



More Than A Fish Story: Taylor Peck's Massive Catch

By Britton Ransford

Walleye angler Taylor Peck expected the morning of August 12th to be just be another day on the water. His plans for the day? Fish for a bit just after sunrise, then go pick up the kids and throw a few more lines in the water, as he typically does during the summer months.

Peck, from the Qu'Appelle Valley area in Saskatchewan, has fished The Calling Lakes — a series of water bodies consisting of Katepwa Lake, Mission Lake, Echo Lake and Pasqua Lake — extensively throughout the years, as well as Tobin Lake, Lake Diefenbaker and Last Mountain Lake in the south, each known for catching once-in-a-lifetime, 10-plus pound walleye. Typically, targeting walleye here is as unpredictable as any walleye fishery, but there's an abundance of fishing holes for anglers to enjoy.

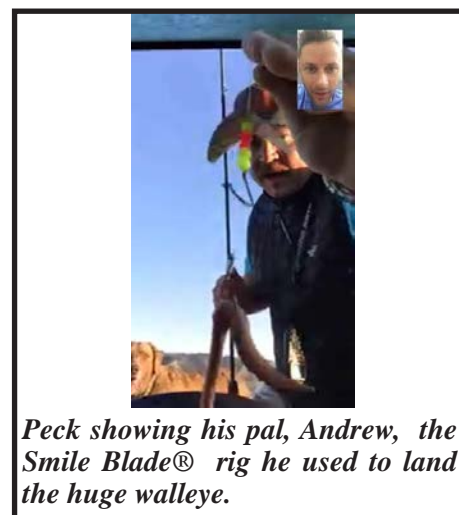
"On average, fall fishing provides the best bite for the large fish, but this summer has been good from the get-go," Peck says. "Fishermen on Last Mountain Lake have experienced tremendous good fortune this year on both size and numbers of walleye.

"Typically, hot weather makes finding the fish a little more difficult as fish head for deeper waters, but it would appear that our unusually hot summer has made some special conditions for walleye fishing here in the province."

The forecast was, again, calling for hot temperatures later in the day, so Peck loaded up the boat and was on the water by 5 a.m. It was a calm morning, a little cooler than expected, but he had the lake to himself. The water was glass — not exactly ideal conditions for targeting walleye, but a perfect morning to relax and hopefully entice a few biters.

Early on, the bite was relatively slow compared to previous days. Peck was using a 1.5" Chartreuse Scale Smile Blade® tipped with a nightcrawler on two hooks and a 36" fluorocarbon leader behind a 1.5 oz. bottom bouncer. He was trolling at about 1 mph in shallow waters.

Then all of a sudden, Peck had hooked his first fish of the day. But this wasn't just any walleye. Peck, at the time, wasn't even sure it was a walleye on the other end.



Peck showing his pal, Andrew, the Smile Blade® rig he used to land the huge walleye.

"With nearly 300 hours in the boat on these lakes this summer, my initial thoughts regarding the fish was that it was a large carp," Peck recalled. "Carp have become extremely prolific in these waters and catching them on walleye tackle is common.

"And while my initial thoughts were of a carp peeling line, my observation of the behavior piqued my interest as I realized this fish pulled down, and while it was peeling line, it wasn't the sporadic, vigorous runs from left to right like I'd experienced with carp before. This fish pulled hard and stayed down. So, with the power loaded up on the rod, I immediately grabbed the net from the floor in the boat and prepared myself."

Having hooked into carp on multiple occasions, Peck wasn't optimistic that this was, instead, a once-in-a-lifetime walleye. He continued to reel, preparing for another letdown.



Peck caught this huge walleye on a Smile Blade® 1.5 in Chartreuse Scale.

But then, she appeared. A gorgeous, 14.55-pound walleye was staring him in the eyes.

"I was set up for disappointment like every other time, but when this walleye came to the surface, I couldn't actually say or feel very much, I just knew I had to get it in the net," Peck said. "Pulling the loaded rod up high with one hand, and scooping the fish into the net with the other, the overwhelming sensations of potential earth-shattering disappointment was gone."

Peck took some time to re-gather himself. He sat down and left the net in the water so he and his prized catch could relax. Likening the moment to waking up on Christmas morning as a child and hurrying downstairs to see what Santa had left, Peck knew he had to share this moment with someone.

"Sitting down with the net still in the water, I had to call someone to witness this catch with me," Peck said. "As the only person on the lake that morning, I had to choose who I was going to wake up at 6 a.m. on a Saturday.

"I also didn't want this experience to end up being another "fish story," so I needed someone there to legitimize my catch, since I practice catch and release 100 percent of the time. My good pal and fishing partner Andrew Urzada was my call, and FaceTime was the method."



Peck's walleye weighed 14.55 pounds, measured 33-inches in length and 19-inches in girth.

Then, no answer. *Of course.* Andrew was just getting out of bed, though. He called back immediately, a little concerned, assuming there was something wrong. Why else would he be calling so early in the morning?

"You aren't going to believe this," Peck said as he flipped the camera to the net, showing off the 33-inch walleye. "What the frig is that," Andrew said, astonished at the walleye's size. "I just caught the biggest walleye of my entire life," Peck explained, "and it's in that net waiting for me to pick it up for the first time."

Peck then pulled her into the boat. After hooting and hollering for a few minutes, Peck placed the walleye back in the water to rest and recover, and prepared to take some photos and gather some measurements. And then, it was time to release her.

"She was back in the water, full of color and vigor," Peck said. "And then she shot back down where she came from."



Peck, who practices catch and release, hopes one day his kids will catch this same walleye, when she's bigger.

Peck, who has experimented with everything from jiggging live bait to pulling cranks for walleye on these waters, says nothing beats a Smile Blade® and a bottom bouncer.

"This combination is the reason I caught this fish," Peck said. "This combination was the reason Andrew and I took second place in the Boundary Dam Walleye Classic in May of this year. This is the combination that I've caught the majority of my big fish on since I found out about the Smile Blade.

"It's that simple. On any given day, I would choose a Mack's Lure Smile Blade over any other blade in my tackle box. In fact, I would confidently say that if I had to choose one lure, and only one lure, for walleye fishing, it would be the Mack's Smile Blade, no question."

As Taylor can attest, you never know when that once-in-a-lifetime fish will grab on to your line. It takes time and practice, knowing your fishery and a consistent approach.

And having a Smile Blade® or two handy doesn't hurt, either.

Advanced Planning Pays Off

By Hall-of-Fame Angler

Stan Fagerstrom

Part 1

There wasn't another angler in sight at the area of the river I wanted to fish. I was about to find out why.

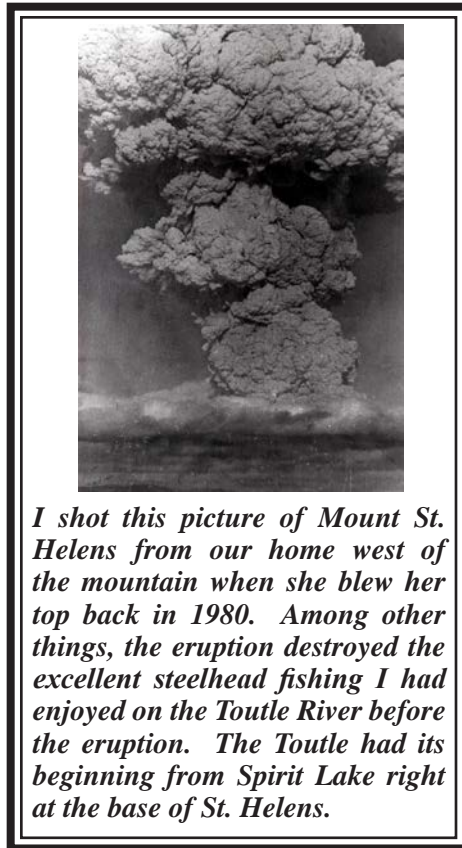
It didn't surprise me that I was one of the first to get this particular spot when I had a chance to get there. But darn near always I could see someone else coming not far behind. This trip I had it all to myself.

The answer was obvious when I finally got to the drift I wanted to fish. The surface of the river from the shore to about two feet on out was covered with a thin sheet of ice. I had to actually break the ice as I waded out to cast.

I hadn't paid any attention to the weather forecast before I went to bed and it wouldn't have made any difference if I had. In those days I went fishing whenever I had had a chance and to heck with weather conditions. Winter weather in Southwest Washington where I was fishing at the time generally wasn't all that bad but at times it could be just plain nasty.

That's how it was on the morning I'm talking about. When I walked out of my door it was obviously cold enough to put ice in your whiskers. I went back in and added some of the garments I knew would help when I got to the river.

The river I reached that morning was the Toutle. You won't find conditions on the Toutle today anywhere near what they were back then. The beautiful old Toutle, you see, has its beginning in Spirit Lake, the lake that is located right at base of Mt. St. Helens.



I shot this picture of Mount St. Helens from our home west of the mountain when she blew her top back in 1980. Among other things, the eruption destroyed the excellent steelhead fishing I had enjoyed on the Toutle River before the eruption. The Toutle had its beginning from Spirit Lake right at the base of St. Helens.

From Spirit Lake the Toutle flows on down through the foothills of the Cascades west of the mountain to eventually dump into the Cowlitz River, a major tributary of the lower Columbia River where it divides the states of Oregon and Washington.

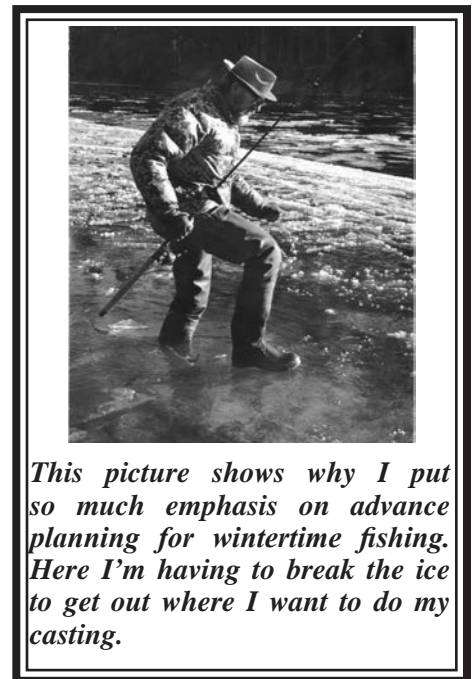
Older readers of this column are a cinch to remember what happened to the Toutle and Spirit Lake when Mt. St. Helens blew her top on May 18, 1980. In fact, my wife and I weren't all that far away when the mountain exploded.

Thank heavens we were living due west of the mountain. Our home was probably about 50 miles as the crow flies west of the explosion. We had to evacuate twice but didn't wind up suffering any major damage. Had we been located to the north or east of the mountain instead of west we probably would have been goners.

How I loved that beautiful Toutle River before Mt. St. Helens exploded! I learned much of what

I like to think I know about winter steelhead fishing on her waters. What she taught me I've been blessed to use on to one degree or another on fishing adventures from the Amazon to Alaska and Argentina to Brazil and a whole lot of spots in between.

The morning I've been writing about was one I experienced several years before the mountain blew. I'm sharing the details especially for newcomers who might be about to experience the same kind of weather I've been talking about for the first time.



This picture shows why I put so much emphasis on advance planning for wintertime fishing. Here I'm having to break the ice to get out where I want to do my casting.

I'm not about to tell you I have all the answers about dealing with the kind of weather I detailed earlier. I don't, you don't and neither does the bare faced liar who says he does. I do have two words that come close to summing up what you can do. Those two words are "Advance Preparation."

I had the extreme good fortune to make friends with a part time guide in some of my early fishing times in the Pacific Northwest. This guy invited me to go steelhead fishing with him. I've never forgotten the

emphasis he placed on my doing what I could to prepare for the curves that the weatherman might throw at us.



Steve Fleming, one of the West's best guides, always urges his clients to be prepared for the weather when he has them out on the John Day River. One of his clients shows the results of Steve's advice.

And he didn't beat around the bushes in doing so. He knew I was a first class greenhorn where winter steelhead fishing was concerned. He also knew darn well if he didn't "educate" me a bit I could wind up being a pain in the rear instead of being fun to have along.

It's easy to recall one of the first things he told me. "Stan," he said, "I'll be glad to take you along but you need to know what you're getting into. It can be colder than old billy out there this time of year and that applies whether we're talking about either air or water temperature. My gosh, believe it or not I had to bust ice along the shoreline a couple of times last December to get far enough out from shore to fish a couple of sports properly."



Advance preparation was one of the main reasons I was able to get this Toutle River steelhead within reach.

This experienced friend was right. One of the primary considerations, and this is so darned important, is the preparation you can do in advance. That old business about the future belonging to the guy who prepares for it really applies where winter steelhead fishing is concerned.

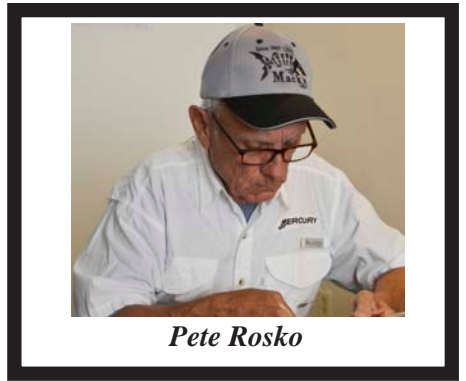
You'll find a couple of items right here at Mack Lure that have turned out to be a tremendous help to the angler who has to deal with the kind of weather I've been writing about. For that matter, you'll find they can also great service to you as whatever the weather and wherever you fishing.



What are some of the tools that can help you ease the problems with cold weather angling? You're looking at a dandy. It's a Pip's Leader Caddy. You can prettie all the rigs you like to use for winter steelheading. There's no need to fool around working with half frozen fingers.

These dandy tools weren't around back in my early days of fishing the Toutle. I'm talking about Pip's Leader Dispensers. Stick with me because in my next couple of columns I'll be sharing why I feel as I do about them.

**Sonic BaitFish (SBF)
"Tips & Techniques"**
**"Jigging For Kokanee
With The Sonic BaitFish"**
By Captain Pete Rosko



Pete Rosko

Whether vertical jigging in June, or during the late September kokanee spawning run, my technique is the same with the SBF. It has consistently out-fished other techniques regardless of the targeted species. Simple is best for me, especially when it comes to fishing. Only four basic ingredients are required. They are fairly calm water for a vertical line angle, a good electronic fish locator on the boat, the proper jig and do not start jigging until the fish are located.

1) Electronic fish locator: No fish locator? You may as well stay home. But, you can still troll and hope you can luck into the fish that way. That's where, "good luck fishing" applies. First, turn off the "Fish ID" on your unit. It confuses schools of bait fish as game fish. Relative to depth, where are the fish located on your screen? Easy, if they are positioned near bottom. Not so easy if the fish are suspended. Most times, the zig-zag pattern of your falling SBF can be seen on your screen. As soon as it approaches the fish mark, try to stop the jig just above that mark. In case you are unable to see your SBF on your screen then use your reel as a depth aid. Determine how much line is retrieved on your spinning or

baitcasting reel. Basically, if you intend to jig down to 50 feet that day then locate a 50 foot hole and drop your SBF all the way to the bottom. Then, with your spinning reel, retrieve your lure all the way to your rod tip. While retrieving, count how many times you need to turn your reel handle a full 360 degrees. Once the lure is retrieved, divide your total cranks into 50. My spinning reel would equate to 25 cranks or 2 feet per crank. As a result of this calibration, if the fish are high at 14 feet below the surface simply release the anti-reverse lock on your reel and back-crank (turning the reel handle backwards) 7 times to drop down to that 14 foot level. Conversely, if the fish are at 14 feet above bottom then drop your SBF all the way to bottom and reel in all slack line with the rod tip touching the water's surface. Then, forward-crank your reel 7 times to get to that 14 foot level above bottom. The baitcasting reel is a similar technique to the spinning reel on the drop but a different approach on the retrieve. This is where you need to count your reel cranks (as with the spinning reel count) and also the number of sideways revolutions made by your levelwind mechanism. Both reel types operate the same when suspended fish are closer to bottom. However, when using a baitcaster to suspended fish near the surface, the levelwind count is used since the reel is in "free spool" and not gear-connected to the handle. The levelwind application is not as accurate as the crank count on the spinning reel but is still very effective.

2) The proper jig: The Sonic BaitFish is a deadly-effective metal jig when vertical jigging for kokanee and many other species. In dead-calm water, I will try jigging all three different line/snap attachments until the fish tell me which one they prefer. On a

faster drift, my attachment is to the nose. Always use the du-lock snap provided in the package. Although the basic lure action is lively, the snap increases that action especially when dead-sticking. Never overwork your jig as this will frighten kokanee. Finesse jigging is the rule with "dead-sticking" a close second. Dead-sticking means no rod movement. The SBF will still move by rotation with the help of the attached snap and water current. A one inch lift of the rod tip can cause the SBF to move up to 8 inches. Especially when dead-sticking, use the lightest-weight SBF to effectively reach your target species. The lighter the jig, the easier for it to move. Best finishes are glow pink, glow orange and glow chartreuse, in that order.

3) Locating the fish: At times, even after locating the fish that you are after, there's no guarantee that they will bite. This is especially true with kokanee. However, vertical jigging a SBF gives you the best chance of keeping the lure in front of the fish to cause a strike response. Lake Sutherland, 15 miles west of Port Angeles, is where I have fished for kokanee the past 37 years. Maximum depth is 83 feet. On the screen of my boat's electronic fish locator, I like to see X-shaped crossing patterns that are caused by active kokanee. I never had a bad day when seeing this. Please refer to the Sonic BaitFish Tech Guide, and Youtube tutorials, for additional tips.

Thank you for subscribing to the Mack Attack. It is our hope that our tips add to your success, and enjoyment on the water. Join me again in October. - Pete



*Gary's Fishing Corner:
September Fishing
Reactionary Bites*

*By
Gary Miralles*

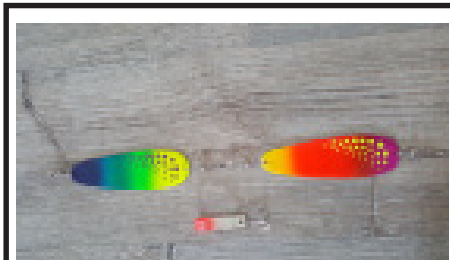


Gary Miralles

Night temperatures are falling and that's a sure sign that fall is just around the corner. It also means that fishing for Kokanee and landlocked Chinook is coming to an end. On a positive note, September, is a month when you can catch some of your biggest fish of the year; catching these big fish can be a challenge. Like all Salmon, these fish are reaching the end of their life cycle. They are no longer feeding and they are only concerned with one thing and that's spawning. This of course, presents us with a greater challenge of how do you get them to bite? There are a few simple technique changes that will help you to convince a pre-spawn fish to bite.

Before I get ahead of myself, let's talk about locating these big fish. Electronics are crucial to locating fish this time of year. Look for paired fish hanging close to the bottom or in areas of structure. Working the bottom is important for catching pre-spawn fish. However, dragging the bottom creates some serious concerns. You need to pay close attention to your electronics and watch your downriggers closely. Unless you have a real consistent

bottom or the benefit of having digital downriggers that are programmed to track the bottom, you may need to stand over your downriggers ready to raise or lower them as you troll. A good ten pound bar weight is a real benefit with this technique as they tend to snag less often.



Using two Sling Blades™ in conjunction to the lure will create a more erratic action, which will help with reactionary bites.

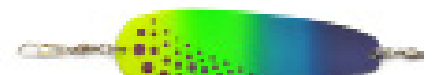
Now let's talk about changing our technique up a bit. Remember, these pre-spawn fish are no longer feeding, so we need to use a more reaction type presentation. A tactic that often works well for me is to double up Sling Blade™. Actually connect one Sling Blade™ to the other. This will create a much more aggressive action. The front blade will wobble, which will occasionally cause the back blade to throw harder and even spin at times. This more aggressive action will create more vibration and will incorporate a more erratic action to your lure. Behind this double Sling Blade™ setup, I like to run lures with greater action. For Spoons, I like the Hum Dinger and the Crippures™. The rolling lateral action of the Crippure™ is hard to resist in this presentation. If your preference is to use squid or hoochie type baits, go with the spinner type hoochie with the larger Sling Blade™ or even a Wiggle Hoochie™, which has a more aggressive action. There is one more important suggestion while using this technique. We're not talking a trolling speed of 1.2

mph with this setup; we're looking to get that reaction strike so we're going to troll up to 1.8 mph. I like to get my speed up to where the back blade will actually roll completely around occasionally. Varying your speed faster or slower can also help. Go with bright colored lures. Glow is always a good choice. Good Fishing, Gary.

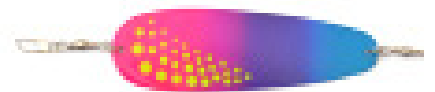
**SLING BLADE™
SUPER GLOW 4"**



41034



41036



41035



41037

**Mack's Lure
DOUBLE WHAMMY®
KOKANEE PRO**



HOT DEAL OF THE MONTH

Mack's Lure
Double D™ Dodger 7.6"



Pink season is upon us and there's no attractor more versatile than the Double D™ Dodger 7.6". This month only, use code DDD10 at checkout and receive 10% off the Hot Pink Double D™ Dodger (SKU: 70063).

Enter code:

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Question of the Month

Have a question? We'd love to answer it! Contact us at MacksLure@MacksLure.com if you have a question you would like to see featured!

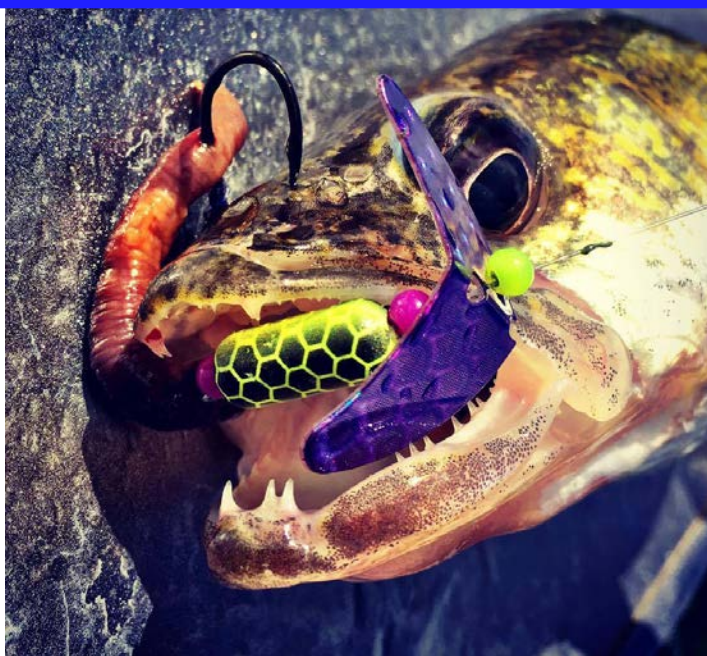
Q: I continue to hear about the Smile Blade®, but typically only use metal blades. What makes them better?

A: Thanks for the question. First, it's made of a lightweight plastic called mylar. It's often more effective than traditional blades (Indiana, Colorado, etc.) because it's lighter, first and foremost, but the design is unique. Traditional blades usually spin effectively at a certain speed. The Smile Blade®, however, spins and vibrates no matter what speed you're going. In fact, these blades can spin at less than 1/4 mph. Not only does it provide a lot of

flash and attraction in the water, you control how it spins in the water. Customize the Smile Blade® by pinching the blade down to increase the spin in the water, or widen the blade for a slower spin.

Pro tip: Try reversing the spin by folding the blade backwards so the color is facing toward the lure. This way, fish approaching the lure from behind can see the main color better. These versatile blades can be placed virtually anywhere on your line, whether it be directly in front of the lure or in front of an attractor, such as a Double D™ Dodger, Flash Lite® Troll or Hot Wings®. They're available in dozens of colors and sizes, so match the hatch you're fishing and put even more fish in your boat.

Photo of the Month



IN. THE. FACE. Dean Schenk snagged this gorgeous photo of a walleye he caught with a Smile Blade® 1.5" Purple Scale.

Video of the Month

Shasta Lake Summer Trout

Experience a spectacular morning of trout fishing on Northern California's Shasta Lake. Learn effective trolling techniques with Mack's Lure's Bob Telles and Gary Miralles as they target large trout with Crippures™, Hum Dingers® and Wiggle Hoochies™. [Click Here.](#)

If you have video's to share, we'd love to see them!! Send your video links to: AI@MacksLure.com



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