

# A New Twist for Pre-Spawn Bass

By Doug Vahrenberg

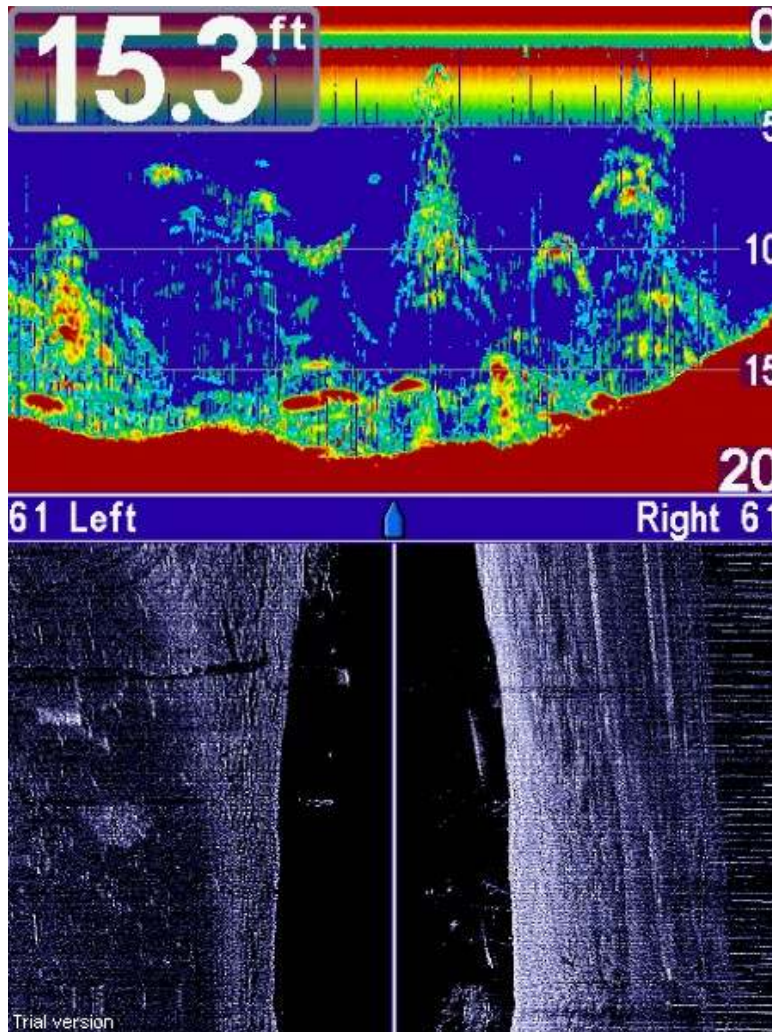


If you talk to any angler and ask their favorite time to fish and I bet you will hear: Pre-spawn. The reason this is the time of the year that the bass are feeding to prepare for the upcoming spawn. But as fruitful and bountiful as it can be it can also be frustrating. Not every day do they bite like gang busters. On a recent trip to Truman Lake, I was faced with less than perfect fishing conditions. A massive drawdown was happening, it was post-frontal conditions and the water was muddy and still cool. But when most anglers I seen commented on struggling and many stayed on the banks, I headed out for my intagrual trip out on Truman Lake. Yes, I have not had a chance to fish my home water yet and it was April already. And today I only had about 3 hours to fish.

Like most anglers I rigged up a Spinnerbait, Jig and Crankbait. After heading to a major or I call them live creek, one that drains alot of area and has almost a continuous supply of water in-flow. I started at the mouth and started fishing just enjoying the day and not paying attention to the conditions and the equipment I'm blessed to own, my Humminbird Side Imaging Electronics. I was trying to put skill and lady luck on my side and it does not always work that way. I fished all the way to the back of the creek thru huge balls of bait and not one bump, sniff or bite. I could see why other anglers told me

to leave the boat on the trailer. I've learned the toughest days make me a better angler, as a competitive angler I don't get to choose the days on the water during competition.

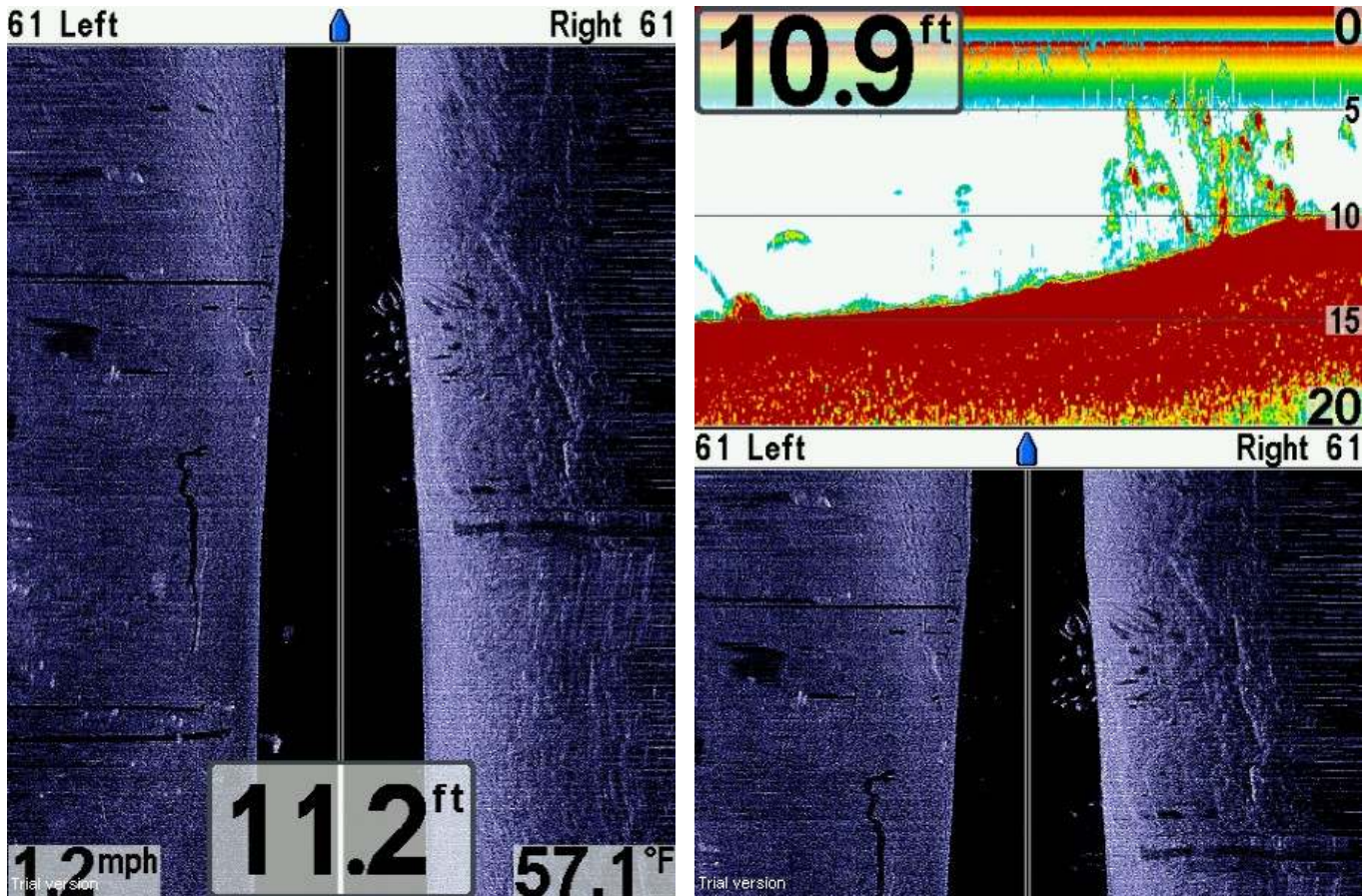
As it got shallow I switched my bow unit from 2D sonar to Side Imaging and guess what. I started learning why the fish were not on the banks. I started seeing fish and bait balls away from the bank or suspended on the channels and break-lines.



Immediately I changed tactics to some techniques I have employed at other fisheries around the country but I have not tried much here locally at home. First thing I opened the rod box in my Skeeter 20i and there was my new found passion a swimbait tied up just calling my name. What the heck I've never thrown it in the muddy water. So I pulled it out. Also it was time to break out the light line and big cranking rod and tie on one of my new favorite pre-spawn baits the LuckyCraft GDS Mini Dr. The GDS Mini DR is awesome for pre-spawn bass as it's wide wobbling action and depth is irresistible to hungry females.



What happened now was 3 hours of nothing but catching hungry female bass one after another but not where most would target. Why because the Side Imaging wasn't lying were they were hiding.



They were right there on the break and schooled up good. I caught three real nice ones out of the first school on the Swimmbait swam over the top and running the LuckyCraft GDS Mini through the bass. Making it an easy prey. Just like you and I like the closest seat to the buffet, bass like the easiest source to get food. After this I spun the MinnKota Fortrex up to 80 Percentage and started covering water watching the Humminbird Side Imaging for the information I needed to be successful. I continued the pattern into two more creeks and put 10 keeper largemouth in the boat with the smallest about 3 1/2 Pounds and the largerst around 6 pounds.



But with all good stories the big one did get away. I lost one in a cedar tree that I estimated around 8 pounds maybe a little more. She hit the swimbait with a bad mamba jamba attitude and never let me turn her. That's one thing the swimbait bite is incredible. You've never had as an intense rush, they have one thing on their mind they want that bait. With this I have had to find the right hook to use with the heavy line and powerful strikes to increase my hook-up ratio. I've found that the Secret Lures Meat Hook HD 7/0 is the best and has increased my hook-up ratio 10 fold. There are several reason why I prefer this hook. It's a heavy duty big Mustad hook. But the biggest reason is the straight shank, it lays perfectly horizontal with the bait and very hard to rig wrong and makes rigging simple and easy to hook-up when you do get bit.

So next time you head out for some pre-spawn action, it's best to let the fish tell you what they want and use your tools you have to locate the fish and you can turn a failure into a memorable trip.

### **Equipment:**

Humminbird 797c2 Side Imaging Graph

Swimbait: 4.5" Swimbait in Blue Back Shad Pattern, Secret Lures 7/0 MeatHook HD, 15# Flourocarbon, Spinnerbait Rod with Daiwa TD Advantage 153HSTA 6.3:1 Reel

Crankbait: LuckyCraft GDS Mini Dr in Mad Craw (286), 10# Flourocarbon, 7 1/2 Foot Cranking Rod Medium/Heavy, Daiwa TD Advantage 153HSTA 6.3:1 Reel



**Doug Vahrenberg** receives promotional considerations from these fine companies: Skeeter Boats, Yamaha Outboards, MinnKota Motors and Chargers, Humminbird Electronics, Navionics Charts, LuckyCraft Lures, Transducer Shield and Saver, Secret Lures, Dave's Custom Baits, Daiwa Reels, AGCO Farm Equipment.