

It's Where You Cast That Counts

by Buck Perry • Education Editor



During the early season, casting can often be more effective than trolling.

no angler should ever make a statement about fishing until his findings have been checked thoroughly. The potential and novice fisherman should be told how things are, not how they appear to be, or are desired to be.

Much has been said by people whose "fishing world" is fairly limited. The average fisherman derives his experiences from his immediate surroundings. He unconsciously feels the world more or less rotates around his area or activities. He might even get to the point that he believes his observations on his fishing experience are universal. In most cases, however, he has not been able to experience just how big this country, or the world, is. What conditions exist beyond his own circle are largely unknown.

Fishing conditions, waters, weather and people vary tremendously. What is considered "fact" in one place may be laughed at in another. What a fisherman says is the best procedure for fishing in one area might be considered insane in another.

The *Spoonplugging Home Study Course* was written from observations made over many years of fishing experience. The most important part of these experiences was the fact that they were not limited in scope. They involved waters and species of fish found from one end of this country to the other. Every possible type of water and weather condition was tested. Many fish were taken, with each playing its part in arriving at a final conclusion or fact.

A tremendous amount of effort and study

went into being sure no localized situation would confuse or harm fishermen in other areas. The only way this could be done was to stick to facts about fish, weather, water, lure types and how they should be used. All types of lure presentations, both casting and trolling, were called for. However, in some waters not all were possible or advisable. In some areas, certain presentations were not possible or permitted by law. In other places, certain types of lures could not possibly be used due to conditions of the waters.

Fishing independence is a very satisfying thing to have. We believe those of you who have achieved it will agree.

Casting Can be Difficult

During the early prespawn and spawning season, casting can often be more effective and more thorough than trolling. The fish are moving toward the shallows, and in many waters this movement is toward areas not well suited for effective trolling.

When the statement is made that "correct casting can be difficult," most fishermen react by saying they are very good casters. They have spent hours practicing, and can drop it in a bucket at 50 feet.

As a rule, we do not put great emphasis on casting accuracy, distance or the elimination of backlashes. At times, we point out that if distance is not good, or accuracy is bad, or if "birdnests" are a constant bother, the fisherman should practice and probably stiffen up his casting rod.

We are not interested in just how good a fisherman can throw the lure out. It makes no difference if he grabs his line and swings it around his head and slings it out. If he gets a backlash once in a while — so what? What we are interested in is DEPTH and SPEED control. The different depths must be checked to locate the fish, then the correct speed must be used to make it strike.

In the selection of lures to cast, the fisherman must remember that two sections of the water must be worked. That is, the SHALLOWS and the DEEP.

Checking the extreme shallows is not too difficult for the average fisherman. Normally he will have good surface lures, and it is a natural thing for him to cast them toward the shallow water, placing them beside weeds, pads, stumps, etc. His depth control is quite right. But where the average fisherman fails in checking the shallows with surface lures is that he does not check his speed. It is a simple matter to try different speeds on the retrieve. At times it could be a small twitch, with a long delay between twitches. At other times, a



Education Editor Buck Perry lands a hard-fighting largemouth bass.

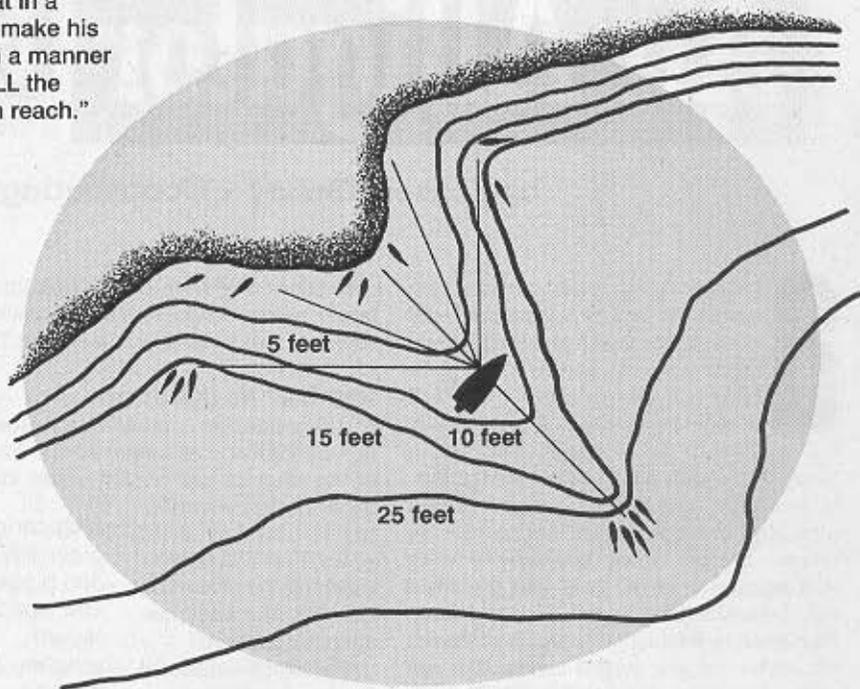
"The fisherman should place his boat in a position and make his casts in such a manner as to work ALL the depths within reach."

steady retrieve with the lure skipping across the top of the water is best.

The same holds true when checking the extreme shallows with weedless lures - his depth control is quite in order, but here again the average fisherman does not check the speed. At times he may find a very slow lure, lazily wiggling through the weeds, productive. Often the retrieve may be so slow as to let the lure stop and sink a little in the clear holes that may exist among the grass, weeds and pads. As the water temperature goes up, he may find the most effective retrieve is to hold his rod tip high, get the weedless lure on top of the water and retrieve so fast that the lure skips and jumps across the surface.

It appears that most trouble occurs in casting the shallows when using a free-swimming lure.

The shallows can be defined as that water that goes down to a depth of 8 to 10 feet. In this depth range, we must assume fish can be caught in all sections. That is, on the surface, the bottom and in all the water in between. When fish are in this zone, they will take a lure in any section. Therefore, the fisherman must be sure he covers all the depths. Most fishermen have free-running lures in their tackle boxes that will check all the depths in the shallows. Most never accomplish this, however. Many will place their boat a distance from the shoreline, make the cast toward the shoreline and use a constant retrieve, hour after hour, with a lure that is checking only a fraction of the depths. The fisherman should place his boat in a position and make his casts in such a manner as to work ALL the depths within reach. Most of the time, all the shallow water in a particular area can be checked by placing the boat near the shore and making the casts parallel to the shoreline, with subsequent casts farther away from shore ("fan-casting"). This lure presentation includes the bottoms, and if the free-running lures do not reach bottom, a switch to a sinking lure should be made so that the bottoms can be checked.



Deep Water

The greatest difficulty the average fisherman runs into is when he is casting **deep water**.

First of all, most fishermen do not know where to make the cast in deep water. When checking deep water, the fisherman no longer can pick out just any section and go to work on it. When casting to deep water, his cast must be concentrated in particular areas. These small areas are scarce when compared to the shallow waters. When casting the shallows, a fisherman may check the complete shoreline, but when he goes to deep water he may have only one relatively small area in the whole lake, possibly covering only a few square yards.

Let us assume the reader knows what a deep-water structure is. As an example, it could be a narrow bar that runs out from a point in the shoreline. It gradually increases in depth away from shore, and at a depth of 17 feet it suddenly "drops off" into a channel or deep hole. Let us also assume the fisherman knows that the fish use this bar as a migration route toward the shallows.

In working the deeper sections, the fisherman would normally anchor his boat on the crown of the bar and try to anchor in water less than 8 feet deep. If the boat has to be anchored in water deeper than 8 feet (to reach the drop-off), the caster must exercise

caution that his lures are working correctly. The fisherman should "fan-cast" the structure so that all sections are covered.

When casting into deep water, it must be remembered that the depth control is definite; the lures must be sunk and worked on and/or as close to the bottom as possible.

If the bottom proves impossible to work, the fisherman should forget this particular structure and find a structure that can be worked effectively. In some cases, he may have to change to another body of water.

Speed control in this deep zone may not be as critical as in the shallow zone. Still, the fisherman must check his speed. He will also find that more practice will be needed to present the lures correctly in deep water than in shallow water. This zone should be thoroughly checked with both "bottom-walking" lures (steady retrieve) and "jump-type" lures, with speed checks on each type.

In summary, the caster should at all times use lures and positions that will enable him to cover the area being fished at all depths and vary his retrieve speed to find the most effective one. If a fisherman casts a particular section, and does not check his depth and speed, he has not fished the area, regardless of how "expert" he might be in casting distance and accuracy. 