

# ODU Magazine™

Pre-Spring Fishing  
February 2014

## The Lure Of Balsa

*Fishing  
Times  
For Bass*

**The 10 Steps Of A  
Bassaholic  
American Shad  
Rediscovered  
Soft As A Baby  
Insect's Bottom**

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*Aaron Eickhorst*  
*Photography*





ODUMagazine™ is looking forward to another great year. We have added additional sales staff and renewed our partnership with great companies and organizations such as Snag Proof™ and “The Bass University”. These past few years have been exciting to watch our viewer ship and readers grow year after year.

As everyone knows the winter of 2014 will go down in record books as one of the wildest winters on record. It's hard to believe we have had snow in 49 of the 50. And I am happy to say that I was recovering in Florida, which was the only state with no SNOW.

I have to believe we are going to see some fantastic spring fishing. I will find it hard to believe the fish are not as excited about the arrival of spring as all of us couch potatoes. Just remember spring is just around the corner, and all the snow and cold weather will soon be a fond memory (NOT). So let's put this time to good use and get your tackle and fishing gear ready for some great spring fishing. Spring will be here before you know it.

And please, Enjoy the outdoors.

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# The Lure of Balsa By Ed Harp



We're all looking for an edge, something that'll put a couple of extra bass in the livewell at the end of the day. A growing number of anglers, including some of the top pros, believe

that handmade balsa wood lures give you that edge.

"The thing about balsa is that it creates a lively action that simply can't be duplicated by any other material," says Phil Hunt, owner of PH Custom Lures.

"The high buoyancy of balsa wood is unique among construction materials. We specialize in high quality, handmade balsa baits for that reason. No one has anything like what we make here at PH Custom Lures."

Mark Dove, a serious B.A.S.S. Nation angler and three-time GEICO Bassmaster Classic qualifier (including the 2014 Classic to be held on Lake Guntersville) agrees with Hunt, especially when it comes to shallow water fishing applications.

"I don't do that much deep cranking, but I believe casting distance and consequently lure depth is more important in that application and plastic lures give you more of that," Dove says when asked about the allure of balsa baits.

"But I can tell you that in shallow water situations balsa wood is the thing. It's so darn buoyant that the deflections from wood and rock are like nothing else you can throw, and that same buoyancy helps you avoid hang-ups. They bounce off wood and other forms of cover better than any other bait out there.



"If you're talking shallow water, I definitely think they're better than plastic."

That's a strong endorsement from two anglers who know what they're talking about. But let's be honest, there are other issues that come to mind when we discuss handmade balsa wood baits.

The first is the idea that handmade balsa baits are all a little different. They simply do not all run and act the same. Hunt embraces that as



an advantage.

“Plastic baits are known for their uniformity. Almost any company can make thousands of them that act exactly the same. I’m not saying that’s all bad. I am saying, however, that there’s an advantage to diversity, as well.



“Bass will quickly become conditioned to a specific vibration or action. We see it all the time on our highly pressured waters. That doesn’t happen with balsa baits. Each one is just a little different. The fish aren’t seeing and feeling exactly the same thing hour after hour, day after day. That makes a big difference.”

Hunt continues on to point out that the days of wide, radical variations in the weight and buoyancy of balsa baits are over, at least at PH Custom Lures. He buys his balsa by weight so that it’s all pretty close to the same density. That keeps the variations from one lure to another within reasonable limits.

He also takes great pains to hand-tune each lure before it leaves his shop. That process ensures that each and every lure tracks straight right out of the box. (Those of you who’ve been around for a while will remember that was a huge problem with early balsa lures.)

Another issue that we hear about from time to time is the cost of handmade balsa baits. There’s no getting around the fact that baits like Phil Hunt makes are more expensive than their plastic rivals. But is that a real problem?

Mark Dove answers the cost question this way:



“I’d rather make a long run and catch fish for two or three hours than stay close to home, fish for eight hours, and not catch anything. I see baits the same way. I’d rather spend my money on baits that catch more bass, even if I own fewer of them. I mean, the reason we go bass fishing is to catch bass.”

So there you have it: The lure of balsa from a couple of true believers. If you decide to try a few balsa baits — and you should if you’re serious about your bass fishing — keep in mind that these men are talking about the very best, handmade baits. Going second-class is a huge mistake.



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# Catch More Fish Without Tangles

By Brad Wiegmann

It doesn't matter if you are in a \$65,000 fiberglass bass boat, floating down the river in a kayak or kicking back and fishing from shore. Fishing is supposed to be fun. Not spent picking out a bird's nest or loops instead of casting and catching fish.



Spinning reels are notorious for tangling. The tangles are caused by several reasons. Some are directly related to the angler and others inherent to the design of almost all spinning reels.

The only exception would be WaveSpin Reels invented by Doug Hannon the "Bass Professor". All WaveSpin Reels have the guaranteed no tangle technology allowing anglers to make more and longer casts. It's an exclusive spinning reel designed to eliminate tangles, loops or bird nests.

Let's take an in-depth look at what causes fishing line twist and solutions to eliminating them.

Overfilling the spool with line is a common cause of loops. Fishing line can't stay in place on smooth round rim shape spool. There's not much you can do to eliminate loops caused by overfilling except for leaving up to a ¼-inch of spool showing; unfortunately, having a less than full spool of fishing line drastically reduces the casting distance.

WaveSpin Reels spools have a completely different design than other spinning reels. The patented "Wave" spool has waves on the rim instead of a traditional smooth round surface. So when the fishing line leaves the spool at approximately 23,000 RPM during a cast it skips from wave peak-to-wave peak creating the perfect friction reduced cast.





Other advantages of the WaveSpin spool is more fishing line can be put on the reel because it doesn't off-load loops like traditional reel spools. Instead the lifting action of the waves causes the line to skip from peak-to-peak resulting in longer cast.

Loops also create problems like snatchbacks or "bird nests" with traditional reels. Not with WaveSpin Reels ([www.wavespinreel.com](http://www.wavespinreel.com)) because the loops lie harmlessly down between the waves never catching the line during a cast. Loops on the spool will simply leave during a normal cast without tangling up.

Putting the fishing line on wrong will result in line twist resulting in tangles. The correct way to put on fishing line is to lay the spool of fishing line down with the label up and the line coming off the spool counter clockwise. Begin by threading the line through all the rod line guides and tying an anchor knot to the spool then reel steady keeping constant pressure on the fishing line with your fingers in front of the spool.





If while reeling the fishing line begins to twist, stop and turn the spool over laying it flat. Don't let small loops or let the fishing line twist near the rod tip.

Using the wrong fishing line can also create tangles. Spinning reels perform better with limp line. No problem for braided fishing line, but with monofilament or fluorocarbon it can become an issue.

Line size will also influence casting distance of a spinning reel. Smaller line diameter almost always cast easier and farther. It will also lay better on the spool.

One way to reduce line twist is to use a swivel. This only works when a high quality swivel is used otherwise a cheap swivel will only increase line twist. Also when fish are aggressive adding a swivel doesn't seem to decrease the number of strikes.

When the line starts twisting on a spinning reel, an angler can let out some and then reel it back in. Sometimes that works. Otherwise the line can be tied to something that doesn't move and the angler can walk out the fishing line from the spool until getting past the twisted line then reeled back in.

One more cause of line twist is having the drag set incorrectly. A spinning reel with the brake set to lose lets out fishing line too easy and an angler will reel against the line going out twisting the line. The correct drag setting should be set to 25% breaking strength of the fishing line.



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Anglers can eliminate many of the issues of tangles, loops and line twist by putting fishing line on right, using a high quality swivel and setting the drag appropriately. Also fishing with a WaveSpin Reel and its' guaranteed no tangle technology.



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# FISHING THE WILD WEST SOUTHERN STYLE

By Bill Vanderford





Sitting around the house after the most recent visit of the “Siberian Express,” I began recalling fascinating experiences from the recesses of my warped cranium. One of those excursions took me to Montana and my first encounter with a big, friendly Indian.

Had General Custer known how much fun Indians can be, he would have never done battle with





them. Instead, he could have asked them to take him fishing and the whole course of American Indian relations might have been less serious and a lot more fun! Unlike Custer's experience, mine started off with much more positive goals when I was invited to Kalispell, Montana to attend a writers conference.



The first leg of my flight from Atlanta started innocently enough until the friendly flight attendants began serving a delicious tasting white liquid with magical qualities, which they continued to refill at regular intervals. By the time I reached Kalispell, the effects of the old firewater had turned me into part of the welcoming and entertainment committee, and I was having so much fun that I didn't even bother to pick up my suitcase after the flight.

I checked into my room at about 2 AM, but instead of hitting the sack I decided to go out and introduce myself to the local crowd. The closest place was a 24 hour a day watering hole and wagering establishment with the quaint name

“Poncho Magoo's.”

Knowing that spirits were slowly getting the best of me, I decided to nourish my body with something less magical and more solid. Since “Poncho Magoo's” main concern was keeping the sporting crowd around, I found their menu to be inexpensive, so before you could say “Coors Light,” I was in the chow line ordering a \$5.95 T-bone steak.

While waiting in line, I suddenly felt the hair on the back of my neck bristling and my imagination ran wild as I mustered the courage to have a look. With my heart pounding and perspiration popping out of my forehead, I turned slowly and there before me was a big man with a wide friendly smile. Despite his big cowboy hat, T-shirt and jeans there was no mistaking the black hair and





facial features...he was definitely an Indian!

He introduced himself as Billy Big Springs, Jr. of the Blackfeet tribe, so I quickly hinted of my own Indian ancestry in case the smile wasn't genuine. Also in case he hadn't understood me completely, I said, "When the fight starts remember...I'm on your side." He just grinned again and asked me to join him at his table. I quickly decided that an offer like that couldn't be refused.

While consuming the excellent T-bone, I told Billy how I had managed to drift into "Poncho Magoo's" and the reason for being in Montana. I continued by reviewing my dream of finding a stream so loaded with hungry trout that even I could catch them on a dry fly.

After quietly listening to my story, Billy casually invited me to visit him on the Blackfeet Reservation for a little fishing after the conference. Not wanting to make the big Indian mad, I told him that I would call him before leaving and stuffed the number he had written down on a 50 cent Keno card into my pocket.

The conference was interesting, informative and very hectic, but by the end, I still didn't have a post conference trip. So, I gave Billy Big Springs, Jr. a call to see what was cooking on the reservation. I assumed that by now he would've forgotten the babblings of a slightly loud son of the South...but I was wrong! He not only remembered me, but was excited to tell me that his 12-year-old son Willie had caught an over 8 pound rainbow trout the day before. I couldn't pack my bag fast enough!

To make a much longer story shorter, my less than dignified trip into "Poncho Magoo's" that first night and the meeting with Billy Big Springs, Jr. turned out to be a great stroke of luck. He and his family owned a 15,000 acre ranch on the Blackfeet Reservation...including two of the prettiest trout rivers in Northern Montana, and the fishing was fantastic! I not only found my dream stream with enough trout that even I could catch my fill on the vaunted dry fly, but my Montana experience became the trip of a lifetime!

In spite of all the fun, food and great fishing, I returned to Georgia with a broken rib and some torn cartilage in my side. Ah! but that's a story that I'm going to save for another time!

Bill Vanderford has won numerous awards for his writing and photography, and has been inducted into the National Freshwater Fishing Hall of Fame as a Legendary Guide. He can be reached at 770-289-1543, at [jfish51@aol.com](mailto:jfish51@aol.com) or at his web site: [www.georgiafishing.com](http://www.georgiafishing.com).







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## The 10 Steps Of A Bassaholic, Part II

By Chris Jenkins

This is part two of a ten step program that will hopefully help you as much as it has me. If you missed part one, please check the last issue of our O.D.U. Magazine to be brought up to speed. As a refresher I had spoken on topics 1 through five and mentioned: Fishing designated waters, using the right gear for the job, seasonal patterns, thinking outside the box, and pulling off the bank. Picking up where I left off brings me to

**#6 Lure choices:** This could be an article in itself but I will try to keep it short. The headline reads, "You are fishing for one big bite". Keeping that in mind, think big. That's not to say that a big bass won't succumb to worm under a bobber, but let's target the biggest bass in the lake. Bass are opportunistic feeders but as they get older they learn to weigh their options as it pertains to prey. They discover it is not worth the energy spent to chase a minnow down when they can just ambush a blue gill. I have found that I catch bigger bass on bigger lures. That being said, I have fallen in love swimbaits and over the past couple of years have seen the rewards they bring to the boat. If you like throwing plastic worms, opt for a 10 or 12 inch version. If you like jigs, double up on the skirts and use a creature bait as a trailer. Start with something



you are comfortable with and use the biggest version you can get away with. Going big requires the right mindset and the understanding that you will be sacrificing quantity for quality.



**#7 Night fishing:** I have always enjoyed night fishing but understand it is not for everyone. As with everything, it has its ups and its downs. I like the solitude it brings and it's a great way to beat the heat in the summer. One of the biggest questions about night fishing has to do with lunar phases. I have hundreds of nocturnal voyages under my belt and still can't provide a definitive answer to my own questions. I have had both good and bad results on every lunar phase on the calendar. Some lakes fish better at night than others as well. Clear water tends to yield better results as opposed to muddy. I put no faith in those calendars that tell you when the best time to catch fish is. I can say for certain that you won't catch them if you aren't out there. When night fishing, I prefer to use large jigs (pictured Conquistador Tackle 1 oz jigs), large plastic worms (Charmer Bait giant worm pictured) and creature baits, spinnerbaits, and paddle tail swimbaits. Old timers always say "what about a jitterbug"? Well in all honesty I very rarely use any topwater baits at night. Fish the thermocline and shallow structure and cover using large lures that emit vibration for best results.

**#8 Fish alone:** This is often a tough pill to swallow and again is not for everyone. Who would think that your best friend could be your worst enemy when it comes to fishing? Have you ever taken someone to a great spot only to see them there the next time you revisit it? Or get a phone call from your buddy saying "man I caught a monster at that spot we fished"? Big bass find the best realstate on the lake and that is where they live. These spots often take weeks or months for an angler to find and minutes to lose because of loose lips. Stalking big bass also requires stealth and planning. Solo voyages allow you to fish at your own pace, obtain perfect boat positioning and use proper angles to your advantage. When the guy in the back of the boat is not on the same page, you might as well not go.



**#9 Optimizing your time:** Spring is undoubtedly the best time to be on the water in regards to hooking a giant. I generally save vacation time so that I can be on the water every Friday in March and April in an attempt to elude the weekend warriors. Don't wait for those sunny, calm picture perfect days either. Last March I caught one over 11 pounds on a day in which I had to dip my rod in the water to clear the ice off of the line guides just to cast each time. Records indicate that roughly 90% of the biggest bass caught in the U.S. are done so in the spring. As soon as the water temp rises to 45 degrees, it's on! Don't overlook or discount fishing prefrontal systems of falling barometric conditions. Set up milk runs that allow you to hit several key spots during low light condition when seasonal patterns dictate thusly.

**#10 This isn't a step, but rather a hopeful prediction from the man that used to be called "The big Bass Professor", Doug Hannon.** He said "If you do all the right things at the right places, at the right times, the odds are in your favor to catch that fish of a life time".





Seems logical I suppose. I believe if you incorporate the steps I have provided (the right things) at the right places (designated waters) at the right times, you will eventually succeed. It's difficult to UN-learn, or forget the habits and small fish tactics we have been taught, but in order to ascend, you must wipe the mental slate clean and start fresh. To consistently catch big fish, you have leave behind what has proven to provide mediocre results at best. The mental transition requires overcoming a level of difficulty that usually sees a 97% relapse back to your old habits. You have to be willing to commit and be diligent in your quest to be one of the 3% that nail trophy bass on a regular basis. There are many days that I go out and throw a swimbait 300 times and don't even get a bite or a

follower, but more importantly to me is that there are also many days that I can claim my right as king of the lake. I guess it's all reliant on what your goal is. I don't think there is an angler out there though, that doesn't make every cast without the desire to catch the big one. The question is, are you willing to go the distance and do what it takes to succeed? Well that wraps up another session of Bassaholics anonymous.

May 2014 lead you on a fish fueled frenzy and an insatiable lust for big girls. The author can be reached by email [sowbelly.hunter@yahoo.com](mailto:sowbelly.hunter@yahoo.com). Now use those tools and techniques in key spots.



# The Cold Weather

By Captain  
Mike Gerry

With the near coldest winter on record here in the Deep South upon us there are many ways to make sure your body is prepared to take the cold when you head to the water. Believe it or not one of the best ways to prepare for that cold day on the lake is not always about how



you dress. Although important what you wear, it is equally important that your body is prepared.

Body preparation starts with a proper diet, you must prepare your body with a satisfying diet with good portions of carbohydrates like “rice, pasta’s, breads and beans” as carbohydrates give you energy and allow your body to run like a well tuned high performance engine. The next important need for your body is proper amounts of liquids; fishing in the cold is very much like any other athlete participating in any sport, the body needs water and plenty of it to maintain body functions that keep you safe in the cold. When your outside and its cold and windy the body will spend internal energy trying to stay warm, hence using the energy created by water and if you’re not prepared with plenty of liquids once your liquids are used you lose the ability to protect yourself from the cold.

Along with proper diets dressing properly in layers is always important, there are many clothes made specifically for athletes to stay warm in cold weather especially under garments that fit tight to the body to maintain heat. Skin tight layers act very much like protective layers on fruit, like an apple, or orange as the outside protective layer grows tight to the fruit to protect it and we are no different, our bodies need that skin tight protective coating in extreme cold temperatures to protect your own bodies heat source. If you have a skin tight fitting layer next to your body everything else you wear over them becomes sources of heat and keeps warmth inside the body and protects it from leaking heat.

Diet, liquids and clothing layers are all part of smart preparation that you can use to keep your body safe from the elements and make a cold day on the water enjoyable.

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# Great Fishing in Louisiana's Sportsman's Paradise

By Jake Bussolini



The sun had barely awakened from its long October Louisiana night when Thomas Alleman, 26 of Lake Charles lowered his john boat from its hoist at the Grosse Savanne marsh. An unseasonable chill was in the air as we started out for our red fish experience. There were two other boats carrying other members of my group, but Alleman didn't subscribe to their search methods. They were looking for surface action to find the redfish, but Alleman, with several

years experience studying these marshes knew exactly where he was headed. Deep in this marsh, among the many twists and turns of the canals, he knew of an area he called the pipe line cut. This cove contained a small reef of oysters in water that was two to five feet deep, perfect for the big redfish. As we sped through the cold morning mist, my mind wandered a little, thinking about the great day of fishing that I had experienced several years ago when fishing for largemouth bass at the Black Lake Lodge.

For years I had bragged about that fishing trip as the best day of fishing that I had ever experienced. I have fished more than one hundred different waters in my fishing career and this Lake Charles area bass fishing was still at the top of my list. In one day I had caught more than fifty huge bass, most weighing more than six pounds, returning all of them back into the water. Since that time, Black Lake Lodge was destroyed by hurricane Rita so I could never fish there again. I have always been intrigued by the availability of both salt and freshwater fishing in close proximity to each other in this area.

This time I was being hosted by the Lake Charles Convention and Visitors Bureau as part of the South East Outdoors Press Association (SEOPA). My fingers were numbing from the cold October wind created by the high speed of our John boat. Just as I zippered up my light jacket, we found the selected fishing spot and the anchor was set. I took the front seat of the boat, warming my hands, I was ready. The waters in the marsh were mirror still and there was no sign of any surface action. But we were not looking for surface action. I was a little concerned that the weather had turned cold since that normally signals a change in fish behavior.

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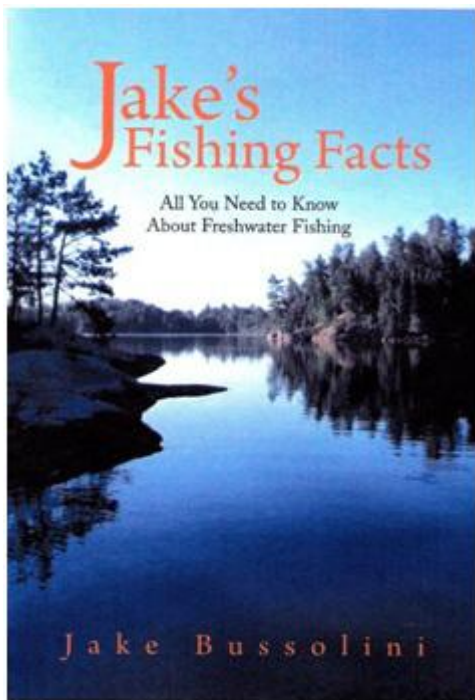
Alleman pointed to a gas line marker directly in front of the boat and directed my first cast in that direction. Shrimp were the bait of choice that day and we attached them to a small ¼ ounce jig head. The technique was to let the bait sink to the bottom, keeping the line taught to feel the bite. The small croakers would peck at the shrimp and it took me a few empty hooks to get the feel of the underwater activity. Once I got the feel, it was



game on for me and the redfish. The first fish I hooked was a fine 30 inch redfish weighing about 14 pounds. The fight the fish gave me was great. The shallow water didn't permit any deep dives searching for the bottom as I was accustomed to, but the fish had other ideas than letting me bring it into the boat. It fought 360 degrees around the boat, dodging the other anglers line and running under the anchor rope. When we finally netted the fish it was a 30 inch beauty.

At one point I was actually able to catch a second fish before Thomas Alleman had measured the previous fish and put it on ice for the evening dinner.

On nearly every other cast, I was able to hook another big fish. Periodically the rhythm was



interrupted by a giant crab that also thought the shrimp were tasty. On occasion we switched to a Berkley gulp swimming mullet for variety, but switched back to the shrimp in short time. The routine of hooking these monster redfish was also interrupted by an occasional black drum, sand trout or flounder, all providing an exciting variety to the catch.

I boated about fifteen of the big redfish in a period of about four hours. We released all of the fish except two that we planned to eat for dinner that night. The action was fast and steady and despite my policy to never leave biting fish, we returned to the Grosse Savanne lodge around noon, calling it a very successful fishing day.

Since my books about fishing deal with the science as it blends with the sport, I was intrigued that Thomas Alleman seemed to study every fish that I caught, looking for

any unique sign that he might have seen that fish before. On several occasions he counted the number of spots on the fish and on at least two fish he pointed out markings that he had seen before. This is how an experienced angler judges the effectiveness of his angling technique and at his young age, Alleman had mastered that technique. Many anglers define the success of a fishing day by the number of fish they catch and that is certainly a good measure. I think about angling in a slightly different way. A fine day on the water is part of a





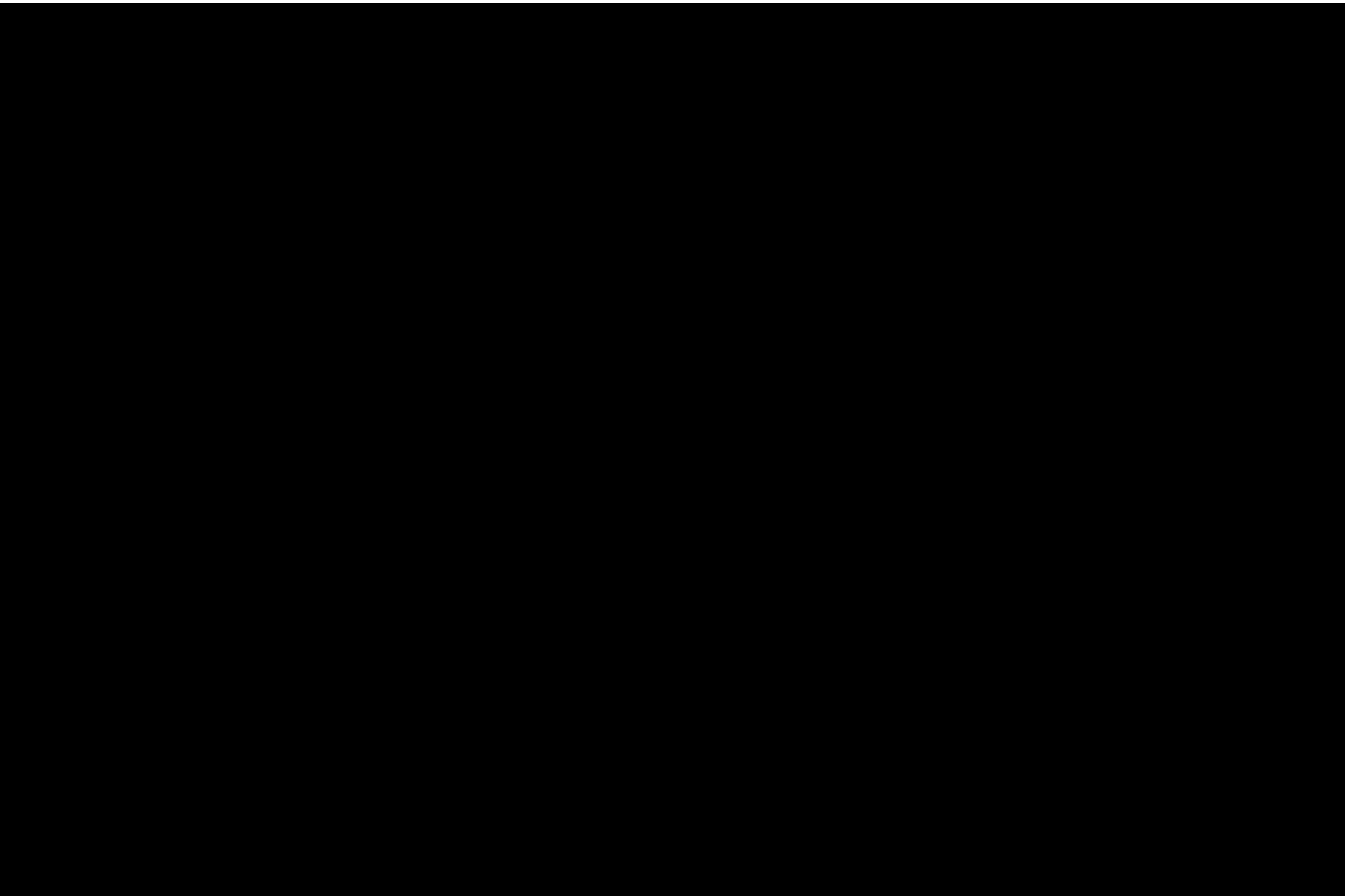


total event which includes the quality of the people you associate with, the conditions of the weather, the culture of the region and of course the excitement of the catch. If I take away the wonderful people that I met, the fantastic weather, the great Cajun food and southern hospitality and the culture of the region, I could define Lake Charles as a fine fishing area. I cannot however take these factors away because they are an integral part of the areas culture and surroundings. This is what puts Lakes Charles at the top of my list as one of the best fishing destinations in

the south. It is also what allows the state to call itself a sportsman's paradise.

Another benefit that I received from this latest trip to Lake Charles was the ability to observe the great job being done by The America's Wetland Foundation through its America's Energy Coast initiative, bringing together public and private organizations to restore and maintain the gulf area wetlands. I witnessed the migration of hundreds of thousands of ducks and geese to their winter habitat. It became obvious to me that there are many people working hard to improve the local environment so that this southern wonderland will continue to produce great fishing and hunting for years to come.

Jake Bussolini is a freelance writer who has published five books about freshwater fishing. His work can be seen at [www.jakestakeonfishing.com](http://www.jakestakeonfishing.com). His latest book Jake's Fishing Facts is a refresher for all anglers and can be ordered on his site.





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# DAN'S FISH 'N' TALES®

## Fishing Times For Bass

By Dan Galusha

It has been said many times not to fish during midday. According to the people saying this, the best bass fishing is early in the morning, late in the evening, or at night. True, fish are usually more active during that time of day, but fish will feed at any time. The trick is to be able to change, and fish a different pattern or technique.

Many of my bigger bass have been caught during the hottest summer month, between the hours of 10 a.m. and 3 p.m., with the majority falling between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. This isn't because the fish are more active; it is just that I've changed to something different than was used earlier in the day.

Weather and water conditions, fishing a river or lake, and the seasons will also help determine how an angler changes tactics for a time of day. For example, fishing in

the middle of the day, during a bright sunny

summer day, on a lake with a slightly stained water, and light surface ripple, can be entirely different than fishing the same conditions on a late fall day. On the summer day some good techniques would be to look for cover in the shade and near deeper water, and fish the area with plastic worms and tubes, crawled through the cover, or go to a shore where the wind is

Johnnie "Crankin" Crain, who is an award winning outdoor writer and bass tournament angler from Iowa, caught this bass while using his famous crankbait techniques during a summer morning along a shallow gravel point that leads to deep water.



This was an early spring day, during a sunny afternoon, when the authored used a black/blue Stanley Casting Jig with a matching Itza Bug along rip rap to hook this 6 pound largemouth.



blowing into or parallel, which will create a wind current. As for the fall day, head to the warmest water area, which may be along rip rap





A warm summer morning, and flipping a blue/purple Stanley Casting Jig with black Auger Frog around stumps on a flat near a 9 feet drop off, helped catch this bass.

areas near shallows that will warm are good spots for jig combinations. Riprap that may be holding some heat from the previous day, can be a place to run crankbaits and slow rolled spinnerbaits.

### **MIDDAY (10 a.m. to 3 p.m.)**

Spring - Head for the north and northwest areas of the water where the water is the warmest. Use swimbaits, spinnerbaits and crankbaits (especially Rat-L-Traps) along old weed lines, with jig combinations and tubes along any riprap or areas where the shallower water is near deeper drop offs. A jerk worm, fished with longer pauses between twitches, in the shallows can be a very good producer.

and shallows, then try crankbaits and slow rolled spinnerbaits, with some jig combinations for a little deeper cover around drop offs, while looking for any signs of schooling action.

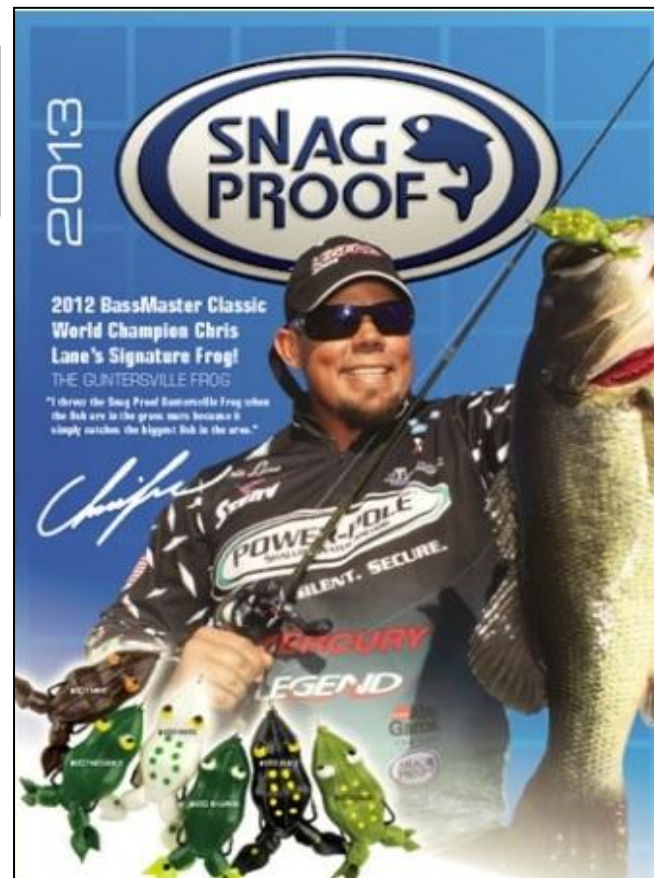
From the above example it can be seen that there is no definite way to approach a time of day. Here are some very general lures and techniques, for times of day and seasons, which can be altered for the above-mentioned factors.

### **MORNING (Sunrise to 10 a.m.)**

Spring - Fish slow, and deeper along areas close to shallows where the water will warm first during the day. Jig combinations, tubes, finesse worms, Road Runners and slow rolled spinnerbaits are good choices.

Summer - Topwater plugs and buzz baits in shallows, and wherever feeding action is found. Spinnerbaits are also a good choice.

Fall - As with spring, the deeper





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Summer - Shady areas with overhanging trees and wood cover, wind or water current and drop offs are ideal spots. Flipping and pitching plastic worms, crawdad worms, tubes and jig combinations in to any of the cover, and working them on the deeper edges will work well. Weed lines are always good, and working many types of lures parallel to these can be a top producer – try a pull-and-pause retrieve with a Road Runner head and Havoc Deuce as the body, especially in areas where fish are feeding on frogs. Watch for areas holding baitfish, especially if there is any feeding “busts” action, and throw a spinnerbait or Rat-L-Trap at these bass.

Fall - Fish should be moved up to the warmer areas in the shallows. Stump fields and riprap are good locations. Spinnerbaits, Rollin Road Runners and crankbaits, retrieved in a way to bump cover is a good start, and if schooling action is spotted start casting Rat-L-Traps around that area. If it is a stump field where the feeding action is spotted, you will be better sticking with something like a shallow billed crankbait and spinnerbait, which will have less hang ups.

## **LATE AFTERNOON – EVENING (3 p.m. to Sunset)**

Spring - The midday techniques will hold up for awhile, but will start going back to the morning patterns as sunset approaches.

Summer - Again, stay with the midday tactics for a while, but start looking for more feeding action as sunset approaches. A Rat-L-Trap is a good choice, as is a slower jerk worm or





It was high-noon, with a 106° heat index, when this 7 pound bass was caught while flipping shore line brush with a black/blue Stanley Casting Jig with matching Chigger Craw.

swimbait, if the feeding action is found. Use this before going back to a topwater plug and buzz bait.

Fall - Head for the deeper cover near drop offs, and slowly crawl a jig combination, tube or craw worm. Suspended fish in the deeper water will often hit vertically jigged spoons.

I didn't go into night fishing, as this is usually a summer time method, and starts another article. For the most part, this time of fishing requires dark colored plastic worms, spinnerbaits, buzz baits and topwater plugs.

Any discussion about fishing times of day wouldn't be complete without mentioning solunar tables. These are the charts that predict the most active feeding periods for each day. To test the validity of these tables look at them after fishing. Remember what times of the day the fishing was the best, and compare it to the table. I've done this several times, and have found it to be fairly accurate on most occasions. Now I use a computer program called Sky Calc, which will set up a table for any location I am fishing. I simply insert the longitude and latitude, and the program does the rest. BLS Outdoors produces this program.

Further  
information

regarding Sky Calc and The Fish Tracking System (fish log program) can be found at [www.blsoutdoors.com](http://www.blsoutdoors.com).

Use the information in this article as a guideline, and then learn to fish any time of day. Just remember, "fishing time" is anytime you can go fishing.

If you have any questions about this or another fishing subject, drop me a line through the Dan's Fish 'N' Tales® website at [www.dansfishntales.com](http://www.dansfishntales.com). This site also provides links to companies that I discuss, along with one that will bring you to ODU Magazine.

Until next time, get out on the water, and enjoy a great day of fishing.

A deep running crankbait run along the saddle area of two adjoining island points, helped catch this 10 pound mid-October bass in late afternoon.





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# Bass Notes From Africa

By Delina  
Alwanger



Casa Msika resort, offers world class bass fishing at Chicamba Dam in Mozambique. The dam is situated in the Manica province of Mozambique, close to the eastern border with Zimbabwe. It was constructed in 1958 and has a surface area of approximately 160 square kilometers. The principal purpose of the dam is to provide hydro electric power, fresh water supplies to the surrounding cities, towns and villages, and irrigation to surrounding farmlands. The dam is home to the Northern Bass [*Micropterus salmoides*], Florida strain Largemouth Bass [*Micropterus floridanus*], the European leatherback Carp and several indigenous species of bream, catfish and eels. Records show that the Northern Bass was brought to South Africa in the 1920s and was introduced to Zimbabwe in the 1940s. Florida Bass are thought to have been introduced into Chicamba when farm dams in the Eastern Districts of Zimbabwe were breached as a result of cyclones in the early 1990's.

With hot summers and mild winters there is no off-season for fishing in Southern Africa. 365 days of sunshine are guaranteed with the occasional thunderstorm during summer. Bass spawn following the cold snaps from July to September. The resort is open all year round and can



accommodate 120 people in comfortable rooms and chalets. For the more adventurous an adjoining campsite with separate ablutions is available.

An on-site restaurant, bar and swimming pool area offer a range of meals and drinks at very affordable prices. Boats are available for hire as well as other motorized and non-motorized activities. For the non-angler there are guided walks and game drives in the surrounding private game park, which supports plains game animals ranging from Giraffe, Zebra and Wildebeest to a variety of antelope.



Birding is a must, as several endemic species are found in this area. Day excursions can also be arranged to places of interest in the surrounds including ancient rock paintings, and ruins from the Monomotapa era, mountain hikes and trips to the famous Gorongosa national park, guaranteeing that once in a lifetime African Safari Experience. For the dedicated angler excursions can also be arranged to Cabora Bassa Dam, or the Zambezi River, for the opportunity to catch the mighty African Tiger fish.



The dam abounds with structure, in the form of inlets, coves, river lines, granite outcrops, standing timber, grassy shorelines, deep drop-offs and numerous species of fresh water weed and lily cover offering the perfect conditions for bass. The resort's bass record stands at 6.86kg, caught by Ronald Hanhart in 2009. The resort hosted several events during 2013, with the highlight being the regional Zone 6 Bass Tournament.



The Zone 6 tournament is an annual event involving teams from South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia, Namibia, Zimbabwe and Mozambique and is hosted in rotation by each country. Without any bass resources of its own, Zambia elected to host its tournament at Chicamba

Dam in Mozambique. Biggest fish was won by Max Pieper of Namibia with his prize 6.43kg Florida bass, followed by Rob Mackay of Zambia at 5.72kg and Collin Van of Namibia at 5.66kg. Over the 3 day tournament 477 fish were caught and released, weighing a total of 583.54 kg. The event was won by Zimbabwe overall with 184.24 points.

A regular feature on the Casa Msika calendar is the 4/30 Tournament which is held on the 30<sup>th</sup> of April every year and is open to recreational and professional anglers. It is both an individual and team event. Bass Tournament Rules apply and safety checks and correct procedures must be observed at all tournaments hosted at Casa Msika. In keeping with the theme weigh-in is done at 4:30pm and a maximum of 4 fish per angler is accepted. Minimum size is 30cm. In 2013, a total of 19 teams, comprising 38 anglers participated.







Biggest fish at the 4/30 tournament was caught by Gerry Jooste and weighed in at 3.47kgs. The Lady Champion was Kendall Hundermark with a bag of 3.60kgs.

Another open annual event which attracts a good turnout is the Virginia Bass Chapter [VBC] Casa Msika Challenge which was held in September 2013 and is a team classic. Nineteen teams participated. Biggest fish was caught by Charles Bezuidenhout of Mozambique weighing

in at 4.32kg. Charles caught the biggest fish on both days of the competition. The total number of fish caught reached 158, and average weight was 1.14kg.

The Carp were introduced by the Portuguese when the dam was built decades ago for recreational purposes. These monsters now grow up to 45kg in size and appear to co-exist happily with the introduced Bass and other indigenous fish species.

As the resort's reputation grows it has hosted anglers from as far as Russia, Canada, Australia, Brazil and Japan all looking for that elusive catch and a great fishing experience. Casa Msika supports eco conservation, including catch and release techniques, flora and fauna conservation and recognizes many reciprocal international organizations such as BASS America. Members of such organizations are recognized by enjoying discounted accommodation rates when booking. Whether you are a recreational or professional angler Casa Msika on Chicamba Dam offers a great Bass and general fishing experience.





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January 2014 - Issue #35



## Top 10 Issue





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**Ice, Ice Baby**



# American Shad, Central Florida's Rediscovered Fishery



**By Captain Tom Van Horn**

In my youthful days along the St. Johns River, the American shad run was an extremely popular event. At the first report of shad anglers from across the state and the eastern Atlantic seaboard swarmed to the St Johns River were a season long tournament known as the Shad Derby was held. For a nominal fee of five dollars per angler, whoever caught the largest shad won a new boat, motor, and trailer at the end of the event. Huge fish camps like Lemon Bluff and Marina Isles thrived along the banks of the river in support of the then popular recreational fishery, but as the numbers of American shad dwindled, the Shad Derby and the fish camps faded away.

Since the colonial era, American shad have been an important food source in North America. They have also been important to recreational anglers in the modern era; however, recreational angling peaked in the St. Johns River during the 1960s and 1970s. Atlantic coast commercial landings also peaked at the turn of the twentieth century and have declined dramatically along with most of the shad's range. Obstruction of spawning runs, pollution, and high harvest rates took a toll on their abundance, prompting the





Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) to mandate protective measures including a directive to monitor existing populations and rebuild stocks.

Commercial landings in the St. Johns River also peaked in the early 1900s and declined significantly throughout the century. Recreational efforts and landings have also decreased markedly in recent years. The net ban in 1995 eliminated most of what remained of Florida's commercial American shad fishery. Later in 2005, the commercial fishery off the coast of the mid-Atlantic states were terminated and should no longer be impacting the stock.

As the largest members of the herring family, American shad are an anadromous species of fish that return to freshwater rivers along the Atlantic coast of America each spring from the ocean to spawn. Juveniles spend their first growing season in the freshwater river of their birth and then swim to the ocean in the fall to grow and mature. They remain in the ocean for two to six years before they mature and return to spawn in the river in which they originally hatched.

Today, both American and hickory shad are holding their own and they start arriving on their annual spawning run to the southern reaches of the St. Johns River between Lake Monroe and Lake Harney "Shad alley" around Christmas day, with the peak run occurring near the end of January. They then move south into the vast marshes of the St. Johns between Lake Harney and Lake Washington. Concentrations vary from year to year based on water levels and other environmental factors. Remember, the average age of American shad on the St Johns is only four to six years old when they return to the river of their hatch to spawn, and like salmon, some of the adult St Johns River shad die from exhaustion once the spawning season is complete. Therefore, the magnitude of shad runs can vary from year to year based on the successful spawn of their parents.



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Although small, averaging between two and four pounds on the St Johns, American shad are a feisty, run and jump, dig deep, cart wheeling, fun fish most anyone can catch. And the best part of shad fishing is it's a great way to spend time fishing during the winter in Central Florida on those cold and windy days when fishing the open waters is out of the question. It's a late in the day, sleeping in, second cup of coffee type of fishing, which is perfect on those cold winter days ,and if this year's run is anything like last year where 100 fish days were experienced, it will only improve.

In recent years, the shad populations on the St Johns River have started to expand and as their numbers increase, so does the popularity of the recreational fishery. Five years ago, Coastal Angler Magazine Orlando, reinstated the Shad Derby in an effort to bring light to this forgotten fishery with the introduction of the Central Florida Shad and Crappie Derby, only this time with a conservation twist. Held from November 1st through March 1st in the Greater Orlando area, the five month long catch photo and release (CPR) derby is free to all anglers who register at any of their derby sponsor sign-up spots. The Derby is free and anglers are permitted to fish anywhere they choose in





Florida, and as much as they want during the derby timeframe. All participants must log into and upload their photos to [www.cfshadderby.com](http://www.cfshadderby.com). All photos must be taken using the official derby measuring device and include the official derby sponsor token.

For light tackle spin and fly anglers living in the south, the Central Florida American Shad run is the closest we come to stream fishing the salmon runs enjoyed in the northeastern northwestern areas of North America.

Shad can be caught in any number of ways, from light fly fishing to slow trolling or casting small darts and spoons on ultra light spinning rods.

For spinning gear, I like a 6' ultralight St. Croix rod and 2000 series Daiwa reel spooled with six pound test braided line. Most anglers either slow troll or cast Nungesser Shad Rigs which consist of a small brightly colored tandem dart or and spoon combination. Nungesser Shad Rigs are difficult to find in Central Florida with Mosquito Creek Outdoors in Apopka being the only source I know about.



For fly fishing, I suggest a 4 or 5 weight matched rod and reel with sufficient backing, and either a floating or intermediate (sinking) line depending on if you are fishing in shallow or deep water. I like a fluorocarbon leader and small brightly colored weighted flies like the Crazy Charlie. Another highly suggested resource for those avid fly anglers is to attend the monthly meeting of the Back Country Association, <http://www.bffa-brevard.org/>. On my boat I carry two rods, one with floating line and one with a sinking leader, so I'm prepared for either situation.

As the excitement and enthusiasm for shad fishing grows, there is hope as commercial harvest is eliminated and water quality improves, the American Shad stock will rebuild, This will be reflected in improved recreational catch rates and renewed recreational interest in the species. Either way, if you haven't experienced the American shad run during the winter in Central Florida, you are missing the boat, so get hooked up and have some fun.

**Editors Note:** I'm [Captain Tom Van Horn](#), and if it's a Central Florida fishing adventure you are seeking, you've come to the right site. With over 15 years as a professional fishing guide experience, [Mosquito Coast Fishing Charters](#) prides itself in providing quality fishing experiences for its clients. We provide a wide range of fishing opportunities customized to meet your desires. I'm a Central Florida native with lifetime of experience fishing the in-shore flats of the Mosquito Lagoon and Indian River Lagoon systems. I also charter in the near-shore coastal waters and inlets, and the inland fresh water lakes and rivers of Central Florida.



# Miami's TUCUNARÉ

By Nici Haerter

Our 21 foot speed boat trolled silently along the rocky ledges of Miami's blue lagoon. We were tossing braided line with large pinfish along a dramatic ledge, plummeting to depths of 16 feet. Submerged debris and rocks shielded our view of what lie below the surface. We bravely encroached upon the canals held captive by one of South America's stealthiest hunters, the much sought after Tucunare. I had ventured across 2 continents in my crusade to conquer this beefed up version of a large mouth bass. My



quest began over a year ago in the Amazon. While angling for piranha on the banks of the Rio Negro River, a dazzling flash of gold illuminated the murky waters along the shoreline. A flaming orange fin broke the surface followed by a roll, exposing the stout girth of the most colorful

species of fish I had ever seen. He lit up the waters with vivid shades of green and blue. Embellished with distinctive black speckles and stripes, he donned a spotted fan-like tail rimmed in gold. His fins were trimmed with brilliant oranges and hues of red. I was mesmerized by its vibrant colors and intimidating size. This mysterious and charismatic fish continued to taunt me throughout the day. He fed along the water's edge with a large, bass-like mouth, rolling and flipping around my line. I was armed with nothing more than a homemade cane pole, rigged with a small, rusty hook. Clearly, I did not have the right tackle to battle a fish this daunting in size. The locals later identified my mysterious visitor as the Butterfly Peacock Bass, or commonly known as Brazil's Tucunare. That evening my husband, Skip, and I sat on the river's bank listening to local anglers recount tales of battling these power-house fish along the Amazon River Basin. With a reputation for hard-hitting antics and voracious appetites, they recommended angling with live bait fish, top water





plugs (HighRoller™ Peacock Series pictured) and heavy braided line. With no bait and tackle shop in the jungle, my quest for the Tucunare' was going to have to wait for another day.

Upon return home to Florida, my research of the mysterious Butterfly Peacock bass continued. Although bass-like in appearance, they are actually in

the cichlids family and are native to South America. In the mid 80's, officials introduced the species to canals in Florida's southern region with hopes of controlling populations of spotted tilapia, oscar and other non-native species. Due to their tropical ancestry, the Butterfly Peacock Bass have flourished in the warm waters surrounding Miami-Dade County and are becoming very popular among sport fishermen. Possessing aggressive fighting skills, they are considered to be a prized, trophy catch. The adult male species are adorned with a distinctive hump on their brows and have been touted as ferocious predators, testing the skills of even the most astute anglers from around the globe. My desire to land this fascinating fish was quickly turning into an obsession. I was relentless. Endlessly sending emails to friends in Brazil, I quizzed them on angling techniques, skills and tackle used when fishing for peacocks. It was time to take action. I contacted fellow angler and Tucanare enthusiast, Captain Frank Carbone of [Hawghunter Guide Service](#). Plans were made and dates set to scour the canals that weave through Miami-Dade County in a long awaited fishing adventure. While Skip was busy stringing our poles with braided line, I decided to enlist the aid of another pro angler. I picked up the phone and called my mother, Jo-Ann, "Pack your fishing pole. We're headed to Miami".

While the first rays of sunrise shimmered across Miami's Blue Lagoon, our eyes anxiously skimmed the shoreline for signs of activity. A ripple of movement broke the surface indicating the presence of peacocks feeding along submerged pylons. I tossed a live pinfish into the swirl and waited in silent anticipation. My line bumped, the water broiled around my bait, and with one flash of his tail, he was gone. Disappearing back into the depths, he left me with an empty hook. It didn't take long for us to realize that Tucunare are clever adversaries. Used to survival in the Amazon, they are conniving predators. Outwitting us on every strike, they continually ravaged our bait, always managing to escape before we could set the hook. Skip was the first to get the feel for their aggressive attacks and quick maneuvers. Refusing to surrender to their antics, he expertly landed an 18-incher. Similar to leopards, no two share the same design of spots and stripes. This particular fish wore a suit of gold with vibrant red fins. We marveled at his





beauty and snapped one photo after another. Mom was the next to figure out their game plan. While trolling through the flats, I heard her shout "Fish On!" as her rod bowed from the force of a giant peacock. She skillfully wrangled a 3 pounder through eel grass before swinging him over the side of the boat for a safe landing. In the next hour, I managed to land two small male peacocks and several exotic Mylan Cichlids. I was comfortably content with my catch for the day. I had accomplished my goal to conquer the peacock bass and now it was time to relax, soak up some Miami sunshine and take a few photos of the local iguanas lounging along the shore. Peacefully situated on the bow, I listened to Mom and Skip exchange fishing tales with Captain Frank when, without warning, my rod bent in half. He hit with a force that literally left me staggering backwards. I held on with a white knuckle grip as Captain Frank ran for the net, yelling "Fight him, Nici! Fight him!" My drag grudgingly released while he continued to plummet straight down, veering left and then right. Captain Frank's eyes lit with excitement as he shouted, "That's a giant peacock!" My arms were starting to quake when I realized this South American native was bestowed with the endurance of a marathon runner. Wearing him down was not going to be an option. Some skillful angling would be required to outmaneuver this clever athlete. As he made a run under the boat, I made a judgment call. Time to end this battle. My eyes locked with Captain Frank in silent understanding. Perched and ready with his net to back me up, he nodded at me reassuringly. When I felt the large peacock surge towards the surface, I quickly reeled, taking up the slack in my line. Using his forward momentum as leverage, I jerked him from the water in one quick motion and slung him over the side of the boat. Captain Frank slapped me on the back enthusiastically, "You just landed a trophy



Peacock!" Weighing in at a solid 6 pounds, he sported the large hump on his brow of an aggressive male. Measuring 21.25 inches in length, he had a stout girth of over 16 inches wide. News of my trophy catch spread fast throughout the fishing community as Captain Frank

busied himself with texts and emails to fellow anglers. Boats trolled up beside us, offering nods of approval and congratulatory words. Locals gathered on the banks when we released him back into the canal, catching his first moments of freedom on film. Splashing us with that infamous, red spotted tail, he did not disappoint his audience before disappearing into the murky water.

His dominion over the lagoon continues as he taunts unsuspecting anglers with broken tackle and stripped hooks. If you are up for the challenge, ask Captain Frank to take you to "Nici's Point", an undisclosed, secret fishing ground where a giant Butterfly Peacock Bass still rules the waterways. Lurking in the depths, this skilled South American hunter waits patiently to meet his next match.





## Family Tradition Delivers Crowning Moment For Tampa Bay Guide

By David A. Brown

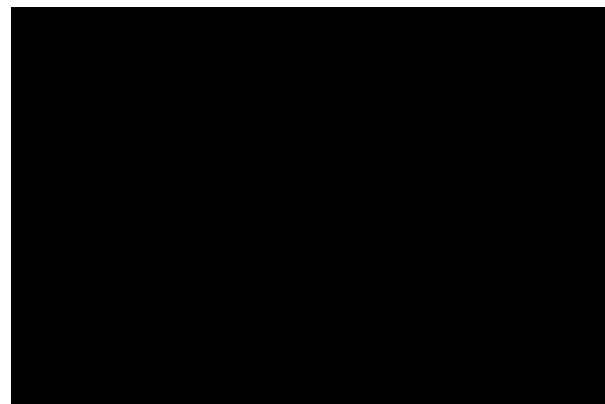
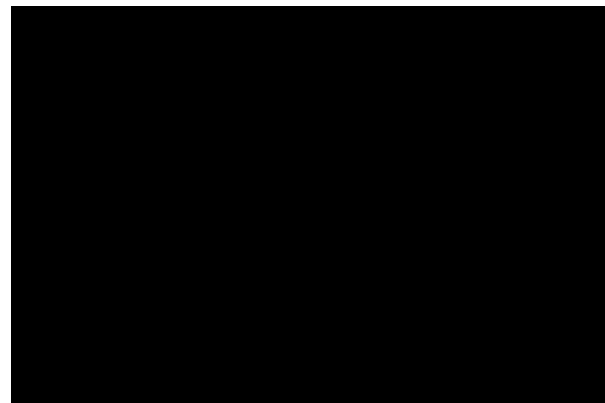
"Capt. Billy Miller Leads Winning Effort in 20th Annual King of the Beach Tourney"

Capt. Billy Miller was 7-years old when the Old Salt Fishing Club's King of the Beach tournament was founded. Two decades later, on November 9, the Tampa Bay guide topped the field of nearly 400 boats with a 44.5-pound fish to claim the crown at the most tenured kingfish competition on Florida's Gulf Coast.

The winning fish ate a live ladyfish on a downrigger. Prior to this event, Miller's largest king was a 43-pounder, so this personal best could not have come at a better time.

"I can't even get my mind around it," the captain said. "Winning the King of the Beach is huge, but the 20th anniversary event is really special. It's definitely the highlight of my career."

Miller's mother, Debbie, handled the rod duties. She and







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her son were joined by Capt. Billy's wife Ashley and media personality Capt. Bill Miller, of "Fishing with Bill Miller." Debbie said she was delighted that a long-time family tradition delivered big results.

"We always fish this event as a family, so it was very special to win this tournament together," she said. "And seeing my son crowned King of the Beach brought a tear to my eye. I was very proud."

Billy Miller said his smoker king formula is something like planning a family picnic: You need a favorable location and a nice spread of groceries. He and his team set up shop in the Egmont Channel between the Sunshine Skyway Bridge and Egmont Key.

They hooked their fish in 15-20 feet of water in a tiderip where converging currents piled up the baitfish and presented a briny buffet line. This, the captain noted, created a predictable target zone that he knew would interest toothy predators.

"You have to find something to attract the fish," Miller said. "It's just like a tree line. A deer will walk that tree line rather than prancing around out in the middle of the pasture."

"The other thing is big baits. If those really big kingfish are going to use all that energy to go get something, they want it to be worth their while."

Timing was also essential. The winning fish bit at 7 a.m. and that's just what Miller expected.

"I always believe in the daylight bite," he said. "That first hour or so of the sun being up is definitely a time to be in your prime spot. It's a transitional time when the kingfish can first start to see well enough to feed."

Debbie Miller said the fight took approximately 10 minutes and her husband, Capt. Bill, subdued the king with a clean gaff shot. Only dicey part, she noted, was the balancing act. Windy conditions made for a rough day on the water, so Ashley stood behind her to ensure stability throughout the fight.

The lady angler credited her teammates for clearing the remaining



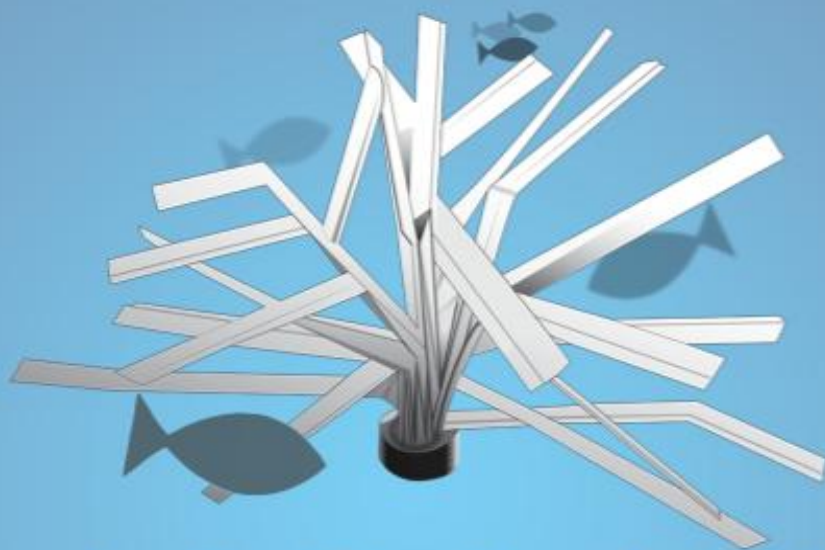


lines, securing the gear and providing her plenty of room to work the fish to the boat with a steady, patient technique.

"Everybody had a role, so when it came time, we all knew what to do," she said. "We were lucky that instead of running around (channel markers or crab trap) buoys, he ran out into the channel, away from the buoys and away from the Skyway (bridge). We were lucky he took the right course."

For more on Capt. Billy Miller, visit [www.captainbillymiller.com](http://www.captainbillymiller.com). "Fishing with Bill Miller" will begin airing on World Fishing Network in April 2014. Visit [www.Fishingwithbillmiller.com](http://www.Fishingwithbillmiller.com) for updates.

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# Anchors Aweigh



**By Scott Glorvigen**

Boat control is critical to fishing success, especially when targeting shallow water. If you're not in the right spot to cast and present baits, or worse, your boat drifts over skittish fish, it's game over.

Through the years, enterprising anglers have deployed paddles, poles, oars, traditional anchors and electric trolling motors in the quest for pinpoint positioning. All have applications, but today, we have an exciting new ally in the battle for boat control, the shallow-water anchor.

Born in the bass market, such devices are quickly shattering the species barrier as anglers everywhere discover their many uses. In a nutshell, shallow-water anchors are mounted on the boat, typically astern, and are capable of quickly deploying a spike to hold the boat in place. When not in use, they fold or retract, thereby keeping a low profile while you navigate from spot to spot.

"The biggest benefit is sheer convenience, both when fishing and for keeping the boat safe while docking, loading, and unloading," says noted freshwater expert and avowed shallow-water anchorman Scott Glorvigen, who's mounted Minn Kota Talons on several boats in his multispecies armada.

On the fishing front, one of the main gains is the ability to thoroughly dissect fishing areas with the utmost efficiency. "When working a break, weedline or flat, I can Talon down and explore every fish-holding facet the spot has to offer. Once I contact fish, I can fine-tune boat position as needed," Glorvigen explains. "In contrast, when you rely on a trolling motor or the wind to push you through an area, you tend to move too fast. And when a fish hits, it's easy to drift out of position, or even over the spot you're trying to cover, blowing the rest of the fish out of the area."

While shallow-water anchors are handy by day, Glorvigen says they're absolute godsend once darkness falls. "If you've ever fished at night, you know the challenges," he laughs. "You can't see anything, the wind and waves push your boat around, and everything becomes ten times more difficult than it is during the day."



On the positive side, night fishing can produce phenomenal action, particularly for trophy fish on pressured waters. Thankfully, shallow-water anchors make fishing the night shift easier and more productive. "They simplify things by holding the boat in position while you're presenting baits and fighting fish," he says.



Case in point: his twin Marty experimented with shallow-water anchor while night fishing muskies last October, and swears he'll never be without them again. "They made such a huge difference, it changed the way he fishes forever," says Glorvigen. "He was able to stay on the windy side of shallow reefs without drifting over them while casting, performing figure-8s and fighting fish up to 50 inches in length."

Shallow-water anchors aren't just for still water, either. "They work great in current, on everything from small flat-bottoms to larger boats," he says, explaining that his favorite riverine applications include anchoring above wing dams and pools, or along current seams. "Since the transom faces up-current, you can fish from the bow, which is convenient. Plus, by using the bow-mount trolling motor in conjunction with a shallow-water anchor, you can work a 360-degree circle without repositioning."



Wherever they're deployed, shallow-water anchors offer big benefits in stealth and efficiency. "Imagine, no more rattling chains, clunking the anchor against the side of the boat, or wrestling with the rope while the boat drifts out of position," says Glorvigen. "Plus, the remote-control options make it easy to raise and lower the spike from anywhere in the boat. The wireless foot switch works great in the bow, while the standard Talon Remote can be worn on a lanyard or mounted on the driver's dashboard, giving you a variety of deployment options."

Besides being breakout fishing tools, they're also great for safely parking your boat at a dock or along shore. "When you pull up to a dock, one of your greatest fears is rubbing the boat against nails or other sharp objects," he says. "With a shallow-water anchor, you can nose up to the beach, drop the spike, and know the boat won't go anywhere. When you multiply the cost of fixing scratches and dents over the life of a boat, a shallow-water anchor pays for itself many times over."

As an added benefit, shallow-water anchors reduce the risk of transporting exotic aquatic species from one lake to the next. "They're so much cleaner than traditional anchors, you're not pulling weeds and muck into the boat, which could spread non-native species," says Glorvigen. "And they keep your boat cleaner in the process."

More good news, there are shallow-water anchors for virtually every fishing boat. For example, Minn Kota recently expanded its Talon offerings, adding 10- and 12-foot spikes to its lineup, which also includes 6- to 8-foot models.

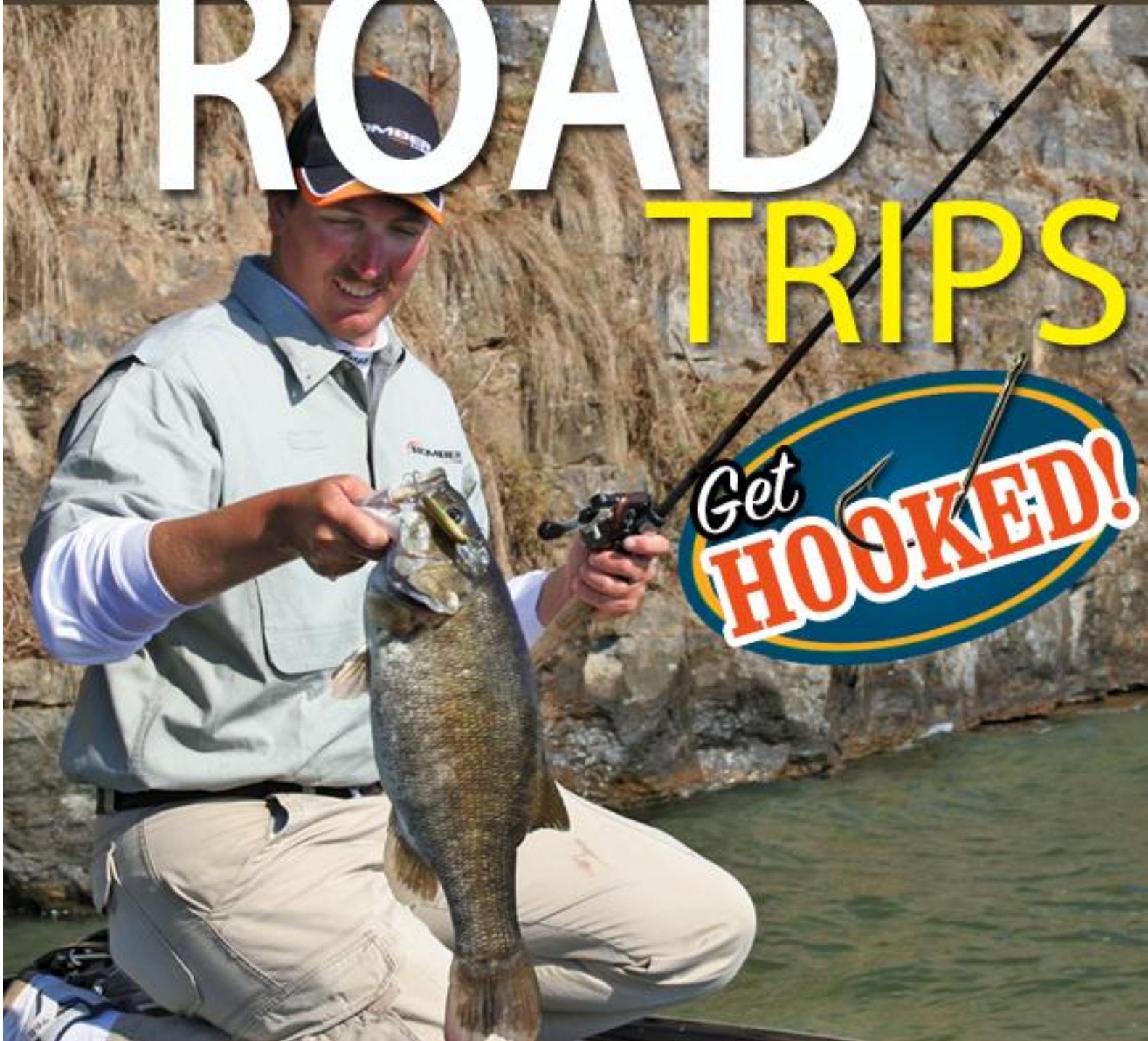
Sporting a three-stage deployment system that left housing height unchanged, the new units also offer a trio of distinct anchoring options. When fishing on sand or mucky substrate, Soft Bottom mode tones down anchoring force and only taps bottom once, to prevent the spike from plunging too deeply into the goo. The Auto-Drive option taps three times, with increasing force, to gain a foothold. And in choppy seas, Rough Water mode performs three Auto-Drive sequences to maintain its grip on bottom.

No matter which size model fits your boat and style of fishing, Glorvigen says once you bolt one to the transom, you'll wonder how you ever got along without it. "Whether you're fishing natural lakes, rivers or reservoirs, shallow-water anchors are a great piece of equipment to have aboard" he says.





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# *Fishing 2014 – 35 Years Of Changes*

**By Bob Jensen**

out. They drew a great picture and it was fun to get such a good look at the structure we were fishing, but the paper needed to be replaced frequently, and it seemed to always be very windy or raining or cold when it needed to be replaced, so much of the time we waited until it wasn't so windy or rainy or cold to replace the paper.

After just a couple of years, LCD (liquid crystal display) units hit the market. They were said to be slow in transmitting a signal when compared to a flasher, but it didn't take long for us to

Recently I shared some memories of a couple of fishing trips with Al and Ron Lindner. At that time I mentioned that I had been in the fishing business for thirty five years. In those thirty five years a lot of changes have taken place in regards to the equipment we use. Let's take a look at some of those changes.

Let's start with boats and motors and the accessories that go with them. In the Midwest, aluminum was the material of choice for boats, and tiller motors were still the way to go. In the early 80's I got my first new rig, a Lund eighteen foot Pro Angler with a fifty horse tiller Mariner motor. It had a flasher sonar on the back, an electric motor on the transom along with splash guards, and a twelve volt, hand control bow mount electric motor and flasher on the bow. That was the boat most of us ran back then, and we wondered how a boat could ever get better. They did get better, and more expensive. If I remember correctly I sold that boat after a year of use for six thousand dollars.

Speaking of sonar units: Most of us only ran flashers back then because that's all there were. There were a few video units out, but they were expensive and fragile. Then paper graphs came

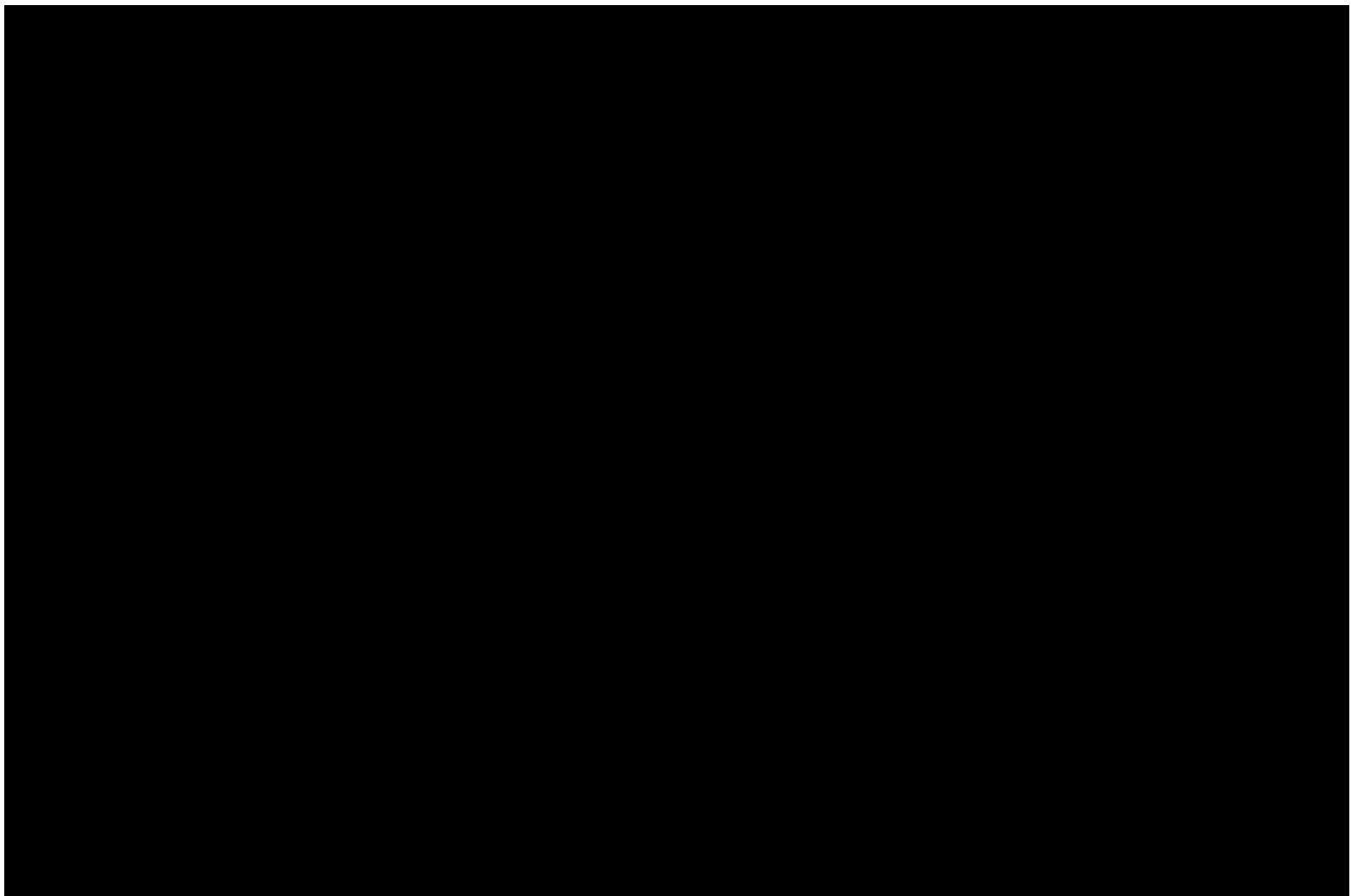
realize that LCD's were the future. They didn't have GPS or mapping or any of the stuff that's now commonplace, but they sure helped us catch more fish.

When I first started fishing as a youngster steel or fiberglass rods were the deal. Then in the late 70's I think it was, this amazing material called graphite was introduced to rods. It was expensive and brittle, but those rods were so sensitive. Skyline was a big name graphite rod manufacturer. The rods were clubby, but back then, if you had a Skyline rod, you really had something. Most of those rods cost about seventy bucks. A seventy dollar rod today is so much better than those first seventy dollar rods.

Selecting a fishing line was a much simpler thing back in the day because there weren't many choices. You pretty much chose either a walleye line or a bass line. Walleye lines were thinner in diameter, bass lines were tougher. We didn't have to think too much about which line we were going to use, and that wasn't such a bad thing.

There is no doubt that we're fortunate to have such good equipment available to us today, but looking back at the changes in the past thirty five years, I wonder what the world of fishing equipment will look like in thirty five years.

To see all the newest episodes of Fishing the Midwest television, visit [www.fishingthemidwest.com](http://www.fishingthemidwest.com). Join us at [www.Facebook.com/fishingthemidwest.com](https://www.facebook.com/fishingthemidwest.com)





# FINAL ICE



# soft as a baby insect's bottom

By Mark Strand

## Plastics In Modern Ice Fishing, Part 1

Some of what you're about to hear, if you have followed Dave Genz and his ice fishing beliefs, might not sound like the father of modern ice fishing. He's finding a soft spot in his heart for soft plastics.

This from a guy who has come right out and said, "I'm a live bait fisherman."

Genz's belief system comes from what he sees and catches while out there on the ice – almost every day, all winter long, on an annual tour that stretches east and west, from the southern fringes of the Ice Belt to the True North. You can't blame somebody for developing confidence in fresh maggots barely pierced through the fat end so clear juices stream from them and they wiggle on the hook. Fish readily eat such things, and they haven't stopped eating them just because Genz believes more strongly in soft plastics.

No, the evolution of Dave's take on plastics says more about his open mind, inquisitive nature, and the development of materials and processes being used to make the latest, more realistic fakes.

Here's the story of how all this came about.

Actually, it was the combination of Genz's wide travels and time spent observing good anglers using the latest plastics that popped his eyes open to the possibilities. In addition to his own fishing, Dave attends a lot of top-shelf ice fishing competitions, often as the weigh-in emcee. Rather than sit in the trailer all day, he tools around on his snowmobile and studies the anglers. He knows them and they know him, and there is a continuous conversation going on.







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“Spending the last 20 years around these tournament fishermen,” says Genz, “is what made me realize that during these tournaments, you usually don’t have the luxury of moving 10 feet away and drilling a new hole to look for biters. It gets crowded out there on the good spots.

“When these guys are restricted to staying in one place and trying to get those fish to bite, a lot of them put down a piece of plastic. These are the same fish that didn’t bite the lure they had down there, that was baited with live bait.

“Color becomes much more important (when using plastics and trying to tempt the same fish), along with the speed of your movements, and the shape of the plastic. You might drop something down and bang, you catch one. Then it slows back down and you have to continue to go through your arsenal.”

All the old rules still apply, such as hoping you can get over a good hole, the edges of the best cover, the place fish most want to be at the moment. And

After years of observing top tournament competitors and some serious time sharing the ice with Jamie Vladyka, Dave Genz has given soft plastics an increasing role in his own fishing. When dandy crappies like this readily take the bait, it’s easy to gain confidence. (Image: [www.davegenz.com](http://www.davegenz.com))





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Vladyka for helping him view the use of plastics for ice fishing as a different matter than using those same baits in open water.



“The light bulb (about how and when to use plastics) went on with me last year,” remembers Genz, talking winter 2012-13, “when I was out there with Jamie. I had always worked hard to thread plastics on perfectly straight, so they hung outward, horizontally (parallel to the hook shank). But we learned that from fishing them in the summer, when we cast it out and wind it back in. That’s how plastics look best when you’re fishing that way.

“In the winter, you drop it straight down the hole, so the movement is more up and down than across. The only ‘across’ we get is by the size of the hole. Jamie got me hooking the plastics so they’re tails up or tails down, so when you work it, it looks more like it’s swimming or kicking up or down. It’s more realistic than having it swim around in circles down there. It was Jamie who put that thought in my head.”

Really interesting stuff, and enough to get your head swimming around in circles. Next time, we’ll bring Jamie into the conversation and get his detailed take on how he presents plastics.

Note: Dave Genz, known as Mr. Ice Fishing, was the primary driver of the modern ice fishing revolution. He has been enshrined in the National Fresh Water Fishing Hall of Fame and Minnesota Fishing Hall of Fame for his contributions to the sport. For more fishing tips and to order his new info-packed book, Ice Revolution, go to [www.davegenz.com](http://www.davegenz.com).





# Electronic Device Advice on the Ice

By Mark Strand

*Dave Genz talks electronics for modern ice fishing.* Since the days that Dave Genz tinkered with using early flashers in the same hole he was fishing out of, there have been many years of electronic revolution and evolution. So where does that leave us, as ice anglers? We sat down with Genz, on a rare break from his “fish pretty much every day all winter” program, and asked how he uses the latest electronic devices to help him find and catch fish through the ice.

In addition to noticing the eye-popping bluegill that Dave Genz is holding, check out his setup, as described in this article. The gear is a big part of Genz’s Winter Fishing System. He mounts a flasher, GPS, and underwater camera on the dash of his snowmobile, and often fishes seated on the sled. When he sets up a Fish Trap or kneels on the ice, going hole to hole, he uses a second Vexilar rigged in a Genz Box, as shown at lower left. (Image: [www.davegenz.com](http://www.davegenz.com))

He spends more time out there than anybody. He travels farther than anybody. He has a technical and creative mind. We hope you pick up some ideas by studying his system.

Q: There have been a lot of advancements in electronic equipment since you started modernizing the sport. As a practical matter, what is the state of

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the art, in your mind, when it comes to ice fishing electronics?

Genz: I use a GPS all the time, with the map chips. I have a quality lake map in there if it's available for the lake I'm on at the moment. That's what lets me find the places I want to drill holes and start looking (for fish).

I seldom use a handheld GPS, because I find I struggle to look at a small screen and locate where I am and see the big picture. So I like a larger screen, maybe 5 inches or so. I would even take a larger one, but it gets impractical to carry it around.

I mount my GPS on the dash of my snowmobile. Then I can navigate easily while I'm driving across the lake.

On the dash, I actually have three devices mounted – the GPS, a Vexilar (flasher - pictured: FL X28), and a camera (underwater - pictured: Vexilar Fish Phone Camera). One of my favorite positions for fishing is sitting on the seat of the snowmobile, and wearing Ice Armor lets me sit there (outside) on most days. The auger is on a rack on the front, and Fish Traps are mounted on racks on the front and back. It truly is my winter bass boat, the latest version of what I had in mind even in the early days.

I keep another Vexilar, rigged in a Genz Box, so I can hole hop or use it inside of a fish house. That's my system.

Q: How do you use the GPS? How do you decide where to drill holes? How do you then look over spots, so you know whether to stay or keep moving?



Genz: One of the big things is to find depressions in flats. Sometimes it's only a couple feet deeper than what's around it, or maybe it's 5 feet deeper. On those huge flats, those are the key areas. This is where those new maps, with the 1-foot or 5-foot contours, really shine.

In a bay or on any big flat, I want to know where the deepest parts are. That's where I'm going to drill some holes. And it helps me find the weedbeds, so I can find the green weeds. Just finding weeds from the summer isn't enough, because they might all be brown and down.

Q: So you find the depth you

want to check. How do you discover those other things, such as the state of the weeds?

Genz: You have to drill holes. It still comes down to drilling holes. I use the camera to look for weeds, and see what shape they're in.

Q: And you look for fish with the camera?

Genz: Not usually. If I see fish on the camera I don't look away, but the flasher is still the best tool for catching fish through the ice. When you're fishing multiple holes, it's so much faster to go hole to hole and drop the (flasher) transducer down there and read instantly everything that's down there.



Q: You've also said that, even when you're using a camera that you like the flasher to be running at the same time, largely because it sees farther out to the side. You've called it the early warning signal. When you see fish show up on the flasher, then you shift your gaze to the camera screen to watch the fish arrive at the bait, so you can study its reaction to the presentation. Do you like using the flasher when searching for fish because it sees farther out to the side than a camera typically does?

Genz: That's part of it, but again it comes down to speed. When you have a whole lake to check out, you don't get it done if you take time to lower the camera down every hole. I also adjust the Vexilar depending on what I'm doing.

Q: What do you mean?

Genz: I love the new 9-degree transducer. It's naturally a narrow beam transducer, but it's designed so that when you turn up the gain, you're reading the lobes of the cone angle. (The sonar signal) is not just a straight upside down cone. When you turn it up, you can read those lobes, so it lets you see farther out to the side, even though it's a narrow beam transducer. When I'm in search mode, I turn the gain up, so I can see a wider area (in practical terms, this means you have the potential to see more fish, out farther to the side). When I'm in fishing mode I turn the gain down, to decrease the amount of side coverage. Then you know fish are close by you when they show up on the display.

Q: So you use the camera quite a bit, to see what's down there with your own two eyes, but you tend not to use it when you're in high speed search mode. Is that accurate?



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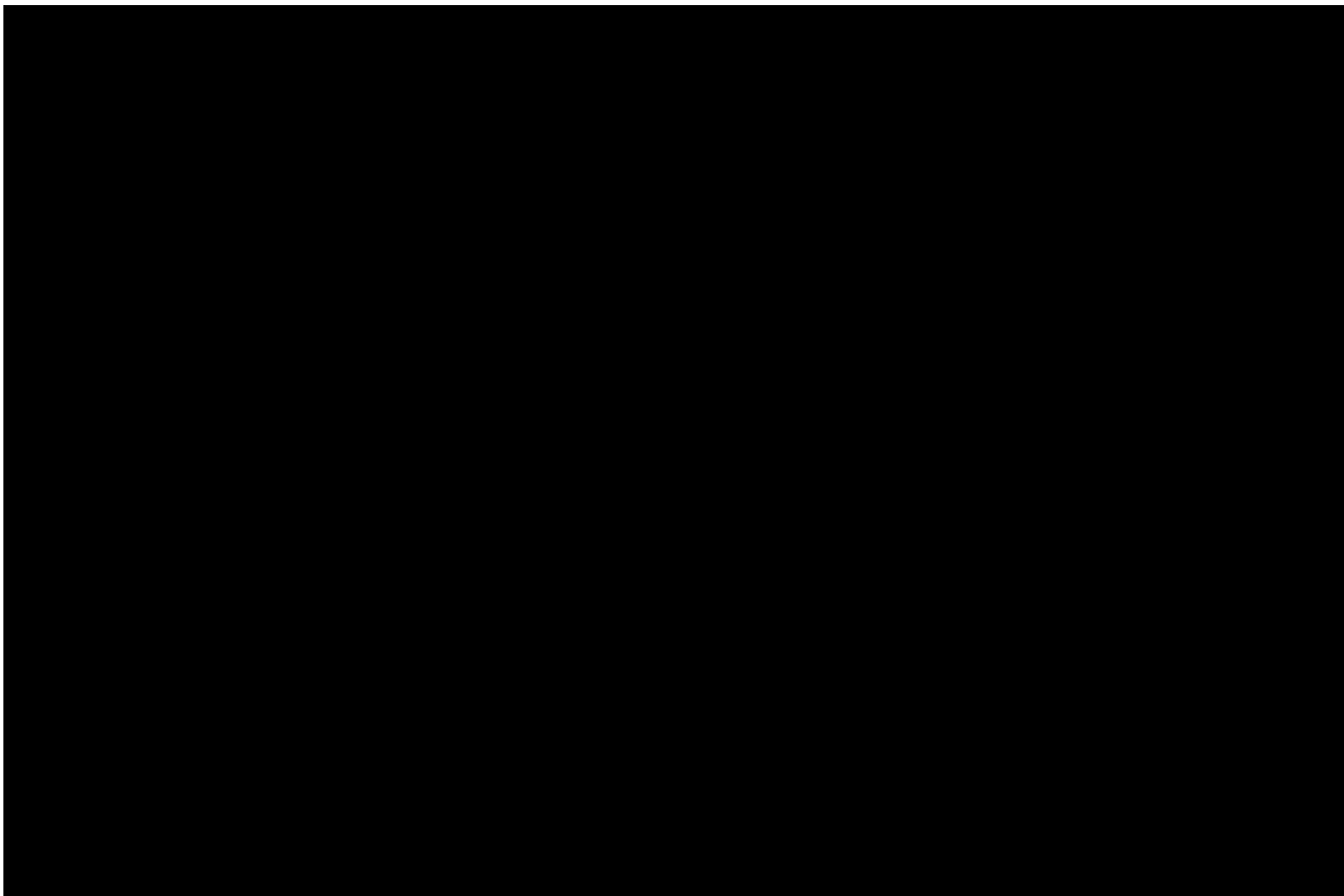
Genz: The flasher is by far the number one tool. If I could only have one, it would definitely be my Vexilar. The GPS is amazing technology, too. It cuts down the amount of time it takes to locate fish. Then the Vexilar cuts down the time it takes to catch fish, and probably makes the difference between catching the fish and not catching it.

Q: What about the idea of using a camera and flasher together? Do you still do that?

Genz: Yes, and it's fun to do. Another thing that does is helps you learn to read your flasher. You watch the jig on the flasher and camera together, and you realize you can see the worms squirming on your hook. You wonder why the line of your jig is fluttering (on the flasher), you look at the camera screen and see the worms are moving down there, and realize you can actually see that on the Vexilar.

You see fish come in on the flasher and then watch them on the camera, and go back and forth between the two and you really get a sense for what it means to understand the mood of the fish by watching it on the flasher. I've always called the Vexilar my mood indicator, because I could tell what kind of reaction I was getting from the fish, depending on how I'm jigging it. That's still the same, and it's one of the most important skills you can have.

Note: Dave Genz, known as Mr. Ice Fishing, was the primary driver of the modern ice fishing revolution. He has been enshrined in the National Fresh Water Fishing Hall of Fame and Minnesota Fishing Hall of Fame for his contributions to the sport. For more fishing tips and to order his new info-packed book, Ice Revolution, go to [www.davegenz.com](http://www.davegenz.com).





Today's anglers are more mobile than ever before. Destination fisheries off the beaten path are enticing the curiosity of more and more anglers and this is true for ice anglers as well. Have rod, will travel. Anglers are exploring remote lakes on the Canadian Shield and driving considerable distances to reach water that has incredible fishing potential with light fishing pressure. Such a destination fishery that continues to attract attention for big fish potential is Fort Peck Reservoir in eastern Montana.



# The Final Frontier For Fishing

**By Carl Madison**

Fort Peck Reservoir is a massive impoundment on the Missouri River that is noted for producing huge walleyes, northern pike and lake trout for ice anglers. Walleyes over twelve pounds are possible. Abundant pike are found that can often measure over forty inches in length. Lake trout over twenty pounds are also a possibility. The main forage that drives these massive predators is ciscoes.

Eastern Montana is very remote and the remoteness is what gives Fort Peck Reservoir a certain mystique.

There are motels available in Glasgow, Fort Peck and Jordan but there is little to no development near the lake. Cabins are available at Rock Creek and Hell Creek. Hard core ice anglers who love big fish and a sense of adventure have fallen in love with Fort Peck.

One such angler is Jason Mitchell. Mitchell has fished Fort Peck numerous times and cites that the opportunities for big fish is the reason to make this body of water a destination but you have to do your homework. "Ice conditions can vary dramatically so we often use ATV's and be very diligent about checking ice thickness. There are springs, current areas and even gas pockets that can form bad ice especially near the dam. We often fish the Dry Arm area but Hell Creek is also a popular area." A great resource for checking ice conditions along with fishing reports is online at [www.missouririver.visitmt.com](http://www.missouririver.visitmt.com).

# *Buckhorn*

## *Lodge & Retreat*

*Fort Peck,  
Montana*

Mitchell explains that walleyes can often be found on classic points and offshore humps that intersect deep water. Productive depths often range between twenty and forty feet of water with much of the action often taking place early in the morning, late in

the evening or after dark. Lake Trout can also be found nearby and can show up anywhere from depths that range between twenty and sixty feet of water. In fact many lake trout are caught incidentally by walleye anglers.

Montana regulations allow for anglers to use six lines per licensed angler so this is a tip up anglers dream. Big lake trout have been known to completely spool tip ups but when you put a large chub or shiner down in the water, you have a realistic chance of catching a giant lake trout, walleye or pike. Anglers often spread tip ups across points and structure and jig in some holes with spoons tipped with a minnow. Large flutter spoons (pictured: spoons from Talon Fishing) are extremely popular. Mitchell has seen some situations where anglers catch big trout, walleyes and pike off the same location.

For focusing on trophy pike, Mitchell adds that Fort Peck might be one of the best bets in the lower 48 states for catching consistent fish over forty inches right now and these fish can be targeted most of the winter. For pike, check the primary and secondary points along the shoreline in the larger bays. Anglers often hang oily dead bait like herring or smelt below tip ups.

If you have a quest for finding big fish, Fort Peck provides that opportunity. Anglers will have to do their homework and be prepared as this fishery can be remote. Mitchell has explained that he has fished this body of water for a





week and seen very few other anglers. “We might see one or two other groups of anglers all week and they might be a mile or more away.” Cell phone coverage is also spotty and you are going to be alone on a big body of water so plan accordingly and fish with a group of anglers that know where you are.

This adventure destination is not for every ice angler but for the anglers who love to figure out fish locations and patterns on their own and have the opportunity to hook up with the fish of a lifetime, Fort Peck is special water. “I just love fishing this body of water, there is going to be nobody to hold your hand. The roads can often be in poor shape for getting on the lake and you always want to make sure you fill up with gas when you see a gas station,” explains Mitchell. Fort Peck however is one of Mitchell’s favorite bodies of water to fish. “What makes Fort Peck rugged and remote keeps anglers away and that is why the fishing is so good. If the roads were paved and there were a lot of people, this just wouldn’t be the same.”



## **I am more than a weekend warrior.**

I’m also a dad. Soon my kids will be old enough to be out here with me. That’s why I switched to lead-free weights and biodegradable baits. I pick up and recycle used fishing line. I never dump unused live bait into my lake. It’s SAFE Angling, and it will ensure that my kids enjoy a clean and healthy lake. Now I’m more than a weekend warrior.

## **I am a steward.**



Fort Peck Reservoir is a twelve hour drive from Minneapolis and a thirteen hour drive from Denver, smack dab in the middle of nowhere but if you love to fish, love adventure and especially love big fish, this part of the world is definitely worth the trip.



# Upward and Downward, with Realism

By Mark Strand

## Plastics In Modern Ice Fishing, Part 1



When we left off last time, you might have been surprised to learn that Dave Genz has become increasingly confident in soft plastics – and finds himself fishing with them more often (without giving up his beloved live bait). Several factors are at work, the most important of which is improved plastics.

They're softer and more realistic, meaning they look and feel better to the fish. With the options available these days, you can strive to match what fish are currently feeding on, in terms of size, shape and color. Watching talented tournament anglers pluck pressured fish

Vermont angler Jamie Vladyka with a bluegill tempted by a soft plastic. In this article, Vladyka shares his top two go-to rigs – one for reasonably active fish, one for finicky fish. Dave Genz gives Jamie a lot of credit for helping him refine his own approach to soft plastics.

(Image:

[www.davegenz.com](http://www.davegenz.com))



off crowded spots, Genz gradually deepened his appreciation for the potential of plastics. Then, last winter, while fishing in Vermont with Jamie Vladyka, the “light bulb came on.”

The refined approach to plastics has to do with the fact that ice fishing is a matter of ‘dangling,’ more than anything else. You’re dangling baits downward and bringing them upward, striving to make them seem real even though they don’t travel outward very far.

Vladyka’s typical approach is to thread plastics on so they assume a ‘tails up’ posture. Rather than the plastic hanging horizontally on the hook shank, the tail (or tails) is angled upward.

“Jamie is the one who got me thinking this way,” credits Genz. “When the tails are upward like that, when you work it, it seems like it’s swimming up or down. You can go down and tap the bottom and make it look like this creature is swimming up out of the bottom. It’s more realistic than if it’s swimming around in circles by the bottom.”

When asked about his overall philosophy on plastics, Vladyka talks about matching the hatch, in the same

way fly anglers do.

“We have spikes, wax worms, things like that,” he says, “and they catch fish, for sure. But that’s not what the fish are feeding on. With plastics, we’re matching what the fish are actually eating. Ultimately, we can hit the full color spectrum, including glow, with plastics. And we can scent the plastic so it smells like what the fish are eating.”

One area of intense study for Jamie has been what’s swimming and crawling around down there, and what he sees in fish stomachs. When he keeps fish to eat, he always checks what they’ve been eating. And he spends time with an underwater camera, to see what he can see in the prey department.

“I use (his underwater camera) to see what’s down there,” says Vladyka. “I go into the weeds and study what’s attached to the weeds. I put on a big jig and rip weeds to see what jumps off of



them. I'm looking to see what those fish are there for. If crappies are feeding on pinheads or smelt fry or baby bluegills or some kind of insects, I try to figure that out. If I can match what they're eating, in size and color, then our success rate goes up.

"I'm not saying you can't catch fish with other things, but if we can match, we do much better." (He says "our success" because he leads guide trips, at [www.fishhounds.net](http://www.fishhounds.net).)

By studying what's available to the fish at the moment, and thinking about how those prey items move in the water, he feels confident about appealing to the fish.

### Jig as Delivery Mechanism

Vladyka thinks of the jig as simply the "delivery mechanism" for the plastic, the thing that gets the plastic up and down during trips to the potential fish zone. Even for bigger fish, he tends to use light jigs (especially in shallow water), so the plastic is given a chance to maximize its appeal. "I love tungsten jigs," he says, "because they're small for their weight and they get you down there quickly. They can bump down through weeds really well, too. I use them all the time."

When fish are extra finicky and the bite's tough to figure out, Jamie will downsize his delivery mechanism even more than usual, often using jigs like the smallest size of either the Drop or Epoxy Drop jig (Clam jigs that he's most familiar with and pictured on prior page).

"Sometimes I use the plastic on a very light jig," he says, "to slow the fall rate and keep the bait almost neutrally buoyant down there. When fish are extra finicky, they might come up to a bait and just blow on it. If a fish blows on your bait and it stays in position (because it's heavy) they won't bite it. But if a fish blows on it and it moves around in the water, the fish thinks it's something real that belongs down there."

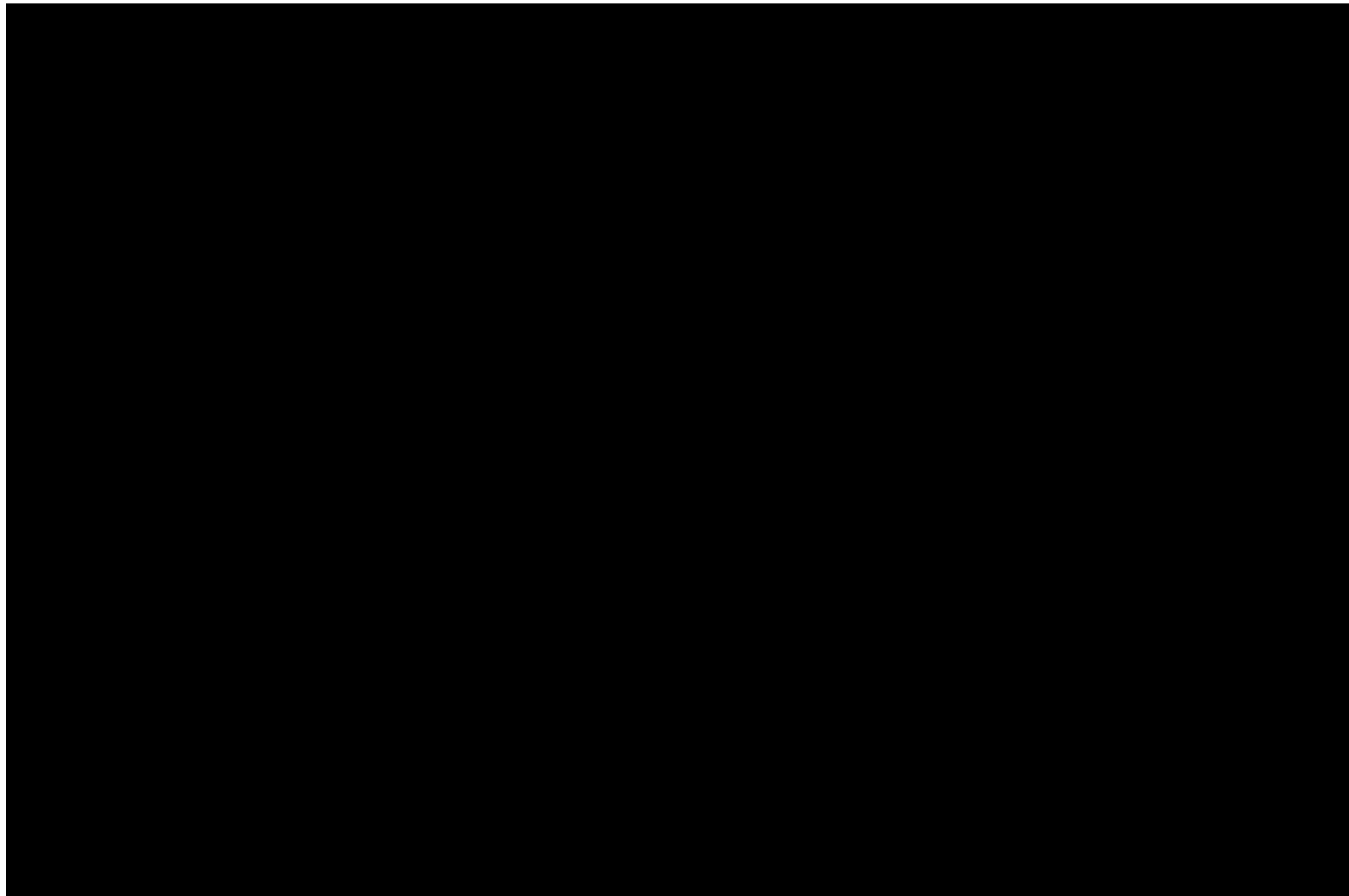


### Presentation Approach

We decided to try something, in an effort to help you catch more fish even if you don't go in-depth on underwater prey study. We asked Vladyka to give us his two favorite setups and presentations, one for generally active fish and one for finicky, tough-bite fish.

"Typically, I start off





with a small tungsten horizontal jig and a plastic I can swim,” he said. “Color depends on where I’m fishing and what I’m fishing for. I usually start with a dark color.”

He likes a long (30-inch) rod for swimming plastics – just the rod, no spring bobber. His go-to plastic on this rig (as he tries for fish he believes will be generally cooperative) is a slender worm-style with a narrow paddle tail called the Spiiki. “First thing I usually do is bite about a quarter inch off, to shorten it up a bit,” says Vladyka. “That allows it to match up better with the small jig, so it hangs more horizontal, rather than the paddle tail hanging down too much. When you shorten the package up, you’re more apt to get the hook in the fish’s mouth better, instead of just the tail.”

As for how he works it: “I love swimming plastics. I try to be a happy little minnow swimming around down there, not in a straight line. I’m usually fishing outside or sitting on my snow machine, and I work the full hole, side to side, front to back, and the whole water column. I try to mimic what a minnow or tadpole would do down there. I work it as much left and right in the hole as up and down.”

So how about when the bite is tough?

When fish are reluctant to take much of anything, Vladyka uses a shorter rod with a spring-bobber on it. A lightweight jig is matched with his namesake plastic, the Jamei, featuring thin twin tails (that he angles upward most of the time) and a thicker body adorned with tentacles.

“That’s my go-to finessing bait,” he says. “If you can hold the jig almost completely still but keep the tails moving, that’s finessing in my book. That doesn’t mean I don’t move it around, because I do. I always tell my clients, ‘be the bait’ so they think about what it’s doing down there.

“How the fish responds on my flasher dictates what I do. If you slow down, but don’t stop, that might be just the right speed to keep the fish interested. I try to slow it down but keep it moving enough so that the fish reacts and tries to get it before it gets too far away.

“If the fish just sit there and won’t do much, I try to barely move it, just enough so the jig doesn’t spin. I want those hairs barely moving. Then I count on the fish putting it in their mouth to see what it is. A lot of times, they take it the first time and just hold it there, but the hook isn’t in their mouth. If it feels real to them, and smells real, there’s a good chance, when they take it the second time, they get it all the way in their mouth.”

Modern supple plastics have a huge advantage in this regard, says Vladyka, but it also means they’re often not as durable. “Fish will tear them up,” he says, “but I think that’s a good tradeoff for catching them.”

Indeed, says Genz, he has witnessed Jamie’s plastics system catch all types and sizes of fish, from panfish to bass, pike and walleyes.

“When you get it all right,” says Genz, “the right cadence, the right plastic, you discover the hook is way down in the fish’s mouth, where you need a disgorger to get it out. They’re eating the bait.”

In all ice fishing, you get upward and downward, but you mostly wish for outward. But the outward appearance of your bait, now that can be extremely realistic. And when it’s backed up by realistic feel, then you got something. Like a fish on the end of your line.

Note: Dave Genz, known as Mr. Ice Fishing, was the primary driver of the modern ice fishing revolution. He has been enshrined in the National Fresh Water Fishing Hall of Fame and Minnesota Fishing Hall of Fame for his contributions to the sport. For more fishing tips and to order his new info-packed book, Ice Revolution, go to [www.davegenz.com](http://www.davegenz.com).







**Recycled Fish**

**We Are  
Stewards.**

