

Catching Walleyes After A Cold Front

by
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Catching walleyes after a cold front can be, well, challenging to say the least.

Unfortunately I often "have" to go fishing in a tournament after a cold front. For many other anglers it unhappily falls on the day they have available in their busy schedules. Whatever your circumstances one thing is certain, you will at some time or another face fishing immediately after a cold front.

What is a cold front? It can be a 40-degree temperature drop, a vicious rumbling thunderstorm, or a howling north wind. A cold front could be all of the above or none of the above. Who cares? Bottom line, you're not going to fish until after it passes anyway!

Recognizing cold front conditions after the cold front has passed can be tricky and often can be hidden behind the disguise of a perfect fishing day. Yes, "the perfect fishing day." It's the day you've invited your boss or talked

your buddy into taking the day off work. No wind, mild temperatures, sunshine! It's a day of weather so

perfect that the words "cold front" never enter your mind, at least not until the day is over and you're

trying to explain to your fishing partners why you didn't catch a single fish. Failure to recognize a cold front is the major reason for many days each year of poor fishing success.

Expect A Cold Front

When you say to yourself, "This great fishing is too good to last," and everything you do works, look out! Here comes a cold front. As my old fishing partner Bob Propst, Sr., would always say, "If you have two good days of walleye fishing in a row, look out for the third!"

Recognizing A Cold Front

Consider the following scenario: The bite has been tremendous for the last couple days, and you're hoping the wind will go down along with the temperature. As you pull into the boat landing the next morning, your wishes have been granted. As you look out over the water, you feel giddy with anticipation; the wind has stopped, the



**The author with a "Cold Front 'Eye'".
Cold fronts don't necessarily mean walleyes will turn off altogether.**

surface of the lake is “looking like glass.” The sun is shining in a clear blue sky, and it’s 20 degrees cooler than it was yesterday. It’s going to be the perfect fishing day - WRONG! It’s a “MAJOR COLD FRONT.” Recognize it! Too often the most perfect fishing day of the year is often the worst fish-catching day of the year.

Accept Cold Front Conditions

As the weather changes, so should you! Don’t continue using the same strategies that worked the day before. If you’ve made your first pass on yesterday’s fish and didn’t get a hit, don’t change color, don’t change bait, and don’t change presentations. Those tactics won’t work. No matter what you do, you can’t catch fish that aren’t there! Accept the fact that this is a cold front and that the fish have moved. New locations and major presentation changes are in order. Cold fronts trigger a defensive reaction in walleyes. Walleyes, whose entire focus had been to seek food yesterday, will be seeking security today.

Regardless of the time of the year, think of cold front fishing as if it were fall fishing. The methods and locations are the same.

If you have had hot fish scattered on a flat or on the top of a long shallow point before the cold front comes through, they will be gone, but not far. Use your electronics and start checking the closest drop-offs, at depths of anywhere from 10 to 30 feet. Check the steepest drops on a break and be on the look-out for

inside turns or comers (cups) on these structures. You’ll find that with good electronics, cold front fish are easy to locate. You will also find that these fish are hard to catch.

Cold front fish are “cold fish.” They’ll be in deeper water and tightly schooled on the most vertical structure. Cold front fish need time to react. Use a presentation with longevity, such as vertical jigging or dragging a Lindy Rig slowly through them. Patience is the key. Fish slowly and quietly with the confidence of knowing that they will eventually bite.

Editors note: Be sure to check out Mike’s book ‘Walleye Trouble-Shooting’, available for \$14.95 plus \$3 S&H from Fishing Enterprises, PO Box 7108, Pierre, SD 57501. Credit Cards call toll-free 1-800-223-9126.

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versatile, pull out the Fishing Hot Spots map again, and move on to the next spot and repeat the process.

Most nights, I can get on fish in a number of different areas, and then even come back to the ones that had gone cold and catch fish again, because a new group of fish will have moved in. I spent a lot of time, and had a lot of fun, pioneering nighttime Walleye techniques, and believe me when I tell you this system works great. You’ll also be surprised at the number of other species of fish you catch, and at the size of those fish. I hope you get a chance to try this stuff out this month, because it looks to be a great night season this year. Good Luck! I’ll see you on the water!

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