Lure Selection for Winter Perch

This task, to say the least, can be overwhelming given the choices available. Looking over the vast selection of models, colors, and sizes at most bait shops can cause decision overload. By following a few simple guidelines, you can narrow your search to 3 basic categories and some standard colors.

Flash/Vibration: These are the straight bent spoon types, often with a rattle included. These make for a great all around lure and I use them almost exclusively while searching for fish. Due to all the flash and vibration created, they will draw a lot of attention from long distances and excel in stained or dirty water. A lift-drop-hold-shake-hold repeat procedure is all that is needed to work them effectively. A good example would be JB's Varmit and Pro Varmit.

Swimming: These are your classic jigging minnow designs. They closely resemble baitfish in profile and work admirably with neutral fish and clear water. A fundamental lift drop motion causes the bait to shoot up and away and then glide back in a wide arc on the fall. Most strikes occur as the lure settles. It's a good idea to shake the bait in place before beginning a new jigging sequence. My personal choice is JB's Spanker due to its deep body and thin cross section. It has an extraordinarily unique action that pressured Perch will often crush.

Pounding/Quivering: These are small lures that fish heavily in relation to their size. This lets you get a tiny offering down to the fish quickly. This allows us to capitalize on active fish and put a number on the ice in short order. You typically fish them tipped with Waxies, Eurolarvae, or Powerbait/Gulp. By "Pounding" in place you cause the bait to perform a kicking type of motion that Perch of all activity levels find hard to resist. If you slowly raise this offering while still "Pounding" it, reluctant fish will often commit as they think it is getting away. There are 2 models designed by Ice Fishing Innovator Dave Genz that are hard to beat. These being the Genz Worm and Fat Boy.

One lure that doesn't fit into the above categories to try when all else fails is the Gem-N-Eye. It resembles a thick spinner blade with a hook molded on the fat end. Reverse hook (slip the hook point just under the skin parallel to the dorsal fin with the point facing the head) a small minnow and let it flutter to the bottom. The minnow hooked in this manner will struggle to swim upward, causing a lot of flash and commotion. It takes some patience to fish this as it settles very slowly but I feel this is the key to its success. It closely mimics an injured baitfish falling out of a school and the fish are instinctively programmed to respond.

Color: In my opinion, this is the most overrated and least understood factor in fishing. Your emphasis should always be on finding fish first, then presenting them with an offering that will tempt them based on their activity level. If you are fishing the wrong lure in the wrong way and in the wrong location no amount of perfection in color selection will improve your odds at catching a fish. *Color is always the last piece of the puzzle.*

With that said, there are some standby colors that are proven winners. Chartreuse, white, silver and perch patterns are good, while gold and blue/purple are excellent in the clear water we encounter during the ice period. I have found that **Glow** in *any color* is a positive at all times.

We need to use less of our limited brain power browsing in the bait shop and more of it on the water figuring out the fish's location and activity level. By doing so, you will become more consistent in your efforts.

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