



PHILLIP GENTRY | FOR THE JOURNAL

With the bass spawn over and summer patterns starting to emerge, try these tips to catch more bass through the summer.

Post-spawn bass fishing tips

BY PHILLIP GENTRY
FOR THE JOURNAL

Post-spawn fishing for bass can encompass everything from hatched eggs to shady summer haunts, but it pretty much begins as soon as the bass start leaving their spawning beds and runs throughout the summer.

Though some anglers love this time of year and others hate it, once you get post-spawn bass pinpointed, you could be in for some of the best fishing of the year.

Just because the bass have quit spawning doesn't mean they've quit being bass, so some of the tactics for spawning bass will still work. One of the pros' favorite spawning baits is also very effective during the post-spawn period — a Berkley Power Lizard in green pumpkin, which is one of the most productive bass baits ever made. After the spawn, Carolina rig the Power Lizard and fish it for post-spawning bass in areas where you expect to find the fish coming off their beds.

Even when fishing offshore areas, continue to fish the lizard — either Texas or Carolina rigged — to catch bass during the rest of the year. In areas where the post-spawn coincides with the shad spawn, look for some shallow chunk rock or riprap that will

hold spawning shad and target the predatory bass nearby.

Post-spawn bass will sometimes take to the shallows or other staging areas until they leave for their summer hangouts. When going after post spawners in the shallows, try a Berkley Power Tube jig. Rig it with a lightweight slip sinker for a slow fall to let bass see the bait longer. If the bass aren't feeding actively and you want to trigger a reaction strike, use a heavier sinker — like a 5/16 or a 3/8-ounce — and fish it around any type of cover you can find.

Another great tip is to find areas where young-of-the-year hatches of other fish species — such as bream, crappie, sunfish and — are making their way out into the water. Bass will hold near these areas — typically flat areas with shoreline cover — and feed on baitfish and fry early and late in the day.

Lastly, hordes of spawning baitfish — which can include herring, threadfin shad, gizzard shad and a variety of other minnow species — provide just the boost post-spawn bass need to recover as baitfish spawn throughout the summer months.

Bass tend to school up by size and hold along gradually tapering points

in large tributaries and main lake areas to ambush baitfish.

Best bait presentations when targeting either baitfish or young of the year are with either topwater or sub-surface, baitfish imitation lures. Anglers typically run and gun between these points looking for schools of bass.

Don't expect to see extended periods of surface feeding. Pay close attention for one tiny swirl or flash from a herring or feeding bass to locate schooling bass, which may number from a couple of fish to more than a dozen. Once the school is busted, move on to the next point to allow the school to regroup.

As mentioned, look for surface baits to work during low-light conditions as well as right before sunrise and right after dark. Sub-surface or bottom bumping lures may produce as the mood of the fish slows or when bigger, lazier fish target crayfish that move about feeding on dead or injured baitfish from earlier feeding.

PHILLIP GENTRY is the host of the podcast radio program "The Outdoors Show with Phillip Gentry & Boat Girl." More information on the show is available at pgandboatgirl.com.