

Knowledge Is The Key To Fishing Success

by BUCK PERRY

Part VII



Man-made lakes, or reservoirs, come in all sizes and shapes. They exist in all parts of the country. Each differing from the other in terrain, weather and water conditions.

Some have one predominant fish, while others have several species. Some reservoirs are quite shallow, while others are deep. Some are full of brush or weeds, while others are clean. Some are clear, while others have dingy or muddy water. Some are long and narrow, while others are spread over huge areas.

To discuss all of the different aspects of the many reservoirs found throughout the country could take up a great deal of time and space — but at this particular stage, it is sufficient to say that very few of these reservoirs will present the exact identical problems at any one given time.

HOWEVER, there are two things that each have in common, and these are FISH and STRUCTURE.

Fish, with their innate instincts for survival, do not differ in the north, south, east or west. Their behavior does not vary in reservoirs from that in natural lakes. Fish are fish, regardless of their geographical location, and regardless of the body of water in which they are found.

Structure, and the way fish use and adapt to it, does not change in climate nor in residence; and herein lies the secret whereby a fisherman can expand his fishing horizons and be able to feel "at home" on any reservoir, located in any part of the

Buck Perry has spent the last thirty years of his life making catches like this from lakes that many other people consider to be "fished out". When they see his catches, they run out to buy his lures, expecting lightning to strike and fill their boats with fish. Buck keeps telling them there never was and never will be such a thing as a "magic lure" . . . that it takes KNOWLEDGE to put fish on the stringer, and that lures are only TOOLS with which to do the job. Many do not get "the message" . . . be sure that you are one of those who do!



Field Editor Vic Saunders on the left and Terry O'Malley on the right, holding you know what. Vic has been letting his work interfere with his job, or something, of late . . . because he hasn't sent us an article for a number of months. When he finds the time to resume his writings again, however, you'll find he possesses a great wealth of fish knowledge . . . the magic ingredient that brings fish like these to your boat.

Do you see the gravel bars just up ahead? Where do they go and what do they mean? How about that tree laying in the water on the right? Yes, the picture on the preceding pages is a beautiful scene, but if you possess fish knowledge, it will be much, much more than just a pretty picture to you.

Terry O'Malley is not only one of Buck Perry's top assistants, he is also a husky young man . . . but he's straining to hold up these fish! How many of you would consider ANY ONE of those fish as the catch of a lifetime? You will make many catches like these when you possess the fish knowledge of a Terry O'Malley!



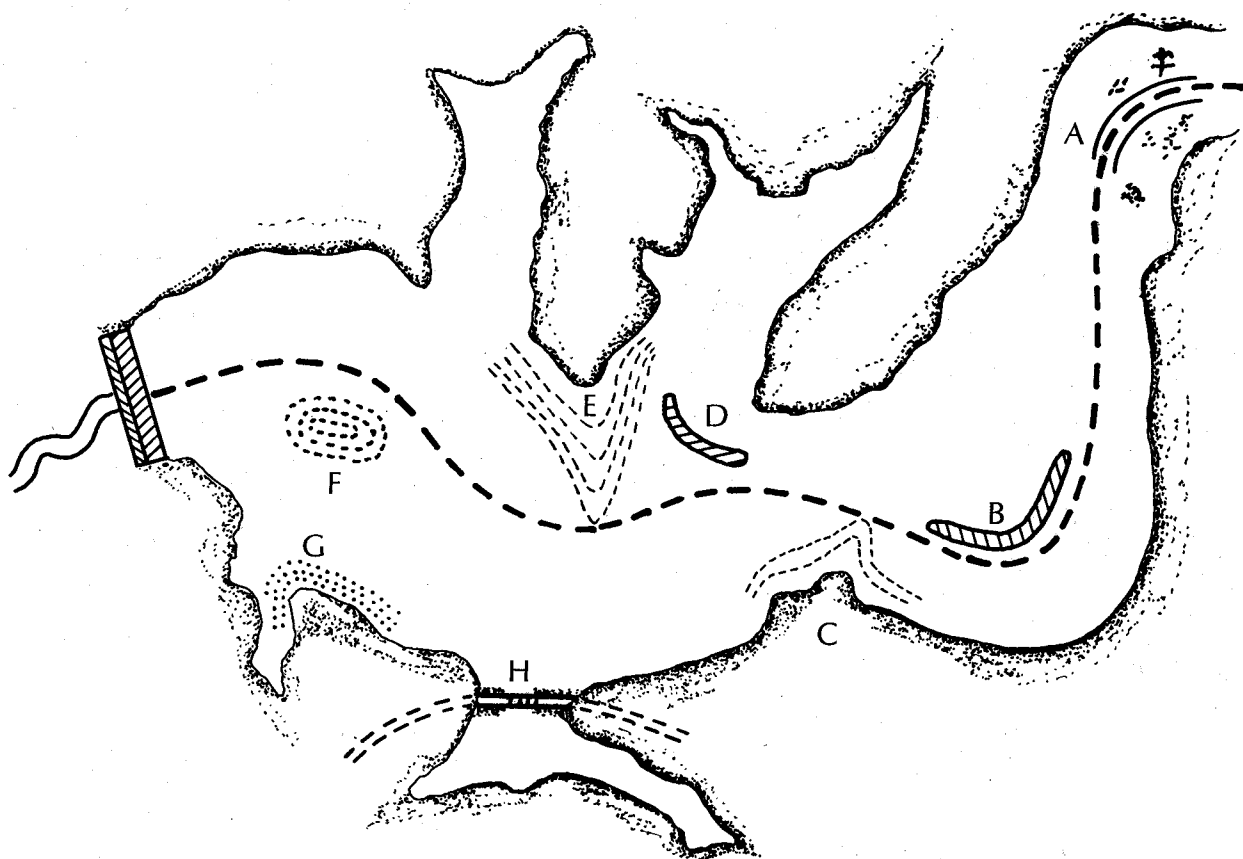


FIG. 1

country, with little care as to the shape or conditions that each might present.

We have established that the home of fish is deep water. Normally, this home is in water so deep that for most of the time fish cannot be found, and difficulty is encountered in presenting lures properly at these depths.

As fishermen, we are saved due to the fact that fish become active at times and move away from this home area toward the shallows. We are, again, saved by the fact that this movement toward the shallows is not done in a haphazard way.

The direction fish choose as they move toward the shallows is well defined and marked by 'signposts' which they are able to see and use. These areas we have defined as structure (and migration routes).

In the study of reservoirs, we need to establish the various types of structures found in most waters and which fish use for their location and movements.

In the drawing Fig. 1, typical structures which are found in reservoirs are shown. All of these areas have

characteristics that distinguish them from the surrounding areas.

A — The shallower sections of the channel or feeder stream; with shorter, flatter bars; with a breakline along the channel that can be reached; and bottom in the immediate area with stumps, rocks, bushes, etc., serving as breaks.

B — A 'delta' condition, or a ridge-like structure, along the old stream bank, which is normally found in the large, flatter areas of a lake.

C — Shorter bars which are rather steep and extend to the channel. The channel sweeps in rather close to shore.

D — Big sweeping bars off a point, with a ridgelike structure at the end, or a long breakline into deeper water. The breakline is straight with no extrusions that would definitely mark the area where fish move up on the structure.

E — Long structures that go some distance into the lake or reservoir. These could be a sand bar, a red clay ridge, or a reef.

F — Underwater islands, or as some refer to them, humps.

G — Steep shores, which are nor-

mally rocky ledges that drop off fast into deep water close to shore.

H — Man-made structures — such as old roadbeds, causeways, dams, etc.

Fish moving from the deep holes or channels on structures, such as those listed, often have additional *visible objects* on structure that serve to help lead them toward the shallower water. We will classify these objects into two categories — BREAKLINES and BREAKS.

BREAKLINES are the areas where there is a sudden increase in depth — such as the edge of a channel, the 'wall' of a weedline, edge of gullies, ledges, etc. Most bodies of water will have many breaklines. In some cases they are easy to see, while at times they are so small that only the best of fishermen can locate them.

We classify BREAKS as the other objects found on the bottom, such as rocks, eroded spots, humps, stumps, clean spots, weeds, bushes, sunken objects, etc.

Since the breaks and breaklines help serve as additional guidelines and signposts by which fish migrate,

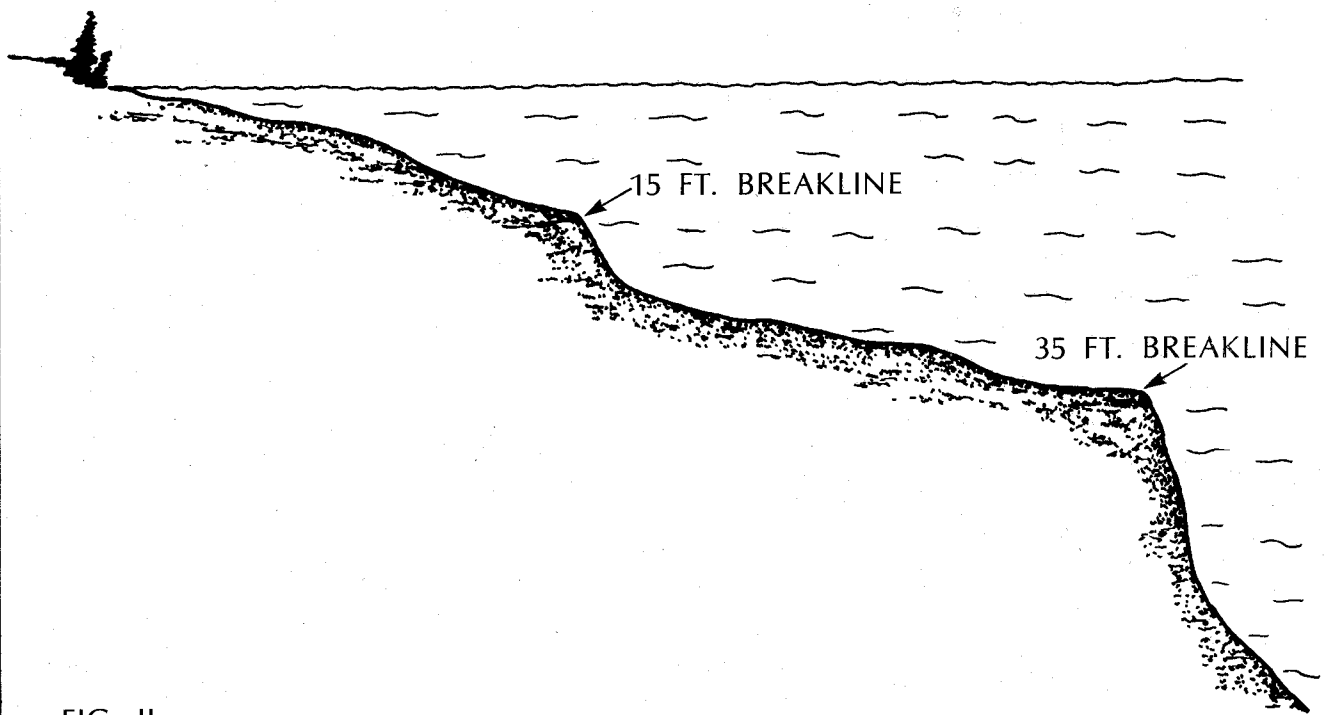


FIG. II

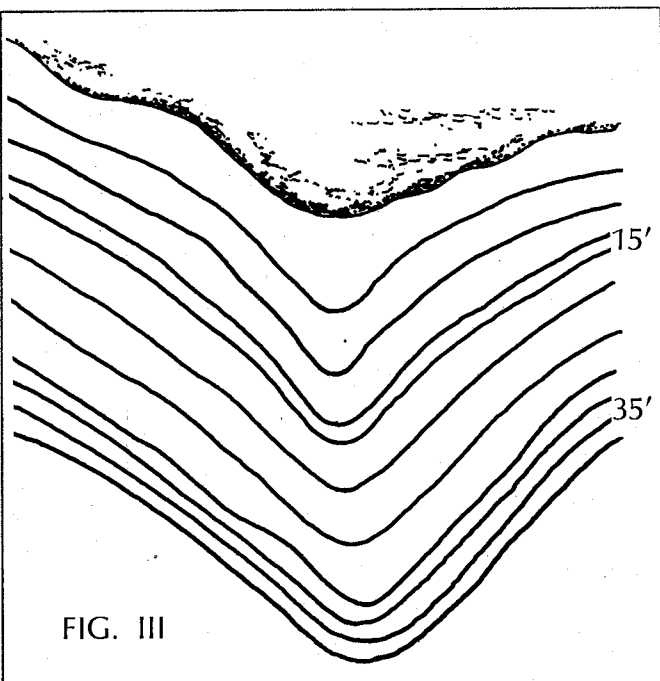


FIG. III

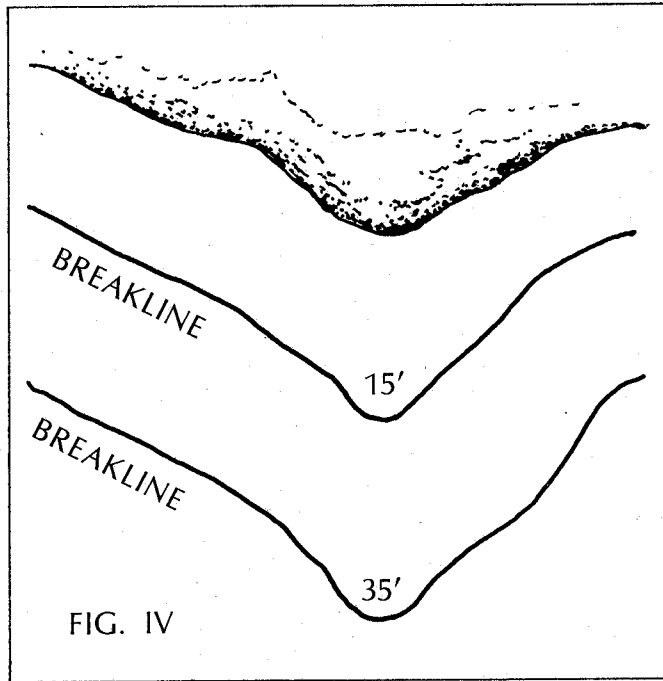


FIG. IV

they are the keys to where fish will be found! It is at these areas that fish pause, or stop, as they move on structure during migration. The weather and water conditions that exist at the time of movement (migration) will determine just how long the pause is, or at which break they finally stop, before turning around and heading back to the home area.

For this period of study, we will not concern ourselves with all of the

various types of structure which may be found, nor will we go into all of the different types of breaks and breaklines. But rather, we will show how to recognize a typical breakline; as one of this nature will be found on many structures, and it is important to fish movements as well as to our ability to interpret the structure.

Our study of a 'break' will not cover the more obvious ones such as a rock, hump, bush, or tree since

these are the most obvious types and are easily recognizable. But rather, in this particular study we will show a less obvious one, but an important one not only in relation to fish movements and our ability to interpret structure as well, and this is the 'break' which is closely related to a breakline.

As has been stressed before, in order for a structure to be good, it must have immediate access to deep

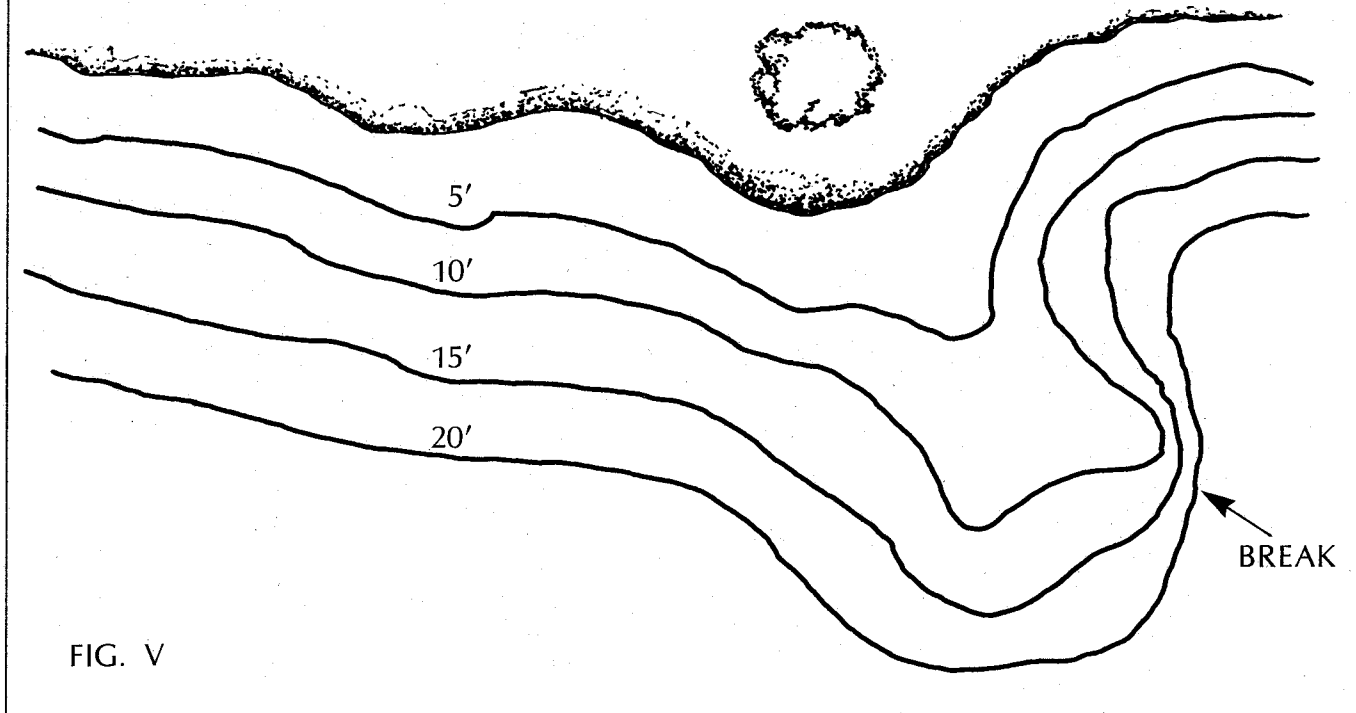


FIG. V

water. That is, it must extend to the deepest water in the area. It must immediately be seen by fish as *they begin migration*, or movement, toward shallower water. At the same time, it must provide fish an immediate access to deep water — their only escape route!

The most common structure found in a reservoir is a bar, a ridgelike formation that extends out from the shoreline, or shallows, and extends underwater to the deepest water in the area, such as a hole or channel.

The most typical, or common, breakline is the one found on structure in the form of a sudden change in depth. The change can be small, at times only a few feet, and at other times the change is quite pronounced. The key to determining a breakline is that in moving toward deep water the change in depth is more rapid than the slope of the structure or bar.

The Figures shown above are examples of typical structures and breaklines. Three views are shown of a structure off a point of land (a bar). Figure No. II shows a cross-section of this structure. On this view, we have pointed out two breaklines. A breakline is the proper description in this case as the area has a sudden change in depth.

In Figure No. III, we see the same structure from a top view with all of the 5 foot contour lines drawn in.

The fisherman would not necessarily be concerned with all of these depths at this time, but would instead be concerned only with the areas on structure where fish could be found. In this particular figure, with no additional 'breaks' present, the fish could be found at any breaklines that exist. You should note that two breaklines occur and they extend completely around the structure (or bar) — one occurring at the 15 foot depth and the other at the 35 foot level. The two breaklines are the areas on which efforts would be concentrated, since nothing of significance is found in the area other than these breaklines.

Figure No. II also shows that the 15 foot breakline has a rapid change in depth, but not necessarily a large increase in depth; while the 35 foot break is a sudden change in depth as well as a large increase in depth. This illustrates how some breaklines do not vary a great deal in depth while others have a great degree of change.

Figure No. IV is the fisherman's view of this particular structure. As stated, in this particular situation he should concern himself with the two breaklines and forget all of the other depths. Note that the 35 foot breakline is also the drop-off, and it would be at some place on this particular breakline that fish would first appear on their migration.

Many times the fisherman may have no trouble finding the breaklines, but may have trouble finding a 'break' when it is closely related to a breakline.

In Figure No. V, we have changed the contour lines slightly. They are no longer running all around the structure in a uniform manner, but, instead, they form a breakline at only one spot. This area (spot) could rightly be described as a breakline; but, in a situation such as this it would be referred to as a 'break', since there is not a continuous break along the whole area, but is the only sharp break on the contour. If the break extended for some distance, it would become a breakline rather than a break.

This break becomes quite significant now as this is the area on structure where the fisherman would concentrate his efforts. With the features shown, *this break would be the 'contact' point of the fish on this structure*. It added a factor which helped further to pinpoint the productive area.

You can see that having a thorough knowledge of structure and how fish move in relation to the existing conditions is important. How fish move on structure — how far they come and how long they stay — is affected by other factors, but breaks and breaklines play an important part in this movement. 🐟