

The teachings and discoveries of Buck Perry started our modern era of fishing. He is forever Enshrined in the National Freshwater Fishing Hall of Fame and one of Larry Colombo's "Living Legends of American Sportfishing." Our Education Editor and my friend.

George

BY BUCK PERRY, EDUCATION EDITOR

Fishermen will often say, "What do you mean by fishing correctly? Why do certain lures work better than others? Why do I have to change my tactics if the weather is hot or cold? What do weeds, grass, brush, or trees have to do with my success? What difference does it make whether I am fishing in a natural lake or an artificial reservoir? What difference does it make if I am fishing in a highland, lowland or a flatland reservoir? Why are breaks and breaklines important? Why should I find *all* the good structure in a lake? Why should I pay attention to the seasonal movements of fish? What difference does it make whether I fish clear water or darker water? Why pay any attention to the weather conditions? What does the boat and motor size have to do with it? Why bother with the movements of the fish? Why should I learn mapping and interpretation? What does my mental attitude have to do with my catching a fish? Why should I use both live bait and artificial lures?" Etc., etc., etc.

**ARE YOU
FISHING
IN THE**

There is one standard answer to questions of this nature: IN ORDER FOR YOU AND ME TO CATCH A FISH, WE MUST BE AT THE RIGHT PLACE AT THE RIGHT TIME, FISHING IN THE RIGHT MANNER. If any of these things are "off" we will not catch a fish. Period!

There are many reasons why a fisherman is *not* at the right place at the right time, *continued*

RIGHT PLACE AT THE RIGHT TIME?

Education Editor Buck Perry, with one of the thousands of trophy-size bass he has caught over the years, describes why it takes more than luck to become a successful angler.

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fishing in the right manner. Each of the previously asked questions may be a major cause. To cover all the reasons, or to even attempt to explain in full the questions asked, would be an impossibility in an article or, for that matter, in a basic book.

Let's look at some fishing situations that will, in part, apply to some of the questions asked earlier. These will not answer all the questions, nor will they answer all the "why's," but they should give some food for thought.

Figure 1 is a top view of a portion of a lowland reservoir (man-made lake). The lake has a lot of "delta" conditions (channel, humps, flats). The figure shows a fishing situation I experienced not long ago. It is located at the junction of a side feeder stream (cove) channel, and the main river channel (of the lake). Note the channels, humps, breaklines, and especially all the depths.

The time of this situation was shortly after the spawning period (post-spawn). The weather had been hot and dry, and the water level had dropped approximately four feet since the pre-spawn and spawning season. The water color was good and slightly on the white-sandy side.

At the entrance to the cove (left-hand side) there exists a short "bar" with a predominant "stick-up." The "stick-up" at the present water level is located in water about two feet deep. The bar itself is clean, ridge-like, and has a gentle slope with the "drop-off" occurring

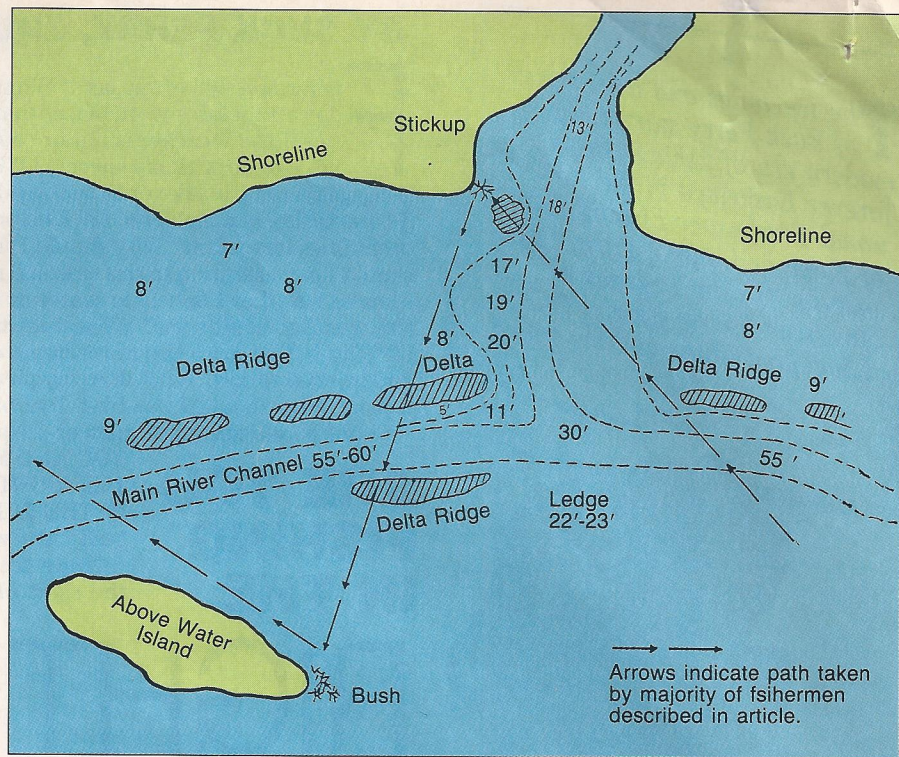


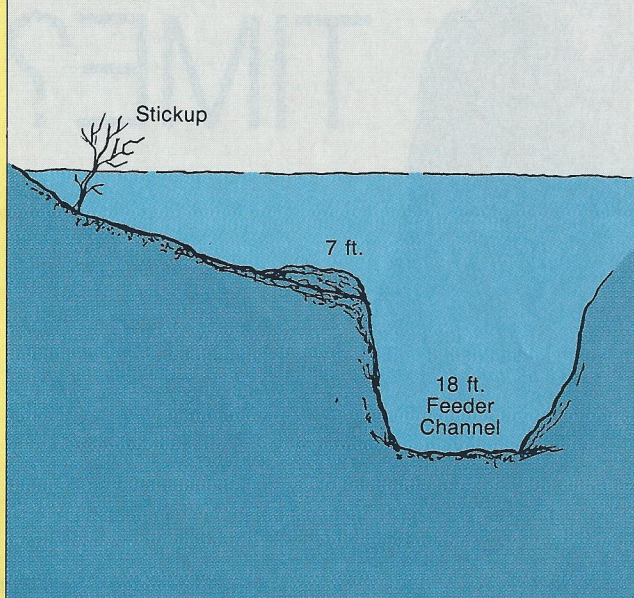
FIGURE 1 - Top view of a portion of a lowland reservoir (man-made lake). The lake contains numerous "delta" conditions (channels, humps, flats). Note all the features shown in the drawing, and especially all the depths. Author Buck Perry anchored his boat at the position marked "X" (as described in article).

at 7 feet. Be sure to keep the drop-off depth in mind, as it is a very important factor in answering the questions.

Note there are two breaklines to consider in the situation. The shallower breakline breaks at 7 feet on the end of the bar. As it moves toward the hump

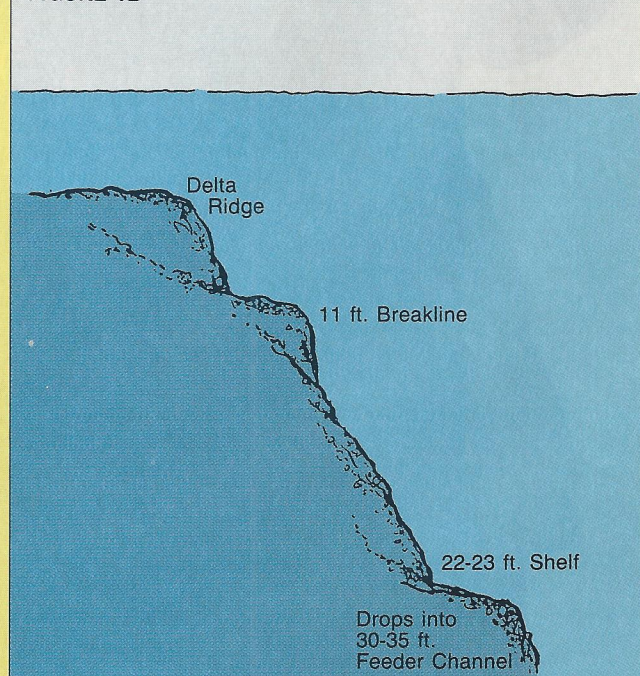
and the main channel, it gets slightly deeper. At the hump (or ridge) it is down to eleven feet. The second breakline is into the feeder stream channel. The feeder channel is approximately 18 feet deep at the bar, and 30 feet deep before it breaks into the main channel.

FIGURE 1A



FIGURES 1A & 1B - Side views of the areas shown in Figure 1. Note the stickup near shore in Figure 1A. This is the type spot where many weekend fishermen cast their lures.

FIGURE 1B



The lower (deeper) breakline starts out at 17 feet near the 7-foot bar, but by the time it gets to the ridge (hump) it is breaking at 23 feet. Note the depths. There exists a small "shelf" or "ledge" just before the lower breakline (drop-off). The slight ledge is 22-23 feet deep. See **Figures 1, 1A and 1B.**

At the time of the situation I was anchored on the hump in about five feet of water (position "X" in **Figure 1**). The spot is from 275 to 300 feet from the entrance to the cove. Earlier I had fished the shallows briefly, but had spent most of the time looking for such a spot. I did not expect the fish to be in the shallows, and I would have to pick my deep-water spot very carefully.

I knew what to expect at this particular time (3-4 weeks after spawning), and it didn't include a good movement of many fish. It (the movement) would be deep, short, scattered, and unpredictable. My lure presentation would have to be "right on the money." By observing the terrain, and with the aid of a depth sounder, the above spot was found without too much trouble.

To complete the setting: about one-quarter mile away, across the main channel, was an island covered with trees (note area in **Figure 1**). On one end there was a bush sticking out of the water. (Later it was found to be in water about 3 feet deep). Farther up the lake, around a bend, was some other object, but I couldn't see it from my anchored position. Later it proved to be a fallen tree on a shallow bar at the entrance to another cove.

I had first tried a fast, bottom-walking lure (checking speed) but, as expected, had slowed down to a jump-type lure — in this case a flat, flashy spoon. I was making each cast so as to work the breakline and the ledge at 22-23 feet. The movement of fish to this position was very spotty — again as expected.

Only one or two fish moved to the spot at a time, and these were spaced at intervals. At one time it was 20 to 30

minutes before another fish showed. A couple of times two fish were caught on consecutive casts, but most were singles and scattered over a period of time. Rather slow pickings!

I sat there for several hours before I had enough fish to call it a day. During this time, big, fast fishing boats would skid in close to the bar at the entrance to the cove. After making several casts to the "stick-up," they would crank up and roar across the lake to the bush at the end of the island. After a couple minutes I would hear (and see) them

take off back across the lake to something around the bend. While I was there, thirteen big, fast boats (with two fishermen riding in each) would zoom into the bar and cast the stick-up with plastic worms. Then each would take off for the same bush at the island, then later scoot to the thing behind the bend. The lines and arrows in **Figure 1** show the path that they ALL took.

Figure 2 is a side view of a productive "bar" with a tall weedline. The weeds come to the drop-off. The fish move to the drop-off (breakline). The fisherman moves to the edge of the weedline (breakline). The two (fish and fisherman) come together (make contact).

Figure 2A shows the same structure, the same fish, and the same fisherman. In this case (**Figure 2A**), due to water color change or to a weed-control program, the weedline has receded. The fish are still using the structure and breakline as they have always done. The fisherman is still doing what he has always done. The problem is the two don't get together again.

Figures 3 and 3A are side views of a fishing situation where the water is covered (choked) with floating plant life (hyacinths, etc.). The floating vegetation has become so bad it is necessary

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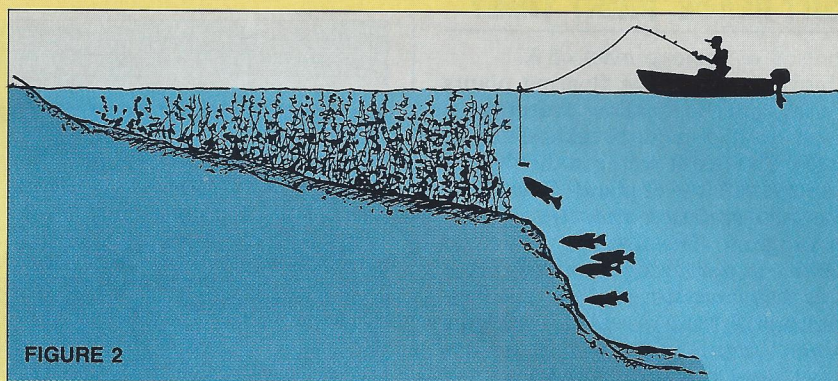


FIGURE 2

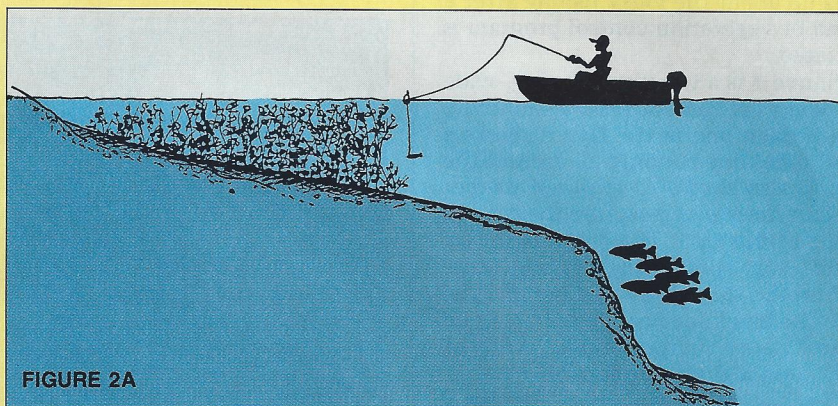


FIGURE 2A

FIGURE 2 – Side view of a productive underwater bar with a tall weedline.

The weeds come all the way to the drop-off.

FIGURE 2A – The same structure shown in Figure 2, but due to a water color change or weed-control program the weedline has receded. Does it make a difference to the fish? You bet!

FOR THE ADVANCED STUDENT OF STRUCTURE FISHING

Each month *Fishing Facts* is introduced to new readers. For many of them the words "structure" and "structure fishing" will be totally new. For these new readers we continually try to emphasize the basic concepts of structure, fish habits, instincts, etc.

However, in this article, Buck Perry addresses fishermen who have already studied their "BASICS" and are ready to move on to additional knowledge. To gain the most benefit from the article, it is important that the student have a clear understanding of the terminology and nomenclature involved.

If you are a new reader, we urge you to "catch up" or achieve a better understanding

of Buck Perry's articles by studying a copy of his great book, "Spoonplugging, Your Guide To Lunker Catches." This book contains all the basic facts of fish movements, basic structures, basic weather and water conditions, basic presentation of lures, and much more. The book was 25 years in the making, a quarter century of fishing knowledge put down on paper for the first time so fishermen everywhere could share in better fishing. The book sells for \$9.95, plus a shipping/handling charge of \$2.70 and is available with an unconditional money-back guarantee from our Northwoods Trading Post, P.O. Box 609, Menomonee Falls, WI 53051.

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to poison or remove most of it.

Figure 3 shows the floating plants covering all the shallow water in a stream out to a major breakline on the bottom. The faster water in the deeper channel is still free of plants. **Figure 3A** is the same situation after the eradication program. The fish are using the breakline as a stopping or pausing place just as they have always done. The fisherman is still doing his thing — with his “shiner” (minnow) — just as he has always done. It is little wonder a howl goes up about the lousy fishing after a weed or vegetation control program is initiated.

Figure 4 is a top view of a big, wide bar and a section out from a shoreline. The broken line in the figure shows a good breakline running all around the bar. It also shows a couple of deeper contour lines to help picture the general shape of the area. The depth is shown at different spots along the breakline, and on the flat, clean area beyond the bar. The breakline has several “contact points” — a “sharper break,” “end of bar,” and a finger projection.

The bar itself has fine “breaks.” There is a bush just outside the sharper break. There is an excellent weed bed close to the end of the bar, and many rocks leading up to a pier on the finger.

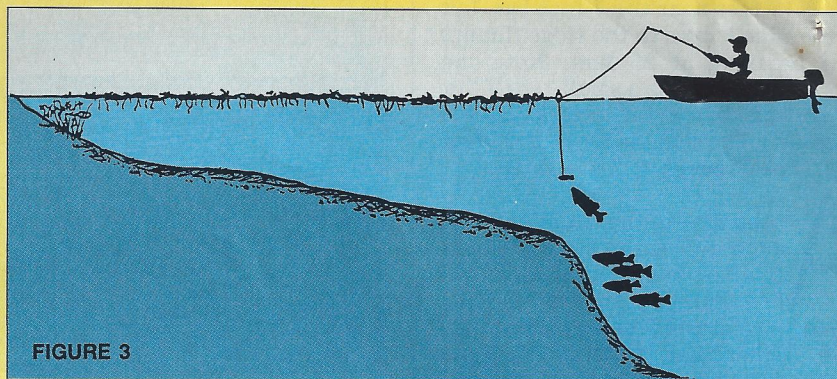


FIGURE 3

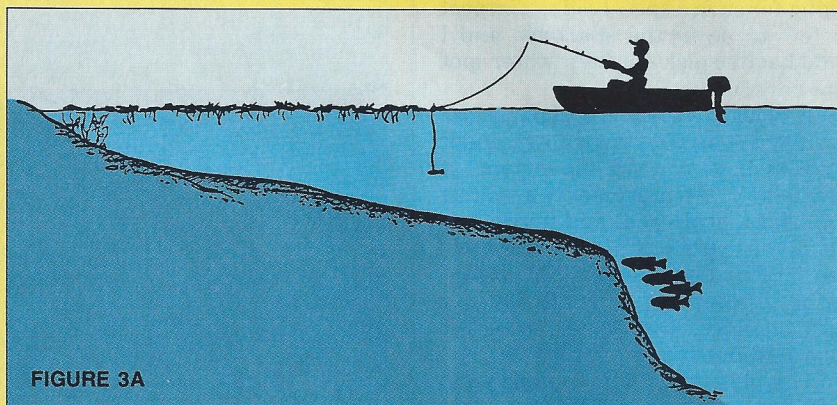


FIGURE 3A

FIGURES 3 & 3A — Side views of a fishing situation where the water is covered or choked with floating plant life (hyacinths, etc.) Note the position of the fish as the plant life recedes toward shore (Figure 3A).

NEW BERKLEY HOT ROD

You don't have to be a tournament champion to appreciate how important casting distance is to your fishing success. As a rule, the man who consistently casts farther will catch more fish. It's that simple. And increased casting distance was a priority in the design of an all new Berkley rod series . . . the HOT ROD.

EXPAND YOUR STRIKE ZONE.

Some manufacturers have tried to modify existing rods to increase casting distance, but with little success. So Berkley engineers

started from scratch by designing a lightweight, high content graphite rod shaft and combining it with the strength and resiliency of a solid polymer speed tip. This *bi-modulus construction* results in a rod that loads easily and offers extraordinary casting range with lures as light as 1/8 ounce.

MORE MUSCLE FOR FIGHT CONTROL.

Getting your lure to the fish is important, but that's only half the battle. When the strike comes and you

LURE WEIGHT / RANGE COMPARISON

WEIGHT (OZ.)

5/8

3/8

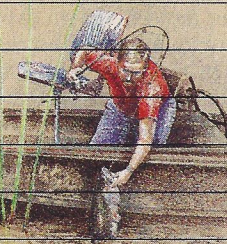
1/2

1/4

1/8

HOT ROD

CONVENTIONAL RODS



set the hook you need a rod that has the backbone to control the fight. The unique bi-modulus blank construction of HOT ROD utilizes an inner-laminated graphite/glass design featuring continuous graphite fibers.

The Hot Rod lure is manufactured by, and Hot Rod is a Reg. TM of the Les Davis Co.

There is also a sizeable "hump" not too far away from the bar. One area has about every good feature a fisherman could ask for. Even the water color is a yellow-green.

The weather is good for the fishermen and they are out in force. One is fishing a plastic worm at the bush. Another is working the weed bed with weedless lures. Two fishermen are anchored on the hump, one with a "shiner" (minnow) out, the other casting shallow free-running lures in every direction. There is one guy lounging on the pier using a nightcrawler. The questions are: WHO IS IN THE BEST SPOT, OR WHO IS AT THE RIGHT PLACE AT THE RIGHT TIME, FISHING IN THE RIGHT MANNER? Look at **Figure 4** very carefully, noting all features shown.

If you interpreted the situation correctly, you should come to the conclusion that NONE OF THEM ARE. It sticks out like a sore thumb that none of the features of the bar, nor any of the fishermen are related to DEEP WATER. The nice clean flat cuts off all movements of the fish toward this particular bar. You can't catch fish where they "ain't." The most promising fishing spots are out there around the channel (or deep hole).

Figure 4A is the same situation, but now there is a deep slot leading from the channel up toward the bar as shown.

Now who is in the best spot, IF the fish move toward the shallows?

It should be obvious, the fisherman working the weed bed has the best chance to catch a fish. IF the fish move over the breakline to the weed bed, and *provided* he is still there when they do. OR, *provided* the fish do not take another route to shallower water; AND *provided* he is checking the depths and speeds of his lures.

The second guy that *might* have a chance to catch a fish is the one working the worm at the bush. IF the fish, in moving toward shallow water, decide to move along the breakline to the sharper break, and IF they move shallower than the break to the bush; OR, the fisherman decides to check the sharper break and is using enough styles (or types) of lures to check the depths and speeds at the same time.

The fishermen on the hump and the man on the pier are "dead," due to the fact that the hump is "out of sight" to migrating fish and the fish will not move downhill along a breakline to reach shallow water.

Figure 4B is another view of the situation. In this case the deep water is located as shown. The ONLY ONE that has a good chance to catch a fish is the fisherman working the bush, PROVID-

ED the fisherman is there when the weather and water conditions are "just right." Conditions would have to be *near perfect*, and the *time of year* must be right before the fish would move up over such a shallow drop-off. He would likely get skunked if the deep water wasn't deep enough to provide the fish protection from the environment.

The other four fishermen might as well be home watching television; that is, if the only reason they are there is to catch a fish. About the only guy that's "got it made" is the guy on the pier who, in all probability, is already sleeping.

Figure 4C is another situation that might exist. In this case there are several deep sections. The depths of each are shown. At first glance it may appear all the fishermen are in good spots. But if we look a little closer, this may not be the case. The fisherman at the bush (and sharper break) is not likely to make a catch, as the water in the deeper section is only 20 feet deep — slightly deeper than the flat. If the water is clear, and he was there at the wrong time of the season, he could cast his arm off and never catch a fish — even if the fish moved along the breakline from the end of the bar — which isn't likely in this situation.

The fisherman working the weed bed
continued

CASTS LURES FARTHER



Hi-visibility tip for improved strike detection.

Hot Rod's unique bi-modulus construction features a solid polymer speed tip that's practically crushproof.

You can really lean on this blank. Combine this with the HOT ROD's solid polymer speed tip and you have high impact strength and a tip that resists breakage even under the toughest fishing conditions.

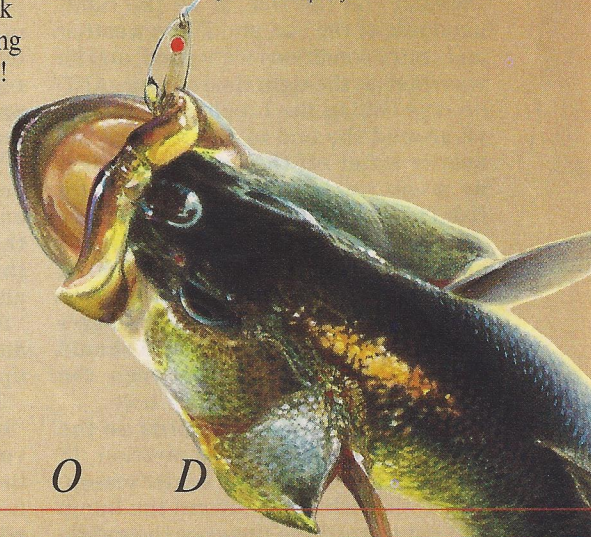
PUT 'EM IN THE BOAT.

When you are hooked-up, your most anxious moment often takes place at boatside. There, a thrashing fish can shake free by working against a rigid rod tip. But the tip on a Berkley HOT ROD is more resilient, thus the

likelihood of a fish throwing the hook is reduced and your chances of putting him in the boat are greatly increased!

"NO RISK" WARRANTY.

Fish with a Berkley HOT ROD for 30 days. If you don't agree that it casts lures farther, send it back to Berkley for a full refund of the purchase price!



Berkley®

H O T R O D

H O T R

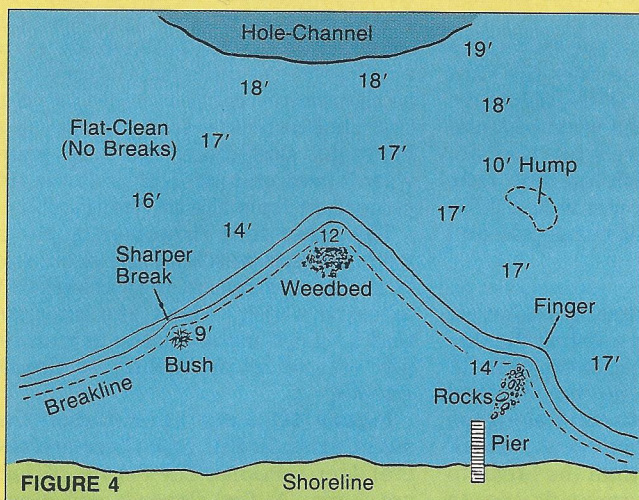


FIGURE 4

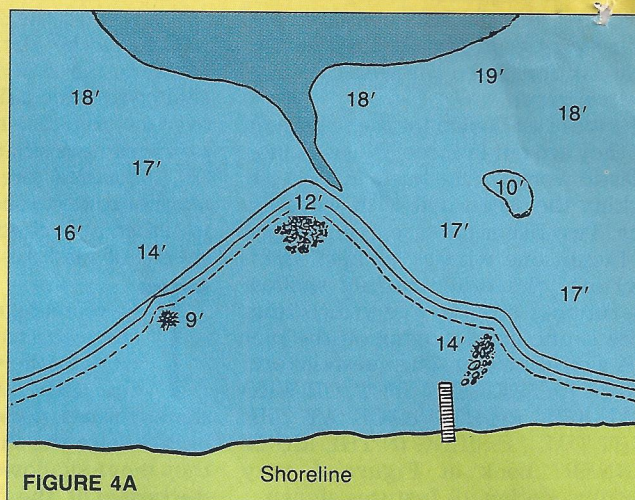


FIGURE 4A

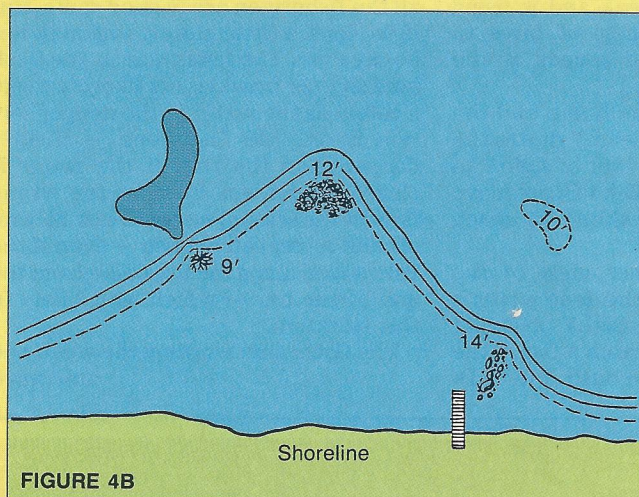


FIGURE 4B

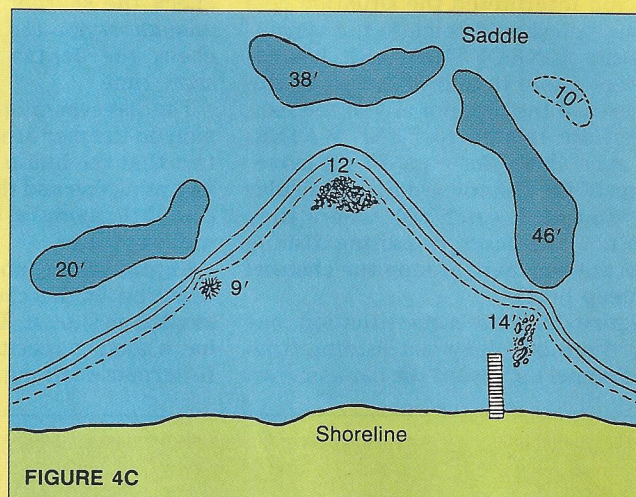


FIGURE 4C

FIGURE 4 – By examining all features (depths, structure, breaks and breaklines) shown in this overhead view of a big, wide bar and section of shoreline, can you determine where a fisherman might have the BEST chance to be fishing at the right place, at the right time, and in the right manner? If not, we'd suggest studying this article carefully.

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is in a bad position due to the fact that the end of the bar isn't likely to get a movement of fish (due to the position of the deep water). IF there were small "breaks" on the flat, or on the right-hand side of the bar, and IF the weather and water conditions were good, and he was there at the right time of year, AND he was fishing the breakline correctly all around the end of the bar and the deeper water off the breakline, THEN he *might* catch a fish. He might get a fish IF the "contact point" was at the "finger" and the fish moved shallower along the breakline toward the end of the bar. If he is expecting the fish to come from the 38-foot hole, then he's completely out of position. He should move to the "saddle" between the 38-foot hole and the 46-foot hole.

The two fishermen anchored on the hump are not in too bad a position, IF they are there during the colder season, and IF the fish move toward the hump and not toward the finger or the saddle

(provided the one changes lures and both fish deep enough and just happen to find a particular small "break" the fish are pausing at during a movement). It doesn't look too good for them if the fish DID move toward the hump. It appears the 10-foot breakline is the "drop-off" in this situation, and this shallow depth would cause the fish to "back off" regardless of the prevailing weather and water conditions or the time of the season.

The fishermen on the pier is in the best position, providing the weather and water conditions are good and IF the fish move up on the rocks, OR if they do not move shallower by going along the breakline. And IF he is "fishing" the nightcrawler on the finger and the rocks, instead of "soaking" it up next to the pier.

There are a lot of "if's," "and's," "but's," "provided's" and "or's" for you and me to be at the right place, at the right time, fishing in the right manner. Neither of us has enough knowledge to hit it right every time. But if we

do NOT have ANY knowledge, then it would be pure luck if we caught a fish. If we do not try to attain more knowledge, we'll never be able to improve our being at the right place, at the right time, fishing in the right manner. This is the reason I have knocked myself out in the past, and is the ONLY reason why some of the things I have observed over the years should be recorded. I would much rather sit in the sun and smell the flowers and go fishing to learn more how to be at the right place, at the right time, fishing in the right manner. This I intend to do, the Good Lord willing, shortly. 

No other publication is privileged to have Buck Perry on its staff. He has become a legend in his own time. As Fishing Facts Education Editor, this former engineering professor from North Carolina State, has consented to share his vast fishing knowledge and experience with us. Many of today's successful freshwater anglers owe him more than they may ever realize.