

## First Ice Wish List

With the recent-and quite welcome-influx of unseasonably warm weather, most folk's thoughts are on anything but Ice Fishing. Many of you are probably out happily pounding away on Pheasants and gearing up for Deer Season. But...you should be putting some thought into what is inevitably going to come, and quite frankly will be the best release for our outdoor energies once the hunting seasons draw down.

May not feel like it, but we will soon be perched atop a coating of hard water, right over our favorite fishing holes. All we need is a few crisp nights with the absence of wind and we can be right at it. That being said, I always view this time of year with a childish sense of anticipation-much like counting the days down to Christmas. Not really any different as we are impatiently awaiting the big event (first ice) and looking forward to all the goodies (new equipment) we get to play with. Now is the time to make out our wish list. As with all things in life, we may not always get *everything* we want as *quickly* as we want, but always seem to manage to get at least some of the things we desire. It's just a matter of piecing it all together over time. Even when think we are getting close, capitalism being what is, companies always step in with new and improved equipment each and every year. If anything, sportsmen are great for the economy.

In this and the next column, I will try and outline some of what I feel to be the most pertinent and useful gear you will want to place on your wish list. With any luck and assuming you have been good, you may just find some of these items lurking beneath your Christmas Tree.

As always, the first and most obvious undertaking in Ice Fishing is to punch a hole so we can get our bait down to our finny friends. At one time this was the most arduous and dreaded task in Ice Fishing. It has now become nearly effortless and dare I say...almost fun. By making what was once a chore merely a quick exercise, we are now able to be much more aggressive and mobile in our search for fish. Today's power augers are light, smooth, and reliably bore through any amount of ice in a snap. StrikeMaster ([www.strikemaster.com](http://www.strikemaster.com)) has long been considered a leader in advanced auger design and continues the tradition with its' latest lineup of Solo powered units. The German Engineered Solo engine coupled with the proven dual Lazer blade tipped auger section makes the Pro Lazer and Lazer Mag the best on the ice. On a personal note: I ran the 10 inch Pro Lazer model last year and found it to cut as quickly and smoothly as any 8 inch auger I had ever used.

We now need a system of placing our baits in said hole. A vastly overlooked option is the use of tip ups. Unfortunately far too many of you equate them as an affair strictly meant for Pike.

Nothing could be further from the truth and with a just a little imagination...they can pay huge dividends with all species for you. While not a “run and gun” tactic, certainly should be employed every single time you stop and settle in. HT Enterprises ([www.icefish.com](http://www.icefish.com)) has many styles to choose from with the Magnetic Pop Up and Windlass models being my personal favorites.

Look for some more of these “must have toys” in the next column.