

# WALLEYE

A Secret Tactic Revealed...Slow Death Rigging for Walleyes

One of those "secret" tactics that has been gaining in the amount of attention it's been getting the past year or so is one that we've been

having great success with in all sorts of live bait rigging situations. The technique is called "slow death." It's one of those tactics that pros and other anglers have been using but keeping a bit under wraps for several seasons now. Credit for the tactic goes to a South Dakota guide and tournament angler, Dave Spaid. It's said that Dave would observe the small smelt that would get caught up in the turbines coming through the Oahe Dam; they would then come rolling and flickering down the current, an easy meal for waiting walleyes and other predators. Through trial and error, he discovered that a short piece of crawler on a bent Aberdeen-style hook mimicked the "slow death" of these smelt as they washed downstream.

The slow death tactic is most often fished as a modification of the bottom bouncer live bait rig. From the bouncer, we'll run a 3 to 4 foot leader of 10-pound test Berkley 100% Fluorocarbon then tie on the slow death hook. To properly rig the hook, thread a night-crawler up the hook right up over the eye and knot. Then pinch off the tail end of the crawler, leaving about a half inch dangling off the back of the hook.

This rig has proven deadly in many of the same scenarios where you'd run a bottom bouncer spinner

**There never will be a secret bait or tactic that will catch walleyes in every situation all the time, but the slow death rig is continuously proving to be a versatile and productive technique for me the more and more I use it.**

combination—for instance, situations when walleyes are scattered across main-lake flats or feeding shelves on points in depths of 12 to 25 feet, or possibly when walleyes are relating to specific structure such as a channel edge or even deep weed edges. Try it anytime that you would troll a spinner rig. As far as how fast to run the rig, you want to move along slightly slower than the same speed you would when running spinners—in the 1/2 to 3/4 mph range, just



On lakes where fishing with 2 rods is legal, I'll also fish a rig on what is often referred to as a "dead stick". This is usually a longer, 8-foot 6-inch to 12 foot rod, with a softer, medium light action. Fishing a dead stick has helped me put a lot of fish in the boat.

fast enough to get the hook and bait spinning seductively in the water. The slow death rig is a presentation that lends itself well to situations

where you need to cover water but want to do it with a power finesse approach.

Your bouncer weight is also an important key to success with the slow death rig. The same principles apply here as they do when spinner fishing. You want the bouncer running at about a 45 degree angle from the rod tip, and just ticking bottom. In most cases, a 1-1/2 ounce bouncer will be the choice in depths from 12 to 20 feet, a 2 ounce bouncer from 20 to 30 feet, and so on.

Using the right equipment is always important to get the best results with any walleye fishing technique, and the slow death tactic is no exception. The rig is typically fished in one of two ways—on a hand-held rod or on a rod set in a rod holder. For the hand-held rod, a 6-foot 6-inch medium action bait cast rod and a reel spooled with a quality low-stretch line, like 12 pound test Berkley Sensation or 10 pound Trilene XT is ideal. Lines like this will give you plenty of feel to know you're ticking bottom and to feel bites. They're also highly abrasion resistant, which helps since many times you're fishing these rigs around rocky, snag-filled areas.

Setting the hook with a slow death rig is also much the same as you