

Walleye Secrets At Shabbona Lake

By Denny Sands

Shabbona Lake is used as a Walleye brood stocking lake each Spring. The IDNR Biologists collect huge Walleye in their collection of eggs and sperm for the State Of Illinois Fish Hatcheries. Subsequently, Walleye are stocked all across Illinois that originated in Shabbona Lake. They annually find several Walleye over 10 pounds and it is everyone's prediction that a new State Of Illinois Record Walleye will soon be caught at Shabbona Lake.

In last months article we talked about Bass locations. This month we will concentrate on Summertime Walleye at Shabbona Lake. Just where do these monster Walleye go in the Summer.

Walleye fishing at Shabbona Lake usually improved dramatically after the weed beds form on the Lake. This is counter to what you normally find on traditional lakes. But as everyone knows, Shabbona Lake is anything but traditional ! I caught my biggest Walleye in the middle of Summer on July 5th, 8 pounds 12 ounces, on a slip bobber and a leech. This fish in the pre-spawn would of weighed way over 10 pounds.

Late May, early June, is when the weed beds form at Shabbona Lake. This sets up both a feeding pattern for the Walleye and a fishing pattern for the fisherman. Lets explore some of Walleye weed patterns and give you some options to plan your fishing trip.

Option # 1 is the weed bed and weed point in the No Motor Zone. It sits about halfway back into the No Motor Zone on the West shore line, just after the stump field and just before a major creek turn. Walleye will cruise this weed line and creek turn. The weed edge sits in about 8 - 10 feet of water.

Option # 2 is the feeding flat just off of Pier # 1 at Somonauk Point. There is a six foot drop off on the West side of the flat that goes for about 60 yards. The weeds will grow in about 10 feet of water. The Walleye will travel the drop off edge along the weed line. Use leeches on slip bobbers or nightcrawlers on slip sinkers.

Option # 3 is the submerged Indian Roadbed that enters the North end of Shabbona Lake. This gravel bottom area is adjacent to a large weed bed on the East side and a major drop off on the West side. This spot has all of the traditional Walleye habitat favorites. Use crank baits or suspended live bait on a slip bobber.

Option # 4 is the bridge and rock pile area in the center of the Lake. They both sit in about 22 feet of water and they provide the only deep water hard bottom areas in the Lake. The rock pile is four broken up cement silos. The bridge sits over the creek bed about 10 feet above the creek. Suspended leeches or nightcrawlers on a slip bobber is the local favorite way to fish this area. I netted my fishing partner's 8 pound Walleye caught on the rock pile in late June on a nightcrawler.

Option # 5 is the area know as "Area 17". It is a drop-off starting in about 8 feet of water and ending in about 30 feet of water. It sits just South of the handicap pier shelter. There is a major creek turn at the bottom of the drop. This is an ideal spot with a West wind. Use live bait on a slip sinker and always keep the wind to your back.

Option # 6 is the weed line directly behind "Pokanoka's Restaurant". It is a favorite spot of local fishermen who cruise the weed line along with the Walleye. It is a good spot with a South wind. Use Shad Raps or slip bobbers here.

Option # 7 is the Southeast end of the weed bed that sits in the center of the Lake. The weeds grow to a depth of about 12 feet in this area. A lot of Walleye are taken on Shad Raps and other crank baits in this area.

Option # 8 is the famous "Area 23". This major drop off holds plenty of Walleye along with the Muskie that patrol this area. It sits on the East shoreline. It has standing trees starting in 8 feet of water and continuing down to 34 feet of water. With a Southwest wind the Walleye and Bass really stack up in here.

Option # 9 is the standing trees in 30 - 35 feet of water. There is a thermocline that forms at about 12 feet. The Walleye suspend just above that, down 10 - 12 feet in 35 feet of water. Lightline a leech or nightcrawler directly down a tree stump, and hold on for the ride of your life, trying to get that 30 inch Walleye back up through those tree limbs.

Option # 10 is the ½ mile Dam face on the South end of the Shabbona Lake. Troll the dam face with Shad Raps or Rapalas or just simply anchor up and cast the shoreline horizontally. Early morning and late evening are the best time to try this area. With these 10 top options you should have plenty of spots to try. You will be successful if you spend the time on the water to learn these spots and when and how to fish them. If you have any questions call Shabbona's Lakeside Bait Tackle & Boat Rental at 815-824-2581.