

# Think Shallow

Probably the biggest mistake most anglers make, myself included, is forgetting about or ignoring shallow water options for Walleye's. If you were to spend just a short amount of time exploring some skinny water on each outing I think you'll be amazed at what you have been missing.

When I'm talking shallow I mean from a foot out to around the six to eight foot break. Forget every preconception you may have about where the fish should be, or water temperature, etc. Rules simply don't apply. There generally will be at least a few fish shallow at all times and the great part about it is that they are there for just one reason; and that is to feed. This makes them super aggressive and quite easy to catch.

Once you've decided to try your hand at some shallow action you need to know where to start. While not always necessary, an area with the wind blowing into it is a good bet. The stirring action starts the chain of life and the Walleye's will not be far behind. Now that you're on a windblown shoreline, points should always be your first option. These are the very same points that you may typically fish, just go in further and don't forget to concentrate on the cups on each side. If the point has no weed cover, a sharp break in the last couple of foot of water into the shore itself becomes very important. It acts as a barrier that the fish can push bait into and thus feed more effectively. Weeds are a definite bonus and you should always focus a good deal of attention on the edges, pockets or any visible lanes with in the weedline. An added plus to these areas is that you can connect with large bluegills, crappies, bass where present and potentially a very large pike.

The easiest and most efficient way to target these fish is with crankbaits tossed up to the shoreline or weedline. Most shad bodied baits that dive to six or eight feet on the cast will do nicely. These fish are not finicky and will strike at most anything moving by them. A bait that I have gained a great deal of confidence in is the Ripshad from Reefrunner. It is a smaller bait that gets down to the strikezone quickly and has internal rattles which are always a positive. Being compact it also casts very well no matter what the wind conditions. Color is not a huge concern. Go with your hotter colors in stained or dirty water and opt for more subdued shades in clearer conditions.

Presentation is very simple. Hold the boat a slight distance away from your target and toss the crank at about a 45 degree angle in the direction you are traveling and reel back at a moderate to fast speed. You can vary the speed or use pauses and twitches etc. if you wish. Some days it can make a difference but most of the time simply reeling the bait straight back works well. The fish will tell you if they are present in short order. No hookset is needed, just reel em in. I often run a bottom bouncer with a float and a leech or minnow as a dead rod on the open water side of the boat. Go with a bouncer a little heavier than needed and keep nearly verticle to limit snags. This will help you to pick up a bonus fish or two. Give it a try and let me know what you think.

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