

BASS BEHAVIOR

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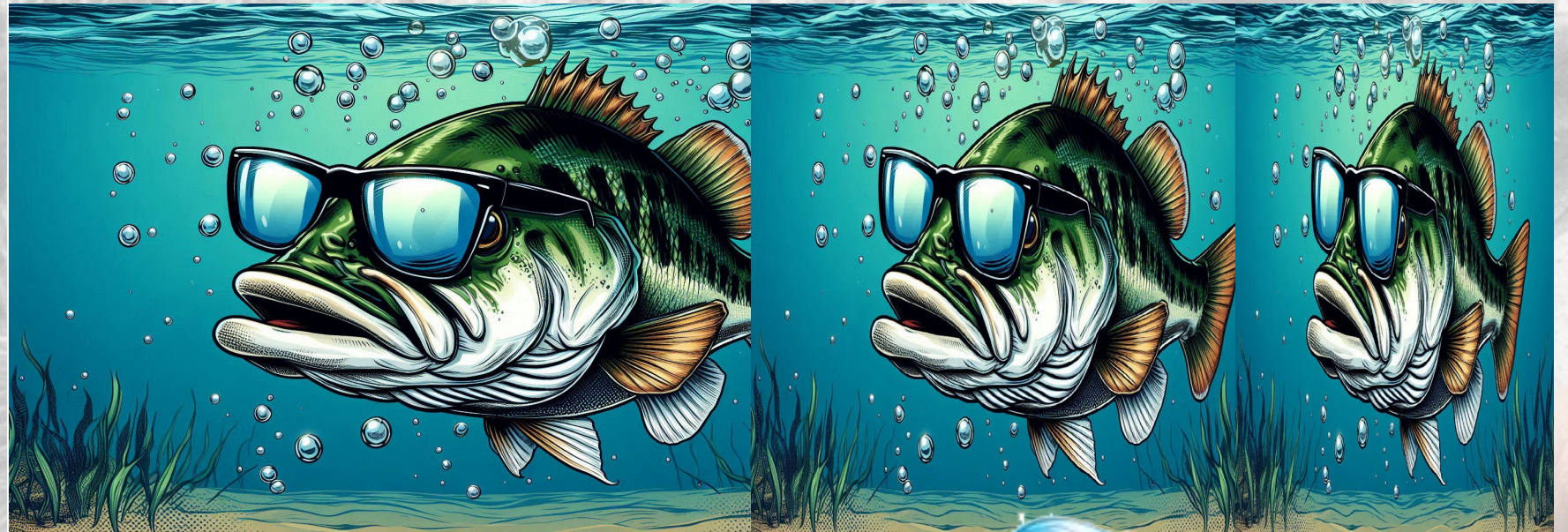


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BASS BEHAVIOR 101

Knowing more about what and why a bass acts the way it does helps a fisherman figure out how to try to catch them. Here are some biological tips on largemouth bass that may help you do just that. Good fishin'!

SENSES
FEEDING
SPAWNING



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SENSES

- Largemouth bass have the five major senses hearing, sight, smell, taste and touch.
- **They have another sense, the lateral line, which can pick up underwater vibrations as subtle as a swimming baitfish.**
- Largemouth bass hear with external ears located within the skull.
- **But when they hear loud unfamiliar sounds, they usually swim to deeper water or cover.**
- Bass can see in all directions, except directly below or behind.
- **In clear water, they can see 30 feet or more.**
- In most bass waters, visibility is limited to 5 to 10 feet.



SENSES

- Largemouth can also see objects that are above water.
- **Largemouth smell through nostrils, or nares, on the snout.**
- Bass can detect minute amounts of scent in the water.
- **Bass use their sense of touch to determine whether to reject or swallow an object.**
- Sense of taste is not important to largemouth bass because bass have few taste cells in their mouths..



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FEEDING

- Newly-hatched largemouth feed heavily on tiny crustaceans and other zooplankton until the bass reach 2 inches in length.
- **Young largemouth eat insects and small fish, including smaller bass.**
- Adult largemouth prey mostly on fish, but crawfish, frogs and insects are important foods in some waters.
- **A bass 10 inches or longer has few enemies and will eat almost anything it can swallow.**



FEEDING

- Bass inhale small foods then it either swallows or rejects the object.
- **As the water warms, the metabolism of bass increases and they feed more often.**
- Largemouth seldom eat at water temperatures below 50 degrees.
- **From 50 to 60 degrees, feeding increases, and from 68 to 80 degrees, they feed heavily. At temperatures above 80 degrees, feeding declines.**



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GROWTH



- The amount bass grow in a year depends on the length of their growing season, or the number of days suitable for growth.
- **Largemouth gain weight most quickly in water from 75 to 80 degrees.**
- They do not grow in water colder than 50 degrees.
- **Bass in the south grow and mature faster, they rarely live as long as largemouth in colder, northern lakes.**
- In southern waters, bass occasionally reach 10 years of age.
- **In northern waters, bass may live as long as 15 years.**
- Female bass live longer than males, so they are more apt to reach a trophy size.



SPAWNING



When inshore waters reach about 60 degrees, largemouth bass swim onto spawning grounds in shallow bays, backwaters, channels and other areas protected from prevailing winds.

- Spawning grounds usually have firm bottoms of sand, gravel, mud or rock.
- **Some spawning areas are in open water; others have sparse weeds, boulders or logs.**
- Male bass may spend several days selecting their nest sites usually in 1 to 4 feet of water.
- **The males seldom nest where they can see other nesting males.**



SPAWNING

- For this reason, beds are generally at least 30 feet apart, but may be closer around weeds, boulders, sunken logs or stumps.
- **Largemouth spawn when the water reaches 63 to 68 degrees and temperatures remain within this range for several days.**
- Cold fronts may cause water temperatures to drop, which interrupts and delays spawning.
- **A female bass lays from 2000 to 7000 eggs per pound of body weight.**
- She may deposit all of her eggs in one nest or drop them at several different sites before leaving the spawning grounds.



SPAWNING

- After spawning, the female recuperates in deep water, where she does not eat for 2 to 3 weeks.
- **Alone on the nest the male hovers above the eggs, slowly fanning them to keep off the silt and other debris.**
- He does not eat while guarding the eggs, but will attack other fish that swim near the nest.
- **Bass eggs hatch in only 2 days at 72 degrees, but take 5 days at 67 degrees.**
- If the shallows drop to 50 degrees, the fry will not emerge for 13 days.
- **At lower temperatures, the eggs will fail to develop**



SPAWNING

- A severe cold front sometimes causes males to abandon the nest, resulting in a complete loss of eggs or fry
- **In waters with large sunfish populations, the panfish can seriously hamper bass reproduction.**
- From 2000 to 12,000 eggs hatch from the typical nest. Of these, only 5 to 10 are likely to survive to reach 10 inches in length.



BASS BEHAVIOR 101

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