



Tip Ups with Large Minnows

When fishing large minnows under tip-ups I like to hook them in the area behind the dorsal fin being careful not to break the spine when hooking. This allows the minnow to swim and flutter but the strength of a 4-5" shiner or sucker will be enough to give you frequent false flags. To resolve this use your line clippers and snip a small piece of the tail, top and bottom to take some of his power away. Be careful not to clip too close to the body as this will injure the bait and it will die quickly. Start with 1/8" -1/4" off each tip of tail fin depending on size of minnow. I find these large bait fish very effective on winter northerns and generally try to fish them adjacent to weeds but not close enough to allow the minnow to get into the weeds where it will wrap up trying to hide. Depending on depth I usually fish them from 9-18" off bottom and keep my split shot close to the bait to stop it from tangling while struggling. Never fish them with a wire leader as it is too restrictive, instead try some of the braided lines—PowerPro or SpiderWire in the 30-50# class; they stay soft and are very difficult to cut off. For hooks, I prefer trebles with a hook gap just large enough to hold the bait, I try to get to the tip-up quickly and prefer to set the hook while the fish is moving with the bait not allowing time to swallow the hook into the stomach. Nearly all of my hook ups are in the front of the mouth allowing quick hook removal and release. On a good day we may take 1 legal pike for eating (they are wonderful when pulled from the cold winter water) but generally release all the others and the less time out of the water the better since they rely heavily on the slime coat for survival. Good Luck and take your kids with you, they love pulling the large pike up by hand.