



Hook, Line, and Sinker

November
2014
Volume 27
Issue 11

The Official Publication of The New Ulm Area Sport Fishermen

New Ulm Area Sport Fishermen • P.O. Box 294 • New Ulm, MN 56073 Web Site: newulmsportfish.org

Observations on the Ice Walleye Scene

By Jason Mitchell

Many trends and mindsets that originate over the open water season eventually transform on to the ice scene. There was a time when walleye anglers had a hard time putting anything on a jig besides a shiner. Today, soft plastic and water soluble soft baits have traction with the walleye crowd. The soft plastic replacing live bait trend has slowly gained a foothold on the ice walleye world. Just like open water, soft plastics will never replace live bait but they are a great compliment and with certain situations and applications, work much better.

For ice anglers, many of the productive soft plastic options for walleye are merely tipping agents. Anglers are using lures where they traditionally tip the lure with either a minnow or minnow head. Now nothing smells or tastes as good as the real thing. What many ice anglers have discovered however is that tipping the lure with soft plastics in some cases adds a little flash, a little movement as the hook swings. If the lure is moving and the strikes are aggressive, anglers have discovered that the presentation doesn't have to taste or smell good. The fish don't get a chance to analyze. This is the key to fishing with soft plastics. Sticking a soft plastic perch eye or minnow head imitation below a slip bobber and letting the hook sit is not going to catch much. If you are going to just sit and wait, use live bait. If however you work the lure however and can analyze the response of the fish with electronics, soft plastics can work better than live bait. Here's why: Soft plastics are much more durable and in some cases have as good or better action.

So often, I just use a pinched off minnow head below spoons or swim lures. Reason I like the pinched off head is because I feel like my batting average is higher on hook sets. The fish come in on the lure and

hit the lure. With just a minnow head, the hook is in the mouth of a fish. There are times when a full minnow will flop more and trigger fish that are a bit tougher and there are also times when fish want the larger profile of a whole minnow so it pays to experiment.

Situations where the fish want the lure pounded hard and want the lure moving are perfect situations to replace traditional live bait with soft plastics. When fish are smoking high lift fall flutter spoon presentations, when the walleyes are punching horizontal swim lures and spoons that are getting pounded, that is the time to experiment away from bait. Last winter, I had days on Devils Lake where I caught over twenty walleyes on one Impulse Perch Eye tipped onto a Buckshot Rattle Spoon. A bag of Impulse lasts me a week.

The reality is that these trends have been happening a long time in isolated regions for both perch and walleye. Bead spoons for example have long had a following for aggressive, shallow water walleyes on Great Lakes fisheries. The bead is just a touch of color, a little flash and the concept is similar to tipping an Impulse Perch Eye on to a Buckshot Rattle Spoon. A mistake many anglers make is thinking that "their fish" on the lakes they fish are not aggressive enough for these baitless presentations.

I have heard all the reasons. "Our lakes are tougher." "That is just a Saginaw Bay thing or the walleyes on Devils Lake are much more aggressive." "Red Lake walleyes will eat anything but our fish are harder." There are truths to certain fisheries and ecosystems having specific traits that make them more or less conducive for certain presentations no doubt. Here is the other reality however that many anglers don't understand. We often think of ourselves as

adapting to the fish but the truth is fish also adapt to us. If we fish with finesse and assume the bite is going to be tough and fish for nonaggressive fish, we will find the non aggressive tough biters. If you don't fish aggressively or at least give the fish that option at

times, you will not see aggressive fish. Very rarely do you ever see an aggressive response from fish with passive presentations.

There are so many times where the fish want the lure moving, they lose interest if you back off the tempo or cadence. Electronics have taught us that. A pretty solid game plan is to start out with an aggressive presentation especially during prime time windows like sunrise and sunset or when fishing new water. Assume that there will be some aggressive fish and cover water to find them. Soft plastic options shine for this. Not only do you cover more water by fishing multiple holes but you also cover more water below the hole by working the lure in a fashion where it can be seen, felt and heard from greater distances. Soft plastics stay on the hook during this process.

There are times when these lures can and will catch fish without tipping at all. I have often had more luck with walleyes with Chubby Darters without tipping the lure. Rattle baits also work well without tipping. Traditional horizontal swim lures like Puppet Minnows and Jigging Raps can be fished with no bait. Spoons, especially flutter spoons can be worked without being tipped. On some western reservoirs in Montana, Wyoming and Colorado, anglers are catching walleyes ripping large flutter spoons like the PK Flutter Fish. Fishing lures for ice time walleyes with no bait is a leap for some ice anglers. The soft plastic tipping options available to ice anglers today kind of bridge the two worlds. I think it is safe to say that most winter walleye anglers learned to fish with the traditional minnow and bobber routine, eventually graduating to tipping a minnow onto a spoon. The next leap is using a lure and trusting in the action of that lure to trigger fish. Now don't think that one mindset is better or more advanced because that is a mistake some anglers make. By getting confident however with these different fishing styles, you will have another arrow in your quiver. There will always be times when an angler has to break out live bait but what will surprise many anglers is how often you don't need live bait. What also surprises some anglers is just how much fun these walleye bites can be.

Club Calendar

Nov 13th - NUASF Social Night at Club House
Nov 20th - NUASF Club Meeting
Dec 11th - NUASF Social Night at Club House
Dec 18th - NUASF Club Meeting



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From the President

By Jason Kuester

We will be holding elections at the next meeting. We are asking that everyone attend this meeting to make your vote count. The term is up for Secretary (Ross N.), Treasurer (Tony M.), and President (Jason K.). If you would like to run for this position please bring it up at the meeting, or call me at 507-381-2041 or email at jr@newulmtel.net

Todd and Karen from the Dixon Lake Resort are very excited to have our club back at their resort this year. They have also donated a four person fishing trip as one of our prizes for the fishing contest we will have in February. The date for the trip is February 12th. I need to have conformation and your \$50.00 down payment to them after the December's meeting. If you are interested in going along on this trip please contact me at 507-381-2041 or e-mail at jr@newulmtel.net. The total for the trip is \$130.00 per person for three nights, or \$185.00 per person food included. Todd and Karen also said there would be no charge for the angling and spearing houses this year. They have room for 24 people in their angling houses and about 25 spearing houses available. This is first come first serve, so if you need an ice house let me know. If you are unable to attend the meeting and need to pay your \$50.00 down payment send it to Jason Kuester 56554-446th Street New Ulm, Mn 56073.

It is time to start thinking of the Ice Fishing Contest. The date for the contest is going to be February 8th 2015. We are asking that each member please try to sell at least one book of tickets. You will find one book of tickets in this newsletter. If you are unable to sell your tickets please send them back, bring them to a meeting, or drop them off at the Ice Fishing Contest. This event is our largest fund raiser for the club. Additional tickets are always available at each meeting or by contacting Ross Nelson at 507-766-0765, Ken Sutherland 507-276-1534 or myself at 507-381-2041. We will have sign up sheets at the next meeting for collecting prizes for this event.

Fall is here (maybe winter) and what a great time to bring our friends and family to the New Ulm Area Sport Fisherman Club. We are always looking for new members to join. If you know of someone bring them along and show them how much fun we have at our club. As always, bring a friend and each of you will receive a free refreshment of your choice!

Hope to see you at the next meeting!!

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426 North Minnesota Street
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Hook, Line, and Sinker

The *Hook Line and Sinker* is published monthly by Joyce Reese graphic design for the New Ulm Area Sport Fishermen. The opinions expressed in this newsletter are solely those of respective writers and not to be construed as the opinion of the NUASF or its members. Send all correspondence and submissions to New Ulm Area Sport Fishermen, P.O. Box 294, New Ulm, MN 56073.

The NUASF Board

President - Jason Kuester (381-2041); Vice-President - Gary Sprenger (359-9358); Secretary - Ross Nelson (507-766-0765) Treasurer - Tony Miller (354-2457); Board Members: Ron Ludewig (507-276-6093), Mike Buechner (354-2739 s), Ken Sutherland (507-276-1534).

Monthly Meeting Oct 30th , 2014 Members Present: 35+

I. Secretary Report

A) Motion made by Jim Liebl and seconded by John Heuchert to accept report as read. Passed unanimously.

II. Treasury Report

A) Balance \$

1) Motion made by Orin Schultz and seconded by Jim Liebl to accept report as read. Passed unanimously.

2) Driveway repair bill was turned in Ground Zero/Jason Kuester donated a big portion.

III. Old Business

A) Membership update.

1) Membership stands at 174 – 22 Due. Membership drive: Tony Miller & Ron Schnobrich with 2 new members

B) Area Lakes and Rivers Report.

1) MN River – Must be good. Lots of boats always by Hwy 37 bridge.

C) Club House and Grounds Update.

1) Nilson family has decided to sell clubhouse property. They would sell us 5-8 acres of the 72 acres that are for sale. Talked over options of ways to purchase.

2) Social night we will be doing a clubhouse & grounds cleanup (Nov 13th) Will also be stapling Ice fishing contest tickets.

3) Fire extinguishers should be refilled, Tony Miller will take care of them.

4) Port-A-Pots were pumped out & LP tank is good for the winter.

5) Club Boats prop was damaged. Todd Simonson to pay \$75.00 to repair

I

V) Other Old Business

A) None

V) New Business

A) Ice Castle fish house was purchased - \$13,000.00 value

B) Club Ice Fishing Contest Update

1) Poster & Tickets will be available on social night.

2) Pat Roiger will head up the prize collection has plans to organize the process better.

3) Wayne Forbrook family would like to sponsor all the kids events/give away at the contest.

4) Prizes on tickets – Vexilar, Aquaveiw, auger, 2 portable icehouse

5) Food License – Tom Simonson checking

C) Winter Ice Fishing Trip

1) Feb 12-15th Cost: \$185 Dixon Lake Resort

2) Signup w/ Jason K. - \$50 deposit

3) First come first serve on the cabins. Ice & Spearing house are free

D) Food next meeting will be provided by Orv Rannow. Bring dish to pass.

VI) Other New Business

A)

Have had some complaints from past members about dues payments. We will continue to do them as we are.

B) Jiffy Auger (3 HP) for sale \$200 – See Jim Hulke

C) Dick Petermann presented \$260 raised at the club fishing contest to the Scholarship fund

D) SE Sportsmen Club will be putting in a new dock on Godahl Point – Lake Hanska

E) Raised \$500 selling food at the River Region Gun Club contest.

VII) Adjourn @ 8:30

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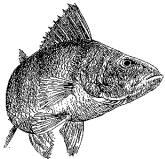
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