

Hawaii – Small Mouth Bass on the Kaukonahua



History...

even out When you think of Hawaii I'm not sure fresh water bass fishing is the first thing that comes to your mind... Especially here on Oahu.

Oahu is known for Waikiki beach, Pearl harbor, big wave surfing, sandy beaches and those naughty hula girls that will steal your heart every time.

However, Hawaii is full of surprises as anyone will tell you who has lived here for a while --- there isn't much we don't have ---- but we have it in a tropical setting so – go figure.... And. Bass fishing - - oh yes my friend!!! We got that too....

- You just don't know about it --- and if I was not writing this article -- nobody else would either --- so why am I putting pen to, paper? Good question! I am doing this so you can learn there is more than meets the eye about "Hawaii" ----- what you read from the "Tourist" guide books ---- and because, your like me----- you fish! You have done it all your life since you were 6 years old – and if god permits– you will still be fishing until your 86... it's in your blood, it's a life long disease ---- and your lucky to have caught it.... If someone asks you "Why do you fish" -- you already know "they" will never understand your answer...

So where does that bring us– right back to the beginning– Hawaii, Oahu, and the Kaukonahua !!!!

The State of Hawaii is composed of volcanic islands in the middle of the pacific ocean - Hawaii is the most isolated of any group of islands found any where in the world, Half way between California and Japan -- in the middle of nowhere.

The Islands cover approx. 1500 miles north to south ... in the north, the islands are the oldest, some are nothing more but Atolls having been worn down by wind and rain over millions of years. As we travel south, the islands are "younger" in geological time, their mountains trap prevailing moisture in the trade winds, and this causes rain to fall. The rain soaks into the volcanic mountains, causing small rivulets, these then come together to form small streams and as they reach the valley floor, a stream is formed. These Mountains are called the Koolaus, and one of the streams is called the Kaukonahua. From the mountains to where it flows into the Pacific Ocean it is the longest stream on Oahu. During it's flow to the ocean it's dammed up, siphoned off for irrigation, used as a reservoir, and by the time it does get to the ocean --- there isn't much left... But our story starts before the stream Taped by human hands to build their reservoir, or irrigate their sugar can fields. Our story starts where the stream still runs pure and free from the hand of man...this area is known as "the

east range” It is a huge area, located in the central part of Oahu, mostly under control of the Military. Sometimes referred as the “Schofield Barracks Military Reservation” – it is mostly jungle, I trained there back in 1963 as the build up for Viet Nam was in full swing-- for those of you too young to remember this “conflict” and what the “Draft” did to our lives --- be glad. ...– Read about it in the history books....

Somewhere along the line, back when dinosaurs ruled the world (I just like to say that) Small mouth bass were introduced to Wahiawa State Fresh Water Park. It’s known as “Lake Wilson” and is all part and parcel of the Wahiawa reservoir.... and guess what feeds the Wahiawa reservoir? You guessed it ---- Kaukonahua stream...

Mile by mile, year by year the bass have traveled up the Kaukonahua to the very base of the mountains, where the water runs fresh and pure.... This is also part of the Military reservation – and you know what that means-- you can’t go there – naturally!!! But all is not lost--- you can still access the kaukonahua, above the reservoir and before it turns into military prosperity.... And I am going to tell you how, so listen up ...

How to get there:

You will arrive at Honolulu Int. airport from where ever you started on the mainland. This is the only airport on Oahu where commercial jets land. Go to baggage claim; get your gear and pick-up your rent-a-car. After leaving the airport complex get on the H-2 highway heading for WAHIAWA... When you see the exit for Wahiawa get off and just follow the traffic flow over the bridge and into Wahiawa town ---- - just keep going straight, on a slight up-hill incline for about one mile, look for a street sign on the right side of the road that says CALIFORNIA AVE. Turn right. You are now on the right track ---- California Ave. heading Mauka (towards the mountains) ,,,,, keep on this road, winding as it goes for several miles, it will travel through a residential area of older homes. Go all the way to the end of California Ave. STOP -- you will know when you get there because --- you will be looking into a huge forest of paperback trees. This is the trail head for the “Wahiawa Hills Trail” - No, there is no sign, but the huge water tank on the right is a sure give-away... park your car, and re-read your book on Hiking Hawaiian trails that you picked up and read before you left on this Hawaiian vacation. This is the beginning of how you are going to get to the Kaukonahua stream.

GEAR

In that backpack you brought along ---- stuff your fishing gear, Pac fly rod, lunch, and 2 to 3 quarts of water... light jacket and your stream boots – that’s right – your going to Wet wade.... Remember. Your in HAWAII..... --- you’re going to need your hiking boots to hike on then trail... and your stream boots to wet wade– plus spare socks, light rain jacket etc. etc. NOTE: Deanne’s secret No. 1 wear 100 nylon clothing - shorts and shirt - it is the only thing we wear when in the “bush” --- underwear is optional,--- I find it chafes like hell so I go “Commando” style, if you get my drift. Loose the skivvies.----- With 100 % nylon shorts and shirt you can be soaking wet one minute and once out of the water– bone dry in 15 ...

That fly rod should be a 5 weight, 3 or 4 piece, the more compact – the better, BLACK woolly buggers or beaded nymphs – black color is the key – these bass go nuts over the color black ... that’s Deane’s secret # 2.... so remember them ----- I’m not giving away the farm to hear myself talk.....regarding your casting... Many parts of the stream have overhead tree limbs hanging low on the water, so unless you like fishing for squirrels, Practice your “roll’ casting, you will be doing a lot of it.

On the Trail

Ok, your geared up, pack on, all checked out – now where ? See the paper bark trees ahead of you ? See the huge water tank on your right - Ok, now go into the woods, into this huge area of paperback trees and yes, you will see a trail– several of them to be exact– you go straight ahead, forget the side trails ...follow your nose until the land just drops away sharply – stop ! notice that ridge to your left ? That’s the “trail” for about 25 yards, there should be a ribbon marking the spot

where you begin a steep descent stepping on eucalyptus leaves that can be very slippery even when dry -- Deane's secret # 3 have your collapsible stream staff out and handy – you will be using it from here on in...

Follow this ridge to the bottom, maybe 300 yards, you should see the trail start here. As it is much better marked. Just begin following this trail, put some more “Trail markers” up if you wish – remember, you will be coming out, the same way you went in...It is level for a while, then crosses a very small --- if you can even call it that – “stream” – and begins to go climb up , switch-backing a mountain.. Once on top you will notice big Mahogany trees and a fork in the trail---- go LEFT...and continue on this trail--- listen ! hear the water ? that's the Kaukonahua stream you're hearing – just keep following the trail as it winds it's way down the mountain.. to the stream – Ohhhhhhh what a relief – it only took you 30 minutes from the time you left your car – to get to the stream --- OK.... OK maybe 45 since you took your time – point is – your there ... and WOW... you never expected that eh .. , looks just like back home – except no snakes...no “skeeters”, and no “Gaters” and the plants !!! never seen anything like that before – and the birds -- they are different too ... but the stream – Ohhhhh look at that big pool by the ledge – I can't wait. So -- you made your way down to the stream, put on your stream boots, rigged up your fly rod Go to it boy !!! it's better fishing up-stream with some huge pool, just take it from there – I don't have to tell you what to do --- just judge your time. Work up stream as far as you want to go – time it... as you will have to come back -- -- same way you came in... DON'T LEAVE THE STREAM.... And I don't want to tell you twice.. WHY - because I don't want to get some call at 3 am, saying some mainland numb-nuts is lost in the “East range” in happens – here is a fact – we “loose” people in there every year – tourists, who are not pre-paired, who go off on the “Wahiawa Hills Trail” and NEVER come out.. they see a “trail” which is really a pig path, and whoops, fall off a cliff, take a wrong turn, and get Swallowed up – big time...and we don't want that do we !

CAUTION:

Once in the Kaukonahua stream those stream boots and walking staff are a must, you will be fishing in a stream that is located in the bottom a winding valley that seems to go on forever, and it almost does.. it goes all the way to the base of the Koolau Mountains, it would take you 3 days to get to it's source and you only got so much daylight and you don't want to be in there in the dark so plan your return route accordingly – I can't stress that enough. Also , like it or not, to be “legal” you need to get Permission to access this trail– I got to tell you that .. you can get permission by writing to the Directorate of facilities Engineering, U.S. Army support Command, Hawaii Fort Shafter, HI. 96858

Naturally we “locals” always get permission.... Oh yea.

Better yet, contact our Trout Unlimited chapter by accessing our web page www.tuhi.us and see if any of our chapter members are making the trek to the Kaukonahua , and you could tag along, we are always open to other Trout Unlimited chapter members - I don't need to tell you..... you got to be “in-shape” for this type of Extreme Bass fishing.

Not to be left out – pigs, wild boar, yes, they live here and are hunted by our local hunters... by nature these animals want nothing to do with you, BUT – should you meet up with Mr. Piggy, He has the right of way -- they are like 300 lb. Black Volkswagens with BIG tusks that could rip you- a new one.... faster than it takes me to type this – so ... don't try to do a “Rambo” Let the “local” hunters do the down-and-dirty with these black furry fuzz balls....stick to your fishing.



The BASS

You will find the small mouth are furious eaters, they slam a Wolly-bugger like a freight train. They range in size from 6 inches all the way up to 18, with reports of really big ones– just in the next hole.... With us it's all catch-and-release, it's hard enough to hike in there with all the stuff in your pack – no sense adding more weight so we just have fun catching them -

Stream levels depend on the amount of rain... most of the time the stream is fishable, BUT – heavy rains in the Wahiawa / Schofield area can make the stream un-fishable for several days in a row – Summer is the best time as the stream levels are “normal”--- November through March it's day by day basis.....That's our Rainy season..... again, best to contact our local TU chapter for an up-date.

And one more point, - you will need a State of Hawaii Fresh water fishing license. For residents it's \$ 5.00 for Non-residents it's \$ 25.00 to be “Legal” you can write to Division of Aquatic resources, dept. of Land and natural resources, Kalanimoku Building, 1151 punchbowl St. Room # 330, Honolulu, Hawaii, 96813

Hope you enjoyed this little “Travel log” from the 50th. State, it's nice to know that here in the middle of the Pacific Ocean we can still enjoy our fishing..... Adventurous, oh yea, but anything worth having, like a BIG small mouth bass in Paradise.... Is worth working for ...

Aloha Deane Gonzalez



