



Buck talks fishing

by Buck Perry, Education Editor

These Proven Fishing Guidelines DO NOT CHANGE!



A lot of bass fishermen might consider this as a "bassy-looking" area. However, a great deal would depend on what exists BELOW the surface of the water here. It's possible this stretch of lake could be nothing more than a "dead end." Education Editor, Buck Perry, gives you some guidelines that will help you tell the difference.

One of the first things a structure fisherman (Spoonplugger) recognizes is the fact that at some time or other a fish can be caught by most anyone, most any place, on most anything and by most any method. However, he knows if he desires to catch more and bigger fish CONSISTENTLY, and BECOME A BETTER FISHERMAN, this is not the name of the game. His guidelines (and weather and water conditions) say he has to spend his time where he has the best chance to catch a fish — if he expects to be consistently successful. He knows his guidelines must direct him to the right place, at the right time, and have him fishing in the right manner—if he desires to reach his goals.

It is too bad a lot of fishermen have not grasped or have not understood what the structure fisherman's guidelines are all about. Many have not taken the time to study the guidelines to really *know* their purpose, much less what they mean. Some take a guideline *out of context* (for whatever their purpose) and say it does not hold true for one reason or the other.

Let's take the guideline about the home of the fish being in deep water and that he spends the greater part of his time there, for example. To some, we are all wet, because

they have seen and caught fish where there was no deep water, etc., etc., etc.

When we say fish react to a cold front by going deeper, this too sometimes brings a reaction about all the fish not being in deep water. We never said all fish react the same to a cold front, but we do say all the CATCHABLE fish, or *those fish you and I can catch* consistently, do react the same way to a cold front. Here again, some individuals have missed the whole purpose for our guidelines.

When our guidelines tell us to use "structure" (bottom feature) as our guide to where the fish may be found, and then to use the "breaks" and "breaklines" on, or connected to it, to pinpoint the fish, the reaction to this brings on all types of chatter.

When our guidelines tell us to use the bottom as our guide when presenting lures in deep water, this really opens up a can of worms, mostly about suspended fish. Great balls of fire, we can expect ALL fish to suspend in some manner. No one ever said they were always ON the bottom, buried in the muck or under some rock. Our guideline says the CATCHABLE fish (those we can catch consistently) are related in some manner to structure, breaks and breaklines.

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OUR GUIDELINES FOR THE PRESENTATION OF LURES NEVER FORGETS THIS FACT.

Our GUIDELINE for *suspended fish* goes like this: "The CATCHABLE *suspended fish* (those we can catch consistently) seen on a depth sounder, are related in some manner to structure, breaks or breaklines. However, most of them (catchable *suspended fish*) are so related to the bottom features they will not always be seen on a depth sounder."

This is the reason "structure" (breaks and breaklines) is our guide—not suspended fish.

Some people may indicate our guidelines are "out-of-date". Since when will guidelines that enable us to catch more and bigger fish consistently, and are the means by which we can become better fishermen, ever become out of date?

It took millions of years for the fish to become what he is today. It is not likely he has changed much in the last 40 years. I, and thousands more structure fishermen, haven't noticed any changes in the behavior of those we keep putting on the stringer. Those who would try to "punch holes" in our guidelines, or say they are out-of-date for whatever the reason, should venture a bit further into this large fishing world of ours. To all of these I would say, no person with localized or limited experiences and observations (with questionable objectives) should ever make a statement about fishing until he has checked and thought out his observations thoroughly. Fishermen and especially the novice fishermen, deserve to be told things *that will help them be successful and become better fishermen.* (They should not be told half-truths, fiction, dreams or assumptions for ego building; or for the sale of fishing tackle.) AND, a tremendous amount of effort and study must go into being sure no localized situation or condition will confuse or harm the fishermen, at home, and especially in other areas. We must keep in mind the fish reacts to changes in weather and water conditions, and we are not likely to experience or observe the EXACT weather and water condition, OR THE REACTION OF THE FISH, any two times in our fishing experience no matter how many years it might be.

Our aim should be to be able to go to any lake, stream or reservoir, in any locality, and fish for any species present, to be able to feel at home on any water, and to be sure if anyone caught a fish on that day, we would be one of them. THE STRUCTURE FISHERMAN'S GUIDELINES DO JUST THAT!

I've been asked by many fishermen in the last few months why I went to the trouble and expense of putting

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together a new 8 volume Home Study Series titled, "*Buck Perry's Guidelines to Fishing Success*".

I wish that the only answer to this question is to try to satisfy (and shut up) associates and others who have continually bugged me to preserve in some manner part of the things I have observed and experienced over the years. My hope would be to accom-

ered; and, in the section titled "Mapping and Interpretations" (Volume 7), the quantity of material in this section alone was so great it had to be printed in two parts. The series required a lot of material because the real purpose of the new study is to give more and better directions for being at the right place, at the right time, and to be fishing in the right manner. The guidelines are set up so you and I can consistently catch more and bigger fish. And, are so tailored they will provide the guides for us to become just as good fishermen as we desire. In the series we have set up "guidelines" on about every phase of successful fishing.

You have heard me say in the past



In order for bass structure to be consistently productive, it should extend from the deep (sanctuary) depths, to the shallows. Here a feeder stream cut (shown during a low water period) extends back into a bay area (it goes "all the way"). The bass would have no trouble following these breaklines from the deep toward the shallows . . . and back again.

plish this so I can go fishing, smell the flowers, stop talking, and forget what a typewriter looks like. However, too many have been asking for more detailed information to make more clear what we have been talking about all these years. I might add, the largest number of requests have been from those who have read our books, and attended our schools. Besides the "make more clear", they have asked for additional guidelines in the presentation of lures, etc. and especially those for mapping and interpreting the many fishing situations they frequently run into. They, too, realize an angler can always get better at the sport of fishing.

The new Home Study Series is presented differently from any material we have published in the past. Most "fishing situations" have been cov-

that the fisherman will never get to the point where he can't apply a better interpretation to the various fishing situations he faces. You have also heard me say that one of the most important keys to successful fishing is the *interpretation of the features* (structure, breaks, breaklines, deep water, etc.) found in a body of water. The structure fisherman (Spoonplugger) should know without proper interpretation of the features, it would be *impossible to make sense out of the other things involved*, such as; how fish move at certain weather and water conditions, how they react to a seasonal change, where they are likely to be found, how active or dormant they may be at any particular time, and how depth and speed control of our lures (or bait) come into play to

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take care of the changes in the environment and the different "moods" (active or dormant) of the fish.

Let us look at an example of where we apply our guidelines. Let it be one where we are trying to interpret a feature (structure, breaks, breaklines, deep water, etc.), we have located in a reservoir (man-made lake).

Before we talk about the specific guidelines we are going to apply to the fishing situation, let's state briefly the BASIC guideline of the structure fisherman. It goes something like this: *"The home of the fish is the deepest water in an area being fished. The fish spends the greater part of his time someplace in this deep water. Normally he is so deep or so dormant (due to weather and water conditions) he is almost impossible to catch. We are saved due to the fact he does not stay so deep or so dormant all the time. Periodically he becomes active and may move toward the shallows. We are saved again because he does not move, or migrate in just any direction. He uses features of the bottom that go 'all the way' from the deep water to the shallows as signposts, or guidelines, on his migrations (movements). How far he goes and how long he stays along the route toward the shallows is dependent upon the weather and water conditions at that particular time. This indicates to us, if we desire to find him consistently, we must use the features of the bottom as a guide to where he can be found. If we desire to catch him consistently, we must control the depth and speed of our lures (or bait) on, and/or around the bottom features he relates to, when he becomes active and moving."*

Now let's look at (just) two of the guidelines we can apply in interpreting a feature of the bottom as to whether it is good or bad (for the movement of the fish). Then let us apply these guidelines to a fishing situation we are likely to encounter.

The two guidelines are:

1. Fish will not use a flat or bottom surface void of (signposts) structure, breaks, or breaklines in their movements and migrations.

2. Fish will not move down the backside of a hump to get to shallow water. In other words, they will not go "downhill" to get to shallower water.

Not long ago we discussed how we apply our guidelines for the "interpretation" of a submerged roadbed. This "figuring out" of the roadbed included not only how the fish might use it, but also how you and I would present lures to locate the fish.

At that time it was said submerged roadbeds can often be among the best features (structures, breaks, breaklines) in a body of water for the

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movements and migrations of the fish. It was also noted, some roadbeds may not be productive. What this means is, if we have no guidelines, or do not apply our guidelines for the interpretation of such a "structure," *we could spend a great deal of time on a roadbed or part of a roadbed, where we have little chance to catch a fish.*

Let's consider the submerged roadbed further, and look at a large reservoir (miles long) with several existing

roadbeds. Our purpose is to see if we can determine WHERE and HOW the fish might use them. The situation may call for an interpretation that eliminates a roadbed completely, or it could eliminate only parts of the roadbed. The interpretation must point out WHERE we concentrate our efforts (if we want to catch fish consistently).

At this time we will discuss the presentation of lures only briefly. An experienced Spoonplugger knows he must control the depth and speed of his lure correctly in any fishing situation. He knows that depth control means WHERE he controls his depth, WHEN he controls his depth, What depth he controls, WHY he controls a depth, and HOW he controls his depth. His speed control means just how fast he moves the lure. It could be from zero speed to as fast as he can move the lure. He knows he can't



Education Editor, Buck Perry, with a big bass that was provoked into striking a deep running, bottom bumping lure.

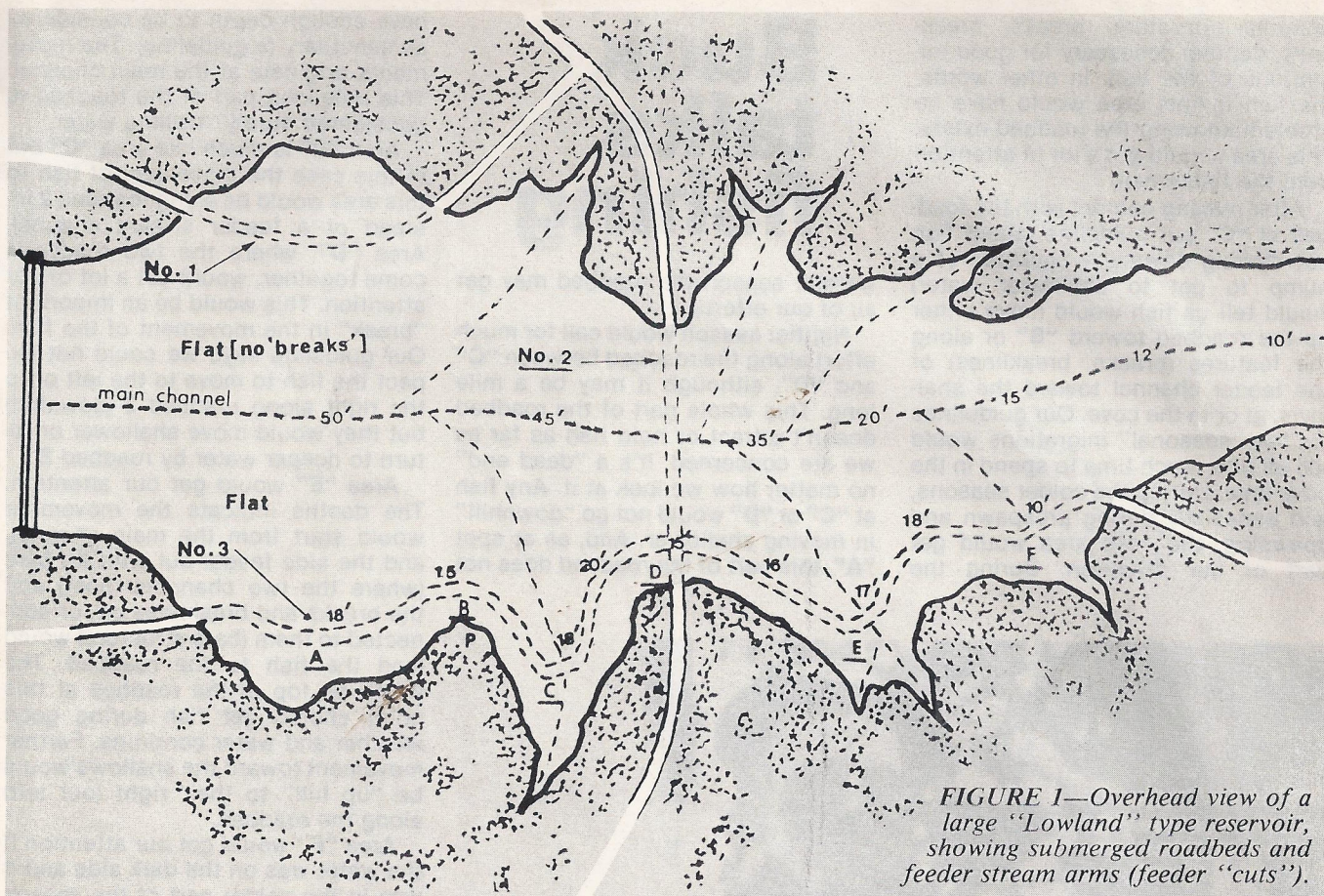


FIGURE 1—Overhead view of a large "Lowland" type reservoir, showing submerged roadbeds and feeder stream arms (feeder "cuts").

sacrifice one control in obtaining the other. They must come together—at the same time (a guideline).

Figure 1 is a top view of a large "Lowland" type reservoir. Those who are familiar with our classification of artificial reservoirs would recognize this as a type 3 in the Lowland group. That is, the lake closer to the short dam (built in a narrow gorge-like area) spreads out and has deep features more like those in a Flatland reservoir. However, the upper and greater portion of the lake has features of a Lowland. This means the area toward the headwaters has few flats, and most shoreline features (structure, breaks, breaklines) extend to the deepest water in the area.

The figure shows the submerged roadbeds in the lake. These roadbeds have been labeled 1, 2, and 3. The depths at different spots are shown. The main channel as well as feeder stream channels are indicated. All of these things are important if we are to get any interpretation to the fishing possibilities. The roadbeds have been enlarged (in respect to lake size) for our study. Roadbed 3 is miles long.

About all roadbed 1 (top left, near dam) would be good for is to launch the boat. The feature is not related in any way to the deepest water in the area, a channel or "home" area that would offer sanctuary from a chang-

ing environment, for example. There is a deep flat between the roadbed and the channel. There is no structure, breaks, or breaklines that "go all the way." Our interpretation would indicate the fish would never know this feature exists. We may "check it out," (fish it) but for most of the "fishing" season it would be passed up.

Roadbed 2 must be checked out thoroughly. This feature (structure, breaks, or breaklines) extends from the channel (deepest water in the area) to the shallows (it goes all the way). The roadbed on both sides of the main channel should be "fished" as discussed in past talks.

Roadbed 3 should get most of our attention in this study. This particular roadbed has a lot to say about roadbeds in general, no matter where or when they might occur. This one may contain the answer to YOUR particular roadbed.

Roadbed 3 does not cross the main river channel—it runs almost parallel to it. This submerged roadbed runs for miles, and it is just as important for the fisherman to know what parts of this roadbed are bad as it is for him to be able to say a part has possibilities. He must be able to eliminate as much water as possible and *spend his time where he has the best chance to catch a fish.*

In area "A" (roadbed 3) the roadbed

appears to be through a flat, not of sanctuary depth (normally 30-35 feet, if available—guideline), and is far from the channel. There are no breaks or breaklines, as far as we can see, in or on the bottom from the channel to the roadbed. It is likely the fish would not know this portion of the roadbed exists. You might think the fish could move to this spot ("A") along the roadbed from another "contact point." However, when we look farther along the road to point "B", we note the depth of the roadbed is shallower as it passed the "point" in the shoreline (the depth indicates a "bar" at this extrusion in the shoreline). Our guideline tells us any fish at "B" would not move "downhill" toward section "A". Any fish that may move on the roadbed to "B" would move shallower toward the shoreline (point "B").

Area "B" has potential as it could be productive by fish moving from area "C"; but the distance is quite great. We would check area "B" out, due to the bar that exists there. However, we would not spend a great deal of time here before moving on to area "C", because of a "flat" in front of the bar.

At area "C", the roadbed crosses a feeder stream channel that has good depth. The "cut" would provide the

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features (structure, breaks, break-lines, depths) necessary for good migrations of the fish. In other words, the fish in this area would have no problem knowing the roadbed exists. This area should get a lot of attention from the fisherman.

After making contact with the roadbed at "C" our guideline (about fish not moving down the backside of a hump to get to shallower water) would tell us fish would move either up the roadbed toward "B" or along the features (breaks, breaklines) of the feeder channel toward the shallows, at or in the cove. Our guidelines for the "seasonal" migrations would tell us how much time to spend in the cove area. During the colder seasons, and especially during prespawn and spawning, the cove area would get part of our attention. During the

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warmer season the roadbed may get all of our efforts.

Neither season would call for much effort along the roadbed between "C" and "D", although it may be a mile long. This whole part of the roadbed doesn't attract or hold fish as far as we are concerned. It's a "dead end" no matter how we look at it. Any fish at "C" or "D" would not go "downhill" in moving shallower. And, as at spot "A", this part of the roadbed does not

have enough depth to be considered as sanctuary (a guideline). The movements originate at the main channel. This mile-long part of the roadbed is considered purely "trolling water."

Area "D" is much like area "C" but in this case the movement of fish to this area would be along roadbed 2 instead of a feeder stream channel. Area "D", where the two roadbeds come together, would get a lot of our attention. This would be an important "break" in the movement of the fish. Our guideline says we could not expect the fish to move to the left or to the right along roadbed 3 (downhill) but they would move shallower or return to deeper water by roadbed 2.

Area "E" would get our attention. The depths indicate the movement would start from the main channel, and the side feeder cut with its bars (where the two channels meet) and the breaks and breaklines on, or connected to them (bars-structure) would lead the fish to the roadbed. The depth on top of the roadbed at this point should get fish during good weather and water conditions. Farther movement toward the shallows would be "up hill" to their right (our left) along the roadbed.

Area "F" would get our attention if the water was on the dark side and it was in the colder part of the season (guideline on weather and water). If the water in this area was clear, the weather unstable, or in the hotter season, we would not expect this area to produce. The reason is simply—the depths. The channel depth is not good and the roadbed is too shallow to get good migrations very often.

If we desired to find the place where we had the best chance to catch a fish along roadbed 3, we would spend most of our time, and "shoot the works" both casting and trolling, in areas "C", "D", and "E". (I expect, and will probably hear a lot about a couple fish being caught at a place other than "C", "D", and "E").

Let me state once again the purpose of Spoonplugging (structure fishing) and our Home Study Series and the guidelines for fishing success. Our studies are not lessons in Physics, Chemistry or Biology. We couldn't care less about some fish caught back on some shallow weed-infested secret place by some oddball method. *Nor, are we concerned HOW or WHY a fish does this or that.* Ours is a study that will enable you and me to catch more and bigger fish consistently **WHEREVER WE FISH**. It also tells us how to go about our fishing so we can become as good a fisherman as we desire. My hope is that our new, detailed study series will cause more to "hear" and understand what our purpose truly is.



"Our aim is to help Fishing Facts readers go to any lake, stream, or reservoir in any locality, and fish for any species present; to be able to feel 'at home' on any water. Above all, if anyone caught a fish on that day, he or she would be one of them."—Buck Perry