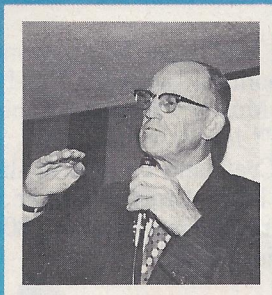


Buck Talks Fishing



Keep This In Mind When Pinpointing Areas To Fish

by Buck Perry, Education Editor

Editor's Note:

It is with great pleasure that we announce the return of E. L. (Buck) Perry to his regular duties as Fishing Facts Education Editor and the resumption of his regular series of articles titled "Buck Talks Fishing." After a long absence Buck Perry has once again become active in his role as teacher and advisor to sport fishermen at all levels of skill. Additionally, during the summer months he will be conducting conferences and summer fishing schools for fishermen who would like to combine a fishing vacation with a chance to improve their fishing skills (for further information write: Buck Perry Fishing Schools, P.O. Box 66, Hickory, North Carolina, 28601).

Each month Fishing Facts is introduced to new readers. For many of them the words "structure" and "structure fishing" will be totally new. For these new readers, we will continue to emphasize the basic concepts of structure, fish habits, instincts, etc.

However, in this new series Buck Perry will be addressing those fishermen who have already studied their "BASICS" and are now ready to move on to additional knowledge. In order to gain the most benefit from the articles, it is important that the student have a clear understanding of the terminology and nomenclature.

If you are a new reader, may we suggest several steps which will allow

you to "catch up" or achieve a better understanding of the articles.

May we suggest that you:

1. Study a copy of Buck's great book, Spoonplugging, Your Guide To Lunker Catches. This book contains all the basic facts of fish movement, basic structures, basic weather and water conditions, basic presentation of lures, and much more. This book was 25 years in the making, a quarter century of fishing knowledge put down on paper for the first time so that fishermen everywhere could share in better fishing. The book is on sale for \$11.85 postpaid and available on an unconditional money back guarantee from us. Northwoods Publishing Co., Inc., P.O.

Shoreline features alone will not always reveal whether a shallow water spot will produce fish. However, important clues may lie just a few feet away in deeper water.



Box 609, Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin, 53051.

2. Familiarize yourself with our glossary of terms titled "Fishing Talk – Our Language of Structure Fishing," which can usually be found near the beginning of each issue of Fishing Facts.

No other publication is privileged to have Buck Perry on its staff. He has become a legend in his own time. As Fishing Facts Education Editor, this former physics professor from North Carolina State has consented to share his vast fishing knowledge and experience with us. Many of today's successful freshwater anglers owe him more than they may ever realize.

Early this year I saw my son-in-law Stanley Smith coming across the front lawn. He was looking at a sheet of paper and almost jumped out of his skin when he walked smack dab into a small dogwood tree.

"That must be an interesting subject," I said, as he grinned and walked up to where I was at work preparing a flower bed.

"Well, I wouldn't say just how interesting it is, but I could say I've run into a problem. In fact, right now I have two things bugging me. First, I'm not sure about a particular fishing situation I ran into last fall. Is there any information you would have that would help me find and catch smallmouth bass on a SEASONAL basis? In other words, I don't have much trouble catching these fish in the summer, but what about the other parts of the year? I plan to take Sharon (wife) and the kids on this trip. The water will be cold and there's no telling what the weather might be. I might come pretty close to a correct answer from this drawing I have here, but I don't think I can handle the question of early season smallmouth without help."

Education Editor, Buck Perry, with a fine catch of lunker size smallmouth bass.



Reaching for the paper I said, "Let's look at your drawing. Maybe we can use this, or others, to refresh your memory on some important basics. Then we'll try to get you better prepared for those early season smallmouth. I might add at this point the waters you plan to fish also contain walleyes, northern pike and an occasional musky. However, your thinking will be bass, and if any other species gets in the way, it's just their bad luck."

Figure 1 is the drawing that Stan handed me, with the comment —

"Quite a few nice bass have been caught on the backside of the hump, in the area marked X — when they were moving good and in the shallows. However, I have not been able to locate the fish when they are inactive. I have trolled and blind cast all over the place without results. It doesn't take much brain power to realize this type presentation is not exact enough for bad or marginal weather and water conditions. I have failed because I do not know where the best spots are in deep water to more thoroughly check out my depths and speeds. My question is, where would I concentrate my efforts

water) found in a lake (reservoir, stream, etc.) as our guide to where the fish might be; in other words, the best place to catch a fish. When discussing this subject it was said, 'structure' (bars, humps, roadbeds, etc.) was the guide to the area where the fish might be, and the 'breaks' and 'breaklines' ON OR CONNECTED TO structure was where we pinpointed the fish. While talking about this, it should be brought out again, we should divide our water into two different parts. Those areas in the lake (reservoir, stream, etc.) that showed no well defined structure, breaks or breaklines would be labeled as 'Trolling Water,' and those areas that showed definite structure (breaks, breaklines) would be classified as 'Fishing Water.'

"You and I must keep in mind that when fish move toward the shallows, the route they take must go ALL THE WAY."

"With the multitude of variables and constant changes that occur in the environment of the fish, it is impossible for us to predict at any given time where the fish might be, or how active or dormant he may be, or what it might take to catch him. Which in turn means that you and I cannot say what was good yesterday or last week, is worth much today or tomorrow. This means also, that we must use the features found in a body of water as our guide to where the fish might be and that we must control the depth and speed of our lures (or bait) on or around these features to take care of the 'mood' the fish might be in at the time.

"Let me talk a little further along these lines, especially in the light of the drawing you have here (Figure 1). Let me repeat a little, but state it a little differently so as to help in your interpretation.

"If you and I are to consistently catch fish in a reservoir, we must use structure as our guide, preferably those that have well defined breaks and breaklines on or connected to them. These well defined breaks and breaklines will lead or guide the fish to the shallows. Note carefully the last part of that sentence.

"Think a minute about a nice wide, long bar with several well defined 'fingers' (projections) in the deeper water. A bar of this nature would stand out clearly on a contour map. But, upon close examination let's say you do not

continued

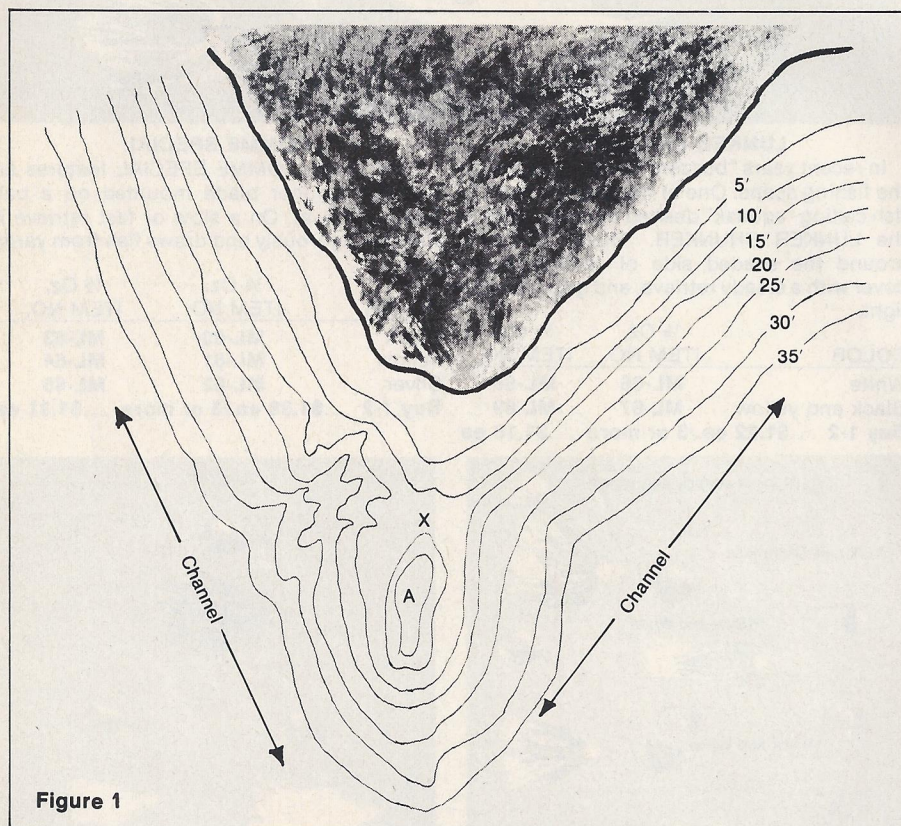


Figure 1

"Here's the sketch of a situation I ran into on a lake you told me to fish. This particular spot is where the reservoir splits into two major arms. Probably I should say, where two major feeder streams come together. Both channels are about the same size and depth. And, as far as I could see, there is no noticeable change in water color in either feeder stream. I have copied this from a topographic map and from my work on the spot, it appears to be pretty close to what's there. You can see a small underwater island (hump) exists a distance out from the point of land. The contour lines show a 'saddle' (dip) between the point of land and the hump (A).

for better control when the fish are not up and moving? Which side of the saddle and hump, or which channel should I work?

"Stan, before we discuss this particular situation, let's go back and refresh our memory," I answered.

"It has been said, that at one time or another, most anyone can catch a fish, most any place, on most anything and by most any method. I think we have agreed this is not the name of the game if we expect to catch fish consistently, whenever and wherever we happen to fish.

"In the past it has been pointed out that you and I should use the features (structure, breaks, breaklines, deep

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BUCK TALKS FISHING, continued
see (or find) any other features such as breaks and breaklines that could serve as guidelines from the deeper water to the shallows. In fact the fingers peter out and the upper or shallower section becomes flat and void of any feature (breaks, breaklines) that could be of any use to the fish. Oh sure, there could be small features that the fish might see and use, but how about yourself? Would you not be fishing blind if you worked the shallower section of this bar? Would you not be 'guessing' as to whether the fish used it or not? I admit in many natural lakes you would find this condition of structure, and you

son we can't classify ourselves as 'expert' just because we catch a fish once in awhile.

"Let me draw a couple figures to more clearly explain what I mean about interpreting a particular feature in a reservoir. Figure 2 is a top view of an underwater bar such as we have talked about. Note the contour lines, keeping in mind this particular bar is quite large. Note the deeper, ridgelike fingers. They look great don't they? The fish would have no trouble recognizing or seeing each ridgelike finger. However, note carefully the greater area of the bar toward the shallows. As far as I can see it's a big flat blank. You might

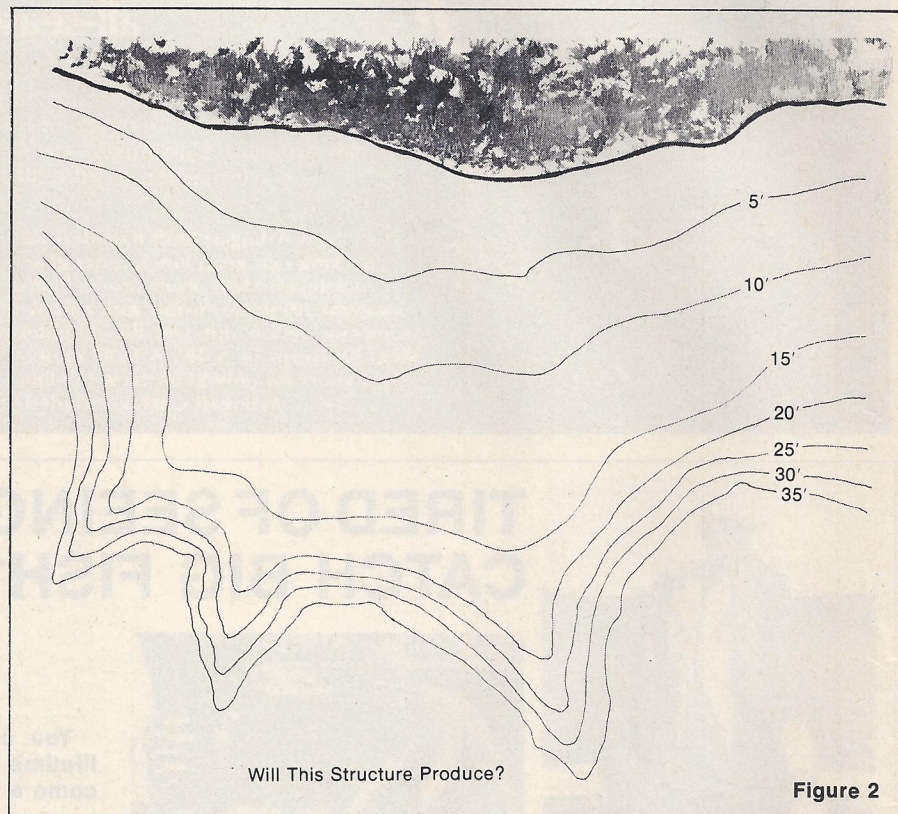


Figure 2

have no other choice but to use them as your guide to where the fish might be. But here we are talking about a *reservoir*, a man-made lake.

"You have to keep in mind what has been said time and time again, 'fishing is usually bad, and then it gets worse.' You and I shouldn't spend much time where the chances of catching a fish are slim. We must spend the greater part of our time where the odds are better. This is the reason we divide the water into sections; one 'trolling water' and the other 'fishing water.' This is the reason the interpretation of our fishing water is so important. This is the reason we keep saying, 'It is in the area of interpretation that we can always become better and better.' This is the rea-

say (from my previous remarks), 'Yes, but there might be rocks, stumps, or bushes that could serve as signposts.'

"That is very true, but here you are putting faith, and I might say, blind faith, in *secondary* features that you THINK might be there. My interpretation would be that the *BOTTOM* does not show enough good features (structure, breaks, breaklines) for the fish to use on migration from the deep to the shallows. I would check it out, but I would classify the areas more as 'trolling' water until proven otherwise. I would not spend much time here. Remember, once again, we are talking here about a *RESERVOIR*, not a natural lake.

continued



It didn't take Stanley Smith long to solve the riddle of finding the whereabouts of early season smallmouth. Stanley is a skillful and knowledgeable angler who can adjust quickly to almost any fishing situation.

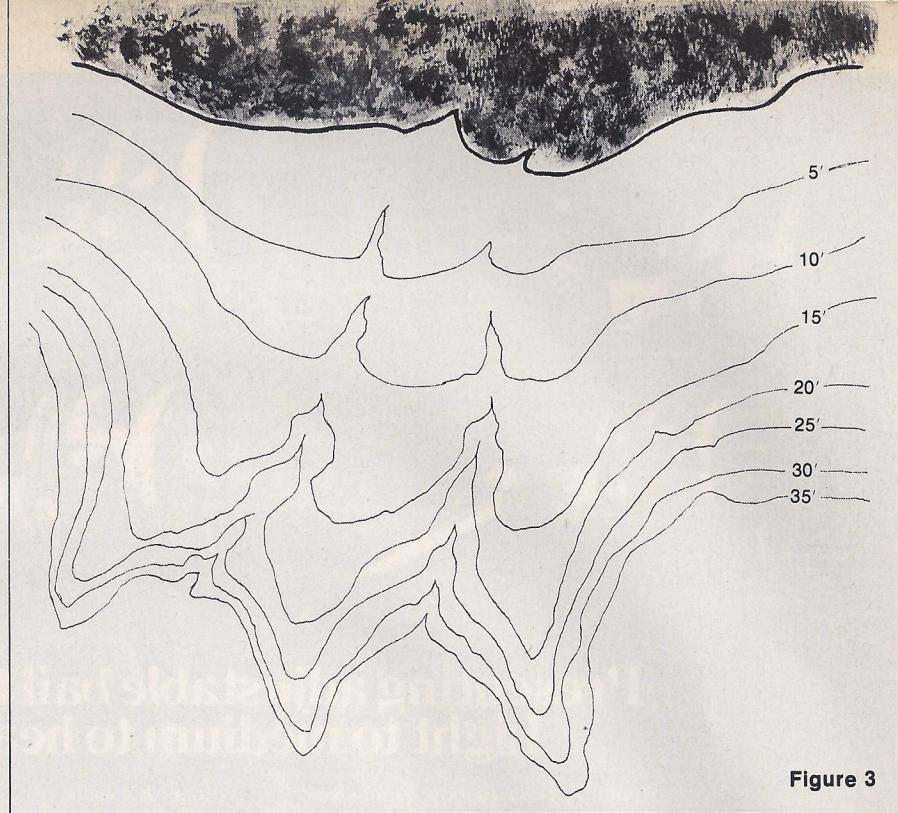


Figure 3

BUCK TALKS FISHING, continued

"Now let me add a few things, such as 'washes' or gullies, etc., to our big bar (Figure 3). Things which are typical, and found in most reservoirs. These will set up the breaks and breaklines on or connected to our big bar. They are well defined and we or the fish should have no trouble seeing them. Note also these features GO ALL THE WAY TO THE SHALLOWS. You and I must keep in mind that when fish move toward the shallows, the route they take must GO ALL THE WAY. The fish may seldom move all the way into the shallows due to weather and water conditions, but the route they take does. This is why

certain humps or underwater islands are 'dead ends', and in time will be eliminated by the fish. *They don't go or extend all the way into the shallows.* We'll talk about humps one of these days.

"Now this particular bottom feature (Figure 3) must be classified as 'Fishing Water,' and you and I must shoot the works in the presentation of lures both casting and trolling. We control as completely as possible our depth and speed to find out where the fish are, and what mood they are in at the time. Today it might be easy, but tomorrow we may have to exercise patience and work our heads off to make contact. Today we may fail, but tomorrow we

may fill the boat. Whichever the case might be, we can feel fairly confident we are in 'fishing' water.

"Stan, let's look at your drawing again (Figure 1). Now you tell me where to work the deep water. While you are at it, tell me how you would fish the area the next time you go."

Stan answered, "Well, — looking at it from this angle, it would have to be on the left hand side of Figure 1 where all those bars occur. The washes and small channels between those fingers certainly create enough breaks and breaklines to feed and guide the fish to the saddle.

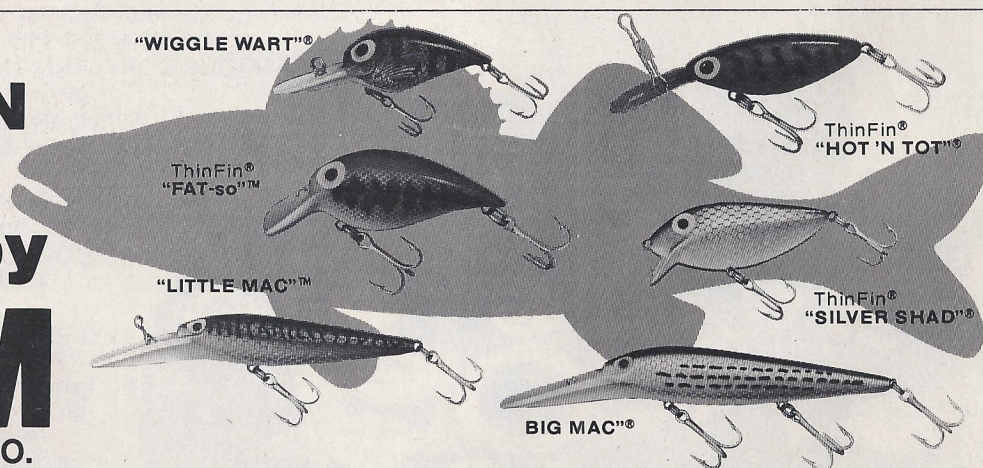
"The next time I go, I would first

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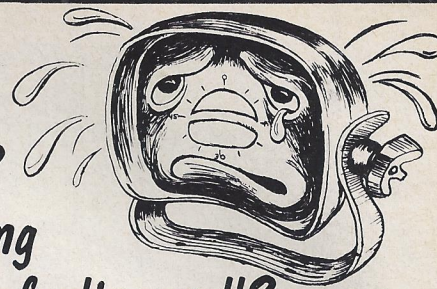
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check out my favorite 'stick-ups' on the saddle behind the hump by casting. Then I would, for a short spell, troll around the end and both sides of the saddle and hump. But, it wouldn't be long before I would be concentrating all my efforts, first trolling and then casting, to thoroughly cover the depths and speeds on the left hand side where the structure (breaks, breaklines) exist. I would hope in time to establish the 'contact point' and the route the fish take from deep water to the backside of the hump. After I had established this, I'd probably, thereafter, go to the casting positions first rather than the troll. I'd use at least two type lures in all positions. First a free running and bottom bumping lure on a steady fast retrieve, and then a 'jump' type lure (jig, soft plastics, etc.) for the slower speeds. However, if I failed on the cast, I would not leave the area until I had covered it thoroughly on the troll."

"You had the answers to this particular situation." I smiled. "Why did you ask me to tell you which side of the saddle and hump, or spot, to work in deep water? Never mind, now let me finish this flower bed. The next time we talk, we'll talk about the seasonal movements of the smallmouth bass. This should help you and the kids on the pre-spawn early season smallmouth venture. I might add, if I get my chores done, I might just tag along on that trip."

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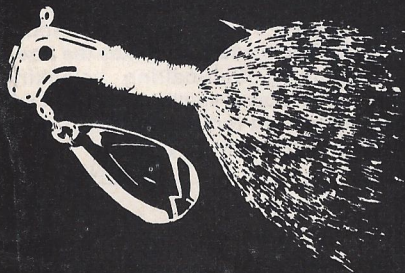
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