

Hot weather, midday bassin'

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There was a lump of chicken fried steak, mashed potatoes and turnip greens sitting in the bottom of my stomach. It felt as though it weighed more than the bass on the end of my line. I had eaten less than 30 minutes ago. It was just exactly 100 degrees in the front of Bubba Chandler's, deep breathing boat. Unfortunately, that is where I was standing.

Perhaps y'all are saying, "Why in the world is that idiot fishing that time of day in that kind of heat." The answer is elementary. That is when Bubba wanted to go and it was his boat.

In the cool of the morning, we had caught four bass, all small, all on spinner baits. Bubba Chandler, an expert on Adlih Lake bass, opined, "We don't belong to catch much until it gets hot." That's what he said and it was his boat. So, we had "breakfast" at 10:30 and went back fishing.

From the feel of the pressure on my line, I was starting to think he may be right. The drag went on another screeching fit and the rod bowed the way you like to see one bow when you know it aint a log or bulligator. Vester and Billy Two Sticks can tell you about bulligators.

When I finally got my hands on the source of the bow, I estimated the bass to weigh about seven pounds, maybe a scoshe either way. Bubba had scales but if you weigh a fish, you can't tell lies about the weight. Bubba weighs his.

Since it was Bubba's home field, he picked the lures and being a gentleman, let me run the boat, giving me first shot at the better looking pieces of bank. He had declared we would use nothing but a bream-colored, medium running crank bait. The lure had a lot of orange on it and he said that was partly the key. The rest of the success of the lure was the way it bumped over logs without hanging up. That was my first introduction to that crank bait and I now have several in my tackle box just for bass fishing in ultra hot weather. I hate them however, I will use them if I have to.

The boat shook and Bubba set the hook in yet another good bass. Bubba eats at the same restaurant five days a week. He has two deserts and tips the scales at a svelte 240, all natural pounds. I believe he played football at some southern college. When he sets the hook, you know it. He weighed that bass and it was a healthy 5.6-pounds on his digital scales. It was also the smallest of the midday run.

That day and one or two since then have not deterred me from still starting my fishing day at dawn.

Even on Old Hickory, nicknamed years ago the Dr. Pepper Lake because the fish only hit at 10-2-4, the old Dr. P. slogan, I still like to fish early. But it would be hard to argue with the success we had that day. I estimate we boated 25 bass that probably averaged over 5-pounds. That is a lot of bass for heat of the day fishing. Hell, that is a lot of bass that size for any time of day.

There was no special technique to what we were doing. We were casting into 12-15 feet of water with a lot of underwater structure such as logs and sunken humps. As the crank bait hit one of these things, we stopped reeling and let it slowly float up a foot or so, then, with a sharp jerk of the rod, we started the retrieve again. That is when most of the strikes came.

Now, I am going to be brutally honest. It is too hot for me to go out and try that here. I am not that badly in need of midday entertainment or fish in the freezer. However, if I were, I would use those same techniques on any lake around here. I promise, you may or may not catch fish.

If you go and have good results, send me a picture. If you don't, never mind. However, I do like me a good homegrown now and again.

By **JOHN L. SLOAN** / **This e-mail address is being protected from spambots. You need JavaScript enabled to view it**

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