

# The great walleye hunt

By Mike Leuenberger

Conditions looked promising, with overcast skies and the water level up. So where were the walleye? They were there, alright, as we soon found out.

The fish fought well, digging for the bottom and the sanctuary of the early season's weed growth.

Deseronto walleye, even post-season walleye, fight well in the cool spring water temperature. Anyone who believes walleye don't fight hasn't fished at Deseronto on the Bay of Quinte.

It was just first light, we set out across the bay from our campsite to the point of a large island. Our boat was fitted with a depth-finder, which can be a handy tool in itself.

We quickly located a drop-off and followed it to a depth of 24 feet, straight into the wind, cut the motor and let the wind drift the boat over the hot spots.

We drifted back to four feet of water, started the engine and trolled back up against the wind back to the 24-foot depth and started again.

In a short time we had 10 walleye boated. In just a day-and-a-half, we caught over 50 walleye using this method.

We hooked fish trolling with spinners, but drifting worked far better. Structure, particularly the edges of structure, plays a very important roll in fish location of all species.

Structure is a kind of beacon and it offers a form of security to the fish; in some cases it can act as an

## Outdoor Adventures

ambush point to allow predators to lie in wait for prey without burning up a lot of energy.

Some of the techniques we have used when fishing include the heavy jigs which penetrate the weeds and get to the bottom where the fish are holding. After the cast, wait until the jig makes contact with the bottom before you start the retrieve.

A light rod and line won't get the job done when you're trying to extract the fish from heavy cover. At times like this you will need a medium to heavy action gear, 6' to 7' rods filled with 10-pound test line. I prefer a 5'-2" spinning rod and four-pound line with light jig-heads for most cases.

Fishing for turned-off fish, the bait has to be directly on its nose before it will pick up the jig. My choice in this situation is the lightest jig I can use and still retain contact with the bottom. Lighter rigs fall slowly and stay in the strike zone longer. Most strikes come on the drop, so line-watching is essential. The slightest movement or sideways twitch is the signal to set the hook.

Also, you should vary your retrieve slow to fast to find out what will trigger a strike.

Good luck and happy fishing.

If you have any questions about walleye fishing or just fishing in general, feel free to call Mike at 873-8144.



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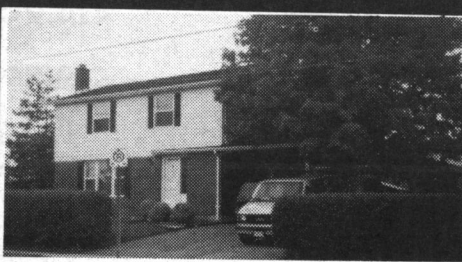
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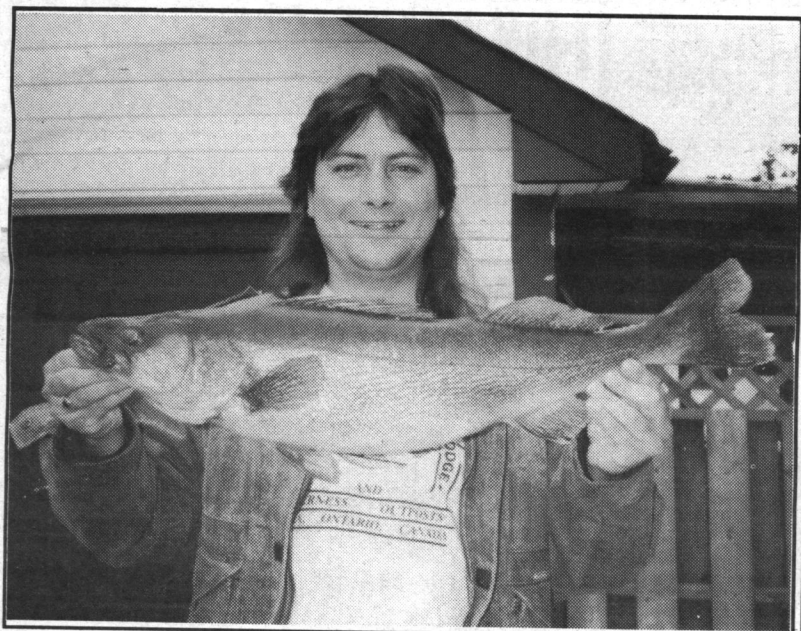
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