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AGE: 12
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HOOKED ON BREAM FISHING

I live in rural Sabine Parish the home of Toledo Bend Lake. All of my family and friends either love hunting or fishing. We really enjoy hobbies that keep us outdoors. Fishing is my favorite outdoor sport. It is a short two mile drive for Uncle Joe and me to launch our boat on Toledo Bend Lake.

As a child I played with my Snoopy rod and reel for hours on end. That is when my love for fishing started. My Uncle Joe is a die hard bass fisherman. He began taking me in his boat when I was four. My first fishing trips were to catch bream. The plan was to slowly introduce me to bass fishing. Armed with a Zebco rod and reel, I began catching bream with a little help.

Uncle Joe knew I would have to catch fish to keep me interested. At first I couldn't bait my own hook with crickets. I also needed help reeling in my first few bream, but after a few catches I was determined to do it all by myself. With every fishing trip I became a better fisherman. We would have a contest on each trip to see who could catch the most. In the beginning Uncle Joe won most of the time, but that all changed as I got older and more competitive.

Every good fisherman has their secret fishing hole. We go to ours every spring and we always catch all we want. I wish I could take you there, but like I said it's a secret. A good thing about bream fishing is the bream normally bite after the sun comes up. This means I can sleep late.

This past April was our best trip yet. It was a warm day and we headed to the lake with our lunches packed and drinks in the cooler. I had a feeling it was going to be my lucky day when I caught a bream on my first cast. With every cast I reeled in a bream. These were the biggest bream we ever caught. The bream were bedded in our secret hole. One of the exciting things about fishing in a bream bed is being able to see the fish that you're trying to hook.

Thank goodness we bought plenty of crickets. As usual the contest was on and it was a pretty even match. Then I hooked what I thought must have been a catfish. It was bending my rod and putting up a good fight. Finally I saw that it was a bream. The biggest one I had ever caught. It was a redear bream and it was a monster! It measured eight inches and weighed one pound and nine ounces. We kept fishing, but never caught another bream to top it. As we headed home I thought to myself this was my best fishing day ever.

Did I mention that I like to eat bream almost as much as I like catching them? Our rule is we only keep what we can eat. I have learned to scrape the scales to get them ready to fry. This fish was no different. I chose to eat the fish instead of having it mounted. Some

day I plan to catch a bigger one. Uncle Joe still wants me to be a bass fisherman, but for now I am happy to be the best bream fisherman in the family!