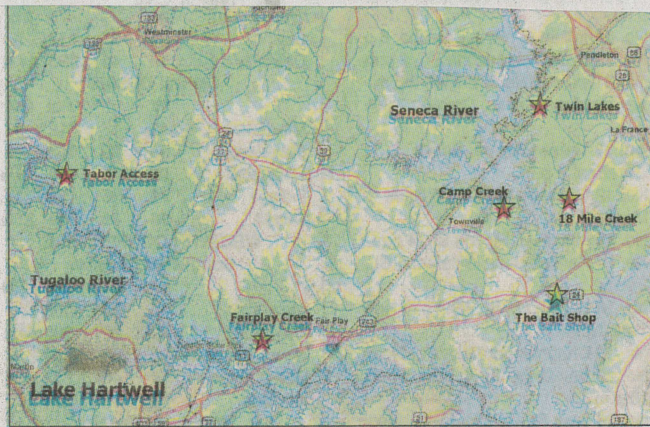


Taking a look at 'the rule of thirds' when

BY PHILLIP GENTRY
FOR THE JOURNAL

hitting the water



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Breaking a lake down into thirds is a good method for eliminating two-thirds of the water and concentrating on the remaining third to find fish.

that is most likely to hold fish will make your efforts more productive.

Which third to target is determined based on season, water temperatures and weather factors. An added bonus is that concentrating efforts on one-

third of the lake will save time and gas, because you don't have to run all over the lake looking for fish in different patterns.

Typically, the lowest end of a lake is considered the main lake basin — water immediately impounded by

determine which third of the water column to target. If your home water has a total depth at the dam of 100 feet, the vertical-third choices will be the top layer (from the surface to 33 feet), mid-depths (between 33- and 66-feet deep), and the bottom third (from 66 feet to the lake floor). Being able to rule out two-thirds of the water column is a great benefit to the newer angler facing the daunting challenge of where to start.

It's a fact that fish can and often do travel great distances in a single day, but just because they can travel great distances doesn't mean that they do so with any great frequency. A school of fish that has a ready food supply, comfortable living conditions and aren't under the influence of reproductive urges have no reason to travel great distances on a whim. Burning calories for no reason is contrary to the fish's survival.

Just as the depth of a lake can be broken down into the rule of thirds, a typical lake can also be broken down into three horizontal areas based on season and water temperature. These three horizontal thirds are lower lake, mid-lake and upper lake. While it is possible for fish to be located in multiple parts of the lake, concentrating efforts on the third of the lake

the dam and or its retaining walls. In some bowl-shaped lakes, the main lake basin will comprise the majority of the lake, and further breakdown will be by depth. Most bowl-shaped lakes will tend to be low-land lakes, and the deepest water will be right in front of the dam where excavation of the area during lake construction provides the deepest water. These areas are typically deep summer and deep winter areas for fish.

Mid-lake areas are further upstream away from the dam. Mid-lake areas typically include areas where major rivers impounded to form the lake converge. In river-run impoundments, mid-lake will be from the beginning of the main lake basin to the intersection of feeder creeks, including the creek mouths. The best way to describe the area are as transition areas, places

where fish stage, or move through between seasons.

Finally, upper-lake areas include the tributary arms that feed into the lakes. Lakes that incorporate several rivers in their impoundment may have more depth in the main channels, which display characteristics of lower-lake or mid-lake ranges. It's also important to realize that horizontal thirds of a reservoir may not be contiguous — that is, touching each other — especially elements of the lake's upper third. Upper lake thirds may branch out and be considerable distances apart.

The upper-lake areas are usually associated with spawning fish, and fish seeking the high end of current flow or generally flat shallow areas to reproduce.

PHILLIP GENTRY is a freelance outdoor writer who has been writing a wide variety of outdoor articles across the Southeast since 2004.

The arrival of early season warm weather has a lot of anglers itching to hit the water before winter shows back up for its final encore.

One of the most difficult aspects of fishing, especially if you've been away for a while, is understanding where fish migrate to during a particular season on a given body of water.

Unless you only fish in places like a local farm pond, the whereabouts of fish can be a daunting task to comprehend. In order to understand how fish relate to a large body of water, a theory called the "rule of thirds" was developed.

Actually, since few things in nature are absolute, the rule is more of a guideline, but understanding the idea can help you adjust quicker and find fish faster.

The rule of thirds is an easy guide to locating fish in the water column. The importance of depth presentation is often stressed in articles or YouTube videos. The rule of thirds is a measure for the angler to rule out two-thirds of the water column on a particular fishing trip and concentrate on finding fish in the remaining third.

Season and water temperatures are the two primary factors that will