



Insider Ice Fishing Techniques and the Right Type of Gear for Success

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The arrival of colder weather means it is ice fishing time for many fishermen throughout the United States. Ice fishing brings with it some unique challenges and requires some specialized ice fishing gear. However, many find ice fishing to be immensely rewarding.

"Ice fishing can be incredibly fun," said Russell Conner, owner of the Rusty Angler, a website that offers fishing tips and techniques. "However, it comes with a learning curve. Many fishermen get hooked on ice fishing after trying it and find it more invigorating than fishing during other seasons."

Dressing properly is critical for ice fishing due to the cold temperatures. "Many people have been turned off from ice fishing because they didn't dress for the weather and were miserable," said Conner. "Dressing in layers and having dry thermal gear as a back-up can improve conditions considerably. After all, it is hard to enjoy anything while shivering."

For ice fishing, the two key factors are to stay warm and stay dry. Dressing in layers is critical. For a base layer, Rusty Angler recommends Patagonia's merino wool thermal underwear," said Conner. Other recommendations include a Carhartt Crowley jacket for a mid-layer, a Frabill Waterproof Insulated Jacket and Pant Rain Suit for a waterproof outer layer, moisture-wicking socks with a propylene liner (such as Scent Lock's Thermal Boot Sock), waterproof boots (such as Muck Arctic Pros), and a waterproof but breathable hat such as the Simms Gore-Text Exstream Hat.

Rusty Angler also recommends buying two sets of winter fishing clothing and putting the second set and a blanket in a waterproof bag that is packed in a backpack. Frostbite and hypothermia are real concerns when ice fishing," said Conner. It is easy to get wet, which can quickly lead to real problems in cold weather. Having a full set of dry back-up gear is critical.

Investing in a five-gallon bucket (such as the Frabill Sit-N-Fish), a slush shovel or ice scoop, an auger (to cut a hole in the ice), jigging rods and reels, a tent (such as the Eskimo FF9491 Insulated Ice Shelter), an ice fishing camera (such as the Eyoyo Portable 9-inch LCD Monitor Fish Finder Camera), and a sled to haul all the gear are recommended by Rusty Angler.

Finding the fish is part of the challenge. For first-time ice fishers, Rusty Angler recommends going with an experienced ice fisherman or hiring a guide," said Conner. It helps remove the guesswork and will provide novices with the chance to learn and ask questions.

Tools such as ice fish finders are one of the keys to success in ice fishing. If budget is not an issue, the Markum LX-7 Ice Fishing Sonar System is one of the best options on the market. A less expensive option is the Garmin Striker 4 with Portable Kit. For experienced anglers, investing in a Vexilar FLX-28 Ice ProPack II Locator with the Pro View Ice Ducer may be worthwhile.

Other tips for locating fish during ice fishing include locating a sticky bottom layer, looking for depressions on detailed contour maps, and keeping the jig moving to attract more fish with the vibrations.

Visit the Rusty Angler website for more insider fishing tips, techniques, and gear recommendations, including information on choosing appropriate bait, tackle boxes, lures, rods, and reels. The site also provides information on winter bass fishing, catfish, pike, panfish, trout, walleye, and inshore saltwater fish.

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Rusty Angler

Rusty Angler offers the latest fishing tips, techniques and free fishing gear giveaways to fishers across the USA.

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