

# WALLEYE TROLLING

Compiled from the Diaries and Logs of the Luhr Jensen Fishing Research Team.



## "Double-Baits" are HOT!

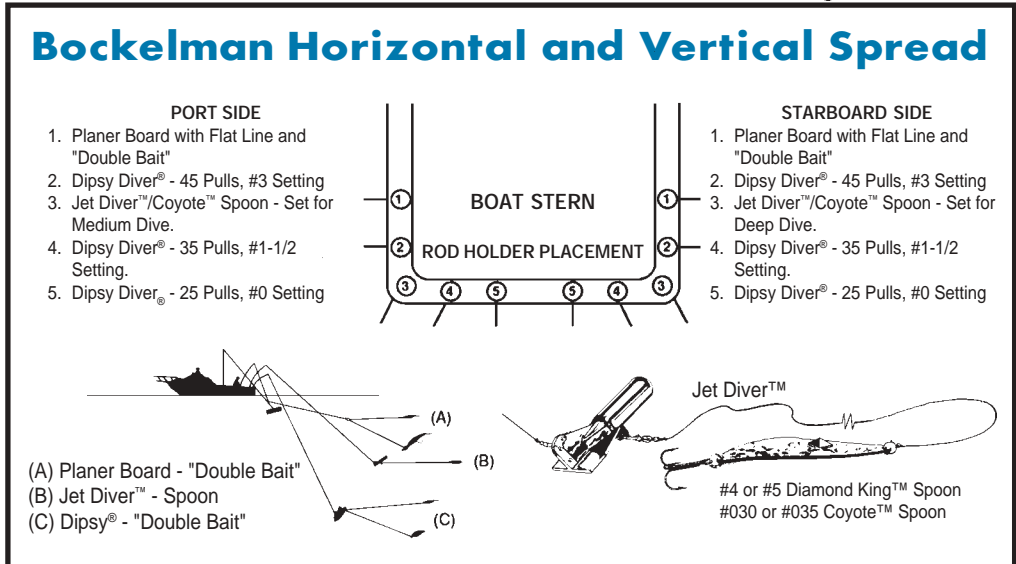


Lake Erie walleye trolling has come of age. Over the past several seasons, lures and techniques have come to the forefront which produce consistent catches of large walleye throughout the traditional June through October season.

The one technique which now stands above all others in its productivity is trolling with crankbait Coyote™ spoon, "Double-Bait" combinations. Whether you're walleye fishing in the shallower waters of the Western Basin or in the deep waters of the Central and Eastern basins, this technique will produce big dividends day-in and day-out.

Trolling has its biggest advantage in allowing you to cover a lot of water in a short period of time. Crankbait/spoon combinations can be trolled in a wide spread horizontally as well as vertically, allowing you to locate walleye concentrations and pinpoint their preferences as to color and depth.

Lake Erie's walleye dine primarily on shad and smelt. Baitfish schools and walleyes most often are found in a temperature band from 50 to 70 degrees. Walleyes which are actively feeding usually are located at the tops of the baitfish columns and your lures should be pulled at a depth that causes them to run at this level. A depth sounder and temperature meter, therefore, become necessary tools for locating the depth of baitfish



schools as well as the depth of scattered walleyes.

A crankbait/spoon "Double-Bait" combination can effectively be fished on a flat line, wire line or with the aid of a planer board, downrigger or *Dipsy Diver*®. Favored crankbaits for "Double-Bait" walleye trolling are the *Power Dive*® Minnow, *Hot Lips Express*®, *Rock Walker* or *Speed Trap*™. Spoons utilized in conjunction with these plugs are all lightweight, high action models such as the *035 Coyote*™ Spoon or *#4 Diamond King*™.

Diagrammed above is a rod spread George Bockelman, a successful troller out of Curtice, Ohio uses in the Western Basin as

an example of maximum spread of lures both horizontally and vertically using several different depth devices.

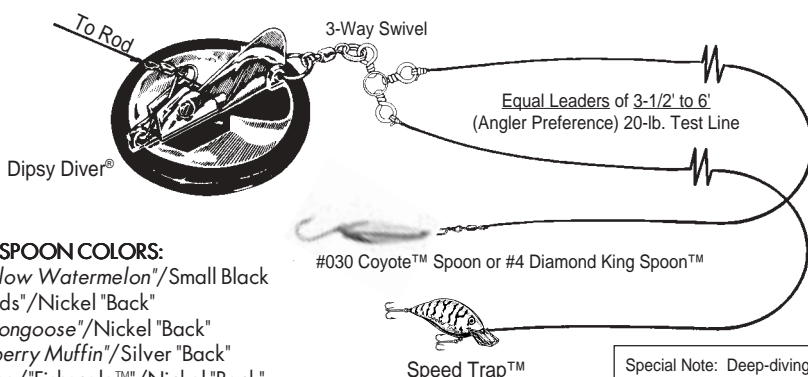
Bockelman uses "Double-Bait" setups behind his *Dipsy Divers*® and single *Coyote*™ Spoons behind the *Jet Divers*™. Productive *Coyote*™ Spoon colors include blue, purple, green and chartreuse (see art below). Here are his specific suggestions on rigging:

For the *Jet Divers*™, run a four-foot leader behind the *Jet Diver*™ to a *035 Coyote*™ Spoon. Set the port *Jet Diver*™ for its deepest dive and the *Jet Diver*™ on the starboard side for a middle dive. Bockelman suggests 17-pound solar, XT high visibility line for easiness of observation.

On the flat lines run off the port and starboard planer boards, he uses "Double-Baits" run off 3 1/2-foot leaders attached to a three-way swivel. A *Coyote*™ Spoon is tied to the end of one leader with a deep-diving *Power Dive*® Minnow, *Hot Lips Express*® or *Rock Walker*™ crankbait tied to the end of the remaining leader. The diving plug will pull the spoon down without any tangling. The result of trolling this rig often is two walleyes at once!

For the *Dipsy Divers*®, Bockelman uses different settings to obtain the widest possible spread (see diagram). "Double Baits" also are used behind the *Dipsy's*®, except he chooses shallower running crankbaits for this operation as the *Dipsy Divers*® provide necessary depth in Western Basin waters. *Speed Traps*™ and *No. 35 Hot Shot*® plugs are his favored crankbaits for this purpose.

### Dipsy® Setup for Running "Double Baits"



#### HOT SPOON COLORS:

- #0142 "Shiny Yellow Watermelon"/Small Black "Seeds"/Nickel "Back"
- #0206 "Mongoose"/Nickel "Back"
- #0217 "Blueberry Muffin"/Silver "Back"
- #0580 Chartreuse/"Fishscale"/Nickel "Back"
- #0814 Metallic Perch/Silver "Back"
- #1077 "Halloween" (Flo Orange-Black "H&H"/Hologram Scale/Silver "Back")
- #3132 "Funky Chicken" (Met Purple/Chart "Tiger" & "Tail"/Cerise "Side Stripe")
- #4499 Silver Glow ("The Ghost")

#### HOT SPEED TRAP™ COLORS:

- #0570 Crawdad/"Crystal"
- #0579 Fire Tiger/"Crystal"
- #0583 Chartreuse/Blue/"Crystal"
- #0814 Metallic Perch

Special Note: Deep-diving crankbaits like the *Power Dive*® Minnow and *Hot Lips Express*® can overpower the planing force of a *Dipsy Diver*® set for extreme side angles. When using these plugs, it is recommended your *Dipsy*® setting be no more than 2.

To attach the three-way swivel to the **Dipsy Diver**<sup>®</sup>, Bockelman uses a split ring between the third leg of the three-way swivel and the swivel on the tail end of the **Dipsy**<sup>®</sup>. He then runs two 3 1/2-foot leaders off the remaining two legs of the three-way to his lures, with a **035 Coyote**<sup>™</sup> **Spoon** on one and the **Speed Trap**<sup>™</sup> or **Hot Shot**<sup>®</sup> on the other. Standard **Dipsy**<sup>®</sup> colors are productive but many trollers have found **Metallic Purple**, **Metallic Pink** and **Metallic Green** to be even more effective.

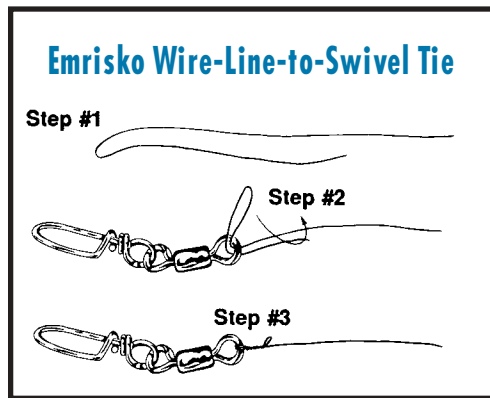
Central Basin walleye expert and charter captain Andy Emrisko, out of Cleveland, fishes much deeper water than found in the Western Basin and adjusts his methods accordingly. He, as well as fellow charter captains Jeff Dzuro and Ron Stevens, also are convinced the way to go is a "Double-Bait" rig off a 3-way swivel.

Crankbait choices for deep water trolling, however, are deep-diving models. Emrisko prefers **Power Dive**<sup>®</sup> **Minnow** or **Hot Lips Express**<sup>®</sup> plugs for Central Basin trolling in combination, again, with a **Coyote**<sup>™</sup> **Spoon**. He notes *blues* or *greens* are top color choices for his **Coyote**<sup>™</sup> **Spoons**.

Emrisko uses leaders of equal length for his "Double-Bait" setups, as does Bockelman. But they're a little longer with 4- to 6-foot lengths preferred. He cautions against using any leader length longer than your rod, as landing a fish will be difficult. Two leaders of the same length are used because there is less chance of "leader nicking". "Doubles" also are commonplace with crankbait/spoon combos and the equal lengths allow easy netting of both fish at the same time.

Emrisko uses 20-pound leaders. He notes heavier weight leaders result in fewer break-offs and can take more abuse so, if they don't spook the fish, why not gain a little edge?

"Double-Bait" setups, as used by many charter captains in the Central Basin utilize a snap on the end of one leader to which the **Power Dive**<sup>®</sup> **Minnow** or **Hot Lips Express**<sup>®</sup>



plug is attached. The second leader ends with a snap swivel to which the spoon is attached. The snap swivel aids in preventing line twist when faster trolling speeds are desired. Both the snap and snap swivel provide an immediate way to change lure colors without retying.

Emrisko, Dzuro and Stevens point out their fondness for the new **Power Dive**<sup>®</sup> **Minnow** and **Hot Lips Express**<sup>®</sup> is due to the fact both crankbaits run straight, true and very deep...a necessity to keep the diving plug down underneath and away from the spoons. Spoons such as the **030** and **035 Coyote**<sup>™</sup> **Spoon** or **#4** or **#5 Diamond King**<sup>™</sup> are chosen because of their high action and their lightweight nature, again helping to keep

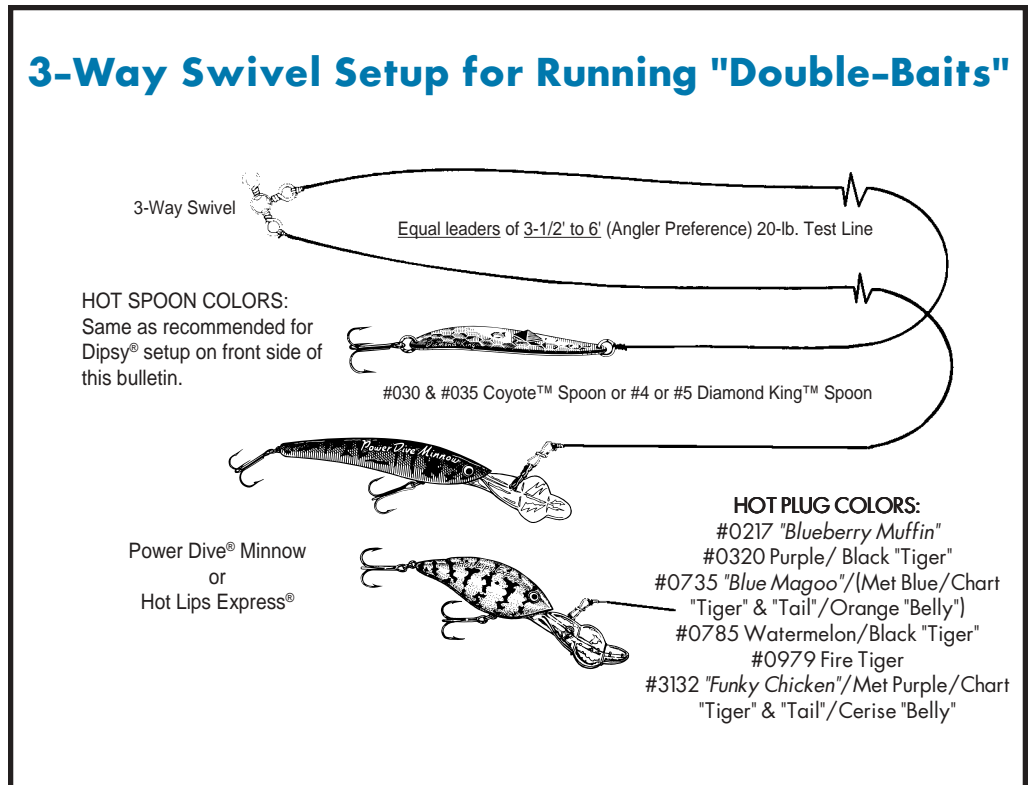
them above and away from the crankbait underneath.

Although some Lake Erie walleye trollers prefer to match the color of their crankbait to the **Coyote**<sup>™</sup> **Spoon** color, Emrisko points out it really doesn't seem to make that much difference. What does count a lot, however, is to run several colors and change colors regularly until walleye are caught and then go to that color with the remaining lures. His best all-around color is **Fire Tiger**, followed closely by **Silver/Blue Top/Orange**

**Diver**<sup>®</sup> **Snubber** and a 6-foot section of 20-pound monofilament ahead of a single **Power Dive**<sup>®</sup> **Minnow**. For "Double-Baits", attach one end of the snubber to the wire and the other end to your 3-way swivel with a snap.

2) Use a backing line of Dacron or cotton on your reel before spooling on wire. Spool it on semi-loosely. Suggested reels for wire line trolling include the Daiwa 47SH and Penn 310.

3) Let out line S-L-O-W-L-Y...use your clicker to slow rate of release.



*Belly, Black/Purple, Chartreuse, Gold and Black.*

All three charter captains agree that while planer boards or flat lines with a **Power**<sup>®</sup> **Dive Minnow** attached will get you down in the 20- to 30-foot range, there are many instances in the Central and Eastern basins when that's just not deep enough. In these cases, they go to **Dipsy Divers**<sup>®</sup> with long leaders or wire line when extra depth is needed.

Emrisko and Frank Maraldo, both from Cleveland, won the First Annual Lake Erie Open Walleye Tournament trolling wire line and **Power Dive**<sup>®</sup> **Minnow/Coyote**<sup>™</sup> **Spoon**, "Double-Bait" combinations. Largest of their five walleye on that day went 10 1/2 pounds with others in the 8- to 9 1/2-pound category.

The 10- to 12-pound test wire Emrisko uses is thin diameter and has very little water resistance. This thinness also makes it virtually invisible in Lake Erie waters. Unlike monofilament, which reaches its depth potential when out about 100 feet, you can go deeper and deeper with wire by letting more line out.

Wire has no stretch, so even with a long line, it's easy to hook a walleye on the strike, though the fish is several hundred feet away from the boat. Because of this fact, it is advised you NOT set the hook, as thin wire will break at its rated strength. Walleye taken on wire line trolling gear will set themselves.

Wire can be a very effective way to reach deep water walleye. It does, however, require some special equipment and care. Here are some helpful tips:

1) Because of wire line's non-stretch properties, it is recommended you use a **Dipsy**

4) Keep your drag loose; you have different forces at work.

5) Use a rod with hardened steel or carbide guides. Wire will cut ceramic; and, a good roller tip guide is preferable.

6) Watch for kinks; be careful!

Bill Agler of Parma, Ohio is still another successful Lake Erie walleye troller. He focuses his efforts in the Central Basin which starts perking in May and produces walleyes through October. Agler also is a firm believer in the three-way swivel/"Double-Bait" setup. He uses 6-foot leaders on his outfits noting this length allows hooking of both the crankbait and **Coyote**<sup>™</sup> **Spoon** to the rod handle when not in use.

His best all-around colors include **Fire Tiger**, **Gold/Green Top** and **Black** on a season-around basis. For July through October walleye trolling, Agler also likes **Black/Purple**, **Red/White/Orange** and **Shad**. Another of his recommendations when using "Double-Baits" is to run six to eight of these combos at once to simulate a baitfish school.

The prominent Lake Erie walleye trollers interviewed for this *Tech Bulletin* differ a bit on leader length, line test, method of getting deep, etc. All agree without hesitation, however, that the top trolling setup for Lake Erie walleye...BIG walleye...consists of a three-way swivel, two equal lengths of leader, a crankbait and spoon.

The "Double-Baits" of choice are Luhr Jensen's **Coyote**<sup>™</sup> **Spoon** in combination with either the deep-diving **Power Dive**<sup>®</sup> **Minnow** or **Hot Lips Express**<sup>®</sup> crankbait.

All these anglers also have one other very important thing in common: they catch a lot of walleyes!