

Late Season Ice Fishing

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As the days get longer and the sun gets warmer, the ice fishing season is getting shorter with each day that passes. As we think back on the great season that we had, our thoughts are switching to the open water season. Don't get too excited yet as the best Ice Fishing is still ahead.

The days of very cold weather while on the ice are getting less and less as the day's pass. More days on the ice at this time of year, get more enjoyable as the temps are getting warmer. The days of those heavy parkas and many layers of clothing are fading away and there may be days that you will be on the ice in sweatshirts and t-shirts.

The late ice season puts the fish into more of a feeding mode as the light penetration is getting better, the shallow water areas are starting to warm a little more. Fish in general are fat with their spawn eggs and are getting into a feeding craze in preparation for the upcoming spawn. The activity under the ice is coming from new forms of life emerging and starting to appear and this is drawing the fish closer to shore.



This is the time of year that ice fishing in general gets to be more fun. The fish are coming out of their deep water doldrums; the weather is getting nicer allowing an angler to have more fun on the ice. This time of year is a great opportunity to get those KIDS out there and give their hand a try at ice fishing if the winter weather has been to cold and miserable for them.



Whenever going out onto the ice and particularly in the spring, it is a good idea to start checking the conditions of the ice. With the warming temps the shorelines are getting warmer and this is thawing the ice fairly quickly. Areas that have runoff coming in or feeder creeks may be dangerous at this time of year and should be avoided.

With the warming sun overhead, the bite should be very good and if you are not experiencing this within 5-10 minute, it is time to move. Spring is not the time to sit and wait for the fish to come to you but you need to be mobile and since it isn't frigidly cold

out, moving will be very simple. Move a little distance at a time and this can make all the difference in the world.

Also, change up on your bait selection as the minnow fry are changing sizes as they grow. Experimentation is a big part of making or breaking a good fishing day and by trying different things until you find what the fish wants, this could be the best days of fishing that you are going to experience all season.

This time of year you may be surprised as to what depth the active fish are being caught at. You may be in 10 feet of water but catching fish 2 feet under the ice is a common thing in the spring. This may also be a great time to have your KIDS looking down the hole as you fish as chances are they are going to be able to see the fish swimming around your bait and this can be exciting for them to watch.



As fishing in the spring is a lot of fun, there are a few dangers that are lurking out there on the ice as well. Number one concern is that the ice on the lake is never safe and precautions need to be taken at all times. We already talked about the shoreline ice eroding; a couple of other dangers are old unfrozen holes and areas that permanent ice houses have been moved off of.

Old holes in the spring are major hazards and if you are not cautious where you walk, can be harmful to you as well. With the warming of spring the old holes do not freeze over much anymore and actually grow in size. A 10 inch hole can grow to 12-24 inches in size in this warming trend. By stepping into these holes, your leg can be badly hurt or even broken on occasions. Always watch your KIDS out there as a KID can fall completely into one of these holes and go under the ice.

One other thing to watch out for is the placement of permanent ice houses. As anglers pull their houses off of the ice, these spots are creating hazards as well. What happens is that the sun heats up the house and actually melts the ice underneath it creating an area that may only have a few inches of ice in that spot. I have stopped my truck near spots like this and find out that there was a house nearby and was only 4 inches of ice in that spot. Where my truck was parked there was 14 inches or more but gets a little to close for comfort.

Spring is the time to have your KIDS out there fishing with you but remember that it maybe very messy on the ice. Always be prepared with extra clothing for them as they will probably be getting wet at some point and once they are wet, they will want to leave and make for a short day on the ice if you are not prepared. Let them be the one's that decide what they want to do out there on the ice as this will make it more enjoyable for all of you.



With spring coming and thoughts of open water fishing starting to consume your thoughts, don't miss out on a time of the ice season that is the best time of the year. Between catching some of the biggest fish of the winter, getting a suntan on the ice and enjoying quality time with friends and family fishing, don't put that auger away just yet as this is the best of the best when it comes to late season ice fishing.