

Bouncin Walleyes

by Bob (Red) Piette

Years ago, one of my least favorite ways to catch walleyes was bottom bouncing. But as I've tried to become more proficient at catching fish, I found out that this is an important technique to learn. Through time and fishing with new friends, I have learned some things that should help any one to get a good start on using this method.

First, let's talk about the bouncer itself. What I have found to be the best all around bouncer is one that has a stiffer wire to it. I think that it allows you to feel the bottom better, and will let you know sooner if there is a depth change or a change in bottom content, which can be a signal to what the fish are using.

For sizes, I like to use enough weight so that my line is no more than a 45 deg. Angle into the water. For most of the fishing in the Detroit River, I'll use one that is 1 1/2 oz. But I will go up to 3 oz. If necessary. Most of the time I will be moving with and at a speed slightly faster the current and have the bouncer contact the bottom occasionally, not dragging it.

Now for the business end of this method, the crawler harness.

I've used both the store bought harnesses and I also make my own. The thing to consider in a harness is the length of the mono and the size of the hooks and blades. A length of three feet is good for most situations. I like blade sizes from number 3 to 5 mostly in colorado. Blade colors can change from day to day but a good starting point is chrome, gold, firetiger and chartreuse. Hooks don't need to be very large. Say around a size 6.

Lastly the bait. Your crawlers have to be lively. **Repeat that to yourself.** At the final moment of truth, if the fish bumps the end of the crawler and it doesn't move he'll just turn away. The best way to keep your bait is to rinse them in cold water and put them in a cooler of ice and water the night before you go out.

Some of the best places I have found to use this method is along weed edges during the summer.

I hope this will help you catch more fish. Good luck and good fishing.