

## Frustrating yet challenging Smallmouth bass fishing in Canada

Canada provides some of the world's best fishing. Summer season opens in March and ends late in July. Many anglers head for the variety of fish found within Canada's border.

The lakes, ponds, streams, and rivers provide perfect habitats for an ample amount fish, and this multiplicity provides a variety of challenges for any type of fisherman. The geographical diversity found in Canada also offers opportunities for saltwater fishing, ice fishing, and fly-fishing.

Smallmouth bass is one of the popular species found from Ontario, Canada's Great Lakes shoals to scenic, glacial lakes of the Canadian Shield and in thousands of rivers, creeks, and lakes in between.

Smallmouth bass are often-discussed. Nearly every fishing magazine contains a story or two where the writer extolled this fish as a hard-hitting, scrappy-fighting, aerial acrobat of the sunfish family. Those who have experienced smallmouth angling know that this praise is justified.

Little wonder should exist that there has been in recent years renewed interest in fishing for this species. Smallmouth, although plentiful only in places with select habitat, are distributed throughout the state. Many anglers need to travel only a short distance for a chance to fish for this fierce fighter of the black bass family.

Smallmouth bass are most often bronze to brownish green in color, with dark vertical bars on the sides. In contrast to the Largemouth bass, the upper jaw does not extend beyond rear margin of eye. Its Eye is reddish in color and shallow notch in dorsal fin. Soft dorsal fin has 13 to 15 rays. These species prefer to stay in rocky habitats in streams and lakes with clear waters.

In streams, these creatures fed on minnows and crayfish while in lakes, they consumed shad and crayfish.

Smallmouth bass also inhabit a wide range of water - there are "deep" and "shallow" bass and they are a schooling fish - meaning if you catch one there's a good chance there are several others in the area. Bass generally stick close to the bottom or near structure like humps and saddles. As ambush predators, bass need cover to feed successfully so casting accuracy and presentation are key elements to consider when fishing for them.

Over the years, many anglers and clients express their frustration at trying to

catch smallmouth bass. Legends and masters do exist in bass fishing. Ones who are everyday men in every way but when they are on the water with a bass casting rod in hand they transform and transcend their ordinary existence.

And according to these experts, in order to catch smallmouth bass in streams, cast upstream and let the bait drift into pools and behind objects that break the current, such as boulders and snags when fishing with hellgrammites crayfish or some other live bait weighted with split shot. Anglers fishing from a boat also may anchor upstream from boulders and other smallmouth hangouts. Cast downstream and let the current hold the bait where it is likely to attract a smallmouth from this position.

In making live bait from boats, drop anchor over a smallmouth structure and lower crayfish and/or minnows straight down to the bass. The more legal lines you have in the water the better. Although smallmouths lie directly beneath the boat, it may take several minutes before they respond. When one bass does take bait, the ensuing battle rouses bass nearby into action. Get fresh bait back into the water as soon as possible after landing a bass to keep the feeding frenzy going.

The effective lures for smallmouth are those that resemble minnows, plastic worms and streamer flies while live baits include minnows, hellgrammites and crayfish. Drop anchor over a smallmouth structure and lower crayfish straight down to the bass.

As you clock more and more bass-fishing hours you will acquire a knack for choosing the right lure and technique for the right situation. The best advice is to examine the fishing conditions, ask for guidance from anglers familiar with the waters you are fishing, and, finally, to try many different lures and bass-fishing techniques until you discover what works most effectively.

Locating and catching smallmouth is a real challenge. That is why it is really so much fun. Of course the real reason why we all enjoy fishing is the fun and camaraderie we experience with our friends and family. Some of the best fishing stories have nothing to do with how many fish were caught or what bait or technique was used.