

Ice Perch – Located and Caught on Camera



A small crappie minnow produced this nice perch.



This fisherman caught these perch while fishing with his brother and father; both perch were caught over a deep woodpile using wax worms and Ratso ice jigs.

After using the underwater camera and catching perch, these fishermen are enjoying an ice fishing shore lunch prepared by John Andrew, the author. Photos: John Andrew

by John Andrew

Technology today is leading the way for all working businesses, individual entertainment, vacations, information, and outdoor sports and activities. The underwater camera is also big technological advancement in the fishing industry. In this article the main topic will be the underwater camera for perch location under the ice. I bought my first underwater camera in 1996 and this revolutionized my guiding career under the ice and in open water.

The GPS has been leading the way for the outdoor enthusiasts for the last several years. We, the Angler's Choice Guide Service, have been combining the GPS and the underwater camera for the past 10 years (winter and summer). Other people have been using this extremely effective technique much longer. We work the perch quickly by watching their behavior to our color of lure, bait, and movement we implement to our presentation. By being able to see the perch react, we are now ahead of the competition. Also, by knowing the species of fish we are looking at puts us way ahead of others when we are only after perch.

Perch are very aggressive on certain locations under the ice. This may sound



An underwater camera helped locate these perch from a deep weed edge.

funny, but this is an accurate statement. Some locations are feeding stations (weed edges, channels, ledges, wood piles, etc.). Some areas are holding areas and certain areas are travel routes to and from feeding areas. Some may argue this is controversial, but this is my finding after years and years of underwater camera use. Obviously, this

information can be used for finding, studying and catching other species of fish.

This year we have installed the new 2015 MarCum VS 625 SD (in color) Underwater Viewing System in all our wood, insulated and heated ice houses. This underwater camera is also set up with the Automatic Camera Panner. This device allows all clients to personally view—follow the fish—as they approach the bait by using the automatic switch that is connected by cable from the camera. It's awesome to see as the camera can be completely rotated 360 degrees and back to where it was originally was set up watching the hook.

This truly gives the angler the "angling advantage." Let's get started on how we do it, as well as how others I have worked with are now utilizing this method.

First, in the late fall we locate a good population of perch and mark this spot on the GPS. Using this same procedure in midsummer and expecting the fish to be there in January, February or March is not a good recommendation since the feeding location changes drastically season to season.

Let's say you have a GPS location on a deep woodpile on a stained lake around 30 to 40 feet deep, which is not uncommon. We stand on the ice precisely over the spot marked in the fall and drill a few holes and then lower our camera down and start searching for the wood. This is critical since the perch (or other panfish) may or may not move too far from the wood to take your bait. Even though the perch are aggressive and take your bait when placed in front of them, they may not venture more than 5 or 6 feet away from the pile.

On a clear lake the fish may swim up a few feet to intercept your bait as it is sinking down to them. This is common, although this behavior will depend on the weather and if your location is being heavily fished. If others are fishing this good location, your fish will stay tight to the cover and you may

story continued...



While fishing with his grandfather and guide John Andrew, this young man caught this nice perch while watching the fish on an underwater camera.



This young angler caught this perch on a wax worm while fishing over a deep wood pile.

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