

Jan./Feb. 2002

# BASS WREST

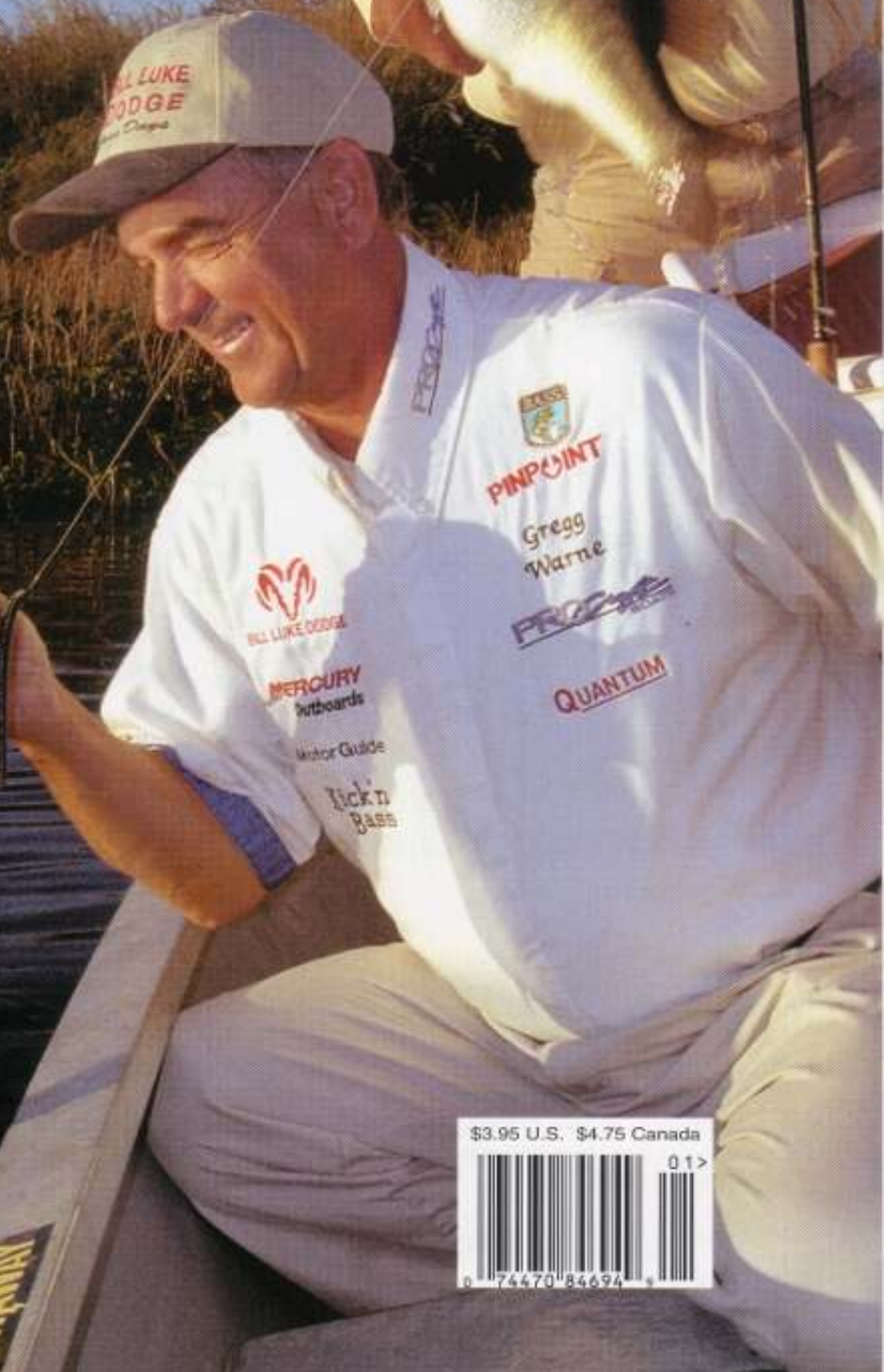
BIGGER LAKES, BIGGER BASS, BIGGER

## Breaking The Code on BIG MEXICAN BASS

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# Breaking The Code

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of years ago, and in my journal notes for the day I called him a "well pressed professional." My admiration for him and his sweet wife Wendy has done nothing but increase since then, but his experience and knowledge of bass behavior was about to be put to the test. The larger bass hadn't really tuned on the week of our arrival.

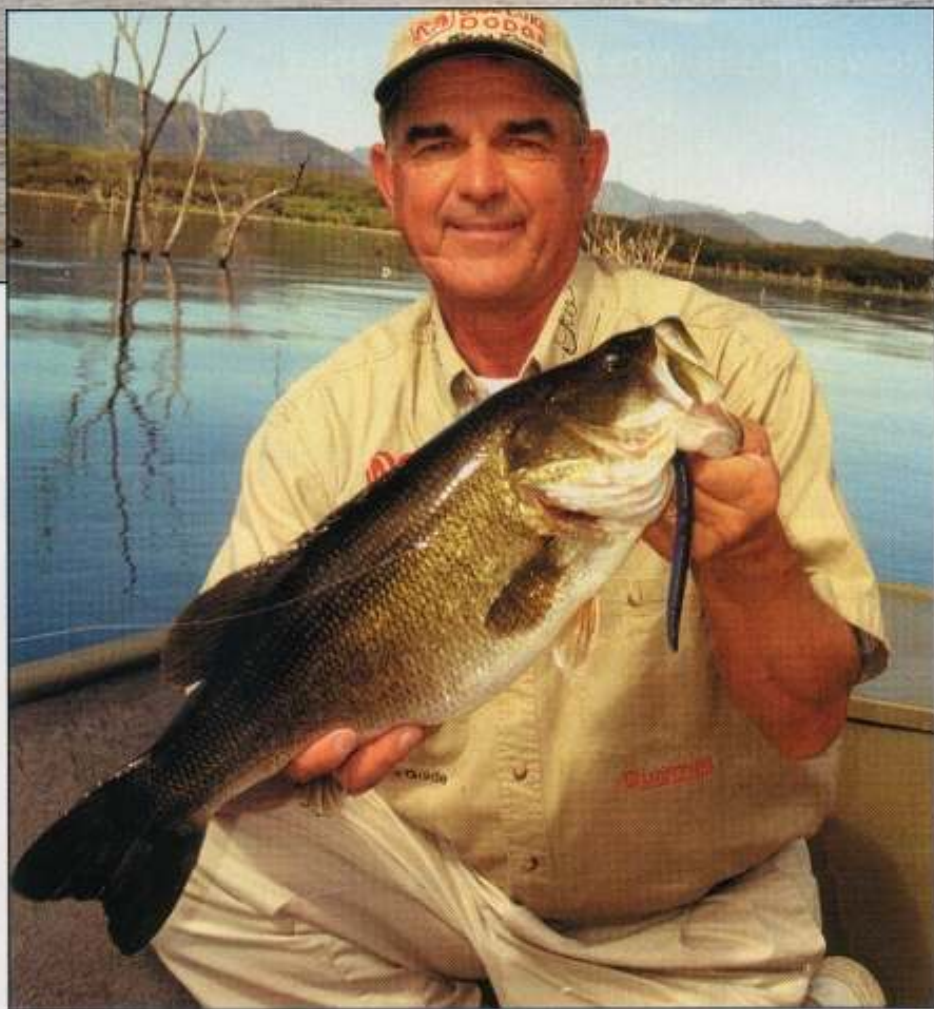
This was Warne's first trip to Mexico, and on our first morning on El Salto he allowed our very capable guide, Oscar, to lead us to the fish. We caught huge numbers of one to three-pound bass, but the larger fish eluded us.

After a couple of hours of quick action on smaller fish, Warne turned to me and said, "I don't know, but I think we need to be fishing a lot deeper for the bigger bass." Since Warne's Spanish vocabulary could be counted on one hand, I explained to Oscar what kind of water we wanted to fish.

Oscar responded by taking us to several outside points full of structure, trees and brush; water depths were between 15 and 25 feet, sometimes even approaching 30.

Warne quickly changed baits and began throwing a deep-diving Chartreuse crankbait. I chose a 7-inch worm in a Tequila Sunrise color. Within an hour, we began catching bass that averaged 5 pounds. Our guide, though pleased, seemed surprised we found such quality fish in the area.

Back at the lodge, a few other anglers wondered where the big fish were. When we explained what we were doing, up to seven other boats showed up on the same deeper points.



Warne, in the course of a single morning, had broken the early December code on larger El Salto bass.

The rest of our time on El Salto, we concentrated on deeper points strewn with bass-holding structure, and caught dozens of fish over 7 pounds and one bass that tipped the scales at 10.64.

The cover shot for this issue was taken on our final morning. The two fish shown were caught as a "double," one on a senko and the other on a topwater bait. Both were taken in 20 feet of water.

"This has got to be the finest big bass lake in the world," said Warne of

his El Salto experience. "How could it get any better than this?"

## Aguamilpa

After a quick trip to Tepic, the second part of our journey began with Billy Chapman Sr. on Aguamilpa. This lake, which we reported on last issue, is a beautiful lake: large, deep and inviting. It is completely different than El Salto from the terrain to the fishing.

"This lake reminds me of many of our Western lakes," said Warne. "It's much deeper than El Salto, and with cliffs, humps, rock piles, and several river channels, it should set up the



same as a Lake Mead."

Aguamilpa didn't quite set up like Lake Mead because the water was not as clear, but its depth and some of its structure was close. In the areas we fished, runoff, that had taken the lake to almost 90 percent capacity, left very fertile off-colored water absolutely brimming with bass, baitfish, and tilapia.

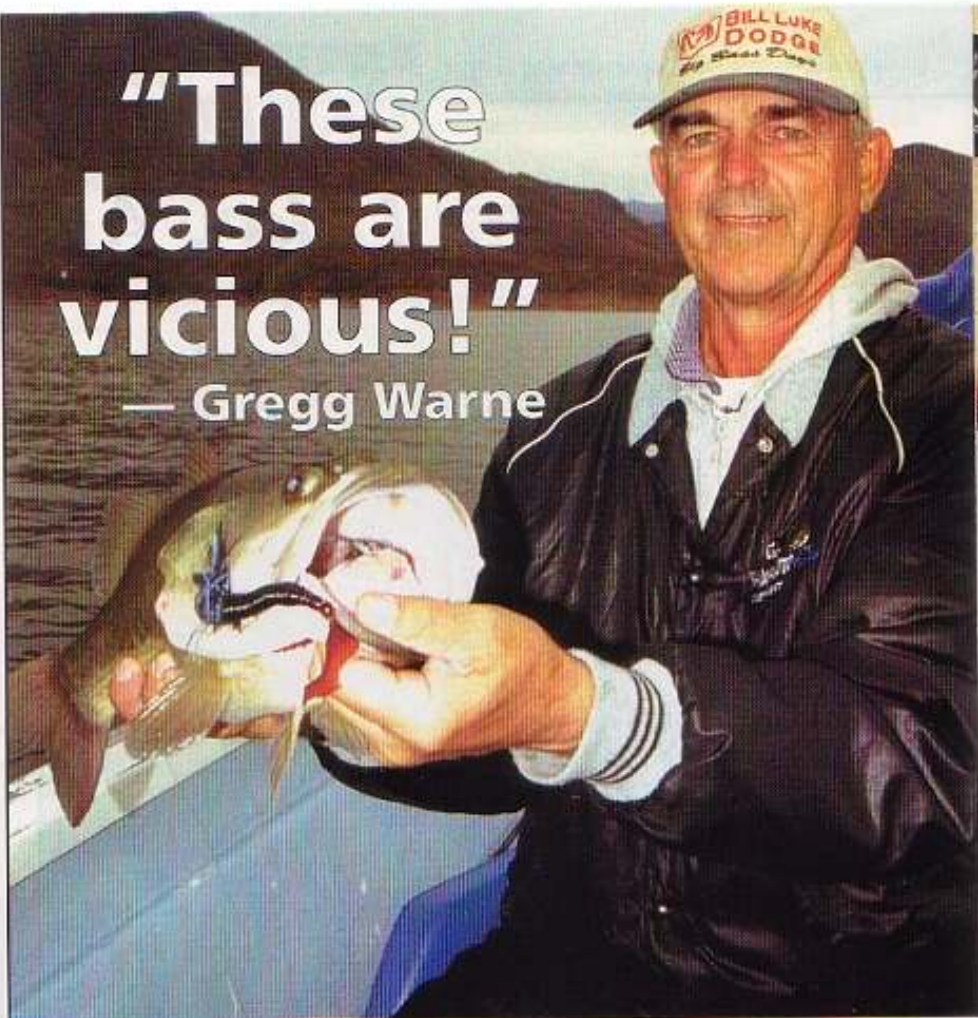
Once again, Warne went to work analyzing which areas would hold fish. When Arturo, our guide, took us to a small island to fish, we struggled to catch even a single bass. "Would you mind if we fish the wind-blown side of the island," Warne asked? "The fish should be there."

From the first cast after moving to the other side, we both began catching bass — healthy bass — averaging close to 3

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# "These bass are vicious!"

— Gregg Warne



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## FORGOTTEN

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This worm had a round head, ribbed body, and a small paddletail or curly tail. Offered in a few basic colors, including black, purple, motor oil and blue, it was originally made in a 6-inch length and later became available in a 4-inch. The concept of the bait was to trap air bubbles, hold scent, and feel more realistic in the fish's mouth. Discontinued by Rebel in the early 1980s, the ringworm has since spawned many imitations and knock-offs. Although I no longer have any original Ringworms left in my box, I enjoy fishing many of the other ringworm-style products that have taken its place.

There are dozens of lures that have escaped mention here. Some of these are standard, run-of-the-mill baits

while others are extremely valuable and worth hundreds of dollars. The quest for old fishing items has developed its own following. The National Fishing Lure Collectors Club was established in 1976 and is represented across the United States and internationally. This organization is the national body for collector clubs, shows, and grading and valuation on old fishing tackle. Annual membership includes a magazine and newsletter, is \$25.00 annually.

For more information on the NFLCC, contact them on their website or write to them at NLFCC, 197 Scottsdale Circle, Reeds Springs, MO 65737

A special thanks goes to lure collector John A. Kolbeck for information and pictures of the older Bomber baits. You can see John's complete collection of antique Bomber baits by checking out his website at [www.bomberbaits.com](http://www.bomberbaits.com).

## MEXICO

CONTINUED FROM 39

pounds. Each time our guide moved to an area out of the breeze, Warne would ask to move just a bit to the windblown side. Many times this meant only a few hundred feet, but the differences were truly amazing.

Next came bait selection.

"You know," said Warne, "This looks like an awful good jig area. What do you think Arturo?"

"Jigs no work here Gregg," he answered. "Lots of people try jigs, but . . . no good."

Undaunted, Warne put on a black/blue jig with a black/blue Yamamoto grub trailer, and proceeded to catch 25 3-plus-pound bass in the same spot.

Once again, in less than a day, Warne had dialed in the larger bass in Aguamilpa as he had done on El Salto; from the baits, to where we threw them, it seemed as if he'd fished Mexico all his life.

Aguamilpa is in its bass angling infancy. One-hundred-fish days per boat are normal for this lake. The average fish during our 3 days weighed just over 3 pounds; the largest bass weighed just under 8 pounds and numerous bass, perhaps even up to 50 bass were in the 4- to 7-pound class.

"These bass are vicious!" said Warne. "A 3-pound bass feels like an 8-pounder."

Warne was absolutely correct. I brought a medium/heavy spincast Allstar worm rod with a Pinnacle reel, and 10-pound P-Line CXX. At times, 5-pound bass literally turned me every

which way but loose. But, even with the lighter rig, I only lost a handful of fish.

Warne's baits for Aguamilpa were Yamamoto's extra-long curly tail grubs in blue/black: half-ounce blue/black jigs with a Yamamoto grub trailer, and a shad-colored Rat-L-Trap.

A group of four seasoned anglers from the Sacramento area were making their fourth trip to the lake at the same time as the two of us.

"These Aguamilpa bass are the strongest fish in the world," said David Coveney, of Lodi, CA. "The guides call them 'locos,' and they're right."

During their trip they averaged 80 fish a day per boat and the largest bass weighed 8 pounds 2 ounces.

Speaking about the experience on both lakes, Gregg Warne was entranced. "How could someone ask for more than these two lakes offer? But what's more, how could you want to stay with more accommodating people than those who run Anglers Inn, and the lodge on Aguamilpa?"

Mexico is no longer a crap shoot with outfitters like Billy Chapman Jr. (Anglers Inn) and Chapman-Balderrama lodges running the show. I have now booked with them four times, and each time, the service and the experience is nothing but top-notch. A quick phone call to 1-800-GOTA-FISH (468-2347) or a visit to their website at [www.anglersinn.com](http://www.anglersinn.com), will set you up with the finest service south of the border. Their mailing address is: PMB #358 23626 North Mesa El Paso, TX 79902

*Editor's Note: Gregg Warne is sponsored by Mercury Marine, Procraft Boats, Quantum, Bill Luke Dodge, Yamamoto Baits, Motorguide, and Kick'N Bass.*