

THE COLD WATER RIVER/LAKE BITE

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LATE FALL / WINTER

This period is defined when the water temperatures fall from the 50 degree mark into the mid 40 degree range. Smallmouth bass are moving into their off-current wintering holes and in most cases are not in an aggressive mode to chase artificial lure presentations. While one can still catch a few here and there on a suspending jerk-bait and /or a slow-rolling 3/16 oz. spinner bait, cold water jigs should be your go-to presentation.



Picture taken @ 25 degrees air temperature

THE TECHNIQUE

Dragging a jig one foot every 3 seconds across the bottom is usually the ticket to get bit by the lethargic smallmouth bass. I accomplish this by holding the rod parallel to the water and moving the rod slowly from right to left. I eliminate any wrist action that will cause the jig to hop or move erratically- just drag it slowly.

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RECOMMENDED TACKLE

I use a St. Croix Avid-6'6" rod - medium lite power (AS 66MLF). The reel is a Shimano Stradic, #2500 Mgf spooled with 10 lb. test braided line and an 8 lb. test, 36-48" fluorocarbon leader. I believe in balancing all my rods which increases sensitivity using this simple system available at Bass Pro Shops: [Rod Balancer](#)

<http://www.basspro.com/The-Balancer%E2%84%A2-Rod-Balancing-System/product/16515/103055>

The balanced rod enables me to hold the reel stem between my third and fourth finger with my hand around the reel seat on the rod **WITHOUT having the rod tip drop downward**. I firmly believe this helps me to feel the mushy, light pick-up of the smallmouth bass in cold water. The rod balancer will also reduce wrist fatigue.

THE BITE FEELING

This is the important aspect of the colder water jig bite that many anglers don't understand, feel or miss completely. Braided line with a fluorocarbon leader is the ticket for increased line sensitivity with good abrasion resistance. The bite can be transmitted through the rod and line as:

- 1) One or two very light taps
- 2) A sudden loss of bottom contact feeling
- 3) A feeling that you've snagged one or two wet leaves lying on the bottom and the weight keeps moving with you as you slowly drag the jig across the bottom

I immediately stop moving the jig when any of the three aforementioned types of hits happen.

I hold the rod parallel to the water surface and slowly load up the rod tip by applying tension to the rod tip and very slowly, using my wrist, move the rod from right to left putting pressure and a very slight bend in the tip.

If the wet leaf feeling (a feeling of additional weight on the hook) continues moving towards me as I load up the rod, I set the hook. You may also feel one or two mushy head movements of the smallmouth bass, "set the hook".

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SUCCESSFUL COLD WATER SOFT-BAIT PRESENTATIONS HIGH 40s -50s

C.W.S.D. & W.W.S.D. RIGGED ON A REDUCED SNAG FLUTTER HEADS



3.25"/3.75" PREDATOR CRAWLS RIGGED ON REDUCED SNAG FLUTTER HEADS



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1/8 AND 1/4 oz. REDUCED SNAG FLUTTER HEADS w/ HITCHER COIL KEEPER



TASTEE TUBES

SOLID COLOR TASTEE TUBES



1- SMOKE - purple & black flake



2-ROOT BEER - black & blue flake



3-WATERMELON - Black,gold & red flake



4-BLACK - Red,gold & blue flake



5-GREEN PUMPKIN - black,purple & red flake



6-MUD PIE - copper & purple flake

LAMINATED TASTEE TUBES



1- Green Pumpkin/Golden Brown Chartreuse



2- Green Pumpkin/Smoke Purple



3-Black & Blue

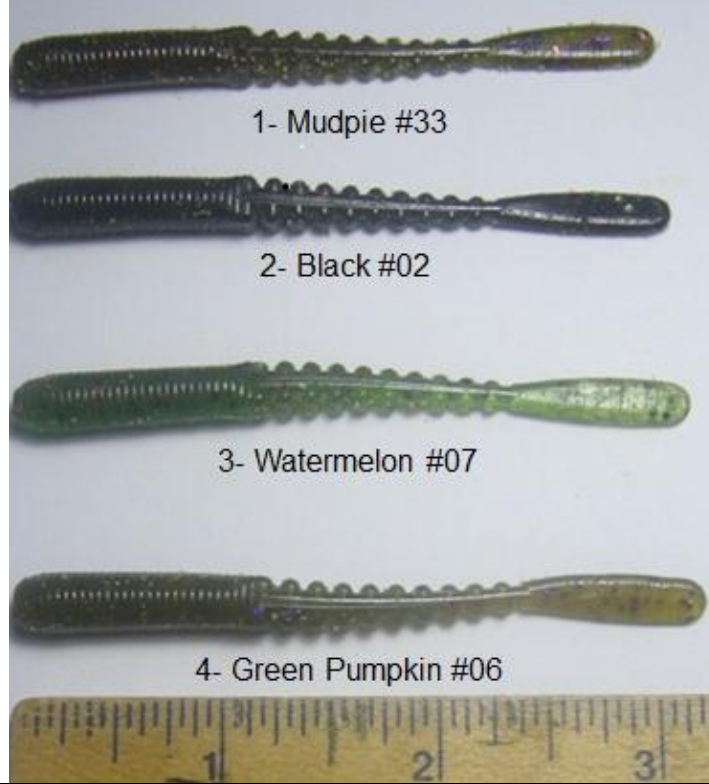


4-Roadkill-Camo / June bug

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G&W KRINKLE-CUT WORMS



MUSTAD ULTRA-POINT BLN HOOKS



These are the recommend jigs for use w/ the [Krinkle -cut worm](#), [Chillee Willee](#) and [Undulator](#). The football jig gives the bait central balance and the number #1 hook enables the tail of the bait to float up on a 45 degree angle. The single wire, flexible wire guard is superlative for prevent many permanent snags in rocky environments. The wire guard must remain against the line tie eye for the best performance and hooking ability.

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WATER TEMPERATURES - UPPER 40'S



WATERS TEMPERATURES FROM 45 DEGREES DOWNWARD

**2.25" WILLEE WANABEE /
STAND-UP FOOTBALL JIG W/
RIGGED SILICONE LAYERS**



**C.W.H.D. STAND-UP JIG
W/ WILLEE WANABEE
TRAILER**



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WATCH ENTICING, UNDERWATER ACTION OF THESE SOFT-BAITS

Underwater Fishing Videos

http://www.wincoscustomlures.com/hotnews/july10_hotnews/underwaterfishinglurevideos.html

This video will show you how to rig the [flutter head](#) w/ the Hitchiker coil keeper-

<http://s906.photobucket.com/albums/ac263/smallmouthaholicVideos/Rigging%20no1%20by%20Smallmouthaholic/?action=view¤t=plaincwsdandwwsd.mp4>

This video features open hook rigging-

<http://s906.photobucket.com/albums/ac263/smallmouthaholicVideos/Rigging%20no1%20by%20Smallmouthaholic/?action=view¤t=plaincwsdandwwsd003.mp4>

AVOIDING/MINIMIZING SNAGS

Smallmouth bass love mixed rocky environments consisting of ledges, boulders and mixed gravel and small stone. Dragging cold-water, soft-baits jigs through this environment will result in many snags unless you consider using the reduced snag flutter heads, which I designed and made available three years ago. The new, flexible wire guard football jigs work extremely well w/ the [Chillee Willee/Undulator](#), [G&W Krinkle-cut worm](#) and the new Willee Wanabee. The single wire guard is designed to remain in a straight, upward position against the line tie eye without affecting its outstanding hook-up abilities. The two aforementioned jigs have excellent central balance which keeps the hook in an upright position for a unparalleled hooking ratio.

<http://i38.photobucket.com/albums/e133/smallmouthaholic/Flutterheads004.jpg>

<http://i38.photobucket.com/albums/e133/smallmouthaholic/Krinlejigheads-2.jpg>

There's a trick to releasing many snagged jigs using a technique I refer to as, "The Buggy Whip Technique" Here's a [link to the video](#) that will help you understand this valuable technique.

http://www.wincoscustomlures.com/hotnews/mar11_hotnews/buggy_whipped.html

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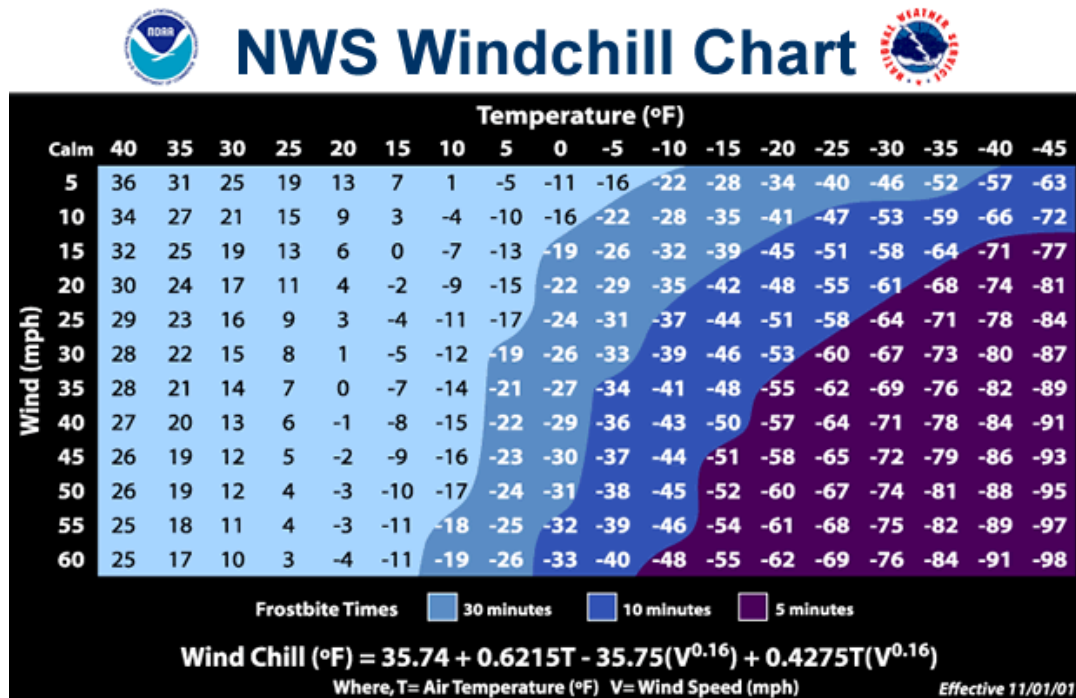
WIND CHILL CHART

Wind chill temperature is defined as that temperature in calm air which provides the same chilling effect on a person as that for a particular combination of temperature and wind. The chart below allows you to estimate the wind chill temperature for a variety of temperature and wind speeds. For example, if the temperature is 35 degrees F and wind speed 15 mph do the following:

- 1) Find 35 degrees F on the top row
- 2) Read down to the row with 15 mph
- 3) Read the number in the intersection

The importance of the wind chill index is as an indicator of how to dress properly for winter weather. Wind chill does not affect your car's antifreeze protection, freezing of water pipes, etc. In dressing for cold weather an important factor to remember is that entrapped insulating air warmed by body heat is the best protection against the cold. Consequently, wear loose-fitting, lightweight, warm clothing in several layers. Outer garments should be tightly-woven, water-repellant and hooded. Mittens snug at the wrist are better protection than fingered gloves.

Wind speeds greater than 40 mph have little additional effect on chilling. In using the table below, values of wind chill below -10 degrees F are considered bitterly cold. Values of wind chill below -20 degrees F are extremely cold -- human flesh will begin to freeze within one minute!



Use the table above to determine wind chill temperature. Make sure to calculate your boat speed, time/distance of your run in conjunction w/ the wind chill chart. Remember, one can always remove extra clothing once you get to your destination and start fishing

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DRESS FOR MAXIMUM WARMTH

Here's a list of clothing I wear before "Take-off" in a river during cold air temperatures

1. Cabela's expedition grade long johns
2. 600-1,000 gram gortex/thinsulate boots w/ 1pair of liner & heavy wool socks.
3. Cabela's turtle neck shirt
4. Cabela's insulated, one-piece camouflage coveralls w/ detachable hood
5. Watch cap
6. A fleece balaclava
7. Fleece gloves/ Simms wind-stopper fingerless gloves with Cabela's liner gloves.
 - a. I carry 3 different pairs/types of gloves in the boat for cold weather fishing
8. Deer hunting hand warmer muff w/ 2,"Grabber My Coal" chemical body warmers packets inside



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COLD WATER LAKE SMALLMOUTH BASS

The bronze gladiators will readily take the same, smaller soft-bait offerings as river smallmouth bass. They can be found on humps, ledges and rock piles that rise to within 12 feet of the lake's surface. The 3/4oz. Sonar blade bait and the Float 'n Fly are two very productive cold water baits for these roaming and suspending lake fish. Here are links to detailed articles I've written for both of these specialty artificial presentations.

Float 'n Fly

http://www.wincoscustomlures.com/hotnews/jan09_hotnews/floatnfly_update.html

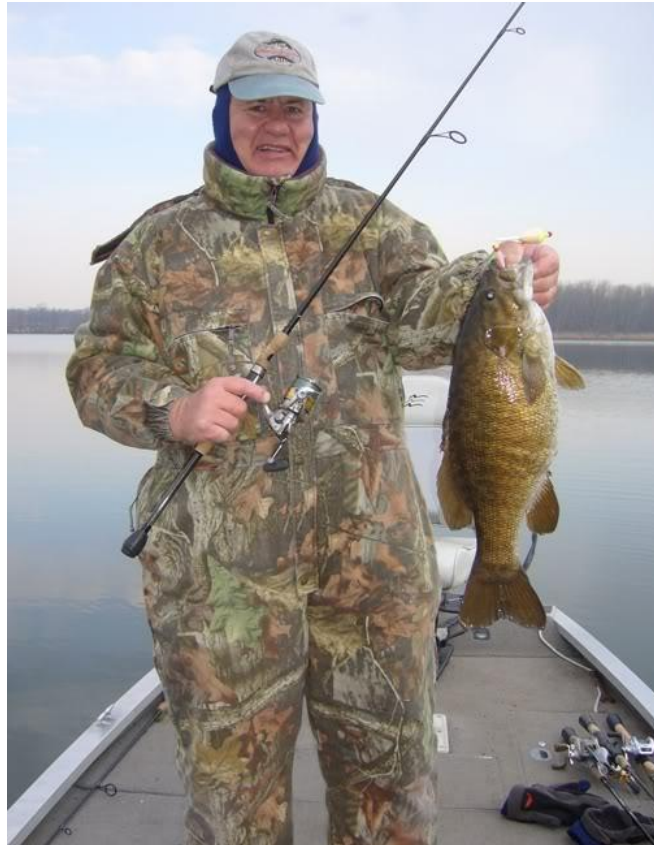
Blade Bait

http://www.wincoscustomlures.com/hotnews/feb07_hotnews/feb07_hotnews.html

Both baits will work in rivers but current, rock ledges /boulders present some difficult obstacles and anglers must be willing to lose more bait vs. a lake environment

PICTURES FOR COLD WATER SMALLMOUTH BASS SUCCESS

(smallmouth bass caught in 42-44 degree water temperatures)



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Enjoy your cold weather fishing in safety and comfort.
Wear your lifejacket
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