

# Fishing Equipment & Tips

## Turns Out Less /S More!

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It is the coldest morning of 2011 so far. -20F this morning in Central MN. Everything to be moving at the speed of ice. Any yet, if we were to auger down through the ice on a local lake we would still find liquid water. A miracle of good old H2O! Ice on top, liquid below. And life.

The fish we pursued in the sweltering heat of August are still there, still alive, still active. Not as active as in August, but they are still breathing, swimming and eating. The difference is that they aren't moving quite as fast now as the temperature in the water rarely rises above +35F. Those of you that have used [Lesson 2:8 - Fish In Winter](#)<sup>PDF</sup> (21 pages | 2.8 MB) have taught your students about being cold-blooded and how that effects activity of fish.

This doesn't mean that it is time to sit on your couch and watch fishing shows shot in Florida however. Even though fish are moving more slowly, they still need to eat and we are able to catch them. The trick in winter is to remember that because their metabolism has slowed down, and therefore their physical prowess, we need to offer smaller morsels to them. Think fish snacks, rather than 3 course meals.

Fishing lures and baits used in winter are on average much smaller than summer. A very popular ice jig is called the 'tear drop'. Guess what size it is? You guessed it.

So which lures to use in winter? Once again we can refer to [Lesson 5:4 - Tackling Your Tackle Box](#)<sup>PDF</sup> (35 pages | 3.7 MB) and the idea that we much match our choice of tackle with the fish or fishes we are pursuing.

Let's start with panfish ([sunfish](#), [crappies](#), [yellow perch](#), [stream trout](#), [ciscoes](#), whitefish). The 'tear drop' jig that I mentioned is an excellent choice. Most panfish jigs are smaller than a dime, including the hook. The lure is often tipped with a maggot or waxworm for added effect and flavor. Remember we are trying to excite all of the senses a fish employs to find food by using color, motion, taste and sound.

These jigs come in a rainbow of colors and sizes. Smaller lures will allow you to catch more fish, so the smaller the better when taking kids ice fishing. They might not always be the whoopers, but your success rate will increase.





When we pursue the larger predator fish (walleye, northern pike, lake trout) we will need to increase the size of the lure in order to attract them and successfully hook them. Lures called 'jigging spoons' create more sound and flash, and travel down to deeper water more quickly because of their size. These can be used with or without live bait, but waxworms and minnows are often added to great success.

Jigging for winter fish is by far the most effective method to attract and catch them. By matching the size of the lure to the size of the fish (and their mouth) you will be more successful. Just remember to size it down for winter ice fishing.

Finally, it is good to know that the tackle industry is also producing non-lead ice jigs these days.

Many are being produced using tungsten which is even heavier than lead so it's easier to get your lure back down to where the fish are during the winter.