows me to transition into a figure 8 with ease, and the modest weight of the rod doesn't leave me fatigued after chasing muskies for the day. A hidden bonus? At eight feet in length, this predator powerhouse still fits in my boat's rod locker, making it convenient to store in the boat all the time, until the Esox hour arrives. My Mojo Musky is an important, final component of my hi-tech solution to the summer musky puzzle.

Summer musky prime time has arrived. This is the time of the season with the musky can truly be an "everyman's fish", as for these few weeks, complete devotion to all things Esox is not necessarily required for success. Use these tech tips to level the musky playing field, and be sure to smile for those musky "grip-and-grin" photos that are destined for your desk at work and your social media profile. Those memories will keep the musky flame burning bright until summer returns next year!

About the author: Dr. Jason Halfen owns and operates The Technological Angler, dedicated to teaching anglers to leverage modern technology to find and catch more fish. Let your learning begin at <http://www.technologicalangler.com>.



Fall Big Walleye Programs

By Jason Mitchell

Fall fishing is typically some of the best fishing of the entire season. Fish start to bulk up with egg mass and the late open water time-period is a coveted season for many anglers looking to target trophy class fish. The productive patterns can vary from fishery to fishery but there is a surprising amount of similarities across the board when comparing different big fish locations and patterns across several fisheries.

There are several prominent patterns that set up during the fall. What seems to push most patterns into gear are cooling water temperatures. There doesn't always seem to be a magic surface temperature but more so a trend. The trends often dictate the strategy. Cooling trends solidify the traditional patterns and

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locations. Warming trends in fall seem to scatter fish. This is an important scope to consider which will be discussed in more detail later.

Productive fall locations for big walleye can be both deep and shallow. Prominent main-lake structure that features quick access to deep water is a classic fall location. Steep structure that has a hard bottom is textbook. Large round boulders are often big fish magnets.

Another classic fall location is current. Current that is created by a causeway or slot between a couple of islands or perhaps a feeder creek or bridge will often be a perennial fall location for catching big fish. Current in conjunction with rock or boulders can often be magical, particularly after dark during full moon phases.

Shallow locations can run the gamut but weeds like cabbage, wild rice or milfoil can hold a surprising number of big walleyes during the fall until the weeds break down and die. The allure of weeds in the fall is that they provide a consistent and stable environment for fish as everything else in the aquatic world changes quite rapidly. Weeds also seem to hold in or retain some heat as the water temperatures cool. These shallow weed bites get better when water temperatures cool after the first

major frost but what is interesting is that these shallow patterns often mimic shallow water spring time patterns in that the afternoon often produces some of the best fishing when the sun warms up the water a touch.

Other shallow water locations include rock reefs and current locations that in many cases are after dark locations. Shallow current for example has long provided some exceptional after dark chest wading opportunities for catching giant walleye on many fisheries. Typically, the after dark fishing peaks with each consecutive full moon cycle.

The patterns highlighted above are just classic programs that produce some of the biggest walleyes each season for many anglers across the Midwest. These classic fall patterns seem to set up when the water temps begin cooling. The bite often intensifies when the water temperature each morning is consecutively cooler.

The worst thing that can happen to fall bites is a warming trend. When an unseasonably warm spell reverses the cooling trend to the point where the water begins to warm back up, this trend seems to unravel traditional locations and patterns. We often joke that the pattern at this point is that there is no pattern. We typically will find fish scattered with no consistency.

Knowing what to do during cooling trends over classic patterns is easy. Making the right decisions on when fish scatter is much more difficult. When the water is cooling, you can focus on a spot or location. When the water warms during the fall, you need to focus on a process. The process of covering as much water as possible and fishing through a milk run of good locations knowing you will find fish scattered.

When faced with warming trends and scattered fish, many fish will be transitioning and trolling crankbaits can be a great way to target these fish. When fish transition and travel between point A, and point B, they typically take the shortest and easiest route. What this means is that primary main lake contours and the old river channel on reservoirs essentially become underwater highways for traveling fish. Cover water over big locations. For specifically targeting big fish, bigger profiles typically catch bigger

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fish. Don't be afraid to double the length and profile from what you would typically use the rest of the year.

When faced with transitioning and scattered fish, don't get hung up on an icon or waypoint as in thinking that you troll until you find the fish and then assume that you will catch more fish from the same location. Instead focus on your fish per hour. On a tough bite, I am happy with a bite an hour. Two bites an hour would be considered good in some cases. Anticipate a grind where you simply put in the time over a general location and pick fish off one at a time. Because fish are scattered, you need to get in the groove where you are probable that you contact so many fish per hour by traveling a set distance.

Remember as well that scattered fish often have a much more difficult temperament in that these fish are not competing with other fish and in some cases, are stressed from the distances traveled. This is exactly why I love to troll crankbaits in the fall when dealing with tough conditions. Not only do I cover water and contact more fish, I can also do a better job of getting a reaction strike by using speed to trigger fish.

This fall season, catch some of the biggest walleye of the year by matching up your fishing strategies to the general cooling or warming trends happening on the water. Don't watch the calendar, watch the temperature gauge.

TRANSITIONAL FALL BASS

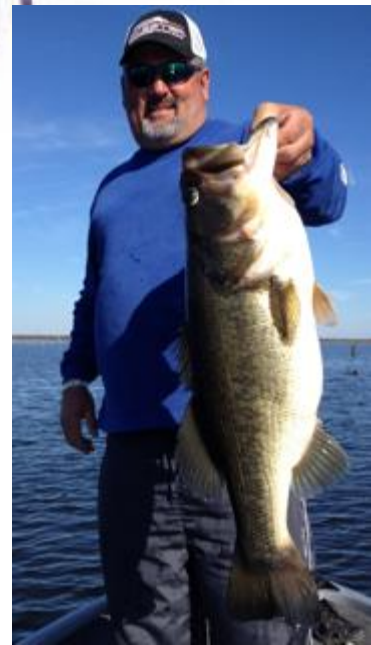
By Shane Beilue

The key to consistently staying on top of the fish is to anticipate where they're going, rather than fishing where they were yesterday. It's an adage that has served professional angler Mark Pack well as he's chased bass all over the country in major tournament competition, as well as regularly hosting guided trips on famed Lake Fork, Texas. Mark is also the founder and owner of M-Pack lures, based in nearby Mineola, Texas. With summer quickly fading, Mark offers his advice on how to stay one step ahead of the bass as they begin making major movements toward the creeks and tributaries.

"What really triggers bass moving from their deep water locations in the summer toward the backs of the creeks in the fall are those initial mild summer fronts that we start to see in early to mid-September here in Texas", as he shared. "A lot of times, fishermen will wait until they see those harder fronts come through in October before they start heading to the creeks for fall bass; however, I can tell you a lot of those bass will start moving back there much sooner than that". To emphasize that point, Mark recounted a recent guide trip in late August where he and his customers caught some deep fish on typical summer structure, but also had success along the edges of feeder creeks and



**HINT: IT'S
SOONER
THAN
YOU MAY
THINK**



tributaries about mid-way toward the back of the creeks.

**Location, location,
location...**

Mark offers up two key locations to search for early season fall bass: outside creek channel bends and secondary points about half way back in the creek arms.

As he adds, “What you’re looking for is any type of cover along the channel swing or point where bass can congregate and ambush baitfish: stumps, lay downs or even boat docks will be the key for finding groups of bass rather than just singles here and there”. Regarding the key depth for early fall bass, Pack says flats along the creek channel in about ten feet of water is a good place to begin your search on most large reservoirs.

Regarding lure choice, Pack keeps it simple: crankbaits, Texas rigged worms and/or jigs tossed right in the thickest part of the cover. As Mark says, “The more gnarly the tangle, the better the odds of connecting with a big fish, which is why I designed my own jig with the new Structure Guard weed guard. I was tired of losing so many jigs to root tangles and brush piles that I decided to design an entirely new weed guard system that has really reduced the number of jigs I hang up and lose”.

As fall progresses, the bass will continue to migrate further into the creeks, moving shallower at different times of the day to chase baitfish. Fast moving baits like squarebill cranks, spinnerbaits, jerk baits and topwaters will be prime choices for intercepting these schools of bass.

Fall to Winter

As the winter months approach and the harder cold fronts start blowing through, the bass basically reverse their process of moving to the backs of creeks and start working back toward deeper water. Pack offers his insights into where to anticipate the bass’ next stop: “You’re basically looking for creek bends again but this time you want to find those channel bends with an abrupt drop – the sharper the better. This can be a spot where bass will really gang up as winter sets in. What will happen is that on warm sunny days, those fish will probably be right on the edge of those steep channel drops or maybe suspended over the cover; however, when a severe cold front inevitably arrives, it will push those fish right to the bottom of the channel itself”. Under these often brutally cold days, Mark suggests casting a jig right down the middle of the channel, as the bass will often be laying with their bellies right on the bottom of the creek channel in big groups. As an example, he recounts a customer trip in the dead of



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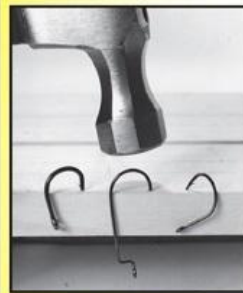
winter, "It was a really cold day on Fork and my customer caught 28 bass on consecutive casts with a jig and we were fishing smack dab in the middle of the channel".

Finally, Mark offers up one other bit of advice when it comes to these creek channel bass. As he adds, "I believe there are groups of resident bass that stay in these major creek arms year 'round, even in the hot summer months. Once those early fronts start showing up, you'll see a whole lot more fish moving back there, but you can always find some bass on those channel swings and points most anytime of the year".

Mark Pack can be reached for guided fishing trips at (903)520-8085

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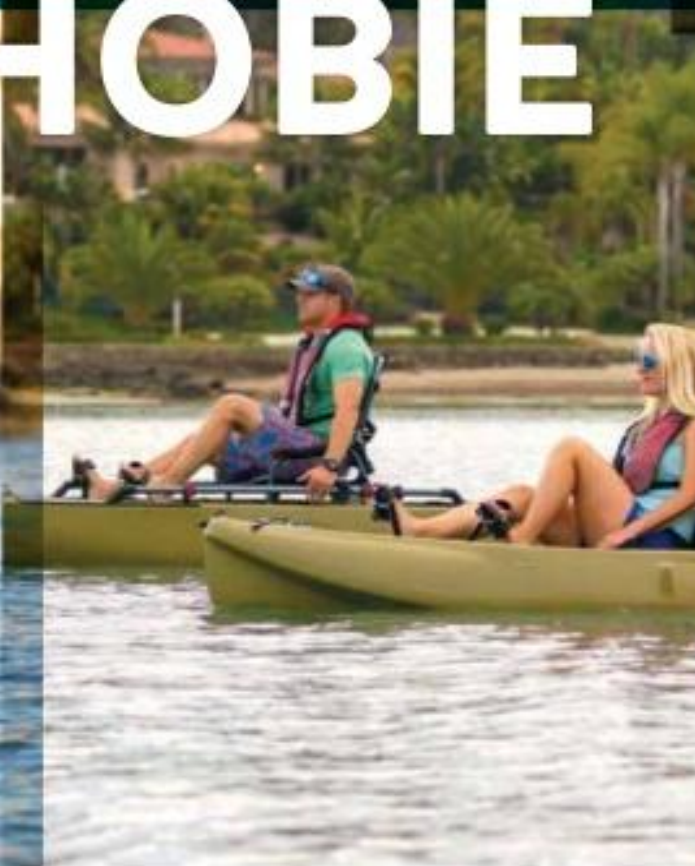


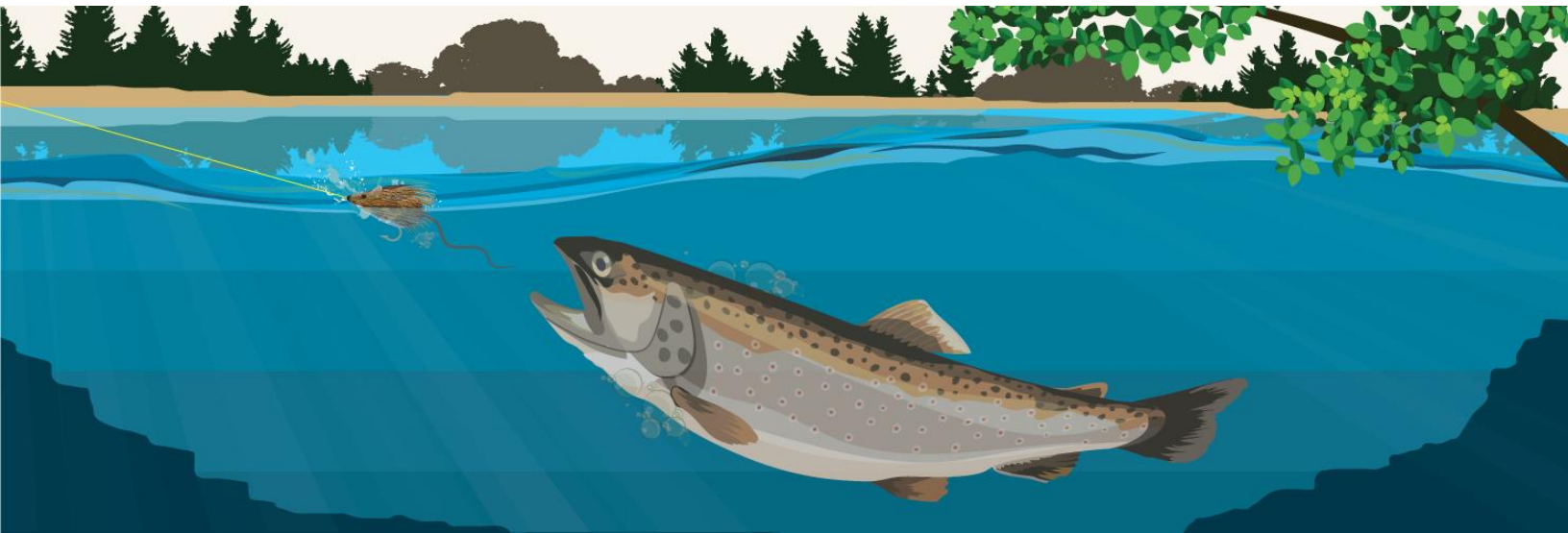
Daiichi!

The Hobie logo is displayed in a stylized, cursive font within a blue diamond-shaped frame. The background of the top half of the advertisement is a man in a white shirt and tan cap fishing from a blue Hobie kayak on the ocean. A fishing rod is bent, indicating a catch. In the distance, a small yellow boat is visible on the water.

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HOW TO MASTER THE MOUSE RETRIEVE

By Charlie Robinton

Looking to catch big fish? Maybe it's time to use a big fly! Mouse-patterned retrieves are designed to resemble live mice and attract larger fish looking for a bigger meal! But it's not just about casting the mouse and waiting – you need to have the mouse simulate what the real thing would look like in the water. It's not just a fly – it's a proven technique to catch yourself some big trout!

Mouse-pattern flies are meant to look like a small field mouse and behave like one in the water. A typical mouse fly designed for trout fishing will be 2-3 inches long and tied on a size 2-6 wide-gap hook. Mouse flies are most often tan, brown, or grey, just like the real thing. Many materials can be used to create mouse-pattern flies, but the most realistic flies are tied using deer hair because of its buoyancy and natural appearance. Keep in mind that mouse flies are meant to ride high on the surface of the water, so your pattern of choice should feature deer hair, foam, or other buoyant materials to help it float.

Many fly shops carry at least one mouse-pattern fly, but these flies are often designed for bass fishing and have a heavy monofilament weed guard looped over the hook to protect it from snags. This feature is helpful if you are fishing in weedy or brushy areas, but it is unnecessary for trout fishing and can hamper your ability to hook fish. You can easily remove the weed guard by cutting it off with nippers.

Even large trout have relatively small mouths for their body size, so hooking them on such a bulky fly can be a challenge. To get better hookups, some anglers have started tying their mouse flies with stinger hooks positioned farther back on the fly, toward the end of the tail. If you are getting strikes but having trouble connecting with fish, a stinger hook fly may be the answer.

There are two general ways that mouse flies are fished. They can be “waked” or “skittered” using the rod tip, or “stripped” by pulling in the line by hand. Both techniques are effective and have their place in the mouse angler’s bag of tricks.

The Wake and Skitter

Waking a mouse fly is most effective when there is a steady current. In most cases, you will want to position yourself across from your target and place your cast upstream. Make a quick mend when the fly hits the water to remove any drag that might pull the fly away from your target, then raise your rod tip to remove slack line from the water and create a direct connection to the fly. Twitch the rod tip as the fly comes toward you while slowly retrieving the slack with your free hand. This will make the fly look as if it is swimming and struggling in the current.

This method can also be used to fish in a downstream direction to wake the fly on a tight line. Cast the fly across or slightly downstream, make a quick mend to reduce unwanted drag, then allow the fly to swing slowly across the current, generating a sizeable wake behind it. Follow the fly with your rod tip to keep it swimming at a steady pace. You can experiment with raising the rod and imparting the twitching action with this retrieve as well.

The Strip

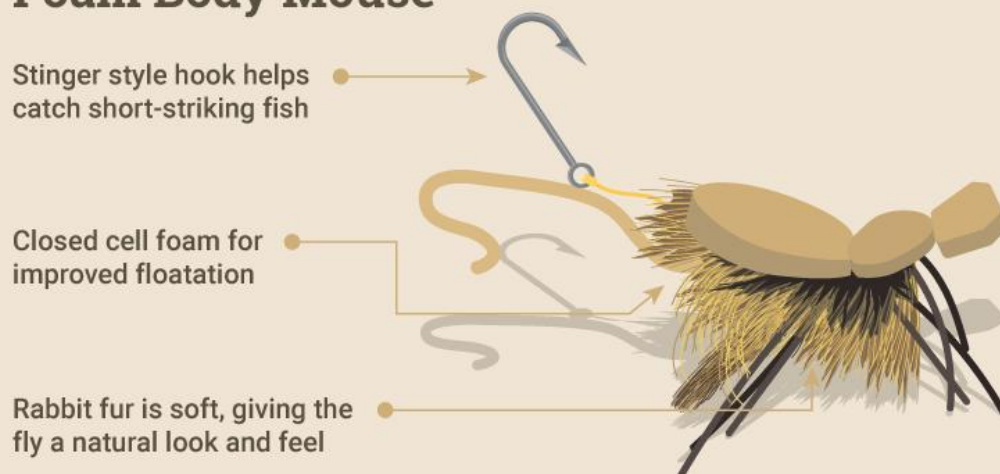
In areas with little or no current, you will need to change your approach to get the fly to swim properly. Cast beyond your target and allow the fly to settle. If there is some current, you may want to make a mend so that the fly is not pulled away from the strike zone.

THE MOUSE FLY

Deer Hair Mouse



Foam Body Mouse



Keep the rod tip low and point it at the fly, then retrieve the line in very short, steady strips with your free hand.

Emulate a mouse

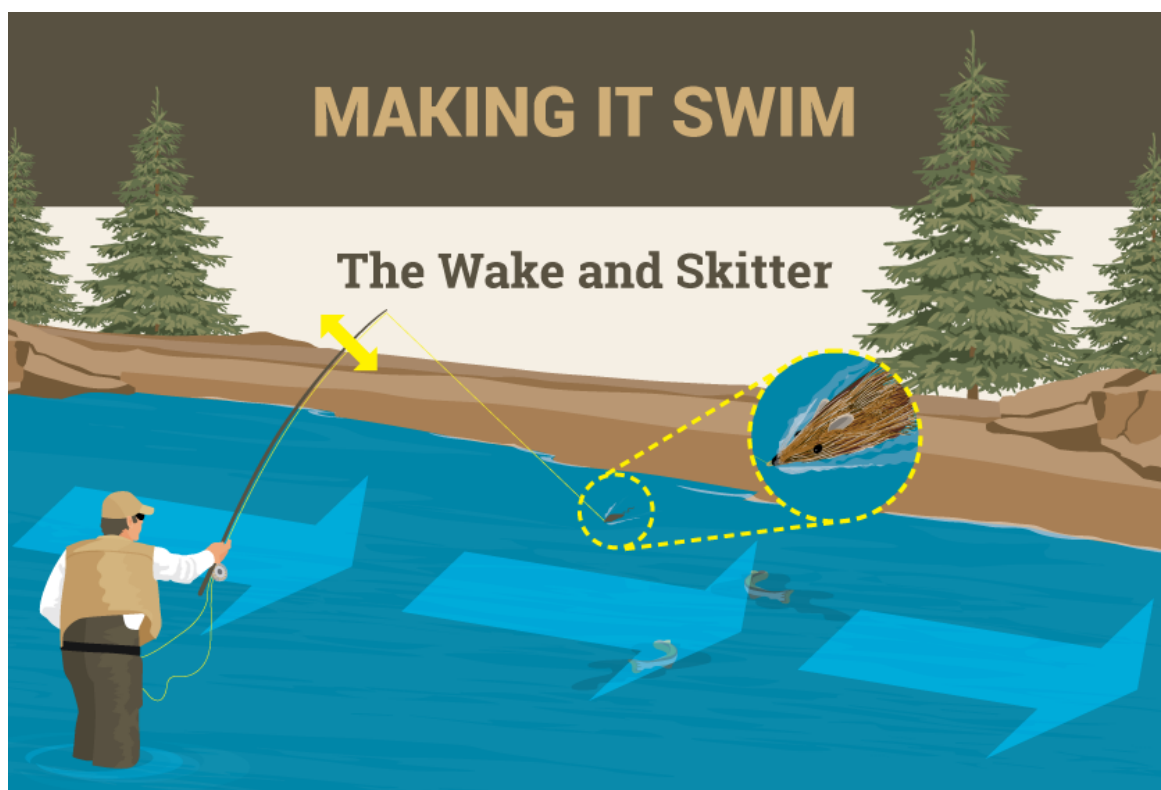
Try to imagine how a mouse would look while swimming. Mice do not pop and splash their way through the water like an Olympic swimmer doing the butterfly. They plod along treading water with their head slightly above the surface and their body submerged. Imitate this slow, steady swimming action with your retrieve and you will attract the big fish.

Let the Fish Eat

When a big trout rockets out from beneath an undercut bank and smashes your mouse fly, your first instinct might be to jerk on the rod, but you will be pulling the fly right out of the fish's mouth. Try to stay relaxed here! Allow the fish time to close its mouth and turn with the fly before setting the hook. Simply watching the fish eat and turn can be helpful for some, but if you are having trouble keeping it together, try counting "one, one thousand" before slamming the hook home.

Fish the Bank

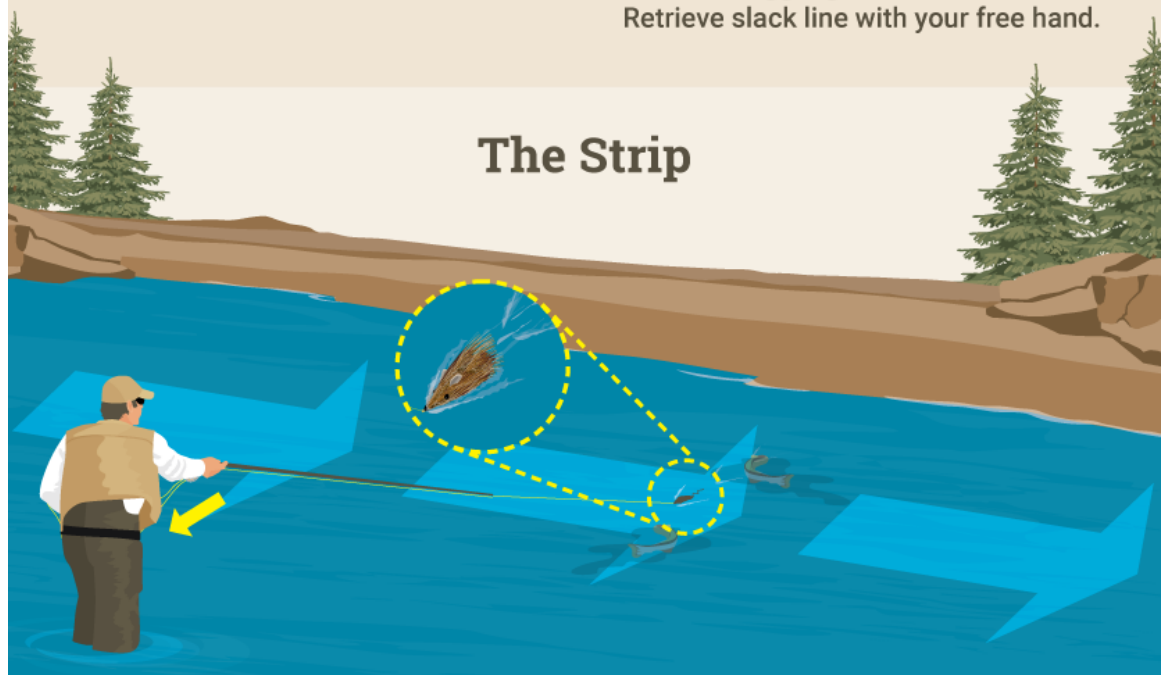
Mouse flies work in a



MAKING IT SWIM

The Wake and Skitter

- 1 Cast the fly upstream of your target and hold the rod tip high.
- 2 As the fly drifts downstream, shake the rod tip up and down causing the fly to wiggle and swim like a natural mouse struggling in the current. Retrieve slack line with your free hand.



The Strip

- 1 Cast the fly toward your target and hold the rod tip low over the water, pointing it directly at the fly.
- 2 Use short, steady pulls to strip the fly back towards you making it swim through the water, forming a small wake.

variety of water, but it makes sense that presenting the fly where trout are most likely to see the actual critter will get you more strikes. Mice, voles, and other rodents end up taking a dunk more often than you may think, but when they do it is usually because they fell from the bank. When they end up in the water, their first instinct is to escape danger by swimming as fast as possible back toward shore. By presenting your fly as close to the bank as possible and doing your best to keep it there, you are offering the most natural presentation to the fish. You can accomplish this either by making short, quick presentations to the opposite shore while wading, or casting upstream and using the wake and skitter technique to swim the fly back toward you along the near bank.

Keep an eye out for steep banks with plenty of structure and depth, undercuts, and grassy shorelines, as all will have the potential to be good mouse fishing spots.

Cover the Water

Whenever fishing large flies with an active retrieve, it makes sense to cover the water quickly rather than saturate an area with multiple casts. Trout have acute senses and they are sure to immediately notice a giant mouse struggling across their dining room table. You are searching for an aggressive reaction from a predator, and not all trout will be in the mood to react at all times. Keep moving and cover the water methodically by placing a cast every few feet, paying extra attention to any obvious structures and fishy looking lies. This way you will place your fly in front of more fish and increase your odds of finding one that is in the mood.

Try Fishing at Night

Where it is legal, nighttime mouse fishing can

TIPS, TRICKS & TECHNIQUES

Let the Fish Eat

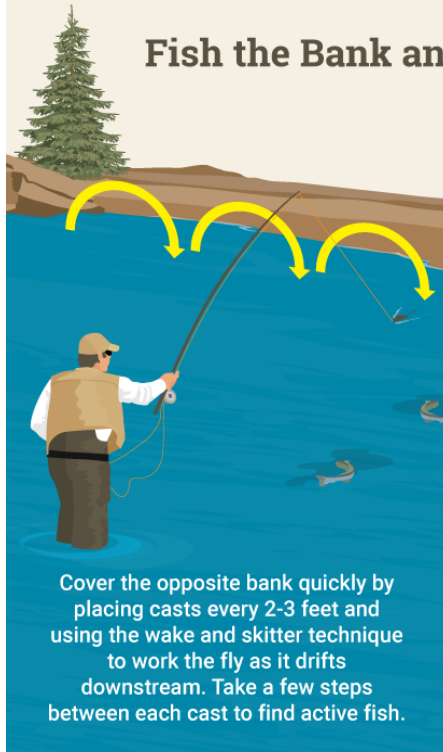


If you set the hook as soon as you see the fish eat the fly, you are sure to pull the fly away from the fish and miss the strike.



Wait until the fish closes its mouth, turns, and begins swimming back down below the surface before setting the hook.

Fish the Bank and Cover the Water



Cover the opposite bank quickly by placing casts every 2-3 feet and using the wake and skitter technique to work the fly as it drifts downstream. Take a few steps between each cast to find active fish.



Cover the near side bank by casting upstream and stripping the fly back towards you, or use a wake and skitter technique while managing the slack line with your free hand.

Use a Traditional Swing Retrieve at Night



A traditional swing is the best retrieve to use at night when darkness can make seeing the fly and detecting strikes difficult.

be a real adrenaline rush. Do some daytime recon on your favorite river to determine some good areas that will be safe to approach at night, then return well after dark with a mouse fly attached to some heavy tippet.

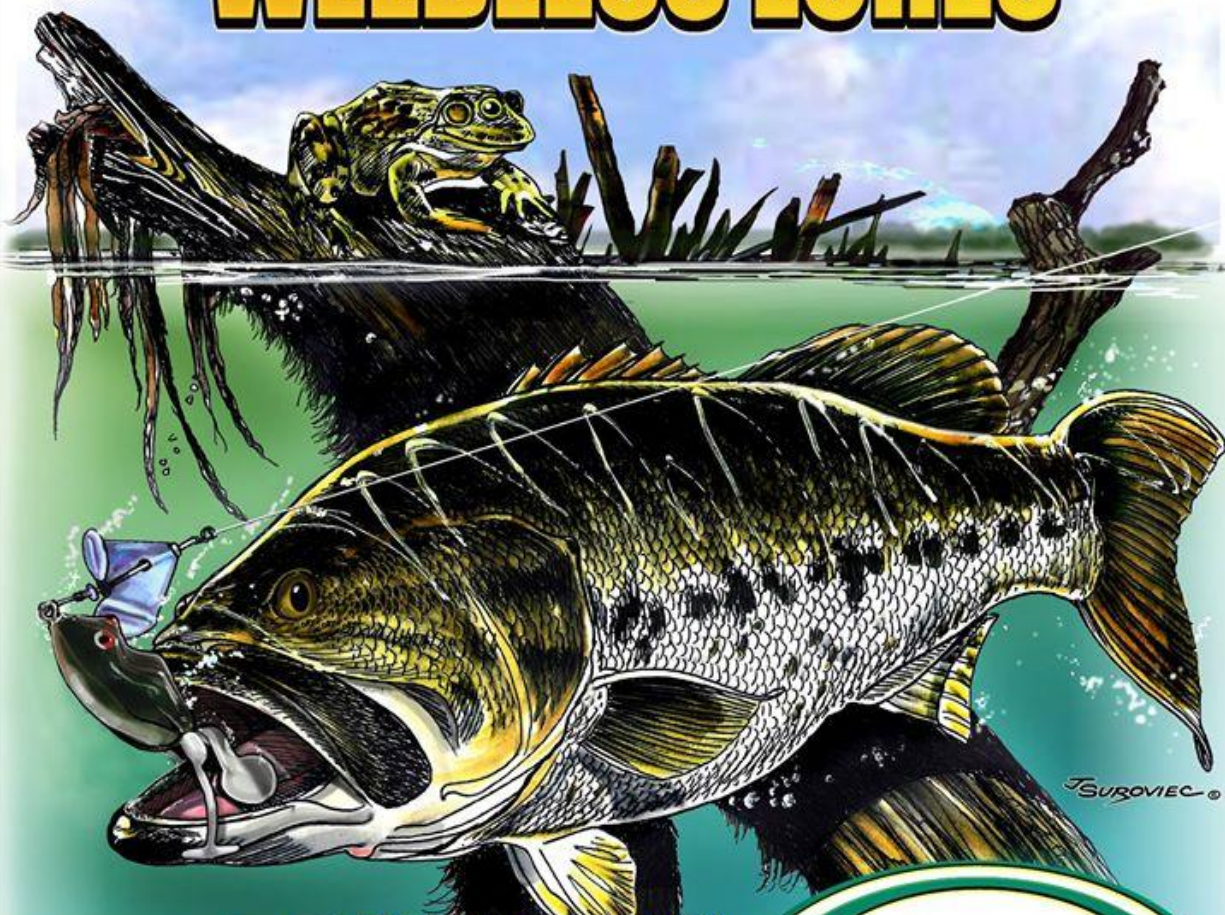
Nighttime fishing introduces an obvious challenge. The darkness will make it harder to wade, cast, and detect a strike. Try to use just your flashlight on the trail as you approach the river, and turn it off well before you reach the water. This will allow your eyes time to adjust to the low light.

In areas with some current, a wake or swing retrieve on a tight line can be the best approach at night. Start at the top of the hole and work methodically, moving a couple of steps in between casts. With the line tight from downstream water tension on the fly, you will feel the weight of the fish when it strikes.

If there is little or no current, you will need to tune in with your senses to detect a strike. Try to focus your vision on the general area where your fly is and pay attention to any unnatural movement. Get in tune with the rhythmic sound of the river and listen for any splash or swirl that is out of sync. This could signify a fish has come up to take a swipe at your fly.

You will hook more fish if you are patient and don't set the hook until you feel the weight of the fish. This can be hard to do when you can barely see and your adrenaline is racing, but you will be rewarded with more big fish in the long run.

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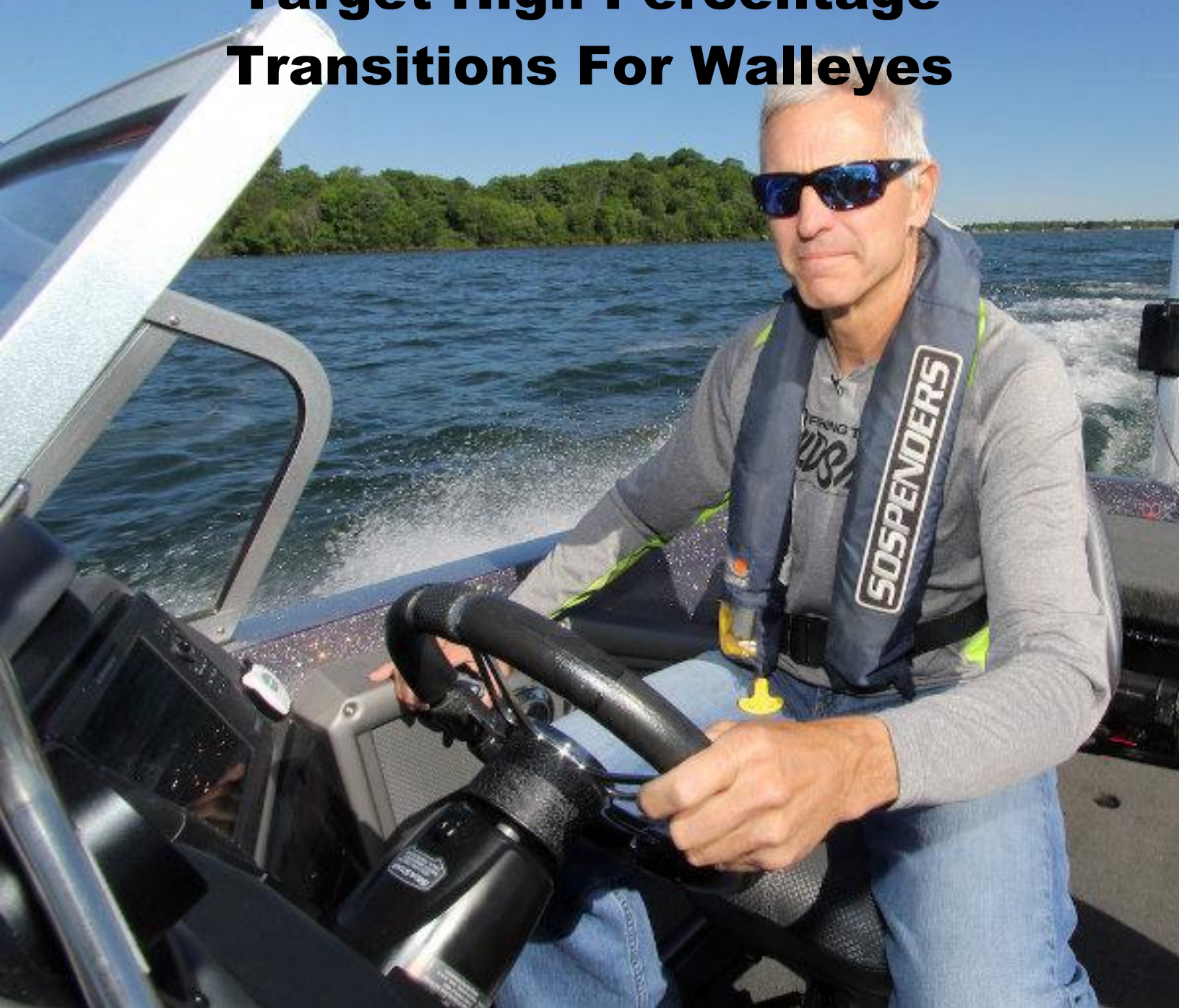
FISHING A FROG IN THE WIND

By Glenn Walker

We all know that fishing a topwater frog is a great way to target bass that have positioned themselves underneath overhead cover and that this technique is a great way to target summer time bass. One thing to keep in mind is how to alter your frog fishing technique when that summer wind is a blowin'. When it is windy, you want to use a frog that has some extra weight to it; this allows you cast further and accurately despite the wind. For me the Snag Proof Phat Frog is a great choice when it is windy. The other thing to keep in mind that your retrieve will be altered as the wind will be pushing or pulling your line, pay attention to this and use it to your advantage to slowly drag your frog across key sections of the mat.

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

Target High-Percentage Transitions For Walleyes



By Chip Leer

Midsummer is a time of plenty in walleye fisheries around the country. Habitat and forage options are at seasonal peaks, allowing hungry 'eyes to scatter more so than at any other time of year.

Still, you'll often find 80 percent of the fish in 20 percent of the water. By targeting classic fish-holding edges with proven presentations, you can consistently find and catch walleyes while other anglers scramble aimlessly around the lake.

My summer game plan starts at the deep weedline. Food and cover often combine to create feeding scenarios opportunistic walleyes can't resist. If that doesn't pan out, I test the waters on other transitions such as changes in depth or bottom content.

For example, areas where the bottom shifts from clay or mud to sand, rock or gravel are perennial producers. Likewise, drop-offs where a steep break settles into a lake's main basin are worth checking, as are the edges of mid-lake structure.



Sonar is a great tool for pinpointing potential hotspots. To confirm the presence of walleyes, I cover water with search tactics like a fixed-arm bottom bouncer and spinner or slow death rig.

Trolling crankbaits can be equally deadly. Long-lining works wonders in consistent depths. When fishing irregular contours, as well as water deeper than 15 to 20 feet, I add a pencil sinker on a three-way rig to keep the lure close to bottom.



In general, match your presentation's color and profile to that of the forage base. In many systems, yellow perch are the main course, which makes perch-pattern spinner blades and members of LIVETARGET's Yellow Perch crankbait family top choices. Before heading to the lake, check DNR lake survey results to find out for sure, then select lures and components accordingly.

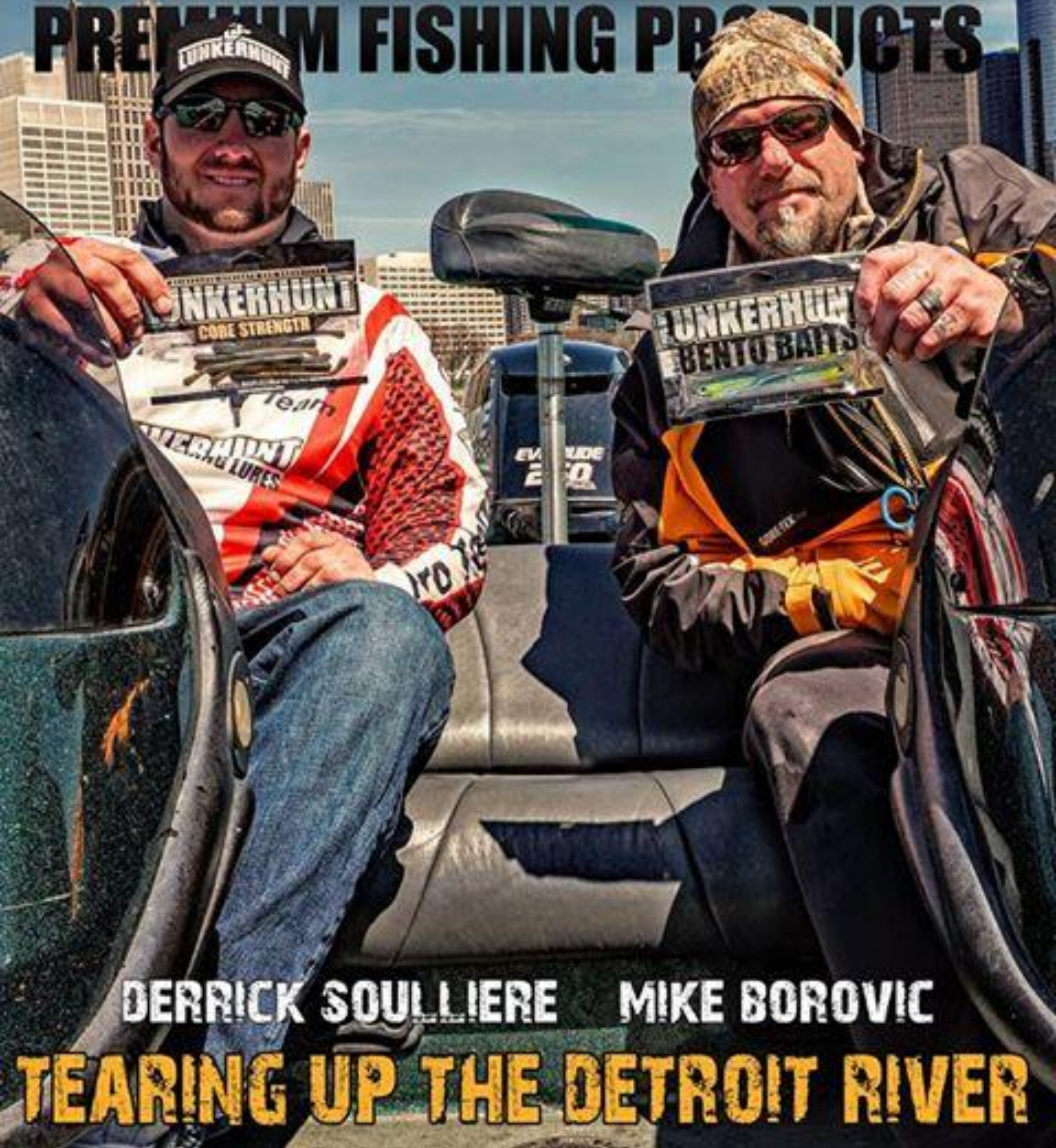


Don't expect to stumble into massive schools of fish. You're more likely to find a few scattered here and there. When you get bit, by all means, turn around and check for more fish, but don't spend an hour hovering over an area that produced a bite. Your next strike is most likely waiting 100 yards further down whatever summertime transition you're fishing at the moment.



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TEARING UP THE DETROIT RIVER

Order Up! *Walleye in the Salad*

By Gary Parsons and Keith Kavajecz



If you are going fishing with your buddies, there is no doubt that there will be a little bit of “ribbing” going on throughout the day. Every move you make is fair game. If you trip and break a rod, drop your sunglasses in the lake, or reel in a ball of weeds, you will most likely get a little grief. While we really can't help you when it comes to being clumsy, we can help you bring back more walleyes than weeds to the boat.

To a lot of fishermen, the thought of casting a crankbait with weed grabbing treble hooks towards vegetation sounds like a hassle. Yet with the right approach, it is actually a fun and easy way to catch early summer walleyes.

The first key to success is doing a little bit of homework to find the weed edges. This will allow you to keep your distance so you don't spook the fish and keep your lure in the strike zone without bringing back a ball of salad with every cast.





If it is our first time on this body of water, we start out by making “S” curves back and forth over the weed bed to find the edge of it. Every time we find the edge, we place an icon on our Lowrance HDS GPS. This will give us a trail to follow.

If we find another piece of structure just outside of the weed bed, such as a rock pile or stumps, we will mark them with a different icon so we can pull our crank past those too on the retrieve.

If we will be fishing the area often, we will drive over targeted areas in a grid-like pattern to record our sonar logs to an SD card on our Lowrance unit. Upon returning home we upload the data from the SD card to the Lowrance Insight Genesis program, which creates a custom map. This map is then saved back to the SD card to be used on future fishing trips.

The cool thing about the map is that it allows us to identify small points and holes that we otherwise not know about.

We can also add a vegetation layer to our map, which is a great way to “eyeball” where weed beds are, so we can find the edges. In addition, it gives us the ability to pinpoint key areas of structure with a color-coded composition map. The darker areas indicate a hard bottom, while lighter colors indicate a

soft bottom.

Once we know where the weed line is, we position the boat so we can cast at an angle towards them. When we get into an area where we get a bump or catch a fish, we stop and thoroughly fish that area. This is where we use the “anchor” feature on our MotorGuide Xi5 bow mount trolling motor to hold us in place while we “fan cast” over the area. This is also a great way to pick apart a piece of structure in the area.

We won't lie, there are going to be times that you will get your lure stuck on the weeds. A little trick for getting your lure unstuck if you make contact with them is what we like to call the “double pop”. Many times when you first make contact with a weed and try to “pop” it off with a quick jerk up, it won't pull through. Instead, try giving it a pop, then drop your rod down to give it some slack. This will leave some space between the lure and the weed. Follow this with another quick pop and it should pull free on the second pop.

Using the right equipment for this type of fishing will maximize your chances for success. When it comes to rods, we like to use a 6.5'-7' spinning rod, like the Bass Pro Shops Walleye Angler WL66MLS. The length of this rod allows us to cast a long distance.

Our favorite lure for this technique is the Berkley Flicker Shad. A lot of times when we are casting shallow we like to use the #6 Flicker Shad, but when casting to weed beds that are up to nine feet deep, we go to a #7 Flicker Shad (pictured) because it has a deeper dive curve. Perch and fire tiger are good choices for color, but don't be afraid to mix it up and give the fish something different to look at.

We also like to swap out the treble hooks on our cranks with the Mustad KVD Triple Grip Hooks (Model





TG58BLN). These trebles have a great inward bend that is great for hook-ups.

Since we are keeping the boat outside the weed line, we like to use 10lb. Berkley Nanofil, which is great for making long casts. However, Nanofil is a very limp line, which means that it could become tangled in the treble hooks of the crankbait. To solve this problem, we put a 3-foot Berkley 100 percent Professional Grade Fluorocarbon leader on the line. This combination of lines has very little stretch, so you are able to feel every vibration of the bait as you are reeling it back in.

Speaking of reeling things back in, while we can't guarantee that following this program will keep your buddies from toning down on the amount of grief they give you in the boat, we're pretty confident it will get you The Next Bite!

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WHEN THE GOING GETS TOUGH.....

.....Finesse Pools Finicky Fish!

By Dr. Jason Halfen
The Technological Angler



As you scan through your fondest fishing memories, they are likely derived from those trips when the fish were, “jumping in the boat,” or “biting everything we threw at them.” These were the days when you, “caught so many, we ran out of bait,” or the bites when you were, “shaking off three-pounders so we could catch the fives.”

Now, be honest with yourself. Those epic success stories are few and far between. You’ll spend many more days on the water when the time spent fishing far exceeds the time spent catching, and excuses coupled to weather, lunar phase, water temperature, and bug hatches substantially outnumber bites.

The best time to go fishing is whenever you can, and there’s no sense in cancelling or rescheduling a day on the water just because the chips may be stacked against you. Rather, this is the perfect time to trade power fishing for finesse. In its simplest form, finesse fishing has three components: smaller baits, lighter line, and slower presentations. Whether you chase panfish or bass, redfish or walleyes, the same fundamental finesse recipe applies to you. Let’s take a deeper dive on finesse fishing for late summer bass.

Late summer can be a challenging time to pursue America's favorite gamefish. Quality bass that were easy to locate and catch in June and July have suddenly become perplexing. Water temperatures that are near their annual peak certainly contribute to bass behavior, driving fish either into heavy cover or deep water to find respite from the heat.

While late summer and early fall bass locations are not particularly mysterious, another challenge working against anglers – both in the shallow jungle as well as the deeper basin – is an abundance of forage: there is, quite simply, so much food available that bass have a LOT to choose from. It can be hard for an artificial bait to stick out as a vulnerable prey item amid nature's abundant shiners, shad, and young-of-the-year panfish, not to mention crayfish, bugs, frogs, and innumerable other tasty treats.

What tools can we use to solve the late summer bass puzzle? Enter "Midwest Finesse Fishing", or the "Ned Rig", which has, quite simply, taken the bass fishing world by storm. A refinement of finesse techniques practiced and espoused by bass tournament anglers for many years, the Ned Rig was





conceived and brought to the forefront of contemporary finesse techniques by Kansas-based angler and outdoor writer Ned Kehde. This simple, unassuming presentation has been responsible for a staggering number of bass fishing success stories, especially when the going gets tough and finesse becomes the order of the day. Let's dissect the Ned Rig, starting at the

business end with the bait, and working our way to the angler.

The classic bait for the Ned Rig bait looks like a Senko that has been cut in half. Looks can be deceiving, however. The highly-refined Ned Rig presentation truly shines with a bait made from a 21st-century soft plastic compound called ElaZtech®, available exclusively from Z-Man®.

ElaZtech is a proprietary compound that renders baits extraordinarily resistant to rips and tears; however, this resiliency is not what makes ElaZtech baits the best choice for Ned Rigs. Rather, it is the fact that ElaZtech baits do something that a traditional soft plastic bait made from plastisol does not: ElaZtech baits float. This unique buoyancy has a dramatic impact on how the bait looks to a fish: when rigged on a lightweight jig, the industry-standard Ned Rig bait, a 2.75" Z-Man Finesse TRDTM, stands at attention as the jighead rests on the bottom. Every twitch of the rod tip makes that upright tail quiver and dance. In stark contrast, a comparably-sized "half-a-Senko", traditional soft plastic bait lies on the bottom when at rest, hidden among the rocks and grass, never to be seen. It is truly the difference between a waffle cone held upright in your hand, versus one lying on its side in the mud: which tasty treat would you rather eat?

When it comes to jigs, think about three words: light, lighter, lightest. The 1/8 oz. jigs that abound in your collection are the heaviest you'll likely employ, and then only in deep water or in current. Consider, instead, 1/16 oz. jigs with thin wire hooks. Ready to take your Ned Rigs to the next level? Put to work dedicated, mushroom-head finesse jigs weighing only 1/10-1/20 oz.

Your line is the critical link between you and the bait. In the case of the Ned Rig, spool up with a braided main line and incorporate a fluorocarbon leader. A sleek, ultra-strong braid like Seaguar® Smackdown® is the singular choice for the serious finesse angler's main line. Spun with 8 ultra-thin, micro-weave strands, Smackdown is uniquely engineered to accurately deliver dainty Ned Rig baits on long casts.

The sensitivity of Smackdown elevates your game to the pinnacle of bite detection, making it easy to feel a subtle Ned Rig nibble at extreme distances. Link your braided main line to your artificial offering using a fluorocarbon leader, with Seaguar Finesse 100% fluorocarbon being an outstanding choice. An exclusive double-structure process combines two custom fluorocarbon resins to create Seaguar

Finesse, a small-diameter line with exceptional knot and tensile strength. It's soft and supple with low memory, making it a great choice for the Ned Rig.

I typically spool up with 20 lb. test (6 lb. diameter) Seaguar Smackdown with a 6.2 lb test Seaguar Finesse leader, the two lines joined by a Double Uni-Knot. If conditions call for the ultimate in finesse, like those windless, cloudless days spent fishing crystal clear waters, forego the braid and fill your entire spool with Seaguar Finesse fluorocarbon. The line diameter of the 5.2 lb. test Seaguar Finesse is smaller than that of most 4 lb. test monofilament lines, with the added benefits of fluorocarbon's enhanced abrasion resistance and virtual invisibility under water. Thin and light, yet tough and transparent is a recipe for finesse success.

Finesse bass fishing is not the time for casting gear; rather, spinning rods rule the Ned Rig arena. An extra long, hyper-sensitive rod like the St. Croix® Legend Tournament® Bass LBS86MLXF is a personal favorite. This new eight foot-six inch entry into the proven Legend Tournament Bass series will launch the Ned Rig a country mile, provides both the power necessary to drive the hook home at the end of a long cast, as well as the agile shock-absorbing properties needed to protect light line from rampaging summer bass. It's hard to imagine a rod better suited for finesse fishing than this new offering from St. Croix Rod.

At it simplest, Ned Rigging starts with a long cast, with bait action imparted by the angler in the form of

subtle hops and twitches, separated by pauses while the bait settles through the water column to the bottom. Slow and subtle is good; slower and subtler is better. Some of the premier finesse anglers will just about put you to sleep with their fishing cadence, only to be interrupted by



frequent, powerful hooksets.

Where should you chase bass with finesse? Just about anywhere. The Ned Rig is well suited to both shallow and deep water, and excels in both the still waters of lakes and the moving waters of reservoirs and rivers. Every bass from largemouth to smallies and spots are susceptible to the subtle triggering characteristics of the Midwest Finesse Fishing technique.

Faced with a tough bass bite? Break out the finesse gear to fool those finicky fish. Learn to present the Ned Rig, and it will quickly become a mainstay in your bass fishing bag of tricks!



About the author: Dr. Jason Halfen owns and operates The Technological Angler, dedicated to teaching anglers to leverage modern technology to find and catch more fish. Let your learning begin at <http://www.technologicalangler.com>.



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THE BEST BAIT CATCHING TIPS



By Hobie Fishing

In Southern California, offshore Florida, and off Hawaii, anglers must often catch their own live bait. Here's a set of tips from Hobie Fishing Product Manager Morgan Promnitz to help you get it done more efficiently. While these suggestions focus on the techniques used for bait fishing off Southern California, the size and style of the sabiki bait catcher rigs can be adjusted depending on the bait you need to make. Take it away, Morgan.

Go Big: My go-to sabiki is a size 6 for strength and longevity. The main line is 30-pound; the branch line is 20. Why? I don't think baitfish are line shy. The thicker line is much harder to tangle and easier to untangle because it is more stiff than thinner line. I think it may help the sabiki flies to stick out straighter in the water. There's a fourth reason, abrasion resistance. If I have some bycatch such as a bonito, it won't break the sabiki fly off. I'll even go up to a number two sabiki if I'm trying to catch really big mackerel for white seabass.

RELATED: Topwater Time

Go Long: I use a heavy rated 7-foot 6-inch St. Croix rod with a cork grip. Sometimes I use an 8-foot rod. The extra rod length ensures there are no issues with length of the sabikis, and keep me from winding my swivel into my tip guide. Most sabikis are a little over 6 feet long. Bonus tip: I use 65-pound braid main line and a 4-foot fluorocarbon leader above my sabiki. When I'm done making bait for the day, I take my sabiki off and clip a surface iron or plastic on there. Then I have a lighter rod for fishing

artificial.

Don't Mess Around: I fish a very tight drag and bring the baitfish into my kayak as quickly as possible. You don't want to be sitting there with a light drag fighting your bait. Catching bait is fun but it can't be too much fun.

Weighty Considerations: I replace the clip on the sinker side of the sabiki with a Tactical Anglers Power Clip so I can

quickly change the torpedo sinker. My go-to is usually a two- to three-ounce sinker, but if I'm catching a full stringer every time I'll switch to the heaviest weight I have, as much as a 6- or 8-ounce. It prevents the baitfish from swimming into a tangle.

Touch Free: Make or buy a bait release. By avoiding touching my bait before it goes into the live well, it stays primo as long as possible. Healthy bait acts better in the water. When it's time to fish, use a bait net to capture the bait in your tank more easily. When you have 50 baits, and 40 bigger ones and 10 are smaller ones, having a net helps you catch the bait fish you want. It's a real time saver.

Glove Up: If you don't have a bait release and need to handle your baits to transfer them into the live well, invest in a good pair of gloves. It prevents you from getting spines in your fingers.

Get the Most Out of Your Sabiki: When you're done for the day, rinse your sabiki with freshwater. Don't store a sabiki inside a Sabiki Stick rod. Saltwater condenses inside, causing the sabiki hooks to rust. Air them out and you'll get several trips out of each one.





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A GOOD KNIFE IS A LOT MORE THAN A TOOL

By John Simeone

Of the great knife designs of the world three come to mind as influential in the practical knife world today. They are the Kukri of Nepal, the Tanto of Japan and the Bowie Knife of Marksville Louisiana, USA. These designs are such icons that everybody has seen one even if they didn't know what it was. Historically, they have been illustrated in Books and Movies such as the Alamo, Rambo and Dracula. The Kukri was originally a chopping tool but pressed into action became a formidable close quarters weapon of the famous Gurkha Soldiers. A larger version was wielded by Alexander the Great. The Japanese Tanto is basically the first 6 to 12 inches of a Samurai Sword (Katana) being used as a weapon, beheading an enemy or committing Sepuku (Hari Kari).

The origin of the Bowie Knife is inscribed on an Historical Marker just down the road from my house



in Marksville Louisiana. It says Risen Bowie (The brother of James Bowie) invented it while other accounts say the blacksmith Joe Black did. Never the less the famous dual on the Vidalia Sandbar and the Battle of the Alamo cemented Jim Bowie and his Knife in history. Since then everybody from The US Military to Rambo had to have one, or something like it as the Great American Knife.

You know when I think about it, all of these designs are more or less for Combat, not really practical for todays outdoorsmen short of hacking brush. Still they are all fun to own and show off something I admit guilt. Being a Grand Master of the Martial Arts at one time I had the skill to use all these designs but now its a matter of pride of ownership and discussion.

What I need now is nothing more than the classic Drop Point knife for basically skinning big game animals for the dinner table. Being a do it yourselfer I do all that myself mainly to save time and money. Yes, I'm convinced that a great deal of hunters these days haven't the slightest idea how to dress a deer, more to the effect they don't want to get their hands dirty. They all pack to the last individual a fine hunting knife, most slightly used. In comparison my Case Trapper and Case Hunter have dressed well over 200 deer and wild hogs with very little wear and tear. Still I searched for a good sheath knife of the drop point design.

All I wanted was absolute perfection, not much to ask. It had to be razor sharp, fully functional as a skinning knife, and it had to look so good it would be envied by all those who looked upon it. So I mounted my two humped camel and braved deserts and the high mountains of the Kush Kush. I trod

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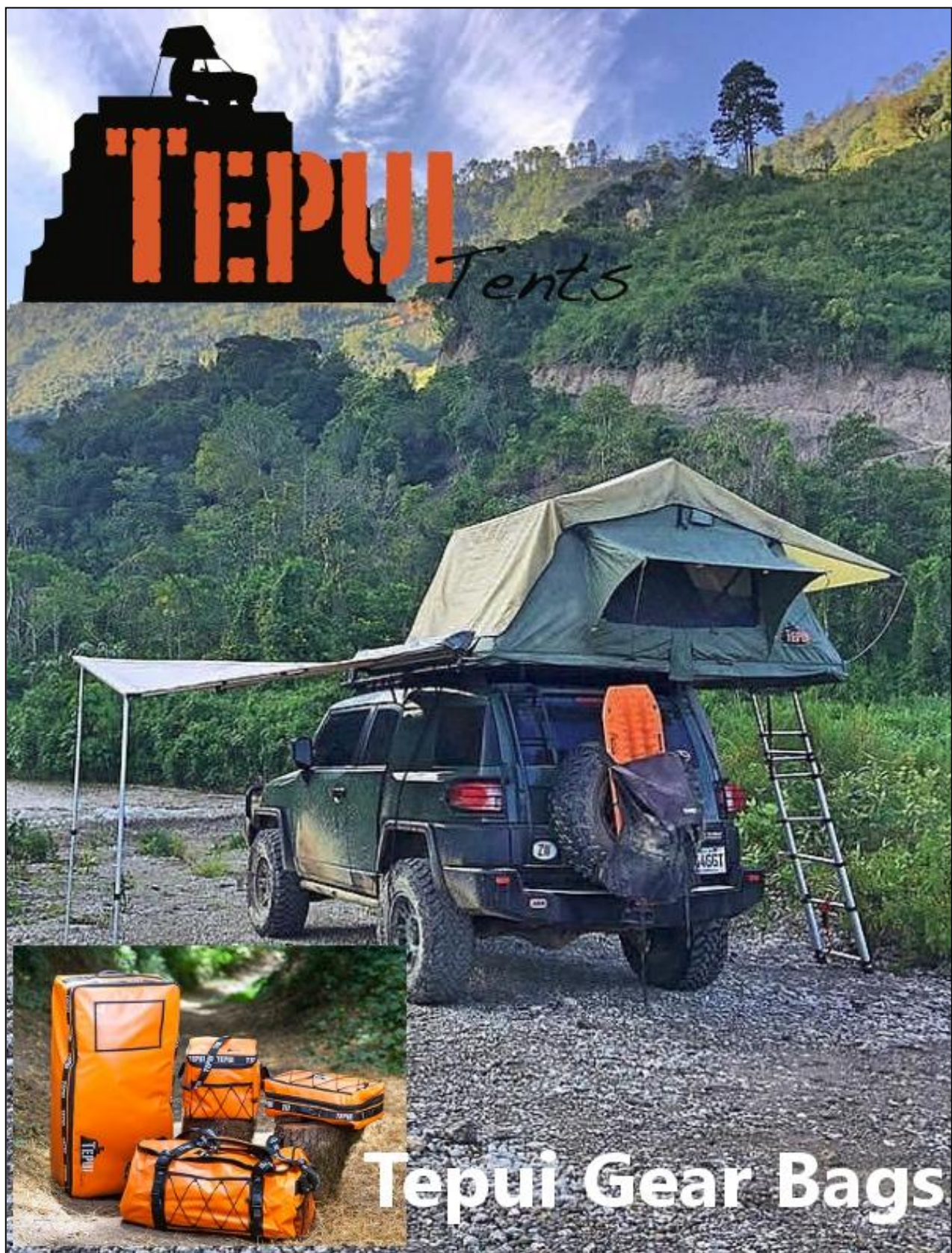
through war zones and remote wilderness seldom seen by Western man, and into the Punjab of far away Pakistan searching for the Blade Master. Well it makes for a good story anyway, I merely embellished a little the journey, where in fact the internet shortened the trip somewhat.

I met Mr. Qaiser Farooq a representative of LTQSA Damascus Knives though our ODU Magazine add channels and there after 3 days of studying a mired of knife designs I found exactly what was perfect for me. It was the Black Eagle V what I consider the perfect Drop Point. The blade was of Damascus Steel something I hadn't counted on, making the knife with its Buffalo Horn handle and brass furniture an ergonomic wonder, beautiful and a true work of art. After some wonderful conversation

with Qaiser I was convinced to order the knife and was not disappointed on its arrival. Having it in my hand it was even better.

If you are going to slice the most famous watermelons in the world from Sugar Town Louisiana you may as well do it with the best drop point knife in the world the Black Eagle V

To me it is the Flag Ship of drop point knives, it is my Black Eagle; I can't think of a better name for it. The blade is of the finest handmade Damascus steel, and razor sharp. It fits my hand perfectly for any task as a skinner and has a plus. It could be used by a skilled hand for self defense as it is made extremely strong in its full tang design. It is fully functional with a plus.



The handle is polished Black Buffalo Horn with attention to detail, with solid polished brass fittings that is sheer beauty to behold. As far as pride of ownership you instantly become an ambassador for LTQSA Damascus Knives because all your friends are going to want one. As good as they look they are not expensive, and usually arrive about 3 weeks after the order. The real fun is shopping the photographs of the more than 2000 designs of straight blade, folders, kitchen knives, axes, tomahawks and jewelry that you will go crazy over. There is something for everyone at LTQSA Damascus Knives, tell them Uncle John sent you...Pass it on.

THREE TIPS FOR LOW-IMPACT DEER SCOUTING

By Josh Lantz

Many successful deer hunters spend more time scouting than hunting. And for the whitetail elite, scouting is a year-round proposition. But late summer and early fall seems to be the time when most everyday deer hunters get serious. Bow season is right around the corner, and they're anxious to pattern deer for fast success once the opener arrives. Consequently, they ramp up their scouting activities in the field.

Human encroachment in the whitetail's world is a complex thing. When it comes to observing human activity, for example, mature deer seem to know the difference between agricultural activity and hunting activity. There may be two primary reasons for this. The first is that nobody is shooting at deer when farmers are busy planting and tending to crops in the spring and summer. That means a hunter riding the field edges on an ATV checking trail cameras really doesn't seem that threatening during these periods. The second is body language. From a deer's perspective, once the hunting season draws near or actually starts, they notice that humans are suddenly sneaking around

and acting like predators. Naturally, this puts them into a heightened state of alarm. Then all the shooting starts.

Don't abandon scouting during the weeks leading up to the archery opener; simply consider backing off and giving your deer some room. Change your tactics. Play it safe and make sure you're the one patterning deer, not the other way around.



Long Distance Observation

Long distance glassing from the roadside or other non-intrusive vantage points can reveal a lot of useful information about daily deer movements – including those of individual bucks and bachelor groups of bucks. Best of all, all this information on deer movement coming during the critical weeks or even days prior to

hunting season is virtually risk free.

The term long is relative here; find a unobtrusive spot that reveals multiple vistas into fields, food plots, watering areas, scrape lines or trails leading in and out of the timber. While you may not see a lot of mature bucks, glassing from such safe zones can show you a lot about how deer are moving relative to your property's features – including food sources, water sources and stand or blind sites. Fill in the blanks; you can bet that the bigger bucks will follow a similar pattern, usually just downwind and in thicker cover.

Low Impact Camera Usage

Fine-tune your scouting camera sets by the end of August – especially any cameras placed in the timber or near bedding areas. If you insist on keeping cameras in such locations, set them and forget them until you have an opportunity to tend to them while actually hunting. Many hunters quickly swap SD cards or download images from cameras in sensitive locations only when passing by them during the course of the season. In other words, resist the temptation and don't make any special trips that might result in alerting deer and modifying their behavior.

Cameras placed along the edges of fields and food plots are easier to manage and remain viable sources of scouting intel during the weeks leading up to the hunting season. Remember, your deer are always watching, listening and learning, so check these cameras during hours when you are unlikely to be hunting, such as mid-day. Instead of sneaking around on foot, do it from your ATV and don't

wear camo; you may seem less threatening to deer, and you'll definitely leave less human scent on the ground. Speaking of scent, follow your scent-control regimen whenever you enter the field, and be especially cautious about leaving your scent behind on scouting cameras.

Scout at Night

Sound crazy? Try it. Scouting at night can put hunters on a level playing field with the deer they pursue, while revealing individual animals – often mature bucks – that are otherwise unlikely to be observed during daylight hours.

Devices like FLIR's Scout series of thermal handhelds work by detecting minute temperature differences in both live and inert objects, amplifying those differences and then projecting an image onto a small screen. Because thermal imaging does not rely on light, thermal images look the same in full sunlight as they do in total darkness. The formerly classified technology is improving by leaps and bounds, and is now available to regular folks at pretty reasonable prices – including hunters.

FLIR Scout models start below \$600. In the world of optics, one can pay a lot more for a good riflescope or pair of binoculars. In addition to daytime and nighttime scouting, thermal handhelds can be incredibly useful to hunters when lawfully used for game recovery and avoiding bumping game while traveling to and from hunting locations in the dark. In areas with populations of potentially dangerous predators, the potential benefits become even more pronounced. It's prudent to check with your state's wildlife law enforcement agency before taking a handheld thermal imager in the field while also possessing a firearm or bow, as laws vary and are often unclear.

Scouting at night with a FLIR thermal imager is incredibly exciting because you may see bucks that you aren't seeing in the daytime. But don't get carried away; make sure you have a favorable, low-impact route to and from your scouting location and be sure to employ full scent control. The point of late summer nighttime scouting is the same as daytime scouting – to see and pattern deer from a non-

invasive vantage point – so don't push the envelope. The best nighttime scouting locations during late summer are elevated, easily accessible positions that afford relatively open views of prime food sources that are likely to attract numbers of deer.

Range will depend on the detection capabilities of your particular thermal imager. FLIR's affordable Scout TK model will easily detect human or deer sized targets out to at least 100



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yards, though you may not see a lot of detail at the far end of that range. Stepping up to a unit like the Scout II or III will provide greatly improved range and detail – especially the 640-resolution sub-model, which will detect human-sized subjects at over 1,200 yards.

I've been using the 640-resolution Scout III while scouting this season, and have learned that I can easily pass within about 100 yards of deer in the dark without alarming them. This has taken place in open areas with clear lines of sight. I suspect I could get even closer,

but haven't had the need to try. Occasionally, deer have heard me and looked in my direction, but watching through the thermal imager, it's clear that they can't tell what I am and they quickly return to feeding. The point, however, is that without a thermal imager, I would never have known those deer were there and almost certainly would have bumped them. Deer can see fairly well at night, but nowhere near as well as we can with a thermal handheld.

Everyone wants to know if thermal can see a deer's antlers. The answer is a definite yes during the summer months; my Scout III clearly shows antlers in velvet in good detail even at long distances. And while I haven't had the opportunity to test it yet on fully developed antlers, I suspect that it will "see them" under the right circumstances. At a reasonable range, the unit reveals remarkable detail in other natural materials like leaves, grass and bark. All it takes is a small change in temperature between the horns and their backdrop.

Early season bucks often have strong and well-established patterns that make them vulnerable to informed hunters. That's why the temptation to heighten the intensity of scouting activities increases as the hunting season nears. The unfortunate irony comes when our ramped-up scouting lays those established patterns to waste. We get patterned instead of the other way around.

Don't scout harder; scout smarter. Make low-impact your mantra. Scout from a safe distance, maintain a strict scent control regimen, and use today's technology – including digital scouting cameras and thermal imaging devices – to show you the pieces of the puzzle you've been missing.





Work the Bird, Don't Let the Bird Work You

By Joel Nelson

The title is a well-traveled phrase created by turkey legend David Hale of Knight and Hale Game Calls, which highlights so succinctly a common calling blunder in the turkey woods. It's a study in human nature, and mother-nature, all wrapped up in an often-repeated scenario that happens every spring. Turkey hunter calls and gets a response from a gobbler. With glee, turkey hunter pours on the calling, delighted with the response and more often, enthralled in the sound of his or her own yelps, clucks, and purrs. The bird approaches, but more cautiously, as incessant yelping becomes both louder and prouder, thus pinpointing the location of said turkey hunter. The gobbler, now quiet, finds the most open and visible spot to strut and display just out of range. This lasts for only so long, and eventually the tom retreats to whatever it was he was doing before.

To better understand the interaction, think in terms of turkey radar. The tom is up on some ridge (a.k.a – his backyard) minding his own business, when a hen sounds off. Immediately he responds with excitement, thinking the entire time, “Now where is she at – sounds like the corner of the field edge where I eat clover about 200 yards from here?” While I doubt that toms understand yardage the way we do, I know from watching them approach so many times that they have a pre-determined spot in mind.

This location could be the actual spot you're calling from, or an area that they're used to hearing from

and intercepting hens, but one thing is for certain, the more you call, the more they KNOW where you're at. An old gobbler's radar works like a series of rapidly closing concentric circles, with him tightening the noose each time he hears from you. After your first series, he's got you pinned down to a 50 yard area. By the time your box call is smoking your you've got a blood blister on your striker hand, that bird knows you down to the tree. That's a blow-by-blow account on how the bird "works you."

Now that we've identified the problem, here's a heavy dose of solutions. The first being to call more patiently, and more to attract him, rather than to scratch the natural itch we all have to plainly do anything it takes to hear him gobble one more time. So often we call to elicit a gobble, rather than to punch a tag. We grow nervous after not hearing from him in 5 minutes, so we "check-call" hoping to get an update on his progress as he makes his way nearby. This check calling is effective and often required, especially if you're in a bad setup, covering a large expanse, or otherwise exposed. The trick is to do it quietly, rarely, and variably.

Speaking of varying your calls, this most often means steering the direction of your calling. This can be tough with a box call, easier with a slate, and easiest of all with a mouth call. With a diaphragm,

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you can throw the sound, and many times I've steered a tom around obstacles or more towards my position effectively by throwing my calls the direction I'd like him to come. Don't think you can get a tom to zig zag his way through the woods on command? I didn't see it captured in video form until Denny Gulvas did it on his DVD – "Challenging Pressured Gobblers," where Denny demonstrates the technique quite well. You can even turn around, pointing your calls the other direction, mimicking a hen that's tired of the waiting game and is leaving town, ready or not. This trick works best in a blind where you have free range of motion without being seen, and is a phenomenal way of breaking loose a hung-up tom.

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(www.odumagazine.com)

Another trick is to call more quietly, or switch to non-verbals like leaf scratching. While scratching can be easily pinpointed, a bird often needs to be within range to hear it well. Just like it's easy to find your buddy when he's honking the horn on the truck, turkeys can more easily pinpoint your location when the sounds you're making are loud. Quiet down and match the tone and noise of the woods you're hunting to more effectively get those birds to close.

In my mind, the best way to work a bird then is to keep him guessing, never letting him know your exact location. Of course there's always outliers. I've spoken at length and hunted with guides and championship callers that never shut up. They blow a call constantly and it only improves their success. That said, they can sound like a flock of turkeys, yelping more convincingly than the real thing and projecting the symphony across a wide-range of vocalizations. They do so with mouth calls and throw the sound around the woods. If you can work a call to their level of proficiency, the more power to you. For most of the rest of us however, fewer, well-placed calls that pique a tom's curiosity into having them close the distance, leaves you more likely this spring to work the bird, rather than having him work you.

