

Worth a Look

Now that it looks as though we have all managed to survive another Winter, we can begin to prepare to roll full force into the refreshing aspects of the open water season. With Springs arrival, many of you will go on a quest to update at least some of your equipment. This is an annual rite and serves as a Stimulus Plan for the Fishing Industry. Helps to keep the doors open on your local Bait Shop, as well as your favorite Lure and Equipment Manufacturers in business.

This updating can go from being as simple and inexpensive as re-stocking your jig supply, right on up to purchasing your dream boat. With the price of boats these days and the uncertainty of the economy-most will fall somewhere in the middle...expense wise that is. One of the areas in which I can see the average angler do themselves the most good is in moving up a notch in regards to the electronics (FishFinders) they currently run. As with anything electronic; there have been some monumental improvements in just the last couple of years.

These are no longer just fish finders, with many of the older units even doing a poor job in this role and could more accurately be described as Depth Finders. Today, this is not the case. We now have GPS chart plotting capabilities built right into the units, but even more impressive is the background mapping that is available. Thanks to Navionics software you can literally see exactly where you are in relation to the body of water and structure you are fishing. 3 Dimensional Lake bottom, Satellite views, and even Satellite Weather...if you wish. Invaluable tools...no matter how well you think you know the body of water you are on. You have to experience this first hand to see just how big a difference this can make for you...trust me on this one.

There are several good brands to choose from and they all make quality products. It is just a matter of choosing one that fits your needs and budget. Please remember that with most things...you get exactly what you pay for and this is one area I would recommend not skimping on. I have been running models from Raymarine for several years now and continue to be impressed with the leading edge technology they offer.

The units now available have all the GPS capabilities mentioned earlier built right in, including the antenna. Installation is easy as all you need to do is connect to a power source and mount your transducer and plug the cables in. Something that is also noteworthy-is that the Raymarine units in particular are a breeze to use-you do not need to be a techno junky to operate them to their full capabilities. No complicated settings to learn or difficulty interpreting what is on the screen. This has always troubled me and I see far too many of you struggle with this. There have been many articles written and even classes offered just to learn the basics. Digital technology has solved this problem and the units are literally set and forget. The micro-processors that do it all for us and the result is a screen completely free of any clutter. What you see is actually there. Bottom and subsequent composition-along with any weeds, submerged trees, etc.-and obviously fish and bait fish. The resolution and sensitivity are so detailed that you can literally see

game fish within a ball of bait and even mark thermoclines. Take some time to learn what is available and see just what you have been missing.