

When temperatures drop, many anglers downsize their presentation, opting for lighter tackle and finesse baits. It's a valid approach for most lures, with one notable exception — the deep diving crankbait. There's no need to limit yourself to bite-sized cranks every time the weather takes a dip. If you do, you might just miss out on the biggest bass of your life.



The [Strike King 10XD](#) is a monster bait, simply put. Too big, some say. At 6 inches long, it's no shrinking violet. But a wintertime fish will hit it, if approached correctly. Remember, bass are opportunistic feeders, and extremely territorial. While an iced out largemouth won't go out of its way to chase a bait during the winter months, it will bite a big lure if it thinks other fish are after it. So how can you convince a fish with a serious case of lockjaw that your bait is worth the effort? Follow these simple steps.

- 1. Start with a big bait.** If the Strike King 10XD isn't your favorite deep diving crankbait, use the one that inspires the most confidence. The [Spro Little John DD](#) or [Bomber Deep Fat Free Shad](#) will get the job done. Picture a big, juicy shad and try to find a deep diver that matches the hatch.
- 2. Cast long and go deep.** The more space you can put between yourself and your prey, the better. Even a suspended fish can sense your presence, so back off as much as you can. The bulk of your lure will help your precision, so don't be afraid to make a long cast. Make sure to add about 20 feet to your cast to allow yourself the extra distance to get the bait down deep into the strike zone. It will take the first 20 – 25 feet of your retrieve just getting your bait to the proper depth.
- 3. Be aware of casting angles.** You want to cast in the opposite direction of the current to ensure that your retrieve moves with the water, and not against it. Baitfish, like the bass, aren't willing to expend all of their energy fighting a fierce current. To best imitate a shad or crawfish, take advantage of the current and let the water do some of the work for you.
- 4. Target creek channels.** Depth alone doesn't appeal to wintertime fish. Looking to conserve energy, cold-blooded bass are constantly in search of stable water temperatures, like those found along creek channels with adjacent ditches. The water current naturally curves out deep pathways along the bottom of these channels, creating a safe haven for wintering fish.
- 5. Flee the scene.** Like I mentioned above, bass will become much more interested in a lure if they think another fish is after it. To create this false sense of competition, crank your deep diver

through a school of suspended bass with purpose, using an erratic fleeing motion to inspire urgency. Burn it, turn it, and pause it. Vary your retrieve to replicate the searching, confused darts of a baitfish being pursued.