

# The Search For Quality Bass

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**W**ell maybe it would be better to ask how to just find bass or is it the question, what's the best lure to use? How deep do I fish? What time of day would be the best? The questions that one can ask in the pursuit of finding bigger fish are endless.

There are so many things in fishing that influences a day on the water, and then to ask how to find quality bass on top of that could throw any seasoned veteran into a high speed wobble. Just as we had to learn how to crawl before we walked, and walked before we could run, there are a few steps we need to know and know well before we even put a line in the water.

Since I just mentioned water, let's start there; "get rid of the water"! Understanding the topographical layout of any body of water from lakes, streams, rivers, to tidal waters is the starting point and the foundation to finding quality bass. Wait, let me rephrase that; to find any bass period! Can we just turn that body of

water upside down and shake it a few times to get a quick look? I think not. And guess what? Learning how to find these areas will not be an easy task either. Yes, this is going to be a lot of work in the form of "time on the water" from looking at your graphs, reading lake maps, to even surfing the web on Goggle Earth. The time spent here is worth the effort. OK, what should you be looking for? Points, ridges, creek channels, flats, and humps! Oh, I am sorry; you did not hear me— points, ridges, creek channels, flats, and humps. Remember, it doesn't matter if you are fishing water that is 4 feet deep in the middle of Franks Track ( California Delta ), to the middle of Lake Shasta in 100 feet of water; structure is the always the first place to start your search.

The key here after finding the structure is to find the spot on spot on each of these structure elements, the exact location were the bass will hit your bait. To paint you a picture so you can understand what spot on spot means is this: Spot #1 is a long tapering point that runs out into a creek channel, spot #2 ( spot on that spot ) is the rock pile setting in 20 feet of water on top of the point. It could also be a small patch of grass, a stump, tire, cinder blocks, or just a great break line (structure) were the point falls into the channel. How fast can you find all of these spot on spots within the lake that you are fishing? Honest truth is, maybe your whole life. I know that can be a big pill to swallow,

but look at what we have experienced just in the last few years. In California alone, we have seen record low water levels to record high water levels that happened over night with the big rains a few years back. This will keep all of us on our toes to stay in tune with all the available areas to fish at any water level. The key here is "THINGS CHANGE"! Remember with falling water levels from droughts, maintenance on local reservoirs, tides, or even the unexpected broken levee, that with a keen eye and a quick picture from a camera, a push of a button to save it on a GPS, pen marks on your lake map or even a short film from your hand held camcorder, you will stay one step ahead of the other guy that's not willing to put in a little hard work.

So is that it? Is that all you need to know on how to find quality bass? The answer is NO. That is just the one part where you are learning to crawl.

This brings us to the BBZ (Big Bass Zone, the book) that I did with my good friend, Mike Jones a few years back. Within the book there are many different approaches to start to look for quality bass and a "must have" in any fishing library. But for now, here are some simple steps to getting started.

1. Location, (points, humps, creek channels, points, and flats); this is the building blocks and the foundation as I explained earlier.

2. T.M.B, now that we understand how the structure lays out, we can now break down the depth of the water were the bass could be located at any given moment within the day you are fishing (top, middle, bottom of the water column).

3. Angles, where creating a funnel (a given area were a bass can push its prey into a compromising position against structure or cover) where proper boat positioning is just as important to maximizing the spot on spot that you have found (uphill, downhill, etc).

4. Techniques, the true magic bullet for catching bigger fish, as long as it is in conjunction with location, location, location. ( dead sticking either on top or bottom of the water column, ripping, pitching, flipping, slow rolling, trolling, or wind drifting).

5. Cadence, the basic speed of any lure within a given technique that you are using to cover the water column and to create a reaction from the bass.

6. LISTEN TO THE FISH! This might be harder than you think but everyone will find themselves pushing the issue of a certain technique that the fish just don't want. And how to do you know when this happens? "When

