



SPRING RIVER WALLEYE FISHING GUIDE

Spring River Walleye Guide: Gear, Tactics & What Actually Works

Spring river walleye fishing is one of the most consistent—and addictive—fisheries of the year. Cold water, current, and spawning behavior all stack the odds in your favor, but success still comes down to using the right gear and understanding how fish behave in these conditions.

This guide breaks down the exact setups, lures, and strategies that consistently produce fish in the spring.

1 Rod Setup: Versatility Matters

Scheels Outfitters Walleye Spinning Rod

A lot of the fishing in spring rivers is hands-on—jigs, plastics, hair jigs, blade baits, and even three-way rigs. You need a rod that can do all of it well.

The Walleye Series rods stand out as one of the best values available. They're sensitive enough for detecting light bites in cold water, yet versatile enough to handle multiple presentations without switching setups constantly.

If you're building a spring setup, this is the kind of rod you can rely on all day.



2

Early Season Edge: Hair Jigs

Northland Deep-Vee Bucktail Jig

Hair jigs are deadly right at ice-out and throughout early spring. There's something about the natural movement that triggers bites when fish are still sluggish.



How to fish it:

- Pair with 8 lb braid (Sufix 832)
- Add an 8 lb fluorocarbon leader
- Fish slow and controlled along current seams

Pro tip: Add a stinger hook. A surprising number of walleyes hit short in cold water, and that stinger can make a huge difference.

3

Tough Bite Setup: Jigs + Minnows

Tungsten Short Shank Stand Up Jig

When the bite gets tough, live minnows become hard to beat.

This tungsten jig is a go-to because:

- It transmits bottom contact extremely well
- Keeps your presentation clean and upright
- Improves sensitivity—especially with mono



Line pairing:

- 6 lb mono (Sufix Siege preferred)

Mono gives a little stretch, which helps keep fish pinned when they're biting lightly.

4

Line Selection: Braid vs Mono



Sufix 832 Braided Line

- Best for: jigs + plastics, hair jigs, blade baits
- Zero stretch = maximum sensitivity
- Ideal for detecting subtle bites and feeling bottom



Sufix Siege Monofilament

- Best for: jig + minnow presentations
- Handles line twist better
- Adds forgiveness during slow, finicky bites

Switching between these two based on conditions is a huge advantage.

5

Covering Water: Reaction Baits



Rapala Ripplin Rap Crankbait

Perfect when fish are scattered over shallow sand flats.

How to fish it:

- Cast long
- Pump and reel
- Let the vibration trigger reaction strikes

Great for areas just outside tributaries or shallow river mouths.

Husky Jerk

A true spring classic.

Best uses:

- Casting in water under 7 feet
- Trolling shallow stretches
- Running behind three-way rigs

This lure has produced across countless river systems for a reason—it just works.



Blade Baits (B Fish N B3)

Blade baits are incredibly effective in current.

Best techniques:

- Vertical jigging below the boat
- Casting into current seams

They shine in moderate current where walleyes are holding tight to structure.



6 Plastics That Last

Eye Candy Paddle Shad

This is a go-to soft plastic for spring.

Why it stands out:

- Extremely durable material
- Stays on the hook longer
- Maintains action even in cold water



Tip: Add a small dab of super glue to secure it to the jig head—you'll often get a full day out of one plastic.

7 Electronics & Boat Control

Lowrance HDS Pro (Fish Finder)

What sets this apart is balance—it does everything well:

- Best-in-class 2D sonar
- Clear side imaging
- Excellent forward-facing sonar (especially beyond 80 ft)
- Fast, intuitive chart plotting

Forward-facing sonar becomes especially valuable when fish are spread out or suspended.



Lowrance Recon Trolling Motor

Boat control is everything in river fishing.

Key advantages:

- Wireless foot pedal (no cords to fight)
- Tight anchor/spot-lock mode
- Smooth integration with electronics

Holding position in current while working a seam is often the difference between a good day and a great one.



8

Power That Lasts All Day

Norsk Lithium Batteries

Switching to lithium is a game-changer.

Why:

- Lighter weight
- Longer runtime
- Consistent power output



A 36V setup keeps your trolling motor running strong all day, while a dedicated 12V battery ensures clean power for electronics—critical for clear sonar imaging.

9

Advanced Strategy: Transducer Pole Setup

HD Innovations Transducer Pole

In spring river fishing, this setup can give you a major edge.

Why use it:

- Keeps sonar independent from trolling motor
- Allows you to stay locked in one spot
- Lets you scan surrounding water without moving

Key insight:

Perspective mode is often more effective than forward mode in rivers because it helps reveal fish tight to the bottom that might otherwise go unnoticed.

Final Spring River Tips

- Focus on current seams, eddies, and transitions
- Slow down—cold water fish won't chase far
- Rotate between hair, minnows, and plastics depending on the bite
- Use electronics + boat control to stay on fish

Spring river walleyes aren't complicated—but they are precise. The more dialed-in your setup is, the more consistent your results will be.



Gear Up for Spring Walleye

Ready to dial in your setup? Shop the gear featured in this guide and build a spring walleye system you can rely on all season long.

[**SHOP THE GEAR HERE**](#)