

Mother Always Knows Best

Well, it looks as though Old Man Winter may have finally left us alone. And a very grumpy old man he has been. To be honest with you, I'm more than just a little bit sick of both him *and* Mother Nature. At this point, we should consider retiring them both as they appear to be getting senile and downright nasty a heck of a lot more than is called for. I generally enjoy winter and the subsequent ice fishing prospects, but these two even managed to make that much more difficult (or impossible) than need be. I'm one who clings to last ice like a drowning man clutching a life ring and have absolutely no desire to climb in a boat until the ice is completely black and I have pushed my fat frame places it shouldn't safely be. I went in up to my armpits recently and can't help but to ponder why the ice seems to get a bit weaker each season and it takes more to keep me on the dry side.

But enough is enough already and bring on the real Spring weather and all that goes with it...including the boat. Good riddens to the whole start of 2011 and on to much better...and warmer things. Great opportunities abound everywhere. There is a decidedly bright side to all of the snow we have had to tolerate. Every body of water is either full to capacity, or in many cases, overflowing. This can be a very good thing, at least where the fish are concerned. It opens up vast areas of new spawning habitat and we see an absolute explosion of fish of all species. The Glacial Lakes region will benefit immensely from this and I would predict we are going to see things as good, or even better, than we saw them the last time we had this much water.

Northern Pike and Perch are the most notable beneficiaries, but the Walleye's will also do quite well. It is a much overplayed conception that Walleye's need a rock, or gravel substrate in which to successfully spawn. Yes, in a classic sense there is truth to this, but is far from necessary. Like most creatures they will take full advantage of every possibility that presents itself. They will follow the current and high water as far back into any pasture or field as they can get and do their business. All of the newly flooded terrestrial vegetation and emerging cattail sloughs will not only provide perfect spawning opportunities for the game and panfish, but more importantly, become a well stocked buffet line for the freshly hatched fry. This shallow and colored water warms quickly and becomes awash in minnows and every little aquatic beastly that the fry need to flourish. This will not only dramatically increase the survival rate, but also help them to grow at an unbelievable pace. We can expect good fishing for some time to come just from the upcoming crop of the last couple of years-not to mention what will be produced this season.

I would have to say that the moral of the story is that even though as of late, I am not exactly thrilled with Mother Nature or her seasonal friend Old Man Winter, the old gal does have a way of balancing things and making them right in the end. If we can step back and look at the big picture, she appears to have tested our endurance and is now going to reward us with some awfully good fishing for several years to come.