

**The**

September 2007

# Mack Attack

A Monthly publication of Mack's Lure, Inc.

www.mackslure.com Mack's Lure, Inc.. 2514 Easy St, Wenatchee, WA 98801 509-667-9202

*Some of The Hottest Action Going!*

## Lake Michigan Salmon & Trout

*by Troy Walwood*



***Lake Michigan is hot for Kings and Cohos. All along the shores of Michigan and Wisconsin, this fishery has exploded in the last few years. Captain Troy Walwood has them dialed in as Amanda shows!***

We depart the port Sheldon boat launch at 4:45 a.m. with a full moon shining and very clear skies, all three of us having high hopes to box some early running king salmon and summer time skamanias (summer run steelhead, mixed salmon and trout). The boat is named Fish bound III, a 620 multi species Ranger, which today was on its maiden voyage for salmon; normally the boat is on tour somewhere in the USA chasing walleyes. While we slowly made our way through the no wake area of Pigeon Lake, not a one of us would know what to expect once the rods were set.

The plan was simple: run two lead core lines with spin doctors and flies on in-line planer boards, two dipsey divers with spin doctors and sledge hammers, and two down riggers with ultra glow spoons. We are allowed to run three lines for each angler on the boat, so we had more board setups, and rods with ½ core and full core ready to go if we needed them. This particular morning more rods would not be needed!

Chuck drives and sets the course for west, until we hit the magic 60-foot mark on the graph. As we covered the water this is about one mile off shore, we noticed the water temperature on the surface slightly above 60 degrees, and loads of bait fish clouds are seen on the Lowrance, all hovering around the 30- to 40-foot range.

We determine that this is the spot to stop, and we start setting out the trap. Amanda watches the rods, and pays close attention to the sounds of the drags in the dark. This is key as the fish hit early and often and are quick to run off 600 feet of line in any direction on the lake. Of course, being the captain I get the job of setting rods and netting fish. It is a job I have come to love as I watch people fighting fish and smiling and complaining about how big and strong the salmon are this time of year, and of course how sore and tired their arms are becoming.

As we started the setup, the first rod down was a rigger, set at 41 feet, an ultra glow blueberry muffin with a Wobble spoon on a slider line pegged at 24 foot (pegged meaning we stop the rigger,

***Salmon... continued on page two***

## ***Salmon... from page one***

place a six-foot lead in a surgical tube on the main line and put a wobble spoon on a snap swivel, keeping this line at a distance from the main spoon).

Both down riggers were duplicated with similar types of spoons and sliders. The next lines to go out were to be the lead core. It is a simple setup on the core, a spin doctor with a 24-inch lead to a Sledge Hammer lure from Mack's, a full core of lead with this setup is targeting fish from 40 to 50 foot down. The beauty of the lead core as we turn the boat or speed up and down from the wave the core brings the bait up and down in the water column which today could be from 60 to 225 feet deep.

Once the entire core is out, we put on the in-line planer board and send the lead and bait out an additional 150 to 300 feet from the boat. Both core lines are set out in the same manner; the only difference was the color of the spin doctor and Sledge Hammer (we did the blue on the port side of the boat). In getting ready to set up the dipsey diver rods, we use a number-one dipsey with a snubber on an eight-foot lead of 30-pound mono using a fish catcher spinner and a fly.

This is where the morning became interesting as Amanda started to yell, "Fish on!" I looked and saw both the rigger rods popped out and fish running, handing them off to her and Charlie, the first setup of lead core was singing and we had three fish on!

If you can imagine having three 15- to 18-pound king salmon on in the daylight, just think of the fun having them all on in the dark! I looked at my watch and the time was 5:42 am, we were at least one hour from day light and who knows how long until we would see the fish.

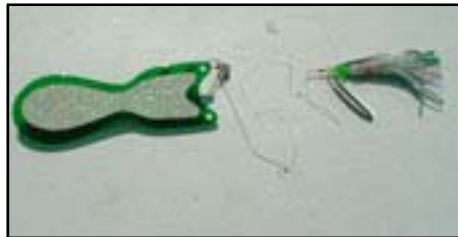
My fish seemed to be coming in easy as I removed the in-line board and continue to reel quickly. Within 10 minutes we had the first king in the boat, it was only about 12 pounds but nonetheless we were starting to box fish.

The other two fish off the riggers... well they were still fighting hard and not giving much up. I decided to put the dipsey setup out while these were way out from the boat. After a while I was finally able to net Charlie's fish, a fine four-year-old weighing in at 16 pounds. I was happy to be two for two, and now wondering if Amanda's fish would ever get to the net.

Just then the dipsey rod went on a screaming run and Chuck was back on the rod, (remember the sore arms and big fish we talked



***Pictured are some of Captain Troy's favorite set-ups which catch salmon like those shown above.***



***Mack's Lure Sledge Hammers work well with Spin Doctors and a variety of flashers and dodgers.***



***A fly on a Mack's Lure Flash Lite Troll***



***A fly with a Smile Blade in front of it for extra flash and vibration.***

about). Finally Amanda's fish came in and was in the box. Wow three for three and a fourth fish on.

I looked at what we had set up and all that was in the water was the one lead core setup, I started to work on the down riggers as Amanda drove, now angling the boat south as to not leave the fish, I was able to get both downrigger rods back in the water.

Chuck was still fighting his king somewhere in the dark when Amanda yelled out, "Double on." I look and the just-set-up downrigger had already released and was running from the boat. It became our first loss of the day: one jump and the fish was gone (we figure it must have been a steelhead).

Now Chuck is gaining on his fish. He looks at the counter on the reel and in an almost painful voice says he is making progress, "Only 450 feet of line out."

I resume the setup, putting the rigger back into play, I was actually able to set up the other dipsey rod and get it to the magical distance of 145 feet out. As I looked at my watch, the time was 6:17 am we had three in the box, one still on the line and one that never really hooked up well enough. In most entire mornings of fishing I am usually satisfied if we have that much action! But in 39 minutes of fishing? WOW, it was turning out to be one of the best mornings in the captain's log.

In the 48 minutes that Chuck was on line with his big king, Amanda and I actually landed three more fish, two salmon and one steelhead. The morning was unbelievable as we were never able to actually set up all of the rods. We ended the morning at 7:55am with 11 fish in the box, including nine king salmon (limit is 3 per person) weighing in from nine pounds to 19 pounds, one steelhead and one Coho. The total number of hits was 15. I usually have time to take a few action photos but today we just never had could even get the camera out of the case.

Our top setups were very simple; Mack's Lure Sledge Hammers on 18- to 24-inch leaders behind spin doctors on lead core and dipsey divers & ultra glow spoons and wobble spoons on riggers. It is hard for most people to imagine the power of a large king salmon and just how much excitement there is when one large fish is on, but at one time on this trip we had five rods with fish on, it does not happen like this often but when it does, we all smile as we look at a full cooler and lots of great grilling!

# You'll Do It Better With A Blade

*By Hall of Fame Angler Stan Fagerstrom  
Part one of two*

When 8-year-old Kiley Stauffer looks at her daddy's Mack's Lure Smile Blades she just thinks they're pretty. When her daddy eyeballs those same spinners my guess is that he thinks he was pretty darn lucky to find out just how effective they can be when it comes to catching the elusive walleye.

Kiley's father, you see, is Brian Stauffer of McPherson, Kansas. He's also one of the area's top walleye anglers. He and his fishing partner Nick Brumbaugh finished in the top 10 in last year's final standings of the Kansas State Walleye Association. Nick is from Lindsborg, Kansas. Both communities are in the central part of the state.

Whenever I run into somebody like Brian I like to probe their thinking with regard to walleye fishing. Some anglers flat refuse to share their secrets. Brian isn't one of them. And the sharing he's already done has resulted in walleye anglers having excellent success in states other than his own.

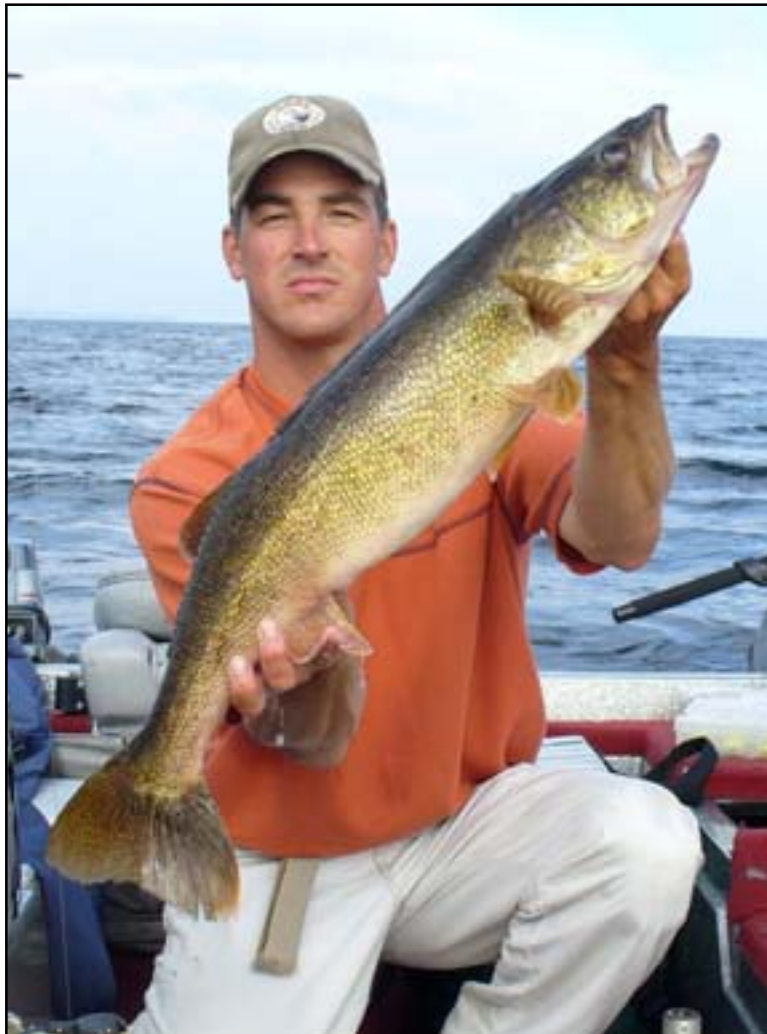
"I've been using Smile Blades almost exclusively for the past two years," Brian says, "and I've been amazed. There's just something about these plastic spinners that attracts fish."

The Kansas walleye specialist chuckles when he recalls an experience he had while pre-fishing for the Cabela's National Team Walleye Championship. The event was to be staged out of Green Bay, Wisconsin. Brian was trolling a Smile Blade in a green sparkle finish when he nailed a beauty.

"That fish measured 32-inches," Brian says. "We didn't have dependable scales so

we just measured the fish and let her go. We estimated its weight at about 12 pounds. It was the largest walleye I'd ever caught."

An experience like that is enough to get anybody a bit fired up. The next day Brian went into one of the area's tackle shops to pick up a few more Smile Blade in different



**Brian Stauffer and partner Nick Brumbaugh are sold on Smile Blades. They are catching huge walleyes on them from Kansas to Wisconsin!**

colors.

"To my amazement," he says, "not one bait shop in the Green Bay area knew much about Smile Blades. I did find one shop that had a few Mack's Lure Wally Pops. They told me they'd been on the shelf for years."

As I mentioned, Brian is one of those likeable guys who enjoys sharing thought that can help his friends catch fish. One of Brian's friends is Hank McWilliams, of Borger, Texas.

"Hank wasn't using Smile Blades," Brian says. "I told him about the excellent success I've had with them and that he was missing a bet if he didn't try them himself."

Hank took Brian's advice. Did Hank give his newly acquired Smile Blades a try for walleyes down there in the Lone Star State? You darn well better believe it! "Hank,"

Brian says, "rigged up using a Smile Blade in a glo gold tiger finish while fishing in a tournament at Lake Meredith. He and his partner wound up winning that contest with the largest weight ever recorded in a Texas Walleye Association contest."

Brian says he talked to his friend Hank about Smile Blades again not long ago. "Now he's got a whole bunch of them," Brian says. "He told me he's going to get even more but has to wait until he gets his Christmas bonus check to do so."

Brian Stauffer will also tell you he now has a generous supply of the easy turning and lightweight Smile Blades himself. "I must have at least 300," he told me.

Why so many? A primary reason is this Kansas walleye expert is convinced using the right color is a key to consistent success in fishing for walleyes. Get just the right colored Smile Blade out there in front of whatever bait you've got on and the walleyes can't leave it alone.

There are other reasons why Brian and his pal Nick have used Smiles Blades almost exclusively for their tournament fishing the past two seasons. I'll give you some of the important details in my next column. Watch for it next month.

## Tip of the Month

### Fishing smart

*Bill and Bernadine Ayres*

When you are trolling with multiple line-counter rods and reels, and the fish are hitting on one certain rod, you want to know what the successful presentation is, so you can replicate it on another rod. Here is how we keep track of our rods and the presentations on them.

Before we begin fishing, we set up our rods, and in our notebook I write what each rod has on it. We have our rods set-up with a strip of visible tape by the reel; black, blue,

red, and green. So I write Black—and its presentation, and how far back, then Blue—and so on. Because when you are busy fishing and pull in one planer board to take off weeds, and put it in another rod holder to handle another rod, it is easy to forget what presentation it has on it, and how far back it was set, etc.

So when we catch a fish, for example, on the rod with the green tape, we know all the information so we can duplicate it on the ones that aren't working. Pre-fishing for a tournament is very valuable time for us, and the small amount of time it takes to write things down pays for us in the long run. We keep track of what works for us, and we call it "fishing smart."

## Photo of the Month

*We want your photos! Send your photos to [bernie@mackslure.com](mailto:bernie@mackslure.com).*



*Here is Jeff Hoppin and his boys Tanier and Jake from Grand Rapids, Michigan. They were fishing with Captain Troy Walwood when they caught these Lake Michigan salmon recently.*

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**THANK YOU!**

