

"IS THE MOVEMENT OVER?"



Limit of Bass, Hess Lake, all released

The thrill of getting into a school of adult bass casting Spoonplugs and catching several in a short period of time is one of the most exciting experiences in all of fishing. This is the ultimate goal of a Spoonplugger. It may take only a few years or many years to attain that goal. Some attain it in only 3 or 4 years of intensive study and practice. For others, it may take many years. In my case it was 25 years of Spoonplugging before I found and caught adult bass on consecutive casts from a school on my own. How many years it took to achieve the goal is not that important, since all along the way you are catching more fish than you ever have before. If you acquire this skill, it is important to protect the resource. The picture above shows a limit of bass caught in a short period of time from one spot. They were kept in the livewell with the pump running, then placed (under water) on a stringer, a quick picture, and then released.

Once you have gotten into a school, most have an insatiable desire to improve on it and increase the frequency. Small details learned along the way improve the results and efficiency of each fishing experience. How much line on the spool, how to better control the speed, how to improve boat positioning, and more efficient anchoring are only a few of the details that can help. One factor can be the wise use of your time after the action stops. In the past I have always referred to this as the movement being over. I would spend much time casting both Spoonplugs and jump lures, repositioning the boat, and retrolling the entire structure in an effort to catch a fish or 2 more. In most instances, I was not successful.

What I didn't consider was that this school of fish was likely spooked and would probably not soon return, especially if some were released or got off the hook. Yet other structures in the lake may still have schools of fish that are active (Mr. Perry has stated that when fish become active, they all become active). A quick check with 5 or 6 fan casts using jump lures is in order after the action stops. If the structure has been previously mapped, repositioning the boat is usually not necessary. A quick trolling pass or 2 may be done on the breakline if the structure is larger and the fish may have moved down it. If other contact points are known in the lake, proceed directly to another nearby and check it for active fish. A trolling pass or 2 and casting the contact point should suffice. You may even want to return to the original structure and check it with a few casts after it has settled down. Repeat doing this on other structures until you are satisfied that the movement period for the entire lake is over. This approach will increase your odds of catching more fish during that fish activity period.

If you are fishing a new lake, you would want to spend more time mapping the structure where you caught fish, then proceed to the next one and map and fish it thoroughly. This is why mapping is so important. The more structures you know in detail, the better chance you have of making a great catch.

These suggestions can be found in Buck Perrys' written material and Guidelines for fishing success. On the water experience turns these Guidelines into your own practical working knowledge. You just keep getting better and better. As Buck would say: "Fishing is a lifetime learning experience", and "Knowledge is the key to fishing success".

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