

Of The Outdoors

Dog Days Will Soon Be Here

BY GARY HOWEY
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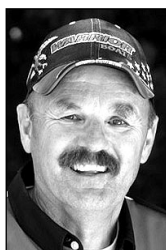
Last winter was a nasty one and we couldn't wait until it warmed up, well it won't be long and your wish will be answered!

With July just a week away, temperatures will start to rise, along with the humidity, making for perfect conditions for nasty weather and tougher walleye fishing conditions.

Fish have a lot of different conditions they have to adjust or relate to this time of the year including: rising water temperatures, rising/falling barometric pressure, high water, low water and the bright sunlight all making walleye fishing during the Dog Days of summer tough.

Keys to locating and catching fish this time of the year with the best location to look for being, your deeper water and areas where there will be less sunlight penetration.

As water temperatures rise, walleyes and other species of fish will head into deeper water searching out area with more comfortable water temper-



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atures. These deep-water haunts provide the cooler water temperatures that the fish need to survive when things heat up.

There are several reasons that the fish relocate into the depths. One is because their food source, the baitfish has moved down bringing the predator fish with them.

There are several methods that help you to take these deep-water fish, those that have worked well for me are: livebait rigging, leadcore line, snap weights or downriggers dragging crankbaits.

During this time of the year, fish movement can vary drastically, especially just prior to a severe weather change.

Fish detect the weather change well before it happens. They have a lateral line, a series of sensitive nerve endings extending from behind the gills to

their tail that allows them to detect any change in the barometric pressure.

Once they realize that a severe weather change is about to occur, walleyes and other species of fish will go on a feeding binge prior to the arrival of the storm, then move deep, lying dormant on the bottom until our weather conditions stabilize.

If you're fishing these dormant fish after a storm has passed through, you'll need a lot of patience and a precise bait presentation, such as a Lindy Rig.

I've had my best luck on these inactive fish by presenting my bait right in front of the walleyes nose and staying there until they get tired of it and mad enough to bite.

Since the sun is at its highest point this time of the year and walleyes are very light sensitive, they're going to be more active in periods with minimal sunlight.

Which would be: early morning and late evening, as the sun is at its lowest point and sunlight penetration is the least during this time of the day.

Not all walleyes will stay deep throughout the day, as there are times when the conditions are right, walleyes will move shallow.

One of these is on those very windy days as there's a good chance that walleyes will move up shallow to feed in the on top of humps rock piles and sandbars.

Because the surface of the water is being rippled



PHOTO: JERRY CARLSON

Walleyes will move deep as the Dog Days of Summer approach. Author took this walleye using a Lindy rig while fishing Mille Lacs.

by the wind, reducing the sunlight's penetration, making the shallower water more comfortable, allowing walleyes to move shallow to feed.

Another time during the heat of the day that you'll find walleyes shallow would be when heavy winds are pounding into the points or the shoreline.

With the wind hammering against a shoreline, a mud line is created, dramatically cutting light penetration along the shoreline.

Looking at this muddy water, it may be hard to

believe that walleyes would be able to find bait in the muddy coming back off a shoreline.

As a diver, I've had the opportunity to be in these areas when a mud line was created.

The muddy water can be on in the first six inches, and depending on the point or shoreline can be clear from that point to the bottom, which allows the walleyes the opportunity to move up during the day and feed.

River, fish will also be in the deepest holes as well as in shallower areas

where there's heavier current as this cools and oxygenates the water making it a more hospitable environment for walleyes.

During the heat of the summer in a river, an increase or decrease in water, will cause fish to make sudden location changes that you might want to take advantage of.

With a drop in water levels, fish will be forced into the remaining deep holes, concentrating them in smaller areas.

If there's an increase in water flow, they'll move up stream, up against the sandbars and shallower to feed, taking advantage of the new influx of baitfish and other aquatic creatures that are being flushed into the system.

Dog Days of summer usually mean you'll need to go to deep-water presentations, but under the right conditions, walleyes can be shallow giving anglers the opportunity to fish them with bottom bouncers and spinners, Lindy Rigs or by pitching jigs and crankbaits.

Gary Howey, Hartington, Neb., is the producer/host of the award winning *Outdoorsmen Adventures television series*. If you're looking for more hunting and fishing information, outdoor videos, a viewer's photo gallery and an outdoor forum, check out his web site at www.outdoorsmenadventures.com.

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