

Ice Out LT's

As Spring rolls around, there are many options for eager anglers, waiting to get out on the open water after a long cold winter, but one that gets less attention than most, is targeting spring lake trout. After the ice leaves the lakes, and before waters warm up to summer temperatures, lake trout can be targeted fairly simply, without the need for downriggers and specialized gear. Once the water warms up, lake trout seek refuge in cool, deep water, and require more effort and equipment for anglers to get at them.

During the spring, lake trout can be found relatively close to the surface, and can be targeted by anglers with the simplest of gear. With water temperatures near the surface around 50F or so, lake trout usually stick close to the surface, and can be caught trolling or casting, either from a boat or from shore. As the water warms, they move deeper, and can still be caught trolling a bit deeper, or jigging, but as the water warms, they become more difficult to catch.

Trout are often found this time of year cruising around river mouths, off rocky points, reefs, or submerged rocks, around shoals, or shallow sandy reefs. They will follow baitfish, that during this time can often be found near river mouths, or seeking warmer water in shallower water.

There are some lake trout lakes I fish that its not unusual to catch lake trout in shallow (<10ft) sandy bays where you can even see fish. I have often caught lake trout early in the spring when casting shorelines for bass or pike, in water that seems very atypical for lake trout. In lakes with large river systems flowing into them, they can even be found making their way upstream, again seeking the cooler waters, and often following baitfish.

When targeting lakers this time of year, using baits like spoons, spinners or rapalas can all be effective. Some spoons to try are spoons like the standard Little Cleo, Mepps Cyclops, Williams Wabler, or one of my favourites, the Gibbs Croc. Spinners can also be very productive, trying the tried and true Mepps spoons, or the Blue Fox Vibrax spinner. Trolling or casting rapalas can also be a great way to catch trout, using ones like Husky jerks, shad raps or countdowns. As the water warms, and trout start to move a little deeper, some of the deep diving rapalas can be effective ways to reach deeper depths and have opportunities at trout. While trolling, I have had good success over the years trolling with a generous amount of line behind the boat, but using in line planer boards, that simply clip onto your line, can improve your odds, by getting your bait away from the disturbance of the boat.

Even for anglers without a boat, this can be a great time to give you an opportunity to target lake trout. If you can find a piece of shoreline near a rivermouth, or at a rocky point, these can be great places to cast from shore. I have had great luck on some lakes after pulling the boat ashore, and casting from shore. Even using live or dead bait while fishing from shore can be very effective, using something like a frozen smelt or herring, or live sucker can be effective. Rigging up a minnow on a slip sinker and letting it sit on bottom with the bail open works well, allowing the trout to pick up the bait and run with it, with no resistance.

Whether you're an angler with no boat, or have 3a boat and no downriggers, and want to target trout, or you're a walleye angler waiting for the season to open, or looking to try something different, grab a few spoons, and give something different a try this spring.



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OUTDOORS GUIDE

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