

Winter to Spring transition

By *Marvin Mitchum*

The Mother Lode lakes are in the winter to spring transition. Water temperatures are warming and surface temperature is running 58 degrees. I probed Lake Tulloch last night down to 40 feet and it was at 51 degrees.

The trout are moving deeper and away from the banks. The cooler nights will bring them back up in the mornings. If you are fishing for trout, it is time to bring out the fast sinking, full sink lines. We have found the trout will bite off this last week.

The bass, both Largemouth and Smallmouth, are starting to spawn. This is the time when record fish are caught. When the water temperatures reach 60 degrees, the male will start moving shallow and looking for sand and gravel bottom to prepare the nest. The females will follow when the water temperatures reach 62 to 65 degrees. Bass prefer low light conditions, fishing early morning and evening are best.

Bass tend to remain in the same waters close to their birthplace. Like trout in a river, they do not move

more than few hundred yards. There are a few exceptions like water fluctuations. When they do move they will simply move deeper. You will find them in the same locations year

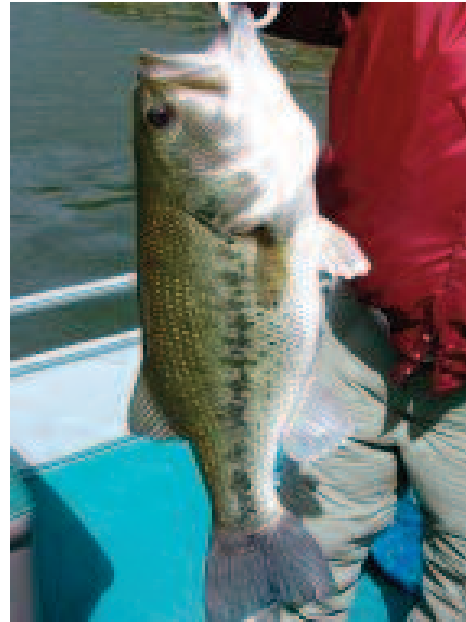


Photo by Marvin Mitchum

until they are a year old.

When looking for Largemouth, they are never very far from structures like docks, islands, logs, humps, ledges, and deep points. Smaller bass will feed on small baitfish, leeches, and nymphs. The bigger fish will attack larger baitfish patterns, three to four inches in

length, sizes 4 to 1/0. Fish these patterns in shad color flies and also black, burnt orange, olive, and pearl white.

When chasing bass, I prefer a good 7-8 weight rod with lots of backbone to get these fish out of the structure. Leaders should be short and heavy turn these larger flies over when casting. Buy or tie your flies with weed guards to keep from getting hung up.

Take advantage of spring time evening fishing, large lunkers will move into shallow water after the boat traffic gets off the lakes. This is the peaceful time of the day and your best chance to catch trophy bass.

New Melones had an 18.11 pound largemouth caught on Saturday March 20 and on Sunday March 21, 2010 a 14.10 pound largemouth was caught. For pictures go to www.gloryholesports.com.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Marvin has been writing this column since the inception of GITM. He owned a fishing store before going on dialysis. He is a Vietnam-era veteran and was exposed to Agent Orange in Korea.

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