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N O R T H E A S T E R N A N G L E R S A S S O C I A T I O N

Rumors mill churns around potential record

Since Manabu Kurita's 22 pounder was boated two weeks ago, there's been lots of buzz but very little information circulating about the catch. Much of what we "know" about it has come second hand. Kurita has been noticeably silent about the catch. Perhaps it's his choice as to how he hopes to monetize the achievement. After all, information is power, and right now, Kurita and his sponsor — the Deps tackle company in Japan — have a stranglehold on it. But one thing they'll never be able to control, no matter how much power they might have, are the rumors that are starting to spread about the potential record.

This week, as the fishing industry gathers in Orlando, Fla., for the annual ICAST trade convention, the biggest rumor surrounding Kurita's potential world record is that the fish might have been caught in an off-limits area of the lake, or at least an area in which boats are prohibited. That might not seem a big deal to anglers who believe that any catch on rod and reel should be good enough for the record books, but to the official record keeping authority — the International Game Fish Association — it could be a very big deal, indeed. In fact, it could be such a big deal that Kurita's catch could wind up nowhere the record books.

In the IGFA rules, under general information, there is a provision that reads as follows:

"No applications will be accepted for fish caught in hatchery waters or sanctuaries. The catch must not be at variance with any laws or regulations governing the species or the waters in which it was caught."

Now, no one could possibly assert that Kurita caught the fish in hatchery waters. Lake Biwa covers more than 100,000 surface acres and is a popular fishery.

But, if it turns out to be true that he caught the bass from waters that were posted or otherwise established as an off-limits area, that area could qualify as a "sanctuary" under IGFA regulations, thereby disqualifying the catch. Furthermore, even if it weren't deemed a "sanctuary," if the area was merely posted as off-limits, the IGFA could conclude that fishing there was a violation of the waters and disqualify it on those grounds.

Whatever the ruling, the odds are that it will be made pretty soon. It appears that the Japanese Game Fish Association, a sister organization to the IGFA, has received Kurita's application and is forwarding it to the IGFA's office in Dania Beach, Fla.

The Bigger The Better - Summer Time Worm Selection

By this time of year, throughout many parts of the country, bass have seen a fair amount of fishing pressure. Common sense tells us that bass in this situation can become harder to catch and luring them to bite requires downsizing both line and bait. While this may be a good tactic for most places, targeting pressured bass in summer doesn't always require picking up a spinning rod and a finesse bait.

As the popularity of tubes, finesse worms and creature baits continue to increase, the traditional plastic worm seems to be used less and less. For this reason, a big 10-inch worm can be the best choice for several summertime situations.

Large worms are great for the warmer months. I start using them in the late spring when the bass start keying on shad and other baitfish and

continue it throughout the summer. When it comes to choosing a big worm, I rely on the water's color, fish size and the surrounding structure to help me decide. Stained or dark water that is holding quality fish is a prime place to try a 7-10 in power worm or some sort, preferably in a darker color. The big profile is easy for the bass to pick up, plus the action of the longer body draws bass in. To the fish, eating one big meal takes a lot less effort and energy than chasing down several smaller meals. In the summer, big bass like to lay up in the shade of trees and other structure in hopes of ambushing their prey, so to make the best use of this bait, make sure you are casting it in and around heavy cover like vegetation and wood.

Summertime can be a great time for catching bass, even when the

temperature reaches triple digits. By fishing big worms, you can effectively target the big bass where they live during the hottest times of the year. And by using bigger baits, it allows you to fish with heavier line and stouter gear so there's less of a chance that the big one will break you off. So this summer, instead of downsizing your line and bait, go bigger and catch bigger fish.



BLAKE'S KNOWLEDGE BASE

Deflecting and Deep Cranking: Just as in shallow water cranking, the deflection factor is key in catching about 90% of the fish. With the exception of cranking through suspended fish, your crankbait must change direction or speed to elicit a strike. On every cast I make a conscious effort to cause that bait to change direction (deflect). The most obvious way is to bounce off some

form of cover. The ability for a crankbait to crash and bounce off of cover and to trigger that inactive, reaction type strike is uncanny. Even when the bait is running in open water or hitting clean bottom areas, I use techniques to cause that bait to change movement. Changing speeds is my biggest method. Also throwing a jerk or pause

into the retrieve will have the same effect.

