

The Simplicity Of Fishing
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Once upon a time, in a far, far different world, a young angler walked quietly along the banks of Indian Creek looking for prime fishing areas. He was very familiar with this terrain having walked the creek banks many times. He walked ever so slowly and quietly, looking for fish feeding on the surface. He knew as he approached each creek bend that this would be a potential "honey hole".

Now this young angler did not carry much bait with him, because it was about a mile and one half bike ride to Indian Creek. It was difficult enough to carry his pole and a limited amount of hooks, bobbers and sinkers. To carry much more would have limited his fishing style. He needed to be very conservative with his limited bait supply.

Trees would overhang the creek bed and bugs would occasionally drop down into the water. As the bug struggled to get out of the water, it would attract a nearby smallmouth bass. Soon it became food in a swift swirl of water. This activity would tip off the young angler of feeding fish.

But what if no bugs were dropping? Should the young angler shake the tree? Wouldn't this scare the fish?

The young angler devised another approach. He would take a piece of bark off of a nearby tree and toss it into the water. The small piece of bark would look just like a bug falling into the water. Presto, a fish would come up to the surface and strike the piece of bark.

The young angler would then stop and fish that pool of water. If no fish hit the piece of bark, he would move onto the next pool and toss in another piece of bark. Bark was more plentiful than his limited worm supply.

In today's world, we make fishing much too complicated. We have depth finders, trolling motors, 150 horse power boats with a "kicker" 10 horsepower motor, underwater cameras, and \$300 fishing rods & reels. Yet, do we catch as many fish or have as much fun as that young angler who simply used a piece of bark to locate fish.

As this young angler grew, so did his appetite to catch fish. While doing his stint in the military, he had an occasion to be stationed near a renowned bass lake that had been closed for three years for renovations. It was the talk of the local bait shops, as to when this lake might reopen. Finally he got the word it would be opening the following

Saturday. He along with three other fellow soldiers would get up at 3 AM to be first in line to get a boat and "get out there where the really big ones were".

When they got to the parking lot, they noticed about 200 other anglers already waiting in line at the concession building. Everyone was lined up behind a door at one end of the building. About 5:30 AM someone said they would be renting boats from the other end of the building, and the mad dash was on. Soon 2 lines formed at each end of the building as nobody was sure. The 4 soldiers split up into two groups, two in each line.

At 6 AM, they got two boats and off they went. Now, they caught fish, but not a lot of them, and the fish were rather small. In late afternoon they docked their boat. As they looked along the shoreline, there was a man with a cane pole and a bobber fishing under an overhanging tree near a small drainage ditch. He had 6 of the biggest bass any of the 4 soldiers had ever seen. The overhanging tree and the small drainage ditch brought back memories of Indian Creek and its numerous springs that feed into it. It also brought back the simplicity of fishing.

The big ones are often caught by the simplest of methods.

Today, the young angler is considerably older and he fishes Shabbona Lake, what once was Indian Creek. The Creek was dammed up in 1975 to form the 318 acre Shabbona Lake located in Southern DeKalb County Illinois. It has been said he catches what seems to be more than his share of big fish every year.

Is it because of his new 4 stroke "quiet" engine that doesn't spook the fish? Is it because of his "weedless" Min Kota trolling motor that gets him where the big ones are? Is it because of his Humminbird 3d depth finder that shows him the lake bottom in three dimensions? Is it because of his Aqu Vue underwater camera that shows him fish in their habitat? Is it because of all of the hundreds of fishing articles he has read? Or how about all of those fishing seminars he attended and all of the "fish stories" he was told about far away lakes he will never fish?

The answer is none of the above. It is not that complicated. It is because of the understanding of why a fish would come up and hit a piece of tree bark. Simply, fish where the fish are, fish with a bait that they are looking to eat and spend time learning the sport of fishing.

95% of his Bass, Walleye and Catfish are caught on a nightcrawler, hooked once on the head end with a #2 hook, rigged with a 1/8 ounce bullet weight. (No swivel or other hardware) Simply bottom bounce the nightcrawler along the bottom and hold on when that Bass, Walleye or Catfish engulfs the worm.

100% of his Crappie are caught with a small Crappie minnow hooked through the eyes on a #8 thin wire hook suspended under a bobber with 2 BB split shot.

Try fishing simple. Go to the lake and let your instincts tell you what kind of "bark" (bait or lure) you should try. Remember that guy using the cane pole and outfishing 200 other anglers 6 to 1. Spend time actually fishing, not running from spot to spot, or changing lures every other cast looking for the magic one. Slow down and walk quietly through the steps that you have learned and by all means, "KEEP IT SIMPLE".