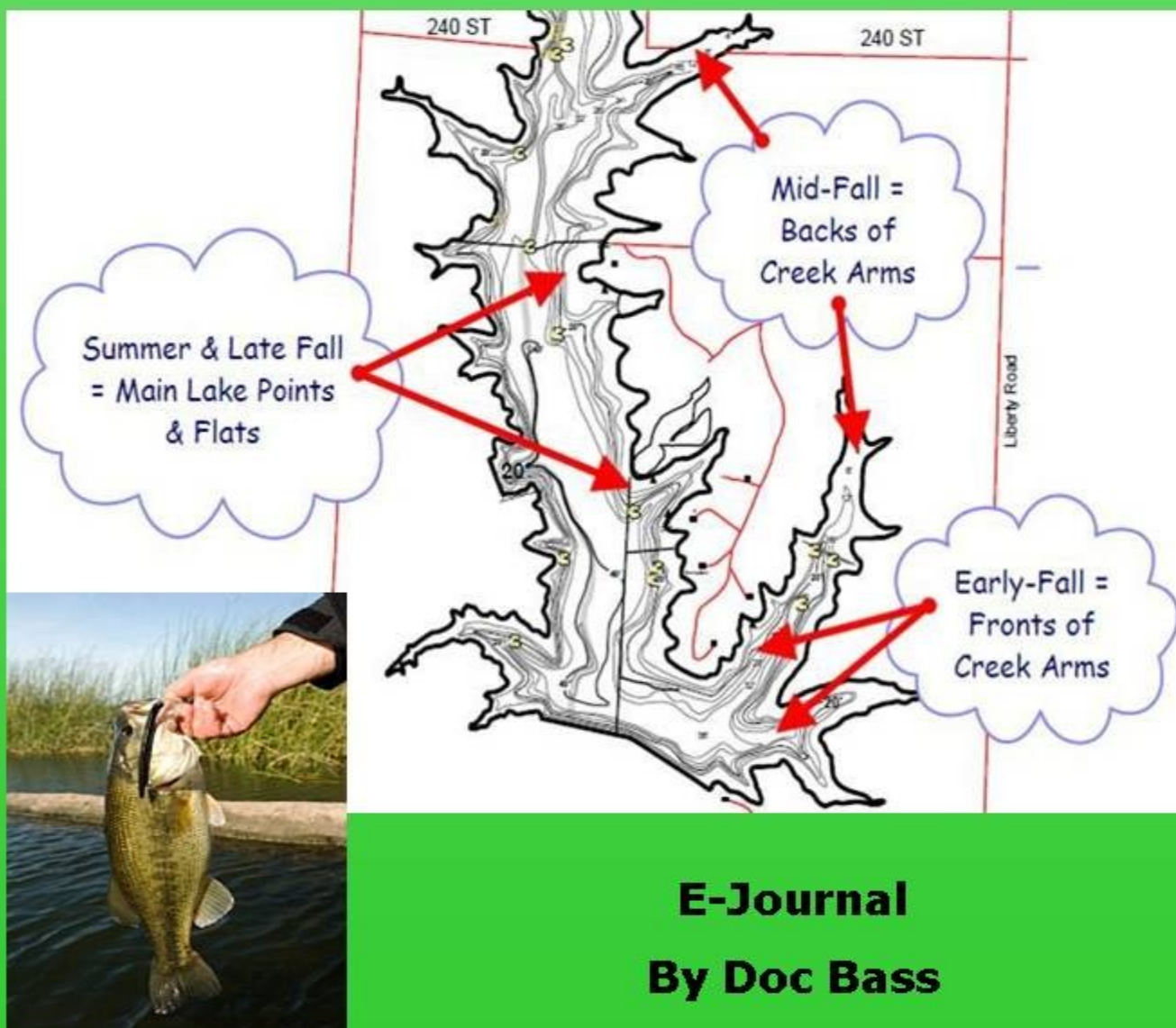


Bass Fishing Log & Tips... 2010



<http://bassfishingtips-tactics.com>

A Bass Fishing Tips & Tactics Publication

Bass Fishing Tips & Tactics' Goal:

Provide useful and actionable educational material to those wishing to enhance their knowledge and improve their fishing skills ...

Bass Fishing Log & Tips ... 2010!

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Note: This journal is optimized for viewing on a computer screen, but it is organized so you can also print it out, assemble it in a loose-leaf notebook and start keeping a live journal this bass fishing season. Since the text is optimized for screen viewing, the type maybe larger than normally found in printed books.

Disclaimer

This report has been written to provide information that will help you learn some alternative Fall bass fishing strategies. Every effort has been made to make this report as useful and accurate as possible however there may be mistakes in text or content.

This report should be used as a guide – not as the ultimate source of information. The purpose of this e-book report is to educate. The author and publisher do not warrant that the information contained in this report is fully complete and shall not be responsible for any errors or omissions. The author and publisher shall have neither liability nor responsibility to any person or entity with respect to any loss or damage caused or alleged to be caused directly or indirectly by this e-book report.

Bass Tip #1:

Springtime = Location, Location, Location ...

And when searching for ice-out and early spring bass, it really is about location.

Though most of us will take what we can get when it comes to accessing bodies of water, early season bass fishing success is definitely increased on smaller bodies of water since they are often more protected and water temps rise fairly rapidly.

With water temperatures still in the 30's and 40's, most fish (including bass) will often seek out warming sections of the lake or pond. Since the Sun is still rising in the southern sky, coves and cuts on the northern shore (especially those with darker bottoms) offering protection from the wind are often bass magnets.

Add in rocks, stumps, logs and other types of solid cover and the magnetic character increases greatly!

Here is one of my favorite ice-out/early spring bass fishing haunts with several key areas highlighted with red arrows:



Once you've located areas with these key fish-attracting elements, it's time to turn your attention to selecting the right kind of bass tackle for ice-out conditions.

My Bass Fishing Log



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NUMBER OF HOURS FISHED		BEST HOURS
FISHING PARTNERS		WAYPOINTS

FISH SPECIES CAUGHT:

NUMBER	SIZES	LURES & BAIT USED	NOTES

SPECIFIC FISH RELATED NOTES

WEATHER & WATER CONDITIONS				
AIR TEMP	WATER TEMP	WATER LEVEL	CLARITY	BAROMETER TREND

SKIES	M	A	E	PRECIPITATION	M	A	E	WIND	M	A	E
SUNNY				NONE				NONE			
PARTLY CLOUDY				RAIN - LIGHT				VERY LIGHT (< 5 knots)			
MOSTLY CLOUDY				RAIN - HEAVY				LIGHT (5-10 knots)			
CLOUDY				SNOW				MEDIUM (<10-15 knots)			
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MISCELLANEOUS NOTES		
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Bass Tip #2:

What's in Your Early Spring Bass Fishing Arsenal?

In many of the waters we fish just after ice-out, the water is fairly to very clear and shallow vegetation almost non-existent. Fortunately this means our rod and reel selection can focus on using outfits that can handle fairly light lines (no more than 10 lb. test with 8 lb. often the norm for me). A medium action spinning or even lighter baitcasting combo can be just what the doctor ordered this time of year.

As far as lure selection goes, I usually keep things fairly basic with a small to medium sized selection of the following baits:

- Hard-baits including shallow to deep running crankbaits, lip-less crankbaits and jerkbaits, mainly in color patterns matching local minnow forage (though I always include some gold patterns in my personal arsenal);
- Single spin spinnerbaits and in-line spinners (matching color patterns again to local forage and water clarity conditions);
- Hair jigs and dressings (both plastic and pork); &
- 4" and 5" stickbaits (like the Yamamoto Senko) in both light and darker hues with 2/0 and 3/0 EWG worm hooks (for Texas Rig) and Octopus hooks to rig them wacky-style.

This assortment of baits will let you cover most ice-out and early spring bass fishing situations and provide plenty of early bass catching action to boot!



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Bass Tip #3:

Late Winter/Early Spring Spinnerbait Tip – Slow Rolling for Big Bass

A skillful bass angler, equipped with the right tackle and knowledge can take advantage of this pattern by presenting a slow, thumping lure through cover and right into the strike zone of these very hungry finny creatures.

The Right Stuff – Nitty-Gritty Details of Slow Rolling for Bass

- **Rod, Reel & Line Combo** – The most common rod and reel combo set-up for slow rolling spinnerbaits includes a 6.5-foot to 7-foot medium heavy action, trigger stick (casting rod) and a quality baitcasting reel spooled with 12 to 20 lb. fluorocarbon line. The fluorocarbon line combines minimal stretch with great sensitivity and ultra-low visibility which can be important in the clearer waters of early spring.
- **The Bait** – Any spinnerbait is fine so long as it is a single spinnerbait attached to a light wire arm with a quality ball bearing swivel. Lure weight and blade size varies with the water depth being fished (3/4 oz. lures with larger blades for water deeper than 15 feet; 1/2 and 3/8 oz. with medium blades for 5 to 15 foot depths; and 1/4 oz with a smaller blade (Vibra-Bug) for water < 5 feet deep). Typically, nickel/white blades are used for clear water, gold for stained and fluorescent painted or copper blades for dirty water. Spinnerbait head and skirt colors vary depending on water clarity and type of forage present.
- **The Retrieve** – Make long casts across structure being fished letting the bait flutter to the bottom. Once bottom contact is made, start a slow, steady retrieve such that the bait remains in contact with the cover. It sometimes pays to experiment with the retrieve so try either a yo-yo or stop and go variation to determine the mood of the bass.
- **Structure and Cover** – Obviously varies with the body of water but look for deep water wintering areas at the base of moderately sloped banks or points connecting with shallow spawning areas. Start working the deeper sections of the structure first then fish the bait up the slope towards the shallows until contact with bass is made.

Taking the time to learn how to slow roll spinnerbaits through cover will allow you to literally drop your offering on the nose of some truly huge and very hungry bass looking to “power-up” before spawning begins ...

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Bass Tip #4:

Mindset and Early Spring Bass Fishing Success

If you are anything like me and have grown impatient waiting for the first days of **early spring bass fishing** opportunities, you've already been out in the yard re-honing those casting skills (even with the strange looks and comments from your neighbors).

Even with many of the potential mechanical kinks worked out, many of us struggle on those first outings of the new season and miss more than a few of the subtle strikes of the still sluggish bass.

So what can we do to shorten the time it takes to “get back into the bass catching groove”? Elementary my dear bassing friend ...

Focus, Concentrate and Analyze!

I am sure you've all heard TV fishing celebs and the bass pros talk about it but ...

1. Focusing on the environment around you plus;
2. Concentrating on the details of your efforts then
3. Analyzing the conditions around your activities ... means better results!

These three factors allow you to tune into the environment and “attitude” (active, neutral or inactive) of the bass; determine how you need to adjust your approach/presentation and ultimately do more early spring bass catching rather than just bass fishing.

How does this work?

Basically you want to learn something from every cast you make. When you get each strike ... stop, think, and analyze the situation around it:

- What part of the lake were you fishing?
- What type, color and size lure were you using?
- How fast and deep were you retrieving the lure?
- What was the water clarity and temperature?
- How did you approach the cover (sunlit or shady side, etc.)?
- How hard did the bass strike the lure?

The bottom line ... utilizing these key factors will help you get back into the **early spring bass fishing** game sooner and result in your catching both more and bigger bass faster!

My Bass Fishing Log



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Bass Tip #5:

Buzzbaits for Smallmouth Bass!

Here's a great tip to both help catch more smallmouths this spring and explosive strikes at the same time ...

It's definitely a little slice of springtime smallmouth fishing paradise!

The technique involves fishing buzzbaits for smallmouth bass once the water temp approaches 50 degrees and continues right through the spring season.

The pattern is actually very straight forward and targets staging smallies as they either prepare to invade the shallow spawning areas or are starting to make the transition back to deeper water.

Position the boat along the first major breakline (usually in 8 to 12 feet of water) then fish the buzzbait parallel to the break and stopping to fan-cast the bait over the shallows every so often.

Experiment with the cadence of the retrieve and find what entices them, the hold onto your rod and enjoy the fight!



Classic Buzzbaits!

My Bass Fishing Log



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Bass Tip #6:

Bass Fishing Lures for All Seasons – Tube Baits

Once you learn the different ways tube lures can be fished, you will be rewarded with strings of largemouth, smallmouth and spotted bass your friend's will envy!

Tube Bait Designs: Different Strokes for Different Folks

There are a large number of tube designs available and some of them are even combined with the shape of baitfish that the bass eat naturally such as the salamanders or crayfish. Other tube lure options have been designed to be used specifically for fishing conditions calling for techniques such as flipping, pitching, Carolina rigging, and even finesse fishing situations.

Beyond the lures themselves, there have been numerous other types of accessory tackle items also created for use with tubes including specialized hooks, scent holders, jig heads and rattles.

Fishing the Tube Bait for Bass

The beauty of bass fishing tubes is due to the fact they allow the angler to fish any depth of water ranging from the very shallow areas down to depths exceeding 20 feet. Though I commonly fish tubes using yo-yo and swimming retrieves in deep water, I also love fishing tubes in the shallows. One of my favorite shallow water techniques for fishing tubes involves rigging the bait on a "Texas-rig" style jig-head then skipping the bait under over-hanging brush and branches along the bank.

This technique is great during the warmer periods of the day when the Sun is high in the sky and has produced both great numbers of bass as well as some true lunkers to boot!

Tubes are great for this approach because they don't get hung up easily and the bass react aggressively since the bait just invaded their tangle infested haven. One of the tricks, however, is learning how to cast directly into these areas accurately without hanging up so the bass gets surprised quickly. Making a successful cast will make a big difference in how or if the bass respond to your bait.

Rigging a Tube Bait

There are several ways to fish with a tube.

Rigging on a Jighead With Exposed Hook

The most basic method of fishing the tube is to insert a jighead (usually a tube or darter head) into the open end of the lure then sliding the head all the way to the front. Once the jig hits the head of the tube, push the jighead eyelet through the top of the tube bait then tie to your line. It is best used in open water away from surface and subsurface obstacles.

Rigging Weightless Tubes

Some anglers fish weightless, meaning they are used just as they are by using an extra wide-gap worm hook. When rigging the tube simply place the hook through the nose of the tube then work it around as you would any plastic bait and either bury the point of the hook inside the hollow part or through the top of the tube. This method is best used for fishing in weedy or grassy areas because it helps to prevent the hook from getting snagged and hung up on structures and the tube is unweighted.

Tube Lures & the Carolina Rig

Another rigging methods include the Carolina rig, Texas rig or adding it to a drop-shot rig.

The Carolina rig is a little more complicated method because the weight is placed on the main line about two feet below the tube, which is left weightless on the end of a leader. The weight will land on the bottom of the water and the tube will be bouncing around a couple of feet from the bottom. The weight will stir up the mud on the bottom while making a clicking sound as it hits which helps get the attention of the bass. After drawing the bass' attention, the fish notices the tube floating behind the disturbance and be attracted to your bait.

Texas Rigging the Tube

Rigging a tube Texas style is very popular, relatively easy and great for fishing around deeper weeds and wooded areas.

Attach the bullet weight to the line followed by the hook and then thread the tube on on the hook in the same manner as you would using the other methods described above. Simply pass the hook through the nose of the tube and then back into the hollow center of the tube and into the top of the tube. This makes it good for fishing in weeds or other areas with underwater obstacles because the point is inside the tube where it won't get hung up on the cover. This method is perfect when using techniques like flipping and pitching.

Last But Not Least – Tubes on the Drop Shot

In the case of the drop-shot just replace the bait you normally use with a tube lure and you are all set to probe deeper structure!

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SPECIFIC FISH RELATED NOTES

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Bass Tip #7:

Bass & Fish Catching Magic – The Rapala Floating Minnow

Rapala's original floating minnow is one of the "go-to" baits in many tackle collections and it should be in yours too!

Why?

Simply because the floating minnow's basic action mimics a wounded baitfish and the slow rise and quiver action imparted when using a stop and go retrieve can be deadly on bass. It also works as a great topwater lure for those early morning outings when the lake surface is like a sheet of glass!

Years ago I also discovered a "secret" presentation technique for putting bass in the boat when other presentations failed. Though not complicated, one subtle change in a normal surface presentation seems to excite neutral fish and entice them to rise to the top and slurp the minnow right off the surface! Still surface water conditions are a must and they are even better if in the afternoon on a bright, sunny summer day.

Enter – The Quivering Dead-Stick Minnow

This presentation involves using either the F07 (one I use most often) or F09 (if larger forage is present) tied to the line with either an Improved Clinch or Palomar knot rather than the Rapala knot used on normal cast and retrieve presentations. The reason for a "cinched" rather than lop knot? It provides a solid connection between the bait, line and rod is key. After casting the floating minnow to the structure I am fishing, I let the minnow remain perfectly still until all rings from the initial impact have dissipated.

Next start gently shaking the rod tip with slack in the line but not moving the lure towards the boat. The goal is to just impart vibrations causing it to quiver on the surface for several seconds. When done correctly, the minnow appears to be shaking feverishly on the surface like a struggling baitfish. Bass and other gamefish in the area can't resist taking advantage of this struggling morsel.

The quivering dead-stick minnow presentation is absolutely deadly on those summer days when the afternoon wind quits and fish are selectively feeding on small insects and baitfish off the surface. It can be pure dynamite, even on big bass!



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Bass Tip #8:

Rigging a Carolina Rig for Deep Water Summer Bass

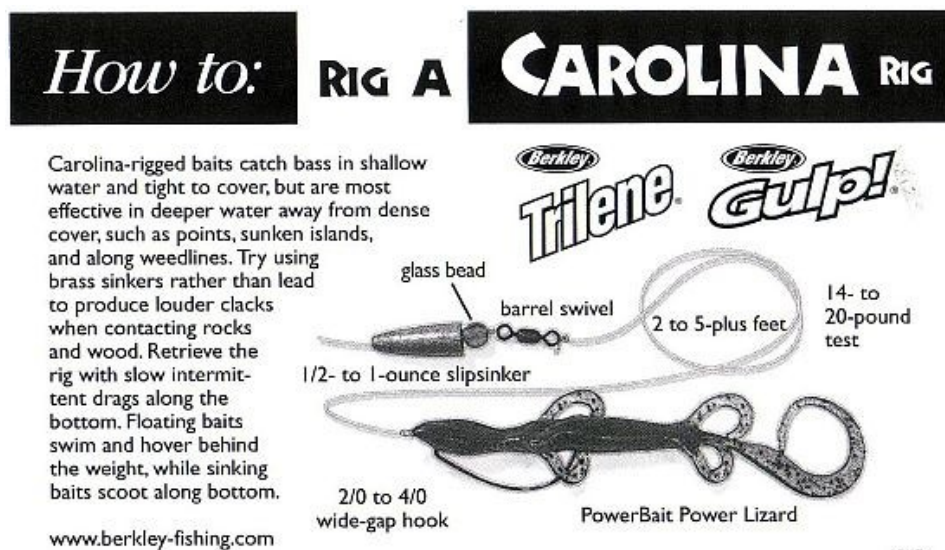
Many bass anglers focus their fishing attention in relatively shallow water depths (<10 feet) for one of two basic reasons:

- 1) the waters they fish are primarily that shallow or
- 2) they are not comfortable with fishing deep water.

Though the second reason may involve a lack of confidence in finding bass holding structure and cover in deep water, often times it relates to a lack of skills in deep water presentations techniques. Probably the most basic of deep water bass fishing methods involves using a simple system called the “Carolina Rig”. The key components of the traditional “Carolina Rig” include:

- A 7+ foot long MH to H casting rod and reel combo spooled with 20 lb. test main line (in today’s bass fishing world, super-braids reign supreme in this role);
- A fairly heavy (> 1/2 oz.) sinker (lead, brass or tungsten), glass beads, barrel swivel and appropriate hook (depends on lure selection);
- A two to five foot long leader (usually fluorocarbon) of varying line test depending on water and cover conditions;
- Appropriate lure (usually plastic baits with lizards and worms being used on the traditional rig).

Rigging the Carolina System (Thanks Berkley!)



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Bass Tip #9:

When Subtle Changes in Structure & Cover = Better Fishing Success

Did you ever have a day on the water when noticing how a subtle change in cover seemed to make a huge difference in catching bass?

I know I have!

It sometimes amazes me how sometimes the even a subtle difference results in a tremendous change in either the quantity or quality of bass brought over the gunwale ...

A Good Kind of Depression!

One example happened a few years ago when fishing a team tournament on Mill Pond (in southeastern Massachusetts).

During most of the morning, my partner and I were working various types of cover managing to catch a limit of keeper size largemouths. As noon approached, we headed back toward the lower end of the pond stopping to fish a small, shallow cove full of coontail and lily pads that averaged about four feet deep on the way.

Since the early morning cloud cover had cleared, we started pitching five-inch reddish-colored Senkos to pockets and holes in the weed cover. After weaving our way through the different weed patches, we entered a small clearing behind a several weed beds and noticed the water depth increased from four feet dropping into a small depression (~50' x 30' in size) averaging 5.5 feet deep.

No sooner had we started to work the weed edges surrounding the depression that we started to catch bigger bass. Forty-five minutes later we had completely culled our original limit (~ 7 pounds total) with five fish ranging from 2.9 to 3.6 pounds and increasing our total weight to just under 16 pounds for the tournament (good enough for second place).

It still amazes me to think that such a seemingly minor difference in the cover or bottom conditions can make such a huge difference in bass catching results ...

Keep that in mind the next trip on the water when things suddenly heat-up after a prolonged slow period. Always remember to take a moment to note the nature of even the most subtle difference leading to a sudden surge in your bass fishing success.

Keying in on similar areas for the rest of the day (or future trips) can be very rewarding!

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Bass Tip #10:

Are Suspending Jerkbait Really Special?

The answer ... absolutely yes! These baits provide the angler with one of the true “multi-use” tools found in their tackle box. Jerkbait will work in any season as long as the presentation style is adjusted to the environmental conditions existing at that moment.

Remember that bass are cold-blooded creatures meaning to a large extent, their environment controls their metabolism. This fact is especially important during cold water periods (late fall through early spring) since metabolism impacts the reaction speed and feeding tendencies of bass during these seasons. Another key factor supporting the use of minnow-style jerkbaits during the late cold water transition periods relates to the change in dominant forage to schools of baitfish.

Suspending jerkbaits are a tool where not only the speed of retrieve can be varied, it can also be stopped for seconds at a time giving sluggish fish that extra moment to “make their move”. Often times a slow retrieve, snap cadence coupled with a long pause triggers reactions during these cold water periods when other methods fail.

Tips and Tactics When Fishing Jerkbait For Late Season Bass ...

Here are a few pointers to keep in mind when fishing jerkbaits in the fall and early winter:

- Use coloration patterns to match the local baitfish staying with more natural patterns in clear water and brighter patterns (red, orange, chartreuse) as the water clarity decreases;
- Fish jerkbaits around isolated cover on main lake points and flats, lower ends of major feed creeks and parallel to steeper banks;
- Vary the speed and cadence of the bait and remember long pauses throughout the day to adjust to slight changes in the reaction tendencies of the bass;
- Watch your line! Using long pauses when fishing suspended jerkbaits for bass is sometimes like fishing plastic worms where the line only jumps when the bass inhales the lure;
- Use a fairly long, medium-light action crankbait rod with 10 to 12 lb. line (fluorocarbon in clearer water). The lighter action rod can provide an edge in hooking more of these sluggish bass than stiffer rods will.

Late fall/early spring bass fishing can yield great days of angling for a variety of reasons. One bonus is the relative lack of competition since many of your summer peers are off in the woods chasing game or sitting on the sofa watching the TV. Another pertains to the great quality of the fish often caught during these periods.

My Bass Fishing Log



GENERAL BACKGROUND		
DATE	WATER NAME	SPECIFIC LOCATION
NUMBER OF HOURS FISHED		BEST HOURS
FISHING PARTNERS		WAYPOINTS

FISH SPECIES CAUGHT:

NUMBER	SIZES	LURES & BAIT USED	NOTES

SPECIFIC FISH RELATED NOTES

WEATHER & WATER CONDITIONS				
AIR TEMP	WATER TEMP	WATER LEVEL	CLARITY	BAROMETER TREND

SKIES	M	A	E	PRECIPITATION	M	A	E	WIND	M	A	E
SUNNY				NONE				NONE			
PARTLY CLOUDY				RAIN - LIGHT				VERY LIGHT (< 5 knots)			
MOSTLY CLOUDY				RAIN - HEAVY				LIGHT (5-10 knots)			
CLOUDY				SNOW				MEDIUM (<10-15 knots)			
FOGGY				SLEET / HAIL				HEAVY (<15+ knots)			

M = Morning A = Afternoon E = Evening

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES		
HATCHES / BAITFISH ACTIVITY	MAP NOTES	NOTES

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES		
ARTICLES	ARTICLE NOTES	WEBSITE URLS & NOTES

Bonus Tip!

Fishing Line Basics

Given the time of year (people prepping for the new season) and fact many people maybe even be looking to purchase some line as present for a fisherman, here are some basic pointers on the different line types ...

Monofilament Line:

Though monofilament lines were originally invented in the late 1930s by DuPont but did not really start to gain in popularity until the 1960s. Some of the benefits and weaknesses of monofilament lines include:

- Benefits
 - Relatively low cost;
 - Shock resistant (it stretches ... actually a plus & minus);
 - Great for baits needing a little give (crankbaits, topwaters, etc.);
 - It floats;
 - Variety of colors for different applications;
 - Varying abrasion resistance depending on need;
 - Fairly limp (though abrasion resistance lines are stiffer).
- Weaknesses
 - Line stretch means harder to detect softer bites on worm rigs, jigs, etc.;
 - Line stretch can also cause hook-setting problems (though this can mostly be offset with the pull hook setting technique);
 - It can absorb water and react with chemicals causing it to weaken; &
 - Monofilament lines tend to be more visible than others like fluorocarbon lines.



Fluorocarbon Line:

Fluorocarbon lines are polymer-based with a refractive index nearly identical to water and were originally developed in Japan as leaders for that very reason. Benefits and weaknesses include:

- Benefits:
 - Nearly invisible in water therefore highly useful in clear water situations;
 - It has little stretch and therefore is more sensitive (better for worms, etc.);
 - It sinks, another plus (great for sinking baits)/minus (not good for floating baits) characteristic;
 - It is inert and does not react with chemicals therefore retaining its strength;
 - It does not absorb water (also helps retain strength);
- Weaknesses:
 - Invisibility sometimes makes it harder for us to detect strikes by line watching;
 - Much more expensive than monofilament;
 - Lack of stretch can cause line to break on hook set;
 - It tends to be stiffer than monofilament giving it memory therefore can cause handling problems (line “fluffing off” reel during cast); &
 - Many fluorocarbon lines break easily at the knot.

Braided Line:

Though braided Dacron and nylon have been around for over half a century, it wasn't until the 1990s when the super-braids (microfilaments) took the market by storm due to their high strength and low diameter properties. Benefits and weaknesses include:

- Benefits:
 - High strength – low diameter combination;
 - Lack of stretch meaning increased sensitivity; &
 - Low (coated braids) to no memory (non-coated braids).
- Weaknesses:
 - Highly visible to fish (sometimes combined with fluorocarbon leader);
 - Low stretch means possible to tear hook from fishes mouth on hook set; &
 - The line is abrasive sending off unique signal when interacting with certain hard objects (boat docks, stumps, rocks, etc.).