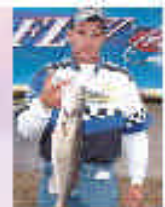


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Bruce "DOC" Samson
2002 Wal-Mart RCL Walleye
Champion and winner
of \$300,000.



For the Plautz boys, fishing is in their blood. (top to bottom) Don Plautz is an RCL winner. Son Danny took second in his first RCL event. And younger son Jimmy finished 6th as a co-angler at the 2002 RCL Championship.

(top to bottom) Rick Franklin took third at the 2002 RCL Championship and Tim Leska won \$75,000 as the top co-angler. And Rick Olson, who has won both RCL and PWT Angler of the Year titles.

With a victory and three top-10 finishes at the 2002 Wal-Mart RCL Walleye Championship, Team Crestliner has definitely arrived. See the Crestliner Tournament Series at your local dealer, and you'll understand why these guys have the winning edge. Call 800.889.7020 (ext. 690) during regular business hours for your nearest dealer. www.crestliner.com



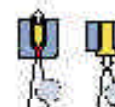
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Size 32 - 33 ft.
Size 30 - 31 ft.



Maumee Walker

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"ROCK WALKER"

The Lure with the Golden Lip

Trotting Depth:
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3 1/2" and 4 1/2"

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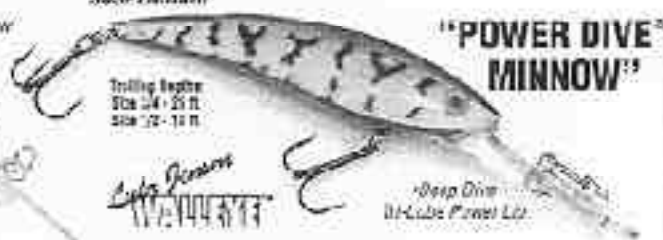


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Natural Minnow Profile

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Size 1 - 29 ft.
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"POWER DIVE MINNOW"

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Walleye News and Fact File

Lake Erie water levels will be lower this year

Lake Erie water levels will continue a downward trend, according to the January lake level forecast from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The Corps is calling for June water levels to be about 8-9 inches lower than June 2002 levels, and this is similar to levels observed in June 2001.

Roughly 90 percent of Lake Erie's water is provided by inflow from the Detroit River, coming from the three upper Great Lakes. Therefore, adequate winter precipitation in the upper Great Lakes basin is a key factor in maintaining Lake Erie's water level. According to the Corps' report, precipitation in the upper Great Lakes Basin has been below average this winter. December precipitation for the Lake Superior Basin was 67 percent lower than normal. In the Huron Michigan Basin, the December precipitation rate was 57 percent lower than normal. In the first three weeks of January, the Superior Basin had received only six percent of normal precipitation and the Huron-Michigan Basin received only nine percent of normal precipitation.

NOAA's Climate Prediction Center links the unfavorable precipitation forecast to the now "mature" phase of the current El Niño condition dominating the tropical Pacific Ocean. The Center predicts that the remainder of the northern winter will see drier-than-average conditions over the Ohio Valley and much of the Great Lakes. Much of the upper Great Lakes region currently is classified as being in moderate to severe drought, with drought conditions expected to intensify and expand at least through April 2003. Unless precipitation increases substantially over the next two months - which appears unlikely Lake Erie boaters will see low water levels and increased boating hazards similar to those experienced in 2001. Lake Erie boaters should remain aware of minimum water depths in their boating areas and of underwater obstructions such as reefs and shoals. Also remain cautious while boating on days with strong westerly

and southwesterly winds, which can temporarily lower the lake level further, making shallow harbors difficult to re-enter.

Lake Erie's Water Levels Who's Responsible for Lake Erie's Water Levels?

Anyone strolling on Lake Erie beaches during recent summers saw the differences-beaches wider than normal, vacationers cautiously edging their boats away from visible reefs, and docks resting several feet higher than the vessels connected to them. Unlike the 1980s where shoreline property owners battled erosion caused by high water levels, since 2000 the shipping industry and recreational boaters have struggled to get their vessels through low waters. What was a common Lake Erie water level of 574.1 feet in July of 1997 dropped to a surprising 571.7 feet three years later. So who's responsible? Solely Mother *Nature*.

Hydrologic Cycle

Like all the Great Lakes, Lake Erie's water is governed by a natural circulation system in which water evaporates from the Lake, condenses to form clouds and is returned to the earth's surface as precipitation. Water enters the lake basin as precipitation directly over the lake's surface, from groundwater, from runoff from the surrounding land, and from tributary rivers and streams. Yet about 80 percent of Lake Erie's water comes from the upper Great Lakes through the Detroit River (see above). Water evaporates from the lake's surface when it comes in contact with dry air, forming water vapor. The vapor stays as a gas, or it condenses to form fog and clouds. When clouds form, precipitation falls, creating a continuous hydrologic cycle.

Factors Affecting Lake Erie Water Levels

Lake levels are affected mainly by wind set-up and by changes in precipitation, both locally and throughout the Great Lakes basin. Fluctuating water levels in

Lake Erie are natural occurrences and are primarily a result of changes in the amount or rate of precipitation. Because precipitation during the winter is likely to be stored as snow pack or frozen ground water, Lake Erie experiences its lowest lake levels during late winter. The combination of runoff from melting snow and ice (both locally and from the upper Great Lakes) and increased local precipitation tends to produce higher lake levels during the spring.

Wind set-up is caused by the persistent blowing of wind in a single direction over a prolonged period of time. This produces a “piling up” of water at the downwind side of the lake, triggering the level at the opposite side to drop by the corresponding amount. This natural phenomenon can result in extensive spring flooding at Buffalo, New York during a prolonged strong west wind, or flooding in Port Clinton during an extended strong east wind. When the winds cease, the water will eventually return to its original level.

Types of Lake Level Fluctuations

Because Lake Erie is a highly dynamic system with complex processes, water levels will naturally fluctuate due to seasonal, short-term, and long-term changes. Seasonal fluctuations in water levels are based mainly on changes in precipitation and runoff to Lake Erie. Although precipitation is fairly constant throughout the year, the winter snow pack does not contribute to the lake level rise until the spring thaw and related runoff. Thus, the lake is always at its lowest level in the winter. The biggest factor influencing Lake Erie water levels is the amount of snow and ice melt received from the upper Great Lakes through the Detroit River. The combination of snow melting and spring rains contribute to seasonally increasing lake levels from early March through early August. Evaporation is greatest in the fall and early winter when Lake Erie is relatively warm and the air above the lake is cold and dry. It can also be very significant during the long, hot cloudless periods of July and August.

Lake levels are also affected by day-to-day changes. These short-term fluctuations are due to storms, wind, or ice jams and usually last from a few hours to several days. Ice jams in the Niagara River, for example, will decrease the amount of water flowing out of Lake Erie, temporarily increasing the lake level. Sustained high winds (wind set-up) can also cause short-term fluctua-

tions, as described above.

Long-term fluctuation occurs over a period of years and depends on how wet or dry and hot or cold the weather is around the entire Great Lakes basin north of and including Lake Erie. Lake Erie experienced extremely low levels in the late- 1920s, mid-1930s, and in the mid-1960s. Extremely high levels were experienced in the early 1950s, and the mid 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. During the last few years, precipitation levels within the Great Lakes basin has been below average, which has contributed significantly to our current low lake levels. Source: FS-025 of the Ohio Sea Grant

“WALLEYE RUN” SET TO BEGIN ALONG SANDUSKY AND MAUMEE RIVERS

One of Ohio’s most unique fishing opportunities is about to occur as the 2003 Maumee and Sandusky rivers’ walleye runs are about to begin, according to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Division of Wildlife.

Each spring, as water temperatures warm and days grow longer, a small portion of Lake Erie’s walleye population make their way up the two northwestern Ohio streams to spawn. And although they represent a small portion of all Lake Erie walleyes, the run brings hundreds of thousands of the tasty fish within casting distance of eager anglers.

During last year’s three to four-week run, approximately 40,000 walleyes were caught in the Maumee and Sandusky rivers.

Walleye spawning normally occurs in these rivers anytime from mid-March through mid-April, but frequently the peak activity occurs the first week of April when the water temperatures range from 40 to 50 degrees. High, fast-moving water also increases the number of walleye in the rivers, especially if river temperatures are warmer than lake temperatures. Most of the river walleyes taken this spring will measure 18-22 inches, though some fish in both rivers will be much larger.

The best fishing areas in the Maumee River will be from Conant Street Bridge in the City of Maumee

upstream to the end of Jerome Road in Lucas County. Sandusky River anglers will find greater success from Brady's Island to Roger Young Park in the City of Fremont.

Though most anglers wade these rivers while fishing for walleyes, some choose to fish from boats. The ODNR advises boat anglers to always properly wear a life jacket, take precautions against overloading their boat and capsizing, be well dressed to avoid the onset of hypothermia, and be prepared to handle an emergency should one occur.

Legal fishing hours from March 1 through May 1 are sunrise to sunset and the daily walleye bag limit is four. Only fish that are hooked inside the mouth may legally be taken and any snagged fish must be immediately released.

Additional [fishing information](#) and [boating safety tips](#) are available on the ODNR web page at ohiodnr.com

MORE THAN 80,000 TROUT TO BE RELEASED IN OHIO WATERS THIS SPRING

More than 80,000 rainbow trout measuring 10 to 13 inches will be released in 40 Ohio waterways from March through May to enhance public fishing opportunities. The daily catch limit for inland lakes is five trout per angler.

Anglers age 16 and older must have an Ohio fishing license. Those anglers age 66 and older may obtain a free fishing license where licenses are sold. The season's new fishing license is now available and is required on March 1. The 2003 annual fishing license costs \$15 and is valid through February 29, 2004. A one-day fishing license is available and may be purchased for \$7 by residents or non-residents. The one-day license may also be redeemed for credit toward purchase of an annual fishing license.

Additional information about spring trout releases is available by calling a [Division of Wildlife district office](#) in Akron, Athens, Columbus, Findlay, and Xenia, or by calling toll free 1-800-WILDLIFE.

From Editor, page 2

In March I attended the annual Charter Captain's conference where Jim Fofrich Jr. gave a moving speech on what his father meant to him and to the Lake Erie Community. He mentioned that one of the lessons learned was Jim's philosophy of what it meant to him to be on the Lake. Being on the lake was like being a guest in someone's home. While in the home one should show respect of both the home and those in the home. Lake Erie was truly home to Jim Fofrich Sr.

We hope you enjoy the new "ONLINE" format of our publication. In each issue we will offer the full magazine and individual articles in PDF format as well in HTML format. For those fishermen (and I know there are many) who have not yet caught on to the computer lingo, simply go to www.walleye.com to see what we're talking about. Wait a minute, if you're reading this, you are already there, that is unless someone printed this text out and shared it with you, and we hope that happens often.

The current issue will be fully displayed and available from our web site for NO CHARGE. Subscribers to the magazine will gain password access to all previous issues of the magazine. Since 1995 we have archived many dozens of articles on fishing Lake Erie.

Till next time, good fishing!

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