

October-November 2020

Great Lakes Angler

THE AUTHORITY ON STEELHEAD & SALMON TROUT

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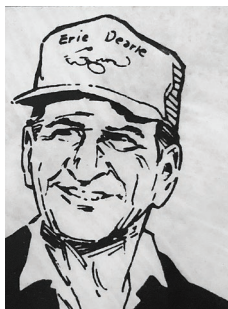
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THE TECHNIQUE AND LURE THAT STARTED IT ALL ON LAKE ERIE



Experts estimate that the present Erie walleye population is at between 116 to 125 million fish swimming in lake. Once again making it is the world's best walleye fishery.



The results of just a few hours of Erie Dearie countdown fishing.

A soft breeze from the southwest was just enough to identify the rocky shoal and the drop off that surrounded it. The honey hole is identified. I open the bail. Carefully aim the swing of the medium/lite action rod and the lure with a juicy six-inch dew worm splashes down exactly where I want it. Then the repetition begins... "One thousand and one..." "One thousand and two..." At one thousand and four the little Ambassador reel snaps closed and I begin the slow retrieve.

In a few short seconds another walleye slams the spinner bait and meat offering with a vengeance.

"Well, what do you think now Cronzy!" chortled my fishing captain for the day John Sim. "It has been like this for years and it's only getting better."

I have to say, I was pretty damned impressed with John Sim, his fish, the fishing, the location, the technique, and the lure he was introducing me to. Less than half an hour after we approached this small piece

of Lake Erie structure and we had already connected with a dozen or more chunky walleye. Cast after cast with his funny looking lures and it was a case of fish after fish being hooked.

The Technique

Sim called it the "countdown" technique. Earlier, as we had approached the shoal in his 27 foot Sport Craft he had positioned his boat slightly upwind of the target area. A light breeze out of the southwest would

slowly carry us over the target area where he guaranteed the walleye would be feeding below us.

The “countdown” technique was simple. You just cast out and as soon as the lure splashes down you begin a count... one thousand and one, one thousand and two, one thousand and three. When the lure settles on bottom, you realize approximately the relationship of the count to the depth of water you are fishing. For example, if the lure settled at one thousand and four, on your preceding casts you simply snap the bail shut and begin an immediate slow retrieve at one thousand and three. If your boat drifts over shallower water, simply reduce the count again. The opposite holds true for deeper water. Just increase the count. It’s important to remember, these shoal feeding fish are on the rocks and sandbars to feed and they feed close to bottom.

Now, as I’ve mentioned the technique is easy to learn. It’s the “actual” lure to use that’s even more important to catching the fish. That first meeting with John Sim, almost 40 years ago was also my first introduction to the Erie Dearie weight forward spinner. Back in the day it was the most popular choice of anglers on both sides of Lake Erie’s western basin who preferred to stand up and cast for their walleye instead of sitting down and trolling.

On first inspection, I thought it was a funny looking little bait, part jig and part spinner with a 2/0 needle sharp Mustad Sproat trailing the spinner. Sims mentioned they were available in a half dozen colors and six sizes from ¼ to 1 oz. I tied on a 3/8-ounce Erie Dearie, stuck the barb through the nose of 6-inch nightcrawler and made my first cast and count. The lure settled. I felt the bottom I began the crank to lift the lure and commenced a slow retrieve. Just a few seconds and... bingo! I was fighting a 6-pound walleye to the boat.

Before the afternoon was finished, I was also hooked on the Erie Dearie and the countdown casting technique. Sim and I must have hooked into 30 walleye in a few short hours. Before heading home I stocked up on a dozen Erie Dearies at the local tackle shop and use them to this day. I toss them not just on Erie, but just about any walleye hole I fish.

Meeting Galbincea

Even more surprising is the fact that a little more than a week after that day on the water with John, I crossed paths for the first time with the inventor of Erie Dearie, Captain Dan Galbincea. I was in the sky, somewhere between Chicago and



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Pelee Island located in the Ontario western basin of Lake Erie is home to some of the world's finest walleye fishing.



A slow countdown technique produced this trophy walleye.

Las Vegas on my way to the AFTMA tackle trade convention. Sitting across the isle from me was an older gentleman dressed in sailor whites. He nodded, I nodded and he asked if I was going to the convention. A few minutes later he was sitting in the vacant seat beside me. I mentioned I was impressed with his baits. Over a few beers for me and a mixed concoction for the Captain he began filling me in on his history and his company.

It was quite the story indeed. After a stint with the U.S. Army's 17th Airborne Division in WW2, Dan returned to his hometown of Liberty Steel, Ohio and found work as an arc welder. Oh, he also liked to fish, be close to Lake Erie and even sold minnows to local marinas. He also introduced me to his wife Helen who was now sitting by herself across the isle. He proceeded to tell me, that he quit welding, bought a location at Mosquito Creek in Meeca, Ohio. There he built the Causeway Sport Shop and also caught a bad case of walleye fever. Soon he was a reputable charter boat skipper and also a tackle inventor. Not just any tackle inventor, but the best known tackle inventor of a lure that was responsible for making Lake Erie world famous for its walleye fishery.

In the mid-'50s he began tinkering with a weight-forward design he named the "Old Reliable." He studied, he fished and even played and tinkered with changes to the bait in his minnow tanks. By 1960 it was finished to perfection and with the refinements came the new name Erie Dearie. It is known now as the world's largest selling walleye lure. A bait that has a special wiggle and appeal for all species of fish whether feeding close to bottom or suspended. Again, it is a bait that was designed for the casting and retrieving, but takes more than its share of walleye under troll. I just believe there's more fun casting, retrieving and feeling the bite.

Dan passed away a little more than a decade ago. Tackle innovator, fisherman, charter boat operator and Lake Erie walleye pioneer. He spent his final day on Lake Erie, fishing his favorite lure with a fishing rod in his hand.

Now fast forward. Last autumn I was introduced to Dan Ross of Biloxi, Mississippi. He's the new President/CEO of Erie Dearie Fishing Lures. A company that has expanded into larger selections of worm harnesses, jigs, spinner baits and buzz baits, still with much of its emphasis on the Erie Dearie wonder. The "original" Erie Dearie line-up is still the same but expanded to 11 color combinations. Even more exciting is the new Erie Dearie

“Elite” Series that have a selection of 18 special new color finishes. Remember also that over the years the tackle industry has refined the art of painting, producing and even packaging their final product.

John Sim/Chante Charters

Now, we come to John Sim. Let’s just say he’s an old boy on Lake Erie. He might have been fishing and pioneering for more than 45 years, but in my humble opinion he is the best. The best, especially when it comes to stand up and cast countdown fishing. Now, trust me once again, there is something special to this style of angling.

Sim and his son have owned and operated Chante Charters for more than 45 consecutive years. The service runs three 27-foot Sport Craft boats out of Kingsville, Ontario and especially around Pelee Island in the western basin. They’ve earned a well-deserved reputation for limit catches of walleye, bass and perch. Can you believe their charter boats fish close the Erie shores and over shallow reefs with seven customers about and land a 42 fish limit of walleye in a few short hours... Believe! The waters are also choked with spunky smallmouth bass as well!

Pelee Island

Pelee Island located in the Ontario western basin of Lake Erie is home to some of the world’s finest walleye fishing. The island is also the largest island found in Lake Erie. Shallow and shoal studded the entire underwater surroundings of Pelee offer prime habitat for walleye, as well as smallmouth bass and yellow perch. Even better the 16 square mile island offers prime protection on the windiest of days. Sim also makes available unique cottage rentals for visiting customers. Can you believe the “Chante Fish Inn” situated directly on Pelee Island can accommodate up to 18 fishermen that take advantage of their multi-boat fishing charters.

Now here’s a mind blower for everyone to remember. Experts estimate that the present Erie walleye population is at between 116 to 125 million fish swimming in lake. Once again making it is the world’s best walleye fishery.

Tie on an Erie Dearie and practice the excitement of a little stand up, count down, light line fishing!

John Sim/Chante Charters - <https://chantecharters.com>; 1-519-733-7231

Erie Dearie Lures - <https://www.erielaide.com>

GLA



It's just a simple matter of casting, counting down and then catching.

ELITE SERIES

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3/8, 5/8, 3/4OZ