

Easy Ways to Catch More Fish

A wise old man I used to fish for Musky with when I was younger told me one day, “10% of the fishermen catch 90% of fish”. Whether that’s accurate or not I can’t say, but the more I have thought about that over the years, the more I think he really was onto something with that statement. Fishing can be a complex affair and some species are easier to consistently catch compared to others, but at some point no matter the species, fish just do not want to cooperate. In this article we will discuss some great tactics to improve your time on the water, despite the species.



Do your Homework

This is one of the most paramount parts of being successful on the water, you have to do your due diligence on the species you wish to pursue and really study up on that particular

species, habitat, habits, forage base, locations at different times of the year, and more. Knowing the fish in and out is extremely important, do your research online, read about it in fishing magazines. There are an absolute ton of resources at our disposal today, and the average person has more information in their pocket thanks to smartphones than any human being in history. While you can study and research your preferred fish species at will, there really is no substitute for experience on the water. I have always told my Guide Clients, "Fish don't read magazines" and this has always been my way to show my clients in the boat that you need to adapt and think outside the box from standard tactics and presentations on a regular basis.



Learn the waters

You won't catch fish if you don't know where they frequently spend their time, this changes with weather patterns and seasons. GPS units have really changed the game if you're on

larger bodies of water, giving the angler the ability to set waypoints on structure such as drop offs, points, humps, brush piles, rock piles etc. along with the GPS modern sonar including side imaging has changed the game, giving anglers a precise picture of what's below the surface, and even allowing the angler to distinguish between vegetation types, like milfoil or cabbage. My rule for any angler fishing a new body of water, is to spend a good portion of your trip without a rod in your hands, I frequently fish new lakes and depending on the size, spend multiple hours zig zagging over breaklines, mapping and exploring, and looking for baitfish. This process helps me eliminate dead water, and allows me to focus on the best looking structure and areas I want to spend my efforts on.

Find the Bait Find the Fish

This tip is predominantly for predatory species but certainly applies to prey fish like bluegills and crappies as well. This goes back to the rule of "you won't catch fish if you're not putting your bait by fish". Baitfish congregate in different areas throughout the day, and season depending on weather conditions. If you find big schools of bait fish one day, chances are they are gone the next, so finding the food on every trip should be a major consideration. The general rule of thumb is if you find bait, the big fish aren't far away. For panfish species and the like, this is also true, bug hatches for instance are an indicator of potential feeding activity Here in northern Wisconsin it's well known that during the mayfly hatches in spring fishing can become very tough due to the overwhelming amount of available food for fish like panfish and trout. You can also see bug activity on your sonar, in the evening larvae and bugs from the bottom of the lake will rise in the water columns in certain areas. This can also make fishing a feast or famine affair.



Don't Leave Fish to Find Fish

This saying in the Musky fishing world is like holy scripture, but it applies in many cases to all fish species. If you're on a spot that is normally successful, and are catching or seeing fish but not catching them, it's usually only a matter of time. Fish feeding moods can change quickly, so if you know the fish are there, don't leave to try different spots, or if you do, make sure your back on that spot at peak feeding times or if any type of weather changes occur. I know this might sound like common sense, but I see people do this on a very regular basis. In one instance on the water, I fished a 300 yard stretch of a lake for 6 hours straight, casting up and down nonstop and never left to fish another spot. I contacted 9 muskies but couldn't get any of them to commit until moonrise when I finally hooked into a 48 inch fish. Persistence pays off.

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