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Issue 293

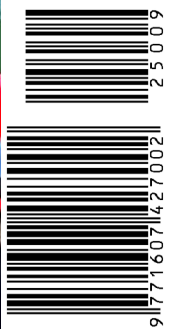


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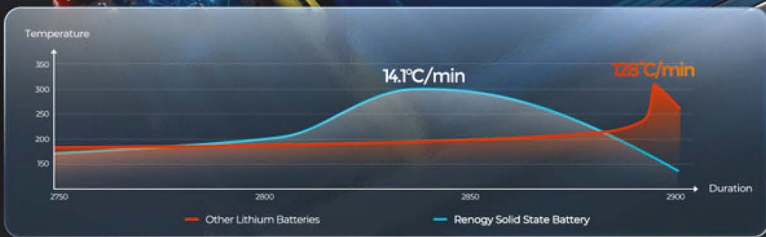


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#### About SA BASS magazine:

SA BASS, which is editorially and financially independent, is a monthly magazine catering exclusively for the bass angling community in Southern Africa. SA BASS is distributed country-wide to outlets, not only in South Africa, but also in Namibia, Swaziland and Botswana.

SA BASS is designed as a specialist bass fishing publication and has catered for a well-defined niche market since April 2001. It enjoys the support and endorsement of non-government organisations, but is not affiliated in any way to these bodies or to any other publishing, environmental or political interest group.

Our mission is to promote bass angling as a socially acceptable and popular outdoor recreational activity, and in addition, to encourage acceptable angling ethics. As such, SA BASS provides pertinent information on a wide range of subjects. These include providing a platform for informed debate on issues affecting the sport of bass angling, providing information on bass angling strategies and techniques, bass angling waters and opportunities, and also creating awareness of new products.

Within this editorial mix, due consideration is given to developing the sport among all the country's people (including the youth), and to the practical conservation of the country's natural resources.

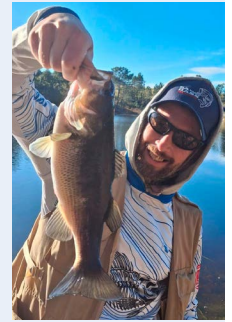
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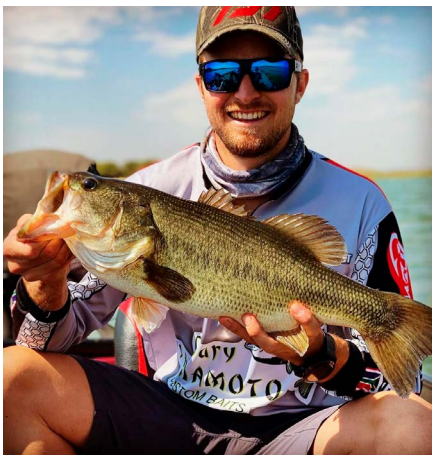
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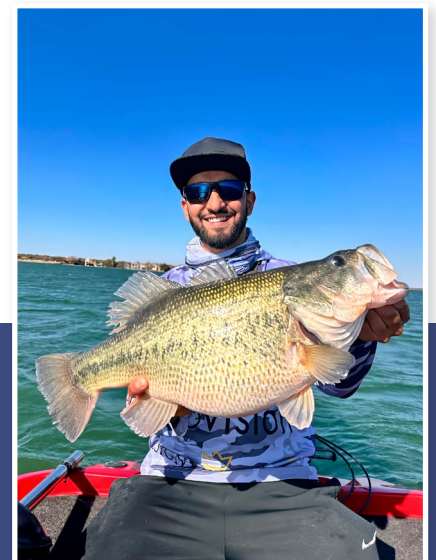


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**DESTINATION**

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**ON THE COVER**

“4.50kg, Muhammad Bulbulia, Disaneng Dam, NW”  
Image: Muhammad Bulbulia



# My Cast



As the waters begin to warm and nature stirs into motion, bass anglers know exactly what this season means: pre-spawn. It's the time when the fish are hungry, aggressive, and on the move, making it one of the most thrilling windows on the fishing calendar. This issue celebrates that energy, while also taking you on journeys across South Africa's finest fishing and leisure

destinations.

We start with a look at ATKV Buffelspoort, a Magaliesberg gem where anglers and families alike can find their perfect balance of adventure and relaxation. Further afield, the Crown River Safari Private Game Reserve offers an Eastern Cape escape where exclusivity and superior bass fishing meet. And of course, we revisit Loskopdam, A Forever Resort, a place where paradise is shared equally by anglers and holidaymakers.

For those hungry to sharpen their skills, we dive into the science and art of targeting bass during pre-spawn. Our Crash Course breaks down where to find them, when to strike, and what lures to trust. We also take a closer look at structure and behaviour: how the 45° slope can give you an edge, and why the second defined edge often holds more bass than you might expect. To add to that, we examine the game-changing role of forward-facing sonar in competitive angling, an innovation that has divided opinion and reshaped the sport.

This issue also pays tribute to legends and leaders. In Hall of Fame, we reflect on the life and legacy of Homer Circle,

whose wisdom stretched beyond the cast. We also sit down with Troy Batty, one of South Africa's top competitive anglers, to hear firsthand what it takes to rise through the ranks.

And finally, because fishing culture is as much about people as it is about the catch, we open the debate around Hook-&-Cook: should bass always be released, or is there still a place for the panfire tradition?

Whether you're here to fine-tune your techniques, plan your next waterside getaway, or simply immerse yourself in the stories of those who shaped our sport, this issue promises to deliver.

Pre-spawn is calling, and may your lines sing with joy!

Hannes Lindeque, *Publisher*

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*Covering ground early in the morning as the sun hits - The author*

# BLUE BIRD SKIES

A game plan discussion

>> *Jay Röhm-Williams*

**W**eather forecasts are one of those factors we bass anglers follow religiously. Whenever an angler is planning a trip out on the water the weather conditions for the chosen day or days get scrutinized and observed in an almost obsessive manner. For good reason too of course because we know whatever Mother Nature is conjuring up we need to be prepared for out there. Bassing isn't always that easy and there can often be some tough conditions we bass anglers have to face up to. One such weather pattern that is infamous for challenging bass anglers is when we are hard pressed against a blue bird sky. The name says it all but simply put it means that the day is going to be bright with not a cloud to be seen and if you don't have a game plan, well you could be found wishing you had one.

On days like such when the sun's bound to be high and shining bright behind the back drop of blue skies bass tend to dig their fins in a bit deeper. Not physically mind you,

just in the sense of meaning it is not going to be an easy days fishing. The light levels are going to be sharp and probably penetrate quite deep under the surface of the water lighting up everything it touches. In turn the bass will shy away generally from open water playing hide and seek with you all day leaving some anglers baffled, frustrated or simply wasting their optimism.

So what's the game plan and how best would one suggest going about a day out under these blue bird conditions? Well let's start at the beginning and work out a day's strategy from start to end to better understand the influencing factors involved.

## Dawn till early morning

It is during this crucial feeding time that an angler will want to capitalize on the most when we know those blue bird skies are following shortly. Low light conditions before a bright, sunny day can make for some excellent bass action. Tackling those westerly shorelines now before the sky brightens up is a good move. This allows you to work that side of the venue that will soon become unfavourable once the sun rises higher and basks that area too much.

Famous tactics to employ are definitely your choice of soft plastics and top water baits during this time. Bass will be roaming from mid depths to shallow waters on the hunt so any easy, slow moving pickings is fair game to them at this time. Anything before a blue bird sky takes over is worth targeting from laydowns, brush piles to standing timber stacks. Attraction is the name of the game this early in the morning so don't be shy to use lures that are appealing both under water and on the surface.

## Early morning till midday

If you look up and you can see that sky becoming bluer by the second then you know it's time to work your way east. By doing so you can locate more shade now than the fully exposed western side of the venue where the sun's rays are shining. By sticking to the shady areas you are allowing yourself a longer window under lower light conditions. The initial bite might have slowed down by now but there is still plenty opportunity to be had.

Now is the time to slow down your approach completely and start pitching and punching along the shoreline. The bass might have moved slightly into that mid to deep water column but they are still actively feeding. Aquatic vegetation and isolated cover are now our main cover targets. We want to get up as close to anything that looks like it could hold fish and work each target location thoroughly slow. Here weighted soft plastics, creature baits and jigs work magic offering a subtle approach with enticing results.

## Midday till late afternoon

Out of all sections of a blue bird sky day this time is hands down probably the hardest time to fish. The air temperature is up and the light intensity is at its peak making for some very tough conditions indeed. It's during this time of the day when we as bass anglers need to search for cover areas that hold shade, offer shadows or lead off

to deeper water like rip rap sections. These areas can also be bridges, cliff faces, docks, jetties, tree overhangs, and thick aquatic vegetation or boat ramps. Any of these offer cover from the heat and sun creating a background to hide amongst from which to ambush passing prey.

Reaction baits can work well here like slow moving jerk baits and bladed spinner lures which can be tempting to attack. Changing ones lure profile can be beneficial here too whether it's an upside or downgrade depending. Sometimes a bigger bait presentation will get more attention as in other instances a smaller, longer profile might seem easier to devour if the fish are feeling lethargic. Repeat casting and changing ones angle of approach works best around any shady cover you can find giving you a higher chance of success if there are any bass holding up under there.

### Late afternoon till dusk

At this point the blue bird sky has come full circle and losing effect. The sky might now be fading in colours and light with noticeable temperature differences. Generally speaking the water has now heated up substantially and with those lower light conditions returning once more the bass are prompted to feed once more in comfort. It is usually round this time of the day when rocky areas, back water channels and shallow shorelines become active. The fish are on the move once more and feeding can become aggressive when the waters are warmer.

Fast moving baits like crank baits, top water lures and soft plastics once more can now all be thrown into the mix. Bass will moving between cover areas so targeting any gaps in aquatic vegetation, points and gradual sloping banks can be super rewarding. Steady retrievals and accurate casting goes along way during this short period before dark so keep moving if an area isn't producing hits till you find the fish.

The pro's even battle on days like this, no matter where they are fishing throughout the world. Bass anglers just know that this type of weather pattern is challenging to fish on any body of water. When those blue bird skies are on your local forecast then you best prepare yourself and do your homework. Timing, strategy, tactics and observation are going to be key fundamentals one must consider in order to have a successful day out. Choose your lures wisely and pick your target locations carefully because if you don't



*Late afternoon paying off as the light intensity drops - Ryan Puttergill*



*Staying behind the sun in the shade during the mid-morning*

you might find yourself running round the water like a headless duck with nothing to show for.

*Rods out and safe fishing everyone! 🎣*



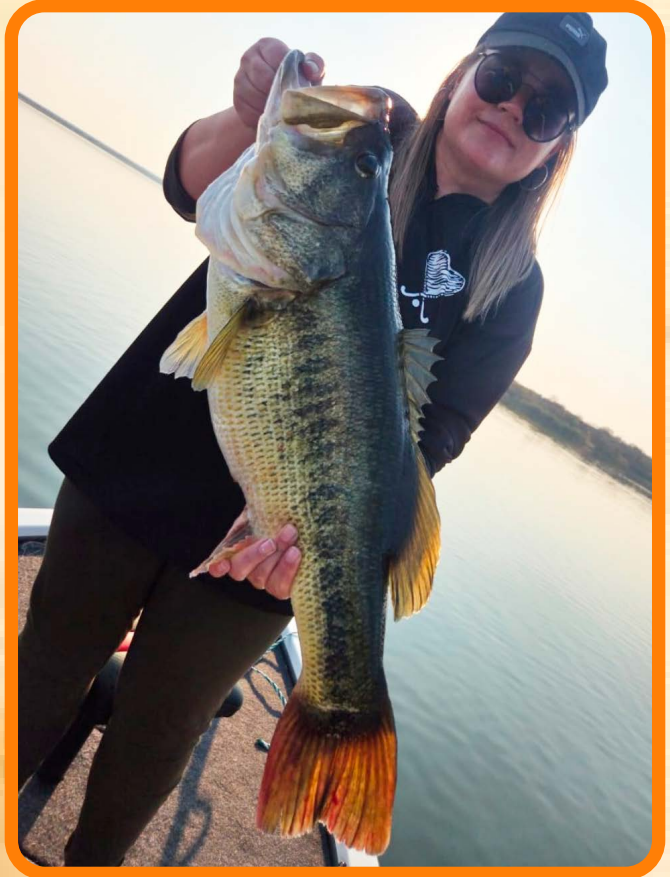
*It's going to be a blue bird sky day*



*Working deeper waters off shore during midday - Bradley Van Vuuren*

# READERS GO BASSING

To feature in "Readers go Bassing" send your story and pictures to [editor@sabass.com](mailto:editor@sabass.com)  
All photos published in "Readers-go-Bassing" are for the exclusive use of SA BASS Magazine. Any photos previously published by other magazines will not be considered.



## DISANENG

The pictures show three different fish. Two weighed in at 3.4kg and 3.56kg, both taken on a lipless crankbait. The biggest of the bunch was a solid 4.5kg, landed on a Texas-rigged craw.

Conditions were tough, with winds gusting up to 50km/h throughout the day, but the rewards were worth it. All fish were safely released – *Muhammad Bulbulia*

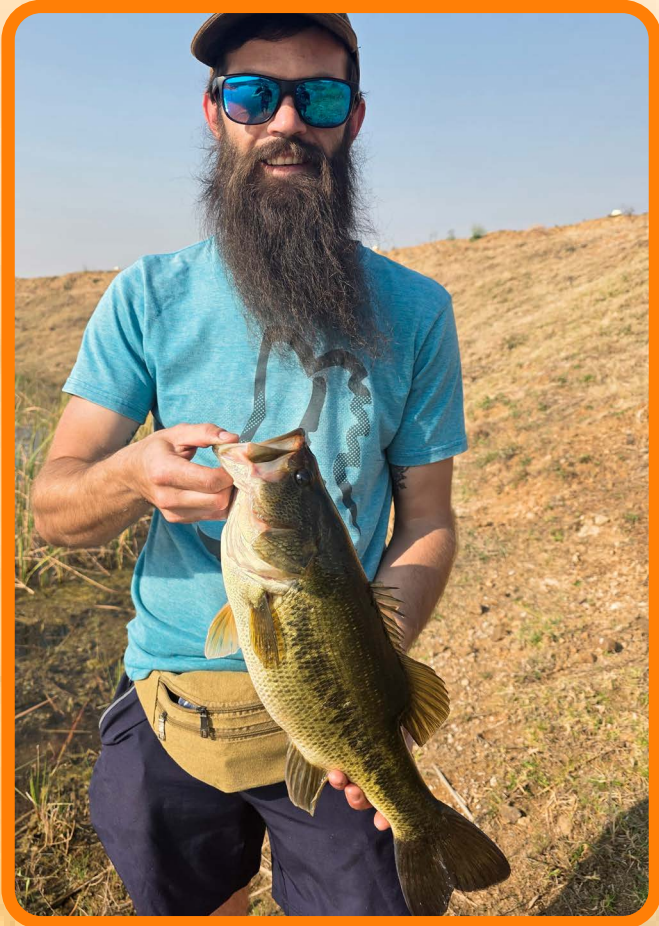
## MONSTER VAN RUST DE WINTER

Ek het Rust de Winter toe gegaan om tyd saam met my kêrel te spandeer- en teruggekom as die onwaarskynlike koningin van 'n 5.225 kg bass. Ek het nog altyd gedink visvang is maar 'n vreemde manier om ure lank te sit en niks doen nie. Dis my kêrel Stefan van Jaarsveld se passie, en tot gister toe het ek net saam gegaan vir die geselskap.

Sondag, 31 Augustus sou ek egter ontdek dat ek nie net 'n vrou op 'n boot is nie, ek is nou die trotse (en getraumatiseerde) vanger van 'n "once-in-a-lifetime" bass. Dit was maar my derde keer ooit op die water, en ek het my verwagtinge laag gehou. Gewoonlik beteken n byt vir my: "Stefan, ek haak vas!"

So ook die keer. "Dis net n hakplek." Maar toe spring die hakplek uit die water en selfs Stefan het vir die eerste keer daardie dag stil geraak. Die stilte was van korte duur. Hy verander in 'n eenman-orke van instruksies en syl selfs rond op sy maag op een stadium om die monster met sy hand te vang, siende ons net, hopeloos te klein was.

Daardie oomblik het my geleer: visvang is nie net vir die manne nie. Soms is dit oor die stories, die lag, en die mens saam wie jy dit deel. Sonder Stefan sou ek nie my vis, of my storie, gehad het nie – *Stefan van Jaarsverld*



## GREAT START

As the seasons started to shift, we headed to Rietspruit Dam for a peaceful weekend getaway. The fishing was a little slow at first, but I managed to land a stunning 2.3kg catch on a Signature Series 4' Stixx. It put up an exciting fight and turned out to be the perfect way to kick off the new fishing season – *Dylan van Rooyen*

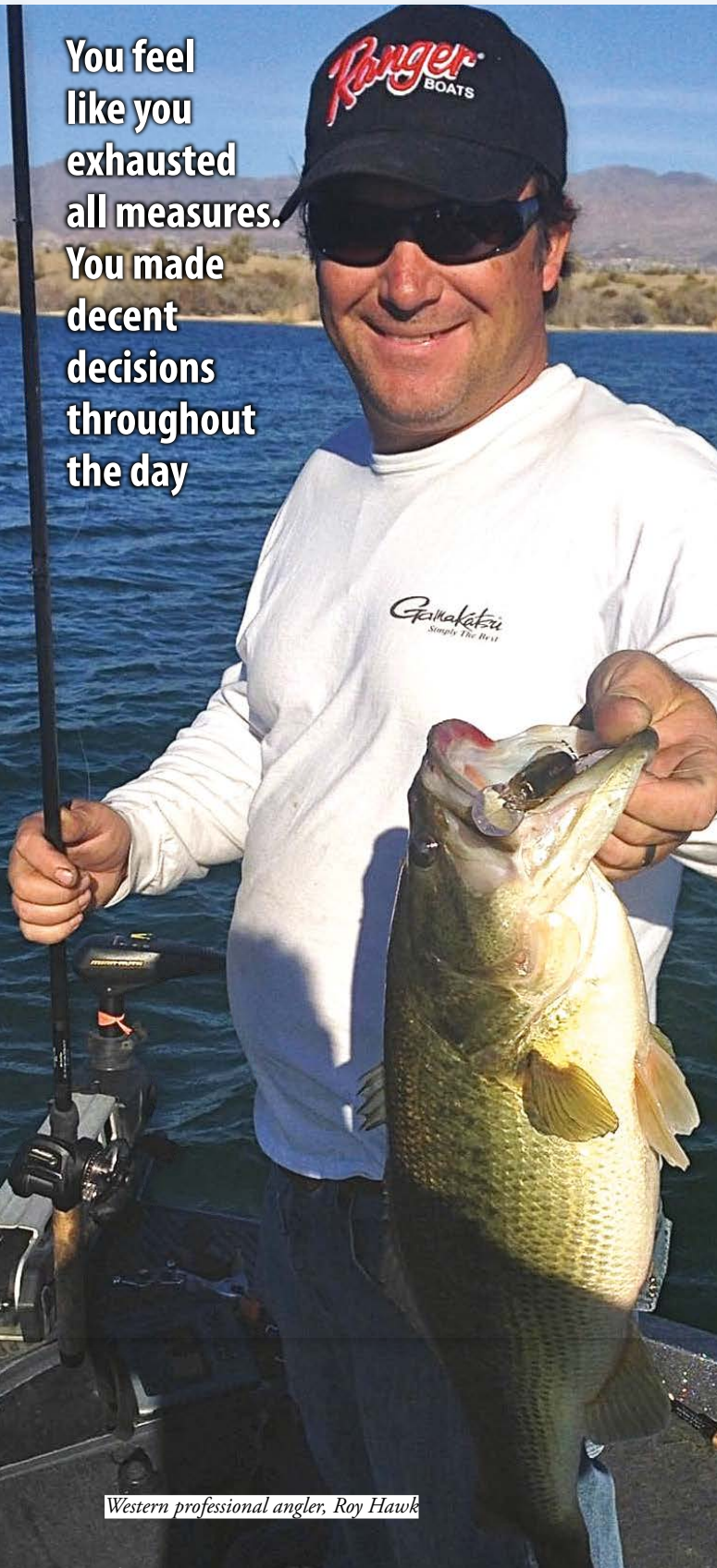
## DONALDSON

A weekend well spend at Donaldson Dam. Hannah and Dante had a blast. The bass was caught on the McArthur Slinky Junebug. Thank you for the great magazine. – *Dylan van Rooyen*

# KICKER FISH

>> David Swendseid\*

You feel like you exhausted all measures. You made decent decisions throughout the day



Western professional angler, Roy Hawk

You've done what you could in eight hours of fishing among hundred competitors. In truth you're really happy with your performance! It's a pressured lake and in one day, a 5.5kg bag is not going to cut it. You need at least 6.4kg to cash a check. You fished your spots, went through them twice. What do you do? Change the game plan. You're looking for that 3kg bass. Just one kicker could seal the deal.

Finding those kicker fish can be difficult. Here is what a few pro's had to say about making the last of a day count.

## Crank deep

Western professional angler, Roy Hawk competed on the FLW Rayovac Western Professional Series. In a single year Roy finished second in the 2014 Angler of the Year FLW series, made the top 25 placing at the championships and qualified for the Forrest Wood Cup. Very impressive! Roy is of the opinion many anglers may have possibly forgotten how effective deep cranking can be for big fish even in clear water, on pressured systems and for changing conditions. Big bass will use bottom cover to move deeper but also feed on rough fish and crayfish.

Fishing shallow in the morning and slowly following the topography out to 25-foot (7.6m) depths can be rewarding. Hawk recommends choosing crankbaits carefully. "For shallow cover, cranks that carry a low ballast system allow the lure to roll over difficult terrain. As an angler begins fishes deeper he often loses consistent contact with the bottom. These are critical places to focus on. When this is happening you need a deeper diving crank. Finding lures that grab deep on the bottom contour are important. The release of innovated cranks with weight transfers systems and sharper diving angles have been game changers. I also use deep cranks with weight transfer systems in them, this allows for increased casting distance. If you achieve great casts then you can achieve better bottom contact longer.

One last tip, look at cranking the chunky roughest areas on points and ledges. These areas provide shade to even big



Wayne Macklin with two giant smallies; results of his kicker fish hunting with a Spinbait 80

fish. A five-pound largemouth can rest a few inches off the bottom and be completely sheltered in volleyball size rock,” reported Hawk.

Footnote: Pictured is Roy Hawk showing what a deep crank can do. Also pictured is the deep cranking technology called the G87. The G87 nearly won the 2015 Bassmaster Elite at Lake Havasu. This little lure is rated to dive 20 and actually touched bottom in 25 foot of water. The G87 actually can be casted over 200ft giving it the longest casting crankbait in the US bass history.

### Go stealth finesse

Professional angler Wayne Macklin speaks candidly about chasing big fish in a tournament. Wayne is a strong believer that sometimes big bass don't simply leave an area even if they are shell-shocked by tournament pressure. These fish are still catchable but opportunities become fewer and a stealth approach is necessary.

“When depths are similar and protective escape routes are not present, big fish like to suspend. They don't necessarily leave the area but they do attempt to hide. Sometimes this is an off angle position”, says Macklin. What Wayne is describing is the bass will slide just outside the angler's view or lift off the bottom and travel away from the angler. Big fish are also known to move off to the right or left when a boat encroaches. They also may just sit out there facing the angler all the while suspending.

“When tournament angling pressure is constant, big fish attempt to suspend. Traditionally these are difficult fish to catch but not impossible”, continued Bassmaster open pro, Wayne Macklin.

If Wayne detects big fish in an area receiving a lot of angler pressure during pre-fish, he will note their proximity. Later during the tournament he will quietly slide into that area attempting not to make any disturbances. It is key for the angler to become a hunter. Wayne believes these fish use distance the same as big fish use depths to escape.

Presenting to these fish require a finesse application. “I actually will put my boat into an area and begin using the finesse technique called spybaiting because the



Jason Kincannon with two trophy spotted bass. Jason uses the new Duo

technique is near perfect for silent approaching and long distance casting. You make these incredibly long casts with this tiny lure that runs precisely through a chosen water column. Before spybaiting, we would drop-shot on these fish, adjusting our lure or dragging a tube. All of these work until the bass suspend off the bottom several feet”, instructs Macklin. Mackling is talking about targeting big



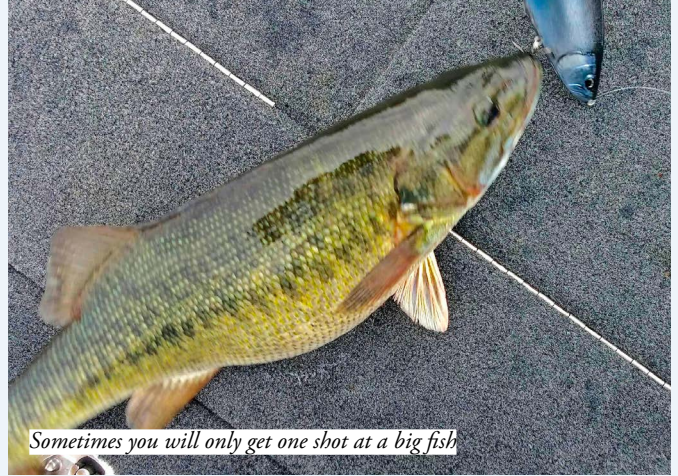
Spybaiting is a near perfect finesse technique for silent approaching and long distance casting



The G87 is rated to touch bottom in 25 foot of water



*The G87 can actually be casted over 60m*



*Sometimes you will only get one shot at a big fish*

fish that use suspended water and presenting much like a big swimbait expert but using a tiny finesse technique and lure instead.

### Go big - real big

Professional angler and western pro-guide, Jason Kincannon believes you have to understand how to follow suspended bass and bass that aren't afraid to use open water. Using big swimbaits is an excellent way to chase these fish. These fish are sometimes called the "untapped" bite. Kincannon is a big fish expert, not only a successful tournament angler but also a new breed of competitor. He tournament fishes and trophy hunts big bass. Kincannon has what the west calls "a deadly set of skills". Jason believes big bass are big for a reason and they often are territorial claiming the best real state.

Jason's presentation begins with a stealthy, quiet entry with his boat. "I turn off most of my electronics and quietly approach the area. Second, his years of big fish hunting have made him a student of big fish. I will study an area before arriving their on the lake, and once on the lake I sometimes will not make a cast for several minutes or even an hour. I pay close attention to what the environment is doing. Are there birds feeding? One reason is I study fish and the area more than fish is because I am looking to make that perfect cast and retrieve angle. Sometimes you will only get one shot at a big fish.

A long cast and a slow retrieve with a glide bait can benefit an angler big time. Jason uses glide baits to get the work done. I am looking at a swimbait as a deadly tool. For tournament angling verses trophy hunting, you need a glide bait that has the ability to be worked slowly but can change demeanour quickly, also being able to cover water at a moderate pace (few glides baits carry this property).

Tournament fishing has a lot of variables. When an angler puts together the right execution and performs flawlessly he can still come up short. Finding that kicker could be the difference between showing up and winning. Utilizing the tools from these pro's could mean a new success.

*(Editor's note: "Professional angler" refers to anglers whose full time job is to travel from one tournament to another across the country and whose only income is the money to be one.)*

*\*David Swendseid is a professional bass angler in the USA. He spends a great time teaching other professional anglers on how to execute techniques or learn new ones and also assist the international community on bass angling presentations. He pursued trophy bass records and held two lake records and an official state record. The study of fish behaviour and lure action is his forte. He contributes to about 16 international bass angling magazines, including SA BASS.*



*Using big swimbaits is an excellent way to chase suspended bass*

# Op my houtbordjie

## ONDERSWAAILEM

>> *Philip Kemp\**

In hierdie reeks deel ons graag 'n paar truuks, of beter bekend as "hacks", met ons lesers.

Om die baars in vuiler water se aandag te trek wanneer sig nie goed is nie, kan 'n tammeletjie wees. Die onderswailem of "underspin" soos wat dit beter bekend staan, kan meer doele dien as net vibrasie in die water. Kom ons sit so 'n bietjie klank by.



Die hengelaar benodig net die nodige onderswaai loodkop, plastiese swemvissie en 'n kort houtskroefie van ongeveer 7mm lank.



Omrede die loodkop solank is word die kop van die plastiese swemvissie in die regte lengte gesny.



Die plastiese swemvissie word nou op die loodkop geryg. Maak seker die hoek kom op die regte plek uit sodat die swemvissie mooi netjies pas.



Die onderswailem roteer onder die plastiese swemvissie en sal nou en dan die swemvissie raak. Bepaal nou waar hy die swemvissie sal raak. Dit is nou presies daar waar jy die 7mm

in lengte houtskroefie in die plastiese swemvissie gaan indraai. Die skroefie word nie heeltemal ingedraai nie. Daar moet 'n stukkie van die skroefie uitsteek.



Jou onderswailem is nou gereed om gehengel te word. Die roterende swailem sal nou en dan teen die skroefie slaan en die klikgeluide wat hy maak, is net genoeg om 'n baars tot die aanval te laat oorgaan.

Stuur gerus jou fotos en storie vir ons na [philip@sabass.com](mailto:philip@sabass.com) indien jy sukses met hierdie truuk gehad het. 🐟

*\*Philip Kemp is 'n gesoute swartbaars-hengelaar en assistent-redakteur van SA*

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# SPRING Spinnerbaiting



A Mepps in-line spinner

>> Roger Donaldson

>> Many bass angling newbies might initially be sceptical at the thought of fishing a spinnerbait, but if their successes with a Mepps inline spinner were historically fruitful then they should welcome this incredibly versatile lure with open arms.



The author with a healthy fish caught on a spinnerbait

Yes, a spinnerbait is pretty much a super-charged version of the infamous Mepps spinner. No, it's not a lure that attracts the angler more than the fish. The spinnerbait is an intricately designed 'searching machine' that has been ingeniously constructed to mimic a variety of potential aquatic predatory, and prey species.

When purchasing a spinnerbait in a tackle shop it's my opinion that fishermen often try to match the lure with indigenous baitfish species. Although this is not by any means the 'wrong' approach, there are numerous other ways to choose which spinnerbait will suit your purposes.

Spring is a great opportunity to beef up your confidence and pick out a few spinnerbaits to test; the bass are less selective about the lure they are targeting and tend to be more territorial in their method of attack. So, for this reason you can pretty much grab whichever spinnerbait tickles your fancy. However, I would advise anglers stick to good quality stainless steel wire, and also those with titanium wire. The reason for this will become very much apparent after you've found either a good quantity of fish, or some of the larger bass in the dam.

But why choose a spinnerbait? Here are some of my top five reasons:

### Irresistible in spring

Okay, I might have mentioned this earlier, but bass find it hard to resist this lure when they're protecting their territorial limits.

I'll never forget the foray of excitement on Rust der Winter Dam one spring tournament day. A reasonable afternoon breeze was rippling the water surface against a shallow gravel bank. I choose a 3/4 oz Terminator spinnerbait with a dull white skirt and hurled it over the sparsely weeded waters toward the bank. I slowly wound the lure back through the hydrilla, taking note of how incredibly 'weedless' (it didn't snag up) the bait was. Ten minutes, and five 1,5kg fish later I was trembling with joy and at the ease with which I was able to put these bass in the boat. Needless to say, it was not long thereafter this that the bank fishermen caught on and soon they too were landing the fish they wanted.

### "Snag-proof" features

Although highlighted in the above paragraph I found it pertinent to paint another example of just how "snag-proof" the spinnerbait really is.

There are not too many fisheries quite like one Lake Mteri in the Chiredzi district of Zimbabwe, which few fortunate anglers have had the blessing to visit. Mteri abounds with flooded trees, similar to that of Nandoni Dam, areas of Inanda Dam, and Rhenosterkop Dam to name but a few.



White is a good colour to use in clear water

Many years ago I visited Mteri Lodge and the pattern that worked then was to cast a spinnerbait over the branches of the trees and slowly retrieve the lure back directly into the branches. Crazy - the lure will get stuck immediately! However, instead of the hook penetrating the trees limbs we promptly landed the most impressive bass I have witnessed today.

### Windy conditions

I will immediately rig up with a spinnerbait and almost expect that things will start to hot up when most bass anglers shy away from areas exposed to wind.

On a favourite dam, enjoying a day away from the office with a friend, we were met with a blustering westerly. Positioned out in 18ft of water, I lurched for my spinnerbait rod and mindfully rigged up with a ½ oz weighted lure to cater for the strong wind. With my rod tip high I wound the bait back over a deep grass bed. Within the first five casts we managed a fish of over 2kg, another almost just as large, and then another three fish immediately after. No other lure could have suited the occasion more perfectly.

### Versatility

Depending on season the water clarity and conditions, as well as the creatures you are trying to imitate may differ. Now we can answer your question about why the spinnerbait comes in so many different skirt colours, blade colours and configurations, weights, and sizes. This is a very big and thoroughly fascinating subject on its own and is one of the most exciting learning opportunities for

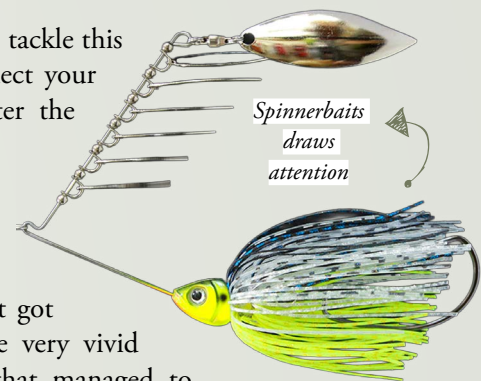


Add a trailer hook on your spinnerbait for short strikes

bass fishermen. We will tackle this subject and how to select your spinnerbaits as we enter the new seasons.

### You hardly ever lose

How many of us talk about the one that got away? I only have one very vivid memory of one fish that managed to shake a spinnerbait loose.



Again on a trip to Lake Mteri, my co-angler Justin Booth released a long cast toward a shelf of shallow tree stumps. Within seconds of retrieving Justin leaned into a strike when he felt the incredible 'thump' from a gorilla-sized Florida bass. Forty metres from the boat the fish streaked through the shallows and wrapped its self resourcefully around two gnarling timber stumps. While Justin desperately applied a 'see-saw' retrieving motion the angry fish put on an inspiring thirty second display of acrobatics until Justin's line finally parted and the beast was gone.

Needless to say, I have a tackle box neatly overflowing with a carefully selected assortment of fifty spinnerbaits – and I have a place and time that each one of them will suit!

Enjoy your time spinnerbait fishing. 🎣

Why not add extra flash, a trailer hook and a soft plastic trailer?



Match-the-hatch

## CRASH COURSE IN BASS FISHING

# HOW TO TARGET BASS DURING PRE-SPAWN

There's a special kind of energy on the water when the first signs of spring begin to creep in. The mornings may still be cool, but the days are getting longer, the sun is warmer, and everything in the lake is changing. For bass anglers, the weeks leading up to the spawn, known as the pre-spawn, are pure gold. It's one of the most exciting windows of the year to chase big, aggressive fish.



**B**ass are predictable during this period if you know what to look for. They've survived a long winter, often sluggish and conserving energy in deeper water. But as the water temperature creeps above

12°C, they wake up with a singular mission: eat. They need to bulk up before the exhausting task of spawning, and that instinct makes them easier to find and far more willing to strike.



>> Hannes Lindeque

### Following the highways to the shallows

Pre-spawn bass are always on the move. Picture the lake like a map of highways leading to a nursery. Bass use channels, secondary points, and rocky banks as stopovers on their migration from deep wintering holes to the spawning flats. Instead of trying to fish everywhere at once, focus your attention on these staging areas.

Points are a great starting place. **Main-lake points** act as gateways, while secondary points in coves or creeks are like pit stops on the way to the shallows. Bass don't rush straight to the bank; they move in stages. If you can locate a point with a mix of rock and some cover, maybe a fallen tree or brush pile, you've just found prime pre-spawn real estate.

**River channels** are another favourite. These underwater ditches act like natural highways bass follow as they push toward shallower water. Work baits along the edges of these channels, especially where they bend or intersect with points.

### The pre-spawn attitude

What makes pre-spawn fishing so addictive is the bass' attitude. These aren't the sluggish fish of July. They're fired up, hunting, and willing to chase. Anglers often describe them as "mean" during this period, and for good reason: even when they're not feeding, they're aggressive enough to lash out at an intruding lure.



*Rattling lipless lures*

That's where lure choice becomes crucial. Moving baits shine in pre-spawn. A lipless crankbait burned over submerged grass or a jerkbait snapped along a rocky bank can trigger violent strikes. The stop-and-go action mimics a wounded baitfish and plays perfectly into the bass' instincts. Spinnerbaits also have their time in the spotlight when the wind kicks up, flashing and thumping in stained water.

But don't put away your slower baits just yet. As bass push closer to spawning grounds, they'll nose around rocks, stumps, and shallow brush. A crawl-pattern jig hopped along the bottom or a soft-plastic creature bait pitched into cover can tempt bigger fish looking for an easy meal. Many tournament-winning bags are built on a mix of power fishing with reaction baits and slowing down with jigs in the right places.

**Reading conditions like a pro**

Pre-spawn fishing isn't just about location and lures, it's about adapting to conditions. Water clarity, temperature, and weather all play a role in how the bass behave.

On bright, calm days in clear water, bass are more cautious. That's when you scale down your presentation with natural colours and lighter line. A subtle green-pumpkin jig or translucent jerkbait can make the difference.

When clouds roll in or the wind ripples the surface, bass drop their guard. That's your chance to go bold with chartreuse crankbaits, white spinnerbaits, or rattling lipless lures. The reduced visibility gives bass less time to analyze, and they'll often strike out of pure reaction.



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Temperature changes are perhaps the most important trigger of all. Just one or two degrees of warming can pull bass shallower, while a cold front can push them back. Staying in tune with these shifts will put you ahead of the curve.

### Chasing opportunity

Every angler dreams of catching their personal best, and the pre-spawn season might be your best chance. Bass are heavier now than at almost any other time of the year, their bellies full from feeding binges. Every cast feels loaded with potential.

Of course, pre-spawn can be fickle. One day you'll land a boatload, and the next you'll wonder if the fish disappeared. That's why it pays to think in patterns rather than isolated spots. If you caught fish on a windblown secondary point yesterday, check similar points in other sections today. If you find a school staging along a channel swing, note the depth and look for the same structure elsewhere.

The more you connect these dots, the more consistent your results will be. That's how the best anglers seem

to "just know" where the bass are, they're not guessing, they're following patterns.

### Savouring the season

For many anglers, the pre-spawn isn't just about the catch. It's about being on the water when everything is waking up. Birds are louder, the air smells like spring, and every ripple feels alive. There's an anticipation that only comes once a year, a sense that something big is always one cast away.

When the spawn arrives, bass will scatter, guard beds, and become more selective. But in the weeks before, they're in motion, fired up, and hungry. Whether you're a seasoned competitor chasing a tournament win or a weekend angler looking to bend a rod, pre-spawn bass fishing is your crash course in excitement.

So grab your rods, tie on your favourite bait, and trust the process. Every point, every channel, every cast holds promise. And who knows? This pre-spawn season might just deliver the bass of a lifetime.

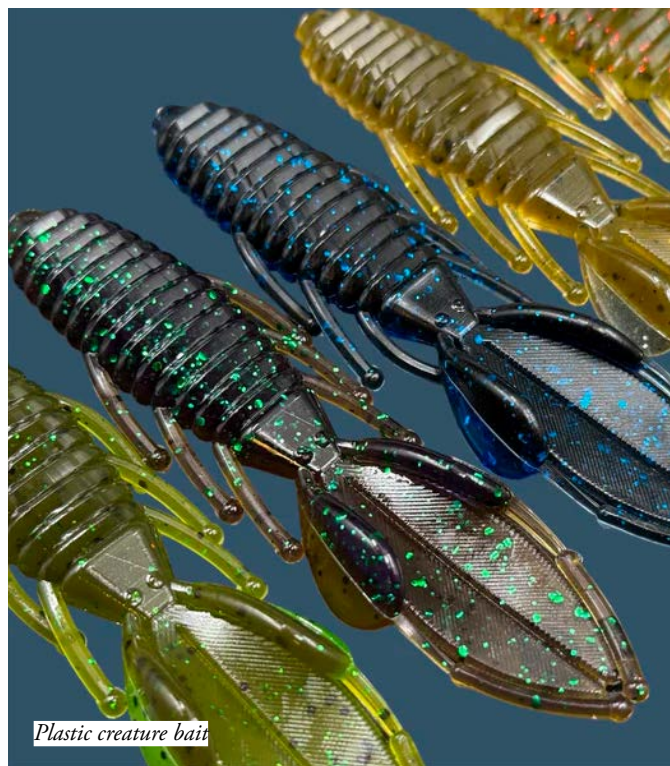
*In the next issue we look at **How to target bass during spawn.*** 🐟

#### Key Areas to Target

- **Secondary points:** Especially ones close to flats or spawning bays.
- **Riprap and rock banks:** These warm up quickly and attract baitfish and crawfish.
- **Creek channels:** Bass use them like highways between deep and shallow water.
- **Brush piles, stumps, and docks:** Offer ambush points and hold heat.

#### Bonus Tips

- **Wind is your friend:** It breaks up the surface and pushes baitfish into shallower areas.
- **Slow down in cold water:** Early pre-spawn can still be chilly; slower retrieves work better.
- **Use natural colours:** Green pumpkin, watermelon, and shad patterns work great in clear to stained water.



Plastic creature bait

### Best Baits & Techniques

Bait Type	Why It Works	Technique
Jigs	Imitates crawfish; great for big bass	Drag or hop near structure
Crankbaits	Covers water fast; triggers reaction strikes	Target rocky banks and secondary points
Spinnerbaits	Works in wind and stained water	Slow roll near cover
Soft plastics	Natural look; versatile	Texas rig, Carolina rig, or weightless
Lipless crankbaits	Great for covering grass flats	Yo-yo retrieve across submerged vegetation



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# Early spring bass fishing

## Techniques for success in South Africa

When winter finally loosens its grip and the first signs of spring start to show, South African bass anglers know it's time to dust off the tackle boxes and get back on the water. Early spring is one of the most exciting times of the year for bass fishing.



>> *Hannes Lindeque*

**T**he fish are hungry after a long, cold winter and are beginning to move into shallow areas to prepare for the spawn. But it's also a tricky time: weather patterns are unstable, water temperatures are inconsistent, and the fish can be finicky. To succeed, you need to understand bass behaviour during this transitional season and adjust your techniques accordingly.

### Understanding bass in South African waters

Bass activity is directly tied to water temperature. In the coldest months, bass in dams like Loskop, Rust de Winter, or Midmar remain sluggish in deeper water, conserving energy. As the spring sun warms shallow bays and protected coves, they begin to migrate into these areas, staging along points, ledges, and transitional zones. The closer the water gets to the magical 16 to 18°C range, the more aggressive bass become as they prepare for spawning.

At Albert Falls Dam, for example, early spring often sees fish holding just off rocky points before sliding shallow in the afternoons. In Doorndraai Dam, bass will shift between deep timber and shallow flats, depending on the weather. Success often comes down to reading these seasonal movements and fishing accordingly.

### Lure Choices and presentations

When the water is still chilly, it's often best to fish slow. A jig paired with a crawl-style trailer is a proven option for coaxing bites from bass holding near rocks, stumps, or submerged brush. On Witbank Dam, where rocky points

dominate, a black-and-blue jig hopped slowly across the bottom is a deadly choice.

Another early spring favourite is the jerkbait. At Injaka Dam, where water clarity can be excellent, suspending jerkbaits worked with sharp twitches and long pauses are perfect for staging bass along points and drop-offs. Sometimes bass want the bait to sit motionless for several seconds before they commit.

Lipless crankbaits are also reliable in South African waters. On shallow flats at Roodekopjes, ripping a rattling crank through grass beds can trigger brutal reaction strikes. The yo-yo technique, lifting the bait off the bottom and letting it flutter back down, is especially effective here when bass are feeding on baitfish schools.

As the season progresses and the water creeps closer to spawning temperatures, spinnerbaits and chatterbaits become excellent search tools. In muddy, windblown corners of Loskop or Bronkhorstspruit Dam, their vibration and flash help bass locate the lure in stained water.

### Matching techniques to conditions

One of the most important lessons in early spring bass fishing is adaptability. On sunny, calm days, bass may slide into the shallows to soak up warmth, making them vulnerable to shallow-running crankbaits or Texas-rigged soft plastics. But if a cold front blows through, they often retreat to deeper staging areas. At Rust de Winter, for example, a sudden cold snap will push fish off shallow reed

banks and into deeper channels, where a Carolina rig is more effective.

Water clarity also plays a big role in South African dams. Heavy spring rains often muddy the water. In these conditions, spinnerbaits with Colorado blades, bulky jigs, or chatterbaits stand out. In clearer systems like Albert Falls, natural-coloured jerkbaits or finesse worms on shaky heads are a better match.

Wind is another key factor. Windblown points and shorelines often hold baitfish, which in turn attract bass. At Midmar, casting moving baits into the wind can produce some of the best action of the season.

### Best times of day in South Africa

In early spring, the time of day can make all the difference. Morning often starts slow as the water is still cold from the night. By midday, when the sun has warmed the shallows, bass activity picks up. Late afternoon is often the prime window, especially on sunny days in dams like Doorndraai, where rock and sand flats absorb heat quickly.

Cloud cover can also change things. On bright, sunny days, bass may hug tight to reeds or rocky cover for shade, while overcast conditions often spread fish out and encourage them to roam and feed. Adjust your lure choices to match, go with subtle presentations in bright light, and more aggressive, flashy baits when the sky is gray.

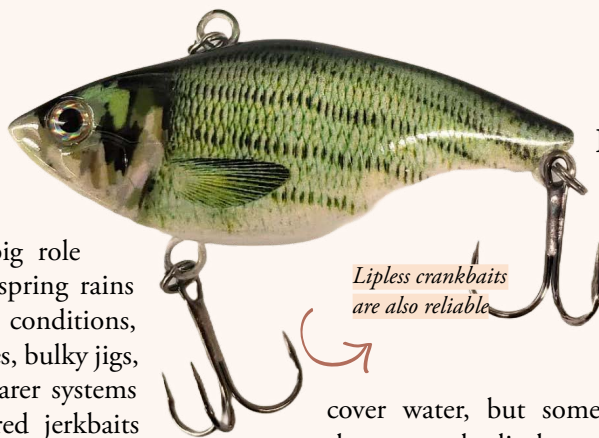
### Gear tips for South African anglers

South African bass fishing in spring demands versatility. A medium-heavy baitcasting rod with fluorocarbon line is ideal for fishing jigs and Texas rigs along the rocky points of Witbank or Loskop, giving you the sensitivity to detect subtle bites and the backbone to pull fish from heavy cover.

For jerkbaits and crankbaits, a medium-action rod with lighter fluorocarbon is a better match, especially when fishing clearer waters.

Line choice is also critical. Fluorocarbon's almost invisibility makes it a top choice for clear water systems, while braid shines in heavy grass or reeds like those at Rust de Winter.

Monofilament still has its place when working topwater lures later in the season.



*Lipless crankbaits are also reliable*

### Patience and persistence

Perhaps the greatest challenge of early spring bass fishing is patience, especially if you sight fish but they don't want to take the bait.

It's tempting to fish fast and cover water, but sometimes the conditions demand a slower, methodical approach. Other times, the bass are active and want a moving bait. The only way to know is to experiment. Don't be afraid to switch lures, adjust retrieves, or change locations until you dial in on what the fish want.

And remember, early spring bass fishing in South Africa is about more than just catching fish. The crisp air, the green rolling hills around KwaZulu-Natal's dams, and the sight of trees budding along the banks make every trip memorable. When you finally hook into a chunky pre-spawn bass, the reward feels that much greater.

### Sight fishing

To sight fish for bass, wear polarized glasses and neutral clothing to see and blend in, and cast short profile baits to likely spots, like beds or cover, using a slow presentation that mimics natural movement. Be patient, observe the fish for reactions like nudging or erratic swimming, and be prepared to change baits or lure actions to trigger a strike. Aim for a "sweet spot" on the bed and give fish easy access to deep water for comfort, but avoid getting directly over them.

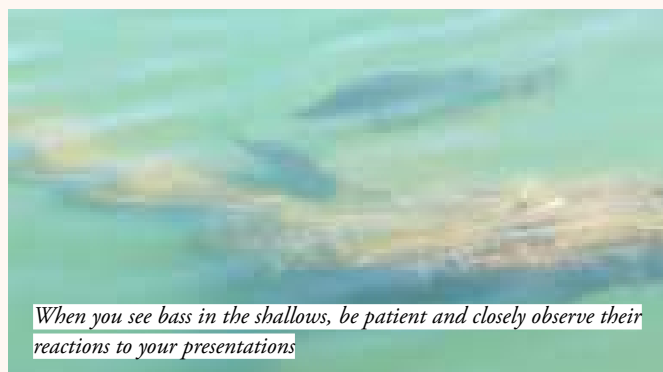
### Final thoughts

Early spring in South Africa is a season of transition, both for nature and for bass. It can be frustrating one day and incredibly rewarding the next. By understanding how bass move with the changing conditions, choosing lures that match the season, and being willing to adapt, you'll stack the odds in your favour.

Whether you're working a jig slowly along rocky points, ripping a lipless crankbait across a shallow flat, or pausing a jerkbait in clear water, remember that this is the time of year when some of the biggest bass of the season are most likely to bite. Be patient, fish smart, and enjoy the process, because early spring is when South African bass fishing truly comes back to life. 🐟



*Another early spring favourite is the jerkbait*



*When you see bass in the shallows, be patient and closely observe their reactions to your presentations*

# South Africa's Top Competitive Bass Anglers

## BRYN BATTY (01-03-1992)

**B**ass fishing in South Africa has grown into a fiercely competitive sport, with top anglers constantly pushing the limits of skill, strategy, and innovation. In this exclusive series, we sit down with some of the country's best competitive bass anglers to gain insight into their journeys, techniques, and what it takes to succeed at the highest level.

From tournament-winning strategies to personal stories, gear preferences, and industry insights, these interviews provide a rare glimpse into the minds of the anglers who dominate South Africa's bass fishing scene. Whether you're an aspiring tournament angler, a weekend warrior, or simply a fan of the sport, this series will bring you closer to the action and the people who live for it.

### BACKGROUND & PERSONAL JOURNEY

#### 1. What is your occupation?

I run a cleaning chemical company called Mega Magic.

#### 2. How did you get started in bass fishing?

My dad has fished competitively since I can remember, so I was born with a bass rod in my hand.

#### 3. What inspired you to become a competitive angler?

I have been blessed to partake in this sport from an early age. Started off fishing league tournaments with my dad and then he would find me open co-angler spots in Zimbabwe Classic's, which supported me to make the Zimbabwe Junior team, this gave me the passion for competitive angling.

#### 4. What was the turning point when you realized you could actually compete in tournaments?

In my younger years, fishing was purely about enjoying being on the water and catching fish. When my family moved from Zimbabwe at age 13, we stopped the sport for quite some time, my dad even sold his boat. Years later, we got back into it through the Cast-for-Cash Tournament Series. We have won a few events, Team-of-the-Year, and multiple MLF Colours, I realized we were genuinely competitive among some of the top anglers.

#### 5. Can you share a memorable moment from your early fishing days?

At 11 years old, I weighed a 32lb limit on the first day of a Zimbabwean National Classic. I was running second in men's open and finished 8th over the two days. This was a standout moment and key memory.

### COMPETITIVE FISHING & STRATEGY

#### 6. How do you prepare for a big tournament?

Ideally, we would like time on the water, not really to catch fish as such (because often it changes before the event), but just to find areas that we might need during the tournament – noting things like water level and structure.

#### 7. What's your go-to strategy when facing unfamiliar waters?

Power-fishing and covering water.

#### 8. Do you have a favourite lure or technique that consistently produces results?

Paddle Tail / Swimbait type baits.

#### 9. What's the biggest challenge in competitive bass fishing?

Finding the time within work and life schedules to get on the water to practice.

#### 10. How do you handle pressure and competition on the water?

We try finding a strategy that other competitors are not doing.

### TOURNAMENTS & ACHIEVEMENTS

#### 11. How many years have you been competing in the SA BASS Cast-for-Cash bass angling tournament trial?

About 10 years.

#### 12. What has been your most memorable tournament win or experience?

Every win or successful event fishing with my dad is memorable one for me.

#### 13. What's the toughest competition you've ever faced?

Competing against Mike Mathee and the Kourie's.

#### 14. Have you ever had a major setback in a tournament? How did you overcome it?

We found what we believed to be a winning pattern in a pre-fish. However, once the tournament started we could not get a bite. We needed to adapt and subsequently

didn't make changes quick enough, by the second/third day we had found a completely new pattern, but had spent too much time before adapting to catch up. Although it didn't help us that specific event, it has helped us with our mindset and success thereafter by not going into tournaments with predetermined ideas.

### 15. What's your proudest accomplishment in your fishing career?

Probably Zimbabwe Junior Colours.

### GEAR & TECHNOLOGY

### 16. What's your must-have piece of fishing gear?

Spot Lock

### 17. How important is technology (electronics, GPS, sonar) in today's bass fishing?

Very important, I need to get better at using these tools for sure.

### 18. Do you have any sponsorships? How do they influence your fishing career?

Mega Magic (a cleaning chemical manufacturer) and Cobat Transport (lowbed transport specialist). These sponsorships are extremely valuable giving us the opportunity to compete in these Trails.

### INDUSTRY & ADVICE

### 19. What's one thing about competitive bass fishing that most people don't realize?

It's hard work and nonstop, there is no sitting around relaxing on the boat.

### 20. What advice would you give to someone considering to compete actively?

Go for it and make sure to enjoy it, it's a blessing to be out there doing what you love.

### 21. How do you see the sport evolving in the next five to ten years?

The sport seems to be growing in competitor numbers and circuits, and all teams are getting more and more competitive.

### 22. What's your opinion on conservation and how anglers can help sustain fish populations?

Keep bass in the dams and protect the fodder fish populations, assist where possible in driving out the netting syndicates.

### FUN & PERSONAL TOUCH

### 23. What's your personal best bass?

10.2 lbs caught at Jiri Dam, in the Zimbabwe Lowveld.

### 24. If you could fish with any angler, past or present, who would it be?

Definitely my dad, Troy Batty.

### 25. What's one superstition or ritual you have before a tournament?

I don't believe in superstitions.

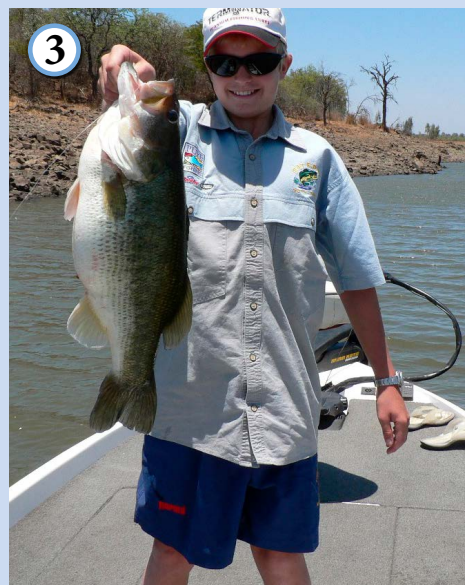
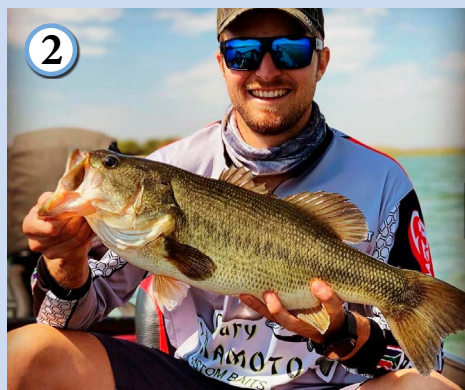
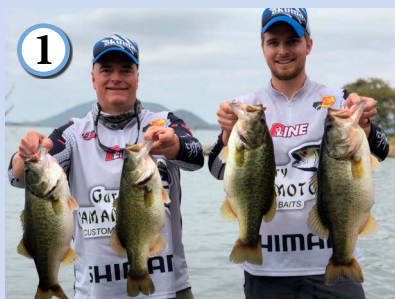
### 26. When you're not fishing, what do you enjoy doing?

I have two young kids so being with the family.

### 27. What's one funny or crazy thing that's happened to you while fishing?

The aggressive crocks at Rust de Winter Dam chasing my Zara Spook, or top water frog all the way back to the boat

Stay tuned as we uncover the passion, dedication, and secrets behind South Africa's elite bass anglers. In the next issue we speak to Calman Grobler. 🐟



1. My dad and I at Mteri Dam, Zimbabwe in 2018
2. At an MLF event at Roodekopjes Dam
3. At a Junior League event in 2005
4. On stage at the Cast-for-Cash Championship 2025

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# BASICS FOR BEGINNERS

>> Hannes Lindeque



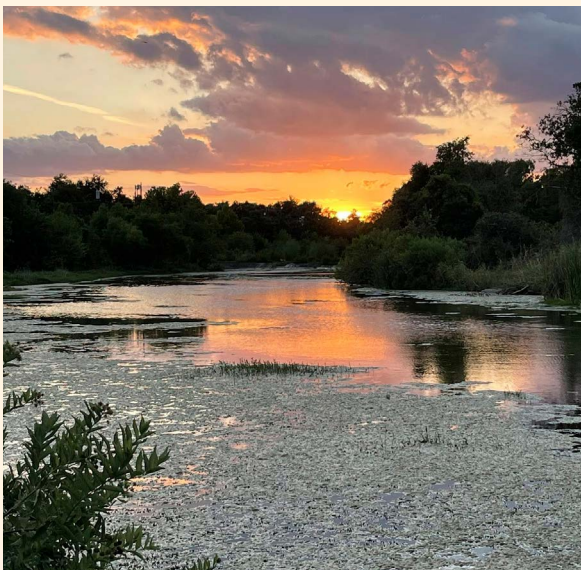
## Curios

Bass are very curios and are drawn to irregularities.



## Spawn

Shallow sandy bottom shorelines will be better for nesting during the spring.



## Overcast

On overcast, cloudy days, bass are more active, typically staying between midwater and the surface.



## Experiment

Experiment with lure presentations, including changes in retrieval speed, colour, rigging, or the lure itself.

## Wind

- On windy days, bass often move closer to the bank
- or remain shallow, seeking sheltered areas.



## Presentation

Adding pauses and subtle twitches to your retrieve can trigger strikes from curious or wary fish.



## Full moon

Fish tend to lock onto nests during full moon periods.

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# DIE GESKIEDENIS VAN BAARSHENGEL IN SUID-AFRIKA



Allan-Ross Smith, die stigter van B.A.S.S. in Suid-Afrika in gesprek met Ray Scott. (Ray Scott kan beskou word as die vader van kompeterende baarshengel in die VSA)

>> Philip Kemp\*

**S**wartbaars, veral bekend in Suid-Afrika as “largemouth black bass”, het oor die jare ’n gevestigde plek in die plaaslike hengelkultuur ingeneem. Hoewel dit nie ’n inheemse spesie is nie, het die baarshengel ’n lang en interessante geskiedenis in die land, en het dit ’n wesenlike impak gehad op beide sporthengel en die ekologie. Hierdie artikel volg die pad van baarshengel in Suid-Afrika – vanaf die vroeë invoer van die spesie, tot die vorming van ’n entoesiastiese hengelgemeenskap en die omgewingsuitdagings wat daarmee saamgaan.

## Inleiding tot baars: Oorsprong en kenmerke

Grootbekbaars (*Micropterus Salmoies*) is oorspronklik afkomstig van Noord-Amerika, waar dit een van die gewildste hengelspesies is. Dit is bekend vir sy aggressiewe aard, vinnige groei en vermoë om in verskeie habitate aan te pas. Hierdie eienskappe het dit ’n ideale kandidaat gemaak vir die uitbou van sportvisserye wêreldwyd – en Suid-Afrika was geen uitsondering nie.

Baars word gekenmerk deur hul groot mond, gespierde liggaam, en die vermoë om beide aasvisse en kunsaaas met krag aan te val. Dit maak hulle ’n gunsteling onder hengelaars wat die uitdaging en opwindning van roofvisvang waardeer.

## Die eerste invoer van baars na Suid-Afrika

Die eerste rekord van baars in Suid-Afrika dateer terug na die 1927 toe die spesie vanaf Nederland ingevoer is. Aanvanklik is die visse vanaf die Jonkershoek visteelstasie uitgeplaas in privaatdamme en landbouereservoirs, veral in die Wes-Kaap, Oos-Kaap en later die sentrale binneland. Die doel was om visserye te bevorder, en om alternatiewe sportvissoorte beskikbaar te stel vir plaaslike hengelaars, wat op daardie stadium hoofsaaklik op karp, kurper en geelvis gekonsentreer het.

Tydens hierdie tydperk was daar min begrip van die impak wat indringerspesies op inheemse visbevolkings kon hê. Die fokus was eerder op die vermeerdering van sport- en

voedselvisserye, veral in damme en riviere wat kunsmatig geskep of aangepas is.

Teen die 1950s en 60s het baars gevestigde bevolkings in verskeie dele van die land begin vorm, en die vis het al hoe meer bekend en geliefd geraak onder sporthengelaars.

## Die opkoms van sporthengel: Baars as uitdaging en passie

Die 1970s en 80s het ’n era van georganiseerde sporthengel ingelui in Suid-Afrika, met baars wat vinnig ’n kernspesie geword het in mededingende hengelkringe. Hierdie dekades het die ontstaan gesien van formele baarsklubs, hengelkompetisies en selfs nasionale spanne wat later internasionaal aan baarskampioenskappe sou deelneem.

Tegnologie het ook ’n groot rol gespeel. Met die invoer van gevorderde hengeltoerusting uit die VSA – soos moderne kunsaaas, sekere hengelstokke, sonar en bote – het baarshengel in Suid-Afrika ontwikkel tot ’n gesofistikeerde en tegniese sport. Baars was nie meer net ’n vis wat per toeval gevang is nie; dit het ’n spesie geword waarvoor mense hul toerusting, taktiek en vaardighede spesifiek aangepas het.

Hengelgemeenskappe het in hierdie tyd gegroei, met weeklikse kompetisies, klubuitstappies en die deel van kennis en tegnieke via tydskrifte, radioprogramme en later die internet. Baars het letterlik en figuurlik ’n kulturele merk gemaak op die Suid-Afrikaanse varswaterhengelwêreld.

## Die ekologiese omkeer: Baars as indringer

Namate navorsing en wetenskaplike kennis oor ekologie gevorder het, het daar ’n groter bewustheid ontstaan oor die impak van indringerse spesies – en baars was nie vrygestel van kritiek nie. Teen die 1990s en vroeë 2000s het wetenskaplikes, omgewingsaktiviste en selfs sommige hengelaars begin erken dat baars in sommige gebiede ’n bedreiging inhou vir inheemse vissoorte, veral dié wat voorkom in kleiner rivierstelsels of damme met ’n beperkte ekologiese weerstand.

In plekke soos die Kaapse bergriviere en sekere streke in Limpopo, Mpumalanga en die Vrystaat is baars geïmpliseer in die afname van inheemse visbevolkings soos Sandelia, Galaxias en kleiner kurper-spesies. Hierdie inheemse visse het nie altyd die aanpassingsvermoë of beskerming teen roofvisse gehad nie, en die teenwoordigheid van ’n dominante roofvis soos baars het dikwels die natuurlike balans versteur.

Hierdie kennis het gelei tot hernude gesprekke oor visuitsettings, bestuurspraktyke, en die verantwoordelikheid van hengelaars. In baie damme en stelsels is selektiewe vang-en-verwyder-programme ingestel, en sekere owerhede het die verbod op die uitset van baars in nuwe gebiede ingestel.



*Gerry Leach, die eerste president van die SA Bass Federasie*



*In September 1983 het Ray Scott, stigter en president van B.A.S.S., saam met Bob Cobb, redakteur van Bassmaster, Suid-Afrika besoek.*

## Hengelaars se reaksie: Bewustheid en verantwoordelikheid

Die baarshengelgemeenskap in Suid-Afrika het deur die jare ook aangepas. Baie hengelaars het begin oorgaan na vang-en-los-praktyke, veral in waters waar trofeebevising beoefen word. Hengelklubs het begin klem lê op bewaring, ekologiese sensitiwiteit, en samewerking met wetenskaplike navorsing.

Opleiding en bewustheidsveldtogte is geloods om die impak van oorbevising, oordrag van spesies, en onwetende uitsettings te verminder. Die idee van “etiese hengel” het al hoe meer belangrik geword, met riglyne oor hoe om visse korrek te hanteer, terug te plaas, en wanneer om dit gepas te gebruik as voedselbron.

Hierdie selfregulering en die groeiende kennisbasis onder hengelaars het gehelp om baarshengel in Suid-Afrika ’n meer volhoubare rigting te gee, selfs te midde van die komplekse realiteite van indringerbestuur.

## Moderne baarshengel: Tegnologie, toerisme en toekomsvisie

Vandag is baarshengel ’n gevestigde deel van die hengelwêreld in Suid-Afrika. Daar is talle damme en reservoirs waar baars floreer, en waar sporthengelaars van regoor die land – en selfs internasionaal – byeenkom vir toernooie en ontspanningshengel.

Moderne toerusting sluit gevorderde sonar, hoëspoedhengelbote, digitaal gekoppelde GPS-tegnologie en ’n enorme verskeidenheid kunsas en taktieke in. Hengelkompetisies word regstreeks uitgesaai, en daar bestaan ’n groeiende mark vir toerisme rondom gewilde baarshengelbestemmings soos Albert Falls-, Midmar-, Clanwilliam- en Loskopdam.

Wat egter die belangrikste is, is die toenemende insig dat baarshengel in Suid-Afrika ’n verantwoordelikheid dra. Die kombinasie van ekonomiese voordeel, sportgenot en ekologiese risiko vereis dat alle betrokkenes – van hengelaars en bewaringsorganisasies tot plaaslike owerhede – ’n ingeligte en samewerkende benadering volg.

Die pad vorentoe: Balans tussen passie en bewaring

Die geskiedenis van baarshengel in Suid-Afrika is een van aanpassing, ontdekking en toenemende bewustheid. Wat as ’n entoesiastiese visuitsetting begin het, het gegroei tot ’n hoogs gesofistikeerde sport, maar ook tot ’n saak van omgewingsbestuur.

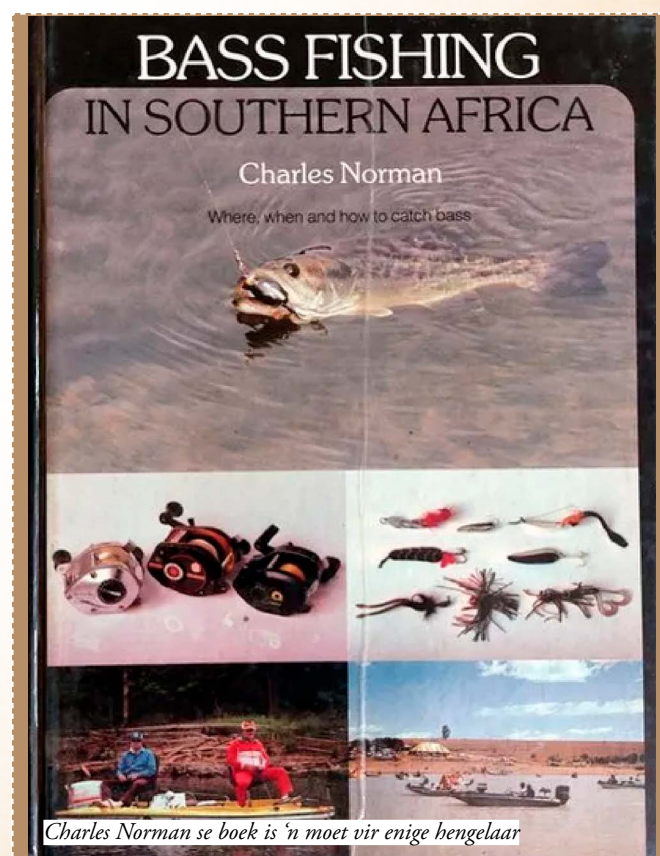
Daar is vandag nie meer ’n eenvoudige “pro” of “anti” benadering tot baars nie. Elke watermassa het sy eie geskiedenis, sy eie ekosisteem, en sy eie bestuurstrategieë nodig. Sommige damme vereis streng bewaring van groot trofeebaars, terwyl ander stelsels doelbewuste populasiebeheer verg.

Wat egter konstant bly, is die passie van hengelaars – mense wat hul tyd, moeite en liefde aan die water spandeer. Hierdie passie, wanneer dit gekombineer word met wetenskaplike insig en gemeenskapsbewustheid, het die potensiaal om baarshengel ’n blywende en positiewe rol in Suid-Afrika te laat speel.

## Slotgedagte

Baarshengel is meer as net ’n stok, ’n lyn en ’n vis. Dit is ’n storie van mense, plekke en die komplekse verhouding tussen mens en natuur. Deur die geskiedenis te verstaan, kan ons die toekoms vorm – een waar die water nie net leef nie, maar ook laat leef. 🐟

*\*Philip Kemp is ’n gesoute swartbaarhengelaar en assistent-redakteur van SA BASS.*



*Charles Norman se boek is ’n moet vir enige hengelaar*

# Old School Bass Lures



## Paying our dues to the days of old

>> *Jay Röhm-Williams*

In an age where progression is the driving force behind modern day culture there seems to be no stone left unturned in this quest for change. All aspects of life in the twenty first century are constantly being tested, refigured and refined to make life supposedly better, easier and faster for us to manage or enjoy. That includes our beloved, high action packed past time of bass fishing and man is it a revolutionary sport filled to the brim with a rich history of evolution.

Years upon years of precious time have been dedicated towards making bass fishing as popular as it stands today when it comes to freshwater game fishing across the globe. To such an extent that anglers from all creeds, colours or cultures have taken to picking up a rod and pursuing personal fishing glory that our green and gold bass offer to the masses. It has touched lives, made legends and seen an influx of modern engineering coated in creativity that has made the world of bass fishing what it is today. This all been said though one should always remember the humble path that was taken to achieve such fame and today that's exactly what we cast back time to do. There are many aspects of bass fishing that have changed over the decades but one category that stands out specifically is the advancing nature of bass fishing lures.

Many if not all of us who religiously give our time willingly to chase down bass across country have stumbled upon some pretty cool, old school lures at one point or another. Whether retro or vintage, the names matter not because you will know what I mean when you see one. The thing is that the history and journey that bass fishing lures have undertaken through the ages is one of interest, creativity and absolute pure genius. If that's not enough reason to pay our respects to the brilliant minds and

companies that set the corner stones for some of the most famous, influential baits we have on the market today then I don't know what is. So get comfortable, relax and join me as I take you on a brief trip down memory lane.

Ever since the early 1900s lure fishing has been present but limited by demand and creativity. History generally tells us that Europe was probably the birth place for original beginnings but it was America that took lure fishing to heights never perceived imaginable. Bass fishing in particular became an overnight craze somewhere during the mid-1960s which led to many upcoming companies rushing to patent lure designs and start manufacturing new creations. Before this many of the bass fishing lures of old were hand carved from various woods, sculpted from metal and tin or fashioned from cork. Some of these lure were that like the original plugs or the first types of spinner baits. They would be custom painted by hand and fitted with appendages or additional flare by adding feathers, animal furs and even tinsel in some cases. Other lures were fitted with little metal blades, metal lips, tiny crafted propellers, steel split rings and handpicked metal hooks each designed to assist with movement, floating or gliding differently. Some of these lure designs loved to add maybe way more tri- hooks than actually necessary but these simple flaws were soon ironed out.

Once tournament bass fishing became massive in the states it was as if the flood gates of the lure industry dam had burst with a peaked interest higher than the Himalayas. New forms of soft plastic moulds began being developed and anglers started tweaking their own existing lures which gave birth to new designs thought before to be unimaginable. Crank baits, spinner baits and other variations of soft plastics became very popular with progressive lure manufactures popping up all over out of the wood work. Bass tournaments created a hype and demand



*Crazy Crawler*



*Heddon's Dowagiac Minnow*

- 1 – Hula Popper
- 2 – Jitterbug
- 3 – Lazy Ike
- 4 – Mann's Little George
- 5 – River Runts
- 6 – Vintage crankbaits

never heard of or seen before and well the rest is history as they say. There seemed to be no limit to what bass anglers imaginations could conjure up leading to a multitude of designs in sizes, colours and shapes. Everything from skirts, blade formations, hook types and weights were now making the rounds and it only grew bigger with the influx of bass anglers that joined the ranks each year after the next.

Some popular, old school lures that some of the more veteran anglers might fondly recall are lures such as the Jitterbug, Crazy Crawler, Lazy Ike, Hula Popper, River Runts, Creek Darter and Heddon Minnows. These antique lures were crafted in all different sizes ranging from really miniature to bulky and large which could be light in weight or heavy depending on where in the water it was to be utilized. Lures of this nature paved the way for future lure manufacturing companies with some of the more well-known names still producing lures today like Heddon, Rapala and Stanley.

It's important to remember how far the supporting industries of the bass fishing global community have come when we look at what we as the modern day bass angler have to use at our disposal. Our tackle arsenals are now days packed to the hilt with all sorts of weird and wonderful creations with just too many to mention. This been said though it does make one feel humble to actually stop and consider how far our beloved sport of bassing has come and to what heights the lure designs have ventured. So next time if you ever wondering why a certain lure has been made a particular way or why some lures still use willow blades or feathers just know that you are holding a piece of actual, evolutionary design in your hands. It's awesome to be bass fishing in the year 2025 but if it weren't for the love and dedication of our forefathers we wouldn't be where we are today, not by a long cast.

*Rods out and safe fishing everyone!* 🎣

1



2



3



4



5



6



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# MASTERING THE SPINNERBAIT

>> The all-season lure every bass angler should know

>> *Hannes Lindeque*

**F**ew lures in bass fishing are as versatile, or as misunderstood, as the spinnerbait. It's a lure that works in just about any condition, from stained rivers to crystal-clear lakes, shallow flats to deep ledges. But to fish it effectively, you need to understand what makes it tick, how to choose the right setup, and how to bring it to life in the water.

## ANATOMY OF A SPINNERBAIT

What makes a spinnerbait so effective is its unique design. It appeals to both sight and sound, creating flash and vibration that bass can't resist.

**Head:** The weighted head determines how deep the bait runs. Its shape also helps it move through weeds, rocks, and other cover.

**Skirt:** Usually made from silicone, the skirt flares and pulses in the water, adding lifelike motion and profile.

**Wireframe:** The backbone that holds everything together. A well-tuned frame keeps your bait running straight and effective.

**Blades:** The blades spin and flash, creating vibration. The type of blade matters:

- **Colorado:** Round, thumping, and great for murky water or slow rolling.
- **Willow leaf:** Long and flashy, perfect for clear water and fast retrieves.
- **Indiana:** A mix of both, offering balanced flash and vibration.

## CHOOSING THE RIGHT SPINNERBAIT

Your choice depends on water conditions, depth, and even the weather.

- **Water clarity:** Use natural colours like white or blue with willow blades in clear water. In stained or muddy water, switch to bright skirts like chartreuse with a Colorado blade to maximize vibration.
- **Depth:** Shallow water calls for lighter spinnerbaits (¼ to ½ oz), while deeper water requires heavier heads (¾ to 1 oz).
- **Weather:** Spinnerbaits shine on cloudy, windy, or overcast days when low light and surface chop give bass less time to inspect the lure.



## FUNDAMENTAL RETRIEVE TECHNIQUES

A spinnerbait is only as good as the retrieve you put behind it. Master these basics, and you'll be on your way.

- **Slow rolling:** Crawl the bait just above the bottom in deeper water. Best paired with a Colorado blade.
- **Burning:** Reel fast, just under the surface, to mimic a fleeing baitfish. This often triggers aggressive reaction strikes.
- **Stop-and-go (yo-yoing):** Pause mid-retrieve and let the bait flutter. The skirt flares and blades flash like a wounded fish.
- **Killing the bait:** When you hit cover, stop reeling and let it fall. That sudden change often convinces a follower to strike.

## PRO TIPS FOR BEGINNERS

Small tweaks can make a big difference in how many fish you put in the boat.

- Add a trailer hook for fish that just nip at the lure.
- Attach a soft plastic trailer for extra bulk, action, and realism.
- Stick to white or chartreuse skirts if you're unsure where to start.
- Tune your wireframe if the bait runs sideways, alignment is key.
- Always target cover like stumps, rocks, docks, or weeds, spinnerbaits are designed to shine here.

## RETRIEVE WITH PURPOSE

Beyond the basics, spinnerbait mastery comes from fine-tuning. In dirty water, slow things down and let the vibration work. In clear water, speed up and let the flash do the job. Sometimes burning the bait just under the surface creates a wake that draws bass from far away.

## WORKING THE COVER

One of the spinnerbait's biggest strengths is deflection. Bump it into stumps, rocks, or dock posts, and be ready, bass often strike the instant the bait changes direction.



## MODIFICATIONS THAT MATTER

Spinnerbaits are made to be customized.

- Match skirt colours to local forage, like kurper or even their bass fry.
- Trim skirts when fishing fast to reduce drag.
- Experiment with blade styles for more thump or more flash.
- Bend the wire arm slightly to change speed and vibration.

## SITUATIONAL SECRETS

- On windward banks, spinnerbaits excel because baitfish get pushed by the wind, and bass follow.
- In summer heat, aim for shade under docks or overhanging trees.
- After dark, go with darker skirts and a thumping Colorado blade, bass rely more on feel than sight at night.



## In conclusion

Fishing a spinnerbait is more than just casting and winding, it's about reading the conditions and making subtle adjustments. When you learn how to match blade, colour, and retrieve to the situation, this timeless lure becomes one of the most reliable tools in your tackle box. Master it, and you'll quickly see why so many pros and weekend anglers swear by the spinnerbait.

## HOT Tips

- Adjust retrieve speed to water clarity.
- Match skirt colour to forage.
- Colorado blade = vibration and thump.
- Willow blade = flash and speed.
- Add trailer hook for short strikes.
- Add soft plastic trailer for attraction.
- \* Use twitches and pauses to trigger bites.





# Die Heldesaal

## CHRISTINE (CHRIS) HOUSTON

Chris (Christine) Houston is nie net bekend as Jimmy Houston se vrou nie, sy is 'n legende in haar eie reg. As 'n stigterslid van die Tulsa Bass Belles, die eerste vroue-bass-klub, het Chris gehelp om 'n plek vir vroulike hengelaars in 'n man-gedomineerde sport te vestig.



Chris Houston



Jimmy en Chris Houston in die jare toe beide nog kompetierend gehengel het

>> Philip Kemp\*

**M**et die krag van haar Mercury-enjins het sy die Bass'n Gal-reeks oorheers en sewe Angler of the Year-titels, vier Classic-oorwinnings en ontelbare aanhangers ingepalm. Ter erkenning van haar baanbrekersloopbaan het sy die eerste vrou geword wat in die Freshwater Fishing Hall of Fame opgeneem is. Chris Houston het nie net gehengel nie, sy het dit gewaag en die sport vir altyd verander.

Wanneer en presies waar sy gebore is, is onbekend maar sy het haar liefde vir visvang ontwikkel as kind langs die Illinois-rivier in Noord-Oostelike Oklahoma. Sy het reeds vroeg haar vaardigheid begin slyp wat uiteindelik tot groot suksesse in die wêreld van professionele vroue baars hengel gelei het.

In 1961 het sy 'n toevallige ontmoeting met 'n senior in haar hoërskooljare gehad – Jimmy Houston. Dié ontmoeting sou hul lewens radikaal verander; hulle het saam begin meeding in visvangkompetisies en het later saam in die sport sukses behaal.

### Pionierswerk en prestasies

Chris het 'n merkwaardige visvangloopbaan opgebou:

Sy eindig derde in die Oklahoma Staatskampioenskap – 'n oorwinning wat lank onthou sal word vir haar deursettingsvermoë. In 1968 het sy die Vrouedivisie van

die World Series of Sport Fishing gewen, terwyl Jimmy die mansafdeling gewen het. Saam het hulle ook die "Mnr. en Mev."-afdeling gewen. Chris was ook mede stigter van die eerste All-Women Bass-Klub, die Tulsa Bass Belles, en was verskeie kere bekroon as "Miss Bass Belle" in die 1970s. In die laat 1970s was sy 'n dominante figuur in die Bass'n Gal-toernooie, sewe keer gekroon as Angler of the Year, en in 19 toernooie agtereenvolgens prysgeld verdien in 'n bestek van vyf jaar. Gedurende hiedie tyd het sy ook die Bassmaster Classic vir vroue drie keer gewen. Nadat die Bass'n Gal-toernooie gestaak is het Chris haar uittrede uit baarshengel aangekondig.

### Heldesaal erkennings

Chris se nalatenskap word internasionaal gerespekteer. In 1987 is sy in die Freshwater Fishing Hall of Fame ingelyf. Haar grootste erkenning gebeur in 2005 toe sy die eerste vrou was wat in die Bass Fishing Heldesaal ingelyf is. Hiermee het sy 'n deur oopgemaak vir talle vroue in 'n mans gedomineerde sport – 'n rolmodel sonder gelyke. Sy en Jimmy se prestasies en populariteit het wyd gestrek. Hulle spanwerk het verder gestrek alhoewel hulle nie altyd saam deelgeneem het aan toernooie nie. Hulle het byna 40 keer gekwalifiseer vir die Bassmaster Classics, FLW-kampioenskappe en Bass'n Gal Classics. Saam het hulle ook meer as \$1 miljoen in prysgeld verdien. Hulle het 'n



Jimmy en Chris Houston



Chris en Jimmy



Jimmy en Chris Houston



Chris Houston

enorme stuk grond Twin Eagles-ranch in Suid-Oklahoma gekoop. Twin Eagles Ranch het amper 2000 akker buite-ruimte wat perfek was vir jag, boer en natuurlik: visvang. Verder is Chris en Jimmy die ouers van twee kinders, Sherri, en Jamey, wat ook hul eie paaie gevind het in die wêreld van baarshengel. Chris en Jimmy is ook die trotse grootouers van 4 kleinkinders en 8 agterkleinkinders.

### Onlangs: 'n Storm in die lewe

In 'n hartroerende onderhoud in April 2024 het Jimmy egter aangedui dat Chris 'n massiewe beroerte gehad het, wat haar gesondheid drasties geknou het. Alhoewel hulle meer as 60 jaar lank getroud is, is sy vir hom steeds die lig in sy lewe ondanks haar siektetoestand.

### Nalatenskap en Erfenis

Chris Houston se storie handel nie net oor trofeë en haar heldesaal erkenning nie, dit gaan oor veerkragtigheid, lewenslange toewyding en deursoettingsvermoë wat 'n voorbeeld vir toekomstige generasies vroue en mans in die sport is.

### Afsluiting

Chris Houston was nie net "die vrou van Jimmy Houston" nie — sy was 'n kampioen in haar eie reg. Van

vroeë visvangdae op die Illinois-rivier tot meervoudige toekennings, kampioenskappe en Hheldesaal-induksies, het sy die sport en kultuur van bass-visvang positief beïnvloed. Haar nalatenskap herdenk 'n dapper vrou wat die roete gebaan het vir toekomstige generasies, en wat 'n nalatenskap los vir talle vroue. ♡

*\*Philip Kemp is 'n gesoute swartbaarhengelaar en assistent-redakteur van SA BASS.*



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# MTHEMBUSKLOOF LODGE

## 'n Verborgte juweel vir die baarshengelaar

Wanneer jy as hengelaar jou volgende uitstappie na Rhenosterkopdam beplan, is daar een naam wat jy in jou notaboek moet neerskryf: Mthembuskloof Lodge. Geleë in die hart van Pieterskraal A, KwaNdebele, en slegs sowat 90 minute vanaf Pretoria, is hierdie lodge die perfekte kombinasie van gemak, kultuur, gasvryheid en naby aan een van die bekendste baarswaters in Suid-Afrika.



Die Glamping tente is stylvol toegerus

>> Philip Kemp\*

Ons SA BASS-span het onlangs twee dae uit ons besige skedule geneem om lyn te gaan natmaak by Rhenosterkopdam. Die visvang was taai – met net 'n handvol baars wat ons ase nie kon weerstaan nie. Wat egter vir die moeilike hengel opgemaak het, was ons verblyf by Mthembuskloof Lodge.

### Ligging

Vir hengelaars wat wil oornag is ligging alles. Mthembuskloof is ideaal geleë, ver genoeg weg van die stad se geraas om jou te laat ontspan, maar naby genoeg aan Rhenosterkopdam sodat jy vroeg op die water kan wees sonder om in die donker ure uit die stad te moet ry. Die roete vanaf Pretoria is eenvoudig en die paaie is in 'n goeie toestand, wat dit maklik maak om met jou boot op sleep te arriveer sonder stres.

### Eerste indrukke – warm welkom, koel atmosfeer

By aankoms het ons dadelik die gevoel gekry dat ons meer as net gaste was – ons was vriende wat terugkom vir 'n kuier. Die personeel se glimlagte en vriendelike gesels het sommer dadelik die spanning van die dag se lang rit laat verdwyn. Die lodge self is netjies, ruim en perfek versorg, met 'n kombinasie van moderne geriewe en 'n tradisionele Afrika-karakter wat vir 'n unieke atmosfeer sorg.

### Verblyf wat pas by jou ritme

Na 'n lang dag op die water het elkeen van ons gesoek na net een ding, rus. Mthembuskloof het presies dit voorsien. Die kamers is ruim, die beddens gemaklik, en die stilte van die omgewing is amper terapeuties. Jy hoor snags net die sagte geluide van die natuur – geen verkeer, geen bure wat lawaai nie – net die soort kalmte wat jou gereed maak vir nog 'n dag se hengel.

Vir groter groepe hengelaars is daar ook akkommodasie-opsies wat dit maklik maak om saam te braai, taktiek te bespreek, of sommer net 'n storie of twee oor die vang van die dag te deel.

### Kos wat jou regmaak vir die water

As daar een ding is wat 'n hengelaar waardeer na 'n lang dag in die son, is dit goeie kos. Mthembuskloof se kombuis het ons nie teleurgestel nie. Die etes was smaakvol, ruim in porsie en voorberei met daardie besondere plaasgasvryheid wat jou laat voel jy eet by familie. Van stewige ontbyte tot hartige aandetes – die lodge weet hoe om sy gaste gevoed en tevrede te hou.

### Meer as net 'n slaapplek – kulturele ontdekkings

Wat Mthembuskloof uniek maak, is dat dit nie net 'n lodge is nie – dit is 'n venster na die ryk kultuur van KwaNdebele. Vir hengelaars wat graag hul familie



Die Glampingtente se kombuisies



Werner Stander met 'n mooi baars van 1.6kg

saambring, bied die lodge die geleentheid om meer te leer oor die plaaslike geskiedenis, tradisies en mense. Tussen hengelsessies deur kan jy die omliggende gemeenskap verken, kunswerke sien, en die warm gees van die streek ervaar.

## Rhenosterkopdam – uitdagend maar lonend

Ons twee dae op die dam was 'n herinnering dat baarshengel soms geduld en vasbyt verg. Die weer en wateromstandighede was nie in ons guns nie, en net 'n paar bass het die pad na die boot gevind. Maar dit is presies wat Rhenosterkopdam so aantreklik maak vir toegewyde hengelaars – die uitdaging. Hierdie dam het 'n reputasie vir groot, gesonde vis, en elke gooi kan daardie trofee-bass bring waarvoor jy gewag het.

Met Mthembuskloof as jou basis, kan jy jou dag op die water tot die maksimum benut. 'n Vroegoggend vertrek en 'n laat terugkeer is geen probleem wanneer jy weet dat 'n warm maaltyd en 'n sagte bed op jou wag nie.

### Waarom Mthembuskloof die regte keuse is vir hengelaars

1. Nabyheid aan Rhenosterkopdam – minder tyd op die pad, meer tyd om te hengel.
2. Gerief en rus – perfek vir herstel na 'n lang dag op die water.
3. Goeie kos – jy gaan nooit honger slaap nie.
4. Vriendelike diens – jy voel welkom van die oomblik dat jy arriveer.
5. Kulturele waarde – meer as net 'n lodge, dit is 'n ervaring.



Die kamers is netjies en ruim



Die manne kan selfs pool speel

### 'n Wenresep vir jou volgende hengeluitstappie

Of jy nou 'n ernstige toernooi-hengelaar is wat Rhenosterkopdam kom aanvat, of net 'n naweekhengelaar wat 'n paar dae van die stad wil ontsnap, Mthembuskloof Lodge het alles wat jy nodig het. Dis 'n plek waar jou liggaam kan rus, jou maag vol kan wees, en jou siel kan herstel – sodat jy elke oggend weer met nuwe energie die dam aanvat.

Ons SA BASS-span ry weer binnekort terug, want ons het besef dat goeie hengel nie net oor die vis gaan nie – dit gaan oor die hele ervaring. En by Mthembuskloof Lodge begin en eindig daardie ervaring altyd op 'n hoë noot.

Vir enige navrae skakel 078.425.2918. Hulle fisiese adres is Plot 826, Madlavedwa, 0460, Suid-Afrika. 📍

\*Philip Kemp is 'n gesoute swartbaarhengelaar en assistent-redakteur van SA BASS.



Na 'n warm dag op die water is die swembad 'n heerlike afkoel opsie



Die verblyf is netjies met genoeg slaapplek vir groot groepe

# GEAR UP

## THE BEST GEAR FOR BASS FISHING

Every July, the International Convention of Allied Sportfishing Trades (ICAST) turns the fishing world into a playground of innovation. In 2025, the event in Orlando once again showcased ground-breaking products for anglers. For bass fishermen, this year's line-up delivered some game-changing tools designed to increase stealth, precision, and efficiency on the water.



# 2



# 1



### 1. BEST OF SHOW: FLUXJET ELECTRIC FISHING KAYAK

**Why it won:** The FluxJet Electric Fishing Kayak stole the show, winning ICAST's highest honour for 2025. Measuring 3.3m and weighing just 40kg, it blends kayak portability with cutting-edge propulsion.

**Stealth propulsion:** The flush-mounted jet drive means no exposed propeller, perfect for slipping over shallow flats or through heavy vegetation without spooking bass or snagging weeds.

**Long run time:** The lithium battery delivers up to 16 hours on a single charge, allowing anglers to fish from dawn until well past sunset without worrying about power.

**Speed & control:** A top speed of around 8km/h makes it fast enough to cover water quickly, while remaining easy to manoeuvre for precision positioning.

**Rigging ready:** Integrated accessory rails and transducer mounts let anglers add fish finders, rod holders, and other gear without aftermarket modifications.

For bass anglers who chase fish in hard-to-reach spots, the FluxJet is more than just a kayak, it's a new way to approach the water.

### 2. BEST FRESHWATER ROD: DAIWA TATULA CORK SERIES

**Why bass anglers love it:** The Tatula Cork Series offers a blend of sensitivity, strength, and comfort that serious bass angler's demand.

**X45 Bias Construction:** This graphite layup resists twisting under load, improving casting accuracy and hook-setting power.

**Lightweight build:** Reduces fatigue during long days of casting, flipping, and pitching.

**Premium cork grips:** A classic feel with excellent grip in both dry and wet conditions.

**Technique-specific models:** The range includes fast-action rods for single-hook lures and moderate actions for crankbaits, ensuring each presentation style is covered.

With a focus on balance and responsiveness, this rod series is ideal for both finesse and power fishing.

### 3. BEST FRESHWATER REEL: DAIWA BALLISTIC MQ LT SPINNING REEL

**Why it stands out:** The Ballistic MQ LT combines lightweight performance with rock-solid durability, exactly what bass anglers need for finesse tactics.

**Monocoque (MQ) body:** One-piece frame increases rigidity and houses larger drive gears for smoother power.

**AIRDRIVE rotor & bail:** Reduces start-up inertia for effortless casts and retrieves.

**Magsealed technology:** Uses magnetic oil to block out water, dirt, and debris, extending the reel's lifespan.

**Corrosion resistance:** Although targeted for freshwater, it's built tough enough to withstand brackish or light saltwater environments.

Perfect for drop-shotting, Ned rigs, or any presentation that demands silky smooth operation.

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# 3



# 4



# 5



## 4. BEST SOFT SWIMBAIT: Z-MAN SWAG LT

**Why it's a big deal:** The Z-Man Swag LT brings ElaZtech durability to a realistic swimbait profile designed to trigger big bites.

**Wide tail kick:** Produces a natural, thumping action at slow or fast retrieves.

**Rigging versatility:** Works with both top-hook and belly-hook rigs, letting anglers adapt to cover and water clarity.

**ElaZtech material:** Floats naturally, resists tearing, and lasts through multiple fish, far more durable than traditional soft plastics.

**Realistic finishes:** Lifelike eyes, gill plates, and scale patterns mimic natural prey species.

This bait is designed for trophy hunters chasing quality bass in pressured waters.

## 5. BEST TERMINAL TACKLE: VMC MINNOW SHAKER JIG

**Why finesse anglers will want it:** The Minnow Shaker Jig is tuned for today's forward-facing sonar fishing styles.

**45° jig eye:** Keeps the bait in a natural, horizontal swimming position.

**Wire bait keeper:** Holds soft plastics securely without tearing.

**Sonar optimization:** Designed to show clearly on screens, making it easier to track fish reactions in real time.

**Hydrodynamic head:** Cuts through water smoothly, allowing precise control in current or depth changes.

For anglers targeting suspended or roaming bass, this jig delivers presentation control and strike-triggering realism.

## FINAL TAKE

ICAST 2025 proved that bass fishing innovation isn't slowing down. The FluxJet Electric Fishing Kayak leads the pack with its stealth, range, and rigging versatility, while Daiwa's Tatula Cork Series and Ballistic MQ LT give anglers unmatched rod-and-reel performance. Z-Man's Swag LT swimbait and VMC's Minnow Shaker Jig round out the toolbox with lures and terminal tackle built for modern techniques.

For bass anglers ready to elevate their game, this year's ICAST winners aren't just new toys, they're precision tools designed to help you catch more and bigger fish.

# South Africa

## Dam Levels



Here is a list of the latest water levels of some of South Africa's biggest water reservoirs.

<b>Eastern Cape</b>	<b>72.2%</b>	<b>↑↓</b>
Beervlei Dam	0.0%	0.0%
Bridle Drift Dam	99.0%	-3.0%
Darlington Dam	39.7%	0.6%
Impofu Dam	50.1%	-0.5%
Wriggleswade Dam	100.0%	-0.1%

<b>Gauteng</b>	<b>101.1%</b>	<b>↑↓</b>
Bronkhorstspuit	101.8%	0.4%
Roodeplaat Dam	100.4%	0.0%

<b>Kwa-Zulu Natal</b>	<b>97.5%</b>	<b>↑↓</b>
Albert Falls Dam	98.8%	-1.3%
Bivane Dam	100.6%	0.5%
Goedertrouw Dam	97.8%	-1.2%
Inanda Dam	101.0%	-0.3%
Midmar Dam	97.5%	-0.3%
Ntshingwayo Dam	94.3%	0.4%
Pongolapoort Dam	95.3%	-0.6%
Spioenkop Dam	99.3%	1.9%
Spring Grove Dam	89.6%	-6.8%
Wagendrift Dam	98.9%	-0.6%
Woodstock Dam	96.7%	-0.6%
Zaaihoek Dam	100.5%	3.2%

<b>Limpopo</b>	<b>86.1%</b>	<b>↑↓</b>
Albasini Dam	97.8%	-0.4%
De Hoop Dam	100.3%	0.1%
Ebenezer Dam	100.0%	-0.2%
Flag Boshielo / Arabie	101.5%	-0.3%
Doorndraai Dam	100.4%	0.0%
Mokolo Dam	28.4%	-3.4%
Nandoni Dam	94.3%	-1.9%
Rust de Winter Dam	101.1%	0.2%
Tzaneen Dam	50.7%	-2.7%

<b>Mpumalanga</b>	<b>98.3%</b>	<b>↑↓</b>
Da Gama Dam	95.5%	-1.9%
Driekoppies Dam	91.7%	-1.4%
Grootdraai Dam	98.6%	-1.3%
Heyshope Dam	100.2%	-0.1%
Injaka Dam	96.8%	-1.4%
Jericho Dam	95.2%	-3.0%
Kwena Dam	99.3%	-0.9%
Loskop Dam	101.1%	0.6%
Middelburg Dam	94.6%	-2.9%
Morgenstond Dam	100.1%	-0.1%
Nooitgedacht Dam	100.3%	0.5%
Rhenosterkop Dam	100.9%	0.7%
Vygeboom Dam	100.4%	0.3%
Witbank Dam	101.5%	0.6%

<b>North West</b>	<b>103.5%</b>	<b>↑↓</b>
Boskop Dam	102.7%	0.2%
Buffelspoort Dam	100.5%	0.0%
Hartebeespoort Dam	100.4%	0.6%
Klerkskraal Dam	107.8%	-0.4%
Kosterrivier Dam	100.6%	0.4%
Molatedi Dam	107.7%	-0.7%
Roodekopjes Dam	104.8%	0.3%

<b>O.F.S.</b>	<b>101.1%</b>	<b>↑↓</b>
Allemanskraal Dam	99.1%	2.2%
Bloemhof Dam	108.4%	0.8%
Gariiep Dam	98.9%	-0.5%
Kalkfontein Dam	100.4%	-0.4%
Knellpoort Dam	99.9%	0.4%
Koppies Dam	101.0%	-0.3%
Sterkfontein Dam	99.1%	-0.3%
Vaal Dam	107.3%	0.4%
Vaalrivier Barrage	97.3%	0.3%
Vanderkloof Dam	99.3%	-0.3%

<b>Western Cape</b>	<b>83.2%</b>	<b>↑↓</b>
Berg River Dam	101.6%	1.1%
Brandvlei Dam	73.2%	10.2%
Clanwilliam Dam	77.2%	-19.8%
Kwaggaskloof Dam	71.7%	10.4%
Theewaterskloof Dam	84.3%	6.7%
Voëlvlei Dam	91.3%	11.8%

Levels on: 11-Aug 15-Jul  
Average: 93.6% 93.7%



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