

## Cashing in on the Last Big Bite of the Year

by Larry Nixon

Shorter days, cool temperatures and buck fever go a long ways toward calming many an avid angler's desire to put the boat in the water and go fishing for trophy bass. But for everyone of you who already has the tarp over the boat, the rods and reels in the closet and the remote control in your hand, know this: autumn -- especially mid-November to mid-December -- offers some terrific opportunities to catch bass. In fact, it may be one of the best times of the year. The more the mercury dips, the tighter the schools of baitfish will be. And when baitfish schools get tight, bass feed like crazy, gorging themselves for winter. For this reason, the last bite of the year can also produce some of the year's biggest fish. Also, cold-weather bass fishing can be a numbers game: where you find one, there's bound to be more. On warm sunny days, anglers can often find fish relatively shallow, even in December. Fish will often gather on the first structure element -- the edge of a weed line or a rock pile -- off shore and they can be taken on all manner of motion lures such as crankbaits. Vibrating, rattling baits like a Berkley Frenzy Rattl'r are most productive when water temperatures are falling. Even a Gulp! Bat Wing Frog fished like a buzzbait can coax a hungry bass out from the inside of a weedline. Later in the month, the fish are likely to be on the outside edges and turns. But as the water temperature drops even more, the fish generally head toward deeper water and bottom baits like Berkley Power Jigs or a drop-shot rig are in order. Around this time fishing becomes more vertical than horizontal as anglers fish the bottom. With steadily dropping temperatures and steady winds the norm this time of year, look for channel drop-offs where high banks give you some refuge from the wind, then work the bottom structure. There's plenty of time left in the year for watching football and deer hunting, so don't miss your chance to cash in on the last big bite of the year. Berkley Pro Larry Nixon is a former Bassmaster Classic champion with more than \$1.5 million in career earnings on the BASS Tour. Nixon, who currently fishes the FLW Tour, lives in Bee Branch, Ark.

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