

Dumb It Down To A Drag

(Winter Fishing)

By the time you read this article, winter fishing will be getting ready to kick into high gear. There's no question about it,

blades can help you load the boat when the bite is on. And, on warm sunny days a quicker jigging retrieve in shallow water will occasionally crush one eye after another. However, a slow and steady pace will typically win the race during the winter months.



Like many of you, I enjoy spot hopping and have the tendency to fish fast. This strategy allows me to cover water quickly, targeting the most active fish in the system and putting many of them in the live well....sometimes. During the winter, cold water typically equates to lethargic walleyes. Motoring from spot to spot isn't always the best strategy. More often than not, selecting a few appropriate locations and slowly dragging your jig will help you "get bit". Think about it logically, you can't get bit without a line in the water. The more time you're soaking bait the better your odds of hooking up. Some anglers have the tendency to snap a jig back to boat regardless of the circumstances. On occasion, you'll see some folks visualizing where their next cast will land before they complete retrieving the current cast. I know I'm "guilty as charged" at times. Unfortunately, that can be problematic, particularly when

you're fighting cold water and sluggish walleyes. This winter, try dumbing down your retrieve to nothing more than a "drag". As the technique implies, the presentation is "dragged" slowly past your quarry offering a catchable meal to lethargic eyes. This presentation is simple and easy to execute. Set your electric on a slow speed and cast out your jig. Adjust your speed to the weight of your jig head and amount of line you have out to ensure you maintain bottom contact. A periodic twitch or short sweep of your rod often entices fish following your jig. It's important to remember that the action you're imparting is often the lack of action. Resist the urge to overwork your jig. Let the bottom contours and the style of jig head you select do that for you. Round, bullet, aspirin, standups, football heads etc. will all impart a different action to your presentation. Match the jig head with your favorite plastic ringworm, grub or tube. Tip it with a piece of crawler and you're in business. Don't over look "dragging" with no plastic affixed to your jig. What's simpler than a jig and night crawler! Best of all...it works. This winter, be patient, keep it simple and dumb your presentation down to nothing other than a slow drag.

Bob ploof