

A Legacy of Innovation
Since 1969

April, 2009



SKINNY CAN MEAN FAT...

by Dennis Foster

By skinny, I am referring to depth of water. The contradicting term fat corresponds to the oversized mature fish you will often find in the form of dominant predators, such as pike, bass, and walleye in northern latitudes. Just enough water to float a fish will keep them perfectly content, even more so when there is a security blanket of ice directly above them.

More importantly, this ice forms a very distinct barrier. This barrier is quite important in helping us to determine the proper position in which to intercept our intended quarry, particularly in respect to when and where they will be going on feeding forays. The ice barrier serves as a crucial aid to the predators in that it removes escape routes for their prey. They will herd their victims into extremely shallow water. Since all vertical escape routes are now gone, they can only move horizontally in hopes of getting away. Thus, the aggressors have heavily tilted the odds in their favor, as half of the alternatives to slip away are now removed.

We can often predict heightened periods of activity on moderately shallow mid-lake bars, points, and shoreline related structure during lowlight periods or heavy overcast

days. This in itself is no mystery. A very notable fact is that we can also expect vigorous action all day long, even with the bright sun we've had lately, until the last of the ice melts.. I equate this to a couple of factors. One factor is that the ice has now darkened and very little light enters, thus offering comfort from intensifying rays and an additional low-light feeding advantage for the predators. Combine this with the fact that the fish are now staging in shallow shoreline areas prior to spawning; needing substantial calories to finish off their egg sacks, as well as providing the energy needed to perform the spawning ritual. We now have a set of conditions absolutely perfect for a torrid bite.

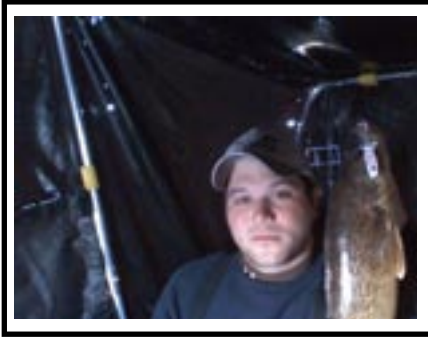
Most, if not all, of our efforts should be focused on shorelines, as the lip directly adjacent to the shore often abruptly drops into a couple feet of water, forming a horizontal wall and eliminating the only other escape route available for the prey. Pay close attention to distinct inside turns as they will act as a funnel from which there is little chance of avoiding capture. Always keep in mind that your top of the line predators are keenly attuned to this and will use it to their advantage at every opportunity.

With a smorgasbord of numerous minnow species, and panfish such as bluegills, crappies, and perch widely available along shorelines with old downed and newly emerging weed growth, the fish come out of the mid-winter doldrums with a vengeance and begin to feed in a binge-like fashion. Let's not forget that the lowly bullheads play an important role here as well. They are now lethargically rising from their winter slumber, and make for an easy meal. Dark, mud-bottomed bays in 6 to 12 foot of water are the key, and present an overlooked pattern worth some serious investigation.

Presentations should be loud, and border on downright gaudy, as these fish aren't shy. A new hybrid lure worth employing in this role is the HummBait® from Mack's Lures. It interestingly combines the characteristics of an in-line spinner with a spoon, giving us both spin and flash...thus offering an exaggerated complement of triggering cues aggressive fish find irresistible. Fish it in a traditional lift-fall-hold manner, and hang on tight.

Do yourself a favor and take one last shot at what can prove to be some of the best fishing you will ever experience...regardless of season.

Late Ice Walleyes with the HummBait® by Dane Stanaway



As winter starts to make its transition into spring, late ice walleye fishing can be at its best. The river and streams are starting to thaw, dumping warmer water into larger bodies of water. This makes for ideal pre-spawn walleye conditions.

My favorite spot to target late ice walleyes would be off underwater points that are near running streams or rivers. (Anglers catch walleyes in these rivers or streams in the spring, so you can bet there are walleyes staging nearby.) These underwater points seem to always hold big pre-spawn walleyes.

One lure that I have spent a lot of time using on the ice this winter is the Mack's Lure HummBait®. I rig the HummBait with either a minnow head or I use a full minnow hooked through the mouth. (A tip for using live bait is; place a small piece of plastic on the hook after the minnow. This will help keep the bait on the hook while jigging.) The noise and vibration produced by the HummBait®, is something walleyes can't resist. I am confident if there are walleyes below me, I have a good chance to catch them with a HummBait®.

While fishing for these late ice

walleyes, do a little scouting and locate these rivers or streams that hold walleye in the spring. Try to find either points, holes, or structure with deep water nearby. Also check with other anglers, baitshops, locals etc. on late season ice conditions. Know the difference between how much cloudy ice can hold in comparison to clear ice. Be safe and tight lines.

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The "go to" trolling spinner, for most western state anglers over the last 40 years. Time after time, its namesake diamond-like stones have consistently produced limits of trout when other lures could not.

Cookin' Your Catch

Camp-Style Walleye

Ingredients

- walleye filets
- butter
- salt and pepper
- lemon juice
- tin foil

This one's easy. Put two fillets in aluminum foil. Put a few pads of butter on each fillet. Salt and pepper to taste and sprinkle with lemon juice. Fold alluminum foil to seal fillets and grill for 10 to 15 minutes, or until fish flakes with a fork. Absolutely delicious!

Take a Kid Fishing!



You will be glad you did!

A Legacy of Innovation for...

40 Years!

Yes it's true, Mack's Lure is 40 years old in 2009. Watch for more info in upcoming editions of the Mack Attack Newsletter!

“A Problem Solver Named Paul”

by Hall-of-Fame Angler
Stan Fagerstrom

Part 2 of 4

It's best to never get too set on using just one approach to solving your fishing problems.

Paul Wright's not going to do that. Paul, as I told about in my last column, is a sharpshooting walleye angler from West Point, Indiana. He's a winning walleye tournament pro and big Lake Erie is one of the places he best likes to fish.

As I also mentioned, a Mack's Lure Wally Pop is Paul's favorite rig when he's offering nightcrawlers to Lake Erie's walleye. It was what he and his two companions caught most of their fish on when they fished that big lake not long ago.

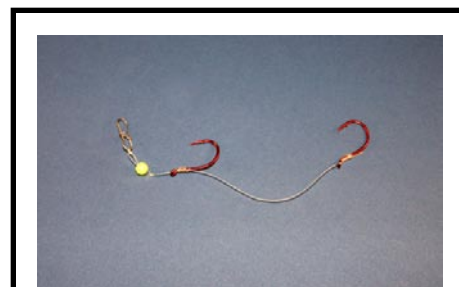
But there was another lure had also grabbed Paul's interest. "I had some extra time on our early October trip," Paul says, "and it was a good opportunity for me to try the new Mack's Lure HummBait."



Paul Wright has figured out a method of using the HummBait that has put some dandy walleyes in his boat. The first thing he does with a HummBait like this is to remove the treble hook. (See next picture)

Wright did troll his HummBait but says he just didn't have the results he'd been having with the Wally Pop. Did he just set the HummBait aside and forget about it? No way! He liked the looks of this interesting new lure and decided to use it in a fashion different than anglers normally employ.

"The HummBait has such a unique profile and flash in the water that I figured it just had to work on Lake Erie," Wright says. "I removed the feather treble hook that came on the lure. Then I added a two hook crawler type worm harness and attached it where the treble hook had been."



Wright replaces the HummBait's treble hook with a worm rig like the one you see here. He says this set up caught some of his largest fish on a recent trip to Lake Erie.

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Paul began trolling the revised HummBait with its trailing nightcrawler on one of the rod he and his two companions were using. What kind of luck do you think he had? Would this new set up work? Well, I asked him.

"Stan," Paul told me, "I was truly impressed. The worm rig I'd attached to the HummBait caught

just as many fish as the Wally Pop, but the size of the fish was always bigger. This was my first experience with the new HummBait but I guarantee it won't be my last."

I asked Wright for some of the details regarding the HummBait he found so effective for his Lake Erie trolling. He says it was a one that weighs a half ounce and is a chartreuse color.

The way he modified the lure isn't at all that difficult. All he did was slide the feathered treble out of the split ring to which it was attached. Then he attached a small snap to the end of his double hook worm rig. The snap was hooked into the split ring where the treble hook had been.

"The leader I used for the worm harness," Paul told me, "was 14-pound test. My two hooks were Number 1 red colored hooks spaced approximately 3-inches apart. I attached that snap so I could easily change back to the treble hook if needed."



Here's a picture of the complete HummBait set up Paul Wright has used with excellent success.

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Ask Paul and he'll tell you didn't need to change back. That worm rig trailing along behind the flashing HummBait must have looked

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like steak on a platter to those Lake Erie walleye. As I mentioned, the Wally Pop continued to get hits, but so did the worms used behind the HummBait and the fish that it caught were larger.

I was curious how deep Paul was fishing his HummBait worm rig. "I assume the lure was approximately 25-feet down," Wright says, "I thought because it was running deeper might have been why we were catching larger fish, but I had a different setup on the other side of the boat and it didn't get the size fish as did my modified HummBait."

And that's why I said in the beginning that it's wise to stay flexible whatever the lure and your method of using it. I've been endeavoring to do that ever since I early on had excavated my own ruts trying to use the same approach to solve this or

that angling problem.

Paul Wright is a guy has hammered walleyes from the Dakotas to Lake Erie. He is just as well known in the field of bird dogs and has been involved as judge in field trials from the Canadian prairies to the deep South. He's a recognized expert in both fields of endeavor. Keep in mind what I've told you about him.

I wasn't really all that surprised at what Paul told me about the HummBait. I've done some experimenting with that new lure myself. If you're getting fish with it the way it came out of the box, fine and dandy. But if you aren't don't just stick it off in a tackle box tray and forget about it.

Now then a change or two helps put more fish in the boat. I'll detail some of my own experiences in this regard in my next column.

Question of the Month

Have a question? We'd love to answer it! Contact us at bob@mackslure.com if you have a question you would like to see featured!

Q: *Who is Jim Grassi and how is he affiliated with Mack's Lure?*

A: Jim Grassi is a member of the National Freshwater Fishing Hall of Fame, noted author, and an honorary member of the Mack's Lure Pro Staff. Read more about Jim in the Mack's Lure press release section of the website.

The Mack's Lure Forum...

is all about
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Photo of the Month



The gold Smile Blade with red beads above a herring scored these 2 springers in 2 passes.!!.

*Thanks!
Jerry A. Brown*

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Photos, stories and comments are welcomed and encouraged. Please forward all content materials to bob@mackslure.com.

THANK YOU!

