

LURE CONTROLS, MAKING FISH STRIKE

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Roger Bouwkamp with a nice Grand River Walleye

CATLIKE

Gamefish are like cats. They are predators that will pounce on prey. Even catfish, carp, and suckers will pounce on prey such as smaller fish, crayfish, and insects before they can get away. Factors needed for predators to strike are that the prey is close enough to be seen and is moving at a speed that triggers the predatory instinct. Often with cats, a slowly moving object is just closely watched, but if speeded up, the cat will pounce on it. It is instinctive behavior built into cats which often can be repeated over and over.

LURE CONTROLS

Artificial lures are what most fishermen use to get fish to strike. Even when live bait is added (e.g. jig and minnow), it is the movement of the jig that triggers a reflex strike. There are 5 basic lure controls a fisherman can use to trigger strikes: **Depth, Speed, Color, Size, and Action**. Buck Perry, the “Father of Structure Fishing”, determined that the 2 most important controls are Depth (where) and Speed (how fast). Only when a lure has

the proper depth and speed could color, size, or action be a factor in triggering strikes, since the lure must be near the fish and moving at the proper speed first. Let's examine how we can use these 5 controls.

DEPTH

Fish can be found from deep water up to the shallows, because periodically they may become active and move up. This movement is along structural pathways where the bottom is different from the surrounding area. Weather and water conditions affect these movements to a large extent. Adult fish are more reluctant to move shallow than the younger ones. To locate fish, different depths should be checked on structure.

SPEED

Fish predators are cold-blooded and eat a variety of prey animals. Weather, water, and seasonal conditions affect the fishes' activity level. At times, fish can be caught at zero speed to over 10 mph. Different speeds should be checked to determine what works at that time.

COLOR

Lures come in many colors and patterns, and they all have caught fish. What varies is the background they are presented in. Water color, bottom color, wind, sun angle, and available light all have a bearing on how well the lure can be seen by the fish. Buck Perrys' guideline for color is: under bright conditions and clear water, use bright colors; under dark conditions, use dark colors. If you are unsure, use a neutral brass, gold, or yellow.

SIZE

Most fishermen have caught little fish on big lures and big fish on little lures. When a lure is moving, fish will instinctively strike or the opportunity is lost. Size is most important for visibility and control. Small lures have best visibility and control in the shallows. Large lures can be seen in low light and work best deeper. Size is a function of depth control.

ACTION

Lure action creates noise. A fishes' lateral line detects noise, which can bring a fish close to a lure, even in dark water color. Faster speeds increase noise intensity and frequency, making action a function of speed control.

SUMMARY

Lures can be used as "tools" to control ones' fishing. Because fish move around, and changing weather and water conditions can affect the fishes' activity level, the wise fisherman will check all depths and all speeds on a daily or even hourly basis to make fish strike. In fact, Mr. Perry has stated that "all fishing successes and all fishing failures can be answered in terms of depth and speed control". Something to think about.

Don't forget that the 29th Annual Muskegon Spoonplugging Outing will take place July 10-14, 2019 at Fisherman's Landing. Early reservations for campsites are recommended. Call 231-726-6100.