

Trolling for more fish

by Bob Jensen

Summer in the Midwest brings hot weather. It also brings the opportunity for some outstanding fishing opportunities. There are lots of ways we can present a lure to fish in the summer, and trolling is one of those ways. Here are a couple of ways you can troll up more fish right now.

You can troll fast, slow, or in between, and you can go forward or backwards. Trolling with the motor in reverse, or back-trolling, is best when the fish have been pinpointed or when an ultra-slow presentation is desired. Backtrolling is most often employed when live-bait rigs are being used.

Traditional trolling, or front-trolling, is most common in some areas. With the development of small horsepower four-stroke outboards, front-trolling is very effective. The Honda 8 horsepower motor that I troll with is extremely quiet, will run all day without a sputter, and is very fuel-efficient.

Front-trolling is most effective when a large area is to be covered. Maybe you want to fish a long drop-off that parallels a shoreline, maybe you want to work along the edge of a deep weedline, or perhaps a large reef off shore is the suspected fish-holding area: It doesn't matter, front-trolling is the way to go to increase your odds for getting bit. You'll be covering water effectively and quickly, and your bait will be in the fish-zone almost all of the time. Crankbaits and spinner rigs will be best most of the time when front-trolling.

Where legal, it works well to troll with multiple lines per person. More lines in the water means you're presenting the bait to more fish. If you'll be pulling multiple lines, the use of a planer board will enable those lines to be worked more effectively, as the planer board takes the bait away from the boat and prevents line tangles. The boards produced by Off Shore Tackle are effective and easy to use.

Keep a close eye on your depth-finder as you troll. The Humminbird 797 that has become so popular among walleye anglers includes depth, boat speed, and GPS, and these are all important tools that will increase your catch. Trolling speed is especially critical. You should troll at one speed for awhile, if nothing happens you should go faster or slower. When a fish hits, note the boat speed and match it when the trolling run resumes.

GPS is great for going back over a productive spot. When a fish hits, press the "Mark" button on the GPS and that spot is automatically saved on the screen. You can then go back over that spot, or you can continue trolling. Whenever you catch a fish, hit the "Mark" button. After you catch a few fish, you'll have established a trolling run. Go back over the spots where you've caught fish. By doing so, you have increased your odds of trolling over the most productive spots.

A seven-foot medium action Lightning Rod with an Abu Garcia Line Counter reel spooled with 14/6 FireLine is perfect for trolling, but something a little stiffer will be necessary for pulling boards. Give trolling a try next time out and you'll increase your odds for fishing success.

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