

Be creative to catch Lake Simcoe lakers

When the lake trout are on the feed in the waters of Lake Simcoe, the angling action can be phenomenal.

And taking into account there's a two-fish possession limit, there are days when hauling in a quota can be quickly accomplished. Then it's time to pull in the lines.

But when the big greys, which have been known to tip the scales in the 20-pound plus range, aren't in the mood to put the bite on your offering, just getting one strike or hauling in one fish might be a feat.

It is times like these when a bit of creativity can entice these finnackly finned creatures to attack your bait.

With the open water season having commenced last Saturday and the ice vacating later than in the last few years (keeping water temperatures cold) the odds are likely that fish will be found at varying depths.

In this situation, fish will still likely be found along the lake's eastern shoreline around the main islands and main lake points adjacent to shoals.

It is also at this time of the year when running a traditional flatline weighted with some splitshot sinkers can be effective, particularly at first- or last-light hours when light intensity is less.

Wil Wegman, a spokesman from the Ministry of Natural Resources' Aurora District office and an ardent angler of Lake Simcoe, points out that those who wet a line on this body of water early in the season have a good chance at picking up the odd whitefish on a flatline.

If this happens, he suggests throwing out a marker buoy in the area of where you get a fish and try vertical jigging for others that might be nearby.

However, as water temperatures warm up, fish will gravitate to deeper depths.

In Lake Simcoe, the deepest water, which can exceed 100 feet in some areas, is found in an area ranging from Kempenfelt Bay in the west and extending north towards Oro Station and Hawkestone.

While trolling with downriggers is the most popular mode in taking lakers, there are days when running the old wire line can outfish those with modern gear. Special heavy action gear is required in running wire line and in doing so, a constant jerking motion is needed to get the lure moving in a manner that might attract hits.



Mike Hayakawa

When trolling on those slow days, try varying your speed and don't travel in a straight line. Utilize a zig zag motion and try slow turns. Quite often, a bait run off an outside line will move in an erratic manner when a turn is made. This has been known to entice a hit from a curious fish that has been following a lure.

While it can be a costly proposition at times, bouncing your cannonball off the lake's bottom is another little trick of the trade. Kicking up mud from the bottom while trolling has been known to coax an inactive fish into striking an offering.

One other proven technique is one that requires a bit of a gamble when schools of baitfish and predator fish hovering nearby can be visualized on your graph recorder.

By estimating how much line you've let out from your reel and the distance to which you've passed the school of baitfish, try releasing your line from the downrigger release and allow your lure to flutter towards the surface.

The sudden upward movement of your bait can appear enticing to a fish that's been following your offering.

On relatively calm days and when your graph shows fish are stacked on the bottom, don't be afraid to try vertical jigging.

It's a technique that's popular for lakers in the far north and has worked for me on occasions. In this instance, try using hair jigs or the Luhr-Jensen Crippled Minnow of at least one ounce in weight.

As for proven trolling lures, body baits in the form of J9 or J11 Rapalas in varying finishes such as chartreuse, silver-black or fluorescent red are handy.

Smelt imitation spoons such as the Northern King or

Luhr-Jensen Diamond King and silver and blue finishes or silver and green are good lures to have.

When boating on the vast waters of Lake Simcoe, take extra precaution before and during an outing.

Winds can pick up in a matter of seconds and direction can do an about-face.

Be sure to get a weather forecast before going out and have a VHF radio tuned into the weather station to keep abreast of any amended forecasts.

Provincial parks set to open


With the arrival of the Victory Day long weekend, most provincial parks in Ontario will move into full operation.

The ministry notes that there still plenty of sites available for the 2001 camping season.

Reservations for camping are recommended and may be made by using the Ontario Parks reservation web site at www.OntarioParks.com or by calling 1-888-668-7275.

Ontario Parks reminds campers that a ban on the consumption of alcoholic beverages is again in effect in selected provincial parks until May 22 this year.

Last year, attendance topped 8.8 million at Ontario provincial parks.



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