

REEL LIFE

25 COVER STORY

ENHANCING YOUR ICE FISHING EXPERIENCE

Photo by Eric Magnuson

My Favorite Fall
Coho Techniques 08

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Ultimate
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22 Fiberglass Rods

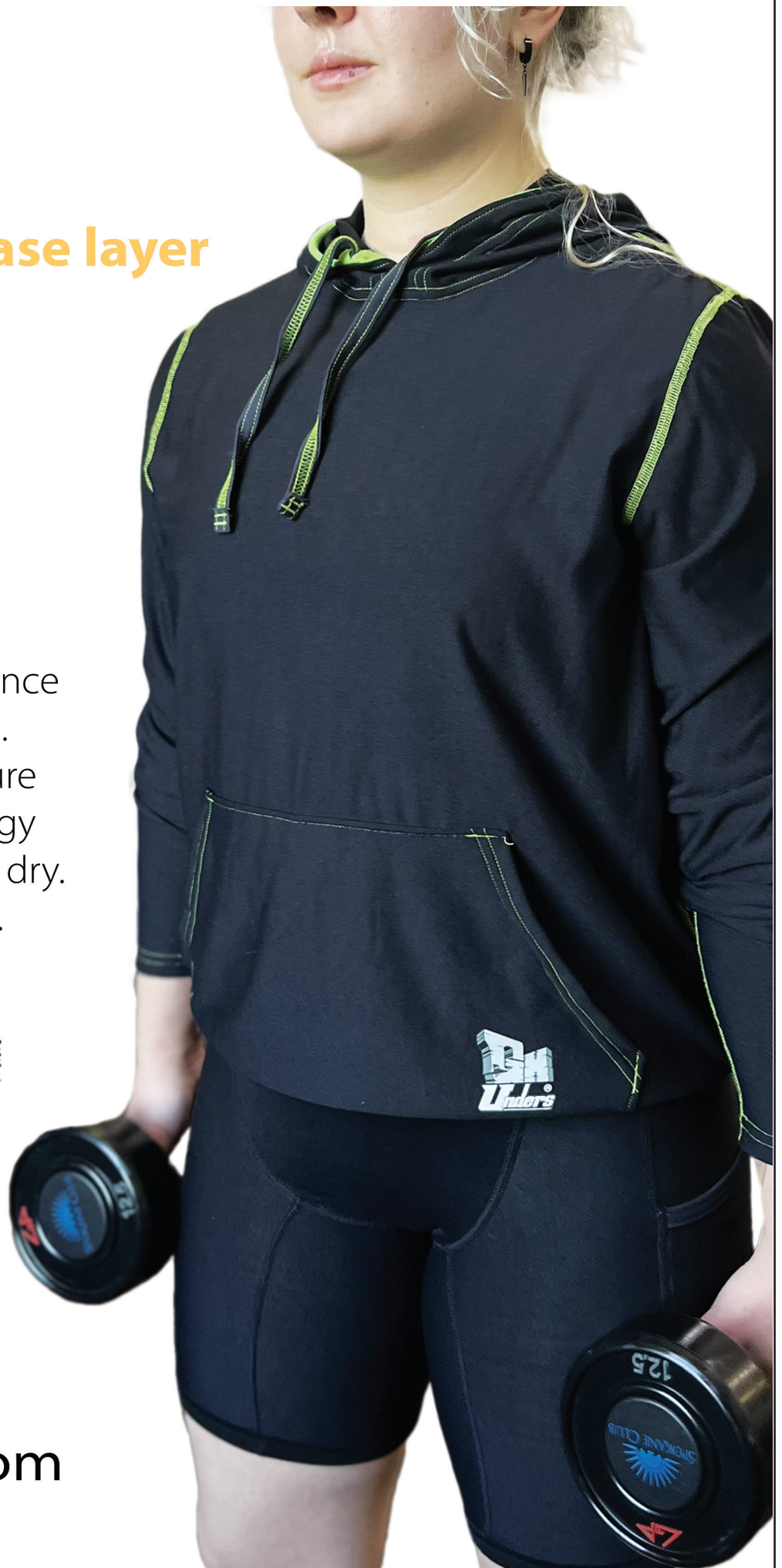
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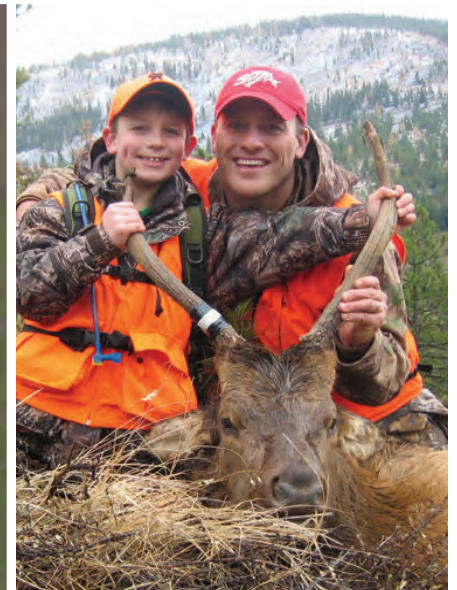


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EDITOR'S CORNER:

It's crazy. One day I'm hunting pheasants with my dog Duke on a beautiful 70-degree fall day, and three days later we've got 5 inches of snow and 15-degree weather. The only thing in life that's certain is uncertainty!

It's time to think about and gear up for hard water fishing, AKA ice fishing. If the cover photo doesn't get your attention we've got a couple of articles that will. Heck, this year I may even give it a try myself.

Our winter print schedule calls for a Nov-Dec and Jan-Feb issue. No worries, you can catch us weekly on broadcast TV and ROOT Sports throughout the winter. Check your local listings for Northwest Fishing TV. We'll see you on the water/ice!

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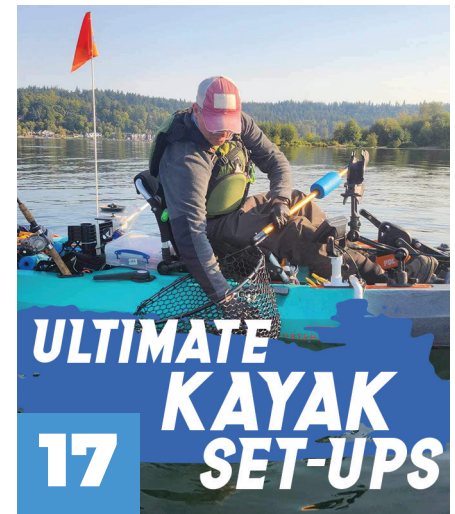
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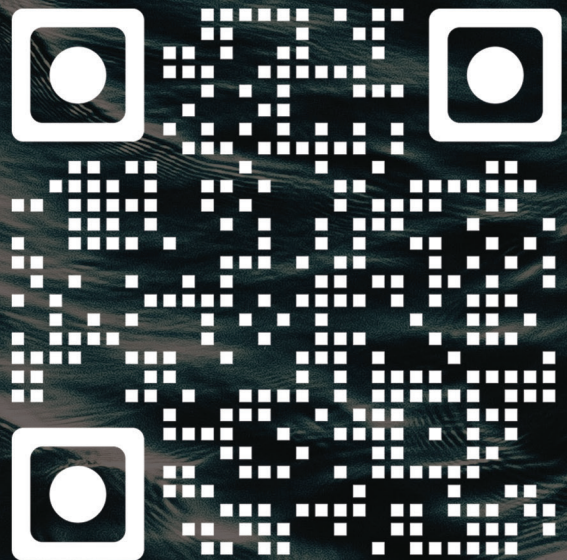
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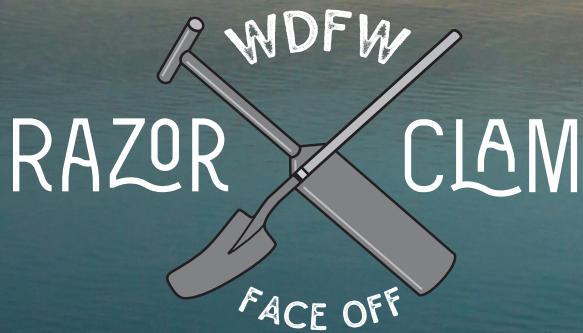


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my favorite

Fall Coho techniques

by hannah pennebaker



Even though the end of the year is approaching, don't put away your salmon fishing gear just yet. There are still plenty of rivers teeming with coho salmon right now! These days, there are many different techniques you can use to catch fish on any river. Versatility is important, and river conditions change day by day. I recently went on a guided trip with Brianna Bruce of Livin' Life Adventures. When we got to our spot, she told us that we would each be fishing a different method. The fish had been hitting different things every day. One day, they only wanted spinners. Another day, they wanted spoons. She began distributing rods- one of us fishing plugs, the other spinners, and so on until we were all casting and hoping to get lucky.

After about 20 minutes of this, another guide motored by on the way back to the launch with their limits. He told Bree that he had gotten all of his fish on eggs! She quickly began switching all of our rods to egg setups. Another hour later, we were back at the boat ramp with huge smiles and limits of dime-bright coho. If she hadn't brought eggs along, we may have all ended up skunked! Versatility is crucial! Most days when I go river fishing, I carry 3 rods: a twitching rod, a float rod, and a spinner rod. I spent a lot of time getting familiar with each technique and when and how to deploy them. Let's dive into how and why I use these techniques. If I had to pick one way to fish for coho, I would have to go with twitching jigs. They are extremely adaptable- I can fish any type of water with a twitching jig.

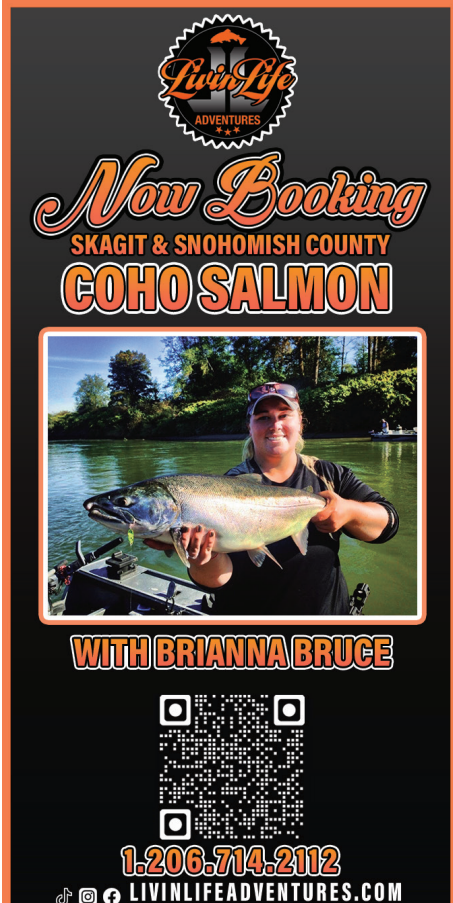
There's something so satisfying about seeing a big fish dart out of cover to grab your jig. Make sure to vary your jigging speed and length depending on the structure, depth, and speed of the water. Some days, you can let the jig sink to the bottom of a deep hole before you start jigging. Other times, you'll want to do short jigs as soon as your lure hits the water. There's no one way to twitch a jig. Color matters! I've had days where I fished one color for 30 minutes with no luck, and then hooked a fish on the first cast after switching colors. Most of the time, I use a 3/8 or 1/2 oz jig. My favorite colors are blue/black and pink/green. My twitching rod is a stout 7'6 rod with fast action. It has an extremely sensitive tip so I can feel those subtle bites, and the backbone to back up my hook sets. I pair it up with a size 3000 spinning reel.

I use light reels to help avoid wrist fatigue. You can twitch jigs with longer, heavier rods, but I like my 7'6 rod because it translates even the smallest flicks of my wrist to the jig. I never hit the river without my twitching rod! There is a bit of a learning curve, as most fish will pick up your jig on the drop. You might feel the line tighten, or you may feel nothing at all. Most fish won't simply grab the jig and take off. The majority of bites are subtle. Watch your line and pay attention to how it moves. It pays to fish high visibility braid so you can see exactly where your line is and what it's doing in the water. Give twitching jigs a try, you'll be hooked!

If I can't get a fish to bite on twitching jigs, I'll switch to my spinner rod. This is my 9ft, fast-action, moderate power rod, rated to throw up to an ounce of lead. It has the springiness to be able to launch spinners across long rivers, but the backbone to bring a monster coho to the shore. I often start off beginner river fishermen with spinners because bites are hard to miss. There are two types of spinners, and they both fish differently. Heavy-bodied spinners sink right away and can be cast perpendicular to the opposite shore. Light-bodied or unweighted spinners don't sink as quickly and are better for shallow rivers. You can cast them out and swing them into the current like a spoon. Keep your rod tip low


and reel slowly. Make sure to do 1 or 2 solid hook sets to really drive that barbless hook into the fish's mouth. In murky water like the Carbon or Puyallup River, I'll go with a bright-colored spinner, like chartreuse or pink. On clear, coastal rivers, I'll fish a silver or copper-colored spinner. It never hurts to try something different, though! Don't forget to pinch your barbs and switch out the treble hook to a single hook if required.

My third go-to technique for fall coho fishing is floating eggs. This technique isn't very well suited for combat fishing, but if you can find a patch of slow-moving water all to yourself, this is a great way to get finicky coho to bite. Floating eggs is a relaxing way to spend the day. You tend to lose a lot less gear, and watching your bobber is therapeutic. You'll want a 10ft to 11ft rod and 3000/4000 size spinning reel. Don't use gear you don't mind getting egg dye on! You can either use store-bought eggs or experiment with curing your own. I usually bring along 2 or 3 different recipes when I fish eggs. Sometimes the fish want pink eggs, other days they like red. You can experiment with adding different scents to your eggs, like tuna or herring. No matter how good your eggs are, you want to make sure you're fishing them correctly, however. Experiment with your leader length by moving your bobber stopper until you're hitting the bottom.




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Then, move it up 6 to 12 inches. That's where the fish will see it, and, hopefully, bite it. Don't forget to mend your line by lifting it up off the water and behind your float. This is where a long rod can come in handy, but it can make it difficult to fish in water with lots of overhanging trees and bushes. Float fishing is a highly situational technique, but it can be very deadly. There you have my top three favorite fall coho techniques. When getting to my spot, I like to sit and watch the water for a few minutes to determine which technique to use. Floating eggs isn't always possible if the river is flowing quickly.

Similarly, when I'm fishing frog water, using a spinner can be difficult. The deep and slow water makes it difficult to reach the fish hugging the bottom. I find that it's extremely important to be able to adapt to any condition. However, there are days when I want to challenge myself or get better at a technique and I'll only bring out one pole. This is how I taught myself to be able to use twitching jigs in any situation. If you haven't tried any of these techniques, hit the water and give it a shot. Make sure to read your rules and regulations, especially emergency ones. Hope to see you all out there!



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DID WA STATE PARKS CANCEL THANKSGIVING?

BY JOHN KRUSE

I was reading the September Washington State Parks e-newsletter, which covered the remaining free days available for day visitors to enter and park in Washington's State Parks without a Discover Pass. One of those dates is the day after Thanksgiving: Friday, November 24th. I was curious why the State Parks and Recreation Commission chose to not call it a Thanksgiving or Day after Thanksgiving free day and emailed the media department to ask them why. Having not received a response right away, I began researching this and found the day after Thanksgiving was first made a free day to enter state parks in 2017 which was called Autumn Free Day. It remained as Autumn Day through 2021, but in 2022 the free day after Thanksgiving got a new name, Native American Heritage Day. However, in 2023, the late November free entry day was once again designated, Autumn Day. Is this all about wokeness and cancel culture towards Thanksgiving? Did someone object to it being called Native American Heritage Day?

I did receive a reply from State Parks media staff shortly before this column went to press stating, "Washington State Parks and the departments of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and Natural Resources (DNR) have offered a Discover Pass "free day" the day after Thanksgiving for several years. The free day is not associated with Thanksgiving. It is the last free day of the year and coincides with autumn and school vacation for many families."

So perhaps I'm mistaken about cancel culture, though the reply doesn't answer the question as to why they changed the name from Native American Heritage Day back to Autumn Day for 2023.

Maybe it's just the way things are done by our state agencies in Washington these days. A great example is the Hungarian partridge, nicknamed the "Hun" for short, which saw its name changed to the completely non-offending and uninspiring name, gray partridge, a few years ago by WDFW. Autumn Day falls into the same category. Afraid to offend any one person or group of people,

you just change the name to something that won't offend (or inspire) anyone. Of course, that's just my opinion. However, no matter what it's called, November 24th would be a good day to get outside into one of our state parks instead of spending the day inside big box retail stores or in front of a computer all day shopping online.

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NO KILL KALAMA

BY MEGAN BENNETT

Sometimes we don't get the fish, sometimes we don't get the shot. And sometimes we don't even think about it because there is just too much going on.

You are not going to get a slick fish picture, but I am going to let you in on a little secret called "License to Chill" on the Kalama River in Washington State. This underdog tributary of the Columbia River is often overlooked, but why? Well, it's hard to get to, and access is limited, but there are substantial year-long opportunities for salmon and steelhead runs. It's a sweet spot, roughly 45 miles long, and narrow enough to cast across to the opposite bank. It may be relatively small, but when you're there you feel the pulse. It's a mainline to the Pacific Northwest heartbeat. The swift mossy green waters amble through the Cascades from Mt St Helens to the Columbia.

License to Chill hosts 19 private acres of preserved forest, easy access to the riverbank, and multiple runs every year. Spring chinook get a lot of attention, followed by summer steelhead, coho in the fall, and the mighty winter steelhead running well into the spring. Can you keep them? No.

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This is a strictly managed catch-and-release barbless fly-fishing stretch.

Should you pull them out of the water, take a picture, and admire your fish? No, what's the point of that? You're causing stress, suffocation, and possible internal injury. This river isn't for the eating fish, it's for the experience. No Kill Kalama is just the place to go if you want to unwind and wet your line.

I am one of those people who believes that all humans should have the right to forage, hunt, and fish for our own sustenance. And, why not fun? However, I also think we should absolutely look outside of ourselves at the natural world, sustainability, and what we are leaving for each other and our children.

This isn't a debate, but a few words to share what a great time I had on the Kalama River. If other like-minded folks appreciate the suggestion, then I'm pleased about that! So much love and history has gone into this cabin and property. It is really one of a kind. At 90 feet above the river, you can feel it roar under you as you drift to sleep. If you like eagles, how about taking a shower outdoors while they fly above giant Red Cedars? It is epic!

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ICE FISHING SEASON IS COMING

MATT CAREY

I've been watching Ice Cold Catch on TV lately. For those of you who aren't in the know, it's a reality TV documentary series that follows two greenhorns as they learn the ins and outs of operating a commercial fishing boat in Iceland. It's a week at sea in some of the harshest conditions imaginable, and then they return to the port and do it all over again. Some of the catches can yield multiple hundreds of thousands of dollars for the boat and \$5,000 for crew members. Other times, they make fractions of that

amount. It's the embodiment of a hard way to make an easy living. Watching the boat and crew lay mile after mile of baited line to circle back, pull it up, and see what was caught is entertaining TV from the warmth of my living room. The blend of passion for the sea with the business acumen needed is something I think anyone who enjoys fishing and also works a "regular" job can appreciate. I don't plan on heading 50 miles outside of the Icelandic coast to commercial fish for cod anytime soon, so I guess I'll stick to something closer

to home.

With the winter season approaching, many of us are stowing away the outboard engines on our boats and getting out the ice houses and augers. Maybe if you're brave enough, and have invested in a decent winter jacket, all you're checking to see is if you have your trusty plastic bucket to flip upside down as your seat when you jig away for what fish lay below. I'm referencing another way to get your fishing fix during the cold winter months - ice fishing.

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When the weather gets cold, many of us shift gears and turn our attention to hunting season. Big game, waterfowl, upland bird, or otherwise, it's the thrill of being outdoors that does it for many of us. I've been known to pull off to the side of the road and look at a few turkeys walking around or admire an elk or two coming down from the mountains. For those interested in braving the elements but not quite ready for the physical exertion of hunting outdoors, ice fishing offers continued sporting opportunities. Whether fishing for perch, kokanee, walleye, or burbot, it never hurts to remind yourself of the respect needed on the ice when fishing these glorious winter months.

I joked about the winter coat, but seriously, having an insulated jacket does wonders on those days when the temperature is below freezing. What else might you need before hitting the ice? While a gaiter is always helpful, you'll need a beanie at a minimum to keep your head warm. Some gloves and boots that are ideally waterproof with disposable hand warmers are a great idea. Ice picks are also a very smart accessory to have should disaster strike and you need to crawl out of the frigid water. They are every bit the equivalent of having life jackets and first aid kits on your boat: the classic "you'd rather have it and not need it than need it and not have

it" item. One other item you might not think about but will be glad to have with you is a good pair of sunglasses. It might be December or January and 15 degrees outside, but on a clear day with the sun reflecting off the ice, it can be nearly blinding. The sunglasses/beanie combo is the personification of ice fishing in my mind. It's a cool look, what can I say?

The gear on your body is important, but you want to make sure the gear you bring to set yourself up to fish is adequate and check that conditions are safe. It is generally advised that ice fishing should be done on ice that is at least 4 inches thick- the thicker

the better, especially if you are considering heavy equipment like an ATV or snowmobile to travel to different parts of the lake. 7 inches is recommended when using an ATV. A ruler is an easy tool to measure the thickness of the ice. Another indicator that it is safe to fish is a visual inspection of the ice - it should be clear. Cloudy or cracked ice are indicators it may have been melting and refreezing and not as strong as it should be. After you've drilled your hole with an auger (or found an abandoned hole), a scoop is extremely helpful to clear ice out of your fishing hole and to prevent your line from freezing.



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Besides the obvious fishing pole and lure, the last item to consider bringing along would be a fish finder. Relatively small, briefcase or guitar amp-sized, they can often give you an edge to find the bottom of the water and determine the movement of the fish below the ice.

Got the list? Excellent! You're ready to hit the water... sorry, ice, to continue this obsession we share that is fishing. It's always exciting to catch fish on a boat or from shore during the warmer climates and summer months, but it's a whole other experience to brave the cold and reel up your catch of the day through the ice.

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BY JOSH DEBRULER

In the 2023 March issue of NW Reel Life, I laid out some key items and concepts to help anglers enter the world of kayak fishing. And while weather predictions, condition assessment, and kayak types are all important, in this article I want to focus a bit more on the actual setup of your kayak and how that can determine your level of success out on the water.

TRACK MOUNTS

Let's talk track mounts! Track mount systems are the starting point for your rod holders, fish finders, and other accessories. A track mount is a slotted track that you bolt to the side rails of your kayak and then slide your other accessories onto. They all have fairly similar styles with some small variations amongst different brands. The most important thing to keep in mind is that your track should be strong enough to support whatever type of load you are putting on it. A good track mount system should be metal, corrosion resistant, and come with a backing plate. If the track holds rod holders, it should be large enough

and secure enough to do so. Smaller accessories like cell phones, fish finders, and camera mounts won't require as beefy of a track.

DOWNRIGGERS

Trolling on a kayak can be straightforward. You drag a lure behind you to target rainbows, or you can utilize a cannonball weight to get you down to chinook salmon territory.

Now, if you want to have more than just an idea of the depth your gear is at in the water column, you need something more surefire. Enter the downrigger.

Because most of my kayak fishing is in the ocean or the Strait of Juan De Fuca, I've opted to leave the downrigger trolling to my aluminum boat.

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The constant attention to equipment while on the water and the inherent risks associated with snags make it an option easier to perform on a vessel of larger size. With that said, a downrigger is not only doable on a kayak, but it's a technique that can increase your chances severalfold, and if you're fishing lakes where currents and large waves are less of an issue, a downrigger might be the exact thing that puts you on the fish.

The most common spots to mount a downrigger are just past the midline of your kayak somewhere out of the way of your peddling or paddling, but also close enough to you so that you can operate it without too much struggle.

Most kayakers opt for smaller downriggers like a Scotty lake troller or the Cannon mini troll downrigger. When mounting your downrigger, you'll want to add a backing plate in the hull of the kayak where your bolts will attach. This is essential for the kayak to be able to handle the added weight and pressure. Fish finder and rod holders should be mounted in close enough proximity to the DR so that you can monitor your rod tip, fish finder, and DR at the same time. Instead of using the steel cable that comes with most downriggers, it's wise to swap the cable for 250 # - 300# braided line. This will lessen drag and it will also allow you to cut your line in case of an emergency. With that in mind, you should

always have a knife attached to your person in a place that is easily accessible in case that emergency were to happen.

STRINGERS

For the longest time, I struggled to find an effective place to connect my stringer to my Hobie Revolution 13'. I would typically have my stringer attached to a carabiner and then the carabiner attached to a strap that was a part of my seat's recline system. Eventually, the rubbing from the constant motion and tension of the fish that were hanging off the side of my boat would fray the webbing around the strap. I now have a stringer cleat attached to one of my track systems that holds and



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secures that line out of my way. Metal clip stringers are a top-rated option for kayaks due to their ease of use, though rope stringers and chain stringers will certainly get you by as well.

FISH FINDERS

The process of setting up a fish finder on your kayak is going to differ depending on what type of kayak you have. Mounting the screen is simple- it can go on a track or be permanently installed on the boat. The trickiest part of the process will be mounting your transducer. Many fishing kayaks come equipped with a transducer mount directly underneath the hull. This allows the transducer to sit in the water while also being protected from the sand and gravel if the boat were to drag along the bottom. For most kayaks out there, transducer mounts are not built in. If you don't have a transducer mount you will need to mount it either off the side of your boat or better yet, inside the hull. This gets tricky and typically involves using some plumber putty for the transducer to both stick to the kayak and to also create a sealed surface without air bubbles. The solid putty allows for the transducer to transmit through the putty, through the kayak material, and into the water. YouTube is a valuable tool for these types of setups.

BILGE PUMP AND BP STORAGE

If the hull of your kayak fills

with water due to crashing waves or due to a capsize, you don't want to be bailing water out of the boat with an empty tackle box. A manual bilge pump is your strongest line of defense against a sinking boat. Some kayakers will stow their bilge pumps inside a hull compartment underneath a hatch. This could seem like a sensible home for your bilge pump, but if you are in a situation where you've taken on a lot of water and you've lost half your buoyancy, and on top of that, you're being battered by oncoming waves, leaning over to open a hatch might be just the thing the kayak needs to capsize once again. Instead, stow the pump somewhere within arm's reach and have it fastened down with a bungee and secured to a lanyard so that it has no chance of going overboard.

CELL PHONE MOUNTS

Having your cell phone mounted on your fishing kayak might seem like an over-the-top luxury, but if you consider the vast number of apps that can be utilized to help improve your fishing trip, you will find that having your cellphone on the ready and in view at all times is a must. When I'm on the water, I use Navionics to navigate and to get a good sense of underwater topography. I also use weather and wind apps to keep me safe and informed on changing conditions. Using a cellphone mount along with a

waterproof cell phone case gives ease of access to all of these things. Phone mounts can be installed directly on the kayak or on your track system.

BUNGEEES AND STRAPS

Bungees, straps, webbing, all these small investments will protect your larger investments in the event of a capsize. Strap everything down as if capsizing was just a normal part of your program. This is particularly important if you plan to do any surf launches into the ocean.

ROD HOLDERS

Rod holders are an essential part of your fishing kayak set-up. Your kayak likely comes equipped with flush mount rod holders, these are almost

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The advertisement features a dark background with a fish illustration. A QR code is prominently displayed in the lower-left corner, with a white arrow pointing to it from the right. The text is in white and orange, with 'BOOKING FALL SALMON' in the largest, most stylized font.

standard on most kayaks these days. However, the position of the standard flush mounts is generally aft of the kayak seat, and this isn't always the best location when you want to have eyes on your rod tip. Additional flush mount holders can be installed in various locations of your boat.

Fixed and elevated rod holders. These will be installed directly to the boat or to a track. Fixed rod holders tend to be one of the sturdier options.

Adjustable rod holders. Adjustable rod holders can move from horizontal to vertical and can be found in various styles that are suited for whatever type of fishing you plan to do.

When installing your rod holder, be sure to place it somewhere where it won't be in the way of your peddling or paddling.

FISH STORAGE

There are quite a few options when it comes to fish storage. Some folks will carry a small cooler on board. This is a good option when fishing for smaller fish on hot days and if you can afford the room on your kayak.

Fish bag. Insulated fish bags are great options for larger fish and are easy to secure on your kayak. If you're fishing for spiny fish, be sure that your cooler bag is puncture-proof.

In-hull storage. Some anglers have rigged fish bags inside their hull, and if you can make that work, you are ahead of the curve on the fish storage problem that plagues many kayak anglers. If in-hull fish storage is a possibility, be sure that your fish are well insulated as the inside of a kayak can get quite toasty on a hot day. Also keep in mind that if your fish bag leaks inside of the hull, you will have the difficult task of cleaning a stinky mess that gets more stinky the longer it sits unattended. Finally, having the hull open frequently presents the danger of water from crashing waves getting inside your kayak. So, if you choose this method, be wary of the risks associated.

Kayaks offer endless amounts of angling opportunities without some of the drawbacks of larger boats. I hope these tips give you some direction in planning your next outdoor adventure on the open water.

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I skipped school on a May morning to fish with my uncle Jon and his bride. That was 1985. You might say they were a bad influence on a teenager, but if I had it to do over again, I'd skip my whole senior year and go steelhead fishing. Wouldn't you? I took two rods to the lake and when, at the end of the day, I put the gear away, I realized I had left the fly rod leaning against a tree. Someone else ended up with my 7-weight Wallace fiberglass and a Pflueger Medalist.

That Wallace rod was equal to or superior to the more popular Fenwicks of the day and looked like a Fenwick,

except in a medium brown color.

That was 1985 and my next fly rod was a custom 5-weight graphite my uncle built. In the 1980s, graphite rods were lighter and a bit more responsive, but there were qualities glass rods had the graphite rods lacked.

A couple of summers back, I floated the Williamson with Craig Schuhmann and our friend Larry Zeilstra. I brought a custom 5-weight McFarland fiberglass built by Uncle Jon. Before I had even wedged my knees into the casting brace of Craig Schumann's sweet Clackacraft, he was ribbing me about bringing an "old" fiberglass rod on a serious big trout trip.



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I pointed out this fiberglass rod was more modern than his attitude as well as the graphite rod he was fishing; also, his boat was made out of fiberglass.

I try to keep a small stable of fly rods, seven or eight in rotation. If I'm not using a rod, I give it to a kid. Over the last couple of years, I've given half a dozen rods to teenagers.

Fly rods don't do anyone any good unless they are fishing.

Truth be told, I own two fiberglass fly rods. The other one is an 8-1/2-foot tobacco-brown Wright & McGill 3-A Champion I bummed off a friend for zero dollars. I gave the same amount of no money for the reel and bought a new Cortland floating line off eBay for \$13. Thirteen bucks. That's all the money I have into this rig. It parties like it's 1971. Whenever a new acquaintance talks me into taking them fishing and they want to use one of my rods, they get the old-school glass. You want me to take you fishing? You want to use one of my thousand-dollar graphite rods because you're too cheap to buy your own? Nope. You get the Wright & McGill treatment. You don't even get to touch my Orvis magic wand Helios, the

Cabela's Rogue rod, or my custom-antlered mule deer Loomis IMX.

This Wright & McGill has bested a boatload of rainbows in the last few years in the hands of grandchildren and other mooches. I even fish it from time to time. It's a pretty good rod, and rugged too.

Glass rods are heavier, which is not a disadvantage. My granddaughter who is 8-years-old has never complained, Grandpa, this rod is too heavy! The heft of a glass rod, along with its to-the-cork action, allows the angler to sense the weight of the line as it shoots through the guides. Weight and slower action tend to slow the casting stroke, which contributes to faster casting competency for a novice.

Another advantage is the forgiving nature of glass. Opt for a glass rod when fishing still waters where trout will be girthier. With a fiberglass rod in hand, the rod absorbs hard strikes better than graphite, which translates to fewer fish lost to broken tippets. Fiberglass is durable too, which means fewer broken tips. That's why, if you want to use my tackle, you get to fish my \$13 wonder.

What my collection lacks is a bamboo option. I have owned and fished bamboo and know what I'm missing. Fiberglass rods rival bamboo for liveliness, power, and balance in hand.

If I had it to do over again, I would not lean that Wallace against that fir tree. If you picked up a medium-brown 7-weight at Battleground Lake in the spring of '85, you got a nice rod. I hope you fished it hard.



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Gary Lewis Bio

Gary Lewis is an award-winning author, TV host, speaker and photographer. Recent books include *Fishing Central Oregon*, 6th Edition, *Fishing Mount Hood Country* and *Bob Nosler Born Ballistic*. Gary has hunted and fished in eight countries on three continents and in the islands of the South Pacific. Born and raised in the Northwest, he has been walking forest trails and running rivers for as long as he can remember. Lewis is twice past president of the Northwest Outdoor Writers Association and a recipient of NOWA's Enos Bradner Award.



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Ice fishing is a unique and exhilarating activity that requires a combination of skill, patience, and the right equipment. While many anglers are accustomed to traditional techniques, incorporating modern technology like fish finders and electronics can significantly enhance your success on the ice.

In this article, we'll delve into how and why you should utilize fish finders, and electronics while ice fishing.

MAXIMIZE EFFICIENCY

Ice fishing often involves drilling many holes in the ice and patiently waiting for a bite. However, with a fish finder, you locate fish faster and more accurately. These devices use sonar technology to send out sound waves,

which bounce off objects in the water and return to the transducer, providing a visual representation of the underwater terrain and fish. This allows you to identify the most promising spots quickly, saving you time and energy.

UNDERSTANDING UNDERWATER TOPOGRAPHY

Fish finders not only reveal the presence of fish but also help you understand the underwater topography. They can detect depth changes, underwater structures, and vegetation, which are crucial factors in determining where fish are likely to congregate. Armed with this information, you can strategically position yourself for a successful ice fishing season.

ACCURATE DEPTH READINGS

One of the most significant advantages of using fish finders is their ability to provide accurate depth readings. This is crucial for ice fishing, as different species prefer different depths. By knowing the exact depth of water, you can adjust your bait and technique accordingly, increasing your chances of more catches.

LOCATING SCHOOLS OF FISH

Fish finders excel at finding schools of fish and of course that lonely straggler. Instead of relying on guesswork or trial and error, you can pinpoint where the fish are congregating. This allows you to make precise adjustments



to your bait and presentation to entice more bites.

MONITORING FISH ACTIVITY

Most fish finders are equipped to allow you to monitor fish activity in real-time. Real-time means there's no delay in the transfer from the transducer to the screen, so when the fish or lure moves you can see it move accurately.

These devices can display fish movements, indicating whether they are actively feeding or just passing through. This invaluable information helps you adapt your strategy on the fly, ensuring a more productive outing.

STAYING SAFE ON THE ICE

Apart from enhancing your fishing success, fish finders also contribute to safety on

the ice. Not only do they read and provide accurate depth information, but some units with GPS can also have up-to-date warnings for hazard areas, thin ice, closed boat launches, etc. while using lake map cards. This knowledge is especially crucial during early and late seasons when ice conditions can be unpredictable.

IMPROVING YOUR OVERALL FISHING EXPERIENCE

Incorporating electronics like a GPS unit, or an underwater camera alongside a fish finder flasher can further amplify your ice fishing experience. GPS is a nice option in some units, allowing you to mark productive spots for future reference, or a unit



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that is usable from the boat to the ice. Underwater cameras offer a fascinating glimpse into the underwater world, helping you understand fish behavior and habitat. This can also help you fine-tune your approach each time you chase fish under the ice.

Embracing fish finders and electronics in your ice fishing endeavors is a game changer. By providing valuable insights into the underwater terrain, fish behavior, and safety conditions, these tools significantly increase your chances of a successful and enjoyable ice fishing experience. So, equip yourself with the right gear and technology, venture out to the frozen lakes, and let the fish finding begin!

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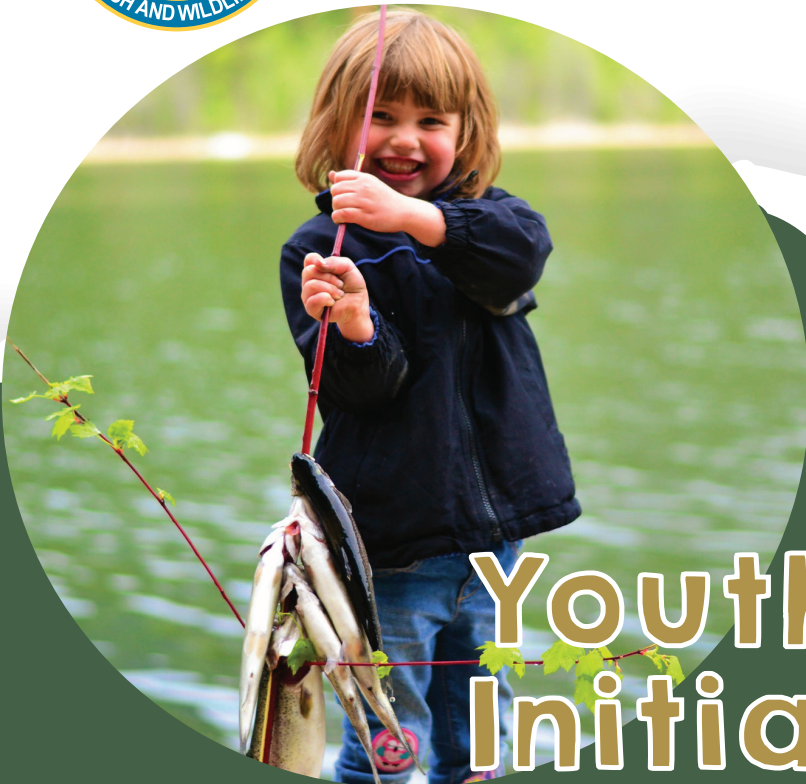
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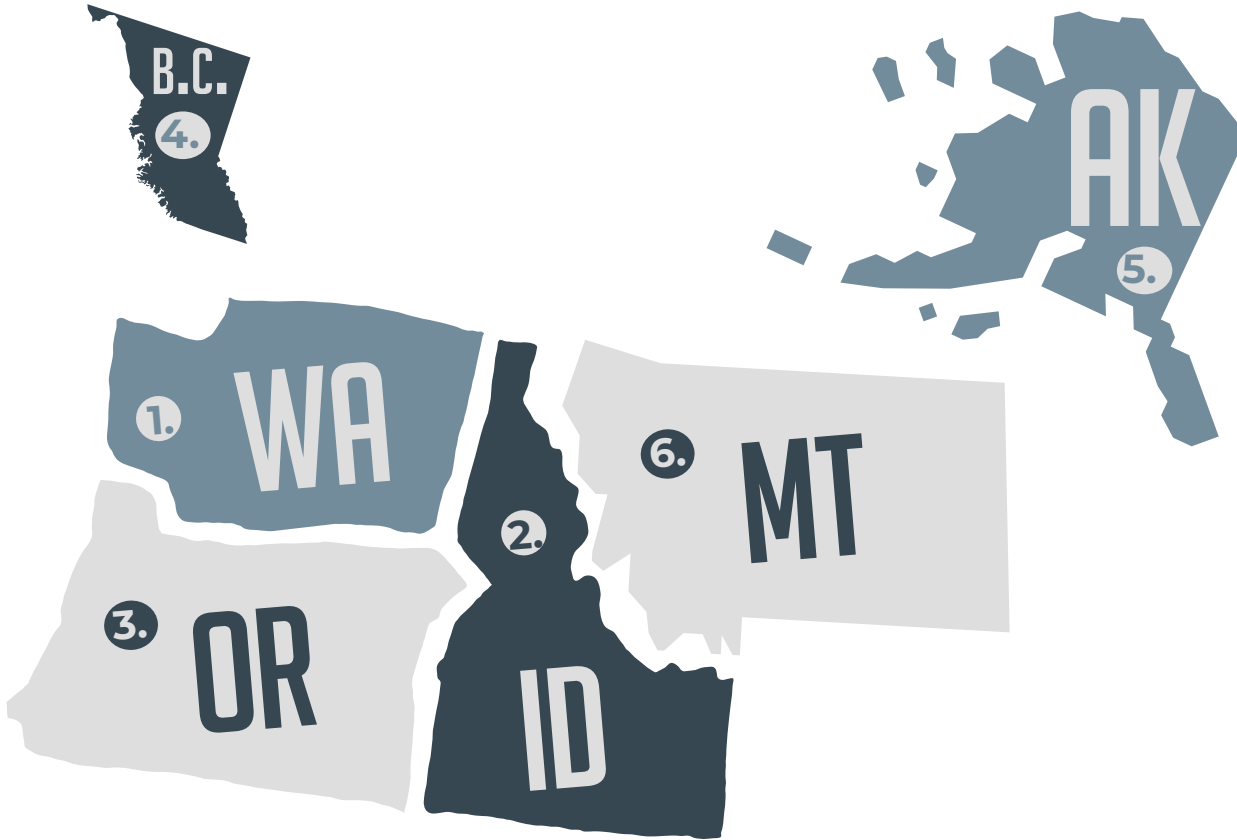


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