

# Thunder Bay Walleye Club Monthly Newsletter

March 2020

P.O. Box 812, Alpena, MI 49707

Officers			Board of Directors	
<i>President</i>	Eric Kruczynski		Jim Leesberg	
<i>Vice President</i>	Jon Kruttlin		Eric MacKenzie	
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			Spencer Weidbrauk	

## April 8, 2020 Meeting Highlights

The April Meeting was canceled.

- This meeting was canceled due as mandated by EO 2020-42.
- EO 2020-42 will also prevent us from holding our first scheduled tournament, which is slated for Saturday, April 25<sup>th</sup> from 6:00 pm to 2:00 am on long lake. Because of that, we are rescheduling that tournament for Saturday May 2<sup>nd</sup>. Time and location remain the same at this point.
- While EO 2020-42 does not specifically state rules regarding fishing, the MDNR has issued their interpretation of this executive order. This interpretation states that fishing with a boat with motor will be prohibited from 4/11-4/30 when that EO expires. You can be ticketed for up to \$1,000 if caught fishing from a boat.
- If you do not agree with EO 2020-42, specifically the MDNR interpretation, and banning of using a motorized vessel, feel free (and we highly encourage you) to contact Governor Whitmer at (517) 373-3400.

## New Fishing Technique

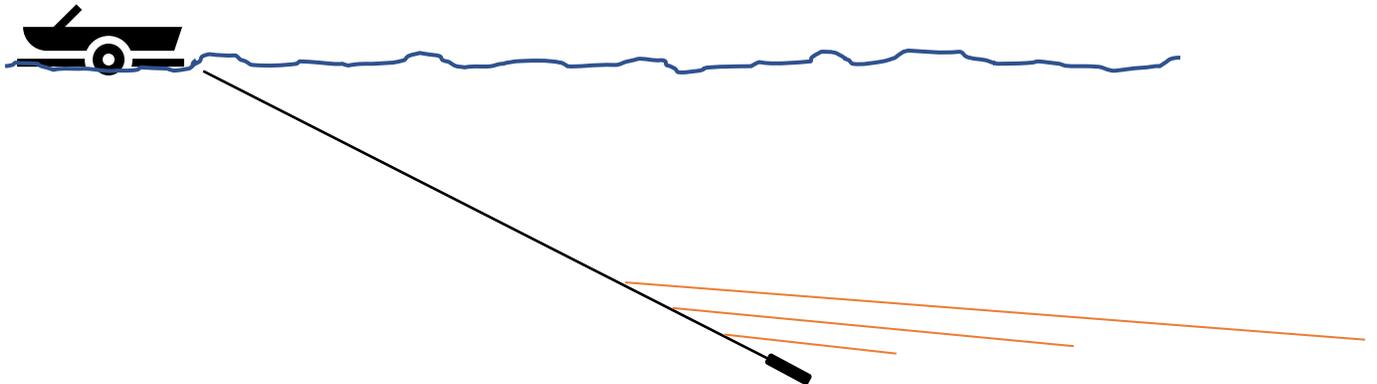
Since we are not able to meet this month and discuss fishing techniques and tactics, I thought I'd include some technical discussion regarding Handlining. Handlining was developed on the Detroit River. Anglers were looking for a more effective technique catch fish in a river system where the vast majority are located on bottom. A bottom that is constantly changing in depth and composition making normal trolling techniques every inefficient.

Handline reels are currently manufactured by A & S, and Riviera. Of the two, most anglers favor the A & S. Used ones can be found of both, and other reels that are no longer manufactured, including the handline reel I prefer...Schaller. I personally prefer them over the new reels

manufactured today because they seem to be built better, and they are easier to work on if you ever have an issue. Pictured below are my two current duty reels.



Handlining is simply a spring-loaded reel typically spooled with 60 lb coated braided wire line. At the end of the line is a shank, that have 3 attachment points for leads. On the bottom of the shank is a snap that you attached your weight. Weights range from 1-2 lbs with 1, 1.25, and 1.5s lbs being the most common weights used. Weight size is chosen so that your wire angle is close to 45 degrees when trolling. This angle is important as it will keep your lures tight to bottom yet prevent snagging. Leads are generally 20-25 lb test mono or fluorocarbon. The top lead is typically 40 ft, the middle 20 ft, and the bottom (or kicker) is 6 ft. These lead lengths can be varied if those same ratios are kept. The diagram below depicts what a handline set up looks like in the water.



Lure choice is important using this technique. Shallow diving body baits are a must. If the lure dives too deep it will snag bottom. The most common lure of choice for handlining is an original floating Rapala in sizes 5, 7, and 11. Jointed Rapalas, Thunder Stick Juniors, and other shallowing diving small body baits and spoons can be used.

There are many other subtle tips and tricks that can and should be used for this technique. Most of which can be researched on the internet, and YouTube. Also, fellow TBWC members that currently handline can be a great resource. Bryan Kozlowski is the member who taught me how to properly do it and is the most knowledgeable in the Alpena area on the subject. Dan VanMassenhove, Gary VanMassenhove, Adam Hume, Chris Wade, Adam Birk, and Erich Carlson and I are all great local resources. New members Eric Lenz and Jeff VanTorre are guys well versed in handlining that are from Lake St Clair. All of these members listed are always willing to help fellow anglers how to learn.

This technique can be applied to more than just rivers as well. Any deep-water applications when fish are on bottom, this can be successfully applied. Give this technique a try this year, it is an effective and fun way to catch walleye!



I caught this fish last week handlining the mouth of the Thunder Bay River...

### **Next Meeting: May 13<sup>th</sup> 6:00pm Twin Acres/19<sup>th</sup> Hole**

- Discussions regarding the first two tournaments and results.
- Discussions regarding new TBWC apparel and ATS catalogue.
- Update on the 2020 Alpena Walleye Extravaganza Progress.
- How to Walleye Technique Conversation led by Romeo Bourdage.
- Fishing Report Updates.

### **New Gear Review**

*This section is devoted to new fishing gear reviews. Each newsletter, we'd like a different member to share their personal review on some new (or new to them) fishing equipment they recently obtained. This is a great way to give some real-world feedback on new products to help the rest of our membership make purchasing choices. Gear is defined as any equipment used for the sport of walleye fishing, any*

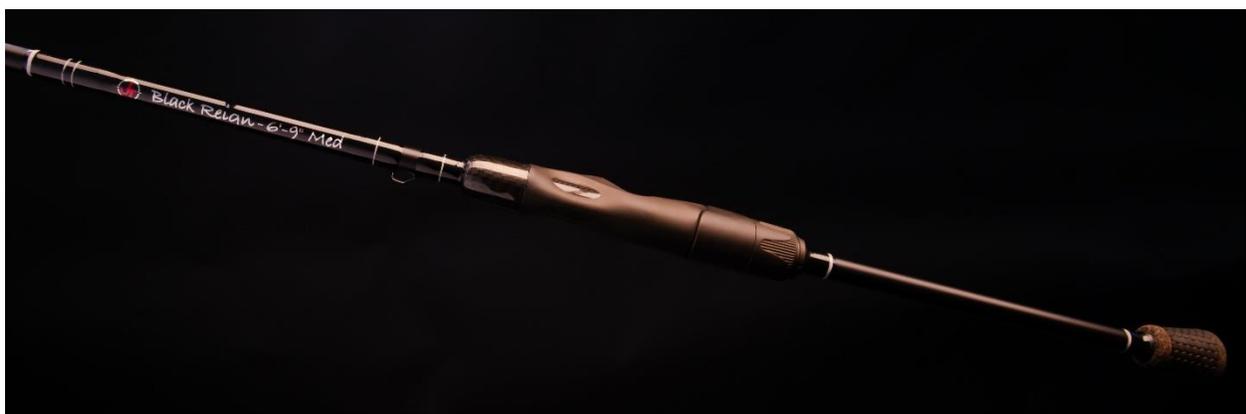
*season, any size. From ice cleats, shanty's, snowmobiles, boats, rod socks, etc. everything is game for this section no matter how big or how small...*

**JT Outdoors Black Reign Rods** – My son and I both have 6'9" Black Reign Rods that are made by JT Outdoors. They are touted as one of, if not the best walleye casting rod made today. These rods retail for \$339 (<https://jtodp.com/product/blackreignspinning/>) so they have the price tag to match their claimed performance. After using the 6'9" rods for more than a year now, I can say these are the most sensitive and highest performing rod I've ever casted. Unfortunately, I had durability issues with them. I had both of the 6'9" models break mid blank in virtually the same location after approximately 25-30 fish. The company offers a 1-year warranty and a lower cost replacement option should you break a rod at your fault. My first replacement the company sent me a new rod no questions asked. The second they understandably asked a few more questions.

I can assure you that I take excellent care of all my rods, but take special care of these because of their price, and their value to me as an angler. They are always placed in a rod sock and stored in a rod locker. The sensitivity they give me allows me to detect bites better and feel what my lure is doing at the end of extremely long casts. Both of which are extremely important to maximizing your catches doing this technique.

The second replacement rod I received from the company; the tip snapped 3" down from the top after initially threaded line onto it and supporting the weight of a ¾ oz jig head. I happened to have about 8 witnesses to the failure, as it happened as we were preparing boats for last year's Alpena MWT event. Obviously, I was extremely disappointed, but I was even more so when I called JT outdoors to get the situation handled. To make this to the point as I can the owner (Pat Bricco) and he was frankly rude, but after several difficult discussions finally agreed to send me a new replacement. Pat sent me a 7'3" model to replace it. He claimed he's never had to warranty a single 7'3" rod since their introduction to the market last spring. I have used the replacement several times this season without issues however, I've only caught a handful of fish with it, so I do not have a true durability report on this new 7'3" model.

In summary, the performance level of these rods is the best I've found to date. However, the durability of this product is questionable, as it the company's willingness to stand behind their product. If you decided to purchase one to try, please be aware to this.



*-Eric Kruczynski, President TBWC...*

## Fishing Reports

*We are asking members to please contribute detailed fishing reports with photos. The idea here is to share our knowledge with our membership base. For those of you not wanting to blow your spot up by sharing information...well the idea here is to all expand our knowledge, it's one of the main focuses of the club. You don't have to give exact coordinates to your location, but rather focus on techniques, presentations, and structure features. Also, this is sent to membership several weeks after you submit your report, and THAT bite you reported is no longer there. So please share so we can all learn more!!!*

### **4-6-2020 Dan VanMassenhove, Thunder Bay**

Dan made an afternoon trolling trip and caught and released this gorgeous 9.3 lb brown trout. He was trolling crank baits in shallow water in Thunder Bay.



### **2-8-2020 Eric and Gage Kruczynski, Thunder Bay**

Gage and I jigged up 5 nice walleye, 2 bass, and a sucker over a 3 hr fishing trip Wednesday afternoon in the mouth of the Thunder Bay River. All the fish were spawned out females. Including the dandy 29" Gage caught.



#### **4-6-2020 Romeo Bourdage, Thunder Bay**

After unsuccessfully trolling for a few hours after dark, Romeo picked up his casting rod and managed to catch 3 nice walleye casting stick baits in shallow water. Nice job switching up techniques Rome!

### **Classifieds**

Please email me: [Eric.Kruczynski@yahoo.com](mailto:Eric.Kruczynski@yahoo.com) if you have any for sale items you'd like listed. Items will be listed for one monthly newsletter cycle, unless requested for an additional extension each month.

### **TBWC Member Businesses. Please support our fellow members!!!**

During this Covid19 pandemic, all businesses are having a very difficult time. Please show support for your fellow TBWC members!!! We all have a buying choice. I hope that each and everyone of our members consider buying from a fellow member to support them.

#### **Greg Trelfa – The Boat Keeper**

(989) 595-3149

Full-service marine mechanic and rigging specialist. Sells and installs all major name brand electronics.

#### **Nate Engstrom – The Boat House**

(989) 340-1120

Full-service dealer for: Ranger Boats, Avalon Pontoons, Starcraft/Starweld, Smokercraft, Yamaha, Mercury, Evinrude and a full line of associated OMC parts, and supplies. Sells and installs all major name brand electronics.

#### **Brad Valley – Valley's Canvas**

(989) 464-1191

Full-service dealer for Minnkota and Cannon. Full service custom canvas shop.

#### **Jon Kruttlin – Alcona Motors**

(888) 572-3878

Full-service Chevy and Buick dealer.

#### **Justin Champagne – Northern Dents**

(877) 200-4245

Paintless Dent Removal.

#### **Jeff Tucholski – Gator Bait Tackle**

(989) 255-0336

Walleye Tackle Supplier and More...

#### **Ed Reutherford – Trout Scout Charters**

(989) 657-2681

Salmon, Trout, and Walleye Charters NE MI

#### **Carl Hatalja – Crazy Carl's Sport Fishing**

(989) 255-8744

Walleye, Trout, and Salmon Charters NE MI...Also Custom Rod Holders

#### **Erich Carlson – Carlson Wildlife Art**

(989) 464-5623

Hand painted, one of a kind, wildlife art.

## **Final Notes**

- Stay Safe Everyone!!!!

**2019 AOY.....Mark Haugerud**