



**Summer time can be the right time for perch fishing.
The author with a "jumbo" summer perch.**

around Marblehead, the South Bass State Park pier, and others further west, and east from Cleveland to Ashtabula.

Boat fishermen in the Western Basin enjoy excellent success in summer, and they do it in one of several ways. The easiest method is to head forth from a marina or public launch ramp, and just cruise looking for concentrations of boats. Then join those boats and fish. Chances are good that they're floating above a school and catching perch.

But it's never good to head right for the middle of a pack unless you see fish being pulled here and there in the center. At a cluster's outside edge you'll have first crack at any arriving schools, especially if you

fish a while and move, fish a bit then move again, until rod tips start bouncing steadily. Summer schools of perch can be fairly tight, and it's not unusual to see one boat pulling fish while another just 50 feet away is catching nothing. Sitting over sterile water isn't the way to build quick limits.

Another method, often much better, is to find your own school by cruising slowly along and watching a fish locator for clusters of blips on the bottom. Then toss over a marker buoy, ease around upwind and drift down before you gently drop an anchor. Even here, action can be fast for a while, then a school moves on and isn't down there anymore. If action stops, it's time to fire up the fish locator and search again.

Lacking a fish locator and given a gentle wind, smart anglers will drift along with sinkers bumping bottom until a few bites turn up, then anchor and fish until catches end. If winds are strong, it's best to anchor and fish 15 minutes, then move and move some more until a school is found. Again, it just isn't wise to stop at random and fish there all day hoping something will come by.

Boat anglers can get by with spreaders, especially when biting is hot and heavy, but even here two snelled hooks above a sinker will produce best. The wire arms of a spreader won't register a gentle bite, while the nearly straight down snells will sense the lightest touch. Last summer I took a headboat trip out of Port Clinton, found the fish finicky and action slow. At trips end only three people had a limit, two others, and myself and all were using a two hook rig. The others were fishing spreaders.

Top spots to go for that boating jaunt are plentiful in the Western Basin. Country off Cedar Point is a traditional hotspot, as is water around the Marblehead Lighthouse. Off the northwest corner of Kelleys Island is a good place, as is the north side of Rattlesnake, around Starve Island and Mouse Island, and more. Seek and ye shall find.

In the Central Basin fish run larger, but are fewer and harder to find. Sometimes perch will be in close here, but often enough they will be

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