

BASS FISHING 101

How To Land The Next Big
Large Or Smallmouth!



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Bass Fishing 101: How To Catch The Next Big One

Learn the Basics

Master and Optimize
YOUR personal tangle
with one of nature's
most worthy champions and opponents

Play the angler's game of
condition, circumstance,
knowledge, opportunity and skill

Synergize and Strategize!

Shape **YOUR OWN PERSONAL APPROACH**
to catching Bass, AND THEN more, bigger, more often,
consistently and regardless of conditions, considerations,
and or interplay of other random factors

Plan to succeed... and **YOU** will.

This 'how to' guide, will help, give you background information,
handy tips and pointers to ponder, consider, try, master **and**
ENJOY!

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1. Foreword - What Are We Fishing For Again? The Target: ('Bass') Defined

Whatever the reason you had for picking up these pages, to learn more about fishing, and game fishing, specifically with an all-time angling favorite embedded in the aptly titled: *Bass Fishing, 101: How To Catch The Next Big One*, you are sure to find a quenching reprieve. Still your thirst for knowledge and any bass fishing pursuit, challenge or battle, you will or might face in your lifetime, right here. There is something for everyone in this book!

If your main interest, is improving your ability to catch Bass, increasing, (and maybe) even stacking the odds in your favor of succeeding time and again, every time, in this angling equation and any future expeditions you plan to undertake, then this book has something of value to offer you.

When you are on the hunt for Bass, knowing the basics is like the lifeblood of your strategy, bringing your chances alive with every cast!

ALSO, discover and develop YOUR OWN sportsman-like, angling style and character, while gradually building your appreciation and understanding of the great outdoors, as part of your fishing experience.

We present a practical approach to the intricacies and complexities involved in this popular sport. We hope that this is captured well by the short title: *Bass Fishing 101: How to Catch the Next Big One.*

Our focus, approach, aims and goals are simple – the basis and premise even simpler: **learn the basics, get them right, consistently, with skill and mastery, and they will eventually lead you to catching all the Bass you can possibly want or handle!**

We prefer to get right to the topic and elements of our discussion – how to find and catch Bass! Basic yet detailed, the text is written in such a manner, that it can be put to use and work for you right away, without spending hours reading and wading through pages of information, you do not need.

Most published works and accomplished authors (many anglers themselves), depict Bass fishing as the ultimate angling experience and 'The Bass' (predator-hunter itself), as tough-minded, unpredictable, with a strong survival instinct, great awareness, sensing/sensors, that make them the keen and effective hunters they are.

These fish benefit from nature's gifts of powerful sight, hearing, vast speed, maneuverability and even jumping action moves, that will have you catch (pardon the pun), your breath... with awe, excitement and expectation that is! All of this makes it possible for the Bass to live up to its name and reputation, as one of the

“extremes” of the gaming fish populations and every angler’s dream catch!

Part of the *Percichthyidae* family (also sub-classified into the genus *Morone* – considered a separate unit or branch (white, yellow, striped), they are widely distributed in temperate and tropical waters, sub-species to be found in fresh and saltwater. There are also the Australian bass (*Acquaria novemaculeate*), European sea bass (*Dicentrarchus labrax*).

Their food of choice/feed and natural diet includes small fish, crustaceans, worms and insects – some anglers have also had great success with live-bait, like eels and even frogs.

Then there are the black bass, collectively referred to and including our prized target – called by some to be the most sporting species in North America – the *Centrarchidae* family. (Largemouth and smallmouth bass, redeye, spotted, striped, black bass, Suwannee, Quadaalupee).

Artificial baits have proven useful to most anglers. Live baits are best, but these fish can be tempted, teased and lured to strike with artificial ones such as spinners, spoons, crank-baits, surface plugs and plastic worms – more on this a little later. Knowing which to choose (and WHY), use, switch to in certain conditions, and how to optimize this art of allure, is a key basic element for every aspiring or great angler alike.

These fishes are all active predators, warming to natural baits **and** artificial lures. Most anglers would suggest spinning or trolling for freshwater fishing for Bass (larger species) and spinning or fly-fishing for the smaller species. Saltwater enthusiasts might also consider surfcasting, trolling or up-tide fishing.

Fishing for and catching Bass, in various waters across the globe, has a proud history and tradition. Most of us are too glad to get dabbling in and form part of it, whether from boat, shore, rocks or rocks, rivers, streams, lakes or oceans. We like to tell our mighty tales and contemplate how to change and modify, adapt and or create new techniques, approaches to hook smallmouth, large-mouth, speckled, spotted, striped and black bass. To each his own. You pick your favorite.

Knowing how to tell a smallmouth from a large-mouth bass, striped from spotted and so on, is a very basic skill most anglers master quickly. Looking specifically at size and physical features are good places to start. Train your eye to 'spot the differences', so to speak.

They differ in size, markings and dorsal fins for example. Their upper jaws are different in length and their dorsal fins are not the same. The large-mouth has a spiny dorsal fin, highest in the middle portion, with almost a distinct 'break', right before the second set of dorsal fins start. For our friends the small mouth bass, these fins are flatter, first and second are connected, with distinct scales at the base of the second set of dorsal fins.

Apart from knowing and telling your fish species apart, by sights and or physical characteristics, there are some general advice we can propose right upfront. Experiencing, treading lightly and honoring nature, the great outdoors, abiding by the anglers' code (catch and release, licensing), environmental protection for generations of anglers (and women) to come, and the like are all vastly important in your angling endeavors.

Second, maintaining an overall alertness, what some call "reading the waters" (understanding the body of water, habitat to the fish, contour, depth, temperature, stratified levels etc.), being generally, as well as specifically 'observant', arming yourself with knowledge, skill and understanding of the fish, the species, the environment, and all other relevant factors to your fishing activity and undertakings – paramount for successful process and outcome.

Third, (and almost most importantly), remain adaptable, for change is a BIG part of this enjoyable outdoor activity. It is definitely not for the faint of heart or the impatient among us!

2. Introduction - Knowing And Going Where The Bass Are

Bass defined: A fighter, ever-elusive, choice game-fish, predator by nature and reputation, the one sought-after, prized hook, catch, reel-in and land, of many an aspiring angler.

How to catch Bass AND then catch more, larger bass, more often, in more places, with more consistency, having a pro-active plan and approach, stacking the odds in your favor to succeed, catching more fish **and** enjoying the process, is what this basic guide is all about.

The hunter becomes the hunted – learn how a small change in your paradigm, thinking and approach can lead to bass-angling success! Start thinking like the watery hunter, become and understand the bass as a hunter. Observe, learn, follow, study and use its natural habit, preferences, patterns, habits, prey and choice of food, in your angling-strategy, and you will have some interesting fish-tales to tell. (None of them tall tales of course, we hope!)... and yes, we may even learn something from the ones that get/got away!

So, without further ado, let us get our rods and reels going...

If you were told that, there is one particular species of fish that most would describe as tough-minded, smart, outwitting and elusively hard to catch, then it the Bass – in all its shapes, sizes, iterations and sub-classes.

It rings true, no matter what the context, body of water, special and or **any** situation or condition, regardless of secrets, tips,

proven science, technique and intent in the world! Bass fishing is challenging and rewarding at the same time. To ensure hours of countless pleasure, follow the pointers (and add some of your own here too!) provided here, for Bass fishing 101 and be ready to hook the next big one... repeatedly, and actually be able to ENJOY it too!

There are various aspects, working in combination in the art and science, sport and pursuit that is Bass Fishing! Strategy **and** synergy, contribute to eventual, and (we will argue), consistent and repeatable success. Equipment, site, lure and skill, dawn and or dusk, shallow or deep waters, fresh/salt water, from boat or shore – it does not matter! There are secrets and techniques for each of them.

Novices, beginners, seasonal and seasoned anglers alike, are all welcome to flip through these pages to discover some magical, sought-after truths about bass fishing! In the end, it is as much about the process, enjoyment, understanding and appreciation, as it is about the fish!

Become an observant, student of nature itself, the Bass' habits and patterns, whether using trolling, artificial and or live bait, fly-fishing, on ice, fresh and salt, deep and shallow waters, do so, using all to your advantage, as you undertake your own journey of the Bass!

Bass is by far the most widely distributed fish in North America – sometimes due to the convenience of our mobility and fast-paced

society, geared for travel and transportation, Bass is within easy reach (for most within 1 days' travel at most), Large-mouths, Small-mouths, striped, spotted, black bass etc. all await.

Ever heard of a smart fish that makes calculated, in-the-moment decisions? One whose survival instinct is so strong, that it snatches and at other times totally ignores and hangs around seemingly uninterested, only to strike/bite when least expected!

Well, that would be typical of our finned, scaly (pardon the pun), fish-friend, the 'Bass'. For the purposes of this book, this species is and takes centre-stage –this is deliberate and intentional. Bass fishing is about exactly that the fish, The Bass. Tenacious, unpredictable and a challenge to most of us.

Various scientists have proven that Bass almost 'calculate' the amount of energy it will take them to go after the prey vs. the return. If this be true and verified, what are the implications for us anglers of promise? OUTSMARTING THEM of course! It is all in the basics, the strategies, battle plan, allure, tease and techniques we choose to use in this process. This will dictate and determine our success.

3. The Basics Of Bass Fishing – An Overview

Most, if not all of the so-called 'insider' secrets, tips and stories to tell of big hauls of Bass, all revolve, around a very simple basic rule – understanding the fish, (their life-cycles, feeding preferences, habits and patterns, habit and menu of choice, their nature, their relationship with the broader eco-system and position on the food-chain, timing it right. Also heeding your surroundings, your equipment (tools), having the know how and basics under your belt and finally optimizing (every!) opportunity...

In effect, you are going about, creating the most favorable angling process and outcome you can muster!

Bass fishing is a passion, a science and an art form upon itself. It appeals to young and old, attracts anglers from all walks of life and both sides of the professional and amateur spectrum.

One key to bass fishing is, what we can easily refer to as, 'predictable behavior'. Habits, patterns, life cycles, the natural rhythm that is life and nature – also applies to fish. This means that Bass exist within this natural reality. If you can capitalize on understanding it better, you will increase your chances of successful hooks/bites.

Seeking protective cover, foraging amongst rocks, stumps, weeds, at times on the prowl hunting for prey, other times just 'lunching' around casually, all seem to be part of The Bass feeding rituals and repertoire. Taking advantage and considering this when starting out and every time casting, will benefit you greatly.

Another is "competitive advantage", The Bass has an "airtight sac" (breathing bladder), that is inflatable, which enables it to swim and thrive at different levels. A powerful tail helps with speed, agility and maneuverability. It can reach great depths.

Other factors like water clarity, time of day, subdued sunlight, water displacement and vibration sensing, noise sensitivity, all add to this fish' cunning and ensuring that you scrutinize these clues, will increase your odds of hooking your next big one.

Unlocking for example how The Bass senses and prefers color and shade in the moment, can always also help anglers increase their effectiveness. The choice and type of lure, colors and movement, bait etc. can all contribute meaningfully to your attempts.

Where the fish are... everyone will have an answer, or at least their opinion/experience on what/where/when, even science. Nevertheless, sometimes it is as simple as understanding the habitat and those that live and thrive in it, to better interact with and enjoy fishing in it – a type of exploring the depths, so to speak. For example: the temperature of the water and

available oxygen, dictate moving patterns and disbursement of fish species. Feeding habits and preferences are distinct, falling more on the "looking alive" or live bait. Some quote smallmouth bass, as showing preference for crawfish and using that as a 'sign' of where these critters will be found, on the hunt for their favorite snack! Looking at stomach content of fish you have caught and kept (not part of the catch and release protocol/requirements), hold hidden clues about food of preference –whitefish, crawfish and others.

Having self-confidence, aptitude **AND** the right attitude when fishing for Bass is crucial. In this battle to outwit your opponent, you will need every tool and trick at your disposal to make a successful catch. Never get discouraged, feel beaten or worse quit for the yield has been slim to none at all – those days happen to every angler. Nature beats to its own drum, you have to discover and enjoy the rhythm you are so intricately part of.

Practice makes perfect – there is no silver bullet, quick-fish method for \$9.99, that can guarantee you bites and more bass all the time, anytime. It DOES take hard work and commitment, persistence and rigor from the angler. There is more than routine at stake and play here. Some days will be predictably better than others. No matter what the conditions, process and outcome, on the day, put it all down to experience and lessons learned. Log and learn, share and grow, in your own understanding, confidence and toolkit, as an avid bass angler.

Another key trick, is actually NO TRICK AT ALL – we call it an “acquired skill”. It takes more of that hard work we mentioned before! Exact, fixed casting, requires target-precision practice, improving your ability to place the lure exactly where you would want it to be – let us call it ‘hitting the mark’. This is another crucial tactic and technique you can practice in the park or your living room – try using plugs and get better every time at consistently hitting your ‘target’ (and nothing else we hope!).

Becoming and being a proactive participant in the context and environment (and process), you are in, knowing when to move on, change something and or quit for the time-being (postponing the hunt or resting when required, planning your strategy for the next trip out), is what it is all about as well!

Habitual creatures of comfort, The Bass (as a species), are not so much different than modern man. Bearing this in mind will help you too as an angler. We like what we like, when and how we like it and normally want it on time, when it is there and ready, be safe, enjoy life and we crave comfort – food, shelter and well-being! Does this sound a lot different from our own needs and requirements? Not really! Well, that is one way of leveling the playing field. Understanding the basic necessities and niceties for these watery “creatures”, holds clues and advantage, for any and every angler.

Stimulus, pattern, routine, habit – predictors and hints – the ace up your sleeve when nothing else works! Learn and develop skills, to 'read' (quickly at a glance, observe and make a judgment), know instinctively what will come happen, next and why – figure out the pattern, stick with it and exploit it to your advantage and angling success. Meet the Bass where they are, in what they do, cater to their needs and you will be surprised at what meets you in the waters below!

Familiarity with the Bass' favorite places to hang around is critical to success: Bottoms, stumps, trees , logs, weeds and plants, contours, structures, travel-routes, creeks, shallows/deeper passages, coves, channels, bluffs, banks and shorelines – all can be repetitive clues on habitual, predictable behavior of the bass. Most of the 'experts' came about their knowledge through reading, studying habits of their catch, in very similar fashion than what you are undertaking. Every time you get to know your fishy friends a little better, until you know instinctively where they will be and where their favorite spots are. Knowing and going where the fish are becomes demystified, but even more exciting, for it is now more than a hunch or random chance – it is a planned encounter where the watery predator, hunter *par excellence*, becomes the hunted!

Tools Of The Trade: Tackle, Boats, Accessories, Lures And Baits (All About Plastics, Spinners, Crank And Others- Top-Water And Specialty Lures)

Having the right equipment, knowing how to best use it, when and how, (also how not to use it and what it is not suitable for), can all help you in your bass fishing adventure.

The basics regarding rods, reels, line, hooks, weights, bobbers, sinkers, lures, sensors and other equipment (hats, vests, nets, scents, scissors etc.), gives you an appreciation for having the right tools for the task(s) at hand.

As a highly participatory and engaging sport, Bass fishing is simply almost unparalleled in the vast amount of styles and tools to use. From quiet streams, tranquil lakes to open sea and rushing rivers – there is something for everyone.

If you are looking for quick tips on the right equipment, most suited to your purpose and the techniques to master to catch bass in any conditions, might this next section enlighten and inspire you, as you delve right into the ‘utilities of the fishing trade’. Some tools of the bass fishing trade, we will be focusing on are:

- Rods, Reels, Lines and Hooks
- Tackle: Lures and Bait – live – artificial and, or, BUT YET...

Limited space does not permit large comparative explanations or ramblings on the merit of some tools above certain others.

These debates are well known and well published in existing literature. We take a more practical approach and look at what you will actually need to hook your next big one, besides random chance and luck! We like to point out that picking the right equipment means a lot of different things to different people. Each angler has his/her own interpretation of what that means, varying skill level, physical characteristics and strengths/weaknesses, so we will not profess knowing what is right for you. What we do offer are mere suggestions on which tools will stack the odds in your favor and help you enjoy preparing, rigging, baiting/hooks, retrieving and landing YOUR next BIG ONE! Ensuring that you do not join the droves of 'the ones that got away'!

Even as you explore your surroundings and the wonder of fish species and their life cycles, patterns and behavior, experimenting, hands-on with your equipment and what is available to anglers today, is part of the exciting world of Bass fishing. From fish-finders, temperature gauges, sensors and more advanced technologies, to the art of preparing your lines and hooks, choosing the lures/bait most suited to your circumstance and purpose and more, adds to the excitement and enjoyment of the activity. Preparing yourself with knowledge on these, will boost your confidence and practicing often, will pay off in the long run as your expertise, exposure and angling mastery grows.

When it comes to equipment, the opinions are many and far between. Your condition, circumstance, purpose and goal will

all figure into the final choice (oh, yes and do not forget the ever-present budget and affordability)!

Spinning or bait casting with artificial lures, fly-fishing, trolling with live-baits, are all options available to you, with specialist tools on hand to assist you make the most of it. Typically a 5.5 to 7 feet rod (spinning or bait casting), with a matching reel with six to ten pound line, fast taper, single action reel would serve you well. Weed-less hooks are a lifesaver in very dense cover or weeds.

Angling techniques and tackle keep refining, developing and almost takes on a life of its own for every angler. There is not really a one-size-fits-all approach. This personalized relationship with your equipment, might mean a basic rod to start with and then adding a couple for your different excursions and expeditions – your Bass journey has just started. Modern tackle and methods, traditional or innovative, technology-driven and enabled – whatever your fancy or preference – there is something for every taste and budget.

It is an ancient sport, pursued by many, with echoes of early hunters and anglers living off the land. Getting in touch with that timeline through hands-on activity, like bass fishing is very rewarding. Most beginners might be overwhelmed by the selection of equipment available on the market today. Knowing what to pick/buy, how and when to (best)apply, use it correctly, to maximize your chances of catching your next big one is key.

Good quality tackle is important – it needs to be adequate for whatever nature throws your way. You will need to build your arsenal of knowledge and equipment over time, to respond best to some of the challenges at hand. Good appropriate baits and lures and how to use them effectively, in combination, in quick succession to ensure bites, are other key components, as is importance of preparing, presenting well, accurate casting, hooking (sharpening the hooks and turning them up slightly for example to ensure that the fish stay on your hook as you reel them in), as well as retrieving and landing of the fish.

An excellent source for beginners on all things tackle-related, equipment, fish species, tools and techniques, is to be found in *The Dorling Kindersley Encyclopedia of Fishing: The complete guide to the fish, tackle and techniques of fresh and saltwater angling.* Our intent and purpose here is not to restate the listed facts found here. Avid and serious anglers are readers and thirst knowledge that will increase their odds of success. This source we recommend for young and old! (There are also some other references listed at the end of this text, if you choose to pursue more facts and or crave deeper insights into the art and science of Bass fishing).

All we will say, is that having expensive or the right equipment, is not a guarantee that you will land the next big one! In fishing, there are no real guarantees. This is a 'contract' and activity between you and nature. Exploring and getting you to the point where you know the feel, function and embedded

strengths and weaknesses of your equipment, is the real way to wisdom. For most trail and error, practice and persistence are the roads to follow to becoming well-versed and experienced anglers.

Realizing the equipments full potential, will take time and practice. Bear in mind, that sophistication in equipment will develop in parallel to your own mastery and skill-refinement.

Your intended style of fishing (from boat or shore, shallow or deep (or both) will dictate the most appropriate choice for tackle (reel and rod, line – thickness and weight), line, hooks, baits and lures, weights, sinkers, leaders and more.

Whether you are a salt-water fanatic that enjoys shore, beach, boat or big-game fishing or a freshwater guru, preferring lure, bait, pole and or fly fishing, there are rod, reels, line, hooks, leaders, links, bait, and landing tackle just right for you.

Basic angling techniques are relatively easy to master, yet conquering and refining all the subtleties and intricate moves and maneuvers, exploring the secrets (discovered or yet to be unearthed), of in this case bass fishing (which has so many iterations and settings), will take a lifetime of pleasure and defeat!

Practice and enjoy bass fishing, according to your own niche and style, preference and location of choice – in a word - YOUR 'specialty'. It is a very personalized and individualized

pursuit and passion. Always remember, that there is a wide array of variety and enjoyment on offer, by different kinds of fishing, locations, baits and lures etc., to keep angling interesting and a growing sport – it is contagious and pervasive – once let in, it is hard to let go! You are hooked and being reeled in by this sport and hobby before you know it.

For most anglers, technique (and choice of equipment) is dictated by the species sought, established practice, conditions and more. Mostly artificial lures are suggested and accepted for freshwater predatory fishing. Some prefer live bait, others have success with hard baits like artificial rats and plastic worms are another favorite.

Whether you are fishing from the banks, boat or float tube, most would suggest you use a six to six and a half foot (1.8 -2m) medium, heavy-push-button, spinning or bait-casting rod and reel combination, with strong line (10-pound). If you are fishing in weeds, heavy cover, thick, slop, grassy wetlands, swamps, etc. a heavier line (braided), will serve you better/best. Hook sizes typically recommended around a # 4 live-bait hook, sharpened and turned up slightly (say around 10%), this is done to ensure that the fish stayed “hooked” and gives you a ‘fighting’ chance to reel it in and land it successfully. A weed-less, # 5 hook can also serve you well in these conditions. Large-mouth bass can be caught at any depth, using live baits, throughout most the year (even ice fishing)! Sharp hooks are key.

Weights and sinkers are another element you must consider, especially in dark, cloudy waters and or when fishing deep water specifically. There are also specialty sinkers, with rattles these days to entice the fish even more. They are very sensitive to sounds, noise and vibrations in the water – so anything you can do to create that allure, tease and temptation is great to bear in mind. Do everything you can to trigger their feeding response and ensure a strike/bite!

Also, remember, fish are a lot like us – on hot, humid days, they look for shelter, food and comfort. These are their handout and feeding ground (no different than us, wanting to sit under an umbrella, or in front on the TV, in an air-conditioned environment, trying to stay cool and enjoy our snack-foods!). Knowing and considering these habits, will help you catch more fish. Look for the lily pads, think cover, giving them shade from the sun. Find the right depth, structure and hide-away(they normally look for cover, like any other predator) and their lightning-fast speed enabled them to cover water/ground quickly and really strike/attack/hit their “prey”.

Weedy, shallow bays, hard-bottom flats, rocks, trees and or other structures, creeks, channels, deeper waters, drops, bluffs and more can all be part of their moving patterns and habitat, where they look for food. They also like being close to access point to deeper water. More later on their preferred spots and how to optimize these patterns.

Examples of luring techniques and how the right equipment can help you:

Surface, Top-water and or Buzz baits: Acting almost like a spinner bait, but with a flat blade that enables it to surface with speed, this is a popular choice for many a bass enthusiast.. It attracts the attention of the bass, by creating a disturbance along the surface like a minnow, triggering their basic feeding instincts and hunter impulse to strike. Rewarding you with a handsome catch!

Carolina Rig: this can easily be described as simply a variation of the standard, so-called 'Texas Rig' (see below), great for use with plastic worms or other soft bait. Most expert bass anglers suggest using a heavier weight like 1/2 -1oz or more. Slide the weight onto the line, follow with three plastic beads, a barrel swivel, and a leader line (somewhat smaller than the main line).What this allows the bass angler to do is to get the bait to 'drop down' to the floor with speed and is especially recommended for fishing deep waters. The movement of the leader allows the bait to swim and rise above the bottom, and fall slowly down. For most beginners this is easy to do and practice and is very versatile to get your routine rigging and tackle skills to improve.

Crank bait: mostly refers to lures, which is usually made from a variety of materials, including hard plastic or wood. With an added feature of a diving lip on the front (simulating effectively the movements of natural prey, wobbling, diving and swimming actions), entices the bass to strike. The rule of

thumb, normally is that the larger the lip, the deeper it can dive. Enhancements like rattles are also good for certain conditions.

Jerk baits: A seasoned favorite amongst bass anglers, for top-water, as well as suspended bass fishing. longer minnow-shaped plugs, available in lots of different sizes and colors. As a surface, top-water bait with a slight twitch-and-stop type of retrieve, or even as a more slow-and-steady retrieves underwater. Another option is to use suspending jerk baits that typically dive deeper, jerking it, almost teasing and tempting the bass to come up and bite right at it.

Jigs: Some have described these trusted tackle as 'lead head and hook with dressing'. Their 'added' features could take the shape of rubber or plastic skirts, soft plastic baits for bodies, instead of skirts. Most bass experts combine them with a frog, or a plastic bait as a "follower"(plastic worm, crawfish).

Lipless Crank bait: mostly referring to sinking-type lures, made from plastic, sometimes with many rattles inside for noise, , vibrations and causing disturbances underwater.

Poppers: Top water lures that carry long-range punch. Retrieve with these kinds of lures are fast, jerky or move in one spot for a duration of time. Can be quite effective if you trying to figure out 'where the fish are'.

Soft Jerk bait: these can be used to great effect in the same manner as a regular jerk bait, but can be dropped to the bottom quite successfully as well to tease out our deep-water predator, swimming around for food and feast.

Spinner baits: another simulator of movement and prey on the go. It is very similar to a jig, but with a blade that runs above the hook, and spins to imitate a bass favorite as well: fish.

Texas Rig: this is considered and named specifically for standard rigging with a plastic worm. Use a sliding weight, usually bullet shaped, and a hook sufficient for the size worm you have chosen. Sharpen the hook and stick the point of the hook directly into the worm head, bring it out the side about 1/8 - 3/16" below the entry, thread it again. Rotate the hook around so the point is facing the worm's body. Lay it over the side to see where it should enter in order to hang straight. Position the work straight onto the hook if it is hanging. NOTE: if the worm is twisted, your line and action will pay the price and it will be less effective.

Walking- the-dog: this is an angling technique that usually requires some time to master, but beginners should not shy away from trying it, for it is quite effective with bass. Casting over a relatively long distance, allow the bait to sit for a brief period of time, take up the slack, and with your rod tip pointed at the water, give it a jerk to the side, then immediately move it backward and reel in any slack, then jerk again, and repeat all the way back. More or less a darting from side-to-side. You

are in effect simulating the prey's elusive movements, enticing the hunter to follow, stalk and hit! This might be your ace up your sleeve for hooking YOUR NEXT BIG ONE.

Slip-bobbers, rigged with a ¼ ounce plastic jig, live bait like minnow, night-crawler or leech at its tip and of course, all on a sharpened hook

Jiggling, lightly shaking, presenting this close to any emerging weeds or brush, underwater logs, trees, stumps or cover, may prove successful.

Remember that fish are constantly on the move while feeding. The timing of day, amount of sunlight, temperature of the water and more all feature into the angling equation.

Bobber-rigs or jigs are popular and quite successful too. Slip-sinkers, Carolina (drop-shot rig) works well too.

Free-line fishing in shallow waters may yield many a bass angler quite the haul. Casting a plain hook with live bait and feed the line to the bait, allowing it to 'swim' naturally will attract some certain attention. Other experts would recommend if you are in the so-called watery salad, weeds or heavy slop, cover and jungles underwater, to go heavier is the key. 20 lb line the minimum and heavy-action, sturdy bait-casting rod and reel combos with long, straight handles to provide you with leverage to reel your BIG ONES in!

Floating jig-heads, with slip-sinker rig, with 2-3 foot leader have proven to be useful too, especially when kept close to the bottom, watching not to get snagged in the process. Weed-less hooks can help you retrieve live-bait and or that hooked fish, through very thick underbrush.

Again, understanding what bass actually eat, where and when, will help you with choosing and presenting the most effective, appropriate and tempting bait (whether live or artificial).

Drawing on the natural diet of the fish, can assist you in improving your baits and lures appearance, strategy, tactics and eventual success. Bass, as a predator will be looking for certain shapes, colors and familiar movement. Plastic worms and crawfish are popular choices. Part of the reason bass is such a popular species to be fishing for, is they are notorious for hitting hard, biting solid and strong pulling or fighting – a strong game fish to be sure. They are known to put up a good fight.

Spinners or spoons are artificial baits that are specifically designed for the purpose of tantalizing the fish. It is meant to provoke, make a strike irresistible, calling on the fish natural instinct to feed and or defend. It optimizes your chances of securing strikes. Rotation, color, skirts, fluttering action (Lil' hustler spoiler is a favorite of many bass anglers) all work together to simulate movement and prey on the move.

Spoons act/move in a fishlike manner in the water, trolled behind boats they are typically very effective and can also be

cast and retrieved. Plugs are made of various materials, designed specifically to float, dive below the surface or sink when reeling them back or in. They simulate surface disturbance and entice fish with propellers or plastic skirts that move and flutter in the water.

Artificial lures can be utilized alone or in combination with live or natural baits. The size and type of lure will depend on the species, location and style of fishing you prefer, choose to pursue. (for example trolling, spinning, fly-fishing).

For bass fishing particularly, a couple of suggestions are to bear in mind that enticing the predators from below, takes skill, practice and patience. For matted weed-beds and sloppy pitches, you might have to tickle the surface a bit. When fishing in shallow waters, lures cast out fast and retrieved slowly shaking it along, might trigger a response. It is all in the tease and promise to the fish that look for signs of movement in the water. Having a handy pair of Polaroid sunglasses are a MUST! Keep on moving the bait around and play with the presentation – it is an art, acquired skill that gets better over time. When casting the bait out, try not to spook the fish, remembering that they are sensitive to sound/noise, movement and vibrations. Plastic worms work well (around 10"). Being adaptable, switching baits, different color etc., using a strong Texas rig for example, hooking up a worm near the bottom of the hook, sliding it onto the shank, popping it through, with a ½ ounce weight might be all you need!

Having a second rod set up and ready to go or fishing with a buddy that can help you to respond quickly (as the fish are always on the move) and when they are ready to hit, you are prepared for them! Others suggest using braided line that is stronger than mono (for when fishing in weedy areas), with no stretch that can minimize entanglement and optimize your chances of retrieval through thick weeds and cover.

Stiff rods that can withstand the "fight" bass can typically put up are another base-requirement for bass fishing enthusiasts. Protecting your rods with rod wraps, to avoid dings and scrapes can also maximize not only its efficiency, but keep your angling investment in good condition! Shaking and popping along bait/lures, create a situation that lets the fish think the "prey" is getting away.

However, the right equipment, bait, hooks and location is not enough! Some basic angling techniques are required, setting up your rod and reel, knowing the basics about tying knots for joining line to tackle, forming loops and more. Tying a secure knot is the main thing here, as every one could pose a 'weakness', which you do not need, when you have the BIG ONE hooked! Some suggest before tightening a knot, to wet it with some water and trim all edges and loose ends, to avoid snag/drag.

Gulp-sinking minnows cast out fast and far, allowing to let it fall and dangle, quiver down, with lots of slack, might prove just what the fish ordered!

Tube-jigs, gulp-tubes that are scented, are other options. The soft, natural-chewy substance, tricks the fish, into not wanting to let go and have another chew, thus increasing your odds of landing it safely.

Top-water baits with rattles are another all-time favorite, with slack in the line, walking-the-dog (flipping) makes for an enticing presentation for the fish.

Having a spinner-bait with some red in it, simulates blood or wounded prey to our underwater predator, triggering yet again their natural instincts and feeding response, increasing your odds of getting a bite, hit or strike.

Whether you find yourself in a jet-boat or flat-bottom bass boat, shore, rocks, beach, cliff, stream, river, stream, lake, reservoir, or other body of water, strong rods, hot hands, good tackle, appropriate preparation, the right bait and presentation, accurate casting, where you know the fish might be/move/feed naturally, fishing for structure and pattern, keeping an eye on surroundings and conditions, can all make those fleeting moments of anticipation and elation at first strike momentous! The fights, flights, flips, turns and jumps, attacks and hard hits, struggles, retrieval and landing of bass, is what keeps us coming back!

Let us now turn to take a look at what other considerations, plan of attack, angling techniques, secrets, mistakes and

specialty circumstances, can teach us about the enjoyable art and activity, that is **bass fishing!**

Water, Weather, Timing And Other Environmental Aspect, Facets And Considerations For Bass Fishing

As mentioned throughout this text so far, there are numerous factors that we often do not consider, and or dismiss, when we first start out, angling for bass. These would include, consideration of:

- Water stratification and depths (bass are found at varying levels and knowing **where** (at which level), to fish for them is paramount); shallow or deep, sometimes both

As far as water temperatures goes, during a yearly/seasonal cycle, waters move, turn and gets re-oxygenized. As temperatures fall, from deep below and throughout ice forms, floats to the surface, melts and moves down again. Science has provided us with enough evidence that THREE distinct layers from in a body of water – say a lake for example. Deeper/colder, Middle-ground/milder – transitional layer and the top/surface/warmer waters. Heeding these levels and varying temperatures, and looking oxygen-rich spots are all factors to consider even before heading out. Think the process through. Think like the fish would – ask yourself, where would you go in all likelihood, if you were faced with the same situation – the answer will mostly lead you to where the fish most likely ARE!

A temperature gauge and depth meter can all prepare you better, as an angler, knowledgeable and prepared, to assess the environment, better understand it, learn from it, and use

the information you gather and have on hand, due to these readings and instruments, to KNOW or best judge, where the fish will be at! Depth is a great indicator of what the bass are up to and where they will be most likely found. This will dictate your approach, tackle and how you execute your angling skills to land THE NEXT BIG ONE! If you fish at the right level, understanding why the fish are there, on the move, feeding etc., you will increase your odds drastically of getting strikes and hooking your next big catch. It might even be a trophy! The depth is related to water temperature and the optimal comfort zone of the bass – always ask yourself, what they would prefer on a day like today and then go fish there. Measure with temperature, depth sensors, GPS etc. to establish the 'pattern' and depth of the day.

- Temperature – optimal and changing

Most bass species prefer a temperate climate –their metabolism is influenced, if not governed pretty much by the surrounding waters they find themselves in. They can also tolerate quite a wide range of temperatures, therefore we can fish pretty much throughout the year. (60-75 degrees Fahrenheit)/ It is also less widely known that ice-fishermen hook bass at around 32-39.2 degree water temperatures, in deeper waters! When it does get colder, they get somewhat more sluggish, as their environment cools down significantly and bearing this in mind will yield and improve your catch.

Oxygen is also very important to fish. The hotter it gets, the closer they will stay to shore, and to plant-life, which produces

oxygen and or where they might catch the occasional breeze. Reading these signals nature provides right, will prepare any angler better to go where the fish are and hook your next BIG ONE. Also look for spots that are not too stagnant and filled with decaying plants, as this might be an oxygen-deprived area with not a large concentration of fish – they need to ‘breathe’ to stay alive too!

- Water conditions: Clarity

Clear and or murky – you will find bass in both! Their behavior and mode of attack will change as they plan how to best expend their energies in the hunt for food, survival etc. Predators by design, they prefer cover and structure and deeper waters. When spawning,) or on very hot days, you will most likely, find them more in the shallows.

Bass always have a ‘back-door’ access to deeper waters. These facts should be able to point you in the general vicinity of where the fish are quite aptly. The male bass is also very protective of the nest/spawn site and will defend it, strike at any perceived threat or intruder. Fishing is no more left up to random, contemplative, reflective trail and error casting. Now, today, replaced with more a more driven, focused, thought-through, rationalized and analytical competitive approach, that tries to understand habits, patterns, environment, conditions, time of year etc. at times relying on the aid of technology and devices to assist and better your changes of spotting, finding, hooking, retrieving and landing the fish successfully (mostly in

deeper waters!). Therefore, if the waters are clear, head for deeper waters as a general rule of thumb.

- Noise/Disturbances/Vibrations

DO NOT DISTURB signs are hard to post in the water! Always remember that there is some truth to not chasing the fish away and being somewhat careful and quiet around them. The bass particularly uses its whole body as a sounding board. Any surface disturbance, water movement and or displacement will attract their attention – this can in fact both help and or hurt your angling hopes and dream.

Rusty, squeaky oars, noisy motors and even the sound of a fast, far cast may interfere and or get their attention. Being aware of any, movement, spotting fish so to speak in their environment, things (water, plants) moving around, can be good indicators. Wearing a good pair of Polaroid sunglasses may also help you 'see' better in the bright sunlight and glare, reflections off the surface of the water(s).

- Color, Sunlight, Time of day

Most bass anglers propose dawn and dusk to be the best feeding time for the bass – not the height of day or when the sun is at its brightest and the water maybe a degree or two too warm for our fishy friends and when they head for the deep and or cover. It is a matter of appealing to their natural instincts.

They are keen observers and movement and color have been researched in the bass species. Picking presentation of bait, lure that is closest to live or alive bait, resembles their prey, in other words, will maximize your chances of catching more bass. This does not mean that they will not strike at night for example or at other times during the day – you might just have to adapt and use some specialist techniques to lure them out of hiding a bit!

- Time of year: Seasons and things are a changing! Surroundings, weather and angling rules change and keep changing. The stage and players do not remain the same and even on the same day, day to day, things will vary. This variety (the spice of life most say) is what keeps most of us guessing, adapting, changing strategy, bait, depth etc. all in the continued hope and pursuit of catching the NEXT BIG ONE.

As to the best time to catch bass – opinions vary greatly on this topic. In some areas, fishing is only allowed after spawning. Spring, summer and fall (with fall being the best for most bigger fish) and even winter some form of bass fishing is available to you, depending on where you are, what the weather conditions are like and what type of year the bass are having (spawning success, health of the body of water they live and thrive in, the eco-system, stocking, pollution etc.) Even ice fishing is possible (more about this under specialty fishing closer to the end of the text).

As pointed out earlier, weather affects behavior and the season and type of water, might all require different approach, equipment and bait and lures/preparation AND presentation.

As an angler, avid bass angler, this will not faze you in any way! On the contrary, it provides you with the opportunity to shift gears, change strategy, tools, refine skills, learn more about your opponent and its habits. By being alert, aware and observant, you will learn a lot about the fish – it is no longer a passive sport! Windy, low and or high air pressure, water temperature, choppy waves and or surface movement of the water, cloudy skies, with lots of cloud cover, masking the sun, could dictate whether fish will be biting or not, color of plastic worms might be adjusted from blue (on bright days), to black (on cloudy days with not a lot of sun around). Modifying your fishing techniques and adapting to weather patterns, even adjusting your bait/lures, strategy, all bear witness of an alert bass master!

Bass are also sensitive to very bright sunlight, so then you might find them looking for some shady cover and or cooler waters. That knowledge will prepare you well for where to go and look for them. Increasing your odds of finding them too!

- Predatory Nature and creatures of habit – what the fish themselves tell us (or not!)

There predators of the deep are rich in their life cycles, habits and patters. It is their nature after-all. They are somewhat

predictable. As hunters, they do certain things, instinctively and as anglers, we capitalize on it. There are lots of facts about the species, worth knowing and key to understanding – the secret to unlocking the success of bass fishing. Thinking like a hunter ourselves and at times like the fish, can increase your odds and success significantly. Being one with nature and its intricate patterns, behavior, balance and quirks, allow fisherman to be skilled, precise, well prepared and more successful, rather than leaving it up to eventuality and random chance to secure a bite!

- Preferred habitat and fishing structures

One author likens contour and topographic maps to bass fishermen, like treasure maps to pirates once were. Lines show elevation, depth etc. Get an idea of what the 'floor' or bottom of the body of water (like a lake for instance) would look like – it is rarely flat, often characterized by rises and humps, slopes and drop-offs.

Slopes and access-points into deeper water should also yield more frequent, larger hauls and more strikes, as bass prefer to have access to deeper waters and are constantly on the move, hunting and feeding and or defending territory.

- Natural Diet and Menu – the art of enticing fish: creating the right atmosphere/conditions/allure for a strike

Lots have already been said about this topic.

- Self-confidence

The belief in your ability to locate and catch the various bass species, is by far the best tool of the trade to foster and develop over time. This cannot be purchased and is the personal call to every fisherman, to include in his/her tackle-box!

Whether you choose to use spinners, or swear by plastic worms, crawfish and other live bait, chum or have a favorite lure for reasons and or secrets that are your very own, you use what works the best and what you believe will produce the bass you want, desire and must have! Positive attitude goes a long way when learning how to fish for bass. Profiting from ongoing experience, success and failure, your angling and odds will keep improving. Practice in this case, will go a long way to enable success in this unpredictable, varying situation – when you are one-on-one with the most popular game and sporting fish of them all: The Bass itself!

Techniques For Bass Fishing Like A Pro (Worms, Skipping, Ripping, Drift Trolling, Flyrodding)

The art of accurate casting

Mastering basic casting is key. Most spinning and bait-casting reel and rod combinations today, are made for hassle-free, ease-of-use flexibility by a variety of anglers (multi-level at that too!)

Try to eliminate errors from your basic style and technique. Skill and accuracy should matter more than strength and it is not always about getting it as far out, as fast as you possibly can (although this might be important in certain situations and circumstances too!)

Casting, getting your line/hook/bait, sinkers, weights and leaders in and into the water, at the exact right depth, imitating 'prey', and doing so with extreme, pin-point accuracy, is what this is all about. Hitting your target with confidence is a very basic skill to master and refine. Getting the hook out to exactly where you wanted it to be, what you should practice and work for.

Casting is one part of this process, getting the lure to the right depth quite another. Advanced bass anglers suggest using a countdown OR counting method. Quite simple really. From the moment the bait hits the water, start counting, 1000, 1000 and 1, 1000 and 2, 1000 and 3... estimating the seconds it will take for it to 'drop' into the water. This will help you know better what you are doing, when it hits the bottom for example, whether or

not it got caught on something in the process etc. YOU establish reference points for yourself on and in the water.

Hands-on and rod in-hand is the best way. Practice-plugs in the park, or your own backyard (be it on 'dry land', so to speak), will make you that more effective and accurate, in and on the water, no matter what the body of water, or style of fishing you choose to pursue. Whether spinning, bait casting or fly-rodding, there is something for every taste. Even missed targets, attempts and failure, are also good teachers, as this technique is somewhat of a routine you can master and learn.

Casting a lure with a spinning reel for example, casting float and or leger rig, bait casting are very similar. Lure fishing, spinning, floating, spoons, plugs, surface or top-water lures, crank bait, trolling etc. are all basic techniques that require exposure, quick demos and hands-on practice. We suggest a video or DVD, or online in-depth explanation, watching a fishing show or two and getting pointers from other anglers and professionals, as well as finding and defining your own style that you are comfortable and successful with. The beauty of bass fishing, is that it offers something for everyone, no matter what your prior experience with fishing might be!

Focusing on your grip, spinning reels, bait-casters and or closed-face spin casters techniques and mastery, picking a target, aiming to land your lure (terminal tackle) in the middle of that target, is a good approach.

As a general rule of thumb, a good arch in the air as a travel path en route to the water, is a good reference and goal to have, as you set out to improve your casting technique and accuracy. Line-control is crucial to avoid overshooting, get a gentler landing, slow flight (by touching the lip of the spool with the tip of your index finger (also known to anglers as 'feathering') is useful.

Playing and landing fish

Getting to know the feel of a fish on your hook, line and rod is very important. Retrieval is about more than simply getting the fish into the eager hands/net/boat. Mastery, maneuvering, responsiveness, knowledge of your tackle, well-balanced control, reel-clutching, fighting curves and arching/bending rods and the various controls and settings, techniques (including casting, hooking, playing, reeling in, retrieving and landing) is important. They are so much more than mere steps in a process and or sum-total of parts. To translate into a true blue-blood bass-fishing experience and success, appreciation of the symphony of the interplay of process and outcome, tactic, technique, angler, equipment, the catch and haul is what is at play here. When using a spinning reel/bait-casting, there are three key techniques to master that would include reel control: with anti-reverse on, back winding (anti-reverse off) and thumb-pressure control

There is nothing more exciting than a fish on the run, apply pressure, keep the rod up slightly and increase the 'drag' if required, using one of the techniques above. Watch tension and avoid line-breaks and allow the fish to tire.

It is one thing to prepare, cast, tease and tempt, hook and eventually reel in. The process however does not stop there. More of the basic technique mastery includes methods of landing fish, like beaching (not suitable for catch and release), tailing (not suited for all species), lipping (watch the toothed species here!), netting or even gaffing (banned in most areas, due to the risk of the stroke injuring the fish).

The most useful tip we can provide or suggest, is remaining in control, alert and not upset or startle the fish even more. Allow the tired fish to turn, submerge the net and avoid lunging at it.

When lipping, grip the lower lip gently between your thumb and forefingers, unhook carefully or hold in the water while freeing it gently, but efficiently, without hurting the fish, adhering as far as possible, to current and accepted, catch-and-release practices.

Lure-fishing and spinning

Spinning tackle and artificial baits and lures are increasing in popularity and the most popular form of fishing worldwide. As far as bass fishing is concerned, one of the easiest way to attract the species – even for novices and beginner anglers of all ages and fishing style and skill-levels. Rotation, color and movement, staying as true as you can to the natural diet and target prey of the bass will optimize your chances. The shape and thickness of the spinning ‘blade’ on the lure affects the action and mobility of the lure – how it responds and acts in and under water.

Floating lures are also common and effective especially for deep-water bass fishing. Watch for snagging on the bottom and ensure to weigh it done appropriately using suitable weights. This method ensures getting the bait at eye-level of the fish.

For spoons, there are two broad categories, namely trolling and casting spoons. Weed-less lures mostly have hooks with nylon or metal weed-guards that prevent snagging and or non-weedless spoons are also commonly used. How to tell which one to use, most bass anglers look for shape, weight and speed. The best way to find your way around in any tackle shop or box, is to practice and get to know the behavior and or success in different conditions. Trying to get to know the optimum retrieval and success rates, maybe even logging it in a personal journal as you undertake your bass journey/hunt for the NEXT BIG ONE!

Plugs, surface lures, useful at all fishing levels, at all speeds make these lures versatile, agile and an all-time favorite of many a bass angler. Matching the lure to the conditions you face and the circumstance, body of water and specific species you are fishing for (small-mouth, large-mouth, striped, spotted, rock, yellow, black, white etc.). Shallow-diving crank-bait and or surface or top-water lures have proven themselves most effective for bass fishing – great for fishing shallows. Stick-baits and jerking, minnow plugs (or the real thing!), prop-baits, surface disturbers, crawler-type top-water baits and even a floating, driving crank-bait can prove useful.

The true secret lies in what some call the 'one-two punch' – teasing and enticing with a top-water or teaser (surface disturber) and then following it up with a plastic worm for example on a second rod, for optimizing strikes and yet again tipping the scales in your favor.

Plastic worms

There are a vast array of worms available on the market (both live bait and artificial). For avid bass anglers they are a necessity. The technique to master is hooking them properly. When hooking a worm for bass fishing, it is of utmost importance to ensure that you thread it properly. Get a lot of the body onto the hook, hooking it twice, at top and bottom. This is to ensure that it does not fly loose when you are casting it out into the water. It also protects it somewhat in the submerged paradise that the bass shares with other fish, who might want to come and take a bite or sample! Using worms in combination with other baits/lures and enticing techniques like top-water and or hard-bait surface disturbers or frogs, eels or whatever species and body of water would deem appropriate "feeding prey" for the bass of your choice and preference is the key. Again adapting your strategy when necessary and giving the bass a variety of foods to choose from, will all hopefully increase you odds of hooking your next bass! ... even if it is not yet the BIG ONE!

4. Mistakes And Secrets Related to Bass Fishing

As we have discovered throughout these pages, there is a lot more to bass fishing than meets the eye. Once you are familiar with the species, different bodies of water, different and sophisticated fishing and angling equipment and accessories, as well as familiarizing yourself with habits, patterns and nature, behavior, natural diet and preferred foods, mastering some basic skills like preparation, presentation, tackle, bait and lures, casting accuracy, knots, hooks and the intricacies and complexities in retrieval and landing, the journey has but started. There is so much more to explore and learn about through the activity, sport, art and competitive science that is bass fishing, that we can almost say no more than the water await and let's go!

Although, there are some last thoughts we can offer on some of the more common casting mistakes. These 'errors' are well-documented in existing literature and easily overcome, to optimize your bass fishing experience and haul. Here are but a few issues most beginners struggle with:

(i) overshoot lure with too much power in the initial cast and the line release not slowed, or (ii) the lure falling short or being too light, with the line being released too early during the cast and or the rod held too high after the line was released. (iii) lure landing too hard, due to the release at too low of an angle and not arching enough in the air, and (iv) inaccurate casting (the most common) – missing the mark, where the lure goes off-course with too much side-to-side action/motioning of the rod while

casting. Practicing reel and line control, as well as the overhead cast might help.

Lots of texts (like the Dorling Encyclopedia mentioned earlier, pg. 212-213), suggests thinking of 'casting', compared to the movement of the arms on a clock-face, beginning in the two o'clock position, pushing back to around the noon-position and back to the 2 again, with the rod slightly lowered as the lure drops deeper into the water. For most beginners this 'visualization' often helps refine technique.

5. Styles And Specialty Bass Fishing

Skipping

This technique might remind you a lot of throwing rocks onto the surface of the water to see it 'skip'. As a water/top-water disturbance and movement simulator, it triggers and teases our predator to come up and see what is there to eat/attack.

Spinning rods and reel combo is best used for this technique – perfect for fishing and reaching bass where they swim and hide under piers, docks and pontoons. Also useful for getting under and into underbrush and growth. Remember their 'comfort zone'. On sunny days, bass look for shade, food and shelter and often rest here in shady areas, under cover of structure.

Ripping

Some call this the throw it out, twitch, jerk and go method. A medium-action rod with parabolic bend and action to it. It might actually trick our bass-friend into thinking there is a 'wounded' prey around. Like a pro, let the worm drop and settle to the bottom, remaining there for a period of time. Reel some slack out of the line, picking up the worm with a long, sharp upsweep of the rod tip. Let 'er rip! Let it drop down again to the bottom, under tension while slowly lowering the rod tip – keep on imitating live prey like this, moving, swimming and bobbing about and your predator will strike it with a vengeance.

Drift Trolling

Trailing behind the boat, covering the bottom worms crawl and move, simulating prey in its purest form. Raise and lower it occasionally, looking natural and alluring to any bass in the vicinity hunting for a tasty morsel.

Fly-rodding

In ponds, ,rivers, streams and lakes this approach is quite effective. Fly-fishing like techniques are very effective with bass. Begin by preparing and rigging a plastic worm, weed-less adding a small split-shot just before the hook. This will enable it to sink slowly. Flip or cast and allow it to drop and bob to the bottom. Quite the tease and hard for the bass with keen sight, sound and smell to miss. Keep the tip of the rod very low, to make it possible for you to make a well timed, strike when you feel a bass hit.

Night and Ice-fishing

Schooling, effective tackle and dropping the lure/bait right in front of the fish, not having them expend a lot of energy is the key for these timings and conditions. Water tends to be cooler and all your approaches, strategies and techniques need to slow down a notch. Bass also tend to school, during these times. Knowing this fact can help you in acquiring your target better and increasing your odds of getting a hit under these unusual or specialty conditions.

It is almost an impossibility to provide here for every unique condition and we barely scratched the surface on most of the

contexts bass anglers might find themselves. We look forward to sharing more secrets with you and learning from your journey!

6. Final Thoughts: Summary and Conclusions

Catch-and-release fishing

Doing your part to protect nature and conserve it for future generations, is mandatory and regulated. Using barb-less hooks and or removing them easily. Holding the fish in the water, gently while unhooking, minimizing the trauma and damage to the fish is crucial. Support the fish and let it go with the current, swimming away and left to live another day, for many battles more to come!

Do all you can to understand and adhere to licensing, permits, closed season stipulations, minimum size and catch limits. These and other measures are there to protect and serve, to minimize the risk of over-fishing and species becoming extinct.

This might not be the utter finest book on bass fishing ever written, but may the passion and contents inspire you to greatness as an avid and successful angler. If we can but ignite confidence and hints of excitement for fisher-folk, young and old, then these pages have succeeded!

May the road (and the waters, The Bass), come up to meet you...
May your journey and journal grow, each entry teaching more, increasing confidence and aptitude!

May the pleasures of Bass fishing and the many ways we can choose actively to partake of it, bring you continued and continual enjoyment, reward, haul and immense pleasure!

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Sosin, M., Dance, B., 1999: The Field and Stream Bass Fishing Handbook. Where to find and catch large-mouths and small-mouths – match baits and lures to every situation. The Lyons Press, New York. ISBN: 1558218955

The Dorling Kindersley encyclopedia of fishing – 1st American Edition. 1994 Dorling Kindersley Publishing, London. ISBN: 1564584925

Vaughan, A. Ladle, M., 1988: Hooked on Bass/ The Crowood Press, Great Britain. ISBN: 1861266294

- DVD and other online links and resources
Dave Mercer's Facts of Fishing, DVD Series Volume 1

www.factsoffishing.com

Bass Fishing: The Basics with Chuck Woolery, DVD, 2004

www.videospace.com

APPENDIX I

Bass Fishing Glossary

(as found at http://www.bassresource.com/fishing_lures/bass_fishing.html)

Action - Measure of rod performance that describes the elapsed time between flexion and return to straight configuration; ranges from slow to fast, with slow being the most amount of flexion; also refers to the strength of the rod (light, medium and heavy) with light being a limber rod and heavy a stout rod; also refers to gear of reels.

Active Fish - Bass that are feeding heavily and striking aggressively.

Adaptation - Biological adjustment that increases fitness.

Algae - Simple plant organisms.

Alkalinity - Measure of the amount of acid neutralizing bases.

Alley - An opening between patches of emergent weeds; also the parallel space separating emergent weeds and the shoreline.

Amp - Measure of electrical current.

Amp Hour - Storage capacity measurement of a deep-cycle batter obtained by multiplying the current flow in amps by the hours that it is produced.

Angler - Person using pole or rod and reel to catch fish.

Anti-reverse - System that prevents reels from spinning in reverse.

Backlash - Tangle of line on a bait-casting reel due to spool overrun.

Backwater - Shallow area off a river.

Bag Limit - Restriction on the number of fish that an angler may harvest in a day.

Bail - Metal, semicircular arm on an open-face spinning reel that engages the line after a cast.

Bait - An artificial lure is usually what is meant even though bait can also mean live bait.

Bait casting - Fishing with a revolving-spool reel and bait casting rod; reel mounted on topside of rod.

Baitfish - Small fish often eaten by predators.

Bar - Long ridge in a body of water.

Basic Needs - Refers to the three survival requirements of bass: reproduction, security, and food.

Bay - Major indentation in the shoreline of a lake or reservoir.

Bite - When a fish takes or touches (or hammers) a bait so that the fisherman feels it. Also known as a hit, bump, or a strike.

Black Bass - Common term used to describe several types of bass, including the largemouth, smallmouth, and spotted bass.

Blank - Fishing rod without grip, guides or finish.

Brackish - Water of intermediate salinity between seawater and freshwater.

Break - Distinct variation in otherwise constant stretches of cover, structure, or bottom type. Basically anything, that "breaks up" the underwater terrain.

Break line - A line of abrupt change in depth, bottom type, or water clarity in the feature of otherwise uniform structure. A place where there is a sudden or drastic change in the depth of the water, or weed type. This may be the edge of a creek, a submerged cliff, or even a stand of submerged weeds.

Brush line - The inside or the outside edge of a stretch of brush.

Brush pile - Usually refers to a mass of small- to medium-sized tree limbs lying in the water. Brush piles may be only one or two feet across, or they may be extremely large and they may be visible or submerged. They can be created by Mother Nature or manmade. They usually hold fish. And fishermen.

Bumping - Refers to the act of making a lure hit an object such as a log, tree, or pier piling in a controlled manner. This is often done unintentionally, but can get the same reaction from the fish. Also, a lure making contact with the bottom.

Buzzbait - Topwater bait with large, propeller-type blades that churn the water during retrieve. Comprised of a leadhead, rigid hook, and wire that supports one or more blades.

Buzzing - Retrieving a lure, such as a spinnerbait or buzzbait, at a rate fast enough to cause it to remain partially out of the water, causing a noisy disturbance. Sometimes called ripping or burning.

Cabbage - Any of several species of weeds, located above the surface or underwater, of the genus *Potamogeton*.

Carolina Rig - A style of terminal tackle normally used to keep a lure a foot or two (or more) off the bottom. This is most commonly used with a plastic worm, but is also used with floating crankbaits and other lures as well. A barrel slip sinker of 1/2- to 1-ounce is first slipped on the line and then a swivel is tied to the end of the line. A piece of line 18 to 30 inches long is then tied to the other end of the swivel and a hook or lure is tied to the end of this piece line. Rigged Texas style (weedless with the hook buried in the body of the bait), the combination is excellent for fishing ledges, points, sandbars, and humps. Diagram

Channel - The bed of a stream or river.

Chugger - Topwater plug with a dished-out (concave or "cupped") head designed to make a splash when pulled sharply.

Clarity - Refers to the depth you are able to see an object (such as your lure) under the water.

Cold Front - A weather condition accompanied by high, clear skies, and a sudden drop in temperature.

Contact Point - The deepest position on structure where a bass angler can first effectively present his lure to bass as they migrate from deep water.

Controlled Drift - The act of using an electric motor, drift sock, or oars to allow a drift to be accomplished at a certain speed and/or direction. This term is often called "drift fishing" by most anglers.

Coontail - Submerged aquatic plant of the hornwort family typically found in hard water; characterized by stiff, forked leaves.

Cosmic Clock - The sun's seasonal effect on water and weather conditions relating to barometric pressure, wind, and cloud cover.

Count It Down - Timing a sinking lure to determine when it will reach a specified depth. This is accomplished by finding the rate of sinking of a lure in feet-per-second. Often used when fishing for suspended fish.

Cove - An indentation along a shoreline.

Cover - Natural or manmade objects on the bottom of lakes, rivers, or impoundments, especially those that influence fish behavior. Anything a fish can use to conceal itself. Examples include stick-ups, tree lines, stumps, rocks, logs, pilings, docks, weeds, boathouses, duck blinds, bushes, etc. (not to be confused with structure).

Crankbait - Typically, a lipped lure that dives under the surface during the retrieve. So-called lipless crankbaits are thin, minnow-like lures that sink at a rate of about 1-foot per second.

Dabbling - Working a lure up and down in the same spot a dozen or more times in a bush or beside a tree.

Depthfinder - A sonar device, either a flasher unit or LCR recorder, used to read the bottom structure, determine depth, and in some cases actually spot the fish; also called a fishfinder.

Disgorger - Device for removing hooks deeply embedded in the throat of fish.

Drag - Device on fishing reels that allows line to pay out under pressure, even though the reel is engaged; set correctly, it ensures against line breakage.

Drop-Off - A sudden increase in depth, created by gulley washes, small creek channels, land points, and the general lay of the land.

Drop Shot - A hook tied directly to the line from four-inches to four-feet above the sinker. The hook is attached from the back side or opposite the point, with a simple Palomar knot with a tag end about four or five feet long. The weight hangs and the hook is at a 90-degree angle to the line with the hook point up. The hook can be 18 to 24 inches above a bell sinker tied on with a slip-knot.

Ecology - The branch of biology dealing with the relationship between organisms and their environment.

Edge - Refers to the borders created by a change in the structure or vegetation in a lake. Some examples of edges are tree lines, weed lines, and the edge of a drop-off.

Eutrophic - Highly fertile waters characterized by warm, shallow basins.

Fan Cast - Making a series of casts only a few degrees apart to cover a half circle (more or less).

Farm Pond - Small manmade body of water.

Feeder Creek - Tributary to a stream.

Feeding Times - Certain times of the day when fish are most active. These are associated with the position of the sun and moon and are referred to as solunar tables (also called moon charts) and are predictable for any time and place. See Moon Times.

Filamentous Algae - Type of algae characterized by long chains of attached cells that give it a stringy feel and appearance.

Feeding Cycle - Certain regular intervals during which bass satisfy their appetites. Examples: Major or Minor Solunar periods; sunrise, sunset.

Finesse Fishing - An angling technique characterized by the use of light tackle - line, rods, reel and artificial baits (often tube worms, grubs, or other small-sized soft-plastic lures); often productive in clear, fairly uncluttered water.

Flat - An area in a body of water with little if any change in depth. Small and large, flats are generally surrounded on at least one side by deeper water, the bottom comes up to form a flat area where fish will often move up for feeding.

Flipping - (generally shortened to flippin') The technique of placing a lure in a given spot precisely, and quietly, with as little disturbance of the water as possible using an underhand cast while controlling the line with your hand.

Flipping Stick - Heavy action fishing rod, 7 to 8 feet long, designed for bass fishing.

Florida Rig - Very similar to the Texas Rig, the only difference is the weight is secured by "screwing" it into the bait.

Fly 'N Rind - Same thing as jig-and-pig - a combination of a leadhead jig and pork rind trailer.

Forage - Small baitfish, crayfish and other creatures that bass eat. May also be used in the sense of the bass looking for food (foraging).

Front - Weather system that causes changes in temperature, cloud cover, precipitation, wind and barometric pressure.

Gear Ratio - Measure of a reels' retrieve speed; the number of times the spool revolves for each complete turn of the handle.

Grayline - Grayline lets you distinguish between strong and weak echoes. It "paints" gray on targets that are stronger than a preset value. This allows you to tell the difference between a hard and soft bottom. For example, a soft, muddy or weedy bottom returns a weaker symbol which is shown with a narrow or no gray line. A hard bottom returns a strong signal which causes a wide gray line.

Grub - A short plastic worm used with a weighted jig hook.

Habitat - The place in nature where a plant or animal species lives. The water, vegetation, and all that makes up the lake, which is where bass live. Habitat, for other creatures, is also in the woods and cities, it's basically a term used to indicate a "living area" or home environment.

Hard Bottom - Area in a body of water with a solid base - clay, gravel, rock, sand. The type of bottom that you would not sink far, if at all, were you to walk on it.

Hawg - Usually refers to a lunker-size or heavyweight bass weighing 4 pounds or more.

Holding Area - Structure that habitually holds three to five catchable bass.

Holding Station - Place on lake where inactive fish spend most of their time.

Honey Hole - A super fishing spot containing a number of big bass; also any place with a large concentration of keeper bass.

Horizontal Movement - The distance a fish moves while remaining at the same depth.

Hump - An area higher than the surrounding area. A submerged dam or island might be considered a hump.

Ichthyology - The branch of zoology that deals with fishes - their classification, structure, habits, and live history.

Inactive Fish - Bass that are in a non-feeding mood. Examples of typically inactive times: following a cold front; during a major weather change that causes a sudden rise or fall in water temperature, or when a rising lake level is abruptly lowered.

Inside Bend - The inside line of a grass bed or a creek channel.

Isolated Structure - A possible holding spot for bass; examples include a single bush on a point; a midlake hump, or a large tree that has fallen into the water.

Jig - A leadhead poured around a hook and featuring a skirt of rubber, plastic, or hair.

Jig-N-Pig - Combination of a leadhead jig and pork rind trailer; among the most effective baits for attracting trophy-size bass.

Keeper - A bass that conforms to a specific minimum length limit established by tournament organizations and/or state fisheries department.

Lake Modification Sources - Elements that change bodies of water, such as ice action, wave action, and erosion.

Lake Zones - Designation that includes four categories: shallow water, open water, deep water, and basin.

Laydown (or Falldown) - A tree that has fallen into the water.

Light Intensity - The amount of light that can be measured at certain depths of water; the greater the intensity, the farther down the light will project. This measurement can be significantly affected by wind conditions and water clarity. In waters where light intensity is low, brightly colored lures are smart choices.

Line Guides - Rod rings through which fishing line is passed.

Lipless Crankbaits - Artificial baits designed to resemble a swimming baitfish. Such plugs vibrate and/or wobble during retrieve; some have built-in rattles. Also called swimming baits.

Livewell - An aerated tank in boats used to hold fish in water until weigh-in time so that they have a better chance of survival when released. Similar to an aquarium.

Logjam - A group of horizontal logs pushed together by wind or water flow to form an obstruction. In lakes, logjams are usually found close to shore and in the backs of coves.

Loose-Action Plug - A lure with wide and slow movements from side to side.

Lunker - Normally, a bass weighing 4 pounds or more.

Micropterus Salmoides - Scientific term for largemouth bass.

Migration Route - The path followed by bass when moving from one area to another.

Milfoil - Surface-growing aquatic plants.

Mono - Short for monofilament fishing line.

Moon Times - Four phases of the moon are usually what the fisherman is concerned with. Generally the "best times" in a month occur three days prior and three days after, and include the day of the new or full moon. First quarter and second quarter periods are considered as only "good times."

Off Color - Refers to the color and or clarity of the water. Brown is muddy like from rain runoff, greenish from algae and black from tannic acid are the normal off-color conditions.

Our Hole - Proprietary term used by anglers to describe the area they intend to fish. (My hole, their hole, etc.) Though actually all holes are all angler's holes since the lakes being fished are mostly public water. It's only your hole if you get there first. Otherwise it's their hole.

Outside Bend - The outside line of a creek channel or grass bed can be considered an outside bend.

Oxbow - A U-shaped bend in a river.

Pattern - A defined set of location and presentation factors that consistently produce fish. Example: If you catch more than one fish off a pier or stick-up, then your chances of catching more bass in such places are excellent. This is commonly called "establishing a pattern".

Pegging - Putting a toothpick in the hole of a slip sinker to prevent the sinker from sliding along the line. Other items such as rubber bands slipped through the sinker have also become popular and don't snag line.

PFD - Initials that stand for Personal Floatation Device; also called a life vest.

pH - This is a measurement for liquids to determine whether they are acidic or alkaline. On a scale of one to ten, seven is considered neutral. Below seven the liquid is acidic and above seven it is alkaline. This is a factor that plays a role in the health of the lake and the fish as well as where the fish may be found in a lake.

pH Meter - Just as a thermometer measures heat and cold, a pH meter can be used to measure the acidity and alkalinity of water. The pH scale ranges from 0 to 14. Bass generally prefer water that is slightly alkaline in the 7.5 to 7.9 range. Water with a pH less than 7 is acidic. Once popular among serious bass fishermen, the device is no longer widely used.

Pick-Up - The act of a bass taking a slowly fished lure, such as a plastic worm, crawfish or lizard.

Pit - Area excavated for mining operations that fills with water.

Pitching - Presentation technique in which worms or jigs are dropped into cover at close range with an underhand pendulum motion, using a 6' to 7 1/2 foot baitcasting rod. The act of pitching a bait into a pocket or under tree limbs. Similar to flipping, but requires less stealth and usually done from further distances (known as pitchin').

Pocket - A small indentation of the shoreline.

Point - A finger of land jutting into the water; deeper water is usually found just beyond the exposed tip and along the length of both sides. Fishing on and around points is often exceptionally rewarding. They almost always hold fish.

Post Front - The period following a cold front; atmosphere clears and becomes bright; usually characterized by strong winds and a significant drop in temperature.

Presentation - A collective term referring to choice of type of lure, color, and size; structure targeted; amount of disturbance a bait makes when entering the water; and retrieval technique, speed, and depth used to catch fish. This refers to the circumstances and manner (speed and direction, etc.) in which a lure is presented to a fish.

Pro - A very few of the nation's top bass fishermen can truly claim the word professional. Not only must the pro be a consistent money winner on the major tournament circuits, but he or she must also be articulate, a good salesperson, present a clean-cut image, and have the ability to teach others to catch fish.

Professional Overrun - A polite term for backlash.

Revolving-Spool Reel - Another term for baitcasting reel. The spool turns during casting, unlike the spool of a spinning or spincasting reel.

Reservoir - Artificially created place where water is collected and stored; also called an impoundment.

Riprap - A man-made stretch of rocks or material of a hard composition that usually extend above and below the shoreline; often found near dams or big impoundments.

Saddle - Site where structure narrows before widening again.

Sanctuary - Deep-water bass habitat.

Scatter Point - Position along structure where bass start to separate or scatter; often found in shallow water, at or very close to a breakline.

Short Strike - When a fish hits at a lure and misses it.

Slack Line - The loose line from the tip of the rod to the lure. This can be a slight bow in the line to an excess of line lying on the water.

Slicks - Bass not long enough to meet tournament standards; typically less than 14 inches. Such fish also are called "nubbins", "through backs", "pop corns", "babies" and "dinks".

Slip Sinker - A lead weight with a hole through the center. Threaded on line, a slip sinker slides freely up and down.

Slough - A long, narrow stretch of water such as a small stream or feeder tributary off a lake or river.

Slow Roll - Spinnerbait presentation in which the lure is retrieved slowly through and over cover objects.

Slush Bait - Topwater plug with flat or pointed head.

Spincaster - A manner of fishing employing a push-button, closed-face spinning reel and baitcasting rod; reel is mounted on topside of rod.

Spinnerbait - A leadhead lure similar in shape to an open safety-pin with a hook; other features include a rubber, plastics, or hair skirt, and one or two blades of various shapes and sizes.

Spinning - A manner of fishing employing an open-face or closed-face spinning reel and spinning rod; reel is mounted on the underside of the rod; rod guides are on the underside of the rod.

Split Shotting - Often called stitch fishing because you move the bait in increments no larger than a sewing stitch and made just as slowly and patience is the key. Use a small #5 split-shot and crimp it about 18 inches above a light wire 1/0 or lighter small hook. Spinning tackle is a must. Small worms, 3-inch salt craws and others are perfect for the gentle application required.

Spook - The act of alarming a fish in a negative way. Examples: excessive noise, casting a human shadow.

Stick-Up - Stationary structure - stump, limb, section of pipe, fence post - that extends about 5 feet or less above the surface; a favorite casting target of bass fishermen.

Stragglers - Bass that remain near shore following a general migration.

Stringer - Antiquated term for a limit of fish, used by tournament anglers to indicate their catch (10-pound stringer = 10 pounds of fish. Not actually used any longer to retain bass, just a term people can't seem to stop using. (see livewell).

Structure - Changes in the shape of the bottom of lakes, rivers, or impoundments, especially those that influence fish behavior. This is probably the most misunderstood word in bass fishing. Structure is a feature on the bottom of the lake. Some examples of structure are creeks, humps, depressions, sandbars, roadbeds, ledges, and drop-offs. Some examples that are not structure: a stump, tree, or brush pile (these are cover).

Suspended Fish - Bass at midlevel depths, neither near the surface nor on the bottom.

Swimming Lures - Sinking-type artificial baits designed to resemble a swimming baitfish. Such plugs vibrate and/or wobble during retrieve; some have built-in rattles. Also called lipless crankbaits.

Tail-Spinners - Compact, lead-bodied lures with one or two spinner blades attached to the tail, and a treble hook suspended from the body; designed to resemble a wounded shad; effective on schooling bass.

Taper - An area in a body of water that slopes toward deeper depths.

Terminal Tackle - Angling equipment, excluding artificial baits, attached to the end of a fishing line; examples include hooks, snaps, swivels, snap-swivels, sinkers, floats, and plastic beads.

Texas Rig - The method of securing a hook to a soft-plastic bait - worm, lizard, crawfish, so that the hook is weedless. A slip sinker is threaded onto the line and then a hook is tied to the end of the line. The hook is then inserted into the head of a worm for about one-quarter of an inch and brought through until only the eye is still embedded in the worm. The hook is then rotated and the point is embedded slightly into the worm without coming out the opposite side. Diagram

Thermocline - The layer of water where the temperature changes at least one-half a degree per foot of depth. Basically, a layer of water where rising warm and sinking cold water meet.

Tight-Action Plug - A lure with short, rapid side-to-side movement.

Tiptop - Line guide at top of fishing rod.

Topwaters - Floating hard baits that create some degree of surface disturbance during retrieve.

Trailer Hook - The extra hook, or cheater hook added to a single-hook lure, such as a spinnerbait or weedless spoon.

Transition - The imaginary line where one type of bottom material changes to another.

Treble Hook - Hook with single or bundled shaft and three points.

Triggering - Employment of any lure-retrieval technique or other fishing strategy that causes a bass to strike.

Trolling Motor - A small electric fishing motor, typically mounted on the bow, that is used as secondary boat propulsion, for boat positioning, and to maneuver quietly in fishing areas.

Turnover - The period when the cold water on the surface of a body of water descends and is replaced by warmer water from below.

Vertical Movement - Up and down movement of fish. Can also be movement of a lure such as a spoon (verticaljigging).

Weedless - A description of a lure designed to be fished in heavy cover with a minimum amount of snagging.

Weedline - Abrupt edge of a weedbed caused by a change in depth, bottom type, or other factor.

Wormin' - The act of fishing with a plastic worm, lizard, crawfish, or similar bait.