

Walleye's and fishing for them in general can prove to be a quandary for most of us, and to greater degrees than I care to admit on many occasions. Unless you are dishonest even by fisherman's standards, you know this all too well. Find a school of decent sized fish willing to display the proper attitude under the right conditions, with an acceptable presentation...fishing-better yet catching-can be downright easy. But, it is far too long between these glorious days for all of us.

For this discussion we will assume that you have located a fair concentration of fish. That is over half the battle-the rest of the equation is unlocking a presentation method in which to get them to bite on a consistent basis. All of us struggle with this to some degree and is an area in which we all need to improve. We'll make further assumptions that that our fish are located on classic structure such as steep shoreline breaks, humps, or points-standard fair in early Summer.

Conventional wisdom has dictated that these fish slide down the structure between feeding times. High powered sonar units such as models from Raymarine have dispelled this notion, as I now easily spot them in nearby deep water amongst bait at the same exact depth waiting for wind, current conditions, etc. to be in their favor to move back on the structure.

Explains why they become so suicidal for short periods when circumstances dictate and why you catch a "flake" fish when you drift over deep water with your baits dangling well above where the fish are "supposed" to be. Now that we have an idea of what these fish may be up to, we need to focus on more than one presentation.

No one loves live baiting walleyes more than myself, and if there is sufficient wind or current to hold fish on the structure, then this becomes option number one. One thing I have found is that when there is a large amount of forage, these fish develop what I call "Goldilocks Syndrome." Meaning your porridge (presentation), cannot be too hot, nor too cold. Spinners moved through at a hot pace can be deadly for short periods and a cooler bare bones offering like a lindy and plain snell can produce equally well...at times. What I have found to be more consistent is a "just right" solution of running a moderate action presentation. Not overpowering, nor overly dull, and allowing you to move along quickly enough to contact enough fish in order to make good catches.

Mack's Lure Smile Blades have filled this role in my arsenal for years and offer all the qualities we need. Flash of a mylar blade that will still spin at speeds as low as one quarter mph. Another harder to find option are inline floats that have the ability to spin. Play with different live bait offerings as well. Fish are not prejudiced and worse than a woman at changing their minds. What worked yesterday-or an hour ago-may not work now.

If the fish are suspended, then the logical course is to pull crank baits right through them and the pods of bait. For this, higher action lures like models from ReefRunner stand out from the plentiful forage and have been a proven staple for years. Thinner baitfish such

as Smelt call for the 600 and 800 Series. Shad type base would call for the 200 and 400 series. Run them through at speeds up to and beyond 3 mph looking for reaction bites. Proves there is always more than one way to skin a cat, or a walleye for that matter.