

by Stephen Headrick, *The Smallmouth Guru*

Fishing on Dale Hollow Lake has been a privilege as well as a great experience — knowing that you are on the greatest Smallmouth Bass lake in the world and that at any time you can catch a Smallmouth of a dream. A strike like this, happening to a man like myself (who has been chasing Smallmouth since I was old enough to hold a fishing rod), nothing would make me happier. If you read the book, **The Big Ones** by Darren Shell of Willow Grove, it will give you all the information about the lake and all the record Smallmouth Bass that have been caught on Dale Hollow Lake. For example, did you know that the people that come to Dale Hollow Lake don't know that out of the top seven Smallmouth Bass ever caught, 5 came out of Dale Hollow Lake?

Just fishing a lake with this type of history, whether catching a fish or not, is a privilege. In Darren's book, it talks about how, when, and where these Smallmouth Bass were taken. During early winter through spring is the time to catch the real "Big Ones". When fishing Dale Hollow Lake, I recommend fishing with a guide your first day on the lake. When trying to find a good guide I would suggest calling Dale Hollow 1 Stop located in Celina, TN, 931-243-2636. Another idea is to go to the website: [www.punisherlures.com](http://www.punisherlures.com) and email the "Smallmouth Guru" and ask about the fishing and fishing guides.

A lot of people come to Dale Hollow Lake to fish a very clear water lake. A good friend of mine named Billy Westmoreland used to say "a man that fishes stained color water struggles with water this clear because he always fishes too shallow. A man that has fished clear water

all his life has no problem fishing Dale Hollow Lake." Most people that go to Dale Hollow 1 Stop looking for advice from the Smallmouth Guru are told first thing, by the Guru, that they are fishing too shallow. Dale Hollow Lake has always had a reputation for Smallmouth Bass Fishing, but a well kept secret is the size of the Walleye, Crappie, and Largemouth Bass populations. Most of the Crappie that you catch on Dale Hollow Lake are 1.5-3 lbs., Walleye are 3-8 lbs., and Largemouth Bass are 3-8 lbs. My personal best Largemouth Bass was 8 lb 15 oz! Due to the history of Dale Hollow Lake and the size limits (1-under 16" & 1- over 21") implemented by the TWRA, 4lb- 6lb Smallmouth Bass have become common. The last year of my life has been the hardest ever emotionally. Losing my best friend and fellow angler, as well as losing my Father (who was also my greatest supporter) has made me look at life differently. I have developed more patience, more understanding, and have a deepened appreciation for the importance of family! My father was 88 when he died and one important thought that he left with me was (since he lived through The Great Depression) that he would never be broke again and his only regret was that he did not take the time to do more fishing. He said "don't put a price on fishing, just go!"



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