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## About the Author

Charles Abbott has fished in many ways and places through his life but he has a special liking for the bass fish which was one of the first types he tried to catch with his parents years ago.

Charles said, "The bass are great fish which almost everybody can fish for and catch."

"They provide good sport but can't be taken for granted."

"Many states have a bass as their state fish, probably because of its popularity with fishers and the financial benefits that it provided to their economy."

Charles said, "I want to help people get started with bass fishing. It's easy to get started and my book will help you keep your costs low."

"Of course, if you get really enthusiastic, there's always something new available."

Charles wants you to join him and the other bass fishers in a healthy, fun hobby which you can enjoy if you're alone and have even more fun with friends and family in many areas of the world!

## Introduction

This book will help you join the bass fishing fraternity in easy steps.

I want to make your early progress as a bass fisher easier and quicker.

Bass are among the most popular sport fish in the U.S.A and several other countries.

You could start fishing for about \$100 spent on fishing gear or many times that amount.

It won't be long before you will understand the special appeal of these fish.

We'll discuss some of the choices for gear and you'll know what questions to ask salesmen and how to make sense of the terms which are common in this sport. Start with a basic kit which you can use for any of the fish and then expand your gear when you have a better idea what type of fishing most interests you.

I'll share some of the commonly accepted wisdom about the smallmouth and largemouth bass.

When you start your bass fishing trip, you will have knowledge about the habits and abilities of the fish and good prospects of success.

Every fisher knows there are no guarantees with any fishing trip but that every time we go, we find more knowledge and enjoyment even if the fish are not always jumping into our laps!

I'll share what I know, including what I've learned from real experts and save you from a few missteps which I found the hard way.

The appeal of bass fishing isn't just in the exercise and tasty fish. There is a bit of thinking to do if you are to beat these smart, fast fish!

Bass fishing is a great way to introduce your family to fishing and most fishers are great folk, just like you.

*Charles Abbott*

### 3 Kinds of Bass - All Good!



There are many types of bass but the most popular with recreational fishers in the U.S.A. are the smallmouth, largemouth and spotted bass.

The first two listed have been among the most commercially important freshwater fish for years.

They attract a huge number of anglers and support tourism in many states. The smallmouth and largemouth bass are fished in many tournaments from local affairs to those which form several heavily promoted trails of contests where companies that sell products to bass fishers provide prizes and other support worth hundreds of thousands of dollars.

There are also several popular television programs and Internet sites devoted to the fish and those who try to catch them.

You can also find bass fishing in many other countries.

The first section will give you some basic information about these three types of fish.

I focus on information you should find useful and will leave you to explore the theories behind the development of the different types if that interests you.

Now, let's talk Largemouth bass.

## Largemouth Bass

This is an impressive looking fish. It is actually a member of the sunfish family.

It is usually green on its sides and top, with more white on the underside.



There is a band of irregular spots running along a band from the gills almost to the tail. The spots and the band vary in darkness at various times.

Southern largemouth bass benefit from more warm days in the season than those in the northern areas and tend to be larger.

The easiest way to tell whether a fish is a largemouth bass or a smallmouth bass is to turn it side-on and look at the mouth. The upper lip of the largemouth extends back past the eye above it.

The upper lip of the smallmouth usually goes only to a point below the middle of the eye.

The smallmouth does not have a band along the side.



## Spotted Bass

The spotted bass are also called the Alabama spotted bass or “spotty”.

This fish will respond to similar rigs and lures as we’d use for the largemouth bass.

They are a good sports fish but often mistaken for largemouth bass.

You need to know the difference if you are fishing waters where both types live because there may be differences in the catch sizes and limits for the different types.

The spotted bass has a smaller mouth.

The spotted bass always has a rough patch on its tongue while the others sometimes have something similar.

The spotted bass has a band along the side but it is likely to have more breaks in it and the patches may be more diamond-shaped.

The two fins on a spotted bass's back are joined but there is a gap between the dorsal fins on the largemouth bass.

The spotty was thought to be a hybrid rather than a distinct species. It was also not as popular but that's changed in the last few years.

## **Smallmouth Bass**

This is a popular fish with lots of aggression when hooked.

It has vertical stripes along its sides instead of the horizontal stripes of the largemouth and the spotted bass.

The inner tip of upper lip only reaches a point below the middle of the eye when the mouth is closed.

The smallmouth usually prefers lake streams and deeper water than the largemouth, but you will find largemouth in these areas too because they have been introduced to a wide range of habitats in attempts to get them settled in for tourism and recreation.

The color of the largemouth is usually more green while most smallmouth are darker and often brown in color.

However color will vary according to the effects of whatever is in the water, the light, and the health of the fish.

Smallmouth bass has eyes which usually appear red while the largemouth has brown eyes, again dependent on the condition of the fish and its environment.

## The Spawning Cycle

After the winter when bass are fairly lethargic, they react to the warming water by moving toward the shore to start their spawning cycle.

The males look for a suitable area for a nest, or return to the one they've used previously.

Water action and agitation from boats close to the nest can disturb the fish or damage the nest, but most bass nest not far below the water so that the eggs and fry are likely to remain warm enough through the hatching cycle.

Although most nests are in shallow areas, bass will spawn at greater depths where the temperature is still reasonable and other conditions suitable. But, these nests are restricted to clear water where the sun's warmth can reach.

They clear away loose rubbish by waving their tails.

Then they find a mate and get on with the mating.

They will move over the prepared area side by side.

As they do so, the female drops her eggs and the male some sperm to fertilize them.

The female doesn't stay around. But, the male will be in constant attendance until the fry have hatched and grown enough to look after themselves a little.

The male continues to keep the area clear of most rubbish and prevents predators eating the brood.

The males will stay until the brood are free-swimming and about 1 inch (2.4 cm) long.

Apart from predators, the main risk to the new fish is a drop in temperature. If that occurs, the male may abandon the nest and start looking for another one because the eggs may not hatch. If they are abandoned, they will become food for other lurking fish.

Males which are guarding nests may strike at your bait from hunger or in defense of the brood. I'm not aware of a requirement to release them

though I think it's worth considering.

Always release females during spawning season to help the increase the number and quality of bass in future years.

## Put These in Your Tackle Box



Every fisher has personal preferences about what to haul along in their tackle box.

The range of possibilities is increasing almost every day.

But, these suggestions will

help you get started without finding you've left something essential at home.

After your first trip, you'll start making changes to reflect your experience and the conditions you are fishing in.

**First aid kit:** Some will just put in a few adhesive bandages and a strip of aspirin. Waterproof tape, sunscreen, insect repellent and some antiseptic might come in handy. This can be a good place to put those spare batteries too.

**Hook disgorger:** Plastic device which can make it easier on you and the fish to remove a hook when you are going to release it.

**Hooks:** Get an assortment of sizes recommended for the type of bass you are after.

**Line:** Spool some of various weights ready for swapping off your reels as needed.

**Lures:** Don't buy many until you've done a few trips with some of the standards which I've suggested and got some information from fishers who drop their lines at the places you are going to.

**Nail Clippers:** Find an old pair and keep them in your kit for cutting line which has snagged. It's neater and safer than using a large sharp knife.

**Needle-nosed pliers:** Very useful tool. Sometimes the best available tool for removing hooks from fish or fingers.

**Sinkers:** You need split-shot if you're using live bait, bait-casting sinkers . Use the smallest sinkers which will put your bait where you want it.

**Stringer:** This is a line attached to a giant clip which you put your fish on and then submerge them until ready to kill and clean them. It’s recommended that you catch and release or kill each fish or put them in a live well where you have one instead.

**Sunscreen:** I mentioned it as part of the kit. Just make sure you use it frequently through the day as it can become less effective under the conditions you are in.

**Misc:** These are the items which everyone forgets at times. They won’t catch even one fish for you but they’ll make each trip a bit more comfortable. Super Glue or similar, nail clippers for the damaged nails which happen on fishing trips (you don’t use the one you cut your line with!)

**Matches:** Waterproof if available or in a waterproof container.

**Worms and other lures:** Bass will almost always grab a worm if there’s one about. Add a small selection of other types but keep the range small until you know what suits your aims or I guarantee you will have bought some you’ll never use!

### *What sort of Fishing Box?*



I think that more people are using the cloth bags for their stuff instead of the plastic boxes because they’re lighter and can be folded down to fit any space which is available on your boat or vehicle.

## Boats



A lot of bass fishing is done in boats or other flotation devices.

Boats for bass fishing may be aluminum, fiberglass or rubber. The aluminum boats

are generally cheaper, but the cost rises as the accessories are added.

Depth finders, trolling motors, lights for night fishing, forward seats to fish from, extra gas capacity, and GPS are common, sensible options depending where you are fishing and your budget.

Many fishers use John boats.

They have limited maneuverability where rough water is likely and it's important not to weigh the boat down too much.

You can put a depth finder and a motor on your small boat. It adds to the weight but also improves your safety.

Inflatable boats are also popular depending on your location and the types of waterways you are fishing on.

Remember, every addition adds to your cost, maintenance bill and needs more fuel to transport.

Even simpler are the inflatable rings (float tubes), which a fisher can strap on over their bathers and then paddle out into a still waterway. It's advisable to do this with at least one other person for added safety.

Don't try it anywhere that large waves or hectic weather is likely.

An anchor is essential with any inflatable so that you can secure it in a spot while you concentrate on catching fish.

It's worth investing in a quality tube with nylon reinforcement and multiple airtight sections.

Canoes are used by some but need care in handling. They are easily tipped when trying to land a fish. You might put a pole over the center of the canoe with a foam float but that can also interfere with your ability to

steer.



## Important Points with Your First Boat

If you are keen to get a boat for your bass fishing, your first step should be to get some time on a few boats.

There are tournaments and other events where you can get some time on a boat.

Before you get to that stage, you should think about things like:

- ? Where will you be using your boat? You might want to get a smaller boat and see if you like it before upgrading.
- ? What is your budget? There are a lot of costs which you may not have considered. The boat and special trailer will cost a lot to buy, more to insure and maintain.
- ? Where you will keep the boat?
- ? How will you transport it? The combined weight of a boat and special trailer will require a strong, reliable vehicle.
- ? Will you moor it somewhere?

There are plenty of options, depending on your particular preferences and type of fishing.

Aluminum boats are a bit tougher than fiberglass but they may not ride as smoothly.

The fiberglass craft is usually more expensive than aluminum but have other advantages. They aren't usually pushed about in a strong wind as much and give a smoother ride.

Deciding whether to buy used or new depends on your budget and also what's available at the time.

Give yourself plenty of time to look around. Don't give obvious clues that you really like a particular boat or you will be at a disadvantage with your negotiations.

Get independent, experienced advice, but remember that the final decision is your own responsibility, however it turns out.

Get all the advice you can. Your local club members will probably willingly

help as they have all gone through the same experience at least once.

Any reasonable-sized boat will require some instruction about getting it in and out of the water.

If you buy a used boat, you will have less initial outlay. But, it's wise to get it inspected by an expert to reduce the chance of a bad buy.

Motors are known to develop problems in just a few years which can be hard to detect without running in the sort of water you want to use it in.

Just remember to give yourself plenty of time to decide about any boat and don't make any sort of agreement until you are sure about that boat.

## Depth Finders



One of the most useful accessories for any fisher that recently became available are depth finders with G.P.S. units. They are not cheap but serious fishers will find the combination very useful.

The G.P.S. adds some extra safety if you are ever fishing in unfamiliar waters or in a different season. Some units can produce maps for later reference with appropriate add-ons.

The depth finders may scan directly under your boat, to the side of it and newer units are becoming available which combine these 2 modes.

These sophisticated machines need some practice to get good results.

There are also portable models which can be moved between boats if you rent them or are trying some with a view to purchase.

These will need some fine tuning each time you shift them and they may need extra fastening and cushioning above what's provided as part of the kit.

Liquid crystal displays are very popular but older units with a circular display are still in common use. They are still very useful so don't invest in the latest model if you don't need the extra features.

## Good Gear Will Save You Money

The first rule with buying fishing gear is “Buying quality gear pays!”

You can get good gear cheap sometimes.

If we skimp on quality with any part of the rig we use, that could cost us more than we saved on the purchase in lost fish and even broken gear!

Always match the rod, reel and line to each other.

If you want to cast long, as you would for smallmouth which are well away from your spot on the bank or in your boat, a longer rod can be helpful.

The tip of your rod should be quickly responsive because the bass hit fast.

If you start with a rod about 6 ft 6 inches (195 cm), you should be in the right area.

Practice using the drag on your reel or free-reeling without it with some small fish so you can be ready to use the power when you need it with the bigger fish you are sure to get on your hooks later.

With a spinning rig, you should start with thin line and some stated abrasion resistance (often missing from the cheap line on those large bargain reels).

Although some fishers suggest particular colors of line should be used, I try to use line which can be easily seen above the water so I know when something other than just the waves or wind is moving it.

Lines can be monofilament or any of several more advanced types. I would avoid the monofilament because its likely to be less wear-resistant.

You’ll soon find that your fish put plenty of pressure on every part of the system, including you, and a weak line is not likely to stand up to it.

Modern spinning reels don’t have the problem with tangles of line appearing as the line is pulled into the water.

There are even gadgets for spooling your line which almost guarantee that the dreaded line-twist is a thing of the past.

When you’re spooling line before a trip, don’t fill the reel completely or you may get tangles when the line is pulled off fast. That can ruin your day and give you some extra maintenance to do when you get home.

Inline spinners may cause tangles, but the possibility can be reduced by using swivels with them.

When you are getting a few fish, or striking snags and other hazards in the water, take the time to examine the last hundred feet or so of line and remove it if it is starting to wear.

That’s not as costly or time-consuming as having that whole section break and take your lures and other bits off into the water!

## Catch and Release

Catch and Release is commonly practiced in bass fishing to reduce the impact on the fish population.

Just take what you need for food and take pictures of any other notable catches.

There are regulations in some areas so check with your local fishing club or the authorities.

We release most of the bigger fish because they are the ones which are most likely to provide the fry in coming seasons.

### *How to release Fish*

Many fish are released but die because of the handling they got during the process.

If you caught a fish and the hook is deep in them or through a sensitive area, you may do more damage trying to get it out. Cut the line close to the hook eye.

Keep the fish in your wet hands and get it back into the water as soon as possible.

Hold the fish under the water to see that its gills and mouth are working, move it gently forward and then let it go.

Don't wipe them with anything - that would interfere with their natural coating which protects them from infection.

Keep their time out of water to a minimum. They become stressed and can die fairly soon after getting back in the water.

## Lures

There are a huge number of lures available for you to try to catch bass with.

Some of the most popular types are worms, pop baits, crank baits and shiners.

Lures are very popular but live bait is also commonly used. Artificial copies of popular live baits are also effective.

The bass seems to learn to avoid certain kinds of lure after a while, so new types and variations are constantly in demand.

But, you will find that trying new ways of presenting a lure may revive its popularity with the fish.

### *Crank bait*

This is a type of artificial lure with a lip at the front of the body. The size of the lip affects the depth the crank bait will dive into the water.

Your rod's action will help or hinder the success of this type of lure too. If you draw the line back too quickly, the fish may not grab it.

The crank bait's action is affected by design features of the crank baits you use.

Slim bodies slip through the water. The width and angle of the lip, if it has one, affects how quickly and how deep it dives.

It is important that the lure goes straight or you may cross someone else's line. Hold your rod straight forward of your body and check whether the line is heading straight out or to either side. Some deflection may be caused by current or other factors.

If you think the angle is because the bait is not tuned, try to gently adjust the lip after you retrieve the lure and before you use it again.

There are fishers who believe that the fish are put off by loud noises but some crank baits which include rattles are catching fish. If you use a rattling lure without good results, you may need to change how you present it to the fish rather than stop using it.



### ***Worm Lures***

Bass respond to plastic worms even though they only see real ones in their habitat when one is washed into the water from an outflow.

Worm lures come in 3 basic styles: flat tail, curly tail and no tail. The ordinary worm will sink faster than those with tails.

### ***Worm and Texas Rig***

The most popular way to rig a worm lure is the Texas rig.

It's easy to put together and has never lost favor with fishers or their quarry.

#### **Two important points.**

1. The weight should not be lead as lead sinkers are banned in a number of areas.
2. Use an offset hook if possible. It will help to keep the hook and lure aligned so there is little chance of it snagging on anything.



This usually has a small bullet weight on the line above the lure but some people succeed without using the weight.

Start by threading the end of your line through the bullet weight.

Tie your hook to the end of the line. Use any reliable knot such as the bowline.

Then, we push the point of the hook into the top of the worm lure about a half inch (1.2 cm).

Then, turn and push the point of the hook out the side of the worm.

Push the worm up along the hook until the eye of the hook is directly above the top of the worm.

As you slide the worm, turn the hook so the point is next to the body of the worm.

Squeeze the worm so that the point of the hook can go into the side of the worm straight below where it came out from.



The shaft of the hook will lie parallel with the main part of the worm body. The barb is inserted just under the surface of the worm.

### ***Color for lures***

Traditionally, red and white were considered worth trying at any new spot. Light colors are generally recommended for fairly clear water and dark colors in clouded areas.

But, other factors also have great influence on your success on a particular day.

There are many people painting and selling lures in their own combination colors. They must have a track record of success. But, you should start with lures which have a record of success in your location with the type of fish you're after.

Always remember that presentation is a very important factor. If others are getting good results with a particular lure in the area you are fishing, maybe they are using a different approach to you.

Other factors which are important include the season when you are fishing.

Male bass eat more as spawning season approaches.

They also feed up after they are released from spawning duties, including eating any fingerlings which come into their range.

They also will show more aggression when the weather is in the mid-range. If it starts to get cold, their systems can slow down. That may also happen at high temperatures.

But, you may persuade them to strike reflexively if you present the bait or lure suddenly to them.

They also usually respond well to baits with rattles in them.

Most lures fall out of favor after a while. Whether it is that the fish become more wary of the design or some other factor is guesswork.

Change your lure or presentation from time to time.

### ***Tube Baits***

These are a popular choice for smallmouth bass.

The bait is a hollow soft plastic cylinder, with a round head and tentacles at the other end. Use one about 3 to 4 inches (7 to 11 cm) long for the bass.

Some tube baits have salt or a scent put in them during their production. You can also try adding commercial scents to unscented tube baits and see if the fish in your area like them.

Cast it and then drag it over the bottom where you think the bass are.

This will wear the line and may take the sedge of your hooks. So, you need to examine the various parts after a while so they will not let you down if an excited fish strikes your line.

## More Top Tips

**Why use a Trolling Motor?** Noises are sometimes a fish deterrent. A really loud motor could alarm fish, but a well-maintained trolling motor will not.

Also, you put your lure or bait out far enough away from your motor that the sound should not be a problem.

Trolling is effective for bass as they are active predators. Trolling is less likely to spook fish than frequently stopping and starting the motor.

Trolling lets you sample a wider area more quickly but you will probably miss a few fish because you keep moving. So, you might want to circle back through an area if you caught fish there during in your first pass.

**Other Bass will move in:** If you caught fish in a spot before, you will probably find more bass in the same area again. Bass will like the same features in that area, so it is worth going back there and also making notes about the features where you consistently find fish even if you don't get them every time.

## Safety First

Fishing is a great hobby but it comes with some risks.

Every fisher needs to have a first aid kit and appropriate clothing for the conditions.

### *Clothing*



You need to be warm and comfortable. Remember that the conditions you expect could be quite different at some time during the day.

Layering is a good idea. Rather than wearing thick clothing, use layers which you can remove or add to suit how you feel.

When you're on the water, the wind comes straight at you.

Gloves are essential when handling the gear and moving a boat. Many small injuries can have a dramatic effect on our ability to continue fishing or handle the boat properly.

A hat and sunglasses will help to keep you from sunburn. The glasses should have side panels to stop glare from the water getting in the sides and possibly causing damage to your eyes.

Even on sunny days, you will lose heat from your head and shoulders if they're exposed. A scarf and beanie, or balaclava, will reduce the loss.

A foil "space blanket" is a wise addition to your gear. You can use it as a temporary shelter from unexpected wind, or to wrap around someone who has been drenched if you don't have spare clothes for them to change in to.

Strong thin gloves are a good idea for handling hooks, knives etc. Always carry a couple of spare pairs for replacements or sharing with others on the trip.

A life-jacket for each person is required in some areas and is just common sense. You may be more comfortable using the type which inflate when you are in the water.

But, wear it all the time you're near the water.

That sets a good example when you have kids around.

Casual footwear invites accidents. Invest in a quality pair of boots which will keep your feet warm and dry. Some are very comfortable.

Put rubber mats on the boat deck to avoid slipping. It will also reduce the amount of noise from your boat which is transmitted into the water to possibly disturb the fish you are trying to catch.

Wrap spare batteries for your cell phone and other gear in water-proof plastic and make sure they're easy to get at but won't get lost.

## Resources

### Bass Fishing Clubs

#### *U.S.A. and International*

##### **International Federation of Black Bass Anglers**

<http://www.ifbba.com/>

##### **Bass Anglers Sportsman Society**

<http://www.bassmaster.com/>

Club which organizes trails of Bass fishing tournaments and fosters conservation of the species and promotion of the sport of bass fishing.

#### *U.K.*

##### **Bass Anglers Sports Fishing Association**

<http://www.ukbass.com/>

#### *Australia*

##### **Bass Sydney Fishing Club Inc**

<http://www.basssydney.com/>

Founded in 1981 by a group of dedicated Bass fishers. As well as fishing for bass and sharing information, the Club is involved with projects to improve the bass fishery in their State.

## Have More Fun Fishing!

Thank you for reading my book.

I hope that some ideas have got your interest and some have hopefully shown you ways to handle problems or reduce the time it will take for you to get more fun from your bass fishing.



The greatest thing about bass fishing is that you don't need special qualifications or a lot of cash to do it well.

The other thing which keeps me excited about it after all these years is that every trip is different and every day has new challenges as well as new discoveries.

I hope you catch lots and enjoy every day you go fishing for bass!

*Charles Abbott*

[Another eBookWholesaler Publication](#)