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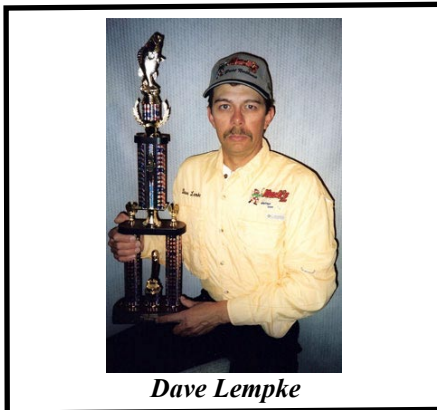
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**The Mack Attack**  
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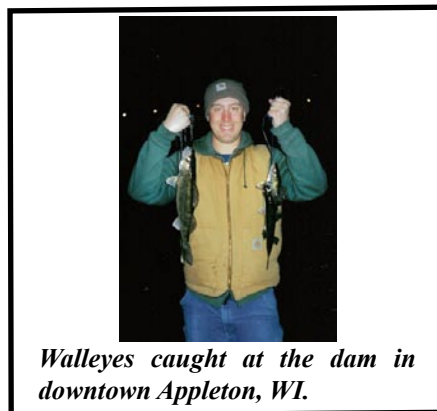
## DAM THE TORPEDOES

By MACK'S LURE GUIDE STAFFER DAVID LEMPKE



As winter loses its grip to spring's thaw, rivers start to swell bring a wave of torpedoes. These torpedoes would be the chunky walleyes on their annual spawning upstream migration. The torpedoes in the swollen rivers sometimes encounter an obstacle in the form of dams. Many fishermen know that this is the spot for some fantastic walleye fishing and the amount of boats on the water gives proof to that. For the shore fishermen, this is the best time of year to catch walleyes. After the spawn, the walleyes will go back to the open water where they originated from, leaving the shore fishermen less chance at catching the prized fish. Fishing from shore offers a great way to catch walleyes at the dams that accumulate them. From the Menominee to the Rock Rivers and in between, the state of Wisconsin offers many opportunities to fish from shore for walleyes

at dams. Many of these places end up being downtown in some pretty decent sized cities. Being from the Fox Cities, I have fished and caught walleyes at dams in Appleton, Neenah, Menasha, and Kaukauna. Then there is Voyager Park in De Pere, where you have a crack at a truly large trophy walleye, all while fishing from shore.



Yes, I do have a boat, and use it to fish for walleyes on the rivers in spring. Warm sunny days can give you the itch to fish open water, but the ice still locks the rivers. That is when I grab my pole and head for the dams. The rivers right below the dams is the first to open up and many times fishing from shore is the only option. Believe me, there will be some walleyes already there. Once you get to the dam, current breaks and eddies are spots you will want to look for to fish. Also warm water discharge areas can be

real magnets for these downtown torpedoes. Now fishing at this time of the year means some pretty cold water, and the walleyes can be finicky. One of my favorite spots has gravel at the end of a warm water discharge. I cast out a Lindy rig with a ¼ ounce Lindy sinker over the gravel. I drill a hole in the sinker which removes weight and reduces resistance for when the finicky walleye picks up the bait. After 18 inches of 4-6 pound monofilament line (super lines tend to sink too fast), I will use a number 10 hook with a bead in front or a number 10 Mack's Lure Glo Hook. The Glo Hook will help it float a bit and the glow will help fish locate the bait. Bait the hook with a minnow slightly larger than you would use for panfish. I cast the Lindy rig out over the gravel and let it settle for a while. Then slowly drag it by lifting the rod tip for about a foot, let it pause for a minute, reel in the slack, and then repeat the process again. What is nice about the Lindy rig, when the walleye starts to nibble it, you can open the bail and let the fish take the line without it feeling unnatural. Like I said, they can be real finicky. Another way for these light biting walleyes is to use a small hook or Glo Hook under a small bobber. Cast it upstream, let it float through the spot, and then repeat again.

## PRO GUIDE PROFILE WILLIE ROSS WALLEYE WILLIE'S GUIDE SERVICE



Willie Ross, AKA – “Walleye Willie”, hangs his guide hat in The Dalles, Oregon and guides clients for fish on the Columbia River between Hood River and Umatilla. His specialty, as you may imagine, is getting big marble eyes in the boat. However, he is also proficient at getting salmon, steelhead and smallmouth bass on the hook for his customers. Willie has been a professional guide for over four years now and is assisted by his wife of 30 years, Sheila.

Willie really likes to hunt for big walleye in the Columbia River and has boated 17 and 18 pound fish in the last couple of years. In fact, many believe the next world record walleye will be caught out of this section of the Columbia River that borders the states of Oregon and Washington.

Willie’s “go to” locations for trophy walleye are near the little towns of Irrigon and Boardman. If he’s in the mood for quantity over quality however, you’ll often find him trolling for fish below the John Day

Dam. Another place he likes to fish on the Columbia is near Arlington, Oregon. It doesn’t receive as much pressure as other sections of the river, but Willie says there are some real quality walleye to be found there.

Willie Ross is a big fan of Mack’s Lure products. He’ll tie on Rock Dancer jigs for steelhead and has trolled Double Whammy lures for years to catch walleye. His favorite offering from Mack’s though is the Smile Blade. He really likes to use them in the winter where he’s found a slow presentation is key to drawing strikes. With that in mind, he’ll troll both upriver and downstream at speeds as slow as .5 to 1 MPH. Willie has found the Smile Blade will spin at these speeds while metal blades hang lifeless in the water. Ross will also tweak the spinning speed of the Smile Blade with simple manipulations of the mylar blade. His favorite color scheme for Smile Blades is silver and green, but he will experiment with other colors as the seasons change. Willie will usually fish a live night crawler on a hook behind the Smile Blade but sometimes finds a plastic worm or lizard will work just as well if not better.

You can go fishing for walleye at any time of the year on the Columbia, though prime time for the big ones is from February into April. If you are after bass, you’ll want to book a trip between April and October. Steelhead and salmon trips can be booked between August and December. To find out more, call Willie Ross at 541-993-7335 or log onto his web site at [www.walliewillie.com](http://www.walliewillie.com).

## Cookin’ Your Catch

### Baked Bleu Cheese Halibut Recipe

#### Ingredients

- 1/4 lb. blue cheese crumbles
- 1/2 qt. buttermilk
- 1 1/2 cups mayonnaise
- 1 cup water
- 1/2 tsp black pepper
- 1 tsp garlic, crushed
- 1/2 tsp white pepper
- 2 lbs. halibut, cut into 5 oz. pieces
- 1 red onion, sliced
- blue cheese crumbles

Mix all dressing ingredients, add water to thin if needed. Chill. ( or use prepared blue cheese dressing of your choice ) Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.

In a large baking dish layer a thin amount of the blue cheese dressing. Lay halibut on top and add another layer of dressing on top. Cover with sliced red onion and blue cheese crumbles.

## Take a Kid Fishing!



**You will be glad you did!**

## **"It Pays To Listen & Learn"**

**By Hall-of-Fame Angler  
Stan Fagerstrom  
Part 4 of 5**

In the past three columns I've detailed what Gary and Bobby Loomis, as well as some of the region's top guides have to say about steelhead fishing. I'd like to share a few other thoughts in that regard.

Lots of readers recognize that G. Loomis Rods are among the finest rods that can be purchased in this country. Anybody who has fished long enough to know salmon eggs from Shinola knows that. What I find many do not know is that Gary, the founder of the rod company that bears his name, is also one of the top steelhead anglers ever to walk the banks of a river.



*Gary Loomis didn't have his own rod building company when I shot this picture of him years ago. Even then he was one of the best when it came to putting steelhead on the bank or in the boat.*

That's why I started this series on steelhead fishing talking about Gary and his nephew, Bobby. I was aware of the reputation Gary had established as a steelheading expert before he even started his rod company.

I've always felt that the skill Gary had developed as a steelhead angler was a great help when he set out to build rods. He didn't have to take someone else's word for what goes into a good steelhead rod. He had "been there and done that."

The wealth of experience Bobby Loomis brings along in his new role as director of sales & marketing at Mack's Lure he came by while working closely with his uncle in producing rods. Bobby has been up to his belly button in river fishing since he picked up his first rod decades ago.

So what do experts like the two guys named Loomis have to say about steelhead fishing that I've not already mentioned? One thing is to obtain all the knowledge you can before ever heading for the river. "Don't wait until you get to the river to start getting a handle on what to expect," they say. "There are a number of things you can find out before you ever get near the water."

What are some of those things? They include just talking to other anglers, visiting local fishing clubs or checking with sporting goods stores. You can almost always find out which river is producing most of the fish at a given time. The outdoor column of the local newspaper or a radio program devoted to fishing provides other good sources for up-to-the minute information.

When I started steelhead fishing the Internet didn't exist. There were no columns like the one you're reading right now. Today there are a number of Internet sites that provide information with regard to river conditions and who's catching what where.

I didn't have my own drift boat when I lived in the Pacific Northwest, but I never had a problem fig-

uring out where most fish were being caught on the rivers I fished. You won't either, even if you just arrived in the Pacific Northwest the day before yesterday. Just take a drive along those rivers in which you have interest. Observe where the cars are parked. It's a cinch most of the cars will be parked where fishing is best. If the fishing is poor, there won't be many cars period.

Once you've identified a good stretch of water, how should you fish it? I've never forgotten what Gary Loomis told me in this regard. He favored the tail out of a hole when fishing winter steelhead. He figures the fish will be less spooky if the water is discolored. "I like to have a stream flow of about three miles an hour," he says. "That's about the speed you can walk at a fairly fast pace."

Something else you should keep in mind is which of the rivers in the area you plan to fish come back into shape or even stay in shape when everything else is unfishable. The same sources mentioned earlier can provide that kind of information.

On some of the popular steelhead rivers of Southwest Washington---the Cowlitz and the North Fork of the Lewis are examples---have upstream dams that catch excess runoff and often keep lower stretches of the river clearer than other area waters. Some smaller streams, like the productive Elochoman in Wahkiakum County, may go out of shape quickly but they also come back in much faster than the larger rivers.

A question newcomers to steelhead fishing often ask is in what depth water are you most likely to find fish. Gary and Bobby Loomis prefer water of from 4 to 10-feet. They pay more attention to water clarity than its depth. The clarity of the wa-

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ter---or the lack of it---plays a major role in determining what lure or bait they offer to the fish.

No matter how well you study a river or how much you know about it, the proper presentation of your bait or lure is still the answer to catching fish consistently. Many newcomers to steelheading use line that's too heavy. Many of the experts I know use 6 or 8- pound test. They say they'd rather hook three times as many fish and lose some of them than hook just one they knew they were going to catch.

I don't totally agree with that, but it's hard to argue with success. I recall writing a newspaper column one time about a two-day trip Gary Loomis and a couple of friends made to the Cowlitz River. The trio hooked 30 fish one day and 24 the next. Hooking that many fish in two days is more steelhead than many anglers will get hold of in the next five years.

In these past four columns I've

shared what some of the best steelhead anglers I've ever met have to say about learning the keys to successful steelhead angling. Any way you slice it, there's no substitute for experience where steelheading is concerned. That's why it's always advisable to hire an experienced guide for the first trip or two you make on a steelhead river with which you're not familiar.

There's just one other aspect of steelheading I want to get into before I wind up this series. It's how to use some of the newer lures. I'm talking about lures that weren't available when I was forever searching for those wonderful sea-going rainbows myself.

You'll find some of them listed right here at this web site. Just click on the heading for the Mack's Lure "Online Store." In my next and final column in this series I'll tell you how steelhead experts are already using some of these products to put fish on the bank or in the boat.

**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:** Does Mack's Lure sell a dodger and if not do they ever plan to offer one?

**A:** I've always been partial to using flashers and our Flash Lite has features that make it second to none. However I had always said if someone ever offered us a dodger design that was truly innovative I'd be interested. Well someone did and it fishes great. We plan to have it available for you this summer.

The Mack Attack is a free service provided to anyone who is interested by Mack's Lure, Inc. We need your input! If you know of anyone who would like to be on the mailing list to receive the Mack Attack, please forward their e-mail address to al@mackslure.com.

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

**Photo of the Month**



*This 14 lb. walleye was recently caught at bouy 34, Tri Cities. in 25 to 30 feet water with a Mack's Lure Wally Pop®.*



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