

Arlington Anglers

Understanding Thermoclines and Game Fish



Bob Diebold
Arlington Anglers Fishing Club

If you count the number of days over 85° this summer, you'll won't be surprised that many of the inland lakes still have very warm surface temperatures. In fact, I've seen some large catch and release" game fish floating on the surface that never recuperated in the warm, low oxygenated top water. You can still catch some largemouth bass early in the morning around piers or shallow weeds and the small panfish in the shallows have been voracious.

But where are those bigger walleyes, smallmouth bass, northern pike, and even larger panfish? They have sunk down and out to where the thermocline meets the structure. The University of Illinois Dept. of Atmospheric Sciences defines thermocline as: "the transition layer between the mixed layer at the surface and the deep water layer. ...The mixed layer is near the surface where the temperature is roughly that of surface water. In the thermocline, the temperature decreases rapidly from the mixed layer temperature to the much colder deep water temperature."

The thermocline in a deep lake like Geneva could be more than 30 feet down. That means that the 70 degree mixed layer could go down 30 feet. The thermocline in Lake Michigan is currently around 50 feet down. In a shallow lake, that mixed warm water could go down all the way to the bottom, making it uncomfortable for the fish and perhaps even result in some die offs. It is not uncommon to actually be able to spot the thermocline line on your fish finder (due to temperature gradients, algae, or water density differences).

Now knowing the scientific concepts

described above, we are able to pursue those larger fish. Move out to deeper water. Look for the thermocline on your fish finder. Use a larger football jig to get down on the bottom. Try a Lindy rig with a sucker minnow for pike or bass. Don't expect results on a shallow diving crankbait or casted spinner bait that worked in the spring. Many lakes will stay in this condition until the temperatures cool, the days get shorter, and the lake turns over. Give it a try!

Dates to remember:

Sept 4 – Outing

Braidwood Lake

Sept 16-18 – Outing

Lake Shabbona

Sept 20 – Meeting

Rod Building Seminar

Sept 24-30 – Outing

Leech Lake

Oct 6-9 – Outing

Clinton Lake

Oct 16 – Outing

Milwaukee Harbor

Oct 18 – Meeting

Ice Fishing Seminar

Come to one of our meetings to find out more about our club, activities and outings.

Meetings are held on the third Tuesday of every month from 7:00 to 9:00 PM.

We meet at Cabela's which is located at 5225 Prairie Stone Pkwy, Hoffman Estates, IL just off I-90 at Illinois Rt 59.

Door prizes, speaker, raffles, fishing reports: Give it a try!

For further information call our President Tom Curtin at 847-639-7858 or visit our website at <http://arlingtonanglers.com>



Seven year old Brody Streeter admires his trophy 23", 5 lbs. 4 oz. largemouth bass. The fish was weighed and measured by his proud grandfather, Jim Martinez.

**PHOTO BY:
ARLINGTON ANGLERS**

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Arlington Anglers cheer on their favorites during the Arlington Million Minnow Races that took place at the Annual Picnic at Harper College Reservoir.



The Arlington Anglers had a very successful trip to Green Bay this August for big walleyes. Gary Elliott had trophy walleyes of 8, 9, and 10 lbs.



Jim Martinez (one of many Arlington Anglers) assists a young fisherman at the SRACLC Special Needs Kids Fishing Derby in Vernon Hills.

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