

Reflections on the Dog Day Dilemma

Once the calendar rolls around to August and September, fishing for walleye's on most bodies of water becomes decidedly tougher. The weather is typically hot, often muggy, and most folks experience sporadic success...often at best. There are a variety of theories and excuses as to why this is-interestingly-most of them hold little water... The common conclusion ends up being; the fish are just not biting.

In reality, nothing could be further from what is actually occurring. We must realize that the water temperature is high and has driven the walleye's metabolism, i.e., feeding activity to a peak. But... minnow species and young of the year panfish have also reached the perfect eating size and are at yearly peak population. Throw in emerging aquatic insects such as Mayflies, and the all you can eat buffet table has been set, with the fish taking full advantage of the bounty.

The fish are really biting better now than ever...they just have an awful lot of choices to bite. If we are wanting to achieve any consistent amount of success; it is our job as anglers to make our baits stand out from the plethora of easy options that are currently available as prey.

That being said, we need to widely veer from what can be considered the more standard options that worked so well just a month or so ago. I'm referring to not only our bait choices, but locations we choose to fish, and even time of day. It's pretty obvious that if what you are doing isn't working, change it-and the more dramatic the better.

Where lure choices are concerned, throw caution to the wind. Think aggressive first and bump everything up a notch so as to get yourself noticed. Where you would normally pitch a jig-burn a hard thumping crank bait like a 400 Series Rip Shad through the area. If you've been daintily presenting live bait on plain leaders, perhaps throw in a float and a JB's Ventilator Spinner Blade or a Mack's Lure Smile Blade to add a little more flash, thump, and profile. Quickly pulling crank baits through likely areas is always a good option. Only now throw in an additional attractor a couple of feet ahead of your lure. LaDredge outdoors Teaser Leaders are always a good bet, as are a Hot Wings setup from Mack's Lure. Always think more than less in these situations.

Location also becomes a factor as often these fat and sassy fish do not have to actively hunt down food along traditional shoreline haunts. Instead, tending to drift away and out into open basin areas. It can literally be as simple as fishing directly adjacent to the formerly productive structure in deeper water, with the fish now suspended at roughly the same depths they were previously found near bottom. Do not be afraid to venture into seemingly featureless basins and search with a quality electronics...you'll be amazed at what you find. I've relied on Raymarine units to do this for years due the fact that you can quickly cover ground with zero clutter, and still be assured that you're seeing everything that is there, including baitfish and thermo clines.

Twilight periods and even night-time forays may need to be more keenly focused on. Bottom line is that things are not quite as easy as they once were. Use your God given superior intellect to turn the odds in your favor. Just a little bit of thought, imagination, and a willingness to experiment can pay some handsome dividends, when most struggle to achieve even meager results.