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Issue 295



Summer Bass
**FISHING
Secrets**

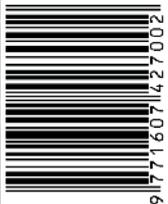
Knowing Your
Fishing Lines

Guide to
Froggin'

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Summer Bass Fishing Secrets | Boat or Bust Evolution of the Angler | Early Summer Bass Fishing | Knowing Your Fishing Lines | A Dummy's Guide to Froggin' | Change Your Game Plan | Understanding How Bass Interpret Sound | Avoiding the Summer Dead Zones | About Mike McKinnes | Bass Tackle and Stuff | Team USA Visits South Africa | Basics 4 Beginners | Industry News and More...

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Office Hours:	Our office hours are Monday to Friday, 08:15 to 16:15
Contact Numbers:	Office: (065) 849 3264, Alternative: (083) 306 2718
Website:	www.sabass.com
Facebook:	SA BASS Magazine
Editor:	Hannes Lindeque – hannes@sabass.com
Assistant editor:	Philip Kemp – philip@sabass.com
Advertising Manager:	Wilma Lindeque – wilma@sabass.com
Subscriptions:	Hannes Lindeque – hannes@sabass.com
Digital subscriptions:	www.magzter.com
Layout and Design:	Storm Deezigns - dee@stormdeezigns.co.za

About SA BASS magazine:

SA BASS, which is editorially and financially independent, is a monthly magazine catering exclusively for the bass angling community in Southern Africa. SA BASS is distributed country-wide to outlets, not only in South Africa, but also in Namibia, Swaziland and Botswana.

SA BASS is designed as a specialist bass fishing publication and has catered for a well-defined niche market since April 2001. It enjoys the support and endorsement of non-government organisations, but is not affiliated in any way to these bodies or to any other publishing, environmental or political interest group.

Our mission is to promote bass angling as a socially acceptable and popular outdoor recreational activity, and in addition, to encourage acceptable angling ethics. As such, SA BASS provides pertinent information on a wide range of subjects. These include providing a platform for informed debate on issues affecting the sport of bass angling, providing information on bass angling strategies and techniques, bass angling waters and opportunities, and also creating awareness of new products.

Within this editorial mix, due consideration is given to developing the sport among all the country's people (including the youth), and to the practical conservation of the country's natural resources.

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How to use QR-codes

1. Open the QR-code reader/scanner app on your smartphone. Most smartphones models often have an app pre-installed. If not, visit your phone's app store and download the app.
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ON THE COVER

“3.60kg, Werner Stander, Rhenosterkop Dam, MP”
Image: Werner Stander



My Cast



As the first real heat of summer starts shimmering across our dams and rivers, the season of topwater explosions, long days on the water, and endless anticipation has arrived. Early summer bass fishing is about more than just chasing fish, it's about rediscovering why we fell in love with the sport in the first place.

In this edition, we dive headfirst into the action with **“Summer Bass Fishing Secrets”**, exploring how understanding migration and feeding habits, and pairing that knowledge with modern technology, can help you stay one step ahead of the fish. For those who remember the early days on the bank, **“Boat or Bust – Evolution of the Angler”** takes a nostalgic look back, reminding us how those simple beginnings still shape the way we fish today.

Our Fishing 101 series continues with a deep dive into early summer techniques, helping beginners grasp not just the “how,” but the “why” behind successful fishing. Pair that with **“Knowing Your Lines”**, an essential guide to when, where, and how to use mono, fluoro, braid, or copolymer, and you'll be ready for anything this season throws your way.

For those who can't resist explosive surface strikes, **“A Dummy's Guide to Froggin”** delivers all the insight you need to master one of the most thrilling techniques in bass fishing. And when your plans don't quite pan out, **“Change Your Game Plan”** reminds us that adaptability is one of the angler's greatest strengths.

We also explore the science behind the sport with **“Understanding How Bass Interpret Sound”**, giving new perspective to what's happening beneath the surface, and

“Avoiding the Summer Dead Zones”, where you'll learn how to identify and steer clear of those lifeless stretches of water that can kill a good day's bite.

Our Helden feature honours Mike McKinnes, a true pioneer whose legacy continues to shape sport fishing across generations. We also share a more personal look at the ups and downs of gear life in **“Bass Tackle and Stuff”**, and bring you exclusive coverage of **Team USA's visit to South Africa**, where the excitement of international camaraderie reminded us once again that fishing connects us all.

So whether you're out on the water chasing your next personal best, fine-tuning your techniques, or simply taking in the beauty of a South African summer sunrise - this issue is for you.

May your lines sing with joy!

Hannes Lindeque, *Publisher*

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BOAT OR BUST EVOLUTION OF THE ANGLER

Speak to any human being about the theory of evolution and you will have way too many answers, arguments, information and points of view to print... however... evolution is real and it's still happening... every single day.



Bank angling is and can be very rewarding to any angler

>> *John Badenhorst*

But it's not evolution as we know it. It's something that is happening to anglers all over the world and there is no way of stopping it. There is also no scientific explanation... it just happens.

How many top anglers from South Africa and all around the world had been introduced to this sport by someone with vision, passion and how many of these folks spent hours walking the banks of that river, stream, lake or pond... making thousands of casts in the ever increasing desire to catch that big one? Changing lures, lines, techniques and strategy even back then.

Go back to the very beginning as there is absolutely nothing wrong with walking the bank or bank angling and sometimes it's good to return to our roots as anglers. I honestly don't know of many anglers that just so happened to suddenly start their angling careers with that shiny new boat with all the trimmings and the hot 4x4 to match. But I do know of endless anglers that started out beating the bush... looking out for snakes, spiders, wild animals and

in some cases crocodiles while hunting those that dwell in the deep.

Bank angling is and can be very rewarding to any angler and just a quick browse at photos of catches will give you an idea of the quality fish caught by our brothers and sisters stalking from terra firma.

With most bank angling, you tend to plan a bit better, select your lures carefully and probably limit yourself to two or three rods that have to serve your purpose. It's kind of impractical to be walking the bank with ten rods, each one rigged differently and a couple of boxes filled with spinnerbaits, soft plastics and lures. This is Africa after all and in summer months the bank angler will limit what he takes along in order to have space for extra water, maybe a small emergency kit and loads of sunblock.

Bank angling can also be rather limiting as there aren't many anglers with the ability to cast around corners and as some would attest, there will always be that desire to be able



The next step is either an inflatable, or a small boat

to cast a lure in front of those reeds over there or that patch of weed or maybe that rock sticking out of the water. Your gut tells you that there has to be a big one hiding there or maybe you have even seen it and yet the angle and distance makes it impossible to get that lure in the right spot, try hard enough and you might even be wearing some of your lures as jewellery costing a visit to the emergency room. Some bank anglers opt to wade a bit, some with waders and some without... this is all depending on the actual water temperature and what little annoying critters happen to inhabit the same body of water you are wading into. Some of these critters are as small as a flea and others have a clear taste for blood like leeches, and others would probably enjoy you for an in between meal snack... crocodiles, and some might resemble an ex-mother in law with a mouth to match... the hippo.

Time moves on and as an angler you cast better, plan better and have probably made some good catches - here comes evolution.

A float tube or kick boat is in most cases the next step for most anglers. Here again space is limited to what you can comfortably take on the water with you in terms of tackle and where as a bank angler you could have some extras in your vehicle or simply sitting on the shore, you have to continue that careful planning that has heralded success this far. Some float tubers and kick boaters will and can spend an entire day on a body of water making some incredible catches while with skilled practice being able to manoeuvre that little craft into impossible spaces to be

able to make even more impossible casts. The floaters as some would call them once again have to be mindful of things that bite, sting scratch and even worse... things that have the ability to puncture your fishing platform. Once again the choice to wear or discard waders does have its merit and in some bodies of water, tiny little swimming creatures will gladly snack on your delicate flesh suspended so tantalizingly. The bites from these critters itch like crazy and results in most cases to a serious rash followed by a visit to the doctor with some cream and maybe an injection or two.

And yet again, time moves on and evolution as an angler happens with the introduction of a **small boat** - either an inflatable, or one made of plastic, or even fibre glass. This



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Upgrading continues, better... bigger... faster...

fitted with a decent trolling motor and now suddenly there is more space for those extras that as a bank angler or floater was deemed not important enough to justify taking along.

With a small water craft there is now even room for that best buddy, brother or maybe someone new to this sport we love so dearly. A new dimension also now enters this sport and it's possible to share those special moments of the ever elusive PB with a mate right there with you. As small craft owner and angler, you still have to be mindful of those that also inhabit your chosen body of water with hippo and crocodile being at the top of the food chain. Other factors also come into play now as you have to always ensure enough battery power to get around, spare oars just in case and hold thumbs that the wind does not pick up too badly causing unwanted drift. There is a huge plus at this point, if the craft is big enough - there is now space for a cooler box!

Soon evolution will take the next step and that would simply be to sell the small one and buy a **bigger boat**, maybe this one is fitted with a small petrol outboard and now suddenly reaching that bay everyone always talks about is not only part of your plan but it also does not take half the day just to get there.

Boating is a huge amount of fun and done right can and will be extremely rewarding for the angler.

Progression, or as I would call it - evolution now hastens along and with careful planning the next step is the **bass boat**, fitted with fish finders, GPS plotters, live-well and an outboard costing more than the average small family car! Now there is space for everything that was always left behind; fishing together, three or more friends can now

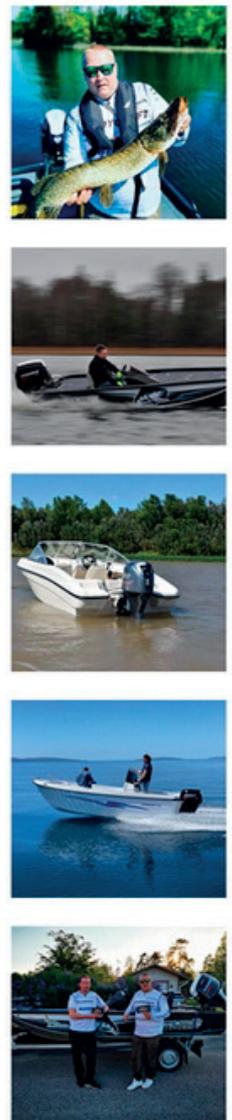
share the experience of a day out on the water and in most cases share the cost of fuel etc. - boating after all is not cheap.

With enough dedication the evolutionary angler will take part in competitions and probably belong to a registered club too. Now it becomes a **frantic race for the best spots** on the water at the start of a comp and here again there are rules to follow and fellow anglers will be observant of a certain code of conduct while out on the water.

Some folks will probably never walk the bank again once they have reached this stage; some will probably not even spare a thought about those days long ago, wishing that they were the ones racing across the water to that hot spot that others only dream about.

While racing with screaming motor across the water, maybe pause for a moment, and remember that you were also there. That guy sitting on that float tube over there behind the reeds, that youngster walking excitedly along the bank with his dad, those two guys you passed in their small inflatable and almost tipped over because of your wake. Many of us started back on the bank and going back to basics and remembering those days not only helps us stay in touch with why we started fishing in the first place, but hopefully it has also instilled a certain code of conduct towards the humble bank angler, floater or the patched up inflatable slowly making its way to a new adventure.

After all, we are anglers on the same body of water, and one day that humble float tuber might be your fiercest competitor. 🐟



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KNOWING YOUR Lines

WHEN, WHERE, AND HOW TO FISH WHICH LINE

Every angler knows the importance of a good rod and reel, but even the best setup can't perform without the right fishing line. The type of line you use can determine how well you cast, how sensitive your rig feels, and whether you land that trophy fish or lose it at the boat.



>> *Hannes Lindeque*

Each line, monofilament, copolymer, fluorocarbon, and braid, has its strengths, weaknesses, and ideal fishing situations. Knowing when and where to use them, and which knots work best for each, can make a real difference in your success on the water.

MONOFILAMENT: *The reliable all-rounder*

Monofilament, or “mono” as most anglers call it, is the most widely used fishing line for good reason. It's affordable, easy to handle, and has just enough stretch to forgive mistakes during a fight. Mono floats on the surface, making it ideal for topwater lures, poppers, and floating crankbaits. Its smooth nature helps it cast long and clean, especially for beginners still perfecting their casting rhythm.

Mono's stretch can be both an advantage and a disadvantage. While it cushions against sudden pulls, it can reduce sensitivity when fishing deep or in windy conditions where detecting light bites matters. It's best used in clear or lightly stained water where fish aren't overly line-shy. It's also great in colder water because it stays manageable and supple even when temperatures drop.

When tying knots with mono, simple and proven options work best. The **Improved Clinch Knot** remains a favourite for hooks and lures because it grips tightly and is easy to tie quickly. The **Palomar Knot** is another strong, simple choice that preserves much of the line's original strength.

Tip - Wet the knot before pulling tight to avoid friction and heat damage to the line.

COPOLYMER: *The middle ground performer*

Copolymer line is essentially an upgraded version of monofilament, made from two or more nylon blends. This gives it the same user-friendly handling as mono but with added benefits like reduced stretch, higher abrasion resistance, and slightly better sensitivity.

Copolymer shines in situations where you want some of mono's forgiveness but with a crisper, more responsive feel. It's an excellent choice for fishing crankbaits or jerkbaits, where you need a controlled amount of stretch to prevent the lure from tearing free from a fish's mouth. It's also ideal for anglers who fish around structure like rocks or docks, where a tougher line resists nicks and wear.

Because it's still relatively soft, copolymer ties knots easily. The **Palomar Knot** performs exceptionally well, offering high strength and smooth cinching.

Copolymer also works well as a leader line when paired with braid, giving you a blend of strength, stealth, and stretch.

FLUOROCARBON: *The underwater advantage*

Fluorocarbon line has become a favourite among serious bass and finesse anglers for one main reason: invisibility. Its light-refracting properties are nearly identical to water, making it almost invisible below the surface. This makes it the perfect choice for clear-water conditions or heavily pressured fisheries where fish are wary.

Fluorocarbon sinks, unlike mono or copolymer, which makes it ideal for bottom-contact presentations like jigs, Texas rigs, and drop-shots. It also transmits vibration better, offering superb sensitivity to feel subtle bites or changes in structure. However, fluorocarbon can be stiff and prone to line memory, especially in lighter test weights. Spooling it correctly and stretching it before use helps reduce this issue.

When it comes to knots, fluorocarbon can be tricky. Its slick surface can cause weaker knots if tied carelessly. The **Palomar Knot** works well if tied slowly and snugged down with care, but the **San Diego Jam Knot** is one of the strongest options for fluorocarbon, maintaining nearly full line strength.

Always moisten fluorocarbon before tightening knots to prevent heat build-up, which weakens it.

BRAID: *The power and precision line*

Braided line is the choice when strength, casting distance, and sensitivity matter most. It's made from woven synthetic fibres that produce incredible tensile strength with minimal diameter. That means you can pack more line on your reel and feel even the lightest taps, making it perfect for flipping heavy cover, punching grass mats, or working deep-water jiggging presentations.

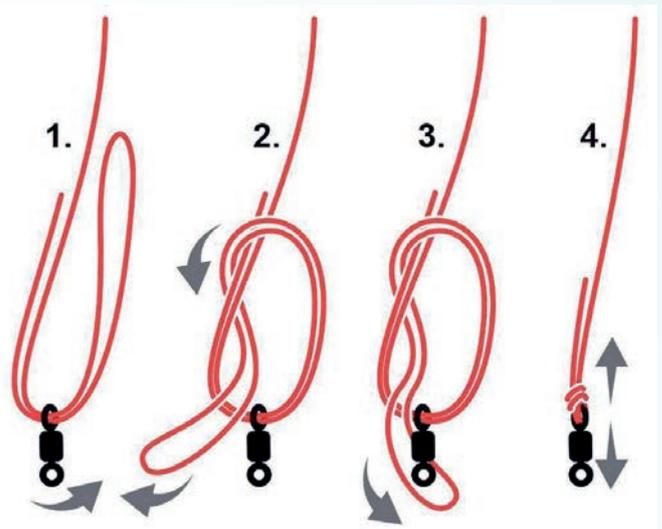
Because braid has no stretch, every twitch of your rod tip translates directly to your lure. This can be a huge advantage for detecting bites or setting the hook quickly, but it also means you must play fish more carefully to avoid pulling hooks free. Braid excels in murky water, heavy vegetation, or around thick structure where brute strength matters more than invisibility.

For knots, braid needs a secure wrap to prevent slippage. The **Palomar Knot** again proves to be one of the most reliable, especially when doubled through the eyelet before tying. Another excellent choice is the **Double Uni Knot**, particularly for joining braid to a fluorocarbon or copolymer leader.

Tip - Always pull slowly and evenly when tightening braid knots to avoid friction burns or line cutting itself.

Blending the best of each

Most anglers today use combinations of these lines



The Palomar Knot

to get the best of all worlds. Braid mainline with a fluorocarbon leader is perhaps the most popular pairing, giving you the strength and casting distance of braid with the invisibility and abrasion resistance of fluorocarbon.

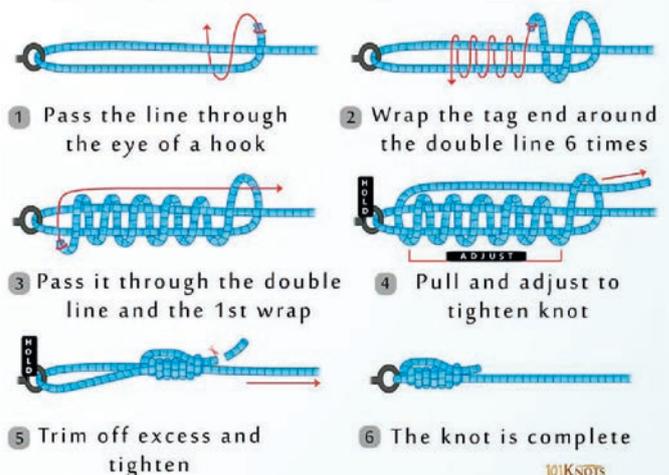
Copolymer can also serve as an excellent leader for braid when fishing crankbaits or spinnerbaits, offering just enough stretch to keep trebles pinned.

Each fishing situation, whether it's targeting bass in shallow grass, chasing trout in crystal-clear rivers, or throwing topwater lures at dawn, has a perfect line type for the job. The real skill lies in understanding how each behaves and how to tie the right knot to make it perform flawlessly.

Final thoughts

Fishing line is more than just a connection between angler and fish - it's the unseen lifeline that determines how well everything else works. Knowing when to fish mono, copolymer, fluorocarbon, or braid can turn frustration into confidence and near-misses into personal bests. Take the time to match your line to your conditions and master a few strong, reliable knots for each. You'll fish smarter, cast smoother, and land more of the ones that matter. 🎣

Tying a San Diego Jam Knot



The San Diego Jam Knot is one of the strongest options for fluorocarbon

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I HEAR YOU ON THAT

Understanding how bass interpret sound



Some classic lipless rattle-trap styled lures

Yes believe it or not, bass do in fact have ears, well only inner ears to be more precise. It is an incredible bodily function that generally speaking all major game fish species have which aids them in their search for underwater prey.

>> *Jay Röhm-Williams*

Although the hearing capabilities of a bass are nowhere on par with ours, through experimentation and research biologists have confirmed that bass indeed can hear underwater.

You can imagine how much of game changing influence this information stirred up when it was first discovered. Needless to say major lure companies immediately began producing the next generation of sound related bass sports fishing baits but we getting ahead of ourselves. To best understand how the factual finds of bass hearing impacted the bass angling community lets dial it right back to a quick anatomy breakdown.

The inner ears of a bass are pores located on the top section of each side of the head almost a short distance behind the eyes. One could even say they are in line with the natural lateral lines of the fish. These internal ear canals are made up of tiny bones called otoliths which detect and interpret sound waves. Now keep in mind bass can only hear very low frequency sound waves, but even so these vibrations can travel up to 4.8 times faster underwater than above. Bass in fact use a combined effort between their swim bladders and lateral lines to amplify and enhance any vibration to the sensory cells within the inner ear. This then transmits a sensory signal to the brain which identifies



The pore openings to the inner ear are set a short distance behind the eyes



The inner ear lined up with the lateral line to work together

the sound wave as either potential food or any other underwater disturbance like birds landing on the surface or boat motors.

If you really think carefully about this it's actually quite a phenomenal feat of evolutionary engineering that nature has conjured up here. I mean bass are known already to possess some incredible characteristics that make them one of the ultimate top, freshwater, predatory fish. Brilliant eyesight, large mouths, broad tails, the ability to change colour and now add hearing to the mix well I mean enough said right? Using the added sensory advantage in combination with a pretty finely tuned lateral line system enables bass to even hone in on the direction of the low frequency sound. Then once the eyes lock on to whatever is generating the sound it can automatically identify it as prey, natural disturbance or danger. That is mind blowing to say the least honestly.

So anything basically that bass have come to identify through their past experience that gives off a particular sound vibration it will now be familiarised with what is making that sound. Whether it is baitfish swimming past, a frog cruising through the water or a grasshopper kicking from above it doesn't matter. If there is a bass close enough to hear that disturbing sound vibration it will pick it up.

Keeping this information in mind led to lure companies actually begin designing baits and lures that gave off some sort of sound vibration that could be heard underwater. The idea took off and bass anglers flocked to the counters in response with amazing results to back up the sales. In fact the first lipless crank bait had a lead slug inside the front to stabilize the lure underwater and when that came loose it rattled around inside. This is how the famous rattle-trap lures were born by accident and soon became a common choice amongst many a seasoned bass angler. Many other forms and designs followed suit with lure manufactures adding all sorts of tiny metal or iron objects inside from ball bearings to shotgun pellets.

It just goes to show how highly evolved these freshwater powerhouse game fish are overall and why bass anglers have to always keep on their toes to catch them. The bigger the specimen the smarter the bass and if we have one more advantage we can adapt our lure presentations towards in order for success sign me up. It also explains why it's so vital to keep our noise levels down to an absolute minimum on the water. If the bass are close and you're thumping around on the bank or above deck the chances are they actually will hear you. Bass angling is an absolute amazing progressive sport and I always say the more you know about your quarry, the better your chances of catching them.

Rods out and safe fishing everyone! 🦁



Using sound to my advantage - The author



Most of my fishing friends know that I adore frog fishing. From hollow bodies floating frogs to soft bodied buzz frogs I love them all! Pop them, walk them, slide them or buzz them, frogs are great search tools and in my mind the ultimate big fish attractor! The trick is to fine tune your approach to frogging!

Frogging can be broken down into two main categories namely hollow body and soft body frogs. Each have their own special needs and after a lot of experimentation I finally came up with an approach for each of them that suited my needs and with a little luck it will help your frog fishing too.

First, let's look at hollow bodied frogs. These have been around for much longer than most people realize but only really came into its own when we started to use braided lines that really allowed us to start fishing these lures in areas where previously we would have been throwing away money! All our equipment is important when frogging, but when it comes to hollow bodies, two things really stand out for me.

Firstly is the rod. This is one area in your fishing that I feel you should opt for a specialist rod. Frogging rods walk a fine line between the finesse required for accurate casts and the brute power needed to handle heavy braid and to lift a big fish through thick vegetation. While most brands offer frogging rods in the 7'2" to 7'6" range, I prefer the slightly shorter 7ft offerings.

The second thing that is really important is the braid you use. With so many quality offerings available, it is easy to get a little confused when selecting the right braid for frogging. To me the breaking strain is not as important as the diameter of the braid. Again it is a balancing act. You want a braid that is thin enough to cut through grass and lily stems, but thick enough not to cut into your reel spool when under strain. For me, I found the magic diameter to be around 0.30mm. In most brands that will be between 50lb and 65lb. It is also important to look for a braid that has a round weave rather than a flat weave, as round weaves have less of a tendency to cut in.

As for reels; as long as it is strong enough to handle the

A dummy's guide to FROGGING



Buzz Frogs require a slightly different approach for me

Summary:

- **Rod:** A specialist rod, 7 to 8ft
- **Line:** 0.30mm ±30lb
- **Hook:** 5/0 heavy wire
- **Retrieve:** Pop them, walk them, slide them or buzz them



strains of heavy line and heavy structure, you should be fine. Since frogging is a technique where the rod imparts most of the action to the lure, the reel speed is not of critical importance. Hollow body frogs are shallow water baits, so fishing them effectively will usually require one to get in between the nasty stuff and we will often fish in areas where a push pole becomes a requirement. Unfortunately no one has yet built a trolling motor that can double as a brush cutter! The trick is to be watchful for surface action between the weed beds and lily pads and then be able to cast accurately and quickly when you see any activity! Depending on the make and model of lure you are using, pop, walk or glide the lure around likely spots, paying particular attention to natural ambush points like openings or channels in the vegetation. The main advantage of a hollow body frog over buzz frogs is that they float and you can park them on the edges of a likely spot and allow the fish to work themselves up into an aggressive state, often resulting in a violent strike on a stationary lure!

Buzz Frogs require a slightly different approach for me. Because for their lower weight and higher wind resistance they often cast like they have a parachute attached to them! They don't go very far and they often don't go in a straight line! A few years ago I over came the distance problem by starting to use a spinning rod to throw buzz frogs. A spinning reel is much more forgiving when it comes to lighter (or just plain odd casting) lures. The free running line will add a few metres to your cast and will also allow you to skip the frog around, tangle free! The other advantage is that you can get away with a thinner diameter

braid, which will also add metres to your casting distance, and before I get complaints and lectures about the power of spinning tackle versus casting tackle. Take a walk around your local tackle shop and you will notice that spinning tackle dominates the off shore market and the monster carp market, which means strength and power are not issues that the bass angler should be concerned about!

The rod I use for instance is an 8ft offering, designed to pull 60lb King Salmon from fast flowing rivers. It weighs and handles no different from my bass rods and can easily dead lift a 4kg bass from the weeds! I have it paired up with a 3000 sized, front dragged spinning reel and 30lb braid. I fish my buzz frogs of a heavy wire 5/0 hook.

While accuracy is an issue with both the lure and the spinning outfit, you can actually achieve quite an impressive level of accuracy and consistency with a little practice. Add to this the fact that a bass will often chase down and destroy a buzz frog from quite a distance, and then a buzz frog makes sense as a search tool to put you on aggressively feeding fish, quickly! I like to work an area by fan casting a buzz frog, again concentrating on likely ambush spots. By slowing down over, or dropping the frog into pockets you can often trigger strikes from following fish. One of my favourite tricks with a buzz frog is to swim it halfway onto a lily-pad, leaving the legs to dangle in the water for a quick "rest" then pulling the frog over the pad and back on its way. You will very often get hit as soon as the frog re-enters the water!

With summer around the corner, getting used to froggin is a great way to search the shallows at dawn and dusk. We have even found that nature is a great help especially at dusk when frog choirs are often singing along specific stretches of shoreline. These are usually prime spots as the bass in these areas seem to be predisposed to eating frogs as part of their diet anyway! 🐸



BASS TACKLE and Stuff



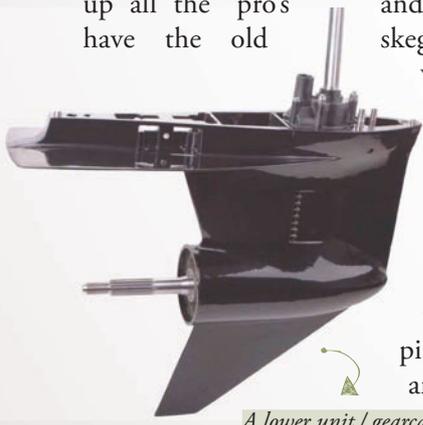
A skeg with a skeg guard

WHENEVER I AM ASKED TO DO AN ARTICLE FOR PUBLICATION, I AM FACED WITH THE ETERNAL QUESTION “WHO WANTS TO HEAR MY OPINION ON WHAT?”

My point of reference is always what affects me in my personal pursuit of these magnificent creatures.

In this instance, I recently have had some serious problems with my outboard's gearbox skeg, the motor overheating, deep cycle batteries, and last but not least, several broken rods.

Let's start with **the skeg on my outboard**. The damage was fairly severe, and having never claimed on my insurance before, I put in a claim, and, in spite of my concern that this could be problematic, my insurance claim was handled very professionally. They paid me out for a new gearbox casing. The end of my problems I thought... not so. Apparently removing gears from an existing gearbox, and fitting them to a new casing is a fairly costly, and, a “not so easy” exercise. There are shims and other “stuff” in the gearbox, that if not perfectly fitted could result in complete gearbox failure. Anyway, after I weighed up all the “pro's and con's” I decided to instead have the old skeg “amputated”, and replaced with an aftermarket piece.



A lower unit / gearcase

This needed to be aluminium welded, and needless to say required a skilled expert. The skeg was welded and returned to me. I noticed that there were quite a few small pin holes along the welded area, and complained to the

company responsible. They re-welded it. It still had pin holes!

Next we embarked on **the re-painting of the gearbox**. Easy peasy... not so much! To cut a long story short, I can tell you that the gearbox was stripped to bare metal and painted no less than five – yip, five times! I am able to share a little gem of information to you about respraying gearboxes. All you need is a good etching primer, and any 2K paint in a colour of your choice. Here's the secret! After painting the unit, do not attempt to put in in the water for at least ten days! After speaking with a hundred “experts”, it became clear that I was “on my own” with this one. Seems that it takes up to two weeks, yip, two weeks for the paint to cure so that it's hard enough that 110km/h water rushing over the gearbox, will not strip the paint. You're welcome #1!

Moving on; I then started experiencing **an overheating problem**. My motor has done 290 hours, and I can tell you that I have never had an overheating problem before. Solution: Replace the water pump impellor. Problem solved? – No! I checked the thermostats twice. They were in perfect working order? Now what? It must be the “pop up valve”. Checked that – perfectly okay... I then spent some time looking at the gearbox and wondering how many blows with a 4lb hammer would put it out of its misery. At this time, I looked at the two little black plastic strainers on the gearbox water intake, and after looking very closely, it became clear that the little shi*ts at the outboard factory, didn't think it was important to make sure that these little plastic strainers could be fitted on the wrong sides. Fitted to the wrong sides would result in directing water away from the pump,



A lithium deep cycle battery

instead were directing it into the pump. That is why at low speeds, the motor was fine, and at higher speeds the overheat alarm would trigger! You're welcome #2!

Deep cycle batteries:

Why is it that when you have a problem with batteries, the suppliers make you feel like you're an idiot, and do not know what you are doing? Batteries are, in my opinion easy to understand. You use them, you charge them and then you use them again? No rocket science needed here. Suppliers will blame your cabling, your charger, your circuit breaker (if you have one – if you don't, they actually are a good idea), you didn't charge it straight after use, you let it get "too flat"... The excuses are endless.

Just last week I tried to buy two new units and my common sense told me that with the ESCOM power crisis (what crisis?) and the sale of hundreds of thousands of inverters (that use deep cycle batteries) that the price of these batteries would have come down. What was I thinking? They've actually gone up. Let's blame the exchange rates for that! I am still looking for batteries...

Now, fishing rods; a subject near and dear to my heart: For the first twenty five years of my bassing career I'd made the decision not to buy the most expensive rods money can buy. Then, about five years ago, I decided that who needs three meals a day anyway, and I bought my first two very expensive rods (with flexible titanium eyes) Wow! They were awesome! And then; five years later... I broke one. I had to pay thousands in "Insurance Premium", and was then given the latest model. All I needed to do was pay in the small fortune! Huh? Now that I'm reading this, I'm wondering what I was thinking. (Wait, it gets better!)



My expensive rods with flexible titanium eyes

I, in my wisdom then decided that I had to have a pair of the newest models and forked out another R7,000.00! (Who needs two meals a day anyway?) Wait, there's more. After a couple of month's use, the one "brand new" rod's eye disintegrated. I was not concerned, because we all know that this brand has an "unconditional" guarantee and after a small "insurance payment", I was sure I would get a new rod. Not so! I was told that company policy is that they reserve the right to "repair" any problems with their rods, and that my unit fell into this category. I complained bitterly that my other expensive rods, as well as my other "cheaper" rods had never experienced this type of eye failure, and therefore it was my opinion that this is a factory fault. On being inspected by the appointed local agent, it was noted that the eyes had been subjected to stress. Huh? That's their job! That's like saying "we make the best rods in the world, but please don't bend them!" Anyway, against my better judgement, I agreed to allow a repair to be done, with the express understanding that should this same unit break on any of the repaired areas, I would expect a new unit with a zero pay in. In spite of this, I must be honest and say that I am feeling less than happy with the outcome. Would I recommend this brand's product? What do you think? 🐟



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Op my houtbordjie

SWEMVISSIES

>> Philip Kemp*

In die warmer maande is swartbaars meer agressief en sal dan 'n swemvissie met mening aanval. Die plastiese swemvissie skeur maklik van die hoek af en moet gedurig vervang word. Hier is 'n vindingryke metode om die verwoesting te verhoed.



Jy benodig 'n plastiese swemvissie van jou keuse, 'n drieangelhoek, skêr, Mojo-loodsinkertjie, oorskoonmaakstokkie en supergom.



Knip die katoenknoppies van die oorskoonmaakstokkie af.



Die stokkie word nou voor by die neus van die swemvissie ingeryg en moet 15mm van die neus af op die ruggie van die swemvissie weer uitkom.



Knip die oortollige stukkie van die stokkie voor by die neus af.



Die lyn word nou voor by die neus deur die hol stokkie geryg aan die anderkant uit.



Gebruik nou jou gunsteling knoop, ek gebruik die Polamarknoop, om die drieangelhoek aan die lyn te knoop.



Die drieangelhoekie word nou in die kunsvissie se rug vasgesteek met twee hoeke nog oop.



Die sinkertjie word nou in die spleet aan die onderkant van die kunsvissie ingedruk. Die sinkertjie gaan die vissie help om nogsteeds regop te swem.



Die sinkertjie word nou met 'n goeie kwaliteit supergom vasgegom.



Die kunsvissie is nou gereed om gehengel te word. Omrede die gewiggie gaan help dat die kunsvissie regop swem sal die hoekies op die ruggie nie maklik vashaak nie. Sodra die baars aan die hoek gehaak word, sal die hoekie van die plastiese kunsvissie skei en sodoende nie skeur nie. Die hengelaar kan die plastiese swemvissie dus oor en oor gebruik sonder om die kunsvissie gedurig te vervang.

Stuur gerus jou fotos en storie vir ons na philip@sabass.com indien jy sukses met hierdie truuk gehad het.

*Philip Kemp is 'n gesoute swartbaarsvanger en assistent-redakteur van SA BASS.

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Change your GAME PLAN



Sexy Shad "Red Eye" Rattle Trap

>> When do you change your game plan? A very interesting question! Whether you are a social angler, or a top tournament fisherman, at some point or another, we are faced with this decision when things are not going well.



Changing your bait size, or even the colour, may just be the trick

Essentially, a game plan is having established or establishing a pattern. One must always remember patterns can change during the course of the day. In the morning, it may have been calm and a top water bait was just the right thing, but by ten o'clock the wind is up, and now throwing a spinnerbait would produce fish.

Back to the big question! There are several scenarios. Firstly, never assume there are no fish that are biting. Sooner or later, you'll find the right lure, colour, presentation and area that will put fish in the boat. Too often I see or hear about anglers, social or tournament that will just abandon a day's fishing because their "game plan" did not work. In situations like this one, one must stay positive and change things a little. Just changing from a Super Fluke to a Junior Fluke on a light Mojo rig can start putting fish on the end of your line. On one occasion in a tournament, our game plan was to fish a drop-off that had brush on it. Another team decided to fish close to us, knowing that we were

>> **Gordon Brown**

fishing a good area. After two hours had passed, we had only caught two small keepers and the other team, one small fish, and decided to leave. My partner and I stuck to our game plan, as we were confident that big fish would move up onto the flats. It wasn't thirty minutes after the other boat left, when we started landing fish over 3kg and easily won that tournament.

On another occasion, we were fishing a Carolina rig in a certain area, and had caught a couple and 1½kg fish. After a while, the bite just stopped! What now? Instead of changing our game plan, we looked for similar areas with the same depth and carried on fishing our Carolina rigs. We filled our bag and upgraded to win another tournament.

Changing your game plan, especially in a tournament, is not an easy decision. If say in practice, all the fish you caught were on a spinnerbait. Now on competition day, you can't buy a bite on a spinnerbait. Now what? There are two mistakes we often make.

- One - fishing in the past; we forget to realise that when the spinnerbait bite was “on” the wind was blowing, mixing up the water, with lots of wave action, making the bass very active. Now, tournament day, not a breath of wind and a clear sky.
- The second mistake is fishing someone else’s pattern. For example, you see someone catching fish on a rattle trap. That is all good and well to a point. So you start fishing a standard half ounce Sexy Shad “Red Eye” Rattle Trap. Guess what! He carries on catching fish and you don’t even get a bite. Why? You can’t see what rattle trap he is fishing. He in fact is fishing a ¾oz Chrome with Blue Back “Lucky Craft” (emitting a different sound) letting it sink to the bottom, before starting to retrieve keeping the bait close to the bottom. I believe I have made my point.

Back to my “no wind” day. Many years ago, John Bulpitt and I realised a game plan change was a must, and started fishing a twitch bait and a lightly weighted Texas worm. Fishing the same areas where the bass were smashing spinnerbaits. The weather conditions stayed the same all day, as was our new game plan, putting together a good solid bag of fish and again taking top honours.

When fishing a tournament, the following factors can influence your game plan:

- How much weight do you need?
- What areas have winning potential?
- What baits and patterns could allow me to win?

With one’s game plan, always try to fish your strengths. By this, I mean, if you’re good and have lots of confidence in fishing plastic worms, don’t fish jigs. Confidence breeds success. One big fish can turn things around in a hurry. Try to become consistent and eliminate as many of the negative things as possible. The better you fish, the better your attitude is going to be. Constantly analysing and trying to figure out your best moves and opportunities. Learn to handle the pressures of tournament situations

positively. A positive mental attitude means positive results.

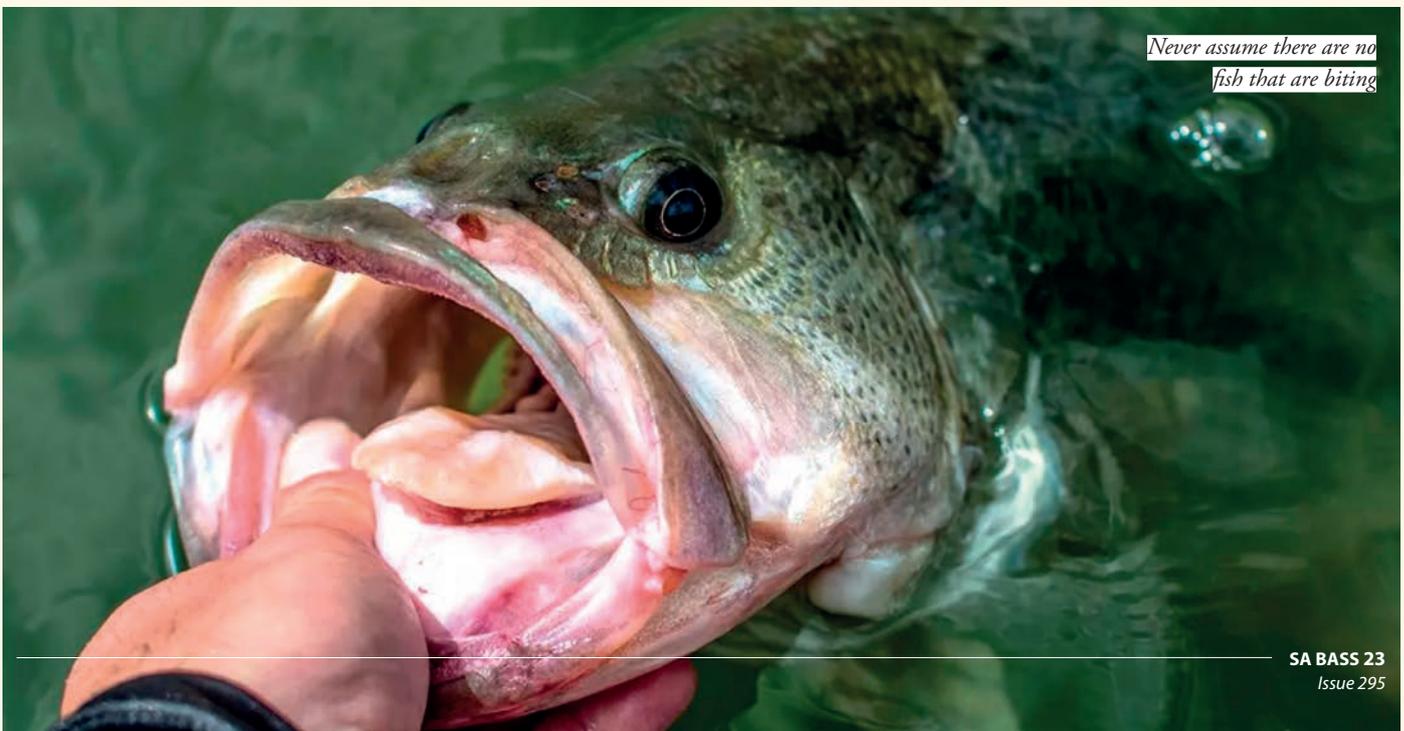
Whether you are social or tournament fishing, never forget your fishing partner within your game plan. Very often you partner may think “out of the box” which can positively influence your game plan. The one thing when you change your game plan, and it does not work out, one can go back to plan “A”. Changing bait size, colour or profile may be just the thing.

Finally, when you have only a few hours of fishing time left, and have not put a fish in the live-well, and all your “game plans” have evaporated into thin air – this calls for desperation tactics. Now the question that emerges is one of whether it is better to “run-and-gun” and cover a great deal of water quickly, or to slow down and fish the same area more thoroughly and efficiently?

I believe that question would probably be a 50/50 answer. The right answer would be the tactic that best suits the angler’s style of fishing. For example, a power fisherman will always go for a “run-and-gun” tactic, the more casts one makes, the better chance you have at catching a fish, while other anglers will fish slower and more thoroughly.

Another option is to start fishing like it’s your first day at the tournament. This happened to John and I on another tournament. It was one of those “blue bird” days, and all the productive areas just went dead on everyone. When we decided to fish a completely new area with no visible cover. On scouting the area with our onboard electronics, we found a second ridge off the bank that was holding fish in 15ft of water. Slowly fishing a light Mojo rig and a finesse worm was good enough to hook and land two fish over 1½kg, together with our first day’s weight, won us the competition.

Whatever your game plan is, and what you decide, remember there are always fish on the bite, and there is a game plan behind the “game plan”. Remember bassing is a wonderful sport, so enjoy and have fun in the game plan. 🐟



Never assume there are no fish that are biting

AVOIDING THE SUMMER DEAD ZONES

Advice on how to sidestep fishing dead water in summer



Beautiful lunker caught suspended above the thermocline
- Photo by Bradley van Vuuren

>> Jay Röhm-Williams

The “dead zone” is an area you never want to be fishing and if you are, you would preferably want someone to tell you sooner rather than later. There can be

often more than one dead zone on a particular stretch of water, I mean it's tricky out there. That's why knowing what to be conscious of as a bass angler will help you to avoid these areas on any day as best as possible. There's of course no promises you won't come across a patch of water where there are just simply no fish, but we will do our best to guide you towards gold and greener underwater pastures.

When we talk about the “dead zone” we are referring to an area of water where the conditions are not favourable to finding bass there. Been aware of what to look out for when out on the water will put you in higher percentage areas quicker saving you precious time by avoiding dead zones. Generally speaking we know off by heart that weather conditions, seasonal changes and water temperature are among some of the main standout factors that can directly impact bass behaviour. However there are a few other key observations that will help steer you clear from these so called “dead zones” of water.

UNDERSTANDING THE THERMOCLINE - AVOID FISHING TOO DEEP

Especially in summer months it is important to remember that heat will remove dissolved oxygen from water faster. If the water is not moving or flowing it will start to stratify and form a thermocline. This means simply put that the water above the thermocline line will have more supply of dissolved oxygen than the water below it. How we can determine what not to do here in an instance of say fishing on a hot summer day is then think that the fish have gone deep. If we proceed to go deep without establishing first what the rest of the water column is doing we might just end up fishing below where the fish actually are. By finding the right depth where the fish are positioned we can avoid fishing dead zones without wasting too much time.

Helpful hints

- If you have access to a boat and electronics go ahead and turn the sensitivity up. Look for a faint sort of line and this will be more or less the thermocline as cooler water below will be denser.
- Do not fish below where vegetation has stopped growing. If there is a lack of visible underwater vegetation there is generally going to be less oxygen at that depth.
- If there is no noticeable baitfish at a particular depth, do not fish deeper than where the baitfish are swimming.

NOT FISHING SHALLOW ENOUGH

Sometimes you will be amazed at just how shallow bass will be sitting in the water column especially in the summer months. If the waters become really heated up enough in some cases algae blooms begin to appear all over which block out sunlight from above. This cuts off underwater vegetation from direct sunlight causing a major loss of oxygen to those particular areas of water. Bass will then pull up tight to the shoreline where the oxygen supply is better. As bass anglers this can often be overlooked leaving us targeting offshore banks just too far out of reach from where these shallow bass are sitting.

Helpful hint

- In sections of water where there are signs of algae bloom in heated waters fish directly behind that area closer to the bank.

AVOID INCORRECT FISHING TECHNIQUES AND LURE SELECTIONS

If we get the incorrect depth or positioning of where we think the bass are sitting then this can lead to knock on problems. This will lead us only deeper down the “dead zone” rabbit hole and further away from actually catching any fish. Targeting the incorrect depths will usually translate to an angler possibly then fishing with either the incorrect approach or lure types. In these instances then it will be easy to see how we are fishing too far below the bass with say Texas rigged lures or weighted lure class types such as jigs. We could be finesse fishing the bottom where we should be flipping and pitching in the middle water column and upwards.

Helpful hint

- First establish the correct depth where fish are most likely to be present and then fine tune your approach according to the conditions.

BE AWARE OF YOUR NOISE LEVELS

Often we forget that bigger specimens of bass did not become massive overnight. Bass have a high sense of awareness about them and if we forget to keep our approach quiet and stealthy then we are only setting ourselves back. Boat noises, idle chatter and loud bait presentations entering the water all have a negative effect on bass prompting them to slip away quietly. This then often leaves an area void of fish except maybe smaller specimens that have less life experience than larger fish.

Helpful hints

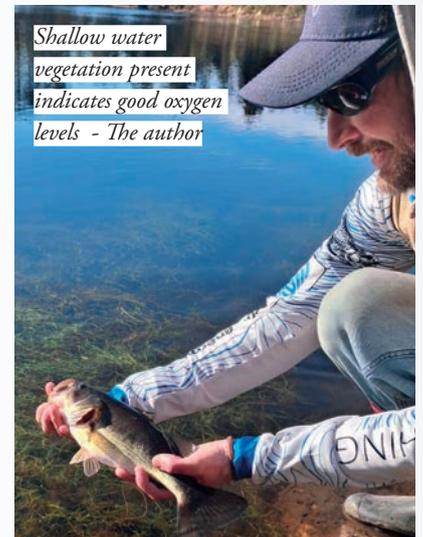
- Keep noise levels to an absolute minimum.
- Avoid high pressured areas where other anglers often fish.
- Cut your boat engines or set your trolling motors very low before you reach your targeted area.



Good size chunk not far off from the bank vegetation line -
Bradley van Vuuren

Bass fishing in the summer months can be a lot of fun and most bass anglers will come out of the woodwork as the warmer weather approaches. Don't get caught up in all the hype though or you might just find yourself fishing dead zoned water like the rest of the pack. Rather strategize, separate yourself and pay attention out there on the water. There are plenty of dead zone areas out there at any venue so best sidestep them and get your share of summer fun with rods bent full of awesome catches!

Rods out and safe fishing everyone! 🐟



Shallow water
vegetation present
indicates good oxygen
levels - The author

HOT TIPS

- If you have access to a boat and electronics go ahead and turn the sensitivity up. Look for a faint sort of line and this will be more or less the thermocline as cooler water below will be denser.
- Do not fish below where vegetation has stopped growing. If there is a lack of visible underwater vegetation there is generally going to be less oxygen at that depth.
- If there is no noticeable baitfish at a particular depth, do not fish deeper than where the baitfish are swimming.
- In sections of water where there are signs of algae bloom in heated waters fish directly behind that area closer to the bank.
- Keep noise levels to an absolute minimum.
- Avoid high pressured areas where other anglers often fish.
- Cut your boat engines or set your trolling motors very low before you reach your targeted area.
- First establish the correct depth where fish are most likely to be present and then fine tune your approach according to the conditions.



Bass can be caught on several different lures during summer



Many anglers fish deep structure using Carolina rigged worms

SUMMER BASS FISHING SECRETS

>> Mark Bilbrey

Have you ever heard of migrating routes? Well, mature bass have definite routes that they use during the summer. The bass released following a tournament will eventually return to the approximate area that they were caught from.

This was proven by biologist after tagging tournament fish as they were caught and electronically tracking them when released, the biologist proved the theory that they are territorial creatures of nature. Some fish only moved an average distance of 200 to 300 meters to forage after returning to the location where they were caught. With this knowledge it is now known that by naturally following the break lines or channels from their primary habitat location to forage ambush areas, bass become even more predictable creatures.

Many of the larger bass are solitary specimens spending time alone and taking advantage of less competition for food, however in seasonal feeding periods territory can overlap, and when schooled they naturally school by size. Forage areas near points, ridges, or humps can get congested in the summer months as the fish seek the bait that is drawn to these areas. In water ranging from 3 to 6m in depth the large bass feed on schooled bait fish. The amount of light and weather conditions directly affect the duration of feeding periods for bass. On overcast days, the bite will often last longer than on sunny days. The key to locating a trophy bass is knowing these routes in which the bass take to the feeding areas and understanding what time or conditions trigger them to move.

By understanding the travel (or migration) of the big bass will make you a better summer angler. By nature they

will suspend in clear deep water over structure, but will follow break lines up to humps, ridges, and points to feed, just as other fish that hold around heavy cover do. Bass tend to follow break lines to feeding areas. Most will feed in summer between 3 and 6m deep then move out to deeper more oxygenated water to rest, returning to deep water by the same route following the break lines. In stained water bass do not tend to suspend as much as they relate to cover for ambush.

Study your topographical map or electronics looking for deep areas that have humps, ridges, points, old river channels, old road beds, or a grass line in the 3 to 6m range. Superior electronic maps can highlight the target range, quickly eliminating non-productive water. The types of structure in the target range of depth will attract the bait followed by the bass that can be caught on several different lures. Many anglers fish the deep structure such as ledges with a big ten inch Carolina rigged worms, and there are those anglers that go to the deep-diving crankbaits for summer success. Colours choices will vary depending on the water, weather and light conditions. During summer the angler's choice in colour can make all of the difference. During a slow bite in summer do not be afraid to try different colours in extreme contrast from natural to florescent colours.

One favourite techniques for catching bass in the summer is swimming and shaking a jig and trailer. Start the retrieve from the target depth of 3 to 6m with the rod in a raised position while shaking the jig on a slack line with quarter-turns of the reel handle, almost as you would walk top water baits on the surface. Bass suspended over deep water structure or deep grasses can often be caught with this simple jig presentation in summer.

During summer bass fishing cannot be expected to be as productive as it is in spring and in the fall, but by understanding migration and feeding habits of the fish, anglers can gain an advantage by using technology and proven techniques. Be careful in the heat, protect yourself from the harmful effects of the sun and stay hydrated. Your safety is an important part of fishing. 🐟



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LIVING LEGENDS

Team USA Visits South Africa

>> Philip Kemp*



When the World Bass Fishing Championships came to Arabie Dam in September 2025, it wasn't just a major event for South African anglers, it was a global celebration of the sport. After their dominant performance and overall victory, Team USA made a special stop in Boksburg to visit the brand-new branch of Mias Angling.

The excitement in the air was electric as fans, young and old, gathered to meet three of the sport's biggest names; Jacob Wheeler, Ott DeFoe, Scott Martin, Drew Gill, Logan Parks and Kyle Welchure. SA BASS Magazine was there to capture the moment and sit down with the champions for an exclusive chat.

A morning at Mias Boksburg

The new Mias Angling store buzzed with energy. Local anglers packed in shoulder to shoulder, phones out, hoping for a handshake, a photo, or an autograph from the visiting legends. Between the crowds and the camera flashes, we managed to sit down with the trio for a relaxed conversation about their experience in South Africa, their impressions of Arabie Dam, and their love for the sport.

INTERVIEW WITH JACOB WHEELER

SA BASS

Jacob, welcome to South Africa! What did you think of the fishing at Arabie Dam?

Wheeler: "It's been incredible. Arabie is beautiful - completely different from what we're used to back home. The fish are strong, aggressive, and I've got to say, the scenery here is just next level. It's one of the most unique places I've ever fished."

SA BASS

You're known for your adaptability as an angler. How did you approach this new environment?

Wheeler: "You've got to learn fast. I noticed South African anglers rely a lot on flipping and pitching heavy cover, which I love. I tried to blend that local power approach with some of my finesse tactics from back home. That balance worked well for me, but the key is always respecting the fish and the water."

CHATting WITH OTT DEFOE

SA BASS

Ott, you're known as a detail-oriented fisherman. What surprised you most about fishing in South Africa?

DeFoe: "The weather! It can change so quickly. We had days where the wind and sunlight totally shifted the bite. You can't just stick to one plan here. You've got to keep multiple setups ready, and that's what makes it exciting."

SA BASS

And what did you think of the local anglers?

DeFoe: "I've got a ton of respect for them. South African anglers are really skilled, technical and precise. I watched a few guys who could place a cast perfectly into thick cover over and over again. That takes serious talent. It reminds you that bass fishing truly is a global sport."

A WORD WITH SCOTT MARTIN

SA BASS **Scott, you're not only a world-class angler but also a YouTube star with a massive global following. How has it felt connecting with fans here in South Africa?**

Martin: "It's been amazing. Sometimes you don't realize how far your videos travel until you're halfway across the world and someone says, 'Hey, I grew up watching your channel!' That means the world to me. The people here are so genuine, so passionate about fishing, it's been humbling."

SA BASS **You come from a family of bass fishing legends. What do you think of the young anglers you've met here?**

Martin: "It reminds me of how I started, that pure love for fishing. I saw kids lined up outside Mias this morning, holding rods and wearing fishing caps, eyes full of excitement. That's what keeps our sport alive. South Africa's youth scene has real potential. Keep that fire burning, and I promise the world will see more South Africans on international stages."

A shared passion

All three anglers shared a similar sentiment during their visit - that South Africa not only has world-class water but also world-class anglers. They were impressed with the local talent and the spirit of the community.

As Jacob Wheeler put it: "If you're a young angler here, keep grinding, keep learning. You've got the passion and the water, that's all you need to surprise the world."

Closing thoughts

The visit to Mias Angling Boksburg was far more than a store event, it was a celebration of shared passion, culture, and camaraderie. Fans left inspired, the Americans left impressed, and everyone walked away reminded that bass fishing isn't just a sport - it's a universal language.

With the success of the World Championships at Arabie Dam and moments like these bringing anglers together, one thing is certain: bass fishing is making the world smaller, one cast at a time.

SA BASS Magazine extends its sincere thanks to Mias Boksburg, as well as Darren and Hazel Hockley from **Team Time for Us**, for making it all possible. 🐟

**Philip Kemp is a seasoned black bass angler and assistant editor of SA BASS.*



Adrian Viljoen had the opportunity to meet one of his heroes, Ott DeFoe



The author and Jacob Wheeler



Philip Kemp, Scott Martin and Maurice Kemp



The USA World Champions took time out to visit the new Mias Boksburg branch



**WE ARE
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Big Bass Fest 2025 – A Day to Remember at Lake Oanob

The calm waters of **Lake Oanob** came alive on the 20th with the buzz of boats, the anticipation of tight lines, and the cheers of anglers chasing glory in the annual **Big Bass Fest**. With **N\$1,000 up for grabs every hour** for the heaviest bass, competition was fierce from the very first cast. Thanks to the generous backing of **King Price** and **Lake Oanob Resorts**, the event was not only about fishing, but also about community, excitement, and celebrating the sport.

The day unfolded with thrilling moments at the weigh station as each hour revealed a new champion. From the early-morning strike to the nail-biting final weigh-in, anglers gave it their all, and the crowd was treated to some impressive catches.

Hourly Big Bass Winners:

- **Hour 1:** James v Rooyen – 0.73kg
- **Hour 2:** Fred Schoeman – 2.09kg
- **Hour 3:** Duan Kotze – 1.13kg
- **Hour 4:** Willie Sowden – 1.08kg



Johan Coetzee with the biggest Bass of 3.120kg

- **Hour 5:** Hanro Laubscher – 1.61kg
- **Hour 6:** Johan Coetzee – 3.12kg (the biggest bass of the fest!)
- **Hour 7:** Jürgen Geiger – 1.69kg
- **Hour 8:** Johan Coetzee – 2.50kg
- **Hour 9:** Richard Grant – 2.54kg
- **Hour 10:** Duan Kotze – 2.05kg



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While every winner had their moment in the spotlight, it was **Johan Coetzee** who stole the show with a massive **3.12kg bass**, the heaviest of the day. His catch not only secured the hourly prize but also earned him bragging rights as the overall champion of this year's Big Bass Fest.

Beyond the hourly competition, the event also counted towards the **King Price Team Tournament Trail**, adding even more intensity to the day. Teams fought hard to secure their spot on the leaderboard, with consistent performance making all the difference.

King Price Team Tournament Trail Results:

- 1. PapopdieMenu** – Johan Coetzee / Ethan du Toit (Junior) – 6.45kg
- 2. Team Kotze** – Duan Kotze / Archer Kotze (Junior) – 5.99kg
- 3. Ruffnek Bass Warehouse** – Jürgen Geiger / James van Rooyen / Dex Geiger (Junior) – 5.03kg
- 4. WBM Lureworks 2** – Richard Grant / Jan Jansen – 4.95kg
- 5. King Price** – Chris Labuschagne / Hanro Laubscher / Hanro Labuschagne (Junior) – 4.29kg



Duan Kotze, with one of the big bass caught and giving the overall individual title on the day

Top 3 Biggest Bass of the Day:

- 1. Johan Coetzee** – 3.12kg
- 2. Richard Grant** – 2.54kg
- 3. Johan Coetzee** – 2.50kg

With tight battles at both the individual and team levels, the **Big Bass Fest 2025** proved once again why it's one of Namibia's premier fishing events. Between the hourly excitement, the overall bragging rights, and the chase for precious **MLF and NBAA points**, anglers left with stories to tell — and plenty of motivation for the season ahead.

BASICS FOR BEGINNERS

>> Hannes Lindeque



Moody

Let the fish tell you what mood they are in and what presentation they desire.



Reaction bite

Retrieve your lure or bait quickly, creating a reaction strike from bass.



Top water

If you observe surface activity, it is a clear sign to rig up a topwater lure, especially early morning and late afternoon.



Hookset

Excessive force could result in ripping the bait away from the bass, or snapping your line.



Overcast

On overcast, cloudy days, bass are more active, typically staying between midwater and the surface.



Hot tip

Adjust your lure's retrieve speed to water clarity. In clear water use a jerk-and-pause action, but apply a constant retrieve in murky water conditions.

Where

Bass tend to be territorial and move around within certain "home ranges."



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Die Haldesaal MIKE MCKINNES

Wanneer mens oor legendes in die wêreld van baarshengel praat, kan die naam Mike McKinnis nie agterweë bly nie. Hy is nie net 'n hengelaar nie, maar 'n ware pionier, mentor en bouer van gemeenskappe, 'n man wie se invloed diep in die wortels van moderne baarshengelkompetisie lê.



Mike McKinnis en sy goeie vriend, Mark Zona, is saam in 2024 in die heldesaal opgeneem

As deel van die Haldesaal is McKinnis se nalatenskap een wat oor dekades heen die gesig van sporthengel verander het, van plaaslike Amerikaanse mere tot internasionale verhoë soos Major League Fishing (MLF).

Die beginjare

Mike McKinnis het sy liefde vir sporthengel op 'n jong ouderdom ontdek. Hy het grootgeword in die hart van die Amerikaanse Midwest, waar hy as kind, met 'n eenvoudige stok en 'n oormaat nuuskierigheid, ure by plaasdamme deurgebring het. Daardie passie as jong seun sou later die dryfveer word agter 'n loopbaan wat baie mense se siening van hengel drasties verander het.

>> Philip Kemp*

As 'n jong man het McKinnis die wêreld van kompetisiehengel betree, maar dit was gou duidelik dat sy visie verder gestrek het as net om vis te vang. Hy wou die ervaring van hengel verander, dit uit die skadu van 'n stil tydverdryf bring en omskep in iets wat miljoene kan geniet. 'n Sport met sy eie helde, sy eie verhale en sy eie glorie.

Die televisie-revolusie

Wat Mike McKinnis van baie ander onderskei het, was sy rol in die media. In 'n tyd toe hengel nog grotendeels as net 'n stokperdjie gesien is, het McKinnis die potensiaal gesien om dit na die televisieskerm te bring. Hy het besef

dat die emosie, die spanning en die taktiese denke agter elke vang nie net vir hengelaars interessant sou wees nie, maar ook vir kykers wêreldwyd.

So is **JM Associates** gebore, 'n produksiehuis wat later die dryfkrag sou word agter sommige van die bekendste visvangprogramme in die VSA. Onder McKinnes se leiding het reekse soos **The Bassmasters**, **FLW Outdoors** en uiteindelik **Major League Fishing** miljoene kykers bereik. Hy het nie net die kamera op hengelaars gerig nie – hy het hulle verhare vertel, hulle menslikheid gewys, en 'n hele generasie geïnspireer om 'n visstok op te tel.

Major League Fishing – 'n Nuwe era

Teen die laat 2000s het McKinnes weer 'n rewolusie begin – hierdie keer saam met legendes soos Gary Klein en Boyd Duckett. Hulle het 'n droom gedeel: 'n nuwe formaat wat die opwindende van baarsvang drasties meer opwindend sou maak. Geen inweegtafels, geen geheime sakke vol vis nie, net regstreekse aksie, waar elke vis onmiddellik gewee, geregistreer en vrygelaat word.

Hierdie konsep het gelei tot die stigting van Major League Fishing (MLF), 'n projek wat McKinnes help bou en bestuur het. Vandag is MLF nie net 'n toernooi nie – dis 'n wêreldwye handelsmerk, 'n professionele liga wat die standaard vir volhoubare hengel en eerlike kompetisie begin stel het. Onder McKinnes se visie het MLF baanbrekerswerk gedoen in tegnologie, "live scoring" en omgewingsbewustheid; aspekte wat die sport na 'n nuwe professionele vlak geneem het.

'n Mentor en mens

Wat vriende, kollegas en hengelaars altyd van Mike McKinnes onthou, is sy nederigheid. Al het hy groot roem en erkenning verwerf, het hy altyd sy fokus behou, mense. Hy het jong hengelaars aangemoedig, produksiespanne opgelewer, en altyd die waarde van eer, respek en passie beklemtoon.

Baie van vandag se groot sterre, van Kevin VanDam tot Jacob Wheeler, het al openlik erken dat McKinnes se visie en geloof in die sport hulle geïnspireer het om beter te wees, nie net as hengelaars nie, maar as ambassadeurs van baarshengel.

Die Haldesaal Erkenning

In 2019 is Mike McKinnes opgeneem in die Bass Fishing Hall of Fame, 'n eer wat slegs aan die invloedrykste

figure in die geskiedenis van die sport toegeken word. Sy bydraes tot televisie, bemerking, en die groei van professionele hengel het hom 'n plek gegee tussen die ware legendes. Maar vir McKinnes was dit nooit oor persoonlike eer nie, dit was oor die nalatenskap wat hy vir toekomstige geslagte wou los.

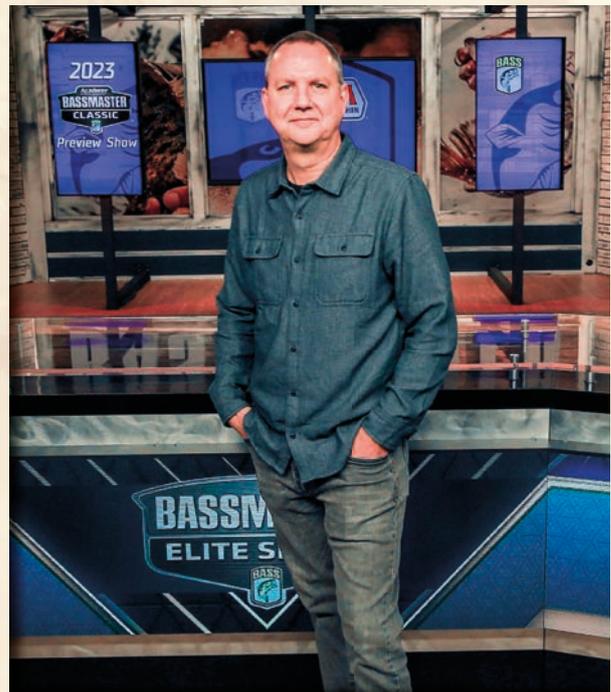
Sy nalatenskap

Vandag, selfs na sy aftrede, bly McKinnes 'n gerespekteerde stem in die wêreld van hengel. Sy invloed leef voort in elke episode van MLF, in elke jong hengelaar wat groot droom, en in elke vis wat veilig terug in die water vrygelaat word. Hy het gewys dat hengel meer is as 'n stok en 'n lyn, dit is 'n manier van lewe, 'n storie van mens en natuur, en 'n geleentheid om te groei.

Mike McKinnes het nie net die sport van baarshengel gebou nie, hy het 'n kultuur geskep. Sy nalatenskap herinner ons dat ware sukses nie net gemeet word aan trofee of vangste nie, maar aan die mense wat jy inspireer en die verskil wat jy maak.

'n Ware Haldesaal held – in naam, daad, en hart. 🐟

**Philip Kemp is 'n gesoute swartbaarshengelaar en assistent-redakteur van SA BASS.*



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FISHING 101:

Early summer bass fishing

When the first warmth of summer settles over the water, bass anglers know it's time to start thinking differently. Early summer is a special transition period, when bass move from their spring spawning habits to the more aggressive, food-driven patterns of summer.



When looking for bass, look for places that offer both food and shelter - Photo: Aly/Canva

For beginners, this is one of the best times to get hooked on bass fishing, because the fish are active, visible, and ready to bite. Understanding how bass behave, where they go, and what lures to use will help you turn those early attempts into rewarding catches.

Understanding early summer bass behavior

In spring, bass move into shallow water to spawn, but by early summer, as water temperatures climb into the low 20s to upper 20s Celsius, they begin to shift toward deeper and cooler areas. The spawn may be over, but the fish are still close to the shallows where food is abundant. Males stay near nests for a short while to protect fry, while larger females move toward deeper edges, submerged vegetation, or drop-offs.

Because oxygen levels and water temperature vary between morning, midday, and evening, bass will also adjust their depth through the day. They often feed shallow early and late, then retreat to deeper shade or cover when

the sun is high. This pattern makes timing an essential part of early summer fishing success.

Finding the right spots

In early summer, look for places that offer both food and shelter. Bass like structure, anything that breaks the monotony of open water. Weeds, docks, rock piles, laydowns, and underwater points are all prime targets. Shady areas under overhanging trees, submerged timber, or around lily pads also attract fish seeking cooler water.

If you're fishing from the bank, focus on shaded pockets or small inlets where baitfish gather. From a boat, explore drop-offs near spawning flats or creek channels leading to deeper water. These transition zones are like bass highways, they use them to travel between shallow feeding grounds and their deeper daytime homes.

Lures and presentations that work

Choosing the right lure can feel overwhelming, but

Topwater baits are especially exciting during early mornings and calm evenings



early summer bass aren't particularly picky as long as your presentation looks natural. Topwater baits are especially exciting this time of year. Early mornings or calm evenings are perfect for walking a surface lure, popping a plug, or casting a hollow-bodied frog over vegetation. Few things compare to the thrill of seeing a bass explode on the surface.

As the day warms up, move to sub-surface baits. Soft plastic worms, stick baits, and creature baits rigged Texas-style or wacky-style are great around weeds and cover. Spinnerbaits and crankbaits also perform well, especially when worked along points and drop-offs. Try a medium-speed retrieve and vary it slightly to find what triggers the bite.

Water clarity can help you choose lure colors. In clear water, natural colors like green pumpkin, watermelon, or silver shad look realistic. In stained or murky water, go for something brighter, chartreuse, black, or white can make your bait stand out.

Timing and technique

The best time to fish early summer bass is when the light is low. Early morning and late afternoon are prime windows, as bass hunt actively in the shallows. During the heat of the day, slow down your presentation and target shaded areas or deeper cover.

Patience is key. Cast repeatedly to good-looking spots and change your lure or retrieve if you don't get results. Bass often strike when your bait pauses or changes direction unexpectedly, so experiment with subtle twitches or brief stops in your retrieve.

Bass often strike when your bait pauses, or changes direction unexpectedly



Wind can also work in your favor. A gentle breeze stirs up baitfish and creates ripples that make bass less wary. Fish wind-blown banks or points where the movement of water concentrates food.

Gear made simple

You don't need expensive gear to start catching bass. A medium-heavy action spinning or baitcasting rod paired with a reliable reel will handle most early summer techniques. Use a quality 8 to 12 lb monofilament or fluorocarbon line if you're fishing around lighter cover, and switch to a braided line if you're working thick weeds or heavy timber.

Keep your tackle simple: a few topwater lures, soft plastics, spinnerbaits, and a crankbait or two. With those basics, you can fish nearly any early summer situation.

Reading the water and learning patterns

Part of becoming a better angler is observing how conditions affect fish behavior. Pay attention to where you get bites and what time of day they happen. Is the water clearer in one area than another? Did the bass hit near vegetation, rocks, or open water? These clues will help you develop patterns that make future trips more productive.

Don't be afraid to move around. If you spend twenty minutes in one area without action, change depth, switch lures, or try another spot. Bass fishing rewards those who adapt quickly to the fish and conditions.

Early summer is one of the most forgiving times to start bass fishing. The fish are active, the weather is pleasant, and the techniques are easy to learn. With a bit of patience and practice, you'll begin to recognize where bass live, how they move, and what they like to eat.

The real joy of bass fishing comes not just from catching fish, but from understanding the rhythm of the water and the habits of one of nature's most fascinating freshwater predators. So grab your rod, find a good stretch of water, and enjoy those early summer mornings when the bass are biting and the lake is alive with possibility. 🎣



With a few basic baits you can fish nearly any summer situation

Z-Man Celebrates Three Decades

What began in 1995 as a small operation crafting silicone skirts has grown into one of the most influential independent forces in the fishing tackle world. Founded by visionary entrepreneur Jerry Zucker, Z-Man® Fishing Products celebrates 30 years of redefining tackle innovation, environmental stewardship, performance on the water, and people-powered growth. Still proudly family-owned, Z-Man remains deeply rooted in the values that shaped its early days, collaboration, integrity, and a relentless focus on the angler.

Humble beginnings, bold vision

Z-Man's journey began on October 20, 1995 in a modest 5,000-square-foot facility, producing silicone skirts for spinnerbaits and bass jigs. For the next decade, the company quietly supplied bulk skirts to lure companies like Strike King and War Eagle, earning a reputation for quality and reliability.

But Zucker, the "Z-Man" himself, had bigger plans. In the early 2000s, he envisioned a new kind of fishing lure made from thermoplastic elastomer (TPE), a material that was 100% non-toxic, incredibly durable, and naturally buoyant. While most soft baits were made from plastisol, Zucker saw the potential for something tougher, cleaner, and more effective.

The Birth of ElaZtech®

Over the next few years, Z-Man's team worked tirelessly to perfect its proprietary ElaZtech® material and the specialized manufacturing processes required to mould it. When the calendar flipped to 05/05/05, a day that will be forever remembered in Z-Man history, the formula was officially finalized and the first batch of ElaZtech baits were moulded. The result was a soft plastic lure that was 10X Tough, capable of withstanding hundreds of strikes from toothy saltwater predators and aggressive freshwater bass alike.

After initially producing TPE baits on a contract basis for other lure companies, Z-Man took control of its destiny in 2008, launching its ElaZtech product line under its own brand. Not only did Z-Man pioneer the use of TPE in fishing lures but to this day, remains the only TPE lure manufacturer in the United States.

The ChatterBait breakthrough

Around the same time the Z-Man crew was cranking out its first ElaZtech baits, a home-brewed lure innovation was making waves on the bass fishing scene. Invented by Ron Davis and initially built in a garage in South Carolina with his son, the ChatterBait® bladed jig exploded in popularity after breakout tournament success in 2006. When demand outpaced their production capacity, the Davises turned to their silicone skirt supplier Z-Man for help. Z-Man stepped in to manufacture and distribute ChatterBait lures, eventually acquiring the patents and trademarks and building out the ChatterBait product line to

include a full array of bladed jigs for all applications and budgets.

Today, the ChatterBait® Elite EVO™ and ChatterBait® JackHammer™ (co-developed with Evergreen International) are staples on pro tours, helping anglers win Bassmaster Classics, MLF Redcrest Championships, and countless other tournaments ranging from professional events to local derbies.

Ned Rig: The finesse, and ElaZtech, revolution

While ElaZtech found early success in saltwater and international markets, the development of the Ned Rig finesse system in 2015 truly put this super plastic on freshwater bass anglers' radars. Inspired by angling legend Ned Kehde and perfected with the help of finesse fishing guru Drew Reese, the system paired Z-Man's Finesse TRD™ stick worm with ShroomZ™ jig heads, offering unmatched buoyancy, durability and subtle action. The Ned Rig has since become one of the most effective, and accessible, techniques in modern bass fishing.

Z-Man's finesse offerings didn't just introduce a new technique to the bass fishing world, they redefined what anglers expected from soft plastics. The manifold benefits of ElaZtech® opened the eyes of serious bass anglers and fuelled widespread adoption across a growing line-up of bait profiles. That momentum reached a defining moment in 2021, when Jeff "Gussy" Gustafson clinched victory at the Bassmaster Classic on the Tennessee River using the 4" Scented Jerk ShadZ™. Today, ElaZtech baits are a fixture in the tournament scene, consistently appearing in the tackle arsenals of top-10 finishers across all major tours.

Sustainability and stewardship

Z-Man's commitment to conservation is woven into its DNA, reflecting founder Jerry Zucker's belief in Tikkun Olam, a Hebrew term for repairing and improving the world. ElaZtech's durability reduces plastic waste, and its non-toxic composition minimizes environmental impact. The company has implemented solar energy systems, launched recycling initiatives, and actively supports organizations like Captains for Clean Water and Release Over 20.

Z-Man also funds marine research at the University of Florida's Nature Coast Biological Station, helping protect the fisheries that fuel our passion and ensuring future generations can experience the same connection to water, wildlife, and purpose.



Livingston Lures

Livingston Lures, the global leader in fishing lure technology, is once again pushing the boundaries of angling innovation with the expansion and reinvigoration of its Electronic Baitfish Sound (EBS™) Technology. This cutting-edge technology integrates advanced electronics that replicate the actual biological sounds of baitfish and prey species, bringing anglers closer than ever to absolute realism on the water.

Each Livingston lure is engineered with precision to match both the appearance and the sound signature of its target species. For instance, shad patterns reproduce the acoustic profile of a distressed shad, while frog models emit authentic bullfrog calls, enticing predators through both visual and auditory cues. The result is a scientifically tuned presentation that triggers instinctive strikes when other baits fail.

“We’re proud to be at the forefront of fishing technology,” said Erick Arnoldson, Vice President of Livingston Lures. “Our newly approved EBS™ patent now incorporates proprietary materials that improve visibility on forward-facing sonar.”

In addition to advancements for sport anglers, Livingston Lures has been granted U.S. and international patents for its Commercial Fishing Callers, a groundbreaking application of EBS™ technology. These electronic sound devices are



currently being used to harvest Maine lobster, spiny lobster, blue crab, and snow crab along the coasts of Florida and beyond, offering a sustainable alternative to traditional baiting practices.

“We’re very proud that our commercial callers are helping reduce the need for traditional bait,” Arnoldson added. “They represent a major step toward conservation and sustainability within the commercial fishing industry.”

Multiple universities are now conducting independent studies to further explore the ecological and economic potential of Livingston’s patented technologies, research that could reshape the future of both recreational and commercial fisheries worldwide.

Berkley Goes Shallow

Berkley is adding the perfect complement to an angler favourite with the all-new Shallow Money Badger. Still built around the same aggressive, hard-thumping action as the original, the Shallow Money Badger adds an ultra-durable, circuit board bill, engineered to deflect off cover and trigger a reaction strike in shallow water. A premium ballast weight lets anglers bomb long casts across shallow flats or hit precise targets in hard-to-reach places.

Built on a hybrid baitfish-crayfish design, the Shallow Money Badger features a fast rise that helps keep the bait out of structure while still triggering strikes. Patented FlashDisc technology enhances tracking and stability, delivering a true balsa-like action. A high-pitched crayfish-style clicking system adds the perfect balance of sound and action. A true multi-species crankbait, the Shallow Money Badger gives anglers a versatile tool that can draw bass out of Laydowns, be trolled for walleyes, or tempt crappies suspended over weed flats.

“We built the Shallow Money Badger to give anglers the same hard-thumping action they trust in the original Money Badger, but with even greater performance in shallow water,” said Chris Seylar, Assistant Product Manager – Core Bait. “Available in five sizes and 22 fish-catching colours it’s a true bite-getter for bass, walleyes, crappies and more when fish are relating to shallow cover.”

Key features:

Hybrid baitfish-crayfish design, Durable circuit board bill, Fusion19 treble hooks, High-pitched crayfish clicking sound system, Optimized ballast weight system, Patented FlashDisc technology

Size: 4cm • 5cm • 6.25cm • 6.75cm • 7.25cm

Colours: Black Gold, Black Silver, Blaze, Blue Frost, Crystal Shad, Firetail Green Craw, Firetiger, Ghost Chrome Gill, Ghost Morning Dawn, Ghost Red Craw, Ghost Sexy Shad, Killer Craw, Korey’s Candy, Nebu, Perch, Phantom Craw, Purple Glimmer, Fire Craw, Special Red Craw, Tennessee Shad, Vanilla Chartreuse, Y’olive Craw



South Africa

Dam Levels



Here is a list of the latest water levels of some of South Africa's biggest water reservoirs.

Eastern Cape	70.1%	↑↓
Beervlei Dam	0.0%	0.0%
Bridle Drift Dam	93.1%	-2.6%
Darlington Dam	39.9%	0.1%
Impofu Dam	47.5%	-1.5%
Wriggleswade Dam	99.8%	-0.2%

Gauteng	100.3%	↑↓
Bronkhorstspuit	100.2%	-0.6%
Roodeplaat Dam	100.4%	0.0%

Kwa-Zulu Natal	93.3%	↑↓
Albert Falls Dam	93.9%	-1.4%
Bivane Dam	99.8%	4.5%
Goedertrouw Dam	95.2%	-0.4%
Inanda Dam	100.1%	0.8%
Midmar Dam	94.1%	-0.6%
Ntshingwayo Dam	80.9%	-11.0%
Pongolapoort Dam	93.5%	-0.5%
Spioenkop Dam	100.2%	6.3%
Spring Grove Dam	75.9%	-7.0%
Wagendrift Dam	94.4%	-2.9%
Woodstock Dam	91.1%	-6.2%
Zaaihoek Dam	100.5%	3.2%

Limpopo	81.9%	↑↓
Albasini Dam	95.7%	-0.7%
De Hoop Dam	99.0%	-0.7%
Ebenezer Dam	96.5%	-1.3%
Flag Boshielo / Arabie	95.3%	-4.0%
Doorndraai Dam	99.2%	-0.7%
Mokolo Dam	21.0%	-2.9%
Nandoni Dam	87.4%	-3.1%
Rust de Winter Dam	100.5%	0.2%
Tzaneen Dam	42.2%	-6.6%

Mpumalanga	93.7%	↑↓
Da Gama Dam	87.8%	-1.8%
Driekoppies Dam	85.9%	-2.9%
Grootdraai Dam	94.8%	-1.8%
Heyshope Dam	100.3%	0.6%
Injaka Dam	93.2%	-1.0%
Jericho Dam	90.8%	-0.4%
Kwena Dam	82.9%	-7.3%
Loskop Dam	98.4%	-1.1%
Middelburg Dam	88.3%	-4.3%
Morgenstond Dam	100.4%	0.1%
Nooitgedacht Dam	93.2%	-2.1%
Rhenosterkop Dam	98.4%	0.2%
Vygeboom Dam	98.5%	-0.1%
Witbank Dam	99.1%	0.5%

North West	98.0%	↑↓
Boskop Dam	101.9%	0.2%
Buffelspoort Dam	100.7%	0.3%
Hartebeespoort Dam	93.5%	0.0%
Klerkskraal Dam	105.8%	5.1%
Kosterrivier Dam	100.0%	-0.2%
Molatedi Dam	100.4%	-4.0%
Roodekopjes Dam	83.7%	-12.6%

O.F.S.	97.8%	↑↓
Allemanskraal Dam	95.3%	-0.7%
Bloemhof Dam	98.4%	-2.8%
Gariiep Dam	95.0%	-1.3%
Kalkfontein Dam	98.1%	-0.9%
Knellpoort Dam	99.6%	0.1%
Koppies Dam	95.8%	-1.3%
Sterkfontein Dam	99.0%	0.0%
Vaal Dam	102.5%	-2.5%
Vaalrivier Barrage	97.3%	-7.7%
Vanderkloof Dam	96.9%	-1.5%

Western Cape	89.1%	↑↓
Berg River Dam	99.9%	0.3%
Brandvlei Dam	78.0%	0.4%
Clanwilliam Dam	95.8%	3.4%
Kwaggaskloof Dam	76.5%	0.4%
Theewaterskloof Dam	84.6%	-1.2%
Voëlvlei Dam	99.8%	-1.1%

Levels on: 14-Oct 16-Sep
Average: 90.5% 91.9%

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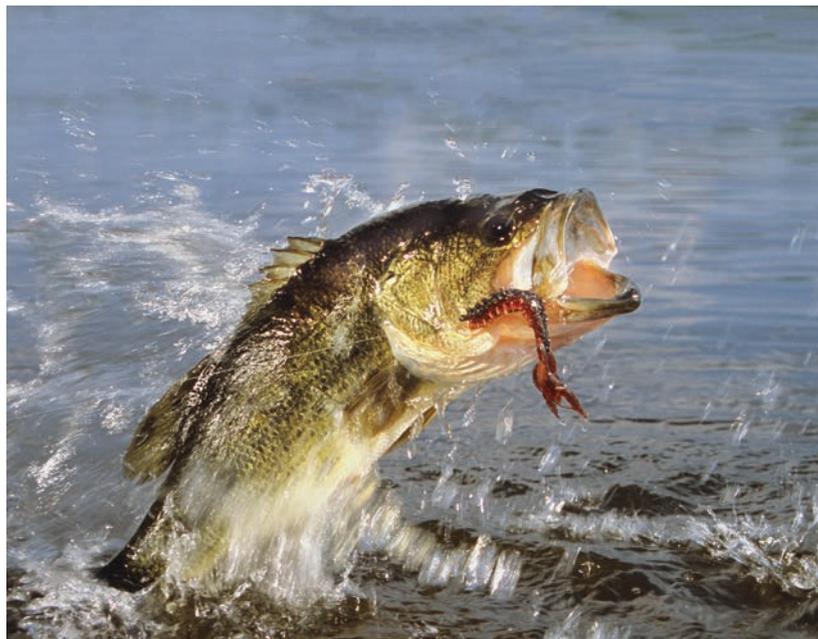


LALIZAS MARINE RSA

Lalizas Marine RSA (Pty) Ltd: 32 Carlisle Street, Paarden eiland, 7405, Cape Town, South Africa.
Tel: +27 21 510 4021, e-mail: rsa@lalizas.co.za, www.lalizas.com



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