

Spotted Bass Spawn

Spotted bass spawn mainly on mud bottoms and along rocky edges of lakes. They spawn in spring when water temperatures are between 63 and 68 F. Males make nests in colonies in mud or gravel bottoms by fanning silt away from their chosen nesting site with rapid movement of their tail fin. Nests have been recorded at relatively deep levels in some clear southern reservoirs (like Keowee) up to 21 feet and as shallow as 3'. Average nest depth is around 8 to 12 feet (depending on bottom contour). Females deposit between 1,150 and 47,000 eggs into nests. Males guard the nests before hatching, then stay with the newly hatched fry for approximately one month. Juvenile spotted bass will often congregate in small schools near the spawning sites for the first year, after which they will join adults in the preferred spotted bass locations within a body of water.

Spotted bass reach sexual maturity when they are one to two years of age, with relatively all fish being mature by the time they reach 10 inches in total length. The normal spawning period in Keowee is from late March to as late as late May. They spawn in spring when water temperatures are between 63 and 68 F. Increasing water temperature seems to be the most popular explanation as to when reproductive behavior begins, however spawning has been documented over a wide range of water temperature from 55 to 74 degrees Fahrenheit. This indicates that other factors such as amount of daylight, water level stabilization, and long-term climatic conditions may be equally important. The spotted bass spawning period typically lasts around 30-45 days.

The ideal temperature for spotted bass is between 70 and 79 F and they can tolerate temperatures much lower and slightly higher.