

In last month's issue of *Fishing Facts* (Nov. '86) we reviewed several of our thoughts regarding weather and water conditions, and how they may influence a fisherman's success on the water. To recap briefly: many of you have heard me say, in one form or another, that weather and water conditions can mess up a day's fishing, a month's fishing and, at times, mess up a whole season.

Our fishing guideline states that where a fish starts from (depth), how far he moves toward the shallows and how long he stays (active or at certain depths) is dependent upon or controlled by the weather and water conditions at the time of the activity. All this boils down to is **our degree of fishing success will be determined by the conditions of weather and water.** However, I must be quick to add — **provided we know where to look for the fish under different weather and water conditions.**

Last month's discussion was a quick review of our guidelines for various weather and water. But now let's look at some questions and situations to see if our thoughts on this subject are fully understood. There may be some situations included where you may have to do some "reviewing" of the section on "Weather and Water" in the home study material. However, since this report is a review of our thoughts on the subject, I'll throw in some comments that may help the cause. I'm going to be quite repetitious in some areas — on purpose.

**QUESTION:** You are fishing a lake for the first time. You plan to spend the whole day casting your favorite lures to visible "breaks" such as weeds, stumps, bushes, rocks, all "stick-ups." Give some reason why this may not be a wise game plan.

**BUCK'S COMMENT'S:** The obvious reason for this not being a wise move is the fact a fish may not be caught all day. Most importantly, the fisherman will not know anymore about the lake at the end of the day than when he started.

Other thoughts:

1. The "stick-ups" may not be on or even near a structure situation the fish use in their movements and migrations.

2. The weather conditions may be such that no fish will move shallow enough to be near a visible weed, rock, bush, etc.

3. The water color may be so clear no fish will venture near a visible break.

4. If you were a true structure fisherman (Spoonplugger) you wouldn't be having such a screwball plan in the first place.

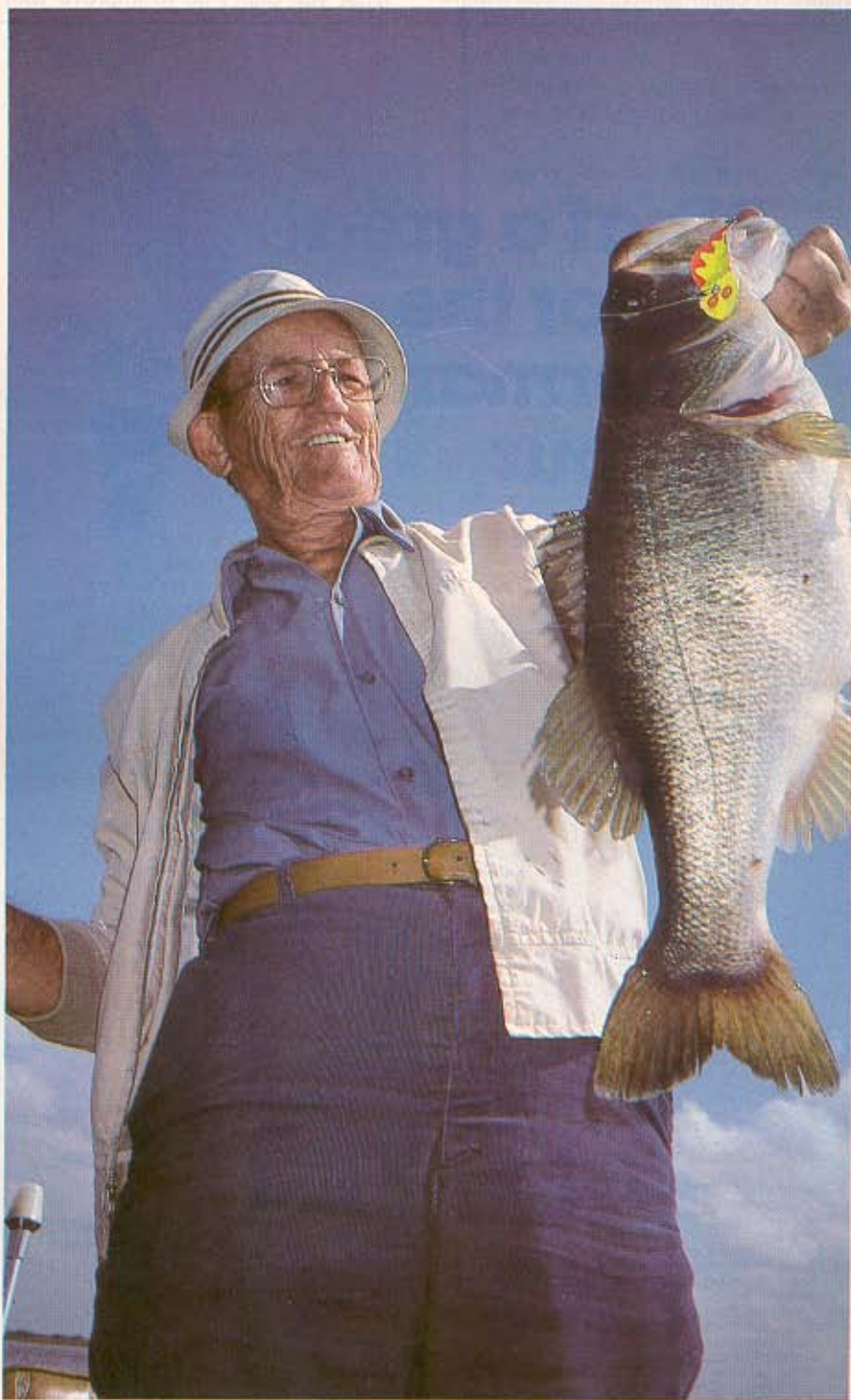
**QUESTION:** You have just bought an expensive temperature meter. You already own an instrument that measures the oxygen content of the water. You spend the major part of your day trying to find water with a perfect temperature and adequate oxygen content. (Most of the time one or the other was off.) But finally you find a section of water which the instruments

*continued*

# Weather & Water

## HOW THEY CAN AFFECT YOUR FISHING SUCCESS

by Buck Perry, Education Editor Part Two of Two



*Fishing Facts Education Editor Buck Perry with a lunker largemouth bass taken in deep water.*



# Weather & Water

say is perfect for catching fish.

You throw everything in your tackle box at the area, but no fish. What is wrong? What didn't you do to improve your chances for catching fish?

**BUCK'S COMMENT'S:** The features of the bottom are the guides as to where the fish will be found in a given area in a body of water.

To the structure fishermen (Spoonplugger) this means "structure situations" (structure, breaks, breaklines, deep water). To catch fish consistently when-

ever and wherever we might fish, we cannot use such things as water temperature, oxygen content, etc. as a guide to where the fish might be. The fish do not roam all over the lake seeking water with a certain temperature or oxygen content. A fish can adjust to changes in its environment and never know or give a thought as to whether it was good or bad.

As fishermen it would be nice if everything was "right" for the fish when we find them. They would probably be so active, even sloppy interpretation and lure presentation would still get some fish on the stringer.

What you didn't do to improve your

chances was throw a couple more things into the lake.

**QUESTION:** How do you look at water color?

**BUCK'S COMMENT'S:** Water color is put into five categories:

1. Clear
2. Yellow-green
3. White-sandy
4. Red-sandy
5. Brown-cypress

To understand a particular situation better, we have classified the above list in the order of "goodness" (most productive) when fishing. That is, water that gives the best movements of fish, greatest quantity and quality, and greater ease in the catching.

1. White-sandy (milky)
2. Red-sandy
3. Yellow-green
4. Brown-cypress
5. Clear

Please note the position of "clear" water.

**QUESTION:** A fisherman said: "I find I have better luck fishing clear waters where I can see the brush or weed beds to fish. This tells me your darker water theory is all wet."

(1) What do **Figures 1** and **2** represent to you? (2) Do you think the fisherman would be lost if he couldn't see any "stick-ups"? (3) How many casts do you think he has made to visible objects that never produced a fish?

**BUCK'S COMMENT'S:** The first thing the figures suggest to me is these side views are of a "structure situation" — a bottom feature the fish use in their movements and migration.

**1. Figure 1** suggests the water is clear and with the weather present the movement of the fish is to a breakline at 20 feet. **Figure 2** represents a more dingy water color and the fish have moved to a stump at 12 feet with THE SAME WEATHER CONDITION.

**2.** The fisherman would probably not know what "breaks" to fish if he couldn't see them. If he works only the visible stick-ups, sooner or later he will fish one located "on structure," and during a good weather and water condition. (A blind hog will come across an acorn occasionally.)

Wonder what he would do in a body of water where there were no brush or weed beds?

**3.** This would be anyone's guess but probably during most of his fishing career he's come off the lake with an empty stringer.

**QUESTION:** Both lakes in **Figure 3** have about the same depth, features and bottom conditions. The weeds go to the 5 to 6-foot depth in one and to 12 to 14 feet in the other. Which lake should be more productive? Why?

**BUCK'S COMMENT'S:** The best lake should be the one where the weeds go to the 5 or 6-foot depth. The water color has an effect on the weed growth. In the

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case of the lake with less weeds, the water color is probably a dark yellow-green. The other lake with the weeds to 12 to 14 feet is clear.

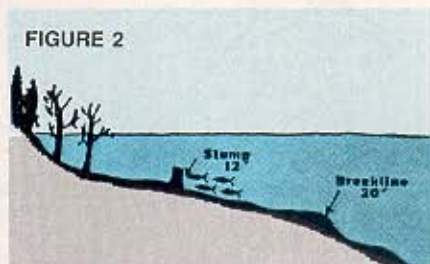
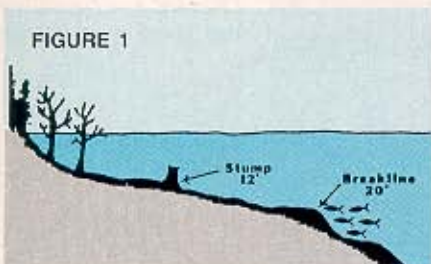
**QUESTION:** Figure 4 represents a typical weather map found in most newspapers. (1) Do you think it wise to check a weather map if you plan to go fishing in the next couple of days? (2) What are the fishing possibilities in Indiana for the next couple of days?

**BUCK'S COMMENT'S:** When you and I go fishing, the degree of success will depend upon the weather conditions present. This is not idle chatter, and our best

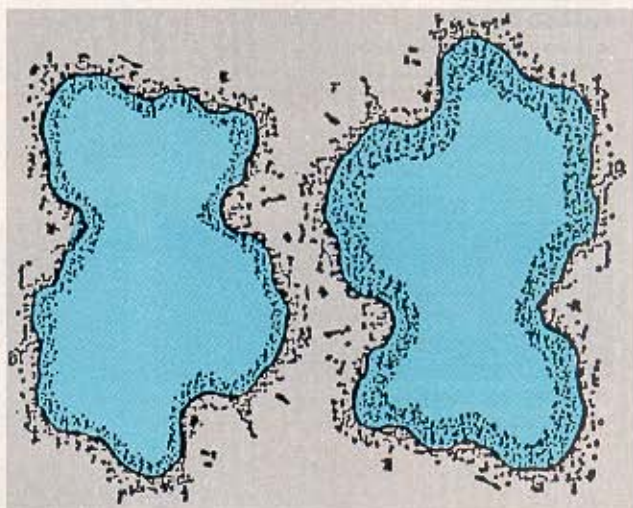
bet is to know what weather conditions are good, and those that are bad.

How active or how deep the fish might be is primarily controlled by the weather. Our "guideline" as to weather is built around the cold front. For most of the fishing season the period BEFORE a cold front can have the fish active and moving toward the shallows. (Cloud cover — darker conditions.) The period AFTER a cold front can have the fish deep and/or dormant (clear, bright skies). And this unfavorable period for the fisherman can hang around for days. In general, the

*continued*



**FIGURE 3 - Both lakes have about the same depth, features, and bottom conditions. The weeds go to about the 5-6 foot depth in one and to 12-14 feet in the other. Which lake should be more productive? Why? (Answer given in accompanying article.)**



Prevailing weather and water conditions can significantly influence a day's fishing, a month's fishing and, at times, a whole season's results.

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# Weather & Water

weather patterns in the United States move from west to east.

1. Being able to predict the type of weather likely to be present during a fishing trip is very important. It could be the trip should be delayed until things look better.

2. The weather map shows a cold front passing through Indiana. The next couple days the wind is likely to be high and the fish deep and inactive.

**QUESTION: Figures 5A and 5B** are side views of different fishing situations. **Figure 5A** is a clear, shallow, weed-infested lake. The "open" water is only slightly deeper than the depth under the weeds (12 feet). **Figure 5B** is a side view of a section in a lake which has depths greater than 25-30 feet in several spots. The reports say both lakes contain plenty of fish.

You plan to fish one of these lakes for two days (Friday and Saturday). The weather reports say a cold front will pass through no later than Thursday. Question: Which lake should you fish?

**BUCK'S COMMENT'S:** I'd ask myself a few questions such as: Which body of water is likely to have the best water color? In which body of water will I be able to get lures to the fish? Where am I likely to find more "stable" conditions? In which body of water are the fish likely to be active enough (to catch) on Friday or Saturday?

**QUESTION: Study Figures 6A and 6B.** (1) If the water were clear, how much time would you spend fishing a situation as shown in **Figure 6A**? (2) If you were fishing such a situation (6A) in the headwaters of a flatland reservoir, what should you do if no fish are caught? (3) If **6B** represents a side view of a nice ridgelike bar, what would you do if this bar was potentially good and it was the second or third day after a bad cold front?

**BUCK'S COMMENT'S:** 1. This would depend upon there being no "drop-off" available that occurred deeper. If this was all that was available, then the season, weather and water conditions would determine how much time would be spent.

More fishing time would be spent working the situation in the colder part of the season than in the warmer. More time would be spent if the weather was dark, rather than light.

More time would be spent in the warmer weather early and late in the day than would be spent in the middle of the day. 2. This situation indicates there exists in the lake a deeper "drop-off." If no fish are caught in a situation such as **Figure 6A** (8-foot drop-off) it means the weather and water conditions present prevent a movement of fish this shallow. This means the fisherman must move down the lake where the drop-off is deeper.

3. Anchor the boat and keep casting the drop-off until a fish (or group of fish) appeared.

**QUESTION: Figures 7A and 7B** are side views of portions of a lake. There exists a school of fish in each area. (1) Where would you place the fish if the weather and water conditions weren't good?

**BUCK'S COMMENT'S:** The question does not say whether to place the fish at a "sanctuary" depth (before movement) or place them someplace on the route to the shallows. We'll assume the water color is the same.

1. If we are talking about the sanctuary depths during a "not good" weather and water condition, then in the first figure (25-foot depth) we would place them in or very near the deepest water.

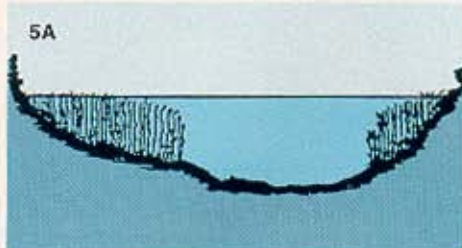
In the second figure (7B) we would place them someplace between the 30 and 60-foot depth. If the weather was extremely unfavorable for fishing (after a bad cold front) and the water was clear, then we could place them at or near the 60-foot depth.

If we are talking about placing them AFTER movement, then under a "not

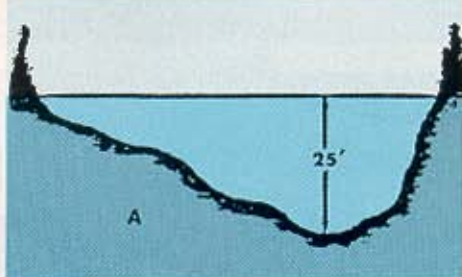
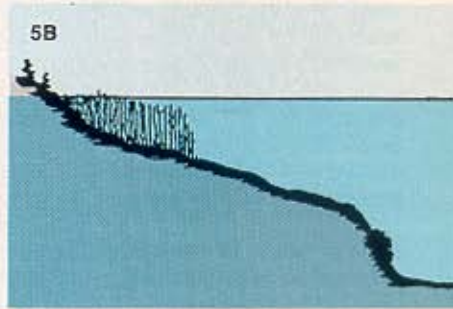


**FIGURE 4** - Typical weather map found in newspapers.

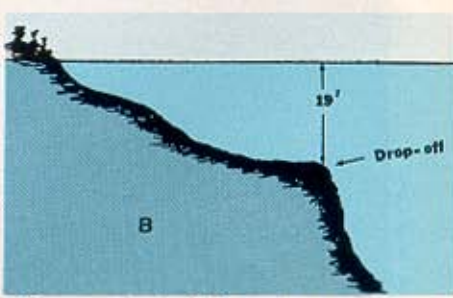
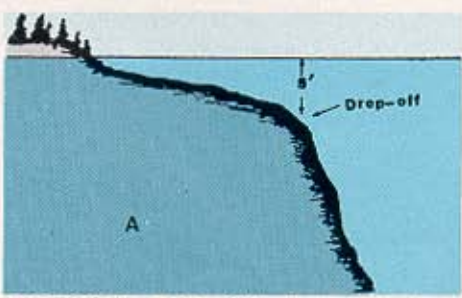
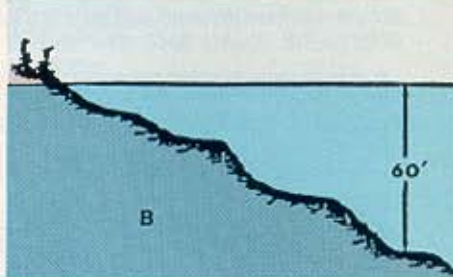
**FIGURE 5B** - Side view of a section in a lake which has depths greater than 25-30 feet in several spots. Both lakes have plenty of fish. Weather reports say a cold front will pass through the area a day or two before you intend to fish one of these lakes. Which lake should you choose?



**FIGURE 5A** - Side view of a clear, shallow, weed-infested lake.



**FIGURE 6A & 6B** - If the water was clear, how much time would you spend fishing a situation as shown in **Figure 6A**? (Answer given in article.)



**FIGURE 7A & 7B** - Side views of portions of a lake. A school of fish exists in each area. Where would you place the fish if the weather and water conditions weren't good?



good" condition the fish in the first figure (25 feet) could be placed near 20 feet. The same could be done for the second figure (60 feet).

The question still remains, what does "not good" really mean? Our best bet is to not say where the fish will be at any time, **but understand that the fish may not come to us, so we have to go to them.**

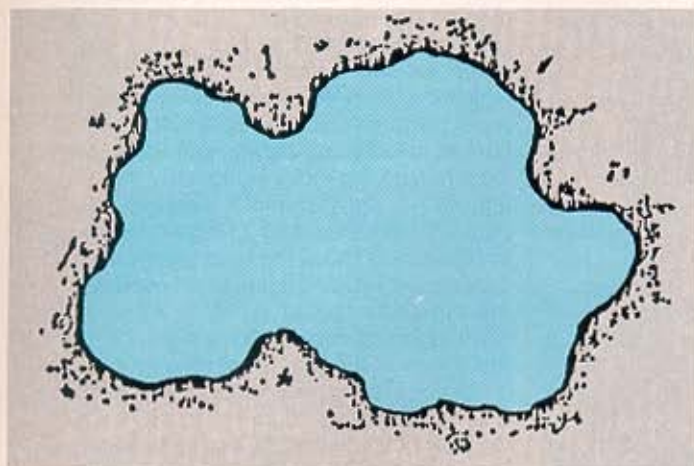
The fish in the lake with the 60-foot water (Figure 7B) have a more stable condition sooner, become more active sooner, and more catchable sooner; that

is, if you know where and how to go down after them.

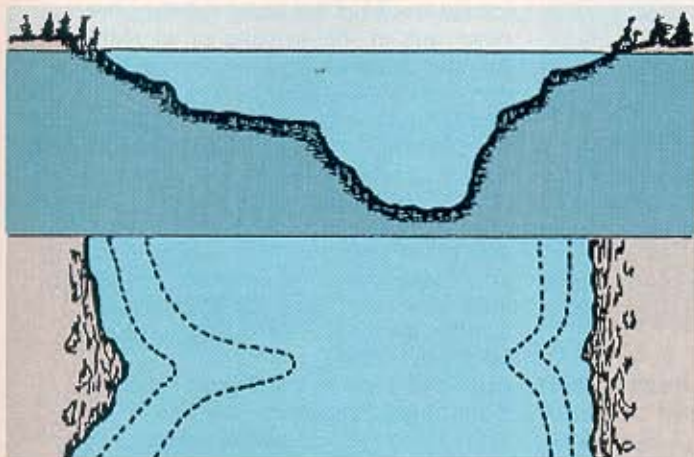
**QUESTION: Figure 8** is a side view of a "bar" that has features on the bottom at certain depths. (1) How many places would you expect to find fish? (2) How deep would you fish on an average fishing day? (3) Would the fish ever be deeper than the "drop-off"?

**BUCK'S COMMENT'S: 1.** There are five places where the fish could be found at some time or other. They are pointed out in the figure. Which one they stopped at

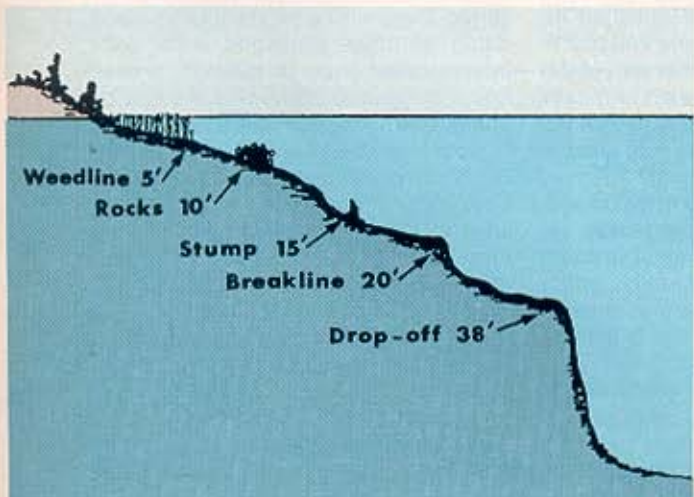
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**FIGURE 8** - This view of an underwater "bar" has features on the bottom at certain depths. How many places would you expect to find fish? (Try to answer question; then refer to article for answer.)



**FIGURE 9** - Side view and top view of the same lake area. From a seasonal point of view, where would you expect to find the fish - (a) colder season? (b) warmer season?



**FIGURE 10** - You have heard the best time to fish this lake is early in the morning or late in the evening. You fish it for three hours early and three hours late, but catch no fish. Someone else fishes it the same way you did for three hours in the middle of the day and made a fine catch. Did the time of year have a bearing on the results?

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FISHING FACTS / 39



# Weather & Water

(before turning back) on migration towards the shallows **would depend upon the weather and water conditions at the time of the movement.**

2. I would keep checking the deeper breaks until I found the fish or had worked the drop-off (last breakline). I would have no guidelines below this point, so it would be better to wait at the deepest recognizable spot where the fish would be on movement to or on the structure.

3. Under bad cold front conditions and clear water, the structure fisherman would expect the fish to be deeper than the drop-off.

**QUESTION:** You have recently moved to an area where access is had to quite a few "natural" (glacial) lakes. You have been informed that all the lakes have good fish populations. You desire to do your fishing where you have the best chance to catch a fish. What would you

consider to be the two most important things to look for in the lake?

**BUCK'S COMMENT'S:** Some may think access to the lake is important. (I agree.) Some would think the amount of traffic would be important. (This, too, I agree.) I'm sure some fisherman would desire a good weed cover. (I pass.) The two most important things to look for are: (1) water color and (2) some deep water.

Think about this.

**QUESTION:** Figure 9 is a side view and a top view of the same area. From a seasonal point of view, where would you expect to find the fish — (a) colder season? (b) warmer season?

**BUCK'S COMMENT'S:** Here again we are concerned with a seasonal change in weather and water conditions.

The structure fisherman's guideline as to the most productive "structure" (from a seasonal point of view) is: the movement of fish to the shallows will be by a shorter route in the colder part, and a longer route in the warmer. That is, short

fishermen this would mean days of less cold and less stormy, cloudy, changing weather conditions. It would be little different than the areas with frequent cold fronts talked about earlier — longer periods of "nice" stable weather would get fish moving.

**QUESTION:** You have heard the best time to fish the lake shown in Figure 10 is early in the morning or late in the evening. You fish it for three hours early and three hours late, but catch no fish. Someone else fished it in the same way you did for three hours in the middle of the day and made a fine catch.

Do you think the time of year had a bearing on the results?

**BUCK'S COMMENT'S:** First off, it appears we are concerned here with a weather and water condition from a seasonal point of view. One Spoonplugger's (structure fisherman's) "guideline" says if the fish do not move in the early morning, do not leave the lake between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. Another "guideline" says in the colder part of the season (late fall, winter, early spring) the fisherman should expect one movement of fish to occur, and to expect it in the middle of the day. In the warmer part of the season (summer) he should expect two movements to occur if there is no weather or water change during the day. One of the movements (active periods) should occur in the early morning, the other one in the evening or at night. Another guideline says the change from one movement to two occurs after the spawning period. The switch from two back to one occurs after the first heavy frost. If you keep these guidelines in mind you may not spend too much time when and where you shouldn't.

**QUESTION:** If you and I were going to fish in a "lake chain" (Figure 11), do you think we should "get married" to just one lake in the chain without looking the others over carefully?

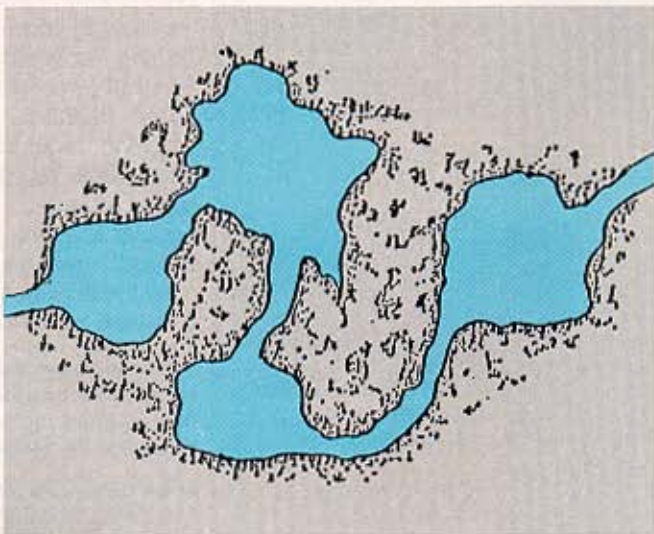
**BUCK'S COMMENT'S:** Before considering fishing just one lake in a lake chain, some things should be considered.

All lakes in a lake chain will not be the same. There will be differences in shape, depth, structure situations, water color, interpretation (easy or difficult), presentation of lures (easy or difficult) and the amount of catchable fish.

Most lake chains will have a lake that has a lot of good features while others will have mostly those that are bad. Where lake chains exist, they are likely to contain a species of fish that has a seasonal migration from one lake to another. This should also be considered before "getting married" to just one lake in the chain.

Before choosing a lake to fish, a good fisherman will check all of them for the best features and conditions. He'll check contour maps (if available), talk to locals and, when possible, drive around each and have a look. All of them could be checked "on the water."

**FIGURE 11** — If you were to fish in a "lake chain," should you concentrate your efforts in just one lake in the chain without looking the others over carefully? (See Buck Perry's comments in accompanying article.)



structure in colder, longer structure in warmer.

In certain limited areas a question is raised at times by fishermen who fish all seasons of the year. The question involves "light" considerations and movements of the fish in the colder part of the season (winter). The question is mostly — "What cloud cover is likely to give the best movements during the cold season (late fall, winter, early spring)?"

There are several things to be considered here during this colder period: (1) The sun has moved south and the direct rays penetrating the water are no longer the same as during the warmer season. (2) Fish are more dormant due to temperature (cold-blooded animals). (3) Cold fronts are more frequent. (4) Unstable water conditions due to changes in temperature.

Due to these factors it would appear the best movements would occur during the "better" weather conditions. To most



Jeri Perry (right) and Gertie Kramme display a good catch of bass made while fishing with husbands, Buck Perry and Herb Kramme.