A large largemouth bass is captured mid-leap, splashing out of the water. The fish is dark in color with a lighter belly, and its mouth is open. The background shows a body of water with some green vegetation.

# Southeast Largemouth Hotspots

by *Vic Attardo* photos by the author

Can you catch an 8-pound plus largemouth from a little lake in Southeast Pennsylvania? Apparently so.

It was done just last year when Joshua Christman landed an 8-pound, 7-ounce largemouth from 22-acre Scotts Run Lake in Berks County. And, Scotts Run still holds the state record smallmouth bass at over 8-pounds. Somebody should check out what those fish are eating.

Despite the bucketmouth catch, I wouldn't recommend Scotts Run as a southeast largemouth hotspot. For that honor, I'd drive about three minutes from one side of French Creek State Park to the other to fish 68-acre Hopewell Lake. Though relatively small, Hopewell is a top pick for southeastern largemouth, but you have to know how to fish dense, sometime impenetrable, weeds. Try two methods. First, working shallow running baits over the tops of tall weeds. Second, getting into the roots with jigs and heavy line.

Hopewell's size allows for multiple circuits in one outing. So, bass that weren't there an hour or so ago are often there now or vice versa.

My hotspots are not in order of their hotness, because it's common for a hottie to turn into a chilly lake for a season or a year, then come roaring back. On the other hand, a lake that's been cold can burn up with a good year-class or two. It doesn't pay to put them in order, just acknowledge good habitat and past performance.

A southeast lake to go on the hotspot list is Marsh Creek Lake in Chester County. At 535-acres, this is an impoundment with a lot of character. It has weedy bays, banks with shallow and deep fades, ripraps along the dam,

coves with creek currents and so much more. And, it grows big bass legitimately. Each year, 6-pound bass are taken from the waters of Marsh Creek, and I'm looking to tangle with four or five.

If you need to practice your bass patterning, Marsh Creek is the place to take a test. When a few bass are relating to some structure or hot for some presentation, you can bet the bass have sent each other signals as to what to eat and where to eat. This makes working Marsh Creek a lot of fun.

When I fished Marsh Creek in mid-March, weeds were practically non-existent in parts of the lake that usually had great greenery during this time of the year. The lake had some really thick ice last winter, and early spring rains prevented light penetration and weed growth. Unless it gets dry, this may be the year that Marsh Creek doesn't umbrella with milfoil. But, hey, don't bet on it.

Talking big water, look to Lake Nockamixon in upper Bucks County. This is a strange lake with not as much varied structure as you would think for a 1,450-acre impoundment. Still, it has weedy mats, areas of scissored stumps, rock bluffs and precious points. What makes Nockamixon hard to fish are its' acres of shallow inclines. It's tough to find a good drop-off along a bank except at the lower end of the lake towards the dam.

Nevertheless, Nockamixon ranks as a southeast hotspot, because of its quality bass and their eagerness to play, particularly in cooler seasons and on summer nights.

I need my complete tackle box when fishing Nockamixon. Over the thickest weeds, I work floating worms. Off the

points, I use jigs, shaky heads and now the flick-shake style of wacky worming with Flea Flickers. When working the stumps, I want jigs, chatter baits and deflecting crankbaits. While out from the flat banks, I continue with a Colorado-bladed spinnerbait, tossing the bait right onto the bank and working it out. It's my signature style for fishing Nockamixon flat banks.

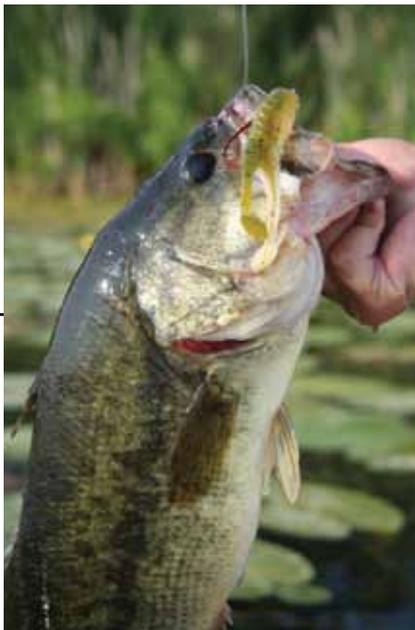
You can't fish Deep Creek Lake with much more than a canoe or rowboat, but this 38-acre lake in northern Montgomery County has some largemouth that might drag those small boats under the surface. Metaphorically speaking.

Deep Creek Lake is part of the county's park system, so restrictions and costs are profuse. However, the little impoundment with a spillway dam is a favorite for summer fishing, if you can fish weeds.

The lake actually has a spray-fountain that has been reducing algae, but it's still the weeds you need to fish. There isn't much structure in Deep Creek besides a narrow creek channel and a sandy bathing beach. These aren't bank bass that inhabit this water. They are bottom huggers.

Deep Creek Lake is where I perfected Tar's New Orleans Worm. It's here and on another small hotspot, Lake Towhee, where it works great. Just put a fat plastic oblong bead ahead of a 7-inch ribbon tail worm. Slither it over the grass, and let it drop into the openings.

At 37-acres in Bucks County, Lake Towhee is also best fished in the weeds of summer. Float around, but watch out for those 20-inch bass. ☐



*Some Southeast lakes are best fished in the weeds of summer*



*Lakes in Southeast Pennsylvania offer good habitat for bass fishing.*