

Subject: : Warm Water & Salt Water Fly-Fishing

Topic: : Figuring out Smallie Topwater Action

Re: Figuring out Smallie Topwater Action

Author: : barbless

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URL:

Thanks for your fast responses- !

It is a help to hear that I may not be totally clueless about this, and that others have also had a tough time in similar situations.

I've been fishing the upper Potomac. And from the replies, I'm getting the idea that the bass are going after these schooling minnows.

I haven't noticed any minnows leaping clear of the water with bass chasing them. I've seen that before, but it was a different circumstance- minnows being chased by bass through the shallows.

The structure I've been fishing has mostly been fairly deep pools, 4' to 10', with a moderate current and clear water. The minnows are holding in fairly tight schools in the top 18" of the water column, all facing the current. Based on what I've seen and the comments, my guess is that the bass are accelerating after their prey vertically rather than horizontally- holding deep in the pools and then plowing upward with their mouths open wide. The minnows aren't so much being chased as ambushed, from below and behind. And they're so plentiful that the bass are probably after gathering several in one gulp when making their move.

As a result, I'm supposing that my problem has to do with the fact that the bass are keyed on these small minnows. Since they already have their meal ticket and their menu choice, they're aren't overly inclined to be distracted by some splashy frog or wounded minnow imitation- much less some circus-clown attractor fly.

As it happens, I do have some small marabou streamers that would work fairly closely as an imitation. So I'll try that out (didn't have them in my box today). But I wouldn't be surprised if I face the same problem as someone trying to fish during a blizzard hatch- too many naturals for the fish to take any special notice of an imitation. Because those minnows are as plentiful as a commercial aquarium tank full of guppies. A home aquarium dip net would bring up several at once.

Anyway, if that doesn't work, I guess I'll go back to drifting something deep, like a crayfish or a woolly bugger. Or, hmm, I'll try the little minnow imitations with a sink-tip line.

Even if nothing happens, it's really something to marvel at the richness of that habitat.