

Gazette Outdoors Columnist Attends iCAST 2026



Visting the Zero Trace booth, pictured: Andrea (left), Evan (back) and Gabriella (right).

By Tom Claycombe
smileya7@aol.com

iCAST 2026 took place from July 14-17, 2026, at the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando, Florida. It is put on by the American Sportfishing Association (ASA) which I will follow up in a later article concerning all of the good that ASA does for us fishermen. But in this article I want to cover some of the cool new items that I saw that are hitting the market this year or are relatively new.

I flew to Orlando on Tuesday night but should have flown in Monday. Consequently, I missed four to six meetings, two dinners and a fishing tournament that I should have attended.

Anyway, let's start off with 'Zero Trace Baits.' If you're worried about plastics being left in our waterways due to our plastic worms etc. breaking off, quit worrying. There's now an alternative option. Here's some info on their website.

"Every year an estimated 200,000,000 (or nearly 550,000/day) soft plastic lures with microplastics, BPA and phthalates) are lost in United States waters. ZT's solution? Premium scent-infused soft bioplastics that perform like top-tier lures and are designed to be completely biodegradable. Made from a gelatin/glycerin base that is safe for the environment and even safe for fish to eat." I bet ZT is going to be super popular in California, Oregon and Washington.

'AHI' has some swivel headed jigs called 'Flash Blade XT.' The head is tied to the hook with a swivel and it has a blade. I think they are going to be great for walleye fishing.

'Tear-Aid' produces fabric repair patches. Who doesn't need this! Torn tents, Gore-Tex jackets, sleeping bags, rafts, air mattresses, tarps, boat towables... My wife was just complaining about a rip in her Gore-Tex jacket. Think I'll keep a package in both trucks.

Magic makes carp and catfish bait. Next time I see a school of carp I'm going to try to catch a few. They're fun to fight plus they need thinned out.

'Whitewater' has some durable clothing that the guides are wearing. I'm going to test out some



I got to talk a few minutes to the legendary Mr. Crappie.

of their shorts on backpacking trips, hoodies and jackets on fishing trips.

I love 'Fish Monkey (FM)' gloves. They keep your fingers from getting shredded when handling fish. Even something as common as crappie will shred your fingers when you're boating 300 per day. FM is making gloves for Whitewater.

'Angl-Rite' offers rod holders. I may have to try out some on my new to me boat. I like the features they offer.

'Somethings Fishy' offers a little spray bottle that eliminates the fish smell after handling fish or after hooking on your bait. Seems to really work.

I met a young man that started his business just a week ago. With his 'FishX app,' you take a picture of your fish and it calculates his length, weight and girth. That'd be a big deal for me. When I'm backpacking, by the time I net a fish he is worn-out. Every second after I net him is important so he gets slipped back in and recovers. This would eliminate the wrestling to get him measured.

'Grand Trunk' has some nice lightweight chairs that I want to take on my backpacking trips this summer. I hate being squatted eating dinner while backpacking. They're going to be awesome.

'Bullet Weights' offers a plethora of weights. Here's three I'm interested in. I love their 1/64 oz. bullet weights for flyfishing. They slide so your cast is a lot smoother than when using a matchstick weight or split shot. Also like their pinch on wts and want to test them on walleye and kokanee. And their reusable split shot for crappie fishing.

On Wednesday and Thursday, 'Huk' had a chef processing tuna and serving us sushi at their booth. I've gotta test out some of their hoodies now don't I?

I visited with an old acquaintance, Colt. He does the marketing for 'Under Armour.' I'll test some more of their gear this year.

'Duck Camp' marketing guru, Mike May, called me before the show and set-up a meeting to see what they had new. Mike markets for numerous companies so I've dealt with him for years. I checked out some of their new shirts. Nice looking.

I was moving down an aisle and struck up a conversation with Lawrence, the CEO of 'Fish Techy.' He offers a unique product-a small orange ball



Under Armour had a tuna sushi bar.



Ty opened his business FISH-X just one week before the iCAST show.

(Proof Ball), much like a fish bobber. Hold it next to your fish, take a picture. In seconds it measures the length, girth and weight.

I met the original owner of 'Lake Fork Lure Co.' in 2013. Stayed at his lake cabin, toured the plant, fished two evenings with his guides and fell in love with his lures. If you remember a few weeks ago three of us caught 300 crappie in 3 hours. and 15 minutes using his plastics. I brought back some bass lures to test them out.

'ArcPro' produces a unique floating aerator that floats in your bucket.

'Perry Fishing' has some lures that I want to test out on walleye. Unique-the guy I talked to lives half a mile from me!

I tested 'Relentless' knives on a Louisiana fishing trip. Going to test more.

'Dexter Outdoors' used a ton of their knives in beef packing plants. Later tested their outdoor knives. They sponsored some of my Knife seminars at The Great Northwest Outdoor Expo. Have to test some more of their knives.

I am going to have to test out the new rhino line of fishing rods/reels from 'Zebco.'

