

Fish offshore for post-spawn largemouth bass

The wet and unseasonably cool weather pattern lately seems more consistent with Derby week than with the upcoming Fourth of July holiday.

Chris Hickey, black bass research biologist for the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, said the cool weather delayed the largemouth bass spawn a couple of weeks, but now everything is on schedule as we head into the heat of summer.

He said anglers report largemouth bass gathering on the channel ledges on Kentucky and Barkley lakes.

Summer fishing for largemouth bass frustrates many anglers, although anglers themselves are usually the source of the problem. The anglers often don't change the presentation or places they fish from the spring season, although their summer catch often consists of a few small male "buck" bass.

Forget fishing the visible cover along the bank and instead concentrate on off-shore structures such as channel ledges, submerged islands, humps and long points to catch bass during the day in July and August. Studying a map of the underwater features reveals these fish-holding structures. Anglers should plan on probing several during a day of

fishing. "I look for three things for deep ledge fishing," said Ryan Oster, federal aid coordinator for the fisheries division of Kentucky Fish and Wildlife. "The first is the presence of bait, second is stumps and third is current. Mussel beds on the ledge are also a big help."

Oster, formerly western fisheries district biologist who helped manage Kentucky and Barkley lakes, prefers deep running crankbaits, 7- to 10-inch straight-tailed worms rigged on Shakey heads and heavy football jig and trailer combinations to fish ledges from 12 to 25 feet deep in these lakes.

"I like the Sexy Shad color for clear water and the chartreuse Sexy Shad for stained water in my deep crankbaits," Oster said. "Typically, bass want it raking across the bottom. On some days, the fish want a slow and steady retrieve and on others, they want it fast. Mix it up until they hit."

Boat positioning is important to keep these lures crawling on the bottom and across those underwater ledges and humps. Some anglers use marker buoys to visualize the ledge or hump.

Slowly crawl a Shakey head rig along the bottom, stop it ev-

ery few feet and shake the rod tip to wiggle the worm and entice bass. Anglers fishing jigs may also work the bottom, but many "stroke" a heavy football jig by ripping it off the bottom with their rod tip and letting the lure fall on a slack line. Trophy largemouths often hit the jig on the fall.

Use at least 1/2-ounce of weight to get down on the deep structure. Many opt for 3/4-ounce or 1-ounce jigs. Shakey worms in green pumpkin, black or purple work well in deep water. Black jigs in combination with blue, purple, brown or chartreuse produce deep bass.

During the hottest times of the year, largemouth bass suspend over the ledge or hump and ignore lures worked on bottom. A swimbait works well for suspended bass.

Pearl-colored swimbaits with shades of gray, blue and light purple work well. Fish the swimbait just above bottom rigged on a 1/4-ounce or 3/8-ounce head as heavier heads deadens the lure's action. Oster prefers 5-inch swimbaits.

Points that extend well out into the lake are high percentage spots for summer largemouth bass. Jigs slowly crawled across the point in water 15 to 25 feet deep draws strikes. Points with stumps or chunk rock on them hold the most fish.

The best ledge fishing is on Kentucky Lake, Lake Barkley and Barren River Lake. Most lakes across Kentucky have long extended points and many have underwater humps.

Get off the bank and catch huge bass on the hottest days.

Author Lee McClellan is an award-winning associate editor for Kentucky Afield magazine, the official publication of the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources. He is a life-long hunter and angler, with a passion for smallmouth bass fishing.

Earl's Extra SPORTS

by EARL COX, Sports Columnist, An Estill County Native
Sponsored by BUNT GROSS Auto & Tire

The college basketball team that could gain the most from LeBron James' spectacular performance in leading the Miami Heat to the National Basketball Association championship is the University of Kentucky.

Remember how close he and UK coach John Calipari are.

Not that Calipari needs help in recruiting, but just in case, a call from basketball's greatest player might sway a prospect UK's way.

UK grid recruits

Everyone wants to know how good UK's football recruiting is. I hope it is as good as the hype, but I've got to be shown.

Mark Stoops' crop of recruits may be good, but how many of them will still want to join the Big Blue after the Cats stumble through this fall's schedule. I hope I am wrong, but I can't see more than two wins.

Martha Layne's future

The Lexington Herald-Leader's story about a faction wanting former Gov. Martha Layne Collins to become the president of Georgetown College is very interesting.

She rates aces high with me.

In 1978 Earl Ruby, my boss and second father at The Courier-Journal, asked me to accompany him to a varmint supper at the Frankfort Armory. During the Great Depression I had no choice except to eat squirrels, rabbits, deer and frogs to keep from going hungry.

I told Earl that I wasn't about to eat varmints, but I went anyway.

The big draw was barrels of free bourbon — yes, barrels of Kentucky's most famous product.

Martha Layne and I were among the few who didn't partake. We stepped outside to get some fresh air when we heard a commotion inside. We went back in. Guess what it was. Coach Joe. B. Hall and his 1978 national champion Wildcats were entering the building.

The bottom line on Martha Layne. She did more for Kentucky than all of the men before and after her who served as our governor. She was responsible for luring the Toyota plant to Georgetown. No one else has done anything close to matching that economic boost to our beloved state.

Birds Kept Kentucky Sports Strong

The Birds of Corbin qualify as the family that has contributed the most to University of Kentucky sports.

Calvin Bird was one of the Wildcats' finest runners in football.

Jerry Bird was a standout forward on Adolph Rupp's basketball team.

The Big Blue was expecting big things from speedy football runner Billy Bird, but he passed away before he got a chance to prove how good he could have been.

Rodger Bird proved to be the best of all the Birds when he starred in the National Football League as a defensive back with the Oakland Raiders.

Word came last week that Calvin had passed away at 75 in Kingsport, Texas.

For UofL, it's the Redmans

The Redmans of Louisville and Jefferson County take up a lot of space in the football yearbooks of Western Kentucky University and the University of Louisville.

Lloyd, the patriarch of the clan, was known as Pappy. We lost him last week at 89. He did it all. He lettered at what is now Western Kentucky University in 1942, then let a little thing like World War II keep him out of football until 1946 when he came home.

He decided to enroll at the University of Louisville and lettered that one year.

Pappy coached Durrett to a county championship and got to be an assistant superintendent of Jefferson County Schools.

His son Bob played at UofL and lettered in 1968 and '69.

The best was yet to come. Bob's son, Chris, proved to be the best of all. He quarterbacked the Cardinals from 1996-99 and dominates the UofL record book for passing.



Birds Love Fruit

If you want to attract non seed-eating birds into your yard, fruits such as grapes, raisins, cherries, apples and orange halves will attract mockingbirds, gray catbirds, orioles, towhees, cedar waxwings, blue birds, tanagers and many more. Use a tray feeder or place on the ground near brush cover.

E-mail: birdingbits@cfl.rr.com
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Stickeler's Puzzle



What are the plurals of the following words?

- | | |
|--------------|---------------|
| 1. census | 5. diagnosis |
| 2. bison | 6. brother is |
| 3. bureau is | brothers or ? |
| bureaus or ? | 7. crisis |
| 4. secretary | 8. vertex is |
| general | vertexes or ? |

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Stickeler's Answer on Page 13

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