

The water in the Upper Laguna Madre is what I'd call "stupid clear" right now. Seems like it would be possible to read the fine print on a beer can lying on the bottom in waist-deep water! This is likely the result of continued super-high tide levels, meaning the water covering the flats in the ULM is basically "ocean water", which flowed in through Packery Channel during the recent tidal influxes. This scenario enhances one's ability to learn about the features lying on the bottom of the bay, but can make fishing difficult.

When a bright sun shines into such clear water, speckled trout don't generally feed regularly, since their prey can see them so clearly. This proves especially true for big trout, which prefer to eat other fish. Catching fish in ultra-clear water normally works better under low light conditions, meaning at dusk or dawn, or under the darkness of night. During an active feed, when darkness makes the fish aggressive, sinking FatBoys in dark colors will produce plenty of bites. Sometimes, topwaters will too, especially during warm spells.

Cloudy or foggy conditions enhance the potential for a decent daytime bite. Using lures with natural coloration helps one earn strikes when fish can see them clearly, and sometimes downsizing lures helps as well. Creating erratic movement patterns with presentations also aids in earning reaction strikes from fish, who will sometimes snap at an "impression" when they won't strike if allowed time to better perceive a lure. For this reason, I prefer rat-tailed soft plastics in clear water, because they move around more erratically in the water, especially when retrieved with vigorous action in the rod tip.