



LAKE OF THE OZARKS

**FREE**

# Fishing News

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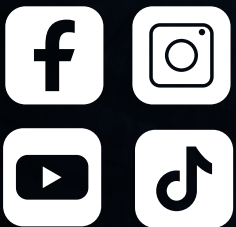
**ANGLER PROFILE**

**LAWSON  
HIBDON**

**IN THIS ISSUE**

- How Long Does Fishing Line Last
- Boating Basics at the Ramp
- Hot Baits for Fall with Fitz Fishing & Tackle
- Tips for Properly Spooling a Spinning Reel
- Winter Time Crappie
- Clays Corner
- And More . . .

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## FROM THE FOUNDER

Bob Bueltmann  
Founder, BassingBob.com

Don't take for granted the time you enjoy fishing. In January of 2023, I had heart surgery to replace/repair two leaky valves and a bypass to clear a blockage in my main artery. I entered the surgery with great confidence that all would go well and in four to six weeks I would recover and be back to fishing and all the other activities that I enjoy. The heart surgery went as planned and the heart surgery was a complete success. However, days after the surgery I had complications.

The complications were not at all due to the heart surgery, rather I went into alcohol withdrawals. While I never really thought that I drank that much, but apparently the frequency and amount of drinking was enough for my body to respond to not having alcohol.

The complications turned severe. I was unconscious in intensive care not moving for nearly a month. I was kept alive by a ventilator and feeding tube, I was totally nonresponsive. After several weeks, the Doctors were not very hopeful that I would live. In fact, they told my kids that in the coming days they would need to decide to stop keeping me alive artificially as documented in my advance directive.

were at my bedside daily, including my son Rob, who drove into St. Louis and returned to the lake every day, the prayers and support of my family and from all of you fellow anglers and friends along with the incredible care that I received by my ICU doctors and nurses at Mercy Hospital South and the Grace of God, I finally woke up.

I was in really bad shape, I could not walk, I could not stand, and I was barely coherent in my speech. After many months of physical therapy and cardiac rehab therapy in St. Louis and here at Lake Regional Hospital along with weekly physical fitness at the local YMCA I have improved significantly and have been back in the boat fishing and enjoying this hobby we all love.

I encourage you all to not take for granted the time that you are out there fishing. I can recall so many fishing trips with friends, the preparation and camaraderie of travelling around for a tournament, the insane weather we fish in sometimes, the memorable days of catching a lot of fish and memories of catching big ones. In a moment that can all be taken away. Please take time to enjoy the entire experience of fishing, think about it while

I was literally a day or two from dying.

Thanks to the support of my children who

in the moment of fishing, restringing your rods, researching the baits you plan to use and the friendship you enjoy planning a fishing trip with your friends and family. Take in every single moment,

If you drink, I encourage you all to monitor your alcohol consumption including the frequency and amount you consume. Alcohol affects everyone differently of course, however for me it nearly killed me. I also encourage you to thank God for all that is good in your life, including fishing. He saved my life, and I am forever grateful.

It is with joy and thanksgiving that we bring you this edition of The Fishing News Magazine. In this edition we bring you informative articles about fishing line and recommendations to string a spinning reel. Articles about the top Lake of the Ozarks species, bass, crappie, catfish, and white bass. We have an article on fishing from a woman's perspective. Our usual articles regarding the hot new baits, Clay's Corner and our featured angler, Lawson Hibdon.

I hope you all enjoy the magazine and I ask you all to pay specific attention to our advertisers and try your best to patronize their businesses and use their products. It is all of you and our sponsors that provide us the opportunity to bring you this magazine twice per year.

God Bless You All and Tight Lines,

*- Bob Bueltmann*

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# HOW LONG DOES FISHING LINE LAST? THE BEST WAY TO STORE FISHING LINE.

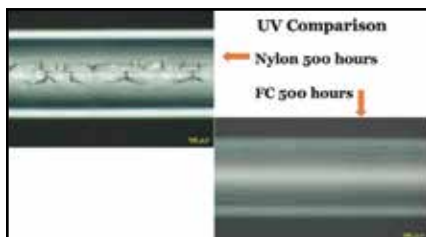
by Yoshinori Mitani

Many people ask how long will fishing line last? The answer is dependent on how the line is stored, but in most cases fishing line can last a very long time in storage and maintain optimum strength. The three main types of line are nylon (monofilament), fluorocarbon and braid. Nylon can be the line most impacted if not stored properly. While braid and fluorocarbon will maintain performance the longest in proper storage.

There are three main suggestions to keep your extra line performing at the highest levels for years to come.

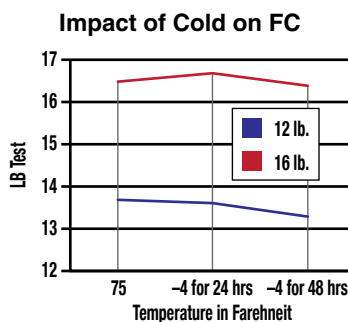
1. Store your line out of direct light
2. Keep your extra line at room temperature
3. Protect the spools

**#1:** The top suggestion is to keep your line out of continuous exposure to light. This means sunlight, but also includes fluorescent light. UV rays can have a big impact on line and affects nylon the most. The diagram below shows nylon and fluorocarbon that have been exposed to 500 hours of UV light. While, 500 hours sounds like a lot it would only be approximately six weeks of daylight. These images show the exposed lines viewed under an electron microscope. The nylon is greatly impacted by this much exposure with fractures developing inside the line that cause premature breakage and prevent the line from performing at the maximum rated lb test.



Keeping the line in some type of container rather than just in the open can help protect the line. Something as simple as a cardboard box can protect line from UV rays. Braided line is the least impacted by UV rays and would take many thousands of hours of light exposure to be impacted.

**#2:** A second recommendation to keep your spare line in top condition is to store the line at room temperature. Again nylon/monofilament is the line type most impacted by temperature. Both extreme heat and extreme cold can have an impact on nylon. Many anglers will store their spare line in their garages and boat sheds. If those locations are not heated and cooled the long exposure of summer or winter temperatures in different parts of the country will impact nylon first. A much better choice would be a basement with its stable temps and also lower amounts of UV light. Fluorocarbon is more resilient than nylon to extreme temperatures. It can handle short term exposure to heat and cold, but continuous exposure will impact its performance as well. Finally, braided lines are not impacted by extreme heat or cold.



You can see in this testing data that exposure can have an impact on line strength if exposed to extreme cold temperatures.

**#3:** The final suggestion to keep your line in top storage condition is to protect the spools. If a spool becomes cracked or broken it can make spooling the line properly very difficult. If a crack or broken edge comes in contact or repeated contact with your line while spooling it can weaken your line, particularly nylon and fluorocarbon. A sharp edge can also snag braided lines and weaken some of the woven fibers. Storing spare lines in an old cooler or backpack can be a simple way to protect the spools. Sunline offers a Camo Line Storage bag made to hold spare line and keep the spools protected from breakage. This line storage bag is a great choice to store and protect all your line.

The bag is padded on all sides to prevent spools from being broken if the bag is dropped or smashed. The bag opens on the top with a large high-quality zipper. The interior features an adjustable divider that can make up to six internal compartments to separate your line types or sizes. It also features six elastic bands that can securely store bulk spools. Use of a bag like this also protects line from harmful UV rays. Many anglers will utilize several bags to store their line by type.



Follow these suggestions for storing your extra lines and you can ensure they will last for a long time and perform at the highest level.





# Methods for Catching Big Cats on Lake of the Ozarks

When it comes to catfish, Lake of the Ozarks is one of the best fisheries in the country. Here you can find blue, channel, and flathead species of catfish. While there is a large population of all three, the most popular and best eating is the blue cat.



There are a variety of methods you can use to catch these catfish in the summertime. Jack Uxa, experienced guide and BassingBob.com expert advisor utilizes a trolling technique to target big blues. Jack will use his electronics in 25-35ft of water to search for schools of shad and multiple big arches indicating catfish. He will then troll through this area at around .5mph with his bait suspended 2-3ft from

the bottom. When it comes to bait, Jack likes to use Green Sunfish instead of shad. He emphasized that the blue cats really seem to like fresh bait, so he keeps the sunfish alive until it is time to put them on the hook. Jack also mentioned that the lake is chockfull of 2-8lb blues. He likes to target that size of fish by taking a 2" chunk of fillet off of the sunfish and sticking it on a 6/0 hook. The lake is full of sunfish and they are easy to catch, but another bait that Jack likes to use is the fillet of a drum. Drum are considered a junk fish that are not sought after by most anglers, but the blue cats will absolutely demolish them! Jack has success with this technique all summer long and notes that the best bite is in mid-august.

Although trolling is an awesome technique, you don't always need a boat to catch big summertime catfish on the Lake of the Ozarks. Bassingbob Dock Expert Jim Verhoef, utilizes a weighted dock-line jugging technique to pull up monster cats



all summer long. Jim will tie a floating jug line off of the dock so that it can be pulled in without getting into the boat. On the main line going down to a heavy weight on the bottom, he will place two three-way

swivels to hooks in 10-20ft depending on the depth. Jim notes that you don't have to have the weight anchored to the bottom, but prefers this method as he can throw the weight out to areas that the jug line won't drift and get tangled into submerged cables underneath the docks. For this technique a circle style hook is critical, since the fish will hook themselves without a rod to set into them. While Jim notes that you can use just about any kind of bait for catfish, his favorite is a small chunk of Skip Jack which can be found at Fitz Fishing Tackle and Supplies. Once your line is baited, all you have to do is wait for movement in the jug, signaling a big cat! For more great info on catching summertime catfish, make sure to check out the Crappie+ section on Bassingbob.com.



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## The Boating Safety Seven



1. Wear your life jacket
2. Take a boating safety class
3. Carry all required safety gear
4. Use your engine cut-off device
5. File a float plan
6. Be aware of weather and water conditions
7. Boat sober, and be considerate of others

# Tournament Schedule *at The Lake*

OCTOBER					
Date	Time	Location	Boats	Club	Phone
10/01/2023	06:30 AM - 12:00 PM	Red Oak Resort	15	Owensville Moose Lodge 878	573-578-5082
10/01/2023	07:00 AM - 03:00 PM	Pa He Tsi	15	Eldon Bassmasters	573-353-9032
10/01/2023	07:00 AM - 03:00 PM	PB #2	45	Angler's Choice Fishing Tournament	314-537-0822
10/06/2023	06:30 AM - 12:00 PM	Start Anywhere/End PB #2	50	Heaven's Anglers Catch a Vet Tourn	314-562-2001
10/07/2023	07:00 AM - 03:00 PM	LORA Marina	40	Lake of the Ozarks Rec Area Tourn	573-346-5673
10/07/2023	07:00 AM - 03:00 PM	PB2/RedOak/Alhonna/PtRandall/IvyBend	1400	Big Bass Bash	314-327-4771
10/08/2023	07:00 AM - 03:00 PM	PB2/RedOak/Alhonna/PtRandall/IvyBend	1400	Big Bass Bash	314-327-4771
10/10/2023	07:00 AM - 03:00 PM	PB #2	25	Bass'n Nuts LLC	314-258-7993
10/13/2023	06:00 AM - 03:00 PM	PB #2	15	St. Louis County Bass Masters	314-330-2907
10/14/2023	07:00 AM - 03:30 PM	Red Oak Resort	100	Warrior William Project	636-357-5874
10/14/2023	06:30 AM - 02:30 PM	Shawnee Bend Access	30	Laclede County Bassers	417-718-6353
10/14/2023	08:00 AM - 07:00 PM	1 MM - 38 MM	600	Lake of the Ozarks CVB	573-348-1599
10/14/2023	07:30 AM - 04:00 PM	PB #2	100	PARIC Open Buddy Bass Tournament	314-813-3295
10/14/2023	07:00 AM - 03:00 PM	Station 46 Marina	35	Mid-Lake Bass Club	573-280-3604
10/14/2023	07:00 AM - 04:00 PM	Start Anywhere/End Anywhere	80	MoYak Fishing Series	417-499-1043
10/14/2023	07:00 AM - 03:00 PM	PB #2	35	USA Bassin	314-346-6963
10/14/2023	06:30 AM - 03:00 PM	Lazy Dayz Resort	15	Olathe Bass Club	816-863-1425
10/14/2023	06:45 AM - 03:30 PM	Point Randall Resort	15	Rodbenders Bass Club	314-378-2696
10/14/2023	06:30 AM - 03:00 PM	Robin's Resort	50	Missouri State Elks Association	314-608-6901
10/15/2023	07:00 AM - 03:00 PM	Station 46 Marina	35	Mid-Lake Bass Club	573-280-3604
10/15/2023	07:00 AM - 03:00 PM	PB #2	35	USA Bassin	314-346-6963
10/15/2023	06:30 AM - 01:00 PM	Lazy Dayz Resort	15	Olathe Bass Club	816-863-1425
10/15/2023	06:45 AM - 12:30 PM	Point Randall Resort	15	Rodbenders Bass Club	314-378-2696
10/19/2023	07:00 AM - 05:00 PM	PB #2	190	MLF/Phoenix Bass Fishing (Regional)	270-703-9119
10/20/2023	07:00 AM - 05:00 PM	PB #2	190	MLF/Phoenix Bass Fishing (Regional)	270-703-9119
10/21/2023	07:00 AM - 04:00 PM	Larry R. Gale Access	25	Premier Anglers Tournament Trail	660-221-6970
10/21/2023	07:45 AM - 03:30 PM	Alhonna Resort	7	St. Louis Gateway Bass N Gals	314-941-8032
10/21/2023	07:00 AM - 03:00 PM	Point Randall Resort	20	Show Me Bass Club	636-262-7309
10/21/2023	07:00 AM - 03:30 PM	Red Oak Resort	50	Sage Rovenstine Benefit Tournament	417-410-5964
10/21/2023	07:00 AM - 03:15 PM	Alhonna Resort	100	"Dupo Marine Center, LLC"	618-286-5252
10/21/2023	07:00 AM - 05:00 PM	PB #2	190	MLF/Phoenix Bass Fishing (Regional)	270-703-9119
10/22/2023	07:00 AM - 02:00 PM	Gravois Mills Access	25	Premier Anglers Tournament Trail	660-221-6970
10/22/2023	07:00 AM - 02:00 PM	East Bledsoe Ferry Ramp	15	Men of Honor Bass Club	816-517-3234
10/22/2023	07:30 AM - 01:00 PM	Alhonna Resort	7	St. Louis Gateway Bass N Gals	314-941-8032
10/22/2023	07:00 AM - 12:00 PM	Point Randall Resort	20	Show Me Bass Club	636-262-7309
10/28/2023	06:00 AM - 03:00 PM	Bass Point Resort	25	Steel City Bassmasters	636-575-8300
10/28/2023	07:00 AM - 03:00 PM	Pa He Tsi	35	USA Bassin	314-346-6963
10/28/2023	07:00 AM - 03:00 PM	Robin's Resort	45	Just Fish Team Trail Open	314-537-0822
10/28/2023	07:00 AM - 06:00 PM	PB #2	150	Fish for Sight Buddy Bass Tourn	314-607-2050
10/29/2023	06:00 AM - 12:00 PM	Bass Point Resort	25	Steel City Bassmasters	636-575-8300
10/29/2023	07:00 AM - 03:00 PM	Pa He Tsi	35	USA Bassin	314-346-6963
10/29/2023	07:00 AM - 03:00 PM	PB #2	45	Angler's Choice Fishing Tournament	314-537-0822

Listings only available until December 2022 at time of print, for a complete listing of tournaments visit [BassingBob.com](http://BassingBob.com)



# 2024 SEASON SCHEDULE

BIG BASS BASH - ANGLERS IN ACTION TOURNAMENT TRAIL



## 2024 BIG BASS BASH SCHEDULE

LAKE OF THE OZARKS, MO: APRIL 20-21

GRAND LAKE, OK: JUNE 1-2

LAKE OF THE OZARKS, MO: OCTOBER 5-6

## 2024 ANGLERS IN ACTION SCHEDULE

LAKE OF THE OZARKS: March 3 | April 14 | May 5

GRAND LAKE: March 9 | April 6 | May 11

TABLE ROCK LAKE: March 17 | April 28 | May 19



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# Tournament Schedule *at The Lake*

## NOVEMBER

Date	Time	Location	Boats	Club	Phone
11/03/2023	06:00 AM - 03:00 PM	PB #2	15	St. Louis County Bass Masters	314-330-2907
11/04/2023	07:15 AM - 02:00 PM	Point Randall Resort	12	Salem Bass Club	573-247-2690
11/04/2023	06:00 AM - 05:00 PM	Red Oak Resort	20	Kansas Buddy Bass	605-880-0119
11/04/2023	07:30 AM - 03:00 PM	Shawnee Bend Access	35	USA Bassin	314-346-6963
11/04/2023	06:45 AM - 03:30 PM	Point Randall Resort	15	Rodbenders Bass Club	314-378-2696
11/04/2023	07:00 AM - 03:00 PM	PB #2	200	Anglers in Action	314-327-4771
11/04/2023	07:00 AM - 03:00 PM	Shawnee Bend Access	25	Tri-County Bass Club	573-762-2668
11/05/2023	06:00 AM - 05:00 PM	Red Oak Resort	20	Kansas Buddy Bass	605-880-0119
11/05/2023	07:00 AM - 03:00 PM	Shawnee Bend Access	35	USA Bassin	314-346-6963
11/05/2023	06:45 AM - 12:30 PM	Point Randall Resort	15	Rodbenders Bass Club	314-378-2696
11/05/2023	07:00 AM - 03:00 PM	PB #2	200	Anglers in Action	314-327-4771
11/15/2023	08:00 AM - 03:30 PM	PB #2/Shawnee Bend/Larry Gale	60	BassingBob.com	314-650-6812
11/17/2023	08:00 AM - 03:30 PM	PB #2/Shawnee Bend/Larry Gale	60	BassingBob.com	314-650-6812
11/18/2023	07:00 AM - 03:00 PM	PB #2	35	USA Bassin	314-346-6963
11/19/2023	07:00 AM - 04:00 PM	Linn Creek Ramp	20	Camden County Bass'rs Club Tourn	573-723-1020
11/19/2023	07:00 AM - 03:00 PM	PB #2	35	USA Bassin	314-346-6963
11/25/2023	07:00 AM - 03:00 PM	Shawnee Bend Access	20	American Bass Anglers Division 49	417-718-2036
11/25/2023	07:00 AM - 03:00 PM	PB #2	200	Anglers in Action	314-327-4771
11/26/2023	08:00 AM - 03:30 PM	Alhonna Resort	60	BassingBob.com	314-650-6812
11/26/2023	07:00 AM - 03:00 PM	PB #2	45	Just Fish Team Trail Championship	314-537-0822

## DECEMBER

Date	Time	Location	Boats	Club	Phone
12/02/2023	07:00 AM - 03:00 PM	PB #2	35	USA Bassin	314-346-6963
12/02/2023	07:30 AM - 03:30 PM	PB #2	10	Central Missouri Bassmasters	573-465-1896
12/03/2023	07:00 AM - 03:00 PM	PB #2	35	USA Bassin	314-346-6963
12/09/2023	08:00 AM - 03:30 PM	Alhonna Resort	60	BassingBob.com	314-650-6812



## WINTER BASS CHALLENGE

Presented by **BassingBob**



**LAKE OF THE OZARKS**

## SAVE THE DATE

Host: Alhonna Resort

Sunday, November 26, 2023

Saturday, December 9, 2023

Saturday, January 6, 2024

Saturday, January 20, 2024

Saturday, February 3, 2024

Listings only available until December 2022 at time of print, for a complete listing of tournaments visit [BassingBob.com](http://BassingBob.com)



Two anglers are standing on a boat. The angler on the left is wearing a black hooded rain suit and is holding a fishing rod. The angler on the right is wearing a red and black rain suit, a black cap with 'RAPTOR' on it, and is also holding a fishing rod. The background shows a marina with other boats and buildings.

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# Boating Basics: At the Ramp

## *How to easily launch and load your boat.*

If you are new to boating, the “Boating Basics” series of videos from Mercury Marine provides an engaging, educational guide to our favorite pastime that will help you gain confidence on the water. Even if you are an experienced boater, you might pick up a few tips! <https://www.mercurymarine.com/en/us/landing/boating-basics/>

Boat ramps are busy places, especially on weekends. Your goal when you get there is to be careful and thorough, but relatively quick, so you won't hold up other people waiting to launch their own boats.

The first step toward achieving this is to load your boat with everything you need for the day on the water when you are still at home. Then, when you get to the staging area at the boat ramp, bring a checklist to go through so you won't miss a step. Here are the essential tasks.

### Get Your Boat Ready to Launch

First, don't forget to insert the drain plug at the transom of the boat. Not doing so is a common mistake that can lead to wet feet or worse when you are out on the water! Detach the transom straps from the boat and trailer. If your boat's engine has a trailering support bracket, remove it.

Next, board your boat and turn on the battery switch. If your boat is equipped with a sterndrive or inboard engine, run the bilge blower for four minutes to ensure there are no fumes in the engine compartment.

Finish by attaching docklines to the bow and stern cleats on the side of the boat you intend to put up against the courtesy dock when you launch. Leave the winch strap and safety chain at the bow of the boat securely attached. Then, if your tow vehicle has four-wheel drive, engage it.

Before towing your boat over to the ramp, run down your pre-launch checklist one more time:

1. Drain plug inserted
2. Transom straps removed
3. Support bracket/trailering clips removed
4. Boat batteries turned on
5. Docklines ready
6. Winch strap and safety chain still attached
7. 4WD engaged in tow vehicle (if equipped)

### How to Launch the Boat with a Partner

Ideally, you will have an experienced boater along as part of your crew. If so, ask him or her to get into the boat and be ready at the helm.

As you back down the ramp, stay close to the courtesy dock and check your rearview mirrors often. When the stern of the boat starts to float but the bow is still supported by the trailer, shift into park, engage the emergency brake and walk back to your boat. Unhook the winch strap and safety chain from the bow.

The person in the boat can now tilt the engine until the water intake is fully submerged then start the engine. To launch the boat, all the person at the helm needs to do is bump it into reverse, then give it a little throttle. The boat should slide right off the trailer. If not, back your tow vehicle a bit farther down the ramp.

If your companion is not experienced enough to drive the boat, there are other methods you can use to launch it. Ask your partner to go to the courtesy dock and take hold of the boat's docklines. Once you undo the winch strap and safety chain from the bow, he or she can walk along the dock, using the lines to pull the boat free of the trailer, then steer it over to the dock and tie it up. Meanwhile, you can drive your rig to the parking lot (making sure to release the emergency brake), then rejoin your companion on the boat and start it up.

### How to Launch Your Boat Solo

If you are launching the boat by yourself, follow a similar procedure. You can use the docklines to pull the boat off the trailer. Or, on many boats, you can climb over the bow into the boat or board from the courtesy dock – then drive it off the trailer. If you're unsure of how to do this process alone, you can ask your Mercury Authorized Dealer for some advice.

### Loading the Boat

At the end of your day on the water, you can load your boat onto your trailer by pretty much reversing the same process. Either tie off the boat at the dock while you retrieve the trailer or have your companion drop you off at the dock and remain in the boat in an area clear of the ramp.



When the trailer is in the water, set the parking brake. Then the person in the boat should center the bow of the boat behind the trailer and drive straight it up. If you don't line the boat correctly with the trailer the first time, don't worry. Just bump the boat into reverse, get back into position behind the trailer and try again. Once you have the boat centered on the trailer, you may need to give the engine some throttle to get your boat all the way up to the bow stop.

Once the boat is on the trailer, turn off the engine and tilt it up so it will clear the ramp. Go to the trailer tongue, hook the winch strap to the bow eye and winch your boat until it is snug against the bow stop. Next, hook the safety chain to the bow eye. Get back into your tow vehicle, disengage the emergency brake and drive your boat back up the ramp to the staging area.

Occasionally, you'll encounter a situation with a strong crosswind or current sweeping across the ramp. For some advice on this situation, watch the video below.

### Get Your Boat Ready to Tow Home

In the staging area, pull the drain plug and empty any livewells in the boat, if you haven't already done so. This will eliminate extra weight and reduce the chance of your accidentally introducing aquatic invasive species to another body of water. Remove any seagrass from your boat and trailer and be sure to hose both down as well.

Secure your transom straps and trailering support bracket, if you have one. Turn off the boat's power and make a final walk around the boat to make sure it is secured to the trailer, the tires are properly inflated, and the lights are plugged in and working.

The ramp is your gateway to adventure. Once you have mastered the art of launching and retrieving your boat, there's no end to the fun you and your companions can have out on the water.

Article from MercuryMarine.com

# 3 Benefits Of Fishing: A Woman's Perspective

by Elizabetha Cochran



Fishing is one of the most accessible outdoor sports. Any gender, age, income level and fitness ability can

fish. It's not the boys club it once was, and women are becoming more visible and enthusiastic within the world of fishing. They are also taking on more leadership roles within the fishing industry. I will say that I have experienced rude comments, and disapproving stares from men on the river a few times, but with more women being involved in the sport this will hopefully become less frequent. Everyone can benefit from being outdoors enjoying nature with friends and loved ones, the fear of not being good enough should not prevent people from trying the sport. As with any sport it takes practice and patience, before long anyone can become confident and skilled while enjoying the peace, beauty and serenity of nature.

When I started fly fishing I didn't worry about judgements, I just knew that it made me feel good. It gave me a break from managing my chronic pain, the rush of adrenaline and feeling of accomplishment after catching a fish became my favorite pain killer. Endometriosis made me feel helpless but fly fishing empowered me to keep going and fight for the care I deserved. Personally, fishing has inspired me to be a stronger person mentally, emotionally and physically. It tests my patience and it pushes me to get outside even when I don't want to because I know I'll come home a happier and healthier person. Fishing is so much more than just catching fish, there are so many benefits that come from the act of fishing as well as just getting outside.

## Physical Benefits

Fishing can provide as much or as little physical activity as you want. Whether it's a path along a river, a remote pond, or hiking to an alpine lake, it can improve your fitness; therefore your health. When I started I struggled to hike a mile to the river, but slowly built up strength and stamina to hike 9 miles one way to an alpine lake. Fishing is also one of the best ways to get Vitamin D. You can get it from eating your catch and soaking up the sun,

but don't forget your sunscreen! If you plan on eating what you catch, fish are rich in calcium, phosphorus and a great source of minerals like iron, zinc, iodine, magnesium and potassium.

As a woman I love that fishing gives me a way to get exercise without worrying about how my body looks. Getting dressed in my fishing gear makes me feel confident and it doesn't accentuate my shape unless I want it to. In the winter I wear baggy clothing and gear while fishing because I dress for comfort and movement. Sometimes I like gear to fit a little tighter and accentuate my curves, it's beautiful and freeing either way. Thankfully there are some companies offering women's fishing gear and clothing, but we still have hurdles to overcome when it comes to equal representation in the fishing industry.



## Mental Health Benefits

As someone that deals with depression and severe anxiety I have noticed a difference in my self-esteem and resilience through my fly fishing journey. Just looking at the water, hearing the flow of the river or the birds chirping can change your mood. Fishing increases time outside and repetitive actions like casting can be therapeutic. Most fishing trips require a fair amount of mindfulness. Waiting, methodically casting, and drifting your flies in an attempt to get the perfect drift or presentation which requires patience and focus. Fishing is a form of meditation and I think we all know how beneficial that can be for our mental health. This is why I come home feeling happier than when I left.

## Social Benefits

Another benefit to fishing is connecting with other anglers on the river, on social media and in gatherings for the fishing community. It's easy to make friends when you share common interests, and you always have something to learn when

it comes to fishing. As more people join the fishing community, we have more opportunities to connect. What really inspires me is seeing how many women are starting to fly fish and all the women's fishing clubs that have formed to make other women feel more comfortable trying it. I have made so many female angler friends on the river, at an event or through social media and it is so empowering to see women thriving in the fishing industry.

Fishing also gives us opportunities to bond and experience new things with our friends and family. Now that I'm a mother, I've started bringing my daughter on fly fishing trips. These trips look a little different, but we still enjoy all of the benefits. When we take the time to teach our children how to fish, they develop a love of the outdoors, hopefully a love of fishing and memories that will stay with them forever. I'm excited to watch her journey with fishing and hope to inspire her to do what makes her happy.



In honor of Women's History Month, I want to encourage everyone to try something new outdoors. Learning to fish can be intimidating but there are so many resources out there to help you feel comfortable. Fishing changed my life for the better and I'm so grateful. If you feel stuck, lost, anxious or depressed, fishing could do the same for you, or at the very least it could get you outdoors for the day and that accomplishment alone will make you feel better.

### ELIZABETHA COCHRAN

*I was born and raised in Colorado. I have my BA in education and 9 years' experience working with children, but I'm currently taking a break to be a more present mom to my toddler. Fly fishing started as a distraction from dealing with chronic pain and quickly became a passion of mine. I have fished my whole life but started fly fishing in 2016. Not long after, in 2020, I started guiding fly fishing trips in Rocky Mountain National. My favorite trips have been with children, and I would love to continue teaching children in an outdoor setting.*





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# Hit the Sweet Spots for Dock Bass

## How Mercury Pro Gerald Swindle picks apart docks



Article from MercuryMarine.com

Ask Gerald Swindle if he wants to fish a dock and he'll tell you he'd rather just skip it. But don't lose interest. The Mercury Pro Team member and Bassmaster Elite Series pro is not going anywhere. Rather, he's all about maximizing what he considers a tremendous opportunity waiting beneath a dock.

Skipping a jig, Texas rig or other lure under a dock is one of Swindle's favorite tactics.

"I love to skip docks, but finding the sweet spot is the key," Swindle said. "Each dock offers several targets, and each part of a dock can represent a high-percentage area during different times of the year.

"The key to dock fishing is understanding where, why and when the fish position and how to make that high-percentage cast."

### Seasonal Starting Points

While there are no guarantees and hard rules in bass fishing, Swindle starts his dock-fishing approach based on seasonal patterns.

For instance, in summer, he'll start fishing the deeper, shadier end of a dock. The center of a dock is optimal during the prespawn and postspawn, as staging fish like to hold midway between where they're coming from and where they're going to.

In spring, spawning bass and other shallow fish set up around the back corners of docks and the space beneath the catwalks leading from shore to the

dock. This inner zone comes into play again in fall, when Swindle knows the bigger fish often form small "wolf pack" feeding groups.

"The fish want to get the shallowest for feeding, and that back corner with the catwalk is where the shade creates a bigger perimeter where they can cruise and feed," he said.

Fish may move throughout the day or react to weather changes, but Swindle said these general guidelines give you a good starting point.

### Made In the Shade

Along with seasonal positioning, Swindle stressed the importance of paying attention to the dock's shadiest sections and understanding that this will evolve throughout the day. As sun angles change, so must your positioning.

"You need to be watching the shade and where the sun is so you can make the highest-percentage casts possible," Swindle said. "Know the depth and start where shade and deep water intersect. The hotter the weather, the more shade matters.

"And watch the roof pitch. It will cast a shadow (beyond the dock). Never underestimate the area out in front of a dock."

### The Right Lakes for Dock Fishing

Any lake with docks probably has a dock bite, but just how good it will be depends

on many factors, including other cover in the lake.

"I think the best dock lakes are the ones that don't have a lot of structure and cover," Swindle said. "Lake Gunter'sville has so much grass that docks are not usually a major player. Usually, the more grass you have, the less they're around docks.

"For example, on Lake Champlain, there's not much cover up shallow, so those largemouth will get on those few docks that are up there with shade. Another one would be somewhere like Lake Norman, where it's a clean body of water with no grass and not many stumps, so the only shady cover they have is under those big boat docks."

### Know the Neighborhood

Location, location, location. It's not just a relevant real estate phrase. As Swindle explains, this notion also helps define dock potential.

"If someone put me on a lake and said pick one dock any time of year, I'm going to pick a dock on a point," he said. "In any region, a dock on a point will always be key. Fish can move up to feed and have deep water close by."

Exact positioning on the lake depends on what time of the year Swindle's fishing. In the early spring, he wants a point close to the channel side of a reservoir creek because the fish use the channel to move up into creeks on their way to spawning





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areas. Conversely, fall puts a premium on points located on the flatter side of a creek, as fish roam these shallower areas to ambush baitfish.

As for dock style, more structure means more inhabitable space. Past that, Swindle likes a dock with fixed pilings when fish are relating to the bottom (spring, mostly). During the times of the year when fish are apt to suspend – postspawn through fall – he prefers floating docks.

“With floating docks, I like the old foam floats because they collect that algae, so you see baitfish and bream gathering around them,” Swindle said. “The newer plastic floats will get there eventually, but the old-school foam is hard to beat.”

### Deliver the Goods

Swindle does most of his dock work with a 3/8-ounce Buckeye Lures G-Man Ballin’ Out 2 jig and a craw-style trailer. He skips the jig with a 7-foot, 2-inch 13 Fishing Meta series baitcasting rod that’s built with a good balance of soft tip and plenty of backbone for extracting big dock fish.

Swindle stresses to not rely on “lucky shots” when skipping a dock. Cover water and fish the jig all the way back from where you cast it to the boat.

“A bad habit I see a lot is where people want to cast, fish the jig real fast and reel it back in,” Swindle said. “If you take time and make a great cast, fish it back out. If I skip my jig way back in there, I’m going to fish it all the way out. I’m not just going to throw it in there and let it go to the bottom. A lot of times, fishing my jig all the way out tells me where the fish are located.”

*To see more from Gerald Swindle, follow him on Instagram, Facebook and YouTube.*

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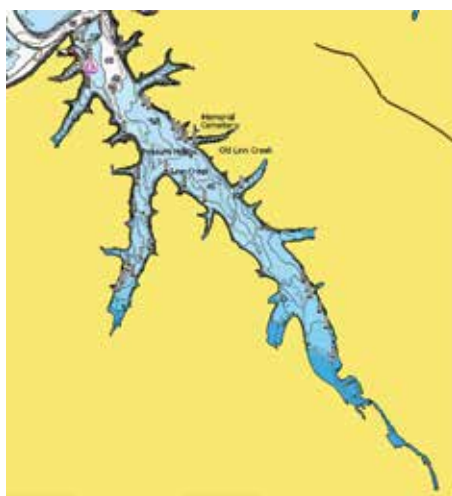


# 4 Places to Find Fall Bass

by Alec Lower

Fall can be a sneaky tough time of year to catch bass. Most of the articles you read online describe it as a hot time because of how many aggressive bass there are. While this is true, finding them is a little harder than you might think because, unlike Spring, Summer, and Winter, there really isn't anything to predetermine how deep bass will be or in what part of the lake they'll be. The search can be a challenge, but here are four places to start.

## 1. Backs of Creeks



The most textbook place to find fall bass is in the backs of major creeks. As temperatures cool and the days get shorter, the migration from summer areas to shallow creeks and flats is the most talked about element of fall fishing. Large numbers of bass will move into and to the back of creeks in pursuit of shad.

Start your search with the biggest creeks on the lake and focus on anything of interest in the back of them. Shallow flat areas will often have roamers, particularly if you get cloudy conditions. Bright sun makes shallow bass more cover-oriented, so target any and all shallow cover should it shine.

This is the time to keep an eye out for surface activity. If you've hit on a good area, you'll often know pretty quickly when you see shad activity on the surface, especially in shallow reservoirs. In best case scenarios, you'll see bass blowing up on these shad. Use your instincts and

focus on visual cues. Fish are very active this time of year so if it seems dead, it probably is.

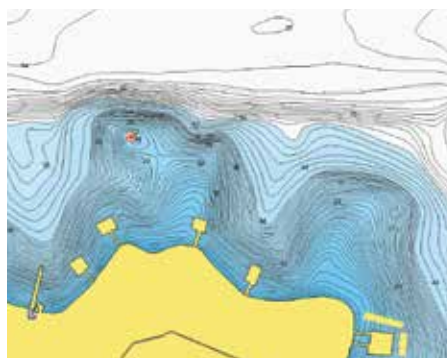
## 2. Rip Rap



Rip rap, which is just the man-made rock that you find around bridges, is unique because it holds fish basically all year. The rocks are teeming with all kinds of baitfish and crawdads and the banks are typically steep providing access to deep water. Rip rap can be especially good in the fall as a result of the aggressive bass you get this time of year.

Bridges in particular are popular feeding spots for bass because they form funnels where baitfish can be picked off. The rocky corners form great ambush points and current coming through the bridge, via wind or artificial generation, only makes them even better, and crankbaits can be super effective in these scenarios. Make short casts and fish slow to avoid hang ups in the rocks.

## 3. Main Lake Flats

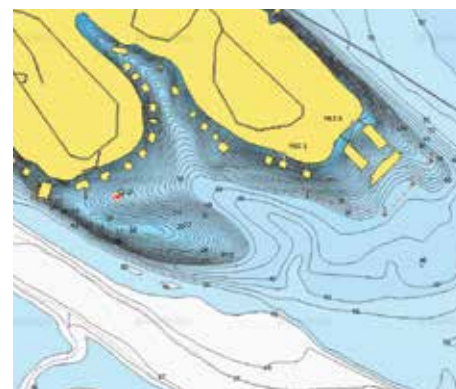


Main lake flats are popular gathering places for feeding bass at many times of

year, fall definitely being one of them. The fall migration is a big part of bass behavior in the season, but nowhere near all the fish in a lake will do that. Many can still be caught on the main lake.

Much like schools in the summertime, fish showing up on these places can be somewhat random as the prevalence of baitfish is the key to the presence of bass. But when you do find fish, you'll often find the motherlode. Oftentimes, you won't even have to explore that much to find fish in these areas because you'll see them chasing bait and breaking the surface, which can create some incredible topwater action.

## 4. Exactly Where They Were in the Summer



It's a major misconception that you have to fish shallow in the fall. It's just not true. When the cold weather starts to arrive, two key things happen. First, the thermocline dissolves. Second, the gradational change in temperature throughout the water column disappears, meaning the temperature at 20 feet is about the same as the temperature at 2 feet. This really opens up the entire water column to bass that were previously pretty easy to pin down depth-wise just a few months ago.

So as long as there is food in the area, bass really have no reason why they have to move shallow or away from the main lake. I've personally caught more fall bass in deep water than shallow, sometimes even deeper than I was catching them in the summer and often in the exact same areas.



## CLAYS CORNER

A few years ago I decided to lay all my rods and reels on the pool table just to take an inventory. That led to a very long email to my daughters and brother that strongly suggested I was sick with an incurable medical issue. The email started with *"You know how sometimes you just don't feel right...things just don't seem normal...you can tell something is very, very wrong...and then you get the bad news"*? After several more sentences like that the email went on to explain that I had recently discovered I had 42 reels but only 40 rods and it turns out that was causing my "illness". My daughters didn't think that was funny but my brother, who for years was a guide in Florida and has the unique distinction of being the second best fisherman in the family but also owning the first set of Frogg Toggs in the U.S., emailed me that ironically he too had been feeling strange but thanks to my email he too had discovered his "illness". He said he discovered he had 42 rods but only 40 reels and that if I would be so kind as to send him my two (2) extra reels then both of us would be instantly "healed".

So...I was thinking about that email recently and it got me thinking that, for reasons that have no explanation (other than me just being a deep thinker!), what lures would I use this fall if I was limited to just three (3) choices. I immediately discovered that this was much harder than I first realized. I also realized that I shouldn't let this information out to the public because if my wife saw it...well...there goes all those reasons I have given her over the years about needing as many lures as is possible. You know, the same ones you tell your wife...like *"Why does a golfer carry so many different clubs"*! August 14th was our 52nd wedding anniversary (I hear you...one lucky woman...right? Funny how I was just

# DECISIONS...DECISIONS... DECISIONS...

thinking the same thing!). It took me more than half that time to train her (She can be a slow learner when it comes to important things like fishing and golf)...so no matter what...do NOT let her see this article!

But despite those challenges...if only for the exercise of the deep thinking that such a task requires...I decided to do just that. I know what everyone says...in the fall you might have to throw everything at them in a day of fishing...and yes that might include the kitchen sink.

But I have found myself over the years usually gravitating to these choices...so...with great thought...here are (in no particular order) my top three (3) lure choices for fall bass fishing.

## Three Lures for Fall Fishing

**1. Buzzbait:** A buzzbait allows you to cover a lot of water...fast! And in the fall covering water can be (and usually is) a critical component to finding fish. Fish can be scattered and just locating them can be 80% of the battle. When water temperatures reach 70 degrees the shad will start moving to the back of creeks followed by the bass. There are few lures that cover water faster and more effectively than a buzzbait. Two recommendations: downsize your buzzbait and add a plastic trailer. Throw it around every laydown, boat dock, brush pile, etc. that you come across.

**NOTE: Substitute Lure: Whopper Popper**

**2. Topwater:** Not just any topwater lure will do. For me it's mostly a "dying" shad type, often referred to as a "walking" type of lure or "Zara Spook" type of lure named after arguably the most famous big fish topwater lure of all time...the Zara Spook. While this lure is not consistent with the idea of covering a lot of water, it certainly catches fish...big fish! Remember that shad are moving to the back of creeks and bass follow. Bass will corral these shad schools...push them to the surface...and charge through them eating as many as they can. In the process many will be injured; thus, the reason for an "injured shad" type of lure. Throw it around any

cover you suspect will hold a big bass including docks, brush piles and laydowns. Here you are looking for that isolated big fish but also throw it into all situations where you find bass chasing shad on the surface individually or in schools.

**NOTE: Substitute Lure: Prop Bait**

**3. Squarebill Crankbait:** Fish are moving shallow following the baitfish to the back of large coves and creek channels. As they get closer to the back it becomes squarebill time. A lot of fish will be in 8 feet of water or less and a squarebill is the perfect answer. This can be used as a search bait similar to a buzzbait and I like to use it around isolated cover as well as open water situations. A squarebill gives off vibration and disperses a lot of water making it easier for a bass to locate in slightly stained water you often find in the back of a creek channel. It's also effective when fished through a school of fish chasing shad on the surface. Start with shad colored baits and experiment from there including crawdad and chartreuse colored baits.

**NOTE: Substitute for Squarebill: Lipless Crankbait**

**Disclaimer:** Honey, just in case you read this article, or one of my many, many fans (did I mention many?) tell you about it, I just want you to know that because of your understanding, love and support over the past 52 years, I don't have to limit myself to just three (3) lures. No sir...! I can take along my spinnerbaits, jerkbaits, jigs, soft plastics, drop shots, plastic worms, swimbaits, Carolina rigs, shallow and mid-depth crankbaits, spoons, creature baits, finesse baits, extra weights and hooks. Oh...I almost forgot...and my 42 rods and reels! In case you are wondering...no I didn't send my brother two (2) reels...I bought myself two (2) more rods! After all...why does a golfer carry so many clubs? Because he might need them...!

*Until next time...take a kid fishing...or take me...my wife says it's the same thing...!*

Clay Dixon



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# Fall Transition Crappies on LOZ

By Capt. Dave Dzurik  
USCG Certified Master Captain

The dog days of summer are coming to an end and the transition to cool crisp fall weather is a much welcome time. Much is the same with the crappie on the Lake of the Ozarks. The summer's warm 86 degree bath water puts the crappie into a lethargic funk. They have become scattered and tend to hang out in their deep water haunts. These spots are usually the main channel points, deep water docks, steep bluffs and deep brush piles.

As the days get shorter and the water gets cooler the crappie's biological clock tells them to start feeding so they can fatten up so they can endure a cold winter. The crappies favorite food this time of year is the young shad that have hatched in the summer. If you can find the schools of baitfish the crappie should be nearby. They should be moving up the creeks and moving to the backs of coves.

The first thing I do is gather intelligence from local experts. You should check out Bassing Bobs fishing reports or stop in and support the local fishing stores. Rob and Ben at Fitz's Fishing can put you on the right baits and hot locations. Also, check

the weather and the wind direction before you hit the water.

Next is to locate the Shad, being the favorite meal of crappies, are weak swimmers and the wind will push them around. Check out the windward sides of coves and channels to see if they are stacked up. If so, the crappie may be close. If the water is clear the fish may be deeper or under cover. Their eyes are on the tops of their head and make them light sensitive. Use your electronics to look under docks or on deep brush piles.

Once you find them, a cork and minnow are a deadly tactic. Pitching jigs and dock shooting can also fill a live well. Depending on water clarity, colors make a big difference so choose wisely. In clear water, I prefer blue ice and monkey milk. If the water is stained, try chartreuse or pinks. Crappie nibbles may help on a jig. You can also use a fish attractant like Capt Dave's Hawg Jam smeared on a jig which will coax a skittish fish into biting.

One other technique to stack up the crappie is long line trolling. A simple spinning rod pulling a Bandit 200 or 300

let out 50' at a speed of 1.5 mph will work fine. Finding the baitfish and troll through the clouds of shad can bring success. My favorite bandit colors are Citrus Shad, Blue Chrome, Mad Cow and Hotty Totty. Try smaller crank baits like a #5 flicker shads also because they are feeding on smaller baits.

Fall is a great time to get out. The temperature is getting cooler and so are the water temps. Be safe and let someone know where you are going. And most importantly wear a life jacket. A fun day out can go south awful fast with a slip overboard.



# Fall White Bass on Lake of the Ozarks

By Jack Uxa

Fall is here and this is my favorite time of the year. Outside of the turnover fall fishing can really be just as good as any time of the year. White bass are a fun fish to catch as they are more available in the fall than any other time of the year.

Fall white bass have 3 basics I want to emphasize. First is the *wind*, wind is your friend in the fall. It is the single biggest factor in white bass activity. Second is *Clouds*, cloudy days help white bass feel more comfortable in shallow water where they are the easiest to catch. Most of your fish are going to come out of 1-3 feet of water. *Rocky points* are the third ingredient to remember. Make your casts within inches of the bank and start your retrieve immediately. Many of your strikes will come within 6 feet from the shore on a shallow rocky point. Various shallow rocky points will work but some are just better than others. My favorite bait is a 2 inch long white pearl Berkley Gulp Jigging Grub matched with a small jig head super glued. A simple yet effective curl tail grub for days when the wind is light. Days when the wind is blowing harder you can throw

a variety of baits. A variety of shad imitating lures will work such as Pop R's, in-line spinners, lipless crankbaits like the Sebile Lipless Seeker (black gold color), Johnson marabou jigs, Alabama rigs, or Frenzy Flicker Shad crankbaits. They all have their place and time when they will be the right combination. Generally speaking when it comes to choosing a lure, think flashy, lots of action, and something you can cast accurately with.



White Rooster Tail

The end of September on through to December is the time to try it. Cool, cloudy and windy days are the best. The last 2 years late fall has been better than early fall. Thanksgiving weekend is probably the

peak. There is no minimum size to keep and the limit per day is 15 fish per person. White bass are good to eat but not as good as crappie. Whites have a layer of red meat that should be trimmed off the fillet. While hybrid bass are more rare of Lake of the Ozarks this is a good time of the year to run into a few each day. Also there is a walleye connection with white bass. The walleye population is weak in the lake but you will see several if you commit to this rocky, windy, main lake point pattern.





# AN INSIDE LOOK INTO

## TOURNAMENT ANGLER

### Lawson Hibdon



**L**awson Hibdon, a last name, familiar to all anglers. Lawson's Grandfather, Guido, a legend and a pioneer of bass fishing and bass fishing tournaments. Dion, Lawsons Dad, has won hundreds of tournaments nationwide and regionally. He is one of only a few that have won the Bassmaster Classic and the FLW Forrest Wood Cup. Lawson at only 28 years of age, continues that family tradition. He has had success on the national level and has been and is one of the hottest anglers locally on Lake of the Ozarks.



Lawson was born and raised in the local area, growing up in the Stover and Versailles area, where he still lives today. Lawson is married to Bonnie and has one boy 3-year-old Truman and another baby on the way, due in January 2023.

When young, Lawson was home schooled and traveled the professional fishing trails with his Grandpa and dad, both would take him fishing as they practiced for the upcoming tournament. In addition, many of the pro's fishing the tournament would take him fishing as they practiced. Lawson remembers observing everything while fishing with these pro's. He paid attention to their bait selections, patterns and decisions they made. He feels that this experience has helped as he became a tournament angler himself. In high school he started fishing more and more with his dad fishing and having success mostly in local tournaments.

It was during these years, that Lawson knew that fishing was the career he wanted to pursue.

Then life's reality kind of set in. Lawson, like his brothers and uncle became a welder. He was on the road a lot with his welding profession, taking down large industrial complexes that were closing. While he continued to fish when he could, his fishing time was limited due to his extensive travel schedule.

In 2020, his dream of fishing as professional came true. Tin Cup Whiskey Executive, a life long friend of the family, stepped in to sponsor Dion and Lawson, as they desired to expand their marketing into the sports and fishing industry.

Dion and Lawson travelled the country with Tin Cup doing marketing promotions with them. Their marketing

events included Dion and Lawson flipping jigs into cups and shot glasses. In addition, both Dion and Lawson fished the Major League Fishing (MLF) elite series nationwide against the best anglers in the country having some very strong finishes.

Being off the road from his welding career and being able to focus solely on fishing, Lawson went to work. He fished and still fishes nearly everyday on Lake of the Ozarks. His work fishing every day has really paid off. In the fall of 2020, Lawson and his fishing partner Joe Wieberg won many local tournaments and finished in the top ten in nearly every tournament they fished. Just as we were going to press with this magazine Lawson's hard work has paid off with his first Major League Fishing BFL Super Tournament win at Lake of the Ozarks. In fact, all three of the Hibdons finished in the top 10 in the tournament.



In addition to fishing everyday to keep up with the fish patterns, Lawson is a fishing guide. He is very selective about the customers that he will take out on a guide trip as he does not take any competitive tournament anglers fishing.

Lawson's time now is split between fishing everyday, creating and building baits and sinking brush piles all over the lake.

Lawson and Dion have been instrumental in the success of Dirks Jig, a very successful jig created by Dirk Sluyter with the input of the Hibdons. The Dirks jig is not only the most popular finesse jig at Lake of the Ozarks but has also become a popular jig of anglers worldwide. The Hibdons also partnered with Baitwrx to develop the popular Hibdon Hammer Jig, a football style jig that is used by anglers nationwide and was the jig used to win a recent Big Bass Bash. In addition to the Dirks Jig and



Hibdon Hammer, the Hibdons created a line of soft plastics working with Bojangles Baits. In addition to trailers for both the Dirks Jig and Hibdon Hammer, they have worked with Bojangles in the design and development of plastic worms. These worms have become the most popular style worms on Lake of the Ozarks and used by anglers nationwide. Lawson and Dion, not only help with the development and design of these jigs but they also assist with making the baits, tying the jigs and pouring the soft plastics, all of which is very time consuming.

When creating baits, one of the things that was drilled into his head by his grandpa Guido, "get the fish into the boat". Too many anglers miss fish, based on hook set and equipment, so many anglers at the weigh in talk about the fish they missed. Well Lawson is very anal with the hooks on his baits, the equipment that he uses for varying baits and patterns and has learned the art of setting the hook, not just setting the hook but when to set the hook as well as the angle of his body when setting the hook. All of which he attributes to his success as missing a key fish in a tournament can cost thousands of dollars in the final standings pay-out. Lawson rarely uses a net. He feels that the net provides yet another chance to lose the fish. Unless it is a really big one, he will either lip it or swing it into the boat as he has the confidence that is hook set is good. He also, does not lead fish around the boat, when he gets it to the boat he is focused on landing that fish right then.

Lawson feels that his time on the water helps him to know what the fish are doing any given day. He said that fish patterns, baits, colors and location on the lake change daily and at times will change even hourly and several times during the day. Paying close attention to these details can make a difference in having a successful tournament. Lawson is very impatient, a lesson he learned from his dad. If he is not getting bit on a pattern or bait, he changes





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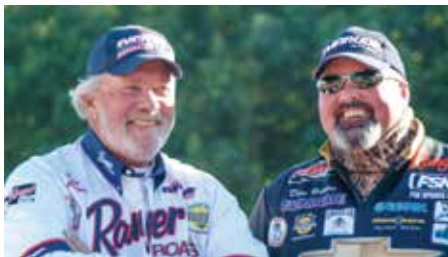


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and does not try to force the bite, even if he feels that should be the bite or pattern, he will move and make adjustments. Fishing up to the very last minute of a tournament is something that Lawson encourages. The last thirty minutes and even the last five minutes of a tournament can make the difference in cashing a check and/or winning.



Guido Hibdon (Left) and Dion Hibdon (Right)

Lawson attributes his success to fishing with his Grandpa and Dad as well as other pro tournament anglers when he was young. Lawson is a purest kind of angler. He invests his time on the water, focusing on every single bite and learning from it. He is also very prepared for everything. He says he carries a load of baits in his boat. While many baits, sizes, styles, colors may not be used very often, he has it in his boat just in case he needs it. He feels that having lots of baits in his boat has helped

him a lot on other bodies of water and when conditions change, which happens often in a tournament day.

Some of the lessons he learned from his grandpa and dad, include Guido telling him that there are fish everywhere on Lake of the Ozarks. As such, Lawson will often run away from the crowd of tournament anglers with the knowledge that fish are everywhere, you just need to know how and what they are biting. Dion taught him to figure out a pattern, as unique as possible and then run that pattern all over the lake. Time on the water helps him assess these patterns. He also learns from everyone, including co-anglers in a tournament. He always has his antennas up to learn something new.

Lawson is not a big fan of the Alabama Rig and Forward Facing Sonar. He feels these technologies have taken fishing instincts and commitment to practice out of the sport. On any given

weekend an average angler can win or do well with these tools. However, he has embraced them and does use them, trying to leverage his experience and years of learning to apply to these tools. However, at times he feels forced to use them versus relying on his fishing instincts and fishing a tournament with traditional approaches.

This year you can follow Lawson as he fishes Major League Fishing Toyota Series and Bass Fishing League as well as other regional competitive fishing trails. Dion will be fishing the National Professional Fishing League trail.

*Lawson is sponsored by Tin Cup, Boat-wrx, Caymas, Lowrance, Pro Guide Batteries, Bojangles Baits, Powerpole and Bassing Bob.*







# Top Baits for Fall Bass

by Chaminade HS student Vincent Rumsey

As the heat of the summer wanes and the temperatures cool down, the bass fishing at the lake heats up. With cooler water temperatures and increased baitfish activity, bass begin to feed more aggressively, moving out of their deep summertime haunts to chase baitfish in shallower, cooling water. Large schools of shad move away from the deep main lake and into coves and inlets, taking advantage of cooling water and lower UV exposure. The bass follow soon after, feeding heavily to prepare for winter. Therefore, a wide range of baits and lures can be effective for these feeding fish, and it can sometimes be hard to decide what lures to throw first.

Bass often begin their fall patterns much earlier than most fishermen would expect. Just as the days begin to shorten and fog begins to appear on the September morning water, the fish begin their transition into fall. Even though the water temperatures are still warm, the longer nights and cooler mornings provide a lengthened movement window for baitfish, and in turn, a feeding window for bass. In early fall, while the bass are just beginning to move away from their summertime holes, the first bait I often turn to is a Texas-rigged creature bait such as a brush hog, large craw, or beaver. Because bass can be found in a great variety of locations during this time, I need to use a lure that is effective in a wide range of depths and cover types. In the early fall, I focus my attention with the Texas rig on transition points between deep and shallow water. These include but are not limited to brush piles that extend into deeper water, secondary points, bluff ends on the main lake, and docks with cover or structure beneath them. When fishing deeper water with a Texas rig, I ensure that I have a stiff rod with enough sensitivity to feel the rocks and structure along the bottom of the lake. This ensures that I can feel even the most subtle of bites.

As fall begins to progress, I turn my attention away from the Texas rig and other summertime lures, and I begin focusing on the use of moving baits. My two favorite moving baits for the fall are the spinnerbait and a spook. These two baits allow me to fish all ranges of the water column and attract reaction bites from schooling

and feeding fall bass. When using a spinnerbait, I prefer to use a ¾ ounce spinnerbait with two willow blades, in either white/gray or white/chartreuse color. I use a heavier spinnerbait during the fall as most of my time using a spinnerbait is spent targeting deep water schooling bass. Even though lighter spinnerbaits can be extremely effective in the fall on shallow flats and rocky banks, my favorite place to throw a spinnerbait is in deeper water close to the main lake.



Despite the fact that several bass move shallow during the fall, a large percentage of the fish population remains in the deep water near points, bluffs, and main lake structure. The bass on these structures form large, suspended schools throughout the fall transition. The heavy spinnerbait allows me to target these deep-water fish very efficiently. I cast my spinner past the school of fish and count down to let it sink. Then, I slow-roll my spinnerbait through or directly above the school of bass, often provoking a reaction strike.

When targeting shallow water bass, on the other hand, there is no bait that I enjoy throwing more than a spook. Oftentimes during the fall, bass congregate around the shallow water schools of baitfish and feed aggressively throughout the day. The spook can easily trigger a reaction bite from shallow water fish, and during the fall, bass will come from surprising depths to hit a well presented topwater. Furthermore, walking baits like the spook allow fishermen to cover a great amount of water per cast, and the loud rattling can draw in fish from even greater distances.



This proves extremely useful when schools of both bass and baitfish are spread out over a large area of water. Even though the fall water is cooling down, don't hesitate to fish quickly and cover water, as fish are more aggressive than ever.

Towards the end of fall, water and air temperatures continue to drop, and bass begin to transition towards winter patterns. Despite this, the bass still relate to schooling baitfish, and many remain in surprisingly shallow water. Some bass begin moving deeper, though, and bass can be found on chunk rock banks and steeper slopes.

Therefore, my favorite lures for late fall must be able to target fish at a variety of depth ranges and activity levels. The shallower fish during this time continue to stay active for much longer than the deep fish. They are often willing to take a reaction bite and even hit a properly fished topwater.



My favorite way to target the shallow fish, though, is with a jerk bait. The jerk bait is a common winter bass fishing lure, but it is also essential in a late fall tacklebox. By adding a small bit of lead wire to the front hook of the jerkbait, it can be modified to slowly sink, catching the bass' attention. In the fall though, there is no need to have pauses as long as what are used in the winter. During wintertime, jerkbait pauses of 10-15 seconds or greater is commonplace, but in late fall, the pause time between twitches is most effective from 3-5 seconds. Fishing a jerkbait shallow in the fall can trigger a number of late-fall reaction bites that may otherwise be hard to get.

*continued on page 26*

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For deeper fish, though, slower fishing methods are often more effective. Deeper fish transition into their winter mode earlier than shallow fish and are often more finnickier. This requires finesse techniques and smaller, slower presentations.

My favorite bait for this situation is an underspin with a white swimbait. I fish the underspin on a lighter rod and lighter line for greater sensitivity as the bites are often light. To fish the underspin, I cast the underspin at an angle towards the fast-sloping bank and sink it close to the bottom. Then, I slowly reel in the underspin, trying to attract bites from fish that may not be keen on feeding.

In conclusion, the fall provides a number of great opportunities to catch fish with a wide range of techniques. Throughout the transition period of fall, the fish are often rapidly changing and moving with the unpredictable weather conditions. Despite this, the heavily feeding fish and schooling baitfish allow for fall to be one of the most productive times to target bass. Hopefully some of my tips and recommendations can be useful on your next fishing outing, and Happy Fishing!



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# HOT NEW BAITS FOR THIS FALL WITH FITZ FISHING & TACKLE

## SPRO CHAD SHAD 180

The SPRO KGB Chad Shad 180 Glide Bait offers anglers the power and versatility to target trophy-class bass with extreme efficiency and precision. This bait has been available via the infamous KGB swimbait company for years but has now joined forces with SPRO Lures for mass production. The original "Chad Shad" was once very hard to get your hands on and came with a \$300 plus price tag. Now they are offering them through SPRO for \$59.99. Chopping style glide baits have recently become one of the hottest fall patterns on the Lake of the Ozarks. Look for this bait to be a huge player for big bass this fall.



## BERKLEY CULL SHAD

Here is another highly sought after bait for the Lake of the Ozarks. Although it may look like a knock-off of the popular Megabass Mag-Draft, the Cull Shad differentiates itself by offering a pre-rigged hassle-free harness and hook retention clip to keep the treble hook secured to the belly. The body and keeling harness design prevent blowouts and keep the CullShad running true even at fast retrieve speeds. Additionally, the Berkley Powerbait Cullshad Swimbait allows anglers to adjust the sink rate on the fly with smart weighting rigging options that provide precise depth control with the use of nail weights.



## BERKLEY NESSIE

Designed in collaboration with Elite Series angler Mike Iaconelli, the Berkley Powerbait Nessie Soft Glide Bait is a soft-bodied glide bait built with a reinforced mesh joint that provides durability while allowing for free range of motion. Fitted with a brush-style tail to mimic the natural movement of baitfish, the Nessie Soft Glide Bait has a slow-sinking rate-of-fall, upright horizontal posture, and stabilizing belly fins to encourage consistent S-shaped swim action. Featuring a patent-pending hook retention clip to keep the treble hook secured to the body, each glide bait is armed with a razor-sharp Berkley Fusion19 treble hook to deliver rapid hook penetration and ensure your success with big bass.



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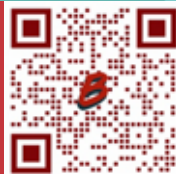


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# STOCKPILED BASS

## A Common Pond Owner Complaint

Missouri has many privately owned ponds and lakes that provide wonderful fishing opportunities. Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) fisheries staff receive calls daily from frustrated pond owners unhappy with the low numbers of big largemouth bass that their ponds produce.

A pond owner will typically complain, "I have a pond on my property. Three or four years ago, we caught a lot of two to three pound bass. We didn't keep any fish less than 12 inches long. Now we can only catch little bass. Did we harvest all the large bass?" After a few questions about their pond, their fishing habits and the sizes of other fish in the pond, it becomes evident the pond has a stockpiled bass population.

### STOCKPILED BASS

A stockpiled bass population contains an over abundance of slow-growing bass that do not reach a large size because there is not enough food.

Ponds with stockpiled bass populations are characterized by numerous 8- to 12-inch bass. The fish obtain enough food to stay alive, but not enough to grow very much. These fish may have long, skinny bodies, hollow bellies and disproportionately large heads. Many people assume that these are young fish; however, they may be several years old. Most will die of natural causes without ever reaching a desirable size. The practice of releasing these fish to grow bigger only compounds the problem, because this condition most often occurs when adequate numbers of smaller bass are not harvested.

High numbers of small bass can result from a number of circumstances. The most common situation involves a pond where bass harvest is very limited and bass reproduction is very good. Under these circumstances, bluegill, a favorite prey

of bass, cannot produce enough young to adequately feed the large numbers of bass. If bluegills are absent, the situation is usually more severe.

Other factors, such as water clarity and excessive levels of aquatic vegetation, can lead to slow growth and stockpiling of bass. Largemouth bass are sight feeders, therefore muddy water and excessive quantities of aquatic plants keep bass from capturing enough food to maintain adequate growth.

Conversely, bluegill may grow large in a pond with stockpiled largemouth bass. The few small bluegill that escape being eaten will grow to a large size because they don't have to compete against hordes of other bluegill for food.

### STOCKPILING SOLUTIONS

If bass underharvest and high reproduction are problems, the first thing a pond owner should do is increase bass harvest. A common harvest regulation used in this situation is a slot length limit. Anglers should be encouraged to harvest fish less than 12 inches long, but to return to the water, unharmed, all fish between 12 and 15 inches. Bass longer than 15 inches may be harvested or released depending on angler preference.

Removing many of the smaller bass makes more food available for the remaining fish. The net effect of the slot length limit is to reduce the number of stockpiled bass and improve overall bass growth.

Landowners south of the Missouri River should harvest 20–25 bass per acre per year. Those with ponds in north Missouri (where soils are richer and pond fish populations larger) should harvest 30–35 bass per acre per year. One experienced angler can harvest the desired number of fish in a one half-acre pond. Owners with

larger ponds and lakes may seek assistance from friends and other anglers to harvest enough fish. Scout groups and other youth and civic organizations are good sources of willing anglers. A daily limit of six bass applies to a ponds previously stocked by the Department, or are connected to streams. Ponds with documented private stocking from commercial sources are exempt from limits. (See section 3CSR10-9.110 of the Wildlife Code.)

If bluegill stocking is required, add about 200 fish at least 4 inches long per acre. Bluegill should be protected from harvest for at least two years. Increasing the harvest of bass usually results in greater production of young bluegill, which in turn, will lead to increased bass growth. Returning a stockpiled bass lake or pond to good fishing condition takes time. Patience is important; it may take several years to restore a balanced fish population in a small pond and even longer in a large lake.

The following table can help you to determine whether your pond has a stockpiled bass population. Go fishing at least five different times throughout the fishing season. For bass, use a variety of artificial lures, minnows or crayfish. Worms or crickets on a small hook are good baits for catching bluegill.

Selective harvest of fish, in addition to good record keeping (see our Aquaguide on Good Record Keeping Means Better Fishing), should help the quality largemouth bass fishing most pond owners desire.

*For more information on pond or lake management, contact your regional MDC fisheries personnel.*



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### *Stockpiled Bass (continued)*

Test	Diagnosis	Recommendation
1. Can you see your hand 12 inches below the surface?	Yes No	Go to #2. Correct water clarity problem. Consult Aquaguide Clearing Ponds that have Turbid (Muddy) Water.
2. Does 10–25 percent of your pond contain rooted aquatic vegetation or other prime fish habitat?	Yes No	Go to #3a, 3b or 3c. Consult Aquaguides on Aquatic Weed Control and Maintenance.
3a. You usually catch fewer than five bass per hour of fishing. Some are longer than 12 inches, with a few longer than 15 inches. Bluegill caught are generally between four and seven inches in length.	Your pond has a well-balanced fish population.	Keep accurate records of the fish you catch. Good records will help you or fisheries staff with pond management decisions. Consult Aquaguide Good Record Keeping Means Better Fishing.
3b. You often catch more than five bass per hour. Few are longer than 12 inches and fish longer than 15 inches are rare. Bass may appear long and skinny with overly large heads. Most bluegill caught are longer than six inches.	Your pond has a stockpiled bass population.	Correct problem by increasing the harvest of smaller bass. If your management goal is to catch big bluegill, maintain a high population of small bass. Consult Aquaguide Managing for Large Bluegill.
3c. Bass population appears very similar to that in #3b with few or no bluegill or other prey species seen or caught.	Your pond has a stockpiled bass population and a serious food shortage.	Stock 200 bluegill per acre (greater than four inches long). Don't harvest bluegill for two years. Increase harvest of smaller bass as in #3b.



# Winter Time

# CRAPPIE

by Steve Heitman

Winter time crappie fishing at Lake of the Ozarks is probably the best time of year to fish for them and their meat is firm and fresh to eat. There is less fishing pressure than in the spring time when every piece of shallow brush has a boat sitting on it.

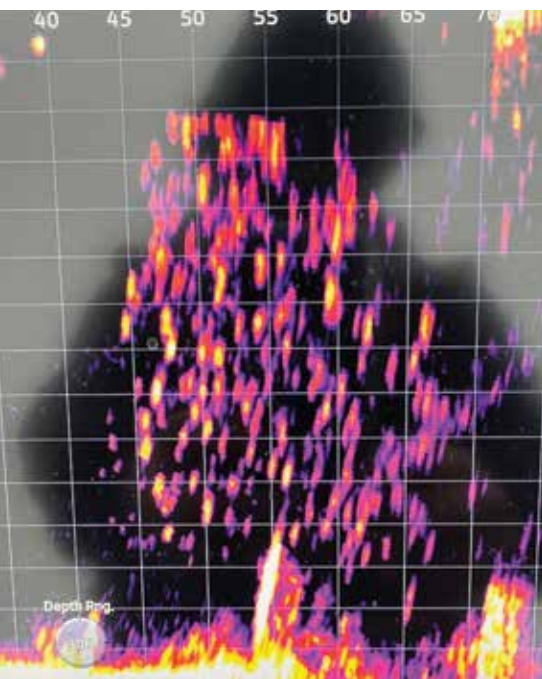
With the advancements in electronics and forward facing sonar it is unbelievable to see just how many crappie are in this lake.





That's why even the die hard bass guys will carry a crappie rod or two with them in the winter. When bass fishing and you run across a big school of crappie it gives you a little reprieve of the grind of finding bass when you load up 15 to 30 crappie in short order depending on if you have a buddy. The limit is 15 per day and a 9 inch minimum size limit. Most guys fishing in winter usually throw back anything under 10 inches.

The crappie can be caught in many ways in the winter. They can be caught just going down a bank reeling a small 1/32 to 1/16 ounce jig with your favorite plastic. I always used to throw a 2 inch John Deere green curl-tailed grub and still do but last year started using the Bojangles "2 inch BoMinno" in Slutty Monkey color and it was lights out!



If you have forward facing sonar the game just got easier and more productive. You can find these fish up shallow under docks, between docks, hanging loose on dock corners and suspended in the middle of coves. I have two favorite ways to catch them this time of year and first would be what we call "corking". This is as simple as it gets, a cork with your favorite plastic on a jighead about 2 to 3 foot down from your bobber. You would be surprised on just how shallow these crappie get! Sometimes they are right on the bank in 2 foot of water. The corking method is very effective



in the winter with the bait just sitting up above the school not moving much making it an easy meal for them. It usually doesn't take long for one to come up and grab it.

Second, and probably the best way I like to catch them is watching them eat my lure on my graph with a stickbait. Seeing one rise up out of the group to take your bait is just fun! Also with the stickbait these are usually the magnum crappie that bite your lure. You can catch them up shallow or out in the middle of the cove just searching with your forward facing sonar.



There are plenty of mild and pleasant days to fish in the winter so I encourage you to give it a try!

If you would like to give it a try but think you would get cold I would first layer up and get you a quality jacket like the Aftco Reaper Windproof Jacket for your outer



upper layer. And if you really want to be cozy team that up with the Aftco Hydronaut bibs which blocks the wind and you will be nice and cozy. Aftco has you covered from head to toe with quality gear to keep you comfortable.



If you want guaranteed success, try one of Lake of the Ozarks fine fishing guides as most fish year-round and know exactly where to go and will show you just how exciting winter crappie fishing can be. You can contact us at [BassingBob.com](http://BassingBob.com) and we can hook you up with one of our great guides here at the lake.







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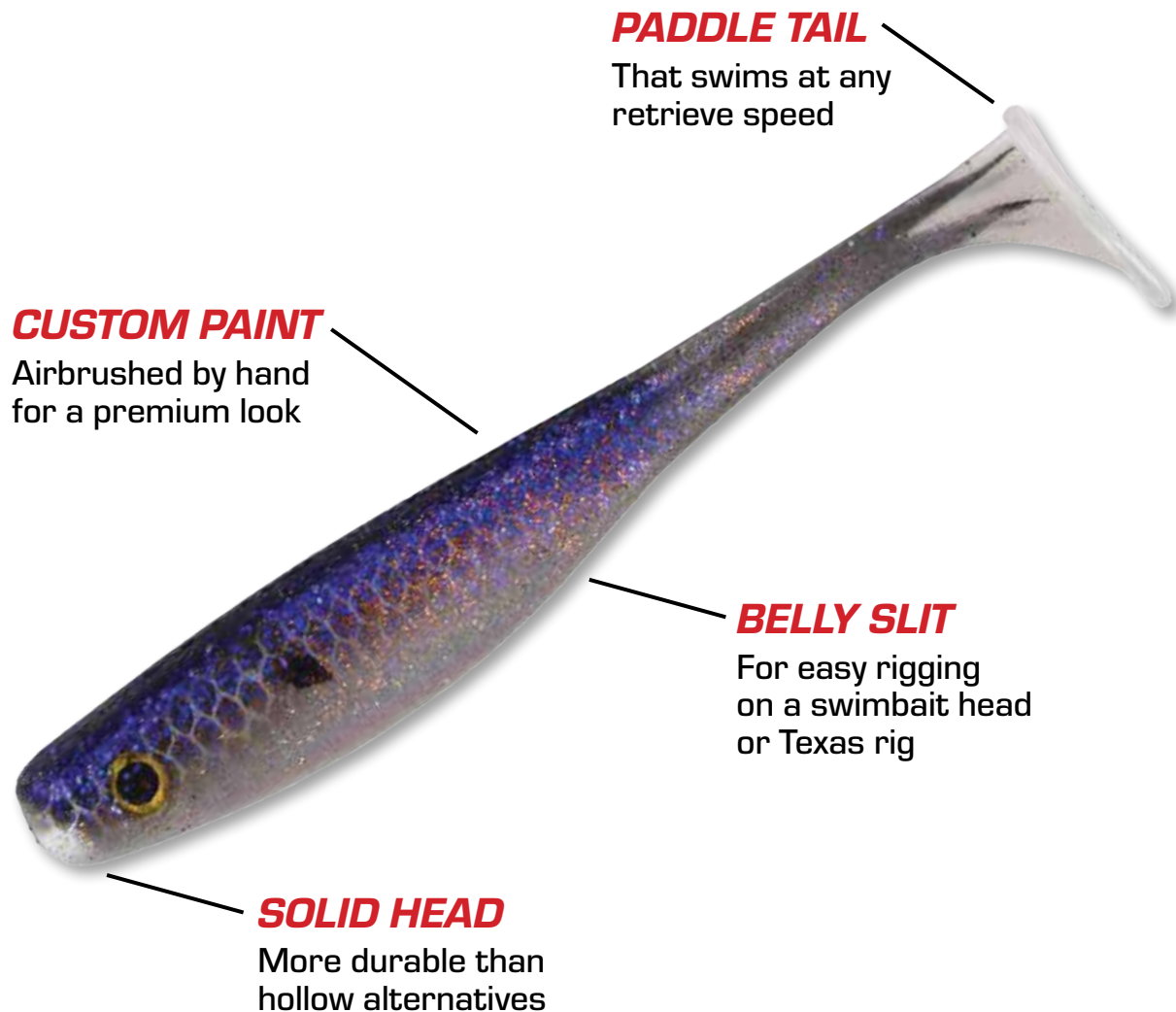
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# 7 Tips for Properly Spooling a Spinning Reel

By following these tips, you can enjoy top performance while fishing with your spinning reels.



*Article by MercuryMarine*

Regardless of the species you like to fish for, spooling a spinning reel is a task you'll need to tackle from time to time. There are several ways to spool a spinning reel, and while filling the reel with line isn't a difficult process, there are some common and frustrating issues that can occur if not done properly. To avoid these headaches, we've provided some simple spinning reel-spooling tips. Follow this advice to make sure you spend more time fighting fish and less time fighting your spinning reel and line on the water.

**1. Beware of line memory** – Monofilament and fluorocarbon lines have “memory.” When they're wrapped on the spool at the factory, memory causes them to take on a natural curve or curl. Because of this, they need to be spooled onto the reel in a certain way to match this curve. If you go against the memory, the line won't lie or flow out smoothly, and you'll spend most of your time fighting it.

**2. Lay small filler spools flat** – Most common filler, or “pony size,” spools hold approximately 330 yards of line or less and are compact. When using one of these to fill your reel, the easiest method is to lay the spool on the ground in front of you. Start with the spool's label facing up and turn the reel handle five or six times, keeping slight tension by running the line

through two fingers just in front of the reel. Then stop, drop some slack in the line and see if it has large, loose natural curls or if it forms twists. If you have loose curls, continue spooling as you were. If you have a section of twisted line, flip the spool over on the ground so the label is down and try it again. This time, the line will come off the spool the opposite way, and you should get no twist in the line.

**3. Fill from the bottom of big spools** – If you have a large bulk or service spool, it's easiest to use some type of line-spooling station or other device to hold the spool while you fill the reel. This can range from fancy store-bought systems all the way to simple homemade versions, but they all usually have a metal rod that passes through the center of the spool and holds the spool horizontally. High-end models apply a bit of pressure to keep the spool from spinning too fast as line comes off. When using a spooling station to fill a spinning reel, make sure the line is coming off the spool from the bottom side to avoid twisting. It's important to note that, if you were to spool a baitcasting reel this way, you'd want to flip the spool, so the line is coming off from the top. If you don't have a line-spooling station, you can have a friend hold a pencil or screwdriver through the middle of the spool.

**4. Keep tension on the line** – Whichever of these methods you use, use your fingers to keep just enough tension on the line so it can be guided off the spool and onto the reel without causing any disruption. It's easiest to lightly hold the line directly in front of the spool. This helps the line to go on tight and even and lie flat on the reel's spool.

**5. Use backing with braid** – Braid lines, or “super lines,” generally have little to no memory and can be spooled onto the reel without much thought after a few simple steps. Braids have very little stretch and can be very slick, so much so that they don't grip the reel's spool. When pressure is applied, the line can actually slip, preventing the reel's drag from working or even keeping you from taking in line. To avoid slip, first spool on enough monofilament line to cover the reel's spool, then connect the braid. This layer of mono is called backing. It grips the reel enough to prevent slippage. Depending on the spool size and the fish you are targeting, it's not a bad idea to add a little more monofilament to partially fill the reel and save some braided line. Mono is generally less expensive, so you'll save money this way, and as long as you don't put on too much backing, the mono will

*continued on page 40*



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never actually come off the reel on a cast or while fighting a fish. Many different types of knots can be used to make this splicing connection, but an easy and effective one is the double uni knot.

**6. Slow down** – Especially when filling large spinning reels, it is very tempting to use a high-speed electric spooler (many tackle shops offer this service), but old-fashioned hand power is often the way to go. High-rpm machines put line on at a fast rate, but they can actually create enough friction to damage the outer coating of the line. When done this way, you can even see the residue from the damaged outer coating on your hands, on the machine's line guide or below the machine. This damage can cause the line to become chalky, which makes the line opaque and more visible in the water. Even worse, it can weaken the line. When using a machine, it's also very easy to spool the line on too tight, compacting it on the spool, which could cause issues while casting. Stick to spooling reels by hand to avoid these issues.

**7. Don't overfill** – Overfilling a reel is one of the easiest ways to cause issues during

a cast. Fill the reel spool until the line is approximately 1/8 inch from the lip. This makes casting easier because, as the line becomes less tight on the reel spool, you still have plenty of room for the layers to expand out without slipping off the spool and possibly underneath to the rotor.

### Spool Right, Spool Often

Spooling a spinning reel the right way is important for angling success, and these tips can help. Once you master this process, you'll feel more comfortable replacing the line regularly. There are a variety of reasons that line needs to be replaced. Like most things, the more you use it, the sooner it will need to be replaced. If abrasion weakens the line or the spool's capacity becomes too low from retying or breaking off, it likely needs to be changed. Also, UV rays can weaken fishing line even when it's not being used. In most cases, monofilament and fluorocarbon line need to be changed more frequently than braid due to memory and because they break down faster than braid. Just like flossing your teeth, you need to do it more than once a year.



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