



## Bottom Bouncers

Bottom Bouncers are used as a depth control device for trolling and drifting in both lakes and rivers. The most common application is trolling crawler harnesses for walleye on the Great Lakes. Walleye 101 and Walleye Kid have lots of great information and videos to help you use Bottom Bouncers to catch more fish.

### Product Overview

- **What:** great tool for depth control while fishing live bait for walleye
- **Depth:** used to target fish near the bottom in anywhere from 10 ft to 50 ft of water
- **Baits:** work best for crawler harnesses but can be used for other lures like crank baits
- **Leader / Line:** best leader is 3'-6' – longer causes fish netting issues. Mainline of 12-14 lbs is best.
- **Speed:** effective at speeds from 0.6 to 1.6 MPH. They are speed dependent and at higher speeds you lose the ability to remain in direct contact with the bottom. Remaining in contact with the bottom is critical.
- **Rod & Reel:** almost anything you have. Line counter trolling combos and spinning combos all work fine.
- **Sizes:** wide range of sizes including weights from ½ oz to 5 ounces. The most common are 2oz and 3oz.
- **Colors:** available in a wide range of colors. The majority of bouncers are plain unpainted lead.
- **Cost:** they range in price from \$1.50 - \$3.00 each depending on size, quality, and where you purchase them. Better quality bouncers have a closed loop where the snap swivel attaches to the bottom bouncer.
- **Setup:** a snap swivel connects your main line to the bouncer. Use a low stretch 14-17 lb test main line.
- **Rule of Thumb:** use one ounce of weight for every 10 feet of water depth you are fishing. The faster you are trolling the more weight you will need. A 2oz bouncer might work great in 20 feet of water at 1.0 MPH but you may need to put on a 3oz bouncer if trolling in 20 feet of water at 1.6 MPH. Adjust speed and weight to keep line at about a 45 degree angle to the rod tip.

### Getting Set Up on the Water

- **Step One:** look for an area with fish at a variety of depths in the water column. You DO NOT need to see fish on the bottom to catch fish with a bouncer. Fish on the bottom may not show up on your sonar.
- **Step Two:** determine the correct bottom bouncer size for the depth of water you plan to fish and the speed you will be trolling or drifting. You may need to experiment a little to get the right combination.
- **Step Three:** select the right crawler harness combination. Perch colored beads and gold blade produce well because walleye on the bottom are generally feeding on perch. Red beads and gold blades also work well. Use a #5 blade for open water trolling but you might want to downsize to a #4 or #3 blade on inland lakes.
- **Step Four:** get the boat up to your desired trolling speed. Let your line out fairly quickly until the bouncer hits bottom and then stop the line. Hold the line for 10 seconds. Repeat the process two more times. Your bouncer and lure should be pretty close to the bottom. Put your rod in the rod holder and wait for a fish.
- **Common Mistakes:**
  1. Using too small of a bottom bouncer. The action of the bouncer tapping the bottom is critical.
  2. Setting the hook too quickly. Give the rod a chance to “load up” before you pick it up
  3. Not checking the depth often enough. Small changes in speed impact how close you are to the bottom

### Fish On!

- **Recognizing a Bite:** bites on a bouncer will be range from a few small taps to a massive rod bending jerk
- **Wait for the right time:** don't grab the rod at the first sign of a bite. Wait for the rod to load up
- **Set the hook:** no big hook set required. Remove from the rod holder, sweep the rod tip up and start winding