

BASIC MOVEMENTS OF FISH

Below are some basic movement guidelines from Buck Perrys' book "Spoonplugging—Your Guide to Lunker Catches" pages 11-26. Refer to the book for more accurate and complete information.

1. **A fish is a fish** is a fish, whether fresh or saltwater. He is controlled by his environment and survival instincts. He has a pea sized brain and never has an original thought.
2. The **largemouth bass is a universal game fish**. He is the most difficult to catch because he reacts most severely to changes in his environment. If you can catch him consistently, you will not have a problem catching other species. These basic movement guidelines apply to all species of game fish.
3. Fish **do not move constantly or consistently**.
4. The fish will be either in the **shallows**, the **deep water**, or **somewhere in between**.
5. Fish **react differently in the shallows**(8-10 feet or less) than in the deep water(8-10 feet or deeper).
6. The **deepest water in the area** is the **home of the fish**.
7. The **older and bigger** fish become, the **tighter they school** and **the more reluctant** they are **to leave deep water**.
8. **Deep water** is more **stable**. Their home is here due to the stable condition, not their seeking some particular temperature.
9. During the **cold season**, fish **movements are scattered and unpredictable**, and migrations are usually toward the steep banks and steep shorelines.
10. During the **summer fishing season**, movements will be from the deep water **towards the shallower, more gradual sloping shorelines**. Under normal weather conditions, their **sanctuary** will be around **30-35 feet**, if available. If not available, it will be in the deepest water in the area being fished. If there is 20 feet or more available, the sanctuary will always be below that depth.
11. **Fish in deep water** are **more dormant and non-chasing**, and can be very difficult to catch.
12. We are fortunate that the fish do not stay deep all the time. They become active once or twice a day and may move toward the shallows.
13. In the **colder season**, expect **one movement in the middle of the day**. In the **hotter season**, **expect two**, one in the morning and another in the afternoon or evening.
14. This **movement** is not haphazard. The fish proceed along **well defined paths** or migration routes which are **on bottom structure**, a change in the bottom different from the surrounding area.
15. The **most common structure** fish use is a gradual sloping **bar** extending out from the shoreline.
16. **All migration routes** will extend **from the shallows to the deepest water in the area**, giving the fish immediate access to deep water. This is essential for all productive structure.
17. The **weather and water conditions** control how far the fish go and how long they stay on structure. The length of time for the activity period is usually **figured in minutes** rather than hours.
18. **Light** is probably the **most unstable element** in the fishes environment. Whatever controls his movements has a relationship to the observed light. We use **observed light** as one of the **major guides** to the movements of fish.
19. Movements of fish are **not** triggered by their **hunger**. Fish can be made to strike with proper depth and speed control.
20. When migrating, fish move along the bottom. If **conditions are excellent**, the school **may** move up to the **8-10 foot level (scatter point)**. Schools of adult fish rarely go shallower than this depth. Adult bass would be those 2 to 2 ½ pounds or larger.
21. When fish become active and move, some move more than others, but **they all move**.
22. **Small fish are not compatible** with adult fish and will **move shallower to avoid getting eaten**.