

Christmas List

Last month I began a discussion on developing a wish list for some great new products to put to use this Ice Fishing season. Christmas is coming and I will expand upon this and give you enough time to drop some not so subtle hints and make yourself “not that hard to shop for.”

I will now focus on portable shelters, electronics, fishing rods, and lures. With these items we can be protected from the elements, see and interpret the fish below us, and have a means of presenting our lures. All are essential elements for a successful outing.

The Pro Series portables from Otter Outdoors are unquestionably the finest Flip Over style units to date and are the result of continual refinements. Rugged, reliable, and sets up in seconds. Standard features include a great sled base, super comfortable seating, coupled with quality fabric and design that keeps all the wind and cold outside...leaving you warm and cozy inside. Check out [www.otteroutdoors](http://www.otteroutdoors.com) to see the selection of cool accessories they have to trick out and personalize not only your shelter-*but your ATV as well*. We can now have everything within arms reach and ready to go. With seven models to choose from and the wide array of accessories, there is surely something that will fit your needs and budget.

Vexilar (www.vexilar.com) is the name synonymous with finding fish through the ice and has led the way since they first burst onto the scene with their now famous three color flasher. Not content with the status quo of proven technology, they continually strive to raise the bar by building upon this base and have done so again with the introduction of the new FL-22HD. Easily the most advanced and functional unit to date with capabilities of less than one quarter inch target separation achieved by matching power output and pulse length to the depth you are fishing. Good went straight to great with this one.

After extensive research and testing, Vexilar has now entered the world of underwater cameras and has come out with the FS-1000 Color Viewing System. What is happening beneath us has never been clearer as the action is brought to us in living color on a 7 inch screen neatly tucked into a self contained system that is ready for use right out of the box. This unit carries Vexilar's signature quality and reliability, complete with a full two year warranty.

The rods we now have available are utterly unrecognizable from the meager offerings just a few years back. In the past, discerning hard-core Ice Anglers simply had no option other than custom built rods if they desired a truly good stick. Manufacturers have stepped up and in my opinion, St. Croix (www.stcroixrods.com) is at the top of the class with their Legend Series Ice Rods. They are based around a patented strike indicator system that is simply called a “Spring

Bobber” would be an insult. Absolutely none of the drawbacks associated with traditional spring bobbers, but offering all the attributes...plus it is easily adjustable to fine tune your presentation. Their Premier Series are a more traditional rod built for heavier lures and tactics based on a sensitive and solid carbon blank able to detect the slightest of bites.

Outfit yourself with a good selection of 100 percent American Made lures from the extensive lineup from the folks at JB Lures and you should be in business. As lures are the least expensive toy on the list, it may be best to drop the hint for these to the cheaper members of your family. Good luck to you.