



# Angler's Notebook

by Jerry Bush



photo-Jerry Bush

**Ice fishing is a popular activity in the Keystone State, but ice comes and goes throughout the winter months in much of Pennsylvania. Vanishing ice signals warming trends that motivate many fish to bite.**

Fish are lethargic when inhabiting icy-cold water. One great key to successful ice fishing is keeping the bait in the strike zone for extended lengths of time. The angler who keeps the bait perfectly still is the person experiencing the most success. When choosing to bottom-bounce or jig the bait, move it as slowly as possible through the strike zone. Get the fish's attention by bouncing the bait below and above the strike zone, before allowing it to dangle motionless where fish are most likely to attack.

In Pennsylvania, expect walleyes and perch to be near the bottom. Bass and panfish usually hang a few feet above the bottom, while trout and steelhead are often located at mid-depths. However, few things are guaranteed. Fish often remind anglers that rules are made to be broken.

Larger bait does attract larger fish, but small fish will shy away from overbearing baits. On the other hand, smaller baits will lure both smaller and larger gamefish. It may be wise to fish with smaller bait until the angler has a good feel for the size and species of fish predominantly inhabiting any area at a specific time.

Most adults who fall into 32-degree water will experience cramping and fatigue within 15 minutes. Ice awls are ice picks surrounded by plastic or wooden handles. Anglers use them to get out of the water and back onto the surface of the ice. Ice awls have been used to save many lives but are only useful if the angler can reach them easily, suggesting the practical purpose of buoyant handles and a lanyard that allows the angler to suspend the awls around the neck.

## Fishin' from the Kitchen

### Crispy Tempura Battered Panfish Strips *by Wayne Phillips*

After a day of ice fishing, nothing beats an appetizer of comfort food, in this case crisp tempura battered panfish strips with three dipping sauces.

#### Ingredients for four servings:

- 16 ounces of boneless, skinless panfish strips
- 1 1/3 cups flour
- 2 egg yolks
- 1 cold can of beer or club soda
- Salt and black pepper
- Canola or corn oil for frying

#### Ingredients for Thai peanut sauce

- 1/3 cup peanut butter
- 1 Tbsp. water
- 1 lime, zest and juice
- 2 Tbsp. soy sauce
- 2 Tbsp. honey

#### Ingredients for Lemon tarragon mayonnaise sauce

- 1/2 cup mayonnaise
- 1 Tbsp. lemon juice
- 1 Tbsp fresh tarragon or 1 tsp. dried

#### Ingredients for Asian sweet chilli sauce

- 1/2 cup sweet chilli sauce



photo-Wayne Phillips

### Procedure

Heat oil in a deep saucepan until it reaches 350 degrees F. Place flour and egg yolks in a bowl and whisk together. Whisk in enough beer or club soda to make a thin batter. Dip panfish strips in the batter and gently lower into the hot oil. Fry until golden brown. Drain on paper towels. Season immediately with salt and black pepper. Serve fish on a platter with the dipping sauces.

### Sauces

Make the dipping sauces first so the flavors blend together. If they are too thick, add water to thin.

### Batter

Tempura batter is lighter than regular batter. Make it extra light by using your favorite beer or club soda. Coating the fish with a thin layer of batter helps makes the finished dish extra crispy. When cooking, do not overcrowd the saucepan with fish.