Fall Fishing Edition October 2018

ODU MAG

JIG TIPS FOR WALLEYE



FALL FROGGING

A Rookie

Kayaker's First

FLOATS WITH CARP

SNAG S PROOF

ICE ZONE IS HERE > Early Ice ishing Success > Advanced

Vexilar Strategies



Why has it been so long for an ODU Magazine. We moved and it has been one crazy thing after another. Went off line for a few days during the whole process and this week we are finally getting our wheels back under us. Lets just says we are ready to move onward!

Over the weekend ODU roled past 22,000 subscriptions to our FREE digital fishing magazine. We are elated to know more and more anglers and outdoorsmen as tuning into ODU weekly. Here is the link if you would like to share the magazine with a friend here is the link > <u>REGISTER YOUR EMAIL HERE!</u>

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Interest in more about ODU Magazine and OutDoors Unlimited Media visit this <u>LINK</u>.

This edition of ODU Magazine is our fall edition, that all starts with a combination of open water fishing, the first of on ice fishing and the Hunting Zone. 23 articles in all coving bass fishing, panfish fishing,

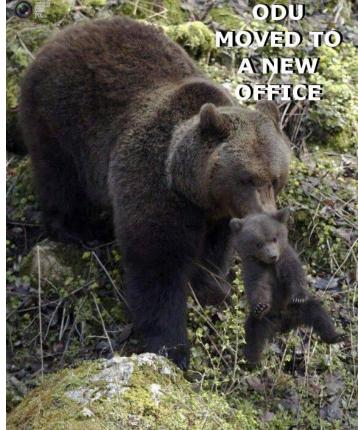
saltwater inshore fishing, walleye fishing, carp fishing, muskie fishing and a bit on hunting. This is a long edition as well, as several articles are are packed with extra information, and we kept from cutting it out.

Fall hunting season is in full swing right now. Good luck to all our friends on successful hunts this season.

Feedspot (<u>https://blog.feedspot.com</u>), one of the webs largest news aggragators and sourcing sites, released their ranking of over 1000 digital fishing magazines and ezines on the web. **ODU Magazine was ranked sixth!**

The magazines/ezines were ranked on these criteria:

- Google reputation and Google search ranking
- Influence and popularity on Facebook & other social media sites
- Quality and consistency of posts.
- Feedspot's editorial team and expert review



We work hard to make our website and our free fishing magazines as good as we can. Thank you for visiting. Here is а link to Feedspot's official announcement: https://blog.feedspo t.com/fishing_maga zines/



<u>A Little About The</u> <u>Cover</u> – Jay Bradford cought this Delta largemouth on

March 12th fishing a Snag Proof Phat Frog and weighed 9.3lbs. Jay says, "A slower presentation works best for me early in the year while the water temp is still relatively cold. I had a nice slow exaggerated back and forth presentation going, that's a real good way to get a huge pre-spawn fish like this to blast it!! Make sure to use a stout rod, braided line and lock down on your drag. I was using a Phat Frog in the "Sexy" color it seams to always do the trick early in the year. Good luck fishing!"

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



Lures for Striper Bass

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By Dana Benner

There is an old saying that goes something like this, "winter won't kill you, but not being prepared for winter will". In other words when it is -20 degrees outside and there is three feet of snow or more on the ground, it is not the time to start gathering supplies. For most people preparation for winter only involves getting snow tires for their vehicles.

I choose to live a lifestyle where I, as much as possible, rely upon what the land will provide. I hunt, fish and grow as much of my food as I can. For me that preparation for winter is an ongoing process starting even before the current winter's snows have disappeared.

No matter where you live winter can be a very rough time. Here in northern New England winter means deep snows, blizzards, loss of power for days on end and no access to services. In other parts of the





country it can mean freezing rain, ice and even flooding. Any way that you look at it things can get pretty bad. What I discuss here is what I do to prepare. Hopefully you can take something from this and apply it to your situation.

At the end of winter, which here in the Northeast is anytime from the beginning of March to the end of April, the freezer and the pantry shelves are pretty empty as is the pellet shed. The pellets can be put off for a while, but the task of refilling the freezer becomes a top priority. It is at this time of year that I start looking forward to April and the opening of trout and salmon season and the beginning of the gardening season. Late February finds me planning my garden; how I am going to set it up and what I am going to plant. The lure of fresh vegetables is almost too much to stand. I start my tomato plants indoors from the seeds that I saved from the previous year. I always plant all manner of root crops and winter squash in my garden. These crops store well and are what we eat during the winter.

As soon as the snow is gone and the soil can be worked I am out there getting the garden ready. By the middle to end of April the danger of freezing temperatures and snow has pretty much passed, so this is the time I start planting the cold weather crops. These include all of my root crops, lettuce and peas. Spring also means rain (sometimes), so this is the time I clean and set up my cistern. The water stored here is what I will use to water my plants when it turns hot and dry.

With the garden set for now I concentrate on fixing any damage caused by the winter's snows. There always seems to be some, with some years being worse than others. This is the time to get it done as the problems only seem to get worse before they get better. When any damage to the house and





outbuildings is fixed my attention is drawn to the near empty freezer. April 1st is the opening of trout and salmon fishing so any lake, stream or river free of ice is fair game. Fishing will consume most of my attention until the beginning of May when my thoughts turn to turkey hunting.

With about 60 percent of my food coming from what I can shoot, catch or grow, getting a turkey is very important. I hunt and fish primarily in Vermont and New Hampshire. Vermont's spring turkey season begins on May 1st and New Hampshire's season opens May 3rd. Vermont allows the hunter to take two bearded birds while New Hampshire only allows one. With each state's season running until the end of May, there is the chance of putting three birds in the freezer, providing many meals for my family.

Come June most of my cold weather crops are up and in some cases an early first harvest can be taken in. I'm still fishing, but now I find myself along the coast taking advantage of the bounty there. Here Striped bass have arrived during their annual migration. There is also bluefish and mackerel to be caught as well as flounder. Mussels and clams are an added treat. Back at the homestead I take advantage of the warm weather to do maintenance on my generators and other tools, making sure that they are ready to go when I need them. My generators are always well maintained and full of fuel and I always have extra fuel on hand. If power is out the gas stations can't pump. No power, no gas. I also use this time to stock up on water. Besides one gallon bottles of water I also have some five and seven gallon water containers. Remember to constantly rotate water as it does go bad over time. In my free time I start foraging in the fields and woods for the first of the berries that are ready to be picked.

Back at the garden I plant my squash and cucumber seeds as well as my tomato plants. For squash I



plant summer squash, winter squash and pumpkins. While the summer squash will feed us during the warmer parts of the year, I will store the winter squash and pumpkins, giving us some vegetables during the winter. The same goes for the carrots, beets, turnip and potatoes as they become ready for harvest. The rest of the summer is spent tending to the garden and catching fish. Some of which is frozen or smoked, some is eaten for daily meals and some I will trade for things I need, like fresh eggs and milk from a local farmer.

July and August find me harvesting vegetables on a regular basis. Green beans are both eaten fresh and flash boiled and then put into the freezer. Root crops are harvested and put into storage. I also take time to continue my foraging of wild blueberries, strawberries and black berries which are now in full bloom. Collected berries are washed, put into freezer bags and put into the freezer for later use. Those tomatoes not readily eaten are made into sauce and put into the freezer or canned. These last two months of summer are also the times that I secure extra fuel for the generators and begin the process of stocking up on wood pellets. During an average winter I will need a little more than three tons of pellets to heat my home through the winter.

Come September food is still an issue. I am still harvesting crops, but it is starting to slow down. Both Vermont and New Hampshire have September hunting seasons for resident Canada geese with very liberal bag limits. October has me harvesting the last of the squash and pumpkin, securing the last of



my pellets and doing more hunting, this time for migratory waterfowl, upland game and turkey. The waterfowl season is set annually, so there is no telling when it will start or end. Upland hunting runs until the end of the year and the fall turkey season is only about a week long. If all goes according to plan there will be ducks, turkeys and upland game added to the freezer.

Come November I am hunting deer with my goal being one deer from both Vermont and New Hampshire. If the weather allows I also try for some last minute trout. You never have enough. November also means the final preparations for the cold that is sure to come. In some years the cold and snow hits sometime around Halloween, but most of the time it holds off until Thanksgiving.

With the first heavy snow it is time to settle in, but that doesn't mean that the work stops. Winter finds me doing maintenance on my fishing gear, and though I am constantly cleaning my firearms, I use this time to fully break each one down for a very thorough cleaning. I constantly monitor the weather as I don't like to get caught by unexpected storms. I monitor the pellet usage, hoping that I will have enough to see us through. I am also monitoring the amount of food we have. If I was able to get two deer and five turkeys, combined with fish and other game, then I should be all set.

All the supplies gathered, particularly food, are no good if



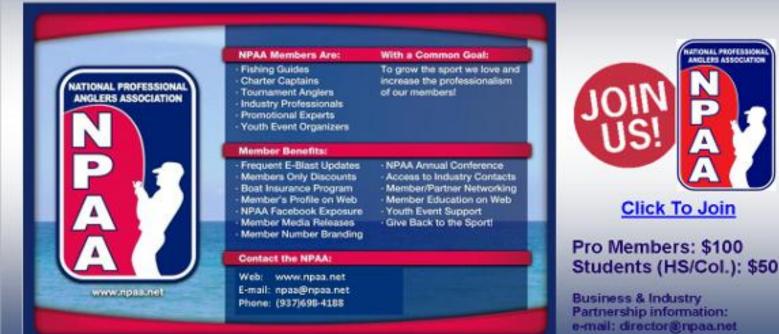
they are not preserved and stored properly. There are many ways to preserve meat to include drying, smoking and freezing. Vegetables can be pickled, canned, dried and frozen. While I have at some point in my life used all of these methods, today I mainly use smoking and freezing.

Long before there were large chest freezers, both Native people and early settlers alike smoked, dried or salted game and fish and every farm would have a smokehouse. To preserve vegetables like squash and pumpkins they would be cut into large pieces and then dried in the sun. Pickling and canning were other methods of preservation for meat and vegetables alike. Storage of these preserved meats, dried vegetables and root crops usually took the form of a large pit dug in the ground. Many of us know them as root cellars.

I could have dug a root cellar, but why do more work than you have to? I have found a way to replicate the function of the root cellar without the need to dig one. If your home has a basement then most of the hard work is done. All you need now is a plastic bin with a cover and a little clean sawdust or sand. In the bottom of the bin put a couple inches of sawdust or sand then add your root crops. Cover the vegetables with the rest of the sawdust or sand and then secure the cover onto the bin. Place the bin in a dark spot in your basement. As your basement is usually about 20 degrees cooler than the outside temperature in the summer months and 20 degrees warmer in the winter months, your produce will stay cool and provide your family with vegetables throughout the winter.

Every year winter arrives and every year people find themselves ill prepared to face it. Sometimes people make things much more complicated than they need to be. No matter where you live you need to stay dry, warm, fed and watered. Do what you need to in order to meet these needs throughout the year. By doing this you will not find yourself short when it really counts.

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JIG TIPS FOR WALLEYE

By Jason Mitchell

The incredible, edible jig. Walleye anglers love jigs because not only are jigs fun to fish but this presentation is also extremely versatile. All season, any season, chances are you can use a jig presentation in some fashion to catch fish. If you were to poll a hundred walleye anglers, there is a good chance that a high percentage would cite that a jig is a favorite way to catch fish. The hands on feeling of holding the rod and feeling the bite, the subsequent hook set... jig fishing is a very intimate presentation. While we can argue that a jig might not be the absolute best presentation every



single day, we can argue that a jig is the one presentation that will still catch fish most days from ice out to freeze up and jigs particularly shine in the fall.

More than any other factor, the location dictates the presentation. Jigs are precise and exact. Perfect for probing the spot on the spot. Compared to trolling crankbaits with planer boards, which is broad and sweeping to break down a large spot, jigs excel for sitting over the top of fish, but you can also cast and drag jigs to give you more versatility. Whenever conditions or structure forces fish to bunch up versus spread out, jigs can be a top presentation.

The beauty of using a jig to catch walleye is simply the versatility. If there is a mistake we all make when fishing jigs, that mistake would be simply not wrapping our heads around all the different ways we can use a jig to be successful. Simply getting in a rut where we think there is one way to use a jig and that's it. Really great walleye anglers are versatile and really great jig anglers are versatile in that they have not only seen enough to know or recall different methods or attitudes when jig fishing but are also versatile enough to implement and adapt.

Think of an old black and white television set where you had to turn a knob to turn the channels. The more channels you have, the more likely you are to find something that will work. Don't be a one or



two channel jig angler. vourself Force to become more versatile. There is often a sense of touch required to fish on jigs. catch What always amazed me from my years as a guide was just how one style or certain touch would catch fish some days while other things simply didn't work. Here is another eye opener... the angler with the most expensive graphite jigging rod didn't always catch the most fish.

To get better at catching fish with jigs, we have to attempt to wrap our heads around all of the variables. I am going to



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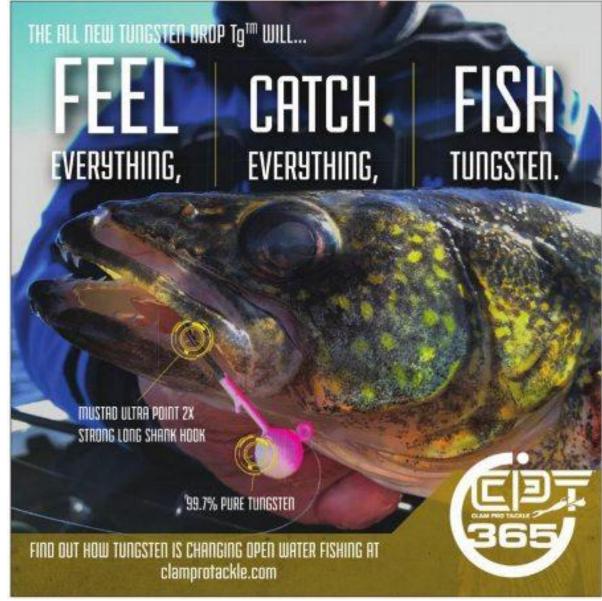
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give you some examples I have seen on the water. Let's take the rod and line along with the weight of the jig. Imagine a very high-quality graphite rod spooled up with eightpound braid. This set up would be extremely I personally sensitive. love a six and a half to medium seven to medium heavy fast action rod for a lot of jig fishing and I often like to use braid for the extra connection on the hook set and for the sensitivity. There are times however where this combination be too sensitive. can There are times where six or eight-pound monofilament makes the presentation more subtle there are times and



where the fish simply feel resistance too soon. Mono gives a jig a different glide through the water. If you are missing fish or not getting bit using braid, switch to mono. I often catch way more fish on tough bites using mono. If you are getting thumped with mono and just not getting a hook into fish where the fish are coming unbuttoned after a few cranks, try switching up to braid. Some anglers try to argue that one type of line is better than the other, but you will be a much better angler if you are comfortable fishing with both.

If you encounter bites that are just mushy where the fish are just hanging on, I often increase my batting average by using a lighter rod. A lighter tip is also often necessary if you have to swim or crawl lighter jigs through shallow water where the rod simply loads up when a fish is hanging on. I have encountered weird bites before where anglers using less sensitive rods and mono actually out fished anglers because the fish seemed to hang onto the jig and simply choked up on the jig more as it was pulled away. Understand when you need the sensitivity and also recognize situations where you need the jig to glide through the water or simply drag the fish a short distance before the rod will load up. Snap jigging a jig back to the boat with mono will have a much different action than braid and not so surprisingly, the fish are just there. When you pick up line and snap again, you will feel the fish.

While not always necessary, I am a big believer in using a fluorocarbon leader when fishing with braid. Fluorocarbon typically is much more invisible under water. Light colored braids in particular are





often highly visible underwater and I do believe there are times when highly visible lines underwater do reduce bites. Consider this... fish have debris floating by them constantly and if you have a three-inch piece of grass on your jig, you probably won't get bit. Fish get tuned into ignoring debris like leaves, weeds and other debris that is drifting through the water. You can also make braid much less visible underwater by simply taking а permanent Sharpie and coloring your line black on two feet of line next to the jig.

What I like about using a fluorocarbon leader is the abrasion resistance for fishing rocks, clam beds or toothy fish encounters like pike. I also like how fluorocarbon will cinch up on the jig eye better, so I can better control where my knot is at. If you are pitching or casting jigs especially, high vis mono or braid can make detecting some bites much easier because you can watch for the line to jump. From my experiences, high vis mono disappears fairly well under water while high vis braid often has a lot of contrast in the water and is highly visible.

When vertically jigging, especially when you are snap jigging... tying a small barrel swivel about two feet above your jig will save a lot of twist in your line which can become a big deal especially when using lighter six or eight-pound monofilament.

I can't tell you how many times I simply used too light of a jig and that mentality cost me fish. There are several reasons why using too light of a jig can be a major mistake. Catching fish so often is simply making adjustments and finding fish. If you error on the side of too light, you have to fish much slower and you simply can't cover as much water. As anglers, we get brain washed into believing we will catch way more fish if we lighten up our jig, but I have seen way too many scenarios where that wasn't the case. Particularly when fishing below the boat over structure or fishing in current, I have the mentality now to use the heaviest jig I can get away with. With the advent of tungsten now entering the



walleye scene, I have fallen in love with the Clam Pro Tackle Drop Tg Series of tungsten jigs as these jigs fish heavy, make louder bottom contact and are much more sensitive than traditional lead. Versatility however is the name of the game. When swimming or dragging jigs, lightening up the jig can pay huge dividends whenever you are fishing at an angle, casting or getting bogged down with debris, weeds or slime. Go up or down in jig weight and don't be stubborn.

Most days, catching fish on jigs is all about feel and so often if there is one variable that greatly changes the presentation, it is simply how much line you have out. If there is another angler in the boat that is cleaning your clock, watch the obvious like rod stroke and speed but also look at the angle in which the line is from the rod tip to the water and match that angle. That is a quick adjustment that usually solves most problems.

Particularly in the fall, jig fishing is often straight up and down over deeper structure. Typically, as you crawl around the spot, trust your electronics and remember to fish for fish versus simply fishing the spot. Crawl up, down and around until you mark fish. As you crawl, remember that the jig is typically at an angle away from the boat. If there is a fish right below your transducer and the jig is somewhere else, fight to get vertical. I often find that I simply catch way more fish if I simply reel up and drop back down right on top of fish that are on the screen. This confidence in your electronics will greatly improve your catch rate with a jig. You can not only target fish and put the jig right on them but also target bigger fish. Remember that bigger fish simply make a much thicker mark. Length of the mark is simply determined by how long the fish is in the cone angle, not how long the fish is. The reel up and drop tactic also makes your jig much more visible to fish as they often see it coming down and if it hits the bottom, it is going to make more noise after dropping from further up. This quickly gets your presentation in front of the fish. When you mark a fish you want to catch, either hover while back trolling or use the spot lock on the bow mount trolling motor to stop your momentum and get vertical.

Fall fishing typically develops a lot of classic fall patterns where we find fish on deep structure like rock bars, reefs and saddles that often have a hard bottom. Jigs and fall walleye have been a staple for years and not much has changed in that regard. What has changed is GPS mapping, rod blank technology, line and of course additional tools like tungsten and spot locking features. Catching walleye with jigs in the fall is nothing new but many of the new tools can greatly increase your success if you gain confidence with them and know how to use them.

Find out how this new tungsten open water jig will change the game.



It's Time To Think About Fall Fishing Now

By Bob Jensen

Depending on where you live, the young people and their teachers are getting ready to go back to school, football season is either here or just around the corner, and the fall fishing season is not far off. Some folks may not like this progression of seasons, but many anglers do. They know that autumn can provide the best fishing of the year for both numbers of fish and trophy fish. Many anglers have caught the biggest fish of their life in the fall. If we want to take full advantage of fall fishing, now is a good time to make preparations to do so. Following are some things to keep in mind as we prepare for fall fishing.

Whether you're fishing a lake, river, or reservoir, at some point in the fall the fish will school up. In the



summer they'll be loosely schooled more of the time, but when the fish feel the water temperatures drop and notice the days getting shorter, they'll group up. Therefore, it works well to keep moving with an eye on your sonar until you find where the fish are hanging out. The importance of paying attention to your sonar was once again driven home on a fall trip to Lake Kabetogama a couple of years ago. Kab is known for its walleyes, but it's also a world-class smallmouth fishery. We were fishing for the smallmouth on deep structures. We located the structures on the maps in our sonar units, then cruised over them looking for fish. The first two spots were fishless, the third showed fish. We dropped jigs and dropshot rigs to them and had immediate action. Just for the heck of it, we tried similar looking structures that didn't show fish on the sonar, and that's what we caught: Nothing. The fact that you've got to fish where the fish are if you want to catch fish was reinforced that day. We were using Raymarine sonar at the time: I can't remember which units we had, but the Axiom series of sonar from Raymarine that we're using now does an amazing job of showing fish, and they have the other features necessary that make fish-catching so much more consistent.

Start the autumn season off with fresh line. Just as we start the season with fresh line, we want to be sure our connection to the fish is in good shape in the fall. Be sure that when that fish-of-a-lifetime eats your bait, your line will be ready to handle it. There are lots of line choices out there, and they all have a purpose. With that said, day-in and day-out, I use P-Line CX or CXX Premium. These are kind of like monofilament line, and I've developed a lot of trust in them. If I want more sensitivity and better hooksetting ability, I use XTCB braid with a Tactical fluorocarbon leader. This set-up provides the ultimate in strength and minimal stretch, yet allows for a very natural presentation.

In the fall, fish like larger lures. Even the smaller fish eat bigger baits in the autumn. Mother Nature tells the fish that it's better to eat one large meal instead of several smaller ones. Use big bait for big fish.



ODU MAGAZINE VIDEO BLOCK (www.odumagazine.com)

There are lots of options for recreation in the fall. Football and hunting take up lots of folk's time. But if you like to

fish, reserve some time for doing-so. The weather is pleasant, the scenery is nice, and the catching can be

outstanding. Discover that for yourself when the leaves on the trees turn colorful.



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most recent and older episodes of Fishing the Midwest television, new and old fishing articles, and fishing video tips, go to <u>www.fishingthemidwest.com</u>.



KAYAK FISHING, A ROOKIE KAYAKER'S FIRST TIME EXPERIENCE

By Jason Houser

I have done a lot of fishing over the years from a variety of vessels. When the opportunity to target some big fish in the Rainy River near Baudette, Minnesota in a Hobie Kayak presented itself to me, I cautiously jumped at the opportunity. I would be fishing peers from with my the Association of Great Lakes Outdoor Writers and team members from Hobie Fishing. Our home base would be the beautiful River Bend's Resort located on the Rainy River.

I have never been in a kayak before, let alone fished out of one. Frankly, I never even thought about fishing out of one. Hobie has been in business since 1950 and has a great line of kayaks for the angler. My first attempt of fishing out of one would be in the Pro Angler 12.



I began the day fishing for lake sturgeon that the Rainy River have an abundance of. Normally these fish are bottom feeders and are an easy fish to catch, but on this particular day they seemed to be feeding higher in the water column making it hard to hook up on one. We knew there were sturgeon in the area as we continually seen them breaking the surface as they breached the water.

Frustration begin to set in as I saw sturgeon jumping all around me, but no takers on the meal of nightcrawlers and emerald shiners I was freely offering. When Joe Henry, director of the Lake of the Woods Tourism offered to take me around the river looking for pike and bass, I was all in.



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We began fishing the empty boat docks of the resorts that hold the big charter boats for walleye angling. With many of the boats on the lake, it was easy to cast into the slips and pull out pike after pike. Eventually we came to the end of the slips and made our way to 4-Mile Bay.

These Hobie Kayaks are known for their Mirage Drive technology. This allows for handsfree maneuvering keeping both hands free to fish and control the direction of the boat. With a pull of a cord the boat can either go forward or in reverse. When the current would take us to close to the structure we were fishing, whether it was boat docks or weed beds, all I had to do was simply put the boat into reverse and make a few turns of the peddles and I would be where I needed to be to make effective casts again.

Fishing the weed lines, we pulled in several pike in the 20 to 24-inch range but Joe ensured me there were some true lunkers calling the weeds home.

Losing focus on where my boat was as I unhooked yet another northern, I was deep in the heart of the weed bed. Needing to get back on the edge of the weeds so I could cast without the weeds being a problem, I tossed my lure several feet behind the kayak and began trolling to open water. One hand was holding the rod and other the was the controlling handle steering located on either side of the boat.

Just as I was about to enter open water and begin casting again





my spinner was slammed with a force that almost jarred the rod lose from my hands. I immediately knew I had on a trophy fish, but until I saw it break the surface I really had no idea what I was battling.

Upon seeing the fish, I quickly hollered for Joe to get to my location and to help. I knew that this fish was probably going to be more than I could handle as a rookie kayak angler. For several minutes we fought the fish as it broke the surface and then returned to the thick vegetation. This repeated many times as the kayak was freely pulled along by the big fish.

The problem I was having that anytime I made ground on the fish that there was so much vegetation getting on my line that it was preventing me from reeling as it clogged the eye on the end of the rod. Several times Joe would have to clean off my line so I could keep reeling.

Knowing that we had an exceptional fish and another hand would be needed, I placed a call to Kevin Nakada, an experienced Hobie Fishing Pro. In no time, Nakada was laying on the front of his boat shoulder deep in the weedy water tossing weeds left and right. After a few seconds of that he was able to reach the pike and pull it into the kayak. The 45-minute battle was finally over.

Watching that pike break the surface and make it into the boat was something I will never forget. Just a day before I had never been in a kayak, and the next day I boated a 35-inch northern pike which easily surpassed any pike I had caught in my life. After a few photos and high-fives, the fish was released back to the waters.



Without a doubt the ability to peddle the boat and follow the fish while having my hands free to reel was what allowed me to catch this fish. A fish of this size does a lot of running all over the place and being able to stay on top of it is very important. This was especially important in the weeds we were fishing.

Even though catching a sturgeon was the goal, the battle between me and the fish was enough for me to call it day. I made the ride back to shore to relive the memories with others as we sat in the beautiful surroundings of River Bend's Resort.

The following morning found me seated in a Hobie Compass. Not sold with the fishing layout of the Pro Angler, the Compass was accessorized with rod holders and a crate that I would be able to store my tackle in turning it into an angling kayak in just minutes.

The morning found several of us anglers scattered across the river as we fished deep holes for sturgeon. Again, sturgeon jumped all around us but none would go to the bottom to take our bait.

After about 4 hours of watching sturgeon I pulled anchor and made the move to fish for northern pike again, hoping to repeat or better what I did the day before. I lost count on the number of pikes I boated, but nothing came close to the giant I released the day before.





Returning back to River Bend's Resort I saw a good sturgeon jump feet into the air. Having nothing to lose, I placed my northern rod in the holder and baited my sturgeon rod for one last hoorah before calling it quits for the day.

I was so close to the sturgeon when it jumped I was able to maneuver my kayak and anchor in the center of the rings if left from the splash. I thought to myself that this was nuts, but I knew a sturgeon was there just moments before.

After abut 15 minutes of waiting my rod got a solid tap, then another. I knew it was about to get serious so I released my anchor system while I was still in my right mind. Then it happened. The rod doubled over and I began reeling. I was using circle hooks so I had to remember not to set the hook.

I knew instantly I had a nice sturgeon on, but there were no other anglers from my group close to help.



In the distance I could see Hobie team member Stephanie Locher in the distance and was able to get her attention and she was able to get the attention of Joe Henry who was even further down the river.

The sturgeon put up a good fight and moved my kayak several hundred feet upriver but in the open water I had better control of the fish and after a couple of runs I was finally able to grab the tail of the fish and flip it into the boat. The sturgeon measured 37-inches, not a big fish by Rainy River standards, but still a fish I was proud to have landed. Eventually the others made their way to me and after some quick photos the fish returned to the depths of the river to be caught again by another lucky angler.

Our night ended with another great meal at the resort and the days events were told over and over. I never would have dreamed that I would fish out of a kayak, targeting fish that could pull me where they wanted to go. But after having done it, I can't wait until I can do it again.

Throughout the course of two days of fishing my group boated a variety of fish out of the river, including smallmouth bass, walleye, pike, crappie, perch and sturgeon. Many people travel to the area for its famous walleye fishery, but the river holds exceptional year-round fishing for a variety of fish.

To say that kayak fishing is a thrill would be an understatement. I can already think of all the uses I would have for one in my home state of Illinois and across much of the Midwest. Fishing in areas a bigger boat would not be able to get to, small bodies of water with horsepower restrictions, or just the thrill of landing a fish in a kayak are all reasons for me to back in to one very soon.

Jas-nMite

Vila serie

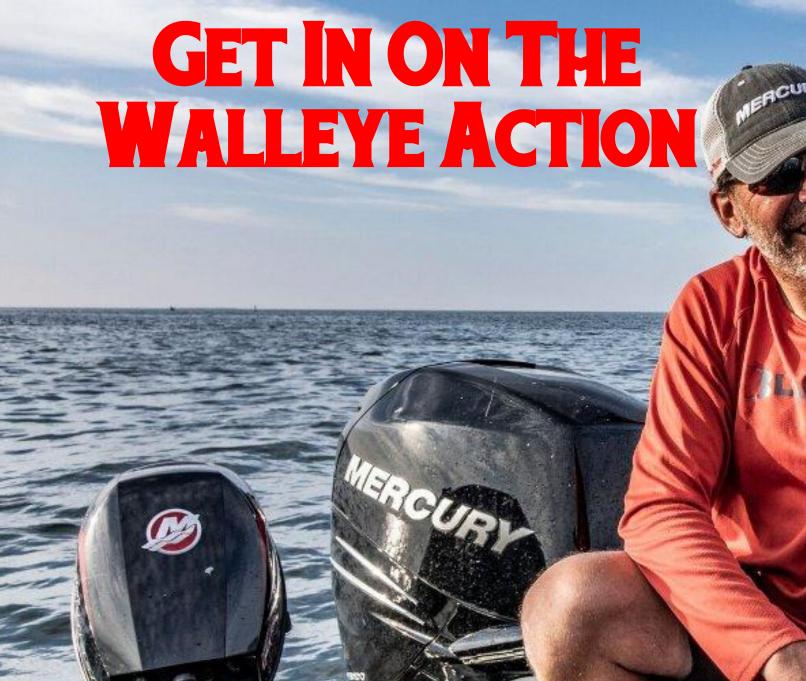
JASONMITCHELLRODS.COM

AND READY TO MINGLE WITH THE FISHES.

The Meat Stick rods and combos are balanced to load perfectly with heavier search loves yet enables anglers to watch for the lightest pickups. They feature a sanded gloss blank that features a feather light tip for bite detection, and an extremely heavy backbone that loads up for the light!

REDESIGNED.

The Mackinaw "MACK" rods were designed extensively for the sole purpose of taming big fish. The graphite blank on the bait-cast rods feature spiraled guides for better shock absorption and sensitivity. The handle is designed extra long past the reel seat for better balance and leverage to reduce fatigue. This rod is extremely effective for chasing giant Pike, Lake Trout, Walleye and Salmon.



Looking for new ways to crank up your walleye game? Some new tools to add to your bag? One of the best ways to cover water, put your bait in front of active fish, and catch big walleyes in the process is to fish with crankbaits! Part of the trolling equation is getting your lure in the zone. If you look at articles we have done in the past you will find a lot of detail on how to use the Precision Trolling Data app and optional weighting systems to understand how to get your bait to the proper depth. Yet even with a lure in the proper zone, more often than not, what will trigger a walleye to bite a crank is the action.

Over the years we have been fortunate enough to be able to help design the Berkley "Flicker" series of baits. These baits have proven time and time again that their actions are second to none! The Flicker Shad has a top to bottom rolling action that throws off a lot of side flash as it moves through the



By Gary Parsons and Keith Kavajecz



water. The Flicker Minnow has a combination of both a rolling and a snake-like action, which is spot on for a lure that is meant to imitate a minnow!

Now enter two more players to the game! The Jointed Flicker Shad and Shallow Flicker Shad which will be available in the fall of 2018. Jointed baits have caught a lot of walleyes over the years. These baits are fairly aggressive because of the extra tail wag you get from having a jointed tail.

Aggressive tactics often equate to summertime fishing, so jointed baits are usually considered warm water lures. The Jointed Flicker Shad is different. This lure was designed and tested to have a wide window of opportunity. While testing prototypes, we caught fish on them as early as April in 50-degree water and as late as November. The key is to adjust speed based on time of year. Colder



ODU MAGAZINE VIDEO BLOCK (www.odumagazine.com)

temperatures mean a slower troll, often down to 1.2mph. Warmer means faster, all the way up to 3mph. This bait has a great action at all speeds!



Another with

this bait is the scheme. colors of Flicker Shad have a tail that is different than the body color. During testing there were instances "hot where this only seemed to trigger more bites, but it got the fish to bite







right on the back hook!

Equipped with Fusion 19 treble hooks, they have a good size hook that still allows the bait to have a great action. These Fusion treble hooks have a point with needle SlickSet Coating for easier penetration. Plus, the shape of the hook locks the walleye on, which is



critical for fighting a fish from a long distance!

To top it off, another "attracting" feature of the Jointed Flicker Shad is that it is one of only a few jointed baits with rattles. The original Flicker Shad and Flicker Minnow line-up have shown us that walleyes seem to react to high pitch rattles, so why change a good thing!

There are two sizes to choose from in Jointed Flicker Shads, both a #5 and #7. The Precision Trolling Data app says the #5 will dive to 12 feet with 170 feet of Berkley 10# XT. The #7 will go all the way down to 20 feet with 187 feet of 10#XT. Lifetime members of the PTD app already have this data available.

Now lets talk about Shallow Flicker Shads. These baits really have two uses - casting and trolling.

Casting

Anytime walleyes are shallow, or you need to fish over the top of some weeds or brush that comes fairly close to the surface, these are go to baits. One of the great accomplishments of the #7 is that it has an extremely similar action to the original deep diving Flicker Shad, but it is great for casting to depths up to five feet deep.

With the incorporated rattles, it casts great for a light lure! When casting, go to a 7-foot medium-light spinning rod with a fast tip. Use a great casting no-stretch line like 10# Berkley NanoFil, or 8# Berkley Ultra 8 FireLine. Each of these lines have a slick finish, so they travel out of the rod guides with less



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resistance than other lines. This creates a longer cast.

The #5 Shallow Flicker Shad does not dive as deep, maybe down to three feet, so it is perfect for when

the walleyes on a very shallow lake flat, up on a bank, or just casting in an overall shallow lake. The other big difference is that the #5 has a very subtle action compared to the deep diver. It still has great top to bottom roll to give the side flash, but this lure is meant to trigger fish that are not in an aggressive mood.

Trolling

Once again, this lure is great for shallow situations when trolling shorelines, flats, reefs. The PTD app maximum depth for the #5 & 7 using 10# XT is 8 feet (with 90 feet of line out) and 10 feet. (with 136 feet out). Remember, in both situations you can let out less line and run the baits shallower than the maximum depth. For example, to get them running 4 feet down, the #5 would go out 19 feet, the #7 would go down 17 feet. If you are running the lures that short, consider putting them behind an Offshore Planer Board to keep them away from the boat in this skinny water.

These baits are just coming out – but we have been testing them for over a year. They've got the right actions to get you – **The Next Bite.**





Winterizing Advice From The Boat Doctor

By Dan Galusha

As cold weather approaches many boaters are thinking about storing their rigs, which means work heats up for marine dealers like Bob Garlock (aka Boat Doctor), owner of Davenport Boat. Because of this we were lucky to have the time granted by Bob to ask a few questions regarding winterizing.

The following is information gathered and reported in

Bob Garlock, owner of Davenport Boat, adds fuel stabilizer to a Legend bass boats fuel tank, which is one of the key elements in winterizing.



Garlock's own words:

In my opinion the most important things for winterizing an outboard is making sure there is no water inside the lower unit. It could freeze and crack the housing.

Stabilizing the fuel system for an extended storage period is Probably the most important thing. Fuel system problems are a very large portion of our service business.

Fuel can start to faze separate in as little as 15 days depending on original fuel quality. Most people do not realize that adding fuel stabilizer to old fuel does not help.

You also must run the motor for 10 - 15 minutes after adding stabilizer to the fuel tank to get it into the fuel system on the motor.

For inboards it is the same for the fuel systems. Make sure there is no water in the drive unit, and either drain or antifreeze the cooling system on the motor.

The difference between an outboard and inboard is that the outboards will completely self-drain of water by letting them sit as vertical as possible for 5 minutes or so (excluding if there is water in the lower unit), while the inboard cooling systems have to be manually drained.

Most dealers like ourselves offer winterizing packages which will take care of your winter storage concerns and your yearly maintenance on your boat for a reduced price from in

season maintenance cost and your ready to go in the spring.

As far as the boat goes make sure all drain plugs are removed from boat and live wells. Any liquid should be removed, and batteries should be fully charged.

There is real no difference in procedures horsepowers, for but there is a difference in do for what we а winterize package depending if your motor

Checking all fluid levels is important during any time of the year, but especially before winter storage.







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is a 4 stroke, 2 stroke , fuel injected , or carbureted.

In case of watercrafts themselves, larger boats or pontoons that have water systems and holding tanks should also be drained.

When it comes to the right time to winterize, we advise our customers to get there winterizing done before there are freezing temps because of the aforementioned freezing and cracking possibilities. The best time would be when you are sure you are done using your boat for the season. Dealers can get backed up several weeks when the temps start to drop, which will cause a waiting time before they can get to your boat.

For people who want to do their own winterizing it is pretty much up to how handy they are at such things. However, they should remember to fully charge the batteries, and remove all liquids from boat and motor.

We also advise customers to use fuel stabilizer year around and especially late in the season when the boat will possibly set without use for longer periods.

There is a little difference between people who store their boat inside and out. Something I hear a lot is that "I do not need to winterize my boat because it is stored inside a heated garage". It is true that you do not need to worry about any freezing or cracking, however your fuel system needs to be stabilized the same as if it were outside all winter. Also, if you have not taken the proper precautions, make sure





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you do not loose your heat in your storage facility because it could be costly.

If the boat is stored outside, along with the normal winterizing try to keep the rain, snow and ice off the top of the boat as much as possible. Snow and ice build up can do some serious damage.

If you have to wait to a later time in the season run stabilizer in the fuel and make sure to store the outboard as vertical as possible to drain water. Check or change the lower unit lube to make sure there is no water in it.

Stern drives need to do the same with the fuel system but do not let that motor get below freezing for too long or it will be a expensive repair come spring!

Some people will use their rigs during the winter. Again I would run stabilizer in your fuel just in case it sets for a while. Each time the outboard is pulled out of the water let it set vertical as possible for 5 minutes to let the water drain from the cooling system. I would at least check if not change the lower unit's lube to insure there is no water inside the lower unit housing before exposing it to a lot of cold weather conditions.

Again, for stern drives, don't let that motor freeze.

SHOP NOW

For trailers some people feel they should jack them up to lift the tires off the ground, but there is no need to do this. However, it would be best for the tires to keep them as close to max air pressures as possible while setting for the winter. Cold temps tend to make tires loose air pressure.

I want to thank Mr. Garlock for taking the time for this interview and photos. For further questions contact "Boat Doctor" Bob at Davenport Boat, 1414 S. Shark St, at 563-326-2431.

You can drop me a line with whatever fishing question you might have through the Dan's Fish 'N' Tales[®] website at www.dansfishntales.com or Facebook page at <u>www.facebook.com/dansfishntales</u>. You can also watch Fish 'N' Tales[®] videos at www.youtube.com/dansfishntales.

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





HOW BEST TO USE FLOATS WITH CARP

By The American Carp Society

Welcome to the 6th article by the American Carp Society designed to introduce and instruct anglers on the new age of Carp Angling...

This month we're going to cover another very useful carp fishing technique that many of us are already familiar with when fishing for other species. Fishing with a Float or bobber can be one of the most thrilling techniques for catching carp. We'll be adding quite a few refinements to the float rigs that you





probably already use that could very well benefit you when float fishing for other species too...

Ok, lets get into it and look at how to use these float fishing techniques to catch more Carp (cyprinus carpio).



Float Fishing for Carp

This technique is perhaps the most fun you can have when fishing for carp and arguably the most versatile, especially when fishing anywhere between the margins and 10 to 15 yards from the bank. there is nothing quite like seeing the float slip away under the surface and then see the water erupt when you connect with the carp!





Here is a range (above0 of floats that we typically have to choose from depending on the conditions we're facing...

We can of course use any rod and reel lying about in our garage to float fish for carp but an 'all through' action rod is the best choice as the initial run of the fish will be very powerful and this softer, more forgiving rod is probably our best choice. But again, with the many years of research and development having been done by specialist anglers and companies



in this department, we can refine our approach to utilize many of the successful techniques that have been developed to increase our catch rate. It must be said though, longer rods in the 10 to 12' range with the 'through' action will give you much better line and float control; you'll find that you actually connect with the fish more often and not miss as many bites due to slack lines etc. So, to reiterate, the longer the rod, the easier it is to pick up and retrieve slack lines and thus being able to set the hook faster when a fish bites, especially on a river.

As in any type of fishing, it's important when float fishing to choose the areas of your lake or river where the fish actually hang out to feed. So as usual, we're looking for underwater structures such as weed lines, points, river mouths & feeder creeks, drop offs, rock piles etc. to find our quarry.



Once you've chosen your spot, if you live in a state where pre-baiting/chumming is legal, it's always beneficial to pre-feed the area before you actually fish whenever possible. This could be the night before your session and/or as soon as you arrive at the swim, before you set up your tackle. This is best done with small, correctly prepared (soaked and boiled) particles such as Hemp Seed, Canned Sweet Corn, Wild Bird Seed and grated bread crumbs work fantastically (loaf of bread ground up in a blender). The ever-wary Carp, will readily accept a hook bait once they have sampled your free offerings and gained confidence on the free offering of the food that is also being used as a hook bait.

Any of the above baits will work well either directly on the hook or even better via a hair rig. Of-course,



boilies, chickpeas, nuts, dough baits, cheese, worms/night-crawlers and maggots/spikes and plain old wonder bread squeezed on the hook are always big favorites too. We recommend that bringing 3 or 4 different baits to your session because the fish could favor one over the other on any given day.



FLOAT FISHING RIVERS, PONDS & LAKES

There are differences in approach and slightly different techniques that should be considered when Float fishing rivers as opposed to still waters such as lakes and ponds.

The main challenge when fishing a river as opposed to still waters is of course the flow or movement of the water. We must adjust a few things with our approach, techniques, and rigs to compensate for the flow.

When fishing a river, throw your pre-bait slightly up-stream of your chosen fish holding feature so that it



settles down on the bottom in your swim you plan to fish. How far up stream to introduce your bait will of course, be determined on how fast the river is running. Also, bear in mind that different sections of the river will be running faster or slower even in the vertical plain (The surface of the river could be running slower than the flow of water at say, 8 feet below the surface). Cyprinus Carpio have an awesome sense of smell and the 'scent' of your bait will be carried off downstream and attract carp up to your area. Keep it going in, little and often.

It is a good idea to mix some of your chosen bait(s) in with a binder such as bread crumb for example in a bucket and make sticky balls to pre-bait with; see last month's article for one of our favorite mixes: The Method. Some experimentation will soon tell you how firm, 'stodgy and thick' to make it. In faster flows, you should make it so it takes 15 or even 20 minutes to completely dissolve/break completely;

this acts as both a delayed and controlled bait delivery system for your swim.

Note: Please check with your local Fisheries Department to make sure Prebaiting or chumming is legal in your area before employing this tactic.

Where still as in waters, a quick (less 2 than minutes) dissolve/break is desirable (see previous articles here in ODU mag for details...) Grits or oats that are wet with a can of creamed corn work well here in verv because the smaller particles these in mixes will stay in position until a fish eats them and of course the pre-bait can be thrown directly the structure or to mark that we have decided to fish.



Now lets tackle up and discuss a few general pointers while we let the pre-bait work it's magic:

> Monofilament and/or fluorocarbon main lines in the 6 to 10 LB test range are suggested when fishing for carp. Often, a leader or hook length is between 6" to 18" is used at the business end of the rig; attached via a line loop or mini swivel. This hook length is often, a fluorocarbon line and much lighter test line in the 4 - 6lb range to give a more visually subtle bait presentation to wary fish...

> Depending on how far we must cast to reach the shoals or feeding spots, use as small and sensitive a float as your fishing conditions and swim will allow. A thin bodied float such as a Waggler, Stick Float, carp antenna or even a good-sized quill (if you can find one) as these types of floats offer much more stability and sensitive bite detection than conventional 'bobber' floats.

> Attach the float to the line by threading the main line through the eye at the bottom of the float and then thread a piece of silicone tubing onto the line and push it up and onto the bottom of the float (See diagram below).

> If no soft silicone tubing is available, the line can be passed through the bottom eye of the float twice to semi secure the float in place. This is not ideal though because the line can be damaged and thus weakened whenever the float rig's depth is adjusted.

Cork Plummet used for finding the depths of the swim by temporarily attaching to the rig as shown and casting out. Adjust depth of float until the float cocks as desired. Join the Over 1200 NPAA Guides, Captains, Tournament Anglers, Clubs Angler Educators, Industry Companies, and Non-Profits All Working Together to Grow and Protect Sportfishing Nationwide



> Important! In all float fishing styles and approaches, it is extremely important to first find the depths of your swim using a purpose made Cork Plummet or by tying a large enough weight to the end of the line to easily sink the float. Repeatedly cast to the area you plan on fishing and keep raising the float up along the line each time it's cast and submerges until the float is at the required depth and is cocked perfectly in the water. We now have the full depth of the water we plan to fish; note the depth by holding the float against the rod with the hook at the bottom of the rod butt and make a mental note of how many of the rod's eyes the float is so you can easily reset the float to full depth as needed during the session. Note: Once the float is adequately weighted, a large split shot clamped onto the hook will do the same job.

> In rivers, allow a little more depth (distance between the float and the hook) on the rig than you would on a still water, especially when fishing your bait on the bottom and 'trotting' it downstream. This is to allow for the bow in the line caused by the current. Once we have the depths mapped out throughout the swim, we can then choose which float rig to use.

FLOAT RIGS

The float set-ups pictured below are very general in nature but will get us through most situations we are likely to encounter in our float fishing pursuits of Cyprinus Carpio. Whether you need your bait well up in the water column or hard on the bottom of the river/lake, one of these or indeed a combination of the rigs, will make our quest that much more successful.



There is a whole science built up around split shotting patterns for floats but it really all boils down to the following:

> The end goal is of course, weighting our float rig so that it helps present the bait on the hook in as naturally looking a presentation as is possible to the hungry fish in the swim they happen to be feeding. This is especially important with the wary carp!

> Most good floats that are commercially available these days have a shot or weight rating guidance printed on them. Some floats are even self-weighed. For example: 2AAA, 2BB, 2AA+ etc. The lettering refers to the size of shot and the number, to how many of them are needed to properly cock the float. Other sizes include, SSG (aka Swan shot), No.1, No.4, No.6 etc. More modern references are given in grams but both size references are commonly seen on packs of mixed size split shots. If casting your float rig to a distance more than a rod length or two is necessary, try to avoid using the split shot with 'ears' even though these are easier to both install and remove from the line. They tend to spin on retrieval and can cause twisted line and tangles. Slow Moving Rivers and Still Waters

> The trick is to place enough weight on the line (via strategically placing split shots on the line) to correctly cock the float so just the colored tip (red in the above examples) of the float shows above the water while at the same time trying to achieve a natural looking and acting bait presentation. Evenly spaced shot tends to cast better than shot clumped all in one or two places but even these 'clumped' shotting patterns can have their place depending on the fishing conditions we're fishing in.

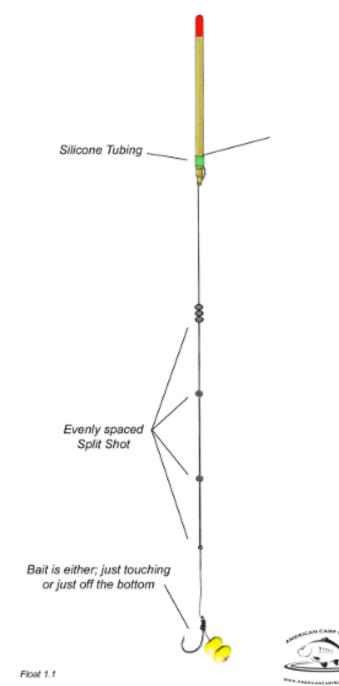
> If we need the baited hook to sink quickly to the bottom of the lake (maybe to by-pass, smaller fish feeding in mid-water) then place some of the larger split shot down nearer the hook.

>If a more natural sinking action of the bait is needed, then place the bulk of the shot up closer to the float.

> In the last two points above, some care should be taken to place the shot on the line so that tangles are minimized during the casting of the baited float rig. Evenly spaced shot tends to cast well. Experience is the best way forward.

THE SLOW MOVING RIVERS AND STILL WATER 'WORK-HORSE' FLOAT RIG

This is a very typical float rig set-up that can be used in most any situation with success. The design of the float used can be changed as well as the hook size and





breaking strain of the line to suit various swims but this is our 'work horse' rig. When fishing rivers, it is best to fish slightly over depth to take into consideration the bow in the line between the hook and the float that the current will cause.

THE LIFT FLOAT METHOD

Used for presenting a bait on the bottom of the lakes and other still waters. Can also be used on slow moving rivers but the use of a more buoyant float like the Peacock Waggler shown in last graphic is recommended.

This rig and approach probably suits carp fishing better than any other due to the way in which a carp typically feeds. As all Carp on the Fly Fishermen can attest, carp can often be seen with their tails up and heads down when feeding on the bottom of the lake, sometimes even looking like they're standing on their heads. This same feeding pattern is also the norm at depths where we can't see them, so knowing this and being able to visualize them feeding on our hook bait is an obvious advantage to us. Once the bait has been sucked into the carp's mouth, the fish then moves to a more horizontal position to chew its food.

This is how we get the term "Lift Method" because the carp, in moving to the horizontal plane to chew the food, lifts the Split Shot that properly cocks the float up off the bottom with the bait, so the float



then pops-up and can even lay flat on the surface. The time to quickly strike and lift into the fish is when we notice the initial lift of the float before it spits the bait. This is why it is very important to only have a 3-inch (4" maximum) length of line between your hook and the split shot that both cocks and anchors the float. Any longer and the bite will probably not register on the float and the bait will be 'spit' as soon as the carp feels the hook and realizes something 'isn't right' with the bait.

The Float Ledger Bolt Rig

Large Quill, Waggler or Antenna Float

Silicone Tubing

Swan shot placed

at exact depth

of the water

Note: Watch out for

Use a ringed swivel

or plastic sliding ring to attach the ledger link Occasionally, if the carp keeps its head down when feeding confidently, then moving directly onto the next item of food close-by, the float may 'bob' slightly before sliding off into the depths. Strike!

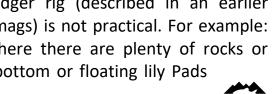
THE FLOAT LEDGER BOLT RIG

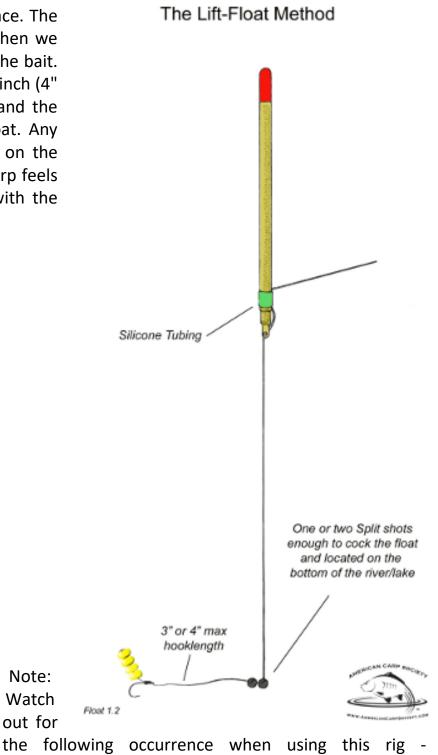
The main advantages to using this method is that it can be cast long distances with a float and into to areas where a regular ledger rig (described in an earlier article within ODU mags) is not practical. For example: fishing in a hole where there are plenty of rocks or weed beds on the bottom or floating lily Pads



Swan shots

on a short link to form a ledger link





etc. in between the angler and the baited rig thus making it impossible or impractical to sink the line to get even a semi tight line for good bite indication via the bite alarms using a regular ledgered approach. This float ledger rig allows a semi-tight line between the rod tip and the float along the top of the water and thus over the top and out of the way of the snags below, thus seeing a positive bite indication via the movement of the float. We can then immediately lift into the fish as soon as the float indicates a fish has picked up the bait. [Text Wrapping Break][Text Wrapping Break]This float ledger set-up is also great in very windy conditions and you want to present a bait tight to a mark you have established and pre-baited. The only other tip we feel is necessary here is to make sure that enough of the float tip is visible when fishing this at distance.

LOCKED PEACOCK WAGGLER RIGS

This float, the 'Peacock Waggler' is used often on bigger still waters and rivers where some turbulence or wind created chop is encountered. Being bulkier than a regular Waggler, it takes more shot to cock and thus can be cast further too.

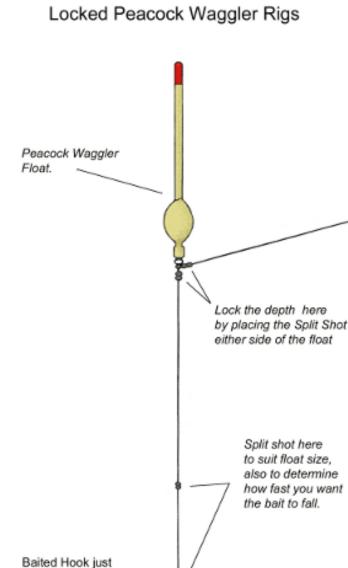
It's used in these scenarios because the extra buoyancy offered by the float's "bulb" steadies the float in the water during these windy or turbulent conditions. This makes seeing an actual bite so much easier and cuts down on the false bite situations.

Another very similar float design is often referred to as the Carp Antenna an is used in the same situations. This

rig is referred to as "locked" because after setting the depth of the float in the area we wish to fish, split shot is then placed either side of the float to lock it into position. Note: Don't put the shots 'skintight' to the float, leave it a little wriggle space, say about a half inch

The main benefit of this approach is that most of the weight needed to cock the float is located at the base of the float with only very small shot need further down towards the hook. This ensures both that the float is always at the correct depth and when cast to the mark we're fishing; the float always arrives tail first with the bait trailing behind it. Especially handy when casting to the edge of overhanging tree branches of reeds etc.

The bait can also be left free to fall through the water column more naturally (on the drop) so making it less suspicious to the carp.









Well, there you have it, the basics of float fishing which are totally adaptable to what ever species you prefer to angle for... Hope you can see the advantages and the pure unadulterated thrill of the catch when utilizing these float fishing techniques...

We wish you much luck, have fun!

All the best and many tight lines...

About Our Organization:

The American Carp Society was formed in 2002, with the goal of promoting and educating the public on the sport of specimen Carp Fishing in the USA.

The Common Carp (cyprinus carpio) is one of the hardest fighting freshwater fish in the world and is now being pursued by anglers of all persuasions, from fly fisherman to dedicated Specialist Carp anglers as a sport fish. The American Carp Society is a membership based organization and is responsible for promoting the sport and ensuring careful stewardship of both the specimen fish and



"

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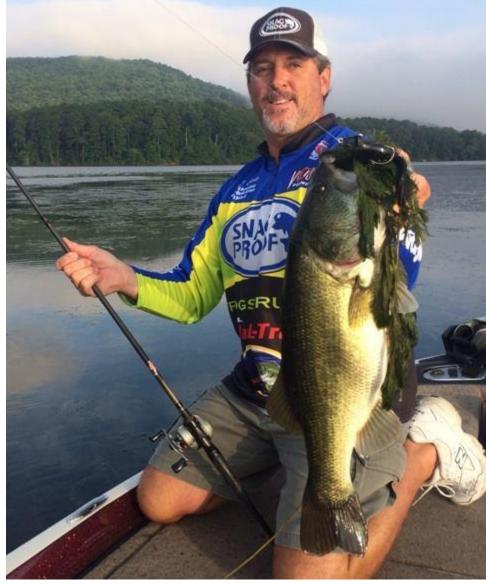


Fall Frogging

By Capt. Mike Carter

This is the time of year that some serious Snag Proof "FRAWG" action is getting ready to begin!

The temperatures will start to fall soon and Bass will start to move into the shallow flats to feed aggressively, and there's no better way to experience this than with a Snag Proof Frog. This time of year can bring a lot of changes in weather conditions and Snag Proof has several types of frogs to help cope with changing weather patterns.



The basic Snag Proof Frog, Bobby's Perfect Frog, and the Phat Frog are the most common choices for Fall "FRAWGIN". When looking for the fall "Frawgin" pattern, you can up your chances of consistent action if you look for grass that's starting to die off and has created that "mucky" look on the surface. These areas can be easy to find but to find the most productive areas, listen for the sound of "popcorn"! This popping sound is a sign of small bream and minnows feeding on bugs, spiders, etc. When you have the smaller fish feeding it's a good chance some solid Bass are in the area as well.

When you find some active fish and all you get is the fish just popping the frog in the air or wallowing on it and not eating it, you can increase your chances of a hookset by changing colors or even getting a little more aggressive with your retrieve and the action of your frog.







If it turns out that the mats aren't producing then look for the scattered grass areas and use Snag Proof's Bobby's Perfect Buzz. This is a bait that can produce some "explosive" strikes and can be very productive even in weather bad conditions. Fish are always cruising grass flats and covering a lot of these areas with the Perfect Buzz increase can your odds of connecting with some solid fish. There's nothing fancy about working this bait, you just treat it like other any buzzbait, except this buzzbait floats and is weedless! These advantages allow you to rip it in long sweeps and pause it

over openings in the mat. Fast or slow, you can use it in some thick grass without it getting fouled up.

The other pattern that's very useful over scattered grass areas is working a Snag Proof Poppin' Phattie. This bait can be used like any other top water popping plug except once again it allows you to fish it in thick scattered grass areas without it getting fouled like other top water plugs with exposed hooks. It will pop and spit water even in the thick stuff without falling over. This bait is also great in calm conditions. The double poppin' cavities create twice the action and vibration that bass react to and really draws them in.

Since 1961, which was the year I was born, Snag Proof has worked to give anglers several "Frawg" options to choose from to make for some successful "FRAWGIN" action. No matter the conditions, Snag Proof has a frog for it.

My choices for Fall Frawgin' are Bobby's Perfect Frog for the mucked up mats, the Snag Proof Perfect Buzz Frog for changes of weather conditions and fishing more scattered type grass areas, and



the Snag Proof Poppin' Phattie for calmer conditions as well as in scattered grass areas. So the bottom line for some great Fall fishing is to have at least 3 rods rigged and ready to go with the 3 main choices of Snag Proof products I

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mention. This is a fantastic time of year to get out and enjoy some great fishing action and there just ain't nuthin like have a Big Bass just absolutely EXPLODING on a Snag Proof "FRAWG"!!! Have some fun!!!







WORLD CLASS FRESHWATER STRIPER FISHING

By Jake Bussolini

You might ask yourself, what exactly defines world class striper fishing? As a seasoned Lake Norman NC. angler, I have always defined striper fishing as five minutes of chaos, accompanied by fifty five minutes of boredom for every hour on the water. More than most species of fish, a successful striper fishing experience requires that the angler thoroughly understands the habits and changing behavior of the fish.

Lenoir City Tennessee has raised itself to the enviable position of being my now favorite striper fishing region. The many dams constructed by the TVA years ago have provided very favorable conditions for great fishing of all types, but the striper fishing is almost always outstanding. BUT to take advantage of the potential for a great catch, the angler or the guide must be skilled not only with the techniques to be used but more important, must understand the changing habits of the fish. A combination of both of these situations can produce several hours of exciting catches followed by only a few minutes of calm. For years I have used the guide services of Bo Rice. He lives and breathes striper fishing in this region



and he has a rare sense of understanding how the stripers think and behave as the water system above the dams is managed. When water is being released, the stripers move up close to the dams to gorge on the thousands of shad that rush into the well oxygenated water. When no water is being released, Rice understands the habits of the fish to move down stream as their food source moves there.

On my most recent trip to this area with two of my fishing partners, Peter Enyeart and Rich Doering, the area demonstrated what it means to be world class. In a four hour morning fish, the three of us boated more than 500 pounds of stripers, most in the twenty pound or greater range. We experienced three triple headers and several doubles.

The best catch was brought to the boat by Doering with a 35 pound monster caught casting a red fin lure. Most of the fish were caught trolling live Gizzard Shad. The enjoyment of fishing in this cool Clinch River water was increased by also catching a 30 inch musky, a four pound largemouth bass, one ten pound black drum and several blue catfish. But the world class status came with the number of stripers caught in such a short period of time. Rich Doering is shown here with his personal best 30 pounder.

Jake Bussolini is a freelance writer who has published 9 books about freshwater fishing. His books can be viewed or purchased on <u>www.booksbyjake.com</u>.





By Chip Leer

It's no secret that all types of gamefish gravitate to aquatic vegetation in the summertime—including bass, walleyes, pike and panfish. Unless you're armed with the right lures and tactics, however, fishing the weeds can be a frustrating affair. Here are five timely tips to help you avoid the hassle and catch more fish on every trip.





1. Choose The Right Jig

Jigs are wonderful weapons for plucking fish from the greenery, but not all fish weeds jigs equally well. Look for jig heads designed duty. for jungle Northland Fishing Tackle's Weed-Weasel is a prime The example. tapered wedge head,

eye positioned at the nose of the jig, and Y-shaped plastic weedguard help it slide through grass without snagging. Weed-Weasels work wonders on the cast or when vertically jigged below the boat. Tip with an IMPULSE plastic or securely skull-hooked minnow.

2. Fish A Weedless Bouncer

Bottom bouncers excel for taking spinner rigs, crankbaits and other lures down to strike the zone. Bouncers with an "R-bend" design, Northland's like **Rock-Runner** Bottom Bouncer, are my pick for the



weeds because they glide over moss and weedy bottoms on the drift and troll. Plus, they prevent grass that catches the mainline from sliding all the way down to the lure.

3. Assess The Bed

Searching for fish in a sizeable weedbed can feel like looking for the proverbial needle in a haystack, unless you attack the bed with a plan. First off, avoid unbroken tangles in the middle of the bed. Instead, focus on ambush points along the deep and shallow edges, where predators prefer to waylay prey. The edges of open pockets within the bed can also be hot zones.



4. Control Your Fall

When fishing panfish with float rigs, choose jigs with a slow fall and natural gliding action—like Northland's IMPULSE Helium Waxyfly, Mayfly and Stonefly. Slow fallers tempt super-sized sunfish and crappies into taking the bait better than jigs that drop like a rock. In deep water, pinch a split-shot a foot or two up the line to bring the lure down to the desired depth range, then twitch the bobber to let the jig work its magic.





5. Swim Like A Pro

Swim jigs aren't just for casting and winding. With the right setup, you can swim a jig and soft-plastic trailer around below a bobber. One of my favorite summer combos is an IMPULSE Water Bug threaded onto a 1/32- or 1/16-ounce horizontalhanging Northland RZ Jig. When you pop the rod tip, the bait grabs water, glides forward and swims around under the float.

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Do Something Else

Mike Frisch with a jumbo largemouth bass taken on the weedline with an Ocho.

JZUK

By Bob Jensen

Recently Mike Frisch and I got together for an afternoon of fishing. Our plan was to chase largemouth bass on a lake that is very similar to lots of other lakes across the Midwest. What Mike and I re-learned that afternoon always helps us catch more fish at any time of the year.

The lake that we were on is primarily a bass/panfish lake. There are some pike and a few walleyes in it, but bass and panfish make up the bulk of the fish population.

The lake has a lot of shallow water cover in the form of lily pads and reeds. We wanted to fish the shallow sloppy areas because, Number 1, we really like to fish this way. You see every strike, and oftentimes you can see the bass approaching the baits. It's very exciting fishing.

Number 2, this is also a productive way to fish. There are lots of bass in those sloppy areas, and much of

the time they're willing to eat regardless of time of day or anything else.

We tied on Strike King's KVD Sexy Frogs and started working the



reeds. These baits slide over and around the vegetation better than anything else, and the bass like to eat them. We caught a couple and missed a couple. Action was not as fast as we expected.

Eventually we got to a small bay that was covered with lily-pads. We could see bass moving in the shallow water. We started casting and caught several bass quickly, but then the action died. The shallow bite was not as good as we had hoped, so we did what anglers should do when the action is not as good as expected: We did something else.

We tied on eighth ounce jig heads, tipped them with Ochos, and moved to a weedline that was in the 9 to 11 foot range. We worked around a bit, catching a bass here and there. Then we found a point in the weedline. It was there that we also found a school of hungry bass. For a while, it was a bass every few casts: A few times we caught them on consecutive casts. Action was fast, and some of these bass were big ones. They mostly ran between 2 and 5 pounds.



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An Ocho is a straight-tailed plastic worm, but is 8-sided, which gives it a wobble as it falls, and it also reflects light effectively. Rig it on a jig designed for plastic, something like Northland's Slurp! Jig or Rock-It jig. An eighth ounce jig is the right size much of the time.

We fished the Ochos on 15 pound test P-Line XTCB Braid. This line has about the same diameter as 6 pound test monofilament. The braid provides excellent sensitivity. We could feel the bait sliding through the weeds, and we could also distinguish the difference between hanging on a weed and a fish bite. Braid has no stretch, so hooksets are solid. Also, due to the no-stretch, the fish feel bigger than they really are, and I'm okay with that. We worked the worms on spinning rods: Medium heavy Lew's Custom Pro Speed Sticks to be exact. These rods provide outstanding performance.

So, as mentioned earlier, Mike and I got on the water with a game-plan. That game-plan didn't work up to our expectations, so we did something else. Because we did something else, we had a very good afternoon on the water. Regardless of season or fish species, if, when what you're doing isn't working, do something else.

Article cover photo---Mike Frisch with a jumbo largemouth bass taken on the weedline with an Ocho.

To see new and old episodes of Fishing the Midwest Television and new and old fishing articles and videos, visit <u>www.fishingthemidwest.com</u>.





THIS LITTLE BAIT'S GOT MOVES!

Legendary inshore guide, Captain C.A. Richardson calls it a nearly failsafe trick for fussy redfish on the shallow flats. Three thousand miles to the northwest, Bassmaster pro Luke Clausen says it's a devastating dropshot bait for bass, with exceptional attributes not found in traditional soft plastics.

Is it possible the expert anglers are talking about the same bait? That Richardson and Clausen are . . . both right?



Indeed, they are. With versatility and good vibes virtually oozing from its pores, Z-Man's new 4-inch Scented Jerk ShadZ is equally effective in salt- and freshwater, delicious to a diversity of fish species, and presented in numerous ways. "Fish really like to eat it," concedes Richardson, one of the most productive inshore guides of all time. "We've been excitedly awaiting the day when we could add a smaller Jerk ShadZ to our arsenal.

"When you make your living on skinny, gin-clear water, a subtle, lifelike presentation is essential," he affirms. "There's little doubt the 4-inch Scented Jerk ShadZ appeals to a fish's primal nature. The bait's small signature lets you cast it in front of bull reds in shallow water without spooking them. And its super-soft ElaZtech structure gives the bait crazy underwater action—a really lively sub-surface walk."

Clausen's take is totally different, though equally valid the broadamid shouldered smallmouth bass he prizes. "If we're being honest, ElaZtech is the ultimate dropshot-bait material," says the winner of both a Bassmaster Classic and an FLW Tour "Z-Championship. Man's Scented Jerk ShadZ has been a longtime secret tournament among



anglers on the Great Lakes; guys have won a ton of money on it. At the recent Elite Series event on Lake St. Clair, I think half the top-ten finishers threw this bait. The new 4-inch size is going to give us another awesome tool for ultra-finesse situations."

The method and the magic, says Clausen, distills down to three of the bait's hallmark features: buoyancy, super-concentrated salt and scent, and unparalleled toughness. "Most every other dropshot



bait sinks to the bottom when you stop retrieving," Clausen observes. "But at rest, the Jerk ShadZ sits nose down, tail up. Its buoyancy keeps the rig perpetually upright and in the strike zone—a look that gets way more bites when you're dropshot fishing."





Further separating itself from most scented baits, ElaZtech exhibits unique properties that absorb, rather than repel, scents like Pro-Cure[®]. "Unlike standard PVC baits, ElaZtech is a porous, almost sponge-like material," notes Clausen. "It soaks up and holds scent better than anything I've used. Even after fishing a bait 3 or 4 hours, you can still smell the goodness."

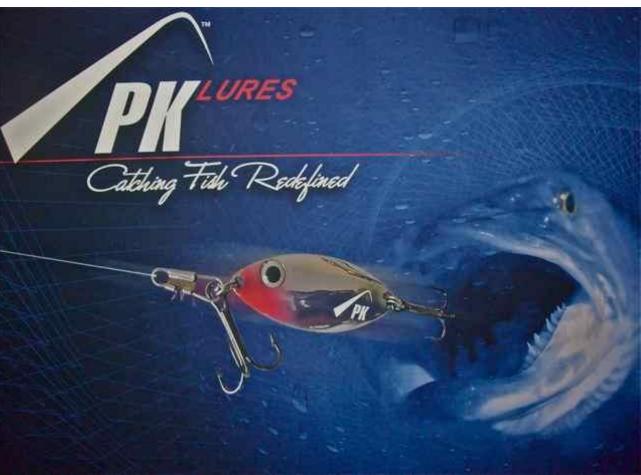
"Z-Man wisely chose to impregnate its Scented Jerk ShadZ with Pro-Cure Super Gel," says Richardson. "It's a powerful, proven attractant whose amino acids stick to the bait like the two were made for each other. Pro-Cure and ElaZtech have more staying power than other scent-bait combinations, and that gives me a ton of confidence when fishing the Jerk ShadZ."

Completing the ElaZtech trifecta is the material's exceptional yet implausible toughness. "Given the bait's softness and malleability, it's hard to believe you can go out and boat several dozen bass on a single bait," Clausen says. "But what can I say? ElaZtech is freakish stuff. Like, freaky good."

Available in 5-, 7- and the new 4-inch size, Z-Man's Scented Jerk ShadZ is a super lifelike, scent- and saltimpregnated soft jerkbait with a lively, split-tail design that perfectly emulates erratic baitfish action. Made 100% in the USA, the Scented Jerk ShadZ shines in numerous applications: dropshot and Carolina

rigging, weedless jerkbait fishing, or even as a topwater twitchbait. Proven Z-Man patterns include

Richardson's saltwater favorites Electric Chicken, Redbone and Laguna Shrimp, Clausen's and smallmouth standbys Smoky Shad, Shiner and Houdini. For more information, visit www.zmanfishing. com.





ROCKIN' THE REEFS

Knowing what's down there maximizes fishing time.



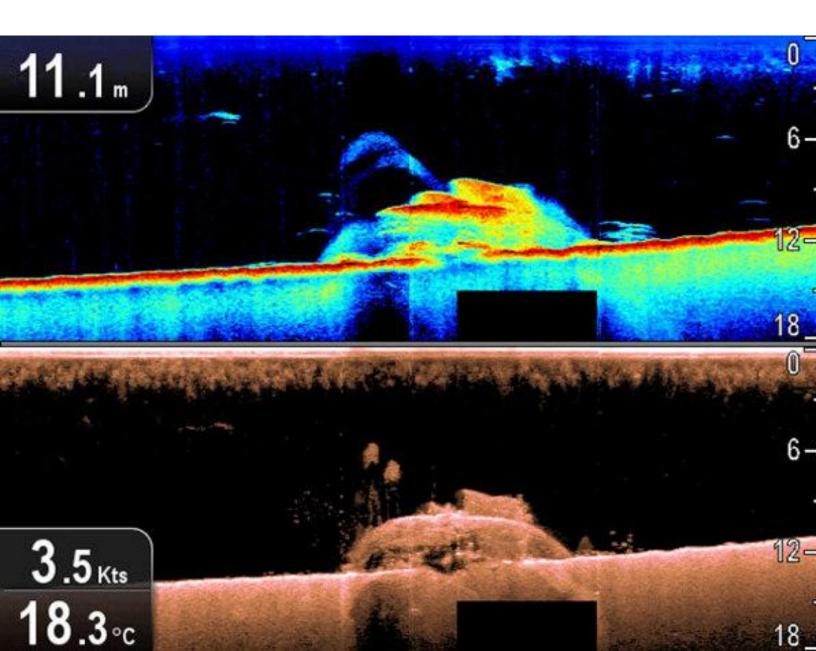
It's the sea's food court; a place where a diverse array of patrons find an equally diverse meal menu. We're talking about reefs and those of natural or manmade design provide shelter for baitfish and prime feeding opportunities for progressively larger predators, many of which rank high in the metrics of the sport and table fare.

Popular species include pelagics such as kingfish, tuna, wahoo and sailfish; but while these fast movers typically pay only short visits, the stars of the show are the home bodies that spend most of their lives in and around reef structures. Topping the list — grouper and snapper.

Raymarine pro Ron Mitchell likes red, mutton and yellowtail snapper and his Raymarine units (twin gS165s and a gS95) play an integral role with each unique species strategy.

Mutton Snapper: These beautiful and aggressive fish tend to hold over sand on a reef's exterior, so welldefined bottom readings give Mitchell a road map for where to present his baits.

"We like to drag baits with heavy leads and long leaders," he says. "So knowing where the outer edge of that reef is lets me know where I need to drop those baits."





Yellowtail Snapper: "When we fish for yellowtail in The Keys and off Stuart and Palm Beach, we like to get them off the reef," says Mitchell. "You gotta work that current and the wind to get your boat backed in so your chum feeds down into that reef to pull some of those fish up to the boat.



"Yellowtail will gather into a big ball off the reef. On your sonar screen, you'll see a red ball about the size of a quarter or 50 cent piece. Right when I see that on my Raymarine unit, I'll turn and go upcurrent and set up so I'm not right on top of the fish. Then, we'll start our chum so it slides back to the fish."

Red Snapper: Bold and voracious, these ruby-scaled treats closely relate to structure; and it doesn't have to be something as large and obvious as a Northern Gulf of Mexico drilling rig. Often, red snapper hover above isolated patches of reef or small rocky outcroppings. Pinpointing these spots has always been one of Mitchell's objectives, but he shares a serendipitous revelation that deepened his appreciation for the clarity and definition of Raymarine's CHIRP sonar.

"You're going to need to be in some type of area with an ecosystem that gives those fish a reason to be there," Mitchell said of a reef's inherent drawing power. "Your bottom machines are your eyes for the depths where you're fishing. If you didn't have that, you're guessing and it's a big ocean out there. If I can't narrow down and know what's underneath me, I'm just hunting and pecking."



DIAL IN YOUR SPOTS

No doubt, identifying these lively areas promotes time-management and enhances the value of invested time and resources. Just consider that not all reef life is a welcome sight. Maybe they're out of season, or just notorious time-wasters; Raymarine's incredible clarity and target separation will show you what's down there so you can best manage your efforts and expectations.

"You have to be careful that the spot isn't covered up with amberjack, sharks, or things you don't want to be a part of," Mitchell says. "Raymarine's DownVision is getting so detailed and sophisticated that you can actually see a ledge with fish under it.

"The definition is so good that, when you start bringing up fish, you relate what you're catching to what's on your screen. So the next time you go out you say 'Those are the same marks that I had at that other spot.' So you start relating what you're seeing to what you're catching."

To keep his day efficient, Mitchell typically sets up a milk run of known waypoints, all within a mile or two. Bouncing back and forth between a handful of sites within a mile or two allows him to let a productive spot rest, while also sampling others in close proximity.

"You have to narrow it down and your Raymarine units can help you do that," Mitchell said. "On top of that, I've found some of these places by accident. Maybe I'm running out of Jupiter Inlet at 40 mph and all of a sudden, I see my machine spike up.

"I'll whip it back around and go over my track and I'll find a spot that maybe people haven't been fishing for a while and it's loaded. You find spots like that because of the Raymarine technology that we have on the boat, you can run at 40 mph and still pick up bottom that's showing you a good enough mark to let you know there might be something there worth fishing."

ALTERNATIVE SPECIES

When your favorite species isn't cooperating, the season's closed, or maybe you've just capped your limit; don't despair, reefs a bountiful offer array of B-Teamers who are usually more than willing to step and take a few reps.





Grunts — mostly white grunts and margates. Side by side with mangrove snapper filets, most would have a tough time distinguishing. Scaled-down slip sinker rigs, knocker rigs and jigs tipped with squid.

Triggerfish — This tasty fish's name comes from its curious design, which finds a rigid anterior dorsal spine standing immovable until a smaller spine is pressed forward to "trigger" the latter's collapse.

Porgies — Several varieties including pink, jolthead and knobbed, offer an aggressive and tasty opponent.

Seabass — One of the most highly valued of the alternative species, this one falls for jigs tipped with cut bait.

A popular option for smaller

reef species, the chicken rig leverages the inherent feeding competition among reef fish, especially these alternative species. Essentially a set of two to three dropper loops with 12-18 inches of leader below for sinker attachment. (A simpler option: Buy a heavy sabiki rig clip off the bottom two or three branches and leave two to three hooks intact.)

Whatever style of multi-hook rig you use, don't overdo it on the bait. You don't want whole sardines or the fist-sized chunks of squid you may drop on traditional grouper rigs; rather, small thumbnail sized cuts of shrimp, squid, or clam.

With any reef scenario, the abundance of life can foster an ill-conceived notion of automatic cooler filling. There's nothing wrong with keeping legal catches for dinner, but know the regulations (size, season, daily bag limits) and practice careful catch and release for the non-keepers. Let the reef reload, rest and reset the clock for your next visit and hopefully, your Raymarine screen will light up with another stacked show of fish.



MUSKIE MULTI SPECIES AND HUNTING PARADISE FOUND

By Ted Takasaki and Scott Richardson

Do you want to catch a muskie, but don't know where to go and how to go about it?

What if I told you that I found a lake that's relatively small (about 5,000 acres) and loaded with muskies that stretch to 50-plus inches? This summer, I discovered Thaddeus Lake, near Dryden, Ontario, Canada, and it is fantastic.





There are few places I know where you have a very good chance of catching a monster muskie, limits of walleyes, drag-burning pike, and tons of fighting smallmouth bass, all within sight of the lodge. No fighting big waves or making big runs to where the action is happening. And convenient when you want to come back to camp to take a break, have lunch, or take a quick nap without burning a ton of gas or time.



Muskie Madness

Although the walleye fishing at Thaddeus is excellent, I was truly impressed with the ferocity and number of muskies we saw and caught during our stay. We only targeted muskies for three days, yet our party of six anglers saw more than 40 muskies, boating 8, with 4 other muskies that were hooked but threw the lures when they leapt out of the water!

My daughter, Kristi, and her new husband, Nate, both caught their first muskies ever. Nate



took big-fish honors for the week, with a whopper of 49 inches! The muskies were actively patrolling outside weed edges in about 13 to 15 feet. The most productive lures were Venom spinners, jerkbaits, and glide baits. We would stay off the edge of the weedlines and cast at and over the weeds. Several of our muskies struck at boatside during figure 8s. It is important to wear polarized sunglasses to spot a following fish and immediately go into a figure 8 to get the fish to bite.

The figure 8 technique is one where, at the end of your cast, you push the rod tip down toward the water and work your lure to the left or right and swing it around in a figure-8 pattern. This change in direction and speed is often the trick to get relatively inactive fish to actually strike. Try to do a figure 8 at the end of every cast, because you never know how far back the muskie is lurking from your lure, and you might not see the fish.

We were visiting in August, but September and October are also excellent months to get in on Thaddeus Lake muskie action.

Walleyes, Too

The walleye fishing is good almost anytime of the year, with limits of fish up to 30 inches long. We only spent one day walleye fishing, and although we didn't get into any monster fish, we caught limits of great-tasting 'eyes, with the biggest at 26 inches.



Most of our walleyes came from sandy/rocky points that are located in various areas of the lake. I'm sure if we took the time, we could have found walleyes in and around weeds as well.

The technique that produced the most walleyes for us? Live-bait rigs tipped with live minnows and chubs.

Superb Hunting Options

Thaddeus Lake is located in an area loaded with hunting opportunity, too—and not just 'bonus' hunting opportunity. The lodge is smack dab in the middle of the finest bear territory in Ontario, for example.

In 2015, there was 100 percent success rate for the multitudes of bear hunters in camp. Kristi and Nate were both successful, each bagging their first bears.

In addition, there is superb grouse hunting available close by as well. And get this: it's one of those rare locations where you can hunt for ruffed and spruce grouse in the woods, and the prairie-loving sharp-tailed grouse on the same trip.

So take my word for it... this is a gem of a lake if you are looking for a great fishing trip, hunting trip, or combo trip. In fact, it's as close to a sure thing as you're likely to find.

Notes: Thaddeus Lake Lodge (<u>www.thaddeuslakelodge.com</u> or 807-529-3377) has reasonably-priced quaint housekeeping cabins, and is managed by Marty Ouelette, who knows the fishing and is an expert bear guide. It's owned by Perry and Eric Parks, also owners of Skinzit, the electric fish skinner creating a buzz for its ease of cleaning/skinning eater-sized walleyes and panfish.



Make Some Changes

By Capt. Mike Gerry

As the summer moves on to the fall of the year, changes may make you change, and some changes do not. The one big similarity of summer to fall is the mid-day heat leaving the water temperature to sore like its summer time. This factor alone makes early fall fishing extremely tough and trying to overcome this and put together a pattern that catches fish can be really tough.

To me this says try



something different, try a favorite winter time presentation; try fishing a presentation that targets suspending fish, like a jerk bait. I know most of us use this bait when the water is cold but many times you get the same result in the warm water days of the fall. There is a slight difference that I try to change this time of year; meaning I go to a deeper jerk bait presentation like the SPRO McStick 95 which goes 8 to 10 ft. down the water table allowing you to fish it deeper than the traditional jerk bait presentation. There are also jerk baits that sink and allow you to count them down to even deeper depths or weight strips help your jerk bait drop slowly around suspending fish, giving you even more ability to fish suspending fish at the depth you see them on your Lowrance units. I also believe as the day moves on that bass suspend along the grass lines we have on a lake like Guntersville, so fishing that jerk bait along the many grass lines can really focus in on the bass. This is also an area that you find gobs of bait balls and presenting jerk-baits through the bait balls around the suspending fish can really prove to be rewarding.

Jerk baits really require you to be patient, so letting it sit for several seconds in between movements can be the key to getting this to work. As I always tell my customers do what you're suppose-to-do; what the text book information tells us then change presentations until you find one that works and of course repeat it when it does. Fishing something different, make a change, away from the text book recommendations can be productive; try it you might just get some great results.



ODU MAGAZINE™ ICE ZONE

ADVANCED VEXILAR STRATEGIES

By Garett Svir

"Turn the gain as low as possible so the weeds show up in green. Drop the jig to the bottom and slightly increase gain until the jig is Weed visible. fishing is the one take time I а bottom-up approach instead topdown of а approach, as it makes finding and seeing your jig much easier."

I have several backup strategies to keep me on the ice, but the one factor that will cut an ice fishing trip



vexilar

short for me is a dead Vexilar battery.

I consider my Vexilar flasher my eyes and ears below the frozen tundra. It not only alerts me to where fish are located in the water column but it also allows me to read the mood of the fish and adapt my jigging cadence to match the mood of the fish.

The technology we have available to us today as anglers has truly changed the game of ice fishing forever. We can now spend less time fishing and more time catching. It's also made ice fishing





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PATENT PENDING



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more fun as this information allows you to search out new unexplored water and look for fish instead of just heading to the local community hot spot. Spend enough time throughout the winter staring at a flasher display and you'll speak Vexilar as a second language. I want to share my advanced Vexilar strategies with you, as learning to better-interpret the display on your flasher will help you put more fish topside this winter.

Tip 1: Start With the Basics

Start with the basics when hitting the lake to ensure you are getting 100 percent out of your electronics this season.

I always start my day by wiping off the bottom of my transducer. This removes any ice build-up along with dirt and debris that may have accumulated. I then set the self-leveling float so that my transducer hangs just below the ice. There is no right way to do this but for me it's a confidence thing. When your transducer is located inside the hole you will see some interference at the top of the water column.

Last season during a late ice trip on Minnesota's Lake Osakis I found crappies coming in right below the ice. These fish were invisible on the flashers of my fishing partners, hidden in the interference at the top of their flasher displays. I nearly brought my limit topside before letting out my secret.

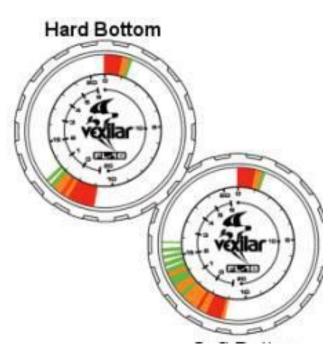
After dropping my transducer in the hole, I set my depth range and find the bottom. I then turn the gain setting all the way down to zero and drop my jig down, slowly increasing the gain setting until my jig shows up as a narrow green line. Depending on the jig you are using and the depth of water you are fishing, gain settings need to be adjusted slightly. To attain maximum sensitivity you want the smallest target you are going to be looking at, your jig, to show up in green. If you are experiencing interference from a nearby unit press, use your gain knob to find a different channel.



Tip 2: Where Are They Coming From?

A common fallacy is that a line approaching your bait is a fish coming up in the water column. In actuality what you are seeing is a fish coming from the outside to the inside of the cone angle on your flasher.

Think of your flasher transducer as a traffic cone extending down into the water. Fish on the outside edges will show up as green or the weakest signal. As the fish travels farther inside the cone angle, the mark will turn orange. As the fish approaches the center of the cone angle, the mark will turn red. Distinguishing that fish are not necessarily coming up in the water column and may be traveling straight toward you is important because you may not want to always start lifting the bait right away as fish approach.



Sometimes I will jig a little faster and not lift, especially when dealing with stubborn bluegills. Sometimes I will switch from a pounding action to a smooth swimming action. Sometimes I will continue to jig the same and not lift at all. Lifting can be a good move but keep in mind that the fish are not always approaching from below and up is not the only move.

The past couple seasons I've been running the Vexilar FLX-28. This unit offers a few additional colors to give the angler a little more detail. In five-color display mode, this unit will turn red as a fish approaches the center of the cone angle and then white when the fish is directly in the center. These extra colors have taught me a bunch about fish posture and how I can adjust jigging cadence to match the mood of each fish individually, which is really the greatest thing a flasher can do.

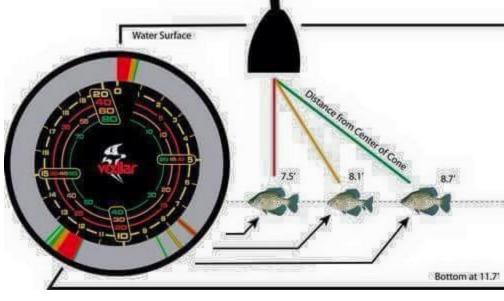
Tip 3: Different Strokes for Different Folks

Several transducer options are available for such as the 9-, the 12the 19-degree and version, appropriate for different average fishing depths. In depths of 30 feet or less the 19-degree transducer is a great option. The 12-degree transducer is better for depths to 45 feet. In water deeper than 45



feet, the 9-degree is an ideal transducer.

If you are fishing 20 feet down with a 12-degree transducer you will only see a 4.3-foot circle below you. This is a simplified example that doesn't account for several factors like the secondary cone angle, what happens when fishing on a drop off and the nature of transducer crystals, but use this as a general rule of thumb to help you pick the right transducer.



The past few seasons I used the new Pro View Transducer from Vexilar. The Pro View Transducer has worked incredibly well for me. It offers a primary cone angle of 40 degrees down to 30 feet, where the secondary 9-degree cone angle takes over, offering the best of both worlds.

Tip 4: Welcome to the Jungle

As a trophy bluegill hunter, I would be lying if I told you that I didn't spend a lot of time searching for fish in the dense jungle. If you were to only let me fish one spot on a lake this winter, I'd find the weeds. Bluegills find everything here from food to cover from predators. Fish will use weeds until the plants die off and start to use oxygen instead of producing it. This past winter near my home in Central Minnesota, lack of snow cover kept weeds alive for the majority of the winter. Bluegills stayed in the healthy cabbage in 5 to 7 feet of water on many lakes all winter long. Savvy anglers plucked big bulls out of the cabbage when others struggled seeing few signs of life over basin areas.

The only down side of weed fishing is that it can provide a confusing and cluttered sonar display that takes practice to figure out. The Vexilar FLX-28 has a weed mode that helps to lessen weed interference. Anglers without this feature can add an S-Cable to lessen power and achieve similar results.





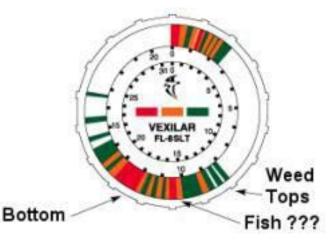
Turn the gain as low as possible so the weeds show up in green. Drop the jig to the bottom and slightly increase gain until the jig is visible. Weed fishing is the one time I take a bottom-up approach instead of a top-down approach, as it makes finding and seeing your jig much easier.

The key is to learn to interpret the flickering orange and red signals you will see amongst the green weed signals, these are fish. Keep in mind that the cone angle is narrow in shallow water so you will not see fish from as far away as you do in deeper situations. Each hole almost has to be fished briefly and not just checked. In a perfect situation fish will show up as a red or orange band amongst the green weeds but often times what an angler will see is a flickering orange or red, and then a bite.

Practice on clear lakes where you can sight fish while using your Vexilar flasher by looking back and forth. The details in becoming a good weed fisherman lie in the flicker and practice makes perfect.

Tip 5: Uncover Transitions

It should come as no surprise that fish of all species like transition areas where the bottom changes in composition to either harder or softer material. Sunfishoften gorge on insects in areas where the bottom is a mixture of soft



substrate that has collected at the base of a harder bottom drop off. Walleyes also love to run transitions where the bottom changes from rock to softer material... but how does one locate these areas? The first bit of advice is to keep the gain setting on your Vexilar consistent and do not change it when looking for these transitions.

We are looking for changes and want to isolate the variable (gain switch). Get a baseline of what a soft bottom area looks like by going to a place where you know the bottom is soft. Keep in mind that a soft bottom will look different depending on the gain setting. The soft bottom areas will show a bottom



display that often has a trailing green or orange beyond band the thinner red band that seems to continue to trail off. The harder areas will appear crisp and will not trail off. Keep drilling down the break lines and pav attention to the lines beyond the red bottom. If you notice the green and orange lines going away and the red band getting thicker you have found just а



transition to harder bottom. We will then try to drill holes parallel and outline the particular piece of structure along the transition.Watching the sun rise over my favorite lake, hearing the hum from my trusty Vexilar and watching a red line come up and inhale my jig are some of my favorite sights and sounds in the world. The time is drawing near; first ice will be here in no time.







KEEP YOUR TIP UP LINE SPOOLED TIGHTLY AND EVENLY

By Tom Gruenwald

This might seem insignificant, but I've been surprised how often anglers have their tip-up line spooled loosely and unevenly on their tip-up something I never allow to happen with my own gear, because this may cause several undesired results.

Even when using liquid-smooth, premium quality tip-ups such as HT's Polar, Polar Therm or Polar Therm Extreme that consistently deliver high performance cold weather operation, proper line arrangement is a critical factor in a consistently successful tip-up presentation, and this consists of tightly spooled

wraps, evenly layered from the innermost band to the outermost one.

When tip-up line is loosely spooled, especially toward the arbor or center of the spool, the outer wraps may cut down into the lower layers, causing tangles. Uneven layers may slip and form loops that can tangle around the line guide, spool handle--even the tube assembly itself.





Needless to say, this may cause lost fish. and on а seemingly less important scale, even the smallest tangles are uncomfortable to try unraveling with wet, cold fingers. Now make that line wet from use--or worse vet, saturated from being submerged in water and given even moderately cold, windy winter conditions, these

layers of wrapped line can freeze tightly together. If the line is loose enough and provides a base for water to thicken around the line, the entire spool may freeze solid, rendering your tip-up useless until the line can be thawed back out.

Even if you're patient, peel all the layers of frozen line free, then respool and tighten the wraps on location, you're taking a risk. Should you leave any icy line inside the spool, this may refreeze, and if a hard running fish spins the line down to the frozen spot, this will compromise your chance of success when the fish encounters resistance.

Even if you're able to strip the line all the way down through the frozen layers and carefully slide it through your fingers to shed water and ice, it's inevitable some sticky grains will remain adhered to the line or its surface, at least in places. When this ice-coated line is wrapped back onto the spool and consequently returned



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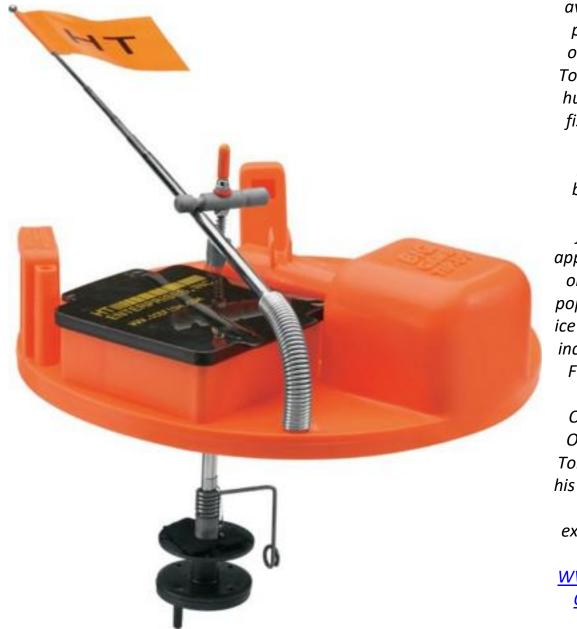
Vexilar, Inc. • 6667 West Old Shakopee Road, Suite 101, Minneapolis, MN 55438 • 952-884-5291 • www.vexilar.com to the water, the ice will melt away, in effect reducing the line diameter and creating loops or loosely wrapped layers that may again cause tangling.

Worst of all, loose, tangled or jammed line wraps not only create resistance biting fish will feel, but this situation may also create a backlash effect, where a lower layer of line may loop or wrap over an outer one, preventing the line from releasing off the spool. Fish that don't hook themselves will likely drop the bait.

Fortunately, the above problems are easily preventable. First, use a premium, water resistant braided tip-up line, such as HT's Polar Ice. Tie the line to the arbor, and in the comfort of a warm room, tightly and evenly wrap the fresh, dry line, layer upon layer, until the spool is filled to the desired level, then add your leader, rig, and secure the unit for transit.

Following these guidelines, you can fish your tip-ups confidently, knowing your line will be delivered to biting fish in a continually fluid, smooth motion, minimizing the chance of biting fish feeling anything unnatural, thereby maximizing your chances for success.

Tom Gruenwald works full-time for renowned ice tackle manufacturer HT Enterprises, and has been an



avid ice fishing promoter for over 20 years. Tom has written hundreds of ice fishing related articles, published 4 books on the sport of ice fishing, and appears regularly on a variety of popular televised ice fishing shows, including The In-Fisherman Ice Guide, Real Outdoors and Outdoors with Tom Gruenwald, his own endeavor distributed exclusively here at WWW.ICEFISH.C OM.



ice Fishing Perchin' on the Rocks!

By Mike Frisch

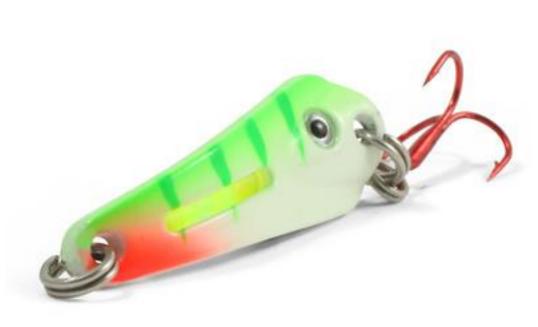
One of my favorite winter fish species is the yellow perch. Perch are often found in big schools and are



often aggressive biters. Fun to catch, yes, but perch provide outstanding table fare as well.

favorite My winter perch destination is Big Stone Lake on the Minnesota-South Dakota border. The "rock" as I like to call it has a very healthy population of 9- to 11-inch fish. The lake also has trophy-sized bluegills, а booming crappie fishery, and a very healthy walleye population too.

Perch are, however, what draw most anglers during winter. The 26-mile long, 12,610-acre border water lake is dominated by a





mostly featureless basin in 10- 15 feet of water, a basin that is home to most of the lake's winter perch.

Artie Arndt is an Ortonville, MN native local bait shop and owner who has fished the lake since childhood. Recognizing the great fishing perch opportunities Big Stone provides, Lake Arndt added fish house rentals several winters ago.

Arndt has his favorite areas for finding Big Stone's perch, but stresses the need for



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staying mobile. "Much of the perch fishing occurs on the south end in the basin," Arndt offered when asked about where anglers should start their perch search. "Rocky Ledge and the islands are popular areas for finding perch, though anglers are advised to stay on the move as the bite often moves from day to day and even during the same day."

The need for staying mobile and searching is a reason I rely on a portable fishing shelter on Big Stone. My Otter XT Pro Cottage can easily be pulled from fishing spot to fishing spot while searching the basin. Once I find fish, the shelter is vey warm on even the coldest days meaning I can fish in comfort.

Two other key equipment items when searching are a good ice auger and quality sonar. The new K-Drill ice auger runs off a cordless drill, is super lightweight, and does a great job of quickly cutting holes. Those features make it perfect for the perch search when fishing "the rock"!

After the holes are drilled I rely on my new FLX-20 sonar unit and its outstanding zoom feature to really key in on what's going on below the ice. The unit also has a super bright color screen and a night mode for comfortable night viewing as well.

After Big Stone's perch are found, a variety of traditional jigging spoons tipped with spikes will usually catch them. The Buck-Shot[®] Flutter Spoon has become a "go to" perch bait on Big Stone. "Once word got out about that bait, we were constantly restocking those pegs," Arndt stated when asked about it.



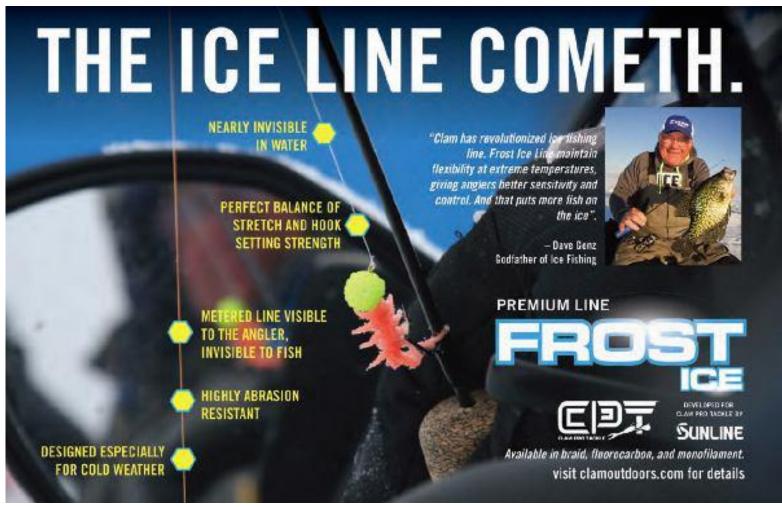


Big Stone's water clarity seems to improve every year, meaning the early in the morning and late in the day bites can be good. During these times the all new Glo-Shot[™] Spoon is a top choice as well. This spoon also features a fluttering action, but comes with interchangeable Glo-Shot[™] Sticks that add to the spoon's attraction during low light periods.

Regardless your baits of choice, Big Stone Lake is a good place to fish them. Anglers interested in a trip to "the rock" can talk to Arndt or one of his guides by stopping at Artie's Bait and Tackle in Ortonville, or calling the bait shop at (320) 839-2480.

In addition to fine fishing, the Big Stone area also

has fine dining and a variety of lodging options for the out-of-town angler as well. Information about the entire Big Stone Lake area, including food and lodging details, can be found by visiting the Big Stone Lake Area Chamber at www.bigstonelake.com



Mike Frisch is a western Minnesota fishing guide and co-host of the popular Fishing the Midwest television series. Learn more by visiting www.fishingthemidwest.com or following Fishing the Midwest on Facebook.





A Boat, a Rod and WiFi Equal Early Ice Fishing Success

By Gary Parsons and Keith Kavajecz

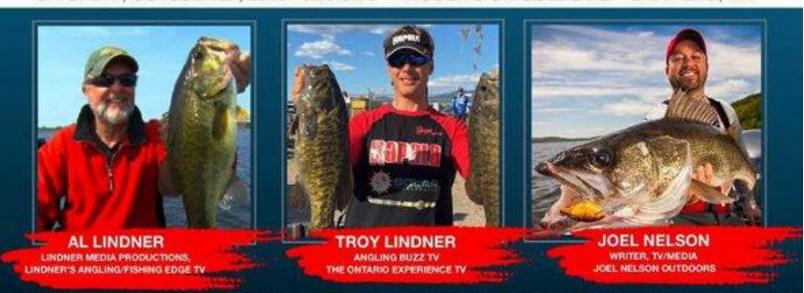
Over the past thirty years, anglers fishing open water have embraced improvements to "old stand-by" products and have incorporated the use of technology such as sonar, electronic contour maps and GPS into their tool chest of fish catching gear.

In recent years ice fishermen have also seen improvements made to their rods, reels, line and lures. Now they are also able to transfer some of the same technology used on their boats to the ice. The result is a change in how we find and catch fish in the winter.

For anglers who like to target the early ice bite, fall is the best time to prepare for hard water. Begin by



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taking your boat out to the lakes you want to target over the winter. The same places holding fishing into the fall are often the same places you will find fish during your first trips out on hard water.

We like to begin our preseason scouting by driving over these 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 you to identify small points and holes that you never knew existed on areas that you have fished for years.

In addition, it gives you the ability to pinpoint key areas of structure that produce fish during early ice with a color-coded composition map. The darker areas indicate a hard bottom, while lighter colors indicate a soft bottom. Favorite areas to target include rock reefs, transitions from hard bottom into mud, sunken islands and hard gravel break lines.

With your homework done, it is just a matter of waiting for safe ice. We won't go out unless there is at least four inches, and often wait until there is a solid six inches of ice. Safety gear is a must, including wearing ice picks and a Clam IceArmor Cold Weather Lift Suit.

It is important to constantly check the depth of the ice as you venture out. If it is less than four inches, turn around and come back when it is safe. Once there is enough ice to take a snowmobile out, be sure to pack a Nebulus Emergency Floatation Device. This product can be a lifesaver should you break through the ice on your sled.

Now that you have made it to your spot, it is time to put the maps you created with Insight Genesis to



work. It is critical to drill several holes over the structure you intend to fish. More holes mean more mobility. By being able to hop from hole to hole, you increase your ability to find active fish. It will also allow you to move with the fish as they slide on and off the structure throughout the day.

Once the fish have been located, we like to set up several dead sticks to thoroughly cover the structure we are fishing, in addition to setting up for jigging over other holes. In the early part of the ice fishing season the fish can still be in their aggressive fall





ODU MAGAZINE VIDEO BLOCK (www.odumagazine.com)

feeding frenzy. One of the most productive baits for triggering these aggressive bites are what we call Glide Baits, such as Moonshine Lure's Shiver Minnow. This "minnow-like" jigging lure has a dramatic side-to-side darting movement when jigged, giving you great horizontal coverage of the area under your

ice hole. The Shiver Minnow comes in various sizes and colors, including long lasting glow patterns that are excellent during the prime times of dusk and dawn.

A really neat gadget we use while ice fishing is a product by JT Outdoors called the Hot Box. This heated aluminum box keeps holes open up to 20 degrees below zero!



THE IMPORTANCE OF WINTERKILL



By Scott Mackenthun

"More often than not with winterkill, a fraction of fish survive. The lakes worth targeting are those with a periodicity of partial winterkills that remove enough competitors to decrease competition, keep growth fast, don't get overrun with undesirable fish, but in which winterkill doesn't happen too often or too great an extent."

Ice anglers are always seeking out the next bite. They scout out spots and structures before ice has formed. They pay attention during the season to tips, tactics and locations. Some hatch plans for waters to visit years in advance.

The natural world is a cruel unforgiving place. and Mother nature operates a peremptory zero-sum game. There are predators and prey, winners and ecological losers, and elemental budgets in which action has everv а consequence. Broken down to the most elementary level, every moment in a



fish's life is eat or be eaten. Competition for resources is and unending the intense: interconnectedness of the system means one species' abundance has direct and indirect effects on another. Growth rates are good indicators of the potential of a fishery and reveal how much competition exists. Fast growth generally means ample forage and low amounts of competition; slow growth can result from more intense competition or inadequate forage.

Competition is shaped by carrying capacity. Carrying capacity may best be described as an environment's maximal load or how many of a particular species the habitat can support. For

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example, how many pounds of northern pike can Lake X support?

To answer such a question, we would need a good deal of data on Lake X in order to identify limiting factors. In other words, what component of the habitat or ecological community is controlling our carrying capacity; where is our link? weakest Limiting factors to Lake X northern pike could be the size of



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the lake itself, the amount of spawning habitat available to the fish, or the amount and size of prey available from year to year, as examples.

But what if those ecological and competition limits did not apply? What if we found a fishery without such limitations? On some rare occasions, a fishery's potential is nearly limitless. Just when do such opportunities arise? When a lake has fish vacancy.

Fish vacancy arises after emigration or a fish kill — natural, accidental or induced. Typically, emigration is not a significant contributor to fish vacancy since it is often offset by incoming immigration. Fish kills are the usual route to fish vacancy. A chemical spill can cause a fish kill significant enough to reduce competition and improve growth, but are thankfully very rare. Induced kills using fish toxicants are utilized by fisheries management agencies seeking to restart fisheries or eliminate undesirable fish. These chemical reclamations typically use restricted use pesticides antimycin or rotenone and are locally publicized.

Typically, a thorough fisheries or wildlife management plan is followed for pre and post reclamation. If that plan includes follow up fish stocking, the lake should be on your radar as a potential hot spot for multiple reasons. Reclaimed lakes typically boast clear waters, abundant vegetation, populous zooplankton and aquatic insects. With such a strong base of a food web, the stocked fish do well and grow quickly. Within a few short years, large fish are the norm. The stocked fish do well because of the fish vacancy and the huge amount of room for them to grow.

Winterkill (and the less common summerkill) is often thought of as a plague on fishing holes. The general and angling public don't understand winterkill very well. The severity of winterkill is important. In cases where winterkill is complete, it is devastating. But the reality is that winterkill is rarely complete. In cases where winterkill is partial and minimal, the trophic balance of the lake goes unchanged. More often than not with winterkill, a fraction of fish survive. The lakes worth targeting are those with a periodicity of partial winterkills that remove enough competitors to decrease competition, keep fast, don't get overrun with growth undesirable fish, but in which winterkill



doesn't happen too often or too great an extent. Be warned, finding such perfect moderation is hard to find.

When the right fraction of fish survive, those survivors flourish. Gone is much of the competition of fish of the same species. Predators are greatly reduced, making fish less wary during With less foraging. competition and bv



making better use of available forage, fish grow faster and attain greater sizes. Indeed, fish vacancy is situationally desirable to anglers that seek it out and exploit it for big fish. Timing is of the essence. Wait too long and competition will return, growth will slow, and gravy times are over. Continued monitoring of the lake is warranted with follow up fishing trips to the lake as years go by.

In my home state of Minnesota, winterkill drives whopper panfish production in select locations around the state. On the Big Sandy/Mississippi River complex north of Aitkin, shallow lakes and large, shallow and flat expanses within deeper lakes are hit with partial winterkills that create fish vacancies. In

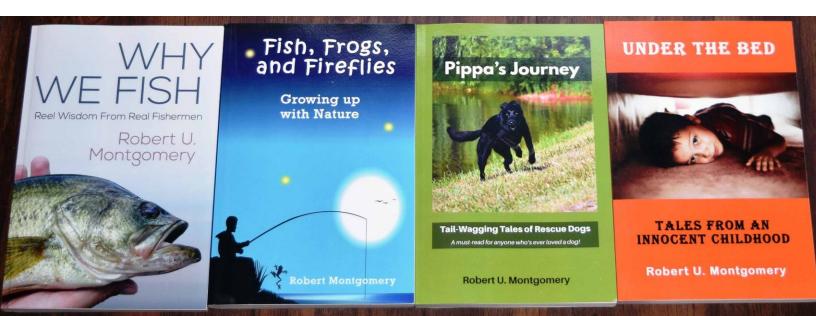




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southern Minnesota, my personal best crappie came from a small lake with a river connection and enough frequency of winterkill to thin down the competitors. A small lake on the western fringe of the Twin Cities has a shallow and deep basin; infrequently winterkill thins down crappie, promotes fast growth and has produced some wall-worthy slabs. A few winterkill basins near Albert Lea grow monster perch; Albert Lea Lake has abundant and large walleyes due to a successful boom-and-bust fishery that is based entirely around and managed for winterkill.

So the next time you hear about winterkill on a lake or read about a natural resources or conservation management agency chemically reclaiming a lake, plan for the future. In short order, good fishing can be yours. Fish vacancy can be your ticket to a jackpot fishing trip for big fish or filled limits.



HUNTING ZONE

ODU MAGAZINE"

MAKE GOOD USE OF LONG WINTER DAYS

By Dana Benner

Being in New Hampshire means that there are only two seasons: winter and preparing for winter. Winter up here can start as early as October and last right through until April. It means long periods of cold weather and so much snow that at times, even if you can get out the door, the roads are impassable. Those not prepared are in for a long, rough ride.

Around here the warmer months of the year are geared towards preparedness. Gardens are planted as soon as the soil can be worked. Fishing starts in earnest as soon as the ice breaks off the water and hunting begins with the spring turkey season. Damage from the

previous winter's ravages, and you know that there will be some, needs to be fixed now. Supplies of propane, wood or wood pellets and gas for generators and chainsaws needs to be replenished, all in an effort to be ready for the next time "Old Man Winter" comes calling.

There are a lot of things that need to get done and not a great deal of time to do them. Some things





have to be put to the side, to get done later. Winter is my time to get some of those other things done. This is how my Native American ancestors did it and it works for me.

With the exception for the time I spent in the military, I have never left the land of my ancestors. They lived on and with this land for thousands of years before the first Europeans arrived on the New England shores and it is the lessons that have been passed down to me that allow me to continue to live, as much as I can, from the land. One thing that was taught to me is that you can't fight Mother Nature. The best you can do is to live with and adapt to it. Winter is always going to be here, so make the best with what you have to work with.

Winter for my ancestors, and then the early settlers after them, often meant long hour, or even days, being hold up inside because the weather was so bad. Despite this things still needed to get done. Among the Native people the woman often used this time to make clothing from prepared animal hides while the men would fix fishing nets or make and fix tools. The same thing happened in the cabins of

the settlers. Women often used this time to spin wool or make clothing and the men repaired tools and cleaned firearms. There are many lessons that can be learned from our ancestors if we take the time to listen. Many of these lessons can be easily applied today and making use of your time during the winter is just one of them.

Don't get me wrong, there are still plenty of chores that need to get



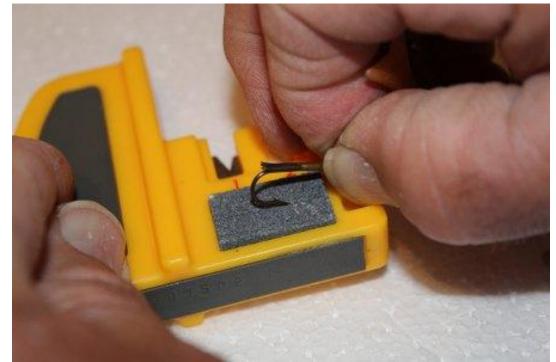
done on a regular basis during the winter. There is wood or wood pellets that need to be brought in to make sure the stove stays running; snow needs to be cleared from the roof and paths need to be cleared to the sheds. When those things are completed, I turn to those other projects that I have put off. Things like tool maintenance, fishing and hunting gear maintenance and maybe even making that special item that I promised my granddaughter.

Tool Maintenance:

Over the course of a year tools are used and abused. Things like shovels, hoes and axes all see heavy use around here. Handles break, blades dull and when that happens they need to be taken care of. Though we all know that knives and axes need to be sharpened, but how many people realize that garden tools like shovels, hoes and shears need to be sharpened as well? How many of us just put those tools back in the shed after we are done with them and giving them no second thought? Well, they need care as well.

The first thing I do is go out to the shed and grab all the axes, shovels and hoes and bring them in to where it is warm. It is hard to work in the cold with gloves on. Taking each item I inspect the handles, as this is always the weakest point, especially with axes and mauls. It makes no sense to sharpen the blades of a tool if the handle is broken. Those that are damaged need to be replaced. Quick fixes with tape are fine in the moment, but replacement is always the safest bet. Now you can go out and buy a new handle, if you can get out, or you can make your own. It is your choice.

Once that is complete I will begin sharpening the blades. A sharp blade is a safe blade and will make your work much easier. When it comes to sharpening my tools, other than my knives, there are a few products that I use. If I have power then I like to use the Work Sharp Knife and Tool Sharpener. Using three different abrasive belts, this tool will put an edge on your ax very quickly. The problem with winter is that the power goes out, but life still goes on. If there is no power then I switch over to using a Smith's Axe and Machete Sharpener or a Smith's Edge Eater Sharpener. In fact, it is the Edge Eater that I prefer to use for my shovels due to the curved blades of the shovels. When all else fails there is always the old tried and true Arkansas stone. Used for uncountable years, I have two or three at the



homestead.

Fishing Gear:

If you are like me, by the end of the fishing season, despite your best efforts, your fishing gear probably is a tangled mess. I rely on my fishing gear to help put food in the freezer which means everything needs to be up to par come spring. Winter is the perfect time to put things back in order.



The first thing that I tackle is the rods and reels. Old line needs to be taken off and recycled. While the line is off, take apart the reels and inspect them for dirt and broken gears. Clean out as much of the old grease and dirt that you can using a clean cotton cloth. Use a pipe cleaner to get into the gears. A cotton



swab will work in a pinch, but they often leave small fibers that can jam your gears. Re-grease and lube according to the manual that came with your reel and then re-assemble. Put on new line and you are done. At this point I like to spray the entire reel, including the line, with a light coat of GetSome 1000. This non-petroleum product keeps everything working without a greasy mess.

Next inspect the rods, looking for cracks or breaks. Make sure to check the eyelets or damage. Fix or replace broken rods now to prevent headaches later on down the road. Wipe down the rods and set them aside. Now it is time for the tackle box. Lay out some newspaper and then empty the box. Check all lures for rusted or broken hooks. Replace these. If the hooks are still in good shape just sharpen them. Both Work Sharp and Smith's put some really good hook sharpeners. While the box is empty wipe it down getting rid of any old containers, dirt and anything else that has found its way there. Put everything back in order and you are now ready for spring.

Firearms:

When it comes to my firearms I am a stickler for keeping them clean. Around the homestead my firearms put food on the table and protect my family so they need to be in

top order. Whenever I return from the field or the range I always field strip the firearm, whether I shot it or not, and clean it. Once a year I do a complete breakdown and this is usually during the winter.

Make sure to spread out newspaper to help prevent any solvent damage to your work surface. Always get your supplies ready and where you can reach them before you start and only use quality products on your firearms. There are a lot out there so find



one that works for you. I happen to like the product put out by Shooter's Choice, Hoppe's and GetSome. Always follow the instructions in your firearm's manual whenever doing a complete breakdown, no matter how many times you have done it. The smallest mistake or oversight can lead to big problems.

The list of things that need to be done can go on and on. If you live this lifestyle then you know that there will always be things that need to get done. The key is to use your time wisely. The long, cold days of winter are a great time to complete some of those tasks that were put off during the rest of the year. If you are going to get stuck inside you might as well grab a cup of coffee, throw another log on the fire and make that time productive.



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ONTHE MARK UITH BUCK MARK



By Dan Galusha

A target shooter's collection of guns can't be complete without a Browning Buck Mark pistol. This is said to be one of the best for this purpose, and recently one was purchased to find out first hand.

My Buck Mark is the Plus Practical model. It has the top rail, which makes it possible to attach a scope, reflex or red dot sight. However, I wanted to use it for the first shooting as it was designed with fully adjustable open iron sights.

The front sight is a TruGlo fiber optic, while the rear has a white outline Pro-Target sight. It is fully adjustable for windage and elevation, with solid "clicks".

Weight of the pistol is 34 ounce,

and it holds a 10-round magazine. The barrel length is 5 ½ inches, with an overall length of 9 ½ inches. Its trigger is gold plated, with a very light pull – almost a "hair trigger".

Ammunition is 22LR, and I've been told by followers of the Shoot 'N' Plink[™] Facebook page that a wide range of velocities have been shot through their units. I had only used CCI Mini Mag and Remington Thunderbolt, with equal success. Both are in the 1250 fps range, which is normally recommended for semi-automatic firearms. However, a couple of people said they had fired CCI standard velocity of 1050 fps, so I gave it a try and it worked nicely. These same people were asking me to try some CCI Quiet, which I did. The Quiet is only 710 fps, and did not cycle. So, that is not recommended.

While this is a 22-caliber pistol the design of the round barrel gives it a much larger appearance. The slide is also a bit different from other semi-autos in that you can see through from one side to the other when it is open.



As for the magazines, they are very easy to load. Some other magazines are a pain, but the follower in the Buck Mark's mags is very easy to slide down and hold while loading the ammo. I do recommend purchasing some extra magazines, as this gun is so much fun to shoot you are going to want to have some loaded in advance, and ready to go. I have 3 at the moment, with 2 more ordered so I can load up a full 50 round box without having to stop and reload.

By the way, all of this comes in a very nice, rugged nylon zip case. The Browning yellow-gold logo and name on the outside is very attractive. It is one of those cases that you will be happy to use for storage, and proud to be seen. It truly compliments the good looks of the pistol, so makes a great set.

As for shooting, I had to adjust the sights twice when getting it sighted in on a rifle sight-in target, with 10 rounds of CCI Mini Mag. It was shooting low, but after the second adjustment I was ready to hit the 2-inch middle of some regular targets, which I did with several rounds of Remington Thunderbolt. I shot the gun at 7, 10 and 15 yards.

The day that this was adjusted was extremely windy, so for the conditions of a 20 to 30 mph cross wind it proved to be a very good shooter. In fact I shot a video on that day which can be seen on the Dan's Fish 'N' Tales[®] You Tube channel at www.youtube.com/dansfishntales, or the Shoot 'N' Plink[™] Facebook page at www.facebook.com/shootnplink.

This is a great two-handed or one-hand shooter. I've seen several people shooting it one hand only, and I can see why, even with the heavier weight.

At a later date I acquired a Buck Mark Reflex sight, with a red dot and four reticle settings. It adjusted easily, much like a regular scope. Once adjusted the pistol was dead on to the point where you could almost close your eyes and hit the target. With the BM Reflex sight I was firing three types of Federal

ammunition (Hunter Match, Champion, HV Match, and 729 Lead Round Nose), all of which had great success.

Overall I would give this pistol a 5 star rating, which is rare for me to give anything a perfect score, or even a 4, because I feel there is always something that isn't perfect with any product. The only thing I want to remind you of is to make sure you are ready to shoot, as you should always be, before touching the trigger. Twice I fired shots before I was completely on the center of the target. The shots were still on the target, but not where I wanted them to be. Also, it would





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be nice if there were two magazines provided with the pistol instead of just one. Neither of these facts is bad enough to subtract from the rating for its targeting and overall shooting.

Mark Millichamp, Illinois CCW/NRA instructor/Award Winning Cowboy Shooter, and I shot the Buck Mark on his private shooting range. He was so impressed with the gun's abilities of cycling the different types of ammo and hitting the target on every shot that he purchased one for himself.

Speaking of Mark's CCW instruction, he conducts these classes in Sherrard, IL and EZ Livin Sports Center in Milan, IL. If you are in this state, and want to take the classes from one of the best, or have questions, contact Mark at 309-235-9619 or Todd Carnes at EZ Livin, 309-787-2244.

Any questions for me can be sent through the Dan's Fish 'N' Tales[®] website on the Shoot 'N' Plink[™] page at <u>www.dansfishntales.com/shootnplink</u>; or the Shoot 'N' Plink[™] Facebook page at <u>www.facebook.com/shootnplink</u>.

Until next time, shoot safe and have a great day of plinking.







By Tayler Michels, Passion for the Hunt Television

Some of the most exhilarating hunting adventures I've experienced in my life combine Mule Deer with Archery. Compared to anything I've personally done in the outdoors, spot and stalk Mule Deer with stick and string is my personal favorite joy. I plan all summer, waiting for fall and the chance to stalk a mature buck. Motivated by big mule deer that gave me the slip in seasons past. The 2017 hunting season was going to be difficult for me. I had a busy schedule planned during a large part of the season that would completely black out all my weekends through thanksgiving. I was left with a handful of windows during the last few weeks of the season. Everyday this fall, it seemed I went to bed dreaming about December's unpredictable weather.

My work schedule was known early on so I knew my North Dakota archery hunting would come down to December. During the dog days of summer, I practiced with my Halon in full winter clothes. Layered up to simulate the wicked conditions I would surely be faced with in December. Not having any opportunity to hunt or even scout on account of my out of state Job weighed heavy on my mind but I can't complain. To clarify, the job that so mercilessly takes me away each fall is guiding in Montana's Missouri River Breaks Country. I pursue elk and mule deer on a daily basis along with the occasional



bighorn sheep. One reality of guiding big game is that you spend your time without a weapon. The seasons in Montana kept me busy all through Thanksgiving. It was December when I was finally able to come back to ND and prepare for my own "opening day" of 2017. All season, I had been cheering on from afar while my friends shared stories of success. Many trophies had already been laid to rest from bow hunters and gun hunters throughout the state of ND. Now in December, it was my turn to get out on a cold windswept hill and glass for a trophy of my own.

The week leading up to departure was filled with all the familiar feelings. Excitement and anticipation as I texted all my close hunting buddies. Receiving words of encouragement and reminiscing about past hunts ramped up the excitement even more. Pressure is also a familiar feeling, I always have butterflies in my stomach the night before a hunt. I can't stop dreaming about what could happen. Praying I make just enough correct moves to get a big buck on the ground. The first surprise of this hunt however was the forecasted weather. Highs in the 40 degree range would equal a heat wave given it was the 9th of December. Warm temperatures



this time of year can make for tough hunting. Post rut bucks will go to sleep in isolated places difficult to find in these conditions. My nerves were firing on all cylinders when Friday showed up and I headed out to a few favorite locations to glass. My good friend Matt was along on this hunt. Matt is a ND native and accomplished mule deer hunter. I was lucky to have him with me. We also had the added challenge of attempting to film this hunt for an upcoming episode of Passion for the Hunt Television that airs on Fox Sports North beginning in July.

There is no substitute for a sunrise over the Little Missouri Breaks, revealing miles of breath taking canyons. A landscape so raw. The sharp stems of grass speared through the shimmering layer of snow that blanketed the hills and ravines in front of me. Remnant layers of thawing snow and warm temperatures can make it tougher to find late season bucks. We knew we needed to stay mobile. Covering ground is the name of the game. When big bucks are rutting, the patient sit and wait strategies can pay off. The post rut conditions meant the deer would probably move less. If you want to contact one of these mature bucks you need to go find them. My strategy for this hunt was to sit no more than a couple hours glassing in a spot before heading to another lookout. Judging by the deer we saw day one it was obvious that the winter feeding patterns were in effect. Bedded deer were mostly up high catching sun out of the wind. Transitioning deer were lower in the drainages finding the best browse.





Day one did not disappoint. I spotted a good number of deer. Even bedded up two mature bull elk which is a rare experience in ND for me. Had a great encounter with two 3x3 bucks that fed past my ambush spot at 22yds.. Opportunities can be hard to come by. I went to bed that night questioning whether or not I made the right decision. If I end up eating tag soup, I would surely regret not taking a shot at one of those bucks.

Early the next morning when the sky was still black and full of stars, I sparked the stove to brew a cup of coffee. Slowly turning the gas knob, watching the flame grow bigger and brighter in the morning darkness of camp. A hardy breakfast and a second cup of coffee made me wide awake. It was going to

be a good day. I laced up my boots. We had short drive to a fresh look out. Soon we were out hiking in the early morning twilight. Breathing that cool air as he hiked and waited for sunrise. The mornings in the badlands are incredible and the impeding sunrise was another miracle but we saw few deer.



Finally after the third look out at midday... we saw him. A lone bedded buck in the shadows of a Juniper clump. He gazed upon the land below him. Big mule deer bucks can be so incredibly sly. He was hidden like a rattlesnake in tall grass. Small pieces of his rack were made visible only when the ferocious wind would blow branches out of the way. Never able to see his whole body, I could only guess what I was really looking at. My gut was telling me he was a good mature buck. I had to get a closer look at this buck. Located nearly a mile away, across a drainage, there were many difficult steps between us. The sun had heated up the air to above freezing but the powerful wind still bit at my face.

A quarter of the way closer, I slipped up the hill to get another look. The buck was now on his feet and had moved into the sun. I couldn't see everything with some cover in the way but my gut still told me he could be the one. Closing the distance half way, I was able to get another look and I could see the buck in full. With the sun casting a bright, beautiful glow across his body, my suspicions were confirmed. This was a warrior of a buck. The buck had the stature of a king with heavy shoulders and a long body. His belly had the tell-tale sag of an older deer. He was skinny now, his ribs shown a little through his tattered hide and loose skin on his neck suggested the rut had taken a toll. A wide and heavy 3x2 frame may not excite some trophy hunters concerned with score but to me he was an incredibly cool buck that had something I love... character.

When bucks reach a ripe old age and they begin their decent, the size of the rack means far less than just appreciating the life that they have lived. By now I knew he was the one for me and the final plans to stalk this buck were discussed. Glassing the bucks surroundings and using my GPS, we agreed to approach this buck from above using a large cedar as cover. With a stiff 25mph cross wind, the buck shouldn't hear, see nor smell our presence before I am hopefully able to push an arrow through his vitals. We nearly reached our designated Cedar and took a knee. I couldn't see the old Warrior yet. I was constantly ranging bushes and trees as they appeared in view, in case the buck simply showed up. I



would have no time to range him so I would already know how far everything is. The wind was cutting the left side of my face. Matt was in my back pocket, matching me step for step, then knee for knee then hand for hand as we slithered into position undetected. Still no sign of the buck. It was difficult to peer through the branches of the My excitement was cedar. confused when my eyes could not pick up any sign of the buck where he was supposed to be.

Then all at once every hair on my body seemed to stand up. There he was. I had been scanning the open meadow 50yds away when my eyes focused on a small gesture from the bucks tail. He was standing 15yds in front of us camouflaged by the Cedar. Much closer than we anticipated. He slowly walked into full view to my right, headed downwind. I came to full draw. The buck hadn't detected us vet and kept walking. Not comfortable with a moving shot I attempted to stop the buck with a small grunt before he winded us. The noise spooked him. He bounded back on his tracks where he came from.

"Did I just lose him forever?" I asked myself in my mind. I stood up without letting my bow down. Moved around the branches of the Cedar to see the buck bounce away. He trotted up next to a tree and stopped broadside unsure if what he heard was dangerous or not. I recognized the tree as one

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that I had ranged earlier. 60 yards I told myself, which is yardage I practice religiously. With confidence I settle my 60 pin behind his shoulder and squeezed the release. Every hunting story has a part when time seems to stand still. The arrow flew true. The buck jumped the string a bit. The hit seemed a little high but the blood immediately jumped out of both sides of the buck as he tore off downhill into the drainage. With a heavy crash he was out of sight.

The excitement was incredible and difficult to describe, Matt agreed that the hit looked good but we needed to give it time before going after this buck. We waited about an hour before we went to check out my arrow. A clean pass through. Large amounts of blood were casted across the white snow where the buck had run down into the drainage. The buck took a tumble down a 30 foot drop off then laid to rest in the bed of the creek that meandered through the bottom of the drainage. He went about 100 yards and his stiff body proved he was dead within seconds of the shot. The old warrior of a buck was missing an eye and had scars on his face from years of rutting and fighting. I waited all year for this brief moment. As we quartered and prepared the buck for the pack out, I couldn't help but stop once in a while to soak it all in. Truly the greatest way I could have used my 2017 archery tag.

Passion for the Hunt Television airs on Fox Sports North on Sundays at 9:00 am from July through October. Watch past episodes on the Passion for the Hunt YouTube Channel.

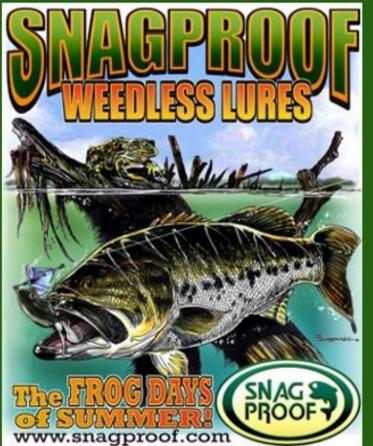


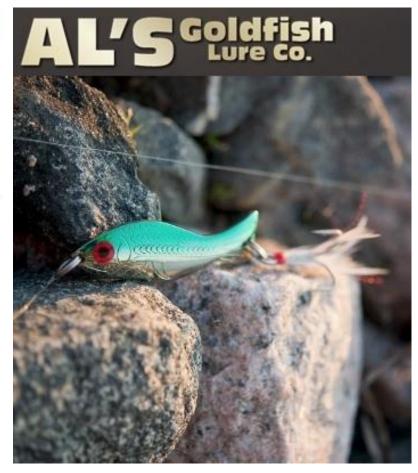




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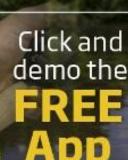




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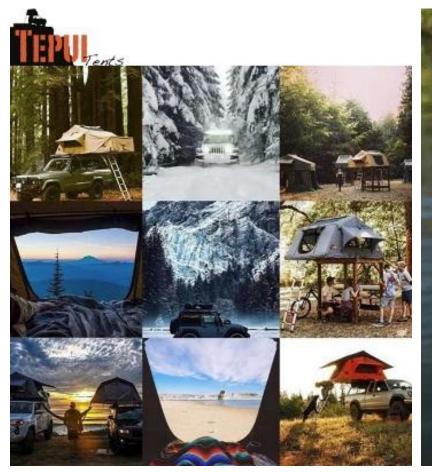
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