

December 8, 2007

Archived Tips



**To catch big bluegills** use sizes 8 through 12 flies in colors that are highly visible, such as light colors for use in clear, brightly lit water or dark colors for a stark silhouette during periods of low light and stained water. Make sure the flies have plenty of action—it's hard to underestimate the importance of rubber legs on bluegill flies.

To enhance the chances of hooking up with a lunker **largemouth bass** try fishing with full-sinking fly line, a short three- to four-foot leader, and a large (sizes 1/0 through 6) weedless wet fly, streamer, Woolly Bugger, or crayfish imitation. Cast near structure (weeds, brush, or deadfalls) and allow the fly and line to fall through the water column. Be prepared for the strike—bass often hit when the fly is dropping toward the bottom.



**Big bluegills**, those that are over eight inches in length, prefer wood structure with overhead protection and immediate access to deep water. A downed tree that extends from shore into relatively deep water is the ultimate bluegill magnet. This prime location provides for all the bluegills' needs: shade, protection, food, a deep sanctuary for escape from danger, and a safe rearing area for the fry.

**Channel catfish** are often misidentified as bottom feeders, but they actually cruise the upper three to four feet at sunset in search of food. They like flies such as Dark Spruce and Woolly Buggers tied on strong size 4 to 8 hooks. A bit of red incorporated into the fly adds to their effectiveness, but all-red flies are usually ignored.

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**Counting down the fly** is a habit all warmwater fly-fishers should acquire because it's an important part of placing the fly in the water column. By counting, "one-thousand-one, one-thousand-two," etc. a sense of the fly's depth can be developed. If the count is consistent, and structure contact is made at the count of 8, for example, we know precisely when to begin our retrieve. If we get a strike there we know the depth at which our quarry is located.

Smaller bass that hang out in the shallows feed almost constantly, but **big bass** are lazy critters that prefer to ambush a substantial meal then take up a protective lie for 3 to 5 days before feeding again. To increase the odds of catching big bass, fish large flies tight to structure.