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Water Temperatures and Fish

Metabolism and temperature go hand-in-hand with fishing. If the temperature suddenly drops so will the amount of bites as fish become lethargic and shut down. It's a classic type of natural pressure.

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The challenge of fishing is trying to time trips with stable weather fronts. There are many situations where it can take hours to get to water, which is more than enough time for cold and warm fronts to move in or out. In the photograph is a prime example of temperatures plummeting without any forewarning. The snow began to fall and my mainline kept coating with a sheen of ice as it's reeled in, which needed to constantly be shaken or dipped into the water. Ice then began to form on the guides of the rod requiring constant attention or it would have greatly inhibited my ability to cast. These little aggravations didn't bother me as much as knowing that any holding fish was going to hunker down and go off the bite. As temperatures fall they effect the metabolism of fish making them lethargic and unresponsive to most offerings; however, by adjusting leader lengths, size of the offering, and making closer casts as visibility diminishes it's reasonable to assume that even fish with lock-jaw will still bite.

Every species of fish responds to temperature changes. All of them have physiological needs for water temperatures to fall within a precise range in order for them to migrate, hold, and propagate. These changes

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dictate pressures that will keep fish on the bite or put them off. Anadromous fish respond to external changes in temperature by as little as two degrees; when temperatures drop so does their mobility due to slowing metabolisms. As temperatures rise they become active and go back on the bite. Extreme temperature changes can put fish off the bite from waters being too hot to being too cold. Anglers can relatively assume what temperatures are in the water on levels to figure out when to fish for each species of fish.

The simplest way to figure out temperature changes is to watch the weather and for impending falling precipitation, especially in areas that has not had measurable rainfall for an extended period of time. Water can be monitored with floating temperature gauges meant for daily fishing; this tool is helpful for figuring out how long leaders will have to be presented in order to garner strikes. The warmer it is the longer the leader should be, which properly presented can make a fish swim over to it. The colder the water is the shorter the leader must be to entice holding fish. Just remember, metabolism and temperature go hand-in-hand with fishing. If the temperature drops so will the amount of bites. The warmer it gets the more strikes can be expected. Having to adjust fishing tactics is part of the norm when it comes to recreational angling. Adjustments that need to be made is largely dependant on the season and species of fish.