



Ice fishing

– On the coast, for grayling and whitefish

Some have gotten the idea that fishing is an activity that belongs to the summer. They could not be more wrong, because when it freezes over the only thing changing is the conditions - for fish and fishermen ...

The areas along the coastline of Skellefteå holds an unexpected potential for ice fishing. The most popular species is probably whitefish (*Coregonus lavaretus*) which are abundant along the entire coast. A big reason for its popularity is probably due to the methods you use. Ice fishing is usually conducted by "kikmete" (Swedish word for that you lie on the ice and watch into the drilled hole in the ice). This means shallow water areas and to see the fish in their own element when they take the lure is an experience in itself. Times when the big whitefish decides to enter the circular ring, I promise you that the pulse increases dramatically. And add to the opportunity to catch a grayling and other species doesn't make icefishing less interesting.

Lars-Eric Ellonen have gathered his experiences and share in this detailed guide generous with tips and know-how..



What equipment to use?

When fishing for whitefish and grayling a small and simple icefishing rod is preferred. The VM-rods that are available in most tackle stores works excellent when a quick snap allows the line to come of the spool when a big fish has taken the bait. The line should be thin because the tactics means mostly small and light baits and rod movements. Ideally, you should use the standard monofil colorless line which works as a shockabsorber when the whitefish mouth is very delicate. The most common baits are now small baits in different colors. These are usually prepared with maggots, but if the fish is really active, it is just as good without maggot. What color is most effective seems difficult to predict but to have a strongly colored bait with no element of red and a darker variant covers most situations.



When to fish?

Ice fishing for whitefish is usually very good at the time when it freezes over, which normally occurs during the month of December. This early icefishing period holds on until end of January. During February and March fishing is a little slower, but far from hopeless. During this period it might be a good idea to try a little bit closer to open sea. The winter months requires a more active searching for whitefish, and the fishes feeding periods are often much shorter. During late March until the beginning of may (if the ice still holds) is a really prolific period for icefishing. This spring period offers much more than a rewarding fishing. The warm weather makes the experience on the ice into a wonderful memory for both heart and soul.

Dawn and dusk is the absolute best periods during the fishing day. Then the fish seem to be more focused on getting food than during the day when it can often occur generally uninterested.

Flood affects chances fishing and a good rule of thumb is usually that the fishery is at its best the second day after the sea started to rise. Rising water may be at our coastline from east or northeast winds. Current water levels may be as read to the local press which can make it easier to plan your fishing trip at a time when chances are best.

The best grayling fishing seasons is about the same as with whitefish. Possibly, the late spring period prior to the ice river to be extra good for grayling.

Where to fish?

Whitefish are numerous along the coastline of Skellefteå. Fishing for whitefish focus on two different strategies. Appropriate water depths varies from 1.5-0.1 meters, and the more shallow the water is the likeier the chances are of finding fish that are willing to take your bait.

The whitefish prefers fields and headlands with varied bottom structure. Areas where we see that the ice is pressed up by the underlying larger stones are hot spots that should be paid special attention to. As an example of such is around Kågnäsudden.

The other habitat consists of shallow sandy bays which periodically attracts large amounts of whitefish. If you are at the right time when this happens you may have very large catches. An example of such a place is Killingövik in Skelleftehamn.

Because whitefish are relatively common, it is rarely any problems finding places with whitefish. It can be difficult to single out places that categorically always keeping fish. Whitefish and grayling fishing is largely a matter of finding the right places at the right time for a really rewarding angling. Places that last year produced large catches may next year be replaced with other places.

Grayling occur, in the same spots as whitefish along our coastline. The chances for a good grayling fishing is better if you keep fishing stretches north of Kågnäsudden. Good depths are between 0,1-0,6 meters. Examples of good places are the east side of Romelsön and Ole-vipersgrundet.



How to catch the big one?

If you come to a place that you already know, you may want to start by drilling out a number of holes that you let rest while you prepare your equipment. The holes may well be drilled so that they cover different water depths. The methods in Ice fishing are as follows:

Get the lure right down to the bottom and repeat a couple of sharp jerks at the bottom. Then the bait shakes up towards the middle water layer. Alternately, you can try to bring lure right up against the edge of the ice and then let it sink down to the middle layer again. Whitefish often stays in the middle water layer, but can certainly sometimes stay along the bottom. A general rule might be to concentrate fishing a bit higher up from the bottom. Good water depth is between 1,3-0,1 m and whitefish are usually more willing to take the more shallow it gets. If you see a whitefish that just passes through the hole without stopping, you can try to move to more shallower places. Another tip for disinterested fish can be to remove the maggots from the bait. This can sometime increasing interest. To constantly varying your fishing and adapt for different conditions is the key to successful fishing.

