

# Stealth tactics

BASS member Julian Fox reckons sneaking about on the shore means you are likely to catch more fish

**M**adness is a trait often associated with anglers, and as I crouched down behind a large barnacle-encrusted boulder I remembered this and began to feel self-conscious.

Making my way to the water's edge and using the cliff as a backdrop I kept the rod tip low and shuffled forward. Nearing the water the sound of the waves crashing on the rocks was loud, and the frothing water seemed at odds with my stealthy approach.

So why was I being quiet when there was a noisy mass of water only two metres away? Previously I had approached the water with little care and spooked the fish, so I knew the fish would be here and close in. Keeping out of sight isn't something that sea anglers usually do, but as I fish more from the shore I think it can be vital at times. Obviously, those bass like to feed totally undisturbed.

The stealthy approach has many advantages, one being the confidence it gives you. Any fish

present are more likely to take your lure or bait if they don't suspect you are there. So presentation is more than just about making sure that the end tackle appears natural. It's also about presenting yourself without frightening the fish away.

It makes perfect sense, and it's been rammed home to me frequently as I have made my way to the water's edge - only to see the dark shape of a bass turning on its fins and swimming away. When that's happened more than once, fishing that mark again takes on a different challenge.

Often you won't be able to see the fish and might think they won't see you, but I reckon they can. A moving shape or shadow at the water's edge must be a warning sign to a fish, and the flash of a rod in the sun is an unnatural sight. Anything unnatural isn't going to end up with more fish on the shore, is it?

At the root of all this is the fact that bass are avid feeders in shallow water. They

like to mooch about scooping up all sorts of rock pool creatures. The prey has nowhere to go and predators know it. Bass will follow the incoming tide over reefs, rocks and gullies, eating whatever they can find. Sometimes the water barely covers their backs, so clearly they are going to scare very easily.

Catching these fish doesn't need a full-on crawl, but it does require you to change how you make your way to some marks. If these fish can see your lure or bait and have no

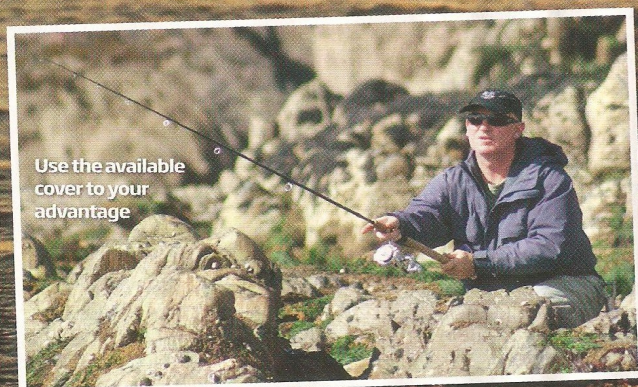
inkling that there is an angler on the bank then you will have a high chance of catching it.

Next time you start walking down the beach think about how you might do things a little differently. I frequently stop 20 yards from the water's edge and cast into the shallows before climbing on to my favourite rock. This tactic has caught me fish in the past and will do so again.

Some anglers fish whole sessions at least 10 yards back from the water's edge. Think about the fact that fish may be under your feet, so slowing yourself down and creeping to the edge may make a difference.

Yes, other people may snigger, but you may have the last laugh by catching that magic fish.

**"Other people may snigger, but you may have the last laugh"**



Keeping out of sight isn't something anglers usually do