

LAKE MACATAWA FISHING REPORT

“BIG WALLEYE, LATE FALL”



November Lake Macatawa Walleye, 10.5 pounds

I fished Lake “Mac” recently (November 20, 2005) because the weather was reasonable and I wanted to **check it out before the season ended**. The air temperature was about **40 degrees**, winds were **light**, and it was **cloudy**. The water temperature was **41 degrees**, only a couple of degrees above when it starts to freeze on top. Apparently **no one else thought it “reasonable”** since there were no boat trailers at the DNR ramp and I saw **no other boats fishing on the lake**. A tugboat and a duck hunting boat were the only other boats seen on the lake all day. The channel and basin areas were fished first, walking Spoonplugs with wire on deep breaklines and running a highline crankbait for suspended fish. **No fish were seen suspended** on the depth sounder **but a few** isolated groups of fish were seen **near bottom in 18 to 30 foot depths** on structure. **These deep structure areas were trolled, cast, and vertical jigged with no results** except one 8 inch goby. A few other known contact points in the main section of the lake were cast with similar results. **These deep fish were simply dormant!**

Because the water was cold and no fish were seen in the shallows, **it was assumed** (Buck Perry: “Never assume anything!”) **that trolling the shallows would not be productive, especially with a Spoonplug (minimum speed 1 ½ mph)**. At about **12:30PM**, I finally decided to try some **straggler fishing to locate action**. A **#250 Spoonplug (6-9 feet)** was used to **troll the 8-9 foot breakline** on the **large bar** just West of Big Bay. Buck Perry writes about **a walking lure being even more important in cold season** than warm season, so a **slow, steady walk was emphasized**. **Within 5 minutes a heavy fish was on**. Still not too excited because of the large numbers of catfish, carp, and drum in this lake, a **marker was thrown and the fish was brought in slowly**.

When the fish **turned out to be a 6 pound, 24 inch walleye**, the excitement level grew! Casting the area and doing more trolling at this depth did not produce more fish, so it was **decided to drop down to the next breakline at about 12 feet**, A # 200 Spoonplug (9-12 feet) was **used to walk bottom at around 12 feet on the same structure**. **Shortly, another fish even larger was on** near where the first one was hooked. This turned out to be **a 10 ½ pound 28 inch walleye!** Further casting and trolling this and another similar structure did not produce more fish, so the fish movement was likely over. Because **some feel that walleye are mostly caught on suspended lures, a shallower crankbait (Hotentot) was run simultaneously** with the walking Spoonplug, but did **not result in any hits**. This may indicate that **at this time the fish were not active enough to hit a free swimming lure**. My real **mistake** on this trip was that **I did not check the shallower water (2-8 feet) both casting and trolling**. **By starting shallow and following procedures one always does a more thorough job of fishing, no matter what the season.**

Chase Klinesteker