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20th SEASON



The Lunker

Nutty Fishing

Fred Metarko

On October 5, eight or nine inches of snow fell on Shumway Hill. Branches broke from the trees; the wicked winter was here. I hurried to winterize my boat and put it away for the season. Then the nice weather came, real nice weather—nice enough to go fishing. Bass club members John Tomb and Dan Sauer teamed up to fish the Iron Man Circuit in New York State. They were catching nice smallmouth bass and posting pictures of their catch. It was tempting; I wanted to get my boat out and join the action.

My son Mike and his family were home for Thanksgiving. I was lamenting about the weather and the nice fish being caught. Mike smiled and with a chuckle said, “Dad, I’ve got a great idea for you—why don’t you go chipmunk fishing? You won’t have to get your boat out and there are lots of those little critters running around outside.”

“Chipmunk fishing? What the heck is that?”

“Well,” he said. “Sam (his son) and I were in a gun shop to purchase a shotgun. The guy waiting on us was a real friendly character. We got to discussing the seasons changing from fishing to hunting. He asked, ‘Did you ever go chipmunk fishing?’ We asked what it was, so he gave Sam and me a detailed explanation of the procedure.

‘First you go to the store and buy a bag of fresh peanuts—the ones in the shell. Next pick one of your sturdiest fishing rods and attach a reel spooled with the strongest line you have. Then tie a peanut to the end of the line using the best fishing knot you know how to tie. Put on a warm coat, boots, hat, and gloves. Take the baited rod and reel with you and also a sharp knife. And don’t forget the bag of peanuts. Go outside to the nearest area where

you’ve seen chipmunks running around. Find a well-used hole in the ground and make yourself comfortable. Slowly drop the peanut down the hole as far as possible. Jiggle it up and down.

‘Soon the chipmunk will smell the peanut and come to get it. When he grabs it, hold on; the fight will begin. He has the nut, it is his, and he is not about to let go. As he heads down the hole it’s time to apply pressure and start reeling. Feeling resistance, the chipmunk will be more determined to keep the nut. The line will tighten and the rod will bend.

‘After a back-and-forth struggle, the chippie is coming your way. You keep cranking as he appears at the opening of the hole. Finally you have him out in the open. He holds firm with all fours planted in the ground, his tail twitching wildly and staring at you with his teeth clenched on his peanut. You get the knife and cut the line. In a flash the chipmunk disappears down the hole with his well-earned nut. After all, bass fishermen do practice catch and release.

‘The fight will be a good one. You land the chipmunk and he is rewarded. You can move on knowing there are a lot more holes and you have a bag full of peanuts.’

After the story, Sam asked, “Pop, do you think you’ll try chipmunk fishing?”

“No, I don’t think so,” I answered. “I’ll spend the winter getting my gear ready for bass fishing.”

The Lunker is a member of the Tioga County Bass Anglers (www.tiogacountybassanglers.com). Contact him at lunker@mountainhomemag.com.



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