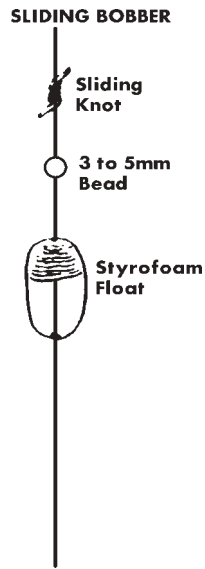


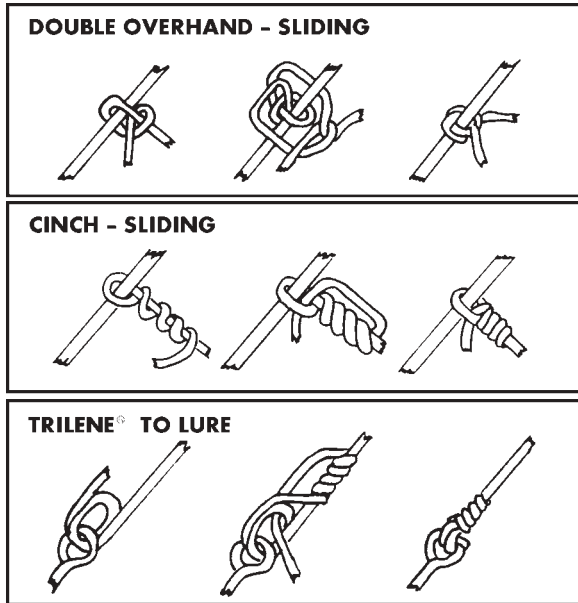
plastic bead, then through the bobber and tie on the lure. Then, with a separate piece of heavy leader, tie two overhand knots onto the main fishing line, above the bead. Cinch this down firmly and trim off the leader ends to about 1/4-in. Now slide the knot up the main line to the desired depth you wish to fish. As you lower the lure into the water, the float will push the bead up to the knot and stop, allowing the lure to be suspended at any desired depth.

When a fish bites the lure, set the hook and reel in. The knot will reel onto the reel spool, retaining the desired depth setting. The bead and float will slide down the main line allowing the fish to be played without any interference.

The sliding float rig is basic for fishing a float in deep water and is a very precise method to fish at the exact depth fish are suspended. Another tip for using a float is to pick one that will just



KNOTS FOR ICE

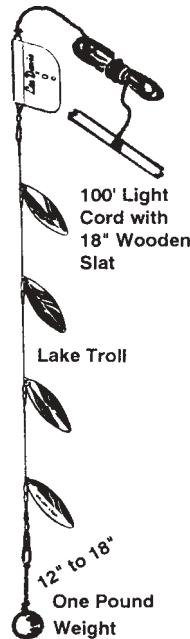


barely support the lure without sinking. The use of a float that is too large will result in not being able to detect the light bites of winter fish. They will quickly reject a lure having the resistance of the larger bobber. On the other hand, a smaller float is extremely sensitive and will readily reveal even miniature bites.

Ice fishing is always done from bottom to top, because fish often suspend in reference to the bottom structure or in the current. Fish could be running two, four or six feet off the bottom. This can be a problem in winter as most fish have a short strike range and will move only short distances to attack a lure.

Despite being overlooked by anglers, the solution is surprisingly simple. Most fishing reels will take in approximately two feet of line with one complete revolution of the handle (measure this to be precise). Simply lower your lure to the bottom and reel up one complete turn of the handle to attain the depth where the fish are.

Attracting fish is an art and most anglers are very specific on the size they wish to attract — bigger is better. This is



accomplished by drilling two holes close together, one for the fishing rod and another for the fish locator.

Next tie a 1-lb. weight to the aft end of a lake troll or **Abe & Al**® flasher, a 100-ft. lightweight cord to the forward end and the other end of the cord in the center of a wooden slat 12 to 18 inches long (see illustration).

Then lower both rigs, the lake troll and the lure, to the bottom in separate holes and set up the locator in the hole with the lake troll. When no fish are present on the locator, jig the lake troll or flasher enough to make the blades spin and flash. Occasionally softly pounding the bottom with the weight will attract fish to your location. Watch the fish locator and pause often, waiting for any to appear. When fish are attracted, switch to the rod and reel and begin fishing. This method is very effective for attracting larger predatory fish such as muskie, northern pike and lake trout.

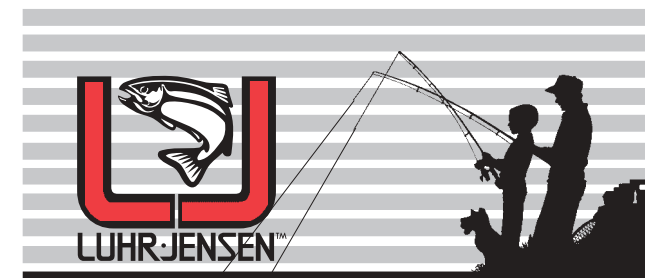
Selecting lures, lure colors or equipment doesn't have to be an enormous project, nor an expensive one. Make sure you buy quality lures or equipment and make a purchase by priority and diversity. Definitely include different styles and sizes of lures and the basic fishing colors of black, silver, gold, pink, chartreuse, orange and glow-in-the-dark. Select three or four colors of each style of lure you are interested in, then fish with them. You'll begin to have your favorites after the first trip and, as mentioned before, they help fill in the tackle box for the other seasons.

Ice fishing is a great winter pastime and a tremendous family sport, especially for the younger anglers. Best of all, the methods, lures and techniques will produce all year long, with or without ice. All involve vertical jigging which has been a superior fishing technique throughout history!

Enjoy the outdoors this winter, be sure to check your local regulations and ice conditions, respect your natural resources, practice catch-and-release when you can and please don't litter.

See you on the ice!

This is one of a series of more than 25 detailed technique reports produced by Luhr Jensen & Sons. For a complete set, a patch for your jacket or cap, a price list and a full-color catalog showing all of Luhr Jensen's quality fishing tackle and accessories, send \$5 (\$3 credited to your first order of \$20 or more) and your name and address to: Luhr Jensen, P.O. Box 297, Hood River, OR 97031, Attn: Customer Service



TECH REPORT #28

A COMPLETE GUIDE TO THE
**SAFETY, EQUIPMENT
& TECHNIQUES
OF**



By Mike Hall

Few fishing styles offer as much action and success as ice fishing. Angling on "hard water" is a fast-growing sport and the techniques are simple to master for any angler. Outings on ice almost always produce, plus a fishing trip is great medication for advanced cases of the winter condition known as "cabin fever".

Preparation is always the golden key to angling, especially during the winter months. With foresight and planning, your hours on the ice will quickly become quality fishing adventures.

(Revised)

SAFETY

There are a few rules of caution to follow that will ensure that your outing is both safe and comfortable. Test the ice thickness often. Use caution and never presume that any ice is totally safe. Ice quality and grade vary with thickness and clarity. Cloudy or gray ice is not as strong as crystal-clear ice. Three inches of good quality clear ice or six inches of cloudy gray ice is generally safe.

Safety equipment for your ice fishing trip should include a length of rope (minimum 20 feet), at least one U.S.C.G.-approved life preserver, a First Aid kit and a solar blanket. When your or someone else's life depends on these items, you'll have the peace of mind knowing you had the foresight to bring them!

Dress in layers. You cannot overdress when cold, but you can remove a few layers when you're too warm. Ice anglers are nicknamed "Cold footers" and the body extremities always seem to be the first to become frigid. Pay particular attention to your hands, head and especially your feet. A good hat (or better yet, a hood on your jacket) warm gloves and waterproof foot gear will keep you warm and in style.

EQUIPMENT

Fundamental ice fishing equipment should include safety equipment, an ice auger or drill with sharp blades, an ice dipper for removing ice from the hole, a chair or bucket to sit on, a trash bag for fish and litter, and of course rod, reel and tackle.

Optional equipment to consider includes an ice house or wind break, portable fish locator, extra pair of dry gloves, portable heater, fishing map, food, warm beverage, rod holder to keep your outfit off the ice, shovel to remove deep snow and a sled to transport all of the equipment.

Despite the special conditions and techniques involved with fishing on the ice, your regular, old favorite, lucky rod and reel will perform just fine. The cardinal rule is to use as light a line as possible for the optimum cold water presentation. Keep the guides of the rod free of ice and pay particular attention to line wear, as ice can be very abrasive.

"Tip-ups" are convenient and useful in states that allow them. They are especially convenient for the angler who wants to fish with more than one rod and reel, an accepted practice for ice fishing. Be sure to check the rules and regulations for your area. A wide variety of designs and shapes are available, some used for bait and others that will jig the lure as the wind blows. Basically, tip-ups use a frame that spans the hole, a signal device above the ice, a reel with line and a lure under the ice. An angler can set up several of these and wait from a central area for bites. When a fish takes the lure, it activates the signal, calling the angler to reel in. Signal devices vary from flags or alarms to lights.

TECHNIQUES

Regardless of the time of year, an angler needs to look for fish in areas that provide the oxygen, food and water temperatures necessary for survival. Location is critical when ice fishing as fish concentrate in smaller, more specific water. A portable fish locator makes the task of finding a prime location much easier.

The better areas during winter are limited in size, determined by minutely warmer water temperatures and by a specific species' particular preferences for either structure or current. During early winter, these areas are usually more shallow and become progressively deeper as the season lengthens.

The jackpot areas are around water discharges and underwater springs where temperatures remain consistently warmer during the winter. Rivers and streams that flow into a lake are good areas, although winter time warming trends can cause inflow water to run colder, sometimes having a negative effect. Be sure to watch out for thin ice in these areas and remember to move around. The hole you are fishing in only represents a very small area of the total water!

Drilling holes in the ice is hard work but you can add method to the madness of doing it. Productively searching for fish through the ice is accomplished by patterning the holes. To locate productive depths, drill three to four holes in a straight line toward deep water, approximately ten feet apart. Then fish each hole briefly, sampling for a successful area. One hole will usually produce more fish than the others. Once found, drill

holes to the immediate right and left of this area and concentrate your efforts there (See illustration for "T"-shaped holes). For structure such as underwater points, drill three to four holes in a "C" shape across the point. Again repeat the sampling and proceed until successful. (See illustration for "C"-shaped holes).

Fish living in cold water have slower metabolic rates. Without exception, ice fishing means using smaller lures with a deliberately slow presentation. Short, slow, jigging strokes with long pauses is the accepted basic method of working a lure when ice fishing. Winter fish usually strike the lure when it is stopped or at rest and the bite is often extremely subtle.

LURES AND BAIT

Spoons are deadly because fish sense both the water displaced and their flash as the spoon sinks. The weight of the spoon speeds the fall and will assist in keeping the slack out of the line so you can detect strikes from wary game fish. Letting the spoon hit bottom is a good idea and will draw attention to the lure. This aids in attracting fish, even from some distance.

The following spoons are lethal weapons in the ice fishing arsenal. Used separately or along with any teardrop, these lures attract fish from greater distances than the smaller teardrops by themselves. The fish may bite that ice fly, but they came to visit because of these lures. Larger attractor lures will add to the number of fish that visit the end of your string, and, in addition, can work very well year-round for casting, jigging or trolling.

One of the finest jigging spoons ever invented is the **Crippled Herring**. It is unequalled in action, finish, will produce fish under virtually any conditions and is extremely effective when fished through the ice. Simply follow the instructions on the package for recommended sizes for the depth and how to jig the lure. This is the pick for a spoon that imitates bait fish and is well-proved for walleye, perch, salmon and trout.

The **Krocodile** spoon is another excellent lure. This spoon is very effective when vertically jigged and is tops for ice fishing when trout are on the prowl.

The **Needlefish** is another very essential ice fishing spoon. It has been a successful producer for many years, becoming one of the most effective trolling lures ever made. Even so, this thin-bladed spoon has been all but overlooked by ice anglers. It is superior for panfish, trout, walleye and perch.

The **Ripple Tail** is a curved "blade bait" which offers the best of both wobble and flash when jigged slowly. It will swim in a circle when presented with small, slow, short strokes. Both of these actions are

highly desirable for ice fishing, plus its wide profile imitates many of the bait fish that predatory fish actively feed on during the winter months. It performs best when used with heavier (12- to 20-lb. test) line.

These are only four of the many top lures recommended for ice fishing. Others include the **Super Duper** and **Nordic** to name just a few. For more information on these and other products, just ask your local dealer or call Luhr Jensen Customer Service at 1-800-535-1711.

The use of two lures on the same line will double your odds of catching fish. This is accomplished with the use of the smaller styles of ice lures such as the teardrop or an ice fly. Simply add a teardrop or ice fly by means of a dropper line between four and six inches long, above the spoon (see illustration). It is very important that the spoon be below this smaller lure, as this will help keep the lures from becoming tangled when jigged. The distance between the two lures can be from six inches to four feet, depending on the presentation, the fish location, the size of lures and water clarity.

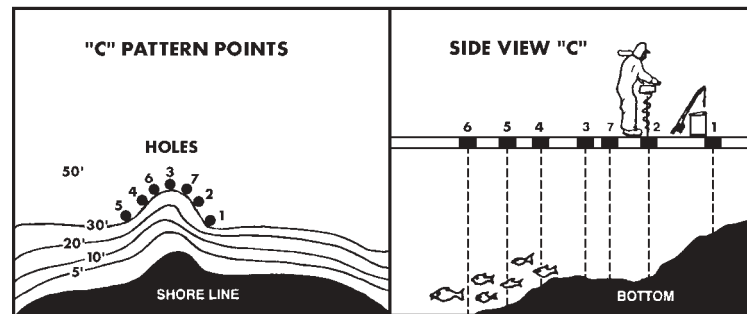
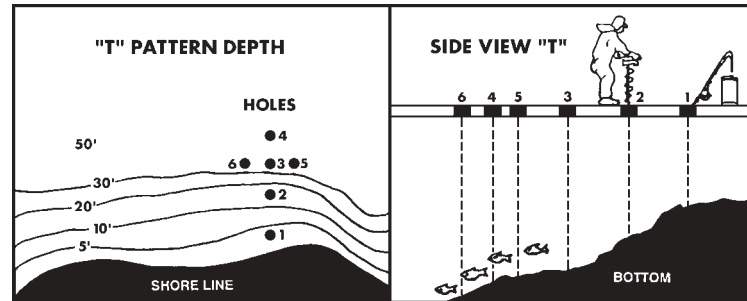
As with any style of fishing, there are exceptions and rigging a fishing lure is no different. Try using the smallest sizes of dodger, flasher or thin-bladed spoons rigged in line above a smaller lure (see illustration) but remember to jig this rig gently and slowly, as line-to-lure tangling with too much rod action is always a problem. This is a dynamite presentation for attracting winter fish when jigging, particularly trophy trout, walleye and northern pike!

Addition of bait to the lure will further enhance the presentation and the chances of catching more fish. Bait suggestions include wax worms, mousies, minnows, meal worms, power bait, crawlers, fish eyes, earth worms or fish eggs, but always in very small quantities. Adding too much bait will restrict the action of the lure(s) and cause a decline in the effectiveness of the presentation.

Scent products used with bait will also help to add more fish to your catch. There are several on the market from which to choose, but for the best results try to match the natural forage of the water with both the scent and lure you are using.

A float or bobber is often used with the lighter-weight spoons, especially when fishing with ultra-light-weight ice flies, teardrops or bait rigs.

Rigging a float is simple (see illustration). First lace the line through a small



Sliding Knot
6" Dropper
Teardrop
or Ice Fly

Crippled
Herring

