



NO FORWARD-FACING SONAR REQUIRED

6 PROVEN SUMMER WALLEYE TACTICS

Forward-facing sonar gets the headlines — but anglers have stacked summer walleyes for generations without it. Here are the field-tested presentations that still put fish in the boat, year after year.

THE TECHNOLOGY CHANGED. THE FUNDAMENTALS DIDN'T.

Forward-facing sonar has become one of the hottest topics in fishing — but the reality is that anglers have been catching summer walleyes consistently for generations without it. The technology can help you locate fish, but it shines when you can hunt and cast at specific fish, and that process doesn't work for everyone.

Take your elderly parents or a boatful of kids fishing, and casting from the bow simply isn't the reality. The good news? Walleye success still comes down to the same three things it always has: **understanding seasonal patterns, locating productive structure, and presenting baits effectively.**

Whether you're fishing natural lakes, reservoirs, prairie pothole lakes, or Canadian Shield waters, the techniques in this guide continue to put fish in the boat year after year. Here are our top picks for mid-summer walleye.

"Spinner rigs, bottom bouncers, jigging, crankbaits, slip bobbers, weedlines, and live-bait rigging produced **countless limits long before forward-facing sonar existed — and they still do today."**

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HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

EVERY GEAR ITEM IS CLICKABLE

Click or tap any product name in the gold-outlined boxes to open that exact item.



COVER WATER, FIND ACTIVE FISH

SPINNER RIGS & BOTTOM BOUNCERS

Few presentations are as flexible in summer as a spinner rig behind a bottom bouncer. It shines when walleyes are scattered across big flats, working transition areas, or roaming basin edges after baitfish. Troll **1.0–2.0 mph** to locate active fish fast while keeping a clean presentation. Harnesses really earn their keep once the water warms or wind and algae blooms stain it up.

- ◆ Start with a #3 or #4 Colorado blade, then experiment with color and size based on clarity and forage.
- ◆ When fish are sluggish, switch to Smile blades, small props, or a Northland Butterfly Blade at slower speeds.
- ◆ Night crawler is the gold standard — but try minnows, leeches, or Gulp! / Eye Candy plastics.

► **Rule of thumb:** 1 oz of bottom bouncer for every 10 ft of water.

GEAR THAT GETS IT DONE — [CLICK ANY ITEM TO SHOP](#)
[Northland Baitfish Spinner Harness ↗](#)
[Bottom Bouncer ↗](#)
[Northland Butterfly Blade Components ↗](#)

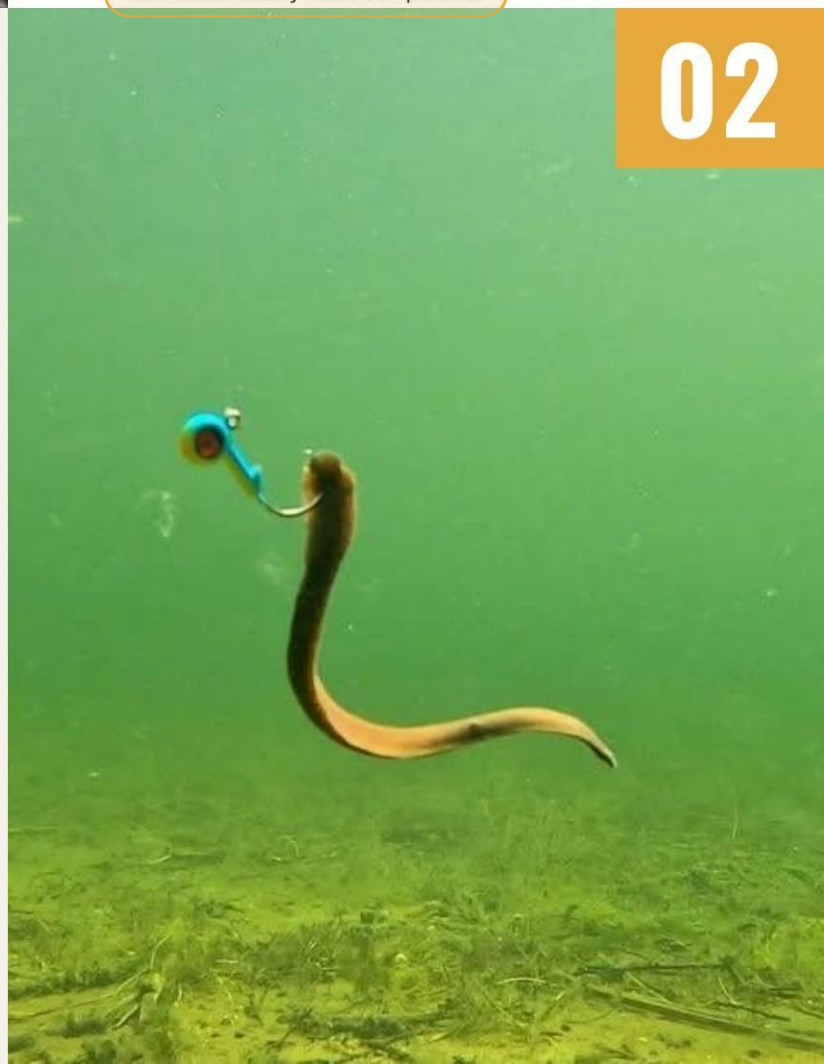
PINPOINT FISH STACKED ON STRUCTURE

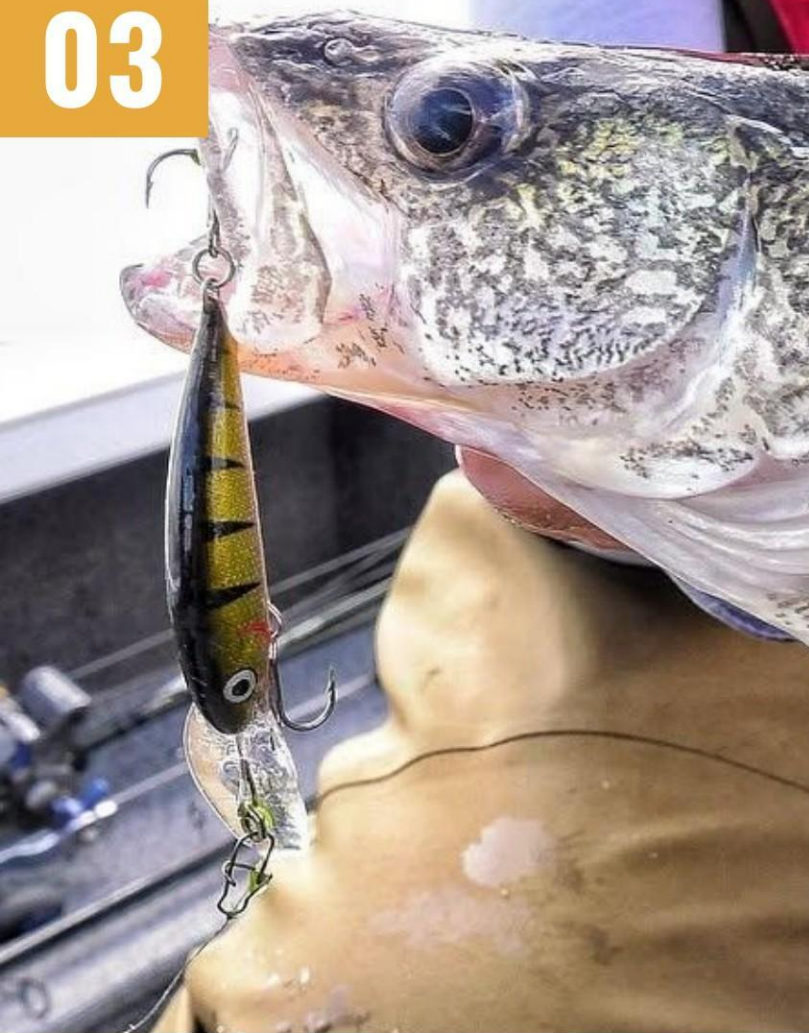
VERTICAL JIGGING OFFSHORE STRUCTURE

Summer walleyes load up on offshore structure — points, humps, rock piles, saddles, and submerged roadbeds. Once mapping and traditional sonar put you on them, vertical jigging is one of the most efficient ways to pick them off. Position the boat directly overhead and keep the jig near vertical.

- ◆ Use a 1/4– to 3/8–oz jig depending on depth — enough weight to stay vertical.
- ◆ Tip with a half crawler, minnow, or leech. Live bait shines when you have to slow down.
- ◆ Soft plastics work with a more aggressive cadence when fish are willing to chase.

► **Best when fish are concentrated and not chasing moving baits.**

GEAR THAT GETS IT DONE — [CLICK ANY ITEM TO SHOP](#)
[Northland Tungsten Long Shank Round ↗](#)
[Northland Eye-Candy Shiner ↗](#)
[Northland Deep-Vee Jig ↗](#)




CHASE ROAMING, SUSPENDED WALLEYES

TROLLING CRANKBAITS FOR ACTIVE FISH

As summer rolls on, walleyes get mobile and chase baitfish over basins and deep contours. Cranks cover huge water and target both suspended and structure-oriented fish. Long-line trolling shines on clear lakes — focus on breaklines and basin edges.

- ◆ Dial speed 1.8–2.5 mph; run S-curves to reveal their preference.
- ◆ Lead core puts small cranks at any depth — deadly during bug hatches.
- ◆ Stagger with snap weights; spread lines with planer boards, tangle-free.

► Love lead core over basins and along deep contours.

GEAR THAT GETS IT DONE — [CLICK ANY ITEM TO SHOP](#)

[Scheels Xtreme Trolling Rods + Line-Counter Reel](#) ↗

[Rapala Jointed Shad Rap / Salmo Homet](#) ↗

[Berkley Flicker Shad & Flicker Minnow](#) ↗

THE CLEAR-WATER FINESSE KILLER

SLIP BOBBERS FOR MIDDAY WALLEYES

Slip bobbers get overlooked in summer, but they're one of the deadliest ways to work walleyes glued to a specific spot. With so many lakes now full of zebra mussels, water clarity has jumped and fish spook off the boat — a long, quiet bobber line keeps you on them.

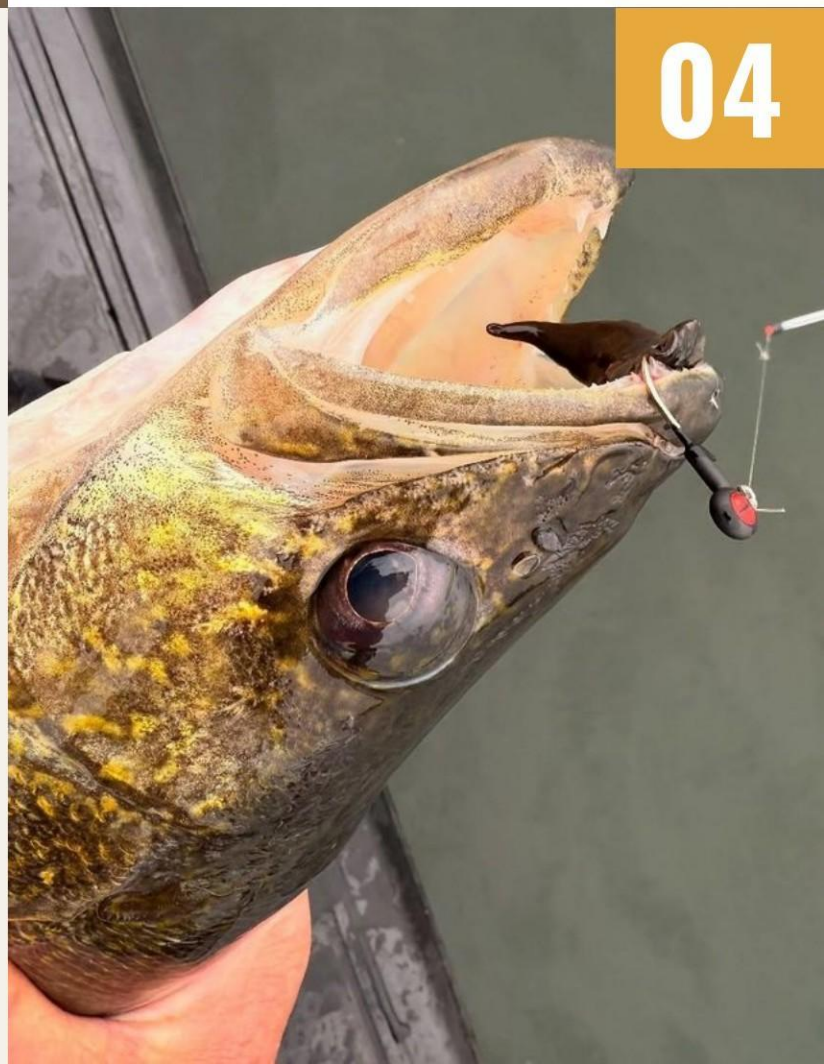
- ◆ On windy days, target rock reefs, isolated rock piles, and wind-blown points.
- ◆ Anchor or Spot-Lock and suspend a leech just off bottom to sit in the strike zone.
- ◆ This slow, natural look produces when faster techniques come up empty.

► Wind + rock + a suspended leech = a classic summer pattern.

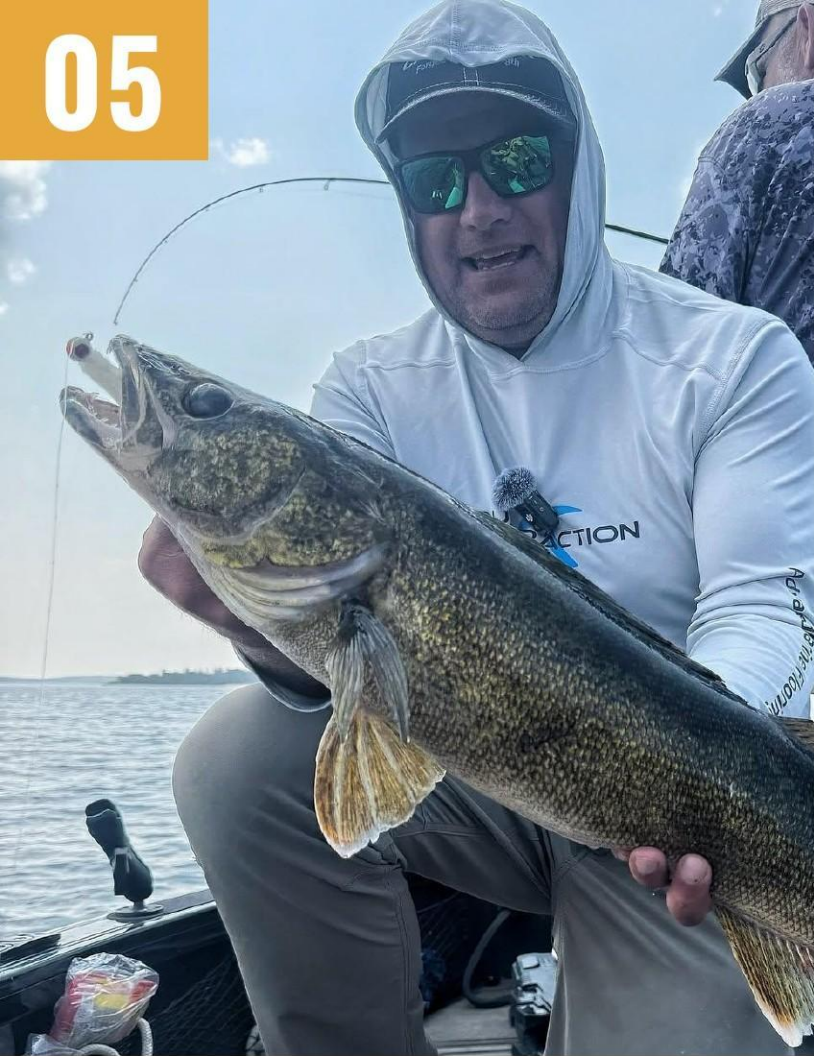
GEAR THAT GETS IT DONE — [CLICK ANY ITEM TO SHOP](#)

[Northland Lite-Bite Slip Bobber](#) ↗

[Northland Tungsten Short Shank](#) ↗



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THE MOST UNDERUSED SUMMER PATTERN

TARGETING WEEDLINE WALLEYES

Healthy weed edges are a summer goldmine. Weeds hold perch, bluegills, and minnows — a buffet walleyes can't ignore. Depending on clarity, weedlines in **8–15 ft** stay productive all summer. Fish the irregular stuff: inside turns, weed points, pockets, and hard-bottom-to-vegetation transitions.

- ◆ Hunt the tallest weeds and the canopies that throw shade — visualize the shade and fish it.
- ◆ Sharp, clean breaks on the weed edge are a favorite. So are clean sand pockets inside weed clumps.
- ◆ Jigs, spinner rigs, and shallow cranks all excel — fish above the weeds or right beside them.

► Come midsummer, shade is the difference-maker.

GEAR THAT GETS IT DONE — [CLICK ANY ITEM TO SHOP](#)

Northland MVP Jig + Eye Candy Paddle Shad ↗

THE BAIT THAT'S CAUGHT IT ALL

LIVE-BAIT RIGGING DEEP BREAKLINES

The classic Lindy Rig has probably caught more summer walleyes than anything. A simple walking-sinker rig tipped with a leech, crawler, or large minnow lets you slowly work breaklines with constant bottom contact — especially along deep transitions and extended points.

- ◆ In clear water, go with longer snells so good bait is the attraction.
- ◆ Slow down enough that the bait does the work — the best bait wins.
- ◆ When walleyes want finesse, nothing beats a live-bait rig.

► When they need finesse, live-bait rigs shine.

GEAR THAT GETS IT DONE — [CLICK ANY ITEM TO SHOP](#)

Northland Tungsten Cylinder Weight

Lindy No-Snagg Sinker ↗

Gamakatsu Live-Bait Hook ↗

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SUCCESS COMES DOWN TO FUNDAMENTALS

While forward-facing sonar has generated tremendous interest across the fishing industry, **the fundamentals of walleye fishing have not changed**. Successful anglers continue to rely on seasonal fish movements, quality mapping, traditional electronics, and proven presentations that consistently catch fish.

Spinner rigs, bottom bouncers, vertical jigging, crankbait trolling, slip bobbers, weedline fishing, and live-bait rigging have produced countless limits of walleyes — and they keep working today on waters across the North Country and beyond.

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