



Snakes in the Grass

"The sight of pads being blown apart while the fish is jumping on your bug is breath taking!"

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Summer of 2008 did not look good. Gasoline was selling for over \$ 4.gal. Living in Marlborough, MA, the drive was too far for me to fish in the salt. It was clear to me. I had to stay close to home.

I've been a fly tyer and fisherman for over sixty years. I have tied bugs with deer body hair to imitate frogs, mice, dragonflies, damsel flies, etc. It was a warm summer afternoon I watched a snake swimming. I don't like snakes. This was a small snake about seven inches. He was crossing a small sheltered bay. Nearing some lily pads I saw a wake from a nearby pocket in the pads. The snake was too much for the bass to ignore. He came out of the water with the slivering critter in his mouth.



I had trouble sleeping thinking about the sight I had witnessed. In bass bugging I love surface strikes. I had tied flies to imitate all kinds of creatures why not tie something that looks like a snake. In the morning I got my fly tying kit out on the patio table. If you have ever used a Sluggo it's amazing to see such lure action. I wanted the same effect in my bug tying. I selected long saddle hackle, the type we use for salt water flat wing flies, for the tail. The bug had to be weedless. I selected 50 pound mono. I have a special way of tying. I secure the end near the bend of the hook with thread



and drop of cement. I don't like bringing the tag end through the eye of the hook. The eye is strictly for the leader. The tag end is tied on hook shank. Proto type, I used deer body hair for the body and head. Tie on and trim in final step. I like eyes on my bugs. I use 3D hologram eyes 5/16 or 3/8 inch size secured with GOOP.

For my equipment, I use an 8 ½ foot fiberglass or bamboo fly rod for 8 wgt line, or a graphite 9 footer for seven wgt. line. I load each rod with 9-weight, floating, weight-forward line. To that I add a 5 foot straight piece of 20 lb mono, fluorocarbon, or 25 lb test Berkley Big Game. The purpose of short leader is that I don't want to lose any bass in the weeds or lily pads. I don't worry about knots.

My craft is an Old Town 12 foot Pack canoe (one man, weighs 33 pounds). I am able to fish comfortably in heavily weeded waters. I make the longest cast that I can. The weedguard prevents me from getting hung up in the trees, shoreline shrubs or other obstacles. I am getting old and not sharp in presenting the fly. I don't have to worry while using my special weedguard.

In the 50's, every outdoor writer suggested fishing slow. Always the same presentation... cast the bug, let it rest 1 – 2 minutes, twitch the bug, repeat the process. I have come to the conclusion that you fish differently in warm weather, especially if the water temperature is 70 degree or warmer. I make my cast with the snake in the thickest pads. Then I start my retrieve by moving the bug slowly on the pads. I am always looking for moving pads or wakes in pockets in the pads. This can be a bass or pickeral. The sight of pads being blown apart while the fish is jumping on your bug is breath taking. In open pockets in the pads I will skate the bug across the water.

Living in Marlborough, MA, I look for ponds with heavy milfoil, lily pads and stumps. These are the areas with good populations of water snakes. I don't worry about color combinations in my snake bugs. It's the free action of the tail and movement of the head (actually the deer body hair) that drive the bass wild.





My best largemouth this year on the snake bug is five pounds. The season is not over!

AJC

If you would care to see the video paste this into your browser.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VI59wMCU_gU&list=UUfnOgTbHHkWxlw3iXkoUtsA