

FEW BASS BIG BASS

FISHING GENEVA LAKE

BY TERRY BITZ OF
OUTDOOR CONVERGENCE

Rumors of a hot fishing bite sent me and friend Bill Pocius to Geneva Lake recently. Well, I shouldn't say rumors as the information came from my friend Doug Kloet who landed numerous nice bass and panfish while guiding clients on Geneva the weekend before.

We arrived on the water a bit later than planned due to morning storms that had swept through a couple hours earlier. However, armed with our tackle and some fresh information provided by guide Jim Tostrud, whom Bill and I happened to see at the launch, we motored out into Geneva Bay where we would begin our outing.

I started out using a plastic worm, wacky-rigged on a red hook while Bill was using a lipless crank. The presentations, which are a contrast in speed, were used to try and figure out what the fish were biting on.

It would take 30 minutes before we landed our first fish; a 16 inch bass that I caught on the plastic worm. It would be another couple of hours before we caught another decent fish. Possibly due to the early morning storms or just bad luck, we were doing far more casting than catching. Outside of some rock bass and small largemouth that was caught by Bill, the fishing was slow.

Shortly before we decided to try a different part of the lake, Bill set the hook on a nice bass while casting a Texas-rigged plastic worm. I looked back to see Bill's pole seriously bent over and I could hear the drag singing on the reel. Much to our chagrin, the fish proceeded straight towards a buoy where it wrapped fishing line around an anchor chain. Our day was not getting better.

After maneuvering the boat to the buoy, I attempted a few different methods of freeing the fish. None were successful.

As I stood there trying to figure out a method of untangling the line that didn't involve me taking a swim, the bass circled the chain and freed the line on its own. I quickly netted the fish ending the drama. The bass, measuring 18 ½ inches, was released after I had taken some quick photos.

We continued to work the bay, but we could not muster any fish outside of the occasional rock bass on a night crawler. We eventually picked up and moved west to Ciscoe Bay where we hoped the smallmouth bass might be in a biting mood.



Bill Pocius of Pleasant Prairie holds a very nice Geneva Lake Largemouth Bass

Once in the bay, we rigged up some suckers on baitcasting rods and dropped the baitfish to the lake bottom. While the boat drifted in the westerly wind, Bill and I were casting night crawlers, assorted soft plastics, and crankbaits in an effort to find the scrappy brown bass.

However, instead of catching smallmouth, we were catching the ever present rock bass along with small perch, schools of which would fill the sonar screen. Knowing that perch are a favorite food for Geneva gamefish, we started keeping some of the fish and putting them in the livewell.

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It was after I replaced the suckers with perch, that the fish indicator on a reel started clicking. I picked up the rod and as soon as I put some tension on the line, the fish on the other end took off rapidly pulling line with it.



I pointed the rod at the fish, engaged the reel, and then quickly swept the line to set the circle hook into what I believed was a northern pike. I turned out to be wrong. After a brief fight, we caught site of a chunky football shaped fish. It was a big smallmouth.

The fish would made every attempt to free itself, but the heavy braided line and a firmly embedded circle hook, were too much for it to overcome. Finally, Bill was able to net the fish and bring it securely into the boat.

The fish was a 20 ½ inch smallmouth. I have latched onto bigger smallies, but have never successfully got them into the boat. I gratefully, traded the fish its freedom for a couple of pictures

Your's Truly Holding Up a personal best Smallmouth Caught on Geneva Lake

Before our trip ended, Bill landed a nice smallie measuring 17 inches. This fish was also caught on a perch, providing an emphatic answer on what baitfish was the preferred smallmouth food on this day.

We certainly did not encounter a hot bite on Geneva Lake last Saturday, but considering the size of fish we landed, the results could not be considered disappointing.