



## Ice Fishing at Ice Out!

A personal story from Warren P. Balgooyen

Ice fisherman and skaters have learned that ice weakens in late winter over shallow water first.

Once when I was a youth, my father, an avid ice fisherman, pushed the season too far on a lake in New York State. We ventured out on only 4 inches of spring ice. The honeycomb pattern was there but a freeze the previous night glued the very top inch or so together to make it seem solid at 7 am.

But by 10 am the sun had strengthened and began to melt that “glue.” I first noticed we were in trouble when I saw “waves” in the ice as my father walked ahead of me. “Hey dad,” I shouted, “We’d better give it up and get off the lake. The ice is getting weak.”



At this point Dad noticed what was happening too. We grabbed our fishing gear. We didn’t even take the time to real up the lines, just wrapped in big loops, then made a quick retreat off the lake. We barely made it to shore.

Later that same day, the lake was open water. We were lucky to be alive. Now that is pushing the ice-fishing season too far! That is why in Maine, all lakes are closed to fishing at the end of March.