

# Marine Electronics Today

The electronic devices that are now available for anglers are truly a modern marvel. What was cutting edge just a few short years ago pales in comparison to the latest offerings. We now have high definition color graphs, GPS with background mapping and autopilot trolling motors. And, of course, powerful and long lasting batteries coupled with onboard chargers to ensure that all of our new goodies have enough juice to make it through the longest of days. Do you need all of these wonderful gadgets to catch fish? By no means. Does the use of these tools make your time on the water more productive and thus increase your catch? Without a doubt. Following is a brief rundown of the aforementioned items.

The first and most important thing you will need to have are quality batteries. Please don't skimp here. Without reliable power all of your investment in electronics becomes little more than useless junk. The last few seasons I have been using batteries made by Optima. Even on the longest of days I have yet to pull them down to unusable levels. Most recreational anglers can easily expect to get a couple of days use out of a properly charged premium battery. This leads us to chargers.

Once we have chosen our battery we need to make sure that it is charged correctly so that it will deliver it's full potential. My Triton boats come equipped with onboard chargers from Dual Pro. What this allows you to do is simply plug the boat in at the end of the day. The batteries will be quickly charged and maintained, which also extends life expectancy. Once you have one you'll wonder how you got by without it.

The majority of your fishing will be done with the aid of an electric trolling motor. If you haven't updated in awhile you'll want to check out the new models. They now come equipped with Auto Pilot and are very easy to stow and deploy and offer plenty of thrust. My nod goes to the units made by Minn Kota.

Sonar is the least understood and most overlooked device used by anglers today. The basic units will tell you depth and occasionally mark a fish. The better models will expand on this by allowing you to determine bottom content (hard or soft), weed growth, and display baitfish. The top of the line models will do all of this in color as well. An example of the advantage color offers is that the Raymarine graphs that I use will actually separate game fish feeding in a cluster of bait.

GPS is the latest to arrive on the scene. You can obtain very good models that deliver phenomenal accuracy at an affordable price. Nothing beats GPS for putting you back on the spot on the spot. As advanced as GPS is, it has recently gotten better with the addition of background mapping. What this amounts to is a contour map that is loaded via a chip. This will show your position in relation to structure breaks in a particular lake. You can now follow any breakline with amazing precision. Best of all, you can marry all of this into a color sonar unit. You now have all of the information you need right at your fingertips. Don't worry, this technology is all user friendly and you won't need a doctorate in electronics to operate them.

Take some time, do some shopping, check your balance and make a purchase or two. I think you'll be quite pleased with the return on your investment.

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