

Persevere

With few exceptions, the results achieved during this Ice Season, have been disappointing. It's not just us: The poor bite is something the whole Ice Belt has been experiencing. Ask any Bait Shop operator; they will tell you the number of Anglers they are seeing is down. The Tackle Manufacturers are also reporting very depressed orders and little to nothing in reorders.

For those of us that remain diligent and keep going out; the return (Fish) for our investment (Time) has been dismal. Although this proves to be very frustrating, don't give up just yet. Better times are just around the corner.

We are nearing the end of the traditionally tough Mid Winter Period and the slow bite can be expected, to some degree. As we transition into the Late Ice Period, things should begin to loosen up and steadily improve. Particularly in March: When the bite truly kicks in.

Please be aware, that in my opinion, this is the time that offers the best opportunity of the year, open or hard water, to cash in on some fishing that can nothing short of phenomenal.

With colder weather and little snow, as of late, our Ice conditions have improved dramatically. This will allow us good access to most any area we want to try. The thickening of the ice will also extend the Hard Water Season and allow us to keep punching holes well into March and even April, on some Lakes.

As the days begin to get longer, all Species of fish will show proportionately increased activity levels. Biological triggers are tripped in response to the upcoming Spawning Season. Females will go on a feeding binge in order to finish of their egg sacks. Males being males, will respond accordingly.

Envision a bunch of teenage boys with the keys to Dad's new pickup, cruising around looking for chicks. Remove the pounding base of the stereo and I think you get the picture. They are very similar, lots of energy and not sure what to do with it. As with humans, although the females may not yet be receptive and ready for the process to begin, it will not slow the males, in the least.

They will be extremely active with all of their senses heightened, burning lots of energy thus needing to refuel often. As with teenage boys, they are pretty much stupid during this time and will be quite easy to catch, once you find them.

The females, like human females, are a bit more selective. They also require a little more coaxing and convincing with subtle movements. But, as they spawn draws near, they to, can be had. Just a matter of a well placed presentation.

Up to this point; Ice Fishing has been a test of endurance and attitude. Those with perseverance will pass the test and be richly rewarded with good catches and large fish. There are also added benefits: You will largely have these fish to yourself as the lesser anglers have long ago succumbed, and have given up. The weather will often be quite warm and comfortable, thus improving attitudes and subsequently catch rates.

Rest assured the fishing will pick up. Knowing this, it is up to us to get off our butts, get out, and get it done. This is where your better fisherman will rise to the top. As with anything in life, if you are willing to keep plugging away and remain steadfast in your convictions, you will eventually be compensated. Keep in mind; I have yet to see anyone catch a fish, standing firmly on land, complaining about the bite.

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