

# Fishing With Bill Long

## Spring Into Fishing Action

Since January, mild weather, in the 60 to 80 degree range, has the fishing action hot and the thermometer high for this time of year.

One has to remind oneself that Spring doesn't officially start until March 20, but we aren't complaining as the weather seems to have more folks wanting to fish, and that is always a good thing.

Navigation is not a problem in the St. John's River, Harris Chain, Kissimmee Chain, East Lake, and West Lake. The lakes of the Butler Chain are still navigable but the connecting canals are very shallow, and most of the Clermont chain is closed due to low water levels.

For Bass in February, concentrate your efforts in depths of two to ten feet. The unseasonably warm weather has pushed the bigger spawning bass in toward shore earlier than usual.

Since the full moon in January, we have seen hundreds of new beds in shallow water all over Central Florida. Look for boat docks, lily pads, trees, cattails, or any likely hiding spot where a bass could take cover and spawn. Also when fishing, search out the clearest water in the lake or river you are fishing. Bass and other fish migrate towards these areas for additional oxygen, sight protection, and feeding advantages.

**TIP: for Bass, try Carolina rigged plastic worms, plastic lizards, or plastic Tube Baits. Try spinner and crank baits, slowly retrieving them to boat or shore. All of these are producing results because they get the bait down in the strike zone where spawning bass are.**

The Shellcracker action, Sunfish to our Northern friends, continues to amaze me. Two entirely different techniques are working right now. The first is to fish in four to six feet of water near grass or other vegetation. Use live bait, small hooks, and a bobber to put the bait just above the bottom. The second technique is to fish in deep water with the bait suspended midway between the surface and

the bottom. Again use a small hook and live bait.

**TIP: for Shellcrackers, try large live grass shrimp and large live minnows, or small live crickets and small wooden popping plugs. When you catch a shellcracker, stay put, they**



**travel in schools and you should catch quite a few at once.**

The Crappie fishing is hot right now also. Many fishermen and fisherwomen are catching their

limits. You will do better this month by focusing on shallower water. Fish near cattails, lily pads, cypress trees, thin grass, or other likely hideouts. Like all fish, the crappies have moved in shallower to spawn.

**TIP: for Crappies, use live minnows, live grass shrimp, or small beetle spins.**

Catfishing is still pretty boring this month, however they can finally be caught in shallower water near shore. The Catfish are spawning this month also and they can be found in four to eight feet of water.

**TIP: for Catfish, use nightcrawlers, hot dogs, cheese, or anything else with a strong smell. Also, fish from sundown to sunrise for best results.**

Take a kid, take your wife (or husband,) or any other family and friends out fishing this month. Spending time outdoors is a great habit to develop and an even greater habit to share.

Until next time, good, luck, good fishing, tight lines.

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