

# Walleye Now

BY JOHN ANDREW

Ah, early fall walleye are starting for our northern counties of Wisconsin—a welcome time of the year for us all.

A wide variety of methods are working during this time of the year. Deep weeds, deep wood, deeper ledges and deeper rock humps are all starting to see bites during mid daytime hours, and there will be more lakes turning on for the midday bite as the weeks go by.

A jig and 'crawler are producing well for the early part of this pre-fall bite and this is working for all the above-mentioned locations. As time moves forward this month, the jig and minnow will take over for the remainder of the fall bite. This does not mean the only live bait that will produce walleye is going to be the jig and minnow.

We will also be using floating minnow baits in current areas later this month in the evening and dark hours as fall continues into October and early November. This reminds me of a great location.

There was a time when we would go to a current area between two lakes in late September, October and early November in the evening and dark hours. We'd cast floating minnow baits across the entire channel and reel very slowly back in. We wore hip waders and held on to a short six-foot rod and spinning reel loaded with four-pound-test monofilament. This spot was a goldmine of walleye (and still is). Being very stealthy was and is ultra important. Black and silver colors were good and so was an old-fashioned perch-colored stick bait. The old, all black River Runt with the white stripes along its body is also magical.

These fish would barely grab onto your bait and you had to set the hook as fast as you felt anything at all on the end of your line. I never got used to the fact how the walleye would have the stick bait all the way into its mouth, since we rarely ever could feel a good strike. Do you know of an area similar to this where you live? I'll bet you do.

You need to get out and experiment on a couple of locations. Make sure there is a decent walleye population on the water you intend to fish. There always seems to be bigger fish present when fishing shallow current areas. Using shorter rods and light line is needed in the location described above, as the area is very narrow, very shallow with very clear water and trees hovering overhead. No one is around this time of year and the walleye are moving shallow to feed. Remember, there are multiple feeding patterns for the walleye during several times of the year; this is just one of them.

One night in particular, we were fishing a location where the wind was howling in the channel and the whitecaps were crashing into the shallow front of the channel. Casting was difficult at best



Using a jig and 'crawler was used to catch this walleye while fishing with John Andrew.



These walleye were caught while fishing with John Andrew and working the top of a rock hump.



Fishing the weeds provided this happy angler a fine catch of walleye while fishing with John Andrew.



This walleye was caught during midday deep hump while fishing with John Andrew.

but when our bait landed into those whitecaps and we slowly retrieved the bait into the shallow channel, the walleye were there waiting to crush our bait. On this evening they hit hard, and most of the time the strike was soft and subtle.

That one night, the smallest fish caught was 21 inches, ranging up to 29 inches and they fought as hard as I can remember any walleye ever fighting.

Take this information to some of the lakes connected to the Great Lakes and hold on, because some real giants are being caught at these locations and the information available is mostly hush, hush.

Fishing the deeper water of shallow lakes in September always produces for us, starting with a jig and 'crawler or a 'crawler harness and spinner rig. If no trolling is allowed, we vertically jig and put the bait directly onto the fish. This could be the deadliest method for non-trolling locations—starting with the deeper weeds, then going to the deeper slopes, and then into the deepest water of shallow lakes. As we proceed into late September and October we switch to a jig and minnow, but do not count out the jig and 'crawler, even in early October as the scent works well for the walleye in deep water.

When in early September we also are casting crankbaits for walleye during midday and produce some of our biggest walleye of the year. This method is very productive for clear water lakes and the weed beds in those waters. The perch make a migration into the weed beds of these clear water environments that lasts for a short two weeks. The bigger game fish are right behind them. Remember, this is in the clear water environments; darker water lakes will have perch in them most of the year.

Making long casts with light super line and long spinning rods is the key to

our success. Perch-colored crankbaits perform well, as do orange and gold colors. Using certain bass crankbaits that have a knocker rattle inside the bait are very effective. These baits dive to around 12 to 16 feet and the strike is subtle—not an earth shaking strike, but rather a light tic or tap is what you will feel.

A small jig and minnow works well when we are fishing the deep woodpiles in early fall. Casting to the pile and the slow descent rate of the smaller jig is the reason for the action we get. As the jig and minnow slowly drops, the cooler water of the fall season has the walleye slightly more aggressive and as the bait sinks towards their location the walleye swim out, take the bait and head back to the wood. Once you set the hook, you need to fight the fish away from the brush.

Working the tops of some deep humps with a jig is now becoming productive and this is for midday fishing—no more sunrise or sunset fishing. Our daytime walleye bite is heating up and will get better and better as September moves forward. You still need to use your electronics and work the beginning slopes and move your baits slowly. These spots will really turn on around mid to late September.

Good luck and good fishing.  
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