

# LAYDO

## For Lunker Largemouth

By: Peter Larmand

**N**o matter what body of water you are fishing, whether it's a lake, a river or a pond, the one thing that you will find in common with all of them is cover, such as fallen trees, which we call "laydowns". We see them along the shore and we cast to them but we don't always catch fish on them.

The location of the laydown is probably the most important part in finding the best laydown on your body of water. Laydowns on gravel banks are best in late spring, while laydowns on flats are often best in the fall. Laydowns next to deep water are best in the late summer. That is what we are going to focus on for this article. Although, fishing a laydown any time of the year can be done the same way.

Ideal laydowns are found where there is a drastic change in depth. This type of change is usually the best locations for laydowns in the



*Peter Larmand with the lowdown on laydowns*

# WINS

summer. Also, laydowns which have more branches and have been in the water for a long period of time, are usually the best for holding more than one fish. Something like the one in the picture below is a prime example of a good laydown.



*A prime example of an ideal laydown*

This particular laydown extends another 10 feet under the surface past where the last branch sticking up. I position my Nitro Z-9 in 15 feet of water. The base of the tree is right on shore which is about 1 foot of water. So you can see that the tree extends far out into deep water, which is what we are looking for this time of year. A Good pair of polarized glasses, like my pair of Costa Del Mar's, really comes in handy when fishing laydowns, as they allow you to see into the water in order to fish the tree top in deep water before making casts into

the heart of the tree.

The most common mistake that anglers make is to fish the laydown from the inside out. Fishing the inside of the laydown will ruin the possibility of catching more than one bass on a single laydown. Fish the outer edges first. This way if you catch a bass on the outside, you will be able to pull it away from the cover without disrupting the other bass that could potential be in the middle of the laydown.

There are several baits and techniques that you can use to fish laydowns, the most common baits are plastics or jigs. I like using other baits to fish the outer edges of laydowns before using jigs or plastics to fish the heart of the tree.

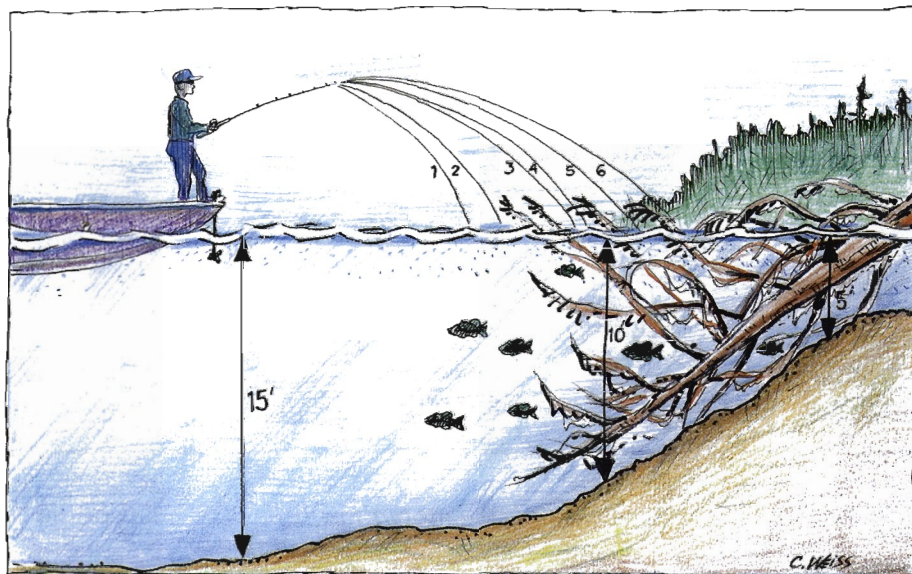
## **Spinnerbaits/Crankbaits:**

Spinnerbaits and crankbaits are great for quickly covering lots of water. Fishing a laydown on the outer edges with these types of presentations is a good idea. These are normally reaction-strike type of hits from the bass and since we are fishing the outer edges and trying to avoid disrupting the bass in the heart of the laydown, these baits make it a perfect match to get those outer-edges bass away from the laydown. Also, the bass on the outer edges are usually ambushing their prey and what better replica of bait fish than a spinnerbait or crankbait. However, there are a few key elements when fish-

ing these types of baits.

The spinnerbait I normally use is a ½ oz Booyah counter strike with a double willow leaf blade. This gives me the most flash and it allows me to burn the spinnerbait past the edges of the laydown causing reaction strikes. The rod/reel and line combination when fishing spinnerbaits is very important. I use a high speed 7.1. Quantum Tour Edition PT reel along with a 6'10" Quantum Tour Edition PT Med, heavy action rod. The reason for the high speed reel is to get the bass out quickly, with as little disturbance as possible. The heavy action rod provides the backbone necessary to horse out the bass, if necessary. The line is also just as important. I use 20lb test P-Line Halo for my spinnerbaits. The heavy fluoride/fluorocarbon line is abrasion resistant and virtually invisible in the water, giving you an added advantage when fishing. When fishing the spinnerbait I want it to come into contact with every branch that is in its path as I retrieve it back to the boat.

For crankbaits I use the exact same rod/reel and line combination. The biggest criteria when fishing crankbaits is the type of bill that the crankbait has. Now you are probably saying to yourself "A crankbait in and around a laydown, won't I get hung up?" You will if you are using the wrong type of crankbait. The bill is the key factor when deciding which style of crankbait to use. Make sure it is a floating model that has a square bill and not a round one. The round bills will cause the crankbait to turn and twist once it comes in contact with the branch causing the back hooks to catch the branch and the end result could be a lost crankbait. A square bill on the other hand, will allow the bait to hit the branch squarely. Once you feel that, stop reeling in and the bait will float up. Once it's cleared from the branch you can continue to reel



SUMMER BASS LAYDOWN, FALLEN TREE LOCATION

in. It's normally when you start to reel in after making contact that a strike will occur. The best crankbaits that I have used for this scenario are either a Bandit 200 series crankbait or the Lucky-craft RC 1.5 or 2.5 crankbait.

### Jigs and Plastics:

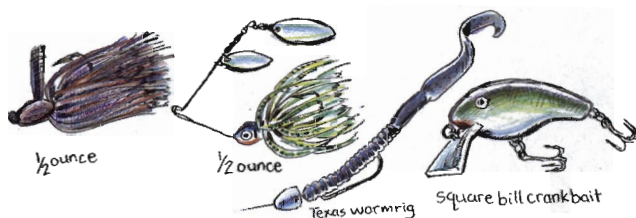
Jigs and plastics are the best type of baits to use to fish the heart of the laydown. They allow you to present the bait quietly into the living rooms of those stubborn big bass.

Flipping jigs are usually the number one choice for fishing the heart of the tree because they are so versatile and can be placed with pin point accuracy. Normally a ½ oz jig with some sort of trailer on it works well. The ½ oz is kind of a common size of jig that will penetrate the branches and limbs of the tree to get to those bass. If limbs are covered with dense leaves or needles (depending on the tree) you may want to go to a heavier jig like ¾ oz or even 1 oz. Just remember the heavier the jig, the faster the fall. The bass will tell you how fast it wants the bait to sink. If with a heavier jig you get nothing, try a bigger trailer like pork rind or chunk. If that doesn't help then go to a lighter jig, this will slow the down the fall of the jig. The jig that I normally

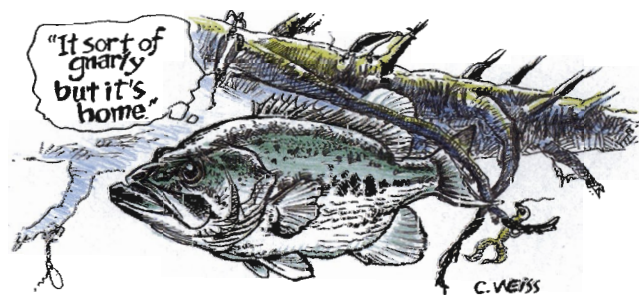
use is a ½ oz Vertical Lure Jig X tied on with 50 lbs P-Line Spectrex braided line. A 7'6" Quantum flipping stick and a Quantum Accurist PT reel.

If you want to use another option try plastic baits. I like throwing stick type baits like Wave Worm's Tiki Bamboo. This is a bait that you can rig various ways, Texas rig, weighted and/or weightless or Carolina Rig. The bigger Bamboo style bait is still 5" in length but it has a larger diameter than its cousin the Tiki Stick. The larger Bamboo allows you to flip or pitch it into the heart of the laydown and it will not get hung up as easily as lighter, smaller baits. It will also give you a slightly faster fall than the smaller Tiki Stick which is what we are looking for when fishing laydowns.

The next time that you see a laydown on your fa-



vorite body of water, give it "the time of day" and fish the entire laydown. You may be surprised how many bass a good laydown will produce for you if you fish it correctly. 🐟



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