

**BY BUCK PERRY,
EDUCATION EDITOR**

BE SURE YOU SELECT THE BEST FOR THE JOB

Quite often, when talking to a group of fishermen, the statement is made that fishing success is predicated upon knowledge. Then, in passing, the comment may be made that the *application* of this knowledge is more of a mechanical process; or, in the final analysis one could say successful fishing is a mechanical process. When we make this last statement, you can see some individuals throwing up their hands in "horror."

Most of the time, when speaking to fishermen, a top view photo of a lake or reservoir is projected upon a screen. The question is then asked, "How many of you can tell me where the fish are in this lake?"

At times I may get an answer such as, "In the water!"; but for the most part, most groups sit there in complete silence. It is then pointed out that, "the fish are either in the shallows, in the deep, or somewhere in between." This statement usually takes a little time to sink in but, without fail, it produces a lot of laughter. After the laughter subsides, my next comment is, "What are you laughing about? That observation

wasn't meant to be funny, it was made to point out a basic fishing fact; and, if you desire to catch fish consistently in the future, it would be best to keep the statement in mind."

I suppose more is said about *lures* in fishing than any other gear that might be used. Lures come in all shapes and sizes and probably, in the long run, more money is spent on lures than any other item. Fishing lures are a very important subject, and a great deal should be said about them. But I have often wondered just how much thought is given as to which lures or what lure *types* a fisherman should have in his tackle box. I believe with just a little thought and

study the proper selection of lures, or the finding of *effective* lures, is not such a difficult task as it would appear. I am quite sure a bit of preliminary thinking would be more effective than rushing to purchase every new lure that came on the market, or every lure claimed to have caught a fish. When thinking about the selection of lures, or the need to purchase new ones, some thought should be given to the reasons *why* a particular lure is selected.

When considering the proper presentation of lures, it should be remembered that fishing gear (and lures) should be looked upon as "tools." These "tools" must allow you and me to accomplish the things we are trying to do at a particular time and place. If the gear we are using does not allow us to do the things we are attempting to do, then they are the wrong tools and should not be used

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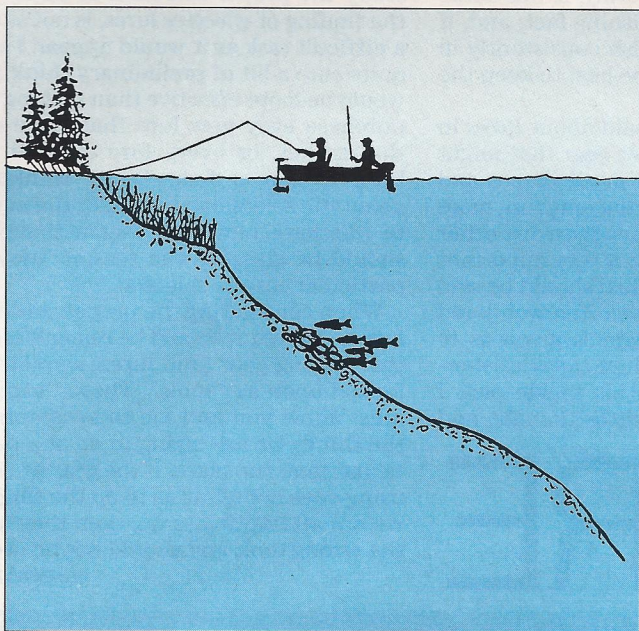


FIGURE 1 – Side view of a fishing situation fishermen may face quite often. Due to the prevailing weather and water conditions, the fish are located in an “in between” position.

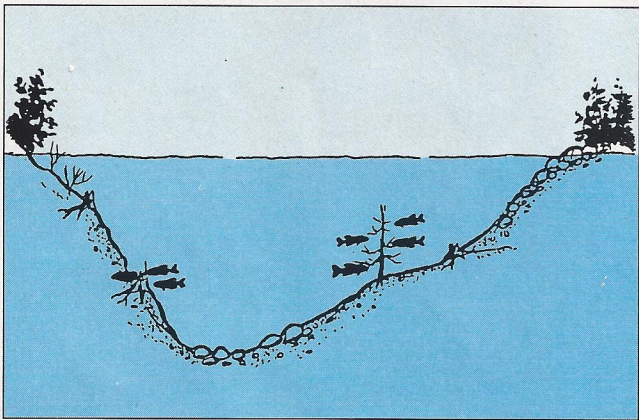


FIGURE 3 – In this case, the fish are located at a deeper “break” on the structure. It is apparent that an angler’s surface lures, or shallow running lures will not provide good depth control and are not likely to catch the fish regardless how well the angler checks out the speeds (or colors, or sizes, or actions).

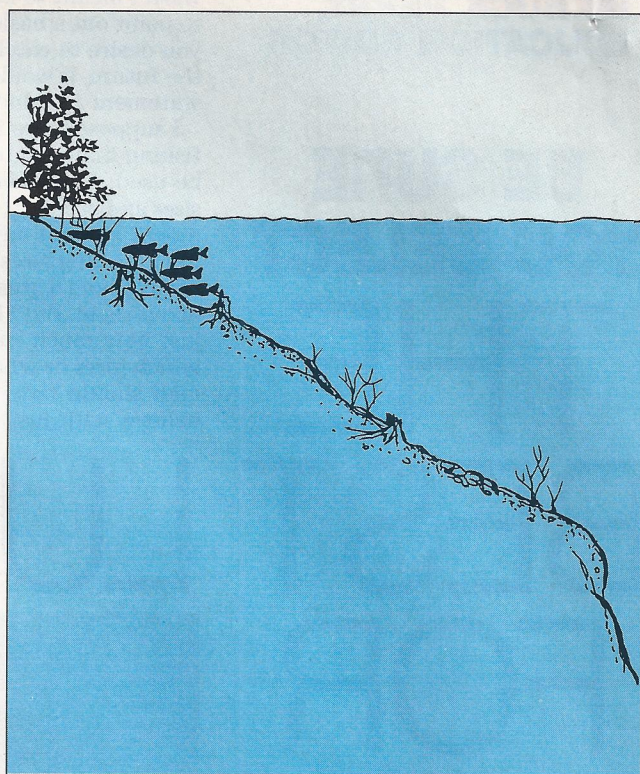
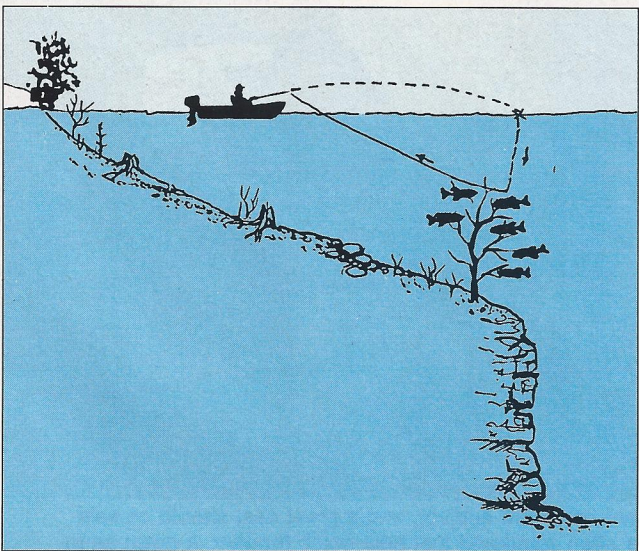


FIGURE 2 – Side view of a fishing situation where the conditions of weather and water have produced a movement of fish to the shallows of the shoreline.

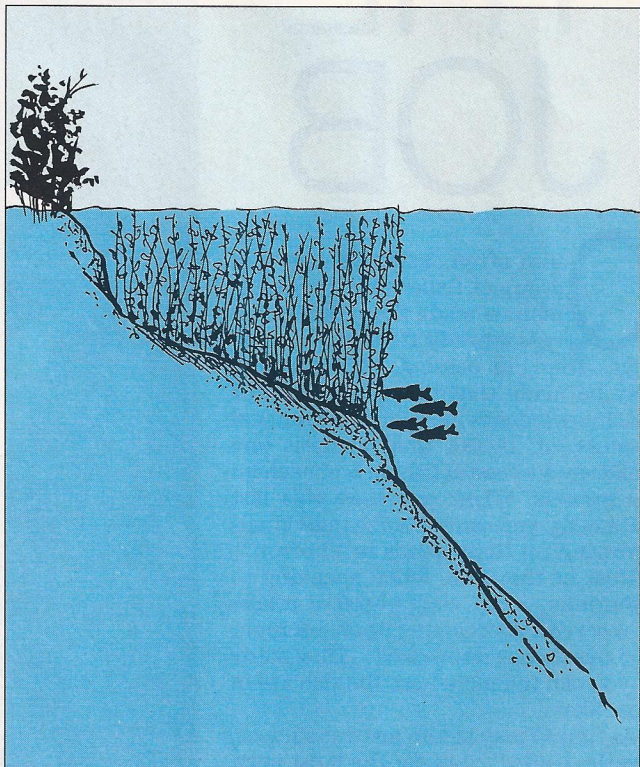


FIGURE 4 – With the fish now located at the base of a deep weedline, how would you go about presenting your lures to these fish?

FIGURE 5 – A situation where the fish have not moved very far from the sanctuary of deep water. They are located in and around a bush that is positioned right next to the drop-off.

SELECT THE BEST LURE

at that particular time. We have to keep in mind that in order to catch a fish we must be at the right place, at the right time, fishing in the right manner. If *any* of these things are neglected, chances are we will not be successful.

When mapping and interpreting a body of water, much can be accomplished by observing the weather and water conditions. Still more can be learned by talking to other fishermen, studying the surrounding terrain, locating the "hot-spots," studying contour maps, scrutinizing the situation with depth sounders, etc. But fishermen would do well to remember that in order to get the *final* interpretation of a body of water (structure, breaks, breaklines, weather, water, etc.), you and I must put our lures down there and find out if our interpretations are correct — by catching or not catching a fish. If we catch a fish, we are at the right place, at the right time, presenting our lures in the right manner. However, if our lures will not *allow* us to fish in the right manner, at any place and time, we will not get the correct interpretation of the situation — nor are we likely to catch a fish.

Figure 1 is a side view of a fishing situation you and I may face quite often. The fish are located (due to weather and water conditions) in an "in between" position. They are not in the shallow weeds, nor in the deepest water. Let's assume you are fishing the area and are using your "best" surface lures or your shallowest running lures over the weeds. It doesn't take much imagination to see that you *are* fishing at the right time; but what about your *place*, type lures and *manner of presentation*?

I believe we all will agree that our lures must allow us to *control* our presentation. If we desire to place our lures at a particular place, or move them a certain way, then our selection must be made based on considerations other than looking for something "pretty," something *we* might prefer, or something we have heard has caught a fish.

In past articles we have discussed several of the things that you and I can *control* in our fishing. We view most of the things we have control over more in terms of aids, rather than absolute controls. We arrived at the conclusion that of the many things we can do, successful fishing finally reduces down to the control of *depth and speed*. We also determined that these two controls must be used *together*. We cannot sacrifice one for the other. In our previous study we went further and decided that should answer all our fishing successes and failures in terms of these two controls (depth and speed). By doing this we would always be learning, and our lure and bait presentations would always be done in the most productive way.

We have discussed how depth control involves a great deal more than fishing shallow, deep or in between. Total depth control means putting the lure where the fish are. Total speed control means moving the lure (or not moving it) in such a way as to make the fish "take." Thus, "depth control" involves many things such as: *where* in the water, *when* in the water, *why* in the water, *how* in the water, etc. The control of speed also involves knowledge regarding where, when, why, what and how. What it all boils down to is the fact, if you and I want to catch a fish, we must place our lures where the fish are (depth control)

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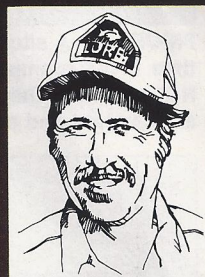
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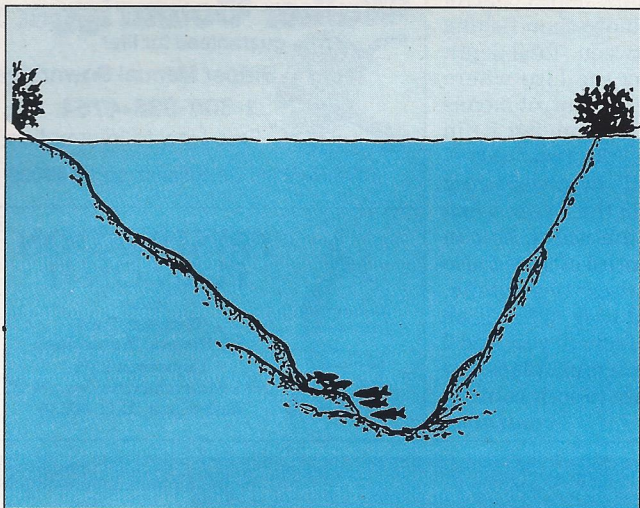


FIGURE 6 – A situation fishermen will face a great part of the time. In this example, movement of the fish from deep water has NOT occurred. They are quite deep and very inactive; that is, they are dormant and non-chasing.

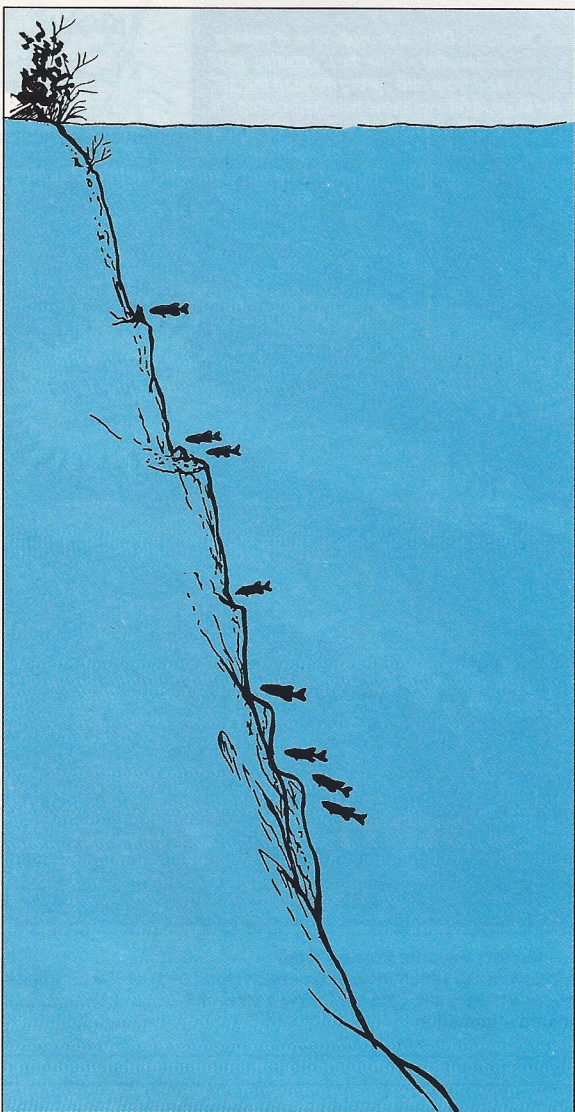


FIGURE 8 – Side view of a steep shoreline situation. The weather is cold (winter). Which is better, casting or trolling? What type lures would you use? What would be the best position for the boat while casting?

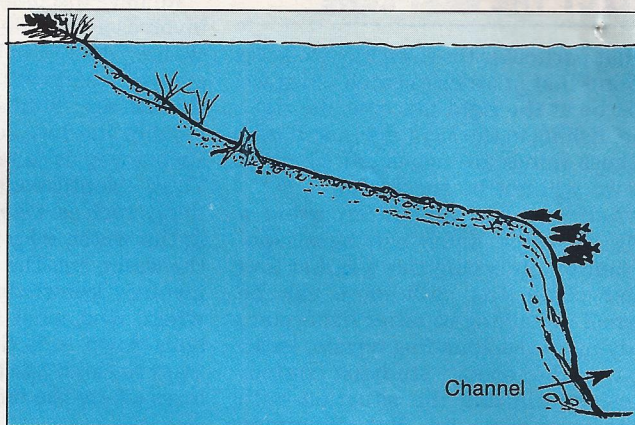


FIGURE 7 – Here the fish have moved to the top of the drop-off. The depth at this spot is not great, the weather and water conditions are favorable, and the fish are extremely active. The questions are: what type lure should be used on the cast? Where should the angler position his boat so as to catch as many fish as possible?

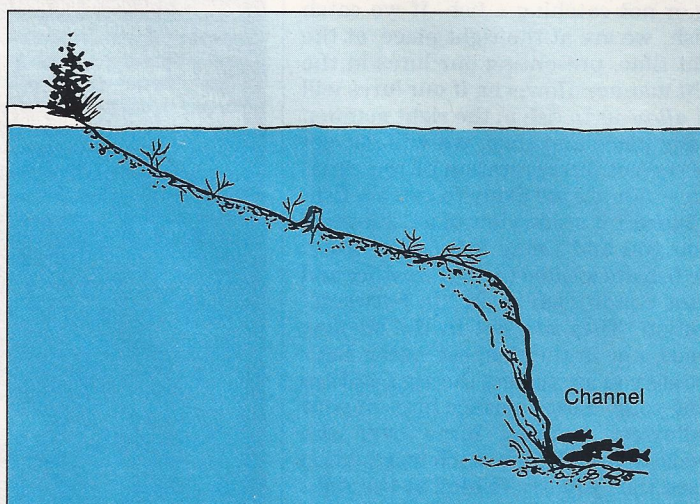


FIGURE 9 – Side view of a situation in a reservoir. The weather and water conditions are such that the fish move only to the “break” at the base of the breakline (drop-off). The water is warm, but the fish are not very active. If you checked the top of the breakline and found no fish, why must you check the base (bottom) of the drop-off instead of wandering around blindly in the channel?

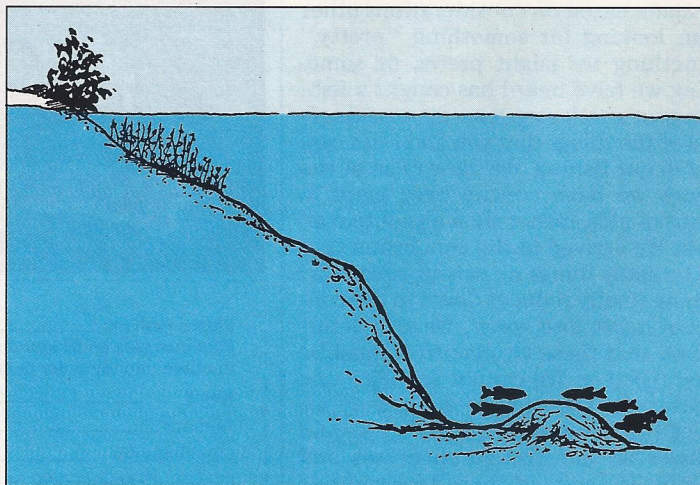


FIGURE 10 – A section in a deep, natural lake. The water is clear, and weather is on the bright side. Fish are deep (45 feet) and located on a “hump.” What type lure would you use, and how would you present it?

SELECT THE BEST LURE

and move them in such a way as to make the fish take (proper speed control).

Many fishermen will stick with one particular lure style regardless of the fishing situation. He gives no thought that he might achieve, or be able to gain, better depth and speed control with a different lure. This difference may be in size, weight or in design. It also may involve a different type lure presentation (casting or trolling). But whatever is involved, our lure selection should be made so that we can do what we are trying to do and give us maximum control at all times. There is a multitude of good lures on the market. *All* will catch fish at one time or another. Most of them have "goodies" of color, size, action, etc., but none of them will catch a fish if not placed where the fish is, and moved in such a way as to make the fish take (depth and speed control). Most of us have experienced fishing with a particular lure and caught no fish, while at the same time other fishermen made a catch using the same lure.

Let us look at some typical fishing situations you and I may face and see if they might help us in the selection of suitable lures for our tackle box. At the same time the following situations might give us ideas as to whether we should present our lures by casting or trolling, or if we are using each at the right time

FOR THE EXPERIENCED STUDENT OF STRUCTURE FISHING

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 continually emphasize the basic concepts of structure, fish habits, instincts, etc.

However, in this article, Buck Perry addresses fishermen who have already studied their "BASICS" and are ready to move on to additional knowledge. To gain the most benefit from the article, it is important that the student have a clear understanding of the terminology and nomenclature involved.

If you are a new reader, we urge you to "catch up" or achieve a better understanding

of Buck Perry's articles by studying a copy of his great 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. The book was 25 years in the making, a quarter century of fishing knowledge put down on paper for the first time so fishermen everywhere could share in better fishing. The book sells for \$9.95, plus a shipping and handling charge of \$2.70 and is available with an unconditional money-back guarantee from our Northwoods Trading Post, P.O. Box 609, Menomonee Falls, WI 53051.

and in the right manner.

Figure 2 is a side view of a fishing situation where the conditions of weather and water have produced a movement of the fish to the shallows of the shoreline. Our main job is to put our lures where the fish are (depth control) and move them so as to produce a "take" (speed control). Our lure selection must be made as to not encounter any problems in working this area. There is a great selection of lures that would give good depth and speed control in a situation such as this. This would be an excellent condition where that favorite surface or shallow-running lure would do a good job. Depth control is no major factor here, and all we have to do

about the speed is to "check it out" (check various speeds).

Figure 3 is another situation that we may encounter. The weather and water conditions have produced a much shorter movement of fish than in the case of **Figure 2**. In this case the fish are located at a deeper "break." It is apparent that our surface lures, or our shallow-running lures, will not provide good depth control and will not catch the fish regardless how well we check out the speeds (or colors, or sizes, or actions). In order to have good depth control we must have lures that will reach the fish, either trolling or casting. We must have "deep diver"-type lures in

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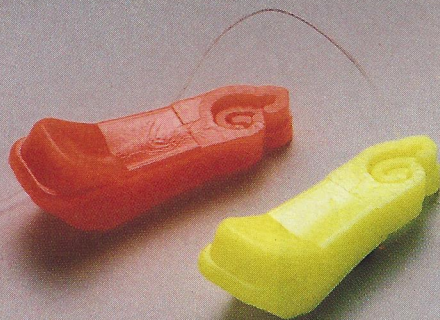


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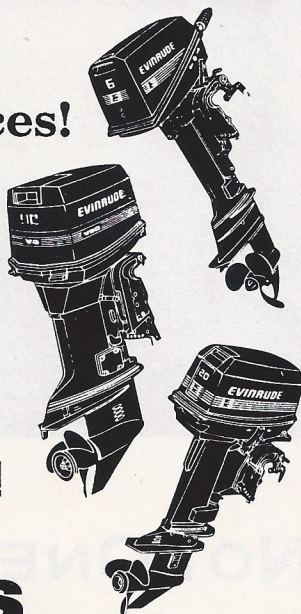
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our tackle box.

Figure 4 is another situation that you and I may encounter. In this case the fish are at the base of a tall weedline. This weedline could be as tall as 15 to 18 feet. This means we must get our lures to the base of the weedline. We could use either a sinking-type "jump" lure (letting it sink to the bottom before starting the retrieve), or we could use a deep-diving lure that will dive to these depths when trolled or cast. Our best position to cast the base of the weedline is to position the boat close to the weedline and make our casts *parallel* with the weeds. A trolling run should have the boat as close to the weedline as possible, and the lure used must reach these depths with a "controllable" line length.

Figure 5 is a situation where the fish have not moved very far from the sanctuary of the deep water. They are located in and around a bush that is positioned right next to the drop-off. To make an effective trolling run would require a lure depth that allowed it to "rip" through the outer twigs and branches. To effectively cast the bush, some type of sinking lure would be required so as to secure the right depth. We may find if we let the lure sink too far into the deeper water, we get hung on the breakline or the brush before we get a chance at the fish. However, if we do not let it sink deep enough, we get no reaction from the fish. Our best bet is to use some type of "countdown" system so that our lures only sink so deep and no deeper before starting the retrieve. We may have a couple false casts, but it shouldn't be long before we have the lure "ripping" just right through the twigs and branches.

Figure 5 shows the best position of the boat when casting a condition such as this. Lure styles are plentiful for such a situation, and they should be included in our tackle box.

Figure 6 is a situation you and I will face a great part of the time. In this example, movement of the fish from deep water **has not occurred**. They are quite deep and very inactive. That is, they are dormant and nonchasing. This situation means you and I must put our lures "right on the money" (extreme accuracy is called for) and we must be very careful in checking how slow or how fast we move them. We must be able to check the area without pulling our lures away too fast (or too far). This condition would be a situation where casting may be better than trolling. It would require some type of "jump" lure such as a jig, spoon or soft plastic. It is possible we may have to place our boat directly over the spot and fish straight up and down.

Figure 7 is a side view of a situation where the fish have moved to the "top"

of the "drop-off." The depth isn't great, the weather and water conditions are good, and the fish are extremely active. The questions are: What type lure should I use on the cast? Where should I position my boat so as to catch as many fish as possible? Should I position my boat over deep water using a jump-type lure working "downhill"? Or should I position my boat shallow and work "uphill" with a fast-walking lure up and over the breakline?


Those of you who have experienced situations such as these will agree the "uphill" approach will put more fish on the stringer. In most situations when casting deeper structure, better depth and speed control (together) can be had by working "uphill" rather than "downhill." When fish have moved shallower and are active, a fast lure is better than a slow one.

Shown next are some additional figures (Figures 8, 9 and 10) showing some typical fishing situations you and I may face. Look each of them over carefully — keeping in mind the size and *metabolism* of the fish. Consider what type casting outfit you are using, the changing weather and water conditions, the season, etc. In each situation try to figure out how you could obtain the best depth and speed control.

Figure 8 is a side view of a steep shoreline situation. The weather is cold (winter). Which is better, casting or trolling? What type lure would you use on the cast? How about the speed of the lure? What would be the best position for the boat while casting?

Figure 9 is a side view of a situation in a reservoir. The weather and water conditions are such that the fish move only to the base of the breakline (drop-off). The water is warm, but the fish are not very active. They (the fish) can be reached either casting or trolling. If you checked the "top" of the breakline and found no fish, why must you check the base (bottom) of the drop-off instead of wandering around blindly in the channel? Where would you position your boat for the cast? What type lure would you use?

Figure 10 is a side view of a situation in a deep, natural lake. The water is clear, and weather is on the bright side. The fish are deep (45 feet) and located on a "hump." What type lure would you use, and how would you present it?

Do you understand why I might make the statement that lures should be looked upon as "tools"? Can you see why I might comment to the effect that catching fish *consistently* is mostly a mechanical process; that we must look at successes and failures in terms of depth and speed? After viewing these examples (there could be many more), I'm sure you understand why I say the fish are either in the shallows, the deep, or someplace in between. 

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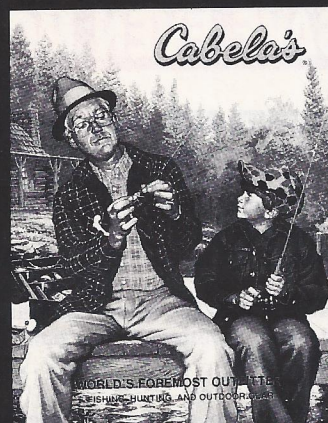
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