

## Putting an end to the ice-fishing season

by Bob Jensen

I just returned from what will probably be my last ice-fishing trip of the year. There is still some ice-fishing available in some areas of the Midwest, but many anglers are now turning to the open water season that is here or fast approaching. If you are done ice-fishing for the year, there are some things you should do to make sure your equipment is ready for next season. Let's take care of the auger first. The folks at Jiffy are leaders in ice-auger technology and recommend this for storing your auger.

First, drain the fuel tank.

Next, make sure the fuel cap is on tight and that the vent cap is tightly closed. Also, disconnect the sparkplug wire from the sparkplug and keep it away from the sparkplug. Check the blades for nicks. Think about the last time you used the auger. Did it cut cleanly and quickly? If it didn't, or if there are nicks, have the blades sharpened or replaced. The blades on some Jiffy augers have a three year warranty, so be sure to keep that in mind. Now let's look at our shelter. Set it up in a location that will allow air to circulate through it. We want it to be completely dry before it is stored. Clean the shelter out completely. Crumbs or anything else that smells will attract mice, and we don't want mice leaving a mess in our shelter. If your shelter is clean when you put it away for the summer, it should be clean when you need it next winter. Next stop, depth-finders. Again, make sure some air has circulated around it so it's completely dry when put into storage. Charge the battery completely, then disconnect the power connections. You should probably check the unit during the summer and add power if necessary. Some of the MarCum units that have become so popular have power readouts that make checking power levels very easy and accurate. I like to take some of the line off my reels at the end of the season. By doing so, I must put new line on to start the next season. Open your tackle-box for ice-fishing and let everything in there dry out as well. Check for any lures that might need hooks replaced, and take an inventory of lures that have been lost during the past season. Also, if a lure has been particularly productive, you should get another one or two of that lure, just to make sure you have plenty next time you're on the ice. If you do these tasks now, you will be ready to take advantage of first ice when it gets here. And, as it seems time passes faster every year, it won't be long until we're preparing for another ice-fishing season.

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