



Zero In On More Bass With These Tips

by Buck Perry, Education Editor

For about 30 years I traveled from one end of this country to the other. During this period, most of each year was spent fishing or "talking" fishing. Only a small part of each year was given to "making a living." The mistaken idea was that the day might come when "fishing" might provide a buck or two, and I could let up on

their so-called, local, "fished-out waters." Their referring to the waters in this manner couldn't have suited me better.

You have probably heard me say: "For over a quarter of a century I had a potential 'Crucifier' sitting in the front of the boat." What this meant was "the powers-that-be" were usually writers, local experts, bigwigs, TV and

a completely new ball game. In other words, if we expect to catch fish consistently, whenever and wherever we might fish, we better be prepared.

Those of you who have read my material will recall I said: "At some time or other, a fish can be caught most any place, by most anyone, on most anything, and by most any method. However, if you and I expect to catch

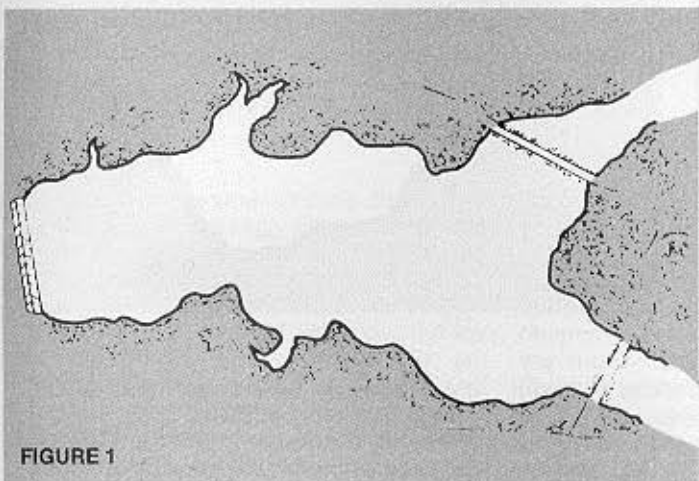


FIGURE 1

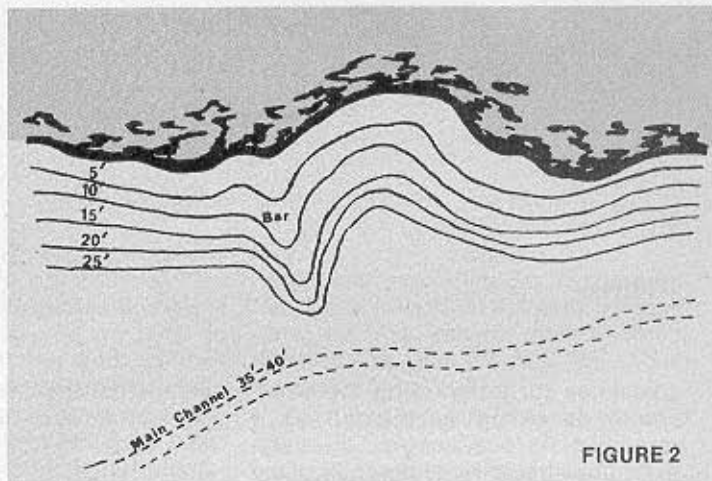


FIGURE 2

some of my other activities.

During those years very few towns or fishing holes were missed. In all the major cities, and many of the smaller ones, I would knock on the doors of the powers-that-be, and say: "My name is Buck Perry. I'm from the hills of North Carolina. Come on, I want to show you something."

The thing I wanted to show them was the fishing to be had in their local waters. It would do no good to show or talk about fishing in some remote wilderness area. I wanted to show them what they had been missing in

radio personalities, etc. These were the people who could help me spread the word. These were the ones who sat in the front of the boat and said "show ME!" I HAD to catch fish, or my name was mud, for sure.

Picture, if you will, the many different fishing situations I ran into during these years. As far as I can remember, no two of them were alike. In fact, I can't recall any two days being exactly the same. Another thing to consider is about the time you think a situation is nailed down, a weather change occurs and you are faced with

fish consistently, we better not play the game in a hit or miss type fashion."

Our guidelines on the Movement of Fish; Structure, Breaks, & Breaklines; Weather & Water Conditions; Lake Types; Mapping & Interpretation; Controls & Tools; and Presentation of Lures; will allow you and me to catch fish consistently wherever and whenever we might choose to fish. Just how good we become is entirely up to each of us.

Many fishermen have written letters asking me to describe how I would approach various fishing situa-

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tions. It would take a lifetime to answer all of these questions, but in an attempt to answer just a few of the more common ones, let me use this article to talk about what I would do in a particular fishing situation. So, don't get upset with the personal pronouns (I don't like them either). I'm not going to explain or point out my

like Figure 1, I'd head directly toward the roads crossing the lake arms. This would give me easy access to the lake. I would have no trouble finding workable structure regardless how much debris, trees, brush, etc., existed in the lake. This also shows me the best water color available.

This would most likely show me where the best structure, breaks and breaklines existed in the lake; and I'd have no trouble from the wind.

I would head for the causeway (roadbed) and the rip-rap as soon as I left the launching ramp. I'd choose the side with the best water color, the calmest, and which appeared to have the greatest depth.

I would start trolling the rip-rap with the smallest size Spoonplug (500 ser-

potentially productive water. By the time I got to the third size lure and to a depth of 8-10 feet, I'd begin to get the "lay of the land." I would not go back over a section already trolled unless I hit a fish, or saw an outstanding feature in the 8-10 foot depth.

I'd continue with the third size (250 lure (8-10 ft. depths) until I had covered a goodly portion of the area chosen to fish that day (several miles of shoreline with the best features and depths for the season).

If I kept my eyes open, I would have no trouble knowing where to do the deeper water work. Periodically I'd go back and check out the shallows on the troll, but if I found the fish "not moving," I'd concentrate my efforts on, and at, the deep features (struc-

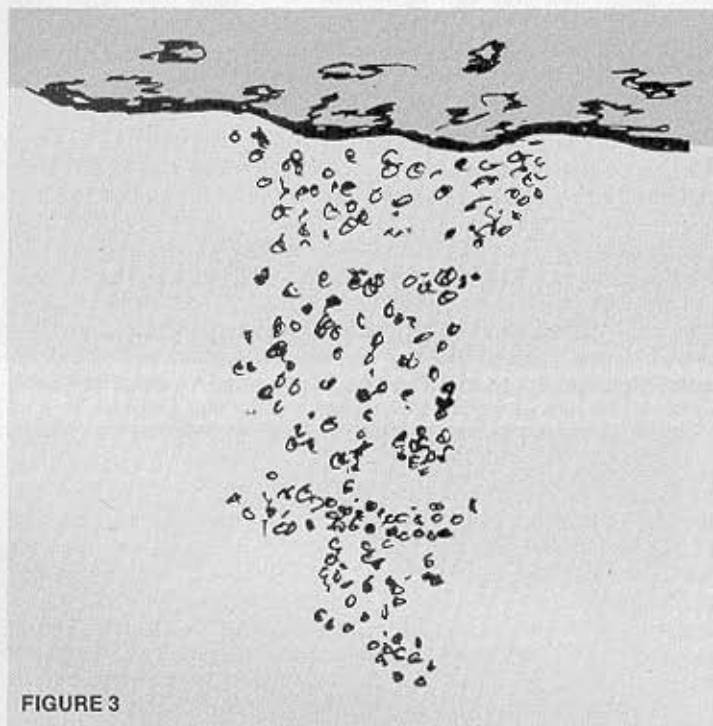


FIGURE 3

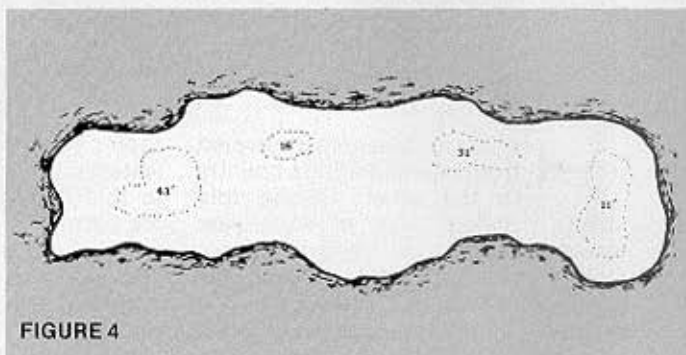


FIGURE 4

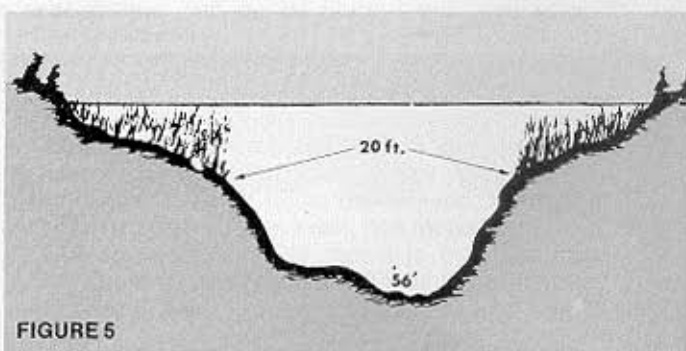


FIGURE 5

guidelines for interpreting the situation, or for doing the things I do. It should be obvious by now, I do everything possible to be at the right place at the right time, fishing in the right manner. If this were not true, I wouldn't be around to talk about fishing today. Some may think I stress trolling too much, but in "working out" any water, there is oftentimes a lot of "trolling water" to be checked. It makes little sense to waste time casting to unproductive water. Besides, some situations demand trolling—if we want to catch a fish. If you desire to look at the situations in a different light, that's just fine with me.

WHAT I WOULD DO

If I were going to fish a reservoir showing on a road map as something

ies). I'd get the lure in close so that it tipped the rocks quite often. I'd probably keep this size on until I'd run the whole length of the rip-rap. Then I'd go back along the rocks with a bigger lure. I'd continue with lure sizes to at least the 15-20 foot depth—if that depth is available. The larger lures should show any feature (side channel, wash, bar, etc.) that would produce a "hot spot" along the rip-rap. This would also check the depths at the piers around the main channel.

If my trolling passes along the rip-rap did not produce, I'd move to the shorelines to see what gives in the way of potentially productive areas.

I would first start trolling the shallows along the shoreline. I'd cover enough distance with each lure size to be sure I had covered some

ture, breaks, breaklines) that were potentially productive. I'd check these out both trolling and casting. I'd be sure to check the various speeds as well as the depths in all my lure presentations.

Periodically during the day, I would return to the causeway and run (troll) the rip-rap with at least three lure sizes to check the depths to at least 10-12 feet.

In whatever section or area I hit a fish on the troll, I'd position my boat correctly so I could control the depth and speed of my lure on the cast. On the cast, I'd probably make a big catch on a fast, steady bottom-bumping lure, but only a comparatively small catch on a jump type lure (such as a jig).

Figure 2 is a top view of a section in

a reservoir. In the past this area has produced fish. If I were going to fish this area thoroughly I'd plan on checking it out both trolling and casting. This would allow me to control the depth and speed as best as I know how.

I would first troll the shallows with a No-Bo trolling line the total length of the section. I'd use the first three sizes of Spoonplugs. If these trolling passes did not produce, then I would go to larger lures, and work ONLY the area of the ridge-like bar. With each larger lure size I'd make several passes from several directions. On each pass I would have the lure bumping the crown of the bar. During this deep water trolling, I'd keep each pass in a straight line. On each pass I'd get a good shoreline sighting so I could

the bottom before each "jump."

If this double coverage did not produce, then I'd turn toward deep water and "fan cast" the crown and sides of the bar. Here again I'd use the two style lures. First I'd use a sinking, free running, bottom-bumping lure. On each cast, the lure is allowed to sink to the bottom before the straight, steady retrieve is started.

If this did not produce, I'd switch lures to the jump type and repeat the fan casts. If this did not produce, I'd move the boat and position it (anchored) so I could reach deeper on the bar. I'd repeat my fan casts with the two style lures.

I'd keep repositioning my boat until I figured I'd reached the deepest water off the bar. Most likely as I moved

might indicate where to concentrate my efforts?

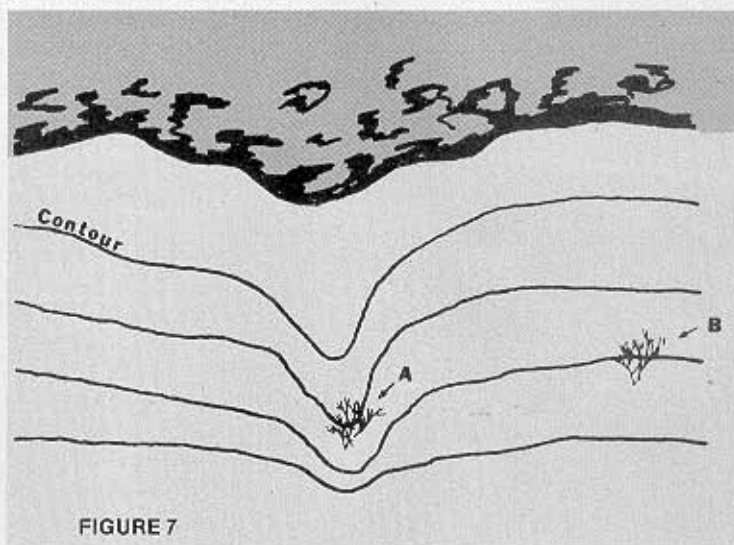
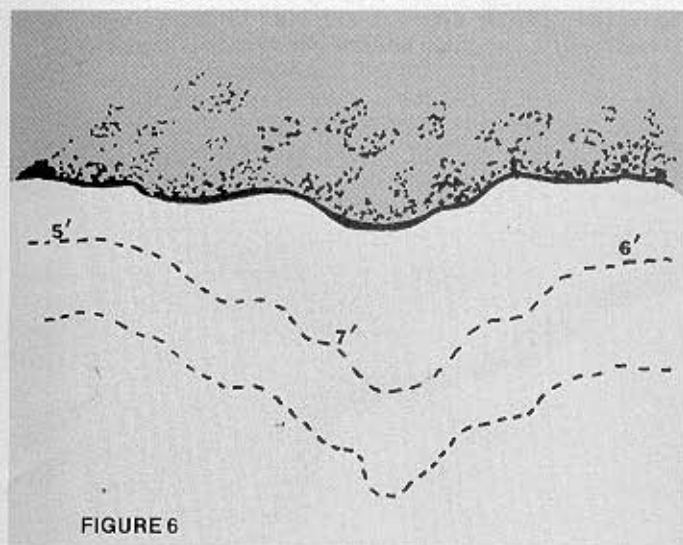
c. Could I expect the fish to be near the shoreline quite often?

d. If I found the fish trolling, should I consider stopping the troll and go to the cast?

e. If I find the fish a mile or more from the shoreline, how will I relocate the spot the next time I go out?

My guidelines would say my best bet is to:

a. Motor troll with different lure sizes to check the depths. Each lure size would cover several passes the total width of the reef. With line lengths each lure size should cover thoroughly a wide area (gentle sloping bottom). When trolling, each lure should bump the bottom at times as



repeat the same trolling pass if it became necessary. I'd probably end up the deep water trolling with a lure size that reached the 20 ft. depth.

If this did not produce, then I'd go to the cast. I would first position my boat on the crown of the bar, anchored so I could "fan cast" and reach the extreme shallows as far as I could in both directions. Subsequent "fan casts" would allow me to check out the depths in the shallows (8-10 ft.) in both directions.

I would check out the shallows with two type lures. First the area would be worked with a free running lure on a straight, steady retrieve. I'd choose a weight and lure size for easy casting, and which allowed me to control my depth and speed (while bumping bottom) without too much effort or waste of time.

If this presentation did not produce, then I'd check out the same area with a "jump" type lure. This could be a jig, soft plastic, or some sort of jump type spoon. On all the casts and depths, I'd sink the lure to

deeper, I'd limit my lure styles to the "jump type" only.

If all this did not produce, then I'd turn on my depth sounder, go to wire line and troll the breaklines along the channel. Periodically I'd go back to the monofilament line and recheck (by trolling) the deep water (more than 8-10 ft.) on the bar. If and when the fish moved (becoming active) I'd probably catch most of them on the cast.

SITUATION

If I were going to look for productive features in a larger glacier (natural) lake, one of them would be rocky reefs that run out into the lake—as pictured in Figure 3. In some large glacier lakes the reef may extend out for a mile or more before it reaches deeper sanctuary depths.

If I were fishing such a situation, my guideline for consistent successful fishing would require me to ask myself questions such as this:

a. What type presentation would be best in locating the fish?

b. What spots would I look for that

deep as it will go. When it will no longer reach bottom, it should be changed for a deeper running lure. When the maximum depth has been reached with the deepest running lure, on the longest monofilament trolling line, then the wire line should be called into play.

b. The spots to look for on the reef are the more pronounced pile of rocks, and any "breakline" that might occur. Different lake levels in the past, and the gouging action of the glacier will have produced larger piles of rocks and breaklines, at some place on most long, rocky reefs.

c. I would not expect the fish to be near the shore very often. However, I would not pass it up. My guideline tells me to a/ways start and check the shallows before going deeper. In fact, they tell me to recheck the shallows periodically throughout the day. I could have missed the fish at some place on the reef, and starting over periodically gives me a chance to not miss them.

continued

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d. It is always wise to stop and cast when a fish is caught on the troll. This saves time, and more fish will be caught. If the casting does not produce, then back to the troll to see what the cause. The fish caught on the troll could have been a "straggler" or a poor positioning of the boat for the casting could have been made.

e. With a shoreline sighting, I can check the depth where the spot is located. The next time out, I can pro-

length on the troll to check depths and speeds as deep as I could go, or as deep as I could detect structure, breaks, or breaklines. This should establish the best positions and features for casting to more thoroughly check out the depths and speeds. On the cast I'd use two style lures: (1) A free-running, bottom-bumping; (2) A jump type (jigs, soft plastics, etc.). I'd use both styles in all the depths on the best features around each of these two deep sections.

If at first I did not succeed, I'd try, try again until I made contact.

WHAT I'D FIGURE

If I found I had to fish a natural lake that had a side view approximately like that shown in Figure 5, I'd figure my best bet would be to fish it at night, or only on dark, cloudy, rainy days, or spend most of my time trying

and its features in other areas (fish in other areas have become active also).

If I had no live bait and found no fish on the spot chosen to cast, I'd continue to troll the deeper breaklines and their features until I made contact with the fish (fish become active and moving).

WHAT I WOULD DO

If I were casting the "stick-ups" along the shoreline, and I came upon a situation such as the one shown Figure 7, I'd "shoot the works" (fish thoroughly) the "A" group, but I'd spend little time, and probably none at all, on group "B" if group "A" did not produce.

MAIN CHANNEL DROP-OFF

If I were fishing a "flatland" reservoir and I found the "drop-off" into the main channel in the upper portion

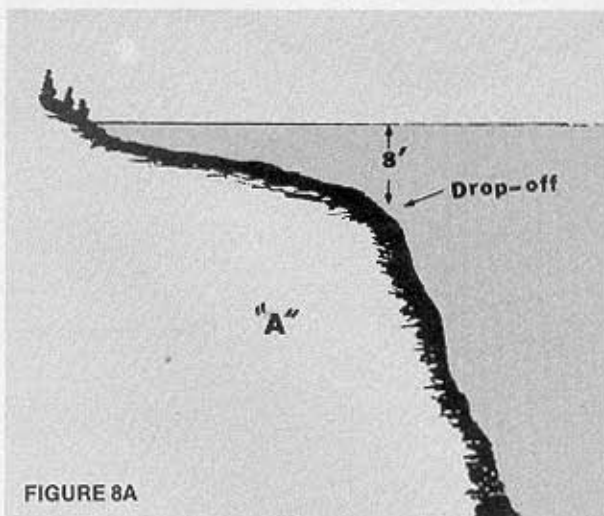


FIGURE 8A

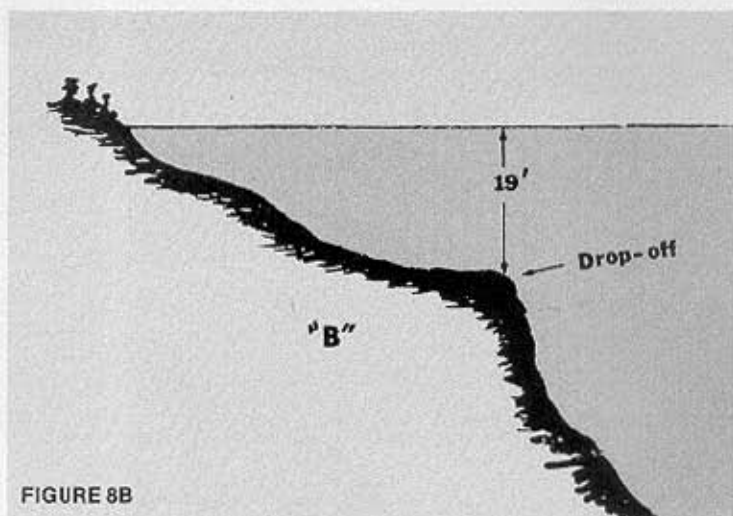


FIGURE 8B

ceed out along the reef (located by the shoreline sightings) until the depth is reached. A little checking with a trolled lure can quickly find the desired spot. Oftentimes a small float type marker can be left at the spot. To relocate the spot, line up the reef with the shoreline sightings and proceed out until the small marker shows up. The reason for using the "small" marker is so it is likely to be there when you return.

WHAT I WOULD DO

If I were fishing a natural lake that was made up about like Figure 4, showing four deeper sections, I'd first troll the shoreline shallows to "get the lay of the land." If no action, then I'd concentrate my efforts in two areas. These areas being the sections with the 43 foot depth and the 31 foot depth. My first testing (fishing) would be to troll all around each section to establish the bottom conditions and features. I'd use lure sizes and line

to locate the fish by trolling wire line.

If I were working a natural lake for walleyes that had breaklines practically all around the lake, as shown in Figure 6, I'd spend little time in the shallows or on the shallower breakline. I'd try to establish the best features (structure, breaks, breaklines) of the deeper breakline section. Trolling would be the best way to "check it out" for both the features of the bottom and the movement of fish.

Once I had established the deepest, sharpest break (quick change in depth) into the deepest water, I'd concentrate my efforts in this area. If trolling did not produce, then I'd go to the cast with two style lures. If this did not produce, and I happened to have live bait, I'd place it at the top of the "break" and sit it out for a spell. If the fish "moved," I'd go back to the cast and check the spot with both lures (free-running, bottom-bumping and "jump" type). Then, I'd get going to check again the deeper breakline

of the lake as shown in Figure 8A and found it as Figure 8B toward the lower section, I'd spend no time in the shallows, and very little time along the channel breaklines in the upper portion of the reservoir.

My time would be spent toward the lower section of the reservoir. I'd troll the breaklines (drop-off) into the channel to determine the movement of the fish, and to establish where the side feeder cuts enter the main channel. I would concentrate my efforts where the side feeder cuts (or washes) enter the main channel. I'd "check out" the bars and breaklines of this area, both trolling and casting.

The area of the deeper "drop-off" would take care of a bad or marginal weather condition. The side feeder cut would provide me with potential fishing water, close by, from a seasonal point of view.

I would not be concerned with water color too much in a reservoir of this type.