Social Distancing’s Not So Bad;)

Plus More Great “Stuff” Inside!

• 8
  Under Utilized Old School Lures for Smallmouth

• 2
  Paying Attention to Details

• 26
  The Long Cast for Pike

• 14
  10 Fishing Mistakes You Should Fix
One the things that I pride myself on in my fishing is using the right tackle and equipment to do the job that I need it to do. I make my living predominately as a guide and tournament competitor so I need the fish that bite to come in the boat. That means choosing the right rod, reel and line for the techniques that I’m utilizing, matching the best jigs or hooks to the presentation or changing the treble hooks on hard baits to increase my chances of landing every fish that I hook. These are all important details that make a big difference in putting more fish in my boat.

There is always an angler who has horror stories after the tournament of the fish that they lost. Had they caught all the fish they hooked; they would have won by a mile. We’ve all lost fish that we’ve hooked, happens all the time but if you are going through a day, losing six, eight or ten fish, some part of your equipment is failing you. Most often, the fishing rod is not matched up properly to the hook you’re using or the technique that you’re employing causing the hook point not to penetrate as deep as it needs to or if the fishing rod is to stiff you may be tearing light hooks out of a fishes mouth.

I have used G. Loomis rods for years and some folks might not realize it but they have a three-digit numbered code that they use to refer to each rod. The first two numbers are the length of the rod, in inches, followed by a third number that refers to the power of the rod. A one-power is a light action while a five power is a heavy action rod. So as an example, an 842S is an 84 inch (or seven foot) spinning rod, that is a two power.

Since I am familiar with these rods, I can look at the number and know which techniques I will employ that rod for. When my fishing buddies that also use G. Loomis rods and I talk fishing rods we usually just use the three number codes to talk about specific rods. My all-time favourite casting rod is an 893C. It is my “do-everything” rod that I employ a variety of techniques with including spinnerbaits, football jigs, Chatterbaits and some topwater. My favourite all around spinning rod is an 872S, that I like for small swimbaits, tubes and Ned rigs.

You can compare fishing rods to golf clubs, so knowing which rod to use for a specific technique is important. I’m not here to tell you that you need to own 25 fishing rods to be successful on the water because that is not the case, but a small assortment is helpful if you want to take your fishing to the next level. For most bass and walleye techniques where you’re using soft plastics, a seven-foot medium action (2 power) rod is perfect. There are some techniques where you need to use...
WHEN TOP BASS PROS COME TOGETHER, IDEAS ON A WHITEBOARD BECOME REALITY:
G. Loomis adds 10 more IMX-PRO technique-specific bass rods to its lineup of tournament-quality rods, purposely built for the techniques that make anglers successful on the water. The new IMX-PRO rods include models designed for bladed jigs, paddle tail swimbaits, finesse baits, lipless crankbaits and for fishing ledges, so you have the tools needed to cover more tasks on the water.
FEEL CONNECTED.
A Line From “Big” Jim

Well... there has certainly been a pile of changes in our world since we last met here. To adapt to these changes, Just Fishing has taken a huge step into the present by becoming a fully digital publication moving forward.

We see this as a huge opportunity to grow our online presence, while continuing to bring you the best sportfishing information in Canada on a consistent basis.

Just Fishing will remain with four issues per year for the time being, but hopefully past Covid days, or as close to it as we ever get, may see us increase our issues to get you on more fish more often.

The electronic delivery of Just Fishing remains Free. Please sign up at www.justfishing.ca to never miss an issue. They will be automatically delivered to you as soon as they are available. By visiting our page and opting in, you will receive advanced notifications on contests and issue releases as we continue to grow with you online... you’re going to like it a whole bunch.

As always, the Summer issue of Just Fishing is packed with tons of solid information from some of the biggest and most respected names in the industry including non-other than the Musky Hunter himself Jim Saric, along with many of our regular contributors such as Gordon Pyzer, David Chong, Tim Allard and everybody’s pal Jeff “Gussy” Gustafson.

With everything we are living with right now and obviously for some time to come, don’t for get to fish lots and be safe all the time for all of us.

“Big” Jim

Unsolicited articles are accepted and will be considered for publication provided they are original and have not appeared in other publications.

Publisher
“Big” Jim McLaughlin
Managing Editor
Tammy Wight
Digital Marketing
Darren Young
Contributors
Gord Pyzer, Jim Saric, Tim Allard, David Chong, Jeff Gustafson, Cameron Tait, Yvonne Brown, Jeff Mattity
Box 214 Seeley’s Bay, ON K0H 2N0.
Phone: (613) 387-8735
Email: info@justfishing.ca
www.justfishing.ca
All Rights Reserved
Reprinting or reproduction in whole or in part is forbidden, except by written permission of the publisher.

IN THIS ISSUE
SPECIAL FEATURES
Paying Attention to Details........................................2
Under Utilized Lures for Smallmouth................8
10 Fishing Mistakes You Should Fix..........................14
Simple Secrets for Summer Cdn Muskies.................20
The Long Cast for Pike...........................................26
Heat Wave Walleye.............................................30

DEPARTMENTS
A Line From “Big” Jim........................................4
In The News......................................................24
Tubman’s Tips & Techniques.............................35
Ontario Women Anglers.................................36
Target Walleye Report.....................................40
For the Love of Cooking.................................43

On The Cover: Main – Jim Saric, photo credit – Jeff Lang,
Under Utilized Old School Lures for Smallmouth, photo – Dave Chong,
Paying Attention to Details, photo – Jeff Gustafson,
The Long Cast For Pike, photo – Lori Mattity,
10 Fishing Mistakes You Should Fix, photo – Gord Pyzer.

With line, I’m only using braid and fluorocarbon. I use Power Pro braid exclusively on my spinning reels, usually in yellow so it’s easy for me to see. On my casting reels I have fluorocarbon on most of them and braid on a few. There are many advantages to braid but the most important when it comes to using it on a spinning reel is it doesn’t hold a lot of memory and it doesn’t twist as easily as other line types. Then there is the sensitivity of it because it doesn’t stretch. You can literally feel a light bite in 30 feet of water and then get a solid hookset with little effort. I always tie on a six to eight-foot section of fluorocarbon leader at the end of my braid to connect to the bait. The fluoro is tougher and more abrasion resistant as well as giving me an invisible link to my bait.

There are advantages to using fluorocarbon, the first being that it sinks, which can help with the action of several lures like jerkbaits or swimbaits that you want to run a little deeper in the water column. It has a little bit of stretch, which can be good for using with some crankbaits and jerkbaits that are equipped with light wire hooks. While it stretches some, fluoro is still a lot more sensitive than traditional monofilament which is very stretchy. I know we have all caught plenty of fish with mono over the years but at this point, other than the low cost there aren’t a lot of advantages to using it. I will say that I always use a short (about 18”) 20-lb. mono leader on my topwater baits, tied to a 30-lb. braided main line.

Everyone that fishes with me knows that I am super picky about the hooks that I use, most of my buddies are as well. Choosing a jig with the correct hook size and gauge wire to match the presentation that you’re employing is a big deal. As is matching the correct treble hook for the hard baits that you’re using.

To clarify this a little bit more, when I’m fishing I want to use the best hook for the job. When you do this, in conjunction with using the correct rod and line, you really limit the number of fish that you will lose. When I am out fun fishing, I’m always playing around with different hooks, jigs, worm hooks and treble hooks to see what works the best. When new products arrive to market, I try everything to because I never want to miss

(Continued on page 6.)
out on something that might be perfect for one of the baits I like to use. I will also say that when we’re out on the road for Elite Series events, my buddies and I are always comparing notes on which rods and hooks we like for different presentations.

Hooks come in a variety of sizes and thicknesses. Premium hooks from companies like Gamakatsu, Owner or Mustad offer the best options and thin wire hooks that are super sharp and strong. I like to use a heavy gauge straight shank hook for flipping bass in thicker weeds. I like to tie my marabou jigs on a small, light wire hook to give the bait the most natural action, same deal with a drop-shot hook.

On my topwater baits, I like to use a 2X Gamakatsu round bend treble, which is a little heavier than a regular treble hook – because I am using braided line and a slightly heavier rod. If you use to light of a hook with a heavy rod, you’ll “jack” the hook – open it up, and probably lose the fish.

I use a lot of the jigs that Z-Man and Northland make for all kinds of fishing situations but I also have a few friends who will make specific jigs for me with some of my favourite soft plastics and for specific fishing situations. Last summer when we fished our Elite Series event out at the St. Lawrence River, I knew I would be fishing deeper water, heavy current and that a Ned rig would likely be a good bait so I had my buddy Jamie Bruce make me some 1/4 and 3/8 oz football head jigs with a small 1/0 hook in them. These jigs allowed me to fish in 25-35 feet of water, yet they had the right size hook in them to not overpower the bait.

I have a bunch of tube heads, ball heads and football head jigs made with the exact hook I want for a wide range of specific fishing situations. Since I fish so many different places and for a variety of species, this is important for me.

Matching the right rod, reel, line and hook for the job that you want to do is going to make sure that you aren’t the one complaining about all the fish you lost at the next tournament or on that important fishing trip where you want to out fish your buddies.

Editor’s Note: Jeff Gustafson grew up on the shores of Lake of the Woods in Kenora, Ontario. He has made his living in the fishing community since he was a teenager as a tournament angler, guide, outdoor writer and fishing promotor. In 2019 he is competing on the Bassmaster Elite Series in addition to competing in several events in Ontario. You can find him on social media at @gussyoutdoors and on his website at: www.gussyoutdoors.com.
SMOKER CRAFT

TACKLE DEPOT

Boat Giveaway

MARCH 1, 2020 TO AUGUST 31, 2020

GIVEAWAY PACKAGE INCLUDES

TOTAL PRIZE PACKAGE VALUE $20,000+

SMOKER CRAFT ANGLER 16 SC

YAMAHA 40HP WITH POWER TRIM AND TILT

SHORELAND’R GALVANIZED BUNK TRAILER

ENTER NOW AT TACKLEDEPOTBOATGIVEAWAY.CA

CLICK TO ENTER NOW
I

f there was ever a year when all you bassaholics are chomping at the bit for the start of the bass opener up here in Southern Ontario, this is it! The entire world as we know has been turned upside down with the Covid 19 pandemic but please remember people, we’re in this together and we’ll get through this together! In the meantime, it will be bass opener soon enough and at least this virus hasn’t affected our bass! Every year, I like to try and add a couple of new presentations to my repertoire or revisit some former presentations that I had gotten away from or neglected recently.

As avid anglers and especially hardcore bass anglers, we’re always looking for a “magic bullet”! Interestingly enough, often that bullet is right beneath our noses, because presentations that caught fish in the past still catch fish today. Bass have not evolved or gotten any smarter, possibly more pressured but definitely not any brighter. Many times, an old school technique can be refined or the baits themselves have developed & improved and therefore are more effective these days. There were a couple of these presentations that played a significant role in my success with smallmouth bass on the water last year.

The first is a squarebill crankbait, which has been experiencing a renaissance these days, especially for smallmouth bass. The first squarebill that I used with any amount of consistent success many years ago was a Cotton Cordell Big O. This crankbait is still around today and is still catching fish. But there are so many options and much more refined crankbaits today. Currently my favourite squarebill right now was actually new on the market last year. It is the Yo-Zuri 3DB 1.5 Squarebill, which is available in 12 great colours.

With crankbaits, it is all about the action – how it deflects off of objects and hunts for centre! The Yo-Zuri 3DB 1.5 Squarebill is 2 3/8” in length and weighs a stout 1/2-oz. enabling it to be cast great distances. It dives down to 4-5 feet really quick and deflects so well that it is very difficult to get it snagged up. Of course, it is the erratic action as it bounces off something or hunts for centre that is the true triggering mechanism. One of the first things that you’ll notice about this squarebill is its “Big” eye! I love having “Big” eyes on my cranks as I believe that it gives the fish something to target in on. It also comes with quality components. Not only does it retail at a fair price, you don’t have to change the hooks and the split rings. They come equipped with stout super sharp round bend black nickel hooks and super strong split rings. Another neat feature of these beautiful 1.5 cranks is that the finish/colour is on the inside of the lure so it is not constantly being scratched off by the treble.

(Continued on page 10.)
When you join or renew for 3-years, at anytime in 2020, you are automatically entered into a draw for a Rubicon TRX 520 in patriot red. valued at $12,469.

Draw date January 20, 2021.

All 3-year memberships in 2020, Life Members, Auto Renewal and monthly giving (MPAP) automatically entered to win. OFAH staff or directors are not eligible to win. Complete draw information at www.ofah.org/membership

No purchase necessary with email request to MEMBERSHIP@OFAH.ORG

This special may also come with individual adult, student and family membership by simply adding $20 onto the 2020 membership price.

Make it a 3-Year membership for a chance to win a HONDA ATV.

www.ofah.org/kit or 1-800-263-6324

Your chance to WIN

A RUBICON TRX 520 with a 3-year OFAH MEMBERSHIP COMMITMENT.
RUBICON TRX 520 IN PATRIOT RED | MSRP $12,469

OFAH Fishing Special includes:
All day cooler bag
Rapala Shad Rap • Sufix Line
OOD Fishing & Hunting Annual (mailed copies)
PLUS...
Digital Ontario OUT OF DOORS Magazine (10 issues)
OFAH Insurance
Lyme Disease Medical Coverage
OFAH Member Discounts

Presented by Honda
The surface of the lure gets a little surface rash but the finish stays true. Because I like to throw and fish these relatively shallow, usually in 2 to 6 feet of water, they are silent so they won’t spook the fish. Especially on bodies of water with gin clear visibility, the vibrations that the bait and the ridges on the underside (Wave Motion Technology) put off is plenty to draw fish over to your lure. It is easy to get this lure a good distance away from the boat as it casts like a bullet, which is important under those conditions.

Equipment-wise, I throw this little squarebill on 10 lbs. test Sunline Crankin’ FC fluorocarbon line with a Daiwa Tatula Elite Takahiro Omori Signature Series Crankin’ rod & Daiwa Tatula SV TW reel. The rod is 7 feet in length and is made of GLATECH™ a fiberglass / graphite composite which allows for a slower action for throwing and working these crankbaits. The reel has a 7.3:1 gear ratio because I like to fish these squarebill quickly to cover water. A traditional cranking reel (5.1:1 or slower) is too slow and too much work.

This sexy little crankbait works extremely well for smallmouth bass anytime that they’re shallow, pre-spawn, spawn and post-spawn. Shallow flats near spawning grounds are ideal areas to target smallies especially if there are boulders and other obstacles to run it into! Make long casts and use a steady retrieve, pausing when you bump into something so that the crankbait will back up and not get hung up!

A quality pair of polarized eyewear like the Vigors that I wear can be critical in these situations because sometimes you’ll be able to see the smallies cruising. When you spot these fish make a long cast and lead the fish but try not to reel it directly right at the fish, instead just try to cross their path as they are swimming. Often, when they spot the crankbait and they’ll rush forward and crush it.

Try and keep your rod tip low throughout your retrieve except when you might need to lift it to guide your lure over snags and obstacles.

(Continued on page 11.)
Maintaining a low rod position throughout your retrieve keeps you in a prime hook setting position! When a fish finally strikes, sweep set across your body to get a solid hookup. Setting across your body allows you to move the maximum amount of line possible. One of the key properties of the Sunline Crankin’ FC fluorocarbon line is that it has a little extra stretch. This along with a glass composite rod like the Takahiro Omori model provides a great cushion for battling that big fish hooked up on the Yo-Zuri squarebill. After your initial hookset, keep your rod pointed downward to try and dissuade the fish from jumping unfortunately this does not always work. All you can do is try sometimes especially with trophy fish they’re just going to do whatever they want to do.

Another tried and true presentation is one that has been around for a long, long time, the good old in-line spinner. Yes, one of the simplest artificial lures ever made. An in-line spinner consists of a metal body on a wire shaft with a blade attached to the top via a u-shaped clevis and a treble hook on the bottom. At times this treble hook can be dressed with various materials like bucktail, marabou, squirrel tail or a synthetic dressing such as flashabou. This hook could also be replaced by a single hook adorned with a plastic grub or a swimbait. The blade could be a Colorado, Willow, Indiana, Turtle or the French blade made famous by the Mepps company.

Probably the most famous in-line spinner is a Mepps which was developed in 1938 by a French engineer, Andrew Meulnart. Over the years there have been many well-known makes of spinners which included, Panther Martins, Worden’s Roostertails, Blue Fox Vibrax’s and my favourite of all time the Warren’s Double Loon’s, just to name a few. Lots of anglers also build their own homemade in-line spinners as the components are readily available through stores such as the Mud Hole, Jann’s Net Craft and LureMaking.com in Canada.

Over the years, there have probably been more in-line spinners sold than any other single type of artificial lure. They work for all species of fish, from Panfish & trout to northern pike & muskies. But they can be deadly for smallmouth bass and often when they’re not interested or hitting anything else. For smallies, I like in-line spinners that weighed between 1/4 oz – 1/2 oz. and most of my smallie in-line spinners are either #3 or #4 Blue Fox Vibrax spinner’s or what I have left of my Warren’s Double Loon spinner’s.

In clear conditions, a silver blade is my first choice and in stained/off-colour water I prefer a gold blade. As far as accent colours are concerned, chartreuse or some kind of green is my preference but don’t be afraid to play around with different colour combinations. Make sure that your in-line spinner comes with a quality hook, if not you can cut it off and use an Owner Hyper Wire split ring to add a quality replacement hook like an Owner ST-36 Stinger Treble. Sometimes, I like to use a red ST-36 treble just to give the lure a little flash of blood.

The gear that I throw my spinners around with consist of a Daiwa Tatula Elite Randy Howell Signature rod (TAELE731MXS) paired with a Daiwa Ballistic LT 3000 spooled up with 18 lbs. test Sunline Xplasma Asegai Braided Line. This slick, ultra-thin smooth 8 strand braid allows for longer casts and ultimate performance especially under cold weather conditions. The no stretch property of this line enables solid hook sets at the end of those long casts! Tied at the end of the is a #1 or #2 Stringease Fastach Swivel to counteract the line twisting action of the in-line spinner! The Fastach allows for easy changes when experimenting with different colours combo and sizes of spinners. Some form of snap swivel is an absolute must whenever fishing an in-line spinner to avoid that dreaded line twist.

The long 7’ 3” rod again adds to the length of your cast and moves a tremendous amount of (Continued on page 12.)
line when you’re setting hook. The larger spool diameter of the 3000 size reel also allows the line to come off smoothly and adds to your cast distance. I imagine that from what we had just discussed about the equipment used to throw this lure, you realize that I believe the further you can cast your lure away from your boat, the better chance you’ll have of catching fish. I also do find that probably 90% of the strikes from smallies come in the first 10-20 feet of your retrieve.

An in-line spinner is usually fished rapidly and designed to trigger a reaction strike with its pulsating vibrations and flash. Its presentation is very much a chuck & wind affair. You can occasionally pause quickly just to get the blade stop and start again. Being a sinking lure, an in-line spinner can be fished at different depths just by counting down to where you feel the fish are before starting your retrieve. It works great over weeds as well by starting your retrieve as soon as your lure hits the water. It is a great lure to pre-fish with because of the amount of water that you can cover with it.

As I mentioned this lure works well in all depths depending on the time of year. When it comes to smallmouth bass I think that it works best when you are able to locate schooling fish therefore adding in the competition factor. It works in all open water seasons but it seems to really excel in cold water periods which happens to correspond with heavy schooling activity. One of the other reasons that this lure can be so effective is that they don’t see it as often as other lures. So, when nothing else seems to be working, switching to an in-line spinner could make all the difference in the world. Even experienced pro anglers like Mike Iaconelli keeps a few in-line’s in his “Panic Box” for when the bite gets real tough.

Although fish do travel in schools, most of them aren’t aware of the hype of new lures and aren’t aware that some baits or techniques are old school or passé! As much as we all like trying new lures and presentations sometimes, it’s the old tried and true ones that still produce. Don’t overlook these supposedly out-dated lures and presentations when your fancy new lures are just not doing the trick.

Until we see you on the water, stay safe and keep well but most of all, Fish Hard! & Dream Big!

Editor’s Note
David Chong is widely recognized as one of Canada’s top competitive tournament anglers. He is also an avid multi species angler and is a strong advocate for affordable, accessible angling for all! David loves sharing his vast fishing knowledge and stories with anglers of all ages, beginners & pros alike!
NO MATTER THE CHALLENGES, NO MATTER THE CONDITIONS.

NO MATTER WHAT.

STRONGER - SMOOTHER - THINNER
MICROFILAMENT BRAIDED FISHING LINE

POWERED BY
ENHANCED BODY TECHNOLOGY
American humorist, Mark Twain is reported to have said that when he was a boy of fourteen, his father was so ignorant he could hardly stand to have the old man around. By the time he reached twenty-one, he was astonished at how much his father had learned in the intervening seven years.

When it comes to fishing, a lot of us are like young Twain, locked in our ways like precocious fourteen year olds, making the same mistakes repeatedly.

I get to fish with two very disparate groups of anglers every year. One includes highly effective pros, some of the best walleye, bass, trout, muskie, pike and panfish anglers on the planet. The other is comprised of anglers who just want to catch more and bigger fish. The differences in their behavior is remarkable, as are the results at the end of the day.

Here are the Top Ten Fishing Mistakes you need to ensure you are not making and the ways to fix them.

#1 FORGET ABOUT LOCATION

One of the most common truisms is that there are no fish in 90-percent of the lake, river, reservoir, pit or pond that you are fishing. None, nada, zero. So why do you spend so much time in these watery wastelands?

For most of us it is because we are so excited once we launch the boat that we can’t wait to drop down the electric trolling motor and start casting or trolling. I mean, we’re fishing, right?

Well ...

I will never forget the first time I shared a boat with bass fishing legend, Ricky Clunn, the only angler ever to win the Bassmaster Classic four times over four different decades. Clunn told me that he routinely fished with recreational anglers who could catch bass at least as well as he could and often better.

“But,” said Clunn, with a wry smile on his face, “I could fill up my bathtub with bass and they would never find them.”

Fast forward to last season, after two friends and I had enjoyed our best day landing upwards of 100 hefty walleye and we were greeted at the dock by another angler who had failed to catch a single fish. He blurted out in frustration ....

“I thought the pre-summer walleye bite was supposed to be good.”

It is ... But you have to be fishing where there are fish. So, this coming season, under no circumstance stop the boat and start casting without having a solid location rationale for your decision. Which is the perfect segue to fixing the associated problem that hinders so many anglers from doing just that.

#2 DO NOT ALWAYS RELY ON YOUR INSTRUMENTS

Ask any airline pilot and they will tell you the lesson that is drilled into their heads repeatedly at flight school is to always trust your instruments. Anglers need to heed the same message.

Are you ready for this: the GPS chartplotter that almost every one of us has mounted on the consoles and front decks of our boats are more sophisticated than what NASA and the Apollo 11 astronauts used to land on the moon.

Combined with traditional 2D sonar, side imaging, down imaging, mega-imaging, 360 Imaging, CHIRP technology, spot lock, i-path and cruise control features, there is no reason ever to fish a spot in which you have less than supreme confidence.

(Continued on page 16.)
B.J. TACKLE
Rice Lake’s Fishing Tackle Specialist – A full Service Tackle Store for All Your Fishing Needs

“Big” Jim’s Jigs

Shimano

Power Pro Super8 Slick V2

Eurotackle

SEASONAL AVAILABILITY
• Minnows • Worms • Leeches
• Pontoon & Boat Rentals

NEW
Vanford

NEW
ZODIAS

Curado DC

OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK
5103 Rice Lake Dr. Bewdley (905) 797-2632
Most walleye and bass pros have four units mounted on their boats, linked via Ethernet cable to display, record and store everything that is going on under the water. More telling still, these same anglers will not turn off the big motor unless they actually see fish on their screens. Many will not even stop for what they perceive to be a small school of medium size bass, walleye, black crappies, yellow perch or trout.

Compare that to your electronic habits. Have you read the operating manual that came with the unit? Do you keep it locked on automatic mode? Do you adjust the gain, use customized split screens, employ the shortcut buttons, code your waypoints and use the zoom feature?

I am not suggesting that you need to buy multiple units for your boat, as one moderately priced GPS Chartplotter will serve you princely. But turn the blasted thing off automatic mode, learn how to use the mind-boggling features and don’t start fishing until you know there are fish around you.

#3 DO NOT FISH QUICKLY & DO NOT REMAIN MOBILE

This is a trap I keep reminding myself not to fall into, but after you have located a school of walleye, bass, yellow perch, black crappies or trout – actually spotted them on the sonar screen – don’t always assume that they are hungry. Don’t even take for granted that they are the target species.

I can not tell you how many times I’ve quickly nabbed two or three nice walleye casting a big soft plastic swimbait, for example, and then struggled as the fish shut down. Your first reaction is to switch over to a finesse presentation – jig and live bait option, or a drop shot rig – and pick the school apart. And some days that is the best strategy. But I can’t tell you how many times I’ve dropped an underwater camera over the side of the boat and discovered that the school of fish I thought was walleye, is primarily composed of white suckers or jumbo perch that share common life cycle characteristic, preferences and seasonal habitats.

Unlike the tortoise and hare, which was a fable after all, he who fishes quickly, efficiently and effectively, makes the most accurate casts and remains mobile throughout the day usually wins the race.

This doesn’t mean there are not times when you must slow down, but they are far fewer than most anglers assume.

(Continued on page 17.)
#5 **DO NOT SET THE HOOK PROPERLY**

Speaking about setting the hooks, I am convinced that for many anglers it is the single biggest mistake they make and the easiest to fix. I have a buddy who, when he feels a fish bite, goes on point like a Labrador retriever that has spotted a pheasant, says, “there it is”, and then sets the hook with so much force that he sometimes stumbles on the carpet. And he misses almost every fish.

Powerful hook sets are fine when you’re fishing with large, thick wire hooks for big toothy critters, giant lake trout and largemouth bass buried deep in the weeds. But if you’re fishing with a sharp, fine wire hook for walleye and bass, in particular, you’ll lose 80-percent or more if you set the hook with excessive strength.

Think of a nurse giving you a needle. Does he or she run across the room and stab it into your arm? I sure hope not. By the same token, however, when the roofer is reshingling your house, he doesn’t push the nails into the plywood with his fingers. He hammers them home.

(Continued on page 18.)

---

**4 ****DO NOT SHARPEN YOUR HOOKS**

Do you pay a few dollars more for premium jigs poured around quality hooks? Do you replace the stock trebles on newly purchased surface baits, jerkbaits and crankbaits with the finest hooks money can buy? Do you keep a diamond hook sharpener in your pocket at all times? If you answer no to any one of these questions, you’re missing multiple fish every trip out. Often, unseen trophies of a lifetime.

Buddy Bob Iznini is the most fastidious angler I’ve ever fished with and the fussiest when it comes to sharp hooks. He will get angry if you don’t sharpen your hook after you nick a rock, log or underwater obstruction. Ditto, if you don’t touch it up after you land a fish. How many times have you felt a fish bite, set the hook and said .... “Whoa, he got off”, or my all-time favourite, “He dropped the hook.”

‘Nuff said.

---

**Boat insurance. It’s what we do!**

Speak to a Northstar broker today.

TOLL FREE AT: 1.866.717.9295

www.northstarinsurance.ca

info@northstarinsurance.ca

**Marine Insurance**

---

---
How you set the hook depends on its size, diameter and thickness and when it is small, thin and razor sharp, a smart sweep of the rod tip is all that is required to nab every fish.

#6 FISH FOR WHATEVER IS BITING

I received a message from a reader last fall about catching big smallmouth, largemouth and northern pike. He had been unsuccessful in his efforts and asked if I’d help him zero in on the key depth. I flipped him back a note asking what species, in particular, he was targeting. He replied .... “All of them.”

Now, there is no question that when you are fishing for walleye, as a case in point, that you may catch a bonus smallmouth, largemouth or northern pike. Maybe even several. But is it a huge mistake to assume it will happen and thus, go fishing without a specific species in mind.

I use to accompany the Conservation Officers and fisheries technicians who worked for me and we would pull alongside anglers and do a creel survey. I was always amazed when the folks in the boats were asked what they were fishing for and they replied .... whatever bites.

To be successful, you have to focus in on a specific species, learn as much as possible about its lifestyle, habits, behaviour and seasonal preferences. Then you need to use the information to select prime locations, the best lures and optimal presentations. To do otherwise is to take a shot in the dark, which almost always misses the mark. Leave the hail Mary passes to the last minute desperation plays for football teams.

#7 BELIEVE THE DOCKTALK

I will never forget interviewing Kevin Van Dam, the winningest angler in bass fishing history, immediately prior to one of his four Bassmaster Classic victories. He had sequestered himself, miles away from the tournament venue, at his brother-in-law’s house. When I asked him why, he said .... “To avoid the dock talk.”

With social media so prevalent these days, it is easy to get caught up in the hysteria associated with a hot lake or new bait. Some folks will even post the waypoints of popular fishing spots. But if you know about it, so do tens of thousands of other anglers.

Sharing reliable, guarded, insider information with one or two trusted friends is a good thing, but relying on second, third and fourth hand accounts of dock talk is to be avoided at all costs. As Van Dam says, “It messes with your head.”

#8 DON’T BE FIRST IN AND FIRST OUT

If you were amongst the very first anglers to fish Slow Death for walleye, Ned Rigs for bass, Bondy Baits for lake trout and big double bladed Cowgirls for muskies you know the heart stopping feeling of riding the roller coaster to fishing success.

I count myself among the blessed to have been at the forefront of each of these trends. Unfortunately, nothing good ever lasts. Despite unbelievable efforts by a select few anglers to keep each one of the techniques under wraps, the secret got out and loose lips sunk ships.

It is why, when you read about a technique for the very first time in a reliable source – like the pages of Just Fishing! – or hear about it from a trusted friend, you need to assess it immediately, perfect it quickly, add it to your arsenal and then milk it for all that it is worth, because every innovation will become commonplace, the fish will become conditioned to it and something better will replace it.

(Continued on page 19.)
#9 DON'T THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX

It is worth remembering that it took an ingenious angler like Dave Spaid to remove the spinner and beads from a crawler harness and use a bent Tru-Turn hook so that the nub of a worm would corkscrew through the water and make walleyes fall head-over-heels in love with it.

Ditto, buddies Doug Stange and Al Lindner who were among the very first anglers to drop a white tube jig, made for open water bass fishing, down a hole in the ice for lake trout.

I remember chatting with Hall of Fame walleye pro, Gary Parsons about being schooled by Spaid and his then secret, Slow Death technique - not once but twice – in the prestigious Governor’s Cup. And I was right there, on the ice, fishing with Stange and Lindner when they worked their Houdini-like tube jig magic on lake trout. I actually freaked out and fretted that the country’s lake trout populations were in trouble.

I still chuckle every winter when I tie on a tube jig for someone who has never caught a lake trout through the ice and they say, “Isn’t that a bass lure?”

But here is the exciting point: the very best walleye, bass, lake trout, northern pike, muskie, salmon, yellow perch and black crappie technique has still not been invented. So, never stop experimenting.

#10 RELY EXCLUSIVELY ON LIVE BAIT

I rarely use livebait, not because it is unfair, but because you can almost always catch more and bigger walleye, bass, trout, muskies, northern pike, panfish and salmon with artificial presentations. It is even more the case when you’re searching for the fish of a lifetime and doubly so when you’re ice fishing in the winter.

If what I am suggesting is case, however, why do so many anglers favour live bait? Ironically, it is because it keeps you in the game, just enough. You can almost always catch some fish with it, just not the biggest or the most.

Think of the bottom tier teams in the National Hockey League or Major League Baseball. They’re equivalent to the folks who rely on live bait. Now think of the perennial league leaders. The Stanley Cup champions and World Series winner. They are the anglers who typically rely on surface lures, jerkbaits, swimbaits and jigs tipped with a wild array of soft plastic baits.

If you don’t believe me, when you get on a good live bait bite this season, let’s say for smallmouth bass, dig out a Whopper Plopper, X-Rap, Ned Rig or marabou jig and go at it.

I am betting the minnows, crawlers and leeches will wither up and die before you make that mistake again.

About the Author – Gord Pyzer:
Throughout much of North America, the musky is thought as the fish of 10,000 casts. There is no question the musky is the most difficult freshwater fish to catch. However, it is not the fish of 10,000 casts or even 1,000 casts for that matter. Like any other fish you have to understand its characteristics, preferred habitat and of course the lures to catch them.

In Ontario there are lots of musky waters with thousands of musky spots, as well as muskies awaiting your favorite offering. Just check out https://www.facebook.com/GoFishInOntario/ to check out some of the top musky waters and lodges across Ontario.

Although many of the Ontario musky waters may be large and if you are a casual musky angler it may seem like a tough task to figure out where to start, here’s a way to simplify musky fishing in Ontario and increase your odds of success. Consider fishing only two types of spots and two lure types, and I bet you can catch muskies almost anywhere throughout the Province!

The two spots to always seek out on any Canadian musky water are islands and pins. Islands exist in most waters. However, some waters have hundreds of islands, so you can’t fish all of them. Try and focus your efforts around clusters of islands, islands just outside of a neckdown portion of the lake, or a series of islands adjacent to a large expanse of open water. From here take a closer look at each individual island. Most islands have weeds on the southern or southeast side, as prevailing winds have deposited soft sediment over time and allowed for weed growth.

Likewise, the north and northwest side frequently have rocky areas from the glaciers as well as the northwest winds. Start fishing the smaller islands and focus on the patches of weeds and rocky points or extensions.

Once you start seeing muskies from a particular type of cover along and island or two, chances are you can replicate the same scenario along nearby islands. The beauty of Canadian musky fishing is that there is a wealth of spots. It’s simply a matter of looking at your map and your surroundings and finding similar-looking islands with either weed or rock, and you’ll locate more muskies.

Pins are something else to consider. What are pins? These are simply channel or navigational markers. The beauty of fishing pins is that you don’t have to understand anything about muskies to locate them. Channel markers are typically red or green, and in some cases yellow and black. They mark shallow water hazards, which could be a submerged reef, a rocky point or even a shallow island extension with weeds. In any case, the shallow water area adjacent to any navigational marker or pin is worth fishing. Like fishing islands just pay attention to the cover associated with each shallow water spot. You can move from one navigational marker to another and fish these pins and on most waters find muskies. It can be that simple.

When tackling Canadian muskies, keep it simple as well. Just make sure you bring two lures: a bucktail and a topwater. Large inline spinners such as Musky Frenzy Staggers and large prop-style topwater lures such as Topraiders both catch and locate muskies. Try first casting bucktails such as a Musky Frenzy (Continued on page 21.)
Bucktails are the number one lure for catching muskies. Having the right equipment to handle these large blades is really important. I use a 9’6” Shimano SKIXX musky rod and Shimano 400 Tranx reel. I put the power handle on the lower speed Tranx for leverage and power. It really allows me to effortlessly fish big blades all day long.

Of course, I spool the reel with 80 pound test PowerPro SuperSlick V2. When fishing blades, if the musky doesn’t strike and follows to the boat, you’ll need to move the lure in a figure 8 pattern at boatside to try and catch them, and this is really where you’ll be glad you have the 9’6” SKIXX to execute large figure 8s. If you don’t catch the musky at that moment, don’t worry. Return to the spot in the evening preferably right before dark and now cast that topwater lure.

For the topwater lure such as a Topraider I prefer the 9’ MH SKIXX, as it’s softer and lets you cast the topwater a mile into tight and shallow spaces. It’s amazing where muskies may live in summer. Take your Cast the topwater a mile into tight and shallow spaces. It’s amazing where muskies may live in summer. Take your...
VANFORD

SUPER FAST

MGL ROTOR

CI4+

UP TO
48% LESS
ROTATIONAL
INERTIA
Master Promotions Ltd. Expands Recreational Show Portfolio

Master Promotions Ltd. is pleased to announce the expansion of its show portfolio due to the acquisition of several Canadian National Sportsmen’s Shows (CNSS) events.

As Canada’s largest independent producer of trade and consumer events, their lineup of 30+ tradeshows from coast to coast will now include: Toronto Sportsmen’s Show, Calgary Boat & Outdoors Show, Edmonton Boat & Sportsmen’s Show, Montreal Outdoor, Hunting & Fishing Show, Quebec Outdoor, Hunting, Fishing & Camping Show. These acquisitions mark the largest bulk expansion to Master Promotion Ltd.’s event portfolio in the company’s history. Precedent of the two companies working together had been set with Master Promotions Ltd. having acquired the Ottawa Boat Show from CNSS in 2017.

“These shows blend well with Master Promotions Ltd.’s portfolio of events across Canada and we are looking forward to meeting and working with the various shows’ exhibitors in the near future,” says Master Promotions President, Wendell Howes. “Our industry is collectively doing its best to adapt to these unprecedented times. Our mission is to carry on the legacy CNSS has built for these events and foster their success for years to come.”

Headquartered in Saint John, N.B., with 5 offices across the country, Master Promotions Ltd. has been producing trade shows since 1973. Other events produced by Master Promotions Ltd. include the Halifax International Boat Show, the BC Sportsmen’s Show, Fish Canada/Workboat Canada, NB Sportsmen Show & Moncton Boat Show, to name a few. Visit www.masterpromotions.ca or contact info@mpltd.ca for more information.

Accomplished Californian and successful Canadian brothers now fishing for Team Daiwa

Just as the U.S. signs USMCA (United States – Mexico – Canada Agreement) into law, Daiwa was busy working on its own form of diplomacy in the bass fishing world. California’s Jared Lintner joins Canada’s Cory & Chris Johnston as Daiwa’s newest members to their professional bass fishing squad.

Brothers Johnston of Peterborough, Ontario, both accomplished competitors in their own right, have years of victories and cash earnings to their names. 34-year old Cory Johnston, for example, has racked up $600K U.S. earnings and been in the money over 70 times. Cory will also be fishing the upcoming 2020 Bassmaster Classic on fabled Lake Guntersville in Birmingham, Alabama in March.

His close-knit brother, 30-year old Chris Johnston, won Rookie of the Year (ROY) as a newcomer to the FLW in 2017 and has raked in over $650K in U.S. earnings. (Smells like sibling.) Chris, too, will be competing in the 2020 Bassmaster Classic.

Older brother Cory credits their undeniable skills on the water to growing up on Canadian waters. “The fisheries here are so diverse. You have to be able to fish for both smallmouth and largemouth bass to be successful,” said Cory. “In 2020, I will be continuing my journey in the Bassmaster Elite Series, looking for the coveted blue trophy, AOY (Angler of the Year), and a Classic win.” Over his relatively young career, Cory has also amassed 3 Forrest Wood Cup qualifications, 5 Canadian Open Championships, 3 Canadian Classic Championships and is a 2-time AOY in the FLW.

Chris Johnston also believes that his countrysidr Canadian upbringing helped make him who he is today. “I was born and raised in the country and could not imagine my life anywhere else. I actually live just down the road from my childhood home and can’t wait to watch my son grow and discover all the things country living has to offer.

“I cannot recall the precise moment that I fell in love with fishing, and that may be because my love for it was innate. My father was a fisherman and my older brother, Cory, had already mastered a baitcaster before I came along. I do recall having impatient moments watching the two of them,” Johnston continued. “I watched my brother and dad enter tournaments and wondered when I was going to be old enough to do the same. Around my 11th birthday, I fished my first tournament with my dad... and we won. The rest is history.”

(Continued on page 25.)
Between the age of 11 and 18, Chris and Cory Johnston gained a lot of experience, skill and success in local Canadian fishing circuits. By 18, Chris decided to take a gamble and fish his 1st U.S tournament, the FLW Costa Series on 1000 Islands, where he earned a 2nd place finish and went on to win AOY. After 3 years fishing the FLW Tour, he was offered a spot in the Bassmaster Elite Series. “Now, a year later, I have completed my first season in the Elites and qualified for the Bassmaster Classic. This is something I have dreamt about since that first tournament 19 years ago.”

“I am really excited to have the Johnston brothers come on board and join our team,” said Daiwa U.S. Marketing Manager, Curt Arakawa. “They are excellent fishermen and have done really well in both Canada and the U.S. They will help strengthen our Bassmaster Elite Series staff, which includes Seth Feider and Patrick Walters. We will also get Brandon Palaniuk back this year competing in the Elites.”

Also joining Daiwa in 2020 is the man whose motto is, “It’s all about the Stash,” Arroyo Grande, California’s bass fishing virtuoso, Jared Lintner. A 13-year veteran of the Bassmaster Elite Series, Lintner has fished 141 events (91 times in the money) and banked a whopping $1,114,530 in cold hard cash over his career, raising the trophy twice at Bassmaster Elite Series events.

Now a staple in Bass Pro Shop’s Major League Fishing (MLF), Lintner competed in the MLF’s inaugural season in 2019, where he scored a 2nd place finish on Lake Chickamauga in Tennessee and fished the MLF’s 2019 Redcrest Qualifier in La Crosse, Wisconsin. Lintner will again fish the MLF in 2020. “I am excited to have Jared Lintner join our team and help in promoting Daiwa reels,” said Arakawa. “Jared is a great fisherman and will add to an already stellar team fishing the MLF circuit.” Arakawa said in closing, “I want to welcome Chris, Cory and Jared to join the Daiwa team, which is made up of some of the best fisherman in the world, including Brandon Palaniuk, Brett Hite, Brent Ehrler, Cody Meyer, Ish Monroe, Patrick Walters, Seth Feider, Takahiro Omori, Clay Dyer and Mark Zona.”

Learn more at daiwa.com/us
Rob Schulz of G&S Marina Outfitters operates on Last Mountain Lake, Saskatchewan. He is a 25-year Master Outfitter and big fish specialist. When I started guiding for him in 2008, it wasn’t my first rodeo. Since I was 18 years old, I’d learned how to get my guided guests big pike in Northern Saskatchewan. Consequently, on our first day of the season, I was enthusiastic and my casting gear was tip-top!

Now, I’m not proud to admit this; but, I blasted off from the marina before our leader, Rob, and got to our first spot well ahead of him.

The warming bay was flat calm as I explained to my American guests, Gary and his 12-year-old son, Roger, how to work a suspending crankbait. In this case, #14 Rapala Husky Jerks, would be reeled down to their maximum depth of about 4 feet. From there, a brisk jerk or two, followed by several seconds at rest was the cadence I prescribed for the cool water conditions.

I watched as; the young fella made a perfect cast to within 3 feet of the reed-lined shore. He worked the Jerk exactly as I’d instructed. After a pause he snapped his wrist, which shot the Jerk forward and BAM, a stout 36” pike was on the line. Landed and returned after a photo, Roger’s Canadian trip started with a big pike… on his very first cast!

No sooner did we slide Roger’s pike back to fight another day, then I heard the whirr of Rob’s trolling motor. I looked up to see four anglers with four rods in rod holders. Their eyes intense, watching the rod tips as well as two trolling boards that gave added width to the spread.


Are we doing something wrong? I thought. At that moment, Gary jerked-up a peerless 35” and Roger had a monstrous fish follow to the boat. With that, the thought was dropped from my mind, at least for the moment.

Long story short… over the fishing day Rob trolled up 18 fish; biggest being 43”. Gary and Roger cast all day for 6 pike; Roger’s 36” our biggest.

On my hour-long drive home, I had time to lick my wounds, take a critical step back and ponder why Rob had so effortlessly cleaned my clock!

Then, it hit me… Rob was accomplishing, trolling, what we were attempting, casting! He was using the same Rapala suspending jerkbait as we were; except, by trolling, his four lures were in the strike zone the whole time… making the Long Cast as he called it!

Plus, his tight-turning, zig-zag trolling cadence actually presented the ‘Jerks’ in a perfect stop-and-go! When he sped up the outside lures quickened pace, while the (Continued on page 28.)
Synonymous with performance, the redesigned line of Zodias rods incorporate Carbon Monocoque technology passed down from Shimano’s elite series of rods that set the industry standard for sensitivity.
Rob Schulz & IN-FISHERMAN, Editor-in-Chief, Doug Stange with a
47” Last Mountain Lake monster pike.
inside lures would stall. Turning in the opposite direction snapped the
motionless, suspended lures forward and brought the moving lures to
a sluggish crawl before stopping.
Rob imparted enough of this stop-start-suspending presentation to
the lures that his fish were seeing the same triggering presentation
as Roger and Gary were doing with rod and reel...without any pause
for casting! Furthermore, Rob covered approximately 10-20 times
the water I did with the planer boards spreading his set to cover an
enormous 40-foot swath! Thus, ended the lesson! I got my trolling
rear-end in gear and haven’t looked back since!

Rob’s Rules:

troll first; cast second

Especially following the passing of frequent weather systems on big
water, the smart money is on trolling:

1) In spring, use shallow running lures and fish from the surface
down; do not dredge messy, muddy bottoms. In summer use deeper
divers and make hard-bottom contact often.

2) Use suspending lures all season long to achieve the ever-productive
sta (i.e., Rob’s hard zig-zagging maneuver to work suspending
jerkbait gives his stop-and-go presentation that is so deadly).

3) By trolling a shoreline with a spread of lures of known diving
curves, you are able to sample several depths simultaneously. Also, planer boards, like Rob’s favourite, Church
Tackle TX-6, gives impressive horizontal coverage.

4) Pike will follow lures for a long way. Adding a quality baits scent, like Pro-Cure
Pike/Musky Ice Gel or Anise-Plus Super Gel, gives pike a scent trigger that makes a big
difference over the course of a day.

5) Trolling with a hair trigger on you GPS button can reveal daily hotspots where the
pike are holding and help you visualize how pike are setting up on a
piece of structure. This information helps you produce a “milk run”
for casting, later.

(Continued on page 29.)
6) Proper equipment: Line counter reels (Daiwa Sealine), 6’6” soft-forgiving graphite-composite rods and no-stretch line (Sufix 832 braid) are vital for performance and consistency when trolling. Steel leaders are critical and must be strong, perfectly straight. Rob prefers using black for stealth.

7) A properly presented lure, running perfectly, trumps a larger size and specific colour. For example, the Rapala Shad Rap RS is only 7 cm long. Still, giant pike, initially attracted to its rattling sound and vibration, are undeterred by its minute size... a superb big-pike bait!

TACTICS & TACKLE

I subscribe to Rob’s primary equipment list and rely heavily on three lure colours: Firetiger, good for any light condition; Gold/Black, a winner under cloudy conditions and for bright sun, Silver/Blue or Silver/Black. With that said, holographic colours like Olive Ghost are new additions to my arsenal.

As spring gives way to summer, the biggest pike vacate shallow environments and focus their feeding efforts on deep water ciscoes, whitefish and mid-depth perch. The pike are still reachable by fishing the wind and waves and following a two-prong approach. Fish mid-depth, main lake shorelines associated with rocky points. For this, Rob’s planer board program is still employed. However, the zig-zag, suspending-jerkbait program used to saturate key areas in spring is replaced by straight forward, slight s-shape trolling at a quicker pace for more coverage.

Maintain a boat depth of about 10 feet and deploying shallow to medium-depth crankbaits such as Rapala Shad Raps RS, which still suspend and rattle. These lures can handle speeds up to around 5 mph. Yes, a Shad Rap RS is a high-performance tool. For example, put one on a “short leash”, say a length of about 10-15 feet behind the Church TX-6 board and it will fish flawlessly in as little as 3 feet of water (on the shallow side of the boat). Extend the distance between the planer board and lure to 80 feet and the #7 Shad Rap RS will fish down to 15 feet (for reaching out to the deeper side of the boat).

If I want to go deeper yet, the Rapala Deep Taildancer and Storm Rattlin’ Hot ‘n Tot can reach 30’ and 20’ respectively. With all that said, from Last Mountain Lake, Saskatchewan to Lake of the Woods, Ontario, speed trolling Super Shad Raps SSR14, either suspended over deep water, or banging rocks along a reef, is the epitome of power fishing pike! At Lake of the Woods, I employ the Super Shad Rap program and move at 6 mph while mapping hotspots on shallow rock outcroppings translates into casting opportunities. When this happens, Rob reaches for 5” Big Hammer swimbaits and peppers specific rock pile from 6' down to around 15'. With his swimbaits, Rob shakes big pike loose, big time! But, that is a story for another day!

Summer heat, stratification & the wind

One final tip... Most people are unaware that the physical makeup of a waterbody can change overnight! Rob’s discovered that during the summer, a big blow creates ocean-like wave action and causes dramatic movements of pike not only north – south along a given shoreline; but, instead, laterally, across the basin to the opposite shore of the lake. That’s right! After a long stretch of flat water and oppressive summer heat, big wind is a godsend as it bulldozes the warm water across the lake to the opposite shore and, in doing so, actually creates a partial turnover of cold water on the protected shore.

Giant pike take advantage of the cold water upwelling since: A) they are refreshed by the newly cooled shallows and; B) the ciscoes, which they are feeding on can, for a time, invade nutrient rich shallows that have abundant insect life. This “tilt in temperature” can be short lived; but, while it lasts, a Shad Rap RS trolled in 6 feet of water, on the inside planer board, may shockingly register several trophy-class fish.

A “milk run” of hotspots on shallow rock outcroppings translates into casting opportunities. When this happens, Rob reaches for 5” Big Hammer swimbaits and peppers specific rock pile from 6’ down to around 15’. With his swimbaits, Rob shakes big pike loose, big time! But, that is a story for another day!

About the Author: Jeff Matity
A Fishing Industry Professional for nearly 30 years as a Fishing Guide & Promotional Staffer, with Bachelor’s Degrees in both Science & Education, Jeff uses this training in his job as a Fisheries Professional & Outdoor Educator (specializing in fishing via family business, GetFishing.ca) to reach out to anyone interested in learning about fish.
Fishing for walleye on a stifling hot day can be tough slogging, but nothing will make you forget about the heat faster than setting hooks on some fish. Summer sees walleye populations spread across a range of areas, from shallow vegetation to deep structure. As such, anglers must cover water to find fish. Forage is also abundant in summer. Experimenting with different presentations can be needed to decode walleye preferences and put them in the boat. Here are several spots and presentations to try this summer for hot-weather walleye.

Skinny Water at Sunrise

Hitting the water at dawn is a good summertime strategy. Boat ramps tend to not be busy and lakes are quiet. More importantly, walleye are active during low light. “I’m a firm believer that all year there are walleye shallow and these are usually aggressive fish,” said Lanark County fishing guide, Jim Miles. “When I start the day with clients, it’s always shallow but on spots that are so close to deep water.”

When he’s fun fishing, Miles is out at the crack of dawn. With clients, the first shallow casts occur between 7:00 and 7:30. Miles likes points leading into deep water and sunken islands in 6 to 12 feet, especially when these structures contain sparse, broad-leafed vegetation, like cabbage.

Unlike thick coontail, cabbage is sparser and easier to fish with a jig, yet still holds baitfish and provides walleye with cover.

Jigs are cast to outside edges in vegetation and through openings and pathways. Working a bait over the top of deep plants is also effective during early morning. “If you get hung up in weeds, rip the rod hard, and then kill it,” Miles said. The rip-jigging’s commotion attracts and triggers walleye to strike.

Miles stays shallow for as long as the walleye bite. This may be as early as 8:30. Other days fish gorge until 10 o’clock. And, on some magical overcast days, Miles has been known to spend all day setting hooks on ‘eyes in less than 12 feet of water.

Working Deep Structure

Anglers will find walleye in deep, cool water during the dog days of summer. These zones are where long-time Lake Nipissing guide, Rob Hyatt, focuses his efforts from early morning on. While he fishes walleye shallow in June and into mid-July, he finds better concentrations of fish are deep by mid-summer. “Usually in the heat of July and August, I fish deep, rocky humps in mid-water because they’re feeding stations,” Hyatt said. “Any hump is good, especially if there’s rock on it on Nipissing. I look for a 40 to 50 feet of water on the outside, with the hump rising up to 28 to 30 feet.”

Structures rising out of 40 to 60 foot basin are textbook walleye hotspots. There’s something about this surrounding depth of water walleye like. Miles referenced it and most of the 25 to 32 foot flats and humps I fish rise out of 40 to 60 foot basins.

Miles, Hyatt, and I also all agree on first scanning areas with electronics. During our conversation, Miles often repeated how walleye are scattered in summer and sonar’s importance for locating fish. Likewise for Hyatt who always scans a hump before fishing. This is done by driving in circles around the structure.

(Continued on page 31.)
starting at its highest point and progressing deeper with expanding rings until he’s surveyed the entire hump. “Walleye aren’t always in the same place as last time because they’re following bait, but usually when you see bait there’s fish under them,” Hyatt said. “When I see pods of fish, I sit and jig over them.”

Hyatt uses 1/4-, 3/8-, and 1/2-ounce jigs rigged, more often than not, with Berkley PowerBait 3 inch Ripple Shad. As Nipissing is a stained lake, Hyatt ties direct with 8-pound Berkley Fireline. “I prefer using braided line whenever I can,” Hyatt said. “I don’t believe there’s any benefit to using a fluorocarbon leader in Nipissing... But, if I’m fishing a lake with clear water, I’ll do an FG knot and use a six foot, 6- to 8-pound fluoro leader.”

Hyatt hovers over fish, vertically jigging a Ripple Shad while watching his sonar for fish interest. A slow to moderate lift of a few inches is Hyatt’s finesse jigging cadence. He makes frequent bottom contact with the jig to stir up bottom and attract fish. A swift lift of 12 to 24 inches off bottom is his go-to stroke for active walleye or to try triggering a reaction strike.

Regardless of jigging cadence, Hyatt begins by slowly raising the jig one to two inches. This is done to feel for a fish’s weight that may have bit the jig on the fall or while it rested on bottom. If there’s weight, the rod is lowered briefly to feed the fish some line before the hook is set. In addition to jig and plastic combinations, anglers will catch walleye on other straight-down presentations. A 4 inch finesse worm or 3 inch minnow on a drop-shot is deadly for coaxing walleye to chew. Metal lures are also worth trying. My buddy, Mike Bredlaw, is a walleye-catching machine with a 1/2-ounce slab-style spoon, like a Luhr Jensen Cast Champ. I recall one hot, August day when he was unstoppable with this lure on pretty much every 25 to 30 foot hump we fished. Sure, jig and plastics and drop-shotting put fish in the boat, but these popular summer baits couldn’t hold a candle to Mikey and his metal spoon. Potent in its own right, I can’t help but think part of its appeal was many walleye wouldn’t have seen this bait since ice-fishing season.

Chinwag about summer patterns with any walleye angler worth their weight in salt and odds are they’ll bring up blades and worm harnesses. Hyatt and Miles certainly did. “If jigging’s slow but I can still see fish down there, I’ll do a total change and get down on them with worm harnesses,” said Hyatt. “If jig heads don’t work, harness are usually deadly.”

(Continued on page 32.)

Heat Wave Walleye continued from page 30.)

Lake Nipissing guide Rob Hyatt jigs a Berkley PowerBait 3” Ripple Shad to catch walleye from deep, rocky humps in July and August

A Luhr Jensen Cast Champ is deadly when vertically jigging for summertime walleye relating to humps and other deep structure.

Spinners In Summer

With a transducer built right into the motor, you get crystal clear Humminbird® MEGA Down Imaging® and a clean, protected look. So put a bird in your motor—and more fish on your line.

Give Your Motor a Bird’s Eye View

MEGA-FY YOUR NEXT MINN KOTA® MOTOR WITH BUILT-IN MEGA DOWN IMAGING®.

MEGA Down Imaging® and a clean, protected look. So put a bird in your motor—and more fish on your line.

MINN KOTA

©2019 Johnson Outdoors Marine Electronics, Inc.
Hyatt uses 2- to 3-ounce bottom bouncers to troll harnesses around 1.4 miles per hour (mph). He tends to favour perch coloured blades and harnesses with red beads tipped with a juicy nightcrawler. Hyatt will also use harnesses outfitted with a Slow-Death hook, which adds an enticing spin to the offering.

Miles has a particular fondness for the Northland Butterfly Blade Super Death. It has a unique polycarbonate blade that puts out lots of flash and vibration, while the hook delivers the alluring corkscrew, slow-death action walleye find irresistible. “I get away from worms and use a Berkley Gulp! Killer Crawler,” Miles said. “It keeps the small fish away. Walleye connect with it better and I’m not constantly re-baiting.”

Making a short cast to fish, the bait is allowed to sink to bottom and then snapped twice to impart a darting action before being allowed to fall again. It’s not a “wait ‘em out,” finesse approach. Fish either bite fast or they don’t. Then, after a few minutes, Miles starts trolling again or moves to another spot completely. “If I get high sun and have trolled the basin and the action is slowing down, it doesn’t hurt to get back into weed cover and see what happens for the 2 to 4 o’clock afternoon bite,” Miles said.

Again, he uses swimbaits on 1/8- to 1/4-ounce jigs to work around pockets, clumps and lanes in vegetation. A 3/8-ounce bucktail jig may also get some water time. He’ll pitch the hair jig about 30 feet, let it get to bottom, give it two quick rips, let it fall, and repeat this back to the boat.

Rip-jigging in vegetation is a classic summertime walleye pattern always worth trying and one of my favourites. Looking to buy some bucktail jigs? The man behind the magazine makes my favourites for rip-jigging walleye.

Taro’s Tree Tactics

Taro Murata is a full-time, multi-species guide who isn’t afraid to try “out of the box” tactics and his YouTube Channel is full of great, entertaining tips: www.youtube.com/channel/UCXVJZWiGUV2GVsL_N05wVTg?app=desktop.

While Murata can pitch jigs, rip hair, and troll spinners and cranks with the best of them, he reminds anglers that walleye will relate to wood. Murata says wood can be cold on deep, clear lakes with little vegetation. In these waterbodies, walleye will relate to deep mud flats and basin structures, as we discussed above, but Murata’s experience is that sunken trees along steep, rocky shorelines will hold above-average walleye that are willing to bite, even during hot, high sun conditions. “You want big, branched trees,” Murata said. “The first break (under them) may be shallow, but then it will break again real fast into deep water. Could be 20 feet or more.”

Clean-Up With Jigs

As Miles trolls he enters waypoints over pods of fish. After finishing the trolling run, he returns to the pod and jigs over them. Here he likes to use a 1/2- or 1-ounce Moonshine Shiver Minnow or 9/16-ounce Northland Puppet Minnow. He may also mix things up and toss a paddletail on a jig.
Fishing guide Taro Murata catches big walleye from fallen trees along shorelines in deep, cold lakes with little vegetation.

Murata likes fishing trees using big swimbaits, like the 5.5 inch X-Zone Lures Mega Swammer and 4.8 inch Keitech Swing Impact. These are rigged on a jig head or Tex-posed with a belly-weighted wide gap hook. “Just slowly crawl the swimbait on the outside,” Murata said.

“Go down a bit, too, and let it bump some of those branches. You could also try a slip float and leech in there, but then you might get into rock bass problems.”

I’ve fished this wood-walleye pattern before and have caught fish using a light jig and grub or 1/8-ounce drop-shot weight and a nose-hooked or wacky rigged finesse worm. A straight, slow fall reduces hang-ups and makes it easy for walleye to strike the lure.

**Eyes After Dark**

Sunset and nighttime afford anglers another window of opportunity to catch hot-weather walleye. Bredlaw and I have had our fair share of evening walleye action on rocky humps using jigging spoons, various jigs, and drop-shot rigs. Casting and slowly reeling a Berkley Flicker Shad or a Rapala Tail Dancer over weed tops and along shorelines has also put walleye in my boat from twilight into dark.

(Continued on page 34.)
About the Author: Tim Allard is a full-time, award-winning outdoor journalist and author/photographer of the book, Ice Fishing: The Ultimate Guide. He’s a regular contributor to numerous North American print and online publications. From panfish to northern pike, Tim fishes whatever he can, whenever he can.

Murata encourages anglers to try shallow sand flats at night in summer. He describes one 5 to 8 foot flat he likes as follows: “It’s got a little grass on the bottom in spots along with some rubble piles. The walleye show up at night. We’ll swim grubs and cast a cranks, anything, really. Just keep it slow and steady. I’ve even caught walleye on topwaters there.”

Trolling is also a savvy nighttime play. Again, it comes down to covering water. As far as baits, it all depends on where walleye are feeding. I’ve had incredible nights pulling shallow-running Rapala Shad Raps through depths spanning 4 to 10 feet, catching fish relating to vegetation, sand flats, rocky points, and tributary inlets.

Sometimes, though, walleye feed deeper. Here the Berkley Flicker Minnow and Flicker Shad, Rapala Deep Tail Dancer, and Yo-Zuri Crystal Minnow Deep Diver will all catch fish. Troll baits over deep structures and along deep water drop offs adjacent to shallow feeding shelves.

“You can catch a lot of walleyes in the heat of the summer around here, but you’ve got to keep moving... there are always fish biting somewhere,” Miles said. This attitude, combined with a willingness to experiment with different presentations and fish several areas will serve anglers well when chasing hot-weather walleye. Oh, and remember to drink plenty of water to stay hydrated and reapply sunscreen. Sunstroke is worse than getting skunked.

---

(Heat Wave Walleye continued from page 33.)
**Summertime Pannies**

While early-season pan fishing isn’t always easy, every trip is exciting because panfish of all sizes roam the shallows and there’s a better-than-fair chance of catching an oversize bluegill or crappie.

During the summer months, however, anglers have to do some searching if they want to catch extra-large panfish, according to Team Northland pro and panfish expert Brian “Bro” Brosdahl.

“For the most part, those big ‘gills and crappies won’t be in the shoreline vegetation anymore,” he says. “You have to find isolated weedbeds out in 8 to 15 feet of water.”

The depth of a weedbed and its distance from the shoreline depends on the lake and the clarity of its water, he explains. It could be anywhere from 100 feet to several hundred yards from the shoreline weeds the fish were using just a couple of months before.

“Thick, green weeds are what you’re looking for – cabbage, coontail, milfoil, whatever,” he says. “Bluegills hold in schools, usually along the side closest to the main mud basin, to feed on bug hatches that blow in.

“You can find crappies in the same types of spots, but they’ll also hold on any hump that has some rock structure on it, especially if they’re close to deep, isolated weeds.”

If the bed is on the shallow end of the spectrum and the weeds aren’t overly tall, anglers can cast and retrieve a 1/16-ounce Mimic Minnow® Spin or Thumper® Jig tipped with a crawler chunk over the tops of the vegetation.

On deeper beds where the plants are leggy, a vertical presentation is the best way to go. “Tie a 1/16-ounce Gypsi Jig®, Fire-Fly or Thumper® Jig, tipped with a panfish-size leech or piece of nightcrawler, under a 1/2 – or 3/4-inch Lite-Bite Slip Bobber and cast into the bed and along the edge,” he says. “Twitch the jig to give it some action. Or, if the weeds are real tall, reel in a couple of turns and then let the bait fall straight back down.”

*Courtesy of Northland Tackle*
In continuation of the Meet the OWA Team article published in the Spring edition of Just Fishing, I’d like to introduce you to the second group of our volunteers.

Additionally, we added several more volunteers after the article was first written: Rachael Campbell, Amanda Tracey, Erin Wilson, Patti Griffin McDougall, Danna Parker and Patricia Merka. This team of 22 ladies, along with others in the community, is instrumental in helping to organize and implement fishing opportunities and providing mentorship to the members of Ontario Women Anglers.

If you should be interested in finding out more about volunteering with Ontario Women Anglers, please contact me at: yvonne.owa101@gmail.com

She may be one of our newest volunteers but Ava is no stranger to Ontario Women Anglers. She came across OWA a few years ago at the Toronto Sportsmen’s Show where she met and befriended fellow OWA volunteer Chris McCoy. Ava has attended a few of the OWA events such as Intro to Muskie fishing and Ice Fishing at Elbow Lake and assisted with running the first Port Maitland event in 2019. Ava has made some incredible friendships with the ladies she has met through the OWA and is looking forward to sharing her love and enthusiasm of fishing and with others. From creeks to rivers to lakes of all sizes, if she can fish it, she will.

After a 30-year hiatus from angling, Chris was “hooked” again after attending Yvonne’s Intro to Fishing seminar at the OFAH’s Women Outdoors Weekend. Now, in her 6th year as a volunteer instructor, Chris has gone from novice angler to recipient of the OWA mentorship award in what seems like a heartbeat. Enjoying every style of fishing, from creeks to the Great Lakes, Chris is heavily involved in fishing and has competed nationally in multi-species tournaments. Chris believes successful angling is achievable from any body of water with a supportive resource like the OWA, a willingness to learn and knowing where to target fish with the right bait.

“One of the most rewarding experiences for me has been the life-long relationships I’ve developed with other dedicated OWA women stretching over to hunting, kayaking and into our everyday lives.” Chris’ passion for angling is evident in her ever expanding target species list. Having caught over 32 species in Ontario, the elusive gar pike on a fly is her goal this summer. Brown trout are still her favourite.

As a young girl, Melanie spent her summers learning to fish in the Almaguin Highlands at her family’s summer cottage. Like most girls her age, she was introduced to fishing by her father, Keith, who had her dig for worms in the garden. Melanie had a career in the Canadian Armed Forces that allowed her the opportunity to deploy on international and domestic operations and experience Canada from coast to coast.

More recently, Melanie has developed a deep passion for fly fishing and fly tying. She is a multi-species fly angler, dividing her time fishing the lakes of Eastern Ontario for pike and muskie and the rivers of Upper New York State for brookies, browns and rainbows. Melanie, with her OWA instructor colleagues, competes competitively in area fishing events including the Ausable Two Fly Challenge, Stoco Lake Black Crappie Tournament and the Monster Mash Muskie Tournament. Melanie reluctantly fishes the hard water at least once a year with OWA. She is an advocate for water and fish conservation and getting more women involved in angling.

Sylvia comes to us from Hamilton where, when she is not baking butter tarts for family and friends, can be found fishing. She normally targets bass, pike and walleye and a day of catching crappie...
Experts in Fishing, Archery, Hunting, Sport Shooting & Camping in Our Great Outdoors!

In Business Since 1973 Serving the Sportsmen & Sportswomen in the Durham Area from Our Expanded & Renovated Store in Oshawa.

HUNTING • FISHING • ARCHERY

Gannis Sports

NOW OPEN – CFO Certified

DURHAM'S PREMIER FIREARMS SHOOTING CENTRE

ACCEPTING NEW MEMBERSHIPS

• New state-of-the-art shooting facility
• PAL and Hunter Safety Courses available on site
• 10 Handgun shooting bays (27 meters)
• 6 Rifle shooting bays (50 meters)
• Modern range baffling and backstop
  • Modern air filtration system
• Well-stocked merchandise and firearms retail area
• Staffed by experienced shooters and qualified range officers
  • 24 hour security monitoring

SHIMANO

Experts in Fishing, Archery, Hunting, Sport Shooting & Camping in Our Great Outdoors!

New Stock Arriving Daily!

385 Bloor St. West
Oshawa, ON
(905) 725-5798

www.gagnonsports.com

Visit Our Website For Details on More Upcoming Events!

Hours: Monday – Friday 9:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m., Saturday 9:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m., & Sunday 10:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.
and bluegill always puts a smile on her face. Her favourite lakes are Balsam, Erie, Temagami and Mistinikon – each different and offering a variety of opportunities to fish with different baits. She mainly fishes with artificial lures but also enjoys dunking leeches for walleye while on vacation.

Sylvia met Yvonne at an Ontario Bass Nation event and became involved with OWA shortly afterwards. She likes to work the industry trade shows and new angler events where she can share some of the knowledge she has gathered over her years of fishing. Sylvia likes to encourage women to come out and try fishing as the environment provided by OWA is a safe and supportive one to ask questions and get help from peers.

A resident of Barrie, Tammy was introduced to fishing at a very young age by her dad on Eagle Lake in Haliburton and remembers catching a lake trout on a Pocket Fisherman rod. About seven years ago, she was reintroduced to the sport and spent most of her time fishing from shore until she bought a kayak in 2017, which allowed her to venture the backcountry on at least 15 solo fishing trips. Tammy always fished by herself as she did not know anyone that liked fishing.

In 2019, Tammy found OWA online while searching for women’s fishing groups and seeking out people with the same passion. She has met so many supportive and empowering women, some of whom she now considers good friends, and feels that OWA has changed her life. Tammy is new to the volunteer group and will be working the OWA booth at the Peterborough Tackle Swap and Fishing Show and at the Toronto Sportsman Show.

Tanya is from Barrie, on the western side of Lake Simcoe, and enjoys all kinds of angling opportunities – whitefish and lake trout in the winter, spring brook trout, summer topwater bass action and fall steelheading, just to name a few. Her favourite bodies of water are Lake Simcoe, the Nottawasaga River and anything in the backcountry of Algonquin Park.

Her partner introduced her to OWA after seeing a group of women, all in OWA clothing, at

(Continued on page 39.)
Chris remembers sitting through a Fishing 101 seminar at the OFAH Women’s Outdoor Weekend in 2013 and thinking she knew absolutely nothing about fishing! The next morning, when one of the volunteers handed Chris a fishing rod, she had to ask the volunteer to show her how to cast.

The following year Chris, attended all of the OWA events and finally caught her first fish at the Bass Fishing Weekend for Women at Elbow Lake, north of Kingston. Soon after, she became a volunteer with OWA and started helping the organization whenever she could.

“What I love most about OWA is the wonderful friends I have made and the positive impact it has had on my life. Not only do we support and encourage each other but share our knowledge of fishing with everyone involved. I think there is a positive focus on growing this program and helping Yvonne achieve her vision of women teaching women.”

In keeping with the restrictions imposed by health and government officials because of the COVID-19 pandemic, Ontario Women Anglers has had to cancel or postpone the majority of our events this summer. We hope the time that we can all meet up in larger groups will happen soon and we’ll keep you posted as to what events we’ll be running later this year.

**Editor's Note:** Yvonne Brown is best known for Ontario Women Anglers and the Fishing 101 for Women program. Yvonne is a strong advocate for getting women and children outdoors and on the water. She is the first female to receive the Rick Amsbury Award of Excellence.
First thing I gotta say is every time I cross paths with CO fishing guide Brad Petersen, he shows or tells me about some super-sneaky technique – or lure mod – that he’s been catching ’em on... Problem is he always wants me to keep it under wraps so he gets a couple years of tourney fishing with it before others catch on lol! Glad he’s finally letting me out one of his unique bites. Dude has been whacking shallow weed-patch walleye throwing stuff you’re more likely to see tied on a bass-head’s rig – check it:

“The bass world has known for years that the bladed jig (aka Chatterbait) is a killer presentation to catch numbers and big shallow-water fish. What makes the Terminator Shuddering Bait unique is the blade... its curved plastic shape gives it a more erratic/darting action than traditional bladed jigs that seems to trigger walleyes. “While fishing a lake in eastern CO last spring I found myself on an amazing bite, and decided to give the Shuddering Bait a try... found walleyes didn’t just like it – they loved it!! “… this bait was producing fish on average 2-3” larger than the other presentations we’d been using that day. Throughout the year when I ran across a shallow-water bite, I kept giving the Shuddering Bait a try and the results kept repeating themselves = numbers and bigger walleyes.

“I like using the 1/2-oz Shuddering Bait size for the added casting distance and depth you’re able to achieve, while throwing it on a MH bait-casting rod rigged with Sufix 14-lb fluoro. “The best way I’ve found to rig the bait is to add a boot-tail trailer – my preference is a BioBait DNA Swimbait or Storm 360GT Searchbait body... the slimmer body profile allows the skirt to work without interference and both have a good kicking action in the tail. An added bonus is both are extremely durability and last numerous fish.” His favourite colour combo out west is the "glimmer blue shad” Shuddering Bait paired with a “sexy shad” colour BioBait DNA Swimbait trailer.

“In western reservoirs the presentation works best over top or along the edges of weeds, or freshly flooded brush during the spring and summer months... (Also) shined on shoreline structure with a mudline adjacent to deeper water. “The best retrieve out west has been a steady retrieve just fast enough that the lure starts to dart more... you’ll be able to see it kicking side-to-side and feel it in your rod.

“One Midwest angler Ana Leschishin (@ana on ice) caught several big walleyes while targeting smallmouth bass with the Shuddering Bait and started experimenting in the natural lakes in north-central MN with great success. “In the early season Ana looks for steep breaks with cabbage or pencil weeds adjacent to the shoreline and uses a slow-'n-steady retrieve. As the water warms she recommends targeting mid-lake humps with an aggressive retrieve. Ana stated, ‘the Shuddering Bait can out-fish some of my favourite go-to crankbaits.” Ana’s favourite colour in the Midwest = “Nest Robber.” Few more of Brad’s tricks when throwing the Shuddering Bait for walleyes: Fish the clear- or solid-colour blades...the shiny blades have not worked as well for me for walleyes. The 3.5-4.5” boot-tail trailers seem to be best. I use a straight retrieve most of the time, the key is to retrieve the bait just quick enough to feel the increased vibration of the lure and you’ll notice the lure starts to get more erratic.

When fish are negative try adding some stop-and-falls to your retrieve. Use fluoro or braid with a medium to medium-heavy rod... the bait has a larger 5/0 bass hook and takes a little more effort to get the hook in the fish – especially on long casts. Pay close attention to the entire retrieve... several big fish have ate the bait right at the boat side... similar to muskie fishing. This presentation excels at covering water – fan cast an area then move on. Thx for the inside scoop, Brad!

I had the chance to hop in the boat yesterday with Mille Lacs guide Brad Hawthorne where he schooled me on the forgotten art of “jig trolling” for walleyes. Great, finessy way to cover more water and keep your bait in the strike-zone longer. Something I’ll definitely be adding to my walleye-fishing arsenal – hope you dig it!

His go-to bait right now is a secret colour (but he ended up showing it in the video!) Northland Long Shank Fire-Ball Jig. Also whacked a bunch earlier in the day using the same “jig trolling” technique with a 4” Impulse Smelt Minnow.

(Continued on page 41.)
The Ned Rig has become one of the hottest finesse-’em-up bass presentations but really it’s nothing new in the Midwest. I’ve been throwing one for about 15 years now, and the guy that showed me had been using it since the ’70s. The biggest difference IMO is that a Ned Rig should technically have a more-buoyant plastic on the back, so it floats up off bottom. Basically it’s a compact little treat (usually a stickbait) slapped on the back of a mushroom-shaped jighead – believe Gopher Tackle made it first (?) but lots of options are out there now for jigheads.

One of my favourites is the VMC Finesse Half Moon Jig. Lighter is better, so typically a 3/32- or 1/8-oz is what I tie on first... will occasionally bump up to a 3/16-oz if the wind is rippin’. This one’s

(Continued on page 42.)
paired with a 3” YUM Ned Dinger: Light braid gives you extra casting distance and feel. Either 8-lb Sufix 832 or NanoBraid, with a 7– or 8-lb fluoro leader. My leader length varies based on water clarity… no shorter than 4-5’, but up to 10-12’ long for spooky clear-water fish. I’m almost always throwing natural, green pumpkin-ish colours to mimic craws or perch pecking at the bottom. Will occasionally chuck lighter shiner patterns up shallow in the spring when water temps are say 55–60 degrees and/or you start seeing shiners dancing up in the shallows at the boat ramp.

How to fish it depends on the day… usually for me it’s more of a slow drag with little hops, just creepin’ and crawlin’ that thing along. They usually hit it in the first 10-15 seconds of the bait hitting bottom, so after that I crank up and repeat.

I know the exposed hook seems goofy for throwing in the weeds, but it comes through ‘em way better than you’d think. Doesn’t matter if it’s 7–13’ cabbage weeds, or 14–22’ coontail later in the season, a quick snap of the rod can usually rip the bait out of the weeds (thx braid!) and sometimes help trigger a strike.
CRISPY COCONUT CATFISH

Yield: 4 Servings

INGREDIENTS:

2-lbs Cleaned Catfish Loin Fillets
2 Lt Canola Oil
3 Eggs, beaten
250 ml Cold Milk
125 ml Flour
250 ml Unsweetened Shredded Coconut
Pinch Salt & Pepper

SRIRACHA SAUCE:

5-10 ml Sriracha Hot Sauce
200 ml Mayonnaise
5 ml Lemon Juice
1 Lemon, cut into wedges

DIRECTIONS:

Place the beaten eggs and water in a medium sized bowl. Mix the flour, coconut and salt, and pepper and place in another bowl. Mix the Sriracha, mayonnaise and lemon juice, chill.

Clean Catfish loin fillets, rinse well in cold water (pat dry and cut into 3 inch strips).

Place the catfish strips in the egg wash, then remove fish and place in the coconut breading, shake well to coat. Let sit in breading for 5 minutes. Heat oil to 365°F, cook catfish until light golden brown, around 1 1/2 to 2 minutes, season with salt and pepper.

Serve with dipping sauce and lemon wedges.

Enjoy!

Editor’s Note: Avid outdoors person, competitive angler, 2-time gold medal winning chef at the Culinary World Olympics and educator Cameron Tait truly loves being in the outdoors. Cameron is an active member of the Manitoba Wildlife Federation, Walleye Anglers Assoc. of Manitoba, Central Walleye Trail and on the Pro Staff team for Alumacraft / Suzuki and Minn Kota / Humminbird. When not pursuing his passion for the outdoors, Certified Chef du Cuisine Cameron can be found surrounded by mouth watering food.
NEW 2020

PRO-V
LIMITED

The new 2020 Lund Pro-V Limited Edition with premium styling and exclusive standard features

Limited Black Port Console
Limited Steering Wheel
Limited Interior Upholstery

LUND
LUNDBOATS.COM