



March-April 2019
Spring Open Water

ODU MAGAZINE

**Mississippi
Crappie**

**Ice-Out
Atlantic
Salmon**

**Carolina
Riggin'**

Enjoy The Harvest, Pg 64
Meet Our ODU Guides, Pg 74
The Outdoor Exchange, Pg 94
Last Ice Team Mag, Pg 96

Downsize For Spring Musky
Trophy Walleye In Manitoba



ODU MAGAZINE™

Spring has sprung and we are so happy to be getting the boat ready, lining up outdoor projects and planning trips. This next edition of ODU has many articles for your spring time plans, loaded with tips to make your outing on the water more successful. Bass, trout, walleye, crappie and musky are all covered. Enjoy.

Would you like to contribute a fishing or hunting story or tip, check out our writers guide at this link

<https://www.odumagazine.com/writing-guidelines/>. Email them your inquiries to odu.media@odumagazine.com.

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Thank You All!

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*



ODU MAGAZINE™

**Feb-March 2019
Open Water & Ice
Fishing Edition**

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OPEN WATER ZONE



Lake Erie: A Popular Destination For Spring Walleye Fishing

By Captain Julia "Juls" Davis



For decades now, Lake Erie's Western Basin has been a hot-spot destination for anyone who has ever wanted to catch big walleye in the springtime. After a long winter, everyone is charged up with excitement to get out on some open water and chase the golden prize.

Trophy Walleye, that's why they come here for year after year. The chance to catch monster walleye from an earlier year class that can easily measure 32 inches or better and gets the heart racing, even from the most seasoned of anglers.

The forecast is often unpredictable during the early spring bite, and can often keep anglers off the water, due to big winds, but when the conditions are right, it's the most spectacular and fun fishing a person could ask for.

What makes Lake Erie's Western Basin so attractive for spawning walleye is in its natural design. The west end is shallow and tapers deeper the further east it goes. The average depth on the west end is 25-30 feet, and the deepest point on the east end is 210 feet. The west end also has several reef complexes and rivers flowing into it, giving the walleye the perfect structure and setting needed for a successful spawn.

Walleye migrate from all over to get to this preferred spawning ground and offer anglers all

along their migration path a chance at catching them on their way in and on their way out.

If you bring your own boat, besides the state-owned launches, which are free to use, there are plenty of private launches where for a small fee you can launch your boat and have a short boat ride out to the reef complexes. Turtle Creek Marina, Fenwick Marina, and Wild Wings are just a few that I know of offhand that have a decent ramp to launch from.

The reefs are best known for their solid jig bite. You'll find the "Jacks" there in the spring first. When the females are ready, they will arrive to take a beating by the male's tales and drop their eggs. Once they drop their eggs, they will move off the reefs and recuperate before putting the feedbag back on again. Once they are feeling better and the water temperatures begin to rise, they will start their migration back to their summer haunts.



Anglers who prefer trolling in the spring will find the most success west of the Bass Islands, if the water clarity is good, which means being able to see your cavitation plate. The most active fish will be in the “mixing” water, which means it’s not too dirty and not too clean. The water is warmer in the dirty water, but the fish are the most inactive in it, and it’s hard for them to zero in a bait they cannot see. There will be fewer fish in the colder water, so finding the mixing water is your best chance, because it’s still warmer than the clean water, and the fish will be able to see your baits as they move past them.

If the spring brings big rains, the rivers will be dumping a lot of mud into the lake, and if big winds come along with that rain, the shallow west end gets churned up pretty bad. If this happens, looking for the elusive walleye on the east side of the Bass Islands, and the on the North side of Kelly’s Island is an option, because it’s one of the major migration routes in and out of the west end. The current that runs

west to east passes by the islands and creates an eddy on the edges of the islands, just like an island in a river, which any river fisherman knows can hold fish waiting to ambush passing forage fish.

Trolling speeds are typically much slower when the water temperature is colder, but don’t feel you have to go slow just because everyone else is going slow.

Sometimes, if a bite is slow, all it takes is speeding it up to trigger a bite. One thing I like to play with is, the Rabbit button on my MinnKota trolling motor. By hitting that button on my remote, I can change my speed from very slow to very fast for short periods of time, and if it triggers a bite, I’ll do it again. If I get another bite, that tells me I should speed up my presentation to catch the active fish that want it that speed.

Speed can vary from hour to hour, so if you’re catching, and then not...try changing your speed.

Lake Erie has a lot of current and hitting a



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current line can change the speed of the lure below the water's surface. Even though your boat speed has not changed, your lure action may have been affected, so that's another reason to play with your speed when things are slow. Going with the current, and going against the current at the same speed, will impart a different action for your lures, so keeping that in mind, and adjusting your boat speed for it, will help you be more successful.

With today's new gadgets, like the FishHawk underwater temp/speed sensor, it's easy to check what speed your lures are running, but if you're like me and don't have that fancy little gadget yet, simply holding the lure in the water at the side of the boat will give you a good indication of what the lure will be doing below the boat.

However, keep in mind that the surface current and the underwater current can often be doing something totally different, due to wind direction...so, again, experimenting with speed when things are slow can often mean the difference between a full cooler and an empty cooler at the end of the day.

The ice is off the lake now, and some eager anglers have already ventured out to chase the golden prize. Several trophy sized walleye have been caught already, so if you're interested in fishing Lake Erie's Western Basin to catch your own trophy, now is the time to come!

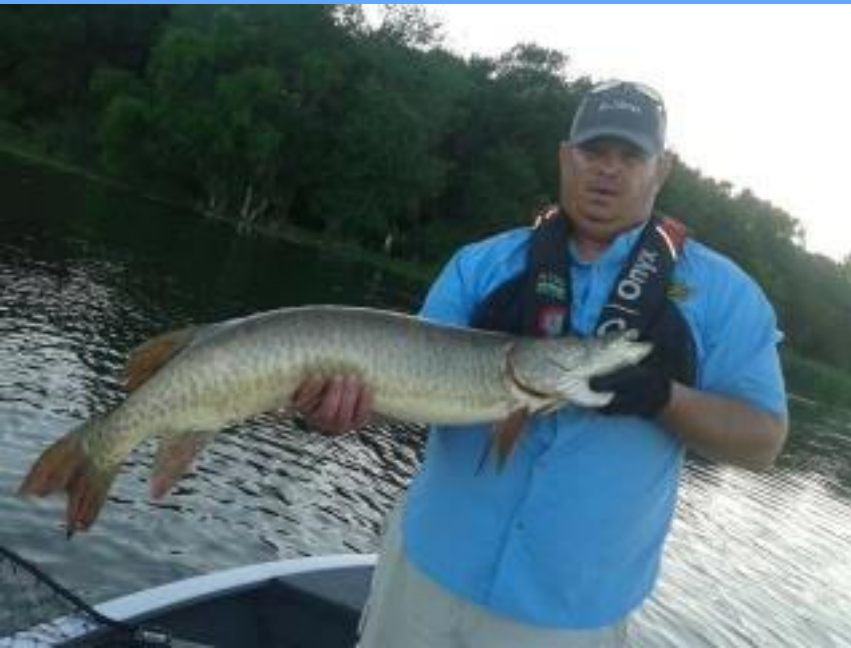
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Lake Erie guide service you can
find it online at
julsvalleyfishingadventures.com**



Downsize Your For Spring Musky Success

By Captain Brian Koshenina



Anyone who pursues the "Mighty" Musky knows that large baits catch large fish. For most of the season the chances of landing that trophy sized fish using a "Trophy" sized lure holds true but that isn't always the case, especially in the spring and many of us forget that "Bigger" isn't necessarily "Better" and here's why:

It's spring time and my anticipation grows as the days get closer to opening day of the Minnesota Musky season. Across this great state, thousands of Musky hunters are preparing to do battle for the most formidable

freshwater fish in our lakes. Many of us are getting ready and making sure we have everything we need for opening day success. We take our old line off and replace it with new, we clean and oil our reels, we sharpen our hooks and we make sure our lures are packed away nice and neat. It is at this time a lot of us make the mistake of thinking that the lures that we used in the fall that caught fish will be just as effective in the spring. We often keep the same thought process throughout the year that "Bigger is Better" and in the spring this is simply not true.

We must look at Musky behavior at this time in its simplest and primal form. As the spring progresses and water temps rise, first and second year bait fish will be in the shallows looking for healthy weeds to hide from predators. It is currently where almost all species of fish in the lake congregate in small, shallow areas and where an easy meal for a Musky is most plentiful. How often have you been fishing for a different species and come across several Musky in shallow water? Rule of thumb in the spring; Warmer water=Weeds=Baitfish=Musky.

In the spring I do not pack my larger lures. I will downsize my bucktals, cranks, gliders and top water. All of my bucktails for the spring season are in the five to seven-inch range. I find this size perfect for working in and over shallow weeds that have not quite met the surface. I prefer



darker colors and single blades at this time although double blades have worked almost as well. I find most of my early season strikes come near or at the surface far off the boat. You can experiment with reel speed and depth but most of your action will come at a faster, steadier retrieve. I also prefer "Custom" Bucktails from Hook Look Musky Lures and Musky Rods. One reason is, in my opinion, the lures are better built, use better components and are often cheaper than store bought lures. The other reason is that a custom lure maker will often work with you in size and in the design of a lure which you just don't find with larger lure companies.



The most successful top water lure I have thrown in the spring, is without a doubt, the Poes Jackpot Series. The Jackpot comes in two sizes. The "Giant" which measures six and a half inches and the "Havana" which comes in at eight. I often will use the "Havana" Jackpot in the fall as it offers a big target on the surface but will opt for the "Giant" Jackpot in the spring simply due to its smaller size. This top water gem is very "castable" making it easy to cover a lot of water and not spook fish in shallow. Using the "Walk the Dog" technique, often found using top water Bass lures, makes the Jackpot an easy to use and effective top water lure choice.

Suicks and Phantoms work great for Musky that are cruising the outside weed lines in search of prey. I use the seven-inch Suick "Thriller" as my go-to lure for shallow to deep weed line areas. The proven action of the "Thriller" has boated me a lot of fish over the years. If you bend the metal tail on the "Thriller" just a little bit, you change the action of the lure which might help with those unsuccessful "Hook-ups" you might encounter. Another one of my favorite lures is the "Phantom". The "standard" six-inch Phantom is easy to work and comes in many patterns and colors. I use the "walleye" pattern all year round as it has attracted and caught many large fish in both the spring and fall. Use it as a glide bait, slow troll or slow retrieve, or let it fall as a countdown bait for deeper fish.

The reason for downsizing your lures in the spring is simple, match the size of what Muskies eat. There is no need to even bring your large sized lures with as the chances of catching a fish are greatly reduced if you are not matching what they are feeding on. Bring your favorite, smaller sized lures on your next outing and with a little skill and a lot of luck you might just land that early season "Trophy" you've been dreaming about in the off season.

Sources: www.phantomlures.com, Hook Look Lures and Musky Rods, www.suick.com, www.yakimabaits.com

Captain Brian Koshenina is a professional fishing guide, USCG Captain, tournament fisherman, outdoor writer, speaker, mentor, volunteer, and Pro Staff member for some of the most recognized companies in the fishing industry - www.muskiesandmore.com.





Spawn Time Walleye Madness

By Gary Parsons and Keith Kavajecz

With the slightly warmer winter many walleye areas will likely see ice off before the peak of the late March to early April spawn. Of course, some areas never see ice and the anglers on these reservoirs relish the opportunity to fish for big fish every evening for a couple of weeks.



The other refreshing part of this tradition is fishing from shore. In reservoirs, these fish push up along the rocks of the dam after dark making a boat useful at times, but unnecessary overall. From a boat, dial in the exact location of the fish by starting an hour before dark with a long trolling pass along the dam. The first line should pull a single Offshore OR-12 board a few feet in front of a Berkley Cutter 90 held no more than 10 feet from the rip rap. Two other flatlines (lines without planer boards) behind the boat with a Flicker Shads, or Flicker Minnows diving into the rocks covers slightly deeper fish staging for the evening.

When it comes to equipment, the 9.5-foot telescopic Walleye Angler Trolling rods from Bass Pro

Shops are real sweethearts! We run the baits off of 10lb. Berkley XT line, which has been the standard for trolling walleyes for years. The Off Shore planer boards we run have a very heavy ballasted system so boards can be trolled slowly without tipping. They are also great for handling rough conditions. When trolling crankbaits, we like to modify the clip set-up on the boards to what we call “The Pro Set-Up”. We remove the release hardware and the OR16 (Red) release from the back of the board. The board comes from the factory with an OR19 (Orange) release that is mounted straight out on the arm and we add another OR19 just behind that one so it’s aimed back at about a 45- degree angle (the board comes with a pre-drilled hole for this modification). The advantage of the “Pro Set-Up” is that it makes the boards easier to read because they will “tip back” more when a fish is on. It also makes removing the boards easy, especially when you are fighting a fish by yourself.)

The rip rap and depth along a dam never stays constant. Larger rocks, flatter sections, and wind-eroded cuts hide beneath the water. Wind plays a factor too. The only goal of this first trolling path is to locate these structural elements and trigger a couple of over-anxious males to provide a clue into the night’s details.

As darkness falls casting becomes the better option. We start with any lure from the Berkley Cutter family and put the bait right up on the edge of the shoreline. The Cutter 90 is smaller than the 110 while the 110+ dives a bit deeper. A Berkley Digger 3.5 will also tempt fish when bounced off the rocks.

Having four or five Bass Pro Shops or Cabelas 6’3”, fast action Prodigy spinning rods rigged up with different lures can help stay on top of the changing bite. Half of the rods should be rigged with a no-stretch line like Berkley Ultra 8 Carrier Fireline. For a different sink rate and presentation, the other rods should be rigged with 8-lb Berkley Trilene XL. The stretchy monofilament line puts a slightly different action into the lure while also keeping the lure higher in the water column.

If possible, nose the boat into shallow water and cast parallel to shore. Start with a constant, but extremely slow retrieve and eventually work pauses into a classic jerkbait cadence. Be patient as each night progresses differently. In some cases that initial nightfall will be a hot bite, but others will be delayed until much later.

On dark nights solid colors like Fools’ Gold and Pearl



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Vapor provide a silhouette for the fish. If the moon is out, metallic colors come into play with Clown and Black Silver as obvious options. Sexier shad and Table Rock work in varying conditions.

A hand-held spotlight can be a key tool from a boat. The walleyes push up so shallow that shining a bright light up against the rocks can return hundreds of reflective eyes from below. Reservoirs with running inlets can also be explored and monitored with the spotlights. Once the run has started clear your calendar for a few nights of great fishing.

ODU MAGAZINE VIDEO BLOCK
(www.odumagazine.com)

After using the mobility of the boat to figure out some details, switching to shore on later nights lands more fish. Every cast can be placed and retrieved through the shallow strike zone, hung up lures can be retrieved quicker, and the time spent launching the boat and controlling it can be spent fishing. Knee-high waterproof boots, hip waders, or even full waders give the angler more than enough mobility.

Shore-bound anglers can troll with two methods. The traditional way is to use a jerkbait behind a 14-foot rod like the Bass Pro Shops Crappie Maxx Tightline Special and simply walk the edge of the dam. This is especially easy on dams with solid concrete walkways at the water level. Similarly, a small planer board like the Offshore OR38 can take lures a bit further out. Wade out and attach the board a few feet in front of the lure. With the bail open, toss the board just far enough away from the rocks to get started. Walk along the dam and the lightweight board will keep the lure tracking parallel to shore. The OR-38 board can switch directions, so you only need to carry one for the night.

After one bite, standing on a rock or wading makes it easy to cast parallel to the rip rap. Stay in the area for a few minutes but don't be afraid to move up and down the shore in an attempt to stay with the fish.

The late nights and darkness might lull you towards sleep but when a walleye splashes and hits the lure at your feet the senses snap back quickly. Eventually a real giant will show up. Starting the season with a personal best secures bragging rights and your big-fish confidence soars for the rest of the season.



THE SNAG PROOF INSIDER



Fishing Tips From The Pros

Frog Tactics

By Mike Atchley

Black bass are predators with a killer instinct. A hollow-bodied frog brings out the mean side of a bass. A bass can absolutely crush a frog lure or simply suck it under. However a bass eats your bait, there's no more exciting bite than a frog bite. Sometimes you will cast your frog and start your retrieve and realize that a fish is following your lure. I call this "cold trailing" your frog. The fish is there but will not strike. Sometimes you need something different to get this fish to strike or commit. A slight difference in your frog may make the difference in you getting the bite or the bass simply turning and swimming off. I am going to tell you some of the ways I tweak or modify a frog to get more bites.

1. Color

I truly believe that a bass can see color and that color matters! Some people argue you only need black or white. Maybe so, but if that's completely true, you would only need watermelon and junebug in soft plastics instead of all the other colors. Some days watermelon or junebug work and sometimes another color will



produce better in plastics. The same way with frogs, some days black or white are all you need but sometimes another color will get more strikes. You have all been in a boat where your partner is throwing one color and you another and they are getting five bites to your one. These are the days that color matters.

Here are a few ways to change or modify the color of frogs. Paint spots on the belly of your frog either with lure paint or a Sharpie. Always keep a red and a black Sharpie in your boat. Paint red spots on the belly and outline with black. I do this on all colors of frogs.

Snag Proof makes a clear, see-through frog called “cristyl” in the Phat Frog and the Poppin’ Phattie styles. A bottle or bottles of different colors of dipping dye can turn this frog into any color you want or need to reproduce. Simply take a small paint brush and paint your frog. Apply a coat of dye and let it dry completely, then add another color until you get the desired color/pattern you want. My home lake is Sam Rayburn. We have a perch or bream here that the old-timers call a river perch. This is the color that can be duplicated with watermelon, brown, orange and red dipping dye. It exactly matches the natural forage species and the results are awesome! So with a Sharpie and or dipping dye the possibilities are endless.

2. Sound and vibration

Bass react to sound and vibration; this enables them to locate or zero in on your frog. The easier your frog is for a bass to locate in a mat or laydown results in more strikes.

One way to create sound is by adding rattlers, split shot or bells to the body of your frog. Bells? Yes,



little jingle bells. Go to a craft store and buy a package of bells. They come in all sizes. You can use the really small ones for rattles or put the larger ones on the back hooks like you would a trailer hook. The bells on the back can actually be heard when coming across lily pads.

3. Action

There are several ways to improve the action of a frog. Trim the legs on the skirt. Shorten the legs or thin out the skirt either of which will create less drag and make the frog easier to walk.

Use a trailer hook. I never or seldom ever throw a frog in a tournament without a trailer hook. There are several good trailer hooks out there. Lake Fork Tackle being one of them. A trailer might be the difference in a check or no check in a tournament and you catching a short striking fish.

I install a heavy-duty split ring on the front line-tie of all my frogs. This lets the frog have more freedom of movement. When working your frog, whether walking or simply popping, it moves to the side more freely.

Anglers have told me they thought the frogs were too stiff and that's the reason they weren't catching the fish. Different frog brands come in various degrees of texture or softness of plastic. Some are soft and some harder. If you want to make your frogs super soft, simply boil them. This will break down the plastic and soften your frogs. The only drawback is it also weakens the plastic and makes them more prone to tears.

4. Scent

If it looks like a frog and it smells like a frog, it will be easier to get a bite. There are numerous attractants on the market. Some are even "frog scented". Spray an attractant on your frog occasionally and at the very least, it will mask the human odor (and maybe the onions you put on your sandwich). You can soak cotton balls in scent and insert them into your frog's body cavity. I soak foam ear plugs. They are a little tougher and easier to handle than cotton balls. I personally use a frog scent made by Bio Logic. This comes in a stick or liquid.

These are just a few ways to modify your frog and will help you get more bites. Try them and experiment with your own methods to customize your frog and create your secret weapon!



Big blow-ups! Mike Atchley is a competitive bass fisherman and outdoor writer in Livingston, TX
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MISSISSIPPI CRAPPIE - SOMETHING THEY HAVEN'T SEEN BEFORE

By Bernard Williams

When it comes to crappie fishing, I like to try new things. A couple of weeks ago, I got an email from Chris Shaffer, the Director of Operations at Pautzke Bait Company, wanting me to test a couple of new products. It all seemed legit, so I agreed to test some samples of what he called Pautzke Fire Dye.

Chris says, "The Fire Dye gives your bait bling. High Octane Fire Dye is professionally crafted to enhance the color and reflective qualities of your bait and is UV Enhanced to give you an arsenal to attack all water conditions. Ideal for minnows and other bait fish. Pautzke's UV Enhanced High Octane Fire Dye is super concentrated and packed with agents to create the industry's fastest-reacting dye, which Dad Pautzke hand poured to yield animated,



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headed for the Barnett Reservoir in Madison, MS.

"It didn't take long for us to see the difference. We rigged up 8 poles with double minnow rigs and chose one pole to try the Chartreuse minnows. The fish weren't on a feeding frenzy, but we were catching some the day before. Before we could get all our poles out, we had a nice size crappie on the top Bling Minnow. We rebaited with a regular minnow on the top and bling on the bottom, before long another fish hit the bottom minnow.", says David. "Before long Adam put the Bling Minnows on his side of the boat, and he wouldn't share anymore. It was no doubt, the Bling Minnows on one pole caught nearly half of our fish. We caught most of our larger fish on the Blings."

Adam says, "The Fire Dye is an awesome product. I've tried to dye minnows with Spike-It to no avail. It's designed strictly for soft plastics. It kills the minnows almost instantly. The Fire Dye is completely different. If you follow the instructions on a quick soak, it only takes about 30 minutes to dye 45 to 50 minnows. I sure hope other fishermen

full, rich colors on baits to be used in salt and fresh water. The Fire Dye comes in Red, Pink, Orange, Chartreuse, Blue, and Gold. Only Red, Gold, Blue and Chartreuse are intended for live bait."

Usually, I don't test products, I get someone from my test group to give it an independent test and I can review them. In this case, I asked David McWilliams and Adam Calcote to test this new Fire Dye and let me know their feelings. I gave them a few bottles in Gold and Chartreuse. So, David followed the directions and dyed a few minnows (approximately 25). Afterward, they

YO-Zuri Tip

<http://yo-zuri.com/>

By Anthony John Badham

Always fun catching big smallies thru the ice... but they are not always aggressively feeding and eating everything in site

When the fish keep coming in to look at your bait and not chomping, sometimes you need a bait a little more subtle.... the Yozuri Hardcore Silent Vibe did the trick on these very finicky Smallmouth.



All our fish caught on the new St-Croix Custom Ice rods in both 32MF and 28MLXF.... these are sooooo sensitive!!!

Thanks, Jean Martin, for supplying us with the best tools in the business Yozuri / St-Croix!!!



don't catch on to the dye. It a game-changer. These Mississippi Crappie Ain't Never Seen Minnows Like the Blings."

Chris says, "No bait outfishes live bait. Live minnows and other baitfish are so effective, they've been outlawed in some areas. Many anglers have dreamed of finding a way to make minnows stand out in the water. A bright, natural bait that swims freely would get bit in seconds. How could it not, right? Imagine casting a live shiner or minnow and

being able to see it glow in the water and look alive because it is alive. It's vibrant and the fish can't resist it. You don't have to fantasize anymore. With Fire Dye, this feat can be realized daily. Fire Dye is the world's only effective, easy to use live bait formula that brings ordinary bait fish to life!"

The instructions say for a short soak, 1 bottle of Fire Dye (4 oz.) to 12 oz. of water. Long Soak, 1 bottle of Fire Dye to a ¼ gallon of water. The Fire Dye sales for \$10.99 per bottle and it can be ordered online from <https://www.pautzke.com/product-category/pautzke-fire-dye/> in Chartreuse, Red, Pink, and Blue. Chris says that Walmart just added the Chartreuse Fire Dye (\$9.96). So, there you have it, if you fish live bait, you should defiantly put some Bling on my Bait. Bernard





Blackfish Launches New Line of Rain Suits

By Dan Stefanich

Outdoorsmen and women, especially anglers, are starved for a quality rain suit that is waterproof but also has the breathability to keep them dry from the inside. Two new rain suits from Blackfish Gear promise to do just that. Using a cutting-edge breathable membrane, these rain jackets and bibs utilize breakthrough technology that lets heat and body vapors escape while providing 100% waterproof protection from rain.

This breathable, waterproof technology by event is the most advanced fabric in the industry with one of the highest combined breathability and waterproof ratings in outerwear. Microscopic pores are perfectly sized to keep water molecules out yet allow body vapors and heat to escape. Simply put, we have created a rain suit that helps you stay dry from the outside and the inside from your perspiration. And with a Limited Lifetime Warranty, these premium rain suits are made to last.



Aspire Rain Jacket and Bibs

The Aspire Jacket (right) is a premium, lightweight waterproof jacket, offering a

unique combination of breathability and water resistance not usually found in lightweight outerwear. Some key features of the Aspire Rain Jacket and Bibs include:

- 100% waterproof and breathable
- Lightweight and packable for easy transport
- Perfect for warm weather use
- Unlike other rain suits, frequent washing renews the breathability factor by cleaning the microscopic pores that allow body vapor and heat to escape



Endure Rain Parka and Bibs

The Endure Parka (right) is a premium, tournament level garment that offers an uncommon combination of waterproof protection, breathability, and warmth. With one of the highest breathability factors in the outdoors, the Endure lets your body breath while keeping rain out— keeping you warm and dry all day from your perspiration. For those that need all-day protection, choose the Endure. Some key features of the Endure Rain Parka and Bibs include:

- 100% waterproof, durable and abrasion resistant
- Insulated for warmth; it's a perfect cold weather rain parka
- Unlike other rain suits, frequent washing renews the breathability factor by cleaning the microscopic pores that allow body vapor and heat to escape
- 100% taped seams and storm flap keep water out at high speeds

You can't choose the weather. But you can choose rain gear that keeps you dry, comfortable and protected. See the entire line and the technology behind it at www.BlackfishGear.com.



Ice-Out Landlocked Atlantic Salmon

By Tim Moore

Most salmon anglers come to Lake Winnepesaukee looking forward to two very distinct times of year for salmon fishing, early spring and late summer. The salmon season runs from April 1st through September 30th each year, and if you ask most any salmon angler when the best months to catch salmon are, you'll undoubtedly be told April through mid-June, and mid-August through September. For most anglers, it's the ice-out period that drives them to the lake in search of Winnepesaukee chrome.

Although the salmon season opens on April first, ice-out isn't typically declared on Lake Winnepesaukee until around the third week of April. Anglers begin targeting salmon from bridges and docks until there is enough open water for water craft, first kayaks and canoes, and then smaller boats, followed by larger boats. Each day, as more water opens up, more boats take advantage. By May 1st, the lake is taken over by anglers all vying for their chance at one of New Hampshire's plump and healthy landlocked Atlantic salmon.

Spring is many anglers' favorite time of year because the salmon are running shallow, following smelt runs and looking to fatten up on concentrations of food. The salmon are hungry, the bite is good, and local bait shops are usually still carrying smelt, which is the preferred bait of most spring salmon anglers. Slowly trolling a live or sewn-on smelt near the surface is a deadly tactic early in the morning. Salmon find them almost irresistible. Some anglers prefer to troll streamer flies, and those in the know catch as many or more fish with flies as those using live bait. Add a light wind that creates what

anglers refer to as “salmon chop” and you’re in for a treat.

My guided trips consist almost entirely of trolling live bait early in the season. We catch more fish trolling or drifting smelt than we do with flies, so that’s what I stick with. Our clients come to catch big fish, but they love to see the rods pop out of the downriggers, and the numbers of fish are there. When only trolling a few feet below the surface, a rod popping out of the downrigger is almost always immediately followed by aerial acrobatics that keep the blood pumping. The limit on Lake Winnepesaukee is two fish, which could easily be filled by 8am most mornings, but many of our clients prefer to catch and release so they can keep fishing. They can’t resist seeing those salmon jumping on the end of their lines and can’t bear the thought of quitting early.

As water temperatures increase, a thermocline sets up on the lake and the salmon begin to run deeper in search of cooler more stable water temps. Eventually live smelt become unavailable in the bait shops

and we switch to trolling spoons on downriggers and leadcore line. Many anglers love trolling spoons because they can be trolled much faster, allowing you to cover a lot more water, but some will stick with streamers and play with size, profile, and color.

Until ice-out is declared, we take bookings

as early as May 1. If the lake is free of ice earlier, we start running trips right away. They say the early bird gets the worm, and that couldn’t be truer on most days of salmon fishing. The fishing is often excellent and when you mix in a few rainbow trout in the three to four-pound range and the occasional lake trout, you’ll quickly know why so many anglers spend their weeks thinking about the weekend.

Tim Moore is a full-time licensed New Hampshire fishing guide and owner of Tim Moore Outdoors, LLC. He is a member of the New England Outdoors Writers Association and the producer of In Season Outdoors TV. For information on guided trips visit www.TimMooreOutdoors.com. You can also follow TMO on Facebook at www.Facebook.com/TimMooreOutdoors.





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MORE THAN JUST ANOTHER BLADE BAIT

By Billy 'Hawkeye' Decoteau



The year was 2016, shortly after that every now and then I would be enthusiastically enticed by the sweetest looking blade-bait I had ever seen! Then just like my enthusiastic-enticement it would disappear, or rather truthfully, I just forgot about it! After all these blade-bait visions were NOT during the cold-water periods. It was July-August the hottest days of the year. The time when savvy bass anglers SLOW-DOWN, bass scatter taking up residence in thick green vegetation, and large six-eight-inch

plastic baits become the Daily-Special on the Bass Menu.

Over the next two-years I became more and more curious of this sleek, shiny, lustrous baitfish profile blade-bait. My inquisitiveness uncovered a treasure chest of information, as my enticing blade-bait vision came into full focus... It was called the SteelShad.

Being a New Englander I was overwhelmed to learn the SteelShad Fishing Company is based in East Dorset, Vermont. Green mountain perfection coupled with 'Yankee Ingenuity' enticed me to contact Stephen Price, CEO of SteelShad. CEO Stephen Price enlightened me on the history of the SteelShad Fishing Company. Founded in 2016 Price, Brad Wightman and Campbell Mathewson partnered together with Florida Fishing Guide Captain Steve Niemoeller and launched the SteelShad Fishing Company nationwide.

I couldn't hold back any longer, I had to inquire, "So Stephen, tell me how you and your partners developed the SteelShad's unique baitfish profile?" "Actually, the SteelShad lure was designed by B.A. Gills, a fisherman on Kentucky Lake. However,



it has been modified and perfected with input from Anglers and Fishing Guides whom are on the water fishing every day.” It suddenly became obvious why I loved this blade-bait the SteelShad so much.....It has the fingerprints of honest hardworking American Anglers!

Continuing CEO Price replied, “We are now selling SteelShad lures to anglers nationwide and gaining additional national visibility every day. Our Company Goal from the day we launched the SteelShad Fishing Company, is to grow our SteelShad Team, incorporate new SteelShad products within the fishing industry with a commitment to becoming a ‘Trusted Name to Anglers Everywhere’!

SteelShad...The Baitfish Profile

Dissecting the SteelShad from top to bottom we have two split-ring holes. Note their precise location; the forward-hole position balances the SteelShad horizontally, thus making for better vertical jigging applications. The rear-hole allows for the nose of the SteelShad to dip down slightly. This in turn increases vibration, allowing for more control during shallow applications.

The teardrop style weight is made of either lead or tin alloy. SteelShad’s in the Elite Series have Lead FREE belly weights. All hooks are secured with split rings, allowing for quick hook changes and free swinging. Most baits utilize VMC PermaSteel coated hooks preventing rust in fresh & salt water. SteelShad 1/2 oz. Heavy Series and 3/8 oz. Elite Series come with sharp VMC Black Nickel trebles.

SteelShad bodies are extremely durable being made of malleable stainless steel. It is this stainless steel malleable material that separates SteelShad from all other blade-baits. Unlike other traditional blade baits, SteelShad Blade-Baits may be bent in a variety of directions and angles. All of which will change the SteelShad’s depth, action and direction. Did I mention SteelShad’s may also be bent back to their original shape!

Bending the SteelShad

- Bending the tail section of the SteelShad approximately 1/2 in. from the rear hook in either direction at a 30-45 degree angle will allow for shallow to surface retrieves. (Note; this will also allow the SteelShad to run either left or right.)
- Bending the tail section of the SteelShad approximately 1/2 in. from the rear hook in either direction at a 90 degree angle will allow the SteelShad to run extreme right or left when retrieved.
- Bend the SteelShad just behind the weight in a ‘U’ pattern to make the SteelShad perform similar to a buzzbait.



Bending Tips - B.A.S.S. Elite Series Pro Jay Yelas

- “When targeting docks boat position is key, give yourself plenty of room to make accurate cast along each side of the dock. You want your SteelShad to run under the dock into the shaded areas. Whenever possible bump your SteelShad into vertical post.” Jay recommends anglers have two rods rigged and ready with baits that run left and run right. This will save precious time, increasing your catch ratio.
- Rod/Reel/Line; 7’ MH Team Lew Custom Pro/Team Lew 7:1 gear ratio/15lb Trilene 100% Fluorocarbon, tied directly to the SteelShad split ring or bass clip.



Fishing the SteelShad with Jay Yelas

Jigging the SteelShad

- Cast and let the SteelShad free-fall to the bottom on a semi-slack line, while watching your line closely. Once it hits bottom pause while reeling in slack, keeping an eye on your line. Many times bass will either inhale your SteelShad on the fall or pick it up off the bottom. Work your SteelShad back by reeling slowly and working your rod in an up and down fashion allowing the SteelShad to Yo-Yo along the bottom.
- Vertical jig alongside the boat by dropping your SteelShad unto humps, channel bends or contour drop-off, etc. Stroke your SteelShad off the bottom until you find the rhythm that entices the bass to bite.

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Jigging Tips - B.A.S.S. Elite Series Pro Jay Yelas

- “If I am vertical jigging deep, I like a longer rod and at times a heavier SteelShad up to 3/4 oz. Lew’s 7’4” H Team Lew Custom Pro Rod paired with Team Lew 7:1 Custom Pro Baitcaster reel spooled with either 10-12 lb. Trilene Fluorocarbon line. This allows for good hook-sets, picks up more line, while the 7:1 reel gear ratio helps me control the deep bass.”
- “When working isolated cover, humps or saddle areas, I will utilize my sonar to locate baitfish/bass. Until then I will make long cast then slowly retrieve my SteelShad back to the boat or alternate a Yo-Yo technique.” Yelas suggest anglers always keep an eye open for schooling bass. “The SteelShad is the best schooling bass bait period. It can be cast fast and far to these surface busting bass, then it vibrates and falls quickly enticing schooling bass to eat it!”

Cranking the SteelShad

- Cranking the SteelShad is accomplished just as you would cast and retrieve any lipless crankbait, spinnerbait, in-line spinners or swimbait. Simply make your cast, and then begin reeling the SteelShad once it hits the water. The SteelShad will immediately start vibrating, vary your retrieve speeds until you zero in on what speed encourages the bass to eat your SteelShad.

Any Fish
Any Depth



Cranking Tips - B.A.S.S. Elite Series Pro Jay Yelas

- “Cranking the SteelShad is one of my favorite techniques to fish! I know of no other crankbait that can cover the entire water column faster, especially for deep water over 20 feet. My go to SteelShad size is the new Heavy Series 1/2 oz. bait,” says Yelas. As for his choice of colors more often than not this Elite Pro Angler sides with the Shad colors. However he quickly adds, “During the spring or whenever I’m targeting shallow rocky areas the red (Crawfish) color has been productive.” Pausing for just a moment, “The Perch (Fire Tiger) color is dynamite on all of the Great Lakes, New York lakes, including the 1,000 Islands and St. Lawrence River Region.” Jay Yelas did reveal he has thrown the Gold color SteelShad in off colored water, adding the extreme vibration of the SteelShad allows bass to hone in on its location.
- What about vegetation I inquired? “Wow, burning the SteelShad over submerged vegetation is another outstanding technique the SteelShad shines in. The narrow profile of the SteelShad also causes explosive reaction strikes when it’s snapped out or off grass. If there is a drop-off along this outside grass line the SteelShad’s will vibrate along this edge making for an enticingly easy meal.”

SteelShad Tips-Tricks

<https://steelshad.com/tips-tricks-faqs/>

Listening to Jay Yelas’s tutorial on the SteelShad Blade-Bait had me more excited than a bird-dog pup on its first hunt! So Jay I have to ask, “When, where and when-not should an angler tie on a SteelShad Blade-Bait?”

“First of all it’s imperative anglers realize the SteelShad is another tool in their arsenal. Like any tool there are times and places it will out perform other baits. One example of where the SteelShad is going to snag-up is within wood. Although, the SteelShad can be vertically jigged within standing timber it takes a lot of practice paired with finesse to do so! Remember, there is NO fishing

THE COLORS OF STEELSHAD

• • •

Vibrant Colors & An Irresistible Flash



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Mini, Original, XL & XXL



GOLD

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Mini, Original, XL & XXL



TROUT

Available In:
Original & XL



PERCH (FIRETIGER)

Available In:
Original & XL



RED (CRAWFISH)

Available In:
Original & XL

season wherein the SteelShad can not be used!"

With that Bassmaster Elite Series Pro Jay Yelas listed the following seasonal opportunities anglers have for utilizing the SteelShad;

SPRING:

- ✓ Rocky tapering points, humps, large flats and pockets, sunny warmer areas.
- ✓ *Technique:* Cast and Reel, Stroking the SteelShad off the bottom in a Yo-Yo Pattern as well as vertical jigging over baitfish.
- ✓ SteelShad Bait: 1/4, 3/8, 1/2 and 3/4 oz.

SUMMER:

- ✓ Deep-water humps, over submerged grass lines, channel bends, riprap, isolated cover, Deep-water docks and schooling fish busting the surface.
- ✓ *Technique:* Cast and Reel, bending the SteelShad to run left or right, burning the SteelShad over submerged vegetation, crawling along the bottom.
- ✓ SteelShad Bait: 3/8, 1/2 and 3/4 oz.

FALL:

- ✓ Schooling fish busting the surface, docks, inside & outside weedline, transitional areas from summer to fall, first drop-offs, secondary points to main points, key factor follow the baitfish.
- ✓ *Technique:* Long cast to schooling fish, ripping out of vegetation, cast and reel, bending the SteelShad to run left or right, burning the SteelShad over submerged vegetation.
- ✓ SteelShad Bait: 3/8, 1/2 and 3/4 oz.

WINTER: (Ice)

- ✓ Deep-water humps, over submerged grass lines, channel bends, riprap, isolated cover, docks and schooling fish busting the surface.
- ✓ *Technique:* Cast and Reel, bending the SteelShad to run left or right, burning the SteelShad over submerged vegetation.
- ✓ SteelShad Bait: 1/4 oz. and Heavy Series 1/2 oz.

THE COLORS OF STEELSHAD

• • •

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Original & XL



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Original & XL



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Available In:
Mini, Original & XL



WHITE SHAD

Available In:
Mini, Original & XL

Note from Elite Pro Jay Yelas

On this article we have concentrated specifically on the SteelShad Blade-Bait.

SteelShad Fishing Company is rapidly growing and expanding their product line of high quality SteelShad baits. "Presently SteelShad Fishing offers anglers, Swimbait with 3/8 oz. Lead Free jigheads, Top-Water Series, Spinnerbaits & Bladed Jigs, Fishing line including a complete line of SteelShad apparel." (www.SteelShad.com)

ODU Magazine readers interested in purchasing the SteelShad Blade-Baits, including the new Lead Free 3/8 oz. Elite Series and 1/2 oz. Heavy Series baits may do so by logging unto www.SteelShad.com

*ODU Magazine readers will also receive
20%-Off your order
ORDER USE CODE: MLF20*

God Bless,
Remember, "Just Have Fun"
Billy 'Hawkeye' Decoteau



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Ramp Etiquette

Capt. Mike Gerry

As is always the case in the spring we are getting into the busy time of year and the boat ramps are the first place one must face the crowds. As usual every day can be a new adventure when you pull up to a ramp, as it's the time of year that many folks that have never pulled a boat are being faced with getting their boat in the water as well as the many folks that think they can take as much time on the ramp as they need.



We all want people to be safe and take the time needed to get their boat in the water, however we also must realize that your actions at the ramp can be aggravating to those trying to get in and chase that first bite of the morning and sitting in line at a ramp where the inexperienced boater is struggling with protocol can be extremely aggravating. So here is my list of do's and don'ts while facing the crowds at your local boat ramp.

Pre-prepare, make sure your truck parking break works correctly, understand how your straps un-hook and always understand how to get your boat plug correctly installed.

Prepare, every time you get to a boat ramp prepare your boat for launch before backing down the ramp, make sure your gear, life jackets, boat straps are ready to launch this will cut down time trying to get your boat in the water. Sitting at the ramp watching someone prepare their boat while backed into the water is extremely annoying to the others in line.

Practice, if you have never backed a boat down a ramp, get your boat to an empty parking lot and practice backing it up and understand how the boat turns prior to ever getting to a busy boat ramp. Believe me the mental pressure you will feel the first time you're backing a boat down a ramp will be high and if you haven't practiced some it will cause a mistake and these types of mistakes generally result in your property being damaged.

Lastly, if you haven't run your boat motor make sure you have had some good instructions on the starting and operation of the boat, and make sure it starts as sitting with the boat half in the water watching someone trying to start it is a fire storm.

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Carolina Riggin' For Spring Bass

By Shane Beilue

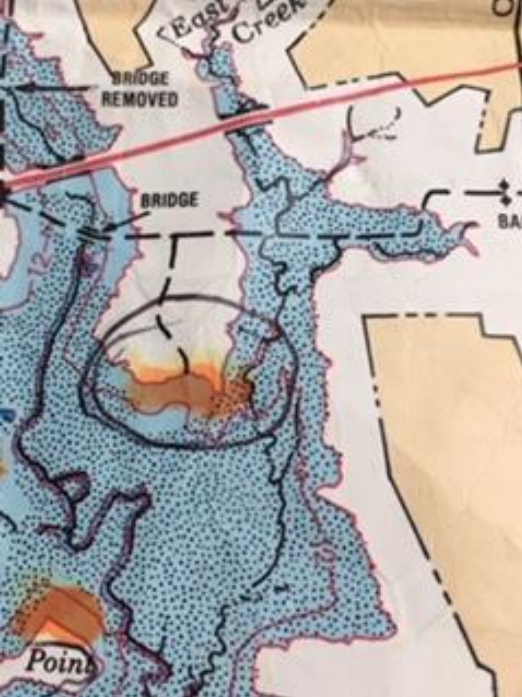
Bass fishermen across the country can see light at the end of the very long, cold tunnel of winter. Regardless what your temperature gauge reads today, you know the calendar promises warmer days (and nights) with hungry bass ready to move shallow for the annual spring spawn. This is often power fishing at its peak: intercepting aggressive bass with fast moving spinnerbaits, crankbaits and bladed jigs in the shallows as bass feed up before the spawn.

Another approach to add to your spring arsenal is a technique often associated with the summer months and deep water: the Carolina rig. If you're new to bass fishing, the Carolina rig consists of a ½ to 1 oz weight followed by a plastic bead (to protect the knot from the heavy sinker), a swivel and a leader of 18 to 36 inches. Then comes a light wire 3/0 hook and the soft plastic bait of your choosing. The



heavier weight kicks up silt and sediment as it is dragged along the bottom, which attracts the bass to the soft plastic offering trailing behind. The benefit of a Carolina rig is the ability to cover a lot of water very efficiently with a bottom bumping lure, yet the soft plastic has a more subtle appeal than, say, a crankbait.

The places to look for in the spring with a Carolina rig are broad, flat and relatively shallow points (8 feet or less) located within the various creek arms of the lake. The



best points are found just outside of a major spawning flat or pocket and lead to and from the deeper water in the main creek channel or tributary. Another consideration is that many of these points don't necessarily contain an abundance of cover. Instead, they may be quite barren or have small scattered bushes or gravel that you can feel with the Carolina rig as you drag it along bottom. These type places are bass magnets and an angler can find large schools of bass there because they use these flat points as feeding areas where bass roam and hunt forage in packs before and after the spawn. Late in the spring, bluegill and sunfish will spawn on these same flat points and the bass will turn the tables on these nest robbers by feeding heavily upon the spawning bluegill. As spring transitions to early summer, the bass will start using the same types of points out toward the main part of the lake. It's also not uncommon to find late spawning bass located along these flatter main lake points. These late spawning fish will also eat a slow-moving Carolina rigged plastic as it nears their nest.

The technique for a Carolina rig is simple: drag and reel with the key of maintaining bottom contact with the weight. As a rule of thumb, the shallower the water, the lighter the sinker. A ½ oz weight works well in less than 5' of water and a slow retrieve, but the ¾ oz is very versatile for faster retrieve speeds and fishing depths out to 10-15'. Experiment with your retrieve speed to see if the bass are attracted to a slow retrieve, or if they react to a much faster drag and reel approach. Also experiment with different styles of soft plastics, from bulky to finesse. Soft plastic lizards are always a good choice, but also consider the bigger profile of the creature style baits like a Yamamoto Flappin' Hog (prior page). Yet, consider that some of the biggest bass of the spring are often caught Carolina rigging the slender profile of a 5-6" Senko (below) or even the very subtle 4" french fry style baits.

Experienced anglers seem to have strong opinions on leader length, with some preferring lengths up to 6' long. Ultimately, the 24-36" length catches a lot of bass and is so much easier to cast than an excessively long leader. Opinions also vary on how heavy a leader to use on the business end of the "C-rig"; however, a fluorocarbon leader of 12-15 # test fits the vast majority of situations you encounter with this technique.

Finally, when rigging up, a longer rod certainly helps when lobbing a Carolina rig. A minimum rod length of 7' is recommended, with many anglers opting for 7'6" medium heavy action rod with plenty of backbone for long distance hooksets. As an example, the 7'4" medium heavy Quantum Tour or Tour KVD rod paired with a Smoke S3 reel in a 6:1 or 7:1 gear ratio handles the Carolina rig set up quite well.



This spring, if the shallow water bite starts to drop off with traditional spring lures, break out the Carolina rig and start searching the nearby points for groups of hungry bass.



Fishing Rod Selection – Power and Action

By Joel Nelson

The art of selecting a quality fishing rod is a time-honored tradition that takes place across the country every spring. Anglers flock to sporting goods stores, weary of winter's woes, dreaming of the first cast of the season. They pull a rod from the display and perform their tests of choice. A shake, a bend on the ground, or a dreaded "grab the tip and pull down" are what most folks use as criteria for determining their stick of choice.



Most never give a thought to how they'll use it or for what. Instead, they're motivated by feel, price, marketing materials and large numbers after the letters "I-M" that would seem to indicate sensitivity and/or quality. Nothing could be further from the truth. Here's the first of a two-part series on rod selection that'll put the right tool in your hand for the job at hand, no matter what price point you're looking to spend to.

Any good story starts at the beginning, and for fishing rods, that discussion gets off the ground with the terms "power" and "action." Contrary to popular belief, the terms are not interchangeable, and mean drastically different things. Before you think we're getting bogged down into an engineering debate, know that "power" relates to the amount of pressure it takes to impart a bend in the rod, and "action" is the part of the blank that actually deflects. That's a big distinction, as I've heard pro after pro relate to rods as a heavy or medium action, knowing full-well that they mean "power" here, as I've made the same mistake myself.

While power is an easy concept to grasp, as we're used to purchasing the appropriate power for the species we like to target, "action" is a more abstract notion. That is, until you look at a rod chart and see that actions start at moderate, bending closer to the

mid-section, and progress all the way to fast, then extra-fast actions that bend far closer to the tip of the rod.

It's important to realize that you'll need to understand both terms, as two medium power rods can have completely divergent actions which will benefit drastically different styles of angling. It'll also help to know a bit about a

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few other variables as you decipher which rod to buy, namely rod length, materials, components, and a bit about the manufacturer you're purchasing from. Did I mention that not all rod companies mention the action, and there are few universal standards by which the entire industry grades their powers and actions? We'll make it simpler, I promise.

Start with the power, knowing that your ability to impart extra leverage on larger fish will hinge on it. Powers range from Ultra-Light, to Light, Medium Light, Medium, Medium Heavy, and Heavy. Choose wisely based both on the species you're targeting, but also the lure weight you'll be using to target these species. If you're angling for a good number of species, Medium Light and Medium powers handle the largest swath of lure designs and fish species.

While you're thinking of lure types, know that the fastest of all actions like Extra Fast (XF) will excel when you need to move the rod minimally to set the hook fastest. Baits like jigs that rely on extreme sensitivity and feel find huge benefit with these XF actions, as you get to the backbone of the rod that much more quickly on a hookset. XF actions are so often paired with the highest end carbon fiber rods at the peak of sensitivity and price. At the opposite end of the spectrum, you've got moderate actions, which most of the cheaper rods already exhibit and truly excel for things such as crankbait fishing where you want some give to account for the bend that the diving crankbait's bill will impart on the rod. A crankbait rod without the proper "give" sees you missing far more fish on account of hooks pulling out of the mouth of the fish.

Rod length can be a function of personal preference, height of your casting platform, or any number of customized factors, so be sure to choose what you like here while observing a few generalities. The trend has been towards longer rods in the 7 foot region and longer for a number of reasons. Longer rods offer a number of advantages from casting distance to leverage and coverage, and as rod storage in boats gets more accommodating while rod manufacturers build increasingly lighter rods, I don't see this reversing itself. For that reason, I'm a big fan of shorter rods primarily for vertical

jigging, and longer rods moving longer for most applications outside of this.

Materials are harder to decipher, as all companies offer different marketing strategies to endear their version to you. Most rods however are made in the same factories, offering the same technologies branded differently for different importers. Very few rods are vertically manufactured, offering the customer a product that was custom made from scratch to solve a specific fishing problem. Know that more technology, better components, and lighter materials make for more expensive rods. It can also make them more brittle and prone to breakage as engineers push the limits of the goods at hand, making a solid warranty a necessity when purchasing a high end rod.

In the second part of this series, I'll offer some personal suggestions for common species and techniques, as well as a few shopping pointers to make sure you get the best rod for the money.

Joel Nelson, Writer, TV/Media Personality, Joel Nelson Outdoors – www.joelnelsonoutdoors.com

Joel is a well-known TV/Media personality in the fishing and hunting industry. A self-admitted “fish

nerd,” Nelson holds advanced degrees in the natural sciences, including fisheries and digital mapping, allowing him to both think like a fish and find them. Annually, he participates in numerous TV, Radio, and writing venues, highlighting relevant stories on his website - Joel Nelson Outdoors. Joel works with the biggest names in ice-fishing, open-water, and hunting; all while focusing on genuine experiences and the how-to's he's picked up along the way.



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TSURUMI

LESSONS FROM LINCOLN!

By Mike Frisch

Good fortune has allowed me to have two careers involving education. Twenty years as a physical education teacher and coach and now several more as a fishing educator have allowed me the opportunity to educate, and learn from, others, particularly kids.

When discussing “today’s kids,” I sometimes hear comments like “kids sure have changed” or “they spend too much time on their phones!” Interesting comments, but more on that later.

I met a young man named Lincoln, a first grader at the time, a couple springs ago. Lincoln attended a Bass Pro Shops and Cabela’s School of Fish (SOF) class I taught at his school in Grand Forks (ND). Later that fall Lincoln was drawn as the lucky winner of the annual “fish on tv” drawing we do from SOF graduates.

Lincoln showed up to a small lake near my western Minnesota home one day in September for his TV shoot and immediately I could tell that this moment wouldn’t be “too big” for him! Some people, adults included, are intimidated by cameras and get very nervous when wearing a microphone for the first time. Not Lincoln, as he inquisitively looked at the producer’s gear, not showing any signs of nervousness.

Lincoln proved to be pretty good with a rod and reel too, landing good-sized smallmouth bass on several of his first casts. The show came together quickly and easily and was highlighted by Lincoln’s reference to the “the anchovies” he was using for baits that day. Hence the show became known as “the Anchovy Kid” segment.

Lincoln did such a good job that we invited him back for an encore appearance. The fishing wasn’t nearly as good this past September, but Lincoln stayed patient and determined, changed “anchovies” several times, and eventually put the fish in the boat needed for the show. He also showed viewers his rendition of “the floss” dance that has become popular. On the way back to the landing, Lincoln asked if “we get to fish together again next year?”



The author and Lincoln with a smallmouth bass that fell for an anchovy!

Summer Time Shallow Fishing

Capt. Mike Gerry



As the heat of the summer moves upon us, most fisherman believe that fishing in 20 plus ft. of water is where they need to be to catch fish; although this is a correct belief it is not necessarily the only way to catch fish. Bass do live in the shallow water during the hottest time of the year and there are some advantages to finding shallow fish. The fact remains that in many lakes where there is a big stand of grass like Guntersville the shallow water can be your best alternative.

First of all when the grass mats over the top on these grass lakes the water temperature is actually cooler by as much as ten degrees under the mats; pushing the bass into the cooler water temps. It is also true that oxygen is more plentiful in the grass as the mixture of grass and water has a biological effect on the oxygen levels in the grass and becomes a better habitat for bass to survive in during the heat of the summer. Bass feed more when their oxygen level is high and getting a bite is many times easier in the shallow grass mats.

The enticing thing about the deep water in the summer is with today's electronics you can visualize the large schools deep on your Lowrance products but that is not necessarily a good thing because the best of the summer time fisherman likes to hang out on those deep schools increasing the fishing pressure substantially in the deep off shore locations. Many times, the shallow water guy has the spots by themselves just because the deep gets crowded with the off shore guys. With the pressure on today's lakes having any area by your self can be a gift!

Another thing about deep water in the summer is that rain seems to dirty up the deeper water longer during hard rains in the summer creating mud lines in the water that separate the deep and shallow. The mud lines move the bass to the shallow and as the deep-water stay's muddy longer the clearing in the shallow allows them to feed along the mud lines in the skinny water. There are certainly many reason to fish shallow in the summer and being versatile enough to try it has its advantages.

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5 Hotspots For Spring Trout

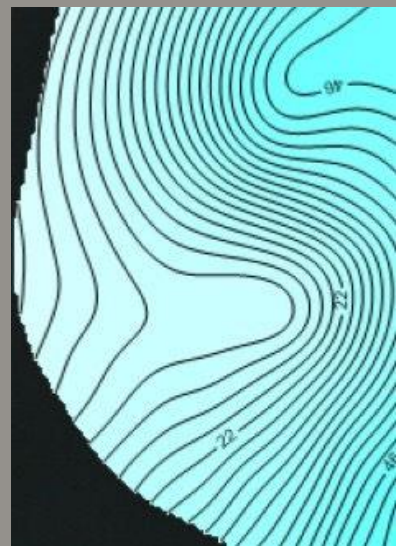
By Bernie Keefe

With cool water temperatures giving them free reign to roam, lakers, rainbows and brown trout could be virtually anywhere in the lake during the springtime.

More often than not, however, a few key areas hold the majority of the fish. Check out these five surefire hotspots from veteran trout guide Bernie Keefe to make this your best spring yet.

Main-Lake Points

Points attract forage and baitfish, making these shoreline sweet spots magnets for trout. "Long, slow-tapering points where the tip quickly drops from 10 or 20 feet of water into 30 feet or more are the best, but any gradual point with deep water at the end has potential," says Keefe, who uses a lake map to locate prime points but says you can sometimes judge them from shore.



Bottom composition isn't critical, he notes. "It doesn't matter whether it's mud, gravel or boulders," he says. "Depth is most important, and that it's a prominent point."

Light conditions are likewise key. "Sunny skies and calm seas won't cut it," Keefe cautions. "This is totally a low-light, heavy overcast or windy-weather pattern. Such conditions cause trout to move surprisingly shallow. Even trophy lake trout will cruise into a few feet of water to grab an easy meal."

The top of the point is where the action's at. Keefe casts a midsize minnowbait like a Berkley Cutter 110 into the strike zone and fishes it with an erratic retrieve.

"A combination of twitches, pauses and pulls usually trips their trigger," he says. "Experiment to determine the right cadence. But in general, keep it slow if the water temperature is less than 40 degrees, and speed things up once it's over 50."

Cove Mouths

As the sun rises on a clear day, trout slide out of the shallows. Keefe turns his attention to deeper hangouts, like 15- to 30-foot depths in front of small bays and coves.



"Bottom content isn't important here, either, except that trout tend to scatter on mud bottoms, and in really rocky areas they look for flat gravel patches to lay on," he says. "They're like us in that regard, because most people would rather have a soft mattress than a bed of nails."

Trout may be in resting mode, but they still bite. Keefe casts swimbaits like a Berkley Jerk Shad or Power Minnow rigged on a 1/8- to 1/4-ounce jighead.

"Cast out, let the jig fall to bottom, then experiment with different retrieves until you get bit," he says. "Dragging, hopping and swimming all have their moments, and the fish will let you know the best approach for the conditions at hand."

While casting, he keeps an eye on his Lowrance sonar. "If I mark a fish, it will often bite if I can get a jig down to it in a hurry," he says.

Inlets

Incoming tributaries are fonts of life in the spring. "Trout and baitfish move into them to spawn," says Keefe. "Other trout move in to feed on the eggs, and large trout like trophy lakere come in to eat other fish. You basically have the whole food chain in there."

When targeting eater-size rainbows, Keefe rigs a worm or artificial Power Bait on a small jig or split-shot rig and drifts it through the shallows with the current, either in the creek or where the inflow enters the lake. "If you want suckers, try anchoring a worm in place with a heavier sinker," he suggests. "Suckers won't chase a drifting bait."

For larger trout, he backs out into the lake and casts deeper water.



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Minnowbaits get the nod in low light, while jigs rule under sunnier skies. "When they're not raiding the inlet, big fish stage in depths of 10 to 25 feet, often in groups, where their competitive nature makes them easier to catch than loners cruising solo," he explains. "Don't be afraid to look around, because I've found them up to a quarter mile from the inlet."

Dam Corners

When fishing a man-made impoundment, Keefe compulsively checks the outside edges of the dam. "You either have concrete butting up to gravel, or large boulders meeting sand and gravel," he says. "Both types of transitions attract everything from spawning rainbows to hungry lakers." Keefe casts the same minnowbaits and jigs around these dam corners, in depths out to 20 feet.

Flats

Flat-bottomed areas rich in baitfish and other forage such as crayfish can also be gold mines right now. Keefe's favorite flats are relatively small areas such as a living room-sized flat lying on a steep-dropping point.



"These are high-percentage areas, ideal for run-and-gun tactics where you line up a milk run of five or 10 small flats and bounce from one to the next, making 10 to 15 casts on each one before moving on."

Small, subtle flats can be hard to spot on traditional lake maps. "Detailed mapping programs like Lowrance's Insight Genesis, which has 1-foot contours, make it easier to find fish-holding flats other anglers miss," he says.

By keying on these overlooked fish factories and the other hotspots on Keefe's early season hit list, you can make this your best spring ever, catching trout when other anglers can't.





Early Season Fishing Memories

By Bob Jensen

It's that time of year: The boat is being rigged, I'm putting fresh line on my reels, I'm calling friends to see if they have any good fishing reports, in short, I'm preparing for the open water fishing season. As I prepare, I have lots of memories, mostly good, about past early season fishing adventures. My recollection of the exact dates isn't so good, but my memories of the events are fairly cloud-free. Here we go.

Clear Lake in north central Iowa doesn't have a closed season for walleyes anymore. Anglers from other states like to visit Clear Lake to chase walleyes before the season in their home state opens. I think it was in the early 90's that Clear Lake was full of smallish walleyes, lots of them in the twelve to fourteen-inch range. They weren't big, but they were plentiful and fun to catch. I hosted

Our friend Jim McDonnell with an eater walleye from a good number of years ago. Cherish the catches, but more importantly, cherish the time you spend with family and friends.

an annual gathering for friends in the media to get together on Clear Lake on a Saturday in mid-April. We usually had three boats with three anglers in each. We always caught fish, and we always had a good time. One-year Jim McDonnell, Marty Papke, and Rick James shared a boat. Mac was a fishing guide and school teacher who lived in the Iowa Great Lakes area of northwest Iowa. Mac isn't with us anymore.

Rick was one of the pioneers in the fishing education industry. He hosted an outdoor radio show and wrote fishing articles. He lived in Willmar Minnesota.

Marty lived in northern Wisconsin at the time. He guided and wrote fishing articles. Marty now lives in Michigan. All during the day, you could hear these guys laughing and landing fish. They were having a good time, and that's what fishing is supposed to be about. At the end of the day we compared notes regarding how we caught the fish and how many we caught. We all had a lot, but they said they had caught 137 walleyes, and we believed them. Rick returned home and wrote an article about the trip. In the article, he reported catching "about 40" walleyes. I called him right away, this was before



emails or texting, and asked him why he only reported 40 walleyes being caught. Rick said that he had written 137 were caught, but his editor told him that “no one would believe that three anglers could catch that many walleyes in Iowa in one day”. By the way, Clear Lake is now an outstanding fishery that still has lots of walleyes, and they’re much bigger now.

I remember fishing on Opening Day of Walleye Season with the annual Governor’s

Fishing Party in a snowstorm in Ely Minnesota.

I remember another Governor’s Opener in Bemidji Minnesota. We hit the water at midnight, fished until four o’clock the next afternoon without a break, then loaded the boat, got in the truck and drove the eight hours home for a business function. I did that a lot “back in the day”.

This is something else I remember about “back in the day”. We didn’t catch as many fish, or as many big fish, as we do right now. For the most part, we’re catching more and bigger fish, walleyes, muskies, bass, than at any time in my memory. Management of the fisheries has changed, anglers skills have improved, and our equipment is far superior. The current era is a great time for anglers for the most part. Take advantage of that in the next few weeks and months.

To see all the newest episodes of the Fishing the Midwest television series, new fishing related tips, and fishing articles from the past, go to www.fishingthemidwest.com.

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Heartbreak and Perspective

By Gary Maerz

Hope

I stood on the deck, hopeful and focused. It was the final hours of our annual trip; I knew that it would be another rotation around the sun before I found myself on that same deck. Trolling along the break, a tube was sent hopping along the bottom. The line moved towards the boat, the slack was removed, and the hook set.

Excitement

The excitement induced with every tight line kicks in. I back off the trolling motor. Then, instead of rising through the water column, she starts digging. "Uncle Danny, get the net! She's big!" I play her for another few moments and get her to the top. Uncle Danny's got jokes but moves to the net when he hears the thrashing. Excitement gives way to nervous elation. I will not venture to guess the size, but I can tell you it was the largest bass I had ever hooked. And yes, I saw the bass; no tree stump or brush pile on the end of my line.

Clearly not as happy to see me, she turned tail and sank like a nuclear submarine. My reel screamed for several



seconds (or an eternity). If I tightened the drag, the line would snap like a wishbone. I held fast hoping she would tire soon. Then, without warning, the struggle ceased.

Heartbreak

Not a single expletive was uttered. I fell to my knees, put my face in my hands, and remained there for several minutes simply speechless. Absolute heartbreak.

The line revealed a clean break. My equipment did not fail. Moby Bass swam towards cover (you know, that brush pile from before) as instinct tends to dictate. It was the edge of a hidden knife that sliced the fluorocarbon. The next hour was spent combing over the area hoping to trigger another strike. It had happened once before so why not again?

Alas, she continued to elude me. I was truly despondent and completely off my game for the rest of the night. Then I realized, that in the grand scheme, this bass meant nothing.

Perspective

This bass was not the difference between a six-figure paycheck and walking home empty handed. It did not cost me a fully loaded Toyota pick-up. I had experienced a great deal of success on this trip. In fact, all I lost was a photograph and a bit

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of pride; another feather in the cap. Perspective allowed me to move on (while confirming my suspicion that I am not a professional bass angler one can find on the ESPN) and stop obsessing over a fish.

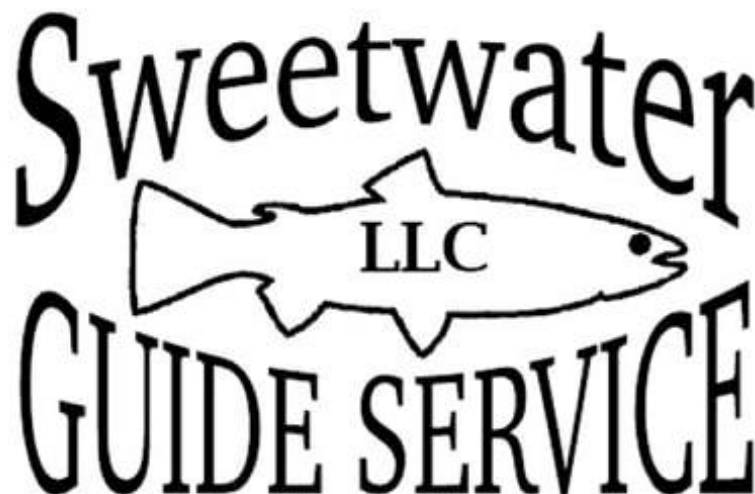
It is several months after that heartbreaking loss (August 2018) and I'm still thinking about "the one that got away" as many would. And that's the key; thinking. I have since considered what I should have done differently (namely using the trolling motor to back away from large rocks and fallen timber) and how I will approach that situation when it comes again.

By keeping things in perspective, heartbreak will be minimized. Every fishing trip remains an opportunity for learning and improvement. To tight lines and photographs.

Opening Image: Largemouth bass released during the same trip to Whisperwood Lodge & Cottages.

Gary is a nationally published, freelance outdoor writer with a focus on fishing related content. He owns/operates www.GermanikAngler.com and is currently a contributing writer for Rambling Angler Outdoors. You can visit his social pages on Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and YouTube.

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Trophy Walleye on Manitoba's Gunisao Lake

By Jason Mitchell



We have been fortunate to have filmed some of the best walleye fishing in North America. Traveling to many renowned destination fisheries during peak times. We have experienced incredible walleye bites across the United States and Canada.

There are fisheries that have a reputation for numbers of fish and there are the select fisheries that have serious trophy potential. There are big water options like Lake Erie and Green Bay and Bay of Quinte. River and reservoir opportunities like the Columbia River, Red River, Tobin Lake, Fort Peck and Sakakawea. Then there is Budd's Gunisao Lake Lodge in northern Manitoba which is unique and unlike any other trophy walleye destination for so many good reasons.



What was eye opening to me is the sheer number of master angler class walleyes measured and released on this water each summer. When we look at all the good walleye water in the province of Manitoba, Gunisao typically leads the way for fish over twenty-eight inches. The number of registered walleyes over thirty inches on this Canadian shield lake over the past decade is nothing short of amazing. This is a bucket list destination if your goal is to simply catch lots of big fish.

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We made the trek to Gunisao this past July of 2018. We have done a fair share of fly in outpost camps in the past but this experience was different. Good fishing is expected at a fly in camp and most camps will put you on unbelievable fishing for numbers of fish that range between 15 to 24 inches. Fly in camps offer that ambiance and remoteness along with cut up hands and shore lunches. Gunisao offers the trophy walleye factor. The entire lake can be driven across in half an hour with an 18-foot aluminum boat and forty horsepower motor. The lake is not overly large, not like most big fish destinations. The number of Master Angler walleyes caught each week however is what sets this camp apart from most fly in camps.



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body of water. In four days of fishing, we put nine master angler walleyes in the boat but what was also staggering was the sheer number of 24 to 28-inch fish we caught. We typically caught at least sixty fish each day. To add even more enjoyment to the whole experience was that the 24-inch fish fought just as hard as the 30 inch fish. Stubborn, bull dog fights that stretched eight-pound mono, bending over a spinning rod right down to the handle. Directly below the boat in twenty-five to thirty feet of water, these big fish refused to leave the bottom of the lake. Good living.

The logistics also make Gunisao stand out. Most fly in camps utilize float planes which add another layer of expense and also are limited by range. This camp actually built an air strip next to the lodge and utilize chartered flights out of Winnipeg. Simply get to Winnipeg and fly out early in the morning. After an hour and a half flight, you are eating breakfast at the lodge and on your way to fishing. No float planes not only simplifies the logistics for anglers but also raises everything else up a notch. This camp uses much larger motors that burn more fuel. The food is excellent. Supplies and staff get transported with each trip.

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GET BIT BY PANFISH NOW

By Bob Jensen

The big lake near where I live still had a lot of ice on it when I drove by a few days ago, but it was opening up near the shoreline. But the smaller ponds in the area have a lot of open water. In fact, of friend of mine told me that a friend of his had just caught a nice bunch of crappies from the open water in one of those ponds. For many anglers, panfish are how we kick off another open water fishing season. Most of us have a body of water nearby that it is home to bluegills and crappies and the like, and they're a great place for that first fishing trip of the year. Here's how you do it.

One of the keys is finding the warmest water in the lake or

pond you'll be fishing. Warm water makes the fish more active and more likely to eat your lure. The north side of a body of water warms up faster, as do the bays and canals and areas like that. Those are the areas where we'll be concentrating our efforts.

Panfish like to be near "stuff". "Stuff" could be a tree that has fallen into the water, a dock or boat lift, anything that provides some cover for the panfish that's in warm water and is close to deeper water will probably be the hangout for some bluegills or crappies.

A small jig under a slip-bobber is probably the best presentation this time of year. If you're after 'gills or sunfish, go with a tiny jig. Something in the 1/32nd or 1/64th size range will be good.

If crappies are the quarry, go a little larger, maybe a 1/16th ounce jig. Crappies have a large mouth and can handle a bigger jig. 'Gills and sunfish have tiny mouths and prefer tiny meals.

By using a slip-bobber, you can suspend the jig right in the fishes face. A slow presentation is best now, and the slip-bobber allows for a slow presentation. Set the bobber stop so the bait is just a



tad above where you expect the fish to be. They'll go up to take a bait, but rarely down.

Black is a good jig color. In many areas the panfish are eating just hatched black bugs in the spring. Crappies seem to prefer something brighter. A Fire-fly jig tipped with a small minnow will be a winner.

Or try an Impulse Helium Stonefly. These jigs are meant to be fished under a bobber and they look like the bugs that

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panfish like to eat. Maybe tip it with a waxworm or spike if the fish are a little hesitant to eat it.

Twitch your rod gently to impart a quiver to whatever jig you use. Rig your baits on four-pound test line. P-Line CX Premium has become favored among many anglers. It's easy to manage and it fishes well around cover. Additionally, some of the most successful panfish-catchers have gone to longer rods. The traditionalists might go with a seven-foot rod in medium light

action. This length is good for swinging baits into position and for swinging fish into the boat.

Others go with a rod with no reel, just a couple feet of line tied to the tip. Cabela's has one called a Whuppin' Stick that telescopes out to ten or twelve feet and is very affordable. They have become extremely popular in many areas.

If you're anxious to get fishing, find a panfish pond or lake in your area and get out there. The fish will bite if you just put a lure in front of them.

Kevan Paul, noted Clear Lake Iowa fishing guide, with a spring crappie.

To see episodes of Fishing the Midwest television or fishing articles as well as fishing videos, go to www.fishingthemidwest.com.

The Spawn And Soft Plastics

Capt. Mike Gerry

When we start to see the bass bedding for the spawn nothing catches fish like soft plastics, it's the universal bait the entices bedding fish and its easy for any angler to fish. The thing to remember is the presentations you can choose from are endless, just about any way you choose to rig your plastic will catch bass.



The important thing to keep in your knowledge base is weighting the plastic is easy, anything less than an 1/8 oz. is generally the ticket to catching fish. It's very rare that I weight it any heavier than a 1/4 oz. that would only be if its windy and in most cases it's just enough to get the bait out easily while casting, slow drop rates are key. The other important part of plastics in the fall is having plastics that entice like lizards, something with legs arms that flutter and make the bait move and drop slowly. Missile Bait D-Bombs have great arms and are perfect spawn plastics.

The presentation I use a lot in this spawning time is to whacky rig a Missile Bait "48" stick bait (pictured), I generally rig it on a 1/8oz. shaky head to give the bait an easy drop without having to peg a slip weight. This set-up is easy for young and or inexperienced fisherman alike and all you need to do is have a little feel for the bite and you can catch fish and many times it's a good fish. I also like to Texas rig an old fashion lizard, there is just something about the way a lizard drops and moves that spawning fish love this plastic and it is always a great fish catcher. Colors to me were never very important but the thing I try to do is just match the water color with dark colors like watermelons etc. in bright clear water the brighter colors and whites seem to work well.

Fishing plastics in the spawn is easy presentation and one that anyone can be successful at, it's a great way and time of year to get your children catching fish. There is generally lots of bites and opportunities for those grand kids to catch fish.



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Fish Jigs To Locate Spring Walleyes

By Team Northland Pro-Staffer Bob Jensen



Mike Borovic's Top Five Spring Walleye Baits

- LUNKERHUNT 4.5" Bento Bait Sassy Shad
- Zipper 5" Original Worm - June Bug Chartreuse Tail
- Case Plastics Lil Magic Swim - Albino Shad
- Lunker City Fin-S Fish - Pimp Daddy Fire Tail
- LUNKERHUNT 5.5" Swim Bento - Mackerel

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Walleye anglers taking to the water for the first time after the ice clears from their favorite lakes generally know where to start looking for fish—those post-spawners set up in shallow, warm feeding areas near the rivers or shorelines that recently held their interest.

A lake of any size will typically feature a number of potential hotspots, however, and they can be fairly large. Then, it becomes a matter of pinpointing concentrations of walleyes. I like to do it by fishing fairly quickly with a jig-and-minnow, or even something like a Slurp!® Jig Head and Impulse® Swim'n Grub.

Because I typically focus on depths 10 feet or less, I go with a 1/8-ounce head of one color and a 3-inch grub body of a contrasting color, say pink-and-white or orange-and-chartreuse. If there are two anglers in the boat, each should start with a different combo until the walleyes start showing a preference for a certain shade or combination of colors.

The retrieve is slow and steady; you don't want to hop or twitch the jig too much. Just swim it slowly near the bottom as you probe the entire area. When you catch a couple of fish from a particular spot, it's time to slow down and really work it hard with a jig-and-minnow.

If the bottom contains some rock, cobble or other debris, I go with a 1/16-ounce Fire-Ball® Jig and minnow and crawl it as much as possible. On a sandy bottom, I'll simply drag an 1/8-ounce Stand-Up Fire-Ball® Jig

ENJOY THE HARVEST



Wild Turkey Slab Salad

**Article and Photo
By Ken McBroom**

This recipe was meant to be a wedge salad, but the only problem with the wedge cut was that the turkey wouldn't stay on top of the lettuce. By cutting the lettuce lengthwise a nice slab of lettuce was created and made the perfect place for the turkey breast to lay. Hence the name for this recipe. It calls for wild turkey, but you can easily use chicken breast or any meat of your choosing. Medium rare strips of venison tenderloin work just as well if the turkey hunting has been tough in your neck of the woods. This is a simple recipe that packs a powerful punch to the taste buds and is a great way to enjoy your harvest this season.

INGREDIENTS FOR GLAZE

These ingredients are for the wonderful balsamic and honey glaze. To me the secret to this salad. This glaze has been accidentally left off the salad and it never takes long for someone to notice.

1/2 cup balsamic vinegar

1/8 cup raw honey

1/4 teaspoon sea salt

In a small saucepan combine above ingredients, bring to a gentle simmer. Stir often, until it begins to



The wild turkey can be a challenge to hunt and enjoying the harvest afterwards can extend the hunt to those around you as you relive it in the kitchen or at the fire.

cling to your spoon. Set the balsamic and honey glaze in the fridge to cool. This glaze is sweet and does well with the spices used when grilling the turkey.

INGREDIENTS FOR SALAD

These ingredients are personal preferences and can be adjusted to your liking. I will say that these few ingredients, as mentioned above, creates a super flavorful dish and while there is nothing wrong with adding more ingredients, the few listed here create a fantastic salad.

1 wild turkey breast
1 red onion, thinly sliced
1 head of iceberg lettuce
1 diced tomato

Slice the head of lettuce lengthwise as opposed to quartering to create a slab. This will let you to lie the grilled turkey breast on top of the lettuce. This makes it easier to slice and eat and gives a nice presentation for the table.

PREPARE THE BACON

You can use packaged bacon bits, but I love freshly prepared bacon chopped into bits. I cook the bacon on the grill's side burner in a cast iron skillet until they are nice and crispy. Set them aside to cool. Be sure to place them on some paper towels to draw out the bacon grease. This helps the bacon become crispy and crumble up much easier. When the bacon is cool, I use a knife and actually dice the bacon strips. Most of the bacon will crumble up just by breaking the slices up, but for those pieces that aren't as crispy a knife will chop them nicely. You can also leave those not so crispy pieces out if you like.

PREPARE THE TURKEY

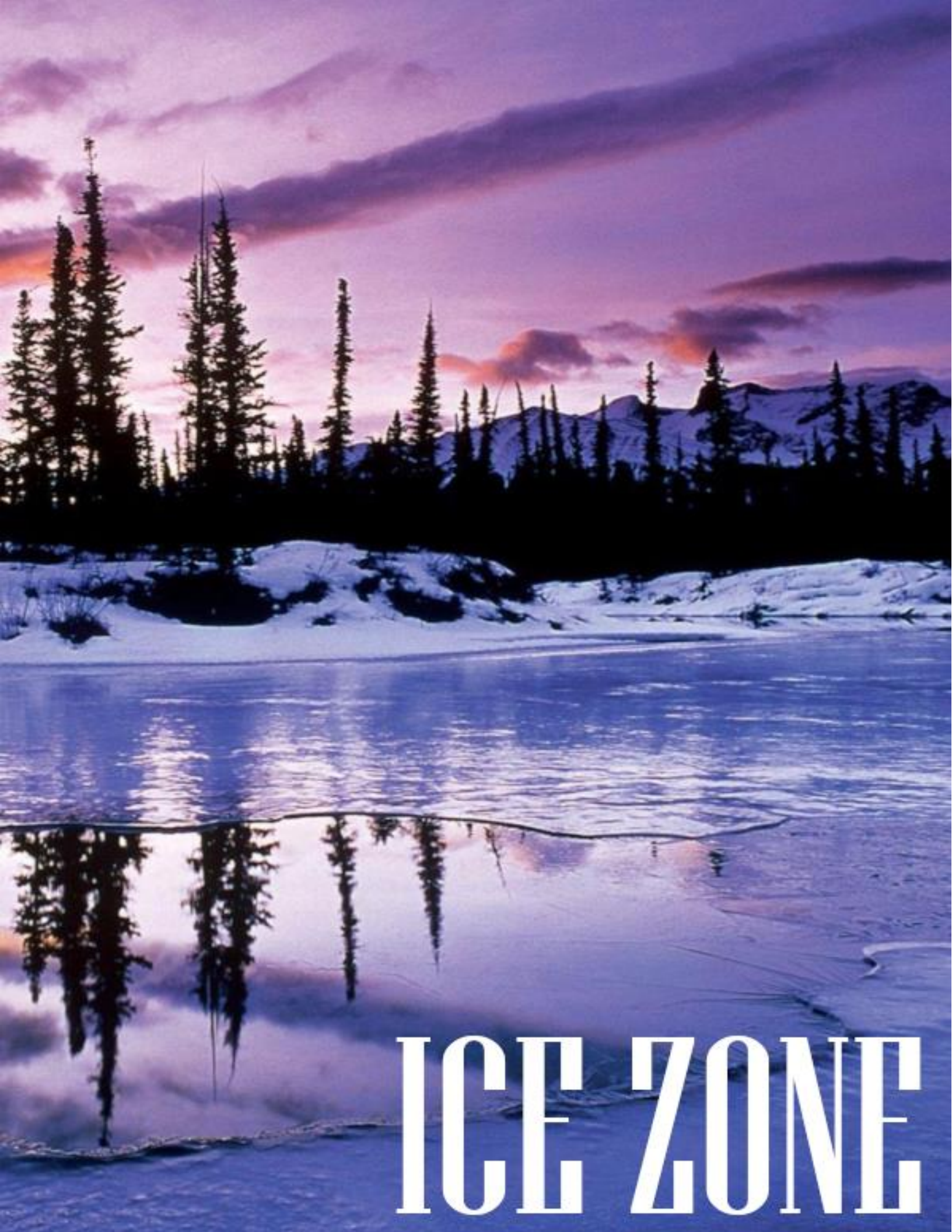
You can cook your turkey breast any way you like. Some like their turkey deep fried while others prefer fried. For this salad the wild turkey breast was cut into strips, seasoned with Cajun spices and grilled. Any meat or poultry spices will work. Chef Paul Prudhomme's Blackened Redfish Magic spice was used for this salad. This is for making blackened fish, but trust me when I say it ain't just for fish. Give it a try. You can prepare some of the strips to be spicy and some mild if you have visitors that prefer it less spicy.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

As mentioned above slice your lettuce lengthwise about an inch thick and lay the slab on a plate. Evenly pour blue cheese dressing, or your dressing of choice, all over the top. Add tomato, red onion and bacon. Drizzle the balsamic and honey glaze all over. On top of this, lay the turkey strips and drizzle more glaze and dressing. Blue cheese crumbles are a great addition and top this salad off perfectly. This salad is a great reward to a great harvest. One more way to prepare wild turkey for your family and friends. ENJOY!

This turkey recipe is healthy and packed with flavor and is sure to have people asking, "when are you going turkey hunting again?"





ICE ZONE



Increase Your Success During Late Ice

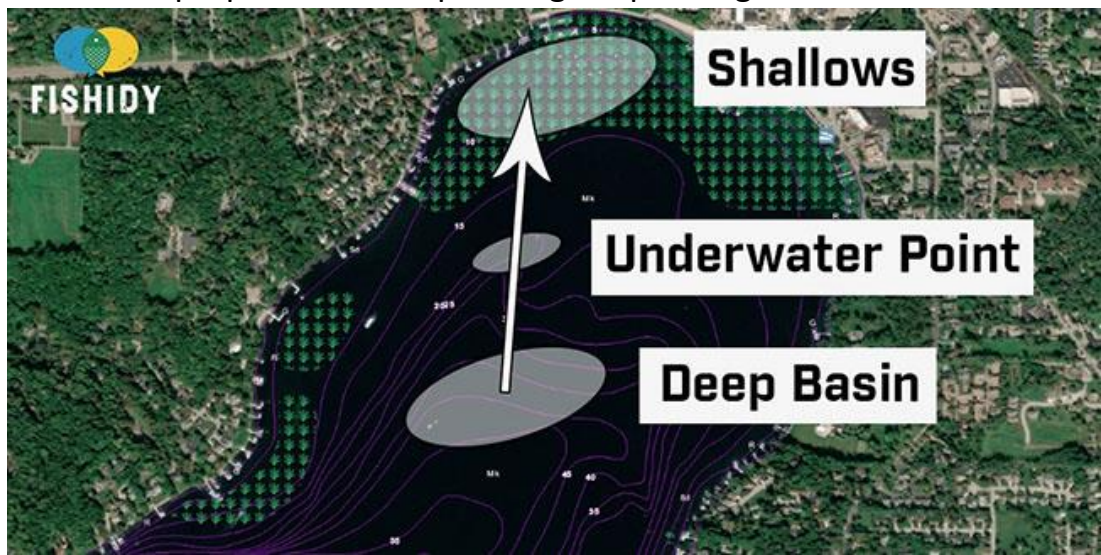
Four Late-Winter Tips for Catching More Panfish

By Jim Edlund

Seek, Drill and Stay Mobile for Late Ice Crappies. In smaller, shallower lakes, crappies are typically located and caught throughout much of the winter season over main-lake basins. In large, deep lakes, however, they tend to avoid the deepest areas and use flats, humps and basins ranging from 20 to 40 feet deep. But crappies are also notorious for suspending. Depending upon conditions, they can be found anywhere in the water column, creating an additional variable in the angling equation.

As the ice-fishing season nears its end, crappies transition from deep water wintering areas towards shallow bays, channels and river mouths in preparation for spawning. Depending on where and when you fish, concentrations of crappies will be present along a relatively straight line between these distinct areas.

Once you've identified attractive areas, gas up the auger and get to work. Use your GPS to confirm your location on the ice, and pick a variety of sweet spots over the particular



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structure you plan to fish. A larger fishing party is beneficial because you can share the work of drilling holes and checking them for fish with sonar. Once you mark fish, take the time to drill more holes. It'll save you time in the long run as you'll waste less time fishing an unproductive hole when an entire school may be located just 10 or 15 feet away.

Once the crappies are located, hole hopping is the key to keeping busy catching them. Anglers willing to leave the comfort of their fish houses and use their electronics to fish from hole to hole are the ones who catch the most crappies. Keep moving if a hole doesn't show a fish on your sonar. Keep drilling more holes if necessary until you get a sonar return. Then drop down, catch a fish or two and move on once the action slows.



Fish Fast for Late Ice Crappies. Crappies display a variety of moods, and their responsiveness to various presentations can change throughout the day – often rapidly. Late-ice crappie anglers should be prepared with a variety of offerings, from small tungsten jigs tipped with thin plastics to relatively large jigging spoons tipped with spikes, waxes or minnow parts. The key is being prepared and willing to show fish a variety of presentations and profiles to determine which one best matches their mood at that moment. Then it becomes a game of presenting the preferred bait to numbers of fish, which means moving on quickly from barren holes.

When a fish shows on sonar, try stopping the bait 4 to 5 feet above it and slowly working it down if necessary. You'll often see the fish begin drifting up towards your bait immediately. If they do, slowly raise the bait while twitching it ever so slightly to make them chase it. Once you get them

moving, they'll usually charge it. If they refuse it, it's time to try a different bait.

Fishing fast means fishing heavy. Getting down to a fish fast — hopefully before it leaves — is critical to maximizing opportunities. Tungsten jigs sink fast while retaining a delicate profile, and are the best choice when crappies show a preference for smaller offerings. Jigging spoons are great options anytime crappies are aggressive and eager to attack a larger profile. They easily punch through slushy holes and get back down to other fish quickly once one has been caught.

Turkey Baster Panfish?. One surefire strategy for determining the types of wintertime foods preferred by bluegills, perch and crappies is to take a living, breathing sample. Fly fishermen use a small stomach pump (resembles a miniature turkey baster) on stream trout in order to match the hatch. It works with panfish, too, and it's completely harmless to fish, other than depriving them of recent eats.

Fill the pump with water with a quick squeeze, insert the tube into the fish's mouth and a few inches down its pharynx, which leads directly to the stomach. Be gentle! Squirt the water into the stomach and release the pump, which vacuums up any recently ingested critters. Squirt said contents into your palm and have a looksee.

A fish's recent meals reveal the anatomical details of each eaten bug, as well as plenty of the goo that represents zooplankton and other partially digested "whatnot." You also learn potentially productive lure colors, and can quickly tie on something you know panfish will want to eat. Identifying specific prey items also suggests fruitful jigging cadences. Mayfly larva, for example, swim with undulating tail kicks that can be mimicked with various soft plastic baits.



The Strength of the Snell. While most ice anglers rely on one or two favorite knots, the truth is you can do a lot better than an improved clinch, Trilene or other customary line-to-jig connection. If you've never tried a snell knot, including versions such as the Marka knot or a Uni-Snell knot—you're missing out on a ton of advantages for almost any jig presentation, particularly for panfish jigs and ultra-thin mono or fluorocarbon lines. Actually, the advantages of a well-tied snell overwhelm those of traditional knots.

One, a snell knot positions your jig at the ideal horizontal position—no need to reposition your knot, ever. Two, the knot is recessed and tied around the shank of the hook, so it rarely requires retying (you can often fish most of an 8-hour day with the same snell knot and jig.) Three, snell knots are almost bulletproof-strong. Finally, the knot itself acts as a form of soft plastics keeper, pinning the chosen bait tight to the jig collar. The plastic further protects the knot by sliding right over the top of it. Moreover, you can tie either version with traditional eyelet jigs, or Russian "through-head" jigs. Here's a link to a few top ice jig knots (see #3, #6A and #6B).



Search Strategies for Jumbo Perch at Late Ice

By Jason Mitchell

Ice anglers have long been infatuated with big jumbo perch and late ice is a prime window for targeting perch on a lot of different fisheries. In some states, game fish seasons close prior to the late ice period where as perch and other pan fish seasons remain open year-round. Part of the allure for ice anglers targeting perch can be the highs and lows of perch fishing in that we often need to move and drill holes to find fish. A frustrating day can change in a matter of minutes with one hole... one school of fish. You can go from a zero to a hero quickly when fishing for perch.

What I find amazing about targeting perch through the ice is just how different ecosystems and forage bases can create extremely different patterns. Locations on Mille Lacs Lake will vary greatly from Lake Winnie. Saginaw Bay will be completely different from Devils Lake. Perch that are keying on shiners and crayfish act differently from fish that are using blood worms or fresh water shrimp as a primary forage. As a rule of thumb, fish that are keying on minnows or crayfish are often more aggressive than fish living off invertebrates like scuds and bug larvae.

The randomness of where we find perch can be frustrating in that on so many fisheries, we are finding schools of perch wandering basins and large flats. Perch can be anywhere on these locations and are often moving. As a result, finding and catching perch is often about moving and drilling holes. You don't catch perch until you find them. There are many nuances however that can affect that overall strategy.

Breaking down basins and large flats is often about making big moves until you find some signs of life and then making small moves to catch fish. This is a mistake that many anglers make is that they get bogged down with drilling a lot of holes but drilling their holes too close together on foot. When you are on a large piece of structure, use your ATV, snowmobile or vehicle to make those big moves. Don't plop on a location, unload all your gear and proceed to tear apart the lake within a hundred yards of you

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when in search mode unless you are extremely lucky. My best strategy for finding fish is making big moves, often traveling two to three hundred yards between holes and spending more time in a hole, perhaps ten to fifteen minutes. By spreading your holes and settling into your holes longer, you also give fish a little bit of time to wander underneath you if you are in a productive area. This style allows you to break down bigger pieces of water and allows you to cover miles of water over the course of the day when you are starting from scratch.

Once we zero in on a general area, this is the time to get more aggressive and drill a grid through an area where you can aggressively move from hole to hole and contact fish. This is where the small moves catch fish. Small moves or drilling out a small area is terrible for finding fish on a big lake but is the very best way to produce fish once you find them.

There are many factors to try and wrap your head around when dialing in patterns but perhaps the most important factor is how to drill out a location and the overall strategy of using your auger to catch fish. Perch can be in one massive school that is moving a general direction or the school can be several small pods or waves of fish that are traveling a general direction. On some fisheries, perch will school in a column where they stack up on top of each other and move very fast. These vertical schools are typically very aggressive fish and these fish will often climb much higher in the water column. There are also times where perch will seldom stack up vertically and instead school up where the fish swim side by side and you seldom have more than three fish on the Vexilar at one time. These horizontal schooling fish are often less aggressive and sprawl out over a larger area. Generally, if you can get fish to stack up on top of each other and get multiple fish below you... these fish are much easier to catch.

How the fish are schooling can really influence your overall strategy. If you are dealing with perch that are sprawled out over a general area, you can sit over one hole and just wait for these waves of fish to pass underneath. If you get a school of fish to pass by every ten to twenty minutes, you can add them up to a great day. When fish are traveling fast in a column, you often need to be much more aggressive and land on them for short periods of time where your windows are going to be intense. You might only keep these fish under you for ten minutes at a time before you lose them but if you get two or three cracks at these fish in a day, you can tally several fish in a short amount of time.

Understanding some of these factors can help you make much better decisions on the ice when targeting perch at late ice. Your process of looking for perch and how to target these fish once you find them in all reality trumps everything else. What you do with your auger can often be much more important than presentation details. Late ice is perhaps one of the most coveted periods of time for ice anglers targeting perch. When breaking down large basins and flats that can be somewhat intimidating... big moves find fish but the small moves catch them.



Jason Mitchell Outdoors can be found on Sunday mornings at 9:00 am on Fox Sports North.

Past episodes can be found online at www.jasonmitchelloutdoors.com



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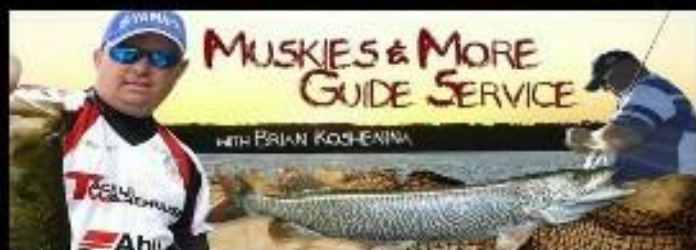
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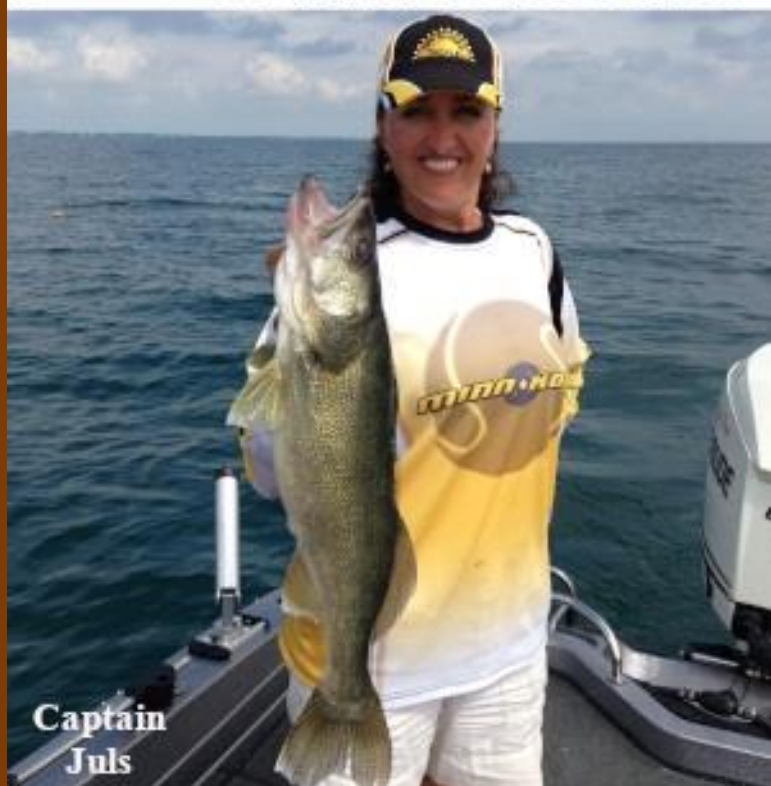
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HUNTING ZONE

Rocky Mountain Hunting Calls

Improves Their Turkey Line

By Mike Mattly

Rocky Mountain Hunting Calls has added three new turkey diaphragm calls to the line for 2019: One-Eyed Tweet, Sharp Tooth Jack and Black Max. Each call has a designation for: novice, intermediate or advanced caller level. These new diaphragms join the Captain Hook diaphragm, Strike A Strut slate call and Strutter box call in the turkey line.

The One-Eyed Tweet is a triple reed call made from premium latex. The top layer of latex has a Split-V cut. The latex has a light stretch and is easy to blow. The One-Eyed Tweet is classified is a Novice Level call. MSRP-\$8.95.

The Sharp Tooth Jack is an Intermediate Level call. It is a triple reed call made from premium latex. The top layer of latex has a Shipwreck cut. This call can create the whole gamut of turkey sounds. MSRP-\$8.95.

The Black Max was designed for the Advanced Level caller. The Batwing cut creates unbelievable turkey talk when used by top callers. The Black Max also is made from 3 layers of premium latex. MSRP-\$8.95.

Rocky Mountain Hunting Calls is located in Kamiah, ID. Rockie Jacobsen, owner, has over 33 years of experience in designing, manufacturing and assembling game calls. Rockie has won 4 Elk Calling Titles over the years and he has been issued 2 patents for game call design. Rocky Mountain Hunting Calls have been used to win over 70 World Elk Calling Championships to date!

For more information on Rocky Mountain Hunting Calls, visit www.RockyMountainHuntingCalls.com





A Look Back, A Look Ahead!

By Mike Frisch

I took my new bow out and shot it the other day. That might not be newsworthy, but it signals two things for me. First, winter is over, at least in my mind. And second, it's time to start preparing for next fall's archery season. Here is a look back at a couple things I learned last fall and a look ahead to the coming bowhunting seasons.

They do "duck the string!"

Good fortune has allowed me to hunt South Dakota for antelope the past two falls. Last year, I did a combo hunt for whitetail deer. Early in the whitetail portion, I had a 31-yard shot at a big 10-point buck the outfitter, Ryan Routier, and I nicknamed "Snowflake" because this old buck had fading, whitish fur on his body and legs.

The shot opportunity presented itself as Snowflake made his way across a creek bottom one very windy evening. Ryan, who was running a video camera to film the hunt, was forced to “bleat” at Snowflake three different times before being heard. The wide-racked 10-pointer stopped broadside and snapped his head at us, obviously on high alert. My arrow was quickly on its way and the shot felt good!

Unfortunately, the arrow found the back edge of Snowflake’s shoulder blade. To shorten the story, we observed Snowflake alive a couple days later. Upon reviewing the video footage of the shot, it was plain to see that, just as the arrow enters the video frame near the deer, he gathers himself to run. That gathering movement brought his shoulder blade back and down, covering a portion of his vitals, the spot my arrow hit!

A veteran archery hunter with dozens of trophies on his wall was in camp and saw the footage. I’ll remember his sage advice. “Stay back a few inches from that shoulder, then you’ve got some margin for error forward,” he advised. “If you hit back, maybe the liver, you still usually have a lethal shot.”

Be sure?

I sat in the rain along a wooded lake shore a month later during the Minnesota rut. With just minutes of legal shooting light left that evening, a big-bodied buck came down a little used trail (as the big boys often do) toward me.

Impressed by his body size, I took a quick look at his antlers and determined him to be a shooter. Remembering Snowflake, I settled my pin back of his shoulder.

The shot felt good, and the deer mule-kicked and ran off. Rain and darkness forced me to delay my search until the next morning. The search was short, but I was a bit disappointed in the results.



The buck was indeed a mature, big-bodied deer, but not sporting the big 10-point rack I expected. Hunting partners and I had trail camera photos of such a buck on that property. Initially, I was a bit disappointed in my buck's 8-point rack. Maybe, however, my disappointment was more in that my Minnesota tag was filled and my season essentially over!

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The lesson? If the goal is to harvest the biggest-racked deer on a property, be sure it's "him" before you draw. Keep in mind though, that lots of factors go into determining a trophy – factors that are probably unique to each hunter.

Get ready now

My final thought is that now – not this summer - is the time to start preparing for fall. I recently purchased a new bow, am adding accessories, and will be sure it's shooting accurately.

I buy my equipment from Prairie Archery in Parkers Prairie (MN) and then rely on their excellent staff to help set it up. Because I'm not real equipment-savvy, it's important for me to rely on someone with knowledge and experience who can make sure my equipment is performing properly.

After that, it's on me to spend lots of hours flinging arrows. My hope is to be a better hunter and archer should Snowflake happen by again this fall!

Mike Frisch hosts the popular Fishing the Midwest TV series. Mike loves archery hunting during his free time.





The Benefits Of Conservation Hunting And Venison In Namibia

By Jofie Lamprecht

Namibia. Land of wide-open spaces. Land of contrasts. Land of the brave. From the oldest desert in the World to sub-tropical climates and wide rivers. Where the sustainable use of our abundant wildlife is enshrined in the country's constitution. The second least densely populated country on earth.

Namibia has had a constant average of over 5000 conservation hunters per year for the last 9 years. This seems like a high number of hunters, right? Well, with our wildlife numbers increasing year on year and the value of these animals increasing due to hunters' dollars and the increase of wildlife range's – the answer is categorically NO!

5000 conservation hunters per year in Namibia

Partly due to our colonial history, German hunters are still the most prevalent, with the USA

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market share increasing every year – these two countries representing 50% of Namibia's total international hunting market share. From there the origin of Namibia's hunter is wide and diverse.

Germany and the USA are dominant in the conservation hunting market

These conservation hunters harvest on average 23,000 animals each year which are then exported to their home countries. Again, you think – this is high right? This is an average of 4.6 animals per conservation hunter! As stated above, Namibia has a firm grasp on wildlife numbers and thanks to the tireless effort of the Namibian Ministry of Environment and Tourism - conservative quotas are set each year on government land and communal conservancies – as well as well-regulated on privately owned land.

Conservation hunters harvest on average 23,000 animals each year or 4.6 animals per hunter

Namibia's conservation hunting contributes N\$ 450,000,000 (almost half a billion N\$ OR US\$ 32 million) in the primary sector to the Namibian economy a total of 0.24% of the country's GDP . This is an estimated N\$ 1.35 billion (US\$ 96 million) total including the secondary and tertiary sectors or 0.75% of the country's GDP. This includes but is not limited to: airfares, tourism activities, taxidermy, shipping and much more.

Hunting contributes N\$ 450,000,000 (US\$ 32 million) to the Namibian economy in the primary sector to GDP

This sector is definitely a significant contributor to Namibia's "third-world" economy as well as an important source of employment and protein in the form of venison. Using the term "third-world" is really not the case for Namibia as a visitor – it is truly a very poor example of a "third-world" country and is often referred to as the "Switzerland" of Africa. The economic value of conservation hunting in Namibia increases constantly year on year and Namibia has become Africa's most popular conservation hunting destination.

Namibia has become Africa's most popular conservation hunting destination in Africa



If one looks at the diversity of species that are hunted annually, Namibia offers 44 different huntable species.

For some of the animals hunted, the venison is not consumed. This accounts for very few animals. The vast majority of animals, including big game like elephant, rhino, hippo and buffalo are a very important source of protein for local communities.

Venison as a product = an important source of protein for local communities

So how much venison is estimated to be a product of conservation hunting each year?

- From dangerous / big game animals, of which 98% occur in either state or communal lands, 320 tons of meat is harvested each year. The vast majority of this meat – about 80+% goes straight to local communities.
- On private land this figure is even higher. If at an average of 50 kg (120 pounds) per plains game animal, this equates to 1.15 million tons of meat annually.
- That is 28,750 18-wheeler trucks loaded to capacity with meat. That is a lot of venison!

An estimated 1.47 million tons of venison meat is the product of conservation hunting annually in Namibia

If one converts the value of this meat to money, its value would be around N\$ 29.4 million (US\$ 2.1 million).

It is my resilient and dedicated belief that there is both place for conservation hunting as well as tourism in Namibia. The two cater to different markets, a different clientele seeking different experiences.

So how do conservation hunting and tourism sectors compare?

Let's go to the numbers:

- Namibia's tourism:
 - Currently (2016) 1.5 million tourists visit Namibia each year



Jofie Lamprecht
www.jofielamprecht.com

- Average tourist stay = 9 nights
- Average spend by a tourist per day = N\$ 1,840 (US\$ 132)
 - Tourism contributes N\$ 5.2 billion (US\$ 371 million) or 3.5% of the country's GDP in the primary sector and a total of N\$ 15.1 billion (US\$ 1.07 billion) or 10.2% of the country's GDP to the secondary and tertiary sectors.
 - Tourism creates 45,000 jobs in Namibia (6.5% of all jobs) per year in the primary sector.
- Interestingly - there are an average of 33.3 tourists for each job created in Namibia in tourism.

Average spend by a tourist per day = N\$ 1,840 (US\$ 132) and equates to 3.5% of GDP in the primary sector

There are 33.3 tourists for each job created in Namibia

- Conservation hunting:
 - 5000 hunters per year
 - Hunters spend an average of N\$ 90,000 (US\$ 6,429) per trip
 - Using the same average stay as a tourist this means hunters are spending an average of N\$ 10,000 per day. This is five times the value per day that hunters are spending, excluding the venison that they contribute to the Namibian economy:
 - Conservation hunting contributes N\$ 450,000,000 towards Namibia's GDP in the primary sector, which is 0.24% of the country's GDP
 - This is an estimated N\$ 1.35 billion (US\$ 96 million) total including the secondary and tertiary sectors or 0.75% of the country's GDP.
 - N\$ 100 million (US\$ 7.14 million) goes directly to communal conservancies
- This accounts for 50% of the revenue earned by communal conservancies annually directly from conservation hunting.
 - Hunting creates 15,000 jobs in Namibia (2.1 % of all jobs) per year in the primary sector.
- This is significant. This means 3



jobs are created for every 1 conservation hunter coming to Namibia. A much higher employment rate than tourism.

Average spend per conservation hunter per day is N\$ 10,000 (US\$ 715) and equates to 0.24% of GDP in the primary sector and accounts for 2.1% of all jobs

3 jobs are created for every 1 conservation hunter coming to Namibia

So, what does this mean when we compare the figures?

Tourism is obviously the winner by sheer volume, but what about revenue and ecological impact of these numbers as well as employment?

In brief:

- It takes 5.4 tourists per day to generate the same revenue as a conservation hunter
- What is the ecological and carbon footprint and tourism vs conservation hunting?

- Camps and lodges need to be 5.4 times bigger to generate the same revenue.

- The foot-print of these lodges take away animal habitat
- Hunting camps are far smaller, hosting far fewer guests to generate the same revenue.
- Habitat degradation - Roads and foot paths take habitat away from wildlife.

- Meat

- Conservation hunters produce 294 kg (647 pounds) of meat per hunter on average per trip – a total of 1.47 million tons of meat
- To feed 1.5 million tourists, at an average of 180 grams (6.5 ounces) of meat per day per person one needs = 270 tons (600,000 pounds) of meat per day:
 - For 9 days on average this is



a total of 2.43 million kg of meat for all tourists.

- With conservation hunting alone, if we only feed tourist's venison – which a lot of lodges to – there is not enough to go around.
- Yes, there is commercial meat hunting as well as domestic stock raised for meat consumption – but I think you get the point we are making here.

○Water

- Water is an incredibly scarce resource in Namibia. Most water is pumped out of underground reserves.
- At 100 liters (26 gallons) per person per day (a very low number) just tourism uses 150 million liters (57 million gallons) of water per day = 60 Olympic size swimming pools of water per day for guests only.
- Vegetables – a vegetarian in the middle of Namibia's wilderness has a far greater negative ecological effect eating fruit and vegetables transported 1000's of kilometers to get there than eating venison.
- Shower and toilet waste

○Fossil fuels

- Tourism uses an enormous amount of fossil fuels to get tourists to Namibia, and then onto their destination. Camps and lodges then also need to be supplied as well as the tourists driven around.
- Electricity needs to be generated. Solar has become a popular option.

○Trash

- This needs to be dealt with and is often too expensive to be taken to the nearest town for recycling = it is buried close to the camp or lodge.

○Employment -

- The huge number of those employed in conservation hunting vs. tourism is significant.

Points to consider:

It takes 5.4 tourists per day to generate the same revenue as one conservation – at what cost to the environment? All tourists are not vegetarian, and the meat must come from somewhere? Conservation



hunting harvests animals in a sustainable manner, and plays a smaller part in the economy, but produces a product of venison. Conservation hunting has less impact on the environment all aspects considered. The high rate of employment in conservation hunting is significant

In conclusion. There is place for all forms of tourism – and yes, conservation hunting is also a form of this. We need to respect each other and understand the crucial role each plays in conservation, ecological impact, contribution to GDP, job creation and the production and consumption of venison.

RMEF Elk Camp & Mountain Festival to Feature Exceptional Entertainment



Open air entertainment, live podcasts, hunting film premieres, the Total Archery Challenge experience, elk hunting and cooking seminars, interactive exhibits, raffles and auctions, outdoor events, the World Elk Calling Championships and much more. It all happens under the blue skies at 7,000 feet in the heart of elk country.

The 2019 RMEF Elk Camp, presented by YETI, and RMEF Mountain Festival, fueled by MTN Ops, will take place July 11-14 in Park City, Utah.

"There is no better place to celebrate elk, conservation and hunting than outside in the mountains," said Kyle Weaver, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation president and CEO. "We can't wait to come together with our volunteers, members, sponsors, families and friends to celebrate our conservation mission accomplishments."

The RMEF Mountain Festival is free, open to the public, and will be held outdoors in the shadows of the Wasatch Mountains in the Canyons Village at Park City. It will feature more than 100 outdoor industry vendors and interactive displays including elk hunting and elk calling seminars, well-known hunting personalities and live music on the Leupold Live Stage by Nate Hosie and Glen Templeton.

Artists performing at [Elk Camp](#) events include long-time RMEF supporter Craig Morgan, Nashville songwriter Shane Minor and guests, Jeffrey Steele,



David Lee Murphy and others.

In addition to Yeti, MTN Ops and Leupold, other Elk Camp and Mountain Festival sponsors include ALPS OutdoorZ, Bass Pro Shops-Cabela's, BMO Wealth Management, Browning, Buck Knives, Eberlestock, onX Hunt, Remington, Sitka, Sportsman's Warehouse, Traeger, Wildgame Innovations, Yamaha and others.

"We greatly appreciate the support our conservation partners. Not only are they outdoor industry national leaders but they fully embrace our mission to ensure the future of elk, other wildlife, their habitat and our hunting heritage," said Steve Decker, RMEF vice president of Marketing.

Additional interactive events as well as keynote speakers will be announced in the coming weeks.

[Go here for registration](#), a daily event schedule and other information.

About the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation:

Founded over 30 years ago, fueled by hunters and a membership of nearly 235,000 strong, RMEF has conserved more than 7.4 million acres for elk and other wildlife. RMEF also works to open and improve public access, fund and advocate for science-based resource management, and ensure the future of America's hunting heritage. Discover why "Hunting Is Conservation™" at www.rmef.org, www.elknetwork.com or 800-CALL ELK.



ELK CAMP & MTN FEST AGENDA

*subject to change

THURSDAY, JULY 11

MTN Festival Opens

Total Archery Challenge
(separate registration required)

World Elk Calling Championships Preliminaries

Thursday Auction & Luncheon

Elk Camp Opening Ceremonies & MTN Fest Evening Experience

FRIDAY, JULY 12

MTN Festival Open

Friends of the Foundation Breakfast

Total Archery Challenge
(separate registration required)

World Elk Calling Championships Finals

Friday Auction & Luncheon

Choice of Friday Evening Event

SATURDAY, JULY 13

MTN Festival Open

Total Archery Challenge
(separate registration required)

Volunteer Recognition & Celebration Luncheon

"(This event replaces Volunteer Fun Night.)"

SUNDAY, JULY 14

MTN Festival Open

Total Archery Challenge
(separate registration required)

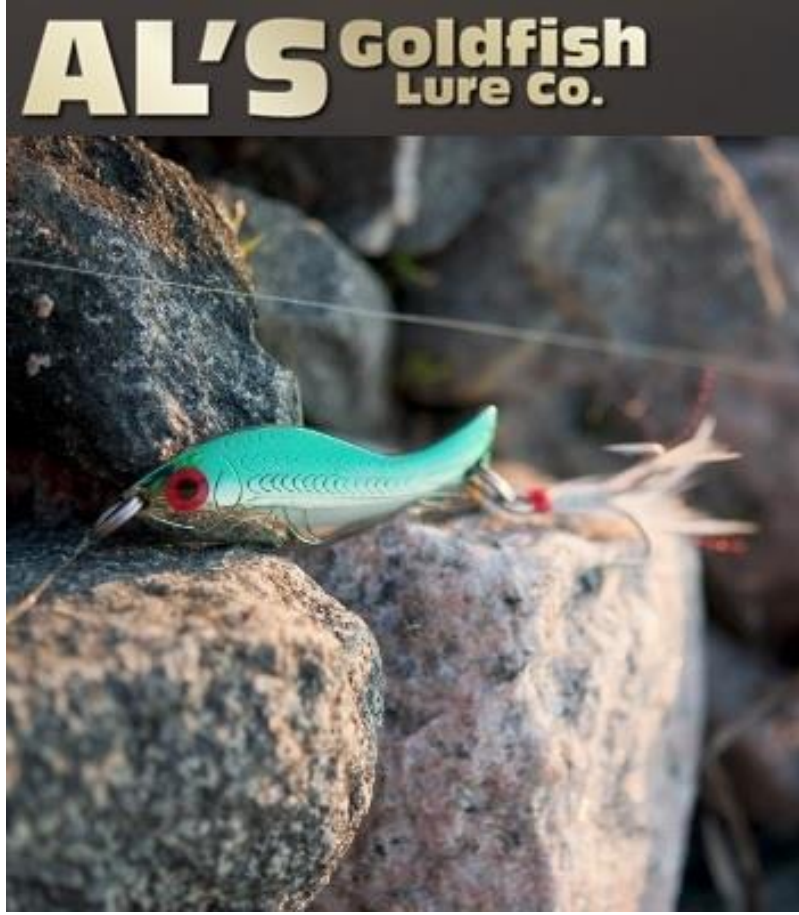
Prayer Breakfast

Elk Camp After-Party & Concert

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