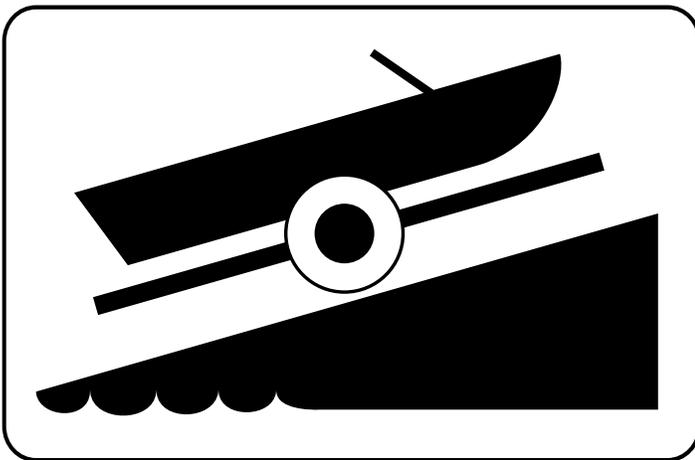




## Newsletter for the south Florida canal and urban pond angler

*Our Purpose: To identify excellent south Florida freshwater fishing opportunities and to provide urban anglers with relevant information that will enhance the quality of their outdoor experience.*



This newsletter is a publication of the **South Region Fisheries Management Section** of the **Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC)**, and is paid for in part by **Sport Fish Restoration** funds. To contact **The City Fisher**, e-mail [john.cimbaro@myfwc.com](mailto:john.cimbaro@myfwc.com) or phone John Cimbaro at 561-625-5122. You can also write to: John Cimbaro; Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission; 8535 Northlake Boulevard; West Palm Beach, FL 33412. Back issues are available. You can visit us at [MyFWC.com](http://MyFWC.com).



**Florida Fish and Wildlife  
Conservation Commission**

[MyFWC.com](http://MyFWC.com)

### Special feature: South Florida boat ramp locator

*by Josh Wilsey*

Recently the FWC **Division of Freshwater Fisheries Management** conducted a survey to find freshwater boat ramps open to the public within south Florida. Over 130 ramps were identified during the course of the three-month study. These ramps ranged from hard-to-find, single-lane gravel ramps in the Everglades to urban, well-maintained multi-lane boat ramps with numerous amenities. Here are details on a number of the more accessible ramps in Palm Beach, Broward, and Miami-Dade counties.

- \* A map and guide are available for sites marked with an asterisk (\*), via the contact information in the box to the left. Please be sure to specify which sites you are interested in.
- The summary map on page 5 shows the locations of all listed ramps.

#### ■ Palm Beach County

##### **1. Loxahatchee Slough Canal (C-18)\***

- **Description** - Single-lane concrete boat ramp located on the Loxahatchee Slough Canal within Sand Hill Crane Park in Palm Beach Gardens.
- **Amenities** - There is a restroom, observation platform, and gravel parking lot.
- **Directions** - Located on the north side of PGA Boulevard 4.0 miles west of I-95 or 2.1 miles west of the Turnpike.

## **2. Lake Catherine / Earman River Canal (C-17)\***

- **Description** - Single-lane concrete boat ramp within Lake Catherine Park in Palm Beach Gardens.
- **Amenities** - There is an unimproved grass lot with space for about ten trailers.
- **Directions** - Exit I-95 at Northlake Boulevard and head east. Turn north onto MacArthur Boulevard, and the ramp will be on the left side of the road, just before the C-17 canal.
- **Note** - *Motors more than 10 HP are not allowed.*

## **3. Lake Mangonia**

- **Description** - Concrete two-lane ramp located on Lake Mangonia in West Palm Beach.
- **Amenities** - Restrooms, picnic tables, trailer parking for eight, and parking for handicapped and non-trailer vehicles.
- **Directions** - Located on the western side of Australian Avenue. Exit I-95 at Palm Beach Lakes Boulevard and head east 1.5 miles, then head north on Australian Avenue 1.1 miles. The ramp is on the left side of the road.
- **Note** - *No gasoline powered motors are allowed (electric motors only).*

## **4. Okeehetee Fish Management Area\***

- **Description** - Concrete single-lane ramp located within Okeehetee Park in West Palm Beach.
- **Amenities** - Boat dock, fishing pier, fish attractors, boat rentals, trailer parking for thirteen and parking for handicapped and non-trailer vehicles, restrooms, picnic pavilions, playgrounds, and walking/biking paths.
- **Directions** - Located on the north side of Forest Hill Boulevard between Jog Road and the Florida Turnpike (note that you cannot exit the Turnpike here). Go in through the west park entrance (not the golf course entrance), take the first right, and then an immediate left.
- **Note** - *Gasoline motors may not be used on boats.*
- **Note** - There is also extensive shoreline access for bank anglers along most of the shore not within the public golf course area.

## **5. Lake Osborne (John Prince Park)\***

- **Description** - There are two boat ramps located within John Prince Park in Lake Worth. The first is on the north lobe of Lake Osborne, near Lake Worth Road; there are three paved lanes for launching. The second is on the middle lobe of Lake Osborne within the campgrounds, and offers a single paved lane.

- **Amenities** - The first ramp offers trailer parking for 50; the second offers limited parking on the grass. There are numerous other facilities available within John Prince Park including fishing piers, restrooms, walking and jogging trails, picnic tables, and playgrounds.
- **Directions** - There are four entrances to John Prince Park. The first is located on Lake Worth Road between Congress Avenue and Lake Osborne Drive. The second is off Lake Osborne Drive just south of Lake Worth Road. The third entrance is located on 6th Avenue between Congress Avenue and I-95. The last entrance is located on Congress Avenue between 6th Avenue and Lantana Road.
- **Note** - There is also extensive shoreline access for bank anglers along most of the north and middle lobes of Lake Osborne.

## **6. C-16 Canal\***

- **Description** - There is a two-lane concrete boat ramp located within Pioneer Park in Boynton Beach.
- **Amenities** - There is trailer parking for three vehicles, designated handicapped parking, fishing pier, picnic tables, playground and restroom.
- **Directions** - Located in Pioneer Park off NW 13th Avenue (accessed by heading north on NW 7th Street from Boynton Beach Boulevard).

## **7. Lake Ida (Lake Ida Park)\***

- **Description** - Concrete two-lane boat ramp located within Lake Ida Park in Delray Beach.
- **Amenities** - There is enough parking for 40 trailers. Also located in the park are a fishing pier, restrooms, picnic tables, pavilions, and regular and handicapped parking.
- **Directions** - Exit I-95 at Atlantic Avenue and travel west 0.3 miles, head north on Congress Avenue for 0.8 miles, and then go east 0.2 miles on Lake Ida Road. The entrance to Lake Ida Park is on the north side of the road, immediately after passing under the I-95 overpass.

## **■ Broward County**

### **8. Hillsboro Canal (G-08)\***

- **Description** - Single-lane concrete ramp within Villages of Hillsboro Park in Deerfield Beach.
- **Amenities** - There is trailer parking for eight vehicles, fishing pier, restrooms, picnic tables, playground, tennis courts, basketball courts, and additional parking for vehicles without trailers.

■ **Directions** - Exit I-95 at Hillsboro Boulevard and head west 2.2 miles, then head north on Powerline Road 0.5 miles. Turn west on NW 6th Street and go 0.4 miles; the entrance to the park is on the northwest side of the road.

#### **9. Cypress Creek Canal (C-14)\***

■ **Description** - A two-lane concrete boat ramp is located within the Veterans Memorial Park in the city of Tamarac.

■ **Amenities** - Trailer parking for 24 vehicles, restroom and picnic tables.

■ **Directions** - Take the Florida Turnpike or I-95 and exit at Atlantic Boulevard; head west approximately 4.5 miles from the Turnpike or 7 miles from I-95. Turn left on Riverside Drive, then left on University Drive and finally right on Southgate Boulevard. The entrance to the park will be on the right just past the intersection.

#### **10. Cypress Creek Canal (C-14)\***

■ **Description** - There are two single-lane concrete boat ramps located at the Margate Marina site within the City of Margate.

■ **Amenities** - There is trailer parking for twelve vehicles. Other amenities include parking for handicapped and other vehicles, and picnic tables.

■ **Directions** - Take the Florida Turnpike or I-95 and exit at Atlantic Boulevard, heading west 2.5 miles from the Turnpike or 5 miles from I-95. Turn left on Rock Island Road and then left on NW 1st Street; the ramps will be on the immediate right.

#### **11. I-75 Canal**

■ **Description** - There are several multi-lane concrete boat ramps located along I-75 / Alligator Alley.

■ **Amenities** - All of these boat ramps have similar facilities. They include paved parking areas capable of accommodating several vehicles with trailers, designated handicapped parking, and parking for non-trailer vehicles, picnic tables, and docks.

■ **Directions** - Located at mile markers 31.5, 32.1, 35.1, 35.2, 35.4, 35.9, 38.1, and 40.7 along I-75 / Alligator Alley.

■ **Note** - Boat ramps located at mile markers 31.5 and 38.1 are only accessible from the *westbound* lane, and ramps at mile markers 32.1 and 40.7 are only accessible from the *eastbound* lane. All other ramps are located within the

rest stop area between mile markers 35 and 36, and are accessible from either direction.

#### **12. L-35B Canal (Sawgrass Recreation Park)\***

■ **Description** - A two-lane concrete boat ramp is located in Sawgrass Recreation Park in Ft. Lauderdale.

■ **Amenities** - There is enough parking for fifteen boat trailers, with additional parking behind the concession building. Bait and tackle, boat rentals, airboat tours, and R.V. campsites are available on-site.

■ **Directions** - Take I-95 or the Florida Turnpike and exit at I-595 heading west. Take I-75 north toward Naples, then exit I-75 at US 27 and head north for about 2 miles; the entrance will be on the right. Alternatively, if coming from the north you can take the Sawgrass Expressway (869) south to where it ends at I-75.

#### **13. North New River Canal (G-15) & L-35A Canal\***

■ **Description** - There are three boat ramps located within Markham Park in Sunrise. One is a two-lane concrete ramp that accesses the North New River Canal and is located to the east of the park entrance. The other two single-lane concrete ramps access the L-35A Canal and are adjacent to each other near the campground.

■ **Amenities** - The first ramp offers trailer parking for nineteen vehicles. There is also a series of interconnected lakes within the park that are accessible to bank anglers. Other amenities include restrooms, picnic tables and pavilions, racquetball/tennis courts, biking/hiking trails, a swimming complex, campground, and a dog park.

■ **Directions** - The entrance to Markham Park is located west of the Sawgrass Expressway (869) and just north off West State Road 84.

■ **Note** - There is an entrance fee on weekends.

#### **14. North New River Canal (G-15)\***

■ **Description** - There is a two lane gravel boat ramp located within Riverland Woods Park in Ft. Lauderdale.

■ **Amenities** - There is trailer parking for eight vehicles, restrooms, picnic tables, playground, additional parking for vehicles without trailers, and a courtesy dock.

■ **Directions** - Exit I-595 at SR 7 / US 441 and head north 0.6 miles. Take the first right onto Riverland Road, then take another right to continue on Riverland Road. The road dead-ends at the park entrance.

■ **Note** - This is a brackish water canal.

### **15. L-67A Canal (Everglades Holiday Park)\***

- **Description** - There are two concrete boat ramps with two lanes each located at Everglades Holiday Park in Southwest Ranches.
- **Amenities** - There is space for over 100 vehicles with boat trailers. Other amenities include bait and tackle shop, fishing pier, dock, boat rentals, restrooms, airboat tours, live alligator shows, and camping.
- **Directions** - Exit I-95 or the Florida Turnpike at I-595 and head west. Take I-75 north toward Naples, then exit I-75 at US 27 and head south for about 6 miles. Turn west on Griffin Road at the traffic light and it will dead-end at the park. Alternatively, if coming from the north you can take the Sawgrass Expressway (869) south to where it ends at I-75.

## **■ Miami-Dade County**

### **16. Snake Creek (C-9) Canal\***

- **Description** - There is a single-lane concrete ramp located in northern Miami-Dade County.
- **Amenities** - There is an unimproved parking lot with parking for approximately fifteen vehicles with trailers.
- **Directions** - Located on the eastern side of NW 2nd Avenue / US 441 just north of the C-9 Canal itself.

### **17. S-333 Boat Ramp (L-67A Canal & L-29 Canal)\***

- **Description** - There is a single-lane, concrete boat ramp located off Tamiami Trail just north of structure S-333, west of Miami.
- **Amenities** - There is an unimproved lot with space for about 30 vehicles with trailers.
- **Directions** - From the intersection of Tamiami Trail (US 41 / SW 8th Street) and Krome Avenue (Hwy 997), travel west on Tamiami Trail 12.3 miles to Structure 333. Turn right and follow Levee Road 250 yards to the ramp, which will be on the left.
- **Note** - The **L-67C Canal Boat Ramp** is located about 0.3 miles north of this ramp, off the same levee but on the right. It offers a single-lane, concrete ramp and parking for five trailers.

### **18. Three Mile Boat Ramp (L-29 Canal)**

- **Description** - There is a single-lane, concrete FWC boat ramp located along Tamiami Trail, west of Miami.

- **Amenities** - There is trailer parking for five vehicles and an additional space for handicapped parking.
- **Directions** - From the intersection of Tamiami Trail (US 41 / SW 8th Street) and Krome Avenue (Hwy 997), travel west on Tamiami Trail 1.3 miles to Structure 334. Turn right and cross over the water control structure. Turn left on Levee Road and go 3.0 miles to the ramp.
- **Note** - The **S-12D** and **S-12C Boat Ramps** (also accessing the L-29 Canal) are located farther west, 12.9 miles and 16.0 miles west of Krome Avenue, respectively. Each offers a single-lane, concrete ramp and an unimproved lot with space for about 25 vehicles.

### **19. Tamiami Canal (C-4) & Airport Lakes\***

- **Description** - A two-lane concrete boat ramp is located within Antonio Maceo Park in Miami.
- **Amenities** - There is parking for seventeen vehicles with trailers. Also located on site are docks, restrooms, picnic tables and playground.
- **Directions** - Located on the north side of NW 7th Street between N Red Road (NW 57th Avenue) and NW 47th Avenue, to the south of the Dolphin Expressway.
- **Note** - There is a launch fee on weekends and holidays.

### **20. L-31W Boat Ramp (L-31W Canal)**

- **Description** - There is a single-lane unimproved boat ramp located on the L-31W canal, southwest of Florida City.
- **Amenities** - There is an unimproved gravel parking lot with space for about ten boat trailers.
- **Directions** - Located in southern Miami-Dade County on the north side of Ingraham Highway, just before the entrance to Everglades National Park. Start from the intersection of US 1 and Palm Drive / SW 344th Street in Florida City and head west on Palm Drive 4.2 miles. Head south on SW 217th Avenue for 3 miles, then head west 2 miles on Ingraham Highway. The ramp will be on the right side of the road.

 **Caution - Anglers should be aware that vandalism occurs at some boat ramps. Therefore, care should be taken to secure your vehicle and keep valuables out of sight or take them with you when you leave the ramp.**



Florida's exotic invaders received a "double whammy" when temperatures not only plummeted to record-setting lows, but stayed there long enough to set additional records. In the end, nearly all south Florida waters were affected, and even relatively cold-tolerant exotics such as blue tilapia died in droves. The other species most widely observed among the dead included Mayan cichlid, spotted tilapia, oscar, sailfin catfish, brown hoplo, and (within the Osborne-Ida system) clown knifefish.

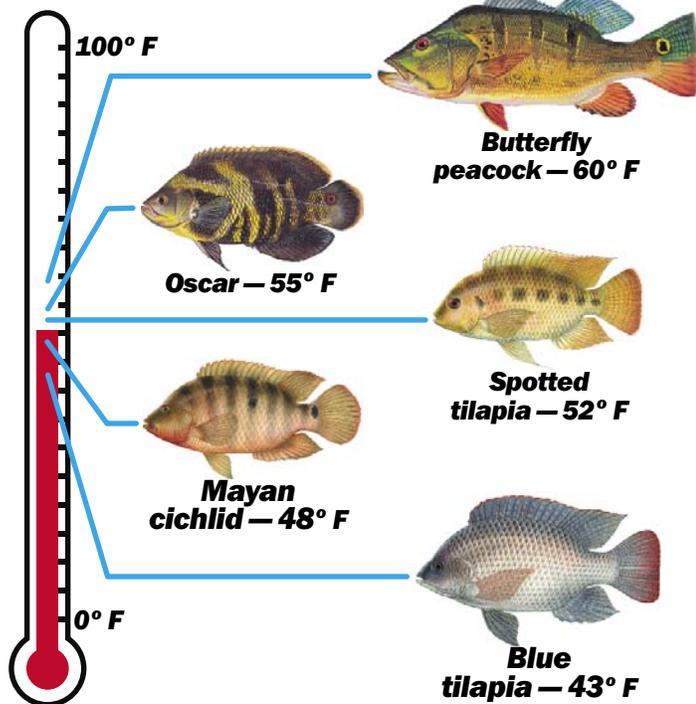
County offers the best bet for any exotic quarry. However, Mayan cichlid and oscar anglers might consider concentrating on bream or crappie this year (check the "Top Spots" for both at FWC's Fishing Forecasts, at [Myfwc.com/RECREATION/FW\\_Sites.htm](http://Myfwc.com/RECREATION/FW_Sites.htm)).

## Wanted—your help!

Whether you are an occasional angler or an avid fisherman, whether you fish with a cane pole in your back yard or travel to Florida—the Fishing Capital of the World—from afar, or if you have a business that depends on quality sportfishing, we want your opinion. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission is developing a **Long-Term Black Bass Management Plan** and is interested in your input.

The link below will provide some introductory material that you may want to review prior to taking the survey, but it is not critical that you do so. We mostly need your opinions to help ensure that we create a plan that addresses everyone's concerns.

[MyFWC.com/BassPlan\\_survey](http://MyFWC.com/BassPlan_survey)



**Different species of fish have different "lower lethal temperatures," the temperature at which death due to cold will occur.**

Sadly, the butterfly peacock—the only legally established exotic fish in Florida—was also severely impacted. Introduced by FWC in the mid-1980's to control spotted tilapia, their preferred food, peacock bass are especially sensitive to cold. It was acknowledged well in advance that the peacock bass would have a limited northern range (probably never farther than Palm Beach County) and be subject to cold-weather kills. However, their role in reducing overall exotic fish numbers in south Florida—in addition to creating a new multi-million-dollar sport fishery—has continued to justify their introduction.

Anglers targeting exotic fish in the near future should think "south." Miami-Dade

# WANTED!

## YOUR INPUT!

**For the NEW Florida  
Bass Management Plan**

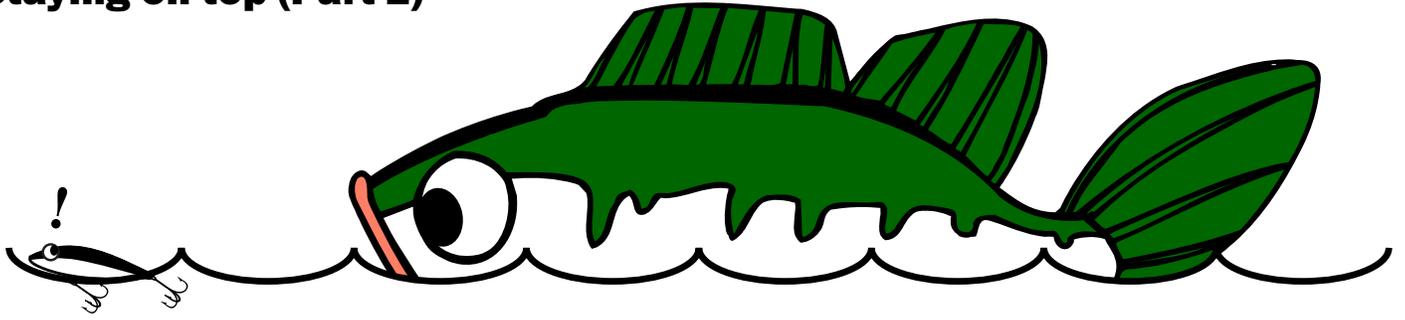


**Make a difference!  
TAKE A SURVEY**

Go to  
[MyFWC.com/BassPlan\\_survey](http://MyFWC.com/BassPlan_survey)

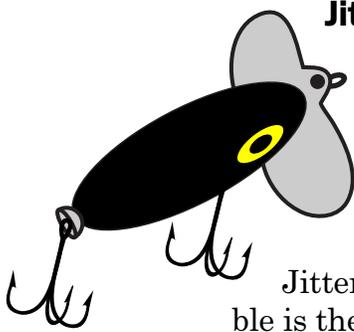

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## Staying on top (Part 2)



Last issue provided an introduction to the excitement of topwater fishing, and covered floating-diving minnows, poppers, the Zara Spook, and propeller lures. This quarter we'll cover several more surface lures, and address the topic of night fishing with topwaters.

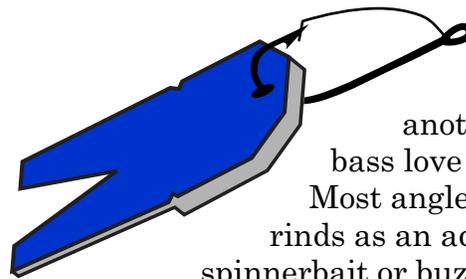
marshy habitat. It can be worked erratically through the vegetation, or retrieved almost like a buzzbait; two "curly legs" provide the action.



**Jitterbug**—The Arbogast Jitterbug is a true classic, and has remained unique over the years. The only other lure I've seen that comes close to matching the Jitterbug's left-right-left wobble is the Heddon Crazy Crawler.

Working this lure is a snap—just cast it out and reel it in. Most anglers simply use a steady retrieve with no stops or twitches. A weedless version of the Jitterbug is available for fishing waters with heavier cover. This lure also happens to be a night fishing staple (below).

**Frogs**—A variety of topwater frog lures have come and gone over the years. One that has endured the test of time is the Snag Proof Frog (still available as "The Original"). Its soft, air-filled body floats well, and as the name implies allows this lure to be snaked over lily pads or other vegetation without hanging up. Experienced frog anglers like to use erratic starts and stops when working this lure, claiming that it mimics the predator-avoiding moves of a real frog. A newer entry in this category of lures is the Zoom Horny Toad, a soft plastic bait which has become particularly popular locally in the "flats" (marsh) within the Water Conservation Areas. Rigged Texas-style but without a weight, this weedless lure is ideal for working such



**Pork rind**—Hawgs love pigs! Or put

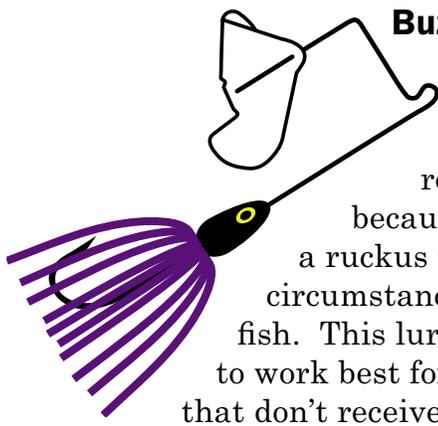
another way, big bass love pork rind baits! Most anglers use pork rinds as an add-on for their spinnerbait or buzzbait, but rigged with a weedless hook such baits as the Uncle Josh Original Pork Frog are standalone bass catchers in their own right. Pork rinds are typically worked across lily pads or other heavy cover with erratic twitches and stops. Although not entirely a topwater lure, pork rinds fished this way stay close enough to the surface to be considered part of the topwater angler's arsenal. Anglers can pause before setting the hook to ensure a good hookup, as bass tend to hang on to pork rinds longer than they do other topwater offerings. The traditional hook for this rig is the Mustad W3369A or Eagle Claw 449W with the double wire weedguard (rigged so the hook point rides *up*), although Uncle Josh makes their own brand of weedless hook. A variety of other pork rind baits suitable for topwater tossing are available, including Uncle Josh's Spin Frog and Big Daddy Frog, along with several other frog and "Craw" style baits.



**Jerk baits**—

Think of jerk baits as softer, subtler versions of "stick baits" like the Zara Spook. Their primary advantage is that these soft plastics can

be rigged weedless, similar to a Texas-rigged worm (sans weight). The Slug-Go, which reportedly started the jerk bait craze, is still one of the industry standards. It's closest contender is probably the Shad Assassin from Bass Assassin lures. When worked, these baits have more forward motion and a less distinct side-to-side action than heavier hard lures like the Spook, but fill a similar role in the angler's tackle box. They don't float as high as the hard baits, but make a more subtle surface commotion. Being weedless means they can be tossed into cover that would eat hard lures whole, and still come back—maybe even with a fish attached. These lures have also become especially popular in marshy areas like the Water Conservation Area “flats.”



**Buzzbaits**—I usually save this lure for last in my bass fishing repertoire, mainly because it creates such a ruckus that under some circumstances it may scare fish. This lure has also seemed to work best for me in areas that don't receive much fishing pressure and the bass aren't as suspicious. However, I've had lots of fun fishing with buzzbaits, and these lures also seem to really bring out the aerial antics in bass. Several times I've had bass actually leap out of the water and land on top of the buzzbait when taking it. This lure also covers more real estate in a hurry than any other topwater, because of the speed with which it is retrieved and the distance at which it can attract a bass' attention. I stick with a quick, steady retrieve that keeps the bait up and running briskly. I'll throw occasional twitches into my retrieve but haven't become convinced that a simple steady retrieve isn't just as effective. White-skirted lures have worked well for me, but black and chartreuse are also popular. Various colors and designs with single blades, double blades and even counter-rotating blades are available from numerous manufacturers.



**Night fishing**—Fishing with topwater lures during the day is pretty exciting; seeing big, splashy strikes is what gets most anglers started down this road.

But night fishing with topwaters has an allure and mystery all its own. Despite not always being able to see strikes, the quiet of the night often makes them sound loud well out of proportion to their size. Night fishing can also provide a quiet and solitude you won't find during the day, especially on busier waters.

While topwater gear will be essentially the same for day or night fishing, most anglers will want to use a heavier line. Fish won't be able to see the difference, but it will give you an advantage in playing a fish when you can't see the cover it might dive into, and a heavier line will also make it more likely that you get your lure back if it lands in weeds you can't see. Anglers should also consider weedless lures. Unless you're fishing a fairly open area, a lure with a weedguard has a better chance of making it back to you.

Several topwater lures do particularly well for night fishing. The Arbogast Jitterbug is a classic for night angling, as is the Hula (or other branded) Popper. Work these as you would during the day. A weedless Jitterbug is available if you night fish waters with vegetation or structure. Buzzbaits can also be used at night, and have the advantage of putting out lots of vibrations that bass can zero in on in the dark; they're also weedless, another night-time plus. When night fishing buzzbaits, stick with a steady retrieve instead of the throwing in the usual daytime twitches; in the dark, a bass may be more likely to miss a lure worked with an erratic retrieve. This may also be the reason a steadily moving lure like the Jitterbug, or a slow-working lure like a popper, are proven producers at night. Other topwater lures can be used, but these are the real standbys.

Alligators and some species of snakes are active at night, so of course exercise caution when near the water. Also ensure that you have enough light to check your footing and move about safely.