

Winter Fishing at the Sooner Discharge

This is my favorite fishing hole from mid November until mid May. The parking lot is 55 miles from my house, so I am able to fish on the week days for a few hours before coming back to work by noon. Here are my favorite techniques for fishing the warm water discharge.

--My most productive lure at Sooner has been a 2 oz Slim Slab. I prefer some mix of chartreuse and white, but sometimes the ghost minnow color is the ticket. If there is no sign of bird or surface activity I will start by the fence, heaving the slab right into the white water. When it hits the water I, allow it to sink towards the bottom then start what I call a pop and stop retrieve. Sometimes a hard long pop of the rod with a short pause is the ticket and sometimes it is a series of small snaps with a long pause allowing the lure to sink back to the bottom is what they want. Regardless the retrieve I usually only work the bait about half way back, then crank it on in and get the bait back to the strike zone.

--When birds are working or fish are hitting the top I will employ the same bait but with a bucktail trailer on the treble hook. I also like to make a slight bend in the slab to make it kind of banana curved. This allows for a slower fall and I am able to keep the bait up in the strike zone with a quick, erratic retrieve. A high speed baitcasting reel and a stiff rod of at least 7 foot is ideal for this technique. The key sometimes is to allow the slab to pop out of the water and let fall back for a foot or so then repeat. This is an exciting way to catch these fish as the strike will just about rip the rod out of your arms.

---A method to catch these fish if nothing seems to be producing is slow rolling sassy shads, wild eyes or bucktails. I like at least an ounce of lead to keep my bait close to the bottom in the current. Just cast it out, let her sink to the bottom and crank it in slow. Try reeling as slow as you can then go slower. Sometimes the bite is very light, so as soon as you feel something different set the hook.

--- Another way to catch fish at the discharge is with ghost minnow or silversides. These are often stacked in the shallow water and can be caught with a cast net with a mesh size of 1/4 inch. You can rig these on a slip float, carolina rig or my most productive a 1/8th ounce wide gap jig head. I like to cast up current and bounce the jig through the rocks. This technique will catch about anything that swims. I have landed crappie, saugeye, largemouth, catfish, and all the linesiders with this technique. If the water gets a little murky, which is rare at sooner, use an orange or chartreuse jig head to increase your strikes.