

"Spring Fishing Dynamics"

Did you ever fish in a small, narrow river or stream? It doesn't really matter what species you were fishing for. It always seemed that no matter what side of the waterway you were on, you'd inevitably end up casting to the opposite side.

This is usually done by novice beginners, young or inexperienced fishermen. It just made sense to be as far away as possible from the bank you yourself were fishing from.



Some fishermen today, young and old, still do the same thing. They blindly stumble out onto the lake or river, maybe with the right equipment, maybe not, looking for the crowd to lead them to fishing success.

They haven't learned the most important key to being successful on any body of water. That important key is dynamics.

Webster describes dynamics as, "That part of physics that deals with force, energy, motion, and the relationship between them". By knowing the dynamics of both the waterways and the species you're fishing for and the effects they have on each other, then equate and apply it to your fishing techniques and

equipment, gives you an advantage to figure out that successful fish catching game plan.

This can only be done by people who let themselves get fully involved and aware with what they are doing, seeing and participating in. Then, both apply, equate and understand nature's variables and how it affects her water bound creatures.

I'm not trying to confuse anybody here. I'm only writing this to inform you new walleye chasers that it's not some vast conspiracy, and that getting skunked often doesn't mean that you employed the wrong technique, or had the wrong color, size or type lure on.

Learning and remembering how and where your prey lives, feeds and most importantly reacts to certain climatic variables will do more to make you successful than a lifetime of (how-to) seminars.

With all that said, I'll try and explain the techniques I use on both the Saginaw Bay and the rivers that connect to it during the Spring. Again, the dynamics of what the river is doing always has an impact on what, where and how I approach the fishing day.

"High Spring Water"

Being able to read the river and its currents can really help during high water levels.

Nothing beats a jig head tipped with a minnow in high water. Walleye tend to pod-up in swift water and keeping the offering in their faces is easier with a pinpoint weapon like a jig.

After 15 years of Drift Boat guiding and reading Steelhead and Salmon holding water on Michigan's best rivers, along with my walleye charters, spotting a good holding spot for walleye has become second nature.

Precise anchoring and quarter casting while slow hopping a jig behind Points, Wing Dams, Ledges, Brush piles and even flooded flats out of the main current, is a great producer in high water on the Tittabawassee River

"Low Clear Water"

There are a few techniques that work well when the river is low and clear. This low water river condition seems to happen more often lately, with the water tables being what they are on the Great lakes.

With the deeper, darker holes being at a premium in these conditions, getting offerings away from the boat and covering more water pays off big time.

A technique called (Dragging) works well, but will cost you a few jig heads. Simply let your boat drift downstream with the current, usually on the outside bends of the river, while you let the combination jig head/twister tail/piece of crawler, bounce along the bottom at a 45 degree angle.

I use this technique a lot, but with a variation on the offering. A small (#6) 2 hook harness, with three (8 mill) green beads, with one 00 blade, orange or red. Tip this rig with a whole night crawler, and drag at a 60 degree. A single small #7 split shot is often added if the current seems to fast. You want it to tick along bottom fairly regular.

This last technique can pay big dividends when the small males aggressively start feeding after the spawn. And small males (2 to 4 pounds) make up 90% of what you'll catch on the Tittabawassee after the season re-opens.

The larger females can drop virtually all their (up to 10,000 eggs) in just a couple nights when the conditions get right, then hastily retreat back to the Bay in just a few days.

Casting # 5 and #7 shad raps or blade baits along the shoreline in likely looking spots as you drift, can at times be outstanding.

Trolling # 7 floating shad raps Silver/Black has also made me look like a genius on a few river charters. Finding a deeper slot or run that's long enough to use this technique is the only tough part on the Tittabawassee.

"Night Eye's"

Although not for everybody, catching walleyes at night has a charm all its own. Both the Saginaw Bay and the Saginaw River has started to give up some of its (Dark) secrets the last few years.

Casting #14 Rapala Husky Jerks along the river shore lines and around bridge abutments from Saginaw to Bay City after the season re-opens, has proven to be worthwhile.

That, along with the night time trolling bite on the Bay itself, can really spell a great time for savvy anglers. I say savvy, because I highly suggest you know your equipment and it's limitations on the Bay at night.

Being able to navigate with your GPS in the Plotter mode and knowing exactly where the marina channel is and how to correctly follow it (STRAIGHT) in, has become a must in these low water conditions.

The proper boat navigation lights, spot light and (on board) boat lights will be some of the necessary equipment needed. I've seen too many guys in 12 to 14 foot boats with absolutely no lights at all, virtually almost too late in the pitch dark. It's not funny when it happens, believe Me.

Your dealing with water temps still to cold and life threatening, to be taking an unexpected swim.

Slow trolling the monster #18 Rapala's along with an assortment of Husky's in every size has rewarded me in Spring's past. These body baits imitate perfectly the abundance of suckers, spot

tailed chubs and smelt that arrive in the close to shore waters about the same time the post spawn walleyes are dropping back out of the rivers, looking for a large, quick energy meals.

Running short leads off of In-line planner boards with blinking red lights attached to their flags, is about as neat a trick as fishermen have devised in the last few years.

In conclusion, nothing teaches you how to be a better fisherman more than getting out and doing it. That is, if you learn from each trip out.

You may even want to consider a charter trip with one of the Bay area charter captains. All of us take pride in both teaching as well as having fun when out on the Bay. If on your own, absorb as much about every aspect of what you're doing and the variables you're dealing with as well as what the guys around you are doing on every trip.

Pay attention and "BE THE FISH" and you will be a better fisherman. Good luck and Tight Lines,

Capt: Dan Manyen, Walleye Express