

# A look at Lake Keowee topwater bass fishing

BY PHILLIP GENTRY  
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Lake Keowee is the adopted home of the spotted bass. What was once a predominantly largemouth bass fishery gave way to the spotted bass that were introduced into the lake back in the 1980s.

Spotted bass are closely related to largemouth bass but have a bit more aggressive disposition, presumably because they don't grow as big as largemouth. For all of Keowee's beauty above the surface, the landscape below the water line is pretty much devoid of cover. A lot of rocks, a couple of stumps and the footings of manmade structures pretty well sums it up.

The lack of places to hide in the lake has created nomadic tendencies among the lake's bass populations. Hungry packs of spotted bass roam the open waters in search of baitfish to ambush. This makes these bass a prime target for topwater fishing.

Early and late in the day, bass — primarily spotted bass, although largemouths can't be ruled out — will use long points and humps to feed at the surface. As the day wanes, those same bass will move off into deeper water and suspend, just hanging out like birds flying high in the sky, choosing not to relate to anything in particular.

At the same time, what relatively little fish-holding structure is available at Keowee — mostly in the form of boat docks and other manmade structures — will also draw a few fish looking for relief from the sun or holding around spawning beds in the backs of coves.



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**Lake Keowee is well known as the adopted home of the spotted bass, a non-native black bass species that is a blast to catch on topwater lures.**

Spotted bass round Lake Keowee to their liking, but because there wasn't a lot of structure in the lake, those fish tend to swim together in packs and move vertically in the water column.

Beginning at first light and lasting for only an hour or so, spotted bass will move up on long points, humps and other terrain located close to deep water to corral and feed on baitfish. A hard bait like a Heddon Spook Jr, Lucky Craft Sammy or any number of noisy top-water plugs can create a fury of action that comes and goes all too quickly.

Lake Keowee bass anglers can generally count on some type of top-water bite year-round, but especially during the spring and summer. From late April through the end of

may only last for an hour first thing in the morning and again the last hour or so before dark, but it's a great time to catch fish.

Early morning anglers may see fish schooling on the surface. Baitfish try to escape by swimming up and away, which leaves them vulnerable to attack from below, and fish are often seen erupting on the surface as they feed.

To mimic this situation while fishing, use a top-water surface lure designed to create a splashing commotion while retrieved across the surface. Most fish tend to feed in an upward position, so a bait-imitating lure clumsily splashing across the surface means an easy meal for the fish.

It's addictive fishing. At times, locating fish might take a little time, but the excitement perks up in a hurry when retrieving lures across the surface and fish suddenly start blowing up everywhere.

**PHILLIP GENTRY** is a freelance outdoor writer and the host of PG & Boatgirl Outdoors. Download the podcast on Apple, Google Play, Spotify or at [pgandboatgirl.com](http://pgandboatgirl.com).