

## “PERCH IN LAKE MICHIGAN”



A nice limit of Lake Michigan Perch

### GENERAL

---Be forewarned: perch are **delicious and addicting!** **Children enjoy perch fishing** also, as there is usually some action and you are **moving around a lot.**

---Learn about Buck Perry, his life, and discoveries about fish and their behavior. **Know your quarry!**

---With larger gamefish, trolling Spoonplugs is best to check first. With perch, **slower speeds (jump lures and live bait) usually work better.**

---**Lake Michigan** is just a big natural lake with **structure, breaks, and breaklines**, and **perch react like any other fish** species to their environment. Use Spoonplugging knowledge to catch them.

---To target **bigger perch**, use **speed and larger lures**. Then find the best structures to fish (interpretation).

---**Review** the 8 areas of knowledge essential to successful fishing: Basic movements, Features, Weather and Water, Lake Types, Interpretation, Controls and Tools, Presentation, and Mental Attitude.

---**Safety first**, especially on Lake Michigan! Watch the weather and be cautious going out.

---No one is an expert---there is **always more to learn.**

### STRUCTURE SPECIFICS

---**Structure** is present in Lake Michigan, but it is **larger and more gradual**. A **graph sounder** seems to work **best.**

---**Bars, reefs, humps, breaklines and sharper breaks** can be found by those who look closely. Also, **temperature breaklines, water color breaklines, and current breaklines** can hold fish.

---Look for **surface oil slicks, fish on the sounder, presence of birds, and groups of perch boats**, all indicating fish are in the area. **Check them all out.**

---**deeper inside turns near shore** often seem to hold perch.

---Always look for other perch boats and check them out first. If they are not catching fish, you will have to search for your own fish. **Save your spots on GPS.**

## BEHAVIOR SPECIFICS

---Sometimes fish are seen on the sounder, **but cannot be caught**. You may have to **wait until they become active** or leave and come back later. If you know good perch are there, wait them out, as **activity times come and go**.

---If **action stops, check shallower and deeper breaklines**. They likely didn't stop biting, they **just moved along or to a different breakline**.

---Large **tall schools of baitfish** may be mixed species and not moving much. Look for **perch** related to them **underneath or slightly deeper on the breakline**. Check around all schools of baitfish. **Perch are their predators!**

---Perch are found mostly **in 40 to 75 or more feet of water**, but **stable weather** at times could bring them **as shallow as 10-14 feet**.

## PRESENTATION SPECIFICS

---**Blade baits are excellent tools** to get reflex strikes from perch when they are active. I use a **½ ounce in less than 35 feet, and a ¾ ounce if deeper**. **#4 treble hooks** are a good size for bigger fish. Keep them sharp and add a **small square of white cloth** on each treble to give perch a **target to strike at**. Make sure the lure **settles on a tight line** so you can **feel the fish hit**. I have caught many good sized perch with the entire treble hook in their mouth.

---I like to use a **baitcasting reel, stiff rod, and braided line** for best control and feel when casting for perch. Lure weight and stiff rod **allow for quick fish removal and return of the lure back to the bottom**.

---**Vertical jigging** is done when the sounder indicates **perch are under the boat**. Lure **vibration and puffs of silt** call **attention to the lure**, advantages live bait does not have. **Long and short jumps** should be tried to check **different speeds**.

---Perch **schools usually are moving** and won't stay long in a spot. **Casting out along the breakline** allows one to **stay in contact with the fish much longer** than when just fishing vertically.

---If you get **no hits on a jump lure** at a spot, **cut or live bait should be tried on a perch rig to check the slowest speed**. **Minnnows** are the most **popular** live bait, but **perch belly or perch eyes can be used as cut bait**. A good supply can be **preserved when cleaning perch** by sprinkling **salt on the pieces and freezing in a plastic bag**.

---**Can't locate any perch?** Put out **2 rods and troll the breaklines for salmon**, looking for perch on the sounder. Anytime you **see perch, throw a marker, pull in lines, and go back to anchor and cast** the spot. Do this even if just a few fish are seen, as sometimes they are scattered or moving along quickly. **Heavier jump lures allow you to fancast a large area quickly**.

---**5 to 15 minutes in one anchored spot** with no results is usually **long enough**. **Keep moving and looking**.

---Most perch fishing is done from an anchored boat, but **one can also drift or use a sea anchor**. **Dragging the anchor with the motor** for short distances also allows one to **cover more territory**. With the depths being fished, from **100 to 200 feet of anchor rope will be needed**.

---On **structure** that is **more discernible** like reefs, humps, rocks or sharper breaklines, and with stable weather conditions, **traditional Spoonplugging presentation can work well**. **Trolling the #500 to #250 Spoonplugs on wire** will strain the water down to about 25 feet. **In deeper water**, the #100, #700, and #800 **Spoonplugs on wire can be used with 3-way rigs to take smaller lures down to over 50 feet**. **JB-1 and JB-2 lures** can be used in the same manner to go even deeper. I have **caught Perch** occasionally **on Spoonplugs as large as a #700**, but the smaller lures hook more fish.

---The above information is not limited to Lake Michigan, and **could be applied to any large glacial lake**.

For more information on Spoonplugging, study Buck Perrys' book "Spoonplugging, Your Guide to Lunker Catches".

Online resources include: buckperry.com, nsoa.info, and spoonplugger.net. Google: JB1, JB2 lures