



# Angler's Notebook

by Jerry Bush



photo-Jerry Bush

Cleaning and organizing cluttered tackle boxes is a productive winter activity. With each fishing trip last summer, you may have become lax about carefully placing tackle in assigned bins and boxes while quickly changing lures. The lack of organization may not have hindered you then, but when you open your tackle box during your first fishing trip next summer, it may slow down your productivity. Organized tackle will help you to be prepared. Many cleaners and chemicals used for automobile interiors work well for cleaning and protecting plastic tackle boxes.

When ice fishing, avoid using the same type of line that caught fish in July. Before stepping onto the ice, use line manufactured for ice fishing. The lines used in summer are usually engineered to allow casts over great distances, which is not a concern when dropping lures through holes when ice fishing. Use a line that remains flexible in cold conditions and holds up to the targeted species. Some ice fishing lines are made with special coatings, so these lines continue to slide through eyelets as ice builds up. If you are targeting panfish, a light line in the 2- to 4-pound-test line range is adequate. However, if you are also targeting bass, pike, or steelhead inhabiting the same water as panfish, choose a 6- to 8-pound-test line. There are braided ice fishing lines that hold up better than monofilament line and may allow the angler to bring even large fish through the hole with a smaller diameter line.

Many hard-fighting fish are caught by fly fishing enthusiasts during winter in Pennsylvania including bass,

pike, steelhead, Brown Trout, and Rainbow Trout. When your hands are cold and the fishing action has been slow, “maintain the arch” when fighting fish with a fly rod. Keep enough pressure on the fish, but not too much.

Cold line and iced eyelets create a different experience than summertime fishing, but maintaining the arch will help land hard-fighting fish. If you try too hard to stop a hard-fighting fish, it may break your line, or worse, a frigid rod tip. The fish may unhook itself if you let the line slack. Keep a vision in your mind of the perfect arch in the rod when you feel that a fish is hooked well.

Lake Erie is the shallowest of the Great Lakes. Therefore, Lake Erie has a reputation for wind to whip up white capped, 5- to 6-foot waves, sometimes larger, occurring a few times most years. As violent water crashes against the shoreline during winter, it may freeze. The frozen water is bombarded by more waves until huge chunks of ice break free, lift, and refreeze, eventually forming an uneven surface locals refer to as “ice dunes”. These ice dunes provide an unstable, hollow surface that may be 5- to 10-feet above the lake below. Do not attempt to access the ice dunes for ice fishing. Falling through a hollow surface 5-feet above frigid water is dangerous and may not be escapable.

## Fishin’ from the Kitchen

### Largemouth Bass and Pinto Beans on the Ice

by Wayne Phillips

Bring summer freshness to a winter meal by topping roasted pike with zesty gremolata.

At home ingredients for four servings:

- 2 19-ounce cans pinto beans
- 1 clove garlic, crushed
- ½ pound bacon, diced and minced
- 1 large onion, coarsely chopped
- 1 14-ounce can tomato sauce
- Salt and black pepper to taste

On the ice ingredients:

- 1 pound boneless, skinless Largemouth Bass, cut into bite-size cubes

#### Procedure

Simmer the pinto beans to heat. Sauté bacon, onions, and garlic until softened. Add, along with the tomato sauce, to the

beans and simmer for 30 minutes. Season with salt and black pepper. Pack in a pot with a tight fitting lid. On the ice, bring beans to a simmer. Add the fresh fish and simmer for 15- to 20-minutes more. Add more water if needed.

#### Serve

Crusty rolls are all you need. If you like some zing in your beans and bass, add your favorite hot sauce.

#### Tips

On the ice, you may need to add more water. The finished dish should have plenty of liquid to dip your bread in the sauce.

Use any white fleshed fish in this recipe. In the summer, freshly caught fish is a regular feature for shore lunch. This recipe allows you to do that in the winter as well. Crappie, Walleye, perch, or pike are perfect for this dish.

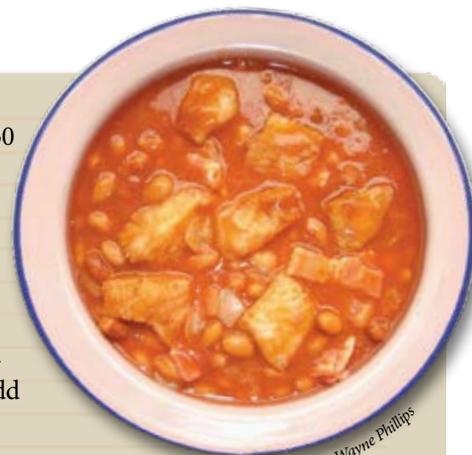


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