

# Glen Lau...



GLEN LAU

## a true bass master

*By Andy Lindstrom*

Some people like to catch fish. Others enjoy eating them. But teaching a fish tricks, like performing seals or elephants in a circus? Better leave that to Glen Lau.

Lau is perhaps Florida's best-known – and probably only – fish trainer with film credits ranging from a groundbreaking video of the complete life cycle of a largemouth bass to television commercials for the likes of Chevrolet, Ford, Bass Pro Shops and several big-name fishing lure and tackle companies.

“Glen is probably the preeminent freshwater fish cinematographer in the country,”

said Bob Wattendorf, marketing and special projects coordinator for the Florida Wildlife Commission's Freshwater Fisheries Management. “He's also a first-class fisherman, avid hunter and good friend of (nationally known fishing) folks like Roland Martin, Homer Circle and Al Lindner. He's just a phenomenal character, at the top of his class as far as capturing fish on film.”

A film and video expert whose office in Williston gives him convenient access to Silver Springs – his favorite outdoor studio – Lau has been hooked on fish ever since he caught a 4-pound bass at the age of 14 in Lake Erie’s East Harbor. After several offbeat jobs including pro canoe racer and Cypress Gardens water skier, Lau eventually decided what he really wanted was to be the best fishing guide on Lake Erie.

In 1958, Lau rented a camera, took some fishing pictures and won a contest. From such humble beginnings, he said, a career was born. Today’s award-winning Glen Lau Productions has produced more than 200 outdoor-oriented television programs and hundreds of TV commercials. The company also has helped with underwater locations for such films as *China Moon*, *Doc Hollywood* and *Garwood*, while its access to Disney/MGM and Universal Studios in Orlando has made it particularly attractive to national advertising agencies and production companies.

“Probably my most innovative shot that nobody else has been able to duplicate was my over-and-under,” Lau said.



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“That’s where you see the fish coming at the camera both above and under water where I keep shooting until the bass literally strikes me in the face.”

Like so many graphic images on film today, they’re probably computer-generated, right?

“No,” he corrected. “We’ve been at it so long, working hands-on with fish, that we’re able to do things naturally that nobody else can do. Everybody in the industry tries to copy us, but that’s where the training comes in.”

Training a fish to do what Lau called “just about anything” takes years to learn. “But basi-

**Training a fish to do “just about anything” takes years to learn. But basically, it takes food.**

cally, it takes food,” he added. “After we get them, we put them into a 600-gallon tank with other bass just to get them used to their new surroundings. Once we get them where they’re eating regularly, then we transport them over to a 10,000-gallon tank and start training.”

Lau said he trained one bass to swim up and lie in his hand for up to a minute before he rewarded it with food. Other fish learned to go about their regular life in the tank despite his prying camera and scuba-clad presence.

The results have been nothing short of spectacular, speaking from a fish lover’s point of view. Lau’s documentary, *BigMouth*, has been described as the most significant film ever produced depicting the life cycle of a largemouth bass. *BigMouth Forever*, its long-awaited sequel, investigates the mysteries surrounding a bass’s life beneath the water’s surface.

“The first one captures everything a bass does in its life-



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time,” Lau said. “The things that eat bass and the things that bass eat. *BigMouth Forever*, which took three years to produce, explores what makes the large-mouth nature’s most challenging freshwater fish. It’s the No. 1 seller at Bass Pro Shops.”

Lau also has completed outdoor documentaries for such

groups as the Wild Turkey Federation and various hunting organizations. Along with Flip Pallot, he hosts a weekly *Quest for Adventure* show into wild country that promises “a voyage of discovery, real adventure and reentry into the way things used to be.” His latest venture, with the state Wildlife Founda-

tion of Florida, is selling prints and videos online whose profits are plowed back into the recently opened Florida Bass Conservation Center in Sumter County.

“But the main thing I’ve been doing the past seven or so years is mentoring young people, teaching them the ways of the wild,” he said. “You don’t have to hook fish or shoot animals to enjoy the outdoors. Catching them on film can be just as challenging and creative. For me, that’s the best part.”

For more on Glen Lau and his work, including the purchase of bass prints and videos, write Glen Lau Film & Video, 14485 NW 160th Ave., Williston, FL 32696 or phone (352) 529-0433. To order online through the Wildlife Foundation of Florida, visit [www.WildlifeFoundationofFlorida.com](http://www.WildlifeFoundationofFlorida.com). **FW**

*Andy has retired to Havana, Fla., after 15 years as a college history and English professor and 25 years writing feature stories for the Tallahassee Democrat and other publications.*

TIM DONOVAN



GLEN LAU



# Working together to build the Florida Bass Conservation Center

By Bob Wattendorf

On February 23, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) dedicated the new Florida Bass Conservation Center (FBCC). Its overall mission is "To conduct and utilize essential research to optimize production, stocking and recruitment of Florida largemouth bass to facilitate integrated conservation management of Florida's freshwater fisheries resources."

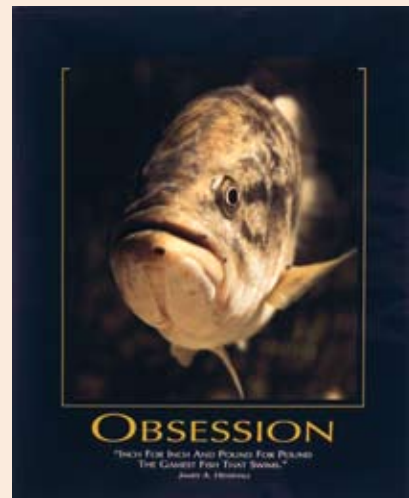
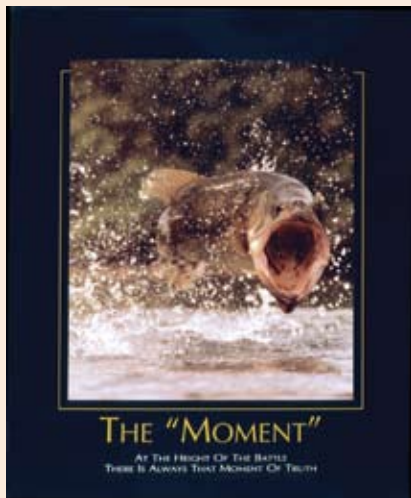
In 2002, it was recognized that the FWC's antiquated fish hatchery at

Richloam in Sumter County had to be replaced if Florida hoped to retain its "Fishing Capital of the World" title, at least with regard to largemouth bass. In business since April 1965, Richloam was one of the oldest fish hatcheries in the country. Although it did much more with much less than many of the nation's 21st century facilities, it was a major drain on the aquifer, used minimal recycling and was plagued by various fish predators that depleted production.

The FBCC was paid for in part by federal Wallop-Breaux and State Wildlife Grants together with state matching funds, and a Rural Economic Development Initiative grant. FISHPRO was contracted to develop architectural and engineering plans for the FBCC and the local Vogel Brothers construction company built the facility. Primarily private funding will be used for the visitors' center, and the Wildlife

Foundation of Florida (WFF) will help by collecting donations.

One easy way to donate to the FBCC is by purchasing Glen Lau décor prints, videos or DVDs. He has graciously offered the use of his art at the FBCC and now is allowing the WFF to sell his creations, including the awesome *BigMouth* and *BigMouth Forever* videos, with all the profits going to the FBCC. See [www.WildlifeFoundationofFlorida.com](http://www.WildlifeFoundationofFlorida.com) to order copies.



**Top:** Glen Lau stands in front of two of his photographs hanging in the new Florida Bass Conservation Center. *The 'Moment'* (left) and *Obsession* (right) are two of Lau's décor prints available through the Wildlife Foundation of Florida.