

## Quality Electronics Aid Search

In a previous column, I tried to emphasize just how vital it is to “hunt” fish with the assistance of high quality electronics. Notice I do not use the word depth finder, as what we have available today is so much more. In reality, the top shelf units are truly multi-functional units...offering sophisticated and highly sensitive sonar, combined with amazingly accurate GPS capabilities, overlaid on detailed background maps. All of this information is displayed on large crystal clear color screens that are easily viewable from all angles and in any lighting. While this array of technology is quite impressive and therefore intimidating to some; manufacturers such as Raymarine have found a way to make it all surprisingly user friendly. Once you have the settings configured to your individual preferences, you rarely-if ever-make any further adjustments.

If you haven't stepped up to quality electronics, now is the time to do so. Once done, you'll soon discover all you have been missing. Although the initial outlay may seem steep-perhaps more so to your spouse-it will prove to be a wise investment. Any future upgrades in the base capabilities and background mapping are minor future expenses and easily installed. Thus, you can continue to have cutting edge technology from your unit without having to repeatedly purchase new models, as advances are inevitably made.

I will now expand on how to approach your search and describe how get the most from your electronics. First on this list would be to determine what you are going to initially look for. Perhaps your trying to find fish relating to steep breaks into a river channel in a reservoir; assuming you'll locate mature walleyes relating to large clouds of baitfish. Now that we have the parameters down, we need to determine where to begin.

Before you even hit the water, you can turn to the background mapping on your unit to identify likely looking spots. Zooming in can provide minute detail that you may feel is important and allow you to eliminate some areas while refining your options. Navionics even offer 3-D views which will help you to visualize “exactly” what the bottom looks like. This is available only on premier high powered models such as Raymarine's E-Series and is worth a serious look.

Now that you have some areas chosen, you can use the GPS capabilities to take you directly to the spot, via the safest route. Once there, you can begin to get after the business at hand, namely finding fish and even more importantly- the bait that they are relating to. Once again, the high end units make this easier as they will accurately display all of this data in detail *and* at speed. I find that moving at a pace just below planing speed to work best. Allows you to quickly cover structure and still have time to let the most critical processor (your brain) interpret all the information. Inferior units simply cannot provide this for you, leaving you with nothing but a cluttered and indeterminable mess.

Many of you may find all of this a bit too technical and many may even think it's totally

unnecessary; after all, it's only fishing, right? To that I will provide a succinct answer. There has never been anyone in the history of mankind-no matter how good a fisherman they may perceive themselves to be-that has ever caught a fish where there are none. If you are serious about maximizing your success and ultimately your enjoyment on each outing-this is a critical area you will want to educate yourself on.