



TECH BULLETIN

ALBERTA CANADA

SLAVE LAKE

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

By Gary Hanke

ALBERTA'S BEST TROPHY WALLEYE, PIKE AND PERCH PRODUCER

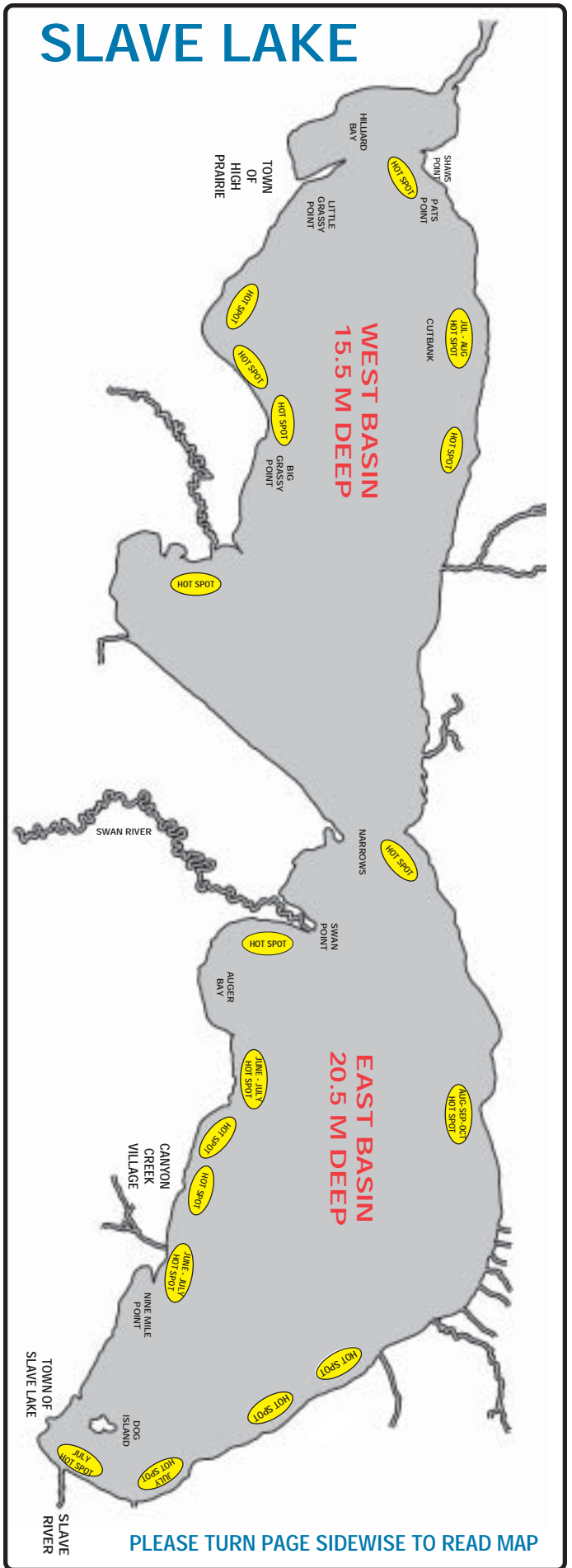
Slave Lake is located approximately a two-and-one-half-hour drive north of Edmonton, Alberta on Highway #2. The town of Slave Lake sits on the most easterly end with High Prairie on the west. The lake has both a well-developed sport fishery and excellent commercial fishing.

Slave Lake and its drainage system account for an area of nearly 12,400 square kilometers and run some 115 kilometers in length. With a surface area of 11,060 square kilometers, it has a maximum depth of 10.5 meters on the east basin and 15.5 meters on the west. Along the north-west and south of the east basin, the lake bottom slopes to a depth of 17.5 meters. The east side slopes are somewhat more gradual.

A wide variety of fish species is available including walleye, northern pike, lake whitefish, yellow perch, burbot, cisco, spot tail shiner, arctic grayling and even a few lake suckers.

SPRING

Generally the best spring fishing is found along the shallow sand and gravel bars with their freshly emergent weed beds (May through June 15). The north shore along Provincial Park and at the Narrows of the lake provide the best large bars (2-ft. to 6-ft.) Shallow-diving crankbaits with a narrow profile such as the *Power Minnow™* in a *perch* pattern work the best. Use 10- to 14-lb. test line with 12-in. steel leaders. The *Power Dive® Minnow* has the best profile to imitate small, first-year cisco and adult spot tail shiners, but be careful not to let it dive too deeply. A K10 *Kwikfish®* can also work well in these conditions. For walleye, rig a *Hi-Float Walleye Rig* with a leech on a #4 single hook along with a 3/8-oz. walking sinker.



HOT LURES FOR SLAVE LAKE

	
Power Dive® Minnow	Power Minnow™
	
Sugar Shad®	Jeweled Bead™ Walleye Spinner
	
Ripple Tail®	Kwikfish®
	
Crippled Herring®	

SUMMER

Nine Mile Point and Big Grassy areas have steep drops with large, suspended walleye populations. These feed heavily on 5-in. to 7-in. cisco in the 20- to 30-ft. depth range. Try *Slave Master* pattern Power Minnows, Power Dive Minnows in cisco colours of purple, pink, blue and red-orange above the lateral line and silver below it. Work the lake basin near steep drops and also try vertical jigging along the breaks of these drops. Use a 1- to 3-oz. **Crippled Herring**® in *Mother of Pearl*, *Pearl White/Flo Red Head*, *Pearl/Fluorescent Blue Back*, *Nickel/Neon Green Back*, or *Metallic Perch* finish. **Sugar Shads**® jigged vertically also can be productive.

FALL

From August 15 to October 15, bottom bounce the sand flats and near steep breaks with a **Jeweled Bead™ Walleye Spinner** in a *Hammered Nickel*, *Hammered Brass*, *Chartreuse/"Sparkle"/Brass Back* or *Fire Tiger/Brass Back* finish along with a 7-in. Power Worm. This combination produced a 2nd place finish in the Slave Lake Walleye Tournament in 1992 as well as a 22nd out of 150 team finish in 1993.

WINTER / ICE

Vertically jig Crippled Herring and **Krocodile**® spoons with a 2-in. or 3-in. #8 stinger hook including a minnow dressed to the main hook. Sugar Shads worked aggressively or **Ripple Tails™** dressed with half a minnow for scent will provide excellent results. Work the long shallow bars near spawning areas or breaks and pivots of these spawning areas for deeper fish. Try south of Shaws Point on the west end of the lake and along Faust Bay.

Often the weight of the lure does not allow proper flow at in-haul. The hook reacts too slowly due to the weight. However, both Crippled Herring and Krocodiles, when dressed with a minnow and a #8 stinger hook, work very well through the ice. The stinger is very important so as to catch short strikers. Walleye often inhale when they come in close (1-in. to 3-in.) rather than accelerating at the bait with their eyes open, so the pivot of the stinger hook does the catching.

LAKE TROLLING TIPS

Here are some techniques you can use to make trolling easier, more fun and more productive.

- 1. TROLL SLOWLY:** Big fish will not expend any more energy than necessary to catch a meal. Also, most lures will not perform correctly at fast speeds. The best advice is to troll s-l-o-w-l-y — the slower the better. Under certain conditions, fishing for suspended walleye can be more successful trolling faster - even up to 6.5 kph e.g. when bottom bouncing or using a **Power Dive Minnow**.
- 2. VARY YOUR SPEED:** While slow is the password, this does not mean slow all the time. A lure running through the water at a constant speed, at a constant depth and giving off the same vibration pattern will not catch many fish . . . there's just nothing there to indicate an easy meal is available or that something is in trouble. Slowly, yes, but adjust your speed every few minutes to change the lure's speed and vibration pattern.
- 3. WORK IN "S" CURVES:** Consistent trolling results require that you do everything possible to keep from running in a straight line. We recommend an "S" pattern because every time the troll and lure are on the inside swing of the boat, the lure will drop deeper and slow down. On an outside turn, it will speed up and rise. With each turn you will impart a different action to the troll and trailing lure, signaling "Meal Time" to nearby fish.

SLAVE LAKE PERIOD CHART

THE PRE-SPAWN PERIOD

April 1 - May 15
A Time of Anticipation
Water Temperature Range: Ice-out to Low 40° F's
General Fish Mood: Neutral

THE SPAWN PERIOD

May 15 - June 15
A Time of Tension
Water Temperature Range: 43°F-52°F -- Peak 47°F-49°F
General Fish Mood: Negative

THE POST-SPAWN PERIOD

June 7 - June 20
A Time of Recuperation
Water Temperature: The low 50°F's
General Fish Mood: Negative

THE PRE-SUMMER PERIOD

June 14 - July 1
A Time of Transition
Water Temperature Range: Mid-50°F's to Low-60°F's
General Fish Mood: Neutral to Positive

THE SUMMER PEAK PERIOD

June 20 - July 20
A Time of Fulfillment
Water Temperature Range: Mid-60°F's to low-70°F's
General Fish Mood: Positive

THE SUMMER PERIOD

July 15 - August 15
A Time of Plenty
Water Temperature Range: Maximum water temperature
General Fish Mood: Positive to Neutral

THE POST-SUMMER PERIOD

August 7 - September 7
A Time of Impending Change
Water Temp. Range: Water begins cooling quite rapidly from its generalized highest temperature range
General Fish Mood: Neutral to Positive

THE TURNOVER PERIOD

September 1 - October 15
A Time of Turmoil
Water Temperature Range: Variable
General Fish Mood: Very Negative

THE COLD WATER PERIOD

October 7 - April 15
A Time of Tranquility
Water Temperature Range: 55°F and down to the lowest temperature of the year
General Fish Mood: Neutral

Chart information courtesy of
In-Fisherman Magazine

SHARP HOOKS PAY OFF!

One of the easiest things you can do to improve your fishing success is to maintain super-sharp hooks on your lures at all times. A fine-toothed file such as Luhr Jensen's **Sharp Hook File™** is the absolute best hook sharpening tool available. Hold the file parallel to the hook point and with gentle, one-way strokes remove a small amount of metal on at least two sides to obtain a sticky-sharp point with a knife-like cutting edge.

