

Lake Erie Fishing “Aboard Denied”



Maps and Fishing Guide

By

Dean Clifton

Web Page; www.cliftond.com

Email; dean@cinci.rr.com

LATITUDE & LONGITUDE

Latitude (shown as horizontal line) is the angular distance, in degrees, minutes and seconds of a point north or south of the Equator; Lines of Latitude are often referred to as parallels.

Longitude (shown as a vertical line) is the angular distance, in degrees, minutes, and seconds, of a point east or west of the Prime (Greenwich) Meridian. Lines of longitude are often referred to as meridians.

Distance between Lines If you divide the circumference of the earth (approximately 25,000 miles) by 360 degrees, the distance on the earth's surface for each degree of latitude or longitude is approximately 70 miles. (This is true at the equator)

Latitude lines are the same distance apart regardless of where you are on earth (70 miles per degree or **1.16** miles per minute). (1.15 statute miles equal to 1 nautical mile)

Longitude lines due to the shape of the earth get closer together the further north or south of the equator you are. In the area of Lake Erie minutes are approximately **0.858** miles per minute.

In the real world we think of one minute of Latitude or Longitude as being close to one mile. SO, if someone says they are at 36/25 and you are at 36/20 you are about 5 miles away from them.

It is common (on Lake Erie) when referencing L/L (GPS) numbers to drop the degrees and thousands from the minutes so you may hear "I am at the 35/25" meaning 41 35.000N 082 25.000W.

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These maps represent places where we have caught walleye or perch over the past several years. Each waypoint (Lat/Lon numbers) is the center of a collection of waypoints that I will call “spots”. Think of these spots as the center of a “shotgun pattern” and not the only place where fish have been caught. I start looking a mile before reaching a spot and then work across the spot, then circle around them. If two spots are close together work between and around them in combination. While the locations are proven fish holding spots for us, they are far from being the only place where walleye or perch can be caught, but they are the spots we tend to fish year after year. I also tried to prioritize spots within a month but the walleye movement is too erratic to make this possible, you will also see many of the same spots used in different months. We tend to fish structure (elevation changes) and check these spots every time we are in the area. While these maps are per month it is important to remember that it is the season and temperature that drive the walleye to move and not the calendar so April’s map can work in May, etc.

It is my sincere hope that you benefit from the use of these maps and receive added enjoyment in your fishing experience.

No guarantees are intended or implied. You should be equipped with good NOAA navigational maps of the area you are in, as well as compass, gps and other navigational aids.

DON’T DEPEND ON ANY ONE DEVICE OR MAP TO GET YOU HOME.

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Dean Clifton
4576 Fisher Rd.
Franklin, Ohio 45005 Email; dean@cinci.rr.com

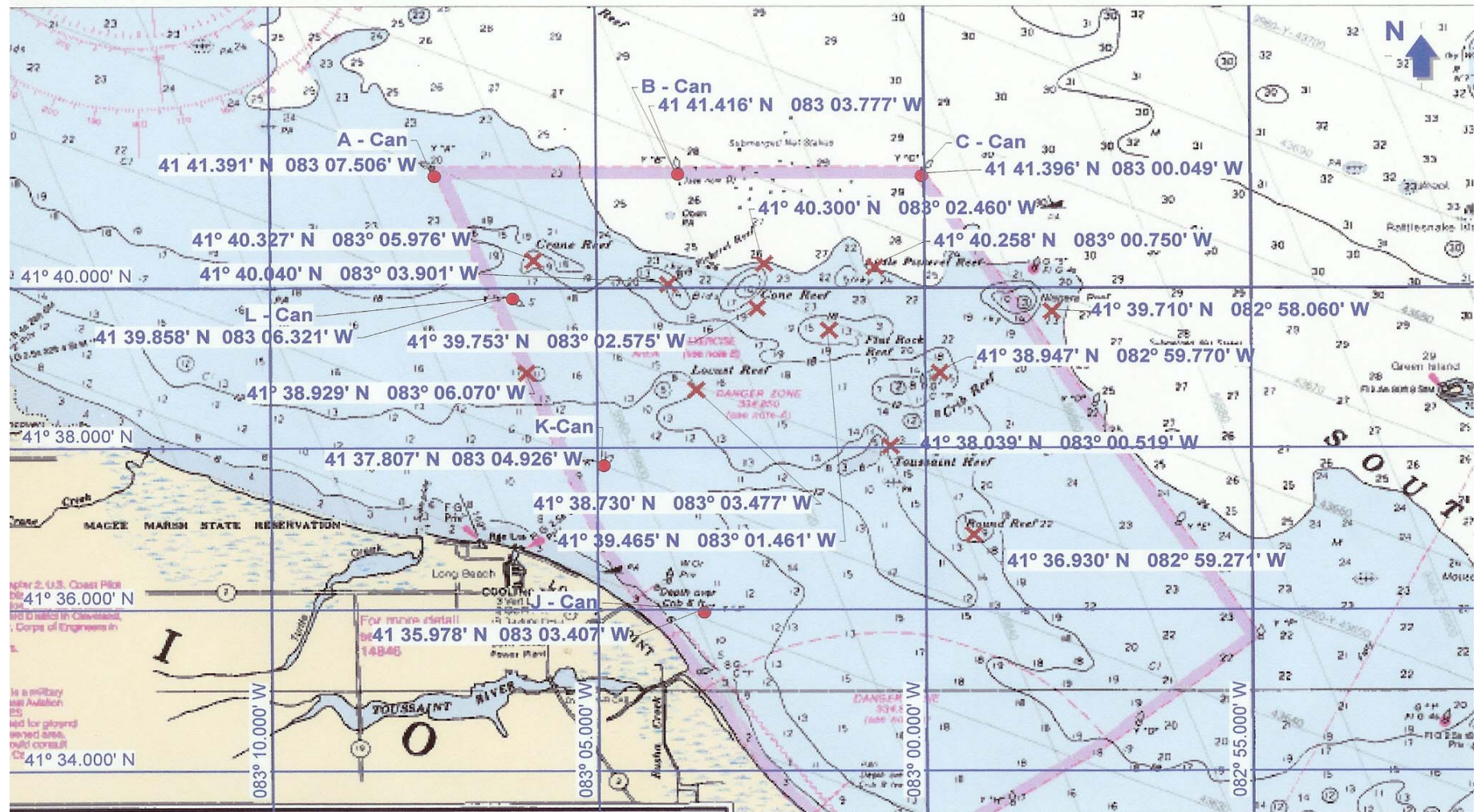
April

During the winter months the walleye school (bunch) up in the western basin waiting for Mother Nature to give the go ahead for the start of the spawn. In late March to mid April the spawn starts and the female walleye move onto the reef tops and up the rivers to deposit their eggs in the cracks and crannies to be fertilized by the males. Before, during and soon after the spawn gets under way jigging or casting will catch the walleye. Either anchoring just off the reefs or drifting across them is the preferred technique. Use a lead headed jig (plain or fuzzy and in various colors) heavy enough to be felt when bounced off the bottom, tip the jig with large minnows or sometimes worms. Casting with blade baits such, as Sonics are also a good method. At times weight forward spinners with worms will also work.

With the water being very cold the walleye will be sluggish and slow to bite so a good sensitive rod with small diameter, no stretch line, like fire line or spider wire are a great help with feeling the bite.

Note; Spots marked with a red dot ● are fixed locations such as buoys, islands, reefs, etc. Spots marked with red X's are fishing spot locations.

WEST END OF LAKE ERIE
Chart 14830_1 (BSB Electronic Charts) Depth Units: FEET



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April – Walleye Spots

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May

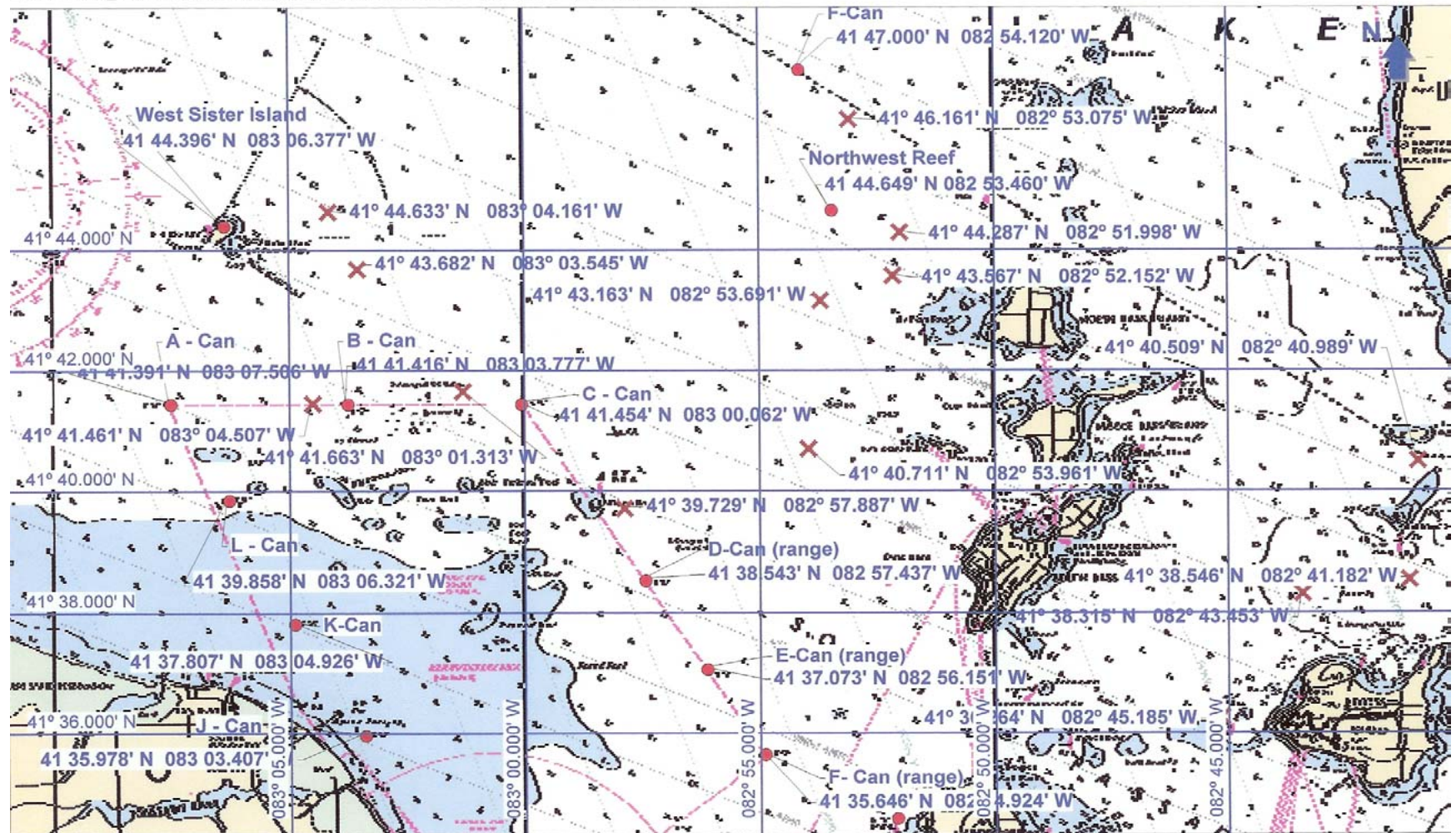
As the spawn ends, the walleye will start moving off the reefs and into the deeper waters around the outer range markers. The large females seem to move out toward the Bass Islands in their migration back into the central and eastern end of the lake while the smaller males tend to begin a counter clockwise movement around the western basin. Not all seem to migrate but stay around the reefs and are caught there in May as well as June and July. Jigs and blade baits used in April still work as the walleye move between the reefs or move from the reefs out toward the open lake. This is also the time to start trolling with worm harnesses / bottom bouncer's, stick baits like "husky jerks or reef runners" and spoons. I like using stick baits when the water is cold and switch to spoons as soon as it starts to warm. Look for walleye in the deeper places between the reefs and out toward the outer range markers (A, B, C, etc.). Generally the walleye will be on or close to the bottom this time of year BUT if you have a warm sunny day look for them to suspend up high where they can find the warmer waters. IF you are not seeing walleye on your sonar try running a shallow diving stick bait in the top 3 to 10 feet of water to see if the walleye are suspended near the surface. I like using small inline boards to get the baits out away from the boat especially when they are high.

If you can time it correctly early spring is a good time to try both north and south of the islands, attempting to "ambush" the big females as they migrate eastward. North of Gull Island shoals to Middle Island is my favorite area during this time. You may find them one day and they will be gone the next. Patience is necessary to be in the right place at the right time but if it's a big one you are looking for this could be the answer.

Note; Spots marked with a red dot • are fixed locations such as buoys, islands, reefs, etc. Spots marked with red

X's are fishing spot locations.

ORAIN TO DETROIT RIVER
 Chart 14830_4 (BSB Electronic Charts) Depth Units: METERS AND DECIMETERS



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Lake Erie Fishing Aboard "Denied" May – Walleye Spots

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June

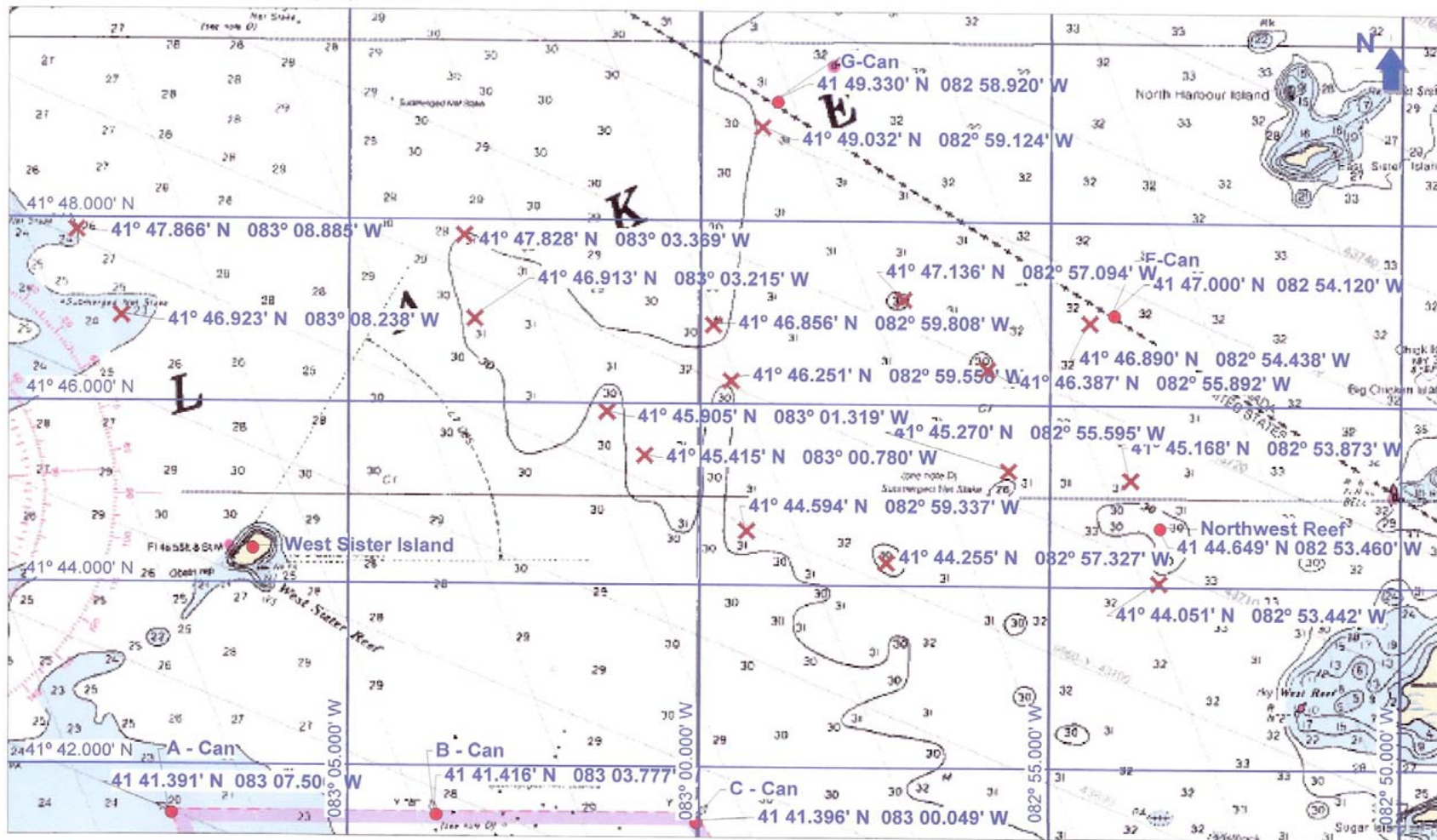
It has been my experience that in late May and June the walleye will move out from the outer ranges markers (A, B, C and Niagara Reef) then on out into the “flats” west of Green Island and southeast of West Sister Island. They will mostly be on the move looking for baitfish to feed on. Work the “spots” starting from the south and working to the north until you see the walleye or more likely the bait fish clouds on your sonar, then get lines out and work that area over. If you see a baitfish ball (see example in back of book) set your baits to run at the same elevation as the baitfish since the walleye will be laying below them and will rise up to feed. Be sure to mark each spot where you catch a walleye and then after taking two or three fish, work back over the marks until you have not caught a walleye in at least two passes before moving on. NEVER LEAVE FISH TO FIND FISH.

By early June we will go to a 90 to 100% spoon program. While I may still run one stick bait (husky jerk or rip stick) up high off a board to check for suspended walleye most everything else will be pulling spoons. We usually fish four people so we can legally run eight lines. We will run four large size 1 dipsy’s, two to each back corner of the boat. One will be set on the number 1 setting and the other on a number 3 setting on each side. To the outside of the dipsy’s we will run two inline planner boards pulling jet divers (usually size 30s) on either side. I run a 6-foot leader behind both dipsy’s and jet divers, the leader will be 17 to 20# test flora-carbon or vanish line. I tie a snap on one end and a good quality ball bearing snap swivel on the other. I attach the spoon to the snap and the snap swivel to the diver. This keeps the weight of the connection to the spoon as light as possible so it does not affect the spoons action. Leaders should be checked after each use for kinks or nicks and replaced, if not perfect. I also use a 12” rubber snubber (shock absorber) between the dipsy and the leader to allow some “give” when the fish hits, reducing the chance of the hook pulling out.

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X’s are fishing spot locations.

WEST END OF LAKE ERIE
Chart 14830_1 (BSB Electronic Charts) Depth Units: FEET



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Lake Erie Fishing Aboard "Denied"

June – Walleye Spots

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July

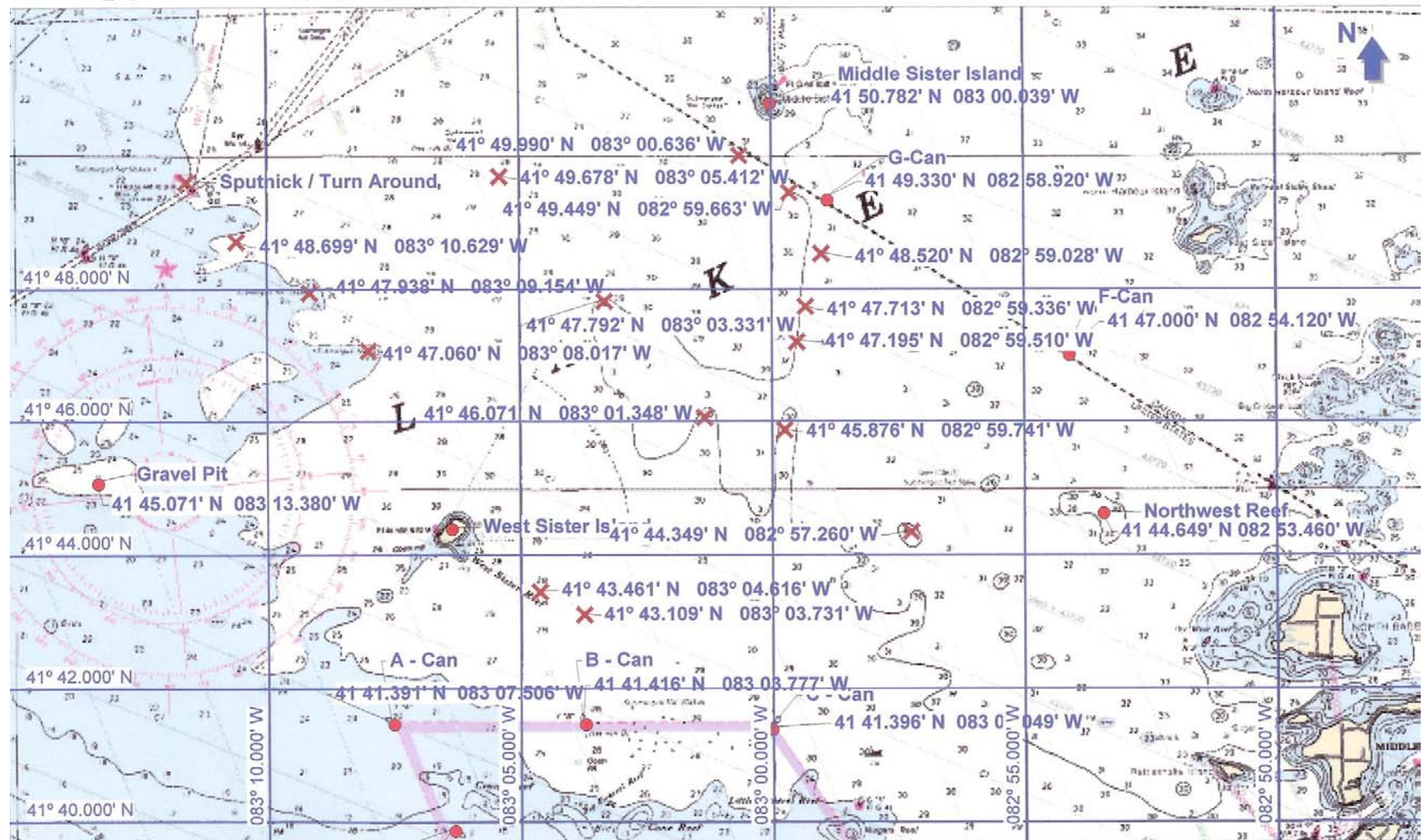
July can be a very productive month for walleye. The western basin schools will be on a migration but not moving very far each day from where they were the day before EXCEPT when a storm comes through, then who knows where they will show up next. We like to fish the flats, which is an area between the bass islands, West Sister, Middle Sister and the Canadian Border. There are many small humps and structure changes that hold baitfish and thus walleye. Since we are coming out of west harbor, I start looking a little past Green Island then head northwest toward Middle Sister Island (330 degrees) BUT hopefully we won't have to run that far. Once we locate the walleye we mark the GPS so the next trip through that area we have a starting point. The walleye may have moved but if it's only a day or two they won't be far off. After two or three days you can establish a direction of migration.

The walleye will normally be in small packs or schools, these could be a few yards to ½ mile or so in diameter. Once we catch a fish we mark the GPS with an icon, then if we get another or two we will circle back across these marks working the school as long as we are taking walleye. Never leave an area you are catching fish to go hunt another UNLESS you are catching all less than legal (15") then a move would be in order, the small fish tend to school with others their size BUT not always, there could be some big walleye feeding on the small ones so it is a good idea when this is happening to make a large circle around the school before moving on.

Note; Spots marked with a red dot ● are fixed locations such as buoys, islands, reefs, etc. Spots marked with red

X's are fishing spot locations.

WEST END OF LAKE ERIE
Chart 14830_1 (BSB Electronic Charts) Depth Units: FEET



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July – Walleye Spots

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August

August is the month of long runs, hot weather and the feeling of “its time to take a break” for us.

The walleyes tend to move north toward the Canadian border as the weather switches from warm to hot. So if it's a hot year look for the move to begin sooner than if it's a cooler year like 2004 has been. August is still a spoon program for us, same as past months, but many folks go to bottom bouncers and worm harnesses with good results. The differences being the walleyes tend to be tight to the bottom most of the time due to the higher water temperatures.

In the past two years the walleyes were along both sides of the Canadian border from a little west of Middle Sister Island all the way to the north side of North Bass Island. They would first move from west toward the east, then for some reason (I have no idea) would turn around and move back west again. It is not unusual for them to do this several times in a month. My best guess is the water from the Detroit River being cooler than the lake water and flowing out along the border causes baitfish to congregate near this temperature merger and that brings in the walleye.

Note; Spots marked with a red dot ● are fixed locations such as buoys, islands, reefs, etc. Spots marked with red

X's are fishing spot locations.

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Lake Erie Fishing Aboard “Denied” August – Walleye Spots

13

September

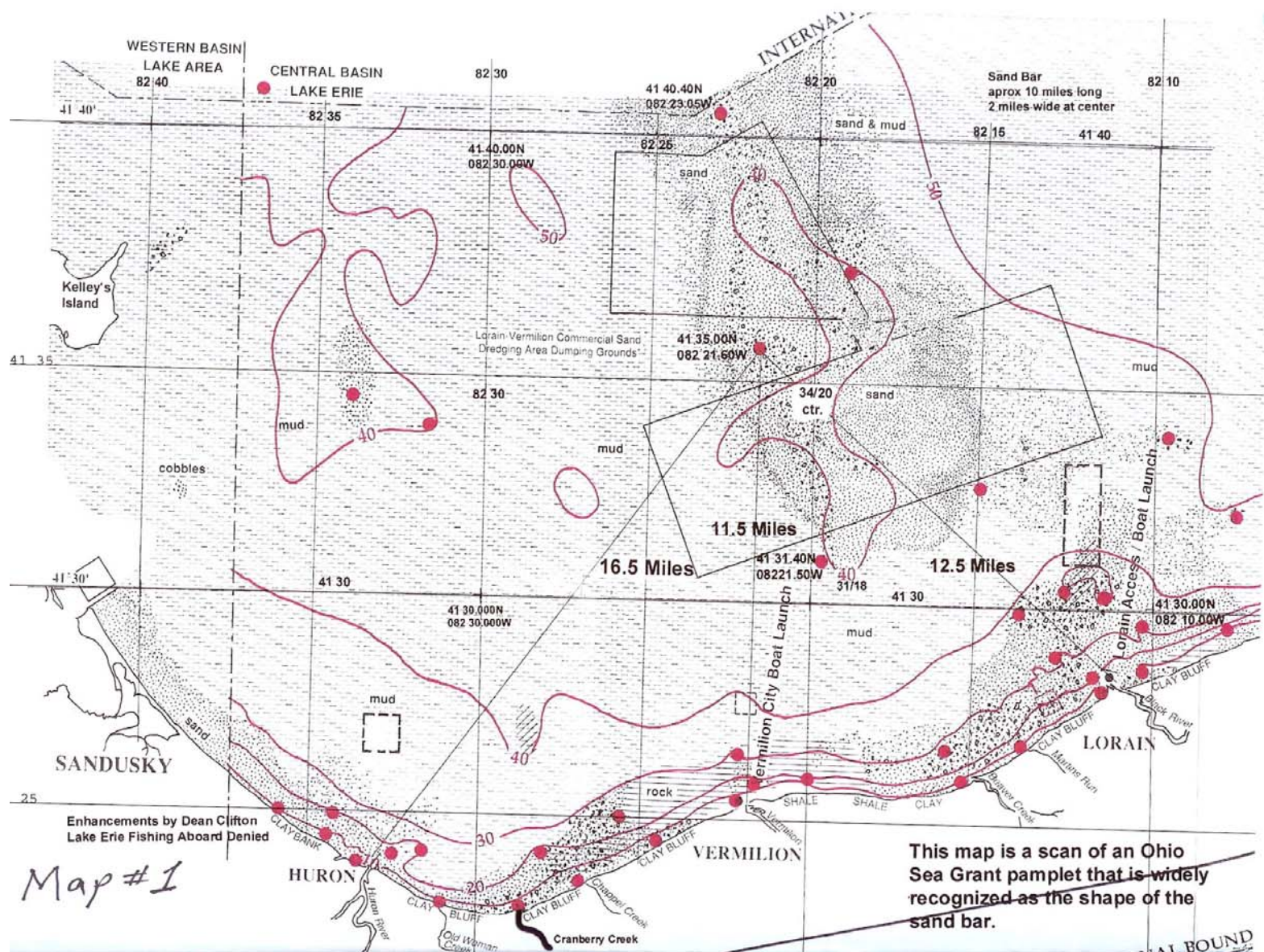
In early September we move the boat to Huron / Vermilion and fish an entirely different area. In the western basin there are reefs, islands, buoys and bottom structure that tend to hold walleye and/or can be used as landmarks. In the central basin there are none of these, the bottom is basically flat with few elevation changes even on the sand bar and those can't be seen and it is not easy to recognize them on the sonar, so we end up using L/L (GPS) numbers to reference spots in the lake much more that we do in the western end of the lake. It is common when referencing L/L (GPS) numbers to drop the degrees and thousands from the minutes so you may hear "I am at the 35/25" meaning 41 35.000N 082 25.000W.

Walleye fishing in early fall starts east of the sand bar (see map1) and in 2004 lasted until mid September. We fished the 17 to the 20 longitude lines (north-south) anywhere from the middle of the sand bar up past the north end of the bar 34 to 40 latitude lines. Then the walleyes started moving west and fishing got good between the 25 to 27 lines and finally moved to between the 26 to 30 lines.

My reason for fishing the central basin is size of walleye not numbers. By the time September rolls around I am only looking for one more walleye but it needs to be a really big one, so when fishing this area I run my baits very near the bottom, such as 40 feet in 47 feet of water, targeting the bigger fish that will be laying on the bottom.

Notes;

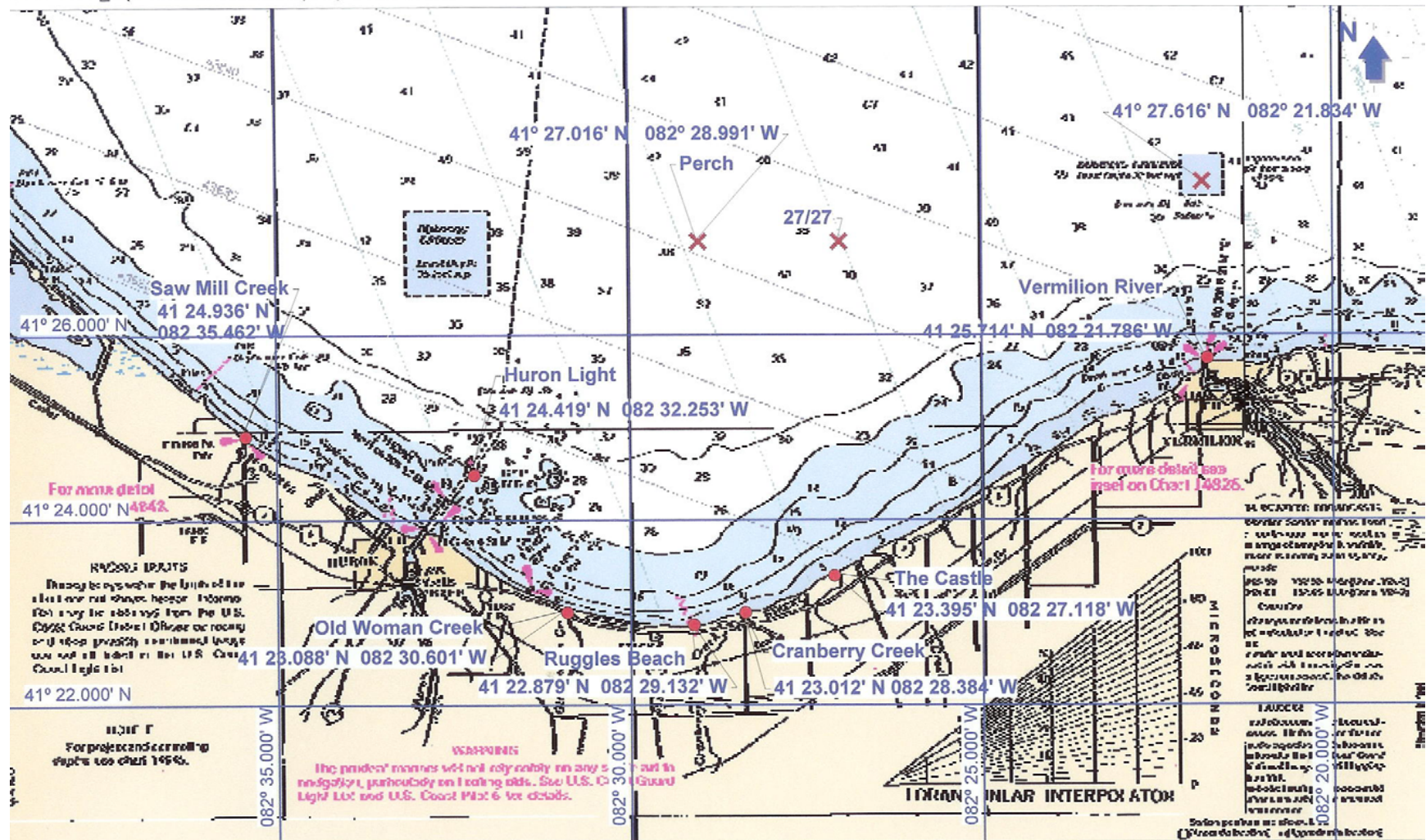
1. Start on the east side and move west as the season progresses
2. Three maps for September; #1 is a scan of an Ohio Sea Grant map showing the shape of the sand bar, #2 and #3 are the lower and upper portions of the sand bar.
3. Fall perch spots are included in with the walleye spots. If an X spot is not marked as 'perch' then it is walleye.
4. Spots marked with a red dot (•) are fixed locations such as buoys, islands, reefs, etc. Spots marked with red **X**'s are fishing spot locations. (Exception map #1 below where red dots were used as fishing hot spots)



Lake Erie Fishing Aboard “Denied”

September – Walleye & Perch Spots – Map #2

16



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Lake Erie Fishing Aboard "Denied"

September – Walleye & Perch Spots – Map #3

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October

October may well be my favorite month for fishing. Usually the weather is not too bad, the fish are cooperative, large and there are no bugs. There are two types of fall fishing that we do.

First type is out around the sand bar, starting on the east side out around the dumping grounds north of Lorain and moving north around the 40/17 lines as the season progresses. The walleye seem to just “roam” around from the east of the bar over toward the northwest side but may move back east for some unknown reason. By mid October they usually move a little further south toward the center of the bar (34/20 lines) but will continue their back and forth (east to west to east) movements so a good sonar is really needed. Notice on the October maps that most walleye spots are bordered by 34/15, 40/15, 40/30 and 30/30 lines, these four points form a lopsided rectangle which to me outlines the active points on the bar BEFORE the water starts to cool down (low 60s) when the walleye will move further toward shore (south) down around the 27/27 lines and finally in near the shoreline.

The second type of fall fishing that I like is late evening / night fishing. Normally we fish no more than a couple of miles off shore between Huron and Vermilion with most action centering around Cranberry Creek and a place commonly called “The Castle”, these spots are located on your October maps. While the sand bar bite is mostly spoons the night bite is shallow running stick baits like rip sticks, husky jerks, etc. pulled behind inline boards, the later in the season the better your chances are of finding big walleye in close. Night fishing should not be tried unless you are comfortable in your navigation skills and sonar equipment, nothing looks the same once the sun goes down and it is very easy to get disoriented. Good onboard lights and lighted inline planner boards are a must. The local folks who practice night fishing do so right up until the lake ices over and some also night fish off the wall at Huron, Lakeside pier, Catawba Point and most anyplace they find a rock to stand on and cast into lake.

The October maps are “busy”, that is lots of points, I tried reducing the number but with the continual movement of the walleye I did not want to leave out any spots that had been productive to us.

Note; fall perch spots are shown on the September and October walleye maps, if a spot is (red X) in not marked as perch then it is a walleye spot.

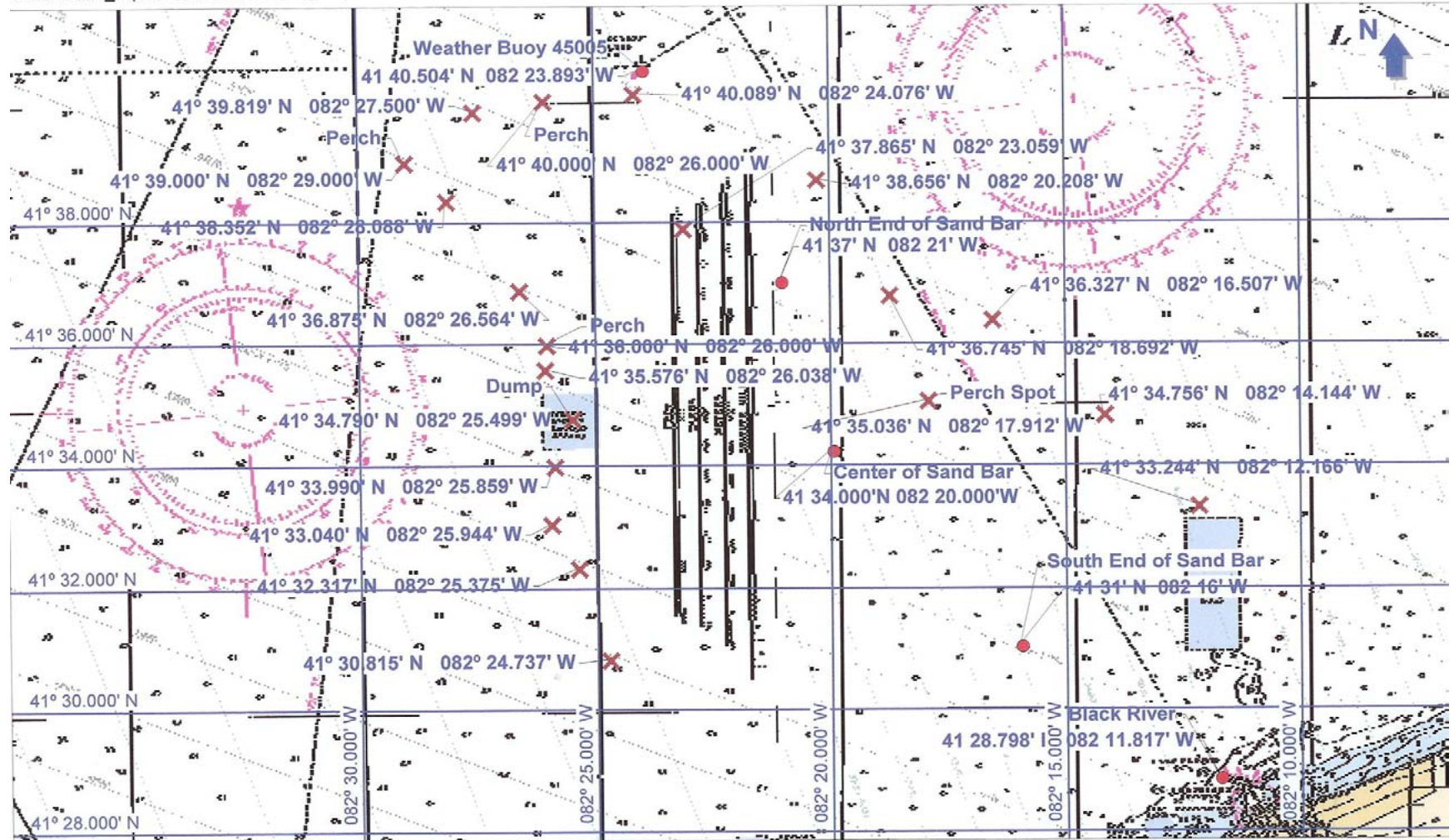
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Lake Erie Fishing Aboard "Denied"

October – Walleye & Perch Spots– Map #1

19

VEST END OF LAKE ERIE
Chart 14830_1 (BSB Electronic Charts) Depth Units: FEET

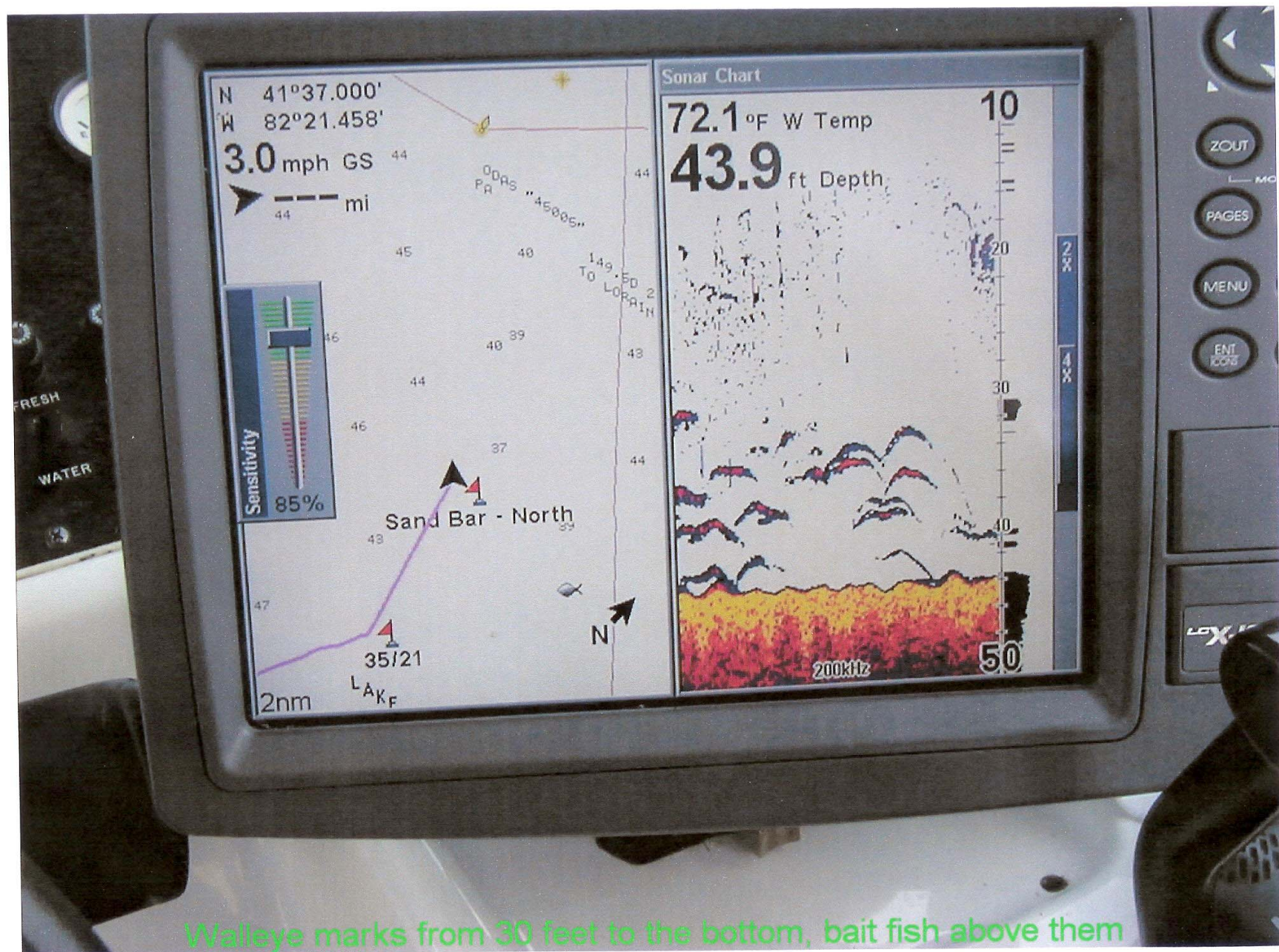


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Lake Erie Fishing Aboard "Denied"

October – Walleye & Perch Spots – Map #2

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Perch

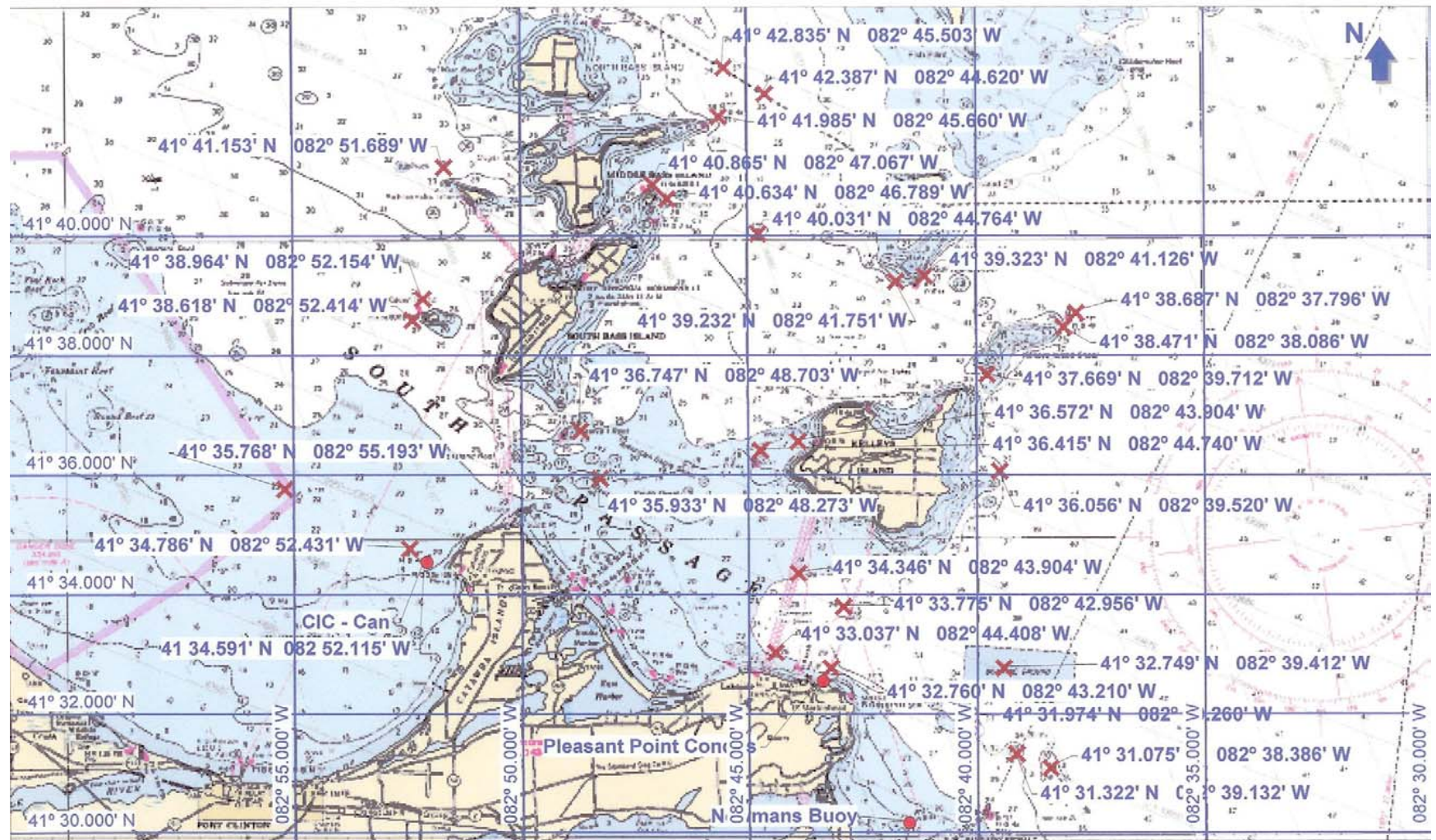
Perch spots for the entire season around the islands are shown on this map. Normally we only perch fish around the islands and do that when the weather is too bad to walleye fish. Perch are caught all over the lake from Toledo to Cleveland and beyond but we don't find it necessary to make long trips. The outer range markers off Camp Perry and the Huron / Vermilion / Lorain areas are also great perch spots for many fishermen. The spring maps of the reefs can be used for perch spots. In September and October I have included the fall perch spots in with the walleye maps.

In early spring (March thru May) perch fishing has been very good off Marblehead near the new condos, off Mazurik's access and all along the shoreline between. Starve Island reef, Green Island and Rattlesnake Island are also favorite spring spots. As the season progresses I like to work further out off the east side of Kelley's Island near the airport opening, west of Kelley's around the loading docks and off the northwest corner of Kelley's.

Perch are bottom feeders and will show up on your sonar very near or on the bottom. A good school of perch may look like a second bottom echo and it takes some practice to know what you are looking for. Perch will be usually found on gravel, sand, glacial till or bedrock bottom so anchoring may be hard to do. A good anchor with a piece of 3/8" chain about 6 feet long attached to it will help greatly.

Once you have located what looks like perch, try and anchor as close as possible above them. Using perch spreaders, crappie rigs on one of my hand tied jobs let your bait down just off the bottom. The best way to accomplish this is to have a sinker attached so it hits the bottom an inch or so before the bait touches the bottom. A description of my rigs can be found on my helpful hints page www.cliftond.com/helpful.htm. Use as sensitive a rod and line as you can find, I use an ultra light fiberglass spinning rod about 4 feet long and as small a diameter no stretch line as I can get. After positioning your bait just off the bottom it is a matter of feel, waiting for the perch to take your minnow. A perch bite will feel like a slight tap or just a small-added weight on the line. When something feels "different" do a gentle hook set of only a few inches then reel in and see what you have. Lots of times it will be no minnows.

WEST END OF LAKE ERIE 38
Chart 14842_44 (BSB Electronic Charts) Depth Units: FEET



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Full Year – Perch Spots around the Islands

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