

Use Your Eyes To Find Potential Hot-Spots



Anglers should take care to note various structure types. . . but equally important is what caused them.

Part Two by Buck Perry, Education Editor

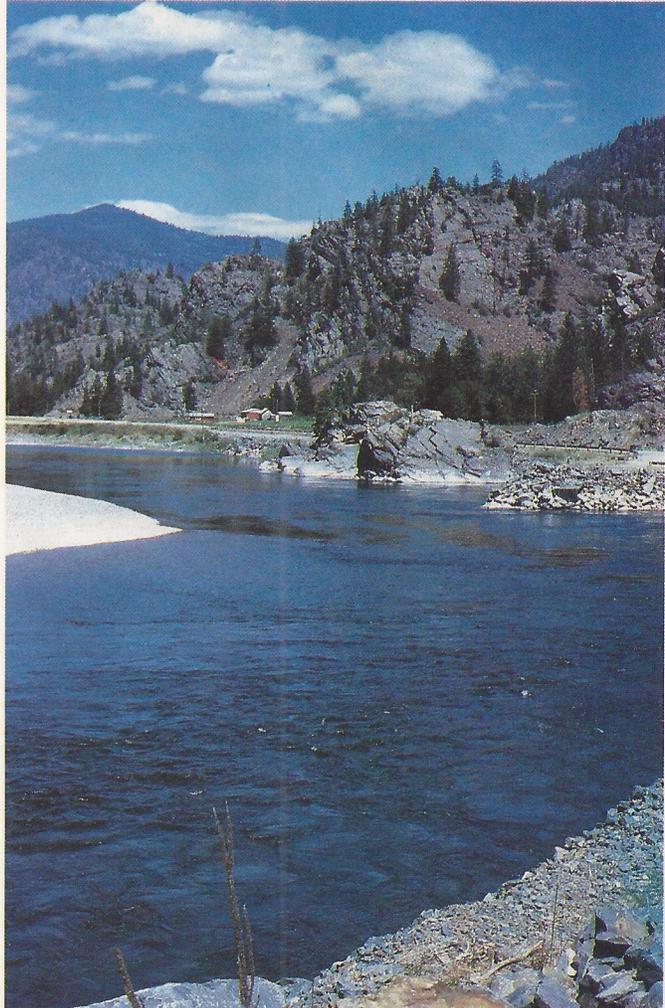
The last time we talked, it was about the chats I had been having with a (potential) structure fisherman named "Joe." Our several meetings had been brought about by Joe saying: "I continually go over the Spoonplugger (structure fisherman) study material. I think I understand the guidelines fairly well, but when I get on the water my mind goes blank and I don't even know where to start. If it's a big body of water, it scares me half to death."

The first time Joe and I met (July '83 *Fishing Facts*) we had a long discussion. The purpose was to find out what was causing his fear, or his feeling of insecurity. We came to the conclusion that Joe was unable to recognize structure situations the fish would use in their movements and migrations. He could not relate the things in his studies (books, home study series, etc.) to the things he saw on the water. In fact, he hadn't digested what the different structure situation TYPES looked like; and he seemed to have no idea as to **what caused them**. I had the impression Joe hadn't fully grasped why structure situations were important. It hadn't fully soaked into his head that if he desired to catch fish consistently, he must spend his time where he has the BEST chance to catch a fish.

To help Joe with his problem, I gave him a figure to study. It was a top view of a reservoir (man-made lake). I asked him to study the figure carefully and note what TYPES of structure situations existed in the lake. (The different type features the fish would use in their movements and migrations.) The next time Joe and I got together, his notes showed he hadn't done a very thorough job. He had indicated some underwater bars off a couple of land points, but he had not drawn in all the channels the figure indicated were present. This spelled out clearly Joe had overlooked the fact that all productive structure must be tied in some manner to the deepest water in the area (channels, in this case). It became apparent Joe was unable to visualize features that might be present under the water, by what he could actually see *above* the water.

During our meeting I used quite a few drawings to show what type structure situations he could expect in different bodies of water. I told him to look at the figure of the lake again, but this time with the different situations we had just talked about in mind. His reply was he probably would do a better job, but he would only be guessing what was present. I told him this is correct, but how else was he to start getting rid of his hang-up? I pointed out some additional "how else's," such as: "How else will you learn to read a contour map correctly?" or "How else can you learn to visualize what is under the water by the things seen above the water?"

Education Editor, Buck Perry, displays a nice catch taken during a day when fishing was particularly "tough" for most fishermen.



I still did not show or tell him what structure situations might be present in the reservoir. Instead, I gave him another figure to look over carefully. I showed him a top view of a body of water that could be a portion of a #1 Lowland reservoir.

I labeled the *major* structure situations **A, B, C, D**, etc. and I had "guessed" or "speculated" as to what could be present in this body of water. I told Joe I had arrived at the "spots" from **what I could see above the water**. I asked him to note or draw in the features that had caused me to designate these areas as potentially productive (structure, breaks, breaklines, deep water).

Although he had been shown the different type structure situations that could exist, I wasn't sure his interpretation this time would be any better than the last. I had my doubts he had gotten the message as to **what** continued

Use Your Eyes To Find Hot-Spots, cont.

located in an area of rolling hills with many small streams (creeks, branches, etc.). The main stream of the lake is a fairly large river.

The purpose of the drawing is to see how we can guess or speculate what structure situations exist in this body of water from what we can see. Later on we may check a contour map (if available) or we can use lures and depth sounders to check what is actually here against what we thought was here from our observations (above the water).

After cruising over the lake and looking at the terrain, the shoreline and the shallow features, it didn't take long to figure out the fishable spots (structure situations). **Figure 2** shows the major areas in the lake where the structure situations must be checked thoroughly. (They have been labeled **A, B, C, D**, etc.) Most of these structure situations are those for the regular (warmer part) of the fishing season. However, some are marked for the colder part (early spring, late fall, winter). See if you are able to recognize them, and determine why they should be checked out during the colder season. In the figure I have tried to visualize as many different TYPES of structure situations as possible.

Your reaction to **Figure 2** most likely is to say: "Just how did you go about choosing the spots from the observations you made above the water?" For a clue, let's look at another figure of the situation.

Figure 3 shows some of the things that could be seen as well as some guessed as being present. It was easy to see the water color was on the clear side. A tall weedline existed in ALL shallow areas. (Do not pass over **Figure 3** hurriedly. Take some time to study the figure carefully.)

Figure 4 shows the weedlines in the lake. This took a little time, but in each area of the lake, the observed weedline gave quick information about the features

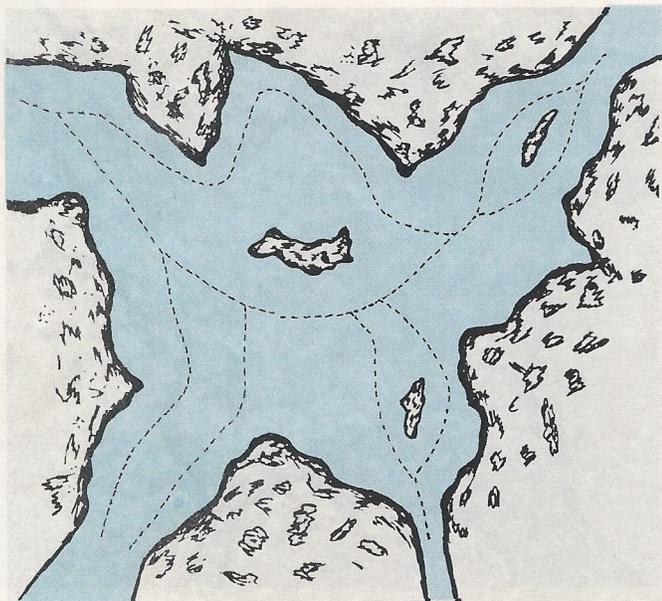


FIGURE 5—Channels in a lake or reservoir frequently provide the deepest water in an area. Pay close attention to these.

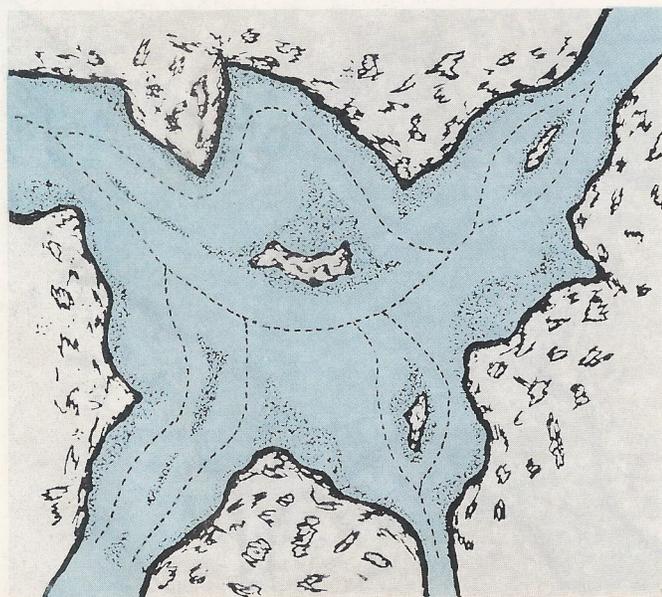


FIGURE 6—A combination of Figure 4 and Figure 5.

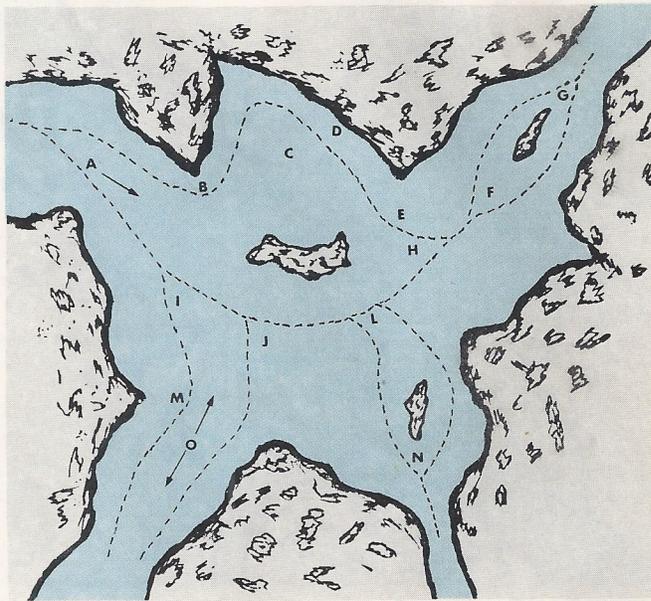


FIGURE 7—A combination of Figure 2 and Figure 5.

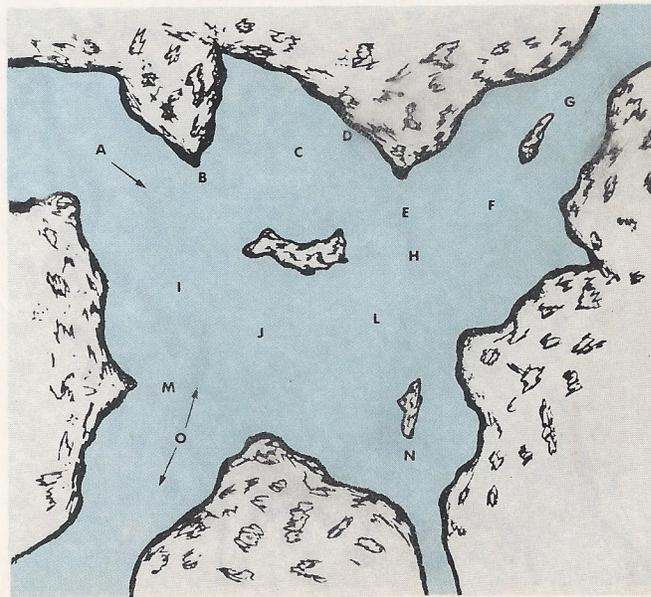


FIGURE 8—To get the most complete picture of a lake, everything looked at, or "guessed at," is important.

of the bottom, such as: structure, breaks, breaklines, and deep water. As you study the weed situation in an area, be sure to refer to **Figure 3**.

If the weedline had not been present, the **terrain and shoreline features** would have shown the shallower areas (position, size and direction). This would have taken a little more time, but taken area by area, it would not be a very difficult task.

After checking the weedline, it was easy to see where the deepest water in an area existed. That is, after we had digested the terrain looked at previously. **Figure 5** shows the channels (deepest water in the area) in the lake. Since we did not have a depth sounder or contour

interpreting structure in streams (or reservoirs). You should know water flows in a straight line until diverted by something in its path. Also, when the flow of water in the channel is diverted it cuts, gouges, wears away, etc. This means the features on the outside of the bend (or turn) are steeper, deeper, sharper breaking, etc. At the same time, those on the "inside" of the bend are flatter, shallower, smoother, etc.

In **Figure 6** I have combined **Figures 4 and 5**. **Figure 7** is a combination of **Figure 2 and Figure 5**. **Figure 8** is a repeat of **Figure 2**.

In the conclusion as to "what was out there," no one thing or feature gave the full picture. Some observations may seem

shallow features to help develop a structure situation under the water. But to develop a **PRODUCTIVE** structure situation we must have it going all the way from the deepest water in the area to the shallows (and vice versa). In other words, **our interpretation of a PRODUCTIVE structure situation must START at the deepest water, NOT at features along the shoreline or in the shallows**. You have to keep this in mind, because this is the way the fish see it and use it. Please note the designated spots (**A, B, C, D**, etc.) and see how they relate to the deepest water in the area (channels). Study the figures carefully and see what **TYPE** structure situation exists in each spot.

Although we still believe fishermen should do a little thinking for themselves, it might be wise to say more about the #2 Lowland reservoir we talked about in last month's issue of *Fishing Facts* (July '83). To be sure what I talk about is understood, let's look at the figure again.

Figure 9 is a repeat of the figure we talked about last month. However, I have added a few things "guessed" or "speculated" as being present. I have added the channels of major interest. I have also put in some question marks at different spots. My question basically remains the same: "What **TYPE** structure situations exist in the lake?" However, I am changing it slightly to: "What type structure situation exists at **EVERY** question mark?" By this time, you should know what to do if structure types give you trouble.

When studying the areas designated by question marks, there are three positions that may cause hesitation and create questions such as: "Why did Buck say (guess) something was here?" or "On what basis did he think this type structure situation existed?"

If the description of the lake and what was said about the structure situations is reviewed carefully, you should come to the same conclusion I did. It is possible we both may find later that these three do **NOT** exist. But until proven otherwise, we better believe they do.

I left Joe with this thought: "Joe, I hope you are beginning to see what *caused* each structure situation and **WHY** a productive structure situation must extend from the deepest water (channels in this case) to the shallows. In other words, the shallow features must be tied in some manner by a ridge, breaks or breaklines, to the deepest water in the area being fished. If you do not grasp these things, you are going to come off the water most of the time with an empty stringer!" 

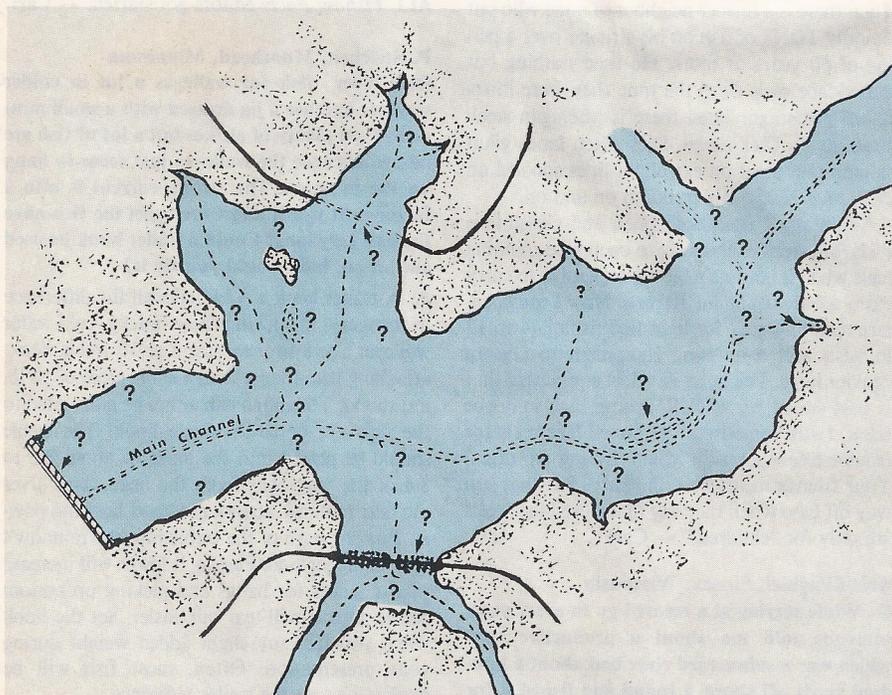


FIGURE 9—After reading this article, can you guess what type structure situations (potential fishing hot-spots) may exist in this lake?

map, we did not know the exact depth or the exact position of the channels. However, this is of little concern, as any discrepancy will be taken care of during our presentation of lures, both trolling and casting. In fact, we would fish it **MORE** thoroughly without a map or depth sounder.

If the weedline had not been present, finding out where the channels were and how they flowed would not have been difficult. With the terrain observations (**Figure 3**), plus the position, size and direction of the shallows; and understanding how water flows, little guessing would have been necessary to determine the position and direction of the channels. I feel a little foolish in reminding you of a basic guideline for

more important than others; but to get the most *complete* picture, everything looked at, related to, or even guessed at, is important.

If you study **Figures 1 thru 8**, you should begin to see that these structure situations (which the fish will use in their movements and migrations) were arrived at **by relating what should occur under the water to that which was visible above the water**. We **MUST** keep our eyes open. When we see something occurring *above* the water, and find this or that occurring *under* the water, it must be digested thoroughly and stored in our memory—**for we will run across it again in future fishing situations**.

We can use the visible shoreline or