

The Night Bite – John Hughes

Best time

- Jan-March Sunset-2am (nobody is on the lake)
- March to June 11-5am
- July to September 1-5am
- Wind and rain are assets if wind is less than 15 mph and it keeps the other anglers away
- Before and during a weather front are outstanding
- Big Fish Jan and Feb...

Artificial Targets

- Banks, points and lights from Jan to May (Macky May and SML Striper Fishing)
 - Any light whatsoever.
 - My best lights have been weak overhead docks lights.
 - Jan and Feb when water is clear be ready all the way to the boat.
- Lights, points and banks May to September.
- Keep out as far as you can throw!
- Each light has its “money maker” perfect cast.
- Use Heading mode to pull boat out and away from light when you hook a fish to get a second and third strike.
- 10 to 15 casts move on.
- Keep three crank rods and 6 soft plastics ready.
- Dark-light-dark throws

Jigs

- Most success with 1/8 and ¼ ounce jig heads white or black(with eyes) and soft plastics. Will stay longer in the zone.
- 3/8 works great in January when the bait is deep.
- 3-in, 4-in and 5-in (white/white ice) flukes split tail and paddle tail is all I have had success on. I have tried a variety of dark and chartreuse with limited success.
- Make the switch. Paddle, split tail and plain monkey.
- The bigger the better on the hooks with 3/0, 4/0 and 5/0 the best Jan and Feb.
- The slower the better retrieve with a stop and go.
- Soft plastics I use include:
 - Zoom 4- and 5-inch paddle and split tails pearl or white ice
 - KVD 4- and 5-inch paddle
 - Keitech 2.8, 3, 3.3 and 4 inch paddle
- Countdown before the start of the retrieve if you don't see the fish-
 - Vary the drop!
 - 10 feet and under 5 sec
 - Over 10 feet go to 10 seconds.
 - Many times, the stop and go has killed it for me.
 - If **you are** touching bottom now and then you are doing it correctly
 - Bumps be ready, they are following!!
- Pull them out from the dock, it takes a few seconds for them to realize what's going on.
 - Lost some hit sticks and jigs on the docks

- I Keep 6 jig rods rigged and ready.
 - 1/8 ounce paddles and split tails
 - ¼ ounce paddles and split tails

Cranks

- April 1st the crank fishing gets hot when water temps hit 60.
- Hit stick #15 retrieved medium to fast(work it both ways)
 - Upgrade hooks to #2 Gamakatsu extra strong with easy eye, short shank.
 - Any color but purple glimmer, hot pink and blue smelt works the best for me.
 - Keep at least two rods rigged up with #15 Hitstick
 - No luck with the #13 Hitstick
- Rapala F18 Vampire retrieved at a medium speed.
 - Upgrade hooks to #2 Gamakatsu extra strong, short shank with easy eye.
- Any other deep divers?
 - Deep diving Redfin
 - Yo-zuri

Rod, reel and line

- I wanted to be consistent.
- 15 pound Braid with Alberto knot to Mono.
 - No leader
 - Re-spool and re-tie often
- I throw a 7-foot Bass pro graphite series spinning rod medium heavy. One piece!
- Pflueger SP400 spinning reel.

Keep it quiet!!!

- Stay as far away as possible.
- Don't roll in like you're in a bass tournament. Rocking the docks sends the stripers deep.
- The lighter the jig the better for dropping on a light with less splash.
- Land your fish away from the light or bank.
- Landing net- great for jigs not so with the cranks which will get snagged and will bend the hooks
- Use the Bogaeasy to handle
- Boga grips work well for fish under 30 inches. I picked up a 33 inch boga on Amazon.
- Night pics are a challenge by yourself.

The Morning bite

- I have been catching fish on the lights, banks and points as they transition out to deeper water until 6:30.
- Jan and Feb great action on top for the first hour
- Wake baits and walkers for sunrise and blow ups , keep rigged.
 - Red fins
 - Jointed thunderstick
 - KVD 2.5
 - Mikey
 - Spooks
 - Cane Walker
- I pass Captain Ken on his dock as he is throwing the net for bait and then go to my dock waiting for him to pick me up to pull boards.