

Visions Below

by Bob (Red) Piette

I'm no expert when it comes to ice fishing, just ask John. But after last season on the ice I have made some observations that I'd like to share.

Have you ever noticed that someone sitting only ten feet away is plopping big, fat perch on the ice and all your doing is watching them? I started to use my under water camera to try and find out why.

Looking through the camera, I could see fish in some holes, but not others. Things would look to be the same, but some holes would have weed patches and seem to have the same depth just like the ones with fish in it. After some time, I realized that there was a difference. The spots that would produce had fish that would move in and out of the area. What I found was that there is a corridor that these fish use to travel in. It would be a slight depth variation with a path where there weren't any weeds and the fish will swim back and forth in search of food. I would see these fish swimming through this corridor only to return later on or to have another group come through.

What I do now is to drill a hole, put the camera down and wait a few minutes to see if any fish are present. I will search for that "corridor". Also, don't sit right over the top of the weeds, work the edges. When these fish are swimming around looking for something to eat, they will have a hard time finding your wax worm hanging off of your ice jig when it's down in the middle of that weed patch.

The other thing that my camera has allowed me to do is to see the mood of the fish. Yeah, I know what you're thinking, man is this guy nuts. But it's true. See, I drill two or three holes side by side. One hole I lower the camera down into and have it pointed toward the other holes so I can see my jigs. As I look into the camera I can change the way I move the lure and see how the fish responds to that movement. Sometimes they charge right in. Other times you may need to jiggle the jig or, if the fish is just starring at it, try lifting the jig. At times he'll rise with it and when he does, stop lifting it and slowly drop it in his face. He just can't resist eating it. Now I'm not saying you have to have a camera to have success. You can stick your head into the hole to take a look. But the camera sure is faster at finding the fish. So the next time you see me out on the ice looking into my camera you'll know what I'm doing. Watching that stubborn big fat perch and trying to figure out how to get him to bite. It's a lot of fun.