

Bass Fishing 101 Lesson Plan

Instructor Notes

Instructors will guide participants in a fishing clinic focused on bass fishing. Participants will learn about the gear needed to target both smallmouth and largemouth bass in Massachusetts. There will be instruction on the different types of lures and their applications to target bass from shore. Class discussion will focus on how to read a body of water and be an effective bass angler from shore.

This class is designed to be a next step angling class, targeting adult anglers with some previous fishing experience. Students will be encouraged to bring their own gear to the class, but instructors should also provide rod and reel combos (spinning and baitcasting, with a few extra push button) as well as some limited lures both hard baits and soft baits. Encourage student participation and questions throughout, this is a great time for students to familiarize themselves with the tactics commonly associated with bass angling.

Teaching Methods Used in This Lesson

- Discussion/Instruction
- Student Hands-on Learning

Time Suggested

3 hours (minimum)

Materials Required

- Accomplished bass anglers for assistance/instruction (2-4 instructors total).
- Rod and reel combos (enough for all registered participants and 10 extra).
- Mostly spinning and baitcasting combos (but a few extra push button).
- Tackle box with surplus bass tackle.
- First aid kit (small).
- Wet wipes/hand sanitizer.
- Lures, both hard bait and soft baits and their associated terminal tackle.
- Pop up table for literature and holding all tackle.
- Pop up shelter frame to lean all rod and reel gear against.
- Hunting and fishing guides (abstracts), fish ID pamphlets, outdoor recreation maps (for participants to grab when leaving).

Classroom Setup

30-60 minutes prior to session

1. Preselect clinic locations based on the availability of shoreline fishing access in conjunction with nearby urban areas, which will cater to a larger crowd of participants.
2. Also preselect locations with ample amounts of parking.
3. Upon arrival, set up the pop-up shelter frame and set all rod and reel combos out for participants.
4. Set up a pop-up table that will hold all the literature to be handed out as well as tools for class instruction and demonstration.

Lesson Plan

Part A:

Focus Activity (1 minute)

The purpose of the focus activity is to get everyone focused on the lesson. Ask: “How long has everyone been fishing for?” Identify who the newer and more established anglers are. “How many of you particularly target bass and are looking for some more instruction from a professional bass angler?” Inform participants who are 15 years of age or older that they will need to be licensed to legally participate. See ‘**ADDENDUM**’ at end of document regarding fishing licenses for this event.

Part B:

Objectives (1 minute)

State the learning objective to the students. “At the end of this exercise, you will be able to:”

- Fish effectively for bass from shore.
- Choose a lure to target bass while fishing from shore.

Part C:

Demonstration/Instruction/Teaching (25 minutes)

Introduction and Basic Bass Biology (5 minutes)

1. Instructor should start the class with introductions of themselves and follow up with a basic introduction into bass biology.
2. Begin this basic introduction by highlighting the difference between largemouth and smallmouth bass, and the differences anglers will encounter in targeting them on the water.

3. Emphasize how the two species differ in their use of a waterbody based on things like habitat and water temperature, but also how in some cases they do overlap and occasionally frequent the same habitat.
4. Give a brief overview of bass fishing throughout the seasons. Explaining the differences in bass behavior throughout the seasons.

Where to Fish on a Waterbody/Choosing Baits in Conjunction with Conditions (10- minutes)

1. Instructors will describe the ways in which you can target/find bass while fishing on a waterbody.
2. This information will also be presented with seasonal variations mentioned as a factor in changing strategies to target specific areas on a waterbody.
3. It's important for instructors to touch on the importance of wind on a waterbody and how it can influence where an angler may find fish.
4. Instructors should talk about the physical features of a waterbody. Talk about the effectiveness of targeting waterbody features like inlets, outlets, wind swept shores, shallow coves, drop offs, substrate (large rocks or muck).
5. Tell participants about the variations of water color and conditions and how anglers should choose a bait based on these conditions.
6. Speak about different types of aquatic vegetation and how to approach them. Mention cover like lily pads, milfoil, hydrilla, and other types of submerged and floating aquatic vegetation.
7. Talk about other organic structure like trees and stumps as well, and how to target bass in those areas.

Specific Lures and Associated Tactics (10 minutes)

1. Next, instructors will dive into some of the most used lures for bass fishing. This section is sort of flexible, but there are some basic ones that should be touched on and they follow.
2. Instructors should use their personal knowledge to touch on 'jerk baits, crankbaits, spinnerbaits, topwater, and soft plastics.'
3. Be sure to mention the importance of size selection to each individual bait.
4. Have example of each type of mentioned lure to hand around/show to participants.
5. OPTIONAL; Have rods set up with some of these lures and demonstrate their retrieval/action on the water while instructing.

Part D:

Student exercise (fishing) (2-2.5 hours)

1. Help rig any gear for participants and encourage them to borrow any equipment if needed.
2. Be prepared to help anglers switch between lures frequently.
3. Carry provided pliers to assist in removing foul or deep hooked fish.
4. Actively work the shoreline engaging with participants and helping them with any needs they may have associated with bass fishing.
5. Often you will have to help untangle fishing gear.
6. It is best to have 2-3 different instructors assisting participants during the actual fishing.
7. Stay friendly and convey enthusiasm while helping participants.

Part E:

Student Summary/Wrap up (5-10 minutes)

In the last 15 minutes of the class, notify the participants to take their last few casts, and return the gear where they picked it up from. Encourage them to take any of the Masswildlife literature that has been provided before leaving.

Clean Up (Instructors)

1. Check rod and reel gear as it gets returned into the van or other vehicle. Make note of missing gear or tangled gear to be fixed.
2. Pack away all literature and fold up tables.
3. Sweep through the class area and the shoreline where students were fishing and pick up any of the garbage that may be associated with the event.
4. Leave the location cleaner than it was when you arrived.

ADDENDUM: In order to legally participate in this class, all adults who are 15 + years old must have a Massachusetts freshwater fishing license. Those 15-17 must have a fishing license, but it is free. Anyone 18 or older will need a paid fishing license unless this class were to be held in conjunction with Masswildlife and their angling education program. If held in conjunction with Masswildlife, there is a blanket permit that covers all students, so they do not need a fishing license for the specific class. June 1st & 2nd of 2024 is also 'Free Fishing Weekend' in Massachusetts this year.