

# Wind, Friend or Foe?

As a musky guide in Northern Wisconsin there are a few things that can ruin a fishing trip..... Wind is not one of them. In fact, I actually look forward to mildly windy days because it makes fish more predictable and arguably easier to catch. In musky fishing we look for as many repeatable patterns as we can to put more fish in the boat and I've consistently had success on windy days by paying attention to bait selection, lake choice, wind-direction, and boat control. When conditions are windy it typically means that a front is coming, or happening, and in turn means the fish are most likely feeding with that barometric pressure drop. Too much wind is not fun to deal with and it can make for a long and brutal day, but in Northern Wisconsin we have so many lake choices that we can pick and choose which lakes to fish and those lake choices are manipulated by the conditions presented to us on a day to day basis.

Wind from a fish's perspective: when the wind is blowing it creates opportunities for a musky to feed that it normally wouldn't be presented. Wind can move water, creating current and current breaks, make it difficult for animals to swim in, and blow baitfish around on the surface and in shallow areas. Muskies will either place themselves in current breaks or position themselves on a wind-blown structure where they can react to anything that is being affected from the waves or current being produced. Instead of pursuing their dinner they just wait for the wind to present an opportunity for them.

On a windy day the first decision needed to be made is lake choice. Is it so windy that you're going to have to eliminate certain lakes because it's going to be too dangerous or uncomfortable? Will you be better off fishing a smaller lake where you'll have less influence from such strong winds or is it a mild wind where bigger water is doable? Next, is the wind going to have a positive influence on prime locations? For instance, when the wind is straight from the north, this wind direction will have most influence on the south side of the lake. Does this lake have enough structure on the south side that holds fish without wind or is this lake more productive with a wind from the south? Think about how the wind will directly influence areas you plan to fish. The wind direction will make certain spots more productive than others and even place fish in areas they may never be otherwise. Any area that holds fish without wind will even be better with the right wind conditions.

What kind of a wind day is it? On a cloudy day we've caught fish as shallow as a foot of water, but windy with little to no cloud cover we've had better luck fishing suspended fish. If the wind has been coming out of one direction for a while, the bait will tend to pile up in certain areas because they're feed has also blown that way. A couple passes with electronics and this bait can easily be found and this is where to concentrate your efforts.

Bait choice is very crucial on how you plan to fish with the wind. When fishing shallow wind-blown structure on a windy day my two choices are top water and a heavy bucktail. Prop baits are the easiest to fish in the wind and get fishes attention. An animal that is swimming in heavy wind is more likely to be struggling in the water than taking a leisurely swim on a calm day and muskies have associated these windy conditions with struggling top water animals. Heavy bucktails are much easier to cast in the wind and will help get that distance when casting conditions are difficult. When fishing deeper windblown areas on sunny days or late in the fall along breaks, rubber is a good go-to. My favorite being a gatortube jighead made by WaterWolf Lures that have nice erratic hop with a slow fall and blade on the back to mimic a struggling baitfish.

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## SCENARIO:

*An island that is wind-blown with a wind coming from the North West. The island will act as a break in the water creating two calm spots on both points that makes two ambush points where muskies will likely be waiting for bait to get pushed into. These two spots are marked with a star. The red hashed area is where the water will be crashing into shore creating quite a disturbance in the water and for the bait getting pushed into that area as well. This disoriented bait makes for an easy meal. This bait will keep getting pushed against the shore of the island until it reaches one of the tips of the island. These two spots marked with a star will act as a break from the wind and crashing water, which bait will often flee to these areas. Muskies often use these areas as ambush points and are the best spots to fish.*

