

Over the years we've received a great many letters from *Fishing Facts* readers. Mainly they fall in two groups: (1) Those asking for additional information or clarification on some particular point, and (2) Those expressing their gratitude for sharing our experiences and knowledge with them.

Then we also have a third group, very small I might add, that gripe, scoff and call us everything in the book. We have no trouble getting the message.

In my case, a letter in this last group gets more attention than those from either of the first groups. When I say "attention," I do not for one instant consider it as an insult, nor would I entertain for one moment the idea of replying to defend myself. I have been a teacher far too long to let a letter such as this "bug" me. My reaction is to try and analyze just what motivated the reader to write such a letter. Oh, probably if he said it to my face I'd try to lay the facts out before him and let him draw his own conclusions. He may not draw any quick conclusions, but at least I might get him to *thinking*. In this case I have accomplished my mission.

I'll reproduce one typical letter here and ask you, the reader, to think about how you would answer it.

*"Dear Buck: I have been reading Fishing Facts for several years. I have purchased about every lure you recommend. I have bought other items as well, including many books.*

*"I belong to a bass club and, after buying all lures, lines, markers, depth sounder, oxygen meter, temperature meter, Solunar Tables, etc., I still get beat most of the time in our tournaments.*

*"I can get to most of the good spots before any of the other guys in the club. I have the biggest and fastest boat in the crowd. I can get to a good spot and cast all your recommended lures without any luck, then a couple hours later one of the club members will catch a good fish there on a lure he bought for 25 cents or one he made at home.*

*"I have purchased about every color available in plastic worms, spinnerbaits, jigs and other lures. I do not leave a bunch of 'stick-ups' until I have tested lots of colors. I can use a white one on clear days, and the best fish is caught on a black one. I can use a black one on a cloudy day and the best fish is caught on a green one.*

*"If I use a crankbait, someone catches them on plastic worms. If I use plastic worms, the fish are caught on spinnerbaits. If I go to spinnerbaits, the contest is won on something else.*

*"I have used lines of all tests. I have kept reducing them until I was down to 2-lb. test. All I got for my trouble was several lost lures.*

*"You guys say the big fish spend a lot of time in deep water. I have spent hours in deep water looking for fish. I have*

# Gimmicks

*won't solve your fishing problems*

*by Buck Perry, Education Editor*



*Buck Perry hoists a trophy bass for the camera. This fish was one of several lunkers found lurking along a deep-water breakline (quick drop).*

*looked for them on my depth finder and I have drifted or trolled (with my electric motor) all over deep water. I have added weights and gone down as far as 50 feet. While I'm doing this a member of the club is catching some fish in the 'stick-ups' or some shallow weed-bed.*

*"You tell us that sometimes it is necessary to fish quite fast. I have yet to catch a fish except when moving the lure just about as slow as I can. You guys tell us*

*that bad weather is better than nice sunny days. Let me tell you my best luck is on those nice sunny days, with only a warm, gentle wind putting a slight ripple on the water.*

*"I have also tried your dingy-water theory and I didn't catch any fish. I have better luck fishing clear water where I can see the brush or weed beds to fish. This tells me your dingy-water theory is all wet.*

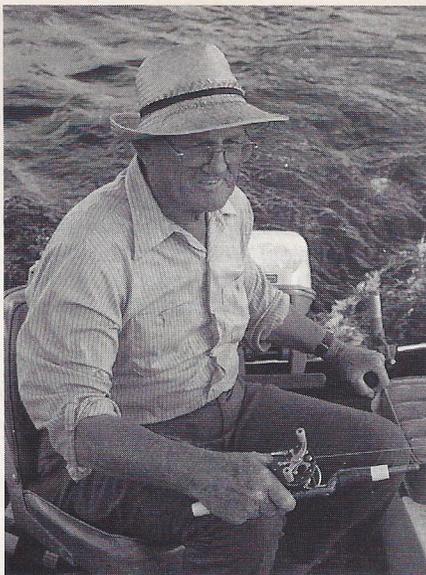
*continued*

# Gimmicks

"I quit reading that section you call 'Our Readers Say.' You only print the 'good' letters. Why don't you print some of the letters from the guys who 'tell it like it is.' I think your gang is trying to give us the old 'rip-off.'

"I'm sending you a map of the lake I fish the most. Would you mark the best spots for me? If I catch some fish off these spots, then maybe I just might subscribe again to your magazine."

As in most letters of this nature it doesn't take much thought as to what motivated the letter. HERE IS A VERY UNHAPPY FISHERMAN. His frustrations are about to get the best of him. He is clearly hollering for HELP. This is the *only* way he knows to do it. Is it little wonder that letters such as this get our attention? Fortunately this writer went into detail on his gripes. This gives me a chance to be



In this article Education Editor Buck Perry (above) answers thought-provoking comments from an unhappy fisherman.

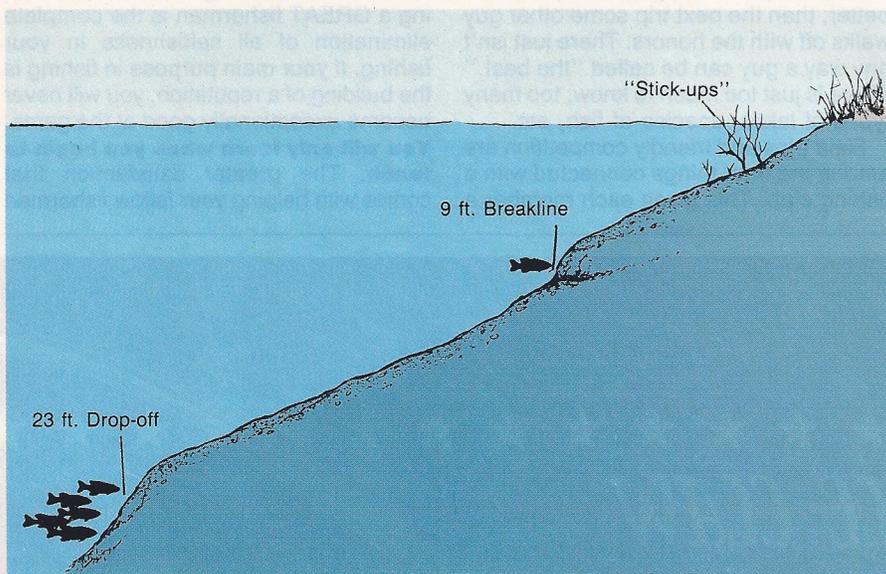


FIGURE 1 - Side view of a "bar" extending out from a point in the shoreline. Can you see what might happen if you limited your casting only to the "stick-ups?"

specific in my reply. If he had just called me some dirty so-and-so, with no detail, I'd have a hard time answering it. In that case, probably all I could say is "the same to you, friend."

When I first read the letter, two things stood out like a sore thumb. (1) He has a driving force to *beat* the other guy, and (2) He is placing great emphasis on *equipment* as the key to his success.

Fishing is supposed to be fun. Trying to always beat the other guy makes fishing a chore. It produces sloppy fishing, and a plateau is quickly reached as to how good a fisherman you can become. I'm not going into detail on why this is so. This is another subject entirely. I am often at a loss for words to explain why the "ego" is the driving force of a lot of people. Suffice it to say, our letter-writer is suffering as a result of his driving force

to beat the other guy.

His emphasis on "equipment" clearly points out that he thinks he can go to the store and buy instant success in some fancy-wrapped package. He is breaking his back, and probably his pocketbook as well, trying to find a shortcut to fishing success. He'll most likely spend the rest of his life seeking success by changing the gadgets on the end of his rod, never giving thought to the fact that the trouble may lie at the other end (of the rod).

Let us look at this reader's letter in more detail. I'll reproduce portions for comment.

"Dear Buck: I have been reading *Fishing Facts* for several years. I have purchased about every lure you recommend. I have bought other items as well, including some books."

*continued*

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# Gimmicks

Bless you! If it were not for our devoted readers, we wouldn't be in business. We try to express our thanks in the type magazine we send to you each month. Each month we try to include articles not only for enjoyment of reading, but primarily those we feel will give you the best information possible to make this great sport of ours more enjoyable, successful and satisfying. Our uniqueness is the fact we are dedicated to **help you become a better fisherman.**

The tackle and lures we mention are all a part of our purpose. It would be a sad state of affairs if we only told you what you should do to become a successful fisherman, and then left out the "tools" to do it with. Each "tool" will do the job for which it was built. But none of them will do the job if you do not understand their purpose or you do not give them a chance. We know many "tools" will never be used as they should be, and some fishermen will become unhappy with the results.

As stated, we thank you for reading and purchasing our magazine. But in looking at your letter, it appears to me you have not absorbed what you have been reading. Probably your use of the word "reading" is correct. You certainly have not

been "studying" the material. It is hard for me to believe you have studied the material when I find you in such a state at this time.

As to your purchasing every lure we "recommend," it would appear to me you are still seeking that magic gimmick that will solve all your problems, and you can go out and strut your stuff before all your fishing buddies. Well, if you believe this, just keep on buying (and you can keep on getting your pants beat off by the other guys).

*"I belong to a bass club and, after buying all lures, lines, markers, depth sounder, oxygen meter, temperature meter, Solunar Tables, etc., I still get beat most of the time in our tournaments."*

Belonging to a fishing club is great, providing the purpose of the club is for things other than seeing who is the best fisherman in the crowd. This will never be accomplished because of the nature of the fish, his survival instincts, his movements, structure, weather and water conditions, etc. One trip it will appear one person is better, then the next trip some other guy walks off with the honors. There just isn't any way a guy can be called "the best." There is just too much to know, too many types of lakes, species of fish, etc.

Field trips and friendly competition are among the finer things connected with a fishing club. This gives each member a

chance to learn from his fellow members. It gives each member a chance to teach those with less or no experience. This fellowship should be the major reason for the outing, and there is little doubt in my mind that it is the main reason why some clubs are more successful than others.

You stated that you had purchased some "markers." For what purpose? How many times have you placed floating markers along a breakline or drop-off so that your fellow members with less experience could use them to position their boats and lures? How many times have you left a marker on a particular productive spot and then told the other fishermen where to find the marker, and how and where to fish the area? How many times have you used your CB radio (I'm sure you have one) to call in your fellow fishermen when you got into a school of fish? How many times have you told your fellow fishermen what lure presentation was needed, or what depth, speed, size, color or action was working best for you?

One of the main ingredients of becoming a GREAT fisherman is the complete elimination of all selfishness in your fishing. If your main purpose in fishing is the building of a reputation, you will never become exceptionally good at the game.

**You will only learn when you begin to teach.** The greater satisfaction that comes with helping your fellow fisherman

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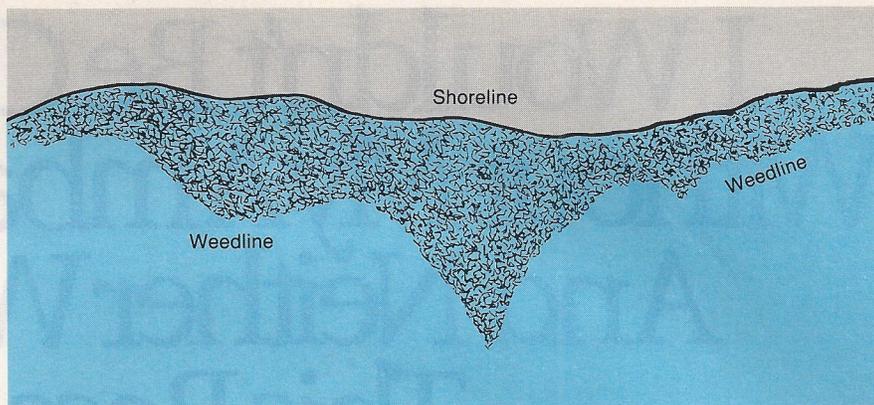
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Touch the point of one of our Lazer Sharp fish hooks to your thumb nail. Careful, there. Now you know what lazer sharp is. These new Eagle Claw hooks are made of carbon steel, cold-forged for strength, then rotary honed and processed using high-tech techniques developed in our R&D lab. The result is the smoothest, sharpest point that ever caught and held a fish. If you use a stone or file on the point, it will dull it; you cannot make it sharper than it comes from the package.

has no equal. But above all, when you approach your fishing in this manner **THOSE OTHER THINGS WILL BE ADDED.** In time you will become a great fisherman, and you can bet your shirt everyone will know about it. This type recognition will *last*, while the other kind will fade in a very short while.

You state that after you purchase all those items you still get beat. Maybe this is the very reason you get beat. I gather, as stated above, you are looking for success in some device or devices ordered from a store. These are merely **aids** in helping you accomplish **WHAT YOU ARE TRYING TO DO.** How you expect a piece of metal or plastic to do a job and you refuse to direct its use, is beyond me. I suppose by the time you go through all your gadgets, you have little time for fishing. You probably use each item, and try to put words in the fish's mouth by saying where he **MUST** be. "He's just gotta be there, for my instruments say he is comfortable;" or, "This is an ideal place for him to be." Or, "This lure has the 'wiggle' or the special color that the fish can't resist, and all of them will rush to gobble it up." Hogwash!

You can use each item to aid you when searching for fish, but you have to **KNOW** where, what, when, why and how to use it. Then you have to *fish the area correctly* to see if the fish are there. Most of the



**FIGURE 2** – Top view of a portion of a weedy shoreline. This particular area of the shoreline is productive when conditions are "right." What should a fisherman carefully note if he or she were to fish this area? (See article for answer.)

time they won't be there, even after you have gained the knowledge on how to use these fishing aids.

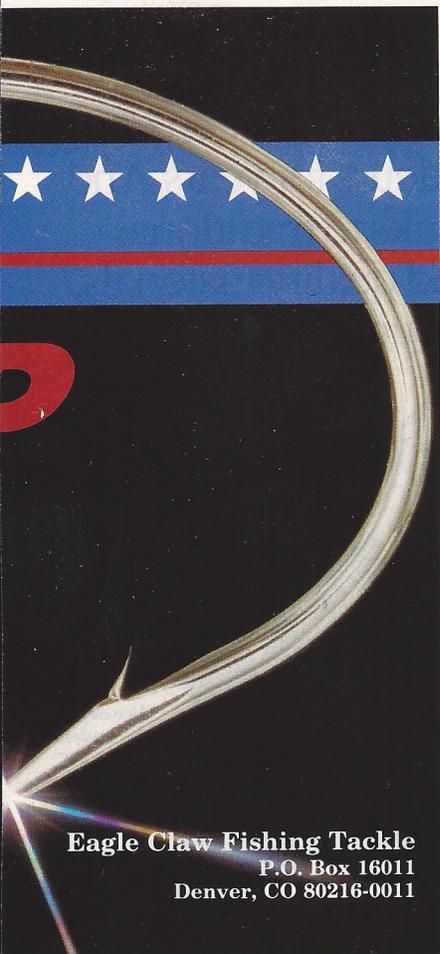
In our past schools, one of the items that created the biggest teaching job was the electronic depth sounder. **Most people cannot read what they see.** Unless a fisherman can interpret what the instrument says, he would be better off without one. However, if a person knows **what he is looking for**, then they can become one of the better "tools" in his possession. To purchase a scientific aid without first knowing what it should be used for, is like

getting the cart before the horse.

Give some thought as to why you get beat all the time. You have a boat full of stuff — so why are you crying? I can sympathize with you. You say you have the biggest and best rig around. There is just one little item missing — you still can't seem to catch a fish.

**FIGURE 1**

Now let us look at your situation where you checked a spot and failed, and later a fellow fisherman took a good fish. *continued*

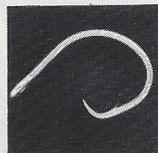


### Many New Products Introduced By Eagle Claw® Over This Past Year

Don Hoben, Vice President of Marketing for Eagle Claw Fishing Tackle recently recapped several new products brought out just this past year.

Probably the most important development is the Lazer Sharp™ hook, but several other innovative products have met with overwhelming approval from anglers everywhere.

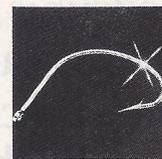
One is the "Nightstick," a tubular glass rod with graphite in the Black Eagle™ II series. It has a fluorescent tip . . . down to the second guide . . . and a 1" fluorescent strip exactly one foot out from where the line comes out of the reel so the fisherman knows exactly where he is at all times.



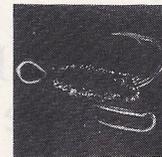
Another is the Circle Sea™ Hook that is primarily for the commercial fishing market, but even sport fishermen are finding it is a vastly superior hook for halibut and other bottom fish. The radical, closed-circle design aims the hook point close to straight back from the shank.



The "Auto Set" Aberdeen Hook automatically twists in the fish's mouth which gives better penetration at any angle. The gold plated hook has a slightly squared round bend. The extra width between the point and the shank makes them perfect for baiting with minnows.



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Yet another new hook is the Scent Saver™. It is flocked with a short hairy nape to hold scent in any plastic or live bait.

Eagle Claw has been producing fishing tackle in Denver, Colorado for over 62 years.

# Gimmicks

**Figure 1** is a side view of a "bar" coming out from a point in the shoreline. There are some "stick-ups" in the shallow water. At a depth of 9 feet a breakline occurs. It breaks to 13 feet. The ridge-like bar continues on out with the drop-off occurring at 23 feet. I have placed a lone fish at the breakline, but the mass of the fish are slightly below the drop-off.

One of the main things quite often overlooked by the fisherman is the fishing fact that **fish do not move constantly nor consistently**. What this means — lucky is the fisherman who makes contact with the fish the first time he arrives at the structure. The movements and migrations of the fish are controlled by the weather and water conditions at **any particular time**. Just how far they migrate toward the shallows and how long they stay is predicated on these two things. Most of the time conditions will not be good enough for the haphazard fisherman to make contact. Another very important thing often overlooked is the fact, as your fishing efforts go deeper, **the more exactness must be had**. You can get by with sloppy lure presentation in the shallows, but not as you go deeper.

Let us suppose that the situation existed just as shown in **Figure 1** as you first made your stab at the structure. Let us also assume that you limited your casting to the "stick-ups." By looking at the position of the fish in **Figure 1**, you should be able to answer why you failed.

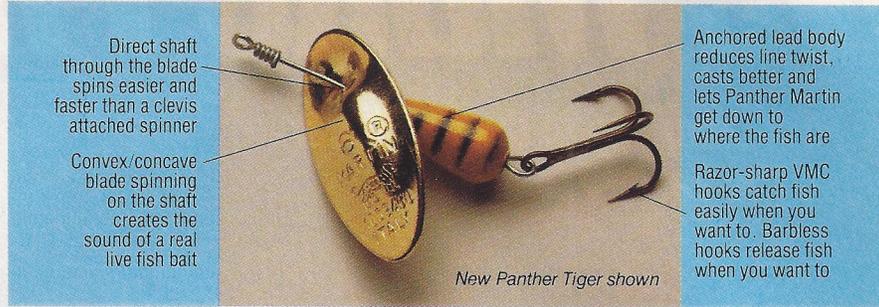
Now let's assume that you *did* cast toward the deeper water. Did your casts reach the breakline in the right spot? Suppose the lone fish hadn't moved to the breakline at the time you fished the spot?

A couple hours later your fellow fisherman either did something different or the situation had changed. But then as I look at it, maybe he did throw his cheap or homemade lure in the right place and moved it correctly. There are two lines of thought here as to why he was using that style of lure. First he might have been looking for some magic lure and had decided to build one himself, so fame and fortune would be his, OR maybe he put color, size and action in their proper place and realized these lures would suffice to control the proper depth and speed at the particular time and place.

The fact remains that he got a fish and you didn't. He either put his lure close to the fish at the breakline, or the fish had moved up to the stick-ups. Maybe he got to the structure (the bar) before the fish moved to the breakline and, being a knowledgeable fisherman, he just waited until the fish moved into range. But as I look at it, I don't believe this last strategy occurred, and his fishing knowledge wasn't too extensive. If the weather con-

*continued*

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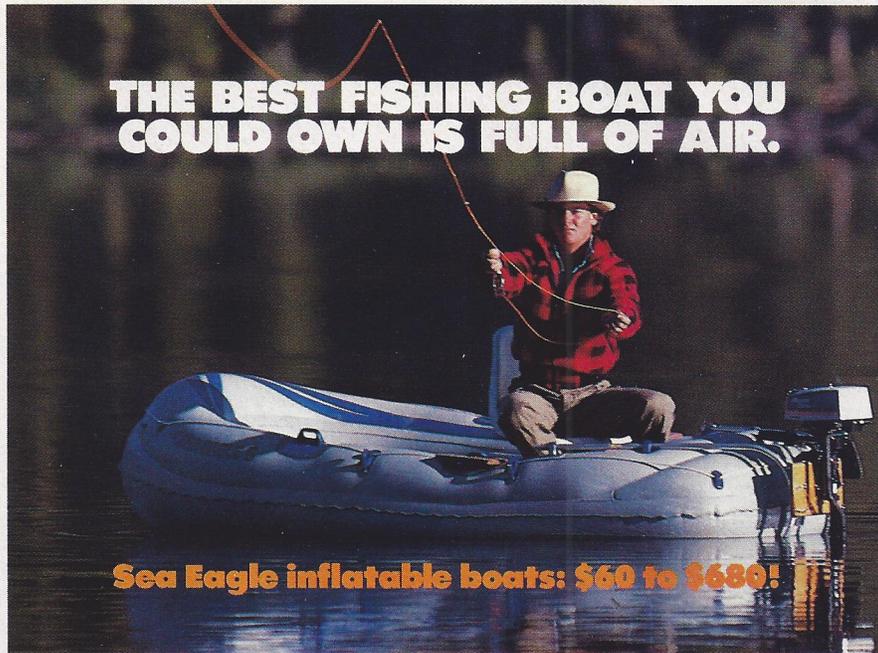
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70 / MARCH, 1987

## Gimmicks

ditions were such that a good fish moved to such a shallow breakline, it is highly possible the mass of fish moved to the drop-off (or beyond). He only caught the one fish, and if the mass of the fish had moved this shallow (23 feet), they would have been ready for plucking.

I have no way of knowing exactly what happened to cause your friend to catch the fish, but I have a pretty good idea why you failed. Did you ever consider asking him how and where he caught the fish? Probably he would have told you something. Maybe you would have learned a little bit — that is, if you can separate fact from fiction.

*"I have purchased about every color available in plastic worms, spinnerbaits, jigs and other lures. I do not leave a bunch of stick-ups until I have tested a lot of colors. I can use a white one on clear days, and the best fish is caught on a black one. I can use a black one on a cloudy day, and the best fish is caught on a green one.*

*"If I use a crankbait, someone catches*

*them on plastic worms. If I use plastic worms, the fish are caught on spinnerbaits. If I go to spinnerbaits, the contest is won on something else."*

Oh brother! You have size, color, and action on the brain. These are AIDS to help you catch a fish. You can use all the sizes, colors and actions in the world, but if you do not use them where the fish are (depth control) and move them in such a way as to make the fish take (speed control) — you will not catch a fish. It's as simple as that. I can see no reason why every lure in your tackle box wouldn't catch a particular fish, at any given time, if each was placed where the fish was, and moved just halfway correctly.

You have often heard me say, or have read, where I stress you must answer all fishing questions (successes or failures) in terms of depth and speed control, NEVER in terms of AIDS. Again I say, in as simple terms as I know how, **in order to catch a fish you must place your bait or lure where the fish is, and move it in such a way to make him take.** Depth control means WHERE depth, WHAT depth, WHEN depth and HOW depth.

*continued*



During a recent trip, Fishing Facts Managing Editor Carl Malz (above) got together with Education Editor, Buck Perry, for several days of excellent fishing. Malz is a long-time disciple of the legendary Perry.

# Gimmicks

Speed control means the same: where, what, when, why and how. By answering fishing questions (or problems) in this manner you will learn a great deal about fishing and become better at the game.

Let me take these thoughts further and see if we can't get a better picture of what I mean.

**Figure 2** is a top view of a portion of a weedy shoreline. Extending out from the shoreline is a structure the fish use on their migrations. In other words, this particular area of the shoreline is productive when conditions are "right."

YOU DO NOT KNOW IT, but the structure is in the form of a big, wide sandbar. A breakline runs all the way around the bar. There exists several "fingers" on the breakline that "break" (drop) at different depths. The water color is a light yellow-green, not too clear, not too dark. When you fish this particular area, the weather has been clear and hot. Recent movement periods of the fish have been of *short* duration, and migration has only been to the breakline.

As stated, you do not know all the details of the structure. You should have noted the water color and the hot weather, though. Probably all you know is that this particular area of the weedline produces at times, and that recently the fishing has been slow.

BUT, you do have a big, fast boat and a tackle box full of plastic worms, spinnerbaits, speed baits, etc. — in all SIZES, COLORS and ACTIONS.

Now let's take these three things and catch us a fish. We look at each and say: WHERE should I fish each size, color and action? WHAT size, color or action is best? WHEN is each size, color or action best? WHY is that particular size, color and action best? HOW should I use each size, color and action to make the fish take? With the conditions present you should know you can't mess around. You have to make your choice. You have but little time to make your catch. Think about it a little.

Let's face it, if you had a week to spend here you might figure it out — FOR ANY PARTICULAR TIME AFTER YOU HAVE MADE CONTACT WITH THE FISH. How about tomorrow WHEN CONDITIONS HAVE CHANGED?

## FIGURE 3

Now let us assume you are a so-called "structure" fisherman, and in some way you've established the structure, depths, etc. **Figure 3** represents what is found. (Study this figure, noting details of breaklines, depths, etc.) We add this knowledge to what we already have as per time, bottom, water color, weather, etc.

First let us review the WHERE, WHAT,  
*continued*

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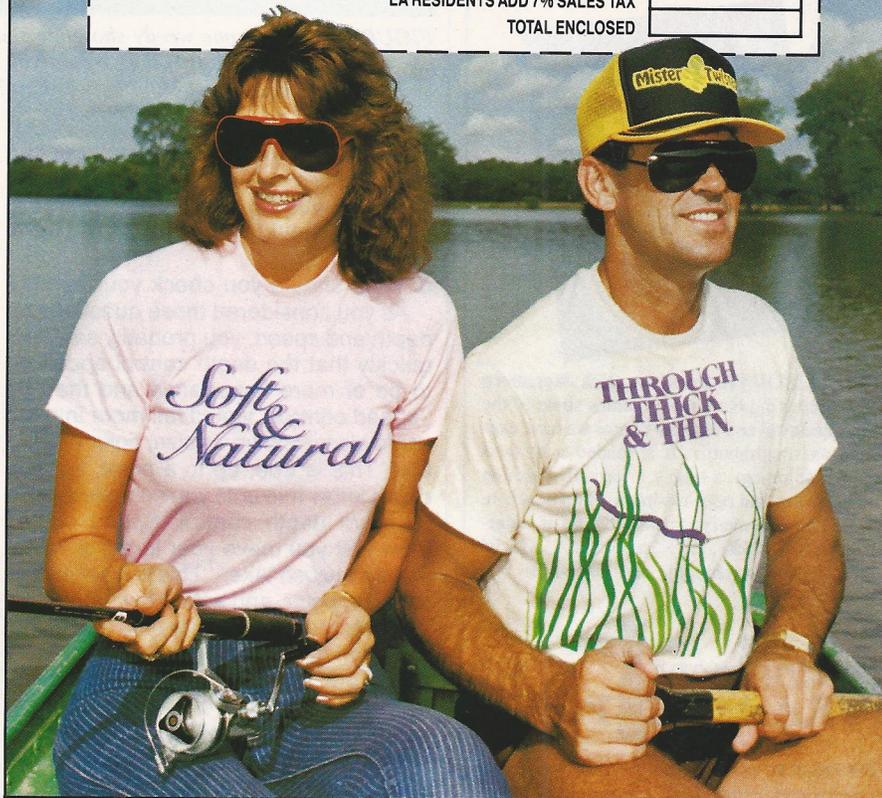
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# Gimmicks

WHEN, WHY, and HOW with each size, color and action. With this added information you should determine the best size, color and action. Did you come up with it? Who are you trying to kid?

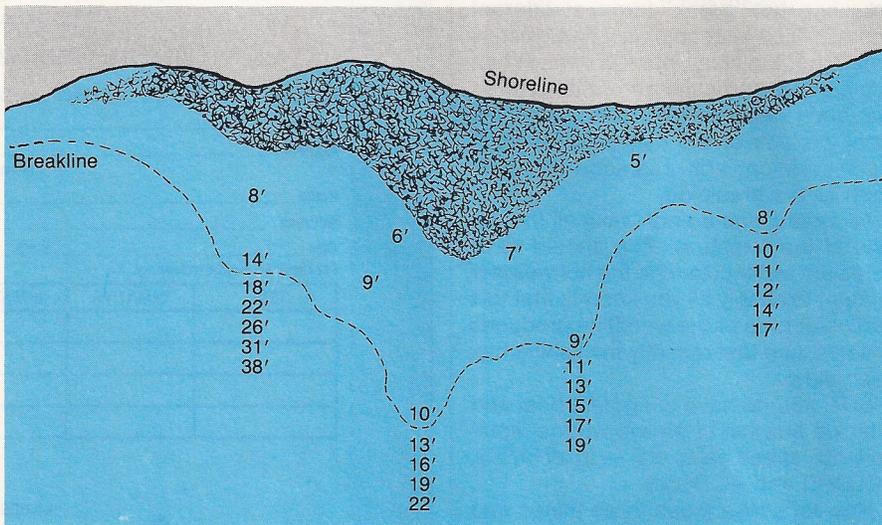
Now let us approach our fishing of this particular area in terms of depth and speed control. You must never forget that you must maintain both of these controls **AT THE SAME TIME**. You cannot sacrifice one for the other.

1. WHERE (depth) should you fish?
2. WHAT (depth) should you fish?
3. WHEN should you fish this depth? (timewise)
4. WHY should you fish this depth?
5. HOW should you fish this depth?

is check it out (try various lure speeds). Where the rub comes, is maintaining depth and speed at the same time. It is here that your choice of styles and types of lures used becomes so important. You are not concerned with what size or color or wiggle so much, for if you could not use your lures at different speeds and maintain the depth (or spot) at the same time, they wouldn't do you any good.

Let's suppose you are trying to hit a particular spot on a breakline. Most any sinking lure would obtain the depth. BUT, will just any type lure allow you to maintain this depth at different speeds? What good would those juicy sizes, colors and actions be if you lost your depth (where the fish is) with a test of speed? The same thing would hold true when casting or trolling at any place.

Let us say you were using a purple



**FIGURE 3** - The same weedy shoreline shown in Figure 2, but now greater detail has been added to the drawing. Would you have found this important breakline to exist if you had fished only the weedline?

6. WHERE should you check your speed carefully?
7. WHAT would be the best speed?
8. WHEN should you check speed carefully?
9. WHY should you check your speed?

As you considered these questions on depth and speed, you probably saw very quickly that the depth control appeared to be of more importance and that the "speed control" would fall more into the same classification as size, color and action. This is true, up to a point, but you didn't know this until you considered it in terms of depth control. Speed control (how fast you move your lures) is "what makes the fish take." This is what makes the size, color, and action become effective *aids* at that particular time and place. But of more importance, you and I can figure out the questions to the speed, from the conditions that exist, and the depth we are trying to fish. Controlling the speed becomes very easy after you have established the depth. All you have to do

plastic worm at a spot in 14 feet of water, and with just a slight twitch of the rod tip (speed control) you got a nice fish. What caused you to catch that fish? Was it due to the fact you had the right depth, or the slow twitch, or the purple color? Now let us suppose on the next cast you dropped the purple worm to the spot, but now instead of the slow twitch, you raised your rod tip up high and fast. Now answer why you failed to catch a fish. Was it due to the depth, the speed, the color (or size or action)?

Your lures are "tools" in helping you do "what you are trying to do." They are used in the control of depth and speed. If you persist in viewing your success in terms of size, color and action, my advice to you is to take up some other sport, such as golf, or bird watching. For not only will fishing be less enjoyable, but it's going to make a nervous wreck out of you. Besides, if your horizons in fishing do not extend beyond "beating the other guy," you should probably stop anyway. 

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