

Peacock bass tactics, tackle and lures

* Like largemouth bass, peacocks often prefer “structure” of some sort. Rocks, fallen logs, points, and sand bars are hiding places for baitfish, so this is where the peacocks will usually be lurking. Of course, you should always heed the guide’s recommendations on where to cast.

* Peacocks usually roam about in small schools searching for baitfish, often bursting into a feeding frenzy. When this situation is encountered, get your fly or lure in front of the feeding fish as soon as possible. The sooner you cast to them after they’ve been spotted, the better your chance of a hookup. Peacocks are greedy and highly competitive schooling fish. Always cast a lure or fly right next to any hooked fish. Another peacock will almost always be close by (attracted by the commotion). If no strikes result, fish the surrounding area thoroughly.

* Novice peacock anglers tend to set the hook too fast when fishing topwater lures or flies. Often peacocks will just slap at the lure to stunt it and then come back around and firmly grab it on the second pass. It’s hard to remember at first, but don’t set the hook on the strike. If you can’t see the plug or fly after about three seconds, drop your rod tip and set the hook as hard as you can. Big peacocks have very tough skin around their mouths and tend to grip the plug or fly firmly.

* If the fish doesn’t take the lure on the first strike, keep moving it. If you are patient, the fish will usually come up and hit the lure a second or third time. If it loses interest quickly, cast a diving (subsurface) lure or fly or even a jig. This often elicits another strike.

* Never try and “horse” a big peacock, and don’t underestimate their power. If a big fish is headed for structure, apply side pressure to the rod trying to “steer” the fish in another direction. If you crank your drag down too tight, they’ll almost always snap the line, or pull off. If a fish does make it into cover, don’t give up. Always keep a high rod tip and a loose drag to absorb last-minute runs without breaking the line.

* Lure or fly color doesn’t seem as important as lure shade. If it is bright, use a light-colored lure/fly. Dark shades are more productive in low-light conditions.

Some basic lure guidelines to help you catch more fish

It is usually best to start with a top-water lure. If the water is off-color or there is a slight chop, a propeller-type top-water lure (like the 6.5" and 7.5" RipRoller) will attract the fish’s attention. If the water is completely calm (and/or clear), it may be wise to try a more subtle top-water lure like a 4-1/2", 3/4 oz. Heddon 'Zara Spook'.

If the fish refuse to take topwater, switch to a subsurface lure. If the water is clear, lures WITHOUT a sound chamber (i.e. Cotton Cordell’s 7", 1 oz. 'Red Fin') seem to be productive. If the water is off-color, use a lure with a sound chamber (Bill Luis 3/4 oz. 'Mag-Trap', or 1-1/2 oz. 'Super-Trap')

In hot/bright light conditions a deep diving lure such as a Bill Luis 'Rattle Trap' (3/4 oz. 'Mag-Trap', or 1-1/2 oz. 'Super-Trap') may be your best choice.

A good supply of 1/2 oz. bucktails (tied on saltwater hooks) will elicit strikes from spawning fish that are not in the feeding mode. Try varying the retrieve until you start getting strikes.

Peacock Bass Fishing Tackle

Guests usually bring along their favorite tackle. We highly recommend bringing three -or four-piece spin, casting, and fly rods that you can carry on the plane. The cumbersome one-piece models often get lost or broken in transport no matter how well they are packed.

Baitcasting and spinning rods should be LONG-HANDLED/medium-heavy action models designed with plenty of backbone for hook setting/pressuring big fish (recommended for 1-3-ounce lures). Baitcasting reels should have a high-speed retrieve ratio, as lures are normally worked at an extremely fast rate. Bring at least two rods and reels, because you might break a rod or strip the gears in one of your reels. Most anglers prefer to use casting rods instead of spinning models. The precise, direct presentation of the level-wind casting reel is generally much more accurate than the high-arching lob of a spinning reel.

Take a medium to medium-heavy to heavy largemouth bass tackle with long-handled 6 to 7-foot rods and good-quality reels of at least 100 yards capacity with high-speed retrieve ratios. Use rods with a firm-action tip to allow for accurate casting of heavy lures. Bring at least two rods and two reels in case of breakage. For lines, we suggest “T & C Tufline” or “Power Pro” in 65 to 80 pounds or other brands of similar braided lines. Steel leaders are not required while fishing for peacocks.