

to where you get your bites. Understand, however, that the patterns may have as much to do with choosing the right kind of live bait or making the best presentation for the day as with a depth range, type of structure or specific spot. On many September days, one bait will work best, but you'll catch fish in equal numbers from a range of depths.

fish for late summer and early fall fishing. In fact, he'll commonly fish for walleyes with baits that many anglers would consider "borderline big" as northern pike bait. Again, though, he keeps shiners and chubs of various sizes handy and mixes up his offerings, letting the walleyes dictate the size and type of minnow they want to eat.

all those areas. Pulling spinners is slow and steady, but the boat keeps moving so you can cover a lot of water. With slight adjustments of weight, speed or simply the amount of line out, you can fish with equal effectiveness around shallow weedlines or deep rocks.

For spinner presentations, use a No. 3 or No. 4 blade in a color that suggests local forage, a 6-foot leader and a 1- or 2-ounce bottom bouncer. Match your hook size and configuration to your bait, using a single hook for minnows and hooking the bait through the lips, and two hooks for crawlers so you can stretch out the bait. Fish a spinner with the rod in your hand so that you can alter the amount of line out as needed and feel strikes or the loss of vibration if the blade gets fouled or covered with grass and quits spinning.

Once Sundin locates walleyes, he often switches to jigging. Unless the fish are very shallow, he'll position the boat directly above the structure with his trolling motor, either holding steady over a key spot or working very slowly over the top and the edges of the structure. Either way, he never stops watching his electronics. If the fish are on shallow weedbeds or reefs, Sundin casts to them.

When walleyes hold atop major points, which connect deep summer areas with fall feeding flats, one of the best ways to get those fish to bite is to work the structure methodically with a live minnow on a Lindy rig, which consists of a walking sinker, a swivel, 6 to 8 feet of leader and an octopus style hook.

The best line angle for Lindy rigging depends in large part on the depth of the water. For water that's more than about 25 feet deep, fish with the line going almost straight down. For shallow areas, add more angle to the line to avoid spooking the fish. At any angle, fish structural features thoroughly, working up, down and across key areas.

Experiment with the details of your approach and pay attention, and by late afternoon, when the action usually turns the best, you should have the best bait and presentation figured out so that you can get the most out of the hottest bite. □

HANDY BAIT STORAGE

Keeping bait alive and fresh presents a challenge for many anglers, especially during late summer and early fall when the water tends to be warm. An easy way to make use of the best water available is to use a collapsible mesh bait holder such as the Lindy Bait Tamer.

The cool thing about a Bait Tamer is that you don't need an expensive tank with its own aeration system. Put the Bait Tamer in the same boat livewell where you'll put the fish you catch, and you can keep it handy and in excellent condition. For bank or dock fishing, tote the bait-filled Tamer to the lake in a bucket of water and then hang it in regular lake water to keep your baitfish in good condition.

Check it out at www.lindyfishingtackle.com.

—Jeff Samsel



THE BAIT

Jeff Sundin (www.jeffsundin.com), a veteran guide who spends much of his time in September putting down live offerings for walleyes, primarily fishes with baitfish at this time of year. During late September especially, leeches and nightcrawlers become less effective than live fish because the insects disappear from the natural forage base and the fish feed mostly on chubs, shiners, perch and other kinds of fish.

Sundin never wants to get boxed in and be out of luck if the fish show a distinct preference that surprises him. Therefore, he almost always has a couple of cartons of crawlers in his boat — just in case — and he usually has at least three different kinds of minnows swimming around in his bait tank. Fathead minnows, various shiners and chubs all can produce well some fall days.

Sundin generally prefers large bait-

PRESENTATIONS

Most live-bait presentations are accomplished with one of three techniques — spinner fishing, jigging and Lindy rigging. Each offers distinct advantages. Spinners allow you to move the fastest in search of fish, along with providing an element of fish-attracting flash. Minnow-tipped jigs offer the best opportunity to vary the total look of an offering and the actual presentation in order to trigger strikes from fish that change their moods frequently. Lindy rigging, meanwhile, offers a highly natural presentation of live bait on its own and can be tough to beat for getting fussy fish to bite and for working a modest-sized area to find the fish.

Spinners help you find fish when you don't know whether they are up on flats, holding on main-lake points or hanging over humps that are surrounded by deeper water — and for days when they are widespread over