

May 2018  
Fishing Edition



# ODU MAGAZINE™

Froggin'  
As Easy  
As 1, 2, 3

Carp  
Care

The Spread  
On Spring  
Walleye

Quick Tips for  
Spring Panfish



# ODU MAGAZINE™

## EDITOR'S LETTER

Crappie, Bass, Walleye, Trout, Redfish, Carp and much more are covered here in. Are you looking for a reason to visit Vermont, Dana Benner will give several. Are you hooked on our carp fishing series? Well you should and the American Carp Society has another great article to make your spring carping successful. In most of North America frog fishing is in real hot. Snag Proof's Frank Tellez presents a how-to article to make you ready for just about every frogging situation. 24,000 words of fishing and outdoor fun await you in this edition. Enjoy

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**Thank You All!**

# FREE FISHING MAGAZINES

**Bass, Walleye, Crappie,  
Bluegill, Catfish,  
Redfish, Musky,  
Stripers, Trout, Salmon.  
Fresh-Ice-Salt**



**"Being A Dad"** - As summer sneaks ever closer to me this year, the topic of being a dad seems to be a topic very much on my mind. I am surrounded by a bunch of great guys who are dads; Joe, Tom, Brian(s), Jar, Sheron, Allen, Dan, Thomas, Jason, Mike, Stuart, Paul, Matt, Scott, Corey and Chris. Some of you I talk to a lot and some of you it's infrequent at times or on Facebook from time to time. One thing shines bright that we have in common, we are involved with our kid's lives. And it matters.



Will my oldest is a 8th grader next August and it amazes me that he has come so far. If you knew him, you would agree. I not only learn from my fellow dads, but Will in his own sort of way is a teacher as well. His reactions to me, his ability to share with me, his internal compass to succeed all help me adjust to his needs.

I was on the phone with a friend the other day and we were talking about being dads and I described Will as being a great student, soccer player and fishermen. As I look at that combination I think I got it right. It's a good mix for Will and will serve him well for years to come.

Am I an expert dad? Nope! Though I have a few rules that I think will hold true as I watch my future 6th grader and 3rd graders follow Will:

1. Take them fishing! Enough said. I find when I go fishing with any of my kids I can talk to them with little interference and really get to know them.
2. Cell phones are great communication devices and can be helpful to keep in touch with your kids. But, keep them off social media as long as possible. Social media for young kids and middle schoolers "is the devil", as Kathy Bates characterer Helen from the Water Boy movie might say.
3. Keep a close eye on what media your kids are taking in, including on their school laptops, phones and home computers.
4. Limit the time they spend on electronic games.
5. Have them do chores.
6. When you are doing chores around the house yourself, fixing something or building something; involve your kids all the time. They will learn.
7. Teach them life lessons early and remind them often.
8. Tell them you love them as much as possible.
9. If they fail, explain to them how to do better and not just tell them it's OK to fail.
10. Teach your kids to say thank you, excuse me, please and may I help you.



Thank you to all who have contributed to make this and past editions a success! And please, enjoy the outdoors.

Larry Thornhill and William Schwarz  
Co-Founders of ODU Magazine

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# QUICK TIPS FOR SPRING PANFISH

By Jason  
Mitchell  
Outdoors



## ODU MAGAZINE VIDEO BLOCK ([www.odumagazine.com](http://www.odumagazine.com))

Spring panfish opportunities are popular with anglers for good reason. Anglers can target crappie, bluegill and other panfish in often shallow water and the action can be tremendous particularly for kids and beginning anglers. Regardless of how much you have fished however, a hot panfish bite can bring out the kid in any angler. In some states, gamefish seasons are closed where panfish seasons remain open. We often also see some pretty devoted bass and walleye anglers spend time targeting panfish each spring as well. Good action, good eating and good fun... anglers love panfish and some of the most watched and popular shows we have aired over the past ten years were indeed panfish shows that highlighted crappies or bluegills.

According to staff member Tony Mariotti, panfish locations can be somewhat predictable after ice out on many natural lakes like the water he fishes in western Minnesota.

“When the water warms up into the low fifty degree range and we have a warming trend, we will often find fish in less than five feet of water. The bays that are usually best are soft bottom, dark bottom bays,” adds Mariotti. Don’t be afraid to push back into these bays as far as possible during stable weather. Here are some additional quick tips from the mind of Mariotti.

1. Protected bays within a bay are often protected from strong winds and are often better as the key seems to be the warming trend. If water temps dive, look for fish to pull out of the really shallow water and look for fish along the break on the mouth of the bay where we typically find fish right away at ice out.
2. If you are catching small fish, try using a bigger presentation or a jig that drops quicker and fish a



little closer or tighter to the bottom as we often find the crappie and bigger bluegill below smaller fish.

3. Use polarized glasses to find the tallest and thickest weeds because usually they hold fish.
4. The emergence of new lily pads often coincides with the right timing for fish to be way back up into shallow bays often in a few feet of water.
5. Casting sometimes spooks fish so don't be afraid to make long casts with a float and jig and slowly work the float back over the top of fish. Cast beyond the fish.
6. Floats allow you to slow way down. The biggest mistake many anglers make is fishing too fast.
7. Small soft plastics especially designed for crappie and panfish work excellent as they are durable for casting and you can catch several fish on one bait. An added benefit as that these baits add vibration, profile and color which can be experimented with, particularly in dirty water.
8. A trolling motor will often stir up shallow water which can aid the fishing if the water is extremely clear and the fish are extremely spooky but often, we can do better by using a push pole to slide the boat up into the shallows. Anchor systems like a Talon or Power Pole are handy for pinning the boat in one spot.
9. Sunshine is your friend. Warm sunny days often correlate with some of our best fishing and the afternoons are much better typically than the mornings. Don't make the mistake of expecting too much before noon and leaving good areas too early because both crappie and bluegill often move into these shallow bays and become active later in the day.
10. Bluegills often create beds in shallow water in the same locations each spring/summer but these shallow easy to find beds also get hammered by other anglers. Some bluegills will build beds in slightly deeper water and these fish often get left alone. Use your side imaging to find not only beds but also whether or not the beds are active. Active beds will be bright and clean on side imaging.

This can be a scenario where flat bottom boats with a shallow draft or a push pole can enable you to catch more fish as some of these locations can be hard to get back into. You might have to cross a foot or less of water to get as far back into the bay as possible.

The presentations are pretty straightforward. Slow reeling a jig below a slip bobber allows anglers to creep the presentation along without falling down into emerging weeds or the muck. A general rule of thumb is to set the jig about half way down between the surface and the tops of the emerging weeds but don't be afraid to experiment by fishing tighter to the weeds or higher in the water column. Sunshine will sometimes pull fish up really high right below the surface.

Jason Mitchell Outdoors airs on Fox Sports Midwest at 9:30 am Saturday mornings and Fox Sports North at 9:00 am Sunday mornings. More information can be found at [www.jasonmitchelloutdoors.com](http://www.jasonmitchelloutdoors.com)





# ***Snap Up More Fish With New Data***

By Keith Kavajecz









Rumor has it the bite is on fire! You head out to the lake and start cruising around at a steady 20mph while watching the screen of your Lowrance HDS with great anticipation. You know that any second now you should start marking fish. Sure enough, they're there! You circle around to set up to troll with the wind. Yet after deploying the planer boards and making a few passes over them with the same cranks that have been working for your buddies, you can't get a hit. To make matters worse, a few more boats have showed up and nets are flying everywhere. What was supposed to be a great day on the water has now turned into frustration.

What is everybody else doing differently than you? There is a good chance that they have their baits running at a different depth in the water column.

ODU MAGAZINE VIDEO BLOCK  
([www.odumagazine.com](http://www.odumagazine.com))

Positioning a crank in the right depth is critical for success! There are two scenarios to consider.

If you are fishing structure, such as a big reef, shoreline break or a drop-off on a flat, you will want to run your baits close to bottom. The fish use the structure as a hiding place while they wait to ambush any baitfish that come by along the floor of the lake.

If you are chasing suspended fish, you will have to move the opposite way. These fish eat in an upward direction, so you will want to position the bait above the arches on the screen. If you are fishing too low, the fish literally can't see the bait!





So how do you get your bait in the right spot in the water column? The answer is literally right at your fingertips!

The data to tell you how much line you need to let out to get a specific crankbait to the right depth has been around for decades. Precision Trolling Data (PTD) previously published a book nicknamed the “Trollers Bible” before transitioning the information over to a smartphone app several years ago.

The app, which is available on both iOS and Android, is simple to use. Begin by picking the type of line you are using, such as #10 Berkley Trilene XL, 10# Berkley FireLine, etc. If you don’t use the lines listed in the app, choose a line type with a similar diameter to the line you have spooled up. Then tell the app what type of lure you are using and the depth you would like the lure to be at in the water column. The app will tell you how much line you need to let out.

Now you know how to get your bait where you want it, but there is another problem. The “hot” bait hits the maximum depth it is designed to dive and you need it to go deeper. How can you accurately get it where it needs to be? There are several options for adding weight to your rig to get it to go deeper, such as snap weights, lead core line, inline weights and dipsies. The catch is that each of these diving devices are speed dependent. Slower speeds allow the device to get deeper, while faster speeds will make the device rise in the water column.

For situations like this, a new feature on the PTD trolling app comes to the rescue! Over the past year PTD spent considerable time and resources, including using an underwater diver, to gather data on the most versatile diving device – the Offshore Snap Weight, specifically the one with the 2oz. Guppy Weight. This device is very simple to use. Just let out a leader of line, clip on the Snap Weight, and then let out a dropper line. Obviously, the bait will dive to a certain depth with just the leader, but the more



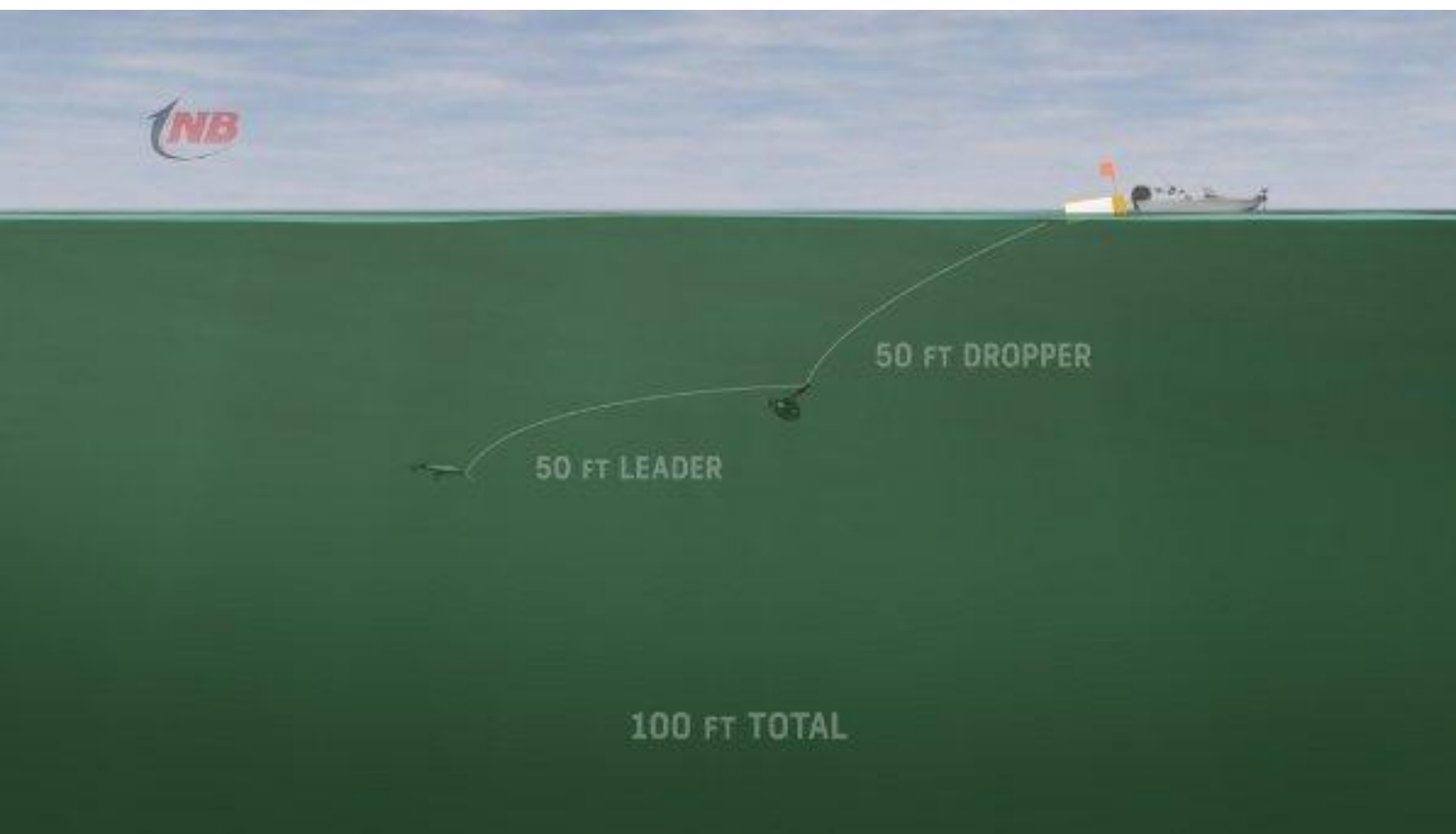
line you let out for the dropper, the deeper the Snap Weight will go, and correspondingly, the deeper the crankbait will end up running.

PTD gathered data for 16 of the most popular walleye crankbaits paired with a Snap Weight. The initial data was gathered with a 50-foot leader of 10# Berkley Trilene XT (which is considered the most popular trolling line on the market, especially for open water) with a 2 oz. Snap Weight attached. This method has been dubbed the “50 Plus 2” method. Tests were done at two speeds – 1.5mph and 2.5mph. The crankbaits were then tested with varying droppers out to 100 feet.

Now let's step back for a moment. In the past, most of us went on the theory that in this type of system, no matter what bait was used, the Snap Weight would end up diving to the same depth, then the crank bait would dive below that. By taking the depth of the Snap Weight on the dropper length, then adding the depth the lure dives on the leader length, you would think you'd get close to the total running depth of the crankbait.

The new tests show that although the old method got you in the ball park, it could be as much as ten feet off. This variance can be huge, especially when targeting suspended fish. It turns out that the Snap Weight, as with other weighted systems, runs at different depths based on the type of crankbait being used – a shallow, medium or deep diver. To accurately gather the data, PTD tested each crankbait/Snap Weight combo separately to get an accurate charting of the total dive depth. This is great data!

Now to use the data. When you find yourself in a situation where you need to run a lure deeper than it can dive on its own, open the Precision Trolling App. Select the type of line of “10# Berkley XT / 50ft Leader 2oz Snap Weight”. Then select the speed you are trolling and the depth you would like the bait to run. The app will then tell you the total amount of line to let out (leader + dropper).



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Let's look at an example. A #7 Berkley Flicker Shad has a maximum dive depth of 14 feet on 10# Berkley Trilene XT. To do this you would have to let out 131 feet of line. Let's say we want to fish this



lure 18 feet down at 2.5 mph. You would change the line type to "10# Berkley Trilene XT / 50ft Leader 2oz Snap Weight" and roll the MPH wheel to 2.5mph. Next you would roll the "Feet Down" wheel to 18. The app will display the "Feet Back" as 78. The 78 refers to the total amount of line out. To fish this lure at 18 feet down you would let out the #7 Flicker Shad and 50 feet of line. Then attach the Off Shore 2oz. Snap Weight. Then add another 28 feet of "dropper" for a total of 78 feet.

You can run the lure right behind the boat (make sure the rod tip is close to the water surface) or attach it to an Off Shore inline planer board to send the setup out to the side of the boat. It is important to remember that the board attached at 78 feet will not affect the depth the lure is diving, no matter how far out from the side of the boat you run the board.

You may have noticed that we are able let out less line to run the bait 18 feet down (78 feet of line), than we need to let out to get down to 14 feet on its own (131 feet of line). This means that there is less line to reel in when you get a fish, making you more efficient. For this reason, there are times that we add a Snap Weight to our trolling set up, not just to get deeper, but so we can let out less line.

This app is available on the Google Play Store and on the Apple App Store. Just search for Precision Trolling Data and install the app for free. The app comes with one lure (the Berkley #7 Flicker Shad) so you can try out the functionality of the app. If you find it useful you can purchase additional lure data individually – or you can purchase a Lifetime membership and get all the data that is currently tested as well as any data that is gathered in the future.

Snap weights have been around for years, but with the new Precision Trolling Data it will help take all



# GARY SNYDER: PROFILE OF A CLASSIC AMERICAN INVENTOR



your cranks to new depths and get you.... The Next Bite.

**By Tom Gruenwald**

Eli Whitney. Thomas Edison. Henry Ford. These men are all classic, admirable inventors who dedicated their lives to their callings.

Each have profoundly affected our everyday existence. Yet seldom when we use modern versions of their inventions in our daily routines do we really consider the efforts of these original inventors.

I don't recognize Thomas Edison every time I switch on the lights. We all know Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone, but few of us pause

before answering a call to acknowledge his prowess. I love peanut butter, but don't stop to thank George Washington Carver for his delicious contrivance every time I bite into a tasty sandwich.

There are other, often overlooked classic inventors who have dramatically influenced us as well. Personally, as an avid angler, outdoor writer and host of an ice fishing TV show, I spend a great deal of time fishing in a variety of environments, throughout a wide geographical area, in just about every conceivable condition. To be consistently successful, I need a selection of truly innovative, cutting edge tackle that helps me stay on top of my game. Often, this means the need for unique lure designs with completely unprecedented forms and actions that really stand out and provide a distinct edge--and I



imagine there are times you might experience this, too.

Although most of us don't stop to consider the work of the entrepreneurs behind these baits each time we fish, most anglers have no doubt heard the story of Laurie Rapala, and are familiar with names such as Fred Arbogast, James Heddon, Tom Mann and Lou Eppinger. After all, their classic minnow imitations, noisy surface lures, plastic worms and red and white spoons are still available today, with variations of their uniquely original baits numbering in the hundreds.

Gary Snyder is another equally dynamic lure innovator I would add to that list, one who has worked rather quietly behind the scenes over the years, ingeniously developing a variety of niche lures now found in hundreds of tackle box trays around the world--baits that have accounted for literally thousands of quality catches. Not just one or two original baits, but numerous specialty designs.

Still, this inventor has seldom been suitably credited for his innovations.

The time has come to lift the curtain. Gary is the man behind some absolutely incredible lure creations. Most familiar would likely be his original Jig-A-Whopper line, namely, the famous Hawger Spoon. He's also the face behind Bad Dog Lures, Red Neck Tech, the man who helped introduce Salmo Lures to the United States, and more recently, the leader of Snyder Lures.

"I have passion for fishing and design," Gary shared. "I love to create."



It's obvious that for Gary, bringing new lure ideas to fruition is the perfect way to blend those passions. I've caught hundreds of fish on many of his distinct designs, and been thoroughly impressed with the genius behind each concept. In fact, I've met some pretty inventive entrepreneurs in the fishing industry over the years, but when it comes to specialty lure design, I can honestly say I've never met anyone more astute, and mentioned that to him during a recent conversation.

"The inspiration really came from my dad," Gary responded. "Dad was an intelligent, creative man." Gary paused, then smiled. "Me? At least I inherited his creativity," he chided, breaking into a laugh.

"Dad was multi-talented. Besides being a teacher, he was a resourceful boat and kayak manufacturer who also made fishing lures. When I was about ten years old, I began helping him in his workshop, putting in a few hours after school and on weekends.

One day, he approached and assigned me a project: Priming and painting about 1,000 of his mainstay baits, a 1" long, lightweight fly rod spoon featuring a treble hook dressed with chicken feathers. Looking back, that was a pivotal moment—I was being entrusted to carry out a significant responsibility. Dad was providing an opportunity, demonstrating he trusted and believed in me. Flattered, I went right to work.

After finishing the job, Dad was obviously impressed, as he didn't only give me verbal approval, he backed that up by allowing me to continue priming and painting thousands of lures from that point forward."

His father's approval became a strong confidence builder, and for the next four years, Gary spent hours in the shop helping build and paint, and through this experience, became even more adept at his craft.

"After I turned 14 and school was let out for the summer, dad explained he'd hired a driver who could haul me around to various resorts so I could sell our lures. I still remember my first stop--a small place in Fairibault, Minnesota, where I showed the owners our wooden Tiger Mouse surface lure. They hadn't seen the bait before, so we walked out on their pier, where I took one cast and







caught a fish. I'd proved my point, and that one little resort alone ended up buying over 300 of them from me that summer."

Now, in addition to enjoying the thrill of expressing his creativity, experiencing the satisfaction of catching fish on baits of his family's design and watching others accomplish the same, Gary had also proved to be a quality salesman. While his father had him continue working on production during the winter, he unhesitatingly switched Gary over to sales during the summer months, helping spread distribution across Minnesota and into neighboring western Wisconsin.

This continued until 1982, when his father decided to sell the lure business. "I looked at that moment as an opportunity," Gary recalled. "I was familiar with the various aspects of lure production, packaging and sales, so I had all the tools necessary to start my own business. I just needed something to go on, and one thing about Dad's enterprise had always bothered me: Although I knew quality hooks would allow us to produce a truly premium product, Dad always insisted on buying imported hooks to help keep our costs down. I had always wanted to produce nothing less than the best, so with \$500 in my pocket, I decided the time had come, and began a new, premium lure business of my own featuring innovative designs incorporating premium hooks. I called it Jig-A-Whopper."

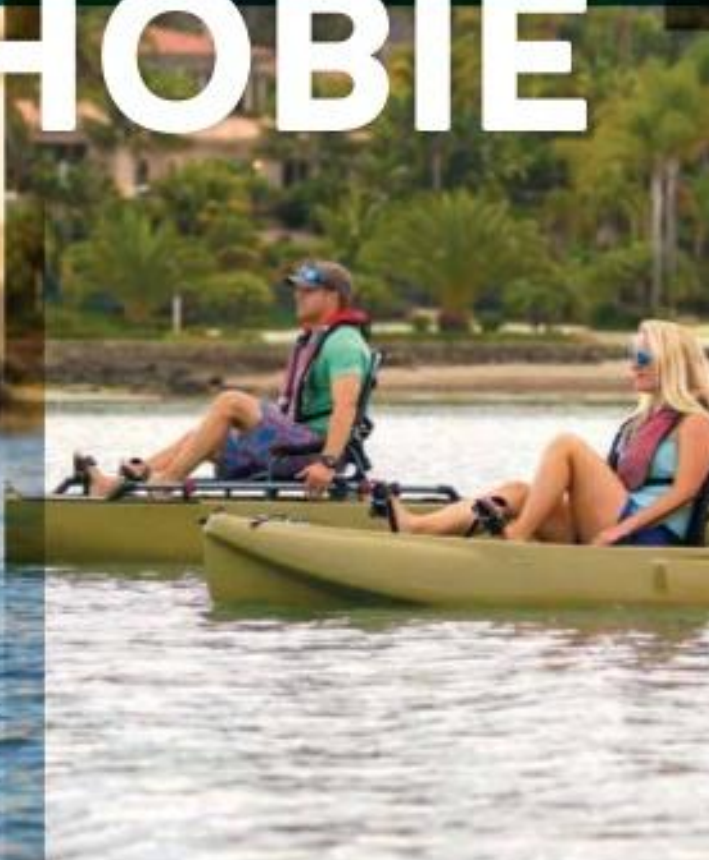
He began with a little lure called the Flutter Bug, which actually did quite well and helped launch his business. After this success, his business plan was to create display racks featuring trays of bulk lures filled with a variety of lure designs, sizes and colors, meant for distribution to independent dealers who were supportive of the Flutter Bug. This way, Gary could continue producing premium, high-end lures, but by eliminating expensive packaging, offer them at a competitive price, too.



The Hobie logo is displayed in a stylized, cursive font within a blue diamond-shaped frame. The background of the top half of the advertisement is a photograph of a man in a white shirt and tan cap fishing from a blue Hobie kayak on the ocean. A fishing rod is bent, indicating a catch. In the distance, a small yellow boat is visible on the water.

*Hobie*

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until years later Dad admitted he made that statement as a somewhat risky means of motivating his son.” Apparently, however, that strategy worked.

“Honestly, I was really worried at the time,” Gary continued. “Dad was a smart man and had a lot of resources and experience to draw from. But I believed in myself, wanted to prove him wrong and decided to move forward, putting in 18 hour days, 7 days a week in order to develop and produce the volume necessary to fill all our bulk trays. In all, we wound up building a line of lures that had soon grown to a few hundred models.” Once more shops started supporting this program, his home office, production and warehousing became too small to keep up with the expansion.

“As we ran out of space, I began storing some lure inventory in various portions of the house, eventually including our bedroom,” Gary laughed. “With so much of that inventory being phosphorescent, the resulting glow was keeping my wife awake at night. That quickly became the incentive for investing in a warehouse.”

Good thing he did, too, because Gary’s first major breakthrough followed shortly thereafter, with a lure he had developed called the Walleye Hawger, a revolutionary, elongated walleye jig. “We had a bait shop over in Wisconsin that was ordering Hawgers, and with anglers having positive results, started moving some volume.”

With a stroke of luck, a couple influential anglers picked up some of those Hawgers, experienced success with them, and by 1987, word had traveled back to Doug Stange, the editor-in-chief of In-

# REDESIGNED.

# AND READY TO MINGLE WITH THE FISHES.

The Meat Stick rods and combos are balanced to load perfectly with heavier search lures yet enables anglers to watch for the lightest pickups. They feature a sanded glass blank that features a feather light tip for bite detection, and an extremely heavy backbone that loads up for the fight!

The Mackinaw “MACK” rods were designed extensively for the sole purpose of taming big fish. The graphite blank on the bait-cast rods feature spiraled guides for better shock absorption and sensitivity. The handle is designed extra long past the reel seat for better balance and leverage to reduce fatigue. This rod is extremely effective for chasing giant Pike, Lake Trout, Walleye and Salmon.



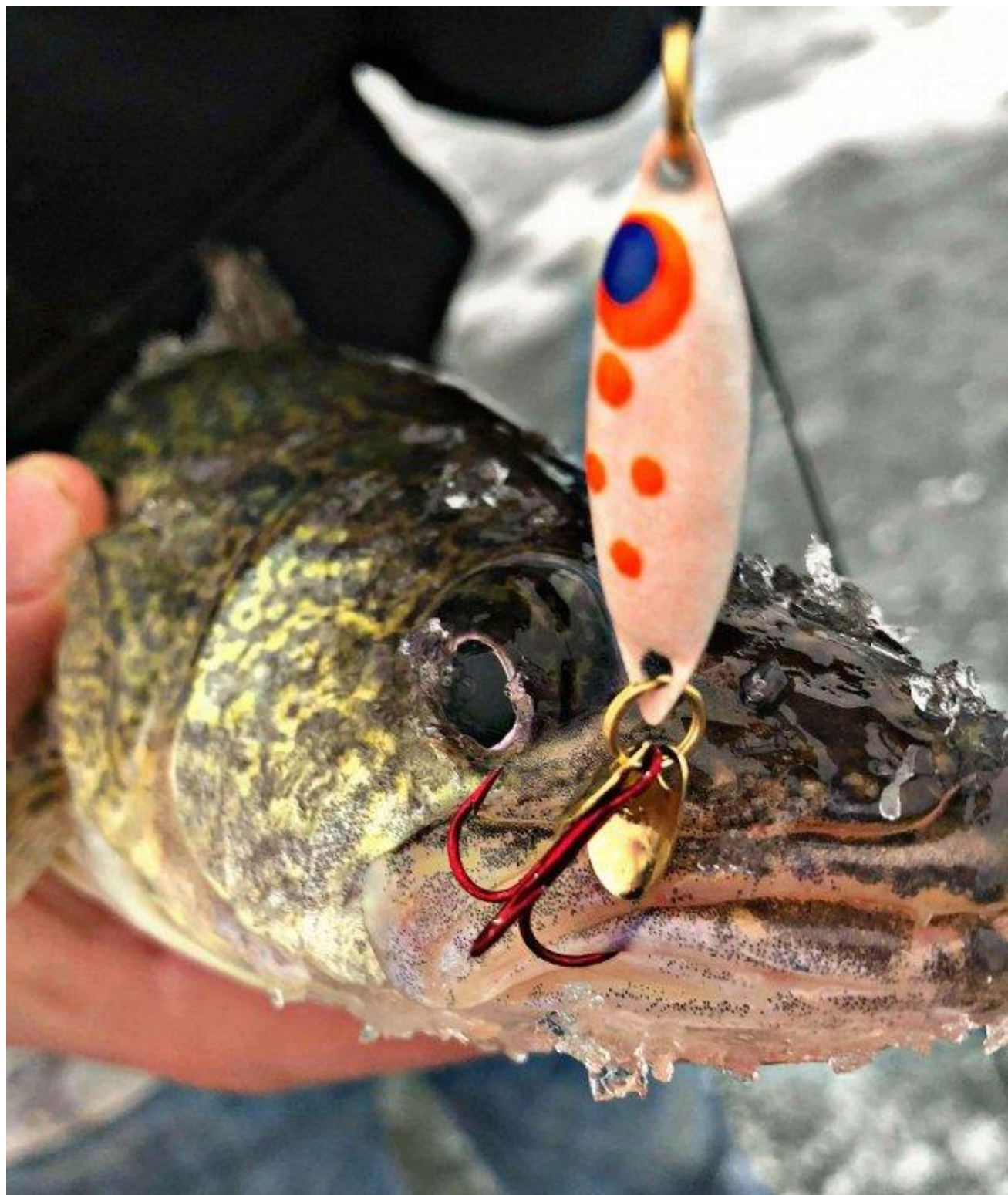


“Doug heard good things about the Hawger and tried them himself,” Gary relayed. “He saw results and started spreading the word. Sales rose quickly, and with Doug inquiring about some of Gary’s other lure designs, including the Flutter Bug, Rocker Minnow and Knocker Minnow—the industry’s first rattlin’ spoon. These soon became big hits, suddenly making Jig-A-Whopper a household name across the United States, Canada and Europe.”

Gary’s Jig-A-Whopper brand continued strong under his direction until 1991, when he sold the business to U.M.M. Holdings, and became a consultant to the company. “For about a year, I would fish Monday through Thursday developing and field testing lures, then work in the Jig-A-Whopper office on Fridays,” Gary shared. “Happy times!”

After Gary finished these obligations and was back on his own, he designed a couple ice lures under the “Arctic Circle” label, which soon evolved into Bad Dog Lure Company around 1992.

People often question where that name originated. “We had this dog,” Gary explained, “that came along fishing with us, and would always try biting our caught fish--to which we would respond, bad dog! That’s where the Bad Dog Company name came from.”





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It must have been a challenge to keep that dog out of trouble, as Gary developed several productive baits under the Bag Dog brand over a two year period, among them, the Crippled Willow, a reverse, off-set hook design that offered exceptional hooking, and the "Little Bully." Bad Dog Lure Company was soon recognized as cutting edge. Intrigued, another lure company bought these designs from Gary.

Yup, you guessed it—a short while later, Gary went back to his workshop and designed more specialty baits, including the "Crappie Spinner" and completely revolutionary "Hornet Grub," a jig with a molded lip head that combined the features of a short-lipped crank bait and a jig, and began marketing them under the Redneck Tech brand in 1995. Gary also traveled to Warsaw, Poland to review some interesting lure designs he'd heard were being manufactured there, and impressed, formed a partnership that brought the first Salmo Lures to the United States.

"Salmo had an extraordinary line of minnow-imitating baits like nothing I'd ever seen before," Gary revealed, "and this one totally unique, lipless crank bait measuring about 6" long that really stood out. The entire line was beautifully crafted, offering amazing life-like actions and absolutely incredible finishes, but there was really something especially eye-catching about that lipless crank." Gary showed the lure to Jeff Simpson from In-Fisherman, and together, they convinced Salmo to make this lure in a smaller size. Gary began marketing that as an ice fishing bait in North America, and using the name Chubby Darter, introduced an entirely new category of ice lure that has since had profound influence within the modern ice fishing scene.

Soon after this introduction, Gary regained ownership of his original Jig-A-Whopper Company, and found himself busy producing Red Neck Tech and Jig-A-Whopper while importing the Salmo line. That got to be a bit much, and it wasn't long before Vexilar bought the Salmo Lure contract from Gary, and HT Enterprises took over Jig-A-Whopper and Red Neck Tech. But Gary couldn't stay away.

"That's when I began Snyder Lures," Gary continued. "Our flag ship item, the Rocket Spoon, is one of my most unique creations yet. It comes in three weights, 1/16, 1/8 and ¼ ounce. Each is 2 ¼" long, but feature different thicknesses, and offer tons of fish attracting flash and action. You can vertically jig them through the ice to create unique rise and fall motions, or cast and retrieve them in open water." But that's not all.

"The best ideas are often the simplest," Gary said. "And recently, I've especially loved developing and designing ice lures. Last year I decided the St. Paul Ice Show provided the perfect venue for introducing the Snyder Frogg-It lure. This little double-hooked bait is absolutely one of the simplest, most productive, fun baits I've ever fished. When ice fishing, you can work it vertically through the water column, hang it beneath a bobber as a 'dead-stick' bait—I've even found you can effectively cast and retrieve it in open water. It's positively one of the most fun baits I've ever fished. You can really feel it swim!"

As you might imagine, Gary isn't done yet. "I'm presently working on several new lure designs, offering features never seen before."

He wouldn't specify what those qualities are yet, but indicated they're based on thin, fluttering, willow designs with subtle wrinkles that provide unbelievably spectacular actions, new finishes that are flashier, brighter and more realistic—plus are coated with brilliant lacquer to make them more durable, too. And he really seems to be enjoying this project.

"To be honest, I'm having more fun right now than ever," he revealed. "Like I've said before, I just love creating this stuff."

For some reason, I have a gut feeling that if asked, Eli Whitney, Thomas Edison, Henry Ford, Alexander Graham Bell, George Washington Carver, Laurie Rapala, Fred Arbogast, James Heddon, Tom Mann and Lou Eppinger would all express sentiments similar to Gary Snyder's.

After all, they are all entrepreneurs, classic American inventors with ingenious insights, each of whom has touched our lives in their own special way.



# Does this lure make my Bass look fat?

## **Rapala**

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# TUBE TRICKS FOR SPRING PANFISH

By Chip Leer

Panfish anglers across the country look forward to the annual spring fling, when schools of hungry sunfish and crappies invade fast-warming shallows to feed.

Simple tactics catch fish, which helps explain why many anglers dangle Aberdeen hooks or tiny jigs tipped with live bait below a small float or casting bubble.

Bobbering can be effective once you locate active fish. But when you want to cover water in search of



the next spring slab, there is a better way.

Casting and retrieving a small, soft-plastic tube without a float is a great way to find and catch panfish cruising shallow bays and shorelines, especially when water temperatures top 50 degrees on a sunny spring afternoon.

Cast out, count the tube down to the middle of the water column, and fish it back, popping your rod tip at a 45-degree angle so the bait moves up, down and to the side.

Northland Fishing Tackle's new Mimic Minnow Tuff Tube



(<http://www.northlandtackle.com/mimic-minnow-tuff-tube>) is one of my favorite baits for this presentation. I prefer the smallest size available, which is 1½ inches.

Tuff Tubes come pre-rigged with an Inner Tube Jig threaded inside the bait in typical tube jig fashion. To extend the length of the micro tube and add extra scent, tip the hook with a single waxworm. For a splash of color, try different shades of Eurolarvae For both color and splash, try tipping it with an IMPULSE Stone Fly (<https://shop.northlandtackle.com/seasonal-tackle/ice-fishing/impulse-stone-fly/>). Be forewarned,





adding more than one waxie or larvae changes how the tube works in the water.

When panfish want a more erratic diving and darting action, fish the tube behind a flattened jig head. Simply poke the hook through the front of the tube and snug the bait up to the jig.

Other tube tricks include trimming the tentacles. Trim all tentacles to shorten the bait's profile, or selectively prune a few random strands to make the bait roll or accentuate the remaining tentacles' pulsating action. You can also add a micro blade for extra flash and vibration.

Tiny tubes work twitched, popped and paused below a bobber. But for covering water and triggering aggressive spring panfish, float-less casting is hard to beat.

Based in Walker, Minnesota, noted fishing authority and outdoor communicator Chip Leer operates Fishing the WildSide, an outdoor sports marketing and communications company. For more information look to [www.fishingthewildside.net](http://www.fishingthewildside.net)







# 5 BAITS FOR ICE-OUT TROUT

By Dan Johnson

Savvy trout anglers know that early spring offers some of the year's best fishing. Winter-weary lakereids, browns and rainbows strap on the feedbag and prowl predictable shoreline hangouts once the lakes shrug off their icy winter cloaks.

When the bite is on, trout fans armed with the right lures can enjoy epic action. To help you catch the most fish possible on every trip this spring, veteran trout guide Bernie Keefe offers his five favorite baits for tangling with ice-out trout.

## 1. Stick It To 'Em

Under the right conditions, slender, shallow-running, minnow-imitating hardbaits are hard to beat.



"Baits like Berkley's Cutter 90 and Cutter 110 are phenomenal early in the morning, from first light until the sun hits the water," says Keefe. "They're also great choices when the wind kicks up a chop later in the day."

Such lures shine over shallow flats, along points and over other feeding areas where trout chase baitfish and other sources of sustenance. "Fish



them with an erratic, twitch-pause retrieve," he advises.

To cover more water when casting from shore, Keefe makes long casts at a 45-degree angle to the bank until fish are found. "Cast, reel in, then walk down the bank almost to the point where the lure landed, and cast again," he explains. "If you're fishing from a boat, use the electric trolling motor to keep moving at a fairly good clip while casting toward the shoreline. Afoot or afloat, the goal is to cover ground until you locate fish. Once you find them, saturate the area with casts until they quit biting."

## **2. Tube Time**

As the sun rises over calm waters, trout move toward steeper bottom tapers in slightly deeper water. "Casting a 3- to 4-inch soft-plastic tube bait like a Berkley Havoc Smash Tube on a 1/4- to 3/8-ounce jighead into 15 to 20 feet of water is a great way to contact these fish," says Keefe.

"Cast, let the jig fall to bottom and, while keeping your rod tip low, retrieve the tube in 6- to 12-inch twitches that imitate crayfish and small minnows darting along the bottom," he continues. "In between twitches, the jig should hit bottom while you reel in slack line and move the rod tip forward in preparation to make the next twitch."

Strike detection is largely a visible matter. "Watch your line like a hawk," he says. "If it twitches or jumps, set the hook." One final caveat: Since tubes are fished on and just above bottom, Keefe doesn't recommend tubing over extremely rocky areas.

## **3. Soft Swimmers**

"Soft-plastic swimbaits like the Berkley Ripple Shad are another great lure choice in calm, sunny conditions," Keefe says. "As with tubes, 3- to 4-inch baits on a 1/4- to 3/8-ounce jighead excel in depths of 15 to 20 feet."

Unlike tubes, swimbaits are fished above bottom. "Match jig weight to swimbait size, so the bait has the right wobbling action on a slow retrieve, without falling to bottom and snagging in the rocks," Keefe notes. "Experiment with steady and subtle lift-fall retrieves until the trout let you know what they're in the mood for at the moment."

To determine the most productive part of the water column, Keefe fishes different levels until a



pattern emerges. "On your first cast, count the jig down until it hits bottom, then retrieve the bait just above it," he says. "Every cast after that, reduce your drop count by five until you find the strike zone."

**4. Spoon Feeding**

Ever a metal fan, Keefe isn't shy about tying on a flashy spoon in sunny weather. "Spoons are deadly for targeting trout suspended over deep water," he says.

Reaction strikes are the goal when spoon feeding trout. "Cast, let the spoon fall to the level you want to fish, and retrieve with a twitch, pause, flutter cadence," he explains.



"The more erratic, the better. Clam's Super Leech Flutter Spoon is my favorite because the lightweight, zinc-alloy construction allows you to really dance it in the water."

**5. Hard-Bodied Swimbaits**

In low-light periods early and late, or windy, cloudy conditions throughout the day, Keefe often turns to a 6-inch or larger, hard-bodied swimbait like the Sebile Magic Swimmer.

"Hard plastic and wooden swimbaits are big-fish magnets, best for covering a lot of water, fast, while casting over large flats, along points and in other sweet spots," he says. "Match lure color to that of the forage base, which in prime trout fisheries is often rainbow trout or suckers."

# NEW!

## BUTTERFLY RIGS

### 3 RIG TYPES TO CHOOSE FROM!

A close-up of a pink butterfly harness lure. The lure has two large, translucent pink wings and a central body with three small, round, pink beads. A red hook is attached to the bottom. The background is dark and blurry, with a fish's mouth visible on the left side.

Butterfly Harness

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# Carp Care

By Wayne Boon

Hello again and welcome to the 3rd article by the American Carp Society designed to introduce and instruct anglers on the new age of Carp Angling...

We've recently covered many of the basic concepts and techniques commonly employed to catch carp; this month, we thought we'd take a really good look at fish safety which is always uppermost on our minds when ever we are fishing, regardless of specie we're chasing...

**There are two main aspects:**

- Fish Safety while actually angling.
- Fish care & safety while the fish are in our possession; That is, while they're out of the water for as brief a period of time as possible while we un-hook, measure, photograph before returning them to the water.

While there are unfortunately still some folks out there tutting and rolling their eyes upon reading this; we (the American Carp Society) passionately believe we should lead by example. It's imperative that we all make it our personal mission to look after present day fish stocks, regardless of the specie or reason we are angling for it...our children and grand kid's

AMERICAN CARP SOCIETY'S  
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angling opportunities will depend on our choices and actions right here, right now...

## CARP FRIENDLY RIGS - SAFETY CLIPS

The actual name of this important piece of terminal tackle (The Safety Clip) gives one of the main reasons for its use away but more on that in the following paragraphs...

To be used effectively, the safety clips requires there main parts to fit together perfectly and working harmony. Four parts if you include the lead weight which ideally have a swivel attached to its wire loop. (see examples below)...



The three main parts are: A swivel, the safety clip itself and a tail rubber. Ideally, purchase all three parts from the same manufacturer as you will be guaranteed that they are all designed to fit and work together correctly. At the very least, make sure the same manufacturer has designed the clip and tail rubber, the swivel should be a size 8 but one or two clips are designed to take a size 7 swivel. Either way, the swivel should fit snugly into the barrel end of the safety clip. Some models even provide a little plastic pin to hold the swivel in place.

So what does the Safety Lead Clip actually do and how do we utilize it when we tie up one of our bolts rigs?

First, the clip should of course hold the lead weight securely enough during the cast to enable us to get our baited hook out to the desired location on the lake/river bed without the lead weight/sinker breaking away from the clip during the cast and potentially hitting someone or something on the far bank. Of course, if we're using heavy lead weights and really compressing the rod for some serious distance casting, then a shock leader (a couple of rod lengths of heavier mono tied to you mainline to safely take the force of the cast) should also be employed for extra safety to prevent crack offs (line



snapping during the casting process, sending the rig and sinker heading uncontrollably towards the horizon somewhere).

The main line or shock leader should be threaded through the pointed end of the tail rubber first and then through the neck (thinner end) of the safety clip itself.

Clip and tail rubber threaded onto mainline.



Having already threaded the Tail rubber and Safety clip onto the mainline/shock leader as noted above, the mainline or shock leader is then tied to the other eye of the hook length's swivel before firmly pushing the swivel into the safety clip barrel as illustrated. A typical hook length complete with a size 8 swivel is shown below.



Some concerned anglers even take a further safety precaution by cutting the plastic retaining arm back a little to ensure the lead weight comes free from the clip in certain circumstances.

Cutting the clip arm back to ensure lead weight ejects if problems arise during the fight.





Next, we choose which lead weight to use based on the conditions we're fishing and attach it to the safety lead clip as shown below. Using a sinker/weight with a swivel already attached adds to the safety aspect of the rig as there is less likelihood of the weight getting jammed/stuck on the safety clip in the event of a breakage of the mainline with the fish hooked.

Now, one of the most important parts of the process; sliding the tail rubber over both the neck of the clip and the weight/sinker retaining

arm. It slides on easier if the clip is lubricated with water or saliva.

The big question is, "how far do we push the tail rubber onto the clip?" Experience is the best judge and it does vary from manufacturer to manufacturer. It's dependent on the materials the clip and tail rubber are made of but we'd recommend as a general rule, no more than 75% of the neck of the safety clip should be covered by the tail rubber once you've pushed them together.

Correct safety clip assembly.





Now that we have the Safety Clip and bolt rig together lets address the three main advantages to its use:

1. As most anglers who regularly fish in and around weeds and other snags soon find out, it's the lead weight/sinker that probably catches a tight hold of the weed/snag. How many times have you lost the fish in a weed bed and then dragged in about 50 LB of the green stuff? Or dragged the green mass in hoping to find a Carp buried in the middle of it all but somehow, the crafty carp has gotten away unseen. It's not only frustrating, it is also very time consuming and a huge tax on all your equipment!

Here is what happens in probably 90% of these cases: Once this very smart fish dives into the weed bed or other snag looking for a haven, the weight/sinker catches a good hold onto the weed. Of course, we try to keep the line as tight as possible thinking we're in direct contact with the fish... The trouble is, we're not! We are tight lined to the weight/sinker in the weed but the other side of the weight (hook, hook length and of course the Carp) is slack lined giving the fish lots of room to shake the hook loose and swim off depriving us of the satisfaction of an awesome trophy photo and a great release story. Here is where the safety clip comes into its own, especially in this very weedy situation when the assembly recommendations above have been followed.

If you apply moderate pressure to the fish in the snags (well, the "locked tight in the weeds" weight/sinker), the weight/sinker should very quickly push the soft rubber tail off of the safety clip and actually break free of the clip. This will enable you to keep the line tight all the way to the hook point. Although the weight/sinker is lost, this will enable you to land and photograph many more fish that would otherwise have escaped unseen.

NOTE: An even better scenario is designing the rig so the lead drops off just as the fish bolts with the baited rig when you know weed banks/snags will definitely be involved in the fight. Some anglers achieve this by cutting the safety clip's arm way back, attaching the weight followed by the tail rubber. The weight is then secured with a couple of wraps of PVA string that then dissolves away in the water after the baited rig has been cast out.



2. You can quickly and efficiently change the weight/sinker size or shape to suit the changing water/weather conditions you can often face during a session without having to change your whole terminal rig.
3. The third and most important aspect of using this Safety Clip assembly is in actual fish care and safety: Think back to the last time you were fighting a large fish and heaven forbid, the mainline broke for whatever reason whether it be faulty equipment, old nicked or creased line, bad knots, abrasive lake/river beds (rocks or Zebra Mussels) etc. The Carp is going to be towing around the rig, complete with the heavy weight/sinker until it again gets snagged up on the bottom of the lake/river bed. Think of this as your pet dog chained up in the middle of your back-garden lawn, way out of the reach of his food bowl in the kitchen. If he can't get free to eat enough food to serve his current metabolic needs, he is going to suffer a long and slow death!

But as in example #1 (in the weeds) above, because the weight/sinker is attached to the retaining arm of the clip and not directly onto the line, the buildup of pressure caused by the fish pulling will cause the tail rubber to pop off allowing the weight/sinker too easily work itself free of the safety clip, the fish will live to fight another day.

It's a very simple and relatively cheap piece of kit that serves you, the fish and the bigger conservation/good stewardship picture well.

## RIG TUBING

Rig tubing, which is also sometimes referred to as Anti-Tangle Tubing is made of a supple PVC plastic and is used directly above the Safety Clip on the mainline. Some newer versions of this tubing has tungsten added to the plastic during the manufacturing process to add weight, helping to pin the tubing down so it's hugging the lake bottom.



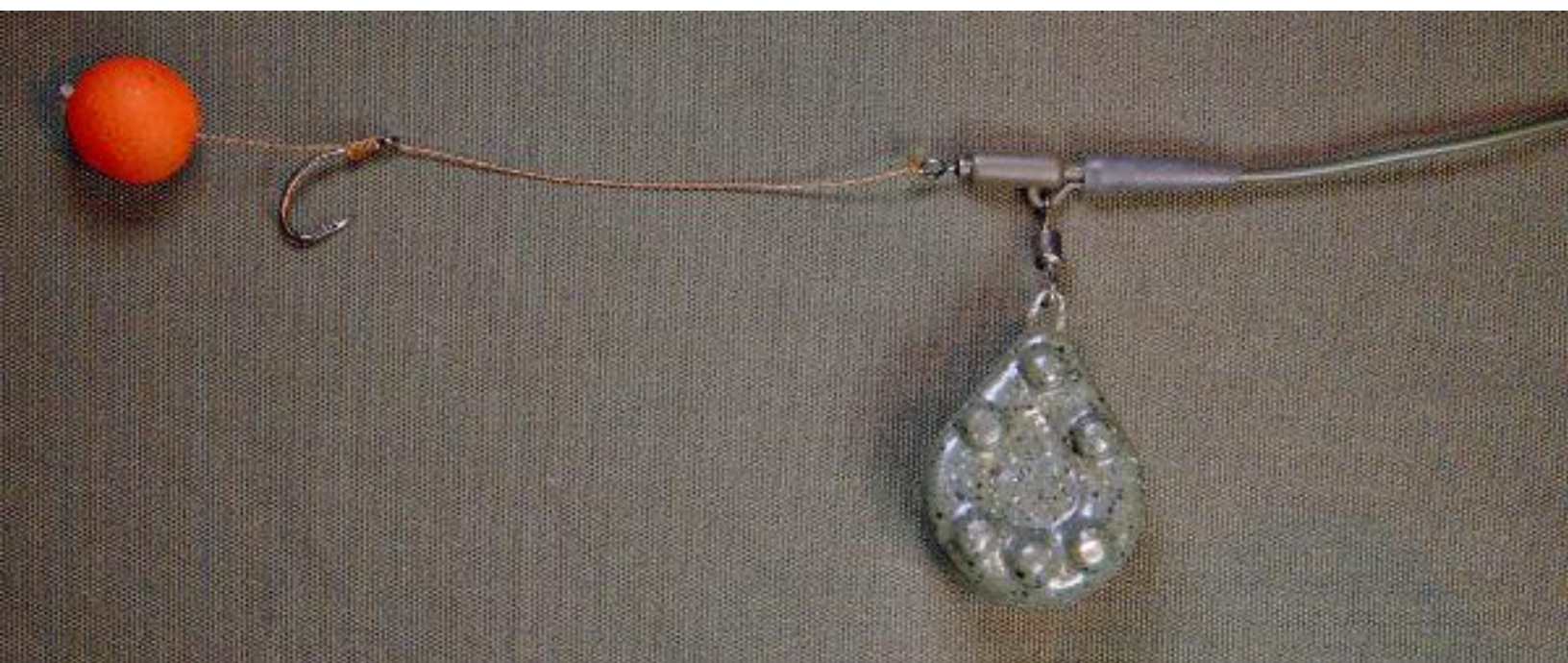
Note: Be careful not to confuse this more rugged PVC tubing with the silicone tubing often used in the hook length/rig construction. Although the silicone tubing would do a similar job, it's almost impossible to thread the mainline through a 24" length of silicone tubing due to it's super supple nature and it's very unlikely to sit anywhere near flat on the lake bed.

As can be seen in the photos below, the mainline is threaded through approximately 18" to 24" of the Rig Tubing. The tubing is then





pushed and seated into the end of the tail rubber on the safety clip; it can be secured with a dab of superglue.



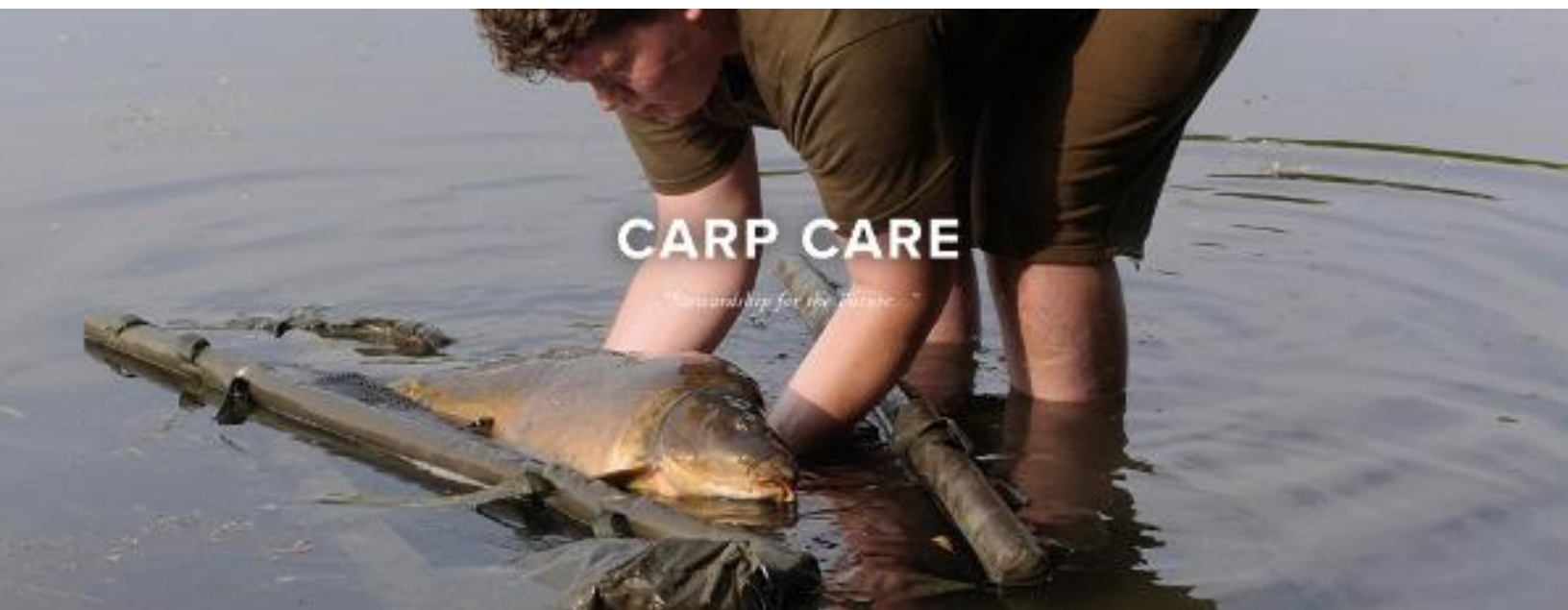
Using a 18" to 24" length of Rig Tubing as part of your baited rig presentation has 3 main advantages:

- As an Anti-Tangle precaution during the cast.
- For protecting your lines from abrasion on very rough lake/river beds.
- Protection of the fish during the battle to land them. There is much less likelihood of you damaging the fish by lifting a bunch of scales off it's flanks during the fight/landing process when Rig Tubing is used.



Many anglers don't like using Rig Tubing simply because they find it a massive head-ache to thread the mainline through 2 feet or more of the tubing. It can be a hassle, especially with older mainline that is coiling. In this case, it's probably time to renew the line on your reel anyways to prevent "lost fish heart ache." Look for a tubing with an internal diameter of at least 0.75mm, 1 mm is best when using a 25-30lb mono shock leader.

Note: We find it hassle free when the mainline section that will be threaded through the tubing is first lubricated with Olive oil or similar. The mainline always passes through the tubing with little or no friction when lubricated like this...



## PRACTICING CATCH AND RELEASE

The large trophy fish that we pursue with devotion can take many years to attain such sizes. A 40+ pound fish can be in excess of 30 years of age so for many, the fish can actually be older than the Angler pursuing it!

These great fish can live in excess of 60 years and, though traditionally known as a hardy fish, we advocate to always treat them with care and respect.

It's also worth remembering that these large fish spend their entire life submerged with their bodies and vital organs supported by the surrounding water pressure. When they are on the







bank and being handled by us, this support is no longer there and they are susceptible to damage if not handled correctly.

The preservation of these 'elder statesmen' for other anglers to enjoy is something that we advocate, therefore we have dedicated a section of our web-site specifically to carp care so that when the fish of a lifetime is captured, it can be released and unharmed for others to enjoy.

After all they give us so much pleasure in their pursuit, it's the least we can do?

## LANDING NETS

Modern day carp nets have

been designed with both efficiency and fish safety in mind. The small mesh that is used today will not lift the fish's scales or cause any tearing of the fins, as the older thickly knotted nets will.

If you do not have a purpose built carp net then a rubber net is the next best option.

The modern carp nets are designed for large fish in excess of 20+ pounds. They are NOT designed however to actually 'lift' fish of this







size out of the water while holding the net handle, in the traditional method.

They usually have a 6ft detachable handle with the width of the actual net being 42"-52" inches.

The actual net is attached to the handle via a spreader block, with the net itself consisting of two detachable arms that fit into the spreader block, and a tension cord.

## UNHOOKING MAT

Either unhook the carp on soft grass or better still use an un-hooking mat. Even soft grass will not stop a carp from harming itself if it decides to flap around on the bank.

Once you have unhooked the fish place the terminal rig away from the net, this way if the fish struggles the hook will not be transferred either to the mesh of the net... or to you!



Unhooking mats are cheap items and will ensure that the fish does not damage itself whilst on the bank. They come in various sizes, some can also be used as a weigh sling serving a dual purpose. They are usually filled with foam or polystyrene beads for cushioning. Make sure that you wet down the mat prior to laying the fish on it and keep both the fish and mat wet at all times, especially during hot weather.

## WEIGH SLINGS

Weigh slings generally come in two forms... either in a very fine mesh type material, the same as a carp sack, or a heavier plastic coated type material as shown in the picture. They both perform the same function of safely enabling you to weigh a trophy carp.

Again it cannot be emphasized enough that these very large fish should not be weighed without a sling,



i.e. through the gills or by any other methods.

Wet the sling down and zero your scales with the slings weight (this is best done prior to you actually banking a fish). It is an idea to then place the sling on top of your unhooking mat or on the soft grass thus enabling you to weigh the fish after unhooking with efficiency.

When you catch a trophy carp place it carefully in the sling and then weigh. If you do not have a sling you can weigh the fish in the net but this is not very accurate and can also cause more damage to your net than necessary. Weigh slings are cheap items of tackle and will last a long time if treated well.



## **Holding The Fish & Releasing**

We advise not to support the fish by the gills or the mouth area, as you might a bass on any occasion as it will cause severe damage to the fish.

Remember to keep both the fish and mat wet at all times, especially during hot weather. To hold the fish for a trophy shot place one hand under it's head, just behind the gills with fingers either side of the Pectoral fin and the other hand supporting around the the anal fin. Pay particular attention and care not to let your fingers enter the fish's gill area as very real and serious injury to the fish can occur if the gills are damaged.

Gently roll the fish towards you until you are able to balance it evenly. This should all be done over the unhooking mat or soft grassy area.





If the fish struggles you do not want any sharp objects close to the fish.

Keep the center of gravity of the fish low, especially to start until the fish is calm and relaxed. Keep the fish close to the ground, over the un-hooking mat by crouching or kneeling on the ground and rest your elbows on your knees for support.

If the fish starts to struggle, simply invert it by rolling the fish back on its flank and holding it close to your chest. This will stop it from struggling. Once you have taken a number of photos from different angles, place the fish back onto the wet mat and "doctor" the fish with one of the commonly available



antiseptic liquids available for the job. It's the least we can do to make sure the fish goes back home in as perfect condition as is possible. Applying the antiseptic liquid to the hook hold mark and any other damage on the fish can help prevent infection.

Then return the fish for someone else to enjoy! Do this by transporting the fish to the waterside inside a zippered weigh sling or un-hooking mat, making sure the carp can't slip out of the sling or mat while carrying it to the waters edge. It is worth watching the fish as it is released for a number of reasons:

1. If the fish has not fully recuperated you will need to stabilize the fish so that the water can be seen to be flowing through its gills and it is able to fully support its own weight in the water (It is not floating on its side). A Large fish after a long fight will be exhausted and so it may take some time for it to be strong enough to swim away on its own. Releasing the fish prematurely can harm the fish. Supporting the fish upright in the water will allow it to regain strength whilst breathing. You may want to hold the wrist of the tail with one hand and give support underneath the head with your other hand whilst slowly moving the fish back and forth. This will promote the movement of water into the mouth and gills. You will know when the fish is ready to be released as it will struggle to swim away.

2. Watching the fish slowly swim away after a tense battle is one of the most satisfying parts of the Carp Fishing experience.

## Antiseptic Liquid For Carp

Here are some examples of some antiseptic liquids that are specifically designed and manufactured for the purpose of treating hook hold marks and scale damage on carp before releasing them back home to their lake/river.







Are you  
guilty?

“

U.S. CARP ANGLERS  
ARE INDEPENDENT  
THINKERS...GUILTY  
OF NOT FOLLOWING  
THE CROWD.



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## About Our Organization:

The American Carp Society was formed in 2002, with the goal of promoting and educating the public on the sport of specimen Carp Fishing in the USA.

The Common Carp (*cyprinus carpio*) is one of the hardest fighting freshwater fish in the world and is now being pursued by anglers of all persuasions, from fly fisherman to dedicated Specialist Carp anglers as a sport fish. The American Carp Society is a membership based organization and is responsible for promoting the sport and ensuring careful stewardship of both the specimen fish and its environment for the future generation of American Carp Anglers.

[www.americancarpsociety.com](http://www.americancarpsociety.com)

[info@americancarpsociety.com](mailto:info@americancarpsociety.com)

[www.instagram.com/american\\_carp\\_society](https://www.instagram.com/american_carp_society)



### **I am more than a weekend warrior.**

I'm also a dad. Soon my kids will be old enough to be out here with me. That's why I switched to lead-free weights and biodegradable baits. I pick up and recycle used fishing line. I never dump unused live bait into my lake. It's SAFE Angling, and it will ensure that my kids enjoy a clean and healthy lake. Now I'm more than a weekend warrior.

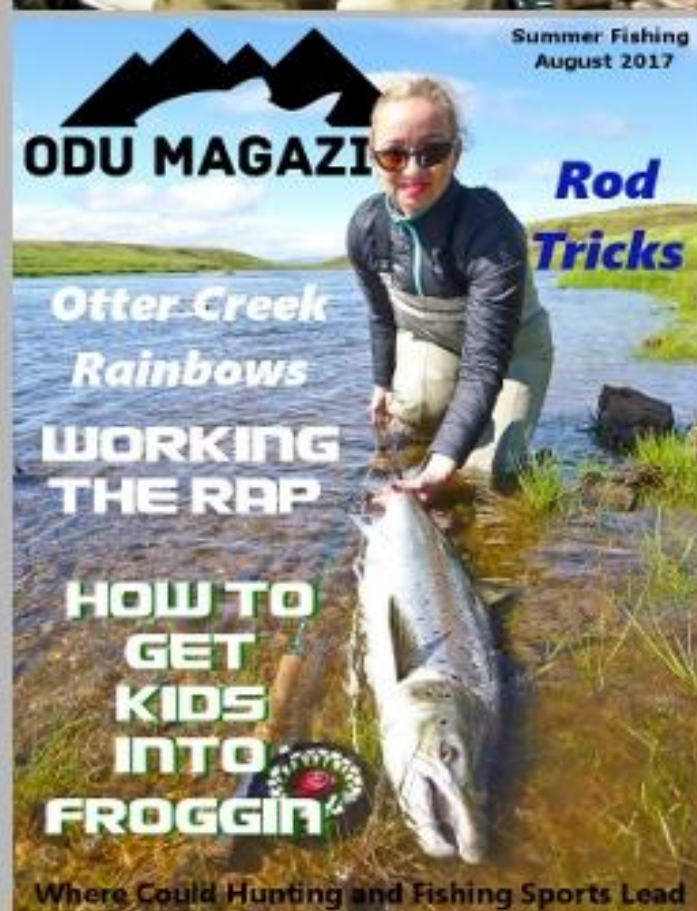
### **I am a steward.**





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# More Ned? Absolutely.

*Z-Man's Finesse TRD  
HogZ Advances the  
Ned Rig Narrative*





For the legendary Ned Kehde— the man behind the miraculous Ned Rig— testing prototypes and lending insights into bass bait design is all in a day’s “work,” if indeed it’s possible to assign such a term to fishing nearly every day, all year long. Following a two-year testing phase, Kehde simply refers the new Z-Man® Finesse TRD HogZ™ as “our best producing coldwater bass bait, period.”

During one brief outing, Kehde caught 55 bass in 69 minutes on a single 3-inch HogZ. “I mailed the bait back to Daniel Nussbaum of Z-Man,” recalls Kehde, “after this lone HogZ produced 112 fish total. It was still in really good shape.”

Kehde, who has chronicled and participated in the finesse bass scene going back to the early days of Guido Hibdon and Chuck Woods, says the HogZ pays homage to Woods’ original Puddle Jumper—a timeless, pressure-immune bait and often disregarded design that’s accounted for untold thousands of bass and other species. Nussbaum, President of Z-Man Fishing, calls the HogZ “the next phase of the Ned Rig genre; a highly detailed, lively, yet subtle bait that’s already selling out in select hot zones across the nation.”

Highlighting the newest member of Z-Man’s ElaZtech finesse bait line, the HogZ sculpt features a specialized flattened nose, facilitating tight flush-rigging to a mushroom style jig, such as Z-Man’s Finesse ShroomZ or NedlockZ HD. Kehde further notes that Z-Man mimicked the shape of its own power-fishing creature bait, the Boat HogZ. “The downsized TRD HogZ sprouts three fine appendages on either side of its multi-ribbed thorax, abstractly replicating the swimmerets adorning a crayfish’s abdomen.”

Breathing life into the finesse creature bait, a pair of refined legs kick, quiver and hypnotically glide. Terminating each leg is a small “foot,” providing surplus thump, plus accentuated up-and-down jet propulsion, reminiscent of the fast-darting movements of crayfish and other invertebrates.

From Kehde’s Midwest reservoirs to Northeastern smallmouth streams, guide Joe Raymond has quietly







*Catching Fish Redefined*

relied on the TRD HogZ for the past two seasons. “For a guide, this little bait is a dream because it’s even more attractive to bass than a tube, and almost can’t be fished wrong,” says Raymond, who runs 225 trips a year, via [susquehannasmallmouthguides.com](http://susquehannasmallmouthguides.com).

“It’s become my go-to presentation for much of the year for big river smallmouths. Just today, we rocked a bunch of bass by fishing it both like a shakey-head and by dragging and deadsticking it on bottom, rigged on a 1/5-ounce NedlockZ jig.

“I fish the baits with a collection of 6-foot 10-inch St. Croix Legend Xtreme spinning rods and 2500-size Shimano CI4s. Each is spooled with either 20-pound Seaguar Smackdown braid and a 10-pound test leader of Seaguar AbraxX fluorocarbon or a mainline of 8-pound AbraxX. Throw this bait in ambush areas—behind boulders, eddies and other visible targets when working down a bank—and you’ll be hooked up pretty often.

“I think of tough ElaZtech and the HogZ specifically, as tube fishing 2.0—the future of finesse bass fishing. Around here, you have to dig deep to even find baits left on the pegs. That’s how hot the HogZ has become.”

Raymond says he’s not sure what the bait imitates—crayfish, hellgrammite or a general ‘something alive and tasty’—but he’s pretty sure fish respond to it because they haven’t seen anything like it attached to



a jighook. “Fishing is really competitive on the river here,” Raymond adds. “Occasionally, I’ll fish through one of my better spots and fail to get bit. When that happens, I’ve learned it’s usually because someone’s already fished the spot with HogZs. It’s like the same thing that happens when you work an area with live bait; catches every active bass in the neighborhood.”

Outside its lively movements and natural underwater posture, the buoyancy of the TRD HogZ is an overlooked attribute. “To the delight of many finesse anglers,” observes Kehde, “these particular ElaZtech baits are not salt-impregnated, making them exceeding buoyant and durable. We’ve noticed the extra buoyancy gives these baits a more pronounced glide, an essential element in our style of fishing.”





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([www.odumagazine.com](http://www.odumagazine.com))

Raymond adds that the bait's buoyancy also makes it work well over snag-inducing rocks, as well as sitting in a natural tail-up position when deadsticked on bottom. "The Hogz's posture keeps the hook up and away from rocks or wood. But it can still become snagged when pulling between rocks. Actually, buoyancy is why it's so important not to snap the bait off on snags. The HogZ looks so lifelike on bottom, even when it's snagged and broken off an angler's line that fish often still eat it. That's a bad deal all around.

"If you don't break off, a single TRD HogZ is durable enough to last all day—even a wolfpack of hungry bass aren't mean enough to shred it."



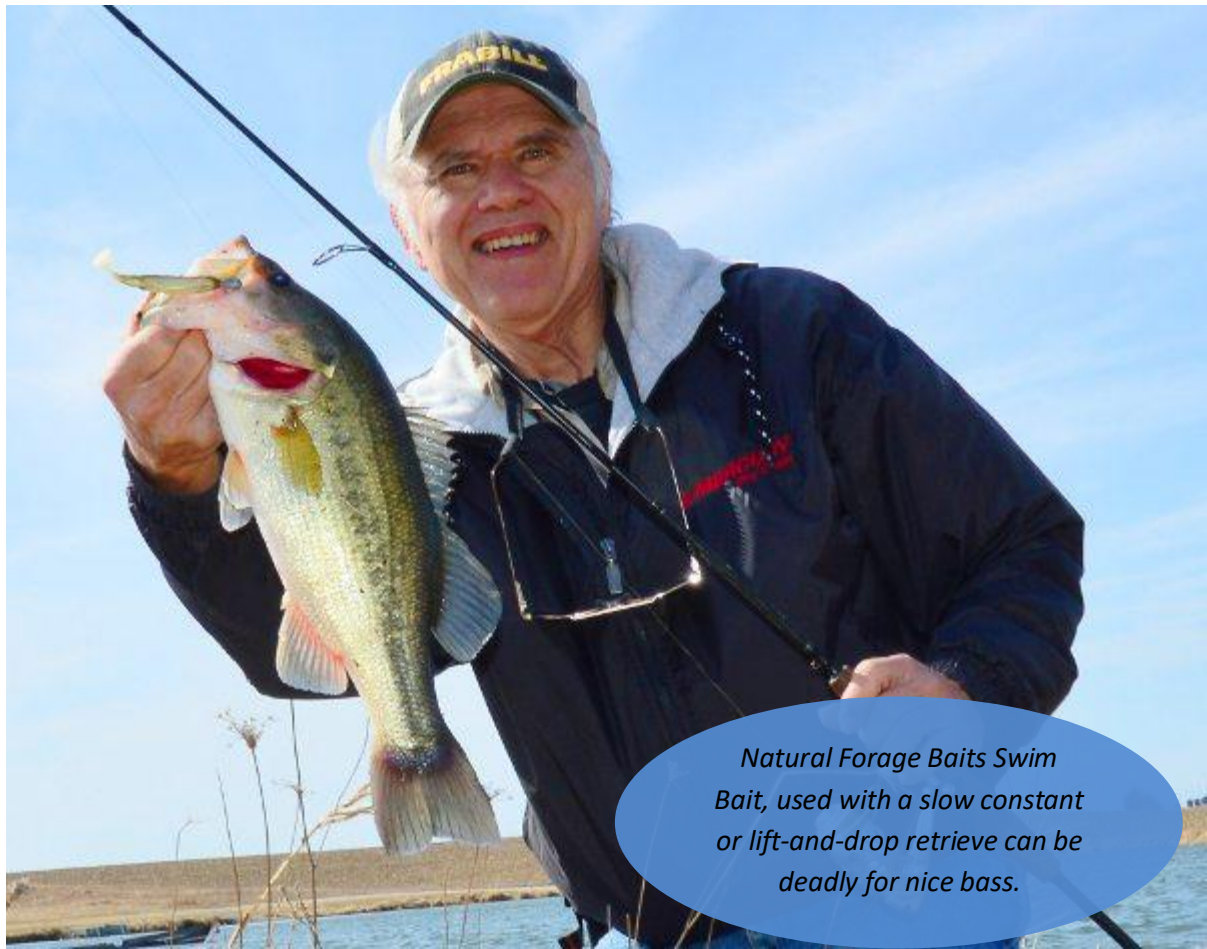


# DAN'S FISH 'N' TALES®

## SEASON'S SELECTION

By Dan Galusha

At the beginning of each season, whether ice or open water, I take a look at what I have in lures and try picking out a selection that can be used without carrying the whole tackle store. This year's selection for bass, which will also work for a few other species, including big crappie, is dominated by five companies – Blitz Lures, B-Fish-N, Natural Forage Baits, Bill Lewis Outdoors Rat-L-Trap and TTI-Blakemore.



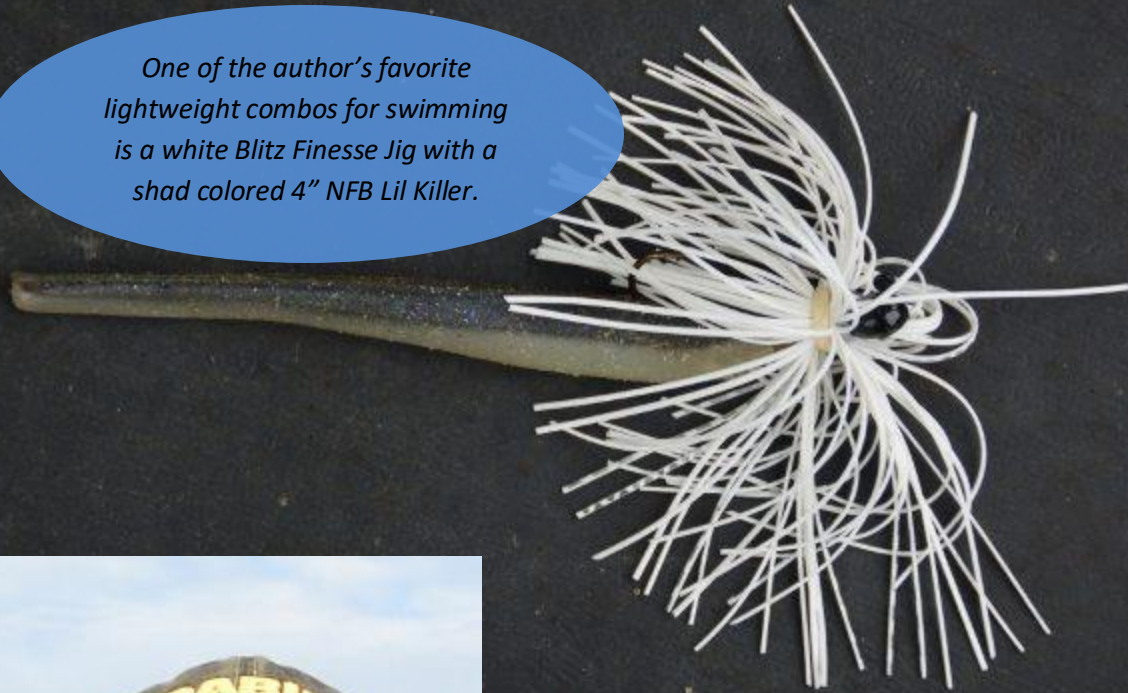
*Natural Forage Baits Swim Bait, used with a slow constant or lift-and-drop retrieve can be deadly for nice bass.*



Blitz Lures is taking me from top to bottom, with the Phrog for topwater, especially in heavy weeds, Spyder Jigs – full size and finesse, and Blades.

As already mentioned, I'll use the Phrog for topwater, but mainly wherever there is a lot of

*One of the author's favorite lightweight combos for swimming is a white Blitz Finesse Jig with a shad colored 4" NFB Lil Killer.*



moss, weeds, or other structures that would otherwise cause a problem with a topwater plug. The soft plastic, buoyant bodied lure comes in several colors, but I prefer the black and natural frog. This will primarily be used during the summer months.

Spyder Jigs are used throughout the season. I'll use the full size, 3/8 or 1/4 ounce size for most of the heavier cover with a Natural Forage Baits Mad Craw to swim or crawl over and through the cover. In the case of needing something in the finesse end of things I'll use the 1/8-ounce Spyder Finesse with an old Mann's Auger Frog or NFB Lil Killer. When using the Lil Killer it is primarily used in shad color with a white Finesse Jig, and swam, rather than bottom crawled. Colors for both sizes of jigs are black/blue, peanut butter/jelly, black/chartreuse, and added for the Finesse is white.

*A B-Fish-N H20 jig head, rigged with a 3.75" Natural Forage Baits Swim Bait catches big crappie as well as bass.*



The Blade is mainly for colder water conditions. In that respect, it is used religiously for early spring, fall and early winter. The retrieve is mostly with a





*Five productive colors of B-Fish-N 4-inch Ringworms with a Xpoint Xgap hook, Blitz Finesse Jig and BFN H2O Jig Head for rigging.*

pump, or dropped to the bottom and lifted a few feet before repeating the process.

B-Fish-N is all of my “ribbed” soft plastics and un-skirted jig heads.

I use the 4-inch, curl tail Ringworms with the H2O jig heads, or Texas rigged with a Xpoint XGap, Daiichi worm hook, or Tru Turn worm hook. These will be used wherever a smaller worm is needed with a little extra action, as well as having the ability of holding scents longer, and producing noise and air bubbles. Five main colors are used – black/blue tail, black/white tail, electric blue/pearl blue tail, June Bug and black/chartreuse tail.

The jig heads are also used with the AuthentX Moxi, Ribb-Finn and Pulse-R. All of these are used mainly like a swim bait, with the Ribb-Finn being a prime candidate for the finger jigging technique. The color selection is simple – Oyster.

Another use for the H2O head is for all of the Natural Forage Baits lures, when not wanting to use a Texas rig. This would be used in open water, some weeds and rocks.

As for the Natural Forage Baits, I’m using five of their lures – Mad Craw (previously mentioned) in black/blue, June Bug and green pumpkin; 3.75” Swim Bait in green shad, brown shad and smelt; 4-inch Lil Killer in shad; 7-inch Ribbon Tail and 4-inch Finesse Worm, both in black/blue fleck, June Bug and green pumpkin. When not used with a B-



*Kick'N Bass Java combined with NFB Mad Craws, either Texas rigged or as a Blitz Jig trailer can be dynamite.*





*Go Go Runners are a new lure that is a great producer for several species of fish.*

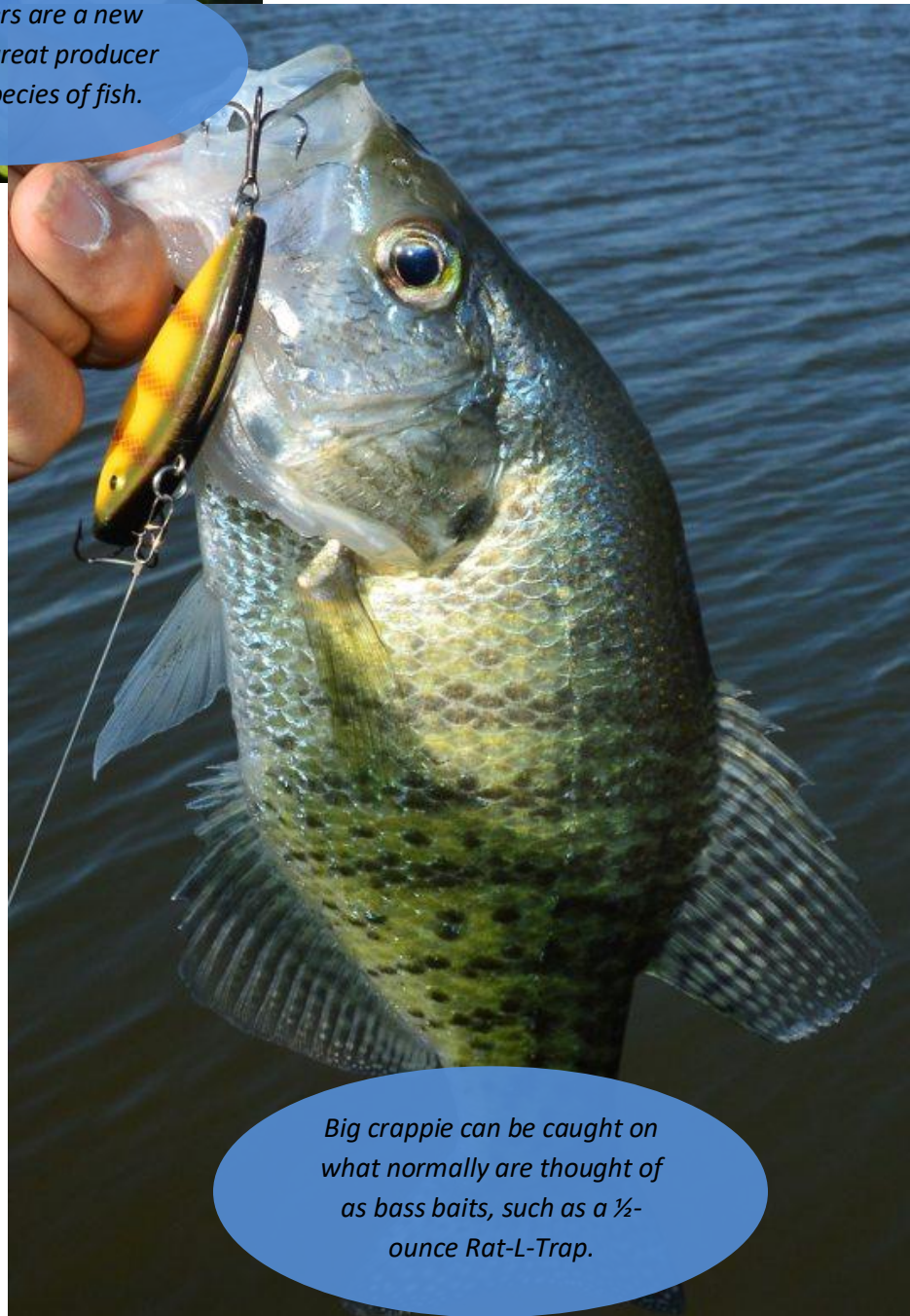
standard Road Runner with a tube or curl tail grub body.

In the past I used all sorts of diving and lipless crankbaits, but for the past couple of years I have went to one main “crank” that I’ve used consistently and productively for over 30 years; the Rat-L-Trap in ½ and ¾ ounce sizes. These can be used in all depths with a “sky is the limit” amount of retrieves, but with the standard constant variable speed and pump-stop-and-go retrieves being the main choice. For colors I can easily cover about any situation with White Bleeding Shiner, Yellow Perch, chartreuse/black back, Apricot, Diamond Dust and Smokey Joe.

With all of the above-mentioned lures I use one other product; Kick’N Bass Attractant, with the main selection of scents being Crappie, Java, Anise Shad and Crawfish. It is available in liquid and stick. The liquid is applied to all of the soft plastics, especially on the B-Fish-N lures’

Fish-N Precision Jig Head or Blitz Jig, they are rigged Texas style with one of the TTI hooks, or placed on a Blakemore Casey’s Runner Head. The only ones that I do not Texas rig are the Swim Bait and Lil Killer. In fact the Lil Killer/B-Fish-N Jig Head rig is a prime finger jigging combo.

TTI-Blakemore products have been mentioned throughout for using with the other products, but their Road Runner, especially the new Go Go, is a great lure for black and white bass and big crappie. The same goes for the old



*Big crappie can be caught on what normally are thought of as bass baits, such as a ½-ounce Rat-L-Trap.*



ribs and NFB Swim Baits belly slits, both of which are great scent holders, while the stick is smeared on all jig heads, Blades and Rat-L-Traps.

To help file all of this in a system that makes it quick and easy to find and use, I'm setting up everything using Plano's Wraps and Pro Latch Stowaway boxes in their new Duffle and Weekender Bags. Not only is this a good system for finding items, but also it is good for storing in the back of the vehicle and placing in the boat's storage compartments. The Wraps are used for all of the soft plastics and jigs, while the Stowaways are used for crankbaits, jig heads, hooks and worm weights.



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*Plano Wraps are part of the authors tackle storage system for soft plastic lures.*

As said at the beginning, this is my selection, but each angler probably has a productive selection of his or her own. Spring is a good time to stop and think about all of the tackle that you have, before the season gets too far along, and what will be the most productive. This can save time, space and money, while making an angler more productive by forcing them to concentrate on what has worked best for them.

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





# DISSECTING THE PRE-SPAWN BASS BITE

**Dr. Jason Halfen**  
**The Technological Angler**

The bass pre-spawn period is a time of anticipation and transition. Largemouth and spotted bass slide out of their deeper, thermally-stable wintering holes and begin a systematic movement toward the warming shallows, where they will binge feed in preparation for the rigors of spawning. Along the way, tempestuous spring weather can cause bass to hit the pause button, or even find their reverse gear, delaying their progress or even causing bass to restart from scratch. Yes, we know where the bass will begin this springtime transition period, and we also know where it will end, but that in-between region, in which bass are hyper-sensitive and on the move – that's what separates the contenders from the pretenders.

Bassmaster Elite touring pro Stephen Browning is no stranger to success in early season tournaments. The ten-time qualifier for the Bassmaster Classic has racked up an impressive number of wins by targeting cold water, pre-spawn bass, including a recent victory at the 2018 Bass Pro Shops Bassmaster Central Open on Ross Barnett Reservoir. With career earnings in excess of \$1.3 million, Browning knows a thing or two about targeting big bass when big bucks are on the line.



I was lucky enough to be able to pick his brain about his favorite early season bass pattern, which is as simple as 1-2-3.



### **Step 1: Crank the outer edge**

Browning begins his search for pre-spawn bass by getting off the main lake and heading into tributaries and creek arms. “I am looking for the first channel swing bank as the creek channel runs from the main lake toward the back of the bay,” remarked Browning.

Channel swing banks are, quite simply, areas where a submerged creek channel changes direction as it runs close to the bank. The steep, hard-bottomed outer edge of the creek channel is one location that focuses pre-spawn bass activity. Any given bay or creek arm might feature several of these key structural features, and Browning works them from the mouth of the bay to the back end.

Browning, an established crankbait aficionado, begins dissecting these channel swing banks by throwing LIVETARGET HFC (Hunt for Center) Craws, lures designed with an off-center tracking action that causes the lure to randomly dart left or right, mimicking a fleeing crawfish in an evasive, bite-triggering retreat.

Browning notes, “the HFC Craw is a compact, two-inch long bait that is just the right size for bass in cold water. It has a nice steep dive curve, digging down six to eight feet on the retrieve, knocking into cover and the bottom along the channel edges. I use the HFC Craw as my primary search tool to parallel the bank. Red is one of my confidence colors for the HFC Craw, as are the more subtle, yet extremely lifelike Phantom Green and Root Beer patterns.”

Browning presents the HFC Craw using a St. Croix Legend Glass 6’10” medium power, moderate action casting rod, a twenty-first century fiberglass rod that is ideal model for pinpoint-accurate casts while fishing smaller crankbaits. He spools up his Lew’s BB1 6.4:1 baitcasting reel with 10-12 lb test fluorocarbon line.



## Step 2: Jerk the inside edge

Not all bass will relate to the steep, outer edge of the creek channel as it bends close to shore. Indeed, many fish will frequently transition out of the channel along its more gradual, inside edge. To target these pre-spawners, Browning selects a long, slender LIVETARGET Yearling Baitball Jerkbait 110, which features an in-line grouping of baby baitfish, effectively simulating a small group of bait that has been separated from the school. Its unique three-dimensional design creates a multitude of flash points and delivers a shimmering presentation that attracts the attention of any nearby bass.



Browning adds, “my approach with the Yearling Baitball Jerkbait is somewhat different than the presentation I use with the HFC Craw. Rather than paralleling the bank, I make long casts at a 45-degree angle to the bank, working the bait back with a regular cadence including some long pauses. The Yearling Baitball Jerkbait suspends perfectly on the pause, which drives neutral fish crazy. In these situations, I’m typically throwing the silver/black or gold/black color patterns.”

To deliver jerkbaits on extended casts and drive hooks home at long distances, Browning turns to the St. Croix Legend Elite 6’8” medium-heavy power, fast action rod, a premium graphite rod engineered for ultimate performance in any freshwater casting application. To further extend his casts, Browning spools his Lew’s HyperMag 7.5:1 baitcasting reels with lighter and thinner, 10 lb test fluorocarbon.

## Step 3: Bump the stumps in the back

Browning continues to run these type of channel swing banks all the way toward the back end of the creek arm, until the submerged channel becomes less well defined and flattens out. At that point, it’s time to cover water and fan cast the flat with an attention-getting lipless rattlebait.

In the back ends of the bays, Browning selects the ½ oz LIVETARGET Golden Shiner Rattlebait, a sinking, lipless bait sporting a loud internal rattle and an aggressive, vibrating action. Browning notes that, “as I patrol the flat, I pay particular attention to the presence of submerged wood. I’ll make repeated casts into those areas, being sure to bump the stumps several times with either pearl/olive or silver/black Golden Shiner Rattlebaits.”

When pitching rattlebaits, Browning again turns to St. Croix Legend Glass, but now selects a longer, 7’2”





rod with medium power and moderate action. This is a hyper-versatile fiberglass rod that performs flawlessly with lipless and standard lip crankbaits that dive as deep as 16 feet. To minimize lost baits and fish when fishing around heavy cover, Browning spools his Lew's BB1 Pro 6.4:1 casting reels with heavier 12-14 lb test fluorocarbon line.

Bassmaster Elite Series pro Stephen Browning's pre-spawn bass playbook is as simple as 1-2-3. Use his early season tips to crank, jerk, and bump your way to springtime bass success!

#### About the author

Dr. Jason Halfen owns and operates The Technological Angler, a company dedicated to training anglers to leverage modern technology to find and catch more fish. Visit them online at [www.technologicalangler.com](http://www.technologicalangler.com).

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# THE SNAG PROOF INSIDER



## Fishing Tips From The Pros

### Froggin' As Easy As 1, 2, 3!

By Snag Proof Pro Staff Member, Frank Tellez

Ah yes, as we transition into the early summer months, there is nothing better than to get your adrenaline racing, and heart pumping with violent topwater explosions while frog fishing! It is 65-pound braided line screaming in your face, rod bending fun! For me, this is the most exciting and most favorite time of year fishing for giant largemouth bass. Whether you are a licensed guide, competitive tournament angler or recreational fisherman, there is nothing in the world that compares to the moment you catch a largemouth bass using a frog and my frog of choice is Snag Proof Frog.

Before we get into the “how” of catching those big behemoths with a Snag Proof Frog, we need to go into the specifics of “why” use a frog. Anglers know





Largemouth Bass love to eat just about anything they can latch their mouths onto or swallow. They are apex predators. A frog lure mimics a rodent, a lizard, or a small bird (or a frog!) that may be on low lying tree branches or reeds, cattails or other vegetation. Largemouth Bass or Bass in general, are opportunistic feeders that are looking for an easy meal. The frog looks like an easy meal presenting itself in the bass' territory.

Specific techniques and equipment are necessary to be successful catching bass while "Froggin'". Listed below are the key essentials and details of the equipment I recommend for a successful day of "Froggy" fishing.

**Fishing Rod:** The preferred rod is a heavy action frog rod with a fast/soft tip. As a competitive and pro angler, I prefer a rod that has some length to it, somewhere in the 7' foot range and higher. My rods of choice are the Bobby's Perfect Frog Rod, Cara T7 from Falcon Rods and the Denali Lithium Series Frog Rod (pictured). Now, when selecting your frog rod, choose a rod that has a lot of backbone! You don't want a rod that's a "buggy whip," you want one that's stout. Rod composition is crucial in setting the hook on the fish! You may be pulling in a fish from dense cover so you need the horsepower to pull in the fish plus the weeds, grass, lily pads! Whether it's the walls or sparse tules, matted grass flats, hydrilla, pennywort, elodea, peppergrass, or American pond weed, these are areas where these fish will hide and feed.

**Fishing Line:** When it comes to catching fish no matter what the species, application, or techniques used, the importance of the correct type of fishing line is essential. Fishing line is a critical tool in the fisherman's arsenal that connects him or her with the fish! For Froggin' whether it is early, mid-summer or in the fall, the preferred line is 65-pound braided line. Anything less than 65-pound test can break while horsing the big ones out of cover and will then break your heart! Especially if you have a trophy-sized largemouth that just devoured your frog. There are many fishing line manufacturers producing braided line. My favorite is Vicious 65 No Fade Braid. Yes, I did say no fade! Why braid? The main reason is due to the weedy areas

where you'll find the fish. Most times when you set the hook on a good-sized bass that eats your frog, not only do you get the fish, but the heap of salad-like vegetation too! The grass weighs down your catch and makes it more unwieldy than it may appear. Braid combined with that stout rod is essential for a solid hook set! The main advantages braid has over monofilament or other fishing lines is that it does not stretch, provides incredible hook sets, tensile strength and has superior knot tying capabilities.





**Frog Colors:** There are a wide variety of colors available. While choosing the right color is important, don't overthink it! Keep it simple. I like to stick with the standard colors such as chartreuse, green, black, brown, white. The question I get asked most commonly during my guided trips is: "How



do you know when you have the right color frog tied on?" Well, first I determine what the fish are gorging/feeding on. Second, note the time of day and the conditions. In the early morning and during low light visibility when the fish are really active, I recommend throwing dark colored frogs or the loudest, bright colors. My primary color choices are in the "Black", "Tweety," and Brown Bull Frog in the "Bobby's Perfect Frog." As the sun rises a little higher, I recommend throwing a semi-white bellied frog such as "Fred" or "Mossback." Later on in the day towards the afternoon when it is bright and sunny, I throw the bright white colored under bellied colored frogs such as 'White" and "Florida Bass."

When the water is little more clear, I recommend in throwing a black, clear, or the Sparrow colored frog.

When fishing heavy vegetation such as expansive grass flats like Hydrilla, Amercian Pond Weed, Lilly Pads, Pepper Grass, stick with your dark colors. Black and Brown Bullfrog or my



go-to colors for fishing these situations.

Finally, and most important, presentation of the lure is key! When it boils down to Froggin', don't limit yourself just to the walking type of frog. Snag Proof has about every frog for every bass fishing situation. There is the Bobby's Perfect Buzz Frog and the new Wobbletron as well.



Depending on the time of day, both of these can be fished at a medium, and fast tempo retrieves. The Buzz Frog is fished in open water near vegetation, stick-ups, and sparsed Tulles. The Wobbletron has the paddled feet just like the Buzz Frog, but without the buzzing blade. The Wobbletron can be fished on or near heavy matted vegetation. It can be twitched just like the regular hollow bodied frog, and it can be retrieved just like the BuzzFrog. Here's a tip with the Wobbletron. When your Wobbletron frog is about to come off the mat, retrieve it as you were fishing with "Bobby's Perfect Buzz Frog, but with the rod tip at the six o'clock position. As soon as it comes off the mat and into the open water and that bass is there, you are in for one heck of vicious strike and explosion! Be sure to hang on to your rod tight! Trust me!

Another innovative frog lure is the Poppin Phattie! This frog can be retrieved and popped as you were fishing a POPR lure. It also can be walked just like a regular hollow-bodied frog. The main difference with Snag Proof Poppin' Phattie from the other poppin' frogs on the market is the unique design featuring 2 concave or poppin' faces. Not only does it chug and spit water, this frog will chug, gurgle and spit water even on top of the cover!

When Froggin, the water you want to focus on should have some current and is 2'to 6' feet deep surrounded by Tulles, matted vegetation, stick-ups and (hopefully) docks! During the summer months, bass love to position themselves underneath docks to get out of the intense heat!

### **Casting and Fishing Mechanics:**

In bass fishing, the angler needs to make the perfect cast into the right areas and at the right time. Casting is critical, and takes practice. According to my mentor in the sport of bass fishing and the king of California Delta Bobby Barrack, every cast has a purpose. You don't just cast anywhere! You have to throw in those hard to reach areas in where the fish may be hiding. In frog fishing, precision casting is essential. For instance, let's say that you are fishing your favorite type of Snag Proof frog on a piece of matted vegetation and you get the fish to blow up and she rolls over your frog lure or you miss it! You have to make the next cast right where you last saw the fish blow a hole thru the mat coming



after your frog. If you don't hit the blowhole and you cast it 2 or 3 feet to the right or left of it, imagine what the bass is doing below the surface. The bass is desperately searching for the frog and thinking, where did that meal go?? The fish wants it to appear over the hole it just made so it can devour it without any hesitation. Nine times out of ten, if you cast the lure directly in front of the hole, and slowly twitch it back over it, you will be rewarded with feeding strike devouring your frog bait.

### **Casting vs. the pitching technique:**

Sure you can bomb or perform a "Hail Mary" cast to the area or matted vegetation that you are froggin' in, but you will decrease your chances by at least 90% to get the fish to commit on your lure. If you bomb it there by making a big splash, or cause a significant commotion, the fish reacts by darting off or swimming away. If you "pitch" the lure in the area that you are fishing, it is a lot more stealthy than by regular over the shoulder casting. Usually, when I pitch the frog into the areas that I am fishing, I am in close proximity. I call this close quarters Froggin'. When I toss my frog into areas that are really tight about the size of a basketball, the bites that I receive are usually one to two feet from where my frog landed before I started to twitch and retrieve it back to the boat. It's really in your best interest to learn

how to pitch. --It is a complete game changer!

### **The Hookset and Mechanics:**

In bass fishing not only is it the lure that catches the fish, but the hookset is crucially important! With topwater frog fishing, the angler must know how and when to set the hook when the fish commits on your lure. Topwater frog fishing is about paying close attention to where and what your bait is doing and how the fish goes about eating it. If you see your frog lure disappear in the blink of an eye, followed by a big splash of





# SNAGPROOF WEEDLESS LURES



water as if someone threw a bowling ball in the water, set the hook on the fish by bringing up your rod from the 6 o'clock position to the 12 o'clock position as fast and as forceful as you can! (This is where your rod and line choices come in) Do not take your eyes off in what is currently going on in front of you. Concentrate on what the fish is doing by evaluating the topwater strike. If the fish eats your frog by slow, subtle slurp, the same process with the hookset, but wait a couple of seconds by ensuring the frog disappears under the surface of the water and you can feel the fish on your line. This sometimes takes nerves of steel!

After you successfully hook the fish, the fight is on! Ensure the butt of your rod handle is underneath your arm and at the side of your ribcage. This technique allows you more control in catching the fish! Keep your shoulders and body square with the fish! Do not turn your shoulders away from the fish! Turning your shoulders away from

the fish as it is coming swimming towards you, allows the fish the opportunity to throw out the frog lure from its mouth. Finally, when reeling in and fishing the fish, keep the bend in the rod. Under no circumstances, do not lower the rod tip, Lowering the tip of the rod will create slack in the line and will increase the chance of the fish in getting away.

In this article, I discussed the critical aspects and some of the basic techniques and procedures to increase your hook up ratio and catching more bass with a Snag Proof frog. I hope you enjoy this article as much as I loved writing it! Try these techniques and equipment suggestions and you will be on your way to catching the trophy largemouth bass of your dreams!



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# ***FOCUS ON THE RIGHT DEPTH***

**By Capt. Mike Gerry**

As we approach the post spawn time of year, there will be many changes in where the bass locate and focusing on the depth they move too will be a key to finding post spawn fish. It's a time of year that can really frustrate many fishermen especially if they come from lakes that are so deep that their back ground has them banging the banks.

When you move to

shallower lakes banging the banks in most cases cannot be effective, so you must focus on off-shore locations. Off-shore fishing is very different, and depth can be the key to catching fish; electronics can be your only friend so sharpen up your electronic skills. Scanning bottom structure with your Lowrance Structure Scan can be your best bet to winning the off-shore battle; understanding what bass look like on your screen is imperative, finding bait is a must and combining this with depth is key.

One of the best ways to start are to find long under water points and humps that offer plenty of depth change out in the middle of what many might say is no-where in your lake. These under water depth changes are the key to finding the proper depth to catch fish from. Scan these points or humps from one end to the other cross them back and forth until you see bass holding on them; If you locate some fish off the long points and humps make a mental note as to the depth, set your Navionics mapping or fishing depth at that depth range and you have the start of a pattern. Once you have this set you can easily locate other similar depth ranges as the coloring on your mapping will easily show you the other areas and contours of these depth ranges. Bass generally locate all over the lake in similar depths, the reason is not clear, my guess is its oxygen, current and structure related as this moves them to these common depths. This allows you to find more fish, in more areas with similar structure and find fish all day long.

Depth is key in off-shore fishing, giving yourself the tools and knowledge to be effective is also a fact of off-shore winning patterns.

Fish Lake Guntersville Guide Service, [www.fishlakeguntersvilleguideservice.com](http://www.fishlakeguntersvilleguideservice.com),  
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# The Spread On Spring Walleye

By Jason Mitchell



By nature's design, not all walleye spawn on the same day. Not all fish use the same reef or tributary. Spring spawning activity is often staggered. As a result, post spawn patterns and locations can range all over the board. Not only does each fishery has a unique personality but what makes fish movements even more confusing is that the entire population of fish as a whole is not always on the same page at the same time.

As anglers we get so locked in on finding a specific edge or spot on the spot that fish are using. We attempt to lock in on a specific depth. The fish are in twenty two feet for example... concluding that assumption after catching a few fish and then spending a great majority of our time trying to replicate that depth throughout the day. I find however that I can easily get too specific and that attempting to lock down too specific of a depth range can be really costly during the post spawn period.

I find that we can often catch a lot more fish early in the open water season by not getting too specific. Instead of picking apart a location and attempting to lock down the productive depth,



## ODU MAGAZINE VIDEO BLOCK ( [www.odumagazine.com](http://www.odumagazine.com) )

establish or fish in a manner to find as wide of a base line as possible. We might not anticipate fish being in forty feet of water during the middle of May (though we have seen that particularly around bottle neck areas with current or after severe fronts) but what we can anticipate is a shallow range where we might find fish in as shallow as seven feet and as deep as twenty feet. Each unique fishery will have a different range. Might be as shallow as three feet and as deep as ten feet on a prairie dish bowl lake for example.

Later in the season as fish become very edge orientated on a piece of structure, you might spend the whole day fishing a specific depth. Early in the season, fish movements are often wider as some fish move up shallow to get some sun or heat while other fish are deeper recuperating from the spawn. Fish often seem to be more spread out on a specific piece of structure where the shallowest fish might be in eight feet of water for example while some fish might be as deep as twenty feet. At times, some fish will push up into shallower water during the warmest part of the day when the water temperatures bump up a few degrees while other situations still see the shallowest movements of fish occurring during low light or after dark. The bottom line is that you can often catch more fish by fishing through a wider range of depths and this is exactly why casting or pitching from the boat makes so much sense.

Casting jigs and soft plastics catches a lot of fish in the spring and early summer on a wide variety of fisheries in part because you can deliver your presentation away from the boat which is a big factor when fish are shallow and won't let you drive over the top in shallow water.

There is another factor at play however that makes the casting game so effective. As you work a piece



of structure, say you have the boat in fifteen feet of water for example. The reality is that there might be some fish scattered in fifteen feet of water while other fish might be laid up in ten or seven feet of water. Now you can control your boat and make a drift or pass in fifteen feet of water and make another pass in ten feet of water to contact fish or you can cover a lot more water by simply making a pass in fifteen feet of water and cast up into shallow water where you are not only touching the shallow water but also fishing the water below the boat on the end of each cast.

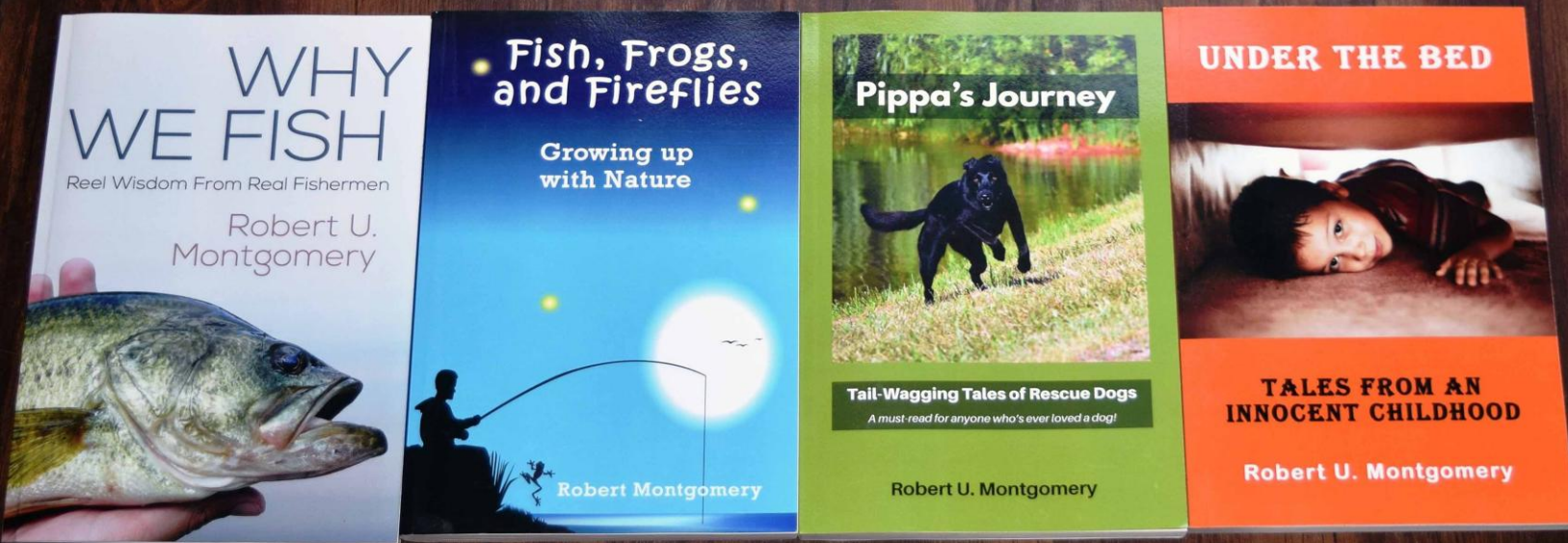
What we often find early in the year is that where fish are on a piece of structure is a moving target. We might pop a few fish deep right below the boat and then catch some fish on a far cast on top of the structure. Other fish hit the jig half way back to the boat. That range in depth is so typical and not only does fan casting these locations allow you to touch all these different zones, it also enables anglers to find fish much more quickly.

So many walleye anglers get locked into finding a specific depth and then fishing below the boat but the damage you can do by simply casting around the boat essentially expands the water you are fishing dramatically. There are always limitations and exceptions however.

The fan casting mentality shines on isolated pieces of structure where there is some depth change where you can saturate the location with repeated cast. The reality is that if you use a jig heavy enough to touch fifteen feet of water below the boat on the end of the cast, the jig is going to be heavy and prone to snag in five feet of water. Because you have to err on the side of heavy to cover a wider range of depths, the jig and soft plastic combination is often deadly as you can swim the jig and fish faster during the top of the retrieve to stay out of snags.

If fish do keep coming from a more specific depth range, you can fine tune your presentation further by lightening up to target a shallow depth or in some cases use a slip bobber or split shot rig. You can also decide to fish vertically over one specific depth with the optimum jig weight if that is what the fish tell you to do.

Stay flexible and gather information by noting where fish are coming from on the structure. When the pattern seems to be all over the board in regards to depth or when you are trying to establish what the base line is each day, you can gather a lot of information in a hurry by casting through locations. Fishing below the boat or behind the boat will still be part of your game plan but you will catch even more fish if you incorporate a lot more casting into your early season walleye fishing and remember that the advantages of casting go beyond just targeting shallow fish that spook from the boat.





# EARLY SEASON RIVER WALLEYES

By Bob Jensen

Pretty much wherever you live in the Midwest, there are walleyes willing to be caught right now. Some states, and some areas of some states have a closed season on 'eyes, but with just a little travel, you can get to areas that have walleye fishing happening now, and those areas are probably closer to you than you think. Following are some ways to get in on the action.

Most of the walleyes that are being caught this time of year are being caught in rivers. While some lakes still have an icy cover, rivers are open. As the water warms, as the days get longer, and as the current increases, the walleyes feel the urge to start spawning. They've probably been feeling that urge for a while now, but the warmer water and other changes move them closer to the actual spawn time.

Most of your catch this time of year will be smaller males, but there is always the chance that a big one will eat your bait. If you want a meal of fresh walleye, keep the smaller ones and let the big ones pass their genes on one more time.

Most walleye chasers this time of year will be using jigs. Jigs are great walleye catchers any time of the year, but they're especially productive now.

Start with a jig/plastic combo. In many areas the walleyes will be shallow: Wading can be very productive. Water less than ten feet, and usually only two or three feet deep will be best. An eighth ounce jig head with a three inch tail is a favorite anywhere that walleyes live. One of the best combos is a Slurp! Jig with a Swim'N Grub body. This time of year bright colors are usually better, as the water is usually stained. Use a body color that contrasts with the jig color.

Swim the jig just above the bottom. It seems like a straight, slow retrieve is most productive most of the time, but also try a slow lift/drop retrieve.

If the walleyes don't respond to this presentation, go to a jig and minnow presentation and work it slower, dragging it along the bottom. This works best on a sand bottom. Rocky bottoms will eat too many jigs that are dragged. If the walleyes are on the rocks, try using a slip-bobber to suspend the jig above the rocks. Allowing a jig to float just above the bottom as it works with the current suspended under a bobber can be a killer presentation.





A slower presentation will be best when the walleyes are being fussy. A stand-up head allows an angler to work the bait slowly better than a round head. The stand-up Fire-Ball jig (see below) is a great choice. When dragging the jig, you'll want to give it lots of pauses to give a finicky walleye the chance to eat your jig. With the stand-up head, the minnow will remain very visible to the walleye when you pause it. The minnow on a round head jig will lay flat on the bottom when the jig is paused and won't be as visible. When you're using a dragging retrieve, a stand-up head will catch more fish.

If you're using the jig/minnow combo, a minnow about three inches long will be best. Smaller is better early in the spring.

Rivers across the Midwest are home to lots of walleyes. Now is an outstanding time to get in on that action.

To see new and old episodes of Fishing the Midwest television, to read new and old fishing articles from Fishing the Midwest, and to see videos with fish-catching ideas, go to [www.fishingthemidwest.com](http://www.fishingthemidwest.com)





# REASONING FOR REALLY GOOD RODS



**By Dennis Foster**

As I am beginning to take inventory, organize, fix and formulate a few needs and even more wants for new goodies to play with this open water season, I am instinctively drawn to the dozens of rods in my ever-growing collection. Maybe drawn isn't a strong enough word. Pulled might be more appropriate. Are you thinking addiction? I sure am. No stage of denial here folks and 12 step programs be damned. Should the time ever come where I am "cured", it will be a sad day indeed.

As I have not so graciously and far from gracefully belly flopped into the pool of middle age, the attraction of toys still holds an incalculable and mesmerizing attraction. For me anyway, all things outdoors exert the most appeal. You see, quality sporting goods are serious tools that not only give initial satisfaction, they provide years of enjoyment if properly maintained. Continually blessing us with even better gifts in the form of the fish or game we harvest with them. And, if our desire is to catch more and bigger fish, the proper tools are needed to greatly improve our chances with each technique performed to entice our quarry. You would cringe if all your auto mechanic possessed for tools were a crescent wrench, pliers and a big hammer. Pretty much the same scenario if we are to take our sport seriously.



As with all things, these tools just continue to improve as technology provides us with better materials and methods of construction. As I was previously alluding to fishing rods, let's have a discussion on that topic. It wasn't all that long ago that metal rods, level wind reels and dacron line were standard fair. Fiberglass was the next arrival and soon replaced steel. Somewhat dependable spincast reels soon adorned them. Think of the venerable Zebco 202 or its big brother the 404. What followed was the carbon fibers of graphite and for a brief stint, boron. Graphite is still the standard where light weight and sensitivity is desired. The materials remain generally the same with improvements as to fibers and resins used. The manufacturing process, quality components, such as guides and reel seats combined with attention to detail-is what sets the truly remarkable rods apart.

Today we have hundreds of good rods from dozens of companies to choose from. Standard rods will perform at a level well enough to get the basics done. For those of us who choose to take our avocations a bit more enthusiastically than an occasional recreational outing, a step above the norm is in order. This is where truly great rods come into play. For those with a discerning nature, the number of choices now becomes greatly reduced. Thankfully, there are a few

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companies that are catering to our advanced needs.

The most notable and that I have handled are St. Croix, G Loomis, Fenwick and Shimano. I am also hearing good things about rods from 13 Fishing, but have not had personal experience with them. All have a good reputation built upon years of continued innovation and attention to detail. To date, St. Croix's continual commitment to quality has impressed me the most. I purchased my first Legend model probably 30 years ago when a rod costing anywhere near a hundred bucks was not just a luxury for a career challenged and therefore broke youngster, but rather more on the lines of a cherished possession.

OK. Enough history and happenstance. Time for some hard recommendations. As there are a fair number of quality rods from a handful of companies to choose from, how do you select the best one for your needs? After all, quality costs a bit and you want to be sure and make the wisest selection. For those of you not quite as obsessed as I am, I would recommend turning to a company savvy enough to build not only species specific, but also technique specific rods. They have done the work for you based on input from Pro Staff, Guides and Tournament anglers who's very living depends on the right rods for the job.

There a handful of companies assisting anglers with their choice of rod and as I am most familiar with St. Croix, I can pass along some of the freshwater models they offer. You can select from designs solely for Bass, Walleye, Panfish, Trout, Steelhead and Musky-with actions that cover the gamut of all the most pertinent applications. Of particular note to northern anglers, the Eyecon Series (as the name

would indicate for walleyes) provide a very good option for a high-quality rod at a surprisingly affordable price point. Check out [www.stcroixrods.com](http://www.stcroixrods.com) to view the entire selection. To get your hands on one for an intimate feel, locate a dealer near you on while on their site. Of particular note are the Scheels stores. They have recently partnered with St. Croix to offer 3 models exclusive to them. They are models designed for various jigging duties and range in length and action from 6'3" to 6'6" and 6'8" and actions from medium extra fast to medium fast. The feature that is only to be found on these rods is a premium full cork handle. I personally love the oh so natural feel of cork and it lends an old school aura to a modern marvel. Darn sure worth a serious look.

A word of advice is in order here. Please, please do not go and slap any old reel onto a purpose-built rod. It would be like outfitting a new Ferrari with studded snow tires. It just plain is not right. In addition to that, overloading the rod with reels far too large no matter how high of quality is just as taboo. Oversized reels just throw the whole outfit way out of balance. For example, I personally do not see any good reason to go beyond a 30 series size spinning reel for spinning rods designed for walleye fishing. I may be a bit extreme, but I favor 25 series and even 20 series for lighter action rods. I've played this game for some time and have been fortunate enough to have stroked my fair share of bruiser walleyes and I have yet to have had a problem bringing them boat-side...yet alone coming close to being spooled. I have never even heard of this happening and I seriously doubt you have either.

Lots of manufacturers to choose your reel from as well. Some of the better ones I have had success with are from the likes of Shimano, Abu Garcia, Daiwa and as of late Okuma. Their top end Coldwater Series line-counters are sturdy, always reliable and even have a sexy look about them. Of particular note is the low-profile version that pairs perfectly with a St. Croix Eyecon 10 foot trolling rod while

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flatlining crankbaits or lighter in-line weighted spinners. I have found the Inspira and Helios spinning models to be extremely light and silky smooth for my jigging and livebaiting needs. With any of these companies you are going to want to start your search in the mid-level to higher end models to be sure and accessorize your finely engineered rods for the best performance possible.

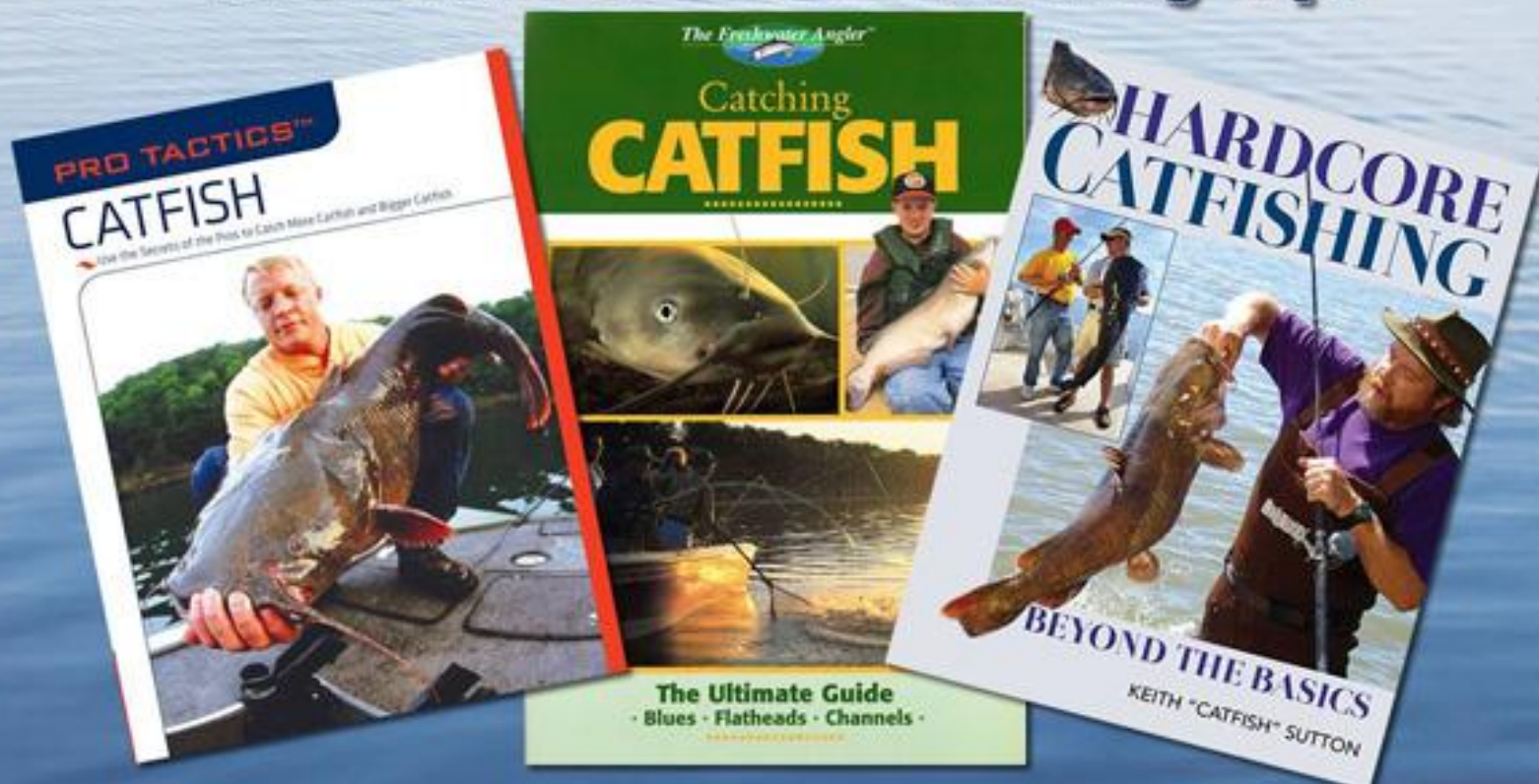
Do yourself a favor this season and if you have yet to step up to high end rods, take the time to do a little research and pick at least one out to perform your favorite technique. If you are a venerable veteran...by all means, obtain a few more. I know I sure will. In the end, it all comes down to value that you not only perceive, but more importantly receive from making the commitment to use the best tools available for all of your favorite techniques. You will soon find yourself just as securely hooked as the fish bending these acutely tuned beauties are.

Is it required to have a high-end rod to catch fish? Absolutely not. Will they help you consistently catch more fish? Bigger fish too? Absolutely. Will you derive more enjoyment from using exceptionally fashioned tools built specifically for the task at hand? Undoubtedly. Although graying, I still possess a child-like enthusiasm for squeezing the fun out of life. Attaining advancing age just happens to allow for a dab more disposable income to predispose to using the best available. As the saying goes, you can't take it with you and maybe-just maybe...getting old is not so bad after all?

About the Author: Dennis Foster is an avid outdoor communicator, guide and tournament fisherman. He welcomes input as well as questions and comments. He can be reached via either of his websites at [www.eyetimepromotions.com](http://www.eyetimepromotions.com) or [www.dakotapheasantguide.com](http://www.dakotapheasantguide.com).

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# The Green Mountain State

By Dana Benner

I have been blessed with the ability to travel throughout the United States over the years, but no place stands out like Vermont. Vermont is home to some of the best fishing and hunting around. From fishing Lake Champlain for bass and pike with Nihad Basic of Fishing Champlain Guide Service to fishing for walleye on Lake Carmi, it doesn't get any better. Then there is waterfowl hunting with Matt Trombley of 3rd Alarm Charters and Bradley Carleton of Sacred Hunter. Finally, there is fishing the numerous trout streams with my friend Stan. In other words, the list could go on and on.

There is much more to Vermont than just the hunting and fishing. It is the culture and the people who make Vermont special. Green living is a way of life here. Recycling and repurposing is the norm. Windmills and solar panels are everywhere. The roads are clean and free of trash. During the warmer months bicycles are a major form of travel. During the winter it is not uncommon to see people moving





from Point A to Point B using cross-country skis. In Burlington, the state's largest city, the city buses, which are powered by natural gas, move people from place to place. There is plenty of open land to hike, bike, hunt and fish. Above all, the people are friendly and welcoming.

Made up of mountains, forests and rolling farmland Vermont is a major draw to skiers in the winter and wildlife watchers and fisherman year round. In

season farmer's markets are everywhere; a place to find fresh produce picked that day. Do you like dairy products? If so, then Vermont is for you as dairy cattle seem to outnumber people and there is nothing better than Vermont sharp cheddar cheese. A visit to Cabot is a must to pick up some fresh Vermont cheddar.



If you are looking for wildlife or perhaps interested in casting a fly to willing trout Vermont makes it



possible. Unlike many states, Vermont not only encourages you to explore they make it pretty easy for you to do it. There are over 800,000 acres of federal and state public land in Vermont. In the state wildlife management areas (WMA) there are designated pull offs and parking areas that give you access to trails that will lead you to some great fishing areas or the adventure of a lifetime. For the angler and history buff there is the American Museum of Fly Fishing in Manchester, Vermont. Here you will find world record fish and the stories of the sometimes famous people who caught them.

Wildlife abounds in Vermont and you never know what you may see. White-tail deer and Black



bear are very common, but don't be surprised if you see a moose as well. You may share a fishing spot with a mink, like I did, or you may see a muskrat or a beaver. Balsam and hemlock forests are the home to Snowshoe hares and if you are really lucky you may see a coyote or a bobcat. The bird species found here are too numerous to name.

A visit to Vermont is lacking if you don't partake in some of the craft beers that the state is known for. Long Trail, The Shed, Trout River and Von Trapp are just a few of the examples. Speaking about Von Trapp, how about a visit to the Trapp Family lodge. If the name sounds familiar it is because this is the home of the Von Trapp family who were made famous in The Sound of Music. This is where the family settled after fleeing Austria



and it is still owned by the family today. Here you can eat authentic Austria food, see maple sugaring done the old way, rent mountain bikes or just hike the trails.

Vermont is not just a place; it is a way of life. Here you can slow down and relax. You can do as much, or as little, as you want. There are no fancy rides, just fresh air and the outdoors. Just the way I like it.





# A New Open-Water Fishing Season

By Bob Jensen

It's a new fishing season! After a spring unlike any other in memory, we're finally getting the lawn mowers ready for action. That's the down-side: The up-side is that the fish are biting, and the bite is just going to get better. Following are some things that you can do to make your fishing season even better this year.

First of all, make sure you have a current fishing license. Some states offer options on fishing licenses. For instance, in Iowa you can buy a three year license that offers a cost savings. For me, even better than the cost savings, is the fact that I don't have to remember to buy a fishing license in Iowa for a

couple of years. Also in Iowa, you can buy a license that allows an extra line. For a few dollars more, you can use three lines, which can be an advantage when you want to pull planer boards or use slip-bobbers.

Be aware of any new regulations that may have been implemented. There are frequently changes that we need to be aware of in daily and possession limits and size limits. Minnesota has changed the northern pike laws in some areas: Be sure you know the rules.

Be really aware of the trailering law in some states that requires boaters to pull the plug out of the boat when you're on the road. This is to prevent the spread of invasive species. In year's past, I've put a spare plug on the key ring for my boat's motor so I remember to put the plug in when launching. I might not need to do that this year. I've become pretty good at remembering to do so.


Also remember to pull weeds off the boat trailer when you take the boat out of the water. This is another attempt to slow the spread of invasives. If you develop a routine when loading and unloading, loading and unloading is very quick and easy.

Make sure the line on your reels is in good shape. Your line is the only connection between you and the fish. Use good line!


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Don't call it a boat, because it's so much more than that. It's a fishing machine. It's immediate access. It's an adventure. It's more time on the lake, canal, river or estuary. It's a state of the art tool. It's a sword and shield. It's a heavy queen with bite. It's a trusty steed. It's a key character in every fish tale. It's quick like a gnat and deadly like a cheetah. It's won championships, beer and rounds of drinks. It's a fighter that never gets knocked down. It's ready for any assignment.

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Make sure your landing net is in good shape. Replace the bag if necessary.

Netting a fish is an important consideration. If you're going to keep the fish, netting it increases the odds of getting it in the boat.

If you're going to release the fish, the proper net will increase the odds of the fish's survival. Some nets damage fish, a few nets are designed with the fish's best interest in mind. Beckman Nets are the best nets out there. They have a model of net that will fit any angler's needs, and they're easy on the fish. If you're in need of a new net, be sure to look at a Beckman.

Now is the time to start investigating some of those close to home spots you've always thought about trying. See if you can get permission to fish from area pond owners. Fish in ponds are often the first biters of the year. Most ponds have bass and panfish and maybe some catfish. They can provide outstanding early season action. Get permission, then get out there.

Last of all: Do what you can to make this a safe and pleasant fishing season. Drive carefully and be patient at the boat ramp. If someone is having trouble loading or unloading their boat, ask if you can help.

It's time for open water fishing, enjoy the season.

To see new and older episodes of Fishing the Midwest television, fishing articles

# THE EYES HAVE IT



“If you look at a lot of the greatest saltwater lures out there, they all have one thing in common,” observes trout and redfish fanatic Ralph Phillips. “Eyes. A large, lively set of eyes. Underwater, eyes can be the trigger, the one anatomical detail that really attracts predator fish to a lure.”

Many seasons ago, when Phillips first met Dave Fladd, neither angler had lure design on his mind. Instead, the friendship was all about exploring the Lowcountry for the big redfish and trout that haunted its immense network of tidal creeks. It’s a bond between fishing buddies that remains today — years after the anglers laid claim to one of the most popular saltwater jigheads ever made.





## ODU MAGAZINE VIDEO BLOCK ([www.odumagazine.com](http://www.odumagazine.com))

The challenge in designing the Trout Eye, recalls Fladd, an optical engineer by trade, “was to make a jig whose head was predominantly a big pair of 3-D eyeballs. At first, we just made the jig for ourselves — sort of the ultimate trout and redfish jig that married perfectly with our favorite Z-Man softbaits. We

started by pouring the jigheads six at a time on Ralph’s back porch. We had no idea what would happen next . . .”

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# TIDEWATER FLASH INSHORE SMASH

Targeting redfish, speckled trout, snook and flounder in the saline shallows is commonly an exercise in covering, and subsequently eliminating water. True, it's tough to beat a live shrimp, croaker or crab under a popping-cork once you have fish pinned in a corner. But until then, you're best off peppering the water with exploratory casts, deploying a menagerie of lures, including casting spoons.

Some will argue that saltwater spoons remain the most reliable search baits. Even in this time of spitting-image replication – hard and soft-baits cloned to look, even act like real forage – the stalwart swim and flash of the spoon is everlastingly effective.

The trouble with most spoons, however, is their one-dimensional performance. A good and heavy, long casting spoon, for example, is a bull in a China shop in the shallows. It crashes and cartwheels over oyster beds, inevitably becoming a permanent fixture notched in the reef. Super-skinny, lightweight spoons tango tantalizingly over the shallows, but can only be cast about six





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oar lengths, even less in a headwind.

The good news is that a high-performing and fully adaptable spoon does exist; one that can cast across the marsh yet hover among tailing redfish long enough to get annihilated. This spoon of spoons is the Fin-Wing.

This so-called “hovering” serves as a primo example of Fin-Wing functionality. Typecasting says saltwater lures, including spoons, should be burnt at Formula One speeds. Yes, inshore species often react positively to a fast-paced retrieve. But equally as often, inshore species either aren’t chasing the silver bullet, or simply didn’t have time to commit, especially in the hyper-shallows.

Because of Fin-Wing’s inimitable scooped shape and wide profile, the patented spoon has an especially long hang-time, and can be retrieved slower. This keeps the bait in the strike-zone longer, letting fish dial-it-up for a charge, not to mention summoning nearby fish that would have gone completely untapped by a fast moving – and sinking – conventional spoon.

Another Fin-Wing phenomenon is its subsurface appeal. As desperately as inshore anglers want to taste a topwater bite, sometimes that just isn’t happening. The typical backup program involves pitching a jig. Retrieved at the right speed, the Fin-Wing flounces just below the surface, throwing flash and vibe like a salsa dancer. So sit on that jig for a while and let the Fin-Wing shake its hips below the surface.

Here’s your chance to get reacquainted with spooning. Take a few Fin-Wings on your next inshore adventure and reap the catch of the most progressive piece of metal on the Seven Seas.







# RESEARCH REVEALS 30 LIFE SKILLS MODERN DADS NO LONGER TEACH THEIR KIDS

**By Libby Barnes**

How to read a map, how to fish and how to polish shoes, are just some of the life skills modern dads are no longer teaching their children, according to a new study.

Researchers took an in depth look into the things the nation's fathers do and - more importantly don't - teach their children, with lighting a fire safely, playing conkers and even riding a bike making the list of skills that we're not teaching the younger generation with some skills falling by the wayside.

In fact, the data revealed that according to the nation's dads, 60 percent of children would rather play computer games than venture outdoors, with a further 53 percent of British fathers saying they have never taken their children fishing.

A further 36 percent of modern youngsters have never been camping, 15 percent have never taught their children to tie their own shoe laces and a further 45 percent have never shown their youngster how to repair a puncture on a bike.

Three in ten have never shown their son or daughter how to tie a tie, while 29 percent have never demonstrated how to buff and polish a pair of shoes.

Almost four in ten fathers admitted they simply don't have time to teach skills or play with their children, with 68 percent of those saying their own dad was more "hands on" when it came to passing on life lessons.

Ed Burgass, Commercial Director for Fishing TV, who commissioned the study of 1000 dads to mark the launch of World Fishing Day, said:

"The survey has revealed some really interesting insights into the things we teach – and more importantly – don't teach our children. As the study has shown families are no longer fishing together like they once did. As a child, I went fishing with my father regularly and some of my fondest memories are from the river bank. As someone whose second child arrived last week, this is something that I am keen to pass on to future generations. By holding our upcoming World Fishing Day, Fishing TV's ultimate goal is to bring more people into the sport of angling, particularly women and children, whilst also shedding a light on the conservation issues surrounding fishing and highlighting fishing's power to improve people's lives around the world."

World Fishing Day, which will take place on 23rd June 2018, will consist of a network of community fishing events and a free-to-air 24-hour live fishing broadcast from around the world.

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The data also revealed 83 percent of dads said they would love to spend more time with their children doing outdoors activities, however 60 percent admit they would struggle to get their children out of the house and away from the games console.

Three in ten dads (31 percent) say they have tried to get their children interested in the same pastimes they enjoyed when they were young but to no avail, in fact according to 48 percent say they often row with their partner over the lack of time their children spend outdoors.

41 percent of dads say they are often embarrassed by their youngsters' lack of practical life skills.

Over half of the men polled (57 percent) accept that their children need to have an understanding of technology, but they hoped they would still have a desire to learn and enjoy less tech focussed pastimes.

However, an ever-hopeful 87 percent of dads said that they plan to switch off the TV, unplug the games console, hide the tablets and laptops and get their children into the great outdoors this summer.

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16. Know different types of trees
17. Play football in the local park with jumpers for goals posts
18. How to tie a tie
19. How to polish shoes
20. To know about the birds and the bees
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# Hunting Zone







# TWISTED TARGETS

By Dan Galusha

People who target shoot seem to like the sound of something going “clang”, as one of the most popular targets are the AR500 steel. These can be manufactured by a professional company, or “homemade”. The homemade end will work, but to have a well measured out target for different calibers, and some different types of designs, unless you are very handy with a cutting torch, it is best to go with the “company” end of things.

One of the newest companies in this field is Twisted River Targets, located in LeClaire, Iowa, that started in 2016. Tim Montag, the owner, started the company because of his love for shooting. He also knew that within his home area there was very little being offered in AR500 targets. This took off very quickly, and his orders have now gone beyond his home area.



*The author's favorite AR500 steel target is called a Bullseye, because of the extra swinging steel target behind the center hole in a 12-inch “gong” target.*





*Target stands can be purchased separately, or in a set, such as seen here.*

The name Twisted River Targets was selected because of the Mississippi River. Tim lives next to the Mississippi and thought that it was a catchy name.

Several of the manufacturers in this industry make paper and self-healing targets, as well as the AR500s for several different calibers. Tim's company only makes the AR500s in several shapes and sizes, which cover a wide variety of calibers from 22LR to 50 bmg, depending on the thickness of the target.

Montag would recommend at least a 1/4-inch thick steel target for 22lr or pellets, but NEVER a BB as there will be ricochets and "bounce backs". However the most popular is the

3/8-inch model. Going with this thickness will open up the variety of calibers you can shoot and last for a long time.

I asked Tim if he was manufacturing a product for the airgun shooters. There are a lot of pellet traps, but very few BB traps on the market. His answer was, "No, not at this time, but there are plans for the future."

Montag says that he designs all of his targets, and since he works for an engineering company, has access to design software. Once he has a design complete the drawings are sent to a steel manufacturer to have them laser cut.

One of the designs that I like is for more than just banging away at a piece of steel. It is a 3/8-inch thick, 12-inch diameter target, with a steel flapper hanging on



*There are 5 sizes of Twisted River AR500 targets; 4, 6, 8, 10 and 12 inch.*

## ODU MAGAZINE VIDEO BLOCK ([www.odumagazine.com](http://www.odumagazine.com))

chains behind a hole in the middle, which is appropriately named “Bullseye AR500 Target”. This way it helps in practicing for accuracy, such as with paper, where you are aiming for the bullseye, but still giving it that all-attractive “clang”.

Any of the targets can be easily set up anywhere. Just remember to check first to see if it is legal to shoot in that area.

Twisted River is smart in that the targets are not the only products with which the company is involved. They also make stands, so that if you don’t want one of their targets you may like their stand a bit better for whatever brand, or homemade target may be selected. Another part is being a dealer for body armor by NcStarr, Phalanx, Rothco, and Fox.

As said earlier, this is a very new company, and as such does not have a dealer network. They hope to start out by having their products in local and regional stores, and build from that point. Otherwise products can be ordered directly from the company.

Tim Montag adds, “Shooting steel targets can be a lot fun for any experience level shooter. The sound of the round hitting a steel target is very satisfying. My boys love to shoot the 22LR at these targets. The smiles on their faces is priceless. It’s a great way to get the family out together and have fun.”

If you would like to see more information about the Twisted River product line, or contact them for any reason go to the website at [www.twistedrivertargets.com](http://www.twistedrivertargets.com), or email at [sales@twistedrivertargets.com](mailto:sales@twistedrivertargets.com). You can also call the company at (563)-210-1469.

Until next time, shoot safe and have a great day of plinking.





***Football legends  
Steve Wisnewski  
and Mike  
Pawlowski team  
up for TV  
adventure.***

# ***The Wiz is Bullish on Thermal***

**By Brent T. Wheat**

Former Oakland Raider offensive guard, eight-time NFL Pro Bowler and NFL Pro Football Hall of Fame nominee Steve “The Wiz” Wisnewski has a simple policy: when his friend Mike Pawlowski, host of Gridiron Outdoors on the Outdoor Channel, calls him the answer is always ‘Yes!’ Fortunately, that shoot-first-ask-questions-later philosophy is giving viewers a chance to watch the former gridgers take in some high-intensity nighttime hunting action using FLIR thermal technology.

Now in its seventh season, Gridiron Outdoors pairs college and professional football’s biggest names with Pawlowski to pursue off-the-field adventure in the outdoors. However, the choice of The Wiz was initially somewhat of an accident.



“Mike was supposed to do an episode of the show and the guest cancelled, but he (the guest) said ‘Hey, you might talk to this guy, Steve.’ That’s how I was first introduced to him,” Wisnewski says, laughing at the fact he was playing second-string on the guest list – something he rarely did during his 13-year professional football career with the Raiders.

The relationship blossomed from that first hunt, and Wisnewski has since appeared in several episodes including a pair this season where they stalk hogs and predators in east Texas. “Mike’s one of those characters who you never go wrong hanging around with,” Wisnewski said, “He and his crew are such fun. We just laughed constantly during filming!”

Even though Wisnewski loves hanging around with Pawlawski and company, filming a hunting TV program isn’t all fun and games; it can be as difficult as a two-a-day football practice. “You hate to call it work,” Wisnewski admits, “but when you’re with six or seven guys out in the field, it is a challenge. You have to take your time and make sure the camera is getting the shot because if it isn’t caught on





camera, it didn't happen."

The experience for the Wiz was even more exceptional this year, because his son Cole was also along on the production. "That is such a thrill for me, I can't even put into words," Wisnewski said. "My son and I have a great relationship and it was so special to hunt with him in east Texas," Wisnewski noted.

The gridiron great also dismisses any idea that the men's ultra-competitive nature might have proven a challenge during the hot nights of taping. "Honestly, he's a far better shot and hunter than I am," Wisnewski modestly claimed in reference to Cole. "I just tried to shut up and listen to Mike and my son."

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Regardless of who was the best shot in the group, all three scored on big lonestar hogs during overnight filming. Using FLIR thermal imagers for both spotting and shooting duty was eye opening for Wisnewski.

"Hunting with thermal was a huge thrill," Wisnewski said enthusiastically. "I was giddy. It's such a fun thing to do," the former lineman, ordained minister and hunting enthusiast explained. "If you like to hunt or you love to spot animals as most of us outdoorspeople do, how could you not love being out there with a thermal scope?"

Wisnewski continued: "My favorite time of day is sunset, but sadly that is the time you have to get out of the woods and the hunt is over. Now, if you've got a thermal scope (where legal), you can stay out and keep hunting. It's a gorgeous time to be in the woods and the scope opens up limitless possibilities

if you just want to spot, track or hunt animals. You can literally see into the night while safely hunting, harvesting and recovering animals... and have a ball doing it whether you pull the trigger or not.” Indeed, the trio pulled the trigger a considerable number of times during the trip and dropped a number of nuisance hogs raiding fields and pecan orchards.

With tight schedules and non-stop action, one thing Wisnewski loved about the FLIR units was the fact that the learning curve was minimal. “I’m one of those guys who can’t read an owners manual,” Wisnewski noted. “They literally handed me one (FLIR scope) and I needed no instruction; I was comfortable in minutes. I said ‘I want one!’”



One of the features that most impressed Wisnewski was the on-board recording capability. The FLIR ThermoSight Pro Series PTS233 scopes mounted on the team’s rifles could capture up to 2.5 hours of thermal video, and it made the difference in following up the potentially dangerous hogs. “My son took a shot and knew he hit the animal,” Wisnewski explained. “But the guide thought he missed. By reviewing the video from the FLIR, we were able to confirm the hit and also track it in the right direction to recover it. It’s such a cool tool!”

Ultimately, after his experience with FLIR thermal sights and monoculars, Wisnewski is sold on the value of thermal sights for hunting. “A FLIR optic,” he said, “is easy to use, simple, reliable, functional and gets you hunting when you otherwise couldn’t be hunting. I’d say ‘save some money on your rifle, save some money off the scope and buy a FLIR!’ You’ll use the heck out of it and when you’re not using it your buddies will want to borrow it!”





# THE TURKEY HUNTER'S TOOL BAG

He may not look like much, but well-traveled hunters agree that the North American wild turkey can be one of the world's toughest animals to harvest.

From the time he's hatched, the wild turkey is a target for predators. As a result, he's equipped with unique defenses to stymie his foes... not the least of which are the two-legged variety clad in camouflage. His powerful legs can sprint at 25 miles per hour. His telescopic eyesight has a 270-degree field of view and is unmatched in the natural world; give a turkey the chance and he'll see a hunter blink at 100 yards. To make matters even more challenging, turkeys are social creatures that seldom feed or travel alone, so turkey hunters must often contend with multiple sets of these incredible eyes.

The bottom line? Turkey hunters need every tool and every advantage they can get.

Tenzing™ Outdoors is known for building hunting packs that give every hunter his or her best chance for success. They carry the tools hunters need to the places they need them, and do it better than anything else out there. Turkey hunters are gear fanatics by definition, requiring a full arsenal of calls, camo, decoys and other tools to fool one of the world's wariest game animals. Nothing gives the turkey hunter a bigger advantage in this war of wile than Tenzing's new TZ TV18 Turkey Vest. It's the ultimate turkey-hunting tool bag.

Weighing in at a trim three pounds, the new TZ TV18 turkey vest fits like a pack, courtesy of fully



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performance air-mesh back panel lends additional comfort while walking, running, crawling or sitting on the integral, fold-down dual-layer foam seat. The seat cushion deploys and stows fast and reliably using integral straps and HDPE quick-release hardware.

Once seated, turkey hunters can call 'em close or wait 'em out with a minimal movement, as the TZ TV18 is engineered for complete comfort while placing every turkey-hunting tool within easy reach. A multi-layer design helps the vest keep its form, while gear stays organized, silent and readily accessible in a network of specialized pockets, including dedicated pockets and compartments for box calls, pots, strikers, diaphragm calls, shells and more. A total capacity of 2500 cubic inches ensures ample space inside for bulkier items like decoys, snacks, cameras and water bottles. The TZ TV18's pair of perfectly positioned handwarmer pockets is a welcomed luxury on chilly mornings, and there's even a special compartment offering fast access to the hunter's phone. The TZ TV18 is available in Realtree Edge or Mossy Oak Obsession, providing critical defense against a gobbler's supernatural eyesight in any environment.

The versatile Tenzing TZ TV18 Turkey Vest does its job to make sure you can do yours. When your bird is down, pack him out in the TZ TV18's extra-large turkey pocket. A carefully designed easy-access opening allows hunters to load even the largest of trophy toms without damage to all those beautiful feathers.

### **Tenzing TZ TV18**

#### **Turkey Vest Features**

- Multi-layer design keeps its form making easy access of calls and accessories
- High-performance air-mesh back panel and shoulder straps for superior comfort and breathability
- Dual-layer foam seat provides soft cushioning and support
- Unique quick-tack striker pockets provide easy access and secure storage for 3 strikers
- Dual pot call compartments holds up to 4 calls



- Angled box call pocket for easy access
- Zippered front compartment with 7 shot shell loops
- Large left & right zippered hand-warmer pockets with lots of room for storing larger items
- 5 Interior mesh zippered pockets with specialized phone compartment for easy access
- Extra-large turkey compartment with easy access opening allows you to carefully insert your bird without damage

### **Tenzing TZ TV18 Turkey Vest Specifications**

- 2500 total cubic inches
- 3 lbs. total weight
- Main Back Pocket: 22" x 13" x 9"
- Hand Warmer Pockets (2): 12" x 10" x 2"
- Box Call Pocket: 8" x 2.5" x 2"
- Zipper Shot Shell Pocket: 8" x 4.5" x 1.5"
- Striker Pockets (3): 8" x 1" x 1"
- Slate Call Pockets (Holds 2 each): 4" x 4" x 2.5"
- Seat Dimensions: 12" x 13.5" x 2.5"
- Available in Realtree Edge (SKU #TNZBP3002) or Mossy Oak Obsession (SKU #TNZBP3003)
- MSRP \$149.99 / MAP \$129.99

Few pursuits provide the same levels of challenge and reward as the addictive game of turkey hunting. Sure, he may be built for survival, but you've got a brand new tool bag. Slip on Tenzing's all-new TZ TV18 Turkey Vest this spring and gain an immediate advantage.



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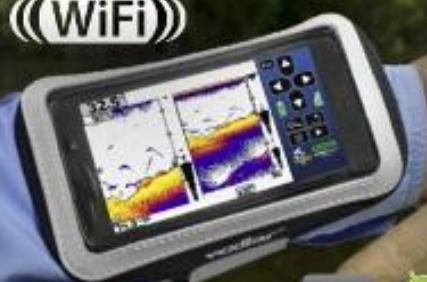
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