

RIGHT WHERE SHE SHOULD HAVE BEEN
By T. Alan Kelly

It was mid March on my home lake at Ft. Gibson in N.E. Oklahoma. I was trying to establish a good pre-spawn pattern in the mid lake area. The lake had been high and muddy for several weeks and was just starting to settle back down to normal. The water temp was rising daily and had reached an average of 55 degrees in the areas I was checking so I knew the big females should be moving up to stage. I started out working the edges of flats with 2 to 4 feet of water and drops from 6 to 9 feet. I found the majority of fish were close to brush and rock piles sitting right on the edges. I caught a couple of 2 and 3 lbers. at my first location on an E-Z bite jig with 15 lb. Vicious



Fluorocarbon and a 5 lber. at the second spot came on a crank bait with 12 lb. Vicious Ultimate. I then moved to an area we call Boy Scout cove where a creek channel works it's way back to a major spawning flat. I caught a couple of 3 lbers. using the same pattern of brush piles on the edges. I moved to a rock pile I knew of where the end of the rock was in 2 ft. with an immediate drop to 7 ft.

As I pitched my jig on the end of the rocks I hopped it once and felt her suck it in and load up. I actually cursed her a little at the beginning of the fight because the way she ran had me convinced I had hooked a big drum or flathead. As soon as she ran to deep water she wrapped me around a bush and I thought I would never get to see what she looked like. When she finally came up and I saw that massive head my heart rate went over the top. I worked her around the front of the boat carefully and lipped that monster sow. She weighed 8 lb. 2 oz. I took a couple of pictures, gave her a big kiss before letting her go and spent the next 15 minutes trying to stop my hands from shaking. I talked to one of my fishing buddies and found out he had caught an 8 lber. from that location at the same time the year before. After evaluating the details we determined my fish was caught only a foot away from where he caught his. That got us wondering if it could be the same fish.

I'm glad I had Vicious line tied on that day because both the 5 and 8 lber. buried themselves in brush and I had to be patient and let them find their way out. My line was a little frayed from dragging hard in the brush but held up well and got the job done when most lines would not have survived. A few days later it rained non-stop for 3 days in our

area and the lake came up 21 ft. above normal pool. Now I'm just waiting for things to get back to normal so I can go hunt for more pigs like her and get that rush that only a big green fish can provide.