

How and Where to Fish A Brush-Infested Lake

"Oftentimes I see so-called 'structure fishermen' fishing trees and brush with no thought as to their location."

by Buck Perry, Education Editor

Part Two of Two

Over the years I have heard a great number of questions from fishermen. During the same period of time, I have asked quite a few myself. I have never considered any question unimportant and, when asked, I make an effort to answer it the best I know how. However, I have heard questions and listened to answers where the person (fisherman) did little *thinking* before opening his mouth. You might say it was a question or an answer off the top of his head.

I have never thought it wise to answer every question that I might ask. At the same time, I am not free to ask *Fishing Facts* readers a question that can't be figured out, or one that has not been discussed in one form or other in the past. If I give ALL the answers, **it is not likely the student will learn.** But, if he has to think and figure it out for himself (from experience or past study), he is not likely to ever forget. I refer to this as "knowledge," and knowledge is the key to fishing success. I feel questions should *teach*—not measure what is known.

In most instances we do not have time to do much reasoning over every fishing situation we may face. However, there are times when we should think carefully before we act. Our knowledge may not be locked in on a particular situation, and if we act too fast and do not consider the alternatives (or consequences) we may fail where we should succeed.

The last time we talked (Feb. '84 *Fishing Facts*), we were considering thoughts raised by our "above" water observations and the part they play in the interpretation of a lake containing bushes or trees. My hope is that all of us came to the conclusion that the trees and brush did not change a thing. The "Structure Situations" were still in force. The "debris" was just another item we could see that would lead us to lake features the fish would use in their movements. I hoped our discussion would eliminate time spent looking (or thinking) about all those "fishy-looking" bushes and trees.

At times I may sound like a broken



Education Editor Buck Perry with several lunker size bass.

record. But some subjects need a lot of repetition. It is very difficult to get across the fact that **structure, breaks and breaklines tied to deep water are the key to CONSISTENT fishing success**—not some visible tree or bush in the shallows. Too often I see so-called "structure fisherman" fishing trees and brush with no thought as to their location. I've also seen them out from the shoreline wandering around on some big flat completely void of fish-attracting "signposts" (structure, breaks, breaklines, deep water).

In our last talk we did not cover all the questions from fishermen readers. Neither did we talk about other things I feel are important. Here again, I will use various figures to cover a variety of thoughts and questions. As stated previously, fishermen

will look at similar fishing situations differently. The conclusions drawn from what I say will seldom be the same by all listeners. Thus, I may approach a discussion about a subject from several directions and hope the point becomes clear in ALL minds. If this causes some to feel I am repeating myself . . . so be it.

As suggested last time, you should give some thought to each question before giving an answer—especially before "digesting" my remarks.

Figure 1 is a top view of a brush and standing tree situation in a section of a reservoir. There are bushes or standing trees along the shoreline. There is a large expanse of open water, but about a quarter mile off shore, we see a clump of treetops sticking out.

QUESTION 1—"What does this situation mean to you?"

What it means to me is that the bottom in this area is likely to be very difficult to work effectively, due to "hangs" or snags. The shoreline features and the visible brush indicate there is NO "Structure Situation" connected to the shoreline. It says to me this shoreline section is purely trolling water. If I didn't troll, I'd pass up this shoreline completely.

The exposed tree clump tells me a bottom feature different from the surrounding area may be present. It could indicate a "Structure Situation" exists, and the fish might use it in their movements and migrations.

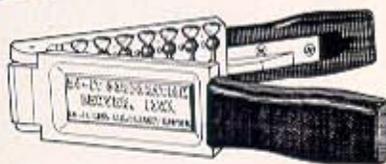
QUESTION 2—"Would you check the clump of trees that are visible and situated out from the shoreline?" (**Figure 1**).

We have to have a reason for checking out the clump of trees, other than the fact it is a visible "stick-up." If we do not know what will make this clump of trees "good" or "bad," a lot of time could be wasted trying to materialize a fish with things such as size, color and lure action. I would consider quite a few things before passing it up, OR going out for a closer inspection.

QUESTION 3—"What type 'structure' do you guess as being present
continued

Free Catalog!

LURE & SINKER
DO-IT.MOLDS
QUALITY PRODUCTS FOR THE SPORT FISHERMAN



Priced for the Sportsman
Used by the Professional

- Accurate
- Durable
- Multiple Cavities
- Time proven design
- Wooden Handles
- Dependable Quality
- Machined Surfaces and Hinges

These are the same molds used by many of the largest jig manufacturers in the USA. Priced from \$18.95. Available at leading tackle stores. More than 150 models.

For Free Catalog Write to:

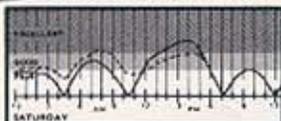
Do-It Corporation
Dept. No. 48 Hwy 63 North Denver, IA 50622
or phone 319-994-6055

CATCH MORE FISH Wildlife Activity Tables



The Original 1984
**Fish &
Game
Forecaster**

ONLY
\$5.95



- Handy pocketsize
- Quick glance charts
- No Guesswork
- Computer Accurate
- Used by professionals
- Seen on National TV

--- SEND TODAY! ---

YES, send me _____ copy(s) of Forecaster at \$5.95 each

Enclosed is \$_____ check or M.O.

Please charge my:

BankAm./Visa _____ Exp. _____

Mast. Card _____ Exp. _____

Signature _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

MN Residents Add 6% Sales Tax.

DO-IT.MOLDS

P.O. Box 23208 Dept. FF
Minneapolis, MN 55423

How to Fish a Brush Infested Lake

out in this lake?"

Is the reservoir (lake) a Flatland lake? Lowland lake? Highland lake? (The question didn't state what type reservoir.) If it's a Flatlander, what "Structure Situations" are likely to exist *out in the lake*?

The reason we classify our reservoirs into "Highland," "Lowland," and "Flatland" is so we know what type "Structure Situations" can be expected in each. Very little guessing should be involved at any time.

QUESTION 4—"How long would you fish the exposed treetops out in the lake if the major game fish were bass?"

The questions I would consider

quickly would be: (A) Is the clump of trees potentially productive? (B) What type structure is likely to be present? (C) Are they out on a big flat? (D) If they are located in the vicinity of a channel or deep hole, just how close are they? (E) Are they "tied" in some way to the channel or deep hole? (F) Would the fish know they are there? (G) I wonder if the question meant I should just check the "tops" of the trees and not spend time checking all the way to the bottom (all depths). (H) Shouldn't I say, regardless what is meant by the question, I'm going to check all the depths—if my observations show the tree clump is on or closely related to a potentially productive "Structure Situation"? (I) If a quick observation shows the tree clump is NOT on or closely related to a potentially productive structure,

continued

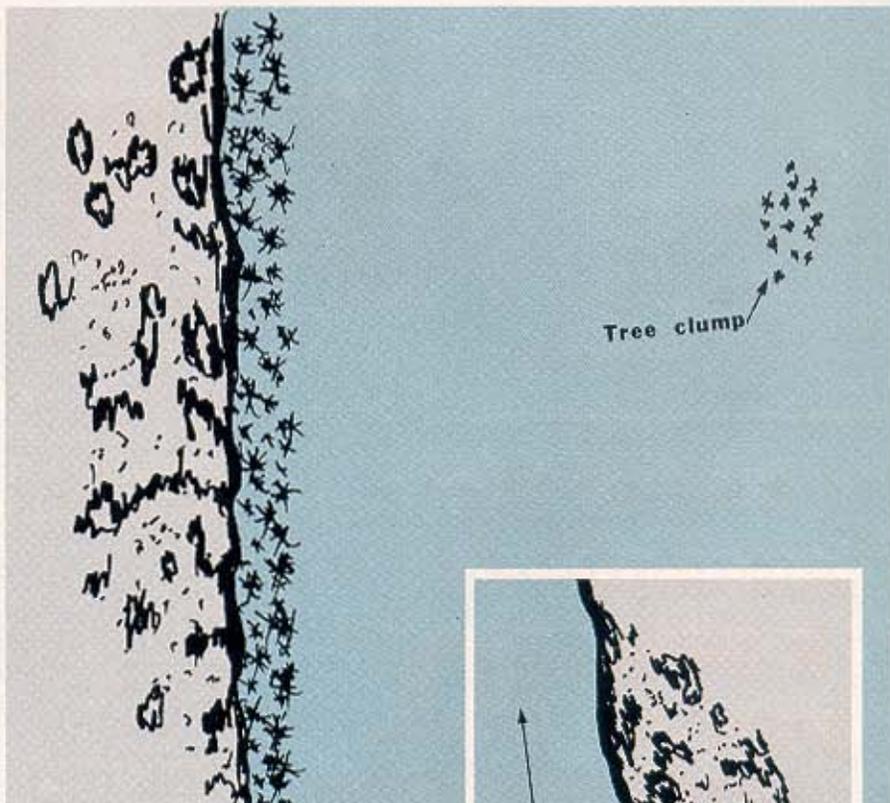


FIGURE 1—A top view of a brush and standing tree situation in a section of a lake. Note the large expanse of open water, and the tops of a clump of trees sticking out of the water about a quarter mile offshore. What, if anything, does this situation tell you?

FIGURE 2—Top view of a fishing situation in a lake where the bottom is covered with bushes and standing trees. Do you think this particular area would be a good place to concentrate your fishing efforts? Study the figure carefully. Then find the answer in the accompanying article.

FISH GITTERS!



Paul Elias, the 1982 Bassmaster's Classic Champion, fishes with Lew's "SG" Graphites every trip to the lake. You should too!

Over 50 models of "SG" Graphites cover most ranges of line, lure, and specialty type situations. If you are after Bass, Muskie, Walleye, Speckled Sea Trout, Redfish, Salmon, King Mackerel, Rainbows ... or just about any other gamefish, there is a "SG" Graphite casting, spinning, or fly rod to help you get 'em.

Lew's "SG" Graphite rods will handle the toughest fishing conditions because they are designed by fisherman just like you. "SG" Graphites are Fish Gitters!



LEW CHILDRE & SONS

110 E. Azalea Ave., Foley, AL 36535
Office Telephone (205) 943-5041/Fisherman Information (205) 943-1467

How to Fish a Brush Infested Lake

should I spend any time at all fishing the treetops?

QUESTION 5—"If this bunch of trees were exposed due to a potentially good 'hump,' does this (Structure Situation) say the clump of trees will hold fish? Are there reasons why a person could waste a lot of time fishing it?"

If I were thinking about this question, things such as the following would flash through my mind. "If the tree clump has the potential of being productive (on a good "Structure Situation") does it mean it will produce NOW?" "If it's a 'hump,' is the top shallow or deep enough to be productive this part of the season?" "This time of day?" "Will it produce with the water color present?" "Will it be productive with the present weather conditions?"

If I had answers to questions like these firmly planted in my mind (knowledge) I would probably be able to decide whether to fish it (or not) without going out for a closer look. If I decided I'd better look it over, no time would be wasted fishing it whether it was a good situation or a bad one. I'd "get with it" if it's good and I'd quickly pass it up if it wasn't.

Figure 2 is a top view of a fishing situation in a lake where the bottom is covered with bushes and standing trees. (Study the figure.)

QUESTION 1—"Do you think this particular area would be a good place to concentrate your fishing efforts?"

The obvious answer would be "yes!" If you recall, the "Structure Situations" we have talked about, you know this situation is one of the main keys for fishing success in reservoirs. If you remember, you should be able to fill in **Figure 2** with the features that were left out.

FIGURE 3—QUESTION 1—"If you were fishing the area shown in **Figure 3** in the 'cold' part of the year for bass, where would you concentrate your fishing efforts?"

Our guidelines say we should expect unpredictable and mostly short migrations from the deepest water in the area during this time period of the year. The guidelines tell us to concentrate our efforts on the steeper, fast-breaking shorelines. They point out that the fish (during this period) would not take a long route to move shallow. If they did move shallow, they would have quick access to deep water. In viewing the situation (**Figure 3**) we would have to consider the main channel as being the deepest water in

continued



CATCH BIG BASS ...and more of'em! IN THE BASS CAPITAL OF THE WORLD

FAMOUS FOR:
Largemouth Bass, Striped Bass, Bream and Speckled Perch.
Close to Florida's best attractions. One day round trips to Disney World, Silver Springs, St. Augustine, Daytona Beach.
WRITE FOR FREE RECREATION OR FISHING INFORMATION.



PLEASE SEND FREE RECREATION INFO
 FISHING INFO

BASS CAPITAL SPORTSMAN'S ASSOCIATION
BOX 550-A, PALATKA, FL 32077

WOLVERINE LODGE

N.W. Lynn Lake, Manitoba
350 Northerns 10 to 27 lbs. caught in 1983; Walleyes 3 to 5 lbs.;
Lake Trout to 28 lbs.
1984 American Plan
7 Days—2 to a boat \$775 Each
7 Days—3 to a boat \$650 Each

Renee & Fred Bettschen—FTS
Cold Spring, MN 56230
PH. 612-685-8198

TEAMWORK

When we build
an outboard
we build a lube
to match.



How to Fish a Brush Infested Lake

the area. This would indicate the fish are not likely to move very far along the breaklines of the feeder cut to get to shallow water.

Can you see any structure or features *tied* to this deep water that would serve as "guideposts" for the fish to move shallow by a short migration? Do you see a short *marked* path back to the sanctuary of the deepest water in the area?

Our guidelines indicate we shouldn't get too far from the deepest water during this period of the year. These guidelines (and past study) should say quite plainly we have to consider the tall trees located where the two channels meet (**Figure 3**). In other words, the trees are the "breaks" tied to the deepest water in the area and they "go all the way" to shallow water.

I hope none will ask: "What trees along the channel do I fish?" Just in case, let me give (again) the guideline — "Productive" bushes or standing trees are related in some manner to the structure, breaks, breaklines and deep water the fish use in their movements and migrations ("Structure Situations"). In other words, if you are checking out the trees or treetops during the winter weather, you do not fish just any tree clumps you see out along the channel. You check out those ON STRUCTURE such as those on the two bars at the entrance to the side feeder stream channel.

Any (trees) at a well-defined "wash" into the channel should be checked. If there exists a well-defined hump somewhere **along the channel**, then standing trees on the hump should be worked from top to bottom during the winter period. Each of these are "Structure Situations" near the deepest water. If I had a choice, I would prefer the situation as shown in **Figure 3**. These trees are related to a "Structure Situation" used by the fish *most of the year*, and I prefer the seasonal "Structure Situations" to be as close together as possible.

This brings up another question on the minds of some fishermen: "Should I spend much time working the treetops during the warm season?"

My guideline is to not spend time fishing treetops during the warmer season. Sure, I'd check them out in the normal control of depth and speed around the "Structure Situation." However, I would expect the migration to be related to structure, breaks and breaklines *tied to the shoreline shallows*. The bars and breaklines of the feeder cut (**Figure 3**) would get

Spoon Feed Trout & Salmon Eppinger's Flutter Chucks!



EPPINGER MFG. CO.
6340 Schaefer Hwy.
Dearborn, MI 48126

Chucklet

Big Ed
Flutter Chuck

Magnum
Flutter Chuck



BONUS OFFER!

Send for our '84 Fishing Tips, a colorful arm patch, decal and a "4-oz 1 1/2" crackle frog Spinlite. Postpaid. \$7.00 value for \$4.00.

ENCLOSED IS \$4. RUSH THE SPECIAL FF

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

most ALL of my attention during the warmer season. (Why do I do this? Do I have a guideline?)

Figure 4-A is a side view of a "Flatland" fishing situation. The edge of the channel is lined with bushes or small trees that grew before the lake

was filled.

Figure 4-B is a top view showing the condition on both sides of the channel.

QUESTION 1—"Would it be wise to troll the 'brushline' with lures barely continued

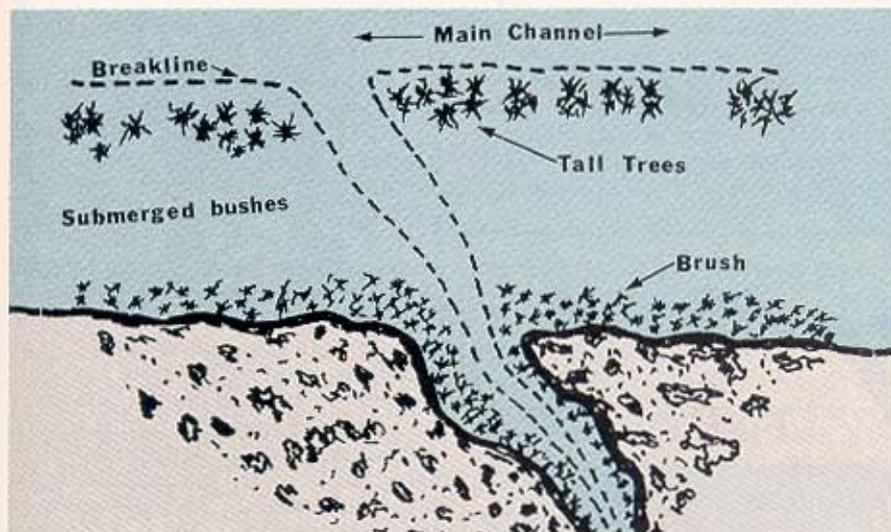


FIGURE 3—If you were fishing the area shown in this drawing, where would you concentrate your efforts?



FIGURE 4A—Side view of a "Flatland" fishing situation. The edge of the channel is lined with bushes or small trees that grew before the lake was filled.

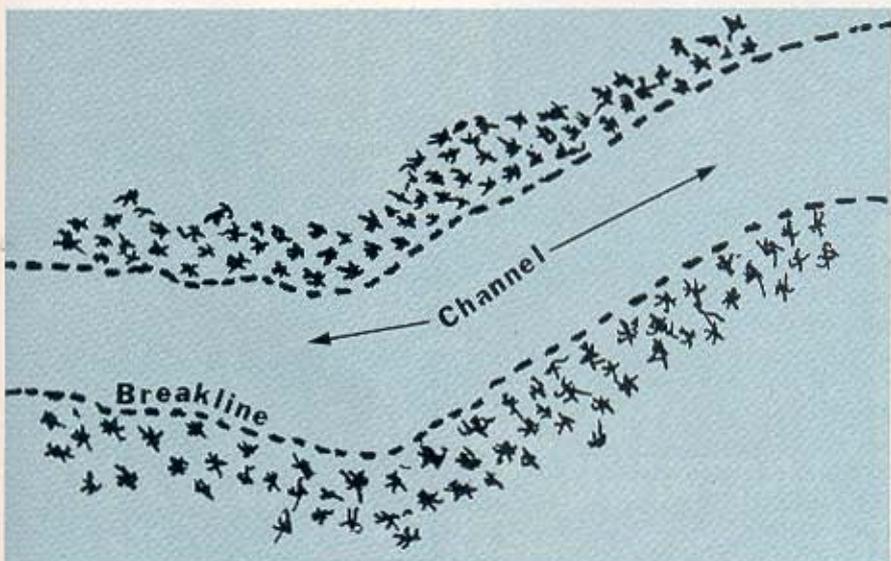


FIGURE 4B—Top view showing the conditions on both sides of the channel. Where would you position the boat if you decided to cast?

AN AMERICAN TRADITION

Eagle Claw Poster / Hook Chart Available



"Yessir, Billy.

If you want to be a good fisherman like your granddad, start with good tackle—and that means Eagle Claw." It's a three generation story about the fine American tradition of quality that goes into every reel, every rod, and every hook that says Eagle Claw. Get a good thing going in **your** family.

Yes! Send me an Eagle Claw Poster/Hook Chart and a gold-plated Good Luck Hook. Enclosed is \$1.00 for postage and handling.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____

ZIP _____



EAGLE CLAW®

Send to: Wright & McGill Company
P.O. Box 16011, Dept. FF
Denver, CO 80216-0011

How to Fish a Brush Infested Lake

skipping through the outer twigs and branches?"

There are several things to think about here before making a decision. Is trolling a good way to locate fish in a situation such as this? Am I likely to find the fish in this lake if I do not troll? If I troll, should I keep my lures running "free" all the time so I won't get hung up? Will I spook the fish if I get too close? Will the fish dart to

deeper water if my lure hits the brush? If I *don't* hit the outer twigs and branches, will my lure be in position enough to locate the fish?

(Did you consider these things?)

QUESTION 2—"If you located a group of fish around a particular patch of bushes, would it be wise to anchor and cover the spot by casting?"

Before I would answer this question, I would give some thought as to whether I should anchor the boat, and what the consequences may be if I do anchor (or if I don't)! The things I would consider very quickly would be: "Can I be thorough if I do not keep the

boat from moving around? Why do I have to anchor and cast, why not continue trolling? Can I catch more fish casting than I can trolling? Am I more likely to "hang up" while trolling or on the cast? Will I be able to get a hung fish away from the brush better on the cast or on the troll? How do I make the trolling passes to be sure I get all the fish that may be around the bushes? What do I do if the fish takes the lure and then gets tangled up in the brush? How far from the bushes do I position my boat if I decide to cast? Should I expect some fish to be around the bushes on the opposite bank (of the channel)? Should I anchor so I can check both sides at the same position? Can I check both sides better on the cast than I can on the troll? Do I have enough lures or enough styles to work the brush thoroughly on the cast? Should I go and spend time trying to get the lure loose if I hang up? Should I "break it off" and not take a chance of spooking the fish? Am I a good enough caster to take a chance? Is my casting gear strong enough to rip the lure through the outer twigs and branches?

(How long would it take you to decide whether to anchor and cast? Why would I make up my mind FAST?)

QUESTION 3—"Where would you position the boat if you decided to cast?"

The purpose of giving some thought to the position of the boat is to be sure we cannot only cover the area thoroughly, but be able to control the depth and speed of the lures at the right places. In this situation, quite a few things should be considered. Most of the thoughts and questions should come to mind when thinking about whether to anchor and go to the cast (above). You should further be thinking — what position would be better? Should I position my boat in several locations? Which one would be better to control my depth and speed? How do I work my lure if I position my boat over the channel? Over the brushline? Over the flat behind the brushline?

(What do your guidelines, study and experience tell you to do?)

QUESTION 4—"How would you control your depth and speed on the cast to keep from getting hung on the brush?"

If you asked me this question (which you did), I would consider very carefully where I positioned the boat. Any position picked would probably present a different picture. In any case, I would consider the fact I should use at least two style lures (a free-running and a "jump" type) to check the spot thoroughly. I would ask myself: "Would a surface lure be effective?" I know exact depth control will be

Tuffy

THE BOATS THAT CATCH THE BEST FISHERMEN



Muskler Rampage — 16'4"



Marauder — 16'7"



Rampage Series — 15', 16', 18'



Bass 'N' Marauder — 16'7"



Roustabout — 14'9"



Rogue Series — 14'9"

There are a lot of reasons so many pros start with Tuffys and stay with 'em.

First. Fiberglass construction. Super strong. Super looking. Super easy to maintain.

Next. Tuffy offers 19 different models, five hull designs plus

seating and outfitting to suit any fisherman — beginner to tournament champion.

Conclusion. Choose Tuffy. No need to settle for less than you need nor more than you want.

See for yourself. Send for a free 1984 full-line catalog and the name of your nearest dealer.

TUFFY BOATS

P.O. Box 750 • 805 C East Lake Street • Lake Mills, Wisconsin 53551

GO FIRST CLASS WITH FIBERGLASS

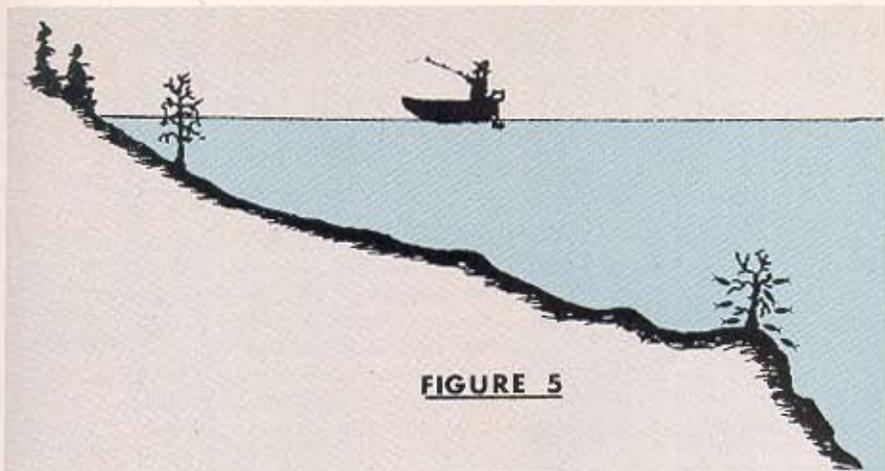


FIGURE 5

FIGURE 5—Are you one of those who fish only visible “stick-ups” and other forms of visible cover?

necessary on the cast with a free-swimming lure. I would have to give thought to each lure used. To secure all the depths required (without hanging up) may call for a “countdown” with a sinking type lure. I’ll have to give the same thoughts to a “jump” type (jig, soft plastic, etc.) but in this case they are not as likely to hang up as much as the free-running lures with gang hooks (treble hooks, etc.). This style lure (jump type, for the slower speeds) would allow me to work the bushes more thoroughly. If I

rigged them weedless, I could put them right into and through the bushes. But as a structure fisherman, I’m not about to forget if the speed is too slow, I am likely to miss a lot of fish I could have caught if I had kept my speed control fast.

When working a situation such as this on the cast, my fishing gear (rod, line, etc.) should be strong enough to put some fish in the boat. This is no place for (me) being “sporty” with light gear.

QUESTION 5—“Name two spots or

two conditions where you would expect to find the fish IF THE WHOLE LAKE WAS LIKE THIS.”

Here again, we must go back to the “Structure Situations” the fish will use in their movements and migrations. We can NEVER get away from these—if we desire to catch fish consistently, wherever or whenever we might find ourselves.

To name two would require very little thought. **(A)** Where a side feeder stream cut or wash enters the brush-lined channel. **(B)** Where the brush-lined channel makes a bend or more rapid turn (deeper water, sharper breaks, etc.). Can you think of another one? How about a “hump”?)

The purpose of **Figure 5** is to see if you are one of those who only work the visible stick-ups. AND—are you one of those fishermen who does not know such a situation exists? How long would you “check out” this visible bush (tree)? How many lure styles (or types) would you use to try to catch (or create) a fish around this bush? After working the “stick-up” would you check the deeper water? Where would you position the boat to work the bush in deep water? What type lure would you use?

(Do you expect a situation such as this to exist very often?)

Good fishing. 



**KING ANNOUNCES
ITS LATEST UNFAIR ADVANTAGE
OVER FISH.
THE MODEL 1350.**

The Model 1350 is the finest, full-function 6-inch microprocessor based recorder money can buy. And fortunately for you, it doesn't take much money at all.

Compare these features to the best of the competition, and you'll see there's little comparison.

Highly discriminating, 4-tone gray chart (including printed depth and setting readouts). Liquid Crystal Display digital readout. Sonar “ping” depth, keel and anchor drag alarms. Bottom lock. Loran interface with King 8001.

Although small in size, the 1350 is big on performance. The unit is scaled to record depths up to 3000 feet, 500 fathoms, or 1000 meters.

When interfaced with the King Loran 8001, it prints your position in TD or Lat/Long, giving you a printed history of your trip for reference. (Any good recorder will help you find fish, but the 1350 helps you go back for seconds).

The 1350 Recorder from King.

Our latest unfair advantage over fish. At a price that is more than fair for every fisherman.

The Model 1350.

The ultimate recorder.

**KING MARINE®
SOUND US OUT.**

5320 140th Avenue North, Dept. FF,
Airport Industrial Park
Clearwater, Florida 33520
Telephone (813) 530-3411

Specifications subject to change without notice.