



# TECH BULLETIN

## TEXAS/LOUISIANA BORDER

# TOLEDO BEND

Compiled from the Diaries and Logs of the Luhr Jensen Fishing Research Team.

### By Ronnie Sheeon Full-Time Toledo Bend Guide

Toledo Bend Reservoir is a 185,000-acre impoundment of the Sabine River constructed by the Sabine River Authority in the mid-'60s. Pool level is 172.0 feet above MSL. Normal fluctuation is approximately five to six feet per year. The level generally begins to fall in late summer due to power generation and returns to pool level with the winter rains. Knowing the pool level and whether the lake is rising or falling will assist you in preparing for a successful fishing trip on this large reservoir.

Toledo Bend still has a considerable amount of standing timber, especially for a lake over 30 years old. The shorelines have laydowns (fallen trees), willows and buck brush (Button Willows). Water depth of less than 15 feet or less accounts for 40% of the reservoir. Numerous offshore humps, old road beds, old sloughs and creek channels offer a variety of structure.

### SPRING (Pre-Spawn/Spawn)

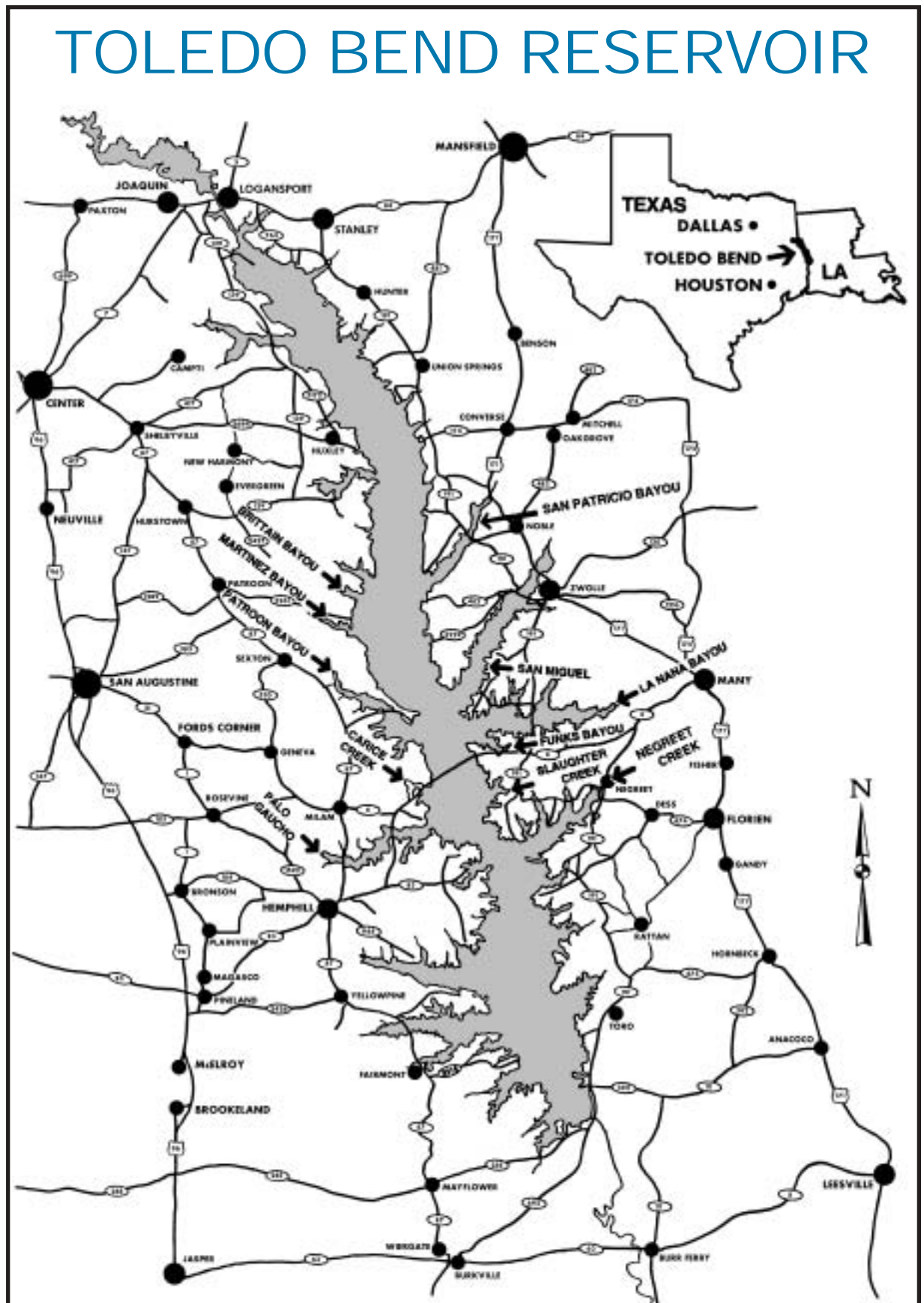
On the Texas side of the lake, bass begin moving into flats and protected areas of all the major creeks and coves. Housen Bayou, Six Mile, Palo Goucho, Patroon, Martinez and Brittain Creek are just a few.

On the Louisiana side of the lake, Negreet, Slaughter, La Nana, San Miguel and San patricio are a few of the better areas. West shorelines, protected from north winds, will provide some of the earlier spawning activity.

**Early Morning:** Work 6 to 10-ft. depths with *Brush Baby*® and *Hot Lips Express*® crankbaits in *Crystal Texas Red*, *Crystal Crawfish* and *Texas Brown Shad*. *Texas Red Crawfish* and *Chartreuse/Olive*

*Klawdads*® are also productive.

**Afternoon:** Move into shallow areas 6 ft. deep or less. If the water is clear enough, try a *Power Minnow*™ or a *Suspending Power Minnow*™. *Silver Flash*, *Gold Flash* and



## TOLEDO BEND LURES



Buzzer'd™



Crippled Herring®



P.J. Pop™



Hot Lips Express®



Klawdad®



Johnnie Rattler™



Brush Ba



Nip-I-Diddee®



Speed Trap™



Sugar Shad®



Dalton Special®

*Fire Tiger* are the more predominate colors. Work these lures slowly. Twitch them two or three times, let them lie and then give another light twitch. If the water has a fairly heavy ripple or small chop, the Suspending model will definitely produce more fish. *Speed Traps™*, Brush Babies and Klawdads will also work on these shallow fish. *Crawfish* patterns, *Crystal Chartreuse/Blue* and *Tennessee Shad* are the best colors.

Learn to "feel" the Brush Babies through the cover whether it is standing timber, lay-downs or grass. Bounce the lure off the cover using a stop-and-go action. Over the grass, dig it down until you feel resistance, stop the bait to clear the cover, then resume your retrieve. When fish are less aggressive, they may hit very lightly.

I prefer 60ft. medium action. All Star 10X rods and Shimano® Curado reels spooled with 14- or 17-lf. Triple Fish Camo Line in heavy cover and 10-lb. Triple fish Camo Line in the open water flats.

### SUMMER

#### (Post-Spawn / Bass Active)

Main lake flats on the Texas side such as those between Palo Gaucho Bayou and the Pendleton Bridge and around the mouth of Patroon Creek offer good recovery areas for fish migrating back to deeper water after the spawn. On the Louisiana side of the lake, the "1215 Highway area" is excellent during this period. Depending on wind direction, some of these flats may not be fishable since they are all open water, main lake flats.

This time of year offers a variety of top-water fishing opportunities. Prop baits such as the *Dalton Special®*, *Nip-I-Diddee®* and *Johnny Rattler™* are good producers. Lure size and color depend on the size and type of forage, along with light and water conditions.

This time of year I generally prefer natural colors such as *Perch*, *Shad*, *Frog*, etc. Another very good lure for this time of year around heavy cover is a *Herb's Dilly™*. This lure with a *Chartreuse Skirt* is deadly! The *Buzzer'd™* buzzbait is another option to be considered.

Mid- to late summer brings on the schooling bass. Most of these fish will be small side, but provide great action for youngsters. Smaller lure sizes and 10- to 12-lb. line will produce more fish, especially in clear water. *P.J. Pops™*, Dalton Specials, Nip-I-Diddees along with *Sugar Shad®*s in *Tennessee Shad*, *Chrome* and *Bleeding Shiner* are some of the best producers.

### FALL

This is my favorite season to fish. The recreational boating has ceased, hunting season has started, and the serious anglers are left to reap the rewards of a fall day on the lake. The shad are now larger and moving into the bays and major creeks. Larger bass are starting to appear with the schooling fish.

Main lake humps and ditches through open lake flats are good places to catch bass that are moving into seasonal pattern changes.

Fish in 6- to 10-ft. of water will take a variety of topwater and crankbaits. Dalton Specials, Nip-I-Diddees and Johnny Rattlers, along with P.J. Pops are all topwater producers in *Shad* and *Chrome* patterns. Speed Traps in the same colors, along with my personal favorite, the *Crystal Tennessee Shad*, are great for shallow crankbait fishing.

Fish off the edges of these humps in water 12- to 18-ft. deep will bunch up on the structure and provide outstanding deep cranking. The Hot Lips Express is one of the better deep cranking lures on the market. This lure casts like a rocket and is a steep diving bait. *Chrome Blue*, *Crystal Tennessee Shad*, *Chartreuse/Blue/Crystal* and *Texas Shad* are some of the best colors.

Using 10-lb. line and a 100-ft. cast, the 3/4-oz. Hot Lips will run 18- to 24-ft. deep, making it one of the deepest running lures on the market. When fishing these deep running lures on open water humps, I use a 6 1/2-ft. All Star 10X rod, Shimano® Curado reel and 10-lb. Triple Fish line. Long casts and a sensitive rod are a must for this type of fishing.

Flats and humps off of Hwy 1215 from San Patricio to San Miguel Bayou on the Louisiana side and flats around Pendleton

Bridge on the Texas side are prime areas for fall crankbait fishing.

### WINTER

When the water temperature drops into the lower 50s, the bass will relate to the deeper structure in water 25 to 35 feet deep. Jigging spoons, such as a *Crippled Herring®* is recommended, along with a *Migrating Shad*, a ripple tailed blade lure. Vertical jigging is the most productive presentation for the Crippled Herring. On some of the more open humps, the Migrating Shad is a good lure. The best presentation is casting the lure and allowing it to fall to the bottom, then "ripping" it up three or four feet and letting it fall back to the bottom. Strikes usually occur on the "fall".

Deep winter bass will usually be found around schools of baitfish. To find these schools of baitfish and bass I utilize an X-85 Lowrance sonar unit over deep water humps, along open lake creek channels, old sloughs and on the edge of the Sabine River channel ledges.

There are numerous maps on the market showing the creeks, roadbeds, sloughs, etc. If you are coming to Toledo Bend, I suggest you purchase a "Good Map" and study it before hitting the lake "cold".

For those who wish to become more proficient with maps and electronics, I highly recommend a two day class run by Will Kirkpatrick at Stephan F. Austin University's 3 Million dollar Piney Woods Conservation Center, located near Powell Park Marina on Sam Rayburn Reservoir. The cost includes all meals, lodging, classroom instruction and materials. For more information, contact Will Kirkpatrick at 409-584-3177.

For more information  
or Guide Service  
on Toledo Bend,  
contact  
Ronnie Sheeon at  
409-625-4125