

On the Water: Summer schoolers

by *Larry_Nixon*

Your kids and the neighbor's kids might be out of school for the summer, but it's during this time of year that bass will go back to school. Back to schools of baitfish, that is. That's because there are huge clouds of baitfish everywhere (or soon will be). The baitfish are gathering on and around big spawning flats and those that hatched earlier in the year are now getting big enough to be bass forage. And sometimes during the day, bass will tear through these schools devouring as many as they can. When bass are targeting schools of baitfish like this, they can make easy targets for anglers. To make this happen, you need to find the schools - and it's easier than you think. Combine good electronics, good instincts and a heavy focus on cover near deep water and it's likely you'll find a school of baitfish. They will be in deep water - and the bass will be laying in cover (boat docks, standing timber) nearby waiting for the right time to feed. So the object of the game is coaxing these prolific predators into biting in between meals. If I see baitfish schooling or see bass engaged in a feeding frenzy it really simplifies things for me. I just go to the nearest cover. They might not be right there at that moment but they are close and most likely they won't be actively feeding. That's why we have to work a little harder to get them to bite. Try downsizing your line to something like the new Berkley Trilene 100% Fluorocarbon (in 6- or 8-pound test) and slowing down your presentation if the fish seem finicky. When targeting bass like this, I like a small swim bait such as a Berkley 3-inch Power Pogy or a 5-inch PowerBait Jerk Shad -- but a lot of different baits will do fine. The murkier the water the heavier the line you can use, but try to use as light a line as you think you can get away with. This can be one of the best times of the year to load up on plenty of healthy, hungry bass. It might take a little work - and a little luck -- but with a little fishing savvy and the right baits you can get it done. Larry Nixon is a former Bassmaster Classic champion with more than \$1.5 million in career earnings on the BASS Tour. Nixon lives with his wife and three children in Bee Branch, Ark.

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