



How to fish the early ice out

Much of America is in the throes of winter, which is a good time for a bass fisherman to start planning to fish the early ice out on his favorite natural lake. When the lake is frozen, it's the most stable the environment is ever going to be - not affected by wind or currents.

The fish are shallow all the time. They are rarely deeper than 12 feet and are only as deep as the deepest grass. They are also near spawning areas (not on them). That eliminates 80% of the water right away - I haven't even launched the boat and I know immediately where to fish. It's a simple time of year. The fish will be ganged up together and when you find them, you'll hammer them.

My lures of choice. In cold water, I like a tight-wobbling lure -- the tighter the wobble, the better. That makes the Shad Rap #6 crank bait my first pick. Next out of the box: The suspending jerk bait (there are hundreds to choose from) and then a jig. Last but not least, go with a rig called the Poor Boy's Crawdaddy, a sparky jighead.

Good Fishing! *Frank*

A man with more than a few favorite natural lakes, Frank Scalish competed in the 2010 Bassmaster Classic and is now fishing the 2011 Bassmaster Central, Northern and Southern Open tours. He's been sponsored by OSI® since 2003.

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