

What to do when the usual isn't working.

By Thomas Ebi

It can be tough to go out early morning with a plan on getting walleye right where you were yesterday or just a few short days ago, but the walleye just aren't there! Where did they go? Well if you have saved waypoints over the past year/years at least you have places to start looking.

This year is a very good example. There a lot of year classes of walleye like I haven't seen in quite a few years. So, if the walleye have moved from where you expect them to be, do you go deep? Or go shallow? More often than not I'd say deep. But this year I have found walleye more towards shore than out suspended where I'd typically find them. The past few times out on Erie, a majority of boats are out fishing towards the Mich/Ohio/Canada line. I'm fishing close towards Brest bay and doing quite well.

At the end of march I fished the FLW league tourney on Erie and was the only boat fishing in 8.5 feet of water! Who would have thought! If I could have figured out a better way to get the fish hooked up I believe I would have finished higher than 4th. We lost a lot of fish before getting the first one in the boat. That tourney also taught me (and keeps me thinking) about changing lures a lot to get reaction bites. When fishing shallow waters (less than 15ft) the walleye seem to get conditioned to seeing the same lures. Switch from cranks to harnesses or spoons every couple passes. This really made a big difference for me.

This summer, crankbaits have really caught more fish than harnesses or spoons for me. Why I cannot answer yet. (I hope I can figure that one out) If you are out marking nice marks and your not getting bit, CHANGE baits! Also change speed! Color as always is important. Go with the basics to start. Perch, purple, pink, copper. A friend was out and not getting many bites, then he had to change his boat speed to miss another boat, WHAM, 5 fish on at once. Speed was the determining factor. AGAIN, if your marking fish and not getting bit, CHANGE something! If the walleye are not biting, changing baits won't hurt your chances! I'm doing some experimenting with modified crankbaits and spoons this year. If they work as hoped, I'll report back and you all will have more stuff to take on your boat. Which translates into you will have more stuff to buy! Hey, its good for the economy.

Learn something every time out that will add to your arsenal. You'll be a better fisher person and enjoy every trip even more.