

## Lake Geneva – Simple Tactics Brings Success

Simple tactics can lead to successful fishing. That seemed to be the theme of a recent fishing outing I took on Lake Geneva with fishing guide and friend Doug Kloet.

After coming back into town from a two week (non-fishing) vacation, I was looking to hit the water and catch some fish. I was in a fishing withdraw and Doug offered the cure.

He suggested that I should join him on Lake Geneva where he and his clients have done very well in landing good numbers of panfish and gamefish.

Our outing was on a weekday, from the late afternoon into the early evening. Our first stop took us to the flat bordering Geneva Bay with the goal to catch some panfish including some perch that we could later use for bait to fish for bass and northern pike.

The rig was a simple small hook with a light splitshot attached a couple feet above the hook. We baited up with half a nightcrawler on each hook and slowly jigged the bait off the bottom.

Within a minute we were pulling in sunfish, most of which were 7 to 8 inches in length. We also caught a few smaller bluegills and of course caught a good number of the ubiquitous rock bass that are seemingly everywhere on that lake.

Doug kept us in the 9 to 12 foot range and when the bite was momentarily slow, he would moved a short distance with the trolling motor and the action would pick up again.

After about 45 minutes at that location and probably 20 fish landed, he decided to move us to a south shore location. We had yet to land any perch to supplement our small supply of suckers that we had brought along as bait for the gamefish.

Repeating the similar tactics and depth range from the previous location, we again were catching panfish of the same variety. Many of the panfish, especially the sunfish were of good size including a couple that topped the 9 inch mark.

After another 45 minutes of fishing, we had caught 15 to 20 more fish, yielding a total of 35 to 40 panfish in an hour and a half of fishing. We kept a few for a photograph and a couple small bluegills to use as bait, while the rest went back in the water.

With less than 2 hours left in our evening, we decided it was time to try for some pike and bass so we picked up and moved off to a deeper spot a short boat ride away.

This time we rigged up several suckers and bluegills on circle hooks and weighted them down with slip slinkers tied above wire and fluorocarbon leaders. The fishing reels were baitcasters with clickers set to warn us when a fish had picked up the bait.

In the meantime, Doug and I held spinning rods set with drop shot rigs. He was using pieces of nightcrawler, while I used soft plastics imitating leeches.

Doug set us to drift with the wind across the area he wanted us to fish and occasionally adjusted our course to keep us at the chosen depths which crossed some underwater humps.

Within 15 minutes at this spot, a bait clicker sounded on a rod near me. I picked up the rod and waited for the fish to be moving steady away from us. I then set the hook and reeled in a pike measuring about 24 inches.

We continued the drift during which we picked up several bluegills and rock bass on the drop shot rigs, but not the bass we had hoped for.

We also had another hit on one of the sucker rigs, but the fish got away with the bait without hooking up. After reaching the end of the drift we picked up and moved back to repeat the process.

Unfortunately, that pike was the only gamefish we caught even though a couple more fish picked up and dropped the suckers and bluegills we were using. It was clear the fish were not in an aggressive mood, at least on this spot.

We wanted to move to another location further down the lake, but dark approaching clouds kept us from heading that direction. Neither of us wanted to chance being on the far end of the lake if it started raining or if a thunderstorm popped up. We decided it was best to just pack it up for the evening.

Though the hunt for gamefish was not very successful, we had certainly caught a good number of panfish and could have certainly caught and kept a limit for each of us if we had wanted.

Doug Kloet guides clients on numerous waters in southern Wisconsin including Lake Geneva. He also guides on the waters of the Fox Chain in Illinois. He can be reached at 262-605-8247 or email him at [dkloet@muskymagictackle.com](mailto:dkloet@muskymagictackle.com).

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