

For Ice Fisherman, once the calendar rolls over to a new year, we begin to enter what most would consider the mid-ice period of our ice fishing season. Maybe just a little earlier or later, depending upon what part of the country you live in; but nonetheless having a reputation for the fishing becoming a bit tougher than at first ice. The issue we have faced this year is that we didn't even experience much for first ice opportunities to begin with, due to the fact that ice came later than tradition dictates across the most of the northern states. Couple that with the combination that once the first sheet did form, it was quickly covered by an insulating later of snow and it all but wiped out the annual flurry of activity we see generally see at this time.

All of these factors have put a serious damper on our fishing activities and most of us are beginning to develop a growing itch to get out and make something happen. Unfortunately mother nature must feel she needs to protect her own (the fish), as she has blessed us with a couple of additional rounds of heavy snow across much of the ice belt. Thus, further restricting our ability to get out by creating conditions that make even accessing many lakes difficult. Even once on the ice, due to the amount of snow-and at times resulting slush created by the weight-mobility is heavily limited. As with any of the various scenarios we are continually confronted with as anglers, there are two things we can do. Either figure out a way to overcome the obstacles and tilt the odds back in our favor, or give up. I choose not to be a quitter and look for solutions.

A system I have been working with for the last several years may be just the ticket to give us an edge. If we can't run all over a given lake to find active fish, we need a way in which to bring them to us *and* put them in an active feeding mode. I have found that ReelWeeds' Structure on a String will do both jobs exceptionally well. By attracting and holding several fish, your baits become harder to ignore. As in a group setting, competition naturally sets in-resulting in more bites...and obviously more fish caught.

If you're not familiar with them you can go to www.reelweeds.com to learn more and see some really cool video footage of fish responding to them. In a nutshell, what they amount to is a durable and easy to deploy artificial weed structure that you can quickly slide down and adjust to desired depth, in any standard sized ice hole. The use of several naturally serves to amplify their effectiveness, as bigger is definitely better in this situation. Ultimately allowing us to create our very own mini-environment wherever and whenever we wish. Thus, we don't have to be continually on the move, in order to keep our baits in front of fish. As we are spending more time actually fishing over fish, it also allow us the opportunity to put more time and concentration into refining our presentations and becoming more efficient at catching them.

As good as this is, it's not magic and won't make fish suddenly appear where there are none. We still need to do our homework and use the system in lakes (and more importantly areas within such lakes) with respectable populations. Thereby, giving the fish that may be moving over a wide area a reason to stop and congregate, and us the opportunity to tempt them.

