

Crank up the Heat

Summer Time Bass Fishing

By: Doug Vahrenberg



When many choose to stay indoors during the dog days of summer; they often choose to miss some of the hottest bass fishing of the year. Since bass are cold blooded animals they do not feel the effects of heat. They choose their summer residence by other factors like available food, shelter and oxygen levels of the water. Finding the right conditions will lead you to the fish. There are two basic types of summer fish that I pursue the "schoolers" and the "residents." Understanding how these fish choose their summer homes and how they find food will help you get more bites in the heat of the summer.

Schoolers

Schoolers like to roam around the lake following their prey. They care more about staying in contact with the food source than finding a home. I like to reference someone that travels from town-to-town like a traveling salesman or even a tournament angler that's on the road. They usually take up residence near a food source or travel route that leads them to food and necessities. Schooling bass can be both easy and hard to predict. The action can be exciting and intense with the aggressive feeding conditions. The fish in the school work as a team to corral the baitfish so they can all grab a quick meal. That's the fun part of schooling fish. The hard part is understanding the timing and where they will attack. The key finding is schoolers is to find the baitfish.

There are many tactics that can reap rewards from schooling fish. One of my favorite techniques is use crankbaits to catch schoolers. One of the advantages of cranking schoolers is increased hook-up ratio and the ability to get the bait in-between the baitfish and the bass. When cranking schoolers choosing the right depth is important and since timing is critical I usually have multiple baits in various depth ranges on deck and ready to throw at anytime. For early summer action when the baitfish are small I like to use the LuckyCraft Fat Mini or Flat Mini Series baits. These baits allow me to match-the-hatch and size of the baitfish plus they offer a variety of depth ranges. From the Shallow running SR series, to Mid-Range MR Series to the deeper DR series baits getting your bait in the "sweet zone" can help you put more fish in the boat. As the summer progresses and the baits grows larger I like to keep progressing in size and this is where the larger LuckyCraft BDS and Flat CB baits become my baits of choice.



Flat Mini SR

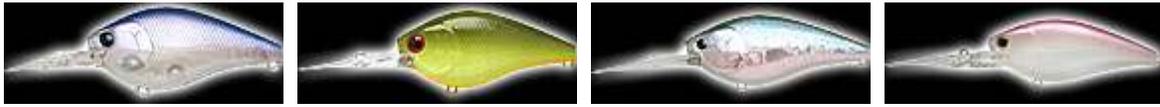
Flat Mini MR

Flat Mini DR

Residents

Resident fish prefer location versus traveling and chasing food. These are the home grown, home town boys and girls that never leave. We all know someone that likes the comfort of sleeping in the same bed night after night and hates to travel. These fish do move but they like to stay close to their comfort zone or home. These fish usually hold tight to cover and use structure or cover to ambush or surprise passing prey. Even though the water can be hot these fish can reside from ultra shallow water only a few inches deep to great depths as long as they can have the necessities for survival: Food, Shelter and Oxygen.

Residents usually reside near stumps, laydowns, logs, rocks, drop-off, ledges, road beds or any other ambush points that they can quickly surprise their prey. These fish feed in two basic ways by hunger and for defense. While many attempt to use slow moving baits like jigs or soft plastics it take a lot of time to cover enough water to find their homes. Selecting a crankbait will allow you to cover more water and find the fish faster. By fishing a crankbait slow you represent a lost or travelling baitfish. If the bass is hunger he will pursue the crankbait if tempted. Another method is power cranking or burning the crankbait. I prefer this method as it helps to resemble a fleeing baitfish that is trying to get away or it can also cause a reaction strike and the bass bites out of defense. This method allows you to cover more water in a day and can actually make non-aggressive fish bite. Matching the right crankbait to depth is highly important. One key element is to crash the bait into the bottom or structure to excite or surprise the fish. I have grown very fond of the LuckyCraft Flat CB series baits for this. They have a great action and can probe to great depths like the D-20 series baits that can reach to 20 foot depth range. One unique feature is these baits "hunt" around structure versus bouncing up; which drives bass crazy because they stay in the strike zone longer. The same characteristics can be found in all the Flat CB series with four depth ranges MR – 4 foot, DR – 9 foot, D-12 – 12 foot, and D-20 – 20 foot depth range.



Fat CB MR

Fat CB DR

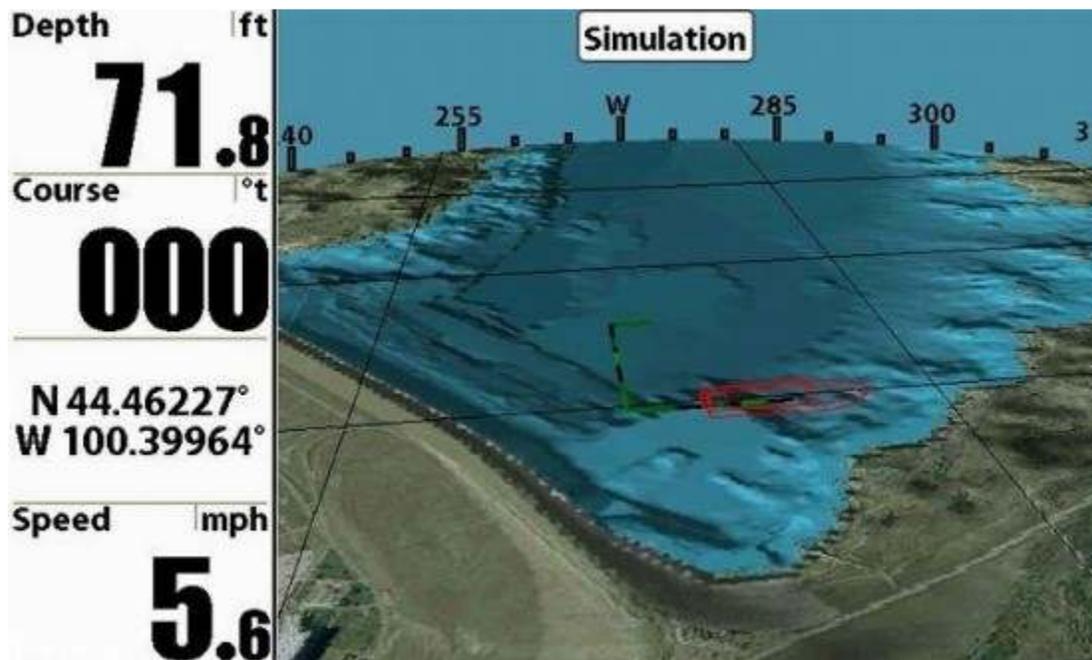
Fat CB D-12

Fat CB D-20

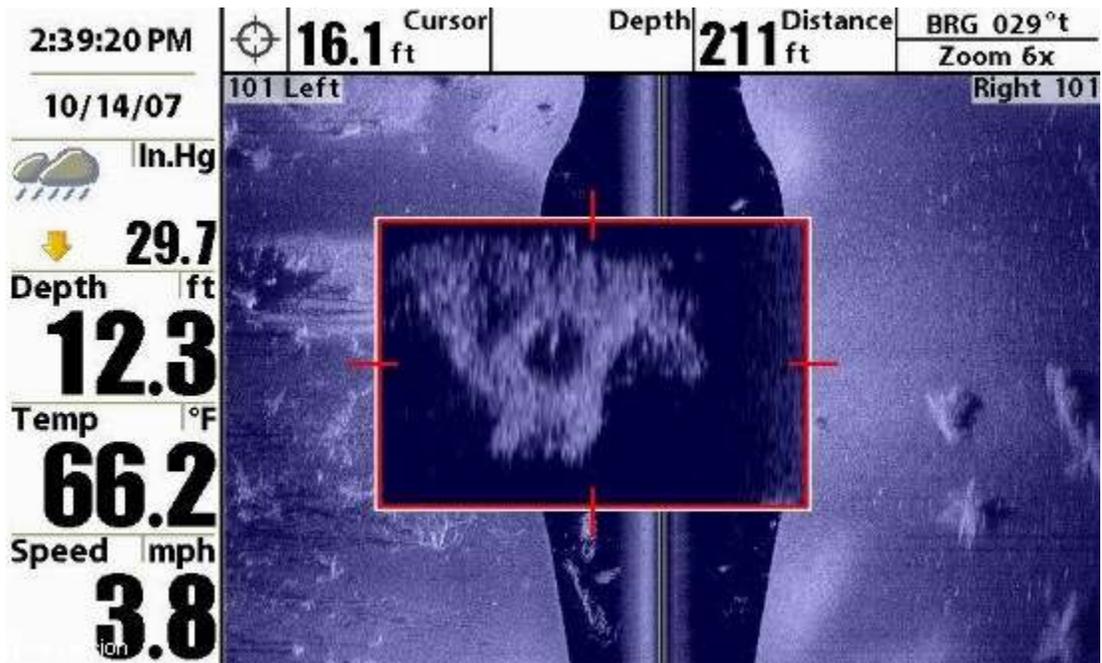
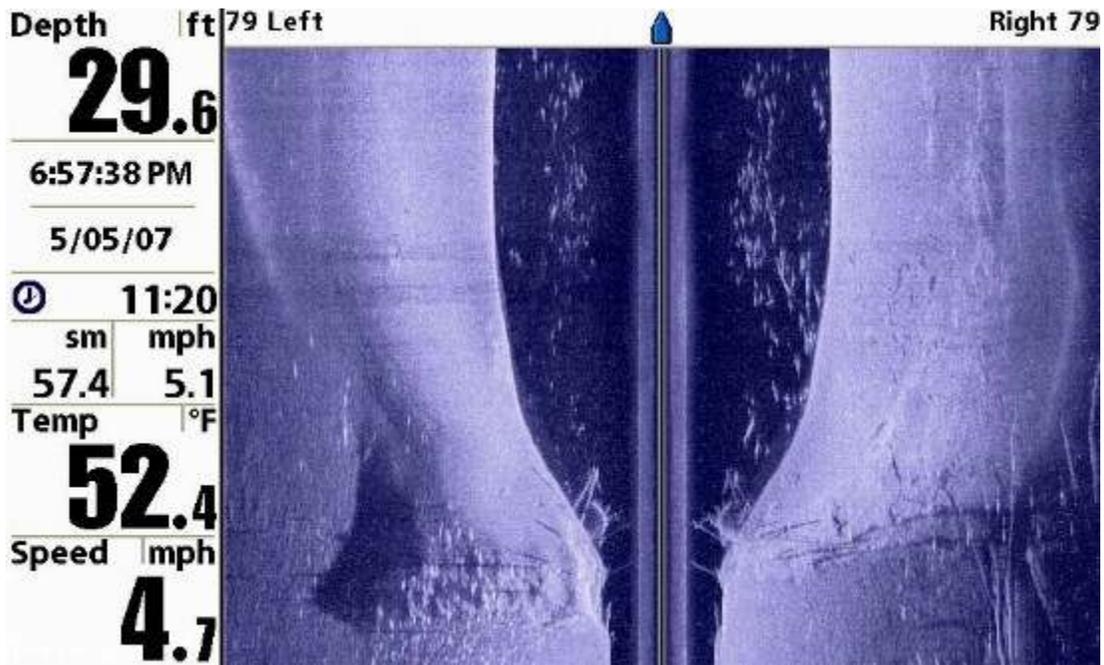
Colors

Choosing which colors to throw I try to keep it simple. In clean to stained water I like to use natural colors of baitfish or bream and try to match the hatch. On the bright sunny days I prefer colors with flash and cloudy or low light conditions I choose solid natural looking patterns. In heavily stained to muddy conditions I choose solid colors and like a lot of white or black in the bait for the muddiest conditions. White and Black are the two best colors for muddy water.

Helpful Tips



Obtaining a good quality map like Navionics Premium HotMaps with 1 foot contours or even better the Platinum HotMaps with 3D maps will help you locate off shore structure that receives less pressure and can contain the mother-lode of bass. Look for the sharp drops and migration areas to and from the deep water to shallow spawning bays and you will usually find areas that are great summer homes for bass. I like to rely on my Humminbird Side Imaging Electronics to help me locate schools of bait, the structure with ambush spots and isolated underwater cover that most overlook. Once you find these sweet spots you can begin to reap the benefits day-after-day and week-after-week all summer long catch hot summertime bass.



Doug Vahrenberg receives promotional considerations from these fine companies: Skeeter Boats, Yamaha Outboards, MinnKota Motors and Chargers, Humminbird Electronics, Navionics Charts, LuckyCraft Lures, Transducer Shield and Saver, Secret Lures, Dave's Custom Baits, Daiwa Reels, AGCO Farm Equipment.