

South Superior Ice-Out

Silver Salmon (Coho) And Steelhead Salmon (Rainbow)

BY JOHN ANDREW

This month we will focus on the shorelines of the world famous Lake Gitche Gumee (Lake Superior) on the southwest shore—a bountiful resource, yet a "vicious" advisory.

With great admiration, my heartfelt sentiments go out to Jim Hudson (a northern Wisconsin guide) and all his family. God bless to you all.

Jim lost his life while pleasing others and was only concerned for their happiness. He was ice guiding a group on Lake Superior during this past January when he fell through the ice. Jim was and always will be a true inspiration to all guides.

We will discuss open water trolling and casting off shoreline locations for your success.

We start off at ice-out (early spring) by trolling close to all small river mouths that are flowing into Lake Superior and shallow shoal areas. There are certain shoreline areas that are very productive, such as public piers, points and extended underwater points. These locations early in the year are magnets to coho salmon, brown trout and steelhead—especially the river mouths. Why? Because the smelt are focusing on these warm water current locations. The coho, brown trout and steelhead are also focusing on the warmer water and the food that is present. Casting from shore is a very productive method for these tasty fish, mostly in front of the current areas.

Trolling along the discharge of these current areas is also very productive but remember, this is at first ice-out. As the water warms, you may produce other game fish, but the salmomiods will seek deeper water as the water temperature quickly rises.

Casting from shore with minnow imitating baits, spinners, small jigs, Lazy Ikes and some live baits are very productive. We need to focus on the time of day to fish. Morning and evening are always best but, then let's not forget very windy conditions. You don't want to fish when the water is like chocolate milk but try at the very beginning of a change of weather event. If you can get to your favorite stream outlet during the beginning of a big windstorm blowing into your creek or river and you are fishing there, hold on, because you will experience some fantastic angling. The color of your bait may also make all the difference.

Using a long nine- to 11-foot rod with a thin line will not only allow you to cast a long distance but this will also allow you to bring the fish in without stressing the hooks to the point of ripping through the flesh of the fish's mouth. Most people



Mike Lucas of Phillips, Wis., with a silver salmon (coho) caught while fishing with the author.



Wayne Nassi caught this trout while fishing with the author on Lake Superior last spring.

will think the fish got off the hook. We at times pull too hard and as we all know, those small hooks are razor sharp. By pulling and reeling too fast, we literally rip the hook out of the fish's mouth. Fight the fish in a steady retrieve and be pre-



Jeff Gogland of Minocqua, Wis., caught this steelhead while fishing with the author.



Wayne Nassi, Hurley, Wis., caught this coho salmon while fishing with the author on Lake Superior.



The author caught this trout on Lake Superior last spring at ice out.

pared to ease off the pressure.

Trolling is an entirely different approach. We use planner boards and trolling towers with multiple lines attached. Minnow baits are traditionally used, although small spoons are also presented, along with streamer flies. Long rods are again used for presenting the

bait, allowing us to fight the fish gently. The minnow baits can vary from exact duplications of the bait the salmon or trout are feeding on, to a wide variety of colors such as brown and yellow, black and gold, orange and gold, black and silver, chrome, pearl, blood, Wonder Bread, all blue, purple, rainbow and the list goes on and on. For the flies or streamers, blue-green with Flashabou, brown, silver, white and an endless variety of colors. The same goes for the spoons, as they are developing new colors as you read this.

First ice-out along the shorelines, break walls and rocky areas of shallow water, warm water discharges and all the small river outlets flowing into Lake Superior are the areas we want to be fishing. The clearer the water, the better you will produce. Fishing during the beginning stages of storms is also very productive. Never fish in dangerous conditions, such as high waves or lightning.

Fish the areas discussed and you will produce at first ice-out.

Tight lines!

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Our Readers Write



On September 29, 2012, at 7 p.m., I caught this 50-inch sturgeon on 14-pound test Fireline with a circle hook, with cut bait. It was photographed and quickly released. We have live here in Princeton since 1997 and never knew sturgeon lived here. Now I know one that does.

David Resop
Princeton, Wis