

the boat or over the ledges that crowded into the deep water. Instantly the bass would dart out from under the weeds and overhanging rocks straight for the imprisoned bait. No number of hard knocks, so hard that indeed I feared for the fragile glass at times—only the equalised compression saved it—would educate these big black bass to the fact that these minnows were unapproachable.

Our camera plays a part in our fishing sport. See how hard my assistant is struggling, how intensely interested he is—eyes screwed up, mouth wide open—in the really arduous task of netting his own catch, and it about a five pounder. I was yelling, "Take care of your tip." It looks as if it would break, does it not?

We have found live minnows to be an excellent bait for the last two weeks in June, varying these with worms, crayfish and frogs in like order. A small double trolling spoon on about forty feet of line, well leaded, with the canoe travelling about two miles an hour, crossing and recrossing the gravelly bars and rocky points of the islands, usually returns a fair bag. The three pounder held up by Fritz was captured in this manner. Using the same bait along the edges of the marshes and weedy bays, makes an excellent lure for the less sporty big-mouth.

Then there is a novel way of catching these fish through the ice—novel indeed, for in every winter catch of bass taken through the ice, that I have seen, the small-mouth was conspicuous by its absence. This alone helps to preserve this good fish, but its poor relation, the big-mouth, falls an easy prey to a small cube of pork dangled a few feet below the icy cover.

All these ways fade into insignificance beside the truly royal sport of fly-fishing. The cast, the strike, the struggle, are events to be remembered. If one should be without artificial flies, take the common shadfly, a grasshopper, a moth, a small dragon fly, anything attractive and fluttering, and note the results. I was once seated on an old log left on the shore by the receding water which ran deeply past my feet. Not a fish could I tempt by any deep water bait that I used. Idly my hand settled on a big shadfly. This I carefully bound to a small bass hook—really a perch hook—removed my sinkers and gently cast it far out on the river, recovering as well as I could from the irritating splash. It was well on towards sundown and the rich, noisy splashes and the ever extending circles told of many a small-mouth's jump. The tiny ripple had not spread a foot from where the shadfly alighted when there was an oily roll, a splashing tumble and a mighty pull. Instantly I was on my feet. No deep baited fish this to fight with. After much fighting and many a struggle I landed the handsome fish and immediately sought for more bait. The first thing my hand closed on was a grasshopper. I cast this lightly, and trailed more than once, when it, too, was drawn under with a nerve-kindling pull and I had another big struggling fellow leaping and splashing. From shadfly to grasshopper, to dragon fly and small yellow butterfly, I wandered; back to the next most readily caught bait, another shadfly, then a moth, a tiny frog, another butterfly, all followed in rapid succession—and every one of them proved acceptable bait.

We found the high water the worst enemy to our sport. The bass are then able to feed far back from the regular channels and the fisherman cannot follow them. We have noted that this fish feeds early in the morning and after mid-afternoon, but I have never seen them feed more greedily than in July and August at night, when the moon is almost at the full. Then they can see their most longed for food, the minnows, swimming between

them and the surface. Often minnow, bass and all, will come out in one great splurge of water. Undoubtedly the best time to fish for the small-mouth is in October, on the rocky points and bars; then, if one is not shot by some disturbed duck-hunter, he will have royal sport indeed.

Fish for them, if possible, in swift water. The fun is harder and faster and the fish more difficult to handle, and pray join the fast increasing throng of clean-minded, honest sportsmen, that gently release all the small fish and every large one above the immediate needs of the party. It is scandalous that any fisherman, United States or Canadian, should catch these sporty black bass and leave them to rot on the shore. Catch all that are wanted, then continue if unable to resist, but let the unneeded ones go uninjured.

Remember that rapid movements, even when the bass are in fairly deep water, scare the fish away from near the craft. Loud noises easily penetrate the water via the anchor line. So sensitive are the fish of all kinds, that on a dull October day, a day when the duck-hunter's guns roll and echo and reverberate, one loud concussion on the waters of this lake—a lake twenty-two miles long—causes a splashing, leaping noise among the fish all over its calm surface. So intense does this become at certain moments, that a paddle dropped in a canoe will cause such a consequent widespread splashing as to make even a strong-nerved hunter jump. When the twilight is settling fast and the air has that hazy Indian summer stillness, we have found this sudden shock really uncanny the long-reaching silent, dark rice beds, the spouting fire of the booming guns and the loud slapping noise of the splashing fish in the darkening night, were sombre in the extreme.

The bass move in schools, feeding up and down the rivers and along the shores, so the best guides are those that, when they find the fish have suddenly ceased biting, know enough to change anchorage and try to find them above or below.

It was laughable the first year Fritz came to these waters. He came from the saintly city of Chicago, the city the St. Louis child alluded to in its wee prayer—"Goodbye, dear Lord, this is my last prayer; we are moving to Chicago." His knowledge of bass was limited, so when I told him to take the two newly caught fish ashore, far from the water lest they hot back to it, I was greatly astounded when I found them tied to a deeply driven nail on the shanty's side. When I reproved him for his care, he answered, "In Chicago we would have put them inside and clinched the nail."

The spawning season is full of interest. The female makes a shallow hole—a nose-pushed depression, a regular nest—clearing out the tiny stones and pebbles in a rolling, pushing manner that is absolutely comical at times. Here she lays her precious spawn and here she guards it incessantly until the heat of the sun's rays has changed the tiny transparent beads—dotted at first with the wee, white mark that tells of coming life—into almost invisible fry. These in turn she faithfully guards, beating off any approaching enemy, darting and rushing with incredible vigour. Some authorities say it is the male that does the watching, but in every case I have observed it was not so, and later, from purely scientific reasons, I captured the female and found the spawning-mark was on her breast. One fish I killed, the photograph of which is shown. In this picture the female bass is shown with the scales, the three skins and the flesh worn away—worn by the constant two weeks' watching, worn as she remained half poised above the spawn or the fry, her fins gently fanning, her breast resting on the rocks below.



Caught with a Trolling Spoon.



Group of Black Bass.