



TECH BULLETIN

OREGON

HENRY HAGG LAKE

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

BY BOB KLAUMANN

Constructed in the mid-1970s and fast becoming one of the best smallmouth bass lakes in the Portland area, Henry Hagg lake has been yielding some in the 6-lb. plus category! This 1,113-acre impoundment is located west of Portland. To get there, go on the Tualatin Valley Highway (Hwy 8) through Hillsboro to Forest Grove. Turn left on Hwy 47 approximately 6 miles until you see the Hagg Lake/Scoggins Valley Park signs. Turn right and go 3.7 miles to the park entrance. There is a nominal fee for day use of the park, which is open from sunrise to sunset. Owned by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and maintained and operated by Washington County, the park has numerous picnic areas; two boat launching facilities; the lake is stocked with rainbow trout, smallmouth bass, largemouth bass, perch, crappie and bluegills for angling; 15-plus miles of hiking trails; observation decks for wildlife- and bird-watching and extensive facilities for disabled visitors. Washington County has provided excellent handicap facilities and the boat docks are fully automatic for those confined to a wheel chair.

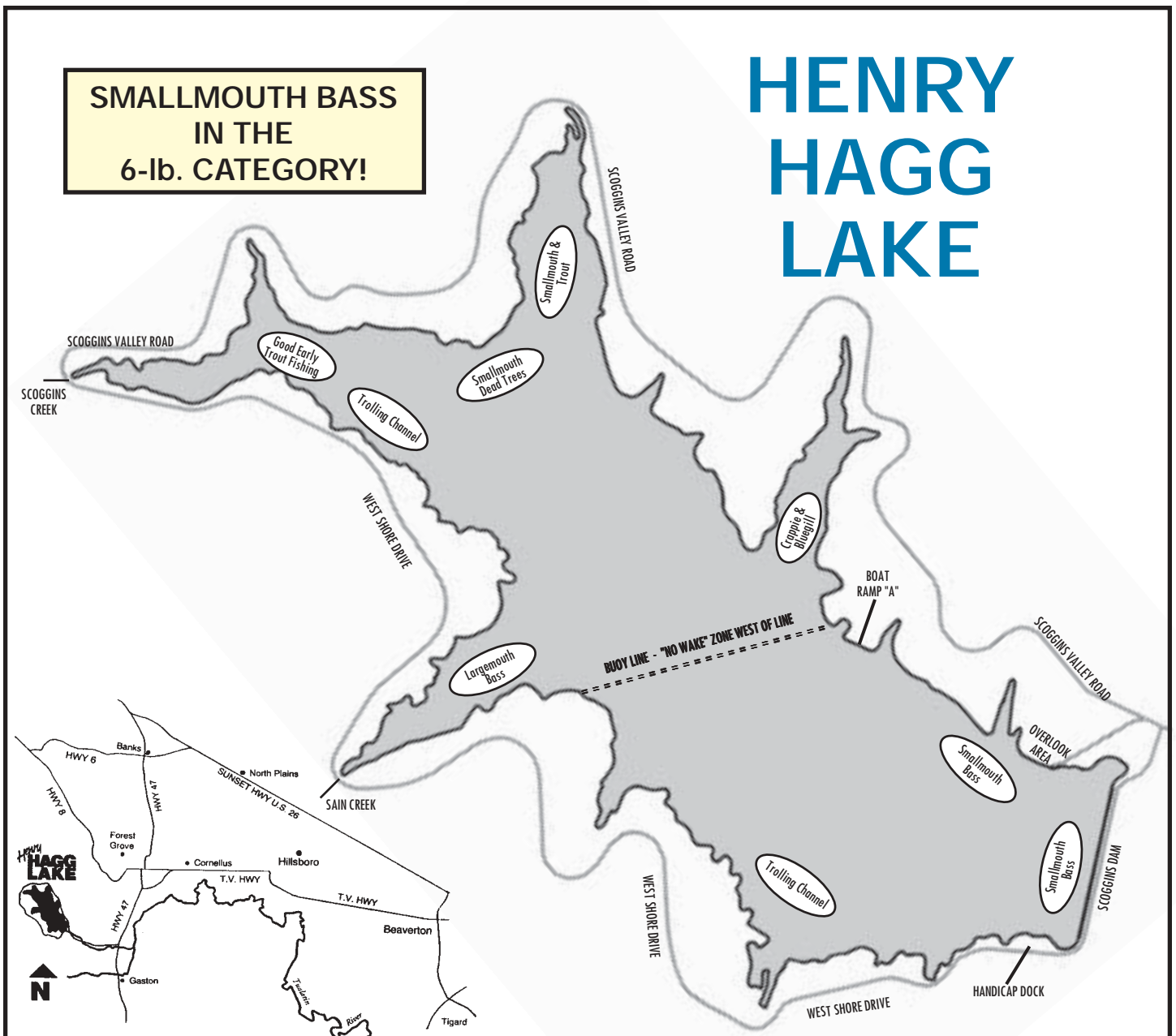
SPRING STARTS TROUT ANGLING ACTIVITY

In the spring hot spots are found at the south end, by the dam and at the boat ramp C area. Scoggins Creek is also good early in the season. Bank fishing is good April and May, slowing from June through August because of the warmer weather. You should try out deep, just off the bottom. Trolling is good all through the year in the Sain Creek Arm and in the deep channels in the middle of the lake as the water begins to recede.

SUMMER SEASON

This is the time to start using lake trolls. Because of their popularity, effectiveness and ease of use, a wide variety are available. They are particularly effective in deep, murky waters or on days with overcast skies.

The basic difference between lake trolls is the number and shape of the blades and the length of the shaft (cable). The blade shape determines rotation speed and the particular underwater sound vibration produced. A round or nearly round blade such as the *Colorado* or *Bear Valley* swings slow and wide from the shaft,



while narrow blades like the Willowleaf are best suited for faster trolling because they have less resistance in the water.

A troll can be used in conjunction with just about any lure or bait such as a small spoon (*Needlefish*[®], *Super Duper*[®]) live bait (worm) or a small plug (*Hot Shot*[®]). From the end of the troll, a leader should extend at least 12 inches back to the lure (many prefer leaders of 18 to 24 inches - some 36").

Larger and more blades should be used for deep trolling or for working murky water. Clear water or depths of 10 to 20 feet require fewer blades which can also be smaller. *Nickel* finishes work best on bright days or in clear water brass and copper finishes produce better in murky, deep or tea-colored water. *Brass, 50/50 brass/Nickel* or *Copper* finishes work well on overcast days.

Some of the best lake trolls for Hagg Lake are *Doc Shelton*[™], *Ford Fender*[®] or other rigs such as Bear Valley, *Willow Leaf* and *Baby Gangs*[™] with a snubber and two feet of leader followed by Hot Shots. Strikes that come when trolling usually are vicious so use the snubber to absorb the impact and prevent tearing the hook out of a fish's tender mouth.

When varying trolling speed and working in "S" curves and just about everything else has failed to outwit a trout, try these tips. Give your line a sharp jerk or two every few minutes or allow the troll to go dead in the water and sink for a few feet before continuing. Also try doubling your speed for several feet and then slow down quickly. You will receive the most hits just after the lure has been quickly and erratically moved and is beginning to slow down. Another thing to consider is going to a lighter, longer leader from troll-to-lure. Berkley[®] 6-lb. Trilene[®] XT or XL has high know strength and very high tensile strength in relation to line diameter and is difficult for finicky trout to see.

Bang-Tail[®] spinners can also be very hot now. Try fishing for bass with crankbaits such as a shallow-diving *Speed Trap*[®] up in the rocks by the dam and by the boat ramps, or the deep-diving *Hot Lips Express*[®] for fast drop-offs and deeper water. Night crawlers can also be very effective.

UNDERSTANDING BASS

Bass first become vulnerable to surface lures when the water warms up in the spring. As water nears 60 degrees, both largemouth and smallmouth move into shallow bays and pockets looking for food and readying themselves for spawning. Once the water temperature has stabilized and spawning is finished, these shallow spots pay off only in low-light situations.

Bass are especially susceptible to wood surface baits such as the *Bass-Oreno*[®] in the fall, when they stay in warmer, shallower water for long periods. They seem to sense that winter is on the way and increase their feeding activity.

COLORS / SIZES

Bass do react differently to different surface lure types and finishes. They normally only see the silhouette of the plug on dark or cloudy days so that's when dark lures work best. When there are bright light conditions, lighter shades work best. On calm days, smaller plugs with less noisemaking capabilities work better, while you need a real noisy plug such as a *Nip-I-Diddee*[®] to create disturbance on windy days.

Accurate casting is essential. Mere inches can mean the difference between a fish and none. Casts should be made to openings in or near cover such as underneath or alongside a dock, inches away from a stickup, between lily pads, over submerged objects which lie just under the surface, etc.

Bass feed on large organisms such as crayfish, minnows, salamanders or frogs. Any small animal or bug that lands near a bass in ambush is a likely meal and this is what makes surface lures so deadly . . . they imitate these easy meals.

TOPWATER TECHNIQUES

Two basic options for fishing wood surface chuggers/darters such as the Bass-Oreno which darts underwater when twitched and then floats back to the top are:

1. For fishing near deep dropoffs and points, it can be used either as a darter or subsurface wobbling bait. A unique feature of the Bass-Oreno is its ability to pop back almost to its original starting position, after being twitched under the surface. To fish as a darter, use a sharp jerk which causes the bait to splash and pop water on the surface before darting under. Then pause, allowing the bait to resurface. Jerk again, pause and repeat. Many anglers prefer to fish the plug with the sharp-jerk, pause pattern for several feet,

switch to a straight subsurface retrieve for the next several feet and then allow the bait to resurface and start the process over again.

2. Use a twitch-and-pause pattern when fishing shorelines or water adjacent to cover. Work it all the way to the boat, keeping your eyes open for a boil adjacent to it. If one is observed, lengthen the pause time between twitches on the next cast.

PROP BAITS

There are three basic options available for fishing propeller baits such as the Nip-I-Diddee or *Woodchopper*[™]:

1. Cast to the edge of cover and let the impact rings move about three feet away from the lure. Twitch once, stop, twitch again, stop. Make a short, sharp jerk, stop, jerk, stop and continue this pattern until the plug is only a few feet away from you. Watch the lure carefully as you lift it from the water. If a boil appears, slow down the retrieve on your next cast as you have been moving the lure too fast to achieve a strike.

2. Cast to the edge of cover. Make two quick jerks, stop and then continue this pattern until the plug is a few feet from you. Follow the lift-out procedure as in #1.

3. Cast to the edge of cover. Wait for one full minute. Twitch the plug twice, stop, jerk once, stop, twitch twice, etc. Use this alternating pattern until the bait is a few feet from you, again lifting out as in #1.

LAKE TROLLING TIPS

1. TROLL SLOWLY: One of the biggest mistakes made by anglers is working a lure too fast. Large fish will not spend any more energy than necessary to catch a meal. Also, most lures will not perform correctly at fast speeds. The best advice is to troll s-l-o-w-l-y — the slower the better. Many expert trout trollers refuse to use a motor as they feel it's just too fast. They use oars instead. If you're going to use a motor, make sure it will throttle down to a crawl. Other prefer a multispeed electric.

2. VARY YOUR SPEED: While slow is the password to successful trolling, this does not mean slow all the time. A lure running through the water at a constant speed, at a constant depth and giving off the same vibration pattern will not catch many fish . . . there's just nothing there to indicate an easy meal is available or that something is in trouble. Slowly, yes, but adjust your speed every few minutes to change the lure's speed and vibration pattern.

3. WORK IN "S" CURVES: Consistent trolling results require that you do everything possible to keep from running in a straight line. An "S" pattern will produce many more strikes and fish. Every time the troll and lure are on the inside swing of the boat, the lure will drop deeper and slow down. On an outside turn, it will speed up and rise. With each turn you will impart a different action to the troll and trailing lure, signaling "Meal Time" to nearby fish.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Bob and wife Cherri Klaumann own and operate *Lake Stop Grocery* at nearby Gaston, Oregon where they offer a full line of fishing tackle and food items. Call 503-357-4270.

