

# HUNTING BASS: Bait that imitates salamanders and crawfish works well



Photo by John N. Felsher

Todd Kersey shows off a largemouth bass he caught on a soft-plastic fluke-type bait, an excellent choice when sight-fishing for bass on the beds.

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the eggs and fry, but the parents. They'll attack anything that poses a potential threat to the nest and periodically remove debris with their mouths.

Salamanders and crawfish rank among the worst nest raiders. Bass frequently kill them to protect their eggs even when not actively feeding. Therefore, jigs, tubes and lizards that imitate salamanders, crawfish or other creatures work extremely well on bedding bass. Some people might throw a plastic bait at one specific lunker for hours before it hits a lure or spooks.

"Most people get too close to the fish," advised Terry Scroggins, a professional bass angler. "If anglers can see the fish, the fish can see them. In clear water, fish may spook so I back away and make long casts. Sometimes, I mark the bed with a tomato stake and come back to it."

Scroggins typically tosses a finesse worm, craw or other temptation behind the nest and drags the bait into the bed. He leaves it motionless for long periods, occasionally giving it a little shake. Even with no apparent action, a craw worm or similar bait twitches and undulates slightly with water movement. Just that

bit of subtle action could provoke a strike.

Bluegills and crappie also eat large quantities of tiny bass. Crankbaits, spinnerbaits or swimbaits that resemble these fish could provoke bass strikes in the spring. Also, crawfish-colored crankbaits work extremely well during spawning season.

After catching a bass on the beds, release it quickly, especially a big female loaded with roe. One female might produce many thousands of offspring in her lifetime. One of them could grow into the largest bass you'll ever catch so let her go as soon as possible so she can get back to her spawning. Also, when an angler removes a male bass from the nest, predators move in to eat the eggs and fry.

Anglers typically need relatively clear water to sight-fish for bass. In southern Alabama, anglers don't usually see much clear water outside of Big Creek Lake or Millers Ferry Reservoir. Some private ponds and lakes can hold clear water. In the typically stained to muddy waters of the Mobile-Tensaw Delta, anglers can sometimes find very clear water around grassy patches in the marshes, the backs of creeks or dead-end waters with little current or tidal flow.



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