

KICK BOAT to Springtime Toads

By RICH CARO

If you're stuck fishing from the shore while the grass is turning green and the water level is overflowing the banks think.... float tube. I have logged thousands of hours float tube fishing the backs of flooded wood, tules and behind docks in places you could never reach in a bass boat. There are also hundreds of spawning areas you just can't reach from shore. My fleet consists of two different models; a Bucksbag Hi & Dry float tube and a South-fork Kick Boat to use when the water levels rise during the springtime spawn.

Ask any angler where the big bass go and where to fish when the waters rise and start to warm in the spring? If they know anything about bass fishing they'll say "Go shallow".

You can go shallow in a 20' bass boat with a 200 HP motor and catch some real hogs, but you can go even shallower in a float tube or kick boat and fish untapped waters. My first double-digit fish came while fishing in my Buckaroo round float tube in

March when the water was high and muddy. There's nothing more exciting than flipping a jig into deep into the tules and getting a giant bass while float tubing down the bank. When the water gets behind the tules you can put money on the fact that you'll find successful float tubers there hunting and catching toads. Try to get a 20' bass boat behind the docks on most any lake and you will appreciate some of the advantages of a float tube.

One of the other advantages to fishing from a float tube or kick boat in the spring time is the fish never hear the electric trolling motor. All they might hear or feel is your swim fins displacing water as you slowly maneuver yourself around. No boat is as stealthy as an angler in a float tube. If the angler pays attention to their approach they can be very quiet. I have been able to sneak up on big female bass while they are on their nests and other unsuspecting wild life while fishing. While quietly flipping a stretch of tules along the Middle River on the California Delta and I found myself 3 feet away from what looked like an 80 pound Beaver. For a few seconds there we were looking at each other eye to eye. Then the big brown Beaver dove straight towards me and swam under my swim fins just missing them by inches. Cool....my heart about jumped out of my chest.

With the new waders and warm clothing available today it is easy to stay warm while fishing in the cold springtime



water. When fishing from a kick boat you only have your legs in the water from the calves down so an angler can be very comfortable unstable spring weather. Usually when fishing in the springtime I try to avoid the wind and that also helps me stay warm. So the days of being cold in our float tubes are long gone. We now enjoy hunting big pigs in the shallow waters.

So if you are stuck on shore because you can't afford a fully rigged 20' bass boat consider getting in the water with a float tube or kick boat. There's nothing like fishing a warm spring day in the sun and catching nice bass while floating in the water at their level. See you on the water and remember to support your local float tuber.

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