

Brookville and Smallies Winter Fishing

WINTER fishing at Brookville, my personal favorite time of the year to fish the lake. Is the bite better? Absolutely not, it is horrible. What winter time does is, concentrates the fish in known areas. If you notice when you catch a smallie during the year with the exception of Fall there will be a follower. There is a reason for this. Smallies feed in packs like wolves. There will be three to four smallies in a pack. Winter time kind of works on the same principal except for the feeding part. They winter in pods, kind of like bait fish. The bite can be down right stingy with you sometimes going a couple days between bites. The one thing your patience will reward you with is a fish of a lifetime! The odds are definitely in your favor of catching a big fish, probably the only time of the year the scales tip in your favor.

When I approach Brookville in the cold winter months I do so with three baits. A silver buddy, a hair jig and live minnows. I will start with the silver buddy on known drops off the main river channel and to the deeper side of old road beds. If you have a topo map of Brookville these places will be easy to locate. So let's attack the lake shall we? My first place to stop would be at the Garhill area of the lake. There is a very nice channel that cuts into the cove where the buoy markers separate open water from idle area. To your right will be a very expansive flat that drops straight into the channel. Pull your boat up towards that flat until you reach depths of 30ft. I will throw the silver buddy up into the 15ft. depths and let it hit bottom. Reel in the excess line and keep the bait on a tight line and make small rips with the bait. I usually hold my rod at the nine o'clock position and never rip it past the eleven o'clock position. If the bait doesn't hit bottom again, set the hook! This is a great winter time bait. I would also keep my hair jig close by. I like a 5/16oz. bear hair jig with sparse hair. If it is too thick I will trim it out myself with scissors. I will start out with a trailer but don't be afraid to remove the trailer and fish it without one. The one thing I do with a hair jig in the winter time is? I always 100% of the time drag it; I never hop it up and down. I feel like this gives me two presentations in one. It mimics a minnow and a crawdad. All right, now we have fished the channels with no success (I hope not) but worst case scenario is we did. Don't fish just this one channel, locate as many of them as you can in high percentage spots and work them over pretty good. Let's hit the road beds.

The first road bed I always hit is right up from where we started. On the eastside of the lake just up from Garhill you will see the road bed leading into the water. The depths here will reach 60 plus feet. Don't be intimidated this can be very productive water. You will need a decent graph to keep you on top of the road bed. It will lead out into the lake a short distance and turn towards the main lake. Once it reaches the river channel you will find the remains of an old bridge. This bridge is golden for larger fish. It's not like Spring or Summer where you have several chances. You usually have only one shot at a fish so make it count! Work the silver buddy to the deeper side of the road bed like we did in the channels except this time you will be in a little deeper water and need to adjust your line

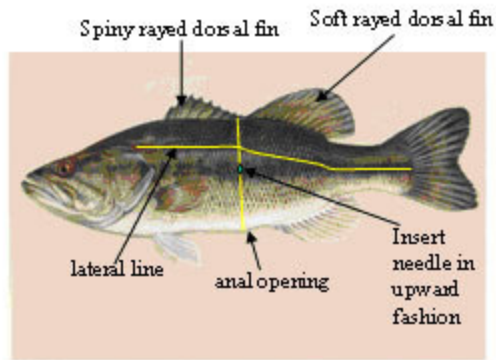
and tightness accordingly. This road bed will also swing to the backside of the point it is on. The point itself is worth fishing around the road bed as well. The water will shallow up a little on the backside but this is ok, we will attack it in the same fashion as the deeper one. Now if we have used the main two baits on the two sets of structure and have not produced any fish it's time for the secret weapon, the minnow!

I rig my minnows on a modified Carolina-Rig. I use a 1/4oz. split-shot about three feet up from the 1/0 hook. I rig the minnow through the tail so it looks like he is always trying to swim away. I don't use a bobber or float with my minnows; just let them freely swim around. I fish them in the same areas we have already fished except I add points to my presentation. I will throw the minnow up on the point in about 15ft. of water and work it down into depths reaching 30ft. You will need patience as you only want to move your bait about five feet at a time. If these techniques don't produce fish for you look at the bright side? You were fishing and not working so how bad could it be? I also highly recommend a camera on every trip as the wildlife around Brookville is amazing! You never know what you will see.

A couple other things I would like to touch on about fishing Brookville in the winter time is safety and depressurizing deep caught bass. Brookville is wide open lake that runs north and south and any winds over 10mph. can produce white caps and dangerous situations so be prepared for it. Make sure your boat is big enough to withstand three to four foot waves and always tell someone where your going and always wear your life vest. I also keep a warm change of cloths in my truck and a cell phone on the boat in a zip lock bag.

Depressurizing deep caught bass; do this on any fish caught from 20+ feet of water. Without doing this the fish will literally drown.

- 1) The fish should be submerged under water during the depressurization process
- 2) Draw an imaginary line from the notch separating the spiny dorsal and soft dorsal ray downward to the anal opening
- 3) Insert hypodermic needle approximately 3 - 5 scale rows below the lateral line at an upward angle towards the spine until it penetrates the swim bladder. ALL ANGLERS SHOULD USE A HYPODERMIC NEEDLE WHEN DEPRESSURIZING BASS. IF LARGE DIAMETER OBJECTS ARE USED TO PUNCTURE THE SWIM BLADDER DURING THE DEPRESSURIZATION PROCESS, FISH WILL LIKELY DIE AFTER RELEASE.
- 4) If the swim bladder has been properly depressurized, the escape of bubbles should appear through the needle
- 5) When the bass is released it should remain in an upright position and begin to swim in a downward fashion



If you would like more information on fishing Brookville Reservoir get in touch with Ray at krigby6644@sbcglobal.net or by phone at 317-788-9167 You can also find Ray hanging out at www.indianasmallmouth.com