



Bass on a Fly Rod... Better than Bridge

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Splat! The large, deer hair popper slapped the still surface of the farm pond with audible smack. Ripples radiated out from the fly into the smooth water of the pond in concentric circles. I held my fly rod perfectly still as my arm flexed with rigid anticipation.

My timing was perfect. The July sun set behind me across the dead still pond. Not a breath of breeze blew. Pond insects buzzed all around me as I sat in my little boat.

The bugs brought baitfish and frogs up to the surface near the shore. In turn, the baitfish and frogs brought the bass up from the depths to prowl the shoreline in search of an easy meal. And coincidentally, the bass brought me here to chase some excitement with my fly rod.

My cast landed just a few feet from the bank of the pond, approximating the distance a startled frog could jump from shore into the water.

I have in the past scared frogs into this pond watching them freeze as they landed in the water.

The frogs always trade my perceived land danger for the very real water danger of a largemouth bass. I once even had the opportunity to watch a good sized frog disappear into the mouth of a bass in this very pond.

One second, I was watching a frog lay still in the water with legs and arms splayed and only its eyes above the waterline. The next second, I saw a swirl of green and white appear in place of the frog. It was over in a split-second, leaving a swirl of water and a void where the frog had been.

With that memory fresh on my mind, I was expecting action as my imitation frog hit the water. I let the rings completely die around my hair popper. When I could no longer stand the suspense, I jiggled the end of my nine foot long eight-weight fly rod about five times.

This didn't make my fly "pop" as the name of the fly would imply. Instead, the vibrations sent down my fly line made the popper slightly wiggle and jiggle. I call this making my fly 'nervous'.

Whatever you call it, it seems to drive the bass crazy late in the afternoon when everything is still and the water is glassy. I strained my eyes,

trying to catch a glimpse of anything that might indicate a bass was about to eat my frog.

Of course, I could pull the fly along in fits and starts, making it pop and slurp and bubble as it moves toward me in the boat. But, I reserve that technique for when there is wind and chop on the water. Or, when my 'nervous' technique proves not enough action to draw a strike. On this calm, summer late afternoon the 'splat' of the fly landing and a few wiggles were all I needed.

A big bass gulped my popper slapping the water with its wide tail as it turned and dove for the safety of the weeds. By the time I got my whits together and struck the hook home, the fish was buried in Coontail moss that grew in abundance in the pond.

I was glad I had the forethought to tie on new, 15 pound mono filament to my fly line before this outing. My thought turned to how well I had tied on the fly. How many turns did I put into that improved cinch anyway?

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