

**ACTIVE ANGLER**



Carl Jocusmen didn't know what he was missing. The Australian-born Elite Series sensation says the message didn't sink in until last summer's Elite Series tournament on Lake Champlain. That's when live sonar came into play for him in a big way when his brand-new Humminbird MEGA Live unit found a figurative pot of gold.

"I think it was the second day, and I had a single fish at 1:00," he says. "I was due in at 3:00, and I started running offshore boulders. I had Live set out to 90 feet, swung it around to my left and happened to catch a boulder about 70 feet to my left that I never knew was there. It literally had 30 smallmouth sitting on it that I could see on the screen like individual gold nuggets."

Jocusmen says he caught 18 pounds of bass in about 20 minutes on that spot. Since then, he's been a devout believer in live sonar.

**BLUE-COLLAR BREAKDOWN**

In 2018, Garmin Panoptix LiveScope hit the market as the first consumer-level live sonar. Humminbird MEGA Live followed in 2021, using slightly different technology and a wider cone to give Johnson Outdoors its own version of the now-ubiquitous live sonar technology that has been taking home blue trophies almost since its inception.

Traditional sonar returns a static, side-scan or down-facing image to a display mounted on the bow or console of a bass boat. Live sonar uses a sophisticated network of transducers to return an instant readout of the data. Most often, it is displayed in a forward-facing view, much like a video game might be.

Photo: Jacob Fine

**IMMEDIATE IMPACT**



"It's pretty much changed everything," says Jocusmen. "Live sonar has turned fishing into hunting. What I mean by that is you are not fishing anymore; you're actually hunting for fish. If there's not a fish on Live, you're not going to catch one. There is no guessing and no hoping you are going to get a bite. You look through a particular area on your screen to see if the fish are there. If not, you move on."

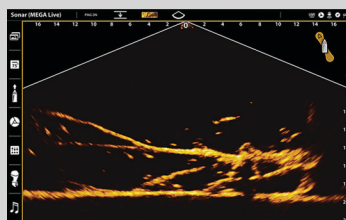
The advantage of this approach is that fishing becomes exponentially more efficient. The disadvantage? Jocusmen says it is possible to become an expert at fish spotting and lose sight of the actual techniques and patterns that enable you to boat bass.

"You have to be careful that you don't get caught up in it, because it will show you so much. Sometimes, there are fish that you just can't catch. You can see them, but trying to catch those fish can be extremely difficult."

Jocusmen says the proliferation of live sonar has made more anglers more aware of how fish act naturally or react to baits. "It is the fastest learning curve that you can utilize in fishing," he adds. "You are actually seeing what is happening live underwater. You are seeing how many fish are following your bait. You are seeing how many fish are actually living on a brushpile or a rockpile. So, as an up-and-coming angler, it speeds up your learning curve of how to fish."

**Product Spotlight**

The ICAST 2021 winner for Best Electronics, Humminbird MEGA Live Imaging rounds out the One-Boat Network to give anglers unparalleled clarity and detail. The technology allows anglers to see fish and structure in real time in down, forward and landscape modes. The unit scans wherever anglers point their trolling motor. It's compatible with Humminbird APEX and SOLIX models, as well as HELIX 8 through HELIX 15 G3N/G4N models with up to 150 feet of range. MSRP: \$1,499.99 [humminbird.johnsonoutdoors.com](http://humminbird.johnsonoutdoors.com)



**FUTURE FORECAST**

Live sonar took the United States by storm in a matter of months. Jocusmen says the wave didn't stop there. The international community has taken notice of the technology and is adopting it in droves. In Australia — a continent filled with large, evasive species like barramundi and Murray cod — anglers are similarly using



Live to transform fishing into hunting. "We have iconic species that are large in profile.

A 20-pounder is considered small. Many of them are considered the fish of 1,000 casts, so instead of casting and hoping to get a bite, you're looking for those fish before you ever make a cast. Then, you're trying to figure out how to get them to bite."



anglers are also refining live sonar to work well in shallow water. Although this technology was

once relegated to offshore patterns, he is already hearing of anglers using live sonar to spot bedding bass or individual fish near stumps in shallow water. Those efforts, he thinks, will continue to become more successful as live sonar evolves. Eventually, Jocusmen believes the technology will become clearer and take more guesswork out of angling.

"Technology has always been there and it has always advanced," he adds. "Mother Nature and fish always learn to adapt. They get caught and then they figure out a way to not get caught again. It's been that way since I was a kid looking at little fish symbols on the old Humminbird 150."