

Knowledge Is The Key To Fishing Success

by BUCK PERRY

Part III

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

BOW — Excess line, in the form of a curve, which occurs between the rod tip and lure.

BREAK IN STRUCTURE — Where structure is no longer uniform due to dips, or a quick drop in depth; rocks, stumps, etc.

BREAKLINE — A line on structure where there is a definite increase in depth, either sudden or gradual; weedline, brushline; edge of channels or holes; where two bodies of water meet which differ in temperature and/or color.

BRUSHLINE — The deep-water edge of a line of brush.

CHECKED — When an area has been thoroughly fished correctly.

CLEAN BOTTOM — Bottoms free of debris, muck, moss, etc.

COLD FRONT — A weather condition. (Description and position obtainable from daily weather maps and reports.)

CONTACT POINT — The position on structure where contact is first made by fish on their migration from deep water.

CONTROLS — Factors to be considered and used for successful fishing.

CONTROL — To present lures in an orderly and correct manner.

DEEP WATER — Water that has a depth greater than eight to ten feet.

DIRTY BOTTOM — Bottoms covered with debris, muck, moss, etc.

DROP-OFF — The place on structure where there is a sudden or rapid drop into the deepest water, such as a hole or channel.

ELIMINATED WATER — Water that has been fished correctly and has produced no action.

FAN CAST — A series of casts that covers the water in an arc.

FREE SWIMMING LURE — A lure moving or swimming through open water.

GAME FISH — Any fish considered worthy of pursuit, either for its pugnacious disposition or for its flesh.

HARD BOTTOM — Bottoms with a firm condition, usually associated



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with sand, clay, rocks, gravel, etc.

HOME — The deep water areas where fish spend most of their time.

HOT-SPOT — An area where fish are caught consistently when fish are said to be 'biting'.

JUMP LURE — Normally, weighted lures used for bottom work, whose speed and action is obtained by rod or reel movement in the form of a jump or jerk.

MIGRATION — Movement of fish from one section of water to another. Normally used when speaking of a depth change.

MIGRATION ROUTE — The path fish take as they move from deep water to shallow water, or vice versa.

MOVEMENT — Closely associated with migration, but also meaning when fish become active (opposite of dormant).

OPEN WATER — Water free from vegetation growth, and away from shoreline.

POINT — An extrusion in the shoreline that extends into and under the water.

SANCTUARY — The section of wa-

ter, in the home area, where fish spend most of their time.

SCATTERPOINT — The depth, on the bottom, where fish start to separate and scatter and are no longer grouped together.

SCHOOL OF FISH — A number of fish that are grouped close together.

SCHOOLING — A school of fish feeding on the surface, visibly tearing up the water.

SHALLOW WATER — Water less than eight to ten feet in depth.

SIZE OF LURE — Normally, the length in inches rather than by weight.

SOFT BOTTOM — Bottoms covered with soft silt, mud, muck, marl, etc.

SPOOKED — Fish which have become alerted or have become scared. Their reaction is to drop into deeper water or to become very inactive.

STRAGGLERS — An occasional fish, which is usually found apart from the others. (Yearlings are often in this category.)

STRUCTURE — The bottom of the lake extending from shallow water to deep water, with some unusual features that distinguish it from the surrounding bottom area.

TRAFFIC — The amount of fishing pressure, or water skiers, large boats and motors, and fast boats in a given area.

WALKING OR BUMPING — A lure moving along the bottom and actually coming into contact with it in this manner.

WATER COLOR — The degree of clarity.

WEEDLINE — The deep-water edge of a line of weeds.

YEARLINGS — One to three year old fish.

In my discussion of the most 'common structure' found in reservoirs, it seems I struck a responsive chord among the readers as the questions have come in galore. I feel these were all worthy questions, and require some sort of response. Since

there are too many to answer individually, perhaps the most appropriate thing to do would be to select a couple which are representative of the greater portion, and answer them in this article rather than continuing with the previously planned discussion on Reservoirs.

This first one chosen asked . . . "Would you cover more fully how to cast a bar, a long bar, and especially one that has weeds on it?"

To fully cover a longer structure (bar) by casting, the boat should be moved to several positions as shown in Drawing No. 1 Position one (1) would allow the fisherman, by fan

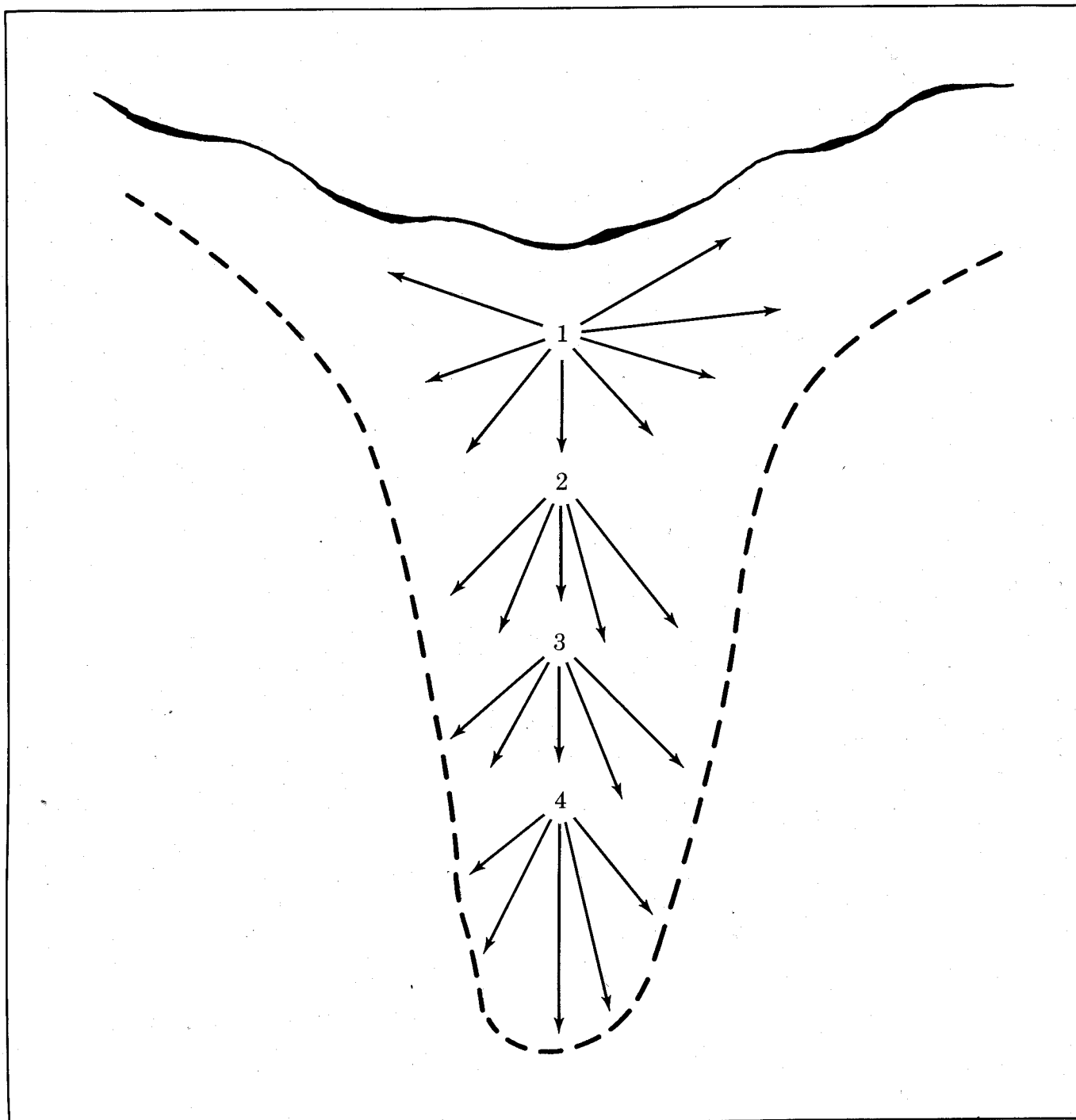
casting, to cover all of the shallow section within reach. From this position, he can check any weedline that might be present, and as the casts swing around toward the deep section, the lure would be allowed to sink to the bottom before the retrieve was started. After this section has been worked, the boat would move to position two (2) which would be about where the cast reached from the previous position. The same procedure would be followed as in the number one (1) position.

Continue to move the boat and follow the same casting procedure until the last position is reached. The last

position would put the fisherman within reach of the breakline, and preferably the "drop-off".

It might be well to bring in at this point that, in most all cases, a breakline (drop-off) at the end of the structure (bar) will occur at a shallower depth than the deep water sanctuary or home of the fish. In other words, the fish will drop off into a hole or channel before he stops. There are only some isolated instances where the lake would be of the type that the deep water sanctuary would be found on the structure.

It is not likely that the sanctuary will ever be found directly off the



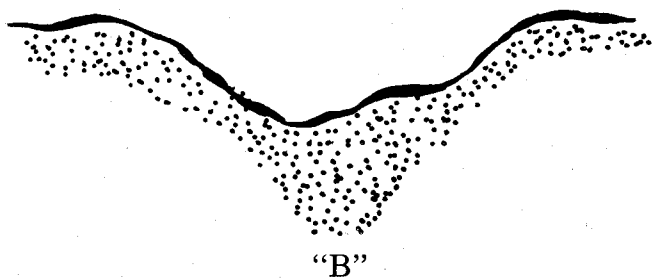


FIGURE 1

"A"

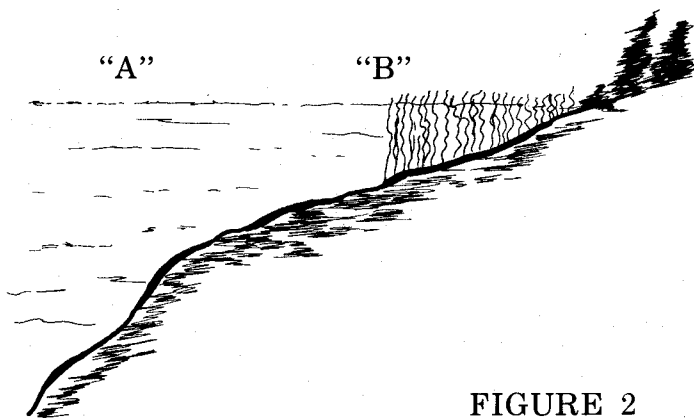


FIGURE 2

end of a bar. It could be to the right, or to the left, or so far out that it would be impossible to reach from any position on the structure. This is one of the reasons the fisherman is directed to exercise patience for the fish to move up and into range. However, when bass are found at a breakline or a drop-off and the action stops after a few fish, it is wise to immediately go deeper off the breakline. In many instances, additional fish can be had. This would, also, hold true on "suspended" fish such as walleyes, northern, etc., found off a breakline. The depth of the suspended fish is normally the same as the breakline, but the action and commotion of catching fish may cause them to drop deeper; so a deeper running lure would be used immediately when the action slows or stops.

Lures used for presentation on a structure such as this should allow depth and speed to be controlled in all areas. In the deeper sections, use a walking and a "jump-type" lure such as a jig. If live or dead bait is used the procedure would be the same, with the exception that on the

retrieve the bait should be moved a short distance and stopped, moved and stopped, until the total retrieve is made.

WEEDY STRUCTURE

Figure No. 1 shows a top-view of a bar that contains a weedline. Figure No. 2 is a cross-section of the same area. Each figure shows two locations for positioning the boat for casting. "A" represents the boat fairly far out on structure, while "B" represents the boat anchored near the weedline (shallows).

If the boat is anchored at position "A" to check out the shallows along the edge of the weedline, it would mean that a cast could cover only a small portion of the weedline, as the retrieve would immediately pull the lure away, and the balance of the retrieve would most likely be wasted effort. Position "A" would create quite a problem working different depths correctly along a tall weedline, and it would practically be impossible to work the deeper water of the structure. It would be possible to dangle a jump-type lure over the

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side of the boat and have some results; but overall, position "A" would not be the choice location.

If the boat is placed in position "B", casts can be made adjacent to the weedline, and as the retrieve is made, the lure is *in position* the total length of the retrieve. From this position, different size lures can be used to thoroughly check the different depth all along the weedline; and when casts are made toward the deeper sections of the structure, this position will allow all sections, all "breaks" and breaklines to be worked.

When the location of a productive structure is known and the cast fails to produce, it is most likely due to the incorrect placement of the boat. This is especially true when fish are caught on a troll but not on a cast.

Figure No. 3 shows a similar situation. The structure is quite large with a weedline that is long and crooked. The weedline bends in and out with "fingers".

Most fishermen would place their boat in position "A", out from the weedline, and make casts in toward

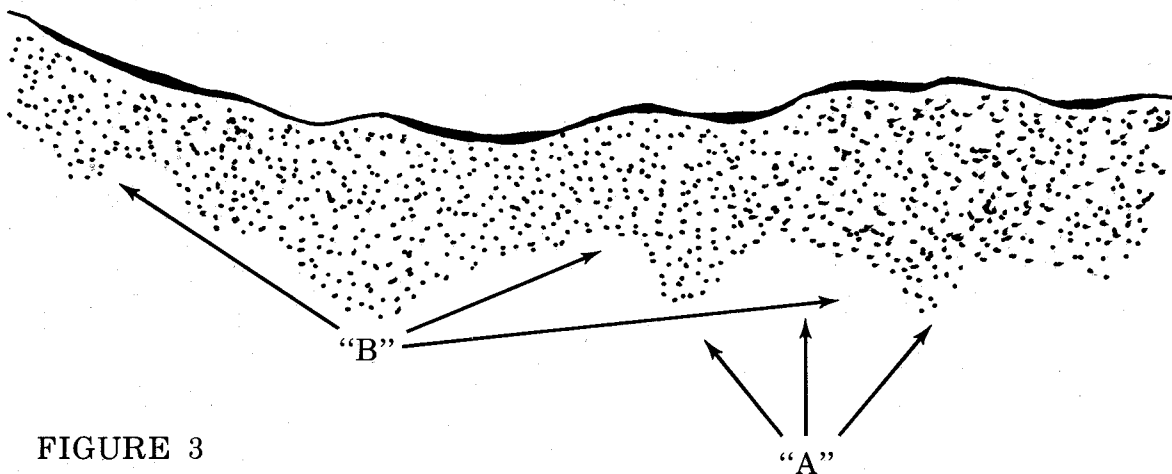


FIGURE 3

shore. The "expert" casters would have you believe that the lure must check every little crook, hole, and turn along the entire weedline. But unless the weedline was completely visible, very few casts would cover the water correctly from this position.

Position "B" would be the preferred location, for the simple reason that the area could be checked more easily and effectively. The exact weedline could be established, and casting would require no special skill since only the tips of the 'fingers' would be worked to establish if any fish are along the weedline. If no fish are found on the tips, it is not likely that any would be found in the pockets.

When casting any portion of a body of water, the fisherman is often not aware of the importance of speed control, and will not vary his retrieve speed to find the one most effective.

Often overlooked and not taken into consideration is just how MANY fish can be caught out of a school, once it is found. So when considering speed control, we are talking about the thing that makes a fish take, and also what will determine just how many fish in the school can be taken.

Let us work a structure that we know is potentially productive. We first check the shallow water with a free swimming lure. We start with a normal retrieve speed. By the third cast we have increased our retrieve slightly and bang — a good fish takes. The next cast produces another fish.

This indicates that a movement has occurred, and it is at this time that speed control comes into its own. It is at this point that speed is increased still further, and continues to increase until retrieve speed is about as fast as the reel can work. Without an increase in retrieve speed, it is not likely many of the school would be caught.

Let us suppose that we did not begin our casts with a free running lure, but instead started fishing with a jump-type lure, such as a jig or worm. The first cast produces a fish; the second cast produces a fish, but subsequent casts draw a blank.

An experienced fisherman would increase his speed as much as possible. Knowing that in most cases this type of lure will not allow enough speed control, he would immediately switch to a free swimming lure and really wind her up.

In checking the deeper water and bottoms, as stated previously, there are two main types of lures used: (1) sinking, bottom-walking, (2) jump-type.

At this point it may be in order to explain why we call these types of lures (jigs, spoons, weighted worms, etc.) jump-type lures. It is done for the simple reason that these lures should be jumped or moved a short distance, then allowed to return to the bottom. You will note that we did not say "dragged" a short distance and allowed to come to a stop. Neither did we say that the retrieve should be slow and steady with the lure sliding along the bottom; these lures should be jumped.

Better speed control can be used with a walking lure than with a jump-type. This is especially true after the water temperature warms up. However, at certain temperatures and certain weather conditions, when fish are rather deep and inactive and non-chasing, the jump-type lure has effective speed control.

Let's assume that on our first cast to the deep section of the structure, we connect with a good fish on a walking lure. The next cast produces another fish from the same spot. This is an indication that a school of fish has moved up on structure. It is at this time that we increase our walking speed.

The increased speed will be the controlling factor in how many fish are taken before the school is lost. This includes not only the speed before the fish took, but also AFTER the fish took. A hooked fish shouldn't be messed around with — get him out of the school fast, and keep him coming. These fish must be kept in a frenzy or competitive spirit, and speed control during the total time of the action must not be lost. There is usually only a very short time to make "hay" and the speed control will determine just how much hay we make. (This is the time it's good to have a "fishing buddy" along to help the cause)

In a casting situation such as this, some fail to allow the lure to sink all the way to the bottom before starting the retrieve. The lure must sink or the cast is lost. Watch the line, it will tell you when the lure is on the bottom.

After the action stops, the deep structure should be checked with a

jump-type lure before leaving the area. The fish may have become "spooked" or the majority dropped back into deep water. If a jump-type lure is used in this instance it may produce another fish or two. He may not chase a fast walking lure, but may strike a jump-type, if it's put right in his face.

Now let us assume that in working the deep part of the structure, we did not start with a walking lure, but instead started with a jump-type. We make our cast and let the lure sink to the bottom; take up the slack line; and then with a short twitch of the rod tip make the lure jump a short distance. We let the lure settle back and continue to twitch and jump it until the full retrieve is made. In order to increase speed with this lure, we would move the rod faster and give a longer twitch or jump before allowing it to settle back. It might be necessary to increase the lure weight to speed up this action.

Maximum speed control on a jump-type lure would be when the water warms, or fish have moved up and contact is made. This can be accomplished by placing the rod tip next to the water and finishing up the movement with the tip over the head. This long, fast pull will move the lure rapidly for four or five feet. Here again, we may have to switch lures to obtain the desired speed, when contact is made.

One of the great faults of the average worm fisherman is that he does not strike the fish soon enough. This will hold true with most any type jump lure. It would be great if we could become aware of the exact moment a fish takes the lure, but with slack line and the amount of line in the water, this is rather difficult. But, if the fisherman keeps his slack line to a minimum and keeps his eyes on the line to see any unusual movement, he can strike the fish before the lure is spit out.

Some have the idea they must let fish run with the lure before striking. Nothing could be further from the truth. Fish "inhale" a lure so fast the movement can hardly be followed with the eye. He can exhale just about as fast. If fish move off with the lure, then in some way is he unable to get rid of it, and unless he is solidly hooked, the fisherman is taking a chance of losing a fish. In other words, the strike is made the in-

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stant there is an indication a fish has taken it. By waiting, the odds for getting him on the stringer are slim.

Whether casting into the shallows or toward deep water, regardless of what type lure is being used, speed control must be kept in mind. Not only from the standpoint of making fish strike, but after contact is made, he will be able to catch MORE fish. After all, catching fish is the name of the game, so why reduce chances by refusing to observe the advantages of speed control while casting?

The second question selected asked . . . "How can a fisherman know which finger the fish will come

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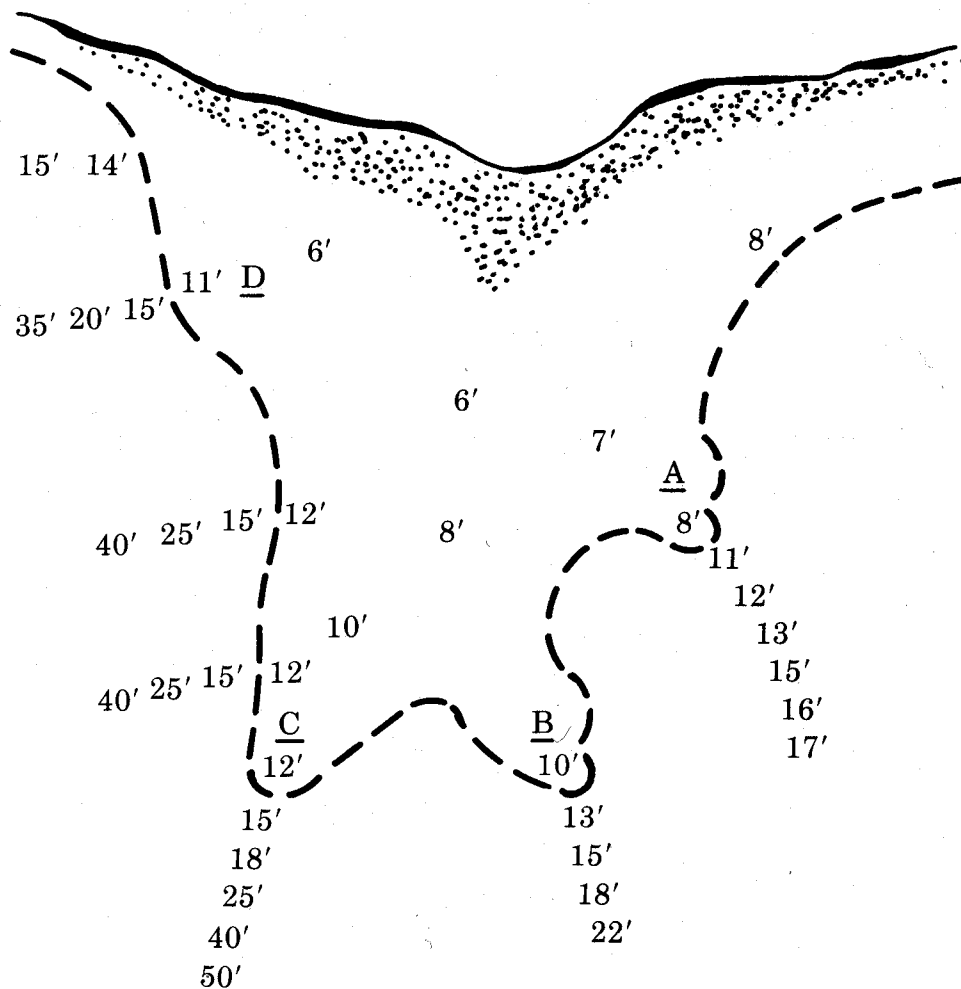
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up on? He might not have ever fished the structure before or has never found fish on a particular finger."

In trying to clear up the second question to determine which "finger" might be best on a particular structure, we must venture into the ability to interpret structure. Since many of you may not be prepared at this stage to grasp a full interpretation, perhaps the best answer at this time would be to interpret a sample structure by using statements from the first article in this series.

The article noted that when fish move or migrate, they come from the



deepest water in the area; that the structure they use **MUST** extend all the way to deep water; and that they must be able to see their intended route immediately upon moving from deep water. In the context of these statements, let's look at a sample structure.

The sketch shown is a top view of an underwater structure or bar. Note the depths carefully, and the breakline as shown. This breakline represents the area on structure where fish are most likely to be found as they first make contact with the structure. Just **WHERE**, on this breakline, is what the fisherman should be able to determine.

Finger "A" has a three foot break. The bottom off this finger is rather

flat as you can note a long sloping bottom. It appears to be too far from deep water for the fish to use it. They will not travel over long flat areas to reach a breakline. The breakline on this finger is rather shallow (8 ft.) for good migration.

Finger "B" is closer to deep water. It has a three foot break, but the break is deeper (10 ft.). The bottom is rather flat, but somewhat better than finger "A".

Finger "C" has a three foot break, and it occurs at a greater depth (12 ft.) than either "A" or "B". The bottom drops off more rapidly into deep water.

Finger "D" is not well defined. In observing the total, left side of the structure, it appears that the break-

line is the "drop-off". Since there is no "break" shown on the breakline, it is not very likely that fish would make contact with this side of the bar.

With the information available, Finger "C" would be the logical choice, and most likely the contact point would be at the very tip of the finger, since no "break" is shown other than that of the breakline.

In observing a structure such as this, it should be noted that if a good "break" was placed on the breakline on the left side of the bar (the 12 ft. area), the fish would make contact at this point instead of the end of finger "C". By placing additional "breaks", the fish could be led to most any desired position.