

# Bass Fishing Secrets!

## A Collection of Bass Fishing Articles

Compiled by Mark Heywood

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### About The Authors

I have assembled some of the finest [bass fishing](#) articles, written by the foremost experts on [fly fishing](#). So whether you are a [bass fishing beginner](#), or want to bone up on the latest [fly fishing tactics](#), read this ebook and enjoy your fishing!

By the way, all the blue, underlined links will take you to more bass fishing info if clicked.

**Jack Phillips** has been fishing Canada coast to coast for over 50 years. [Fishing Canada](#) provides solid advice for walleye, pike, muskie, a variety of trout, bass and more. His website contains ideas on when and where to go on your next trip to Canada.

**Charles Hammer** - If you want to catch more bass you need to come over to [www.allaboutbassfishing.com](http://www.allaboutbassfishing.com) where we provide many tips, tactics, articles and more to help with your next bass fishing adventure. Whether you fish for largemouth bass, small mouth bass, peacock bass, or any other type of bass we can help you.

**Dean Carl** has enjoyed fishing with family and friends nearly all of his life. Dean feels sharing fishing stories and reliving the "one that got away" is a necessary part to enjoying the great sport of fishing we enjoy today. His stories are shared courtesy of [www.thefishingbobber.com](http://www.thefishingbobber.com)

**Allen Bohart** is a fishing fan, and enthusiastic writer for about any subject that interests him. He is also co-owner of [The Fishing Bobber](#), a site for and about fishing enthusiasts of all levels.

**Roger Overanout** - For more [Bass Fishing](#) information and tips check out his website at [www.bassfishingbeat.com](http://www.bassfishingbeat.com)

**Lorraine Weston** runs the Fishing Activities website. Learn more about [getting started in the pro bass fishing game](#) by checking out her articles.

**G. Wayne Byrd** is a professional bass tournament fisherman, who is also a major contributor to [Fishin' Secrets](#) with Eric Allee and Friends

Contents

About The Authors ..... 2  
Contents ..... 3  
Fishing - Just the Basics..... 4  
A Basic Equipment List..... 6  
Catch and Release Fishing..... 8  
Selecting The Right Fishing Boat..... 10  
The Big Bass Fishing Secret..... 12  
Learn How to Be a Professional Bass Angler..... 13  
Do Scents Really Make Sense?..... 14  
Topwater Bass Fishing..... 18  
Planning a Peacock Bass Fishing Trip..... 20  
Buzzin' for Bass ..... 21  
Jiggin' for Bass..... 26  
Poppin' and Walkin' for Bass ..... 30  
Wormin' for Bass ..... 33  
Further Reading ..... 36

Chapter 1

**Fishing - Just the Basics**

Author: **Jack Phillips**

Fishing can mean different things to different people, but it all boils down to just a few things. Many anglers are out there for the excitement of the hunt and of course the battle to land that lunker. Others it's just the peace, quiet, the fresh air and the beauty of nature, but they love to catch the odd fish to make it a perfect outing.

I've been fishing for over 50 years and even more frequently in the last 10 years; during this time I have learned a lot of countless things about fishing in general. The most important is that you can never know it all. Even a novice can show an old timer a trick or two.

Over the years I've seen hundreds of anglers come to the areas I fish full of enthusiasm and determination and they end up leaving frustrated and confused. With just a little advice this could have made for a better experience and more than likely created another fishing addict like myself. It may take some time to turn you into that pro, but the enjoyment of the sport would be more easily realised.

When starting out the very first thing you want is just basic information on where and when to fish. Sounds easy and generally just ask other anglers, lodge owners, bait store owners, heck just ask.

Now for the fishing equipment, the rod and reel. Sounds simple enough, but maybe not. As in most other sports, cheap or poor equipment will result in poor results. As an example I met a fellow from southern Ontario (Toronto) while fishing here at home for Northern pike and asked him how the fishing was. His remark was that he was going to rent a boat and give it a try. So I asked him if he would like to go out with me that evening and he accepted.

I met him at the dock and told him to load his gear in the boat and offered him a life jacket and away we went. I did not notice what he had loaded at first except he had a nice big new tackle box, as we moved away I asked where is your rod and reel. He went on to open his new tackle box and proceeded to pull out one of those pocket fisherman rigs. Of course I had a hard time from not laughing out loud, but went on to offer him one of my other rigs already in the boat.

Once we hit the area I intended to troll he went on to politely say he wanted to use his own rod but asked what one of his lures he should use for northern pike. He had one large red and white spoon and I told him to use that and made sure he let out enough line for what we were doing. I believe I was praying for him to get the first strike and sure enough he did after about 15 minutes or so and the fun began.

Now this pike he had on was I would guess about 15 pounds, not that big but the struggle with that little, short toy he had was hilarious to watch. I did not believe he would get the fish to the boat but he did although to fast, I had the net and told him to slow down, he did not hear me as I leaned over to net the fish he had it reeled up to about 2 feet from the tip of that little rod, all that pike did was lean on the line and he was gone.

I must add here that he also had no leader on that rig. After that he was so excited and of course wanted to keep fishing, but asked if he could use one of my other rods which was fine because I wanted to see him really hook and land a nice fish. To shorten this story he did land 2 more northerns and a small walleye. Oh yes I did catch a fish, one walleye and one pike, but we had a new fishing addict here. The next day he went into town to the Canadian Tire store and got properly equipped.

I imagine that young man from southern Ontario had some great tall tales to tell when he got home. I wonder how big that one that got away is Now!

A light action graphite spinning rod and reel will handle most fish you will want to catch, plus it is light enough for the beginner to feel even the light hit of those walleye.

So just get out there relax, take your time. Bring some coffee or lunch or even better catch your lunch and cook on one of the many small islands all over these northern lakes.

Mostly just enjoy all the fresh air, wildlife and scenery. Enjoy it all while you're watching that loon, deer or even a moose feeding, a big walleye might just swim up and inhale your bait sending that twitch up your line through your rod to your fingers. Set the hook and there's lunch!

Well that's enough from me time for supper and a 5 minute stroll down to the river and make a few casts and see what happens.

Chapter 2

**A Basic Equipment List**

Author: **Charles Hammer**

Bass fishing for many begins the first time they get that hit and proceeds from there to become a lifelong avocation. If you have just discovered bass fishing then it's time to start accumulating your bass fishing tackle.

Over the course of your [bass fishing](#) lifetime you will probably have many rods and reels, literally hundreds of lures and a wide variety of storage boxes. However, the first gear you buy need not be expensive or abundant as long as it suits the needs of a novice bass angler.

**Rods.**

As you become more experienced you may find that you want several rods of varying lengths and made out of different materials. A good first rod for a neophyte fisherman is generally five and a half to six feet long and made of graphite, fiberglass or a graphite/fiberglass blend.

Longer rods may give more reach in casting but they also require more nuance. Look for a balanced, medium weight rod. As the term implies, that is a rod which has its weight evenly distributed from end to end.

**Reels.**

Once you have chosen your rod, select a complimentary reel. Consider a rod and reel combo package. Many beginning fishermen shy from this simple answer to tackle selection; after all, buying stuff is half the fun. Still purchasing an inexpensive rod and reel bundle allows you to get the feel for bass fishing gear before making a large investment.

If you have decided to make separate purchases, check out the spincast reels. They have fewer line tangle problems and provide smooth casting and retrieval. Most also allow for a wide variance in lines and lures.

**Lines.**

Most rod and reels will recommend the line weights that harmonize well with them. In general, a 10# line will hold up well in the vast number of situations you'll encounter. As you become a more sophisticated angler you will learn the many factors that go into proper line selection.

Strength, resistance to breaking, stretch, diameter, even color are all important in making more sophisticated line choices. Don't worry about those now though; just buy a high quality line.

**Lures.**

Choosing the right lure for the right area and the right bass is key to successful bass fishing. If you are going with experienced fishermen or with a guide, they will be your best resource for information on what lure or bait to pack. The number one bait out there though is the humble worm. Stock up on these in a variety of colors and pick up a few inexpensive spinnerbaits.

**Tackle Boxes.**

Here again many new fishermen go for the fully featured models, the more drawers and trays the better. Quite often though the more places you have to put things the more ways you have to lose them. Start out with a simple tackle box with a large open bottom and a few small trays.

Now you're ready for the most fun of all: Bass fishing. Hit the water, be safe and good luck.

Chapter 3

**Catch and Release Fishing**

Author: **Dean Carl**

Many of us can remember going fishing as youths and coming home with the "big" catch of the day. Frying up one's catch and enjoying a good meal was a great end to a perfect day of fishing. While it is perfectly acceptable to enjoy one's catch for dinner, fishing itself has changed in the last two decades.

Catch and release is now a widely used method and it is not any more difficult than catch and keep. If you are wondering just how to go about switching to catch and release fishing, here are some tips that you will find helpful.

It is a good idea to understand the "why" of releasing your catch, in order to better appreciate the "how". Nearly every fisherman can understand that fish are indeed a valuable resource. In some area's fish might not be as abundant and releasing one's catch is a great way to keep stock plentiful in your rivers, streams, and lakes.

Keep in mind too that depending on your local fishing rules, put out by fish and game departments, you may have caught a smaller fish than allowed or you have limited out and wish to keep fishing. Preservation is a key word in the catch and release method.

So how do you begin? Remember that fish stand an excellent chance of survival if you handle them properly. Time is important, so as soon as you hook a fish you need to make the decision to release. Exhaustion plays a major role, so land the fish quickly. Something too that fisherman may not think of is setting the hook quickly. A swallowed hook can mean a dismal survival rate.

If you are fishing deep water, bring the fish in slowly to give it a chance to adjust to pressure changes. Don't use barbed hooks and do not use rusty hooks. This gives the fish an opportunity to recuperate without a big risk of infection.

How the fish is handled also makes a tremendous difference in its survival. If possible you want to leave the fish in the water while you use your hook removal tool. This keeps the fish cool and wet. Also try to keep the fish from thrashing and do not use a net, if possible, to avoid damaging the fish.

In the event you have to handle the fish, try to adhere to the following: Use a wet rag or glove, do not put your fingers in the eyes or gills of the fish, avoid removing mucus or scale, turn the fish on it's back on cover it's eyes, and get it back in the water quickly. These steps will help to avoid injury to the fish and help keep the fish exhaustion level at a minimum.

I believe most fishermen are adept at removing a hook; still you will want to keep these points in mind. If the hook is deep within the fish or you believe it cannot be removed quickly, then cut the leader close to the fish's mouth. Always try to back the hook out the opposite way it came in. In other words, do not rip it out and cause further injury to the fish. Tools of choice include needle-nose pliers, a hookout, or even hemostats. Believe it or not, these tools can save the fish and you from risk out injury. Nothing dampens a fishing trip more than a hook in a finger.

Whatever you do, do not try to jerk the hook out by grabbing the line and pulling. This can cause fatal injuries to the fish. If you happen to be fishing for bigger catch, then try to slip a gaff around the leader and slide it to the hook. Lifting the gaff upwards, while pulling down on the leader.

When the fish is ready for release, place it gently into the water. Don't throw it back or give it a belly flop into the water. Support the mid section and tail of the fish gently. It will swim away when it is ready. If your fish is overly tired, carefully move it back and forth. This will help force water through the gills and give it a good boost of oxygen. Watch the fish after release. If it does not swim away, then recover the fish and go through the steps again. This will only take a minute or two of your time and helps to give the fish a solid chance to recover.

Saltwater or deep-water fishermen may have to take an extra step. If the fish cannot right itself or shows a distended air bladder, the bladder should be gently punctured. Carefully insert a thin point through the side of the fish just behind the upper part of the pectoral fin base. Using a fine knife blade or even wire works well. Let the air escape on it's own. Do not press the fish as that may cause major injury.

While it may seem like a lot of steps, in truth it is just a minute or two of action. By doing so, you save a fish to repopulate and thereby make more fun for yourself on another day. You give the best possible opportunity for a fish to recover without injury or risk of infection. One other word of note is to always check your local fish and game regulations. They may have more on the subject and possibly have restrictions for certain bodies of water. More and more areas are open to fishing, but only to barbless hooks. Knowing how to deal with that type of fishing can make for a more pleasurable day.

## Chapter 4

**Selecting The Right Fishing Boat**Author: **Allen Bohart**

One of the biggest investments a fisherman will every make is the purchase of a fishing boat. Just like cars, fishing boats come in all shapes and sizes and varying levels of quality. To avoid buying a "lemon", it is always advisable for the potential boat owner to educate themselves on the ins and outs of boat ownership.

**All-Purpose Fishing Boats**

These boats are intended for those who fish for just about everything. They can be made of aluminum, wood, or fiberglass and sizes usually range from 15 to 20 feet (4.5-6 meters) in length. Aluminum boats are generally the least expensive option available, with prices ranging from \$1,500 up to about \$25,500. Keep in mind that these prices are generally without a motor, which will have to be purchased separately. Wooden boats are still being made, but they are difficult to find, and very hard to get. Used wooden fishing boats are readily available in the classifieds section of your newspaper or any number of places on the Internet. Maintenance is the big issue with wooden boats, as the wood is susceptible to dry rot and fungus, and so must be painted and kept in good shape at all times.

Fiberglass boats are probably the most widely used these days. There are many manufacturers and styles of fiberglass boats, and prices range from about \$8,000 to \$30,000 for a new boat. A general purpose fishing boat will usually have spaces for fishing gear and several bench seats or pedestal style seats with backs. The driver's area will be very simple; some boats can be found that even use a steer-by-tiller layout. These boats are almost always outboard powered, and are usually trailerable. The capacity range for a general purpose fishing boat is 1-4 people.

**Bass Boats**

Bass boats are almost self-explanatory. They are purpose-built for getting to bass quickly. This is the sort of boat you see on those ESPN fishing tournament shows. Bass boats usually have larger outboard motors than the general-purpose boats and have much more storage space as well. Additionally, bass boats will have a full complement of fishing electronics such as depth and fish finders.

There are usually raised casting platforms in the bow of the boat, and quite often in the stern as well. There will usually be provisions for a trolling motor near this platform. Most bass fishing boats are made of fiberglass, but they can also be found in aluminum. Bass boats are usually between 16 and 25 feet in length, with prices ranging from approximately \$10,000 to \$30,000+. These boats can be trailered and are comfortable for up to 4 people.

### **Center-Console Fishing Boats**

Because of their design, with the control station in the center of the boat, these boats allow for fishing from almost any place on the deck. Additionally, the center station allows for easy netting of fish. These boats are generally larger than the other two types, and usually have much larger engines, though still outboard as a general rule.

Because of their versatility and pricing, these boats have grown in popularity in recent years. Some of these boats even have small cabins and toilets. Some of the larger center-console design boats can even be used for offshore saltwater fishing.

Center-console boats range in size from 16 to 35 feet in length and are generally trailerable. The larger varieties can comfortably accommodate up to 6 people. Prices for center-console boats range from around \$15,000 up to over \$60,000.

This article gives a general overview of some of the items to consider when shopping for a fishing boat. For more specific information, as well as suggestions on where to purchase a good fishing boat, be sure to visit [Fishing Boat HQ](#)

Chapter 5

**The Big Bass Fishing Secret**

Author: **Roger Overanout**

The biggest Bass fishing secret is that there isn't a real Bass fishing secret at all, there is no secret to catching Bass, no more than there is a secret to catching fish of any type.

Having said that there are certain things which you can do to help yourself catch more Bass. Perhaps the most important thing is to set out to catch just one kind of Bass, as I'm sure you know there are several different varieties for instance the Small Mouth Bass, the White Bass, the Large Mouth Bass, and many more. Having decided which particular type of Bass you are trying to catch you can then decide on the appropriate bait and tackle.

In this short article I will deal with catching Large Mouth Bass but the principles discussed apply to any type of Bass, the important thing in trying to catch Large Mouth Bass or any other type of Bass for that matter is to know what their natural prey is. The nice thing about the Large Mouth Bass is it will take almost anything that is floating on the water from flies right up to small birds and chicks.

The thing you have to decide is whether you're going to use live bait or artificial, if you decide to use artificial I have found a correctly used jig and pig combination produces very good results but you do have to give it a fair try out. With Bass fishing bait local knowledge is very important and even though some fishermen like to keep these things secret it is surprising what you can learn by listening carefully when other fishermen are talking.

The next important thing to decide is where to go fishing for your Bass, in the case of Large Mouth Bass there is a very wide choice, as you will find this fish in both rivers or lakes, they are usually found quite close to shore, hiding under low foliage perhaps or near rocks waiting for suitable prey. If you decide to try the jig and pig bait, it will work well in both these situations.

The Large Mouth Bass can be fished for at most times of the year, but fall does seem to be the best time because the fish are busy building up reserves for winter and so will take any bait they can.

I suppose the true [Bass fishing secret](#) is to acquire experience of fishing in your area and to enjoy yourself while you are acquiring that experience.

Chapter 6

**Learn How to Be a Professional Bass Angler**

Author: **Lorraine Weston**

If you enjoy fishing, you've probably seen at least one fishing show on television. Have you ever thought, "I would love to have that person's job, fishing all day"? Well, put some more thought into that idea and you could become a professional bass fisherman/woman!

First things first: if you think that all you need is lots of cash to spend on fancy boats and tackle, you're headed in the wrong direction. [Bass fishing](#) is like any sport - it takes dedication, patience, practice, and skill.

If you know someone who seems to know what it takes to catch that beautiful bass, go and visit them! Get as much information out of them that you can, and write it down. During your spare time, get out on the water in a boat, a canoe, or a rubber raft, whatever you have, and try out some of the methods or suggestions they gave you.

You can also research bass fishing information on the Internet or at a library. There are many books on the subject, and there are also magazines you can subscribe to. The most important thing is to practice what you read. If you've tried ten different lures and none of them work, keep asking around - eventually you will hit on something that really works to lure those fish in!

Are there any fishing competitions in your area of the country? Make sure to take part in them; nothing helps you hone your skill like a little competition. Plus, you never know who might be at a competition - there could be someone from a local television network or outdoors company looking for a person with your skill at reeling in the bass.

Whether you land a job as a professional bass angler or not, you should always like what you're doing. If you're trying so hard to be the best angler in the world that you don't even enjoy fishing, you should take a step back and take the time to enjoy fishing again.

With patience, practice and some tips and secrets from other anglers, you'll be reeling beautiful bass into your boat and feeling glad that you took the time to learn this excellent sport.

Chapter 7

**Do Scents Really Make Sense?**

Author: G. Wayne Byrd

With over a hundred brands of formulas, gels, lotions, sprays, cremes, gravies and so-called "Fish Attractants" on the market, whether or not to scent your lures can be a very perplexing topic. The first "age old" question I usually get is...Do scents or attractants really work?

The answer is...Yes, they do! Now, with that being said, let's break this topic down a bit and discuss how and why they work so that you can better understand the mechanics. You might even discover that they work in an entirely different way than you thought they would.

You woke up this morning and the weather outside was beautiful so you decided to go fishing. You rummage around the kitchen for a while and put together a quick breakfast, eat, grab your gear and you are out the door. Did you wash your hands yet this morning? You probably sweated and scratched yourself during the night and why would you take a shower at 5am just to go fishing.

The omelet you made contained cheese, eggs, ham, onions and hot sauce--all of which you handled. You get into your vehicle and head to your favorite fishin' hole. All of a sudden, you realize you forgot to get gas yesterday and might not have enough to make it back home after the fishing, so you stop and fill the tank up. As usual, the gas splatters on your hands and you get petroleum products all over your hands from the gas nozzle, but you just wipe them on your pants and go on about your business. Perhaps you light up a cigarette or take a chew on the way to your favorite destination as well.

You are now standing on the shore of the lake, trying to figure out which lure is going to haul the "hawg" in today. One pole has a 5" watermelon colored plastic worm that usually produces a few fish. You know the worm I'm talking about--it's the one that's been hanging from your pole in the garage ever since your last fishing trip a few weeks ago. It's the same one that got dragged all the way down the driveway this morning because you were trying to carry too much stuff all at once.

The other pole just has line hanging on it because you had to break it off last time you went fishing. You go through the tackle box and find a nice crankbait to tie on. Of course, you rub it around in your hands for a while and it takes about 2 minutes to get it attached to the line because you missed the loop when you brought the tag end back around....twice!

Finally, you fished for 6 hours and told everyone you didn't understand why the fishing was so slow today!

**The Science behind the Scent**

First things first... I will use bass as an example because that is the species I primarily fish for and have studied for years. A bass has a very small brain in comparison to the human brain; the fish isn't dumb, but it's not smart either by the human definition. It has three purposes in its lifecycle--eating, surviving, and reproducing.

Bass simply interpret environmental stimuli, and then react to it. They are territorial by nature, but also very alert to changes in their environment. This same creature is also capable of conditioned behavioral responses. Dr. Loren Hill studied and documented conditioned behavior in bass while he was doing studies for the development of the Color-C-Lector. Bass are undoubtedly very complex creatures.

Reactions to any environmental stimuli including artificial lures can be directly related to three senses. These senses are mechanoreception (the use of their lateral line, hearing, and touch senses), photoreception (their use of vision), and chemoreception (use of their senses of smell and taste). Biologically speaking, chemoreception is further broken down into two categories: olfaction (sense of smell), and gustation (sense of taste).

Can bass smell different odors? Yes, they can, as do other species of fish. Bass however, don't depend on scent as a major factor in foraging. Sight and sound seem to be much more important. Compared to some of the super-smellers like catfish, salmon, or carp, a bass's sense of smell is a great deal less sensitive. Nevertheless, I can't ignore the capability they do have.

Let's analyze the subject matter of fish olfaction (their sense of smell). Bass have two nostrils on each side of their snout. One is the anterior nostril and the other one is the posterior nostril. Water will flow into the anterior nostril, over the olfactory nerves, and back out through the posterior nostril.

There is no link between these sets of nostrils and their throat. As the water flows across the olfactory nerves, a message is sent to the brain, where the scent is then interpreted as either a positive or a negative scent.

As fish mature, their senses of smell and taste become even more sensitive. Fish use their sense of smell in many different ways: to locate spawning areas, feeding areas, predator awareness, and even their schoolmates in open water.

**Positive Scent vs. Negative Scent**

Have you ever been catching schooling fish, then have one hooked deep enough that it was bleeding when you released it? Most often in this case, the school probably stopped feeding shortly after you released the fish. Do you know why the frenzied fish stopped?

The schoolmate released a chemical known as schreckstoff. Schreckstoff is sensed by the other fish in the school through chemoreception and interpreted as a negative scent by the brain.

The scents that we purchase to help us catch that "hawg" have ingredients that are interpreted as a positive scent. I don't know of a single body of water in Colorado that has a growth of garlic or anise under the waters surface.

Just like we, as humans, like to spice our food with salt and pepper because they are appealing to us, fish enjoy spices such as garlic, anise and salt as well as a multitude of other spices. Take a handful of unsalted peanuts and pop them into your mouth. They are not nearly as good as the salted ones and you might even spit them out.

Imagine a bass swimming up to a sinking unsalted soft plastic worm, he takes a small taste and does not taste it again. Take the same type of worm and impregnate it with salt, the fish swims up to taste it, he then locks down on the worm and won't let go. If the worm were also coated with a scent, the fish probably would have been more aggressive in taking the bait earlier.

Scents such as garlic and anise have another great purpose as well. The purpose is to mask the smell of offensive odors, kind of like the odor on your hands that you rubbed all over your lures this morning.

First, let me explain the importance of "Fish Attractant". A bass (Largemouth, Smallmouth, or Spotted) will usually spit out bait within two or three seconds if the bass doesn't accept the taste (if it picks up the bait at all).

On the other side of the coin, if a bass likes the scent or attractant, it can hold the bait up to as much as thirty seconds or more before it spits the bait out. Fish Attractant does not really "attract" fish, but your odds on setting the hook will be greater by using it rather than not.

### **Spending Your Cents on Scents**

Now, let's talk about marketing. The companies that manufacture Fish Attractants or Scents want the anglers to "Use it by dousing the bait with it." Well, if you have lots of money, go right ahead!

Most tackle shops that I've been to have a variety of Attractants and Scents, and they cost the angler anywhere from \$1.99 up to \$10.00, and when an angler "Douses the Bait" several times, he or she is ready for another bottle, and that can get expensive after awhile.

Most plastic baits on the market today are manufactured with a "Scent" already put in the bait. Why would you want to douse this same bait with additional Fish Attractant? It really makes no sense at all, does it?

However, there is a reason why one would want to buy and use Fish Attractant. Just think of this...a bass can sense 1-200th of a drop of a substance in about 100 gallons of water. Wow, what an acute sense of taste! This just goes to say that whenever you go fishing in the morning, "Gas-Up" the night before and wash your hands.

Some of the most popular scents on the market today are Berkley, Bang, MegaStrike, Crave, Kick'n Bass, Liquid Lure, Mr. Goop, Dr. Juice, Fish Formula, Scientific Bass Products and a host of others.

My scent of choice is by Basswax. It's in a big tube like Chap Stick and has a beeswax base so it stays on the lure or plastic worm for a long time. The stick is available in garlic, crawdad, sardine and salty shad. It will not drip, leak or spill and get all over your boat carpet or inside your tackle box.

Scent can make a small difference in the numbers of fish you catch under certain conditions, but remember it will never completely make or break your day of fishing!

Chapter 8

**Topwater Bass Fishing**

Author: **Jack Phillips**

Bass fishing with topwater baits is without a doubt the most fun you can have fishing for large or smallmouth bass. People watch these bass tournaments on the tube and see all these pros using plastic and spinner baits jigs and crankbaits, forget about the fun and excitement you get with topwater baits. Topwater baits create great action and stories to pass on to family and fishing friends.

Bass fishing with topwater baits is without a doubt the most fun you can have fishing for large or smallmouth bass. People watch these bass tournaments on the tube and see all these pros using plastic and spinner baits jigs and crankbaits, forget about the fun and excitement you get with topwater baits. Topwater baits create great action and stories to pass on to family and fishing friends.

The best time I find for topwater bass fishing is in summer, the colder the water the slower the response, and the more you have to work that bait. Early morning and evening are best for topwater bass fishing.

Of course weather effects your choice of lures also, on a bright sunny day it is better to have a light wind to go with it, a bit of a chop makes the bass less spooky. On a calm sunny day use a heavier lure and lighter line for longer casts. Bass tend to become real spooky in calm and clear water, so the further the cast from you the better off you'll be.

Wind can also change the type of topwater bait you can use I believe that when the wind comes up you should use a smaller bait that makes a lot of noise. The larger baits just plow through the chop, while the smaller baits ride the chop and still make that enticing noise to get the strike you want. Also try to fish through the troughs created by the wind.

Bass fishing topwater baits has some of it's own quirks you want to be able to make pinpoint casts to cover areas and make a clear retrieve. Most of your topwater bass fishing will be done in shallow water over weed beds, flats and around objects and shoreline cover. The majority of bass population remains in shallow water all summer.

To fish bass with topwater baits cast about a foot or two past your target and bring it as close to the cover as possible. If you do not get a strike after the first few feet reel in and try again and make another cast. Fishing cover like this there is no need to reel the bait all the way to the boat. Work the bait slowly to get that strike from the bass that is hiding in the shadows and under cover. Have patience when fishing topwater baits, let the ripples disappear, and let the bait sit a few seconds before you make you retrieve.

When the bass strikes a topwater bait, wait till you feel the fish before you set the hook. If you try to set that hook when you first see the strike you'll miss more than you will catch.

I can't count the times that lure has been knocked back towards me by the bass striking that topwater bait.

Now for some of the most popular baits, Poppers are among the oldest of topwater bass fishing lures. They have the dished out face with the line tie in the middle. When retrieved they make a slash noise or "bloop" when popped. Poppers work best in warm, calm, shallow, clear water. You get your action from the rod tip not reeling. The harder you snap the bait the more noise and commotion created.

Stickbaits are rounded, hot-dog shaped lures usually plastic or wood. weighted to float nose up. The only action they have is what the angler adds to make them work. These baits have appeal for big bass, just using the jerk, then reel up slack and jerking again produces a good erratic side to side motion that gets lots of attention from bass.

Propbaits are cigar shaped and fitted with propellers on one or both ends. Propbaits can be worked fast or slow, quiet or loud, but stop and go retrieves are best. The bass will let you know what is best so vary your retrieve. Be sure to experiment, propbaits are dynamite around sunken logs, lily pads, and shallow cover. Be sure the blades on the lure run freely,

Wobblers and Crawlers, these baits are particularly best at night or early morning, Examples of these are the Jitterbug or the Crazy Crawler. They make a loud plopping sound when retrieved steadily. Use a steady slow retrieve for the best results with this bass bait.

Buzzbaits are a little like spinnerbaits designed to be fished on the surface. There are two types, the opposite wire types, with the blade above the hook, and the inline type with everything on one shaft. Excellent for clear water, and pick up less weeds. Again experiment with your working of this bait, twitching and vary speeds to create different noises.

Weedless Spoons are also in this category, designed to be fished in dense cover, either through the thickest weeds, lily pads, or grass. They go through the toughest cover you can find. Fishing with weedless spoons for bass you will want to be using heavy fishing tackle, rods and reels. I like to point my rod tip at the lure on my retrieve, and again here be patient and allow the bass to take the lure.

Chapter 9

**Planning a Peacock Bass Fishing Trip**

Author: **Lorraine Weston**

Have you ever dreamed of traveling to a tropical country? Do you love to fish? Then start planning a trip to the Amazon to catch peacock bass. Sure, peacock bass can be caught off the coast of Florida, but the real adventure is in the jungles of South America. There are many companies that offer peacock bass fishing charters, so the only work you have to do is choose which charter you would like to take!

If you are up for a challenge and a real prize, the peacock bass is the fish you want to catch. This bass is a fighter, so be prepared for a battle. If you win, you will have a great prize: a beautiful fish to photograph or to keep and mount on your wall. The peacock bass, which comes in varieties such as butterfly, black barred, royal peacock, and speckled, grows to be a huge fish, with the world record catch weighing in at twenty-seven pounds!

When fishing in the Amazon, you will be amazed at all the wildlife you will see around you. The country is beautiful, but wild, so be sure to think of your safety at all times. Listen to any advice your guide gives you, and don't risk injuring yourself just to catch a fish or get a photograph.

Speaking of photographs, don't forget to bring your camera and lots of film; bring a video camera if you have one, too. If you come well prepared, you will be sure to have lots of photos and video to show your friends and family once you are back home. This will be the trip of a lifetime and you don't want to forget any details.

In case you are thinking, "What if I go all that way and don't catch anything?" peacock bass are known to be territorial. This makes it easy for fishermen and guides, because once a good fishing spot is found, you can pretty much guarantee that there will always be peacock bass in that spot.

The peacock bass is a fisherman's dream: easy to locate, a challenge to land, and a showy trophy to bring home. Start dreaming about catching one for yourself!

## Chapter 10

# Buzzin' for Bass

Author: G. Wayne Byrd

If you are anything like me, you live for the action packed, heavy hitting, bone jarring topwater explosion produced when you throw a topwater bait. As far as I am concerned, it is incredibly exiting to watch the water splash upwards and the opportunity to see that lunker bass flash and slam into your bait!

Getting a bass to take surface baits requires you to get their attention. Out of all the topwater baits on the market, few, if any, come close to creating as much surface disturbance as does the buzzbait. To a prowling hungry bass, this unique sputtering, splashing and gurgling noise that is created by a buzzbait is extremely hard to resist.

I would like to educate and provide you with an understanding of the buzzbait so you can also enjoy the success of this awesome and versatile lure.

The buzzbait is designed specifically for surface fishing and lacks some of the versatility that it's cousin, the spinnerbait possesses. Nevertheless I have found that many times a buzzbait is often more effective than a spinnerbait when fishing over grassy, weedy areas, or visible timber.

Why? First of all it is less likely to become fouled in the grass or weeds. Second, in stained water or thick vegetation, the sound created by a buzzbait not only alerts bass to its presence but it allows them to locate, track, and acquire the bait much faster. Third, there is something special about the way a buzzbait will ignite the predatory instincts of a bass.

A buzzbait will work best in calmer waters, however I often use one when there is a slight surface chop on the water. Although, too much wave action will erase the disturbance action caused by the buzzbait, so let your common sense take over in this situation.

When the surface temperature of the water is in the 60-degree range and the aforementioned water conditions are in alignment, I will throw a buzzbait just about anytime. Buzzbaits are typically thrown when the sky is overcast or when you are in a low light condition.

Most people use the bait early in the morning or late in the evening. Keep in mind, this is simply a theory and you can throw a buzzbait anytime of the day. Buzzbaits are very effective when thrown into thick or heavy grass cover during warm or hot weather. You just might be surprised by how effective a buzzbait is at drawing bass out of the densest grass or surface matting.

This versatile lure is great for locating bass. They will cast far and can be retrieved faster than most topwater baits. This will allow you to cover a lot more water in a shorter period of time.

Considering that a buzzbait has a single hook that is usually offset, this will allow the bait to be fished in all types of cover no matter how dense it might be. This really adds to the locator ability of the bait as well.

I think that the biggest disadvantage of the buzzbait is the fact that bass will often completely miss the bait or strike it short. Some newer buzzbait manufacturers have helped to greatly increase the hook-up ratio by off-setting the weighted head and hook from the wire which runs the head and hook a bit deeper in the water than conventional buzzbaits.

You can also buy single trailer hooks that will add percentages to your hook-up rate. For this addition, I would recommend the Gamakatsu trailer hook. One other issue with the buzzbait occurs when you fish the bait in very dense cover. Bass sometimes have problems catching the bait. You might have to slow your retrieve a bit when fishing in these conditions.

There is almost nothing as disturbing as when you see that water part and you get that huge powerful hit on your bait only to discover there is not a fish on the hook! With that being said, you must also be extremely careful not to set the hook too soon. This action will basically pull the bait right out of the mouth of the fish.

I view the procedure for an effective hookset with the buzzbait almost the same as a hookset with a Senko style worm. As with all topwater baits, you need to try and delay or hold back on the hookset a bit. I wait until I actually feel the fish take to bait. A good rule of thumb is to always set the hook by feel, not by sight or sound.

The faster the fish hits the bait, the longer I wait. Many times a bass will hit the bait when they are cruising along at a high rate of speed and miss the hook entirely. They will often come back around and take another swipe at the bait if you keep your retrieve steady and slow the speed down a bit to make them think they possibly injured the bait.

You can really up your odds if you have the buzzbait coated with a great scent as well. If the bass gets a taste of the scent, they are much more likely to come back for seconds.

Buzzbaits come in several sizes, but the most popular are the 1/4oz and the 1/2oz. Some buzzbaits have a clacker built in to make them louder. Blades come in all different sizes as well as shapes.

One trick I learned several years ago is to take a 1/8" drill bit and drill about 4 or 5 holes on all sides of the blades. This will force water through the blade holes and cause the water to bubble up. This will make the fish, which is looking at the bait from an underwater perspective, think that there is really something big going on near the surface.

Buzzbaits are also available in one, two, three and even four blade models. The more blades a bait possesses, the louder they are.

When it comes to retrieving the bait, I like to retrieve just fast enough to keep the bait up on the water surface. If I do not get a reaction using this presentation, I then increase the speed until I get a reaction. There are times when I am "burning" the bait at full reel speed to get a bite.

You might also try an erratic type of retrieve such as a fast-slow-fast or a slow-fast-slow system. You will always be a successful fisherman if you will just think your presentations out and give the fish what they want.

Go ahead and experiment a little, as there really is not a "right" way to retrieve this lure. As far as colors go, you must experiment. If you have experienced success on a certain color of spinnerbait, I would try a duplicate that same color on a buzzbait. My favorite color of buzzbait is junebug or white/chartreuse with light blue.

I prefer using a baitcasting outfit when bass fishing, but when presenting a buzzbait, a spinning outfit is easier to use. I use a 7' spinning rod with a medium heavy action and a fast tip.

If I use a casting rod, I use a 7' fast tip rod as well. My favorite rods for buzzin' are the St. Croix Avid and the Kistler Helium. If you prefer a heavy rod, you might consider the G.Loomis MBR844C GLX. The reason it is easier to use a spinning outfit is because when you cast the buzzbait out, you must engage the reel just before the bait hits the water. This will help to pull out any slack in the line and prepare you to begin your retrieve immediately. This action is much quicker if you have a bail on a spinning reel to shut quickly.

Be sure to keep your rod tip up, as this will help you to keep the bait running on the surface. Be sure not to lift the rod up too high, as this could cause you to miss a strike as the bait could lift from the surface. Go out and try a little buzzin' and I am sure you will fall in love, when that "lunker" violently strikes your buzzbait!

## Chapter 11 Drop Shottin' for Bass

Author: **G. Wayne Byrd**

In this article, I would like to introduce "Drop Shot" fishing to you. Many of you might be aware of the powerful potential of this method, while others may have never tried this technique.

Drop shot fishing is one of the best "go to" techniques to use when the bite seems to be a bit slow or the fish are all suspended and will not strike anything else. When reaction baits are not working well, I tend to rely on dropshotting.

The drop shot technique will work in stained water, but I find it to be more effective in clearer water. I use this technique in all depths of water from 6 feet to 60 feet. . A drop shot rig tends to work most of the year for me, although it works extremely well during pre-spawn and early Spring as well as the hot days of Summer for a variety of reasons.

The bass may be deeper because they are keying in on bait moving off of the bottom and they have been living deeper due to the cooler weather. The bass may also be inactive during the daytime and need to be finessed. Dropshotting can be used to fish fast or slow, depending on what the bass want.

The drop shot is also a wonderful technique for a vertical presentation. Bass will sometimes be as deep as fifty feet in summertime, and drop shot is the method I rely on to catch those deep lunkers. I usually catch most of my fish in ten to thirty feet of water, and I locate them using a fishfinder. You can use a fishfinder on a boat or the "Smartcast" type from shore.

The rod I use the most for dropshotting is a 7' medium lite action baitcast rod. If I am dropshotting in shallower water, I might go to a 6'6" medium light baitcaster. Because this technique is a finesse situation, I like to use a 8lb to 10lb fluorocarbon line with a 1/8 to 1/4oz weight. If you find that the bass are not responding to this presentation, you might switch to a 6'6" spinning outfit with 6lb to 8lb fluorocarbon. The lighter rig is good for most applications including finesse fishing with smaller worms.

There are many advantages of fishing a Drop Shot Rig. It is much easier to cast than a Carolina Rig, cast as far as a Texas Rig and also sinks faster. The bait is always suspended and easy to adjust depth for suspended fish. You are also able to feel the fish much better because of the weight being on the bottom as well as you can feel bottom better.

Disadvantages include heavy line twist, and your plastics and weights will get hung in heavy cover. Putting a swivel on the sinker helps slow twist. What type bait is best? Smaller slim type baits are best in clear water. Plastic worms in the 4" to 6" range with tapered or straight tails are ideal such as a Roboworm.

In clear water this is a great finesse technique. When fishing any structure the Drop Shot Rig should be a consideration for a presentation option. This technique is extremely effective when fishing structure.

When fishing muddy to clear water at any depth, this is a technique that will catch fish. Any structure free of heavy cover is an easy place to learn to fish this rig. Why choose this rig over a Texas Rig?

When fishing a Drop Shot Rig the bait is always suspended just off the bottom putting the bait at eye level or just inches above when the fish is on the bottom where it prefers to stay. This also gives an angler the ability to keep the bait in the strike zone longer.

How do you rig a Drop Shot? Tie a Palomar knot leaving 1 1/2 to 2 1/2 feet of extra line. Thread the loose end back through the eye of the hook so the hook stands point up. Tie on weight preferably with a swivel about 12 to 18 inches below the hook.

Most hook manufacturers are making specific hooks for Drop Shotting. I like the Gamakatsu because I think it is the sharpest hook right out of the package I have found. Weight size range from 1/8 to 5/16.

A lot of anglers simply use bass casting weights. The weights I use and prefer are made by "Magnum Weight Systems" and they are basically a hollow brass pod. One end has a swivel and the other unscrews so you can add weight or take it away depending on your fishing situation. The weight that you add is in the form of small brass balls. This also allows you to shake the rig a bit to produce a rattle sound similar to a Rat-L-Trap. This feature will help to attract fish!

The pods come in three standard sizes and are available at many tackle shops and online at Cabelas. The deeper you are fishing the longer the leader up to about 4 feet long. When you are fishing deep with lighter line, this lets the bait fall faster giving a better feel of the bait and strikes.

When fishing shallow water heavier line and a baitcasting outfit can be used. Lighter weights may be better for fishing on lighter line sizes on any type of outfit.

Presentations vary from casting to vertical jigging. Casting Drop Shot Rigs is similar to casting a Texas Rig except into heavy cover. This rig can be used as a swimming rig, hopped, crawled, or dragged. You can even fish as a stationary rig on bedding fish.

One of my favorite methods that I call the "Texas Drop Shot" is absolutely deadly on bass. Instead of putting a weight on the bottom, put a 1/8 oz jig on bottom and run your drop shot hook with your worm as normal. Who knows, you might just catch 2 fish at once.

Chapter 12

**Jiggin' for Bass**

Author: G. Wayne Byrd

As I was fishing several months ago under a partly cloudy sky with patchy fog starting to set in, the reality hit that fall weather was upon us. The temperature when I arrived at one of my favorite fishing holes was a beautiful and sunny 70 degrees and now I was starting to get a bit chilled. The weather had taken on a new identity in the past hour or so.

The fishing had started to slow down as well. The hits were plentiful and constant when the sun was beaming down upon the dam and the bass were stacked around the rocks adjacent to the weed beds just begging to be caught. I had already landed around 15 nice keepers when the sun disappeared behind a cloud and failed to show its face again.

I began to rummage through my tackle bag trying desperately to find the perfect bass wrangling lure that would take my catch rate back to an acceptable level. I threw a spinnerbait for a while and then switched to a Rat-L-Trap. I then threw a few in-line spinners followed by some crawfish imitation plastics and followed up with the Junebug colored stick worm I had caught all of the previous fish on. Still, I could not find a bite.

As I sat on the bank of the pond I started to think very hard about my present situation. I looked around and noticed that the trees were just beginning to shed their dark green colors and change to shades of red, orange and yellow.

I reached into my bag and pulled out my box of jigs and selected a 1/4oz model with a brown and orange skirt. I then put a chartreuse plastic craw as a trailer, which made the jig match my surroundings perfectly and flipped the jig towards the rock ledge.

The jig was allowed to sit for about 60 seconds and then the slow retrieval process began. A very slow upward motion of the rod tip with a few slight jerks thrown in intermediately was exactly what the bass wanted. After a few retrieves were made and I was waiting for the jig to travel back downward so I could begin the process again, that's when she hit!

Once I landed the fish she was weighted and released. It was the largest bass of the day weighting in at 5lbs 4oz.

**Bass Fishing** with a jig or the jig-and-pig is an extremely effective method for catching those stubborn fall bass. I rely on this method during the spring as well as certain times throughout the year, but sometimes forget how effective the bait really is until I throw it a few times usually out of desperation.

Lets first talk about the equipment needed for effective jig fishing. A baitcast reel with a flipping switch built in the reel is my number one choice. Pair this reel with a medium-heavy 7 1/2 foot pitching or flipping stick and as far as the equipment goes, your ready to

go. I prefer to use a heavier line such as 50lb Power Pro with about 48" of Berkley Vanish or Transition fluorocarbon line tied on to the braid as a leader. This will assure that you have the strength needed to horse those big bass out of heavy cover when necessary.

I realize that some of you might not be baitcast users so rest assured that a spinning reel works also as long as you have a long spinning rod about 7 to 7 1/2 feet. You want to be able to flip the jig into place without causing a big wake and disrupting what you hope lies below. Accuracy is a big key when flippin' jigs.

I know many anglers who are of the opinion that jig fishing is rather complicated and they don't really understand how to do it.

Lets take a little time and discuss the important facts surrounding jig fishing. First and foremost, I want to stress to you that confidence is the most important key regardless of what you are throwing.

I have been in the situation when I am fishing with a partner and he ties something rather odd on his line and I think, "What is this guy doing"? I watch as he fishes the lure with total confidence and concentration and before you know, the fish are coming in the boat.

I might not have tried that particular lure, but through commitment and confidence it's surprising what can happen, if you will maintain an open mind. Whether you fish the jig as is, or with some type of plastic chunk, craw or worm as a trailer, the choice is yours. I fish the jig both with and without and they will produce both ways. I usually put on a large flat plastic chunk if I want to slow the fall of the lure a bit.

Color is very important, and to some people overly technical, but I tend to simplify if a bit. How many of you have a favorite lure, that you have all 26 colors available in your tackle box? Do you use each and every color?

Most anglers have all of the colors and out of all of those colors, they might have 4 or 5 colors they are stuck on that really produce. I simply take the 4 or 5 colors that work on the other lures and add a few other colors and end up with 7 or 8 jig colors.

Don't forget to look around you and "match the hatch" so to speak. I fish black & blue, black & chartreuse, blue & chartreuse, brown (or copper) & orange and watermelon w/black flake jigs most of the time.

Some models have rattles and some do not. I love to fish lipless cranks because of the noisy rattle; therefore I choose models with rattles. Once again, it all revolves around what you have the most confidence in. Jigs come in a vast array of sizes as well.

I prefer 1/4oz and 1/2oz the most, unless I have to punch down through heavy structure like heavy brush or submerged hydrilla. When everything is still and the wind is not blowing, I always go with the lighter jig.

As far as the presentation goes, it's pretty simple. Find the spot you want to lay the jig and flip it to the target. This is a technique that takes practice and during the off season I tend to practice in the basement with 5lb coffee cans placed strategically around the floor.

Keep in mind that jigs are target-specific lures. Once the lure is flipped out, I usually let it sit for about 30 to 60 seconds. If you choose to just leave the jigs sitting there for a while and then reel it in and repeat the process, this is called deadsticking.

You can lift and drop your tip and let the jig fall and then repeat again or you can bounce, hop or swim it across the bottom as well. Do what you want to do with the jig, as there is no right or wrong way to fish it, just theories. During fall, bass tend to become more lethargic as water temperatures drop.

My favorite method during this period is to simply drag the jig past each and every piece of cover. Just a slow steady retrieve without any jerks or tugs on the line produces the best results. Bass will absolutely whack the jig if it comes cruising slowly past them. I also like to flip it to a stump or cover point and just let it fall, then hop it a few times and let it fall again. This technique is used when you are simply going for a reaction bite on the fall.

I think one of the hardest things I had to figure out when jig fishing was when to set the hook. I still know weekend anglers as well as pro anglers who miss about 70% of their strikes on the jig because they set the hook to late.

I am a big plastic worm fisherman and have learned to always set the hook on the second tap, especially when you are using a Senko style worm. With a jig, the first tap is generally the bass sucking the jig up and the second tap is the bass spitting it out. I think it would behoove you to set the hook the very second that you feel a tap or when the jig feels different in any way whatsoever.

One method that I use whether fishing a plastic worm or a jig is to put my finger under the line and lift up just a bit so I can feel any change that might occur. Remember, don't try and force the jig on the fish. He will either want the bait or he will not. During early spring fishing, the jig can really irritate bedded bass and cause them to strike uncontrollably.

As you can see, there is nothing difficult about the mechanics of bass fishing with a jig. Keep in mind that confidence plays a major role in everything you do in life.

When I am fishing and starting to struggle with the confidence factor, I am often reminded of Takahiro Omori from Japan. Takahiro came to the U.S. in 1992 to become a professional bass angler. When he left Japan, he had it in his mind he would win the Citgo Classic event. Before the 2004 B.A.S.S. Citgo Classic, Takahiro went to Woo Daves house to visit Woo and see the trophy that Woo had won at the Classic several years prior.

When Takahiro saw it, he grabbed the trophy and started to yell and scream and shake the trophy over his head as if he had just won the Classic himself. He actually visualized himself winning! He was pretty pumped up when he left Woo's house that evening.

A short time later, Takahiro Omori won the 2004 B.A.S.S. Citgo Classic and was the first non-American to ever win a B.A.S.S. Classic.

By the way, Takahiro said that he refocused his thinking, pumped himself up and started fishing hard during the last minutes of the tournament. Takahiro caught his two biggest bass during the last five minutes of the tournament.

"This is the best day of my life," said Omori, who pounded the stage repeatedly and cried openly before the 13,200 spectators in the Charlotte Coliseum. Until next time, keep a tight line and happy fishin'.

Chapter 13

**Poppin' and Walkin' for Bass**

Author: G. Wayne Byrd

Two of the most productive methods of topwater fishing are using a popper, or chugger type lure, and "walking-the-dog" with a surface walker. When it comes to popper type lures, you may remember the old Heddon Lucky 13, Bass Oreno, or the Heddon Chugger Spook.

Lure design has changed drastically since the first production of those aforementioned lures, and now we have such poppers as the Berkley Frenzy Popper, Tsunami Talkin' Popper, Rapala Skitter Pop and the Lucky Craft G-Splash.

For topwater walking-the-dog applications, we have the Heddon Spook and Super-Spook, which have been around for many years and are, still to this day, top producers.

Some other surface walkers include Lucky Craft Sammy, Rapala Skitter Walk, Salmo MAAS Marauder and the Yo-Zuri Banana Boat.

While all of these lures produce fish in different situations, I have discovered a lure that is producing topwater hits for me on a consistent basis when water and light conditions are right. The lures I speak of are made by L & S Mirrolure. The popper is called The Humpback Mule and is actually a jointed topwater popper. The walking-the-dog style surface walker I prefer is called the Top Dog Jr.

Both lures are extremely good quality and have extra sharp hooks, which can really come in handy when you have a bass that might strike you a little bit short, or not hit the lure very hard.

Let's start by taking a look at when the best time to use a topwater lure would be, and then the techniques involved in producing the most strikes. I have caught some of my largest bass, by far, on topwater lures.

My reasoning behind this occurrence is that back in the old days, everybody I knew threw topwater lures. They threw them for 2 or 3 hours in the mornings and 2 or 3 hours in the evening.

From an industry perspective, topwater lures are not among the top sellers these days. The majority of the people I fish with these days mainly throw spinnerbaits, plastics and crankbaits.

Could it be that the big bruiser bass that have been around for several years have seen all of the spinners and cranks, after being caught several times on these lures, and now tend to shy away from them?

I think this is possible, and if you go down South to Texas or Louisiana, you will see huge bass being taken on topwater lures. I have a good friend who says that the bass have seen the same lures over and over again for so many years that they have the serial and model numbers on the bottom of the lures memorized.

This might be a bit of a stretch, but almost all the bass I have caught that are over 5 pounds are loners, holding on a particular piece of structure in the lake. I won't say that you never see large bass schooling up, but it is a rare occurrence.

Smallmouth bass are different though...they do tend to school up in certain areas, and there can be many large fish all together at one time.

I use topwater baits mainly when the water temperature is 60 degrees or above, but I have caught bass on topwaters when it was in the high 50's. Whenever I see a stump, rock, or maybe a bush, further away from other structure, I throw a topwater right to it.

The best way to provoke a reaction strike from a big largemouth is to cast the bait right to the cover, not beyond it. If you cast past the target, the bass will be alert before the bait gets there.

You may have seen them boil or swirl when you do this, instead of smashing it. They are tentative when you work the bait up to the cover, and then they just swirl at it, or miss. To provoke a big bass into exploding on the bait you must cast right to the cover!

The popper is one of my favorite baits to use in places that have a lot of grass or milfoil that is holding bass. When you retrieve a popper, it requires a fast jerk, which spits water out from the front of the cup-lipped bait, and the bait makes a deep pop or bullfrog sound. You then should let the lure sit for a few moments and repeat this process again.

I will never forget, when I was 11 years old I caught my first largemouth bass over 5lbs on a clear popper with a white bucktail. The lure was a Pico Lil' Pop and what a thrill that was! I watched the fish following my lure, when all of a sudden a topwater explosion occurred, and I was in for a fight. Ever since that moment, I have been a fan of the popper style lure.

I like to use it like I would a crankbait from the perspective that you can cover a lot of water when you think of your lure as a search-bait. Simply put, trying to find out where the fish are located.

Walking type topwater lures are another great bait especially in post spawn season, when big bass are around some shallow cover, but they aren't particularly aggressive yet. I use baits with rattles for this also.

I've caught a lot of big bass on topwater walkers in prespawn as well as postspawn. Also, on really warm days early in the year, it produces well. I just cast it to the structure, let it sit, twitch it a few times, and they usually just suck it in.

To walk-the-dog, you simply snap your rod in a downward motion over and over again throughout the entire retrieve. This will force the lure to zig-zag back and forth from left to right. This action drives bass crazy as they think an injured baitfish is trying to get away.

When I am throwing a lighter weight popper or surface walker, I tend to use spinning gear on a 6 ½ to 7 ' rod with a medium action. When I am throwing Spooks or other heavier or larger lures, I switch over to a baitcaster with a 6'6" or 7' rod with a medium heavy to heavy action.

When I am throwing topwater lures in tight areas, with very specific targets, where there is no room for error, I will downsize to a 6' casting rod. This length is much more accurate than longer rods and easier to control when working an area with stumps and brush, where one bad cast will tangle your lure up and waste your precious fishing time.

Although most of my really big bass have come from shallow water, they were always in a place that was near deep water, where one or more grasses came together, and near the main creek channel or water inlet. The fish always had some kind of deep-water escape route nearby.

I feel that in larger bodies of water the big bass spend much of their time in deeper water, and just move in and out of the shallows as the opportunities arise, when hunting for food. As I mentioned previously, most anglers use these baits at sunrise or sunset, but I use them all times of the day, especially when the sky is overcast.

Big bass are always on the shady side of cover once the sun rises. They can be enticed into striking a popper or surface walker at all times of the day when presented properly. Bigger bass feed more frequently due to their body size, and when they do feed, they want a bigger meal if at all possible. They have to expend a great deal of energy to catch their prey, and want to make sure the size is sufficient to meet their needs. Good luck on your topwater action and e-mail me with any questions.

## Chapter 14

# Wormin' for Bass

Author: G. Wayne Byrd

Over the past several years the sinking stickworm has not only brought plastic lures back into the mainstream, it has produced an incredible number of catches and become a staple in bass boxes across the world.

The Senko was introduced by Gary Yamamoto several years ago and this soft jerkbait has become a favorite presentation of mine as well as a solid fish catching bait in practically any condition. There are several companies who have jumped on the bandwagon and produced a similar stickbait. This list includes the Yum Dinger, Berkley Sinking Minnow, Tiki Stick, Strike King Zero and my all time favorite, the Gambler Ace.

These worms are heavily impregnated with salt, which makes the bass want to hang on and not let go! Some of them are even coated with scents like garlic and anise to make them more appealing. I would like to discuss three rigging methods that I have found to be the most strike producing worm methods. They are the Texas rig, the jig rig and the wacky rig. We will also discuss presentation and color as well.

When you first study the stickbait, you might realize that it looks like a plain, simple non-fancy worm. Yamamoto actually got the idea for this worm from the shape of the old Bic Click ink pens. There is really nothing about this worm that really jumps out and grabs you.

I have had people tell me "It looks like that worm won't do anything" which is precisely what it's supposed to do! It's been labeled the "do nothing worm" which explains the slow horizontal fall that the worm is most famous for. This horizontal fall drives fish absolutely crazy and produces a multitude of strikes. When the bass see this bait, they consider it to be a nice meal and something that will not require a big chase to capture.

The majority of my hits have occurred while the bait is on the slow downward descent, but I receive many hits when the bait is sitting on the bottom doing nothing.

These stickbaits come in so many colors and combinations that it's impossible to list them all. When selecting your colors, take a look around you and see what colors are the most prevalent. You have heard fly fishermen say, "match the hatch", this is exactly what you are trying to accomplish when choosing colors of plastics.

My best producing colors whether fishing in a tournament or just practicing on a local shore has been watermelon black flake, watermelon red, watermelon gold flake, pumpkin with chartreuse tail and my #1 color is Junebug.

I would suggest you try these colors first and see how they fair for you as many of us fish primarily much of the same waters in Colorado.

**Texas Rig--Weightless/Weedless**

I prefer to fish this rig with no weight at all unless I am somewhere down South where I have to punch through extra heavy weed cover to get the stickbait in the water. In Colorado, I have always fished this rig weightless. This allows for the slow horizontal fall to take place and will produce the most strikes.

These stickbaits come in a variety of sizes from 3" up to 8". We will focus on a 5" and 6" model, which is the most used size according to all the manufacturers. Depending on the conditions and what size hooks you have available, you should try and use a 3/0 hook as a minimum and up to a 5/0 size.

The hook I would recommend is the Gamakatsu EWG or the Gamakatsu G Lock. These hooks are sharp right out of the package and will ensure good hookups. The nice thing about this rig is you can run it through about anything and remain weedless. I use this rig to skip under docks, in and out of heavy structure and in thick weeds. This rig provides great hooksetting ability, as the hook does not have to travel through the plastic to get to the lip of the fish.

Simply cast the stickbait out and let it do its slow fall. Be sure to keep your line fairly tight as a lot of hits occur while the bait is sinking. You really have to focus on your line as fish will swim up to the bait and inhale it slowly and you won't see or feel a big strike. When the bait has hit the bottom and is just resting, I always let it sit there for about 2 or 3 minutes. I know this sounds a bit boring but this method produces a lot of catches for me.

After the stickbait has been sitting for a while, slowly lift your rod tip, then let it down and reel in the slack as the bait starts the falling pattern again. I like to give the stickbait a few jerks now and then on a slack line as it will dance around a bit and encourage nice strikes.

One mistake that most anglers make is to set the hook too early when using a stickbait. When you feel or see a hit take place, just relax for a moment and allow the fish to take the bait before you set the hook. I know this can be frustrating and you are probably wondering how many fish you will lose by following this method, but when the fish actually takes the bait you almost have a guaranteed catch! Many times they come up to the bait just to get a taste and when they taste the salt, they grab it again and won't let go.

**Jig Rig**

This presentation is used when fish are suspended and you are having problems getting them to hit. With a 3" or 4" stickbait and a 1/8oz jig head you can keep the bait in the "zone" for a longer period of time thus resulting in more strikes. I use 1/16oz to 1/4oz jigs depending on the speed of the fall I am trying to accomplish. Depending on the structure you are fishing, the jig stickbait can be jerked, dragged or skipped across the bottom just like you would a bass jig or tube bait. Weed lines and ledges are a great place to run this bait as long as hang-ups are not a big issue. I like to go to this presentation when nothing else is working. It is a finesse presentation that will put fish in the bag for you.

### **Wacky Rig**

This has been a favorite presentation of worm fishermen for a long time and it is just as deadly when wacky rigging the stickbait. You should downsize your hook a bit to a 1/0 or 2/0 size when presenting the wacky rig.

I like to cast the stickbait out and let it sink and sit for a few minutes. I then began my retrieve, but instead of slowly raising my rod tip I shake the tip on the way up and then let the bait fall. You must be careful not to get the wacky worm in thick grass or structure, as the hook is not weedless. Holes in structure as well as weedlines that are adjacent to open water areas are great places to try this technique out.

Sometimes you will just want to bounce the stickbait across the bottom by jerking it on a slack line, especially in shallow water areas. This will give the bait a swimming action, which will produce violent strikes.

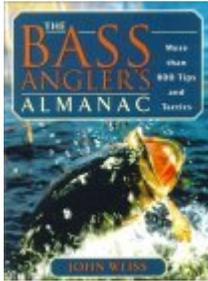
Rocks that are slightly under the water's surface are one of my favorite areas to focus on when wacky worming. I cast beyond the rock structure, let the rig fall and sit a while, then start shaking it up the far side of the rock. I will then bring it over the top of the rock and slightly shake it down the front of the rock.

I was using this technique in a medium size farm pond in Larimer County Colorado several months ago and this technique enabled me to catch 11 smallmouth in the 3lb and 4lb range in about an hour.

With stickbaits, it doesn't matter whether you are fishing open water, structure, shallow, deep, under docks, rocks or weeds; this is a bait that will produce a bite in almost any environment. These stickbaits are available at most tackle stores in the area so stop in a grab yourself a bag.

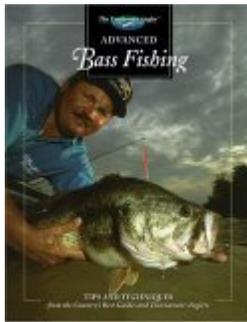
Heck, you can even drop me an e-mail and I will take you out and show you how to throw these bad boys! If you would like more information about Gambler products, you can contact me at [bassmasters65@yahoo.com](mailto:bassmasters65@yahoo.com) and remember, if you are a member of Fishin' Secrets and go to [www.gambler-bang.com](http://www.gambler-bang.com) and place an order, put "wayne" in the special offers section and you will receive 50% off your order---Thanks!

### Further Reading



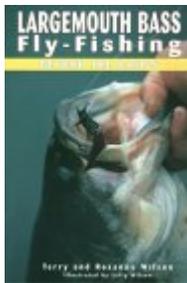
#### [The Bass Angler's Almanac](#)

The Bass Angler's Almanac is an easy-to-read reference and guide, loaded with detailed illustrations and photographs that can help any bass fisherman - from beginner to expert - take his share of good-sized fish. Written in a straightforward manner, the Almanac is just the type of book that bass anglers need - packed with tips and tidbits that the author has picked up over a lifetime of bass fishing.



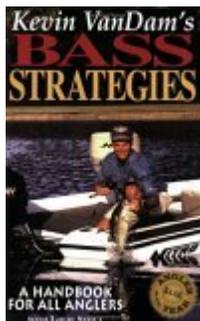
#### [Advanced Bass Fishing](#)

Advanced Bass Fishing is the one book you'll keep going back to! It's full of tricks that will add some fish to your otherwise empty live well. Stuff like how to weight minnow plugs to suspend & to sand down poppers to make them spit and skip better. Also to turn your buzzbaits into squeaking, clicking, clacking, bubbling dinnerbells! And things such as the correct way to de-gas deepwater largemouth.



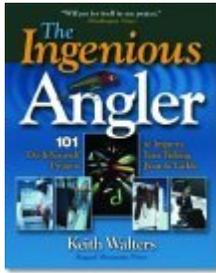
#### [Largemouth Bass Fly-Fishing: Beyond the Basics](#)

This book is an exhaustive guide covers everything a fly fisher needs to know about largemouth bass, including habitat, approach, delivery, fly animation, fishing the shallows, the vertical drop, fishing the mid-depths, going deep, time/weather/locational patterns, seasonal/night information, fly patterns, and more. Largemouth Bass Fly-Fishing is a superior reference to a virtual battle sport, for the fish in question is potentially strong enough to suddenly jerk the rod from the angler's hands. Recommended for fishing enthusiasts



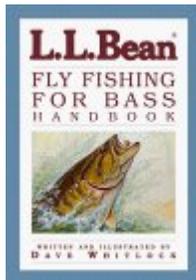
#### [Kevin VanDam's Bass Strategies: A Handbook for All Anglers](#)

The nation's most revered bass angler reveals everything you need to know to catch more bass from reservoirs, natural lakes, and rivers. In addition to dozens of tips for finding and catching bass, VanDam analyzes the dilemmas anglers face and how to overcome them.



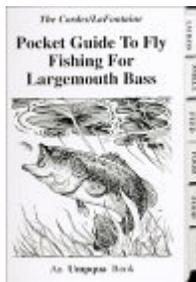
### [Ingenious Angler](#)

A bad day fishing is better than a good day working, right? Keith Walters has been fishing for over fifty years, and he knows that even a good day fishing can be made better by simple, do-it-yourself projects that will improve your boat, your tackle, and your temper. His priorities are safety, comfort, and "fishability," and he's gathered more than a hundred tips on everything from handy rod rests and space-saving tackle storage lockers to modifying or making your own lures and rigs.



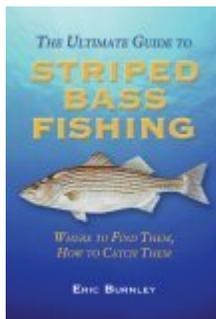
### [L.L. Bean Fly Fishing For Bass Handbook](#)

Fly rodding for largemouth and smallmouth bass and other warmwater gamefish has really taken off in the past decade. Leading the way into this new fishing frontier is Dave Whitlock, one of America's most famous and innovative fishermen. His flies, videos, and seminars have pioneered new possibilities for bass fishermen everywhere. In this all-encompassing handbook, Whitlock introduces and examines angling techniques that will enable even beginners to catch bass on a fly rod.



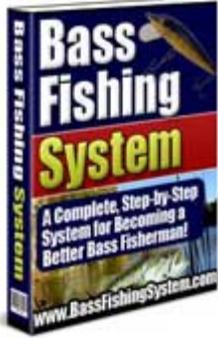
### [Pocket Guide to Fly Fishing for Largemouth Bass](#)

Laser printed on hard vinyl, this spiral-bound, fully-illustrated, index-tabbed pocket size guide is virtually indestructible. Lays flat, water and dirt can't hurt it while you access "what you really need to know, when you really need it!" This title contains: Bass types; range; feeding characteristics; hearing; vision/light; smell/taste; touch; temperature/pressure; feeding strategies; key food organisms; seasonal calendar; equipment; lines & leaders; knots; river/estuary holding areas; lake holding areas; surface fly patterns; swimming patterns; bottom fly patterns; and presentation.



### [The Ultimate Guide to Striped Bass Fishing](#)

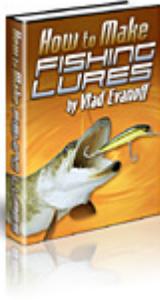
Noted angler and author Eric Burnley has compiled everything any angler needs to know to be successful at catching this wonderful fish. Burnley starts with the biology of the fish itself--its life cycle, migratory patterns up and down the seacoast, the baitfish and other foods it prefers, and the underwater structures anglers must learn to find monster stripers. He then addresses in exacting detail every possible way the sport angler can catch stripers.



### [Bass Fishing System](#)

The Bass Fishing System by Jack Mitchell is the complete method for catching more Bass. He shows you the best places to fish and what you can do to greatly increase your chances of a bite. You will learn how to land bigger fish as well as how to select the right lure to tempt the monster fish!

Don't leave your fishing to chance, take a look at the [Bass Fishing System](#) and boost your catch today.



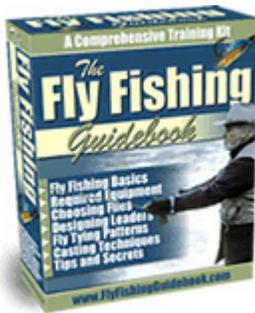
### [How To Make Fishing Lures](#)

Can you imagine hooking, fighting and then landing a fish on a lure you made yourself? What could be more satisfying?

In 'How To Make Fishing Lures' you will learn how to design and then make your own lures that land fish after fish.

Discover for yourself how to make almost every kind of lure an angler needs including plugs, spin bugs, spoons, spinners, jigs, metal squids, and eel and eelskin lures.

[Click here to find out more...](#)



### [Fly Fishing Guidebook](#)

This Comprehensive Training Guide Kit contains all the necessary tips and techniques you need to become an experienced fly fisherman or fisherwomen.

You'll learn fly casting techniques, trout fishing techniques, how to tie fishing knots, and other great fishing secrets from pros that earn a living fishing!

[Check out the Fly Fishing Guidebook HERE](#)



### [Largemouth Bass Extreme!](#)

Largemouth Bass Extreme blows the lid on professional bass fishing techniques, revealing all the tips and secrets that the 'big guys' don't want you to know.

If you want to land more fish...the kind of fish that make your buddies eyes pop out in amazement, then dive straight into Largemouth Bass Extreme. You'll discover:

- How to think like a Bass!
- How to dispel the myths about catching Bass
- What you need to do to land more fish
- How to spot the big ones - and hook them!