

Finding Bass

If you are reading this there is one thing for sure. You want to be a better Bass fisherman. You live for early mornings on the water. I love the smell of an outboard motor and the sound of early morning birds singing and chirping. I love the sound of my motor as it rips up on plane for the first time of the day. I love watching the sun come up while running to my first location. I get excited at the site of standing timber; lay down logs or lily pads. You want to catch more and bigger fish? Well join the club. All bass fishermen are passionate about catching bass. We all want to learn how to do it a little better every time we are out on the water. Although most fishermen share the same passion, what separates them is knowledge. I see guys all the time use excuses about how they did not catch any fish. They blame the conditions, the time of year, or the even the body of water itself. It's true that even the best bass fisherman have tough days, we all do. The skunk is never far from anyone's boat. What will always separate a good day from a bad day is not luck. It's knowledge. Before fishing you have to consider the conditions first. By conditions I mean, water temperature, water clarity, water levels, recent weather patterns, and the forage in the lake or river you plan to fish. The more time you spend on the water the more this information will help you. You see a bass is a bass in any river, or any lake, in any state in the country. If I am heading out to fish the Illinois River, and it's been a little cool this spring and the water temperature is not as warm as I'd like it to be, but today its bright and sunny and there is not a cloud in the sky. We call this blue bird skies, and that usually happens after a cold front. So now I know fishing will be tough, the fish will be scattered or deep, or more than likely I'll find them suspending somewhere near where most guys would make their first cast, say a ledge or point off the cover. I'd be willing to bet my bass boat that I could at least find a few fish and get at least one or two to bite. How do I know? Knowledge, I've been here before. I've done it before. Most of the success anglers have comes from confidence. The kind of thinking like "I've been there done that". They know what to do when certain conditions are present. Successful Bass anglers already know what they are going to do before they even get out on the water. Sure even the best laid plans full of information can fail. At least you'll have a starting point, and if you are experienced, you'll also have a plan B, or even a plan C. If we only fished on perfect days, during perfect conditions, there wouldn't be a whole lot of fish left to catch and we would all be experts. One simple rule to remember is to watch the weather, spend plenty of time on the water, write down your experiences in a fishing log book, and always note the conditions. If you are just starting out there are a couple of good tips I could give you. They are the same here in Illinois as they are everywhere else I've fished. These simple rules will help you catch more bass. The first thing I can tell you about spring fishing is; as a rule when the water comes up, and is getting muddier the bass will follow. If the water is dropping and is getting clearer, the bass will go deeper. The faster the water level changes, the faster the fish will react to it. I'm sure you have heard someone say, "Those fish were here yesterday" well if they are gone now you usually know it's because the water level or weather has changed. If it is bright or even partly cloudy the fish will seek cover if the water temperature and water levels are stable. Look for weeds, stumps, or lay down logs type cover. If it gets mostly cloudy and windy those bass will scatter and get out of the cover and will be harder to locate. Find some baitfish activity over a point or a flat, and I promise you they won't be far.

Experience and confidence is the key to fishing anywhere, anytime. Spend as much time on the water during different weather, and water level changes, experiment with your lures and soft plastics and remember to, well remember and write down your experiences. Fish several different pattern's during different conditions. Learn to fish on the main lake, or river channel and stay away from your usual area's where you know you can catch fish pretty much anytime you want, and save those fish for when you need them. Set out to have a plan A, B, and C. I can't tell you how many times, I have had to go with plan C, and it worked out for me. Nothing can replace experience and the time you spend on the water.