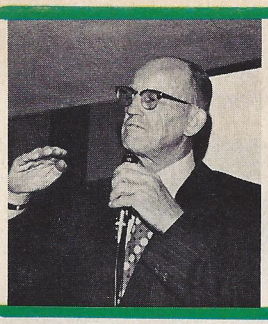
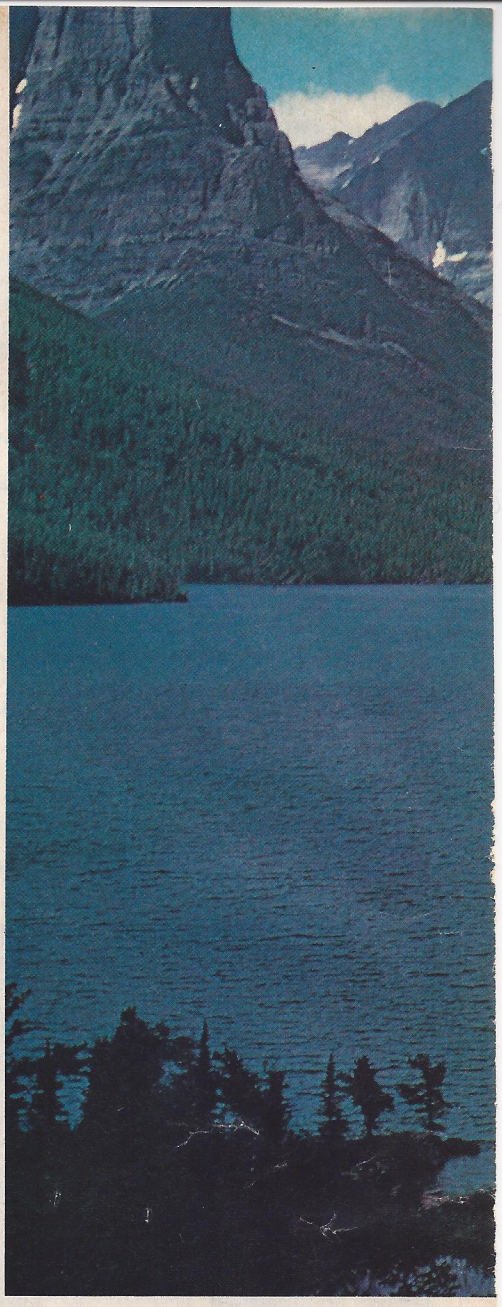


Buck talks fishing

by BUCK PERRY, Education Editor



The Home Of The Fish Is . . .

Editor's Note:

E. L. (Buck) Perry, of Hickory, North Carolina is the father of "structure" fishing. It is Buck Perry who gave modern day structure fishermen a "language" with which they could communicate. It is Buck Perry who first coined the words "structure", "migration route", "breaks and breaklines", and many more. It is also Buck Perry who correlated many of the basic facts concerning fish habits, their movements, and how they could best be caught. He later named these facts about fish and fishing, SPOONPLUGGING.

Each month Fishing Facts is intorduced 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. from time to time.

However, in this present series titled "Buck Talks Fishing", 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 new book, "Spoonplugging, Your Guide To Lunker Catches". This book contains all the basic facts of fish movements, 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 $10.30 postpaid and available on an unconditional money back guarantee from us, Northwoods Publishing Co., Inc., P.O. Box 609, Menomonee Falls, Wis. 53051.

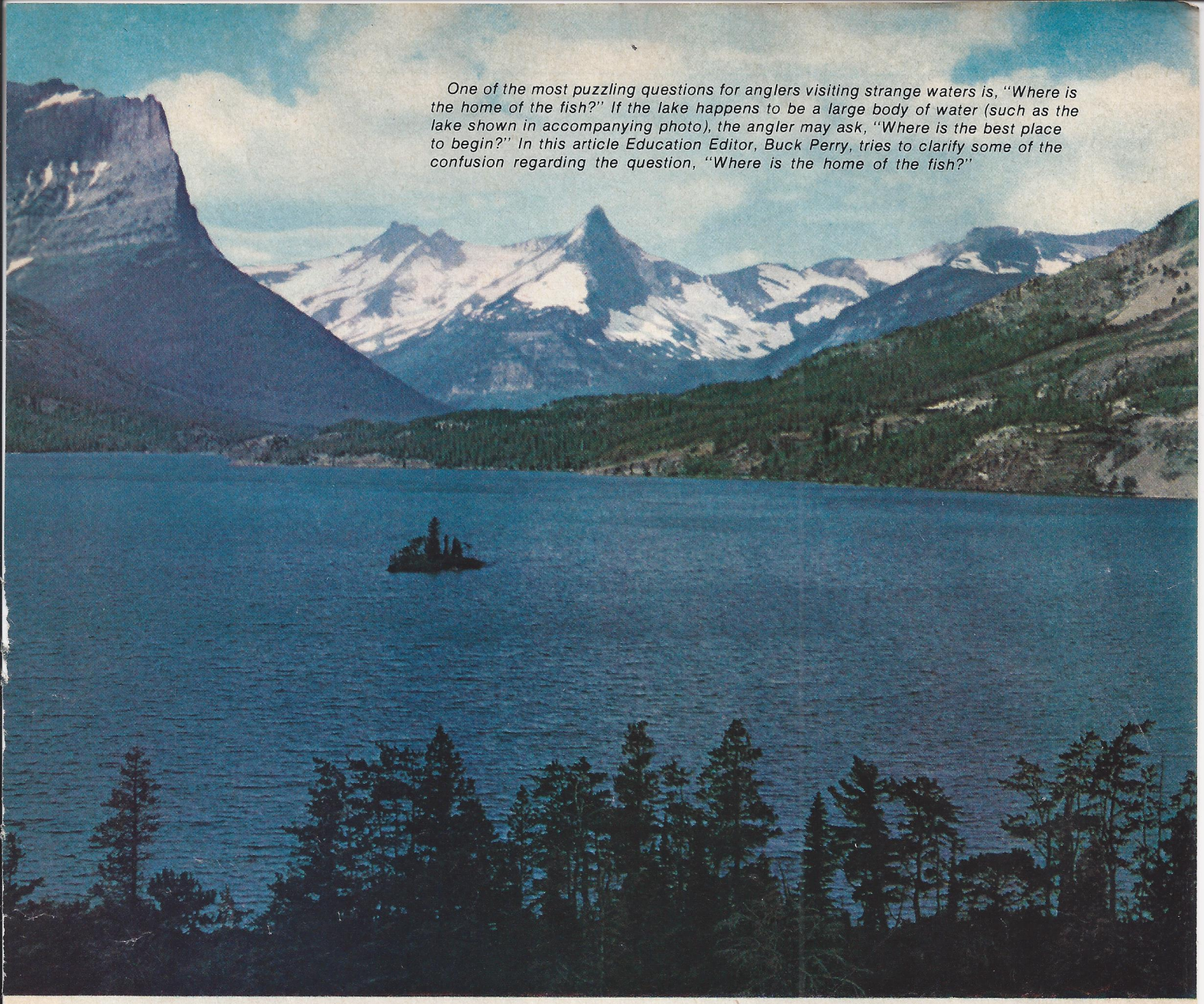
2. Familiarize yourself with our glossary of terms titled "Fishing Talk — Our Language of Structure Fishing", which can be found near the beginning of each issue of Fishing Facts.

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 fresh water anglers owe him more than they may ever realize.

When discussing the basics (Fishing Facts) with students, or when preparing new material for the expansion of the subjects, I try to go into detail on those things not clearly understood. If the student does not thoroughly understand what is said, or written, he will become confused, and this is especially true when he reads or hears someone saying something different. The student is not knowledgeable enough (yet) to separate fact from fiction, nor is he able to understand, or analyze, the observations and comments of people who have come to certain conclusions based on limited observations and limited experiences.

I find when expanding the basics into a comprehensive study, little can be said without detailed explanation. Over the years, a multitude of fishing questions have been asked concerning a particular subject. Ever so often a new question might appear, but for the most part all have been asked in one form or another years ago. This enables me to somewhat cover the subject very thoroughly. It enables me to know in what areas more detailed information is required. The questions that have been asked point out those areas where confusion might well occur.

It would be an impossible task to answer, explain, or expand the subject matter in articles such as this. But, at periods, we can go into more



One of the most puzzling questions for anglers visiting strange waters is, "Where is the home of the fish?" If the lake happens to be a large body of water (such as the lake shown in accompanying photo), the angler may ask, "Where is the best place to begin?" In this article Education Editor, Buck Perry, tries to clarify some of the confusion regarding the question, "Where is the home of the fish?"

detail on particular subjects that might not be clearly understood, or those subjects that are confusing. To cover the whole range of questions that might arise, would (and does) require several books. *(Editor's note: Buck is in the final stages of completing his Encyclopedia of Fishing Knowledge. We understand it entails nine rather large sections.)* However, for awhile, let us look at particular subject matter that might not be clear, and even some of those things where you might become confused due to the comments and observations of others. In subsequent articles I hope we can cover (in detail) those things which particularly "bug" you.

After talking to students in a classroom, I will often get a comment such as this:

"When you stated the deepest water is the home and sanctuary of the fish, I thought you were saying the fish spend most of their time in the 'DEEPEST' SPOT IN THE LAKE."

In the periods previous to this comment by the student, we had been discussing the deep water sanctuary of the fish. Our discussion had been along these lines.

There are several things involved here. (1)-The deepest water IN THE LAKE; (2)-The deepest water IN THE AREA; (3)-The deepest water AVAILABLE. Let's look at some figures to be sure this is clear in your mind.

FIGURE 1

Figure 1 is a top view of a natural lake. You will note there are three (3) deeper sections. One section is 60 feet deep, another is 52 feet deep, and still another is 37 feet deep. I have outlined a "bar" near one of these sections. If this bar is being used by the fish in their migrations, the "home" of the fish is the deepest water available (in the area), and their sanctuary would be located some place in this deepest water. The "home" of the fish (where they spend the greater part of their time) in this area is the 37 foot section. This particular area in the lake is a fishing hole within itself. The other two deep sections will supply fish to structure in their respective areas.

FIGURE 2

Figure 2 is a top view of a section of a lake. I show a structure in the form of a bar. Two deeper sections are shown in the area. One section is 45 feet deep, and the other section is 17 feet deep. The 17 foot area would be checked when there exists great fish activity, but the "home" of

FIGURE 1

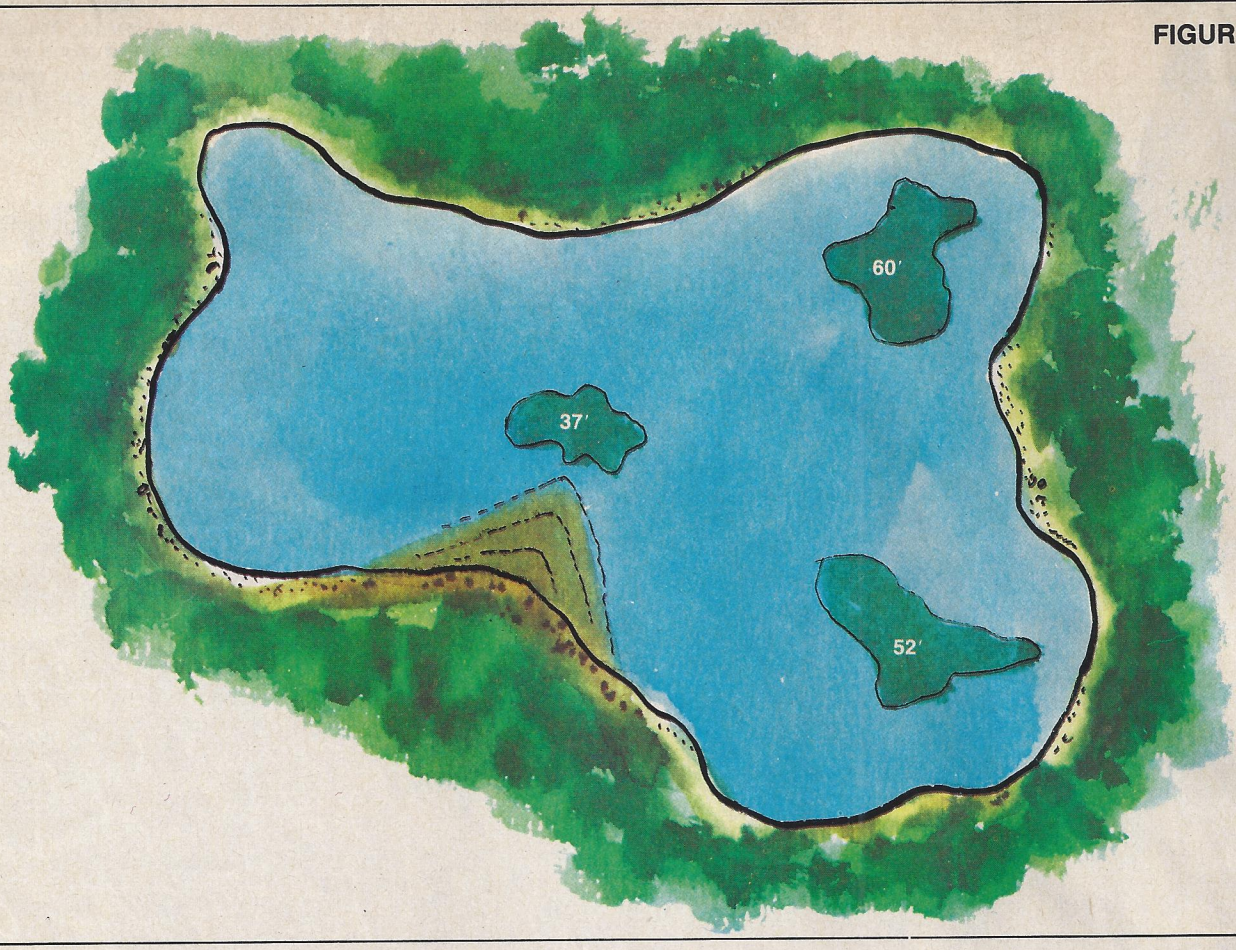
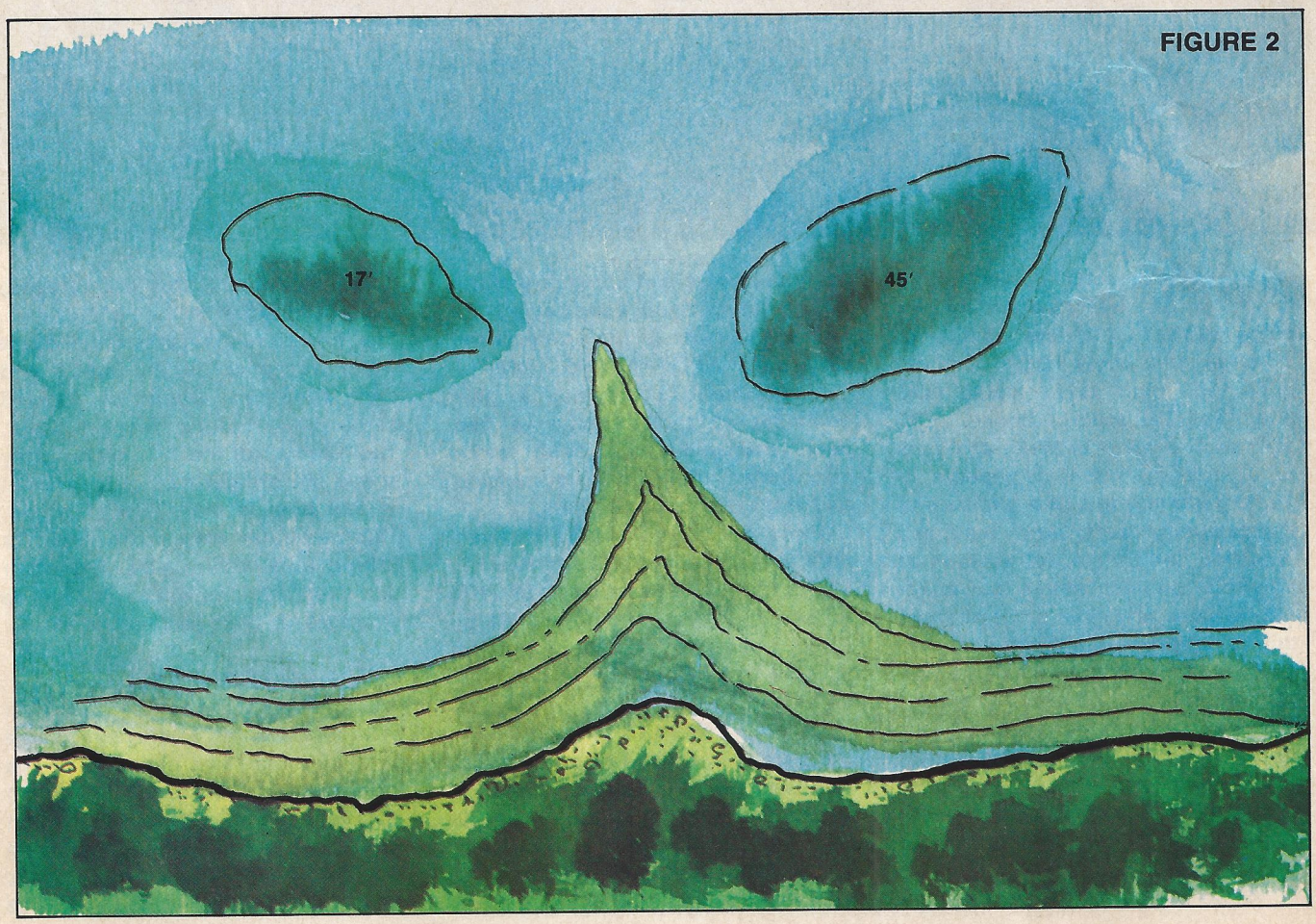
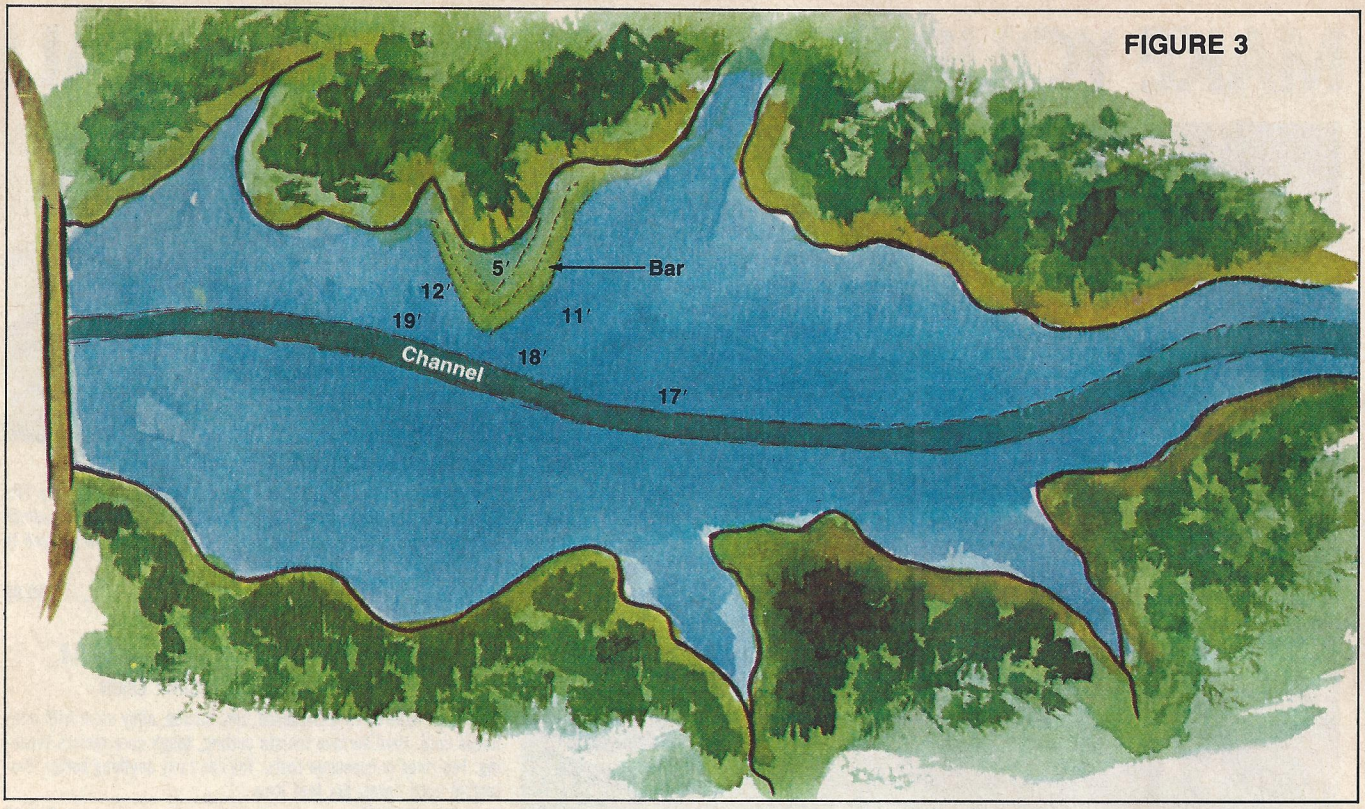


FIGURE 2

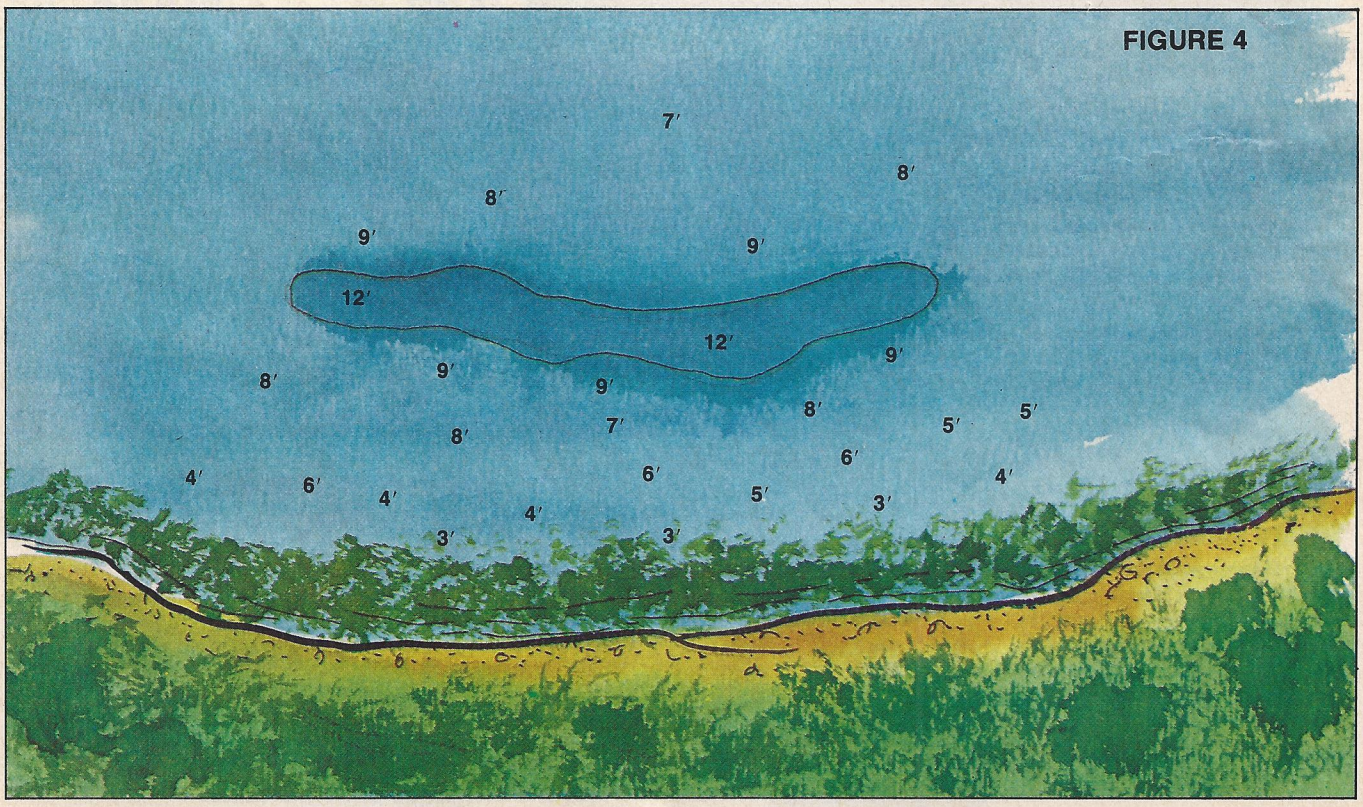




the fish in this area is the 45 foot section — the deepest water IN THE AREA.

If you will recall back in the very beginning we stated that the sanctuary would always be below 20 feet if that much depth were available. We also stated that IF IT WERE POSSIBLE, we could assume the sanctuary was some place around 30-35 feet as an average figure UNTIL PROVEN OTHERWISE. These depths are normally deep enough to provide the fish protection from his environment.

Let's carry this (Figure 2) a little further and say that instead of the one section being only 17 feet deep, we changed the depth to 35 feet. This means we have two deep sections in the area that could serve as the "home" of the fish. One is 35 feet deep, and the other one is 45 feet deep. Probably both sections serve as a sanctuary for groups of fish. If you and I were fishing such an area, and did not know their position or their features in respect to



the structure (bar), we would have to check out BOTH sections. If you and I had to make a choice WITHOUT CHECKING THE AREA, we would choose the DEEPEST. If their positions and features (in respect to the bar) were the same in every detail, the DEEPEST should be the better of the two, and it should contain the biggest fish in the area.

FIGURE 3

Figure 3 is a top view of a reservoir (man-made lake). It shows a deeper channel. I have outlined a productive structure (bar) running out from the shoreline. Note that the depths along the channel out from this structure run less than 20 feet deep. You can rest assured the "home" area is the channel. The sanctuary would be some place in this channel. Weather, water, structure, breaks and breaklines would determine just where. You should not figure the fish that use this structure (bar) would be a great distance away. That is, NOT down close to the dam (where the DEEPEST water exists). There would be OTHER schools of fish in other areas, using other structure, breaks and breaklines. When you have great depths outside the channel, then they (the fish) could spend the greater time (home — sanctuary) outside the channel. However, in most all reservoirs, you would be fairly safe (and accurate) in saying the "home" (and sanctuary) of all the fish in the lake is the channel.

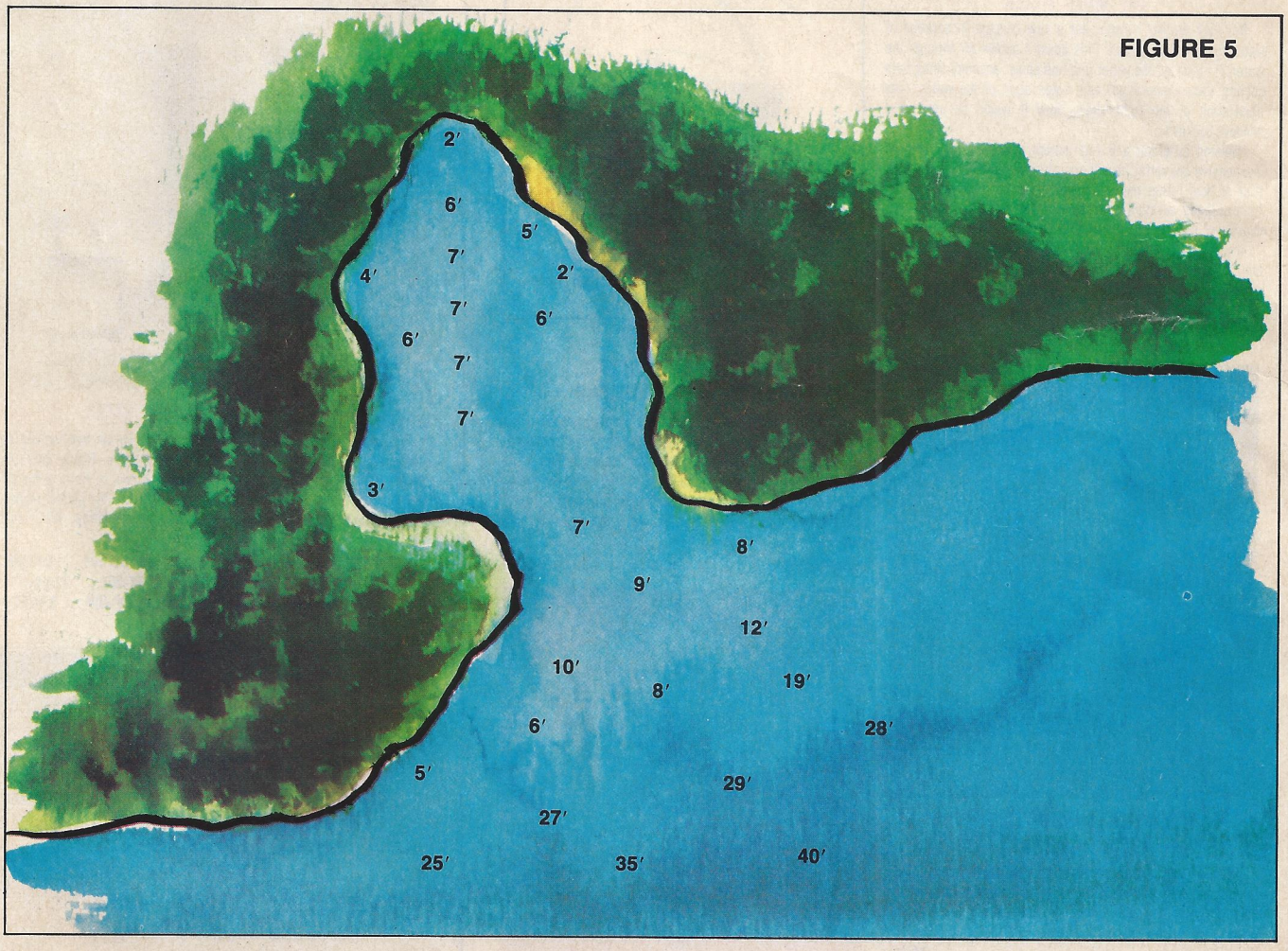
FIGURE 4

Figure 4 is a top view of a section of a lake. The shoreline shallows have a weed growth (could be brush, trees, etc.) 2 to 4 feet deep (note depth figures). A distance out from this weedline is a long narrow slot that has water 12 feet deep. In a case such as this, you would consider the slot the "home" of the fish — the deepest water AVAILABLE.

FIGURE 5

Figure 5 is a top view of a portion of a lake, with a shallow bay on one side. If you were fishing this bay, you COULD say, the DEEPEST WATER IN THE AREA is 7 feet, therefore this would be the home and sanctuary of the fish. This is WRONG, because this depth is too shallow to provide him protection from his environment. The home of the fish, that might use this bay on migration, or spawning run, would not be in the bay, but would be in the deeper section outside the bay — *the deepest water available* (or in the area). However, let us take this a little further so as not to confuse you.

If you will recall what was said about the deep water being the home of the fish (where he spends the greater part of his time) it was stated *the water must be sufficiently deep to provide him protection from his environment.* In most cases, the shallow depths (zero to 8-10 feet), are not sufficient depths to give him protection from a CHANGING environment. However, we can add something to this depth, which can give him partial protection, and this is "COVER"; weeds, pads, grass, cuts under embankments, etc. Let's look at another figure.



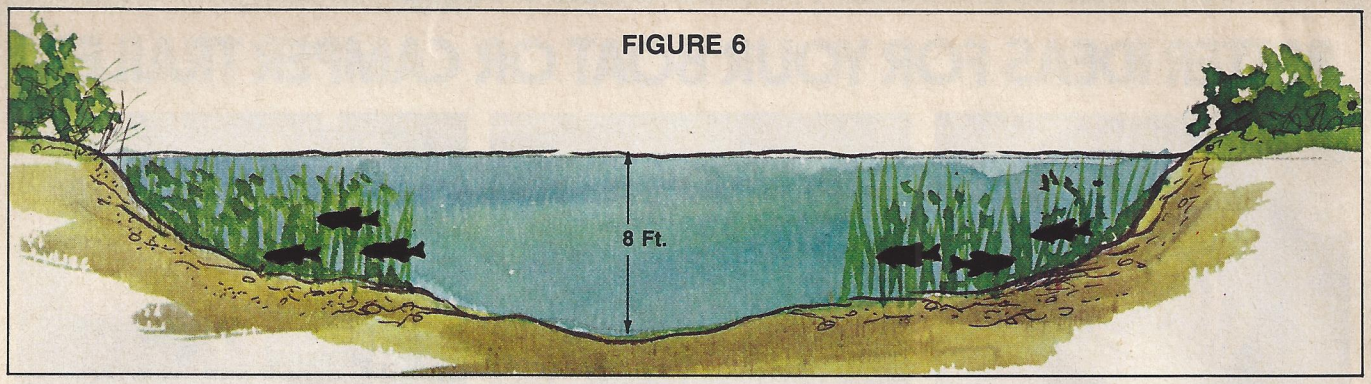


FIGURE 6

Figure 6 is a side view of a shallow section of a lake (could be a slough, canal, etc.). You will note the deepest water available is only 8 feet. The "cover", in this case, are weeds that cover all water under 6-7 feet in depth. This "cover" could provide him sanctuary. If we remove this cover, we are not likely to find fish here for long. If you were "fishing" such cover, you would try to find the DEEPEST water under the cover. The fish would spend most of their time under this cover. But, upon good movements, the fish would move to the open water.

Let's refer again to Figure 6, but in this case let's imagine the weeds go to 14 feet. The "open" water (free of weeds) is only slightly deeper. Here again, the sanctuary is likely to be under the weeds. But, if the open water gets beyond 20 feet or better, then you should begin to figure the sanctuary is in the open water. It's a simple case of the deeper water having a more "STABLE" condition. A fish can adapt to a changed environment, but the less CHANGING the better. Deep water is the only reliable escape route that he has from a changing environment. If he doesn't have depth, he might survive in some manner, but it's not likely to be GOOD FISHING for you and me.

FIGURE 7 AND FIGURE 8

My statements about the home and sanctuary being in the deepest water IN THE LAKE, the deepest water IN THE AREA, or the deepest water AVAILABLE, need more comment. Figures 7 and 8 are side views of an underwater "bar" in a lake. I have placed the fish in the home area — deep water (in the area). Note in Figure 7 the deepest water is 100 feet. In this example I have placed the fish at a sanctuary of 33 feet (under the present weather and water conditions). In Figure 8, the deepest water in the area (on the whole lake) is only 23 feet. In this example (Figure 8) the home and sanctuary is in the DEEPEST WATER IN THE AREA, or the DEEPEST WATER IN THE LAKE, and the deepest water available.

Let me state again what was meant when talking about the "home" and "sanctuary" of the fish — the area in a body of water where the fish spend the GREATER part of their time.

The home of the fish can be the deepest water of a lake, or in areas of a lake that are *sufficiently deep* to provide him protection from a changing environment. If there is a depth of water more than 20 feet available, their home or SANCTUARY will always be below this 20 foot depth. If it were possible to state the approximate depth of the deep water sanctuary, UNDER NORMAL WEATHER AND WATER CONDITIONS, I would say it would be at the 30-35 foot depth (until proven otherwise). IF THESE DEPTHS ARE NOT AVAILABLE, the sanctuary will be some place in the DEEPEST WATER AVAILABLE.

Next time we will discuss more on the sanctuary, but more from a standpoint of you're being exposed to some comments about THERE NOT BEING SUCH A THING AS A DEEP WATER SANCTUARY. We will also discuss the subject of suspended fish.