

# Hawg Hawlers Bass Club

March 2015



## A HOOK from our President.....

### Saving our Fish

By: Greg Shands

I hope all of you read the January newsletter on keeping your fish alive and healthy throughout weigh in, if not please go back and read it.

This month we are going to expand on what we talked about last month. Remember this is all about keeping the fish we catch alive and healthy even after we return them back to the lake.

Think of your livewell as an aquarium, a safe place you can keep your fish alive till you are either ready to release them or make a meal of them. All aquariums have two basic operations going on inside them. Moving water, (a recirculation pump) a way to move the water and keep a current flowing, and an aerator pump to replace the oxygen back into the water.

Granted there is more to having a healthily aquarium than just these 2 basic things, but let's discuss what we can provide our fish while we are out on the lake.

Most bass boats are equipped with both, a way to recirculate or replace the water and to add oxygen to the water. Remember it is up to you to ensure this equipment is working properly. You can check both of these operations while sitting in your driveway at home with nothing more than a garden hose and a charged up battery in the boat. Just close off the livewell drains and fill the livewell with water. Turn on the aerators and look to see if you have bubbles flowing, kick the recirculate pump on, see if the water is flowing or going out the boat or to bilge, however your boat is plumed, you should be able to tell if the pumps are working or not. When you are done, wash the livewell out as you let the water out.

Now let's go a step farther, by now you should have the 2 basic pieces of the puzzle, moving water and oxygen rich water. But what about the temperature or the PH, what can we do to help maintain these factors? First we'll look at water temps, and ways to keep from boiling the water in your livewell. Remember a fish is a living, breathing creature same as you and me. They want to be comfortable too in the hot parts of the year. They will search out cooler water, whether it is deeper or under something that provides them with shade. A livewell lid is good and bad at the same time. Yes it does provide shade but it also traps in heat, add to it a dark color carpet and you may be creating an oven instead of an aquarium. I'm not saying you should replace your carpet with lighter colored stuff, but could you add insulation to the lid to help cut down on the amount of heat that comes through the lid? Some of the boat companies are now installing vents to help reduce the heat buildup.

One of the simplest ways to reduce water temp is to add ice. But remember you don't want to just throw it in, use frozen water bottles with tight lids. Don't want to add any unwanted chemicals. Replace the water though out the day. Even though the surface water will be warm it is still cooler than the air around it in the middle of the day, for the most part. But always be smart and check. Above all don't put the fish in shock by dropping the temp too fast. Give them a chance to acclimatize to the cooler water. It's the same as when introducing a new fish to your aquarium, you don't just drop it in, you first are suppose to adjust the water temp in the bag slowly to the water temp in the aquarium. Add just one bottle of ice at a time, instead of throwing in a frozen 6 pack.



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**What about the PH of the water?** Fish release ammonia into the water, same as you peeing in it. This ammonia raises the pH or makes it acidic. But unless you want to carry around a pH kit and take the time to compare your livewell water to the lake water, I would just recommend changing out the water several times throughout the day. And always remember to completely pump out the water before starting the next day's fishing.

**Last month I asked you** to do your own investigation on the different chemicals that is available to add to your livewells. In no way am I going to say which ones are good or bad. But we can look at what we want these chemicals to do to help our fish continue to live after we release them back into the lake. Most of us have probably seen someone on crack or meth before. They are full of energy, a real superman, if you will. But what happens when the drugs wear off? Over time the drugs will kill them. Now compare the druggie to what you have seen at weigh in, where fish are jumping all over the place. Get the picture. Remember we want our fish to remain calm and relaxed. When you are stressed don't your muscles draw up and when you are relaxed your body just said ahhhh? A fish reacts the same way. Haven't you caught a fish and immediately measured it, then measured it again at weigh in only to find it has gotten shorter? Stress makes them draw up so wouldn't it make sense to use a chemical that would help to sedate it compared to making it lively?

**We covered 4 things** to help keep your fish healthy and alive while in your livewell so they can be caught another day. It's really not that hard to remember and we owe it to our future generations to practice these simple steps.

1) Keep water moving, 2) keep it full of oxygen, 3) keep it cool, 4) change it out

If you use chemicals, be sure it relaxes fish and doesn't turn them into druggies.

**Now comes the tickly part.** You did a good job of keeping the water moving, full of oxygen, cool temp, and low pH levels. But now it's time to go to the weigh in, where you are going to place your fish in a bag that has none of the above things. This is probably the most stressful time for the fish.

**Put yourself in the fish's shoes**, imagine standing in the middle of town buck naked. Would it be more stressful to be placed in a clear bag so everyone could see you and you see them, or placed in a black bag where no one could see you, and you couldn't see out? Obviously it would be less stressful to the fish if they were in a black bag.

**How much water should you have in the bag?** The more fish the more water right! Remember, fish breathe through their gills and water must be able to move from their mouth, through and over the gills. There has to be enough room for their gills to flare in and out. Again the more fish in a bag the more water they need. The only oxygen will be whatever was in the water you placed in the bag, so don't place your fish in a bag too early only to go stand in a long line. Leave them in the livewell where they have plenty of oxygen. Remember to handle the fish using the thumb and forefinger (or lipping it) instead of just grasping them. Once you place them in the bag don't dally around, if you have one you need to bump, do it as quickly as possible. Don't set your bag down on the hot ground. Be ready to present your fish when it's your turn, if pictures are going to be taken, again do it as quickly as possible and return fish to the water. Avoid allowing the fish to fall from the bag into the water, if possible place bag in water and slowly pour the fish back into the lake. If a fish doesn't swim off when released but starts to roll over on its side, try to help hold fish upright and move it back and forth so to help flush water over its gills.

**There are going to be times** when a fish is going to die. There's nothing we can do to escape this. But by making ourselves more aware and practicing these things we can help reduce the death rate. This is how we do our part in preserving a resource for the future anglers so that they can enjoy what we take for granted now.

**Please**, remember this throughout this season,

Greg

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## Choosing the Right Color Lure

By: Greg Shands

**Last year I gave a seminar** at Bass Pro on choosing the right color lure for any given condition. So I thought I would share it with you guys and hopefully it will help someone catch a few more fish this coming season. Remember nothing is cut and dry when it comes to fishing, but maybe this article will point you in the right direction when it comes to choosing the right color lure for whatever conditions you may face while out on the lake.

**How many times have you gone to your favorite lake** and found the water so muddy you could walk across it. Or been catching fish all morning, then the bite stops for what you think is no reason. Conditions change from day to day even hour to hour and if you don't make the right adjustments you could find yourself fishless at the end of the day. Hopefully after reading this you will have a better understanding at what goes on under the surface as a day progresses and can make the adjustment to continue to catch fish.

**We all know** you can buy any color of lure you can imagine. Does that mean they will all catch fish or are the lure companies only trying to get you to bite and not the fish.

**Water clarity, amount of light, and wind** are some of the main factors in choosing the right color lure to throw. But you also have to remember what the fish are feeding on.

**Let's first look at water clarity.** There are 4 types we want to talk about: 1) Muddy, 2) stained, 3) lightly stained and 4) clear. Each has its own characteristics. For example Muddy water has just inches of visibility, light cannot penetrate it. But because it has all the dirt particles suspended in it, it will warm up faster than clear water. Stained water has more visibility usually from 1 to 4 feet. Wappapello would fall in this category. Lightly stain allows you to see anywhere from 4 to 10 feet down. This is that good looking water where a fish should be everywhere. Then there is Clear water and it's just like it sounds, clear. Visibility can be from 10 feet to 20 or more. Table Rock is the closest thing we fish with this type of water. This water is found more out west than around us. So, how do we choose the right color lure for these different types of water? Well let's look!

**With muddy water having no visibility to speak of,** you are going to want a lure that will stick out. Lures with contrasting color would be your choice here. Brightly colored lures, chartreuses-greens, yellows, reds, orange, even blacks with blue or red tips, all are good choices. Don't forget you also want lures that make noise or vibrate; chartreuse yellow spinner baits would be a great choice. Also a black and blue jig with a rattle is good too.

**Stained water** – water that has that heavy green appearance, light does penetrate it to some degree so the color choice begins to broaden up some, solid colors are good choices, remember to pick colors that resemble the bait the bass are feeding on. Crawdad colors change depending on the time of the year. A great place to see what color crawdads are is at the boat ramps. When you launch your boat pay attention to what is scurrying off the concrete. Most crawdads start off as a bright red in the early spring and then change over to a greenish or brown as the water warms up. Remember this note. Multiple colored spinnerbait or jigs will work well too, just remember to use solid colors.

**Lightly stained water** is the color of water we all want to see every time out. Visibility can range from 4 to 10 feet and the fish can too. Here is where light comes into play most importantly. As the sun comes up the light penetrates farther down into the water column allowing for the translucent colors to come into play. But remember early in the morning or late in the day as the light is low you would want to use more solid colors, and as the sun comes up start switching over to the translucent colors or lighter more subtle colors.

**Clear water:** there are several things to remember here to be successful such as smaller diameter line, shadows, long casts and natural looking baits. Wind and low light can be your friend, with the clear water the fish will be easier to spook. Lighter or small diameter lines are a must. Remember to avoid throwing long shadows out in front of your casting zone; keep the sun in your face. Be able to make long accurate casts to avoid spooking fish with the boat. Natural colored lures are very important since the fish will be able to get a good look at you bait.

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**OK, we have covered water clarity so far**, but what about light penetration and wind.

Light penetration depends on the water clarity, sun shine, and the wind. The clearer the water and the calmer the wind, the farther down into the water column light can penetrate. Fish can see better as light goes deeper into the water. You may be catching fish like mad when you first start out in the early morning but as the sun comes up the bite goes away, why? The fish can see your lure better and can tell it's not real. Switching over to a more natural or translucent color may bring the bite right back on again. Just the opposite will happen in the afternoon to evening hours. So remember to start out in the morning with more solid colors and switch over to the natural ones as the day gets brighter or progresses. But remember that a cloudy day you may not need to switch.

**Wind:** wind plays a big part in the amount of light that can travel through the water column. As the waves get bigger they break up the light. Again remember to adjust to the changes that occur throughout the day.

**One thing we haven't touch on yet is top water baits.** Regardless if its day or night a fish can still see, and the most light comes from the surface, So with that said you want to use dark colored baits during the low light hours and lighter colored one as the day gets brighter.

**One other thing to remember** when throwing crank baits. If the fish you are catching are only getting the back hook in their mouths you haven't quite got the color down perfect. Try adjusting colors just a little, you want both sets of hooks to be embedded in the fish's mouth. Same way with spinner baits. If fish are blowing up behind it, try changing colors or adding a trailer hook.

I hope you found this article informative and can use it to increase your catch this season.

## A Breakdown of Clearwater Lake

By: Greg Shands

**Clearwater Lake** was build to help prevent flooding of the rich farmland southeast of Poplar Bluff. It lies between the steep rock and clay hills northwest of Piedmont. Depth can range from 40 ft. in front of the dam to shallow shoals and sand bars up the river arm. At normal pool there is no vegetation within the waters. There are two arms which make up the lake, the river arm, which runs to the right of the dam and the Logan arm which has web creek in it. Fishing consists of chunk rock, rip-rap, bluffs, ledges, stump fields, humps, and brush piles. Due to the steep banks, a hard rain up river can raise the lake several feet in a matter of hours. Three different species of bass can be found here, large mouth, spotted bass, and small mouth. The small mouth generally stay in the upper part of the river arm portion, but can be found as far down as the state park marina in early spring when water temps are still cold. The main forage of the bass is crawdads in the spring. The bass grow to be very large in this lake, as the club history has proven. Several bass pushing the 7 pound mark have been weighed in at our tournaments here. And the record big bass came from here,(7.96 pounds). Ask Andi Himstedt about her big bass that weighed in at 7.92 pounds.

**I guess now** you would like for me to tell you what parts of the lake is the best parts to fish. Actually I have had good luck from the very back of Logan creek to the upper parts of the lake, up the river arm. If you go to the back of Logan be careful there is a huge stump field at the back, and if you go up river once you pass Bluff view marina you have to really watch out for the shoals and root wads, a fiberglass boat can't get very far past the marina. There are plenty of cuts and pockets, points and bluffs with ledges, plenty of large chunk rock, or flats. Most importantly is the weather, it plays the biggest role in finding the fish than any other factor when we are there. Water temperatures will run from the upper 40's to the low 50's while we are there. A sunny day will warm the rocks up which will make the bait more active which will draw the bass to these areas. Now my question to you is which part of a lake warms up earliest and what type of water warms up the fastest? Good Luck to everyone and may you all catch a limit of fish our first tournament of the year.

**PS** , If anyone can tell me where the Model A John Deere tractor is I'll give you the number one bait for this lake in the spring. Hint: it's in the lake, about 15-20 feet down!

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### Clearwater 2015

Our first tournament to kick off the 2015 season is on March 21st on Clearwater Lake. This is a one day tournament that will take off and end at Clearwater Marina. Launch your boat at Piedmont Park Recreation Area and boat over to the Marina.

Take off is at 9:00 am and ends with our weigh-in at Clearwater Marina at 3:00 pm.

**To Piedmont Park Recreation Area** - Take Highway 55 South to Highway 67 south. Follow Hwy 67 to Highway 34 west. Follow Hwy 34 to the city of Piedmont. Continue Hwy 34 through the city of Piedmont until you reach the Walmart Store. Make a right onto Highway HH in front of the Walmart and follow Hwy HH for 7 miles to the Clearwater Lake Dam. Highway HH ends at a T intersection on top of the Clearwater Lake Dam. Make a right at the T intersection on top of the dam onto County Road #418 and follow to the Piedmont Park Recreation Area. The park entrance will be on your left.

**To Piedmont Park Marina** - If you continue following County Road #418 as it continues on towards the right, the next entrance on your left will be for the Piedmont Park Marina.

### Clearwater 2014 Results

BOAT	NAME	CREEL SAT	BIG BASS SAT	Penalty	TOTAL WEIGHT	PLACE	COMMENTS
11A	SCOTT HASTY	5	4.62		21.47	<b>1</b>	Red/Black Crank
11B	BRYAN SLAUGHTER	5					
1A	KEVIN HELLDORFER	3	6.73		17.22	<b>2</b>	White/Chart Spinnerbait
1B	EDDIE HINRICHS	2					White/Chart Chatterbait
2A	MARK DALY	5			15.30	<b>3</b>	Jerk Bait
2B	TONY BRINLEY	5					
6A	DON NICKEL	3	4.11		7.18	<b>4</b>	Sexy Shad Square Bill
6B	STACEY FORD	1					
8A	MICHAEL PARMENTIER	1	4.00		6.45	<b>5</b>	SENKO JIG
8B	SAM SUTTON	1					
16A	CHRIS HIMSTEDT	4	3.92		6.31	<b>6</b>	Brush Hog
16B	ANDI HIMSTEDT	0					Jerk Bait

CLEARWATER LAST FIVE YEAR CLUB HISTORY					
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
NO. BOATS	15	20	27	28	24
TOTAL FISH	39	100	59	76	78
1ST PLACE LBS	10.83	11.87	10.98	10.82	21.47
1ST PLACE BAIT	Fish Doctors	Wiggle Wart/Red Rat L Traps	Brush Hog/Crankbait	X Rap/Twitch Stick	red/black bomber
BIG BASS LBS	5.72	5.59	5.79	7.91	6.73
BIG BASS BAIT	Fish Doctors	Red Rat L Trap	Spinner Bait	X Rap/Twitch Stick	White/Chartreuse spinner
AIR TEMP	47-57	?	70s	55-61	Low 40 - Mid 70
WIND	Light Breeze	?	Slight Breeze-Windy	8-10 mph	slight
SKIES	Partly Sunny	Sunny-Partly Cloudy	Cloudy	Cloudy/Overcast	Beautiful blue
LAKE LEVEL	?	?	?	498 ft.	494.8 (Normal)
WATER COND	Slightly Stained	?	Heavy Stain-Muddy	Clear in River/Stained-muddy in Lake	Very Clear - stained
WATER TEMP	52-54	?	Low 60s	47-54	47-54
LAKE RECORDS	BIG BASS: JOSH ZELNIS 7.96 MARCH 2009 HEAVY STRINGER: HASTY/KENNEDY 21.47 POUNDS MARCH 2014				