



# Buck talks fishing

by BUCK PERRY, Education Editor

instincts, etc. from time to time.

However, in this present series titled "Buck Talks Fishing", Buck Perry will be addressing those fishermen who have already studied their "BASICS" and are now ready to move on to additional knowledge. In order to gain the most benefit from the articles, it is important that the student have a clear understanding of the terminology and nomenclature.

If you are a new reader, may we suggest several steps which will allow you to "catch up" or achieve a better understanding of the articles.

May we suggest that you:

1. Study a copy of Buck's great new book, "Spoonplugging, Your Guide To Lunker Catches". This book contains all the basic facts of fish movements, basic structures, basic weather and water conditions, basic presentation of lures, and much more. This book was 25 years in the making, a quarter century of fishing knowledge put down on paper for the first time so that fisher-

## Facts To Help You Chose The Best Fishing Spots

### Editor's Note:

E. L. (Buck) Perry, of Hickory, North Carolina is the father of "structure" fishing. It is Buck Perry who gave modern day structure fishermen a "language" with which they could communicate. It is Buck Perry who first coined the words "structure", "migration route", "breaks and breaklines", and many more. It is also Buck Perry who correlated

many of the basic facts concerning fish habits, their movements, and how they could best be caught. He later named these facts about fish and fishing, SPOONPLUGGING.

Each month Fishing Facts is introduced to new readers. For many of them the words "structure" and "structure fishing" will be totally new. For these new readers, we will continue to emphasize the basic concepts of structure, fish habits, in-

In this article Education Editor, Buck Perry, cites some examples of what it takes to be fishing in the right place, at the right time, in the right manner. Sometimes the best "looking" fishing spots may hold few, if any, fish.

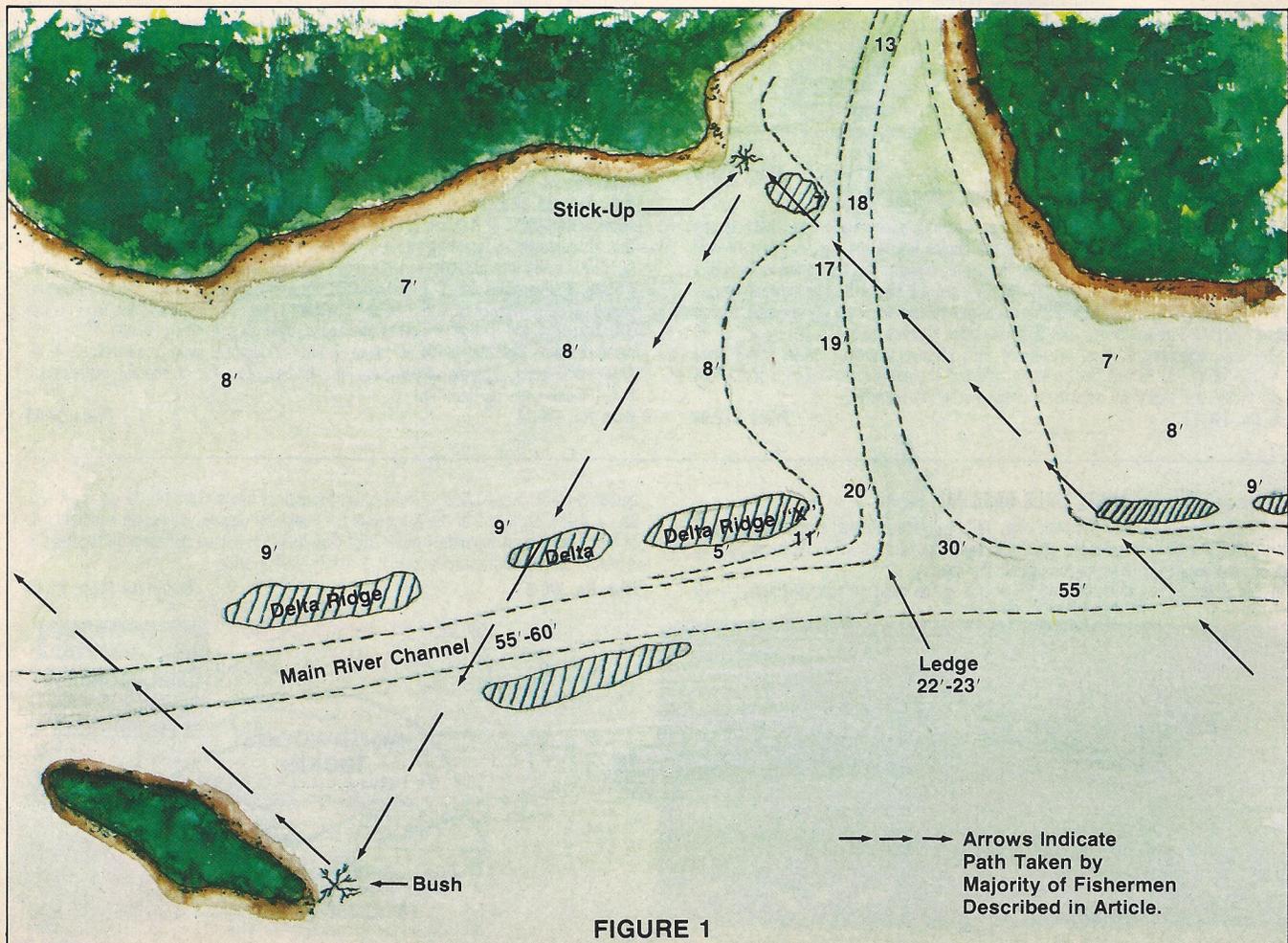


FIGURE 1

men everywhere could share in better fishing. The book is on sale for \$10.30 postpaid and available on an unconditional money back guarantee from us, Northwoods Publishing Co., Inc., P.O. Box 609, Menomonee Falls, Wis. 53051.

2. Familiarize yourself with our glossary of terms titled "Fishing Talk - Our Language of Structure Fishing", which can be found near the beginning of each issue of Fishing Facts.

No other publication is privileged to have Buck Perry on its staff. He has become a legend in his own time. As Fishing Facts Education Editor, this former Physics Professor from North Carolina State, has consented to share his vast fishing knowledge and experience with us. Many of today's successful fresh water anglers owe him more than they may ever realize.

Fishermen will often say, "What is Spoonplugging? What do you mean by fishing correctly? Why do you say to present lures both casting and trolling? Why do certain lures work better than others? Why do I have to change my tactics if the weather is hot or cold? What do weeds, grass, brush, trees have to do with my success? What difference does it make whether I am fishing in a Natural Lake or an Artificial? What difference does it make if I am fishing in a Highland, Lowland or a Flatland Reservoir? Why are breaks and breaklines important? Why should I find all the good structure in a lake? Why should I pay attention to the seasonal movement of fish? What difference does it make whether I fish clear water or darker water? Why pay any attention to the weather conditions? What does the boat and motor size have to do with it? Why bother with the movements of the fish? Why should I learn mapping and interpretation? What does my mental attitude have to do with my catching a fish? Why should I use both live bait and artificial lures? Etc., etc., etc. etc."

There is one standard answer to questions of this nature: **IN ORDER FOR YOU AND I TO CATCH A FISH, WE MUST BE AT THE RIGHT PLACE AT THE RIGHT TIME, FISHING IN THE RIGHT MANNER.** If any of these things are "off", we will not catch a fish. Period!

There are many reasons why a fisherman is *not* at the right place, at

the right time, fishing in the right manner. Each of the questions asked above may be a major cause. To cover all the reasons, or to even attempt to explain in full the questions asked above, would be an impossibility in an article or, for that matter, in a basic book. This is the major reason why the Home Study Courses and the School Curriculums are being rewritten. (Editors Note: Buck's notes, courses, etc. were destroyed in a fire a number of years ago and he is now in the process of rewriting them.)

Let's look at some fishing situations that will, in part, apply to some of the things said above. These will not answer all the questions, nor will they answer all the "Why's", but they should give some "food for thought".

Figure 1 is a top view of a portion of a Lowland Reservoir (manmade lake). The lake has a lot of "delta" conditions (channel, hump, flats). The figure shows a fishing situation I experienced not too long ago. It is located at the junction of a side feeder stream (cove) channel, and the main river channel (of the lake). Note the channels, humps, breaklines and especially all the depths.

The time of this situation was shortly after the spawning period (post-spawn). The weather had been hot and dry, and the water level had dropped approximately four feet since the pre-spawn and spawning season. The water color was good and slightly on the white-sandy side.

At the entrance to the cove (left-hand side) there exists a short "bar" with a predominant "stick-up". The "stick-up" at the present water level is located in water about two feet deep. The bar itself is clean, ridge-like, has a gentle slope with the "drop-off" occurring 7 feet. Be sure to keep the drop-off depth in mind, as it is a very important factor in answering the questions.

Note there are two breaklines to consider in the situation. The shallower breakline breaks at 7 feet on the end of the bar. As it moves toward the hump, and the main channel, it gets slightly deeper. At the hump (or ridge) it is down to eleven feet. The second breakline is into the feeder stream channel. The feeder channel is approximately 18 feet deep at the bar, and 30 feet deep before it breaks into the main channel.

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The lower (deeper) breakline starts out at 17 feet near the 7 foot bar, but by the time it gets to the ridge (hump) it is breaking at 23 feet. Note the depths. There exists a small "shelf" or "ledge" just before the lower breakline (drop-off). The slight ledge is 22-23 feet deep. See Figure 1, 1A and 1B.

At the time of the situation I was anchored on the hump in about five feet of water (position "X" in Figure 1). The spot is from 275 to 300 feet

from the entrance to the cove. Earlier, I had checked the shallows briefly, but had spent most of the time looking for such a spot. I did not expect the fish to be in the shallows, and I would have to pick my deep water spot very carefully. I knew what to expect at this particular time (3-4 weeks after spawning), and it didn't include a good movement of many fish. It (the movement) would be deep, short, scattered, and unpredictable. My lure presentation would

have to be "right on the money". By observing the terrain, and with the aid of a depth sounder, the above spot was found without too much trouble.

To complete the setting: about one-quarter mile away, across the main channel, was an island covered with trees (note Figure 1). On one end there was a bush sticking out of the water. (Later it was found to be in water about 3 feet deep). Farther up the lake, around a bend, was some other object, but I couldn't see it from my (anchored) position. (Later it proved to be a fallen tree on a shallow bar at the entrance to another cove).

I had first tried a fast, bottom-walking lure (checking speed), but as expected, had slowed down to a "jump-type" lure — in this case a flat, flashy spoon. I was making each cast so as to work the breakline and the ledge at 22-23 feet. The movement of fish to this position was very spotty — again as expected.

Only one or two fish moved to the spot at a time, and these were spaced at intervals. At one time it was 20 to 30 minutes before another fish showed. A couple of times two fish were caught on consecutive casts, but most were singles and scattered over a period of time. Rather slow pickings!

I sat there for several hours before I had enough fish to call it a day. During this time, big, fast fishing boats would skid in close to the bar at the entrance to the cove. After making several casts to the "stick-up", they would crank up and roar across the lake to the bush at the end of the island. After a couple of minutes I would hear (and see) them take off back across the lake to something around the bend. While I was there, THIRTEEN big, fast boats (with two fishermen riding in each) would zoom into the bar and cast the stick-up with plastic worms. Then each would take off for the same bush at the island, then later scoot to the thing behind the bend. The lines and arrows in Figure 1 show the path that they ALL took.

Figure 2 is a side view of a productive "bar" with a tall weedline. The weeds come to the "drop-off". The fish move to the drop-off (breakline). The fisherman moves to the edge of the weedline (breakline). The two (fish and fisherman) come together (make contact).

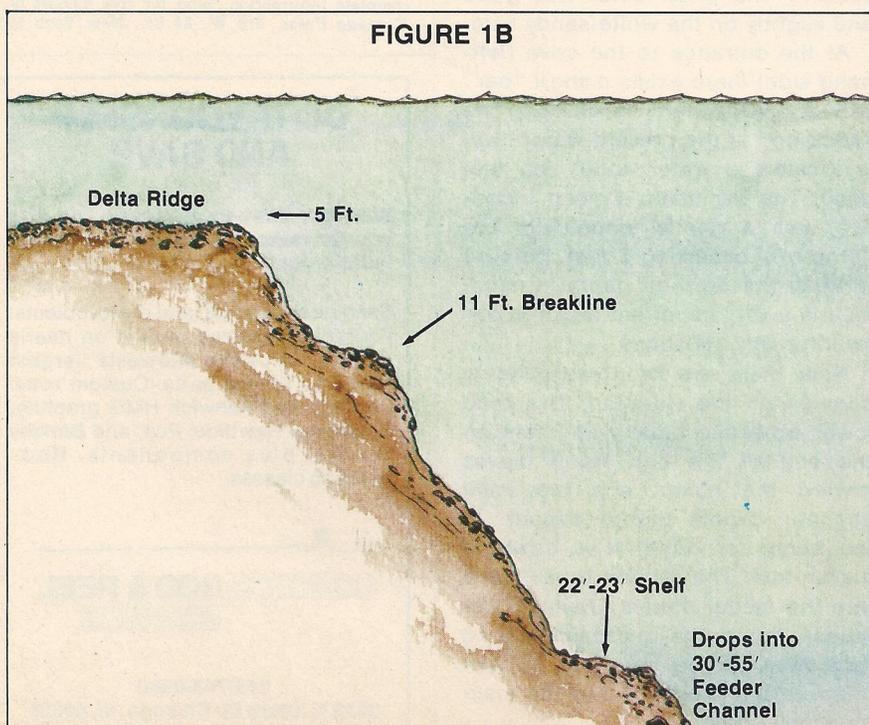
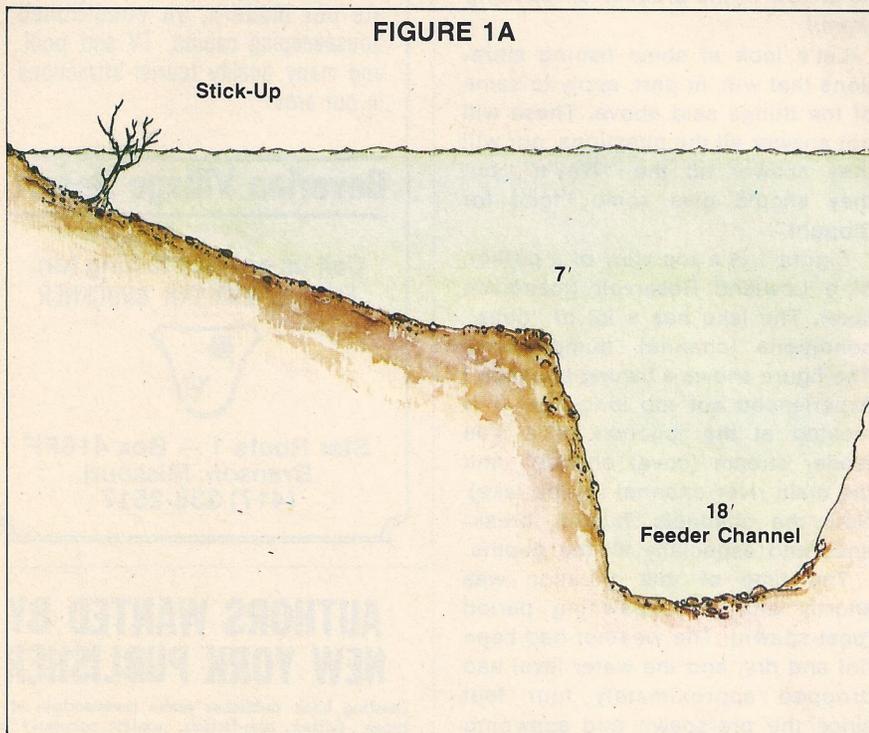


Figure 2A shows the same structure, the same fish, and the same fisherman. In this case (Figure 2A), due to water color change, or to a weed control program, the weedline has receded. The fish are still using the structure and breakline as they have always done. The fisherman is still doing what he has always done. The problem is the two don't get together again.

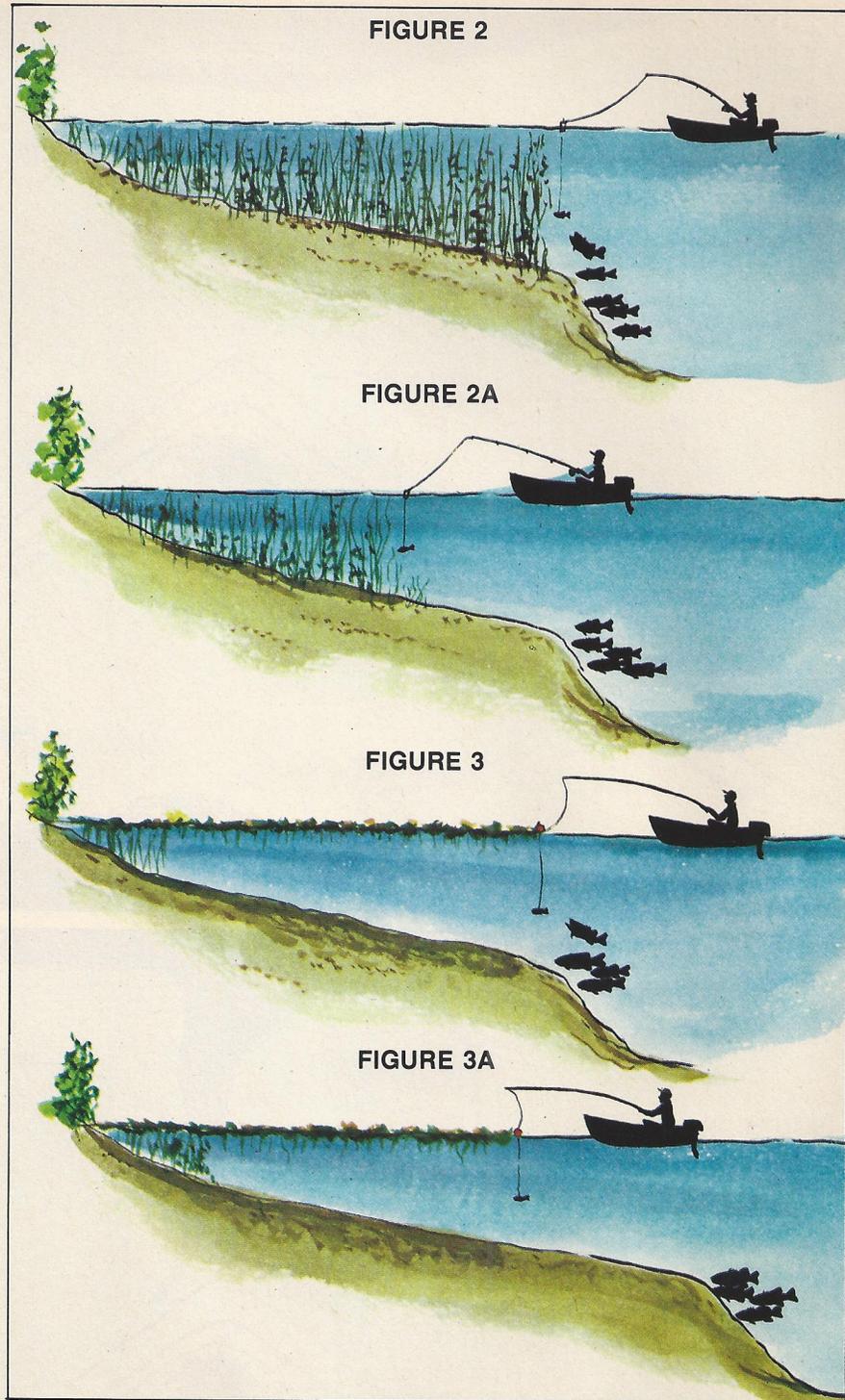
Figures 3 and 3A are side views of a fishing situation where the water is covered (choked) with floating plant life (Hyacinths, etc.). The floating vegetation has become so bad, it is necessary to poison, or remove most of it.

Figure 3 shows the floating plants covering all the shallow water in a stream out to a major breakline on the bottom. The faster water in the deeper channel is still free of plants. Figure 3A is the same situation after the eradication program. The fish are using the breakline as a stopping, or pausing, place just as they have always done. The fisherman is still doing his thing — with his "shiner" (minnow) — just as he has always done. It is little wonder a howl goes up about the lousy fishing after a weed or vegetation control program. You can guess who gets all the blame.

Figure 4 is a top view of a big wide bar, and a section out from a shoreline. The broken line in the figure shows a good breakline running all around the bar. It also shows a couple of deeper contour lines to help picture the general shape of the area. The depth is shown at different spots along the breakline, and on the flat clean area beyond the bar. The breakline has several "contact points" — a "sharper break", "end of bar", and a "finger".

The bar itself has fine "breaks". There is a bush just inside the sharper break. There is an excellent weedbed close to the end of the bar, and many rocks leading up to a pier on the finger. There is also a sizeable "hump" not too far away from the bar. One area has about every good feature a fisherman could ask for. Even the water color is a yellow-green.

The weather is good for the fishermen and they are out in force. One is fishing a plastic worm at the bush. Another is working the weedbed with weedless lures. Two fishermen are anchored on the hump, one with



a "shiner" (minnow) out, the other casting shallow free running lures in every direction. There is one guy lounging on the pier using a night-crawler.

The questions are, WHO IS IN THE BEST SPOT, OR, WHO IS AT THE RIGHT PLACE AT THE RIGHT TIME, FISHING IN THE RIGHT MANNER? Look at Figure 4 very carefully, noting all features shown.

If you interpreted the situation correctly, you should come to the con-

clusion that NONE OF THEM ARE. It sticks out like a sore thumb that none of the features of the bar, nor any of the fishermen are related to DEEP WATER. The nice clean flat cuts off all movements of the fish toward this particular bar. You can't catch fish where they "ain't". The fishing spots are out there around the channel (or deep hole).

Figure 4A is the same situation, but now there is a deep slot leading from the channel up toward the bar



FIGURE 4B

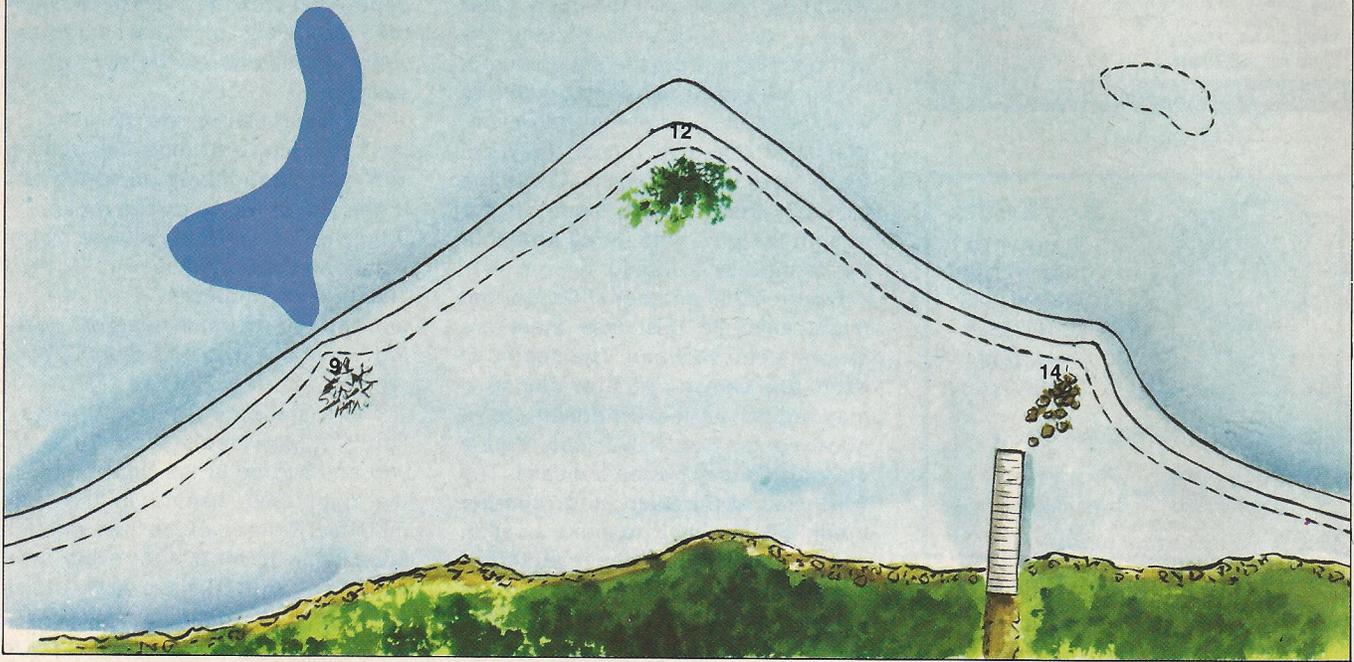
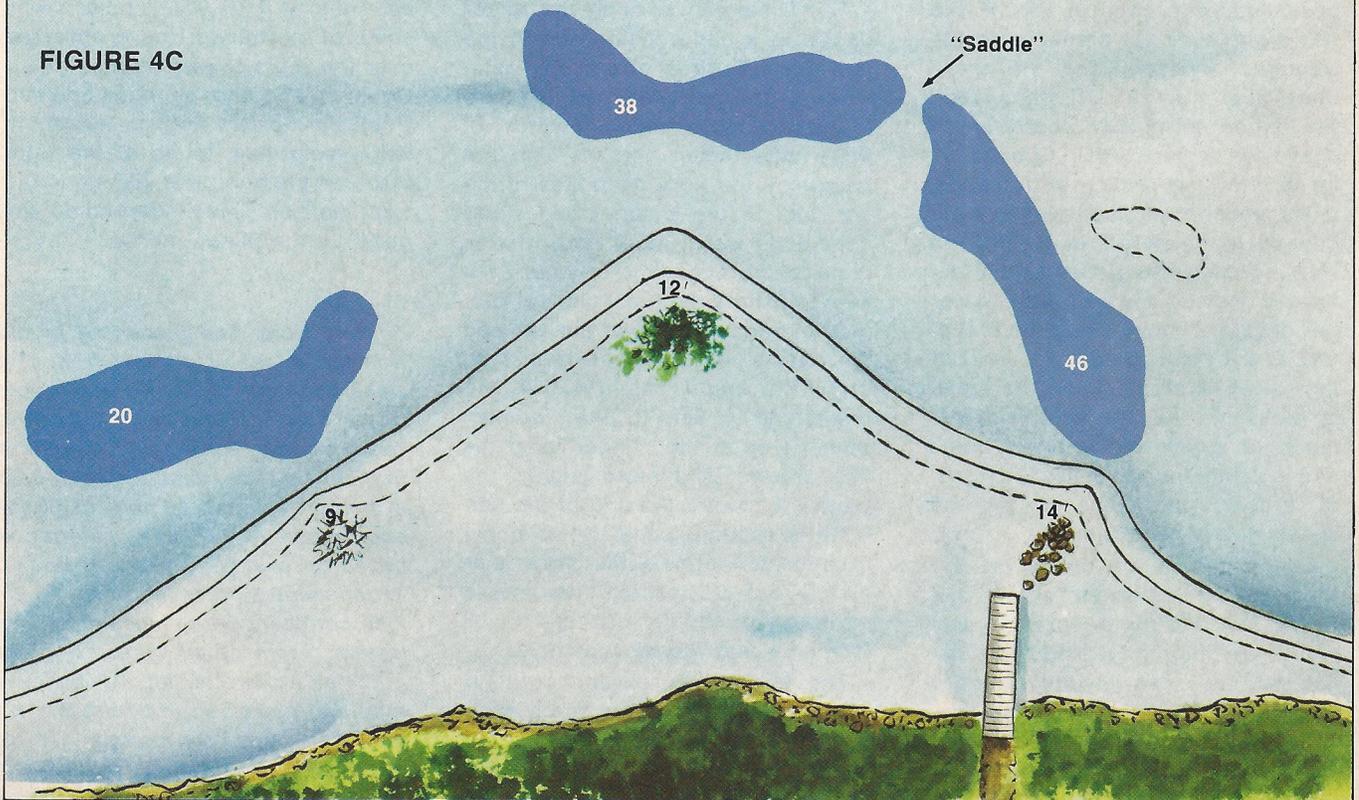


FIGURE 4C



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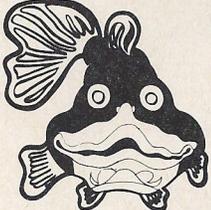
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as shown. Now, who is in the best spot, *if* the fish move toward the shallows?

It should be obvious; the fisherman working the weedbed has the best chance to catch a fish. **IF** the fish move over the breakline to the weedbed, and "*provided*" he is still there when they do. **OR**, "*provided*" the fish do not take another route to shallower water; **AND**, "*provided*" he is checking depths and speeds.

The second guy that *might* have a chance to catch a fish is the one working the worm at the bush. **IF** the fish, in moving toward shallow water, decide to move along the breakline to the "*sharper break*", **AND IF** they move shallower than the break to the bush. **OR**, the fisherman decides to check the sharper break and is using enough styles (or types) of lures to check the depths and speed at the same time.

The fishermen on the hump and the man on the pier are "*dead*", due to the fact that the hump is "*out of sight*" (to migrating fish), and the fish will not move *downhill* along a breakline to reach shallow water.

Figure 4B is another view of the situation. In this case the deep water is located as shown. The **ONLY ONE**

that has a good chance to catch a fish is the fisherman working the bush, **PROVIDED** the fisherman is there when the weather and water conditions are "*just right*". Conditions would have to be *near perfect*, and the "*time of year*" must be right before the fish would move up over such a shallow drop-off. **AND**, he would get skunked if the deep water wasn't deep enough to provide the fish protection from the environment.

The other four fishermen might as well be home watching television; that is, if the only reason they are there is to catch a fish. About the only guy that's "*got it made*" is the guy on the pier, who, in all probability, is already sleeping.

Figure 4C is another situation that might exist. In this case there are several deep sections. The depths of each are shown. At first glance it may appear all the fishermen are in good spots. But, if we look a little closer, this may not be the case. The fisherman at the bush (and "*sharper break*") is not likely to make a catch, as the water in the deeper section is only 20 feet deep — slightly deeper than the flat. If the water is clear, and he was there at the wrong time of the season, he could cast his arm off and never catch a fish — even if the fish moved along the breakline from the "*end of the bar*" — which isn't likely in this situation.

The fisherman working the weedbed is in a bad position due to the fact that the "*end of the bar*" isn't likely to get a movement of fish (due to the position of the deep water). **IF** there were small "*breaks*" on the flat, or on the right hand side of the bar, and **IF** the weather and water conditions were good, and he was there at the right time of year, **AND** he was fishing the breakline correctly all around the end of the bar and the deeper water off the breakline, **THEN** he *might* catch a fish. He might get a fish **IF** the "*contact point*" was at the "*finger*" and the fish moved shallower along the breakline toward the end of the bar. If he is expecting the fish to come from the 38 foot hole, then he's completely out of position. He should move to the "*saddle*" between the 38 foot hole and the 46 foot hole.

The two fishermen anchored on the hump are not in too bad a position, **IF** they are there during the colder season, and **IF** the fish move toward the hump and not toward the

finger or the saddle. *Provided* the one changes lures and both fish deep enough and just happen to find a particular small '*break*' the fish are pausing at during a movement. It doesn't look too good for them if the fish **DID** move toward the hump. It appears the 10 foot breakline is the "*drop-off*" in this situation, and this depth would cause the fish to "*back off*" regardless of the weather and water conditions or the time of the season.

The fisherman on the pier is in the best position, providing the weather and water conditions are good and **IF** the fish move up on the rocks, **OR** if they do not move shallower by going along the breakline. And **IF**, he is "*fishing*" the nightcrawler on the finger and the rocks, instead of "*soaking*" it up next to the pier.

There are a lot of "*if's*", "*and's*", "*but's*", "*provided's*" and "*or's*" for you and I to be at the right place, at the right time, fishing in the right manner. Neither of us has enough knowledge to hit it right every time. But, if we do **NOT** have **ANY** knowledge, then it would be pure luck if we caught a fish. If we do not try to attain more knowledge, we'll never be able to improve our being at the right place, at the right time, fishing in the right manner. This is the reason I have knocked myself out in the past, and is **THE ONLY** reason why some of the things I have observed over the years should be recorded. I would much rather sit in the sun and smell the flowers and go fishing to learn more how to be at the right place, at the right time, fishing in the right manner. This I intend to do, the good Lord willing, shortly.

*Editor's Note: The preceding article was taken out of context from one small segment of Buck Perry's new Home Study Course, which Buck is busily writing, editing and preparing at this time. The Home Study Course is being designed to help beginner and expert alike. The material is based on over forty years of Buck's experiences all over the North American continent on all types of fishing waters. From small lakes to giant artificial reservoirs, all will be covered and explained in depth. We expect (we hope) the course will be completed and ready for publication by the spring of '76.*

