

Dog Day Dilemma

The dilemma many of us face during the Dog Days of August and September is whether to expend the time and energy (not to mention the sweat) chasing Walleyes during a period that typically isn't thought of as conducive to catching large numbers of fish.

The fish haven't disappeared to some mysterious underwater haunt and are still catchable. The food chain is now at its peak with baitfish populations high and young of year perch, drum, white bass, etc. perfect eating size. Our lazy and opportunistic Walleye friends have a well stocked smorgasbord to choose from and are not easily tempted. This does not mean that they will refuse everything. We just need to spice things up a bit and present them with something a bit out of the ordinary.

The information I'm going to share with you was learned on the Reservoirs of South Dakota but will apply most anywhere Walleye's are to be found.

It never ceases to amaze me in the Dakota's that the few days each year the wind doesn't howl the temps are 100+ and you're begging for a breeze. This is when the bite really gets tough. Without a 15 mph or better wind, it's my opinion that you can throw out your traditional shallow water bouncer/spinner tactics as they are going to become largely inefficient. The only bites you'll likely receive are from the hordes of creepy crawlies that inevitably invade our boats when we have no air movement.

Now that the bouncers are out of the picture, it's time to get kinky. Throw em a curve or better yet a knuckle ball in your presentations. Cranks immediately come to mind due to the amount of ground covered. You will want a hard wobbling and rattling model with a steep dive curve that will quickly get down to the depths that the fish will be holding. ReefRunners are my favorite for this application. By running them on 10/4 Fireline you gain 25% in depth and the lack of stretch amplifies their action.

Go one further and run a floating lure or a spinner above for a 1-2 punch. Do so by attaching a 3-way swivel 6 foot above and placing the second offering on 3 foot leader. It may resemble a school of baitfish scooting by, who knows, but it works. Another option is to remove the rear treble hook from your deep diving bait and run a stickbait a couple of feet behind.

Lead core line is an underutilized technique that can yield tremendous results. Spinners work well, with some adaptation. I go with a 6 foot spinner dressed with rattle beads and a JB Lures Vibraflash spinner blade. Along with flash, they create a lot of sonic disturbance, thus drawing fish from a distance. Place a Mack's Smile Blade and a bead above the splice for a truly flamboyant combination. Leave the crawlers at home and bait with a scented plastic like Powerbait or Food Source's food based products. They will stand up to the rigors of trolling and are as good or often times better than the real thing. If you want even further enhancement, you can replace the treble from a Flutterspoon with a quality snap swivel and attach this directly to the leadcore with your spinner setup following behind.

These are just a few options to try. Think outside of the box, be creative and experiment until you find what works for you. Besides, it's a good feeling catching fish with your own concoctions while others are struggling with run of the mill tactics.

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