



Little Waters, Big Bass

by Mike Bleech

photos by the author

Seldom is there only one answer to any fishing situation. Virtually any bass lure you enjoy using can be effective in small waters.

Deer browsed along the shoreline in the low-angle light of early morning. Wood ducks traded back and forth, overhead. Fortunately, no Canada geese were around to break the calm on the state game lands pond. Jim Lynch had caught and released several bass during his previous visit to this particular pond including one that weighed somewhere in the vicinity of 9 pounds. He was even more enthused than I was to get here.

He had been there while the bass were still concentrated in shallow water. Now, they had spread around the pond more, making fishing more challenging. Finding bass was not terribly difficult, though, in the 30-some acres of water that was less than 8 feet deep.

Though my friend was a bit disappointed that the fishing was not faster, I was more than pleased with our catch of several bass in the 10-inch to 14-inch size range. We had begun fishing in the shallow head of the pond where he had caught those big bass, then fished our way into increasingly deep water.

On the down-lake side of the largest point in the weed bed that encircled the pond, Lynch was bringing his favorite lure, a pork frog on a weedless hook, toward the surface when a big bass, much larger than anything we had caught so far that day, made an attack. The battle was superb.

Before releasing the bass, we guessed the weight at well over 6 pounds. With a flip of its tail, it splashed Lynch's face liberally. Bringing an even bigger grin than he already had.

This is precisely the situation I look for when I am in the mood for largemouth bass fishing, a quiet little lake or pond where we have the water to ourselves. I have found that in waterways like this one, the potential for big bass is as good as it gets.

Lynch's fishing tactic is indicative of the relative simplicity of fishing for bass in small waters.

"A pork frog and a weedless hook, that's all I ever use," he said.

He is very successful with this terminal rig, which shows how an angler can become very effective by keeping things simple. Lynch's proficiency with the weedless pork frog is impressive. Simple as this seems, though, choosing the specific rig took considerable experience and good planning. The pork frog can be fished anywhere from the surface to the bottom, with the understanding that he fishes almost entirely in small lakes or ponds where water is not deep. The pork frog is the perfect lure to fish over the tops of weeds and into gaps between weeds. Since the pork frog has little action, other than some wiggling of the two tails, Lynch completely controls the action.

Seldom is there only one answer to any fishing situation. This is no exception. Make it as complicated as you want. Virtually any bass lure you enjoy using can be effective in small waters.

My choices of lures for the small waters are carried in a small tackle box. Plastic worms, surface lures and a couple

of spinnerbaits are all I need. Sometimes, I will add a couple of Arkie jigs, which will be tipped with pork frogs or some other type of pork bait.

Pennsylvania has a wonderful variety of bass waters from large lakes or rivers to hidden ponds. Big bass lakes buzz with activity, and many small waters are almost unnoticed. Most can be fished from shore. However, anglers should get outside or at least into weed beds to effectively fish bass habitat. Float tubes may be allowed on some waterways. Canoes or jonboats that can be launched by hand are great for fishing waterways that can be accessed by motor vehicles. Electric motors can be used on most of the numerous small lakes in our state parks or those managed by the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission. Check for regulations at ponds located on state game lands. Boats may be limited to manual power.

Some of the best bass fishing is at small ponds, which are not known about by most anglers. Look for state game lands ponds at the Pennsylvania Game Commission website, www.pgc.state.pa.us.

The Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission manages several small lakes where boats are limited to electric motors. You can locate these lakes at the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission website, www.fishandboat.com. ☐



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