

Spring Fishing &  
Boat Buyers Guide  
April 2014



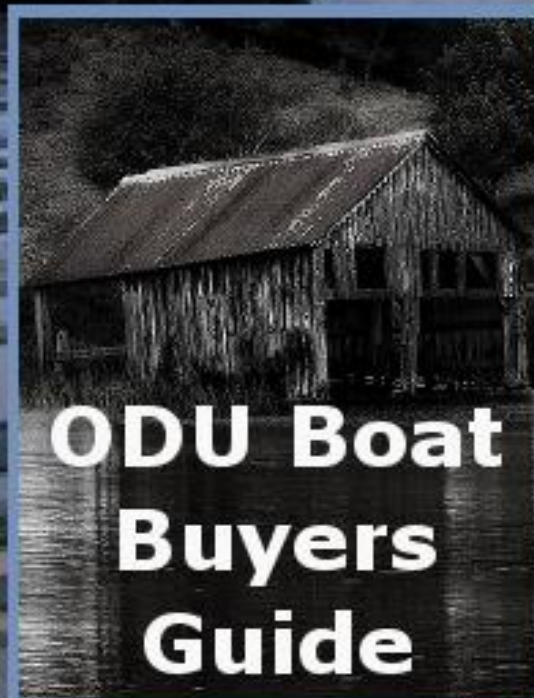
# ODU MAGAZINE™

## Making the Connection For Big Bass

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For Trout**

**The Five C's To  
Fishing Success**

**WhoDat Catching Dem  
Louisiana Redfish**







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Here is what I wrote last year and it still is true today as it was then. "After review, my last few years worth of "Editors Note" it appears that things are evolving, morphing, changing, whatever you want to call it in the world. We as Americans are a very resilient and a tolerant group of individuals, especially us outdoorsmen. On a regular basis, we struggle through hurricanes, blizzards, floods, droughts, and continue to have an un-wavering love for Mother Nature and a passion for the outdoors. Outrageous

gas prices may curb our passion for traveling to our favorite fishing hole or hunting grounds but not our love for hunting and fishing.

As I mature and the years mount up it has become quite apparent to me that city dwellers will never have our love or passion for the outdoors. It's not that they can't, but it's hard to appreciate something that you have never experienced. To me, it's like setting in a classroom and your teacher is trying to encourage you to ask questions when you have no idea what they are talking about. Let's face it, there are a lot more city dwellers then there are suburbanites and country folks. We need to face facts we are a minority, and if we don't do something to help educate the masses

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we eventually lose what we cherish most, the right to enjoy Mother Nature and the joy of hunting and fishing."

So with all that being said again let's go out and sharpen our hooks, change our line and get the boat and tackle to the best year we have had fishing in years. This record-setting winter should be well behind us, and great Spring Fishing is ahead. So let's do your Superman trick and change from being the coach potato into an active outdoorsman and enjoy the spring.

Do me a favor and introduce someone new to the outdoors and help preserve our heritage before it's gone.

And please, Enjoy the outdoors,

Larry Thornhill, Editor Chief, 919-603-5681 - <http://www.odumagazine.com/>



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## MINI-CRANKBAITS FOR TROUT

BY JEFF SAMSEL

Minnows, Wee-Crawfish and Teeny Wee-Crawfish.

You'll draw questioning stares from fellow fishermen when you show up streamside with a hard bait tied to your line. Even a small crankbait looks gaudy to a trout fisherman who normally uses flies, spinners or small natural baits such as corn or red worms. That's OK. You'll also draw the more important interest – that of the trout – and when you start catching fish, the doubters around you will suddenly become intrigued.

Crankbaits prompt reaction strikes from fish that might study and eventually reject something smaller and slower moving. They also increase your odds of finding large trout that live in a stream, but do so

The mere mention of a Rebel Crickhopper lit up Richie Hays' face as the long-time trout guide remembered the first time anyone threw Crickhoppers from his boat. A guide at Gaston's White River Resort ([www.gastons.com](http://www.gastons.com)) in north-central Arkansas, Hays took those clients to a shallow shoal where current swept into deeper water, and they proceeded to catch trout after trout by casting across the shoal and reeling slowly so the Crickhoppers wobbled over the drop.

Soon after our conversation, Hays steered his boat to a similar shoal so I could put a Crickhopper to work. It only took a handful of casts to get a feisty rainbow tugging on the line.

Many fishermen use Rebel Crickhoppers for bluegills, pond bass or stream smallmouths, but the same little crankbait also performs exceptionally well for stream trout. Seemingly, the trout have a hard time resisting the wide wobble and the cricket/grasshopper profile.

In truth, various diminutive crankbaits work wonderfully for trout, and they all tend to get overlooked by trout fishermen. A few other baits that stand out are Rebel Tracdown



without culling numbers. Additionally, crankbaits offer cast-and-crank simplicity, making them wonderful lure choices even for inexperienced anglers.

Most importantly, casting and cranking and then having fish attack little crankbaits is an extremely fun way to catch trout.

### **The Right Bait**

Crickhoppers and slightly larger Bighoppers stay the shallowest of the crankbaits mentioned. The dive just a couple feet when retrieved at a medium, constant speed. As the season progresses and fish start finding more food on the surface, Crickhoppers work well waked on the surface with an extra-slow retrieve, twitched on top or even dead drifted. In a large river like the White, Crickhoppers work best over shallow shoals or fished close to the shore.



Rebel Tracdown Minnows sink slowly when they are not in motion. That means you can reel right away and keep the rod tip high to work one over very shallow areas, or you can wait several seconds before beginning each retrieve and work the bait with pauses and get it notably deeper. After we worked the shallow White River shoal, Hays took us to a deeper, rainbow-filled run, and a Tracdown Minnow turned out to be the ticket for those fish.

Cranked steadily, a Tracdown Minnow swims with a fairly tight wiggle. Twitched, it darts erratically. As the name suggests, a Tracdown Minnow is minnow-shaped, so it can suggest a minnow, sculpin or even a baby trout depending on the size and color pattern, where you throw it and how you present it. The same basic bait comes in three sizes, which range from 1 5/8 to 3 1/2 inches long, and a half a dozen color patterns.



Rebel Wee-Crawfish and Teeny Wee-Crawfish, which are super-realistic crawfish mimics, dive when they are in motion. Often the best way to fish a Teeny Wee Crawfish is simply to cast it and crank it back. It will produce many fish while swimming freely in the current, but can be even more effective over shallow rocky bottoms that you can kick the lure off during presentations.

The Wee-Crawfish handles nicely in current, which





makes it especially effective in trout stream situations. In extra-strong current, instead of casting upstream and reeling quickly to outpace the river, cast across the stream and keep the line tight, so the lure dives and swings out into the current.

### **Experimentation**

A friend and I commonly begin a day of stream trout fishing with one of us throwing a Tracdown Minnow and the other throwing a Teeny

Wee-Crawfish. Some days, the trout show about the same level of interest in both, so we stick with our guns. More often, though, one bait out-produces the other and we end up both fishing with either a minnow or a craw.

Along with trying different lures, experiment with presentations and the types of water you cast to, and to pay careful attention to where you catch fish. Also, watch behind your lure from the moment it comes into view on every cast. Trout are notorious followers. If you are getting followers without strikes or even passing slaps from fish that won't commit, that means you're close. The fish are interested in the bait but something's just a little off, so this is when you react and slightly change one aspect of your tactic, from a different retrieve speed or cadence to replacing your lure with one slightly larger or in a different color pattern.

As you experiment, realize that a little thing can make a major difference. Be intentional about changes and watch results as you try different things, and chances are good that the crankbait pattern will become better-defined as the day progresses.

Light or ultralight spinning tackle and 4- to 6-lb line works nicely for delivering small crankbaits to trout. A 5 ½-foot rod allows for accurate casting in small streams. A 6- or 6 ½-foot rod allows for longer casts and makes it a little easier to control the action of the lure.

Small crankbaits fit nicely in a small stowable tackle box that you can put in a vest or shirt pocket, allowing you to travel light and to keep things simple. Just be sure to include a little pair of needle-nose pliers or hemostats to remove the tiny hooks.



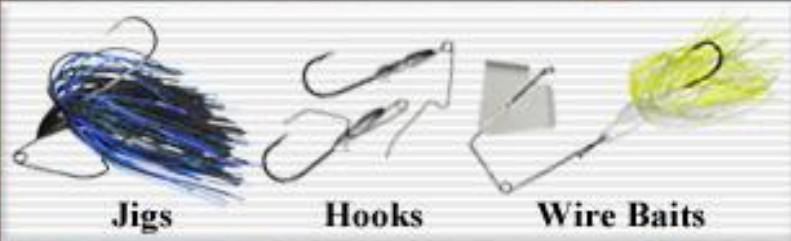


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# Making The Connection For Big Bass

By Chris Jenkins

By far, spring is my favorite time of the year when it comes to bass fishing. I have been waiting for this since last year and it couldn't get here soon enough. History shows that more big bass are caught in the spring than any other time of the year. And that my friend is what pushes me to the limits these next couple of month. With such a short window, I try to get out on the water every opportunity I get. Sometimes that means fishing in the rain, snow, and blustery winds. One thing is for certain, it will be windy.



But when it comes to wind, I have found that you need to use it to your advantage. Sure it would be nice to hide in the backs of coves, but that's not generally where the action is this early in the season. If you think about it, bass migrate out of the shallows after the spawn into deeper water. It doesn't happen overnight, and they don't all do it at once. Now apply that migration rout in reverse. They will be holding in relatively deep water during the winter, and slowly move toward their spawning grounds. Main creek channels are like bass highways. They use these to travel and for reference along the way. Many will gravitate to points and feed before making their way into a cove or flat. Points and drop off that lead to spawning flats are hot spots this month and need to be fished hard. Personally, I start looking for big bass near the flats when the water stabilizes in the upper 40's. I know that may sound crazy to most anglers, but trust me, big bass move up fast and first. Last year I went out early in March and the air temperature was in the high 30's and dropped as the day went on. The water was hovering around 46 and I had to stick my rod in the water to get the ice off my eyelets after every cast. For two hours my brother and I made cast after cast without a bite



until my Strike King Red Eye (see below) shad got hung up. Hung up in and eleven pounders mouth that is. The fish was staging on a slow tapering point that had a small shallow cove on one side and a large cove on the other side. I cast beyond the point, let the Red Eye Shad sink, and began a reel/pause retrieve. The fish hit on the pause and in all honestly I did think I was hung in a piece of wood. This is but one of many examples I have of catching big bass when you would least expect them to be shallow and feeding.

As the water warms and the day's progress, the fish will move toward their final destination to spawn. The trick is to head them off before they become consumed with the act of spawning. Use your "mind's eye" try to visualize their path and have confidence in your plan of attack. My plan is simple, lob big baits to persuade big fish. Bass seem to be unusually dumb and very hungry in the spring. Use this to your advantage because it doesn't last long. If you have never had the courage to throw swimbaits, now is the time. I generally rotate between a Huddleston 68 Special (pictured on next page) and Castaic Catch -22 shad or blue gill swimbaits for pre-spawn bass. I will use the Strike King Red Eye Shad on points and drop offs, and their Diving King Shad and spinnerbaits in the shallows and windblown areas. This handful of lures has always come through for me and if you notice, they are all moving baits. I very rarely use soft plastics in the spring until the bass are actually on beds. Prior to that I am covering a lot of water and increasing my odds of hooking up.



Every lake fishes differently though, and not all days are created equal. If the fish are holding tight to cover after a cold front, I will gladly pick up a double skirted jig or slide a creature bait into the tightest of spaces. More often than not though, I am throwing big moving baits. Don't be afraid to try something new either. As I said, bass seem to be a little less picky during the pre-spawn and will fall for some pretty outrageous offerings.

I also like to set up what is referred to as a number system. I dissect the body of water and break it down in numeric fashion. If I am fishing points as an example, I will take the five best points and number them from 1 to 5. One is my top pick and five is my last. These figures are based on certain

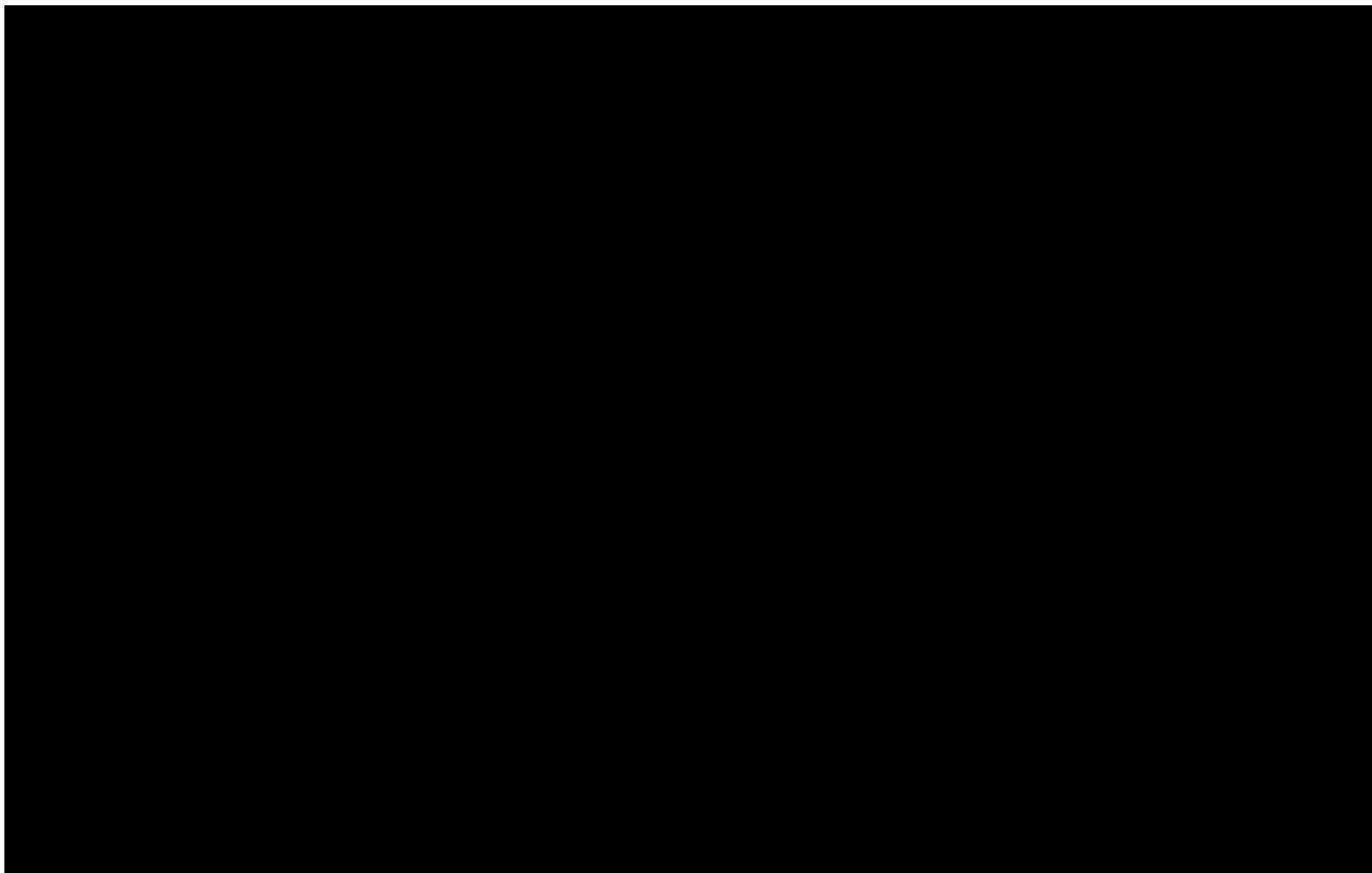




criteria. Does it have a fast or slow taper? Does it connect with a creek channel? Does it have cover on it? These things attribute to its rating. That value can also change during the course of the day if the wind is blowing on it, or you notice pre emerging vegetation forming. These factors add value. Now if you were keying on coves, apply the same philosophy and use the point system. With potentially only five

weekends in the month of March, you don't want to waste time casting blindly to unproductive water. The best of plans can in fact go wrong, but this point system is a great approach to any body of water and can be applied all year long.

The main thing is to be out on the water as much as you can this month and the next for that matter. Fish points early on, as well as any windblown shorelines. Head the fish off as they migrate, and lob big baits. Once the fish move into any spawning area like a flat or a cove, keep pounding them with moving baits until they commit to the spawn. Remember, not all fish spawn at the same time, so areas will reload with new members daily or even hourly depending on the size of the area. Make sure your gear is in tip top shape, you have a license, and you have a camera for that moment when you catch and release the big one. Chris Jenkins [sowbelly.hunter@yahoo.com](mailto:sowbelly.hunter@yahoo.com)





When life gets busy, your time on the water doesn't always have to suffer. We are fortunate enough to spend an ample amount of time on the water but as families grow and adult responsibilities increase, some sacrifices have had to be made. Through our adventures, we have stumbled across some great locations and acquired knowledge of many species. By putting all of the pieces of the puzzle together, nighttime has not only produced some quality fish but also doubled our available fishing time.

Although not every species of fish bites after dark, many will and their bite can be even more aggressive than that of a good day! As kids, bullheads were one of our main targets while sitting around the campfire, as we grew older and fishing for lake trout came into play; the night bite was the right bite. While the whole night was good, sunset to 9pm and 3am to sunrise was primetime. With our current affliction of panfish, we have keyed in on some great bites. While all these species are a ball, the constant learning curve is what keeps us coming back for more.

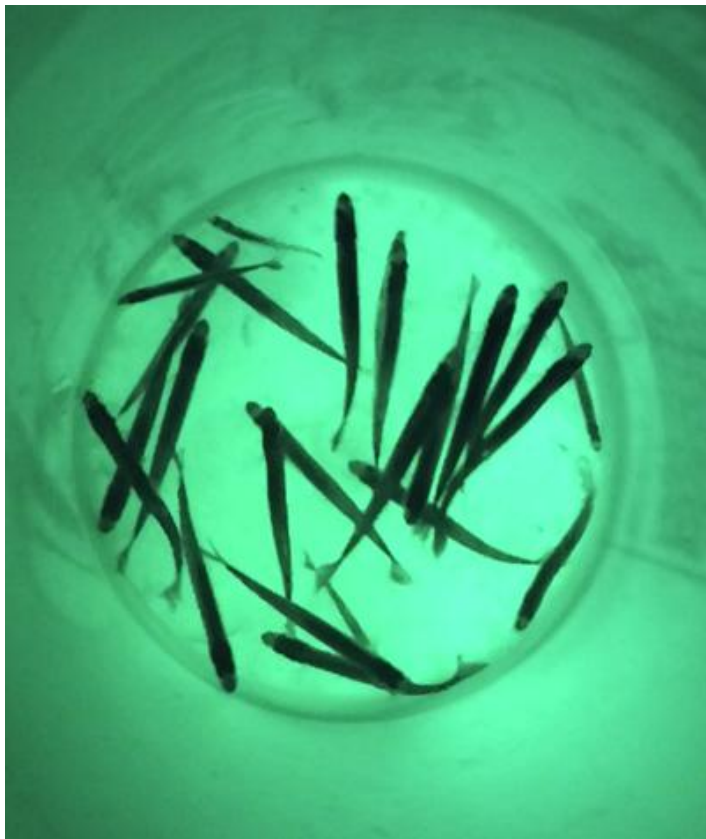
Fishing at night with a light has been a popular technique for a long time. We have heard stories from the old timers about using old car headlights hooked up to car batteries to attract the bait fish and the game fish. Like most aspects of ice fishing, this technology has improved greatly in recent years. The latest product that we have had a chance to work with is the Hydro Glow Fishing Light. This light is an LED light that connects to any 12v battery. The main difference in these lights compared to your conventional fishing light is that the Hydro Glow has green LED lights, not white. The theory is that the light draws in zooplankton, which draws baitfish, which ultimately



## Expanding Your Time On The Water

[D & B Ice Adventures](#)





draws in the larger target fish. The benefit of the green light is that it is far less offensive to the fish so they are more aggressive and less skittish. Our experiences lately have affirmed this.

While you can't beat knowledge on of a body of water, using common sense about locations is what makes us successful. Predominately, weeds will hold your panfish, main lake features will hold your trout, and depending on the lake, smelt will either be roaming basins or shallow at the mouths inlets. To touch more on the locations that we would target we will give more details on a few successful trips from this winter.

As a romantic Valentines date, Dylan took his girlfriend out for her first smelt trip on a local reservoir that has a robust population. From past experiences, these smelt will be cruising deep water all year until their runs in the spring to spawn. The bite on this particular night was

good. It took three holes to find the desired 25 foot depth and about 5 minutes with a Hydro Glow in the water to be stacked top to bottom with smelt. The bite was steady and we never had to drop down more than a few feet. For most of the night, Mary sat with her head over the hole watching them coming in and work the bait. As the wind started to pick up, we packed up our gear and made our way home. Walking off the ice, Mary expressed her hopes of going again soon!

A few weeks back, a medium sized trout pond was the target lake. We tried several locations with varying topography. By using Navionics, we were able identify several key features to the lake that we thought would act as a funnel for the fish. Unsuccessfully, we tried sharp shoreline breaks and deep water weed-lines. It wasn't until we fished the slope of sandy hump coming out of deep water that we found some willing fish. The hump came up to about 10 feet out of 40+ and we were positioned over 18'. Using fatheads on medium size hooks, the fish came in waves anywhere from the bottom to 7 feet below the ice.

For the last example, our favorite species for targeting, the elusive crappie. We set up near deep water in short (3' tall) but dense weeds in 8 feet of water. We targeted the pockets where there was a break in the weeds. This pocket would allow for just a little easier fishing with the electronics but would also let the light illuminate just a little





bit better. Crappie will also use these holes as ambush points as they hold in the thicker cover waiting on a snack. As most crappie fishermen know, crappies will often feed heavily at night. After a short wait while the hydro-glow did it's job building the food pyramid, the fishing was fantastic. We were able to catch bluegills and crappie with ease for the better part of our outing.

Like any new tool in your ice fishing arsenal, the light is more effective the more you understand how to use it. We have had unsuccessful trips with the light as well as successful. The placement of the light is critical and can vary depending on the body of water. It is also important to mention that fishing with a light at night isn't legal in all states so check your local regulations before deploying one. We have found that when fishing shallow the light is most effective in the hole, hanging below the ice just a few inches. Deeper situations might call for the light to hang a little deeper, or it may not, you really need to try multiple set-ups to see which one works best for you and your fishing situation.

It is no secret that people have been catching fish at night for as long as people have been fishing but not many people have the drive to fish every minute possible like us. Fishing at



night is a great way to spend some time on the ice when life's responsibilities call you during day light hours. Hopefully we have introduced you to a few new techniques and tools to make that precious time more enjoyable by putting more fish on the ice.



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# Product Review: Bites Back Fishing,

## Part 1

### The Basic Idea

The idea behind Bites Back Fishing's line of hardbaits is to make a fishing lure that's totally weedless but, at the same time, have that lure provide a secure and reliable hookset. That's a serious and difficult task. It's easy to make a lure weedless. It's the hooking part that makes for trouble.

### How They Work

Bites Back Fishing has developed something that looks as if it might do both. The hooks in all Bites Back hardbaits are designed so that they fold back inside flat wings that are molded into the body of the lure. As a practical matter, it's almost impossible to snag one regardless of how thick and nasty the cover. They are, indeed, weedless.

The hooks are deployed by means of a small lever on the belly of the lure. When the fish takes the bait in its mouth and clamps down on that lever the hooks spring out putting them in a position to make an unobstructed hookset.

### Physical Construction

The baits are well-built. We bounced a couple of them off a bluff wall without any serious damage.

The finish on the baits is adequate. It's better than some but not nearly as realistic as others. If you're looking for a bait that looks exactly like the real thing, this product is not for you.

If, however, you agree that it's more important to be able to put the bait where the fish are than it is to swim a photocopy of a minnow around in open





water you'll be satisfied with any of the Bites Back finishes.

### In the Water Performance

The crankbaits — all sizes and running depths — have a wide, (very) slow wobble to them. There's



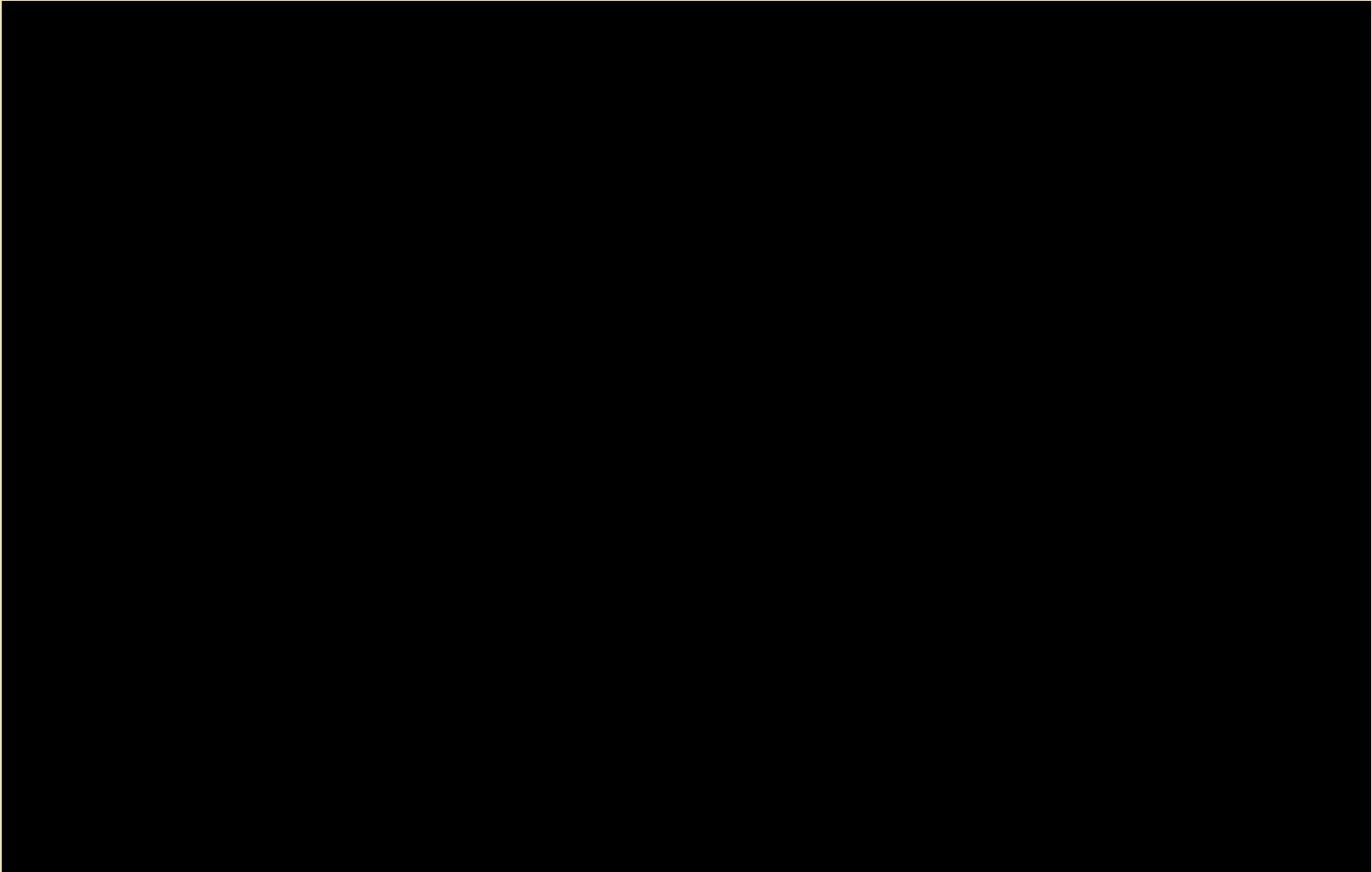
### WEEDLESS LURES

probably not a lot of vibration coming off the baits but they have a very enticing sway about them as they swim through the water.

The topwater and ultra-shallow models walk easily. Those that are supposed to pop or sputter do so without a lot of angler effort.

All the on-the-water testing was done with Lew's rods and reels spooled with Vicious monofilament line.

Every hardbait tested ran true and straight right out of the package.





Unfortunately, because of the harsh winter, shallow bass were not available in March for our testing. They had not yet moved into shallow brush and cover and so we couldn't get enough bites to thoroughly test the triggering mechanism under real world conditions.



There doesn't seem to be any reason it won't work, however. We had no problems when we repeatedly depressed the triggering mechanism with a forefinger. Moderate pressure deployed the hooks on all the baits tested. If you want to make the trigger a little more sensitive, all you have to do is lubricate it with a scent product of some sort.



These lures are available in enough colors to satisfy most anglers. There are three natural looking colors — Blue Herring, Golden Sunfish and Silver Shad — along with a Green Tiger finish for those anglers who want something a little brighter.

### Cost

The crankbait models retail for \$5.99 each. The frogs retail for \$6.50 or \$7.50 depending upon the model.

### Conclusion

This is a lure worth having. They're not expensive and, when you want to fish where the other guys can't, they just might be the ticket especially when the fish are aggressive and are serious about grabbing the bait.

Bites Back also manufactures a line of jigs, spinnerbaits, buzzbaits, spoons and hooks. All are weedless. We'll cover them next month in Part 2 of this product review.

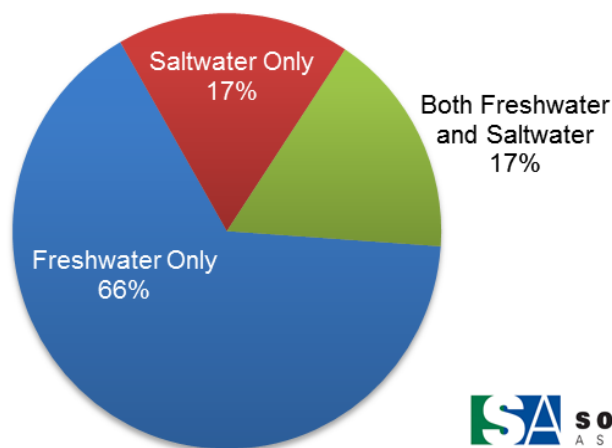




# Fishing and Hunting Trends

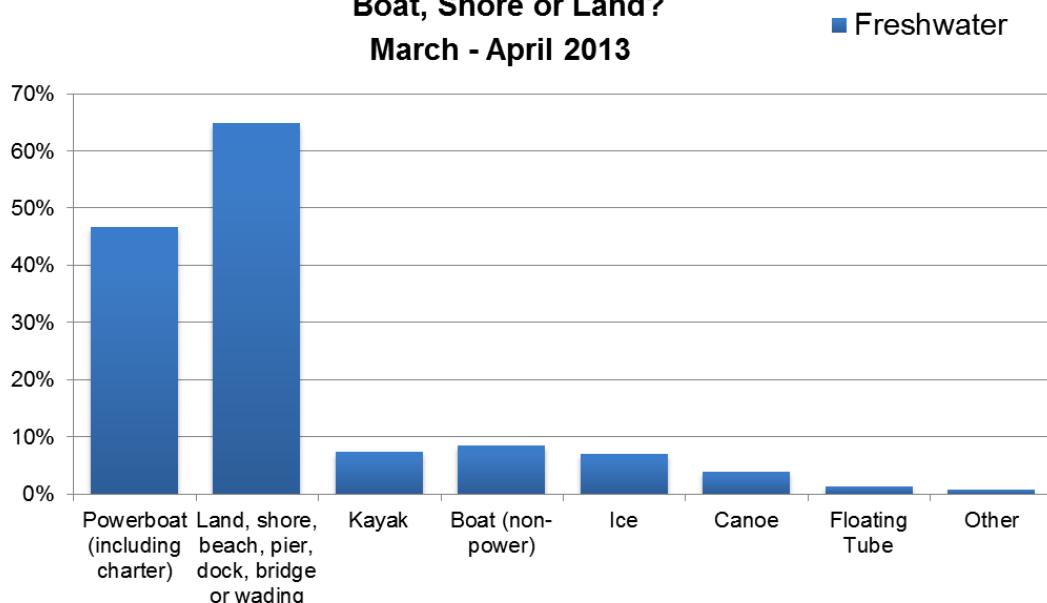
## Who's Been Fishing Where?

### Freshwater vs. Saltwater Angling March - April 2013



## Where Are They Fishing From?

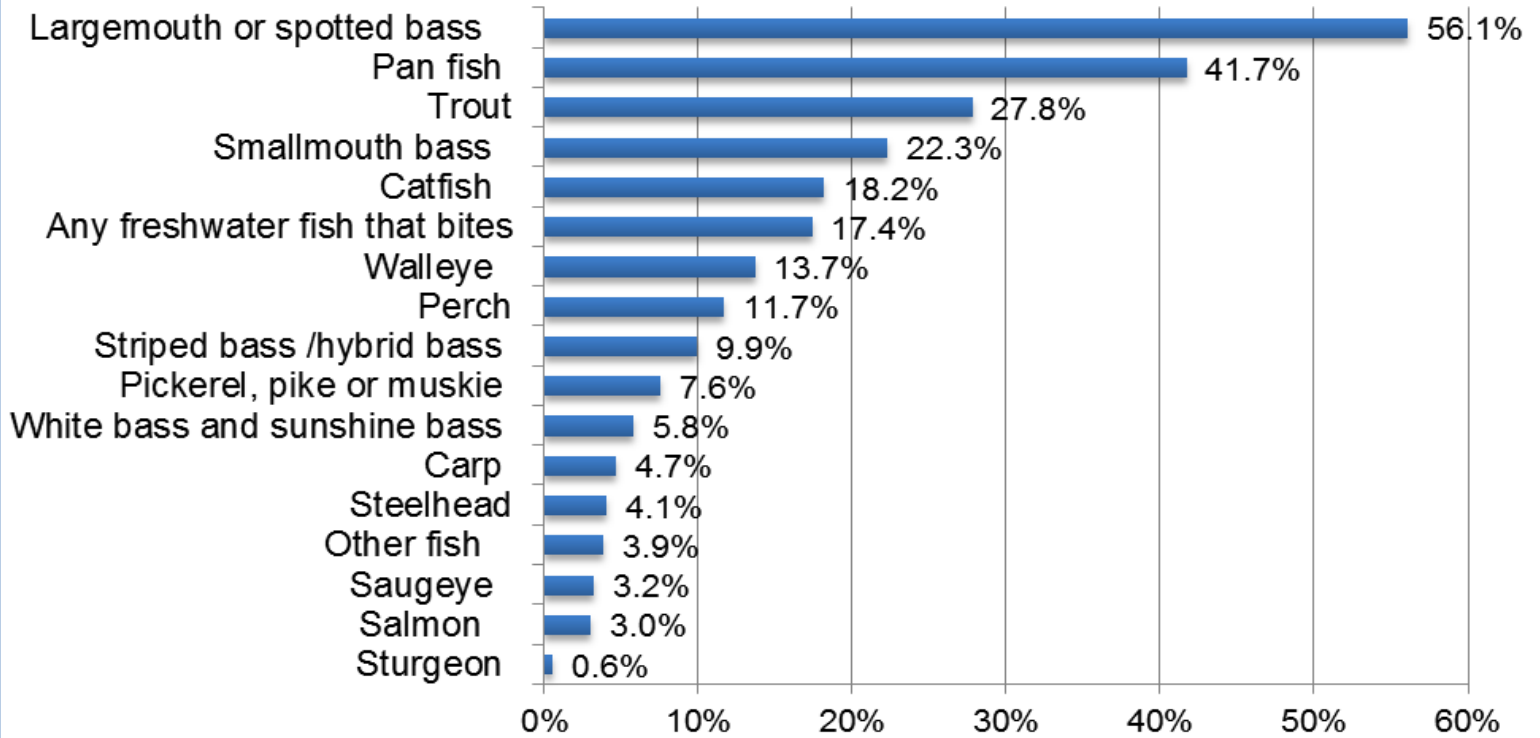
### Boat, Shore or Land? March - April 2013



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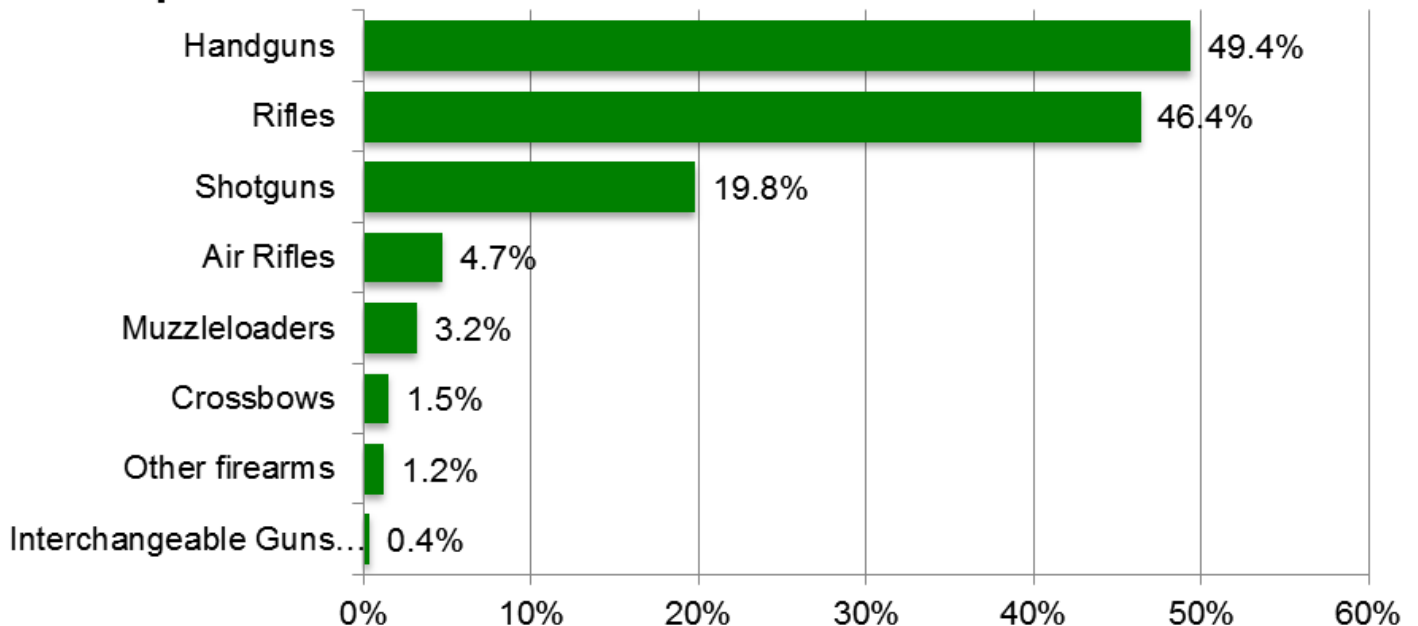


## Freshwater species targeted in March - April 2013



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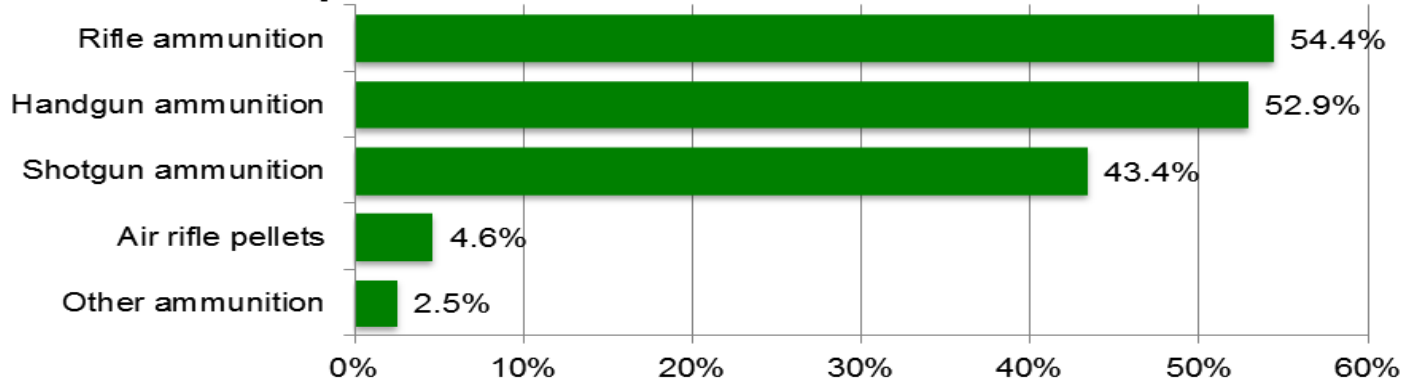
## Types of firearms purchased in March - April 2013



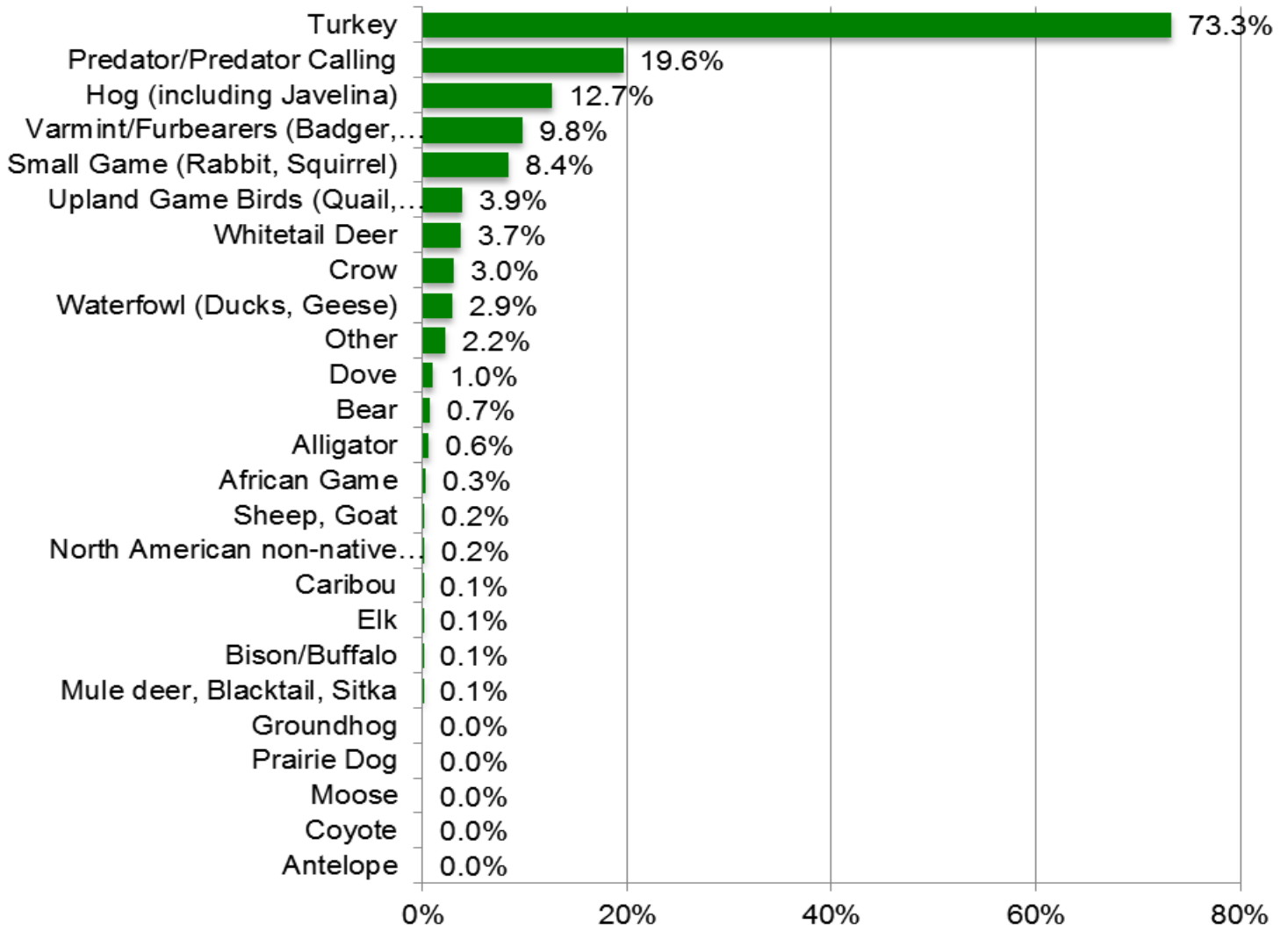
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## Types of ammunition purchased in March - April 2013



## Species hunted in March - April 2013





# Ice Out Panfish

By Bob Jensen

Most of the ponds and many of the small lakes across the Midwest are either free of ice or will be soon. For those of us that are looking forward to getting back to open-water fishing, that means it's time to get the panfish gear together. In some places we fish panfish because walleye, bass, and pike seasons aren't open, but in many other places we get after panfish because they're fun to catch and a great way to kick off the fishing season. If you would like to feel a tug on your line and catch a couple fish for the table, following are some ideas.



There are a couple of ways we can approach this panfish thing right after ice-out: We can cast a small jig to different types of cover and retrieve it slowly, or we can rig that jig below a slip-bobber and fish it very slowly. The mood of the fish will determine the best presentation, and we can only determine the mood of the fish by experimenting a little.

Many successful panfish anglers will start with a small jig and a casting presentation. The specie of panfish you're after will determine jig size. If you're after crappies start with something like a sixteenth ounce Fire-fly or Gypsi jig (pictured on next page). Crappies have a larger mouth than most panfish, so they can handle larger baits. Start off casting these jigs tipped with a small minnow or piece of plastic,



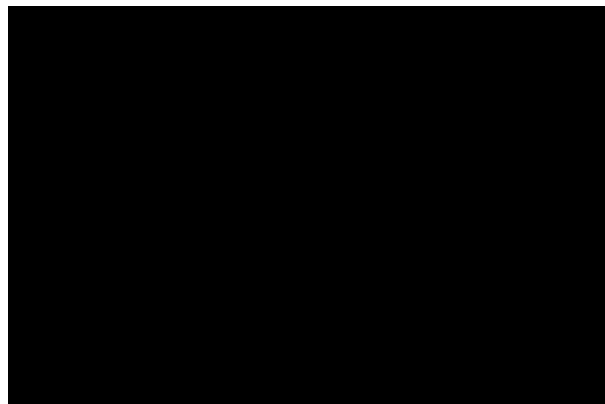
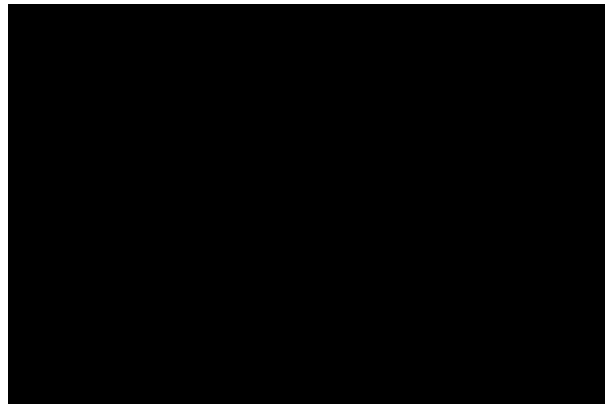


in warmer water for the most active fish.

If the crappies don't respond very well to this presentation, and you believe that there are some in the areas you're fishing, rig up a slip-bobber and slow down. Slip-bobbers are great tools for suspending a bait right in a fish's face. Not very many fish, crappies or otherwise, can resist a small minnow wiggling on a jig right in front of them.

Bluegills and sunfish and the like have smaller mouths and generally prefer smaller baits. Maybe start with something in the one-thirty second ounce size, but don't hesitate to go smaller. A Bro's Slug Bug (pictured above) is a jig that was designed for ice-fishing, but it's also a great panfish bait in open water. With these smaller baits, it is usually necessary to cast them with a slip-bobber and small split-shot. Adjust the bobber depth so your bait is just above where you think the fish will be holding.

As always, experiment with lure color.



Some very successful panfish anglers like black in the spring because there are a lot of bugs hatching and most of them are black. It's the old "match-the-hatch" theory. However, I've caught lots of panfish on very bright colors.

Also experiment with how you work that jig, especially under a bobber. Sometimes some sharp snaps followed by no action will get the fish to eat, other times it's best to just let the minnow provide the action. Let the fish show you what they want.

After a long winter, many of us are really anxious to get on the water again, and panfish are a great way to start off the open-water season. Keep a couple but put most of them back and we'll be able to enjoy this action for a long time.

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something like an Impulse one inch Tube, to deeper cover such as docks, brushpiles, boat lifts, or anything else that can provide cover. As the fish get more active they will move closer to shore. Look for cover



Swim jigs have a reputation for catching big bass out of heavy cover. There is no telling how many tournaments have been won or giant bass caught on a swim jig. Of all the swim jigs built, Santone Lures' has a reputation for having the best designed and constructed.



# Advanced Swim Jig Tips

**By Brad Wiegmann**

Fishing a swim jig can be as easy as taking one out of the package, putting on your favorite trailer and casting it out towards cover or structure then reeling it back in.

Sure you will catch fish doing that, but if you really want to catch big limits or giant bass consistently, presentation is the key to being successful.

“Over the past few years a swim jig has become my go to lure. Of course the only one I will fish with is the Santone Lure Chris McCall Rayburn Swim Jig. Its designed to always track true right out of the package, it never rolls no matter how fast you reel it, you can fish it through the nastiest stuff without getting hung up and the head design gives the trailer a lifelike shimmying action,” said professional angler and recent winner of the FLW Rayovac Texas Division, Chris McCall.

What swim jigs do better than any other jig is come through cover and structure effortlessly while resembling forage. They can be fished in all kinds of aquatic vegetation, around docks, riprap, boulders, wood or any place where bass use to ambush forage. Anywhere you go, a swim jig will catch bass.

Not just any jig can be used for swimming through cover and structure. The wrong jig head style will get hung up on everything it comes in contact with or not resemble forage to induce a strike.

Legendary Texas reservoir, Sam Rayburn, has been an extensive testing site for eminent lure designer, professional angler and fishing guide, Brian Branum. “The Santone Lures Sam Rayburn Swim Jig ([www.santonelures.com](http://www.santonelures.com)) gets its name from where it was designed, tested and has become one of the





hottest selling swim jigs in the past five years,” said Branum. He noted a numerous tournaments across the United States have been won on the Rayburn Swim Jig since they were first built.

“Earlier in my fishing career, I noticed an angler fishing with a homemade light wire round ball head jig reeling it in fast to catch bass. It wasn’t the best jig head or hook for the application, but it did catch a few fish. I decided to build my own jig for fishing this technique, however, instead of reproducing his jig design, I came up with a completely different jig with a larger head with a different

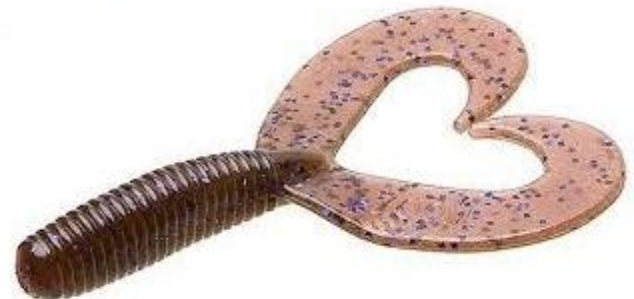
shape and a bigger, stronger hook,” said Branum.

Branum also designed the Santone Lure Rayburn Swim Jig to have a two tone paint finish on the jig head and weedguard. “By making the jig head and weedguard two tone it breaks up the profile resulting in more bites,” said Branum.

He also included Center Eye Technology in the design of the Rayburn Swim Jig. “Center Eye Technology means the eye of the jig is moved back towards the rear of the head towards the hook point. The end result is a better hook up ratio for anglers,” said Branum.

“The Rayburn Swim Jig also features an innovative flat angle head. It allows the swim jig to be hopped around lay downs, stumps, docks or just on the ground without hanging up because the flat part keeps the lure upright. An angler can also put a swim bait on the jig and its design will make the lure have a lifelike shimmy,” said Branum.

Although a swim jig can be fished anywhere successfully, professional bass angler Dickey Newberry noted that on



Sam Rayburn Lake or Toledo Bend Reservoir at certain times of the year fishing a swim jig behind the grass line or on top of the grass line can be deadly for catching bass. “You’re really missing out if you don’t fish a swim jig when big bass are in those areas,” said Newberry.

Newberry added one more tip when fishing grass. “After I fish an area with a trap style lure and the bass stop biting, I will change up and fish a white swim jig in the same spot and catch fish,” said Newberry.

Trailer selection is also vital when fishing a swim jig. “A good general rule of thumb for me is when the water is cold I use a flapping twin tail style of soft plastic lures like the Gambler Flappy Daddy, NetBait Paca Crawl, Zoom twin tail or Speed Vibe (all pictured top to bottom, on prior page). Once the water warms up from the spawn forward, I will use a shad imitating soft plastic swimbait as a trailer,” said Branum.

As for swim jig and trailer colors, Branum and Newberry will experiment each day to see what bass are biting on best. Normally they begin with a Rayburn Swim Jig matching the forage color patterns. If that doesn’t work they will try other colored Rayburn Swim Jigs including the just released lite hitch, southern bream, threadfin shad, blue gizzard shad, alewife and sun perch.

As for equipment, McCall, Branum and Newberry agree a high quality strong, heavy action rod at least seven foot in length should be used when fishing a swim jig. McCall will switch up to a seven foot medium heavy action when fishing the finesse swim jig model. They don’t agree on fishing line to use. Branum uses 65 pound braid while Newberry likes 20 pound fluorocarbon line and McCall uses 15 pound fluorocarbon on the finesse swim jig model.



Recently, anglers have requested swim jigs with even larger hooks than what’s in the original Rayburn Swim Jig. To meet the demands, Santone has come out with a swim jig featuring a Gamakatsu Siwash Monster Hook. Branum pointed out that anglers can pull out the stems of lily pads before this hook will ever bend.

Why the bigger hook? “Obviously down on Sam Rayburn where we have lots of big bass it’s a necessity to have a big enough hook to land a giant bass, but that goes for anywhere across the United States where you have big bass like Lake Guntersville, Lake Amistad, Lake Okeechobee or Clear Lake,” said Branum. Currently the Rayburn Siwash Swim Jig is available in 7/16-ounce and soon in 5/16- and 9/16-ounce.

“One of the techniques where a bigger swim jig model with the big Siwash Gami hook is going to catch them is in the grass. Anglers on famous grass reservoirs like Lake Guntersville or Sam Rayburn will be able to slow roll it then pop it out when it gets hung up making it dart to get a

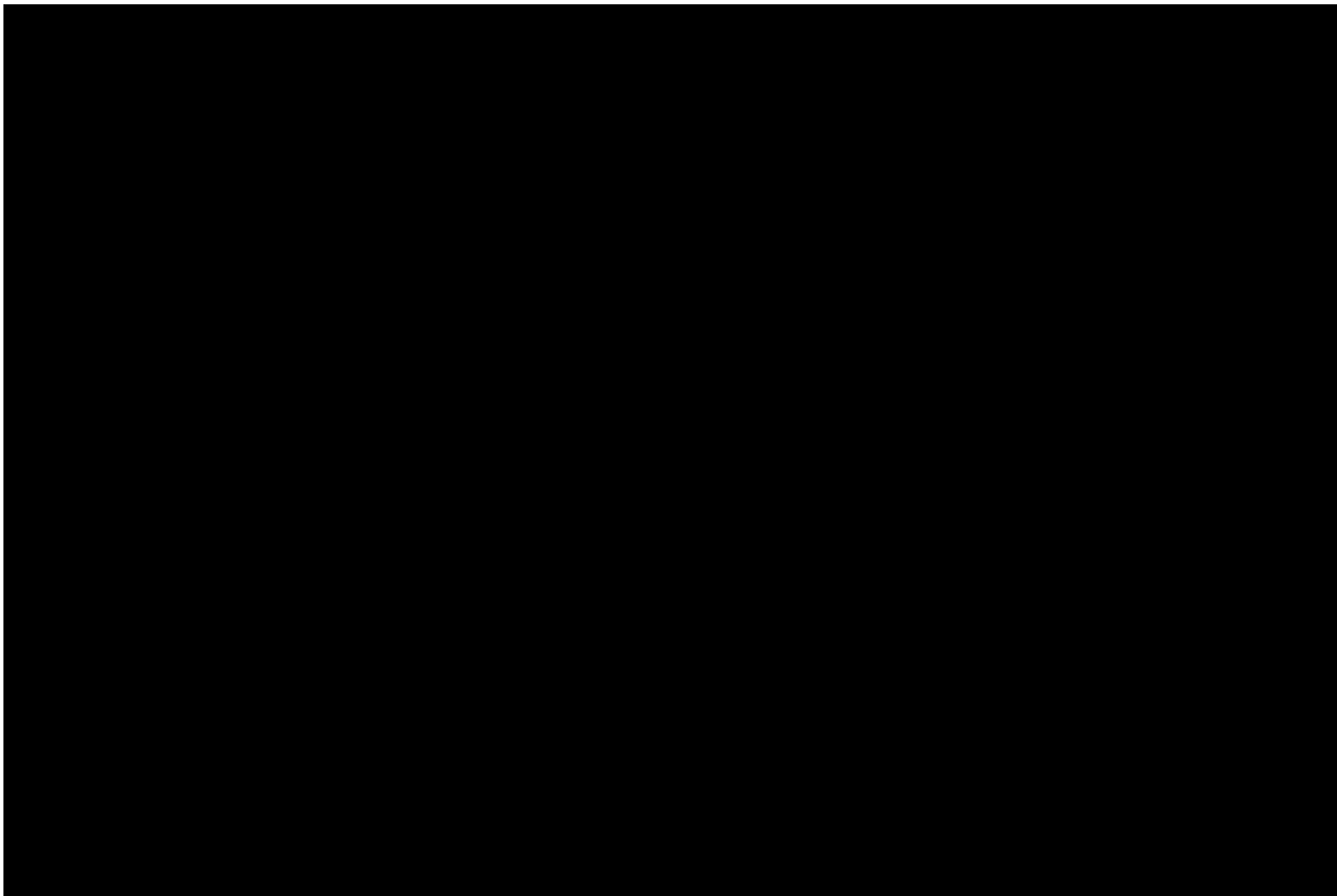


reaction strike like a lipless crankbait,” said McCall. McCall noted anglers should start with a red color pattern swim jig when fishing in the grass. “As for a trailer to put on the big Siwash Gami hook, I would use a Gambler Flappy Daddy or Gambler Big EZ swimbait,” said McCall.

Santone Lures also has a new Rayburn Swim Jig built with a finesse hook. “Anglers from across the United States were requesting a swim jig with a finesse hook to fish. They are fishing lakes, rivers and reservoirs with clear water clarity and eel grass or other vegetation easy to pull through,” said Branum. The finesse Rayburn Swim Jig is available in 3/16- or 5/16-ounce model with a 5/0 Mustad light wire jig hook.

“I think the reservoirs like Table Rock, Texoma or any reservoir without lots of grass is where the new Rayburn Swim Jig is going to excel. Anglers are going to use it when bass are guarding fry or when the shad spawn is going on,” said McCall. McCall pointed out he would use a white pattern Reaction Innovations Little Dippers or Gambler Little EZ swimbait on a shad colored swim jig or a bream colored pattern around bass guarding fry.

“The option of having different hook sizes and weight in Chris McCall Rayburn Swim Jigs is really exciting. It’s going to open the door to how and where you can fish a swim jig.” McCall continued, “Sometime to get a bite or win a tournament you have to be doing something different from all the other anglers.”



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# Erie Walleye Anglers Take Notice of Perfect 10

By Abe Smith

Charter captains on the Great Lakes don't waste much time testing every new lure that hits the market. They know the two or three best baits for trolling for walleyes and that's that. Don't even bring a new lure to the party.

So, when a lure crashes in from nowhere to enter the ranks of elite Lake Erie walleye baits, the old timers get a little upset. Solid belief systems are shaken. Old confidences are questioned.

It happened last fall in the Central Basin. The Smithwick Perfect 10 Rogue counted coup on walleye and topped the performance of every hardbait competitor, old and new.

"By season's end a lot of captains had all but abandoned the traditional trolling lures they've used for years," says angler Matt Hougan.



## Derby winner

If Hougan gets exuberant over the success of the Perfect 10, he has good reason. As a salesman for Smithwick, Cotton Cordell, Bomber and other fishing companies, he represented the companies as first-time sponsor for the Fall Brawl, a popular month-long walleye event in Erie's Central Basin, which stretches roughly from Huron to Cleveland.

Hougan fished the first evening of the 2013 Fall Brawl, and his boat captain rigged up with traditional Erie trolling lures. Hougan always finds this situation a little awkward, but captains use what has worked in the past and what they feel gives their anglers the best shot at catching big walleyes. After fishing for



nearly an hour without a strike, however, he asked the captain if they could give “one of my baits” a chance.

No doubt the crew expected Hougan to pull a Cordell Wally Diver or a bait from the Bomber Long A series from his bag. But the sight of several Smithwick Perfect 10 Rogues sparked another thought.

“I had brought them with me, but the truth is I hadn’t fished a Perfect 10 yet,” recalls Hougan. “It was a ‘bass bait’ (that had gained some acclaim during the 2013 Bassmaster Classic). I didn’t know if it would work, but I had a hunch it would.”

Prior night patterns had found fish feeding in the upper third of the 30- to 38-foot water column. The

captain set the bait exactly as he had the others, 10 to 15 feet behind a side-planer board.

He had barely set the rod in the holder when it buckled. Minutes later, a walleye weighing nearly seven pounds came over the gunwale.

The first fish proved to be no accident when they went to reset the line.

“Another fish took it before we could get the rod set,” says Hougan. “Immediately, everyone on board was asking if I had any more Perfect 10s.”

He had a few customer samples, and each saw serious use that evening.

“There we were, cutting tags off and tying them on more rods,” he laughs, recalling how quickly the crew had volunteered to get his baits walleye-ready. “We had started out with all competitors’ baits, but by the end of the night we were running all Perfect 10s.”

Word spread through the tournament ranks that night, and it continued to spread. Within a couple of weeks, almost everyone Hougan talked to was pulling the new jerkbait.

### **Back at the bait shop...**

So you don’t think this is just a salesman’s story created to add money to his bottom line instead of adding fish to yours, outdoor writer and tackle shop owner Craig Lewis lends credibility to Hougan’s



account. Lewis owns Erie Outfitters tackle shop and Internet sales operation in the Ohio community of Sheffield Lake. Lake Erie walleye hunters form a large part of his customer base.

"These guys know what works, and the most-popular lures for the area haven't changed much in a few years," said Lewis. "This year, though, the Perfect 10 fired off and stayed hot throughout the fall season. It was really a dominant bait."

And, with some veteran Erie trollers claiming the Perfect 10 outfished other baits by margins of five- and six-to-one, the word is getting out.

Why did the Perfect 10 dominate Erie walleyes this fall? Only the fish know for sure, but the Erie think tank largely credits three attributes:

- 1) Speed control -- It has a wider wobbling action than some of the tight-wiggle mainstays, and can maintain its action at very slow trolling speeds.
- 2) A wiggle with your roll -- Its "Rogue" action adds a side-to-side roll to its wobble, which produces more baitfish flash.
- 3) It thumps -- A big single tungsten rattle generates a "thump" and vibration that is distinctive from the ticking sounds of baits with more conventional, multiple rattles.



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Veteran Erie anglers know that walleye color preferences do not always align with the forage base. About half the colors of the Perfect 10 Rogue line-up are subtle, transparent baitfish generalizations. The rest feature reflective sides that produce bright baitfish flashes when in motion.

“All of the colors are selling, but the best by far has been Lemon Lime Crush,” says Lewis. “After that, it’s a tie between Clown and what marketing calls ‘Lady.’ The Emerald Shiner actually is a good perch imitation for us because of its color patterns.”

Other colors with a reported following are Table Rock Gold, Juice and Ayu. Reports are that the most

productive color patterns for daytime trolling are just as effective at night.

### Rigging

At night, walleye tend to suspend higher in the water column, and a standard side-planer set-up with the bait running 10 to 15 feet behind the board seems to keep the Perfect 10 right where they want it.

When sunlight drives fish deeper, however, trollers add 1 1/2-ounce in-line weights about 6 feet in front of the bait and extend the line between board and bait 35 to 55 feet.

Many of Erie’s walleye watchers regard last fall’s performance by the Perfect 10 as a mere dress rehearsal for the big show that lies ahead. Historically, early spring walleye





patterns pick up where they left off at early ice. That bodes well for the Perfect 10's spring debut in the "West" come March and April.

"It will be lights out when folks in the Western Basin figure it out," Hougan said. "A lot of the guys who fish the Central Basin also fish the Western Basin, which is where the fish concentrate in early spring. I'm sure other guys will figure out what they are using."

Bigger yet could be the bait's prospects this summer after precision-minded trollers have calculated the Perfect 10 Rogue's depth dynamics.

"The guys who fish walleye here are all about the Dive Charts," explains Hougan. "They have trolling down to a science, and they know precisely how deep they can get any particular bait to run with a given line test, weight, attractor and other variables."

He also predicts that by summer, charter captains and Weekend Warriors alike will be trolling Perfect 10s in 55-foot depths.

"We're pretty sure this is not just a cold water phenomenon," says Hougan. "We'll have to see. But if you have a bait that outfishes the competition in cold water and in warm water alike, you're golden!"



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After our morning ritual of coffee and breakfast on the porch with the squirrel monkeys in the Amazon Rainforest, we put on our hiking boots, packed the fishing gear and headed into the jungle. Upon emerging from the dense foliage and into a clearing we discovered a hidden jewel. It was a pristine beach surrounded with marshes and a canal

from the Rio Negro leading into a small lagoon. Exotic birds were feeding in the grass beds along the water's edge and the

# The Elusive Piranha Preta

## Part 2, By Nici Haerter

murky water was alive with activity. My eyes quickly scanned the muddy banks for any sign of caimans. Sure enough, I spotted a couple of trails along the water's edge. We were going to have to be cautious.

With baited hooks of raw meat, we cast along a weed line not more than four feet from the shore. Immediately we had action and landed a red-belly. The water was churning and the piranha were in a feeding frenzy. It wasn't long before we had another stringer of brightly colored piranhas. I decided to cast out beyond the weed bed but, using the cane pole, I just couldn't reach it. With my love for wading, I decided to venture into the shallows in my hiking boots. Not a good idea. I immediately sunk in mud up to my knees. At the same time, I heard my husband shout "Caiman on your left! Get out of the water!" I saw the familiar triangle of eyes and nose sticking out of the weeds watching me from about a 15 foot distance. I had invaded his territory and he was keeping a vigilant eye on me. I peddled backwards as quickly as I could, safe again on land. Okay, wading was not going to be an option today. All of this additional commotion in the water set the piranha on fire. More churning and boiling, however, this time it was different. I now spotted black fins rising out of the water. Could it be the black piranha? Skip and I gave each other a look and started casting. There were no time for words. The piranha preta suddenly arrived and were churning right in front of us. They attacked immediately, aggressive and strong, this was going to be a good fight. No problem setting the hook on these monsters. I had to drag the fish through the weed bed, hoping and praying all the time that I wouldn't have to fight with the



caiman over my prized catch. When it finally landed on shore, I stepped on it, gently releasing the hook and keeping my fingers as far away from the mouth as possible. Vicious and aggressive by nature, their mouths are lined with rows of sharp teeth that could easily take off a finger.

With no bucket for our fish, Skip dug a deep hole in the sand, threw the fish in it and covered them for protection from the birds. We kept fishing and he landed two more. Then, just as quickly as it began, the boiling and churning stopped and our window of opportunity had disappeared. The blazing heat from the jungle sun was bearing down on us and the fish had retreated to deeper waters.

I can only imagine what a sight we must have been to the newly arrived tree house guests as we returned from the jungle. I was caked in mud up to my knees, slinging a makeshift stringer of red and yellow piranha. Skip had his hands full of black piranha and blood was running down his arm from an incident with sharp teeth. Fabio met us with a proud smile on his face. I handed him the poles back with a hug of gratitude. Mission accomplished, I had conquered the Piranha Preta. That evening we dined on delicious piranha soup.



When we returned home to Florida, one of our first priorities was a trip to the local bait and tackle shop. We put together a care package for Fabio. It included a new spinning rod and plenty of extra hooks, weights and line. With hopes and prayers that it would arrive in the jungle safely, we mailed it to Brazil. About a month later, I received a post on my Facebook page. No note attached, just a blurry picture of Fabio holding his new spinning rod in one hand, tackle in the other, and wearing a very big smile. No words necessary.



Nici Haerter is a professional musician, freelance writer and avid angler. [www.Harpbynici.com](http://www.Harpbynici.com)

# Fishing Specific Spots “Hot Spots”

**By Captain Mike Gerry**

Time on the water has proven many things over the years I have been fishing; nothing has become more prevalent than the ability to catch fish on some very specific structure and a very specific spot. Many



areas of your lake can qualify as hot spots the issue is finding these areas that become havens for fish to hang on and feed on.

The way to do this is to understand some very basic principles of locating bass. The first thing to look for is underwater points, today's technology and the use of Navionics mapping, underwater points are very easily defined on your map. The next thing is to be aware that not all the area of a apparent hot spot area like a hard bottom, or shell bed holds fish; in fact the area holding bass can be as small as the size of your boat; it can easily be somewhere in the 10 by 20 feet in size. Meaning that when you do fish an apparent hot spot and you get a bite the area your fishing can narrow down to a very small window, and your job will be to stay on the small area to keep the fish biting. It's also very possible that the area is very specific to the proper fishing angle so work the spot from many angles until a fishing direction produces the bite and use that angle as your approach to catch the next fish.

The bottom make up can also become an indicator of where the bass are holding, shell bottoms are one of the best fish holding bottom structures on any lake. Finding the structure is as important as anything you can do while searching for bass; bass are structure holding predators that need hiding places, so use the structure and visualize how bass would hold and how they would position to hide like any predator. Where would they hide, is very similar as where you might hide if you were using a tree to play hide and seek.

Hot spots are narrow, defined and specific, find them and you will find the fish!

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# **DAN'S FISH 'N' TALES®**

## **The Five C's To Fishing Success**

**By Dan Galusha**

One of the toughest, but most important times to apply the 5 "C's" is when filming a television show. Here the author was shooting a "clutch" show, with most of the concentration devoted to the show, using an unfamiliar lure, but using enough of the C's helped save the day. The complete show about fishing the Gulp Alive Minnow can be seen on the Dan's Fish 'N' Tales® You Tube channel. (photo by Brad Mosier)

People have long talked about certain lures and techniques being the secret to fishing success. However, setting back and thinking about the lures and techniques there is usually a reason as to why they are successful. In most cases they fall into one or more of five categories that create most successful fishing trips.

These five categories can be called the "Five C's" to fishing success, which are casting, control, confidence, concentration and courage. While each is a separate part of the equation, they must work hand-in-hand to bring about maximum results.

The following breakdown explains each of the categories.

### **CASTING**

It is extremely important to learn the proper way to use spinning, spincasting and baitcasting rigs. Each plays a vital role in presenting the many varieties of lures/baits available. As an example, a 1/16-ounce crappie jig would be the most effective on an ultra-light spinning outfit, while in the opposite direction a medium/heavy casting rig would be a better choice for using with a 1/2-ounce spinnerbait.

Once the basic casting procedures are mastered then it is time to move on to learning different techniques. These include flipping, pitching, roll casting, and "accurate" side arming. All of these

techniques are very important to successful bait presentations.

## **CONTROL**

Control is a three way street. It plays a big part in the aforementioned casting. Without it casting accuracy is out-the-window. Within this same line is lure control. Controlling the proper depth and speed of a lure is crucial to producing strikes.

For those of us using boats "control" is an absolute necessity. If at all possible always face the boat into the current and wind. This will provide more stability and maneuverability. There is nothing worse than being pushed passed a potential hot spot, or being turned in an undesirable direction. Proper boat control also aids in better bait presentation. With the boat pointed up current most casts will be made so the baits will be retrieved in a down current direction. In general, fish feed facing up current. As a result baits coming down current should produce the most strikes.



Boat control is a critical part of successful fishing, as is seen here where the boat is faced into the wind, and controlled with a foot operated trolling motor. (photo by John Francisco)

## **CONFIDENCE**

Perhaps the most important "C" of the group is confidence. Without this none of the others will work. Confidence must be had in baits, techniques, locations, and just about anything used. If confidence starts to waver in any of these during a fishing trip, then start changing to something that will give it another boost.

My most successful confidence "booster" is to tie on my 5 or 6 favorite and most productive lures, and keep switching from rod to rod until a successful pattern is developed. Once a bait and pattern are found then I may start experimenting with variations, but will return quickly to the original if nothing happens.

## **CONCENTRATION**

It is often difficult to do, but try to leave your problems on shore. As with anything else fishing takes a lot of concentration. True, enjoy the natural surroundings, as this is one of the most important elements of fishing, but give everything the bait is doing the most concentration possible. The slightest distraction when fishing a slower presentation, such as a plastic worm, jig or grub can mean a missed fish. Also,





Don Banning who is an accomplished angler and outdoor writer, loves using open face spinning tackle, and shows his concentration as he fishes a plastic worm along a deep weedline.

constant concentration will help in developing a daily pattern, as well as storing information for use on future trips.

Some tournament anglers will not talk to their partners while fishing. It isn't because they are unsociable, in fact they may be quite chatty during a break or when on shore, but instead they are concentrating on everything that happens.

## **COURAGE**

Courage in fishing doesn't mean going fishing in a raging storm or on thin ice. If the fish were really hitting it might take more courage not to go into those conditions. With the fifth "C" to success it means to have the courage to change and build confidence in a different bait, technique or pattern.

Many times something has been a consistent producer when all of a sudden it stops working. Then it is learned that someone else is having success doing something different that is totally foreign to your methods. This is when it takes courage to try the new method.

Combining the five "C's" on a consistent basis may take a little time and self-discipline, but once it is accomplished the accumulation of angling knowledge, and rate of successful trips will definitely increase.

If you have any questions on this or another fishing subject, drop me a line through the Dan's Fish 'N' Tales® website at [www.dansfishntales.com](http://www.dansfishntales.com). This site also provides links to my You Tube channel, and ODU Magazine website.

Until next time, get out on the water, and enjoy a great day of fishing.

Well known for his expertise in crankbait fishing, Johnnie Crain displays his success while fishing a lure in which he has a lot of confidence, a gray Wiggle Wart.





## Spring PANdemonium

### Simple stuff for finding and fishing cool spring crappies

By Calvin Christopher

In search mode, crappie expert Brian “Bro” Brosdahl casts small jigs with soft plastic bodies. Once fish are located, he switches to fuller bodied feathered jigs tipped with minnows. Photo by Bill Lindner Photography

Ask any saltwater angler whether ‘high’ or ‘low’ tide is the pick of the litter, and not only will you get mixed results, but iterations from “the first hour of incoming tide,” to “halfway through outgoing,” to “dead flat – I’m weird like that.”

Maybe not quite so particular, but subjective nonetheless, are freshwater panfish seekers. And in the spring, their preferences arc the spectrum from “sun-soaked bridge pilings,” to “mouths of creeks,” to complexities like “first drops off shallow muddy bays on the north end.” Myriad factors affect their partialities, of course, things like water temperature, water clarity, bottom composition, forage base and the like. So truthfully, to offer one man’s perspective is pretty one-dimensional, given the infiniteness of conceivable factors. But what about two-dimensional? Now that’s diverse.



So unwilling to enter the third dimension, I quizzed two dogged and salty (like character; sometimes language) panfish activists for their perspectives on spring fishing. And it goes something like this:

**Who is your favorite NASCAR driver?**

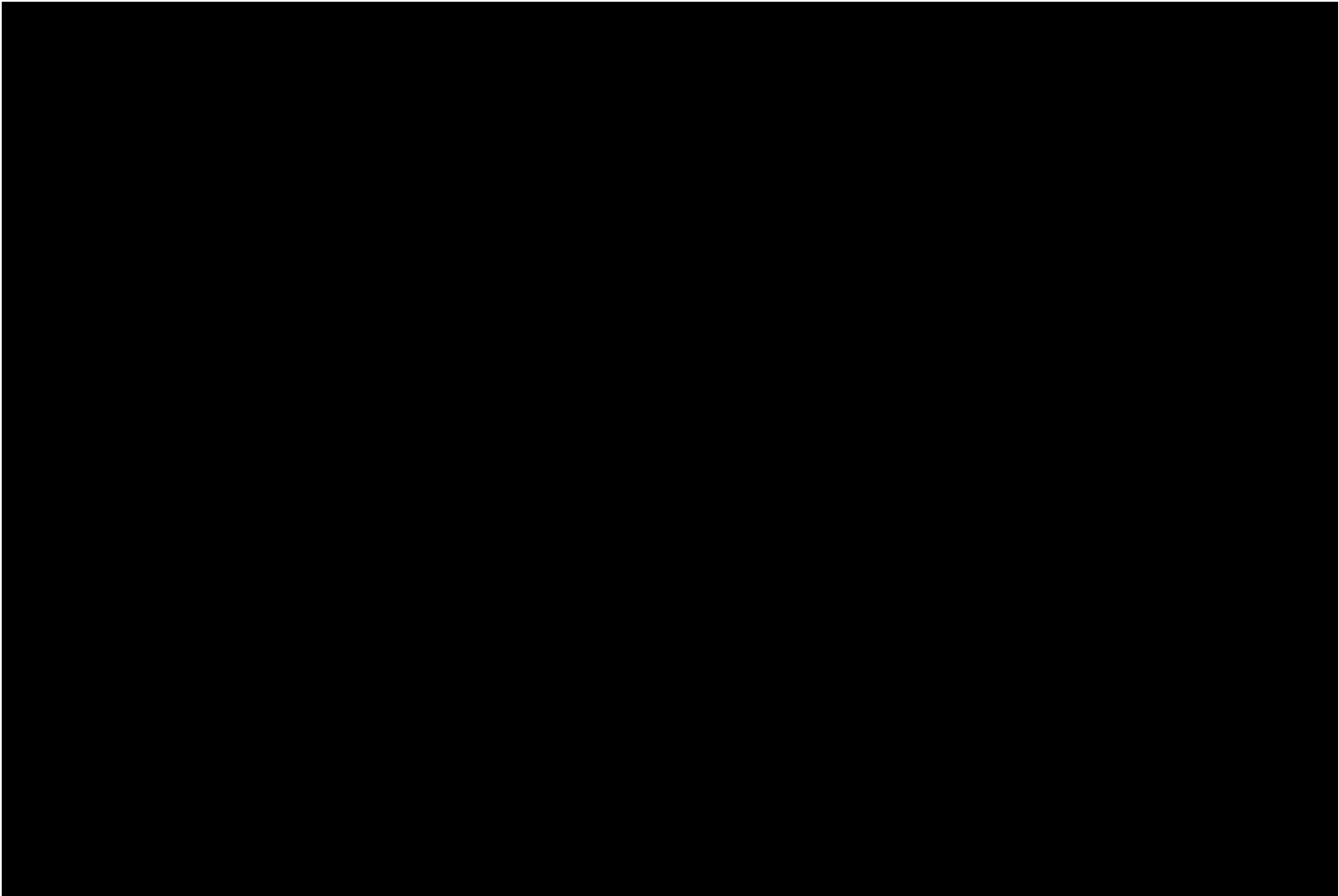
Bro: Dale Earnhardt Jr. It’s hard to live in the shadows of a big name like his dad. Jr.’s carving his niche and I respect that. (Frankly, I thought this question would stymie Bro.)

Neustrom: Dale Earnhardt Jr. He’s the crowd favorite. Great individual. He’s gone up against all the negativity and just races fast. Oh, and Brad Kieslowski – he’s a pain in the ass, and I sort of like that, too.

**Do you open with plastics or livebait on spring crappies?**

Bro: For searching, it’s definitely plastics. And ice fishing sized stuff. I like to put a single Northland Bro’s Bloodworm on a Gill Getter jig (pictured above). Might slide on a piece of waxworm as well. The meat and plastic combo can be lethal in the spring.

Now once I know where they’re at, it’s time for feathered jigs and minnows. Cast it out and swim it back slowly. Give fish time to come over and grab it.





Neustrom: Depends. In clear water, my tendency is to go with minnows. The bite is trickier; fish are spookier. And livebait, well, always looks like livebait. Don't have to worry about matching the hatch.

In darker water, I catch most fish on a jig and curly tail grub. The action does it. And I'm still a firm believer in the effectiveness of vibration.

### **Fish under a float or cast?**

Bro: I use a float when searching during bluebird days. You can work a bait so much slower under a float. No float if the conditions are perfect – low pressure, warmth and some cloud cover. Then it's time to cast and retrieve.

Either way, I'm looking for that one fish that gives up the flock. Humminbird Side Imaging lets me choose those casts wisely, too. It'll show me actual fish, or at the least help me identify key features like emerging weeds and sunken timber – crappies are like glue on early green weeds. And just to make sure they're fresh, I can verify greenness with my Aqua-Vu underwater camera.

Neustrom: Both. I like to pitch and swim plastics first, though. Keep the rod tip high. Reel in slowly. And just watch and feel for the rod to load up. There probably won't be a classic 'bite,' either, so be on the trigger.

I fish with a float if I'm targeting smaller spaces like pockets in the reeds. In cover, the bait needs to sit longer, let fish find it. A 1/32-ounce jig with a minnow or plastic tail works just right under a float.

### **Are you a slave to fishing the northwest corner of a lake?**

Bro: No, not at all. Some of my best spring crappie spots are shallow weedy bays on the south end. But then I'll check the northwest corner of the specific bay. I'd say 60-percent of my natural lake crappies are caught on the northwest corner of the most qualified bay.

And then there are all those nooks and crannies, which can be in any direction. I'm looking for harbors, channels and small sections of water that get a lot of sun but little or no wind. Crappies hate the wind.

Neustrom: No. There's far too much emphasis put on fishing the northwest end of the lake. Instead, I choose smaller lakes with all the right stuff: reeds, bays and darker water. If it looks good, I fish it.



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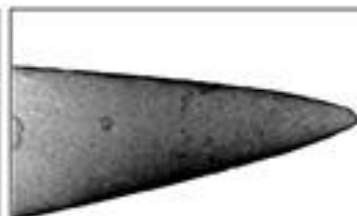
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## Weather goes to hell. Where do you start looking for bites?

Bro: Crappies will hold to structure near shallow feeding areas under cold front conditions. Or, they might hover over holes near prime shallows.

I'll go after them one of two ways. If the fish are 12-feet or deeper, I quietly drift over them dragging feathered jigs. If they're shallow, I'll pitch a heavily weighted float and jig. I want the float barely sticking out of the water so waves roll over it.



Crappie warlords Bro and Neustrom underscore the importance of keeping livebait energized. Minnows are best maintained with Frabill Aqua-Life aeration systems. Photo by Bill Lindner Photography

For both techniques, I'm using a short, 5-foot St. Croix Panfish Series rod. Long rods catch too much wind.

Neustrom: I'll slide out to first break, which might only mean 8- to 12-feet of water. Don't expect the motherlode, but you can still pick away at a few crappies in crummy weather.

I go to a float with a plain VMC hook and a tail-hooked minnow. You have to sit on those fish.

And one more thing, I set my Humminbird on SwitchFire mode. It enhances my view, seeing baitfish and even smaller fish that'll start me on the right path to locating larger crappies.

### Led Zeppelin or the Rolling Stones?

Bro: Tough call, but I'm saying Zeppelin. The guitar riffs are epic. And their aggression and intensity keeps my pulse high, in that good sort of way.

Neustrom: Led Zeppelin. Their creativeness is incredible. Makes you stop and think.

### How does current factor into your site selection?

Bro: Current sorts things out nicely. I can find fish faster. It pushes crappies into pooled-up calm areas associated with logs and timber. And the fish are usually more aggressive.



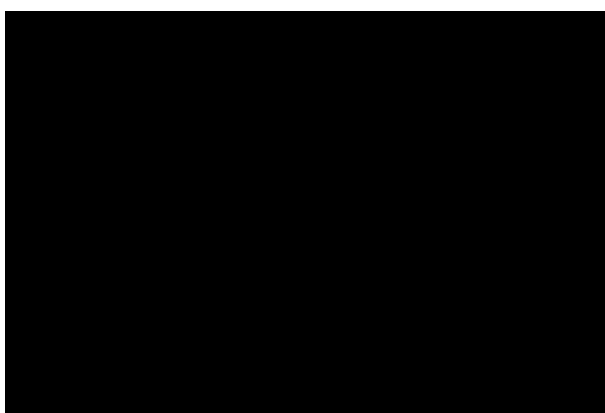
I like to tight-line with a 10-foot St. Croix Panfish Series, reaching out and bumping the jig around. And wherever possible, I lock down with a Minn Kota Talon shallow water anchor. It's the absolute epitome of boat control.

Neustrom: Don't like current much. Maybe the edges, but that's about it. Crappies don't like a lot of movement. They're a different kind of cat.

But with all that said, current flushes in food. So it's typical to find springtime crappies near current areas.

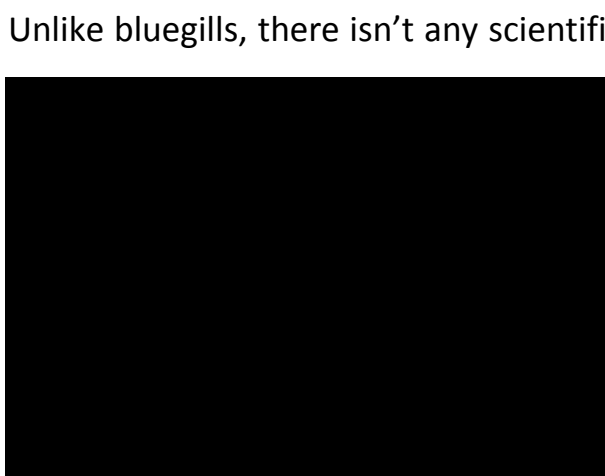


Freshwater Fishing Hall of Famer Tom Neustrom advocates releasing breeding-sized crappies before and during the spawning to promote species proliferation. Photo courtesy of Daiwa



**What are your thoughts on catch & release as it relates to the proliferation of 'big' crappies?**

Bro: Nothing wrong with turning crappies into food, but that doesn't mean getting greedy on the big ones. Actually, fish in that 10 to 12-inch range are the best eaters. Trust me. Watch how much better the meat cooks next time. Slabs fall apart in the pan.



And let others enjoy catching big crappies, don't get all piggish. Unlike bluegills, there isn't any scientific study that says fishing down size alters the gene pool. But I do know when a lake gets hammered, it takes years to bring back size.

Neustrom: I really don't like catch and kill during the spring spawn. Let them breed. And if you remove the large fish, eventually all you'll have are dinks. Can take 4- to 6-years for size to recover. I've seen it over and over again.

Where did all the big ones go, people ask? Duh.

# Exploring The Great Lakes Of New York

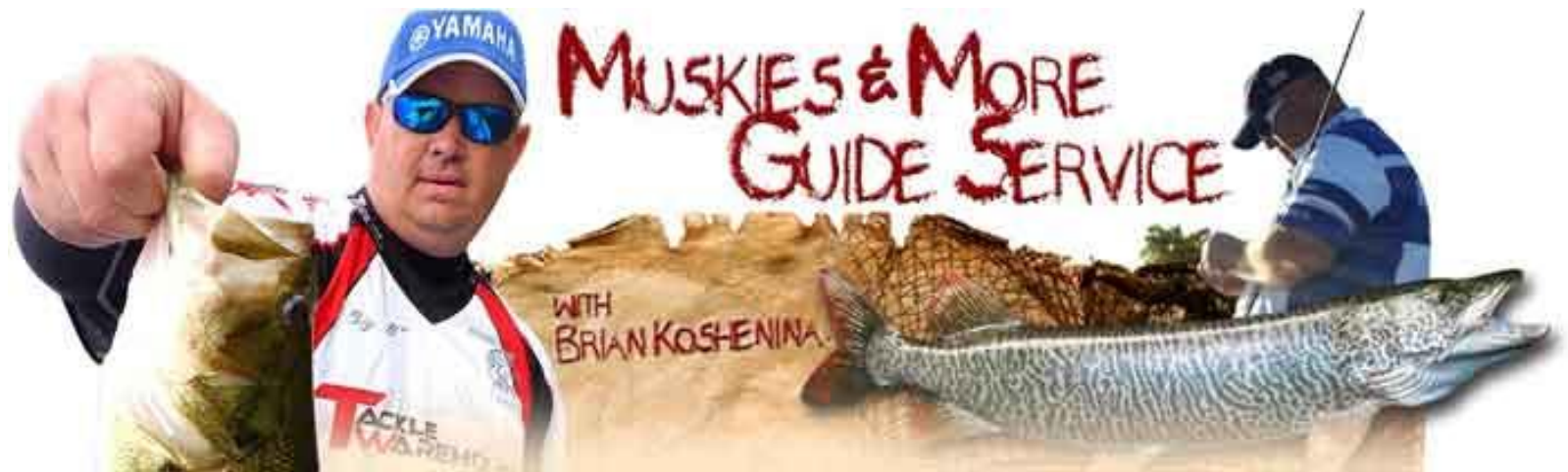
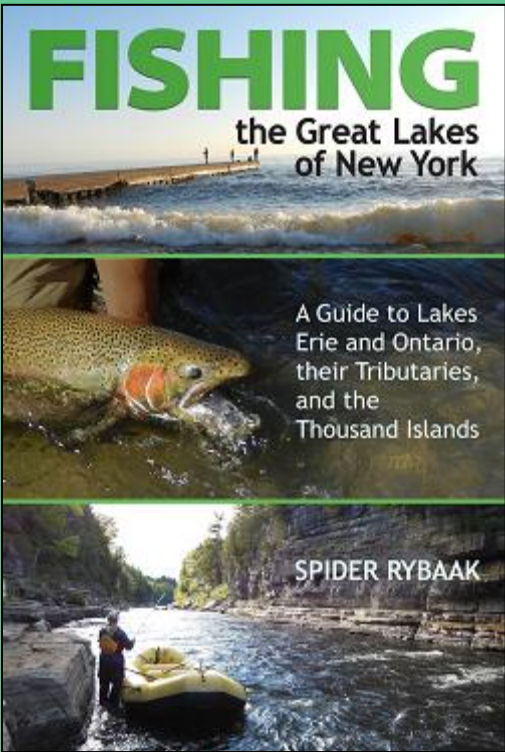
I recently finished reading a book I find easy to recommend to any angler, of any level, thinking of visiting New York State, in or around Lake Erie or Lake Ontario. “Fishing The Great Lakes of New York”, by Spider Rybaak, is a perfect reference guide for this part of New York that details almost every significant tributary, bay or connecting water way to both big lakes, from the New York shore.

Spider’s years of knowledge fishing and exploring this part of New York State really has shown through. The book starts out breaking out the basics of fishing, definitions of key terms and the species of fish you may run into while fishing these many water bodies. A key feature to the description of species that he includes are state record weights, where caught and when caught. For someone like me who grew up fishing originally in New York, it was fun to see all these records. Not like I am ever going to break one, but heck if I ever hook into a four pound yellow perch I now know to get it to a scale.

Spider has broken down each lake very well. Even to the point that if you are vacationing and you have your travel spinning tackle with you, you can find a puddle along the way and he gives you a few tips to bring you some success. Directions, hot spots to fish and lures that can be successful are all mentioned.

I have a bucket list forming, and seriously, it would be a fun summer vacation run for my son and I to travel with this book and follow what Spider detailed.

**By William Schwarz**



## You’re a Professional “fake”!

**By Brian Koshenina**

They are out there. They are all around us; you might know someone who is guilty of this? The professional “Fake” outdoors person!

I have been watching the outdoor world very closely the past few years and one thing that has become more and more prevalent is the professional “Fake” outdoors person. With the popularity of social





media it has become clear to me that our industry is flooded with anglers and outdoorsman that are not “True” professionals.

I am on social media networks often, Facebook and Twitter to name a few and I often see people declare themselves as being a “Professional Fisherman” or a “Professional Hunter”. I also know some people personally that are doing that same thing and it makes me sick to my

stomach. My question is, what makes you qualified enough to call yourself a “professional”? How did you earn such a prestigious title? If they are anything like the people I know, it wasn’t earned through long hours in the field or on the lake, nor was it earned by “passion” or “determination”. No, it was given to themselves in order for them to reach the top quickly, with little or no work. I affectionately call these people “climbers”. We, as true outdoors people have to watch out for “climbers”. They are all around us and they will step on you and your sponsors that you’ve worked so hard to get. They will leave you behind to get what they want and you won’t notice it until it’s too late.

Let’s look at what the Webster dictionary defines as the meaning of “professional” ; “Professional”, adjective: relating to a job that requires special education, training or skill: done or given by a person who works in a particular profession: paid to participate in a sport or activity.

Just because you have your hand over extended to show off your “trophy” catch in your photo does not make you a professional. Just because you sit 10 feet behind the so called “Trophy” animal you just harvested just so it looks “huge” in your posting or tweet does not make you a professional and it definitely does not make you a professional when you take your picture with someone else’s catch or harvested animal. Here’s a news flash,” You are not fooling anyone and you are making the true professionals in the outdoors mad”!

I see these same people signing sponsorship deals, radio deals and writing deals and it upsets me to think that these are the people we are supposed to follow in the years to come. Are these the same people our next generation will look to gain knowledge and guidance from? Will companies look at these so called “professionals” they have blindly added to their staff and say enough is enough, or is it our jobs to call them out when we see these people giving us, the “true professionals” a bad name?

I think that being a true “professional” in the outdoors means “Giving back”, whether it’s through a job, mentoring, or just through sharing a “passion”, but I also think that the title should be” earned and not given” to just anybody. If you know someone that calls themselves a ‘professional” but hasn’t earned it, do us all a favor and “Call them out”.Tell them to look up the meaning of “Professional” in the dictionary. Do it for all the hard working “true outdoors professionals” and do it for yourself! We all thank you in advance.

Sources- Webster online dictionary [www.m-w.com](http://www.m-w.com)

Brian Koshenina is a professional guide [www.muskiesandmore.com](http://www.muskiesandmore.com), radio host [www.knsiradio.com](http://www.knsiradio.com), tournament angler, mentor and volunteer in Minnesota.



## ROCK AND ROLL IN SHALLOW WATER

By Ted Takasaki and Scott Richardson

Want to have some fun? Try targeting big walleyes in shallow water. Anglers who claim walleyes don't fight as hard as other species have probably never hooked a 4- or 5-pound walleye in 3 feet of water.

There are times and conditions when targeting the shallows produces bigger walleyes than rigging or trolling deep water.

One instance is in weedy lakes. Vegetation produces plankton, which attracts minnows, which bring in big walleyes and lots of

them.

Weeds act like a natural wall or edge. Walleyes will patrol the edges. When they find minnows, they'll herd them to shallow water closer to the weeds and come to attack. The result is that whenever walleyes inhabit the greenery, they're there for just one reason – to feed. The action can be wild.

Use spinning gear. A 6-foot, 8-inch St. Croix LXS68MXF rod with 8-pound TUF Line XP will work great. The super thin diameter of a super braid will cut through a lot of weeds. Stick with a 1/8-ounce jig tipped with a leech or half nightcrawler. Use a slightly bigger jig when the wind is blowing.

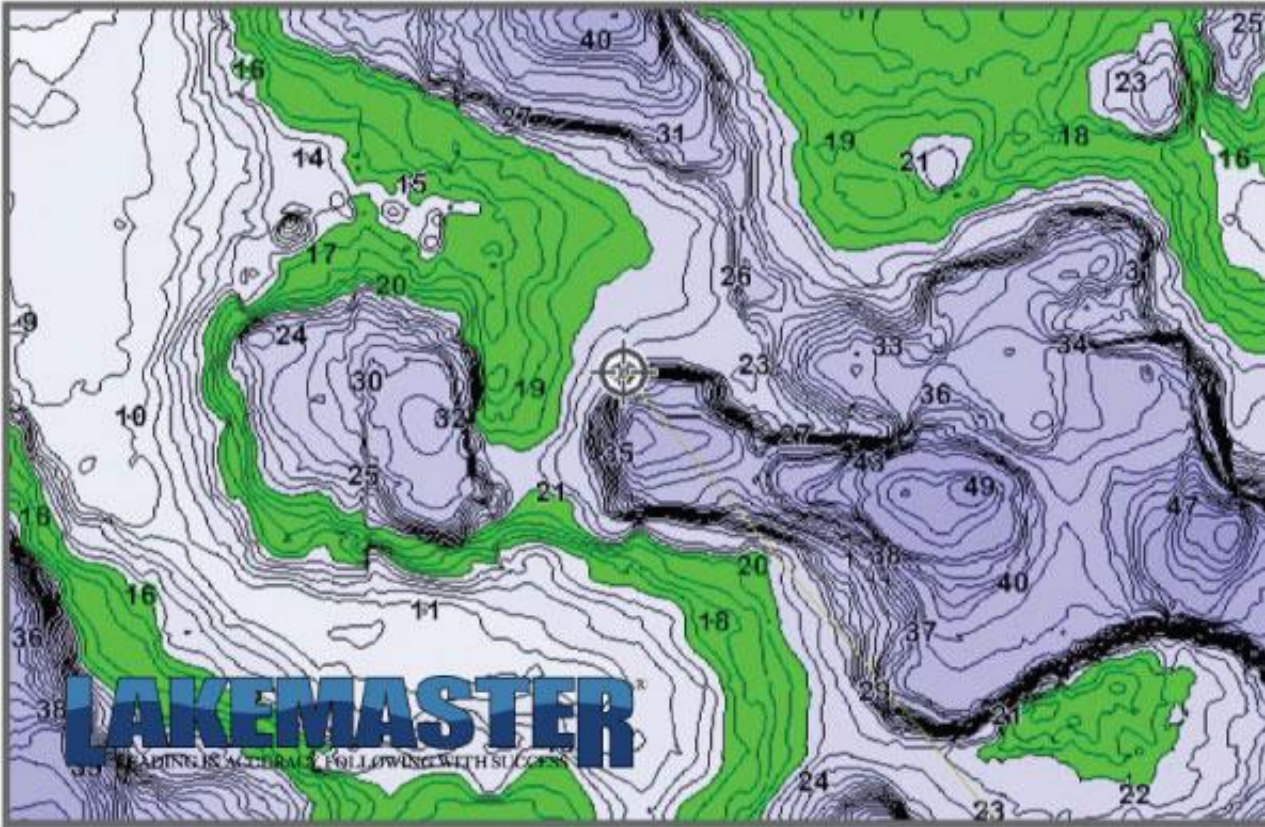
Jig color? Shallow fish are often so hungry they won't seem to care. Try yellow glow to start.

The most productive weeds are often adjacent to deeper water. The best weed beds are the ones that stand alone isolated from all others.

Carp rolling in the shallows is also a good sign. They stir up the bottom and dirty the water. Walleyes can take advantage of their keen eyesight to gorge on baitfish. Focus on the points and turns on the deep side first. Stay back from the edge and make short flips to the targets. Most casts should be under 15 feet. Twenty feet is a long one.



# Selectable Depth Ranges ✱



If you snag up, simply pull it free or pop it. Strikes will often come as the bait pops loose. Bring the jig back with a fast lift, reel, lift, reel motion. Try to guide your jig through the alleys where there are sparse weeds. Shallow fish are not bashful.

Try moving closer to pitch into the pockets of the green stuff. Weeds are best on calm days. But,

a second shallow pattern relies on the wind. Sustained, strong breezes will blow plankton to the windy side of a lake. That rings the dinner bell for minnows – and minnows attract walleyes into shallow water. Wind also stirs the bottom so walleyes can use their sight to good advantage.

At this time, target windy points and the windy side of islands. Try pitching a 1/8-ounce jig tipped with a minnow, leech or piece of nightcrawler. Or, choose a shallow-running crankbait that will dive deep enough to tick across the rocks as you retrieve.

Use your electric trolling motor to move along the shoreline just within a decent cast to the rocks. Anchor and cast if the wind blows too hard to control your boat. Retie often to avoid a nick to the line that could cost you a trophy fish.

You're not limited to casting lures or jigs in shallow water. In fact, there are some lakes where trolling is the best way to locate shallow fish fast. Trolling with the gas-powered Mercury 9.9 Pro-kicker can also give you boat control you may lack with other methods in the wind.

An excellent way to control your boat when it's windy and you are going to troll, is to use your gas



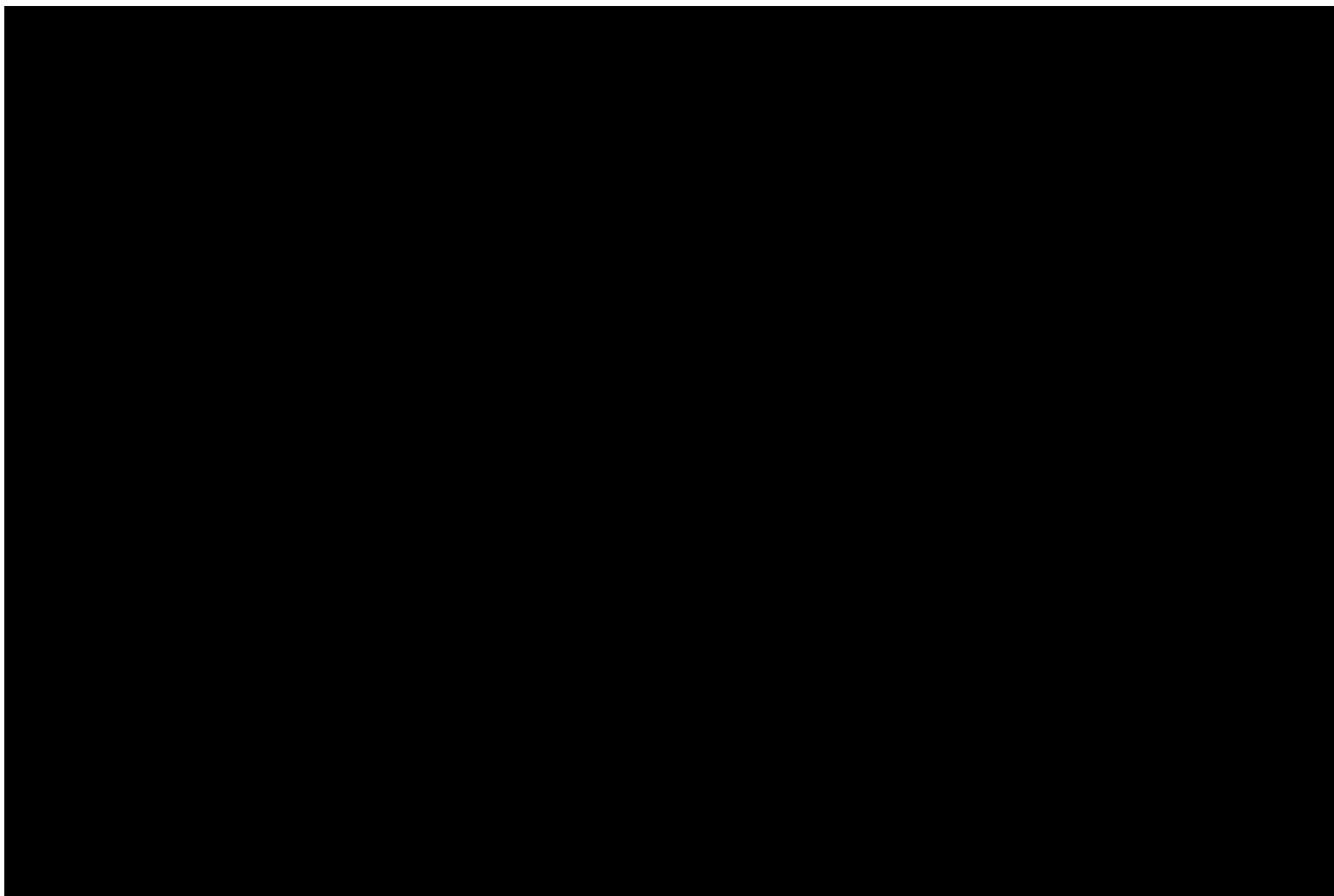
kicker in conjunction with a MinnKota Terrova bow-mounted trolling motor. With the I-pilot Link you can control the boat remotely or use the Link feature to stay on the LakeMaster contour lines (pictured on prior page). Your boat will be much more responsive when you're controlling it from the front and the rear.

Use TUF Line Micro Lead or XP on 12-foot and 5-foot St. Croix Eye Con trolling rods. Use line-counter reels to precisely control lure depth. The more line out, the deeper they will go.

Get out the lake map and identify stretches of shoreline or islands on the windy side of the lake with as many different features as possible, such as points and turns. Areas with slow sloping shoreline and subtle changes in bottom composition are best.

Depending on state law, mount as many rods as you are allowed on the shallow side of the boat. Use good rod holders, like Tempress' Fish On (pictured on prior page), and try to get your lures as close as possible to the shoreline. Use at least one line to target the "mud line" where water clarity changes from murky to clear.

Follow the contour of the shoreline while watching your depth finder to stay a safe distance from the rocks. Don't stay in deep water all the time. Shallow water rocks!







# Selecting A Crankbait Rod For All Conditions

**By Brandon Lester**

Crankbaits are great pre-spawn and post-spawn lures. No matter what part of the country you live in crankbaits can play a key role in finding and catching quality bass. Crankbaits can resemble bluegill, shad, crayfish, and pretty much any other type of bass forage. I like to break down pre and post-spawn crankbaits into three different categories; square bills, small "finesse" crankbaits, and medium to deep divers. It is very important to choose the right rod and line for each of these categories. Here is what I use.

## **Square bills.**

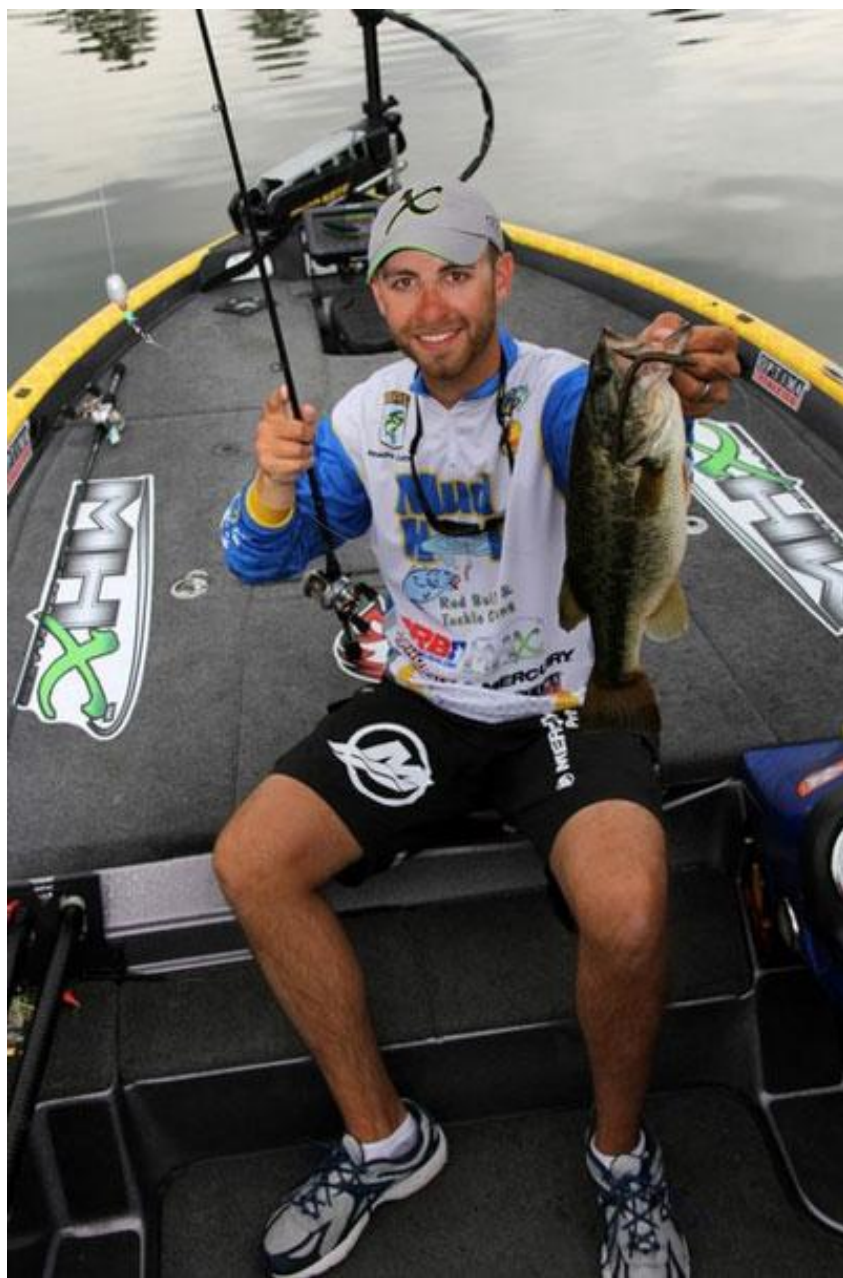
In recent years there has been a strong push for parabolic bend cranking rods and they certainly have their place, but not with square bills in my opinion. I like a 7' medium-heavy power rod like the MHX-MB843. The reason being many times you are fishing square bills around heavy cover where you really need to bear down on the fish and get them away from the cover quickly. Another reason why I use a medium heavy rod is I find I can make more accurate casts to cover than I can with a parabolic cranking rod. My lure choice for square bills are the Luck E Strike Rick Clunn Series 3 and the Strike King 1.5 and 2.5. I use 15 pound Vicious Fluorocarbon line.

## **Small "finesse" crankbaits.**

When I say small finesse crankbaits I'm referring to baits such as Rapala shad raps, Rapala DT4, DT6 and Strike King Series 3. Being from Tennessee we actually do things a little different with these crankbaits

than anglers in most parts of the country. I actually throw these on spinning tackle. The reason for that is these baits are lightweight and can be hard to throw on bait casting equipment in windy conditions that we often face in early spring. My favorite rod for this is an MHX-SJ842. It is a 7' medium power blank that is perfect for lightweight crankbaits. Longer casts equate to more time in the strike zone which equates to more fish in the boat. I use 8 pound Vicious monofilament line.

### **Medium to deep diving crankbaits.**



My favorite mi- depth to deep diving crankbaits for early spring are the Rapala DT10 and the Norman Deep Little N. For these baits I do like a parabolic cranking rod that will really load up and make long distance casts. For me the MHX-CB905 cranking rod is perfect for all mid to deep diving crankbaits. It is a 7'6" heavy power so it has the parabolic bend to help keep from ripping the hooks out but still has plenty of backbone to fight big ones. Just this week on Lake Guntersville I caught 3 bass in the 7 pound class using this rod with a Rapala DT10 and this rod handled them flawlessly. I use 10 and 12 pound Vicious Fluorocarbon line.

Each person is going to have slightly different preferences with their crankbait rods and that's one reason why custom rod building is so great. I built all three of the rods I use for crankbait fishing and have had a blast learning to do that. It is worth the time to learn to do it and very rewarding.

Building the rods with longer or shorter handles is important. When pulling a crankbait along and tucking the rod under your arm you will have more leverage when fighting a fish. Some companies make their crankbait rods too

short in the butt section. A longer butt section will also let you cast the crankbait further. For the square bill rods I make the handle shorter which allows for more accuracy in casting to targets.

If you are interested in custom rod building you can check out [www.MudHole.com](http://www.MudHole.com) and the MHX rod blanks.

About Brandon Lester: From Fayetteville, TN, Brandon Lester is a rookie on the Bassmaster Elite Series. Brandon qualified for the Elite Series by winning the Southern Open point series in 2013. For more on Brandon go to <http://brandonlesterfishing.com> or interact with him at [www.Facebook.comProAnglerBrandonLester](http://www.Facebook.comProAnglerBrandonLester).





# WhoDat Catching Dem Louisiana Redfish

By Lawrence Taylor

Anglers facing shallow, weedy water can take a lesson from Bernie White and his father, Steve.

The father/son team finished second in the first

Louisiana Saltwater Series (LASS) tournament of the year throwing Metal WhoDat Spoons to redfish feeding in shallow grass and took home more than \$2,000.

“This tournament trail is put on by the Louisiana Department of Fisheries,” Bernie White said. “It’s been going for four or five years. It’s a family oriented trail – my father and I have been Team of the Year a time or two, and my daughter is starting to fish it with me, too.”

The season kick-off tournament was held March 8 out of Boudreaux’s Marina in Cocodrie, La. During prefishing for the tournament Bernie found some fish in shallow, weedy water, even though most competitors felt it was a little early in the season to find tournament winners up that shallow.

“We caught two really good ones (in practice) and felt really good about that area,” he said. “The rest of the day we just trolled around and watched redfish play. We probably saw more than 100 fish that day.”



On tournament day the White team fished deeper water in the main channel while waiting on the tide to come in and put more water onto the weedy ponds and flats where they’d found the fish. As the water level rose, the team slowly worked into the flats via ditches that provided enough depth for the boat. It was on these weed-choked flats and slightly deeper ponds where the Metal WhoDat Spoon did most of its damage.

“Once the tide came up about mid-morning we could get into those shallow ponds covered in coontail – it was the thickest I’ve seen in awhile, especially this early in the year. The redfish were in there thick, pretty much standing on their heads tailing. You ran that spoon by them and they would just blow it up.”

The White team wasn’t the only one throwing a WhoDat Spoon. Charlie Howell and his partner (and brother) Hunter, who finished eighth in the tournament, also whacked ‘em on the WhoDats, but the Howell team used the original version manufactured out of high-density plastic molded around a loud rattle chamber.

“We fished water anywhere from 6-inches to 3-feet deep,” Howell said. “With the tide coming in, we focused on the shallowest water we could find.”

Like the White team, the Howell brothers each used a slightly different version of spoon. Charlie caught his fish on the WhoDat Rattling Spinner Spoon, which features a Colorado blade attached to the weedguard for more vibration and shallow-running capabilities, while his brother threw the regular version.

Both teams needed to deliver long-distance, sniper-accurate casts to put the spoon on the right tract to tempt a fish without spooking it. Redfish are quick to flee anytime they’re in shallow water, but early season fish can be especially unforgiving. The lure also had to stay shallow at a medium retrieve speed even at the ends of these long casts, while coming through the weeds without fouling.

“Fishing that thick grass – the WhoDats went through it easy,” White said. “Lure selection gets pretty easy in this situation -- you’ve got to throw a spoon.”

Barnie White threw the silver WhoDat while his father threw the gold version, and he said it didn’t seem to be a color-specific bite. It was more of the action – the spoon swimming lazily past a feeding redfish – that triggered the strikes.





“You can retrieve that spoon so slowly to get that swimming action even in very shallow water,” Howell said. “In that cold water, the fish needed to see the bait for a longer time to get them to strike.”

Both teams reported nearly flawless performance by angler and lure during the tournament, with the only lost fish credited to human error, not mechanical failure. Charlie had one fish hit the spoon and charge toward the boat while he was adjusting the trolling motor. He just couldn’t catch up to it to get a good hookset.

“I use the same baits for regular fishing as I do for tournaments,” Howell said. “I just cut them off and toss them in the tackle box. I’ve got some WhoDats that I’ve used for three or four consecutive fishing days without a single problem.”

Redfish are well known destroyers of inferior tackle, from tearing up cheap reels to straightening hooks and even breaking weak lures in half. Finding a lure that performs perfect for the situation and is tough enough to take on tournament reds can be difficult.

“I’ve used spoons in this situation for years, but these redfish are tough and you could always expect the spoon to break or fail sometime during the day,” White said. “A lot of times the weedguard is the first to go, and then the bait is useless.”

The Metal WhoDat’s weedguard is constructed out of tough nylon instead of the cheap wire used on other spoons, and is attached to the spoon via a screw rather than the more-common (and less durable) solder. It also splits into two toward the hook and each end is tipped with red beads that mimic a pair of beady shrimp eyes.

In addition to the weedguard, Bomber Saltwater Grade also eliminated the solder from the hook

attachment as well. Its genius positioning through the tail of the bait and a secure screw attachment make the WhoDat incredibly tough and reliable.

“Durability is a real consideration when selecting a spoon,” White said. “We caught a bunch of fish and the WhoDats never failed.”



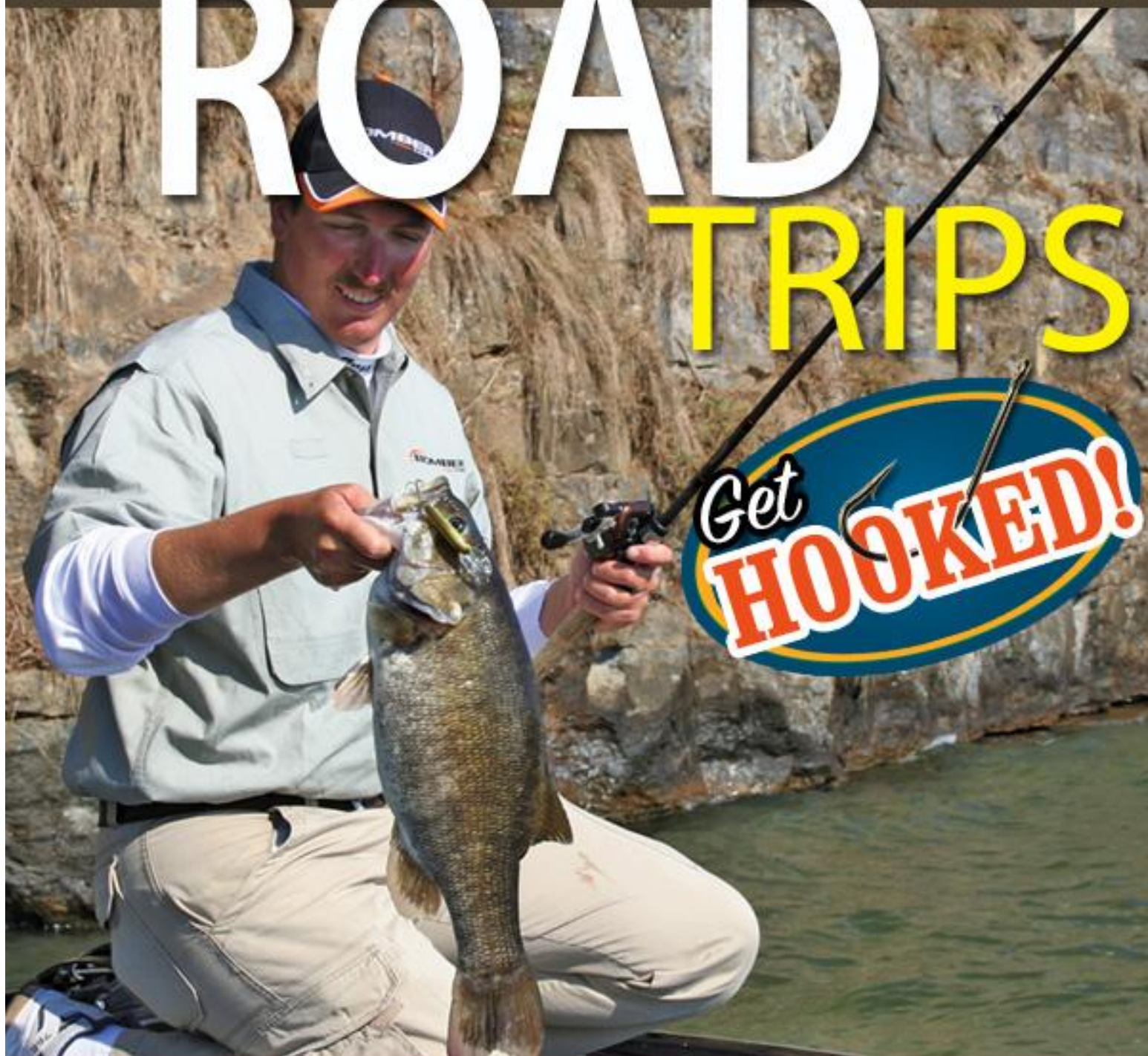


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The shad spawn although it's a short period of time, can mean the best bass fishing of the spring if you hit the right spots at the right times. Shad spawn when the water temperatures hit upper sixties to low seventies and during the full moon. In the Southeast TN, GA and AL this usually means the full moon in April and May. Shad normally spawn right at daybreak. Once the sun gets on the water the shad spawn is usually over for the day; likewise if it remains cloudy it will last longer into the day.

For the most part in the southeast region, the first major wave of spawning bass have either finished or is close to finishing. For a lot of anglers this can signal the beginning of the post spawn blues, however for some

anglers it is game time! Shortly after spawning the larger female bass start a migration to deeper water areas close by to start the recovery process. After a couple of days rest their hungry; a very prolific fish and a favorite meal of the bass is threadfin shad and their beginning the spawning ritual.



## The What and How's of the Shad Spawn!

By Capt Jake Davis





Threadfin shad can be found in most lakes across the southeast and are the staple diet of all bass from Largemouth in Lake Guntersville and Kentucky Lake to Smallmouth bass in clear deep lakes such as Tim's Ford and Lanier. This high in protein food source makes them the perfect forage for hungry bass. Threadfin shad generally grow to a size of four to six inches and inhabit a wide range of water depths and temperatures.

Typically the shad are triggered to start their spawn when the water temperature ranges between 68-76

degrees. The shad will find varieties of habitat to spawn depending upon the type of lake. These areas may consist but are not limited to shoreline grass or lily pads, rip rap, wood cover and even boat docks typically in shallow water (three to five feet) with deeper water close by. On lakes such as Lake Guntersville shad can also be found spawning on the main lake grass ledges around deeper water.

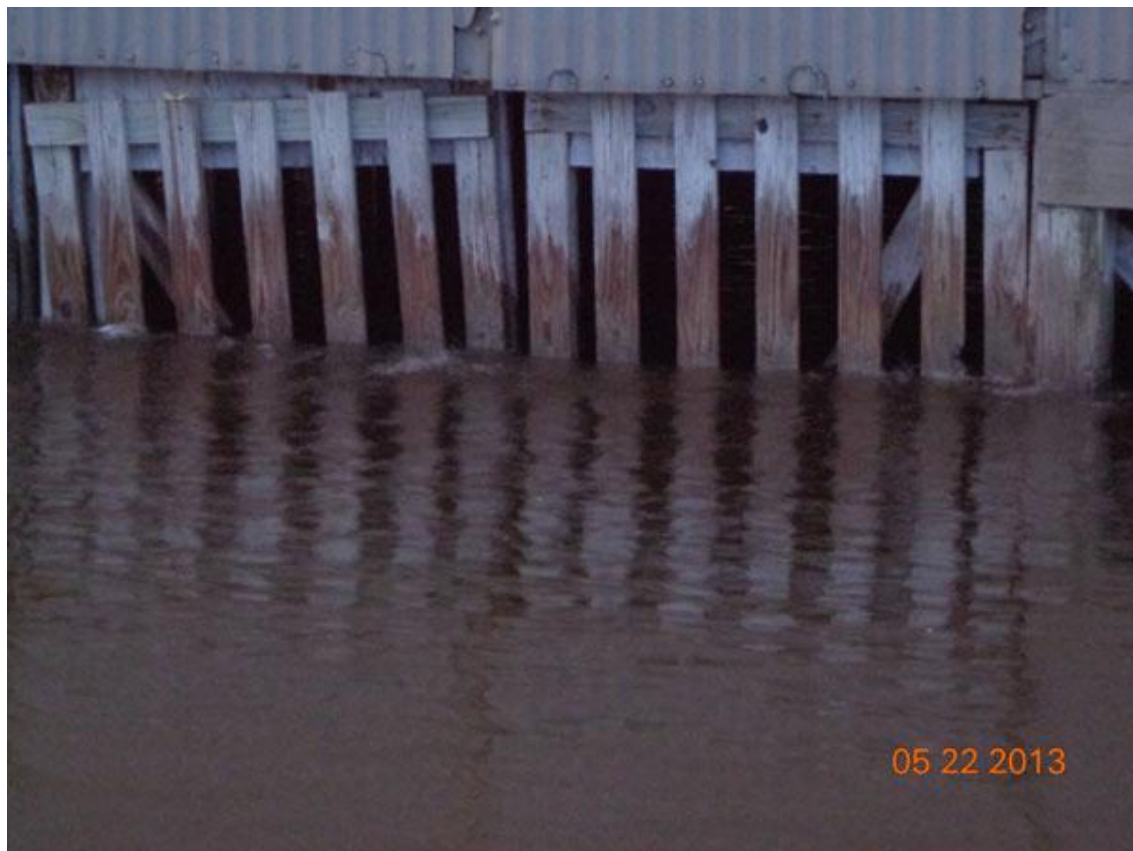
Watch for dark clouds of shad travelling the grass lines or rippling of the water right where the water meets the edge of the hard surfaces, such as wood or rocky banks. The school of shad runs down the bank or channel grass and the females lay eggs that stick to the grass and other hard surfaces. The males are running with them and releasing sperm that fertilizes the eggs. I've noticed shad jumping completely out of the water onto the bank when they spawn on lakes like Tim's Ford.

I have found one of the best ways to catch bass during the shad spawn is using a spinnerbait such as a 3/8 to 3/4 ounce Assassinator "Clacker" Spinnerbaits with its unique stacked blade configuration, in which the blades actually bang together garners one of the most violent strikes I've known; next best choice is the light wire Punisher Spinnerbait. Silver willowleaf #4 or





#5 blades with a white skirt imitate the shad. Another great way to catch bass during this time is top water baits like Assassinator Buzzbaits with a head/hook that set below the water due to its 45 degree bend just in front of the head, Rapala X-Rap Poppers and walking baits such as Sammy's. A buzzbait worked slowly will often excite the bass even more shallow cover, while at the same time if you are fishing close to deep water try a hard bait such as the Rapala X-Rap Popper this will draw



them from greater depths simply because you can work them slower. I tend to use a top water lure when fish just prior to the crack of dawn and again as the spinnerbait bite slows after sun up.

Get your boat in close to the bank and parallel the bank. Try to position your boat behind the shad and keep your movement to a minimum, so not to spook them. See which way they are moving and cast with or across the flow of traffic. Cast your spinnerbait right on the rocks or against the sea wall in areas void of grass and when fishing around grass allow the spinner bait to "Tick" the grass, as it does jerk it free and hold on. If fishing grass ledges as your lures clears the grass drop to rod tip and stop your retrieve for a few seconds, than pop the tip once or twice. Many times bass will relate to the edge of the grass waiting for unsuspecting prey. If you suspect this; using a stick bait similar to a wacky rigged Yamamoto Senko, will produce great results. You can't cast too shallow! Some bass will be amazingly shallow and will be looking for shad almost out of the water. Start your retrieve as soon as your bait hits the water and be ready to set the hook immediately. Bass will often hit as soon as the bait hits the water when using either a top water lure or spinnerbait.

My preferred equipment set up when using a spinnerbait or popper is a 6'9" to 7'0" Medium Heavy Duckett Micro or Macro Guide Rod, LEW's 6.4:1 reel spooled with 15-17 pound test Vicious Ultimate Co-Poly line. With this set up your rod has just the right tip action to properly work the lure and still enough backbone to keep the beast hooked up. With Buzzbaits, I'll arm my clients with a 7'0" Heavy Duckett Micro or Macro Guide Rod. LEW's 6.4:1 or 7:1 reel spooled with 50 pound test Vicious Braid because we are normally throwing it in or around heavy cover and your going to need to extra power to drag them out!

Capt Jake Davis is a full time, year round professional guide on Lake Guntersville and Tim's Ford, Mid South Bass Guide, [www.midsouthbassguide.com](http://www.midsouthbassguide.com) or cell (615) 613-2382

# How To Catch Grand Lake White Bass & Crappie

By Brad Wiegmann

Recently there has been an increase in the number of anglers fishing for white bass and crappie. It's probably due to the fact that white bass and crappie are fun to catch and anyone with a boat or even on shore can fish for them. Anglers also like the fact there are normally liberal limits allowing the angler to take some home to eat.

Southern reservoirs normally have good populations of white bass and crappie. That fact is not overlooked by anglers wanting to experience a bobber going under or a tug on the end of the line.



Going out fishing is fun, but catching fish is what makes fishing exciting no matter how young or old you are. That's why anglers go fishing for white bass and crappie. They are aggressive most of the time and bite year round.

"Taking out clients fishing for white bass or crappie is





fun. Everyone enjoys catching them. Grand Lake has a healthy population of white bass and crappie that are willing to bite almost every day,” said Grand Lake fishing guide Rusty Pritchard (<http://www.rustypritchardoutdoors.com/>).

Grand Lake is renowned for its white bass aka sand bass population. “In the spring of the

year white bass will make a run up the river arms to spawn. I like to fish the shallow shoals and bars in 1- to 6-feet of water with 1/4-ounce lead jig heads rigged with 2-inch FLE FLY Go Go Minnows to catch them,” said Pritchard.

Once summer arrives Pritchard follows the white bass as they migrate back to the main lake. “White bass will stack up on humps, shallow windy points or rocky areas,” said Pritchard. Pritchard noted that anglers shouldn’t go too deep when fishing for white bass during the summertime since they are mostly in shallow water with the exception of fishing a FLE FLY jigging spoon for them on humps.

In the fall, Pritchard spends most of his time following the schools of shad and looking at his Lowrance HDS 10 graph for groups of white bass. “White bass love windy points and windy banks in the fall,” said Pritchard.

If anglers aren’t trying to catch white bass on Grand Lake odds are they are after crappie. Crappie are probably the best eating fish you can catch on Grand Lake.

“During the springtime, crappie are on the banks spawning. Any bank with gravel inside a protected cove with cover is a great place to catch them. Although on Grand Lake it’s not unusual for crappie to just spawn in any open area,” said Pritchard.

“I love crappie fishing once summer arrives and the crappie are done spawning and move out of shallow water to brush piles. They will suspend above the brush piles in 15- to 20-foot of water and you can catch them chasing a lead head jig with a Go Go Minnow over the tops,” said Pritchard. Pritchard noted that some brush piles that he fishes were put out around the boat docks by owner and others he had set out.

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When fall arrives, Pritchard will continue to fish for crappie around boat docks with brush piles by also the first quarter section of the dock. "Crappie will change depth almost daily during the fall so you just have to make enough casts to figure out how deep they are and what color lure they will bite," said Pritchard.

Pritchard's favorite lure for catching white bass and crappie is the 1- or 2-inch FLE FLY Go Go Minnows ([www.FLEFLY.com](http://www.FLEFLY.com)) in Ole faithful, pearl and firecracker rigged on a 1/8- or 1/4-ounce lead jig head. "What I like the most about the FLE FLY Go Go Minnow is no matter how slow I reel it, the tail is going to have a swimming action that incites white bass and crappie to bite it," said Pritchard.

He uses High Standard Carbon Rods spinning rod and Team Catfish Tug O War braided line when fishing the FLE FLY Go Go Minnow. "I love the high visible Team Catfish Tug O War Braid because it's easy to see and has a small diameter, zero stretch, retains no memory and casts a FLE FLY Go Go Minnow a mile," said Pritchard.

One rig Pritchard has caught numerous white bass and crappie on is a spoon and jig set up. "I simply tie a dropper loop attaching a FLE FLY Lead Free Feather Jig 18-inches above a FLE FLY Classic Slab

Bendable Spoon or FLE FLY Bendable Minnow Jigging Spoon. It's a deadly combination and they are going to either hit the jig, spoon or both," said Pritchard.

Anyone going fishing just wants to get a bite and catch a fish. For many that means chasing after white bass or fishing brush piles for crappie. It really doesn't matter as long as they bite.







## MAKE AN ANGLING ACE OUT OF DAD IN 2014 WITH FATHER'S DAY GIFTS FROM RAPALA

Lures, Accessories and More to Outfit Dad's On-the-Water Adventures.

A welcome change from unwrapping the clichéd necktie or bottle of cologne, this Father's Day, help dear old dad satisfy his thirst for aquatic adventure with the gift of best-in-class gear from Rapala® and Respected Rapala Brands.

Whether he's an experienced fish head or just beginning to discover his love of the sport, Rapala and Respected Rapala Brands offer a seemingly endless variety of premium baits, tools, accessories and apparel perfect for outfitting anglers of every experience level.

To pick up gifts that are sure to take your pa's angling acumen to the next level, stop by your local sporting goods store or visit [www.rapala.com](http://www.rapala.com). Be sure to check out Rapala on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/RapalaUSA](http://www.facebook.com/RapalaUSA) for special offers, tips and techniques, new product updates and much more.



### Rapala® Scatter Rap® Crank Deep & Shallow

When Rapala® introduced the Scatter Rap® Series, the angling game changed forever, thanks to the lures' one-of-a-kind Scatter Lip™ and evasive, erratic swimming action. Now, the brand unleashes the new Scatter Rap Crank Deep and Scatter Rap Crank Shallow, leaving fish with nowhere left to hide.

A gift that will have pops hookin' hawks like never before, the Scatter Rap Deep features an elongated lip that allows the lure to dive quickly and work the deep side of the water column, while its counterpart's shorter lip design brings the Scatter Rap's irresistible action to the shallow 4-to-5-foot depth range. Both come armed with premium VMC® Hooks and are available in 18 color patterns.



Especially potent when targeting Bass, the lures' compact balsa body delivers a responsive action that searches from side to side on the retrieve, mimicking a spooked baitfish fleeing attack and triggering strikes from multiple game species.

A can't-miss Father's Day gift, this is one of few times dad will appreciate you giving him some lip.

## Storm® ARASHI™ Rattling Square 3 & 5

If dad is a Bass man through and through, look no further than the Storm® ARASHI™ Rattling Square 3 & 5 to find his new favorite lures.



Based on the super-crankin' ARASHI Silent Square, these baits are equipped with a loud internal multi-ball rattle system that replicates the sound of baitfish feeding in the shallows – a virtual siren song for behemoth Bass.



The Rattling Square 3 & 5 run at 3-feet and 5-feet respectively and swim with a lively rolling action and pronounced tail kick that drive lunkers loony. Designed with features previously only found on expensive, custom lures – such as a durable circuit board style lip, self-tuning line tie system and rotated hook hangers – each lures' square lip and buoyant body combines perfectly for triggering reactive bites as the bait cranks into and off of structure.

Available in 12 enticing color patterns, the ARASHI Rattling Square 3 & 5 are ready to make some serious noise.

## Williamson™ Speed Pro Deep®



The perfect gift for dads who dream of epic battles with the world's most lively game fish, the Williamson™ Speed Pro Deep® boasts features that will have saltwater specialists doing a double take.

The Speed Pro Deep screams through the water at speeds up to 15 knots, thanks to its deep-diving lip and a self-centering "Auto-Tune" line tie system that automatically aligns the lure to deliver a consistent action, perfect for trolling reefs or current rips for Wahoo, Dolphin Fish, Tuna, Grouper and other offshore or near-shore species.

The lure stands out from the crowd with a smooth deep-down swimming action that allows the anglers to fish the bait on lighter line, even with a light drag setting. Available in two sizes and six enticing color patterns, the Williamson Speed Pro Deep comes ready to fish with rugged VMC® Heavy-Duty Perma Steel® Hooks and is built to handle the fiercest strikes the ocean has to offer.



## Trigger X® Hodad

Now available in the popular 3-1/2 inch size, this gangly crawl-tubed creature features a solid head, durable, thick-walled tube and alluring, slow-responding appendages that draw fish in with an open mouth.



Flipped, pitched, cast or Carolina rigged, the newly sized Trigger X® Hodad is built for versatility and abuse in heavy cover, giving dad an unstoppable create bait perfect for bass and other multispecies gamefish.

With the new sized Hodad, anglers can choose from a whopping 17 visually stimulating top-to-bottom dual or solid color patterns that come eight per package.



### **Terminator® Weedless Football Jig**

Begging to swim through the thickest of vegetation, dad will go crazy for the new Terminator® Weedless Football Jig fears no amount of cover and is ideal for any water depth, as well as sand, gravel and rock bottoms.

This weedless gem features a new custom Wide Gap VMC® Jig Hook that can withstand the heartiest of bites and in-water abuse, while the perfectly balanced head design creates a methodical swimming action. Rounding out its attire, this weedless wonder sports a FULL custom silicone skirt with color matched multi-fiber weed guard for toughness.

Bass addicts can choose from three sizes including 1/2, 3/4 and 1 ounce, along with six pro-inspired color patterns.



### **Blue Fox® Classic Vibrax®**

No tackle box is complete without the Blue Fox® Classic Vibrax®, a spinner that's sure to have the old man pulling in Salmon, Trout and every type of lunker in between.

Vibrax exceeds all others in quality, durability and its ability to catch fish. The bait's quality is apparent in its flaw-free plating, fine tolerances, super sharp hooks and life-like dressings. Its patented two-part body emits low-frequency sound vibrations that attract fish and trigger strikes while virtually eliminating line twist.

Available in an assortment of sizes, pick out a Classic Vibrax in a color pattern to match pops' favorite local honey hole.

### **Luhr-Jensen Kwikfish K and X Series with New Blazin' UV Color Patterns**

Just when dad thought this global Salmon and Steelhead favorite couldn't get any better, Luhr-Jensen® turns the tables with the introduction of two new Blazin' UV color patterns for the KwikFish® K and X Series lures.



The KwikFish K Series features top-to-bottom molded



construction and adjustable screw-in eyelets for custom tuning. Ideal for slow trolling action to fast water back trolling, the KwikFish K series, in sizes 14, 15 and 16, adds two new Blazin' UV finishes including Blazin' Purple/Pink UV and Blazin' Blue/Pink UV.

Diving slightly deeper than the K Series, the KwikFish X Series claims side-to-side body construction with a fixed eyelet that requires no tuning. New for this year, the KwikFish X Series adds one new color pattern and two new Blazin' UV finishes including Orange Craw, Blazin' Purple/Pink UV and Blazin' Blue/Pink UV in sizes 9X, 11X, 13, 14X, 15X and 16X.

Both lures come standard with VMC® Treble Hooks and are ready to help dad battle the fish of his dreams.

### **VMC® Drop Dead Weighted Hook**

Often an overlooked method for Large and Smallmouth Bass, the drop dead technique can be fished all year, and when anglers tie on the new VMC® Drop Dead Weighted hook paired with either a Trigger X® Drop Dead Minnow, Minnow or Flutter Worm, they'll see just how effective it can be in increasing hook sets.

Available in sizes 3/0, 4/0 and 5/0 with multiple weight options, the Drop Dead Weighted Hook features a tapered locking spring to firmly hold soft baits to the nose of the hook, without causing damage to the bait.

"The extra-wide gap hook design allows for the weight to be ideally fixed for maximum presentation, positioned low on the hook like a keel — making it the go-to choice for fishing Texas drop dead style," explains Mike "Ike" Iaconelli, Rapala® and VMC pro angler.

When paired with the Trigger X Drop Dead Minnow, anglers will note how the bait darts and dashes through the water when twitched, but the major difference is the violent quiver the combination produces on the fall — instantly succumbing to multiple strikes.

Change up dad's angling game with the new VMC Drop Dead Weighted Hook.

### **Rapala® Heavy-Duty Electric Fillet Knife**

At double the speed and three times the power of average electric fillet knives, the Rapala® Heavy Duty





Electric Fillet Knife will help your dad make quick work of once time-consuming fillet chores.

He'll love the knife's incredible control and increased power, and with twice the blade speed of lesser fillets, the old man will cleanly and quickly slice through rib and backbones faster than ever before, taking the hassle out of cleaning Walleye, Salmon, Trout and other large game species.



*New Flat Rap*

# Does this lure make my Bass look fat?

## RAPALA

*See the big, fat truth at [rapala.com/how2TV](http://rapala.com/how2TV)*

Featuring a comfortable, relaxed grip that provides fatigue-free filleting, the knife's 8-foot power cord provides ample opportunity to maneuver around the fillet table when preparing the day's catch for the evening's fish fry.

The Heavy Duty Electric Fillet Knife's custom airflow body design keeps its motor running cool and smooth, while reducing vibration. Dishwasher safe for convenient cleanup, this versatile fillet comes with 7-1/2 inch blades – the perfect size for any species from Panfish to Pike and everything in between.

### Premium Rapala® Fillet Knives by Marttiini



The knives that taught the world to fillet, Rapala premium fillet knives are used in more fish camps, on more charter boats and by more anglers than any other fillet knife in the world.

Masterfully crafted by legendary Finnish blade manufacturer Marttiini for more than 50 years, each Rapala fillet knife comes with a renowned razor-sharp blade that anglers worldwide have grown to trust.

Choose from beautiful, artistic knives like the Rapala Classic Collector Fillet, dependable workhorse knives such as the Fish

Camp Fillet fit for nearly any task under the sun, or the historic Fish 'n Fillet—the original Rapala fillet knife, to meet all of dad's filleting needs.

A sure-fire gift for this Father's Day, when you gift one of the world's favorite Rapala fillets, it's like giving him a shortcut to the frying pan.

# ***Cold Water Fishing In New England***

**By Sharon K. Brown**

This article will give you some tips on how to identify the proper fishing locations, choose the right baits, and use the right equipment and apparel when fishing during the cold water period. Follow these guidelines to have you prepared for the unpredictable bitter cold fronts that are associated with the early spring fishing season. Let's face it by this time of year we are tired of below freezing temps and washing



salt off of our vehicles. Mother Nature has given us a couple warm days and daylight savings time has ended!

## **Dress properly for cold water fishing**

If you pay attention to pro athletes particularly the ones that compete in outdoor sports such as baseball, soccer, and football; one thing to pay close attention to is the style of dress depending on the immediate weather conditions and or the predictable weather patterns for the season. A Soccer player



knows that when it's going to rain and he is playing on a natural field; mud will be an issue and he will offset that by wearing shoes with longer cleats for better traction. A quarterback or wide receiver when playing in wet weather may wear gloves to get a better grip on a football that will be slippery. A baseball player may wear a long sleeve jersey with a base layer such as Under Armour or Duofold Cold Gear to keep the muscles warm during long periods of inactivity. In addition if it's windy and rainy out a balaclava will keep the neck and face warm. All these equipment adjustments will help the athlete perform at a high level during adverse weather.



During the cold water period an angler's choice in apparel can have a direct affect on his or her success on the water! Cold extremities will distract the anglers attention from detecting the subtle bites associated with early spring fishing. It is surprising how many anglers forget how much cooler it is fishing on the water versus the misleading warmth felt while discussing today's tactics standing at the boat ramp. During the colder months I use a 3-4 layer approach when fishing in cold temperatures. The 1<sup>st</sup> layer is always a base layer. Wool is a material that is always a great choice. This first layer is extremely important and it does not come off. Some choices are Under Armour, Duofold, Redhead, and Columbia Omni Heat. All offer exceptional warmth, breathability, flexibility, in minimally restrictive and stretchy fabric. My 2<sup>nd</sup> layer is usually something very light to offer a thin shell over my base layer. I like to wear a mock neck or turtleneck cotton shirt of some sort. Long johns also work very well. My 3<sup>rd</sup> layer is generally some type of hooded sweatshirt. A hood offers warmth and blocks wind. Heat escapes from the body through the head so I always have a wool beanie on to keep my ears and bald head warm!! If the sun is bright and I need a lid a wool hat with a brim is my first option! Often this is all I need when the mornings are cool and a warm afternoon sun is expected. If temps are going to be below 50 degrees and or if I am going to deal with cloud cover, precipitation, harsh north winds or long boat runs I will wear a fourth layer. The 4<sup>th</sup> layer is going to be some type of Gore-Tex type of rain suit that offers an external water proof shell. I personally wear a STORMR Stryker rain suit. STORMR is new to the fishing market and they offer a complete system with accessories for fishing in adverse weather.



I don't wear a hooded sweatshirt when I have my STORMR jacket on. I also have used Bass Pro Shops Pro Qualifier and Field and Stream rain suits. The latter can be purchased at your local Dicks Sporting Goods store. The unique feature of the STORMR rain suits is that they can be worn with minimal base layers thus giving the angler exceptional freedom of movement without compromising warmth and dryness. I always wear wool socks



and sometype of fingerless gloves. I am not too particular with my choice gloves. I keep extra pairs in my boat and in my truck. I keep gloves made out of wool and neoprene. If I happen to forget them at home; any convenience store will have some type of work glove that can be modified by cutting the fingers tips off. I also keep a bag of hand, toe, and body warmers in my boat. I never take them out.

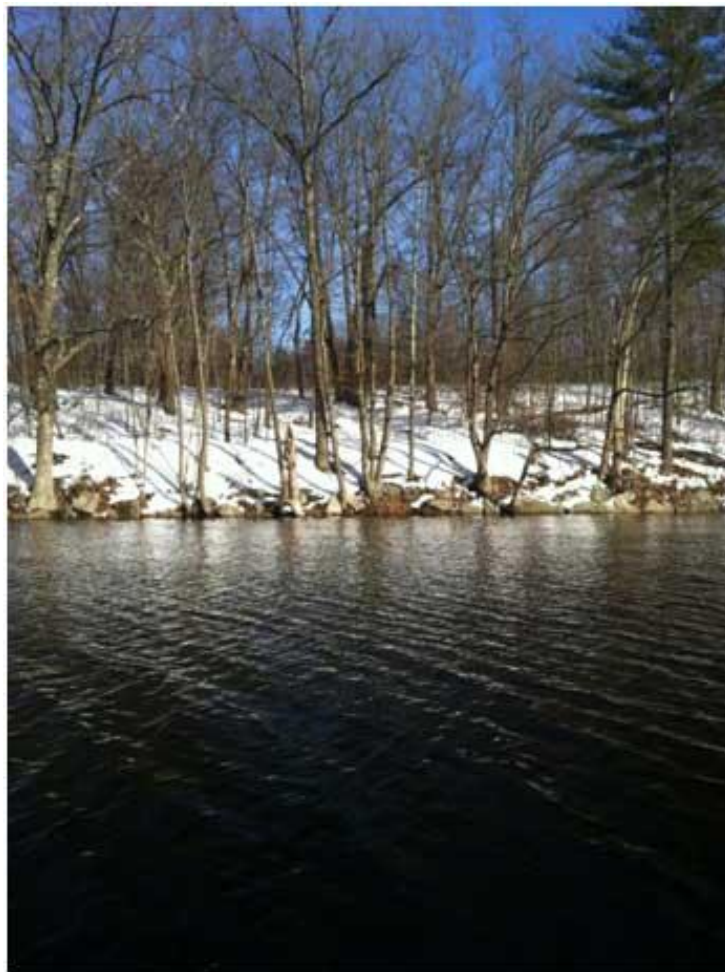
***“Wool fleece gloves were needed for this cold day in April. The water temps were 52 and this 2.5 chunk fell for a RC jerkbait attached to 8lb test Vicious Fluorocarbon Elite matched with a Denali Michael Murphy Jerkbait rod and Lews Tournament Speed Spool.”***

### **How to determine the best location for success**

I determine my initial location quite simply by going to the first body of water that has no ice. In New England this is always a river. Any area that has current will open up first in

the Northern part of our country. However, the bass will not be directly in the main river current they will be in any backwater area adjacent to the main river.

The bass is part of the sunfish family it is a cold blooded creature but it is not a cold water fish! Once ice out occurs the aggressive fish are crappie, perch, trout, pike, pickerel and Muskie. If I catch any of those by accident I and my mom are having a fish fry! Normally you will catch some good ones using bass fishing tackle. We are after the bass. The bass will be the slowest responding fish in the water at this time of year. This is contradictory to the fast moving environment of a river. Since we are looking in a backwater area the current will still be existent but will still help determine the location for success. The deepest water will be along the channel. In a river I always head to the very back. This is where you will find the warmest water. I will keep constantly look at my Lowrance HDS 8 for depth changes and scan the shoreline. Cover in the form of thick coontail, over hanging brush, lay downs extending way out into the water and rocky shorelines will hold heat from the sun and warm the surrounding water often 5 or more degrees then the main river. Since the bass is a cold blooded creature it will be in inches of water basking in the warm sun.



***“Backwater area on the Nashua River, Pepperell, MA.”***





***“Concord River, Fair Haven Bay section. The water temp was 45 and the main river was 41. This 5lb river largemouth fell for a brown/orange bucktail jig with uncle josh pork rind trailer. The skirt was rubbed with Bioedge Crayfish scent.”***

## **Ponds and Lakes**

After the initial ice out period and we have had a week of rain with temps in the low to mid 40's with some wind; the ponds will begin to open up followed by elongated lakes that have streams feeding into them and shallow lakes with dark bottoms than larger lakes by region. Here in New England I will start my season by fishing ponds down in the Cape Cod area followed by small lakes in the central part of the state just west of Boston. I like to fish ponds that are routinely stocked with trout. The bass in these ponds grow quite larger than the ones found in other shallow warm water ponds. Trophy bass season begins as soon as the ice leaves these bodies of water! I

look for sandy flats next to 45 degree banks leading into the flat. If there are smallmouth present than I will look for any rocky shoreline and idle out to the deepest water closest to this shoreline and start my search by casting parallel to the shoreline. These clear water ponds and lakes allow for maximum sun penetration several feet below the surface. Bass in these bodies of water tend to suspend a few feet below the surface before they start migrating to the shallow warm water. These fish will be larger than the 1-2lb males found swimming in the skinniest water in the backs of ponds and coves off of the main lake. Any quality size fish in the shallows will be extremely spooky. Keeping a low profile and utilizing light line with long casts can substantially increase your chances when targeting these skittish fish that are in the shallows for warmth rather than to feed.

***“This 2.8lb smallmouth fell for a 1/8 oz black fox hair jig and leach combo. I used 6lb Yozuri fishing line which has a high abrasion resistance for fishing around shallow rocks.”***



## Tactics that produce now!!

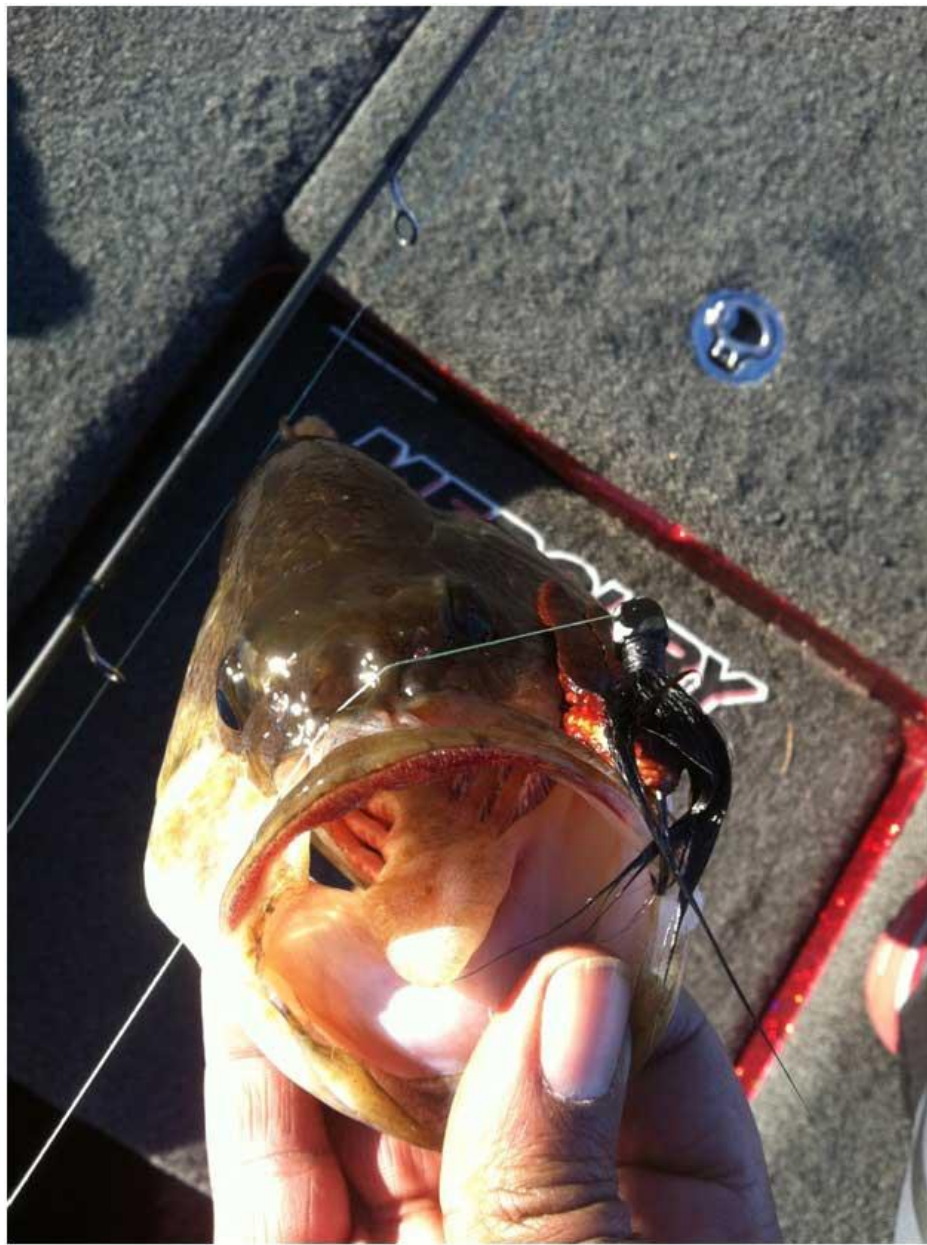
If I could only pick two rods for ice out conditions one would have a hair jig tied on. I alternate between black, brown, and any combination with black and brown as the base color. I vary my trailers from just a chunk of worm slid on the hook shank to plastic crayfish, grubs, and pork rinds. A small piece of worm on the hook shank makes the hair puff out and decreases your rate of fall for sluggish bass.



My other rod is some type of search bait for suspended fish. This rod can have a Colorado bladed spinner bait for shallow dingy water, a jerk bait for fishing clear or stained water, or a lipless crank bait for fishing vegetation in cold water. I have all 3 rods rigged and ready to go in my Legend Alpha 211. As the season progresses into the pre-spawn period I will utilize more search baits and faster retrieves. This is where some homework has to be done prior to launching on the body of water. If the target location has grass than my lipless crank bait gets the nod and I will cover water looking for green weeds. I match the hatch with my primary pattern in

perch, bluegill, than red craw in that order. When I know I am fishing a rocky lake than a crank bait and or jerk bait will get the nod. I like to use 3 different size jerk baits depending on the depth of water. I look for secondary points and cast parallel to the shoreline along the first drop off. I like a slight wind and keep the wind at my back for long casts. If I am on a shallow body of water that has a lot of cover in





the form of vegetation and wood I will use a Colorado bladed spinnerbait. I target wood and shallow brush. This lure is also my number one lure selection for fishing from the shore. The spinnerbait will cast far and stays relatively snag less while emitting a slow pulsating vibration that will attract early ice out bass!

In closing, the proper equipment with a simple selection of baits will have you catching fish as soon as the ice melts. Waiting for those warm spring days will definitely feel good but if you really want a chance to catch a lunker; bundle up in layers, grab two rods, a pair of gloves and hot cup of coffee and get to the first body of water that is open!







# Power of Plastic

## Softbait strategies for open-water panfish

Artificial softbaits are all the rage for targeting panfish through the ice. Savvy winter warriors reap rewards including uncanny realism and unparalleled convenience in their quest to catch more fish. Trouble is, when the ice recedes, these deadly weapons are too often holstered in favor of traditional natural baits.

"Many anglers think they need crappie minnows, worms or other live bait to catch panfish in open water, but that's just not the case," says fervid panfish fan, veteran Northwoods guide and noted fishing expert Scott Glorvigen. "In fact, thanks to improvements in materials, designs and actions, artificial baits often out-fish the real thing."

Plus, from purchase to deployment, plastics are infinitely more convenient. "They take the hassle factor out of the equation," says Glorvigen. "There's no driving miles out of your way to buy minnows at a bait shop, or taking the time to dig worms before heading for the lake." He further notes that plastics likewise need no nurture between fishing trips. "Artificial baits never go belly up, get fuzzy and foul your minnow bucket. And they never stink up the fridge."

Admittedly, there's something nostalgic about dunking an angleworm or minnow under a bobber. But cutting-edge softbaits fuel a variety of effective presentations, and are often able to match the shapes and movements of natural forage with uncanny accuracy.



"My plastic epiphany occurred when I was fishing bluegills a few seasons ago," Glorvigen explains. "I dropped my underwater camera down and saw clouds of white zooplankton zukiing around all over the place. Naturally, the 'gills were taking full advantage of this smorgasbord. And when I tipped one of Northland Fishing Tackle's Gill-Getter jigheads with a white Impulse Mayfly body, they absolutely tore it up. I thought to myself, 'Why would I mess around with euros or waxies when plastics work so well?'"

From that point forward, Glorvigen put plastics in play at every panfishing opportunity, and quickly developed a number of killer patterns. He also dispelled the notion that softbaits are best left to basic crank-and-wind maneuvers. "People have a tendency to think of open-water panfish plastics as twister-tails suited only for swimming in a horizontal manner," he says. "But today's miniature creature baits have such supple appendages, they work great for a variety of vertical presentations."

Glorvigen begins throwing plastics shortly after ice-out, and continues to use them throughout the season. One of his favorite early season scenarios centers on fishing a jig-and-softbait combo beneath a small float in shallow feeding areas. "Look for places where the water warms up first, such as old reed beds, canals and dark-bottomed bays protected from the wind," he begins.

Once in a potential hot zone, he ties on a downsized jighead such as a Northland Mud Bug, Gill-Getter or Hexi Fly. Heads in the 1/32- to 1/16-ounce class are ideal, provided the hook is sized to yield solid hookups, without tearing a small softbait. Tippings include Northland's ice fishing friendly Slug Bug and Scud Bug, along with open-water softbaits in the Impulse lineup, including the Mini Smelt,



Mayfly, Stone Fly, Tadpole, Water Bug and 1-inch Tube. "I try to match the hatch, but ultimately the fish tell me what they want, so it pays to experiment with different heads, bodies and color combinations," he says.

Tackle considerations are straightforward. "A quality spinning combo is perfect," he says. "I personally use rods from St. Croix's Panfish Series, which offers plenty of options." Lengths of seven feet or less are great for casting and retrieving, while longer sticks stretching up to 11 feet work well for dipping jigs into brushpiles and other cover. Both varieties handle bobber rigs, though longer rods fuel lengthier casts and make it easier to take in slack before the hookset.

"Always use as light a line as possible," he adds. "I prefer 2-pound-test monofilament because it's harder for fish to see, and gives the bait a more natural fall." Indeed, using light line can at times make a

huge difference in catch rates. "I was fishing an ice-out crappie tournament with my brother," he recalls. "We were throwing tube jigs on 4-pound-test and catching a few fish. But when we switched to 2-pound line in an effort to cast the same jigs just a little farther, we absolutely lit them up. We placed second, but might have won if we hadn't wasted the first hour fishing with heavier line."

After spooling and before tying on a jig, Glorvigen slides a small, clear casting bubble on the line. Next, he ties a small swivel to the end of the mainline, and adds about a two-foot leader of 2-pound mono before capping it all off with the jig. In early season, active fish are often found in depths of six feet or less. Glorvigen tailors the level at which his jig rides in the water column to the forage base and corresponding style of softbait needed to mimic it.

"For example, when crappies are feeding on baitfish, a minnow-shaped plastic can be dynamite," he says. "I keep minnow baits about 1½ feet down in four feet of water. But when the fish are scooping bugs off bottom, a stonefly or other insect imitator gets the nod."

Rather than a stationary cast, settle and wait approach, Glorvigen moves his jig along in a series of pulls and pauses, which produce a pendulum action. The baseline presentation entails casting the rig out, letting it settle, then pulling it about 12 to 18 inches and letting it settle a few seconds before moving it again. However, the pace is often tweaked to match both the bait style and mood of the fish. "Typically, I fish minnow shapes faster, and bottom-hugging bugs more slowly," he says.

When early season pans play hard to catch, such as after a severe cold front, Glorvigen slides out to the closest breakline and rigs a 1¼-inch Northland Mini Roundworm wacky style on a size 8 hook. The bait can be fluttered in front of fish holding along the break or close to wood and other cover, or twitched in place beneath a casting bubble.

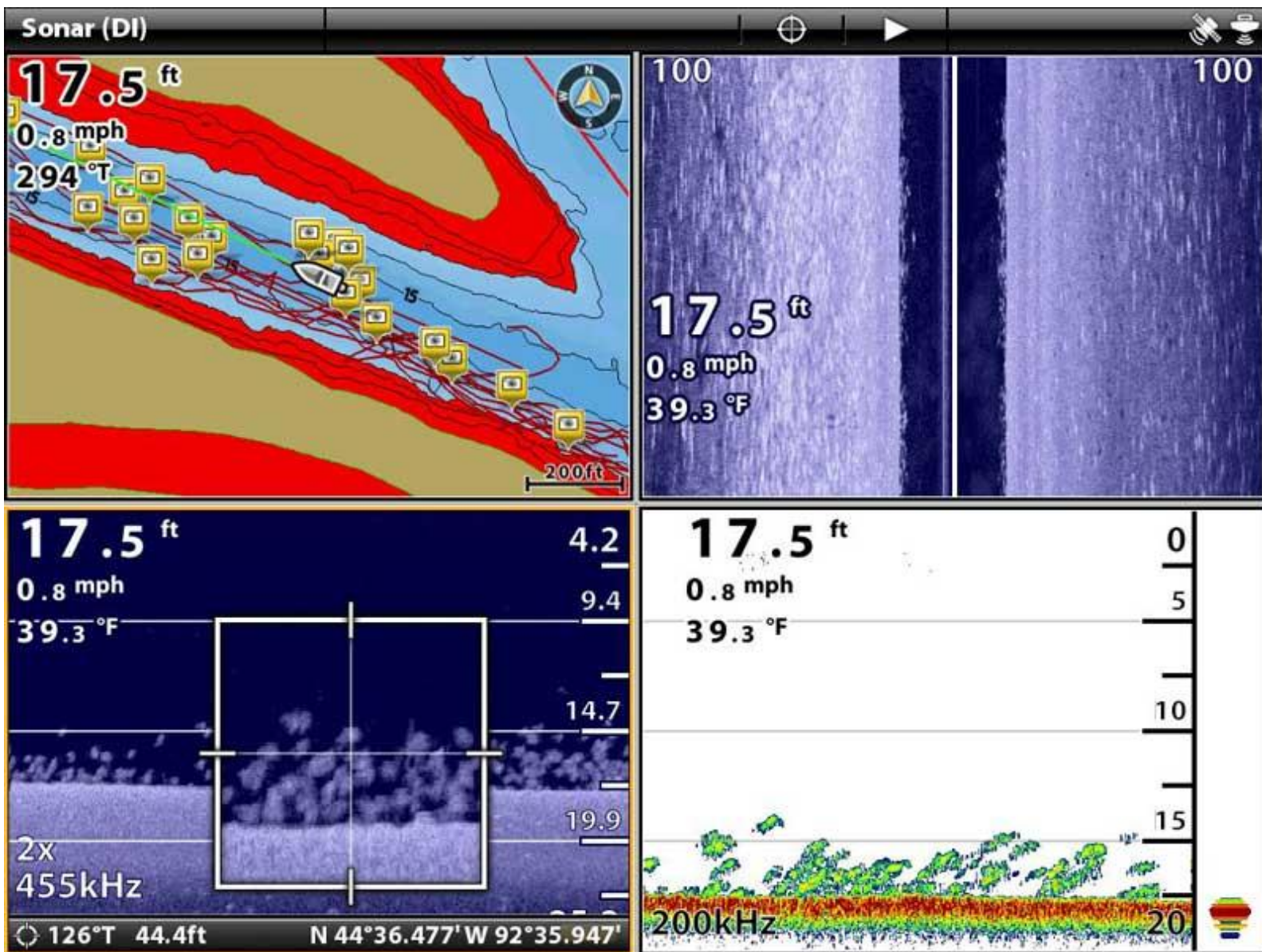
Glorvigen continues to tap plastics for panfish throughout the season, choosing shapes that match the predominant forage at the time. "There are realistic shapes and colors to match everything from

waterbugs to tadpoles," he says. "With a little experimentation and the willpower to kick the live bait habit, you can use these new-age plastics to catch panfish all year long."



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# Harness the Power of Side Imaging to Locate Trophy Pre-Spawn Walleyes

By Dr. Jason Halfen

Did you know that ONIX views are fully customizable? In addition to "pre-made" views for sonar, GPS, and accessory information, users can construct their own views using a set of very convenient templates. The 4-way split screen view is amazing. ONIX is information-rich! Photo courtesy of [www.learningsideimaging.com](http://www.learningsideimaging.com)

In early spring, anglers across the Walleye Belt turn their attention to rivers in pursuit of migratory pre-spawn walleyes. Many anglers are drawn to “community holes” near river-spanning dams that interrupt the upstream movement of fish. However, many unpressured fish can be found miles from these obstructions, lingering in areas that provide feeding opportunities as well as shelter from strong spring currents.

How can an angler find these fish, and enjoy the opportunity to target them with limited competition from others? Advanced sonar technologies can reveal the presence of unpressured walleyes and baitfish, and thus provide anglers with the advantages they need to land spring trophies.

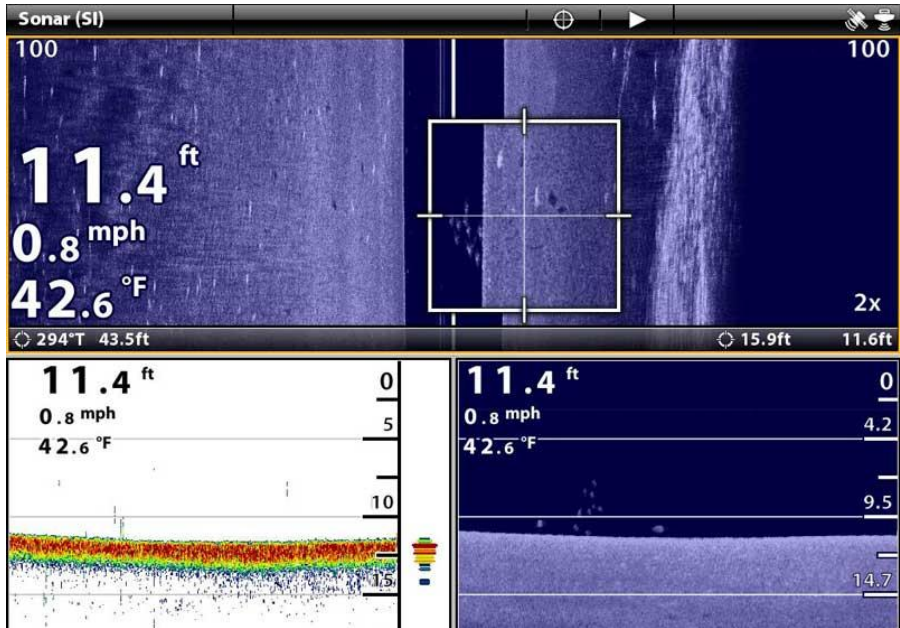
During the coldwater period, I target areas that are sheltered from the main force of the river's current where the water is warmer and baitfish gather. These walleyes, and schools of baitfish, are revealed by Humminbird Side Imaging.

During a recent trip on the Mississippi River near Red Wing, Minnesota, my Humminbird ONIX10 Side Imaging system revealed large schools of bait holding in deep water during the day; as evening arrived, these baitfish transitioned rapidly to shallow, rocky shorelines. The screen capture shown here reveals baitfish as large groups of white sonar returns above the darker blue bottom; the dark "sonar shadows" found to the left of the white fish returns demonstrate that these baitfish are suspended, feeding at or near the surface during twilight.

Predictably, walleyes followed the baitfish into the shallows and became vulnerable to one of my favorite pre-spawn presentations: slowly dragging a 4" B-FISH-N Tackle Ringworm on a light jig well behind the boat. Shortly after Side Imaging encouraged me to move shallow, I caught, photographed, and released this beautiful 10-pound class, pre-spawn female walleye. Finding and catching trophy-



The author practices what he preaches, proving out the marks on the Humminbird ONIX screen are in fact walleyes...huge walleyes. Photo courtesy of [www.learningsideimaging.com](http://www.learningsideimaging.com)



Hungry walleyes spotted on an ONIX10 Side Imaging system! Check them out in the zoom box in the right Side Image, chasing some large baitfish (big shad). We know these are walleyes because they were flopping in the net soon after we captured this image. Photo courtesy of [www.learningsideimaging.com](http://www.learningsideimaging.com)

caliber fish like this one is made easier by using Side Imaging to help you make informed fishing decisions.

As you prepare to open your fishing season, check out our instructional DVD, "The Technological Angler, Volume 1: Success with Side Imaging" to help you harness the power of Side Imaging to catch more and bigger fish. T

Trophy walleyes are waiting for you!

Editor's Note: Learn more about using Humminbird sonar and Side Imaging to better your catch with Dr. Jason Halfen's "The Technological Angler, Volume 1: Success with Side Imaging".



# ODU Boat Buyers Guide





## V-Hulls and Deep V's

Think of your bread and butter boats for family fun, fishing and all outdoor water activities and V hulls are your ticket. Typically these are the boat many anglers get first and make part of their everyday fishing adventures. Some of these boats are big that we have chosen, but most are boats any angler can fit into a already cramped garage.



You're passionate about fishing and want the best? The [Princecraft Platinum SE 207](#) (as well as the whole Platinum SE Series!) is there for you! The boat is designed to offer you a maximum of performance, comfort and amenities. It can fulfill all your fishing needs as well as welcome your family and friends to spend a wonderful day on the water. This versatile boat offers you also a lot of options to customize your fishing and boating days. So, out on the water next year, fishing or just enjoying a pleasant cruise, the Princecraft Platinum SE 207 will be perfect for you! It will let you "Dominate the waters".

MAIN STANDARD FEATURES: Double reverse chine hull design, Bow and aft raised casting platforms, Plenty of storage space, 2 electric-

filled livewells, 2 rear fold-down jump seats, Deluxe driver's heated convertible seat, SeaStar hydraulic steering system, 160-watt AM/FM/Bluetooth Stereo and Pop-up privacy enclosure. [Website Link](#)

The **Alumacraft Classic 165 CS** provides comfort underway by combining a symphony of hull shapes with robust build features. Its stem is steeply raked, allowing the boat to more gradually lift to wakes and chop than boats with more vertical bows. Aft, the Classic 165 CS carries its V-shape all the way to the transom. Its nearly full-length keel improves tracking, inhibiting the tendency to run a skewed course in crosswinds. Reversed spray rails deflect water back into the lake. Structurally, the Classic 165 CS features double-plating in the bow, providing durability for the part of the boat that hits stuff most — this so-called 2XB feature also contributes to ride quality. I found this especially evident in turns, where the doubling prevents the hull from losing its shape momentarily, allowing for crisply carved crescents, rather than skittering and jostling, during course changes. That long keel also aids in shape-keeping.



A 17-foot boat might sound cramped, but the [Polar Kraft 179 Frontier WT](#) (pictured on following page) defies conventional wisdom. A large, spacious forward casting deck provides room for two adults to fight fish. There's a pedestal for a forward seat with a convenient storage nook for the standard trolling motor's foot pedal. Both a baitwell and lockable storage are at the ready, and a channel system in the





boat's gunwale provides real estate for adding aftermarket accessories. As the WT implies, the 179 features a convenient walk-through windshield to offer protection from the elements. Under the walk-through step lies lockable rod storage for nine rods. Oversize gauges highlight the attractive helm. There's plenty of landing space on the dash for even two fish finders. Port and starboard rod lockers can hold up to 7-foot rods. Cockpit toe kicks provide added leverage. The rear casting platform offers plenty of room for back trolling, while the 52-inch livewell stands out for its ability to handle bigger

species. [Website Link](#)

The new **1675 Lund Pro Guide** is 16-feet, 9-inches in length and rated for up to a 75 hp tiller engine. The Pro Guide features two rod lockers, an easy-access side rod locker for rods up to 8-foot, 6-inches and a center rod locker for 7-foot rods. There's also an aft 16-gallon Pro-Long livewell with bait bucket and an optional bow baitwell. It also contains a redesigned Pro Command Console offering a tackle storage area with three tackle trays, a drawer with bait cooler, a collapsible electronics shelf that locks and stores your electronics and an optional stereo.



[Starcraft Fishmaster 210](#). When you're headed for big water, Fishmaster is the aluminum deep-V boat you want on your side. The open floor plan gives you more room for rod storage and a huge, 41-gallon livewell. Plus, with a removable jump seat and stern seating, you have the choice of taking along more anglers or keeping all that space for yourself. Fishmaster features a pro-style console with lighted gauges, rocker switches, stereo with J-port, and 12-volt power point with space for an optional sonar unit. Other highlights include a wraparound windshield, a helm chair with slider and a full vinyl



cockpit and casting platform for easy cleanup and durability. [Website Link](#)





**Koffler's Jet Drifter.** Whether running in a shallow water river or a lake, the advantage of our Jet Drifter is that it's design allow it to perform better with the use of less horsepower than our other Power boat models. This powerboat will perform with as little as 35 HP prop engine but the hull design will also accept larger engines. In addition, the Jet Drifter is also designed to be able to row. The Jet Drifter can be custom built in 16', 17', or 18' lengths. Similar to our Koffler Power boat models, the Jet Drifter can be equipped with inboard or outboard power and with a flat or semi-V bottom. It

is built using the finest marine grade aluminum alloys (5086-H32 and 5086-H32) with 6 to 7 stringers that run the full length of the boat for extra strength.

**G3** builds its **Deep-V V185 SF boat** to tame rough water with a smooth ride and provide plenty of fishing and water-sports fun to double the return on a boater's investment. The three-piece riveted hull design is as durable as they come in aluminum boats, with heavy stringers and bulkheads secured to a double-plated, 100-gauge, tough aluminum hull. In our test the full-length riveted keel added strength and superior tracking when we circled back over wakes to test its mettle. The boat crossed the worst we could throw at it with a steady, dry ride, spreading the full force of the impact through the tough hull and structure, and saving the crew from the worst of the pounding. During wide-open-throttle runs, four hull-lifting strakes raised it quickly to plane. With plenty of trim, it stepped up almost like a performance bass boat on pad. The high bow and strong chines deflected spray and kept the ride dry. The capable fisher topped the speed at 58.5 mph.



The capable fisher topped the speed at 58.5 mph.



**Smoker Craft's 172 Pro Angler XL** offers plenty of room for you and your friends to spend the day reeling in the next big catch. With extended rear fishing areas and deluxe, ergonomic, wood-free fishing seats, the 172 Pro Angler XL brings

functionality and comfort together for all your days on the lake. Plus, the Pro Angler 172 XL features a large lockable bow center rod storage compartment that lets you safely stow up to 8 rods. [Website](#)

**Northwest Boat's 218/228 Lightning Outboard** (pictured on following page). Experience performance so singular, so impressive, you're propelled to exhilarating new levels of nautical prowess. Our 218 and 228 Lightning Outboard Series adds chop-taming length to a ride-enhancing, deep vee bottom that handles predictably and confidently under the most challenging conditions. Recognizable from stem to stern are the trademark Northwest Boats construction, roomy interior space, seaworthiness, panache





and detail. Designed expressly for the most adventurous and discerning boaters, the Lightning Outboard is built to take an extraordinary watery beating—leaving you free and easy to enjoy the fun.

**Duckworth Advantage Inboard Jet.** The Advantage Inboard makes the journey possible by combining upscale features with down-to-earth performance. It's the most capable and unstoppable inboard jet in its class. With a wide 14° hull, the Advantage

performance you expect from a Duckworth. And getting on plane, and staying there, is of little consequence. The Hydro-Flow hull, heavy-duty intake and stainless rock grate all produce superb handling and dependability. An in-line muffler system and exhaust downturns reduce engine noise. It's no surprise, of course, that the Advantage Inboard is as comfortable as it is spacious. The interior features and standard equipment are nothing short of exceptional. The seating is signature Duckworth quality, as is the heavy-duty convertible top. With so much versatility going for it, you and the Advantage can go virtually anywhere.



Our **River Hawk GB Boats** are designed with a maximum motor-leverage bracket which allows more water to feed to the engine for better performance. The GB offshore bracket is unique to the industry as it cantilevers off of the transom of the boat permitting more leverage from motor trim.

This offers a smoother ride in rough conditions for better leverage and performance. The GB series has a high degree of polish and finish sure to be noticed at the boat ramp or on the water. Fish or ski like a pro with class-leading storage including under the bow.

**Duroboat Center Console 16** rated to 50HP, comes in standard Blue, Yellow, Red and Optional white and for the Duck guys federal green. Like all Duroboats great on big water but able to get into backwaters or run skinny flats. Options include stainless console rails, side rails and in a powder coat black rails to go with the federal green. Other Duroboats available from 10ft yacht tenders up to 16 foot. All are no rivet no weld technology.



Big water and aggressive fish are no match for the latest addition to ultra-rugged, Built Right line-up, the all-new [Crestliner 1850 Commander](#). The Commander rides on a newly designed hull that offers the depth and stability to remain rock-solid and reliable in the harshest conditions and amid the most dramatic fish fights. The all-new 1850 Commander's aluminum hull maximizes aft cockpit space by locating the consoles farther forward and extending the cockpit aft as close to the transom as possible. The all-welded Commander hull is also one of Crestliner's deepest; as four inches have been added to the hull sidewalls to achieve a side hull height of 33 inches and an impressive 30-inch cockpit depth. The 1850 Commander's massive 94-inch beam promotes interior real estate and provides supreme stability. [Website link](#)



Meet the full-sized, fully spec'd fishing machine that delivers tournament-class performance and incredible value: the [Lowe FM 185 Pro WT](#), only from Lowe. With its full walk-through windshield and extra-wide deep-V hull, the FM 185 Pro WT tackles even the toughest conditions without breaking a sweat. And with an incredible array of premium features—including a Motor Guide® wireless trolling motor, Lowrance fish finder, bow

and stern aerated livewells, locking center rod storage with organizer tubes, and much more—you're armed for fish-fighting success. Strong, efficient Mercury® outboard power (up to 150 hp) gets you right to the action, and a handsome dual console layout puts you and your fishing buddies in prime position. For serious fishing, the FM 185 Pro WT is at the top of its class. [Website link](#)

The **Precision Weld Pro Guide** model is the fisherman's ultimate dream boat. The boat is versatile for all types of fishing. While salmon or steelhead fishing the operator drives from the back of the boat on a high seat for optimum visibility of both the river and his clients or friends. Backing down swift-water while boon-dogging is a breeze. With the roof off the interior is open with no overhead obstructions for casting, yet still incorporates a windshield for the those chilly mornings. When the weather turns or anchor fishing you can quickly bolt on the hard top frame and canvas, drive from the front and you and your company are covered from the elements. Now you have the best of both worlds. And don't forget since you are powered with a 8.1 liter V8 and a Hamilton 212 jet drive the boat will take you over the sand bars and up the skinny rivers with ease.







The dual console [Starcraft Explorer 160 DC](#) gets you out on the water with incomparable Starcraft quality and reliability. You'll take the helm at a great console with easy-to-read lighted gauges, rocker switches and room for an optional sonar unit. The Explorer features a removable wood-free swivel fishing seat, and you have the option of

adding two more seats. Lockable center rod storage stows up to 6 rods, and a 15-gallon aerated livewell gets your catch safely home. [Website link](#)

## Larger Bass Boats 20 Footers

Larger Bass Boats, those over 20 feet, are considered the flagships of their respective brands. Most of these boats are packed with amenities that you wouldn't believe. Through in a few bass boats that clear the 80 mph mark in the list and you will find yourself landing at your favorite bass hole, full equipped and in record time.

The [Legend Alpha 211R](#) was built to shatter the misconception that you can't have it all in one package. This boat is the ultimate predator on the water. The blistering holeshot, blazing top-end speed, exhilarating handling, and the unmatched smooth, dry ride truly form the 211 into a prodigious athlete on the water; but the benefits don't stop with the hull. With the trolling motor down and two guys up front,



the broad deck of the 211 offers an oversized platform that is rock-solid and incredibly stable even in the roughest water. The efficient and functional layout makes every aspect of the fishing experience seem natural from the moment you step into the boat. From the perfectly positioned bow panel that accommodates up to 9 electronics to the solid-state touchpad controls, recessed trolling motor foot pedal, padded front deck step, exclusive Tournament Day Box, and passenger rod storage system, the Alpha 211 puts everything at your fingertips, and does it in ultra-sleek style and with unmatched strength and durability. [Website link](#)



**Bass Cat Jaguar.** If you're looking for a top-end bass boat which can handle the largest outboards built, run at speeds fast enough to get you a ticket on I-95, and has all of the luxury appointments you yearn for—like bucket seats, an iPod/USB stereo, a tandem-axle trailer, and a ginormous six-foot forward casting

# DESIGNED FOR YOU AND *Built for a Lifetime*



Whether you are a weekend warrior, a full-time fishing guide, a dedicated tournament fisherman, or an avid duck hunter, SeaArk Boats has a model that will fit your outdoor passion! Built tough by men and women who love the outdoors and understand the need for quality construction, our wide selection of species specific models will offer a boat sure to suit you. We offer several different hulls for use on everything from extreme shallow water to big river chop and every model has a long list of options to create the perfect rig just for you. Add to that your choice of engine and an excellent warranty from a company that stands behind our products, and you will have to ask yourself, "Why would I buy anything else?"



For more information about our models or to find your local dealer visit our website:  
[www.seaarkboats.com](http://www.seaarkboats.com)



deck—this could be your next boat. And the Bass Cat's construction is just as impressive, featuring vacuum-bagging, pedestal mounts which are reinforced and glassed to the hull to eliminate deck fatigue, and custom wiring harnesses designed for each specific boat. For more information, visit Bass Cat.

**Bullet Boats** most recent model release blends many of the best features from several of their previous models to create the **21XRS**. The basic hull is derived

from the 21' 10 line that has been proven since 1986 to be an awesome performer in all areas from fuel economy to rough water handling. The styling is taken from the more modern look of the 21SS. The deck layout is designed to offer a large fishing platform and an incredible amount of easily accessible storage. The 21XRS will answer any needs of the tournament angler, recreational fisherman or boat enthusiast. It is the boat you have requested and been waiting for! The 21XRS was thoroughly proven last year by Andy Morgan while winning Angler of the Year on the 2013 FLW trail.



The [Blazer 202 Pro-V](#) is a top of the line bass boat. A 250 HP rating combined with a 7 ½ foot beam gives you an incredibly fast and stable fishing platform. Available in both dual and single console the Pro-V 202 is one of the most versatile 20 foot bass boats on the market. Take a look at the size of the front and rear casting decks and you'll see why the 202 Pro-V is a favorite with tournament anglers. The 202 Pro-V has a huge amount of rod and tackle storage, so even if your fishing buddy brings everything he owns, you'll still have room for all of

your gear. We know you'll appreciate the recessed area in the front deck for the bow mount foot control. It gives you a clear snag free casting surface. [Website link](#)

**Skeeter's FX 21.** Purpose-built for the four-cycle SHO — including a high-lift bottom pad, a setback purpose-shaped to feed solid water to both of the props, and the low-water pickup in the 505-pound Yamaha's race-bred nose cone — the FX 21 may be the hottest bass boat going. Delivering a blistering hole shot of six seconds to 30 mph and a top speed over 75 mph, it still





remains stable and maneuverable. At 70-plus mph, where the wake from a duck can give experienced anglers the puckers, the FX 21 feels controllable. If you're a two-stroke junkie who has eschewed four-strokes for lack of performance, or a newbie fearful of fishing at interstate velocities, this collaboration should prove an epiphany. And it can fish.

**Allison Boats** enters 2014 B.A.S.S. Elite Tour with Pro Grant Goldbeck and Bassport Pro Elite. Their **XB21** hull technology has an amazing rough water ride. Allison claims this boat has set the industry standard higher with the Worlds most fuel effecient hull in its class. How effecient is the Bassport Pro Elite? Staff at the factory claim you can run at the same high rate of speed of all other manufactures acquire fuel savings up to twice that of other 21 footers. Max. horse power is 225. While other elite tour boats are running 70 to 79 mile per with a 250. The Allison will run 80 with only a 200!



**Triton** introduces the all new **21 TrX**. The 21 TrX measures 21 feet and features a 95-inch beam, giving this bass platform an unmatched ride that delivers results for both the weekend and professional



angler. The boat is full of new features including an extra-wide front casting deck, a redesigned bow and dash panel that accommodate 12" big screen electronics, and easy access of up to 24 rods under the front deck. Like all Triton's, the 21TrX boasts all-composite construction for durabitly second to none. Prestige, value, maximum fishability and blazing performance: The incredible Triton 21TrX.



## Small - Medium Bass Boats

Years ago ODU Consulting ran a pole to find out which was the most popular bass boat length and motor size to own. The results were not much of a surprise, but told us that many anglers try to keep to budgets. A 19 foot bass boat, powered by 150 HP engine came out on top. The top brands were also included in that pole, but we will

keep those results to ourselves. 17 – 19 foot bass boats are what you get to see stuffed into garages all over the country and are by far the most economical to run and afford. But, don't be surprised to see many having very good speed and an array of options.

**Ranger RT178.** From crappie to bream, catfish to bass, the Ranger® RT178 is performance engineered and factory-rigged to make it the ultimate fishing partner. The RT178 includes a broad 92" beam and comes equipped with a wide range of factory installed outboards up to 75 horsepower. Inside, the raised decks include a recessed trolling motor pedal and a world of storage for tackle and gear. Cockpit seating is custom built in the Ranger factory and the helm is highlighted by a fiberglass console engineered to provide unparalleled confidence, strength and durability. Best in class features also include a Minn Kota® trolling motor, on-board battery charger, Lowrance® depthfinder and all-aluminum floors and decks. New for 2014, the RT178 is now available with Ranger's rugged Rawhide™ interior and a choice of authentic Mossy Oak® or Realtree® camouflage. [Website link](#)



**Stratos 186 VLO.** Loaded with innovative fishing and performance features, the Stratos® 186 VLO™ makes the selection process an easy one. Rated to 115 horsepower and packaged with the comforts you expect from a quality built fiberglass fishing machine, now there's no reason to settle for aluminum. With a wealth of storage and a tournament style center rod box, the wide open VLO™ interior is packed with features and geared for fishability. Factory equipped with a Minn Kota® trolling motor and recessed foot pedal, Lowrance® electronics, full featured cockpit and custom upholstery, the Stratos® 186 VLO™ is built to fish and designed to deliver...all at an incredibly affordable price.



The **Phoenix 919 Pro XP** is the newest addition to the Phoenix fleet. Measuring in at 19'8" with the same wide casting platform that the rest of our "9" series models have become known for, this is truly an amazing fishing machine. It allows anglers to get into those tight spaces around docks and

backwaters with plenty of casting area once your get there. Add to this the same fishermen friendly layout that all of our models incorporate and you arrive at an amazing blend of fishability and performance.



**Charger's 195 Foxfire** has a standard-equipment list that reads like the options list on most other boats. It's 64 items long, including a Hot Foot throttle, an integrated jack plate, a Lowrance HDS 7 (at the helm) and an HDS 5 (at the bow), a single-axle trailer with aluminum wheels and a swing-away tongue, and a custom boat cover. Examine the Foxfire, and you'll find that all of those goodies are complemented by smart design. The angled, nonslip step pad makes it easy to go from the casting deck to the cockpit, for example. And notice that all of the stowage compartments are lighted with blue

LED lights, more durable and efficient than incandescent. Fit and finish is up to tournament bass-boat standards, with a tricolored hull and deck, 24-ounce ash carpet, while a set of slick-looking Livorsi racing bezels on the helm gauges adds appeal. Performance is also tournament grade, with a head-snapping 2.87-second time to plane and a 67.9 mph top-end speed.

**Nitro Z-6.** As one of the most popular builders around, Nitro can offer economy f scale and maximum bang for the buck. And if you want a production fiberglass bass boat that offers solid performance at the lower end of the cost spectrum, the Z-6 is a model you're sure to be looking at. It MSRP's under \$20,000 (with a trailer and a 115-hp Mercury outboard), can hit speeds in the low to mid 50's, and at 17'4" long with a 2,400 pound tow load, is easy to handle getting to and from the ramp. For more information, visit Nitro Boats.



Available in single and dual console, the [Blazer 190-PRO-V](#) could be the perfect boat for your fishing style. All Blazer Bass Boats are fully equipped, super fast, and stable fishing machines. With a 200 HP



motor, the 190 PRO-V delivers the speed and handling that are the trademarks of all Blazer Boats. Special features like a passenger rod shelf, huge divided livewell, and two gigantic rod boxes allows the 190-Pro-V to compete at any level. If you're cramped for garage space, the optional swing-away trailer tongue allows the 190-Pro-V to fit in most standard garages. It comes standard with twin 22 gallon gas tanks so you can concentrate on fishing instead of looking for the fuel dock. [Website link](#)



## Aluminum Bass and Crappie Boats

This group of boats hits on all sides of the metal boat world that mixes boats that can take a few bumps and bruises, get into skinny water and are quick to your favorite fishing hole.

**[SeaArk Predator Series](#)**. The Alaskan environment is among the toughest around for hunting and fishing. SeaArk's Predator Series was designed with this fact in mind. Constructed from .125 gauge aluminum and a 3/16" heavy-duty center keel this boat can take a beating. Equipped with a Mercury SportJet engine and tunnel hull the Predator allows you to access very skinny waters and get to big game. The Predator series is offered in the AK version (with the optional walk-thru windshield), the FX version (with a livewell in front of the center or side console), and the Hybrid which allows the walk-thru windshield of the AK and the rear deck of the FX. You can also add many options to the Predator such as, a seat box with bench seats, gun boxes, live wells, upgraded paint colors, or six different camouflages all to help build the perfect boat for you. [Website Link](#)



For **[2014 Princecraft](#)** expanded its **[DLX boat Series](#)** with the release of two new mid-sized boats as part of the **[Nanook line](#)**. Measuring 16'-6" long and 88" wide and equipped with a side console (SC) or a full windscreen (WS), they are the perfect size for big lakes. They have plenty of space for four fishermen—and all their gear—yet are compact enough for easy towing and launching. The bow features a large raised casting platform with plenty of space below for stowing batteries and fishing gear of all kind. The aft raised casting platform, which includes a livewell (34"; 61 L / 16 U.S. gal.) and a seat mount floor base, rounds out the fishing-friendly features. As always with Princecraft, you can customize your boat with a variety of optional equipment, including a top, radio, electric motor, sonar, and a Mercury outboard engine ranging from 40 to 115 HP. Princecraft's new Nanook fishing boats are a perfect blend of performance and ingenuity! [Website Link](#)



**761 Blackhawk War Eagle** is 17' and the smallest of the Blackhawk series but still packs a punch on the water. This model is perfect for year round hunting and fishing. The Blackhawk comes loaded with all the standard equipment you need and looks great





on the water. Standard equipment for the side console 761 Blackhawk includes a full skin out with carpet, vinyl or spray liner, 16 gallon fuel tank, 9" windshield, running lights with rocker switches, bilge pump, side console with live well, bracket with wiring for 24V trolling motor, storage box with driver and passenger seating, 2 seats with spiders, 2 pole extensions, bow storage, metal gas tank cover, 4 cleats, upgraded paint option, 3 base plates in front low deck, 1 base plate in high rear deck, wings transom, V-bow and a V-hull.



The most popular bass boat on the water today, the aluminum [Crestliner VT17](#). With a competition-honed VT hull and standard best-in-class fishing features like a 30-gallon aft livewell, huge bow and stern casting decks, recessed trolling motor foot control, under-seat storage, lockable rod storage, step storage, elevated console with instrumentation, MotorGuide trolling motor, Lowrance depth finder, onboard battery charger and much more. This top-flight aluminum bass

boat gives any boat in the field more than a run for its money. [Website link](#)

Performance Personified! Sleek. Stealthy. Powerful. The **RiverPro LoPro 201 Rear Center Console** is the ultimate evolution of a river fishing machine. And it's mind-boggling, with 200 horses of Mercury Sport Jet fury, pulsating to be unleashed. Let 'er rip! She leaps up to step in a heartbeat, charging to 50-plus speed in just inches of water. At the slightest touch of the wheel, she responds instantly, cutting with the precise agility a thoroughbred. Whoa! Rocky shoals ahead! Incredibly, she stays on plane as she slows, riding the surge of water and effortlessly gliding over the snag, ready to run... and leaving you breathless.







Built to get you on the fish quickly and comfortably, the [Lowe ST 195 DC](#) features a dual console layout that ensures you and your fishing buddies enjoy the ride—and fill the livewells. The roomy, durable ST 195 DC includes a huge deck—wider than the leading competitor’s—that functions beautifully for wrangling bass. Everyone’s gear is kept safe and secure, thanks to generous storage space throughout the boat. And the ST 195 DC is nicely equipped, with fishing features including dual rod lockers, dual aerated livewells, a MotorGuide® trolling motor, a

Lowrance fish finder and a strong, efficient, power-matched Mercury® outboard. The ST 195 DC arms you for maximum angling success and total enjoyment. [Website link](#)

[SeaArk RXT Series](#). When your number-one objective is catching fish, you don’t need a lot of unnecessary things getting in the way. SeaArk’s RX series offers the ideal set-up for fishing but without the high price tag of other boat lines. This series offers livewells, storage, navigation lights, bilge pump, trolling motor wiring, fishing seats, casting deck, and side or center console all in a low-maintenance aluminum hull. For shallow water use, this model is offered in tunnel hulls (RXT). The RXT model allows the engine to be mounted higher on the transom with the prop turning in the “tunnel” for accessing those skinny water locations. And for extreme shallow water, the RXJT is a jet tunnel version, designed to be used with an outboard jet motor. Whichever version you choose, getting to your honey hole just became a lot simpler with SeaArk’s RX series! [Website link](#)



**861 Predator War Eagle** is loaded with standard equipment that puts all your gear within reach. The low



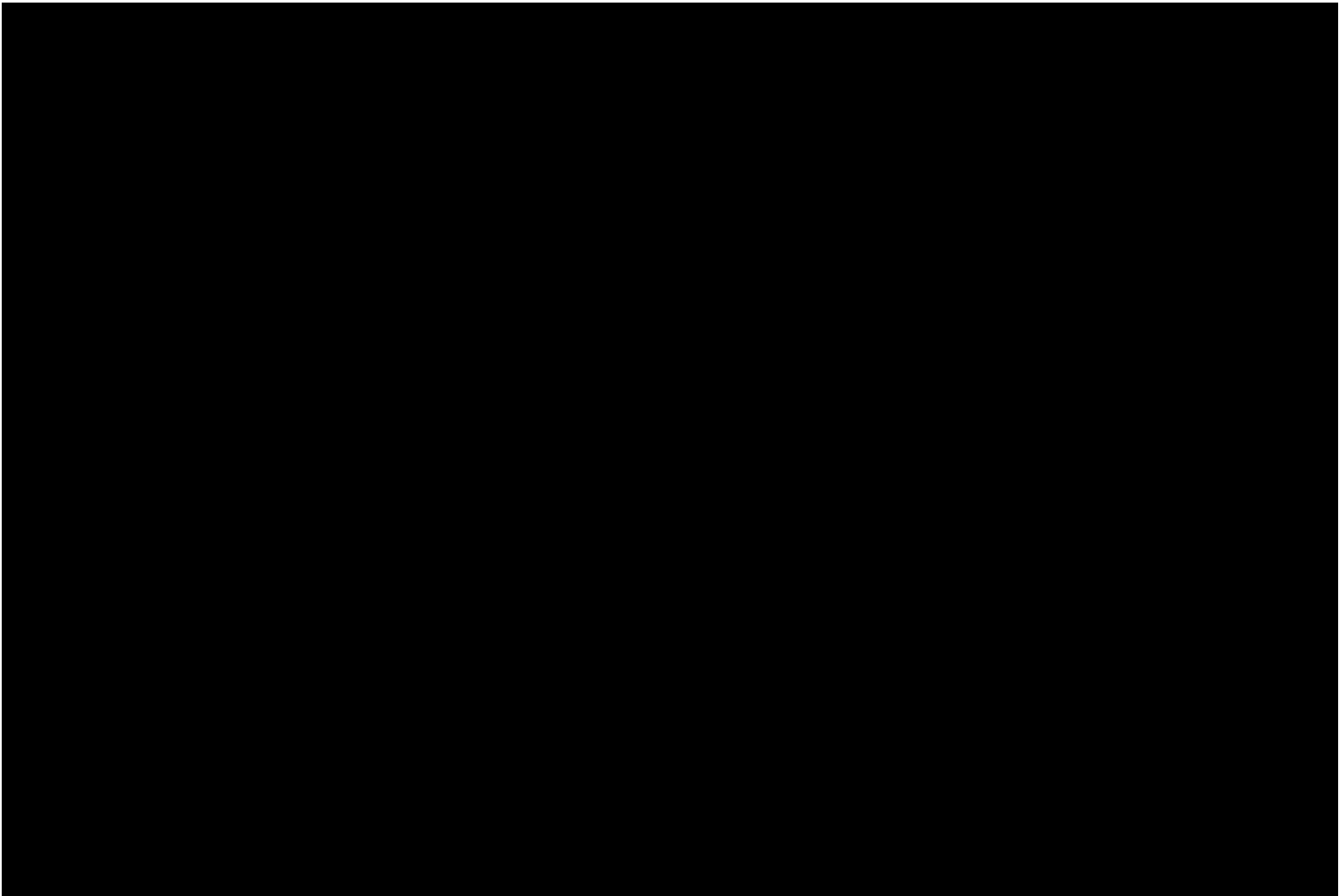
front deck is designed for side by side fishing and includes a front bait well and live well. The front deck includes marker buoy pockets, drink holders and anchor storage. The rod box holds rods up to 7.5' or use the rod straps to store longer jig poles. Upgraded seating and the large console give the Predator lots of style on the water. The rear deck is finished out with insulated ice chests and an insulated live well. This crappie fishing machine has quickly become a favorite among crappie fishing guides across the south. Standard equipment included in the War Eagle 861 Predator is full skin out with carpet or vinyl, two seats with spiders and

pole extensions, running light package for console models, and much more.

**Tracker's Pro Team 175 TXW** has been the company's best-selling bass boat for years, and it's banking on raising the bar on that number with the all-new 2014 model. How? A brand-new factory in which to build a fully featured, top-shelf aluminum boat for a price comfortable to most family budgets. The new Pro Team 175 TXW is powder-coated, not painted. Tracker calls it Diamond Coat for its tough brilliance. The durable finishing process, applying color and clear-coat to the entire hull for a deep and durable shine, is practical only to a builder of Tracker's scale. It also is a nod to the environment, reducing to nearly zero volatile organic compound emissions. The all-welded hull is solid and in our tests was comfortable in light wind chop or when crossing others' wakes. Its shallow draft assures anglers can get to the honey holes deep into the creeks and flats.



For bass fishing excellence, you can't beat the rugged and durable [Lowe Skorpion](#) (pictured on following page). This well-built, well-equipped mod-V fishing boat was made to take the “sting” out of buying a quality bass boat package. Large bow and stern fishing decks offer plenty of fish-working real estate.







Premium standard components include a MotorGuide® trolling motor, Lowrance fish finder, 23-gallon bow aerated livewell with baitwell, ample storage, your choice of Mercury® outboard power, and a portable gas tank with storage. For superior fishability and a price that doesn't sting, the Lowe Skorpion delivers. [Website link](#)

## Catfish Boats

Catfish boats featured here are all about rugged, metal boats, with lots of deck room, set up for multiple rod placements with a giant live well. These boats are meant to take a lickin' that cat fishing brings and get you home safely with for a Fish Fry.

[SeaArk ProCat 200](#) was designed by a professional cat-fishing guide with all of the features needed for guiding, tournament fishing, or just weekend cat-fishing. Constructed from .125 gauge aluminum the ProCat is the toughest cat-fishing boat on the market. Its 15 degree, V-hull bottom allows the boat to ride smooth in heavy chop. An 80 gallon livewell is standard in the boat for those big cats the 25 gallon bow baitwell works for smaller fish or shad. The front deck is specially designed so that water will drain to



the outside of the boat when using a cast net. The Procat also features a walk through windshield to deflect the wind, comfortable captain chairs, and a designated area that allows you to easily mount a filtered bait tank. [Website link](#)

While pursuing monster Cats on the mighty Mississippi River or any large body of water, you need a boat full of fight and capable of handling any situation. [Xpress Boats X24 Catfish](#) has the muscle it takes



to battle rough water conditions and provide the comfort and safety needed to make any fishing trip a success. The Xpress Hyper-Lift® hull glides over the swells with a 250 horsepower rating. A huge livewell and pump system makes sure those big cats make it to the ramp in perfect condition. Take on North America's toughest water; challenge the deep in an Xpress X24 Catfish. [Website link](#)



## Multi-Species Boats

**Versatility! When we think of multi-species boats we think of boats that can on one day hit the great bays of the Great Lakes and handle the waves that can come up and on the next day be foot trolled in shallow water for crappie or bass. A true multi-species boat has the ability to provide comfort on a ride, give the anglers the opportunity to fish muskies, troll for trout and walleye and enough room to stow all the related gear.**

The **Larson FX 2020** comes in three distinct tournament-ready layouts: an open tiller (TL), a highperformance side-console (SC), and a roomy dual console (DC). Each model is also available with an optional sport package. Professional angler Tony Capra called the FX 2020 series “the best multi-species fishing boat on the market today” and “the next generation of performance and reliability.”

“The seating and hull do an incredible job of suppressing waves, and the VEC® Technology gives the FX 2020 one of the nicest rides I have ever experienced,” says Chris Kudek, National Fishing Hall of Fame inductee.



Nothing turns heads faster than the [Smoker Craft Millentia 192](#). This pro-style V-hull fishing boat is loaded with bells and whistles, starting with its racecar-inspired console with chrome accented speed, tach, volt and fuel gauges. The top-of-the-line, 21-gallon stern livewell is lighted, aerated, recirculating, and timed to better protect your catch, and for added convenience there's a 18-gallon livewell in the bow. Lockable bow center rod storage with T-locks safely stores up to 8 rods, and you'll fish in superior comfort from ergonomic, wood-free deluxe fishing seats. [Website link](#)

The **Larson FX 1750 Side Console** is our easy-to-use and easy-to-enjoy model. It's equipped with all the amenities of traditional aluminum fishing boats but with the added benefit of fiberglass styling and smooth ride, an open floor plan, movable pedestal seats, and quick access to livewells and storage. Features include: Integrated Fiberglass Floor; Fixed Cleats (4); Grab Handles; Built in Fuel Tank, Deck Reinforcement for Down Riggers/Rod Holders; Color Band w/Sport Graphics; Wind Screen; Bow Storage



Compartments (4) w/Latches; Lockable Side Storage (2); Drink Cup Holder (3); Aerated Stern Livewell (29 gal/48") w/Light; Large Bow Casting Platform and Stern Casting Platform.





If you love fishing from fiberglass boats, then the [Starcraft STX 206](#) Viper is your ultimate boat. It features a great roomy floorplan and tournament-ready features to help you fish like a pro. In fact, with so many bells and whistles, you'll fall hook, line and sinker. Consider these amenities: four deluxe wood-free fishing seats; lockable center rod storage; in-floor storage; side-mounted rod racks and a huge 36-gallon aerated stern livewell with baitwell. Plus, the STX 206 Viper features great optional equipment, including a sonar unit, a trolling motor, snap-in carpet,

a depth gauge, and a full enclosure that's great for early- and late-season fishing. [Website link](#)

The [Crestliner Raptor](#) has always been about fishing, so expect nothing less than everything you need to work a honey hole or get the monster catch. Outfitted with a deep 17-degree deadrise hull and an expansive, open deck design, the Raptor continues to be the boat of choice for anglers throughout North America year after year. The illuminated center rod locker features two rows of storage, holding a maximum of 10 rods in lengths up to 7 feet 6 inches with a recessed bottom for free hanging reels. Well-equipped console accommodates two large graphs. Lockable drawer below. Roomy, storage-rich bow platform includes 13 gallon aerated livewell and 1.5 gallon baitwell. Stern 26 gallon aerated livewell with light, timer, divider and recirculating system. The SureMount Gunnel system conveniently locks gear onto the boat's gunnel. [Website link](#)



The **Excel Bay Pro's** Excelleration™ Pad hull provides a high degree of performance, stability, handling and seaworthiness in an aluminum boat hull. Water under the boat breaks cleanly and away from the running pad, eliminating hydrodynamic drag for increased performance, speed and handling. Lockable rod boxes keep your gear safely stowed. Other features include flip-up jump seats, deluxe center console with rod holders, leaning post with cushions and foot rest, two livewells, integrated trolling motor bracket and over 31 cubic feet of storage. Superliner™ on the floor and interior ensures secure footing and a floor drain keeps it dry. For more info see [www.excelboats.net](http://www.excelboats.net)





Looking for a pro-style fishing boat that's easy on your budget? The [Pro Mag 182 by Smoker Craft](#) is designed to give you everything you need for serious fishing, starting with hydraulic steering and a deluxe console that features chrome accented speed, tach, volt and fuel gauges, plus a compass. Huge aerated livewells protect your catch: 26-gallons, stern; 18-gallons, bow. Plus you'll love the walk-thru casting platform and the ergonomic, wood-free deluxe fishing seats — with the versatility of 6 seat bases. [Website link](#)



## Duck Boats

Marshes, seas, bays, lakes and so on, you will find ducks (+) on all sorts of water bodies. We have collected several boats that will fit in these conditions and are all on different price points as well.



**Pro-Drive Boats** are known for their strength, durability, and performance, along with their reputation for detailed craftsmanship. Their boats are designed to plane off easily and run close to the waters surface even when powered with the low horsepower engines that are available in the mudmotor industry. This same hull design went into their newest model "**The SBX Series**". This is a completely "Self Bailing" cockpit. The "SBX" Self Bailing Boat, has a completely

open floor that is welded in and sealed above the waterline with all of the same structure underneath as the "X" Series Boats. This floor, along with large scupper outlets, naturally evacuates all water that enters the cockpit from rain or swamping from a large wave. Even when left in the water unattended, heavy rain has no effect whatsoever. No need for a bilge pump.

The [Duck Boat Company's Broadbill](#) is Back! The hull design is the traditional semi-V configuration with a wide beam and yielding great stability and reduced draft. The lowered drag on the hull allows the Broadbill to perform amazing with up to a 25hp outboard. The Broadbill is factory built with the following standard features. A 1 piece



separate molding fiberglass liner that was designed to keep the floatation foam out of the middle of the boat. Enough room in the bilge area for a std size 12v battery and a 3 gallon gas tank. Plexus adhesives holds your new Broadbill together and each and every piece is composite materials that will not rot over time. We use a nice black rub rail to compliment





your new Broadbill on the exterior finish to bring it to life. Options available, Spray/Dodger Blind, Locking Cockpit Cover, Light Package, Transom extension for 20" motors and side decoy boards. [Website link](#)

The next generation of boat blind has arrived. The all new **Bankes 14" Dominator** is here! We started from the ground up to bring you a duck boat for the 21st Century. A boat that reflects the needs and demands of the modern hunter. The hunting pressure on today's birds demand that you go further and get into places others can't. The Dominator

only draws 4-5 inches of water, so you can get into places you thought were impossible. It's unique reverse transom design pushes mud, cattails, ice, etc., away from the boat ensuring you can get out with ease. The hull has been designed with the Bankes exclusive R.T.C. (reverse tunnel chine) hull design that turns spray down keeping you dry, even in the worst of conditions.

**G3 Boats** has added another new jonboat to their line-up of Gator Tough jons for 2014. The **1548 DK with Mossy Oak Break-Up®** provides the ideal platform for year-round success. From duck hunts on the Mississippi Delta to crappie fishing in East Texas the 1548 DK is always ready to change with the seasons. The 1548 DK is built on an all-welded .100 gauge aluminum hull and is rated for a variety of engine options, from the fuel efficient Yamaha F20 to ever popular Yamaha F40.



Developed over 30 years ago, the versatile [Duck Boat Company's 14 Classic](#) is designed for two people, a dog, and all your gear and draws just 4 inches of water when fully loaded. Talk about being able to get

to where the birds are! This versatile boat is at home in open water, marshes, mudflats, and against rocky shorelines. In the TDB 14 Classic, you'll enjoy the same remarkable stability that marks the entire TDB line of boats. Because all flotation is strategically located in the boat, it refuses to roll upside down even if swamped when fully loaded! The TDB 14 Classic as well as the Sea Class boats, are proof that thirty years of research and development has resulted in exceptional performance and safety. [Website link](#)





# "GET YOUR FROG ON"



TSURUMIEC®

**Lake Cherokee, TN June 21- Potomac River, MD July 26**  
**California Delta, August 2,3- Lake Guntersville, AL August 9**