

Confidence is Key

The ability to maintain the attitude that you are going to catch fish every time you hit the water is the largest X factor in a successful outing. Without this, you are just putting in your time in, and hoping for the best. The old saying that “the fish are always biting somewhere” generally holds true. It is our job to find these fish and present a bait to them in a manner that will elicit a positive result...them connecting with our hook.

Once we have them located, with a little perseverance and a willingness to experiment, we can usually get at least a few to bite. This task is heavily dependent on quality electronics (fish finders) and staying on them with the ability to accurately return to these areas (GPS).

By being able to consistently mark fish and thus knowing we are actually fishing in a location that holds fish, lends us the aforementioned confidence to catch them. Without this ability, we are doing little more than fishing blindly. Unfortunately, this is exactly what a lot of folks do, and their catch rates suffer dramatically.

We now need to assure ourselves that we are using the best tools available. A high quality Sonar/GPS combo is easily the most important piece of equipment on your boat.

With that being said: What should we be looking for in a truly great unit that will serve all of our needs? First of all, you will want to confine your search to those brands with a good reputation and track record of reliability. Lowrance and Raymarine top the list in my book. Having used both, in my opinion, Raymarine clearly stands out in terms of overall quality and ease of use.

Absolutely no complicated settings and adjustments to learn. Simply power them up and go. This is due to their incorporating a Digital Sounder Module that does all of the interpretation for the user. It is constantly analyzing data and adjusts for variations as conditions warrant. Whether trolling at 2mph or flying down the lake to your next spot at 60mph-you will get a clear and concise reading of what is going on below you.

There are a couple of things that will impress even the savviest of users. One is the ability to actually mark fish at high speeds. This just is not possible with lesser offerings. The other is that they will mark game fish in a cloud of bait. Standard sonar will mark this a large blob, at best. Once all of this information relayed to the ultimate computer... our own brains, we can concentrate on presentation options.

Some minimum requirements you will want to look for in a combination Sonar/GPS unit are: A color screen to help in interpreting signals, as you can judge the strength of fish returns and relative bottom hardness in the colors displayed. Monochrome makes this extremely difficult, and in most cases impossible. Get the largest screen size you can afford. Makes for easier viewing at a distance and from odd angles.

On the GPS end you will want to make sure that it has background mapping. What this means is that you will allow know where you're boat is located above the lake bottom. This aids in giving you a real “feel” for the piece of structure you are working. Also allows you to easily find your chosen spot and return safely.

By doing some research and getting the best unit for your money, you will have made a very valuable investment that will yield high dividends in your ultimate enjoyment on the water.

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