



## St Mary's Lake, Salt Spring Island

May 12-13 or May 19-20

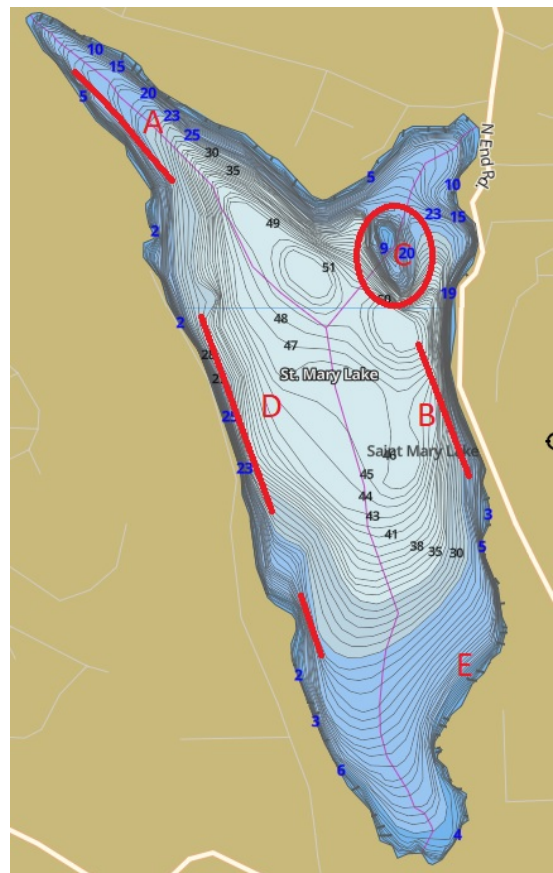
Event #3 2021 WCKAS

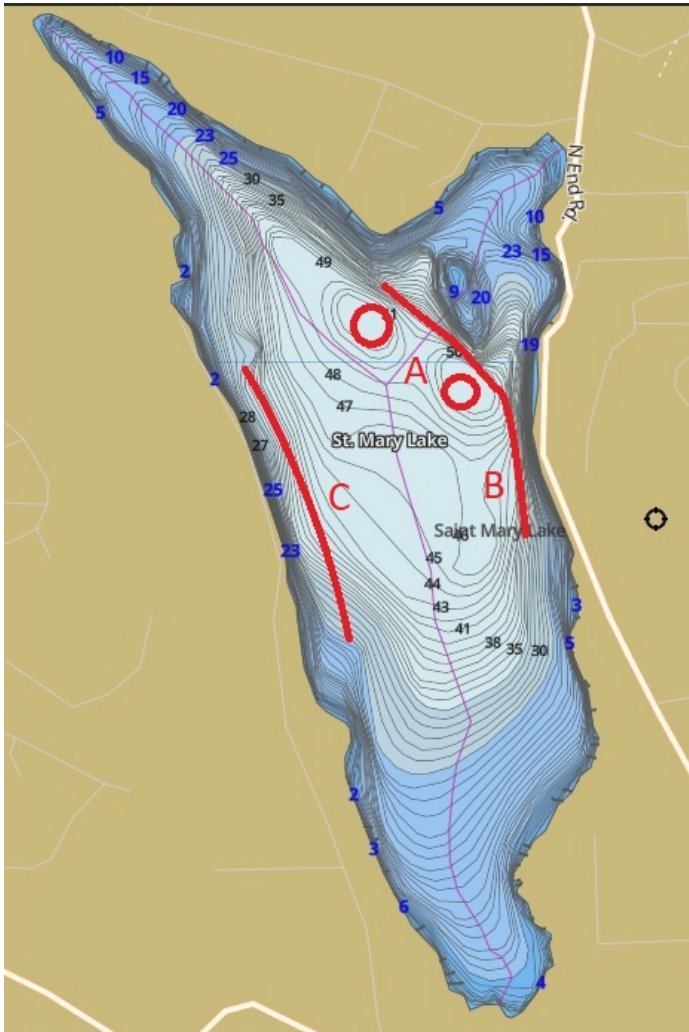
*Tips, Tricks and Techniques: Provided by Stijn Francois*

### Overview

Compared to the last two lakes, St. Mary Lake is shallow, with a depth of only 50-55ft in the middle. Because this, downriggers are likely not needed to catch the trout in the lake. Fish can be found all over the lake, but both the bass and trout seem to prefer the steeper drop offs on either side. On a usual day out, I'm targeting bass, so I head to a known spot first thing. If I get no hits after 10 or so casts, I move on to another spot. If the new spot is more than a 5-minute paddle away, I'll run out a gang troll behind me, and troll for trout between spots. If I am going to be at a spot for a while, I'll usually toss out either a float rig, or a bottom rig, for passive trout fishing while actively casting for bass.

For bass specifically, I usually try area B first, as it is the first area to be hit by the sun in the morning, and this seems to get the bass moving. If I get nothing here, I'll move to either spot A or D. both have some nice rocky drop-offs, and some good sunken log features. Spot A also has the chance to find turtles, which is always a treat. On the opposite bank to spot A, there are some docks, which can produce fish well. If the fish are still spawning, which they may well be, the island at spot C can produce good fish, though in a float over this past week, it has gotten pretty weedy. Spot E is a last ditch effort, hoping for some fish in the shallower weedy areas at the south end of the lake, and around the docks there.





For trout, if I'm aiming specifically for them, I will troll line C, back and forth, with a wide turn at either end. Most of the hits usually come near the middle of the line, or when turning. I never use a downrigger, so just pull an unweighted gang troll, tipped with a worm. Line B can also produce good fish, usually while passing through the channel in the middle between the drop-off and the island. Spots marked A are a pair of water aerators, installed many years ago to improve water conditions. They're not currently functioning, but are still tethered to trolling past them can be dangerous as you may snag up. These two spots are great for dropping lines down with small jigs, or simple worm rigs.



There are also yellow perch in this lake, though I've not found any consistent spots for them, mostly picking them up when using smaller lures and worms while aiming for bass.

## Trout Techniques



As I stated before, this is a shallower lake, so I never use a downrigger. For trolling my main lures are a Ford Fender gang troll, with a short leader to a hook and worm. Wedding bands in red or pink also work well for terminal tackle. I usually have the gang troll working 50-75ft behind me, and as it's unweighted, it rarely goes deeper than 20ft.

Another great lure for trolling is an inline spinner. I mostly use Vibrax spinners in Blue/Chrome, size 1 or two. I leave the treble hook on, but a single should work just as well.





If trolling fails to produce fish, I'll start cast and retrieving. My main lures are small spoons, tiny buzz bombs, or small crankbaits (expect to pick up some bass with these).



If these produce nothing, I'll start still fishing, either with a float and a worm or jig (usually 3 or 4 ft below the float), or with floating powerbait eggs suspended off the bottom. Pink eggs work best, though I've had luck with yellow and white also.



## **Bass Techniques**

For bass, my main technique is finesse jigging. I use small weedless jigs, usually 1/10 or 1/16 of an ounce, with a short 3" plastic worm on the back. I use Z-Man plastics mostly, because I like the way they hold on, but any plastic will work. I prefer darker colours, greens and blue/black produce well for me.

Other techniques that can produce fish include throwing crankbaits or jerkbaits, of varying sizes and colours. The best plan with these is to switch up regularly, to find what the fish want that day.







I also run a range of hook and plastic worm setups, whether it be Texas rigged or wacky rigged. Wacky rig with a small weight a foot below consistently produces fish for me when other presentations fail.

Lastly, the old standby, live worms will catch bass. Any way you rig them, whether it be from a float, on the bottom, or dragging it through the water, you'll likely pick something up.

**Note: I have a large box of soft plastic baits (and hard baits) I rarely use, you are welcome to take a look through and grab some things to try out.**

### Gear Recommendations

I run mostly 6ft rods, with small reels. I love to fish for bass on ultralight rods, as they put up a good show, and love to jump around. I run 20lb braid on most of my rods, with a 10lb mono leader, though I always have an ultralight with full 6lb mono for finicky fish.