

# Anything Goes

Here in the Dakota's most species of fish have recovered from the rigors of spawning and are ready to tie on a serious feed bag.

What this means is that they will generally be easy to catch using a wide variety of presentations. To some degree, all of us get stuck in a rut with pet methods for extracting our favorite fish. Now is the time to broaden your horizons and live a little on the wild side, at least as far as techniques are concerned.

Still can't force your self to put down your tried and true bouncer/spinner combo? Compromise and try some different blades and color patterns. JB Lures has several unique configurations that you may want to try; their Vibra Flash and Hot Flash immediately come to mind.

Replace your favorite livebait with corresponding Powerbait or Gulp. I have had great success by threading on 2 inch white Powerbait grubs in lieu of minnows. These scented plastics actually offer a couple of advantages over livebait in that the action is more intense and you don't have to constantly rebait due to pesky little panfish.

Another twist on the bouncer and leader scenario is to tie on a Mack's Smile Blade and an inline float where you would traditionally go with a spinner. They are a mylar wing style blade that will rotate as slow as a ¼ mph and up to 3mph quite nicely. They effectively bridge the gap between a plain snell moving slowly and a spinner at a fast clip. With the spinner if we slow down too much it falls to the bottom becoming a dredge that the fish show little interest in and vastly increase the odds of snagging. What I have found to be effective is to vary your speed to create an undulating motion that fish in all levels of activity will respond to.

It absolutely amazes me the number of folks who still seem to have an aversion to crankbaits. Although using hard baits is not my favorite technique, there is no arguing with their effectiveness. More often than not cranks will catch more and often larger fish than any other method. This is largely due to the fact that you are covering much more water and putting your bait in contact with higher numbers of fish.

Plugs work equally well either cast or trolled. To troll, begin in the 2mph range and let out just enough line to occasionally touch bottom with one line running maybe half way up in the water column to check for high riding fish. Follow your chosen contour in an S shaped pattern to cause the inside lines to slow while the outside lines speed up. If you are getting more hits on the inside or outside lures adjust your boat speed accordingly. Although there are subtle nuances that you will learn over time, it's about as simple as that.

If casting, I like to employ the previously mentioned Smile Blade set up as a dead rod and keep the boat roughly at the first break. Move along slowly and cast a plug such as ReefRunner Ripshad at 45 degree angle ahead of you and towards shore. Reel back at a moderate rate and hang on. No hookset required, just reel em in.

When the fish are really poppin it gives you the chance to experiment with new lures and techniques. After catching a few you'll gain the confidence needed to become proficient with all

the tools available and in the long run a much better and more versatile angler.

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