



We all want to catch a big bass

BASS chairman **Ian Misselbrook** looks at his bass fishing adventures in Ireland and the USA and realises we have something missing in this country...big bass

This year my bass fishing will be split between the east coast of the USA and Ireland. At the moment I'm staying in a cottage in County Kerry overlooking a beach that has given me some marvellous bass fishing.

After a week of ridding myself of work and getting into fishing holiday mode, my thoughts have turned to what a privilege it is to experience these places, their people, and the bass fishing.

Thinking back to May, a colleague and I arrived in JFK airport for our annual spring trip to Cape Cod. For seven years we have fished this paradise for striped bass. Hours of planning, searching and travelling go into these fishing holidays, but this alone cannot guarantee any success. You can be totally prepared with an itinerary for every eventuality, but as my colleague says "fish don't read the rule book."

These trips give us the opportunity to experience different fishing styles and methods for this most beautiful fish. One particular memory involved three nightly sessions, which turned out to be the most exhilarating fishing I have ever had.

On the run-up to those three nights we happened to be in the local tackle shop, talking fishing, lures, rods, reels and the latest paraphernalia, as you do. We then mentioned to the guy behind the counter that the fish seemed a bit thin on the ground, and, as visiting anglers, where else should we be looking? This resulted in an instant invitation to join him on the beach at 7.30 that evening.

Standing waist deep in crystal-clear water, late at night fishing for striped bass certainly gets your adrenaline pumping. What followed was a session like no other; to be in the fishes' environment and to catch several bass between 10lb and 20lb and release each one in the glow of the headlamp was almost a surreal experience. Opportunity and experience like this draw me back year after year.

This Irish trip, although a million

miles from the hustle and bustle of the Cape, has the same ingredients. Spectacular scenery, lovely people and each venue having its own charm.

When we arrived we did the usual visits to old friends, armed with the age-old fishing questions - where, when and how big? I happened to catch up with two BASS members, Nick Cosford and his son Thomas, both passionate anglers who catch more than their fair share of decent bass.

They were determined to make the most of the opportunity and catch good bass. It is always a joy to fish with guys like these. The highlight was young Thomas catching one of almost 7lb, among several other fish for both of them.

What concerns me is I'm putting

less time into my bass fishing in the UK. In the past I would plan my home trips the same way as I do for those to the USA and Ireland. After

all, my opportunities at home have similar ingredients:

delightful locations, good people and friendly advice. But what is missing? It's that overriding opportunity, which, for me and many like me, drives our fishing ambitions...the opportunity to catch big bass.

To achieve it the UK needs a legal framework

for bass management, and to get that anglers need to be far more forceful in lobbying national and local government and other organisations. Join us, and through the BASS website, forum and magazine you can learn how to lobby as an individual. **SA**

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Malcolm Gilbert and Ian Misselbrook with two superb strippers

