

# Hot-water fishing tips

BY PHILLIP GENTRY  
FOR THE JOURNAL

Even die-hard anglers have a hard time finding success on our area waters during the heat of summer. With temperatures this week pushing 100 degrees, most anglers simply hang it up for the season.

Just like fishing in the winter when most people think it's too cold to fish, fish will and do continue to bite during even the hottest parts of the summer. In order to be a successful hot-weather angler, you need to target areas that offer fish the most comfortable surroundings.

These adjustments tend to be more on the angler's end than that of the fish. The angler continues to fish during the summer, using the same patterns and the same locations and at the same times of

day as he does during the spring, he's not going to catch as many fish, if any at all.

In order to be more successful, consider making these changes to the way you fish, no matter what type of fish you target.

## GET AWAY FROM THE SHORELINE

In the spring, most species of fish move shallow to spawn. The warming weather heats the water up from the cold winter temperatures, and fish go there to get warm. When the weather turns hot, the opposite is true, and fish move back out to deeper water away from the shoreline to find cooler water.

At the same time, most lakes will begin to stratify, meaning separate into warmer upper layers that hold very little dissolved oxygen, and deeper layers with cooler water but also

less oxygen, because that oxygen is being consumed by decomposition of plant and animal material on the lake floor. Look for the middle level, called the thermocline, where cool water and oxygenated water meet. Any level of the thermocline that has structure, like submerged timber, rock piles or bridge columns that fish can hide around, will be the better places to fish.

## LOOK FOR COOLER WATER INFLOWS

If you are fishing in one of our area lakes here in the Upstate, consider moving to the headwaters of that lake or pond, where water flowing from a stream, spring or the deeper waters of another lake above the one you are in will cool the water considerably and draw fish to the area.

The best way to find these locations out in the



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**Anglers can still catch fish through the heat of summer by altering some of the patterns and tactics they use for fishing.**

lake is by closely watching the thermometer built in to most sonar units. Don't expect to find a 10-degree difference in surrounding temperature unless you know an area where a mountain stream pours into the lake.

Just 2-4 degrees cooler than the surrounding area could mean you are on to

something. Your graph is reading surface temperature, so an underwater spring, some 15-20 feet below the boat, may not register much on the surface but may be substantially cooler on the bottom.

## FISH AFTER DARK

Night fishing is an age-old tradition, but doesn't

always have to mean tying up under a bridge and fishing with live bait. Bass anglers typically discontinue daytime bass tournaments and concentrate their efforts on fishing at night, from late afternoon until midnight.

Fishing at night means cooler air temperatures and less recreational boat traffic. For those anglers who insist on fishing shallow or don't have the means to get to deeper water offshore, lights can be used to draw baitfish into the shallows around a boat dock or along the shoreline, and often larger predatory fish will follow.

Fish rarely bite all night long. The best periods are typically sunset and the first few hours after dark or the last few hours before daylight and sunrise. Plan your trip accordingly.

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