

Late Fall Walleye In Lakes

BY JOHN ANDREW

As the lakes are now completed in fall turnover in Vilas, Oneida and Iron counties in northern Wisconsin in the shallower lakes and the deep clear lakes, walleye are already on the bite, big time. Are we like the Great Lakes? No, of course not, but we do have thousands of walleye eagerly biting, right now. For anyone who wants to learn how to catch them, it's easy this time of year. As the daytime activity of the walleye continues through late fall, these tasty fish draw a large attraction for anglers who are in the know.

We can still catch them in the weeds, although the main lake basin walleye are where we are looking for our mid-day catch, and all my clients want to be home for dinner by 5 p.m. We begin looking around the ledges, drop offs, sides of deep humps, deep flats and deep contours of any lake. Again, we can still catch them near weeds, although deep is a more consistent bite for my clients. Prowling along these areas with our Lawrence H.D.S. locator (or any other updated locator), we can spot the individual fish or the humps of fish located on the bottom. Sometimes there are piles of fish and they look like rocks on the bottom. Now, this will be in deep water, where most rock ledges, rock piles, points and bars stop. Our fish are deeper than that. We are looking along main lake basin drop offs. This is where our fish are active and biting right now at this time of the year. As the fall progresses, the central and southern lakes of Wisconsin will also do the same. This happens every year. If you can brave the weather, if you can locate the fish and if you are good at boat control, you will catch them with these described techniques.

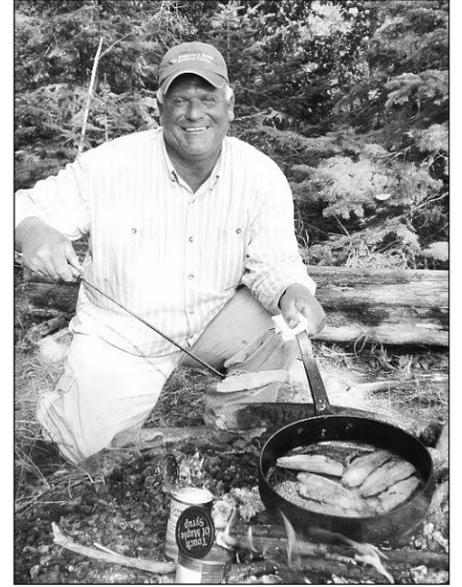
We like to use a lead head jig tipped with a red tail chub. I like to use what we call "exactos." These are the perfect size Red Tail Cubs that fit on the jig the way I hook them—about 1-1/2 inches long. It may sound small, but we do very well with this size. Again, this is because of the way I hook the minnow. Does size matter? It does if you are after numbers, and 95 percent of my clients want to catch walleye, and not just five or six fish in a whole day. Having the slow approach is the critical concept to deep fishing. Slow means slow! It's that simple—no fast drifting, no guessing. If you are in contact with the bottom, you will get the strikes. Keeping in contact with the bottom is the essential technique for deep fishing. However, you do not want to drag the bottom with a jig. Simply lift and drop slowly, but you must maintain bottom



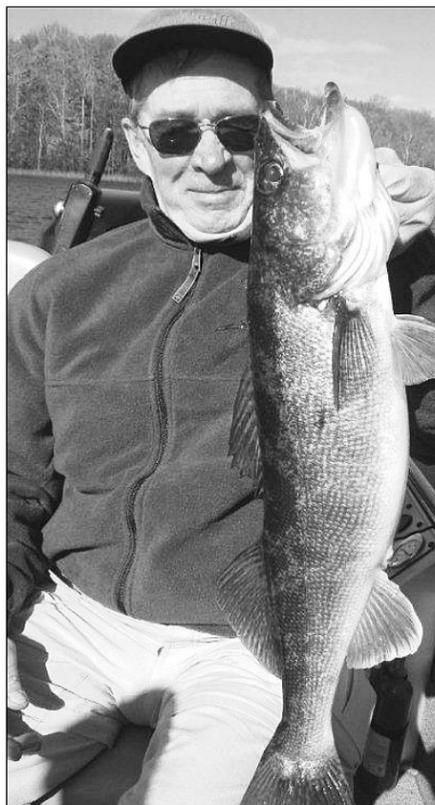
Ben Walker of Chicago, Ill., caught this 31-inch walleye while fishing with Presque Isle, Wis., Guide John Andrew, fishing deep on Presque Isle Lake in Presque Isle, Wis.



Mike Freedman of Chicago, Ill., caught these walleye while fishing with Presque Isle, Wis., Guide fishing deep water in November of 2010.



The author preparing shore lunch in September.



Bill Renolds with a 30-inch walleye caught in late November of 2010, while fishing with Presque Isle Guide John Andrew.



The author with two 31-inch walleye ice fishing in February 2011.



William Martin of South Bend, Ind., caught this 32-inch walleye, deep water fishing with John Andrew of Presque Isle, Wis.

contact. This is technique works very well for this time of year.

You can also use a Lindy rig or a floating jig. We like to use a lead head

jig. Depending how deep you are fishing will determine how big a jig you should use. Half-ounce jigs will work, but a 3/8-ounce jig will allow the fish to hold on longer, allowing you time to set the hook.

Then there is the 1/4-ounce jig used with a stinger hook in deep water. Remember, **deep** water is where you want to be fishing. We sometimes use a 1/8-ounce jig with a stinger hook in 40-foot deep water, on the bottom, on a calm, sunny October or November day, with six-pound test Berkley Fire Line. This very thin diameter line allows you to feel even a 1/8-ounce jig in 40 feet of deep water, while on the bottom, and is required when the bite is slow. A stinger hook increases our catch when fishing in glass calm conditions by 30 percent. Remember, this is in calm water lake fishing, not river fishing. When fishing deep, in breezy conditions, we use a heavier jig, but still maintaining bottom contact at all times. This is because the fish are strongly relating to the bottom after lake turnover. We use our trolling motors to slow us down and gently drift with the breeze. This allows us to present our baits more accurately.

Once walleye are located, you can troll for them as long as your presentation is tight to the bottom, or close to it. Up here in the described counties, trolling is allowed only in a few impoundments, such as the Willow Reservoir located in northwestern Oneida County in Wisconsin. This impoundment is loaded with walleye throughout the year. Record numbers of walleye keep coming out of this water. Natural reproduction is very good here and several year classes are being caught, as well as in Big Muskellunge Lake in Vilas County, Wisconsin. There is no trolling allowed on this lake, but year 'round catches of walleye are com-

mon with fish from 15 to 22 inches being normal. These are prime examples of fantastic main lake basin walleye that are available to you right now.

There are several other lakes where the main lake basin technique works. These lakes can be from 25 to 100 feet deep. That's right, you read it correctly: as deep as over 100 feet.

If your lake has a good population of walleye and does not have any trout in that body of water (trout do make a difference), you will catch walleye after turnover very deep, during the middle of the day. This sometimes will happen from mid September through the month of May, depending on your geographical location. There are also several other factors involved with this technique, but we are going to move on with our location and methods.

We are catching walleye now in the creek channels and deep waters of the Turtle Flambeau Flowage, the Willow Reservoir, the Rainbow Flowage, Fence Lake, Boulder Lake, Presque Isle Lake, Crawling Stone Lake, Lake Tomahawk, Lake Nokomis in Heafford Junction, Wis., and several others. Remember, this is happening now, in Vilas, Oneida and Iron counties in Wisconsin and soon will be happening in your area, too. Enjoy!

As all of my advertising and website clearly quote, "No Fish, No Pay." I belong too and advertise in the Minocqua Chamber of Commerce, Rhinelander Chamber of Commerce, Manitowish Waters Chamber of Commerce and The Mercer Chamber Of Commerce.

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