

## March 20, 2019 - Fish moving shallow

Written by Wayne Gustaveson  
Wednesday, 20 March 2019 11:56 -

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Lake Powell Fish Report – March 20, 2019

Lake Elevation: 3570

Water temperature: 49 – 53 F

By: Wayne Gustaveson <http://www.wayneswords.com> or Wayneswords.net

Cold, windy weather has been replaced by beautiful, calm, warming spring weather. My fishing results the first two weeks of March in the cold water were not stellar so I hoped for much better success for the 3rd weekly fishing trip. In preparation for that trip I reviewed my archived fish reports - both the recent reports on Wayneswords.net, and the older reports on Wayneswords.com. The old reports are still insightful and I found one that resonated with the current conditions faced this week. The water has been cold and is now warming so what is the fish response to the change in temperature? I found several reports from mid-March but one really stood out to me. Briefly, the report stated that stripers moved from deep water to very shallow water and were receptive to fast moving, shallow running crank baits.

The old reports were from Last Chance and Rock Creek, but I find that a fishing pattern is likely to work over the length of the lake instead of in one isolated canyon. With that in mind, we headed uplake and tried some of the deep water spots that had been productive in previous reports. On one trip we caught 80 stripers on spoons along with one 20-pound striper. We stopped at that spot and saw no fish on the graph. We went further back to shallower water and saw no fish on the graph.

It was time to try the pattern given in the old fish report. Water temperature in the morning held steadily at 49 degrees in the clear water of the main channel, but as we moved to the back of the canyon the temperature rose to 52, and finally to 53 degrees in the slightly turbid water.

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There were many unfamiliar islands showing up with the recent decline in lake level. We started trolling, at 3.5 mph, in 15 feet of water, seeing no fish on the graph. (Remember the visible graph cone size is very small when graphing in shallow water.)

The first striper hit our trolled Lucky Craft Bevy Shad, and XD pointers at a depth of 11 feet. We stopped to reel in the fish, then started to cast at that spot and were rewarded with constant catching of willing, very healthy stripers, from 12 inches to 3 pounds. We were surrounded by single splashes of jumping fish, which were eventually identified as gizzard shad. We had found the warm spot where many different species of fish were enjoying the sunshine and frolicking in the warmer water. The shallowest fish caught was in 2 feet of water and the deepest was at 14 feet.

Back at the fish cleaning station we found the vast majority of stripers were males that will spawn this year. These precocious males are the most likely stripers to catch in abundance each spring. They are usually in shallower water and much more aggressive than pre-spawn females. They are very fun fish to catch. They all had empty stomachs so they were happy to see our lures.

Bass fishing is turning on due to the same warming triggers mentioned for stripers. Find shallow murky water that is warmer than the clear water in the main channel. Fish plastic grubs, senkos and jerk baits around rocky structure. Bass will be grouped up. Sometimes you find a regular point that has many bass, while other similar points are vacant. Pound the shoreline and catch a decent amount of bass each day.

The winning weight of the Utah BASS Nation State Team Qualifier held at Bullfrog last weekend was 10 bass with a total weight of 32 pounds. Overall, 64 anglers caught and released 396 bass (300 largemouth and 96 smallmouth). Largemouth prime time is right now at Lake Powell.

(Pictures on wayneswords.net)