

# Warm Weather and Weeds

As we enter the warmest months of the year, fishing tends to become spotty. A lot of people reduce or even eliminate their fishing trips, waiting for cooler weather. They equate warm air temperature with warm water and assume that every fish has moved very deep in search of cooler water.

While this deep movement is true to some degree on a lot of lakes and particularly reservoirs-natural lakes with moderate to heavy weed growth ringed them present an entirely different scenario. In this case, the majority of the fish have most likely moved shallower-not deeper. By shallow, we can be talking depths of just a couple of feet. Here is where you will find the densest mats of weeds and that is exactly why the fish are there.

Thick weeds that may look uninhabitable to you, provide the perfect habitat for fish of all species during hot weather. Everything they could possibly want can be found there. Fish naturally seek cover which provides protection from predators. Nothing better than hiding out in an underwater jungle. This goes for everything from the smallest zooplankton, right up the food chain to the largest predators. In addition to shelter, the weeds supply a plentiful variety of food for fish of all sizes. The greenery also offers comfort in the form of shade, oxygen, and cooler water temperature. So, what we have is an environment that gives the fish a relaxed setting with an abundance of chow and a fighting chance of not becoming a meal themselves. Knowing this, it is not hard to imagine why we-the ultimate predator-should be spending some time checking the weeds out in search of respectable summertime catches.

Now that we have a good idea of where to find the fish the next question becomes, "how in the heck are we going to fish such a mess?" In reality, it's not as hard as you think to extract these fish from the slop.

There are numerous methods that will work and they all have their time and place. Casting to the edges and over top of submerged weeds is the most hands on approach and proves to be the most fun. Jigs rigged weed-less with plastics or even better, Berkley Powerbait or Gulp, are a natural fit. Fish these quickly and aggressively. If the fish are present, they will let you know in short order. No finesse needed here.

An even quicker and more efficient means would be tossing small crank baits. They work particularly well where you have weeds coupled with wood in the form of downed or flooded trees. Rip them through the weeds and let them bang off limbs and logs. The fish will absolutely smash 'em as they careen around the obstacles. This presents a bit of a snagging factor that can be easily overcome.

Over the last couple of seasons, I have come to rely Ultimate Smartlinks. They are a titanium split ring replacement that will open up under steady pressure when you're hung up. This leaves the offending treble hook behind and all we need to do is snap in a new one and you're back in business. They come in two sizes and several pound test strengths, allowing us to match them with the equipment we are using. By doing so, we eliminate any chance of them releasing a fish in same manner as the hook.

Next outing, throw you're preconceived notions into reverse and spend a little time looking shallow. It may just open a whole new world to you.

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