

Piers & Places

Winter solitude, winter wonder

By Roland Sigurdson, Aquatic Education Specialist

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One of my favorite places to be in the winter is out on a frozen lake, ice fishing. I know that to some that may seem like punishment, but for me it includes moments filled with solitude and wonder. This is something that can be shared with kids as well.

While it is arguably difficult to find solitude during an ice fishing session with a group of children, there are moments when a hush will fall over the entire group as they concentrate on the bobber and hole before them. Suddenly, the solitude of a world frozen in time will encompass the group. Literally!! The world around them somehow seems silent. No bird songs, no insect buzzing, no frog calls and the winter light is just...well...weird.



Winter Shore Fishing



Ice fishing with students from Battle Lake School

Yet they quickly realize as the bobber in front of them begins to jiggle that there is life here. The aquatic species below this lid of ice continue to survive and thrive in the face of below freezing temperatures above the surface. Nature has found a way.

The opportunities to introduce kids to this wonderment become boundless in our watery state during the winter months. Suddenly, every lake is accessible. The prime fishing spots can be reached with our own two feet. The only barriers to access are a warm jacket, good winter boots, a stocking cap and the good sense to put them on.

One thing that you'll need to remember is that fish in winter are not in the same places they were during the summer months. You probably won't find them near the public fishing pier, but rather in much deeper water. To discover why that is true, use [Lesson 2:8 - Fish in Winter](#) highlighted in the [Featured Lesson](#) of this newsletter. It would also be a good idea to check with the local bait shop or resident anglers about good places to find fish on any particular lake that you'll be visiting. A special project for a group of students might be to interview some of the local anglers before hand to obtain this knowledge and report back to the group.

Not only will the horizontal location of fish change in the winter, but the vertical location as well. Most fish will be within the bottom three feet of water, often to depths over 20 feet. Kids can research where to find these deeper holes using the maps found on the DNR [LakeFinder](#). By knowing the structure of the lake bottom, we can make some educated guesses about where the fish will most likely be found.

Be sure to include [Lesson 6:2 - Ice Fishing and Winter Safety](#)  (29 pages | 2.2 MB) in any of your ice fishing program planning.