

Valley Angler Fishing for Bass by Bill Thompson

Warmer water conditions have slowed the trout fishing down for the past few days. Fortunately when this happens we always have bass to fall back on. O K, I am aware that there are some who find bass fishing more appealing than trout fishing.

Most of us dyed in the wool trout fishermen tend to have a skewered view of bass men and women. The stereotypical bass angler owns a 100,000 candy apple red boat, with a 200 HP engine, and enough electronic gear to navigate a modern nuclear submarine. Bass fishermen tend to dress funny too. Jump suits in florescent colors covered with lure manufactures' patches is high fashion for the bass man. Charlie Moore, "The Mad Fisherman", is perhaps the best example I can think of. Needless to say fishermen who wear rubber pants should not be casting stones at others. The fact is bass fishing is a vital part of the fishing industry and accounts for a lot more license sales than do fly anglers. So more power to them.

It is possible, however, to fish for bass without a lot of hoopla. There are numerous small ponds through out New Hampshire that hold populations of both small mouth and large mouth bass. These ponds are perfect for small car topped boats or float tubes. It isn't necessary to have a lot of fancy gear either. Spin fishermen and fly fishermen can have a lot of fun with these feisty game fish without breaking the bank.

Almost any spin outfit will do the trick. A fairly stiff rod is a good idea as bass have a hard mouth and the stiffer rod allows you to set the hook better. My personal favorite bass plug was always a Rapala Jointed Minnow followed closely by the Heddon Torpedo. Plastic baits and jigs never turned me on. There is nothing quite like the thrill of having a big old bass explode on a top water lure.

Fly fishermen will probably want either a 6 or 7 weight rod with a little back bone. Flies range from spun deer hair bugs, cork poppers and large streamers that represent bait fish and leeches. I love to tie deer hair bugs, but a few simple cork poppers will do the trick.

It is somewhat difficult to fish for bass from shore although it can be done. Some kind of small water craft will up your chances and allow you to cover more water. Canoes are good, but an old fashioned john boat is almost perfect. Float tubes are another option and work very well. These craft are very popular with fly fishermen, why they have not caught on with spin fishermen is a mystery.

This past week Janet and I decided to do a little bass fishing. We were dying to use our little pontoon boats and with the trout lying low we opted for some top water fishing for bass. Summer, unfortunately had to stay home. She is too big to fit on one of the boats

and because of this insists on swimming out to and around them. This can be a bit disconcerting and it tends to put the fish down.

Aside from our boats our outfits were fairly simple; a 9 foot, 7 weight rod and a half dozen bass poppers. We got on the water at about 7:00 in the evening and fished until about 9:00. I caught one right off the bat, I think on the first cast. Janet followed suit with three more from the same spot. The action slowed down for a while after the initial frenzy. We paddled around for an hour or so picking up one or two here and there. Around 8:30 we started heading in. Up until then Janet had been the hot hand. I stopped just short of the take out spot and made a few final casts. On three casts I landed three bass. The final score was Janet 9 Bill 4. Janet was the undisputed "Bass Queen" of the evening. I did catch the largest one.

We were the only two boats on the water and had a very enjoyable evening without annoying motor boats or jet skies. You can bet that we will be going again real soon.

See you on the river.