

## OUTDOORSUPDATE

## OF THE OUTDOORS

## Shore Fishing: Where It Begins

BY GARY HOWEY

Hartington, Neb.

Most fishermen, as I did, started out fishing from shore and over the years we've spent hours setting along the bank waiting for a bite. During that time, we've learned a lot of things making us better fishermen, long after we've abandoned the shoreline and started fishing out of a boat.

This column will be aimed at those of us who still enjoy fish from shore; much of which will be aimed at the river fishermen, with a lot of it being applicable to shore fishermen and women no matter what body of water they're fishing.

When fishing a river, lake or pond we need a plan to decide where we're going to fish and what will make an area more productive than others?

## Current Breaks

On the river, a good place to start is an area where there's little current, a spot where the fish can rest, not needing to use any excess energy fighting the current in the river or a place to lie in ambush on a lake or ponds. Slow current areas or slack water pockets on the river fit these criteria's. Look for areas lying below points, behind rock piles, wing dams or timber that's fallen in the water, as these areas will all hold fish. The reason for this is simple as that's where their food source, the baitfish, crawfish and fingerlings will be hiding. These breaks allow the fish to move in out of the current to feed.

We'll need to place our baits fish as close as possible to the area where the fast water comes up against the slack water as this is where the more aggressive fish will be located, waiting in ambush for a meal to swim by.

## Bottom/Structure Changes

Another area that holds fish is one where the bottom contour changes from one type of structure to another. Things like rocks to sand. Sand to mud or snags etc, as they attract the things bigger prey fish feed on. These changes and the critters that call these areas home will draw the walleye, northern, catfish and bass into these areas.

Now that we've got an idea as to where the fish will be located, lets get into the "how" to catch them.

## Heavy Tackle, Light Tackle

I like many anglers, when we first started fishing from shore; we were using much too heavy of equipment. It's sort of a catch 22, if you use too heavy of tackle, you probably aren't going to loose as much gear, but those anglers using the lighter gear, (line and tackle), may loose a little more tackle, but they'll definitely catch more fish.

When using light tackle, your bait has the ability to move around, appearing to be more natural as they aren't pegged down to the bottom by a heavy weight or line. Lighter line gets you into the fish catching zone quickly because of its smaller diameter, it has less resistance, getting to the bottom much quicker than the heavy line.

## Live Bait Rigs

This time of the year, I like to use a live bait rig when shore fishing. Let's face it, no matter what the season, there's no more effective rig than a live bait rig as it's impossible to beat the real thing.

One of my favorite live bait rigs that I use when fishing from shore is a slightly modified crappie rig works just fine. The biggest problem shore fishermen have are those darn snags. They'll eat you alive, if you let them; this is why I prefer to fish with a modified crappie rig. Most often, the piece of your equipment that will usually snag up is the weight. When the weight snags up you'll loose the whole rig, the whole caboodle, the hook, line and sinker.

To avoid this, I'll modify the rig by connecting a fairly heavy rubber band to the snap at the bottom of the rig and then attach the sinker to the rubber band. With this modified rig, when the sinker gets snagged, I can generally pull back hard on the line,



PHOTO: OUTDOORSMEN PRODUCTIONS

Braeden Howey of Pierce, Neb., like most anglers, learned to fish from shore. Many of the things we now know about fishing, we learned while fishing from shore.

stretching the rubber band and when it snaps back, it will generally flip the sinker loose. If the sinker doesn't pop loose, the only thing you'll need to replace is the weight and replacing a weight is not only much cheaper than replacing the whole rig, it's done quickly compared to tying on a whole new rig.

When it comes to how much weight to use when fishing from shore, there are a couple of reasons why you don't need heavy weight; one is that the racket created by a heavy weight splashing down in the water will scatter the fish. Fish have lateral lines that detect vibrations and the noise from a heavy weight hitting the water will spook any fish within 100 yards. Another is that you won't need a heavy weight if you're fishing in those areas I mentioned with less current, all the weight needed will be enough to get your bait in the area holding the fish. If you're using too heavy of a weight, it may peg your bait to the bottom, not allow it to move or give off the vibration the prey fish zero in on.

By using a lighter weight, you'll be spooking less fish and your fish catching will improve.

## Live Bait

As far as the live bait I like to use this time of the year, when ever possible, I like to use Shiners or Creek Chubs, as the flash given off by these baitfish and their scent helps to attract prey fish. With these baits, you'll probably need to change bait more frequently, as these are delicate baitfish and won't last long on the hook.

The black Fathead minnows available in a lot of bait shops are tough and stay alive a long time on the hook, but won't give off the flash or the scent the baits above do. If Shiners or Creek Chubs aren't available, I've used a partial minnow, a head or body allowing my bait to leave a scent trail for the fish to follow, I've also had good luck using a whole Fathead, giving my bait some movement along with a piece of another minnow which gives off the scent. Another thing that's worked for me is to hook the minnow backwards, or tail first. This cause the minnow to move around more giving the prey fish the opportunity to zero in on its vibration.

As I mentioned earlier, fish, are just like people when it comes to conserving or using the least amount of energy needed to get the job done. Very seldom will you find them fighting heavy current unless they're traveling from one area to another and if they are out in heavy current, they'll be tucked in

behind something that breaks the current for them such as rock piles, snags or sand bars.

## Artificial Baits

## Crankbaits

This time of the year is an excellent time to use floating crankbaits while fishing from shore. I'll cast them up stream and then crank like a wild man to get them to dive and run about the same speed or faster than the current. They'll also work well when cast down stream and retrieved using the crank and pause method. With each pause, your bait floats up resembling a wounded or injured baitfish and when you resume cranking the bait it will appear as if the fish is trying to escape, triggering a strike. It's not a bad idea to use a shallow running crank bait like the standard Rapala or a shallow diving Shad Rap when ever possible as deeper divers may bury themselves into the rocks, weeds and other junk right on the bottom. One advantage to using a floating crankbait is that they are easier to get loose when snagged by releasing line, allowing it to be carried up out of the snag by the current.

Another thing that I'll do on my crankbaits to cut down on the cost of lost tackle is to clip off the trailing part of the treble hook, which would be the one hanging off the bottom. If you're crankbait is going to snag along the bottom, this is the hook that will hang up most of the time. By snipping off the one hook, you will still be able to hook the fish and may loose a few less crankbaits.

No matter what type of bait or rig you're using, make sure that your hooks are sharp. More fish are lost because of dull hooks than any other reason. A hook may look sharp, but unless it digs into your fingernail when you drag it across it, it's not sharp enough to catch a fish. To touch up a dull hook, I carry a small diamond hook sharpener with me and a small file will also work well.

Shore fishermen have the advantage when it comes to fishing for those fish that hug the bank to get out of the current and by using live bait and a few simple tricks; you'll catch more fish.

Gary Howey, Hartington, Neb., is the President of Outdoorsmen Productions LLC and the producer/host of the Outdoorsmen Adventures television series, which airs throughout the upper Midwest on Fox Affiliates For more information on the outdoors or to contact him go to his web page at [www.outdoorsmenadventures.com](http://www.outdoorsmenadventures.com).

## Commentary: How To Swat Turkeys, Not Bugs

BY BABE WINKELMAN

Have you ever had a gobbler approach in stealth mode? Without making a gobble or even the sound of a footstep?

I have, many times. But the one bird that stands out in my memory the most was an Eastern that was easily the biggest turkey I've ever seen in my life. I can't even guess how heavy he was, and his beard was as thick as my wrist and practically dragged on the ground.

He came in just outside of my peripheral vision. And like I said, he didn't make a sound. Ten more steps and he would have popped out right in front of me. But he didn't, because of a mosquito.

A mosquito you ask? How can a winged creature that small have any kind of effect on a winged creature the size of a mature Tom?

I'll tell you how: the voracious little blood-sucking bandit had rudely attached himself to my neck, just as the unseen turkey was approaching. I could feel its little syringe going in, and I tried not to flinch because it's always so important to sit like a statue when turkey hunting. But the discomfort of that tiny torture machine was too much for me to take, so SWHAP! I got him with my right hand. I also unwittingly spooked King Kong Tom with my movement. I have never hated a mosquito more than that one, and I never saw that bird again.

Well, there are lessons learned on every hunt and that day I learned (the hard way) to always be prepared with the right gear — insect repellent included. This is especially true when hunting in areas that have ticks carrying Lyme Disease, which is a terrible disease that can have dire consequences if undetected or untreated.

So now there's always a can of repellent in my turkey pack, whether I'm hunting in the spring or fall. And because I hunt turkeys so often with the people I love most in the world, my wife and daughters, I always make sure they're protected with an effective

repellent too.

Now, let's talk about swatting TURKEYS. I want to give you two sure-fire tips that will help you bring home more poultry, whether you're hunting with a shotgun or a bow.

For shotgun hunting, it is 100 percent critical to pattern your turkey gun before you go hunting — with the choke you're going to use in the field. Some hunters like to use anatomical turkey targets when patterning. And they're great for the job. But a sheet of cardboard with a snuff-can-sized circle drawn on it will do just as well. Because all you're trying to determine is whether the payload is landing where you aim it; and that a lethal dose of BBs are hitting inside the strike zone at your gun's effective range for turkeys. Knowing your gun's patterning performance ensures two things.

First, that you'll make humane, lights-out shots. We owe this to the vital organs reside in a turkey. That might sound silly, but it's not where people instinctively assume they're located.

For bowhunting, know where the vital organs reside in a turkey. That might sound silly, but it's not where people instinctively assume they're located.

Rookie turkey bowhunters regularly shoot too high and too far forward on turkeys — into the meat of the chest. And you will not kill a gobble with that shot. The vitals in a turkey are quite low and located about where the drumstick muscles meet the body.

Here's what you do to get a study in turkey anatomy. Go to the grocery store, buy a turkey and study how it's built and where the organ cavity is located. Engrain it in your memory, so when the moment of truth comes and you're putting that pin on your bird, you put it where it belongs. After your anatomy lesson, eat the bird. It's a win-win.

I hope these little lessons pay dividends for you this season, and I hope you swat a giant gobble. Who knows, maybe you'll get the one that mosquito cost me.

## TROPHY SPOTLIGHT



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Trent Van Essen caught this 3-pound, 5-ounce smallmouth bass at Lewis & Clark Lake on April 18.

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