



LARGEMOUTH

GOING TOPWATER FOR BIG BASS

FROGS REALLY DO HAVE A GOOD LIFE. NO WONDER MISS PIGGY WANTED TO HOOK UP WITH KERMIT. Think about it – you hang out in the swamp, you don't even have to move very much; you just sit there and when something you want to eat flies by, you grab it with your elasto-tongue.

As if their life wasn't good enough, people started writing stories about them getting kissed and turning into princes. Ah, to be a frog. Not a care in the world.

But, like Kermit sang: "it's not easy being green." For example, you're sitting on your lily pad and a giant largemouth bass swims below you with a hankering for some frog legs ... unfortunately, for Kermie and the boys, the summer months are primetime for bass to dine on the surface. And the frog's bad fortune is good fortune for Ontario anglers.

There is no better time of the year to catch fish on top water than the hottest days of summer. And if you ask me, there is no better way to catch fish than have it blow up on your unsuspecting lure as it gurgles, wobbles, pops, or rips across the surface.

However, before you do this, I have to warn you, this definitely isn't for the faint of heart. More fish are lost every year by anglers who rip the bait right out of the fishes yap before it's ever hooked. Normally, you can't see your lure as you retrieve it back to the boat; but with topwater bait, you see everything.

Sometimes fish will just gently slurp that bait under the water. Other days, it'll look like a toilet bowl flushed underneath your lure. And then there's even days that you'll swear someone threw a cinderblock on top of your bait. I don't care whether it's your first time fishing or your 500th. When you see the explosion of a largemouth bass hit your lure, your first instinct is to set the hook; but don't do it. Often, a fish will splash around your lure and not actually bite it.

If you set the hook on the splash, two things are going to happen: first, your lure is going to come flying back at you at a hundred miles an hour leaving you no option but to test your matrix-like reflexes and duck before it hooks your hat. Second, you're going to leave your trophy fish sitting out on the water wondering what in the world happened to its dinner. It's simply the number one rule of topwater fishing. Never, ever – and I repeat ever – set the hook on what you see; only on what you feel. When that big bass blows up on your bait, wait until you feel the tug at the end of your line to set the hook.

SOMETIMES FISH WILL JUST GENTLY SLURP THAT BAIT UNDER THE WATER. OTHER DAYS, IT'LL LOOK LIKE A TOILET BOWL FLUSHED UNDERNEATH YOUR LURE."



OKAY, IF YOU'VE READ THIS FAR, OBVIOUSLY YOU THINK YOU'RE TOUGH ENOUGH TO CATCH A FEW FISH ON A TOPWATER WITHOUT PLANTING A LURE IN YOUR BUDDY'S BUTT. IF YOU ASK ME, THERE'S BASICALLY THREE TOPWATERS YOU CAN'T HIT THE WATER WITHOUT:



1 Prop-style bait like a Rapala Skitter Prop. This bait is the easiest topwater there is to fish and is the first bait I reach for when I want to cover water quickly. You can apply a steady retrieve to this bait and allow the prop to spin and gurgle as it moves through the water. Most times, I will apply a quick jerk, jerk, pause retrieve. Whether it's the shine of the blades, or the unmistakable sound that calls fish in, prop-style baits are something that every serious bass angler should have in their tackle box.



2 Probably the most popular topwater is a popping-style bait. Its concave lip allows anglers to slowly pop the bait across the surface and create a sound that drives fish crazy. For many years anglers have argued whether these baits impersonate a frog swimming, or bait fish feeding on the surface. Who cares what the anglers think. One thing I know for sure: bass think they look like one thing – dinner.



3 Finally, a soft-bodied frog. While the first two baits are awesome in open water, the one area they struggle in is around a lot of weeds. In the heat of the summer, some of the biggest bass any lake has to offer find themselves buried under lily pads, bulrushes, or just about any other aquatic vegetation they could find. Unfortunately, most anglers wouldn't dare throw bait into any of these areas unless of course, they have a soft plastic frog tied on. These baits can be easily worked through some of the thickest weed beds. ☺

If you're wondering what the hottest bait is at the hottest time of the year – it's definitely a topwater!

chill's

TACKLE BOX OF TIPS

- 1** Never set the hook on what you see; only on what you feel.
- 2** Prop-style baits are something that every angler should have in their tackle box.
- 3** In the heat of the summer, some of the biggest bass find themselves buried under lily pads or bulrushes.



BOATsmart!
CANADA

Take Your BOATsmart! Exam Online



» BoatSmartExam.com

SAVE \$10⁰⁰

Redeem this coupon online at BoatSmartExam.com for \$10.00 off the official BOATsmart!® exam. Not valid on prior purchases. Limit one coupon per customer.

ONLINE DISCOUNT CODE CHL615

Valid only at www.BoatSmartExam.com

BOATsmart!® Info Line 1-877-792-3926

