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

Ice Fishing For Perch

Courtesy of: <http://www.gameandfishmag.com>

The successful winter fisherman only needs to know two things about yellow perch: They school and they move. Perch naturally separate themselves into same-sized schools (or age-classes, as fisheries biologists prefer to call them) and in order to keep that school of perch fed the fish must move constantly in search of forage. The concept is a simple one (from a perch's point of view) and is the same from the smallest farm pond to the largest freshwater inland sea. It's not enough to just cut a hole, drop 'em a line, and hope they answer. Successful winter perch fishing comes down to pre-trip planning, and that is where most casual anglers go awry.

PRE-TRIP PREP

Any successful ice-fishing foray begins with pre-trip planning. Elements to consider include how to get there (vehicle, snowmobile, ATV or foot power), sonar gear to help find fish and examine bottom structure, fishing tackle including tip-ups, hooks, sinkers, jigging rods and lures, fresh line and bait (minnows, worms, mousies, grubs, etc.), power or hand auger, chisel and skimmer.

The perch may not know what's going on above the ice and so their daily activities won't change much, but anglers need to be prepared for the best and the worst of winter conditions. For that reason, proper clothing for the predicted weather is a must, plus additional protection — extra gloves, face-mask, coveralls or windbreaker — against unexpected wind, snow or sleet. A small, portable windbreak or shelter is a good idea in case an expected sunny day suddenly turns stormy.

PICK YOUR SPOT

Most avid winter anglers head for a traditional, proven hotspot where they've caught perch on previous trips. It makes sense that if perch were there in the past they'll be there again in the future. Simple logic suggests that any deep hole, dropoff, sunken channel or sloping bottom will provide good fishing for at least part of the day. Cut the initial series of holes perpendicular to shore and then set baits, or jig using lures at varying depths. Roving schools of perch will show up eventually, in fact sooner rather than later in most small ponds, lakes and protected bays, but on larger, more expansive waters a school may make one exciting, productive pass and then disappear for the rest of the day. That is where the angler needs to make a decision: Should I sit and wait or should I take action?

GET MOVING

The fisherman who is packed and ready to move will catch the most perch on any given day. Sonar gear will reveal where the best bottom structure is located, as well as where schools of perch are temporarily suspended, but when the screen is empty and vacant it only makes sense to move on. A fisherman using a snowmobile or ATV obviously can cover a lot more ice than the foot-bound angler, but the strategy is the same: Cut a hole, prospect with the sonar rig and either set up to fish or move on. If there is no structure below and no evidence of schooling perch or baitfish, pack up and try another spot. It may be necessary to cut-and-look several times before a good spot

is found, but experienced perch prospectors can cut a hole and survey the bottom in 5 minutes or less.

Considering the size of the lake and that there are likely to be several age-class schools of perch roaming the depths in search of forage, it's more than certain that a fishable school will be encountered in short order. The key is to focus on places where schooling baitfish can be found. Find them and the perch will find you!

PATTERNING PERCH

Most major lakes in ice-fishing country have been surveyed and mapped by state fisheries divisions, which provide downloadable maps on their Web sites. Just as a deer hunter patterns a big buck, the perch fisherman can study a bottom-structure map and all but guarantee that perch will be found close to the most obvious points of interest including steep dropoffs, rocky points, ledges, submerged islands and deep channels.

These and other maps, which usually are available for sale at local tackle shops, provide GPS coordinates for each bottom feature of interest to perch fishermen. From these it's a simple matter of going from way point to way point, checking for schools of perch and then setting up to catch them. Of course, when a series of bottom features suggests that the perch schools are following baitfish in an obvious pattern, it makes sense to get ahead of the school and be there, baits and lures at the ready, when the swarms of perch come through.

Anglers who fish the same waters year after year soon learn to pattern their perch, which is why local fishermen invariably target specific areas with semi-permanent shacks and shanties. Mobile fishermen new to a lake can enjoy even greater success by following the bottom structure patterns and staying with the schools of larger fish throughout the day.

DEALING WITH DEPTHS

While the bottom structure of any given lake is not likely to change over time, the depths at which schools of perch travel are definitely subject to change. Barometric pressure is most likely to affect how deep the fish (and their forage species) will be, and pressures can change over the course of the day, especially when winter storms are coming or going in rapid succession. When sonar images indicate good bottom structure and the presence of bait-fish, it's best to set initial baits and lures at varying depths until the perch start hitting in earnest. Set your baits or jig at 5-foot intervals from top to bottom and monitor the productivity of each offering until a pattern develops. If all the fish are being taken at 20 feet, for example, drop all lines to that depth for as long as the action continues. A small school of perch may breeze past in just a few minutes, but extremely large, dense schools of larger fish may provide regular action for several hours.

If the forage base is ample, there will be schools of differing age-classes cruising past the same bottom structure all day long. That is why anglers may end the day with perch ranging from 6 to 16 inches in length. The forage

Ice Fishing continued on page 2



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E. Friends of High Island Contest Report

- The presenters were sick and will make the next meeting, wanted to thank those from the club that helped. They sold 22 tickets for us up there and mentioned us in their ads and such.

F. Club Ice Houses Update

- 1 house is on the lake; Orin's place is plowed out and need volunteers to get the remaining houses out onto the lake.

G. Food for next meeting (Fish Dish) - Before the meeting, gates open at 5:30pm.

- Everybody bring some fish!!! Bring sides if available.

H. Other New Business:

- Orv has tickets for Sleepy Eye contest.
- Wes L - Club to entertain the idea of the club logo on a pullover sweatshirt? Jason can get "hockey style" for \$45 from Printwear graphics.
- Club contest on Studtmann's Pond - ~~Saturday March 10th~~ ****Correction since meeting, moved to Saturday March 17th**
- E.E. Mecklenburg scholarship fund update questioned.
 - Deadline for scholarship app is April 15th?
 - Awarded 7 last year. Awarded \$29k in scholarships to date.
- Chad Wills Thrivent Financial
- Discussions on funding options available to the club.

V. Meeting Adjourn @ 8:58 PM

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P.O. Box, 294 • New Ulm, Minnesota 56073




Club Calendar

February 22nd NUASF Club Meeting (Fish Dish Night)
March 15th NUASF Social Night at Club House
March 17th 9th Annual Willmar Studtmann Memorial Ice Fishing Contest

March 29th NUASF Club Meeting
April 12th NUASF Social Night at Club House
April 26th NUASF Club Meeting



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From the President....

By Jason Kuester

CONTEST NEWS! What a great day for a contest! I was glad to see that the weather was nice!! There was over 1,000 people fishing and enjoying the day on Clear Lake Sunday February 11th. I want to express a great **Thank You** to everyone that helped with this contest. This contest would not be a success without everyone volunteering, selling tickets, collecting prizes, and organizing the event. ***Great job everyone!!***

We just got back from a great trip to Dixon Lake Resort. I would like to Thank Todd, Karen, Roger, and Sharron for all their hard work. They did an awesome job keeping all 38 fishermen happy. We look forward to seeing them again next year! If you have any questions about their resort, give them a call at 1-800-362-7298.

NOTICE!!! Saturday March 17th is the 9th annual Willmar Studtmann Memorial Ice Fishing contest. It will be held at Studtmann Pond in Courtland from Noon to 3pm. (Studtmann Pond 557 Mary Lane Courtland, MN) There will be Kids prizes and prizes for the biggest fish. All proceeds go to the EE Mecklenburg Scholarship Fund. This event is open only to club members and their families. What a great way to spend an afternoon!!! We usually have around 25 members and their families on the pond. If you have questions or need directions to the pond call Mike Studtmann at 507-995-3074.

The next meeting is **“Fish Dish Night”**. If you like fish (and who doesn’t) you’ll want to be at the next meeting! I invite you to bring your best fish dish to pass or just bring some fillets. In the past we have had fish sultz, pickled fish, Pete’s smoked fish, Scotts Cajun Fish Gumbo, fish chowder and many other great dishes. The DNR fisheries staff will be on hand at the March meeting to give us updates on Clear Lake, Lake Hanska, Sleepy Eye Lake, High Island Lake, and the Minnesota River.

Please thaw out your fillets before you bring them! Thanks

I would like to thank Eric Olson for filling our bellies at the last meeting with some delicious Montana venison steak. Eric has also been very generous in the past and present by donating trips to Canada for our club. One of these trips is handed out to the member who signs up the most new members for the year. The other trip is given away as a big prize at our ice fishing contest by purchasing a five dollar raffle ticket. Eric would like everyone to know that there are some openings throughout the summer for more people to come up to Canada fishing. If you are interested contact Eric at 406-395- 4515 for more details. *We would like to give Eric a big Thank You for everything he has done for our club.*

Just a reminder, the deadline to have your icehouse off of the ice is Mach 5th .

We are always looking for new friends and ideas. Feel free to bring them to the next meeting. We will be discussing dates for events for the rest of the year.

Hope to see you at the next meeting!

Ice Fishing continued from page 1

“highway” was wide and broad enough to keep several age-classes of fish busy for several hours. Of course, no school of baitfish or perch is going to stay in the same place indefinitely — that’s simply not the nature of schooling fish. When the forage species move on, the perch and other predators will be right behind them, and so it goes under the ice all winter long. The difference in location can be depth-related (the fish simply school higher or lower in the water column) as is the case in small lakes and ponds, or the fish may travel several hundred yards, even miles, to the next major forage base. When the action noticeably slows or stops, the ice-angler needs to make a decision: Sit tight and hope for another school of hungry perch to come along, or pack up and find a new, more productive spot. Fishermen who have mastered pre-trip planning, pack for hit-and-run fishing and who can make the tough decisions (“Should I stay or should I go?”) will catch the most and the biggest perch this winter.

VARY YOUR BAIT OFFERINGS

Rick Ouellette, a veteran North Country perch fisherman, advises anglers to mix it up when considering baits and lures for winter perch. “Sometimes basic small minnows will do the trick,” Ouellette said, “but there have been times when the perch would take only worms, grubs or certain lures. It’s best to bring everything you have that’s small, flashy and lively.” Ouellette also said that pieces of perch, such as eyes, pectoral fins or belly strips often take more fish than standard, traditional baits. “Keep experimenting until you come up with a winner,” he said.

Read more: <http://www.gameandfishmag.com/fishing/ice-fishing-for-perch/#ixzz56NCjifql>



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The NUASF Board
President - Jason Kuester 507-381-2041; Vice-President - Gary Sprenger 507-359-9358; Secretary - Ross Nelson 507-766-0765; Treasurer - Jen Kuester 507-766-0143; Board Members: Mike Buechner 507-354-2739, Wyman Forbrook 507-420-5828, Mike Studtmann 507-995-3074.

NUASF Monthly Meeting January 25, 2018 Members Present: 43

I. Secretary Report - Report excepted as read.

II. Treasury Report - Report excepted as read.

III. Old Business

A. Membership update 154 Members w/ 33 Due (1 new member tonight)

B. Area Lakes and Rivers Report:

- LOW Long Point - No trophies.
- Jim Hulke said Mike Grousam Looking for 2 more people to go to NW angle
- Jason’s trip last week to Dixon for “pre-fishing” and area lakes, Winnie, etc. Blue & White was the hot color.
- Lake Hanska - Doing well. Getting Walleye.
- Lake Crystal and Hanska’s contests this coming weekend.
- Sleepy Eye - People pulling houses of the lake.
- Clear Lake Landing is not in good shape.

C. Club House & Grounds News:

- New Woodshed
- Light at sign, Tom S replaced bulb and it didn’t work. Will need someone to look into further.

D. Other Old Business:

- Lake Hanska - Jason meeting with groups to discuss options. Sounds like resolution is going to open up more times for commercial fisherman. Discussion amongst the club on what’s happening there with the fishing.

IV. New Business

A. Eric Olson 2017 Hunting and Fishing Update:

- Thank you Eric for steak night!
- Northern phenomenon on Diefenbaker in Saskatchewan.

B. Amanda Wold (Brown Co Soil & Water):

- Started 4 months ago. Took over aquatic invasive species program. Spoke to Jason about coming to contest to provide info on IS. Displayed chair, hats and bags and other items that will be raffled and/ or given away. Will be handing out info on IS issues in the area lakes. Bighead Carp that was caught near Redwood Falls this last year. Doing extra outreach this year and working with the board on how to get the info out. Commented on boater safety classes in the area. Jason K commented how it would be nice to have Amanda at the Kids Fishing contest.
- Questions:
 - a) Any testing at the boat landings in Brown County? Something they are definitely thinking of doing. Amanda is willing to give demonstrations on how to clean boat, etc. or assist with samplings.
 - b) Jeff Nielsen commented how he is on the board and offered up the idea of using club boats and taking out the team for samplings at area lakes.

C. Club Ice Fishing Contest - Just around the corner!

• Prize Collection:

- a) Going well, some spots open yet, grab a list and help out.

• Tickets and Posters:

- a) Ken Sutherland has tickets for contest and fish house.
- b) Posters available to handout and hang up.

• Food Committee Sign Up Sheet:

- a) Talk to Tom Simonson and/ or sign up on a sheet up front tonight.
- b) Food is ordered and will be ready for us to pick up
- c) Rubber mats for standing on will be available again.
- d) Orv will provide the wall material again.

• Other items

- a) Start at club house at 8am to load trailers, etc and head to lake. Out on ice by 9am otherwise.
 - b) New generator is ready to go.
 - c) Sound System is in clubhouse and Glen will grab and bring it out.
 - d) Bring augers to help drill holes.
 - e) Bait will be available.
 - f) Kids prizes will be available thanks to Forbrook Family.
 - g) Houses are allowed. **Need to add to the poster for next year and mention on KNUJ this year.
 - h) Going to put ad in Lafayette Ledger. Radio ads started this week on KNUJ and SAM. Will start on Radio Mankato after Sleepy Eye’s contest.
 - i) Ducks Unlimited donated a bunch of items for us to give as prizes.
- There will be a special meeting on Thursday 2/8 @ 5pm at the Club House:**
- a) Need help to get things sorted. Volunteers needed. Pizza out here.
 - b) Bring your ticket stubs in that night to save time out on the ice.

D. Winter Fishing Trip to Dixon Lake - Feb 15th-18th

- 38 signed, still spots available.

Meeting notes continued on page 4

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