

Travelin' Sportsman

Catching those dam bass on the Tennessee River

BY JOHN N. FELSHER

On Pickwick Lake, anglers could potentially fish in three states the same day with the hope of landing big fish including lunker bass and possibly a dozen or more other species.

While the reservoir can produce monster largemouths, Pickwick offers anglers some of the best trophy smallmouth action in the nation. Anglers could catch either species on subsequent casts with the same baits anywhere in the lake, but smallmouth generally prefer more current and rocks than weed-loving largemouths.

The best smallmouth fishing usually occurs below Wilson Dam at Florence, Ala. From Wilson Dam, Pickwick Lake runs 53

miles along the Tennessee River into Mississippi and Tennessee. Near the dam, the river rushes through several channels pock-marked by numerous rocky shoals, islands, sandbars and other obstructions. When the dam gates open, current dislodges creatures from their hiding places, kicking off a bass feeding frenzy.

"Current is essential to catching fish on Pickwick Lake," advised Brian Barton, (256-412-0969, www.brianbartonoutdoors.com) a fishing guide from Muscle Shoals, Ala. "Anyone fishing when the dam is not generating current is not fishing at the prime time."

Many anglers exclusively

See **TRAVELIN'**, 40



Photo by John N. Felsher

Brian Barton, a Tennessee River guide, shows off a smallmouth bass he caught while fishing on Pickwick Lake close to Florence, Ala.



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