

ISSUE 1, SPRING 2025

Where Fishermen Talk!

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Magazine

**FISHERMAN'S
WAREHOUSE
& BAM**

**MAKING A
DIFFERENCE FOR
BASS FISHING**

FROM NORCAL
to the Elites

JDM BAIT
For The Biwa Bigs

CALIFORNIA
Monster Bass Era

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FIRST CAST

by Wayne Wasulko

Hi All,

Welcome to the start of a new fishing season! I'm sorry to see the exit of the longtime MLF (Formerly FLW) Western Division; but very happy to see the new opportunities that have opened for western tournament anglers such as Angler's Press Pro Teams and Future Pro Tour Top 75 as well as others such as the BAM Super 60 and the expanding Kayak events of the events.

I'm also proud to spearhead Fisherman's Warehouse support of fish conservation as the Conservation Sponsor of the BAM Tournament Trail Live Release Boat. You can read more about that in the feature article in this issue. We have some new exciting things coming down the pike.

The first issue of the year is always a great place to feature some of the new gear that typically debuts at ICAST in the late summer and has begun to store shelves by winter. We hope you enjoy some of the new products highlighted in this issue, that we saw at the annual sportfishing tradeshow and are looking forward to trying out on the water.

I would like to close by wishing all of you Merry Christmas, a great Happy New Year and a personal best for the upcoming season.

Tight Lines, And of course, tight lines!

Wayne



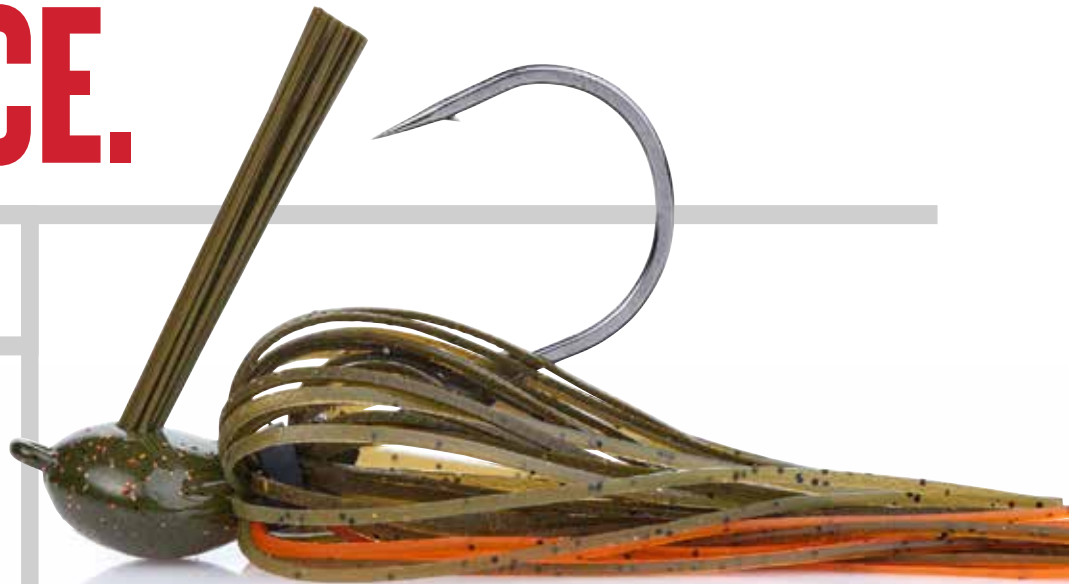
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FINESSE



SKIPPIN'



FINESSE
SWIM



HEAVY
COVER



FLIPPIN'

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HOOK TYPES TO MATCH
PLASTIC BAITS

By Glenn Walker

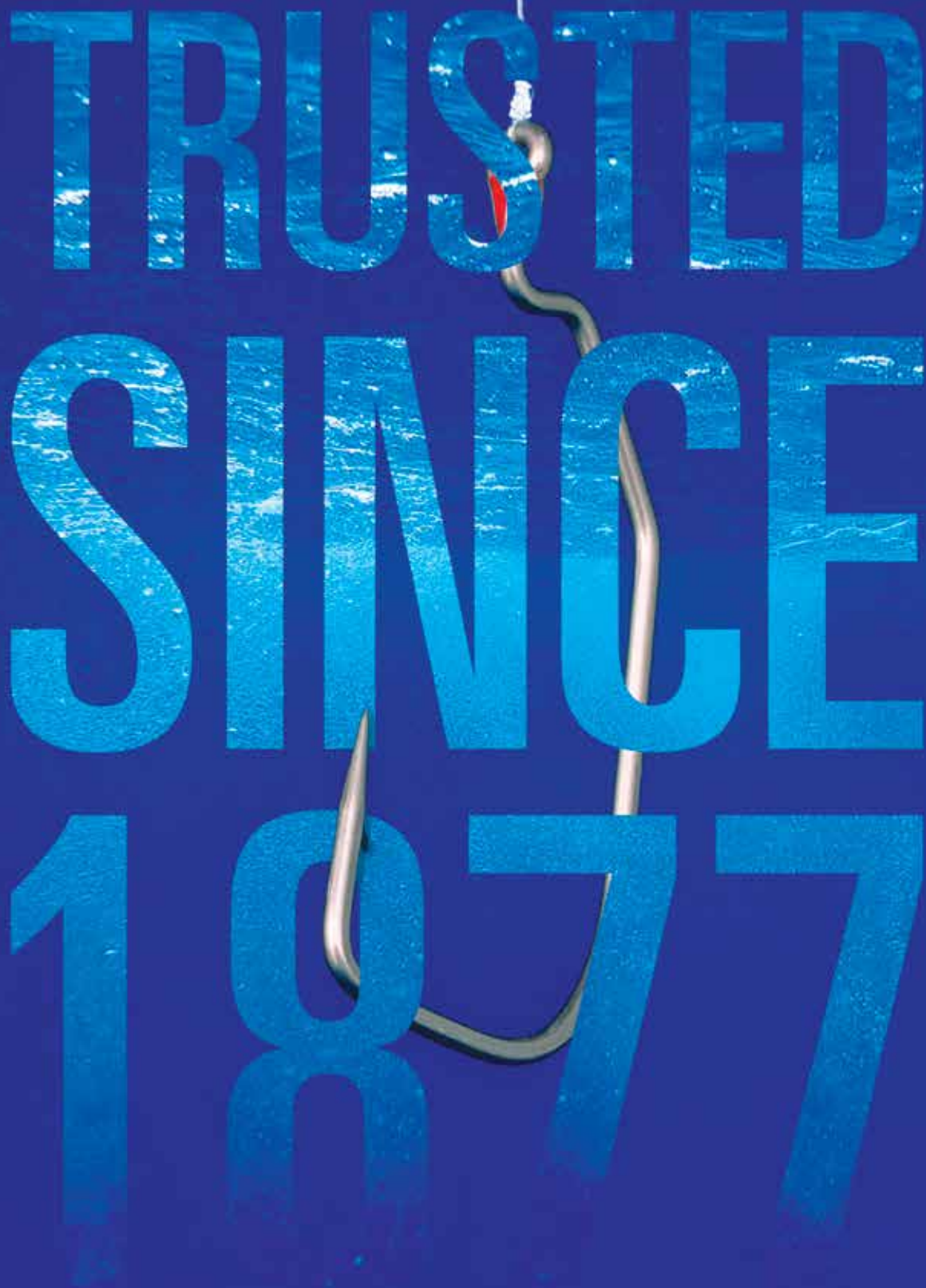


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FORMER NORCAL ANGLERS JOIN /
REJOIN THE BASSMASTER ELITES

By Tyler Brinks





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THE 10X MORE DURABLE, CHEMICALLY SHARPENED PRECISION NEEDLEPOINT

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By Glenn Walker

HOOK TYPES

to match plastic baits

When to use each one, and why.





No matter how many soft plastic baits are out on the market or in your tacklebox, they are worthless without a good hook. Fishhooks are a key item to a bass fisherman's tacklebox and no longer is it as simple as saying, "I need some hooks," so let's breakdown the different styles of hooks for fishing soft plastics for bass.

The hook itself has developed and evolved over the years and now these super sharp and strong hooks can help increase your hook up ratio, along with allowing your plastic baits to move more naturally in the water. Hooks come in a wide range of styles, sizes and colors and each one of these hooks has a specific plastic bait and fishing application that it will shine in.

There are three core groups that a hook can fall into:

WORM HOOK: This style of hook is what paved the way for plastic worm fishing and is still used by anglers today and often used when rigging a worm on a Texas or Carolina-

rig. A worm hook usually has a longer shaft, which puts the hook point further down the soft plastic bait, making a great choice for worms, lizards or stick baits.

A variety of sizes in this style hook is important when choosing the right size hook to match the plastic. It is necessary to have the hook with the point somewhere on the plastic bait that increases hook ups, while not impeding the action of the bait. Keeping a selection of worm hooks from 1/0 up to 6/0 is common for most bass fisherman.

EXTRA WIDE GAP: This has become a staple and works well with a wide variety of soft plastic baits such as craws, creatures and Flukes. The key characteristic of the Extra Wide Gap is that when rigging a bulky plastic lure, there will still be room on the hook for the plastic to shift during hookset and get the best possible hook up.

These hooks both come in standard, 2x or MagWorm model. The latter is designed for fishing with braided or heavier



Photo credit: Chad Eddings Photography

Author, and tournament angler Glenn Walker, gives you his TroKar hook choices, and Bass Pro Tour Pro, Brent Ehrler, gives you his Gamakatsu hook choices:

BRENT EHRLER'S - GAMAKATSU HOOKS

WACKY/NEKO: G-Finesse Weedless Stinger – “There is not a tournament I fish, where I don’t have this hook tied on,” said Ehrler. He’ll use it for a wacky or Neko Rig, and even use it on a drop shot when I’m wacky rigging the plastic. “For me it’s all about efficiency, by simplifying the amount of gear I use and have to pack, so this hook covers multiple basis.”

ALL-ROUND TREBLE HOOK: G-Finesse Treble – “This is the best treble hook, you can put on a hard bait, for multiple scenarios and baits,” stated Ehrler. This treble hook is very thin, but it is a stiff hook, so it doesn’t bend, and the rigidity helps with hook penetration. It has a slight O’Shaughnessy bend that helps land the bass and Nano Smooth Coating acts like a lubricant, so you get better penetration in the fish’s mouth.

FLIPPING HOOK: G-Power Heavy Cover Worm Flip and Punch Hook – If you are flipping or pitching a soft plastic on Texas-rig, you’ll land more bass with a straight shank hook, than you would an offset or EWG bend hook. “You get more direction penetration when setting hook, and the wide gap O’Shaughnessy works well with the beefier plastics. “This hook I can fish on braid or fluorocarbon, and I have enough power to get solid penetration,” explained Ehrler.

fluorocarbon line. You’ll want to keep a selection of both standard Extra Wide Gap and MagWorm models ranging from 1/0 all the way up to 6/0. When making longer casts or fishing a bait on a Carolina-rig, a preferred choice is the standard. The MagWorm gets the nod when fishing in heavy vegetation.

TIP: *I use Extra Wide Gap hook on a creature bait in lieu of the below mentioned flipping hook, when I’m making longer pitches or casts to a target, such as a weed line or point. I like how a plastic bait looks on an extra wide gap when making a cast, compared to a flipping style hook.*

SPECIALTY HOOKS: Hook manufactures have developed their line of hooks based off input from anglers; so, don’t overlook specialty hooks that allow plastic baits to perform better in the water and will increase hookup ratio.

- **Tube baits:** A specific hook for a tube bait is a must as this bait has two walls of plastic to get through when setting the hook. The design of these hooks put the hook point right in the sweet spot and allow it to be rigged smoothly.
- **Flipping:** Without a doubt one of the most sought-after specialty hooks on the market is a flipping hook. These stout hooks are straight shank hooks, which increase the hook up percentage when flipping. Securing the bait on the hook is very important because the proper presentation is crucial when dropping a bait in front of fish’s’ face.
- **Swimbait:** The soft plastic swimbait has grown to be a mainstay lure in many bass anglers’ arsenal. The key

GLENN WALKER'S - TROKAR HOOKS

WORM: Pro V Bend Worm Hook – I like the Pro V style from TroKar, as I feel they have a little more room for the plastic to slide on the hook set, resulting in increased hook ups.

FLIPPING: Pro V Flippin’ Hook – Based off the original TK130 Flippin’ Hook, with the Pro V barb that keeps your plastic securely in place, the Pro V bend helps keep bass buttoned up.

DROP SHOT: Pro V Drop – The NEW Pro V Drop Shot Hook helps keep the bait in place when wanting to keep a horizontal presentation and enhances the baits action in the water.

WACKY/NEKO: Pro V Bend Finesse Hook – Unique pro v bend design, which keeps your soft plastics in place, resulting in less time rigging baits and more time with your bait being properly presented in the water.

characteristics of a swimbait hook are a plastic keeper, an angled hook eye, and possibly a weight on the bend of the hook. These hooks are especially designed to allow a swimbait to swim naturally in the water. If they aren’t swimming naturally, it is likely a bass won’t show interest in it.

- **Drop Shot:** Finesse fishing for bass is becoming more crucial for an angler’s success, primarily because bass are seeing more and more pressure on our lakes and rivers. Since these hooks are predominately small an extremely sharp hook is even more important now than ever. A preferred size is 1 or 1/0.
- **Finesse:** A newer style of hook to the bass fishing market in the last few years, which is being used by anglers for wacky-rigging stick baits, drop shotting or Neko rigging. Some brands also offer a weedless version, that features hand-tied weed guards. These work well for skipping boat docks and fishing shallow water cover.

As you look to stock up your tackle box for that next bass fishing trip, be sure to have a wide variety of hooks for your plastics, the styles above will cover any soft plastic bait that you may have and by keeping hooks in a wide array of sizes, you’ll be able to select the right hook to match the size of your plastic bait.

Glenn has been in fishing tournaments for over twenty years, spreading his passion and knowledge of the sport via articles and videos. ■

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JAWDROPPER UNDERSPIN



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- Mouth Opened Lead Lip Design
- #3 Underspin Willow Blade
- 2/0 Mustad® Ultra Point™ Hook
- Available in 6 Colors 1/8oz, 3/16oz, 1/4oz

HD SWIMBAIT



NEW

- Tapered Head Design - Recessed Line Tie
- 2X Strong Mustad® Ultra Point™ Hook
- Triple Lead Bait Keeper
- Available in 4 Colors 3/8oz, 1/2oz, 3/4oz, 1oz



meet the

VALLEY HILL GIGAMOTO

The JDM bait developed for the
Biwa 22-pound largemouth.

By Tyler Brinks



An emerging name in America, Valleyhill is the latest top Japanese lure brand to enter the North American market with highly technical lures to fit specific needs. They make many lures under Valleyhill and more under their sister brand, Whiplash Factory. All of them are highly detailed with a purpose, including the large lipless crankbait called GIGANOTO, which was developed for catching huge bass on the world-famous Lake Biwa.

FILLING A NEED

Lake Biwa is the crown jewel of Japanese bass fishing, and in 2009, Manabu Kurita caught a world-record-sized bass there. The 22-lb, 5-ounce fish was one ounce bigger than the existing record, but it tied the world record set by George Perry in Georgia in 1932 because it wasn't two ounces more than the record. This giant bass put the lake on the map, attracting anglers worldwide.

Anglers from Japan and elsewhere often fish Lake Biwa, hoping for a new record. While many anglers fish from boats, even more fish from the shoreline. This is why casting distance is critical, and Valleyhill developed GIGANOTO specifically for longer casts.

"Anglers who pursue bass from the bank wade out to reach targets," said Mr. Yu Kawano, the head of marketing for Valleyhill. "Besides wading far into the water, they need the special tackle to assist their unique styles and baits to cast farther. Their goal is up to 80 yards, which shows their passion for making long casts."

Bank anglers in Japan also use rods like the Valleyhill Black Scale Distance Edition, which can be up to 9 or 10 feet long. But the bait is also specially designed for excellent casting distance, even with standard gear from shore or a boat. Its nearly one-ounce weight (27g) and the aerodynamic shape helps it fly through the air.

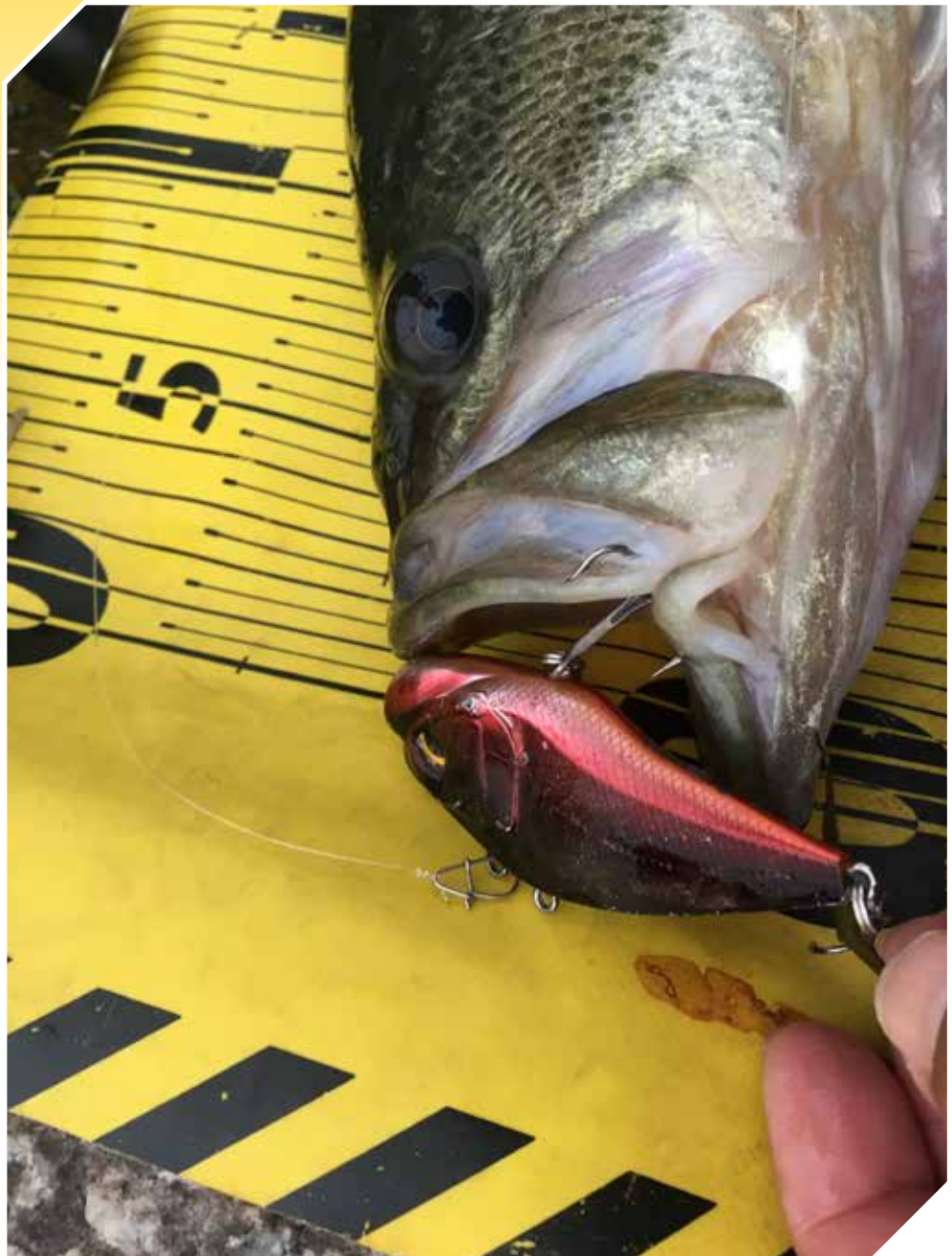
GIGANOTO DESIGN FEATURES

Like most lipless crankbaits, GIGANOTO has incredible vibration and a great swimming action to mimic a baitfish. Sound is also critical in the design, and modifications can be made to cast it even further.

"Under the massive chin section on the bait, there is a place to attach a drop-shot weight for longer casts," said Kawano. "It also has a very loud knocking sound because of the lead block inside the body. It's available in three versions, the original, a tungsten version, and a lighter bait with the same shape and profile."

In addition to GIGANOTO, GIGANOTO TG is approximately the same weight. The TG version includes tungsten rattles for a different sound, and GIGANOTO Light has the same size profile but weighs 21g grams or 3/4 ounces. They all feature specially designed Ryugi hooks with a smaller hook at the rear to stabilize the bait as it falls.

The top of the bait is also unique as there are two line ties, each giving the bait a different action. "The two eyes give you two ways to change your presentation as the back eye makes the bait have a wider wobbling action," said Kawano. "The back eye also allows for a more stable cast."



The eye at the front gives the bait less vibration, which allows you to present the bait more quietly."

FISHING THE GIGANOTO

There are many ways to fish a lipless crankbait, and the large GIGANOTO can be fished in all of the traditional ways but excels around grass.

"During the summer, Lake Biwa is full of grass, and anglers use a 'yo-yo' retrieve to get fish to bite," Kawano said. "Jerking the bait free from grass gives it excellent vibration, and the fast fall triggers fish because of its weight and speed of fall. The preferred retrieve speed of Japanese anglers with this bait is relatively quick, which gets the bait to vibrate strongly."

Even if the grass isn't present, a 'yo-yo' type retrieve works well, but it also excels with a standard straight retrieve, according to Kawano. There are many ways to fish it, and the vibration from each retrieve is excellent.

"Even with a straight continuous retrieve, you will feel the strong vibration," he said. "Japanese anglers have also done very well with it with a lift and fall because it sinks so fast. This bait lipless can go deeper, literally deeper."

The large profile bait has proven itself on a trophy fishery like Biwa but will do the same on American fisheries known for big bass. "It's a unique bait made for big bass in Japan, but can be a weapon for California," said Kawano. "Lipless crankbaits work great on Clear Lake and Lake Berryessa, using them around the grass for the giant bass that lives there. The GIGANOTO was made when you wished you had a heavier lipless crankbait to fish deeper and more effectively."

Though largemouth are the primary reason this lure was made, Kawano says it's perfect for any predator fish, including the striped bass, one of the most popular targets in Northern California. "In addition to the long casting distance, it works well in strong currents because of the weight of the bait," he said. "Many anglers like to use big jerkbaits for stripers, but this is a new approach to striper fishing. The shape and size will appeal to huge fish like the striper."

Valleyhill has a long history in Japan, designing lures to meet specific needs, like the GIGANOTO for extreme casting distance. This is just the latest example of a unique bait hitting the American fishing scene, and there will be more to come. ■



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What is needed for a lipless crankbait, especially for shore fishing, is a casting distance. Giganoto was developed to realize this casting distance, to achieve over 80 meters casting distance with XH class rods. It has double eyes for the main line which allow anglers to select two different actions. With connecting your line to the eye in the back, you can get the longer casting distance with wide wobbling action, and with the eye in the front, the lure swims with milder vibration with some rolling action and the lure balance while casting changed to achieve less distance than using the eye on its back. Adding the sinker at the eye on the chin allows you to cast even more than 100 meters.



RYUGI PIERCE TREBLE (front # 6/rear # 10)

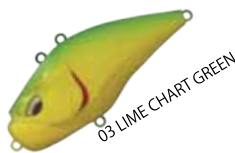
★ Made in JAPAN
★ Length:72mm ★ Weight:27g



01 GD/BK ORANGE BELLY



02 RED METALIC



03 LIME CHART GREEN



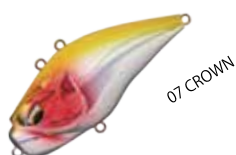
04 PURPLE GILL



05 GHOST AYU



06 NO NAME SHRIMP



07 CROWN



08 WEED GILL



09 BLACK BACK TIGER



10 SPARKLE ORANGE TIGER

THE HYDROGEN-POWERED BASS BOAT

By Ish Monroe

we're prepared!



Photo: Jody Only



The time is now; maybe not right now, but it is now, and we are prepared at Yamaha! The world's first hydrogen-powered outboard motor was unveiled this year by Yamaha and while that may sound like something out of a Jetson's cartoon, it is actually a #currentsituation.

Throughout 2024, at various boat shows around the world, Yamaha has been showing its game-changing H2, a hydrogen-combustion version of the XTO outboard. The XTO is Yamaha's flagship 450 horsepower, gasoline-powered V-8. In a combined effort with Regulator Marine and Roush Performance the H2 was installed into two boats currently in testing phases.



Photo: Jody Only



Photo: Jody Only

being carbon-neutral operations by 2035 and products by 2050, without sacrificing performance and reliability. That is why we have been working towards alternative propulsion methods, other than gasoline.

When we look at gasoline or diesel motors, we know it is a goal to find alternatives, and while we aren't saying that we have to go all hydrogen, the goal of Yamaha is to be ready with other motor choices that run on alternative fuels.

It was first unveiled in Miami this year at the International Boat Show; however, Yamaha was also requested to display their H2 Hydrogen Outboard for the auto industry at the 2024 Specialty Equipment and Market Association (SEMA) show in Las Vegas in November in the Future Tech section of the event. As part of the Yamama crew, I was able to assist in the Yamaha presentation it to the automotive crowd.

EMISSION-FREE PROPULSION

Yamaha and Yamaha Rightwaters work diligently to improve the environment. We have a long-term goal of

Electricity is increasing its popularity in the automotive industry, especially with rising costs of gasoline, Tesla's offerings and the increasing infrastructure for charging; but will that overtake gasoline?

It is our theory, even when looking ahead to future decades, gasoline could remain at 50 percent of the fuel market, electric 25 percent, and hydrogen another 25 percent. We don't have to go all one type or another, but what we do want to do is show that we have technology for propulsion in all methods.

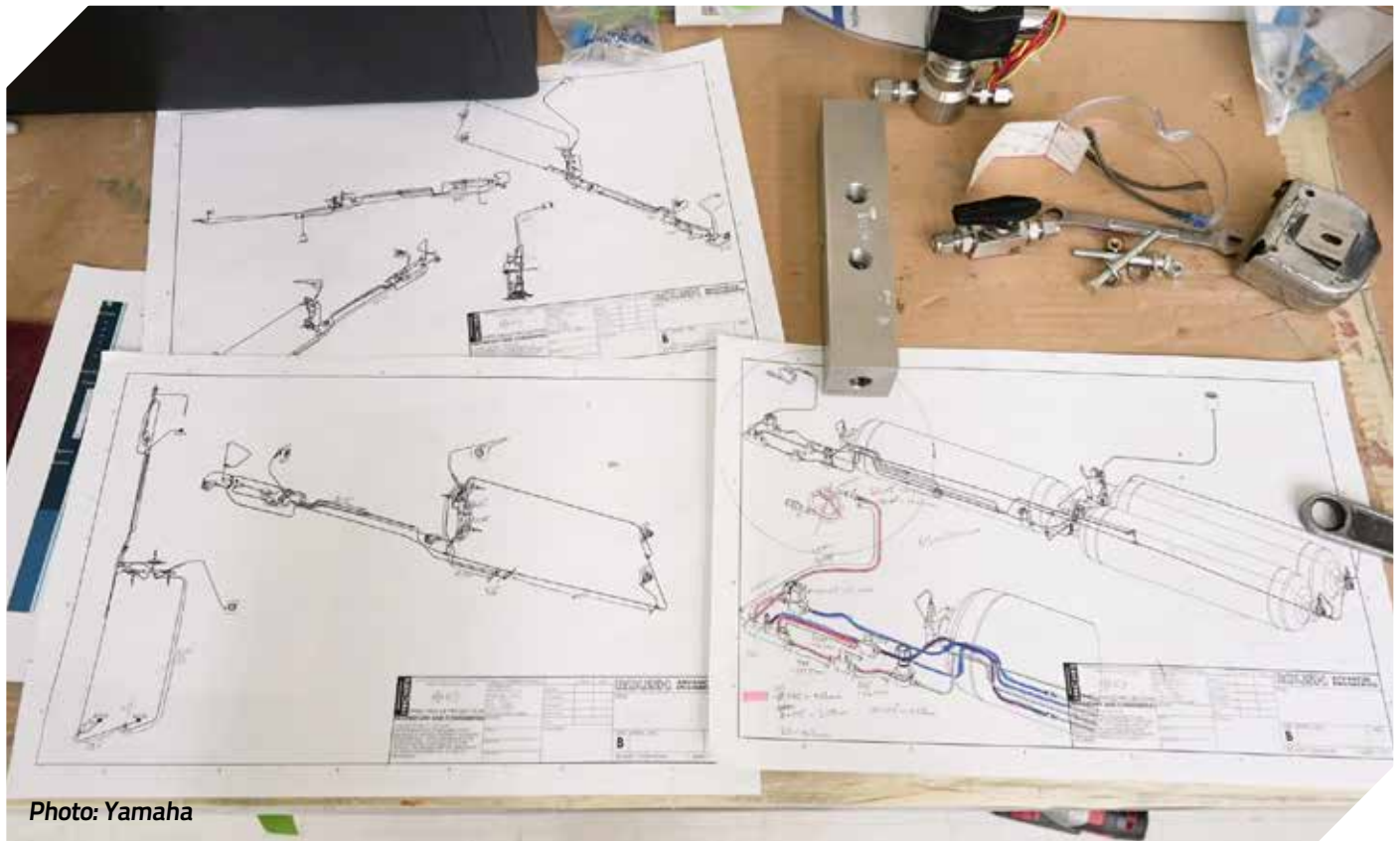


Photo: Yamaha



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PROTOTYPE DEVELOPMENT

As we know our infrastructure is based on gasoline and there isn't current infrastructure for customers to readily utilize a hydrogen motor; but in working with Roush Performance, known for racing components in the automotive industry, the fuel delivery system for the hydrogen outboard was developed. Roush is also providing safety analysis.

The automotive industry has been working with hydrogen for years, and Roush specifically has 20-plus years of working with hydrogen; so, this was a good partnership to help get the marine industry to the next step.

Regulator Marine was part of the joint effort and modified their 26-foot Regulator XO center console for the H2 hydrogen motor and the fuel delivery system. There are currently two test vessels with the modification with hydrogen tanks, both by Regulator Marine. The tanks hold 22 to 23 kilograms of hydrogen and take up much of the boat's space. If the H2 were to go beyond prototyping Regulator could redesign the boat to accommodate the tanks and still have more of the space that we are accustomed to.

HYDROGEN COMING TO MARKET

Using Yamaha's 5.6-liter, 450-horsepower V-8 XTO made sense as the hydrogen motor basically uses the same energy-harnessing principles as a gasoline-powered motor. However, a big difference is the byproducts of a gasoline



Photo: Yamaha

and hydrogen motor. Hydrogen is H₂ – or two hydrogen molecules, and water is H₂O – or two hydrogen molecules and one oxygen molecule; so, the only emission byproduct of H₂ is H₂O (water), making it one of the cleanest alternative fuels to use. Another

Because we are still in the progress of testing, we can't give range or horsepower specs; but that is on the horizon. And, while Yamaha isn't looking for immediate production of a hydrogen outboard, and it is not something that is being mandated to as of yet; if it ever comes to that then Yamaha will be able to deliver. ■



Photo: Jody Only

TRCnext

Aftermarket Modification Impact on Take Angle

Stock Vehicle with 32" Tires	Take Angle = +5.580°
32" LVL 60 with 32" Tires	Take Angle = +6.248°
32" LVL 60 with 32" Tires	Take Angle Change = +0.722°
32" LVL 60 with 32" Tires	Take Angle = +6.248°
32" LVL 60 with 32" Tires	Take Angle Change = +0.668°

Aftermarket Modification Impact on Lane Line Detection

Forward Facing View	Side-Side View
Stock	Stock
32" LVL	32" LVL



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discovering **FINESSE BASS FISHING TECHNIQUES** By Jessop Petroski *in Japan*

*Atsuya Asano & Jessop Petroski
on Lake Biwa.*



When we think of bass fishing in the U.S., it's typically a game of heavier lines, powerful casts, and big lures. So, when I first heard about the finesse techniques the Japanese anglers were using, I was skeptical. Finesse fishing, and even "micro-finesse," as they call it, seemed a little far-fetched for catching serious bass. But curiosity won out, and I headed to Japan to see if these lightweight tactics really could make a difference. Spoiler alert—they did, and it was nothing short of eye-opening.

LAKE NOJIRI: A BASS ANGLER'S MICRO-FINESSE PARADISE

My finesse journey started on the pristine waters of Lake Nojiri, a highland lake in Nagano Prefecture, known for its stunning smallmouth bass population. The lake is clear, deep, and has a tricky bass scene that challenges anglers to put their skills to the test. This place isn't just about fishing; it's about precision and patience—qualities I'm usually not banking on when bass fishing back home. In Japan, however, that's exactly what gets the job done, especially when you're working with techniques designed for crystal-clear water and selective fish.

Here, I met up with Hiroki Nakata, a local guide and the man behind Royal Blue Lures. Nakata-san, a former developer for Jackall, introduced me to his unique finesse techniques, using his own soft plastics, the "N-Bomer" and "N-Shad." For someone used to bigger rigs, holding the tiny 1.3- to 1.8-inch N-Bomer was almost laughable. But I quickly found out why this little lure was a game-changer.



N-Bomb Lure
(Hiroki Nakata,
Lake Nojiri)



N-Shad Lure
(Hiroki Nakata,
Lake Nojiri)

"N-BOMER AND N-SHAD" TECHNIQUE ON LAKE NOJIRI

The N-Shad and N-Bomer are Nakata-san's brainchildren and essential tools in Lake Nojiri's finesse game. The N-Shad is used similarly to a mid-strolling technique back home, where you rig it on a light jig head and retrieve it slowly while giving it a subtle shake. It's nothing like the aggressive action we tend to use in American bass fishing—it's a whisper in the water, and the bass respond to it like a quiet invitation.

The N-Bomer, though, takes subtlety to a new level. Measuring just 1.3- to 1.8-inches, this lure is meant to mimic tiny aquatic insects and shrimp. With colors like kiwi and chartreuse, the lure slowly sinks to the bottom or rests gently on the weeds, a move that's surprisingly enticing for the bass here. The key to fishing the N-Bomer is patience—Nakata-san showed me how to barely move the rod tip to drag the bait horizontally. There's almost no action to it, which felt strange at first, but that's exactly what triggers those Japanese smallmouth to bite.

THE GEAR AND TACTICS BEHIND NOJIRI FINESSE

Fishing on Lake Nojiri, finesse isn't just about lure size; it's an entire setup. Nakata-san's rig included 2- to 3-pound fluorocarbon line spooled onto a compact 2000-size reel, giving enough sensitivity to feel subtle bites in the lake's deep, clear waters, often at depths of 12 meters or more. He used a 6- to 6.5-foot SUL-UL class rod with an ultra-sensitive, solid tip—a far cry from the bait-casting rods I'm used to. It was light, but that's exactly what allowed me to feel every little bump, even in 40-feet of water.

As we fished, Nakata-san explained that finesse fishing was all about control, especially in the depths. With a light nail weight of only .3- to .9-grams, each cast required precision to ensure the bait sank without disturbing the bass below. Once I got the hang of it, finesse fishing became surprisingly rewarding. By the end of the day, I was convinced. Lake Nojiri and its micro-finesse techniques were unlike anything I'd ever experienced, and they had me hooked.



Lake Nojiri



LAKE BIWA'S "POWER BAIT FINESSE" STYLE

My next stop was Lake Biwa, Japan's largest freshwater lake and home to some of the country's biggest largemouth bass. I'd fished Biwa before with the "go big or go home" mindset, using massive lures that would turn heads in any American bass fishing tournament. But this time, my guide, Atsuya Asano, encouraged me to take a different approach with "bait finesse," a technique I'd only heard about in passing.

Armed with an ultralight bait-casting rod, a Shimano Bait Finesse reel, and 6-pound-test fluorocarbon line, I rigged up with a #6 off-set hook and a 3.5-inch Ano Straight worm by BOREAS. When I first saw the setup, I had to ask myself, "Could this really land a Biwa bass?" But, as I'd come to learn, this technique was exactly what was needed to tempt bass out of hiding in heavily fished waters like Biwa.



Big Biwa bass

FISHING DEEP WATERS IN LAKE BIWA

Our fishing spot was in 30-feet of water, about 500f-eet offshore, with scattered rocks on a hard bottom. The goal? Get the lure down deep, let it rest, and let it drift naturally with the lake's bottom currents. There was no aggressive reel here, just a slow, twitching retrieve that made the soft plastic worm look like a small, curious creature.

On the first cast, I felt a subtle resistance. With finesse fishing, the hookset isn't about hauling the fish in; it's about careful, precise movement, which was a new challenge for me. Once I got the rhythm, however, the bites were steady, and by the day's end, we'd landed over 10 fish. On a lake as challenging as Biwa, where catching even one bass can be a victory, finesse had done the trick.

ADAPTING TO JAPANESE FINESSE TECHNIQUES

What really caught me off guard was how effective these techniques were, not just on Japanese lakes but also in changing how I thought about fishing altogether. The finesse approach forced me to slow down, pay attention to the smallest details, and rethink my strategies in a way that American bass fishing rarely demands. Techniques like the N-Bomer, N-Shad, and bait finesse worked because they



Jessop Petroski with Biwa bass catch.

were about precision, subtlety, and embracing the unique nature of each environment.

I would like to give a special thanks to Nakata-san and Asano-san for welcoming me out on the water with them and sharing these special techniques with me and allowing me the opportunity to pass along the knowledge to the readership of WesternBass Magazine. ■



Biwa bass and Rocky Island.

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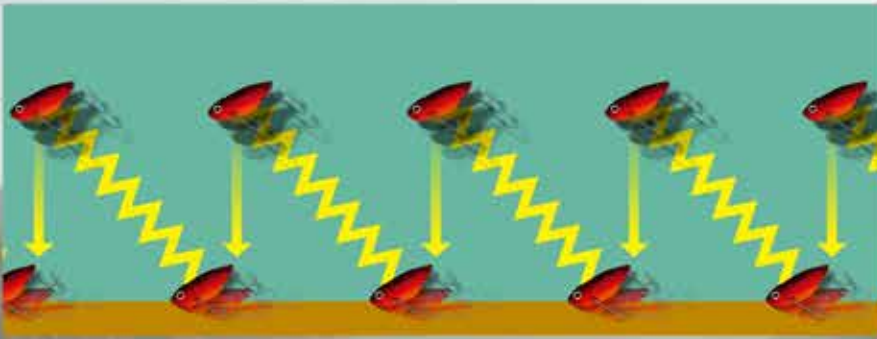
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FISHERMAN'S WAREHOUSE & BAM

By Jody Only

making a difference for the sport of bass fishing





LIFE AS A TOURNAMENT ANGLER ENDS

As a tournament angler, Mark Lassagne, known for his long-standing Bass Angler Magazine publication, had fished much of what the West Coast had to offer for many years, including the now defunct, Wild West Bass Trail (WWBT) and wasn't satisfied.

"When Wild West went away, in my eyes there wasn't really a professional bass fishing circuit with a feeder circuit and pro tour in California or on the West Coast," said Lassagne. "One that anglers could potentially fish, stay on the West Coast, and earn a living."

Lassagne thought long and hard about the western tournament scene and how he could help to fill the void that that was left with the sudden exit of WWBT / APEX.

"I didn't know anybody else that could/would take on the responsibility of a circuit that had the kind of reach that I did and could do bang up job at it; but unfortunately, as a fisherman, taking over the circuit would boot

me out of fishing," he added. "I decided to go for it; and for the greater good of the West Coast, I think it was worth it."

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE FENCE

Now as the owner/operator of the BAM Tournament Trail, a multi-level circuit that currently includes a Pro Tour, Pro/Am's and Kayak trails, Lassagne has insight that he never had as a competitor.



"Tournament anglers just don't realize what goes on behind the scenes – myself included," he elaborated. "Before this, I fished a tournament. I caught my fish. I went to the scales and weighed and then I took off. I didn't know what it was like behind the scenes, setup, tanks, fish care. I knew about fish care in my livewell; but then I brought them to the bump tank and let 'em go in the lake, and that was it."

With a season of the BAM Tournament Trail in the books, Lassagne has expanded his knowledge in many aspects and fish care and conservation of the resource that continues the sport is a giant part of that.

"I've learned so much; things we never think about as the anglers," he said. "Things like using the lake water in the tanks and not tap/hose water, because tap water has chlorine in it and there is no way to remove it.

"I didn't know when fish got stressed, they released ammonia, which went into the water and makes the fish even more stressed."

These and other factors are now part of what BAM has taken into account in advancing fish conservation as a tournament circuit.



MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Although it is extra cost, time and effort, BAM uses their own Live Release Boat, sponsored by Fisherman's Warehouse at their

tournaments. Their Release Boat holds about 1,000 pounds of water. It is able to pump in lake water and accommodate aeration and recirculation.

"It allows us to recirculate the lake water, keep it fresh and keep the fish in good shape," Lassagne stated. "We've done a lot of work to the Release Boat, since we got it. We've replaced the stones and the pump and squared everything away.

"In addition to that, we add ice to the boat and the bump tanks, and survival additives. We limit the number of weigh bags, to limit the amount of anglers at the tanks. We also use a special bag. It is a bag within a bag. We have a bag that retains water and



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a mesh bag that the fish go into which is inside of that; so, when the anglers are at the bump tanks the mesh bag goes in the tank and allows the fish to be surrounded by the water in the bump tank."

Longtime industry person, Wayne Wasulko, owner/operator of this media site WesternBass, and an owner of Fisherman's Warehouse is also a proponent of fish conservation in order to continue the sport. Wasulko shows his appreciation for the resource putting Fisherman's Warehouse support behind BAM and the effort of their Live Release Boat.

"Wayne's effort has led to a good partnership for conservation that is ever-evolving," explained Lassagne. "With the help of Fisherman's Warehouse, we're taking new steps to advance fish care once the bass come to the scale."



EVEN MORE FOR NEXT YEAR

"I don't believe there is anyone else that is doing recirculation on a release boat," he said. "I think the only aerate and as far as I knew that was the best thing to do; but now after consulting with a water professional, I found out how important recirculation is to maintaining fish. I also learned that you want the recirculated water to come to get air before it goes back in."

BAM and Fisherman's Warehouse have more plans to enhance the BAM's fish survival rate for the next season. They are working on a cooling system for healthier release of fish.

"Our goal is to be as advanced as possible," said Lassagne. ■



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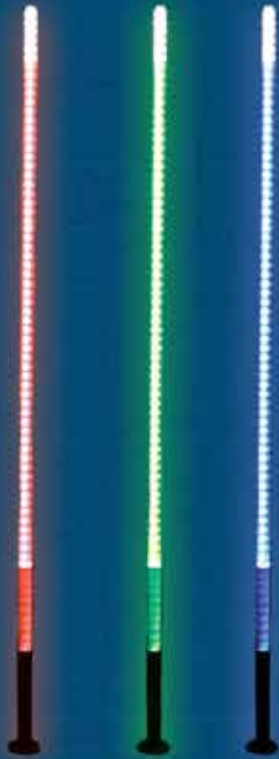
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BAJÍO what's new from SUNGLASSES

Since Bajío hit the scene and became a major player in the sunglass world, they have continued adding new frame styles with a wide selection of unique and useful lenses. The brand is fun, and their booth at ICAST was a testament to that. All of their gear was on display, as well as live haircuts and tattoos right inside the booth. It got plenty of attention and helped to showcase the brand and what it's all about.

This year, the company released several new sunglasses and hat styles that should interest bass anglers. They also showcased some new performance clothing, including hooded sun shirts that are stylish and help protect you from the sun so you can stay comfortable and fish longer.

Here's a rundown of all of the newest items from Bajío:

SIX NEW FRAMES

One of the great things about Bajío is that they have something for everyone regarding sunglasses. They have options for all different head sizes, some tailored for men, some made specifically for women, and others that would be great for both. Their sunglasses also fit in the traditional fishing world with plenty of wrap-around designs, but they have more progressive and stylish styles for those looking for something a little different. All of them include quality polarized lenses that make them perfect for fishing.

New this year are six frames: Clink, Rigolets, 12 South, Hopedale, Sigs, and Tionia. Each is a little different and has a name that is relevant to Bajío. They all come in both glass and polycarbonate lens materials and are offered in seven unique lens tints, including their

patent-pending LAPIS technology that blocks 95 percent of harmful blue light, most yellow light, and 100% UV light. The lens colors include some classic fishing colors as well as some that are unique to Bajío. They include blue mirror, green mirror, gray, silver mirror, copper, rose mirror, and violet mirror.

12 South is named after a highway in North Carolina's Outer Banks and is a large fit with a medium wrap-around design. They are offered in three frame colors and the seven Bajío lens tints. Hopedale is named after a fishing village in Louisiana and features a flatter design with a large fit and medium wrap. They are also offered in the seven





lens colors, but there are four frame options. Sigs are a medium fit with a completely wrapped design, and the name comes from a park with great fishing in Key West. They come in four frame colors and all of the different lens colors.

Tonia is named after the road at the Bajío headquarters and is a small fit with a medium wrap with a metal frame and will be popular for women. They are offered in two frames and all of Bajío's lens hues. Clink is named after a series of spoil islands and has an extra large fit, medium wrap, and a stylish metal frame. Rigolets were designed for smaller faces with a small fit and full wrap-around design. They come in two frame styles, including a white silver mirror, and are available in the seven lens colors.

BESIDES SUNGLASSES

In addition to making quality sunglasses, Bajío continues to add new performance clothing. One big launch this year was the addition of several new hat styles. There are performance and trucker hats with various cool designs featuring fish.



There are also performance sun shirts with UPF 40 fabric. They are hooded and feature more Anderson designs. The material used is bamboo, which is lightweight and breathable but also quick-drying and moisture-wicking. It's also a stretchy, very soft fabric that feels very comfortable. The shirt designs include tarpon, bass, marlin, and dorado on the back of the shirts, with a small Bajío logo on the chest on the front of the shirts.

Bajío continues to add more and more sunglasses with a variety of different frame styles and sizes. They are gaining popularity in the fishing world as anglers have learned that they make great-quality sunglasses perfect for any outdoor activity, including fishing. In addition to the glasses, they have added some great shirts and hats that showcase the fishing lifestyle. ■



what's new from **BERKLEY**

As one of the leaders in the fishing industry, Berkley has an entire team dedicated to developing new items, and they show off many of them at the annual ICAST show. This year was no exception, as they unveiled some FFS-specific products, new soft plastics, hard baits, and kits that every bass angler will be interested in.

Here's a rundown of the newest items from Berkley:

FFS LINE, BAITS, AND MORE

Forward-facing sonar is a big trend in the fishing industry, and Berkley has embraced it and developed several products to work more efficiently with the technology. They started with a series of baits that included this year's Best in Category winner, the Krej, and are now moving on to more baits and even fishing line.

The new FORWARD Braid was developed for better casting distance, greater sensitivity, and a faster sink rate. The line is thermally fused using proprietary technology to achieve these advantages, which all help when fishing while using forward-facing sonar.

fish you see on your screen, but can also be used along the surface depending on where the fish are in the water column.

The Fusion 19 Hybrid Jighead works well with all sorts of minnows and swimbaits. It has a 90-degree line tie, and the weight and hook size are printed on the jighead. It comes in six colors and six weights for two different hook sizes. The ballast weight keeps your plastics upright, and the realistic eye rounds out the package.

POWERBAIT SOFT PLASTICS AND NEW HARD BAITS

Berkley's PowerBait has been a mainstay in bass fishing for decades and continues adding new shapes and styles. New for this year are the Clatter Craw, Drip Minnow, Drip Swimmer, an unrigged version of the CullShad swimbait, and new colors for the popular Bottom Hopper.

The Clatter Craw is a 3.5-inch craw prerigged with a Fusion19 jighead. It has rattles inside the pinchers for added sound, and the bait is ultra-realistic, making it look like a crawfish scurrying along the bottom. It will be offered in eight great colors and is infused with Berkley's PowerBait formula.

The Drip Minnow comes in three sizes and features a realistic baitfish profile. It can be rigged in many ways, and the drip-shaped tail gives it more action no matter



The Krej, jerk spelled backward, came out in January, but it is still new and just won this year's award. It's a unique jerkbait-style bait with an upturned bill. It can be fished at any depth and backslide towards





The popular Stunna jerkbait also got some new sizes and colors. It will now be available in a 100mm size. The standard 110mm size now comes in two deeper divers: the 110+1 and 110+2. The seven new colors are Nebu, French Pearl OB, Baja Wakasagi, Blue Vapor OB, Stealth Minnow, and OG Blue.

KITS

One more unique thing Berkley unveiled at ICAST was a series of kits. They include collections of different baits and some meant to give you everything you need to cook your catch or to serve as a great gift for the angler in your life.

Starting with the Haul of Fame Kits, a collection of hand-picked baits for different categories that fit in a 3700 Plano box, the kits include crankbait, topwater, frog, and swimbait versions.

The Angler Essentials Kits include a tool kit with a scale, scissors, pliers, and a microfiber towel. The plier kit contains two pliers: superline cutters and a microfiber towel. The Catch' N Cook Kit is just like it sounds and includes a fillet knife, rubber mat, towel, and knife sharpener. The Swigs for Bigs Kit would be a great gift, including Slobberknocker and PowerStinger baits and two great-looking Berkley tumbler glasses.

It's another year with some great new products from Berkley. The team continues to add more great baits, accessories, and fishing gear every year. They have embraced current trends, built products for them, and filled the gaps with new colors and sizes of their best-selling items. ■

how you fish it. The Drip Swimmer has a similar profile but a small boot tail for an excellent, subtle swimming action.

The Unrigged CullShad is their popular swimbait with more options for different hooks and rigging. You can use a weighted swimbait hook with a belly slot for the hook, allowing weedless rigging for fishing around cover.

The new Bottom Hopper colors include Blue Craw, Green Pumpkin Blue Fleck, Green Pumpkin Candy, Green Pumpkin Green, Green Pumpkin Magic, Green Pumpkin/Watermelon, Morning Dawn Red Flake, Redbug, Watermelon Magic, and Watermelon Seed.

Jack is the name of the newest Berkley hard bait, a lipless crankbait with tungsten weighting for longer casts and a unique sound. The bait's loud rattles and strong vibration call fish from a long distance, and its thinner back side makes it great for ripping through the water column. It will be available in three sizes and 21 colors.



what's new from **MUSTAD**

Few fishing brands have a name as legendary as Mustad. The famed hook company was founded in Norway in 1832 and has been a leader in fishing hooks ever since. They continue to innovate, and you can find their products in every corner of the world, as they make hooks for anything that swims. In addition to the Mustad name, the company owns LIVETARGET Lures and Tuf-Line. All of their brands had something new to show off at ICAST 2024.

Here's a rundown of what's new from Mustad and their family of brands for the bass angler.

ALPHAPOINT TECHNOLOGY, ULTRA NOR, AND SUSTAINABLE PACKAGING

The AlphaPoint line was unveiled last year, and the super-sharp hooks have styles for all species, including bass. Among the hooks are standard worm hooks, finesse hooks, and several jigheads. The AlphaPoint technology makes the hook points thin, extremely sharp, and strong. They also include a smooth TitanX finish for even better hookups.



Some new designs include the Infiltrator Blade rig, a bladed weighted hook perfect for soft swimbaits. It's strong and ideal for bass, stripers, pike, and other big gamefish. A weighted version without the blade comes in several weights and three hook sizes from 2/0 to 10/0. The final is a standard hook without a blade or added weight. All three of these come with a spring to lock the head of your plastics in place.

The new A-Tak series includes the AlphaPoint hook technology in several popular jighead styles. New in this lineup is the A-Tak Ned Head with a flat head and unique spring keeper for your plastics. It comes in several colors and sizes, from 1/16 to 1/4 ounces.

Also new is the Stand Up Jig Head, a shaky head style jighead with spring keeper and several hook size options and weights from 1/16-ounce up to 3/8-ounce. The final is the A-Tak Swim Jig head, a robust



swimbait head with five color options and weights from 1/8 to 3/8 ounces.

One of Mustad's key pillars is being a sustainable company, and they have integrated that into the packaging for many of their hooks. The packaging eliminates over 65 percent of waste and uses paper with limited plastic. It looks good and showcases Mustad's commitment to the environment.

Another new line, primarily for saltwater anglers, is hooks with Ultra Nor technology that makes them up to 20 percent stronger. They are using a new forging process for their proven hook shapes already made. This improves the pull strength of the same gauge of wire, and they also added a Titan Steel nano-coating to make them even stronger and more corrosion resistant.

MUSTAD TOOLS AND ACCESSORIES

Also new from Mustad is a series of tools that fit everyday angler uses but are also packed with convenient features. Many tools, like the 7.5" pliers and multi-tool, are highly technical, with bottle openers, wire cutters, knot-tying tools, crimpers, and more. There are many tools available, and they keep adding more. The newest options are the 11" Peal Nickel Ergonomic Pistol Pliers, 8" Straight Nose Pliers, and 3.5" Serrated Braid Scissors.



The tools fit the needs of anglers, with plenty of different types of pliers, split ring tools, braid cutters, and scissors. They are well-built, made to last, and extremely useful for all anglers.

NEW FROM LIVETARGET

There were several new bass lures on the lure side of things with LIVETARGET. Included was a unique frog called the Freestyle Frog 2.0, Shad and Sunfish swimbaits, LIVETARGET worms, and a new crawfish imitator.



The new Freestyle frog comes in three sizes (2", 2.5", and 3") and looks just like a real frog with realistic legs. It's made with their Injected Core Technology, which gives it a soft inner core and durable outer section. This helps to keep it soft and buoyant but also makes it very strong. The new Craw (2.8" and 3.8") uses the same molding technology and looks incredibly lifelike. You can rig it in several different ways.

The new swimbaits are the Shad (4.5", 5.5", and 6.5") and Sunfish (3.3", 3.8", and 4.3"), which swim great and look very realistic. They use the same Injected Core Technology as the frog, which makes them durable with the ability to have lifelike colors.

There are also several new worms, including four sizes (3", 4", 5", and 6") of their Stick Worm to use on everything from a Ned Rig to wacky or Texas rigs. The body is ribbed, and they use a saltless plastic that makes them extra buoyant. Also new are the straight tail and finesse worms in 4.5", 5.5", and 6.5", which you can fish in many different ways. They are soft, lifelike, and full of action from the soft plastic material they use.

Mustad and its family of brands continue adding new products while improving their existing offerings. New for this year are some great hook technologies, smart tools, and several new LIVETARGET lures. ■

what's new from **P-LINE**

P-Line is a favorite fishing line manufacturer for bass anglers nationwide, but they are more than just line. In addition to their fluorocarbon, braids, and copolymer line, they have sister brands that make lures, tools, and nets. This year, they added some new lines for species other than bass but added plenty of new items under their 1st Gen Fishing lineup of lures. In addition, there are some new nets from Beckman and saltwater lures and tools under the P-Line name.

Here is a recap of what's new with G. Pucci & Sons, the parent company for all of the brands.

1st GEN FISHING

Brothers Thomas and Nick Kanemoto, both avid tournament anglers in California, were the brains behind this lure brand and helped get it off the ground. Since they started, they have continued adding more products every year. This year, there are several new



lures, terminal tackle items, and new colors and sizes for some existing baits.

One item they released in 2021, the year the brand started, was the Jaw Dropper. It's a jighead with a unique lip to give your soft plastic bait a different action. They've changed it slightly and added an underspin to create the Scope Jaw. This underspin was designed for fishing for suspended bass while watching your forward-facing sonar. It comes in three sizes and six baitfish-imitating colors. It's poured on a 2/0 Mustad hook and has a #3 willow blade that has a subtle movement and flashing to get the attention of the bass.

1st Gen has a new swimbait head that is heavy-duty and designed to handle big fish. The HD Swimbait Head has a 2X strong Mustad hook and is strong enough for freshwater bass or for tangling with stripers, redfish, or other mean saltwater fish. It comes in 3/8, 1/2, 3/4, and 1-ounce sizes and four colors.





There are also several new colors and sizes for existing baits. The Jaw Dropper has three new colors: lavender shad, blue shad, and Tennessee shad. The CopperHead bladed jigs are now available in a 3/4-ounce size for a handful of colors.

Another recently released item is a unique weight with a football head shape. The Football Weights are great for fishing along the bottom and around rocks and can be used as a free rig or Carolina-rig weight or tied and used as a drop-shot weight. They come in five different sizes, both unpainted and black.

P-LINE LURES AND TOOLS

In addition to the line, P-Line also makes several saltwater-focused lures, including the Laser Minnow. This spoon is a proven design for many species, and this year, they added some new colors and sizes. Three of their glow colors (glow green tiger, glow blue tiger, and glow pink tiger) are now available in 1/2 and 3/4-ounce sizes. Six new colors are also offered in four sizes, from 1/2 ounce to 2 ounces. They include glow, chartreuse shad, lavender shad, wonderbread, white glow, and black shad.

For the striper angler, the new Angry Eye Predator and Predator Minnow may grab your interest. They are shallow and deep-diving jointed minnow baits measuring 6.5 inches

long. These new minnows come in a bone-white pattern and are perfect for trolling.

For tools, P-Line now has a 10-inch stainless steel fish gripper with a built-in scale. The spring-loaded scales weigh fish up to 40 pounds and have a lanyard that attaches to your wrist. The other new item is the 7.5-inch Coated High Carbon Pliers, which have tungsten side cutters. The needle nose design works for getting hooks out, and they are built to last with a corrosion-resistant coating.

NEW LINE

While P-Line did not release any new lines for bass fishing, they did add two new lines: the PelagX saltwater leader and HD Panfish for panfish anglers.

PelagX is a strong leader material for big pelagic saltwater fish. It comes in sizes from 20 to 200 pounds test and in 50-yard spools for the smaller sizes and 30-yard wrist spools for the sizes over 100 pounds test. What makes it different is its shock and abrasion resistance, which allows it to stand up to long fights with large fish.

The HD Panfish line includes a clear and high-visibility yellow option and panfish-specific sizes like 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 8-pound tests. It's a copolymer line developed for low memory that's perfect for small spinning reels.

P-Line and the sister brands continue to add new products for bass anglers and those who target a wide variety of fish species, both in fresh and salt water. This year, the focus was on new items and options for the 1st Gen line, as well as some great tools, saltwater lures, and two new fishing lines. ■



what's new from

ABU GARCIA

At the annual ICAST show, companies, big and small, showcased their new products for the year. Among the many brands showcasing their products was industry leader Abu Garcia, which refreshed several of its very popular rods and reels. These are existing names in the lineup, like the Max and Revo series of reels, the Veritas rod, and the IKE series designed by Mike Iaconelli.

THREE NEW REVOS

The Abu Garcia Revo is an established lineup of spinning and baitcasting reels, and it has been around long enough that there are several generations of the reel. Instead of a complete redesign like they do every few years, this year, they extended the line of reels with three new additions that will excite Abu Garcia fans.

like a finesse reel but still has 20 lbs of drag. It will retail for \$149.99.

Next is the newest version of the Revo Premier, the top-of-the-line for the Revo family. The latest version has the EXD design like some other Revo reels, ten stainless steel bearings, and an alloy frame. It has a nice carbon fiber handle and oversized knobs, and all of the best features Abu has, with a price of just under \$300.

The final is the Revo Inshore Low Profile Reel. While it's made for inshore saltwater fishing, it's beefy and robust enough to handle swimbaits and other heavy-duty bass techniques.

A MAX SPINNING REEL MAKEOVER

Of all Abu Garcia's products, the affordable MAX series is its best-seller. This makes sense because they are solid reels at a low price, making them a great starter reel or for someone who wants to get good performance without breaking the bank.

This year, the entire lineup of spinning models got a total makeover with new features and cosmetics. The new series includes the Max X (\$39.99), Max SX (\$59.99), Max Pro (\$79.99), and



First is a reel designed for BFS fishing, a shallow-spool version called the Revo X BFS Low Profile Reel. It has a frame and features similar to other Revo reels, with a carbon matrix drag, a C6 carbon frame, and a 90mm aluminum handle. The difference is that the light BFS concept spool is designed for casting light baits a long way. The reel looks and acts



Max Elite (\$99.99) reels. They are also sold as a combo for some of the models.

As you can see, they have several models and great pricing. The Max X is the lowest-priced reel, starting at under \$40, but it is packed with features that have trickled down from other Abu Garcia reels, including the Rocket Spool lip and line management system for less line twist and better casting distance. The top of the lineup includes the Elite, which has a carbon matrix drag system, a V-Rotor system for low start-up inertia, and a machine aluminum spool ready for braided line without backing.

NEW IKE SERIES

Abu Garcia pro Mike Iaconelli has long had his signature series of products from various sponsors. That includes Abu Garcia, and his IKE series of rods and reels have always stood out with bright colors and great features. The previous version was heavy on the purple hues, and the new version stands out just as much with a sparkly finish. But, beyond just the color, these rods and reels feel great and have some excellent features.

The rod series includes a Finesse Series of spinning rods and a Delay and Power Series for casting models. They retail for under \$150 and have five casting models for the Power series, four in the Delay moving bait series, and five spinning rods. They are built on 30-ton graphite blanks with a Powerlux 200 resin that is both strong and lightweight. They also have a custom reel seat, stainless steel guides with Zirconium inserts, and a 3-year warranty.

For reels, there is a \$149.99 baitcast series that includes two different retrieve speeds, an 8+1 bearing system, and carbon matrix drag.

Abu Garcia continues innovating and bringing out new products every year that continually improve. They have something for everyone, regardless of your skill level or how much you want to spend on your next rod or reel. ■



VERITAS REFRESH

The white Abu Garcia Veritas rods of old have been favorites for years, and although they are now black with white accents, they are still excellent rods at a fair price. Starting at under \$100, they have technique-specific rods, including the Winch series for cranking and the BFS line. For under \$130, you can get the LTD models, and for around \$150, you can get the beefier Toro versions.

They all have the light and strong Powerlux 100 resin system, high-density EVA foam grips, and titanium allow guides with Zirconium inserts. There are plenty of different models to fit just about everything you will encounter while bass fishing.



what's new from AMERICAN BAITWORKS

American Baitworks is a collection of some great fishing brands. Their lineup includes frog fishing favorites like Snag Proof and Scum Frog, as well as excellent soft plastics from Netbait. That's not all, as they are also home to Halo rods, BaitFuel, Freedom Tackle, and more. It's an extensive lineup of products, and there is something new from all of them this year.

Here's a look at what's coming to a store near you from the American Baitworks family of brands.

SNAG PROOF ZOO WAVE AND NEW SNAG PROOF AND SCUM FROG COLORS

Snag Proof is a legend in the frog game, and they added some more products this year. Last year, they unveiled the Zoo series, which is made up of hardbait-like baits with soft bodies similar to frogs. This year, they added one more with the Zoo Wake.

The Zoo Wake comes through everything and acts like a wake bait as it works along the surface. It's a 3/8-ounce bait that measures just over 4 inches long. If

it looks familiar, it's because it's an updated and revised version of the classic Wiggle Wog released over two decades ago. The new version comes in 10 colors and has the same great kicking action as the original, with better finishes and a quality 4/0 double hook.

Also new from Snag Proof are new colors in the Bobby's Perfect Frog and Smash Mouth frogs: Burnt Toad, Angry Gill, Purple Burst, and Stump Knocker. Scum Frog has four new colors in the Launch Frog and Launch Frog XS: Lemon Seed, Golden Shiner, Lavender Shad, and Hot Gill.

MORE OPTIONS FOR BAITFUEL AND FREEDOM TACKLE DROP SHOT WEIGHTS

Ever since it was released, the BaitFuel attractant has been very popular. The unique scent is easy to apply to your baits and triggers more bites. New for this year are more ways to use the product with the BaitFuel injector, the Hardbait Stick, and new packaging and container for the original BaitFuel gel.

Freedom Tackle is a brand name with some unique products, including everything from jigs to spinnerbaits and terminal tackle. New for this year is a revision of their drop-shot weights. Their cylinder and teardrop





weights are now available in a cool matte black finish. They come in five popular sizes: 1/8, 1/4, 3/8, 1/2, and 3/4 ounces.

NETBAIT HEX TEK LINEUP AND NEW NETBAIT COLORS

In addition to the HEX TEK baits, Netbait also added some new colors to its existing baits. The baits all have a unique hexagon shape that helps disperse the BaitFuel scent infused in all of their plastics. The shape helps to release more scent than standard round or flat soft plastics because it increases the surface area with more flat surfaces.



The new series includes unique designs, including the 4.5-inch Big Boar creature bait, a unique tube and creature hybrid with a tube-like tail and appendages on the side. The 3.5-inch Eko Craw is a small crawfish imitator with appendages on the side and rear. It's designed for punching but can be fished in several different ways. The 3 and 4-inch Eko Shad was intended as a forward-facing sonar bait for a jighead, and the flat sides help it show up better on the screen. It also makes a great drop-shot bait.

The Rascal is an excellent flipping and punching bait but also works well on the back of a jig. The 3-inch Blip

Minnow is a finesse swimbait that you can fish many ways, and the 4.25-inch Whiptail Shad was built to give a baitfish profile to your favorite vibrating jig.

For existing Netbait products, they added some new colors to the BF Toad (four new colors), B Bug (six new colors), 5-inch Big Spanky (six new colors), and 4-inch Twitch Jr. (eight new colors)

HALO RODS BB SERIES JUSTIN HAMNER SERIES

Halo Rods are known for their quality and great actions; this year, they added a few more models. The Justin Hamner series of rods includes three new rods designed by the 2024 Bassmaster Classic champion.

The series includes a 6-foot, 11-inch medium-heavy "JERKBAIT" casting rod, a 7-foot, 1-inch extra-heavy "JIG" casting rod, and a 7-foot, 1-inch medium "SCOPING" spinning rod.

All of the rods fit in the existing BB Series and use high-modulus graphite, cork handles, and composite materials designed for strength and durability while remaining very lightweight.

American Baitworks continues to build on the legendary brands under its umbrella with new designs and colors. It has also worked hard to expand its presence with BaitFuel and Freedom Tackle and is always adding new models for Halo Rods. This year was a big one as far as new products go, and there is something in its lineup for every bass angler. ■



what's new from

DAIWA

It was another busy year for the Daiwa team as they developed new products to release this year. They added a dizzying number of new items for freshwater and saltwater anglers. Everything from new rods, reels, lines, and lures was part of what's new with Daiwa; they genuinely have something for everyone.

With so many new products, we simplified the list. Here's a rundown of their latest gear tailored for bass anglers.

BFS RODS AND REELS

The bait finesse system or BFS movement has been picking up steam in recent years, and Daiwa now has new lightweight baitcast reels and rods to fill the gap. This has been more than just a trend; it is becoming increasingly popular, and now Daiwa has a few great options for fans of BFS.



For rods, there are two options for different pricing. The Tatula XT BFS rods retail for under \$100, and the PX Bait Finesse Series comes in just under \$300. The PX rods are 6 feet 8 inches long and have a light and ultralight version. Both are composite blanks for fishing moving baits. The Tatula XT includes two new options, and both are 6 feet, 5 inches long, and a light power. The difference between the two is one is a one-piece, and the other is a two-piece rod.

The new PX BF TW is a small bait finesse reel with an Air Spool for casting lightweight baits. It has a 90mm handle, a compact design, and will come in two gear ratios: 7.1:1 and 8.6:1. It's a quality reel with a \$349.99 price tag, but they have a lower-priced option with the Tatula BF TW that retails for \$239.99. The Tatula version has an 8.1:1 gear ratio and the same lightweight spool for better casting distance.

NEW STEEZ, ZILLION, TATULA, AND KAGE ITEMS

These four names are legendary among Daiwa fans, and each offers something new with different rods, reels, or both.

The new Steez has been refreshed with the Steez SVTW. This top-of-the-line reel includes the HyperDrive design and SV spool and is available in right- and left-hand retrieves in 7.8:1 and 8.5:1 gear ratios. It's an ultra-premium reel with a \$749.99 retail price.

The Zillion rods have also been refreshed with 16 new technique-specific models. They have a Carbon MQ grip, Fuji Alconite guides, and SVF graphite that is lightweight and very strong. The retail price is \$329.99.

The Kage LT reel and Kage bass rods have also been redesigned. The rods are available in 17 models with premium cork, Fuji guides, custom reel seats, and a \$199.99 price tag. The Kage LT spinning reels have a Zaion frame, cork handles for smaller sizes, and Daiwa technology like Air Rotor and Air Bail. The reel retails for \$249.99.

The Tatula reel family is also growing. New on the baitcast side is the SV TW 100 and Tatula SV 150, both \$219.99. The 100 is lightweight and compact, and the 150 was designed to have a bigger line capacity. The Tatula Elite spinning reel also got a makeover with an improved reel with a Zaion frame, beefed-up drag, and a retail cost of just under \$300.



LURES AND LINE

Aside from rods and reels, Daiwa continues to add products in all categories. They have many new lures under the Daiwa name, distribute the Ever Green brand, and make boxes to store them. For line, there are also many new items, including the new Samurai 8 braid and J-FLUORO mainline.

Samurai 8 continues the legendary Samurai name with a new 8-strand coated braid that is very thin and sinks quickly. It comes in two spool sizes (165 and 330 yards) and sizes from 8 to 80 pounds test in a dark green color. This braid is thinner, softer, and smoother than standard braided lines.

The new J-FLUORO mainline is a value-priced line that costs less than \$15 per spool. It is still 100 percent

fluorocarbon with Japanese materials. It was developed for solid knot and tensile strength, but it is still soft and manageable.

For Daiwa lures, there is the Smelthead DX underspin, the 6-inch Tournament D-Fin swimbait, and smaller 75mm for the popular TD Minnow jerkbaits. New from Ever Green is the Combat Rat, a big jointed wake bait that weighs 2.3 ounces, and the Last Ace 128 S, A 5-inch minnow designed for mid-strolling. They also released the DD X-Over, a deep-diving shad profile crankbait.

It was a jam-packed Daiwa booth at ICAST 2024 as they showed off plenty of new items for all anglers. They jumped into the BFS game, added more line and lures, and refreshed some of their most popular brands. ■



what's new from

OPTIMUM BAITTS

Optimum Baits and AA's produce some great baits under their own name, but the company is also responsible for bringing some of the best lures from Japan to our tackle stores here in America. Included in its family of brands are Deps, Ima Lures, SwimBait Republic, Madness, Kahara, and Zappu.

These brands make unique items that catch bass everywhere in the world, and they continue to add new products, some of which have just recently hit our shores. Here's a rundown of some new items that may interest bass anglers.

NEW DEPS RODS

The Deps name is well-known for everything from the incredibly popular Sakamata Shad and Cover Scat plastics to big baits like the Slide Swimmer, but they also make rods. New to America is a series of technical rods called Gain Element. These highly technical rods include the Power Versatile, Flipping Element, Moving Element, and Cover Game Element baitcast rods designed for versatility of specific techniques. There are also specialized rods like the Soft Jerking Element for fishing the Cover Scat and Sakamata Shad and two spinning rods designed for mid-strolling.

The 6-foot, 6-inch Shaking Element is a medium-light rod with a slow taper for shaking minnows to perfection. This rod is meant for smaller jigheads from 1/8 to 1/4-ounce, and the 6-foot, 5-inch light action is for lighter jigheads and smaller baits. The slow rod tapers are purposely part of the design for shaking the rod and make it easier to control your slack to get the bait to roll more.

NEW DEPS SOFT PLASTICS

In addition to the rods, several new soft plastics from Deps are also now available here. Many of these baits are already popular and proven in Japan.

One of these is the Bumblehad, a soft swimbait with a great wobbling and rolling action. It comes in 4—and 6-inch sizes and can be fished several ways, including on a jighead, football head, weightless, or with a bullet weight on a Texas rig. The plastic is also unique,



BECKONCRAW



and it has a part with softer material and a section with more rigid plastic, which helps the bait's action and better rigging.

The Beckon Craw is a crawfish imitator with oversized claws that create

tons of vibration. Several smaller appendages and antennae sections also make the bait look even more lifelike. It's a 3.5-inch bait that can be fished in many different ways. Another new item is the 13-inch KINCOO Air, a straight-tailed worm with air holes throughout the body to make the bait more buoyant. It's a giant worm that can be used on a Texas or Wacky Rig and has great action as it falls.



used is deceptively light. They say it's a space-age material blended from different metals.

The standard P.D. Chopper Dead Slow comes in 1/4 and 5/16 ounce sizes with a 4/0 hook. The Jr. version is in 3/16 and 1/4 ounce

sizes and uses a smaller hook. Both come in unique color options, many of which are not found in American swim jigs.

These are just a few new items from the Optimum Baits family of brands, and new items continue to arrive each month. In addition to the items highlighted above, many new colors and sizes for existing baits are released often and showcased on their website and social media accounts. ■

Another new release is the Slender Scat, a stretched-out version of the Cover Scat. It has the same look and feel as the original but is shaped like a soft stickbait and works in those situations. However, it will also glide and dart because of the heavier, soft plastic material and bulbous tail section.

ULTRA-FINESSE UNDERSPIN AND SOFT PLASTICS

There are some new items for downsizing to catch bass or for trying to catch some panfish. One is the tiny 2-inch version of the famed Sakamata Shad. This little version of the popular bait has the same profile and action as the bigger bait, just in a much smaller package.

There is also a new underspin from Zappu that works very well with the smallest Sakamata Shad. The Micro Bredy is a tiny underspin with 0.8, 1.3, and 1.8 gram sizes and hook sizes to match. The head design keeps the blade well beneath the hook, and the quality of the blade spins perfectly.

ZAPPU P.D. CHOPPER DEAD SLOW AND DEAD SLOW JR.

Also new from Zappu are two really unique swim jigs. The P.D. Chopper Dead Slow comes in two sizes, and what makes it different from a normal swim jig is how slow you can fish it. Its irregular-shaped head makes your soft plastic wobble and shake as you reel, and the material



what's new from RAPALA

Rapala, known for the world's first floating minnow lure, showcased a variety of new lures for release for the year and was recognized in the New Product Showcase Best Of Category Winners in the Novelties and Wellness segment with their USA Rapala Giant Lure. The objective with the USA Giant Lure release was to underline unity and assist in bringing a symbolism of patriotism to angler areas around the country.

X-Rap Jerkbait and the DT Series Crankbaits with Ott Defoe.

The Rapala PXR Deep Mavrik 110 Jerkbait was designed with a tungsten long-cast system for enhanced control and the capability for ultra-long casting to optimize time in the strike zone. In an effort to replicate a head-down silhouette, the Mavrik's profile sits head-down. It can be short-twitched, or with a side-to-side walk. It will also do the 180 turnaround with a quick snap. To help ensure its stays pinned on hookup, the Mavrik comes with VMC RedLine Series treble hooks straight out of the box.

The Rapala PXR Jowler 127 walking bait is created with a cupped mouth for a splash-n-walk retrieve. Internals offer a cast-booster for ultra-distant accuracy. Also developed with VMC RedLine Series trebles, the Jowler is accessorized with a dressed rear flash feather tail as an added attractor.



RAPALA 20 LB. HI-VIS DIGITAL SCALE

Rapala is not new to the world of weighing fish; however, for 2024 their scale offerings are expanded to include the Rapala 20lb High-Vis Digital Scale with an oversized display that was made with visibility from all angles, in low light conditions, and without having to remove sunglasses. An external strain gauge provides +/- 0.2% accuracy, a must-have for those in tournament culling situations or on the hunt for a record catch. A total bag weight can be kept as another perk for tournament anglers.

NEW RAPALA HARD BAITS

Rapala released several new hard baits, including OG Big Rocco Crankbaits, PXR Jowler 127, PXR Deep Mavrik 110 Jerkbait as well as expanding the color options for the



Jowler

RAPALA CRUSH CITY PLASTICS

The Crush City Rapala brand brings in the new season with the Rapala Crush City Mooch Minnow, the Rapala Crush City Hedgehog, the Rapala Crush City Pigstick and the Rapala Crush City Janitor Worm as well as new color offerings.

Sneak-peeked months ago by Jacob Wheeler, the Rapala Crush City Mooch Minnow is a minnow-style fluke bait / swimbait collab. The minnow mashup has already earned a rep for domination, accounting



Mavrik

Mooch Minnow

Janitor Worm

for a pre-release collective \$600,000 in tournament winnings for those testing it, including its win at the Red Crest. It is made with TPE for durability and buoyancy translating into a floater minnow that can hover in the water column, extending the strike zone time. A unique characteristic are the tail tabs that provide a high-frequency wag. It can be paired to a VMC jig head, dropshotted, Ned-rigged or a variety of other methods.

The goal of the compact Crush City Hedgehog was to create a plastic creature bait with fluttery appendage action, with a secondary action between the upper and lower extremities, even at slow retrieve speeds. The raised ribs of the main body allow for Tex-posing an EWG, round bend or straight shank hook to increase hookup capability and lengthen its life on the hook. The Hedgehog is brought to life with flake, salt and scent and set to be a killer in a clear water, challenging cover situation. Sixteen colors make up the four-inch Hedgehog fam and they are packaged six to a bag.

As the Rapala's Crush City big bass temptation, the five-inch Pig Stick is specifically poured with an integrated slot for VMC Crossover Rings. The Ring will increase life duration of the plastic when wacky or Neko-rigged. Its attributes include a fast fall with weightless rigging from added salt. Again, flake, salt and scent are additions to this unique profile. The Pig Stick is produced in a wide array of colors that include Sprayed Grass, Watermelon Red, Green Pumpkin Watermelon and even Bubble Gum. The package holds eight Pig Sticks.

Another Rapala Crush City offering for the VMC Crossover Ring is the Janitor Worm – a small, finesse plastic worm. The tapered tail was a feature to provide an action-filled quiver imparted with the minimal movement. It is six-inches long, comes in 14 bass-catching colors such as Baby Bass, Ghost Morning Dawn and the always-popular Green Pumpkin. It comes eight to a package. ■

Pig Stick



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THE TASK FORCE

what's new from

YAMAMOTO

Few names in the fishing world are as famous or as legendary as Yamamoto Baits. The Senko alone has cemented them in bass fishing history, but their list of fish-catching baits is extensive and continues to grow yearly. This year was no exception, and at ICAST 2024, the Yamamoto team showed off some great new lures.

Since purchasing them, GSM has added new items and expanded popular baits at warp speed. The Yamamoto website says, "GSM Fishing doesn't just buy quality brands...we build on them," which is happening right now.

Here's a look at what's new for Yamamoto Baits.

NEW STEALTH COLOR SERIES

Fish are continually getting more pressured, especially in clear water when fishing with forward-facing sonar. They see minnows in jigheads every day. This was the reason that Yamamoto wanted some new muted, natural, and different colors from what they already made. This year, the Stealth Series will have five

new colors in the Yamamoto Scope Shad and the new Shad Shape Swimmer.

The new colors include Stealth Ice Out, Stealth Blue Glimmer, Stealth Chartreuse Purple, Stealth Purple Shimmer, and Stealth Pinkasagi. These colors will also be available in two baits from Yamamoto's sister company, Big Bite Baits.

A NEW YAMATANUKI-STYLE BAIT CALLED THE NUKI BUG

The Yamamoto Yamatanuki is a small, dense, soft plastic bait with very little action. This style of bait has been trendy in recent years, and now Yamamoto has taken the body of that bait and dense, soft plastic and added some action. The Nuki Bug is still a compact and heavy bait, but they added some appendages.

The Nuki Bug can be fished weightless or on a Texas rig, but it also works well on the back of a Carolina rig. The compact body has claws and three small appendages coming out of the body on both sides. It's

a unique 3.5-inch bait that looks lifelike and will be available in eight proven Yamamoto colors.

COVERT CRAW

Also new from Yamamoto is a JDM-inspired craw bait called the Covert Craw. This bite-sized 2.5-inch bait can be used on a Ned Rig or the back of your favorite finesse jig. The bait also makes for a great little pitching bait when using the BFS setups that have become so popular in recent years.

It looks very lifelike, with several appendages and thick





to show the fish something different. They will be available in 12 original colors and the five new colors in the Stealth Series. The 3.5-inch baits come with six per pack, and the 4-inch versions will have six in each package.

4" FAT SENKO

This new bait filled a need for the 4-inch Senko. They made it fatter, with a 20 percent larger diameter than the standard 4-inch bait. The Fat Senko was already offered in larger sizes and has been a favorite for anglers flipping and pitching when looking for a bigger bite, and now there is another option.

Even though it's fatter, it still has the nice Senko shimmy as it falls. Since it has

claws. It's also made from their Mega-Floater formula, which makes it buoyant and perfect for imitating a small crawfish in a defensive position. The new bait comes 10 per pack in eight of Yamamoto's best colors.

SHAD SHAPE SWIMMER

One thing that Yamamoto was missing in their lineup was a small swimbait, and they filled the gap with the new Shad Shape Swimmer. Based on the popular Shad Shape Worm body, this new swimbait has everything you need for fishing on a small jighead or an Alabama Rig.

The bait has a subtle kick and roll, and several plastic formulas were tested to get it just right. The new finesse swimbait comes in three sizes: 3.2, 3.7, and 4.2 inches, and 17 colors.

MORE SCOPE SHAD SIZES

"Scope" is the word of the year in bass fishing and the Yamamoto Scope Shad has been one of the hottest baits for forward-facing sonar since it was released. Now, there are a few new sizes of this minnow that also makes for a great drop shot bait.

The two new sizes are 3.5 and 4 inches, giving you more options if the forage is bigger or you're trying

more plastic, it will also outcast a regular Senko. The new 4-inch Fat Senko will come in 16 colors and 10 per pack. This is the latest of many awesome baits with the Senko name.

Yamamoto continues to develop new soft plastics that build on its great tradition of producing baits that catch plenty of bass. These new items are twists on the favorites, with new sizes, shapes, and colors that should all be a hit for serious bass anglers. ■



what's new from YO-ZURI

Yo-Zuri is one of the most recognizable lure brands, and its reach includes many different species in fresh and saltwater. This year at ICAST, it added new baits for both and some great new colors for existing products. It also expanded with more options for its fishing line, including its popular SuperBraid. It was a year of improvements, building on what works with more options for anglers.

Here's a full rundown of what's new from Yo-Zuri.

3DR-X FLAT HEAVY MINNOW

One new bait from Yo-Zuri is the Flat Heavy Minnow, which is just like it sounds. It's a flat minnow-style bait that also weighs quite a bit for its small size. This bait is part of the 3DR-X series and works well in deep water and fast currents. Even though it's a fairly small bait, it gets down quickly. It shimmies and darts as it falls and can be fished in many ways, including while watching your forward-facing sonar. It should entice any predator fish that eats small minnows.

It comes with 3D Internal prism finishes that keep the bait looking new, even after many fish catches. This finish helps preserve the color, and there will be no chipping. It comes in three sizes (1-5/8", 2-3/8", and

3-1/8") and eight colors: ghost smelt, metallic ghost ayu, baby trout, baby rainbow trout, pink baby trout, black silver, gold black, and chartreuse baby trout.

NEW BAIT COLORS AND A NEW SPOOL SIZE FOR SUPERBRAID

The 3DB series includes several popular bass lures, such as the 3DB Popper, 3DB Pencil 100, 3DB Pencil 125, 3DB Pencil Popper 100, and 3DB Pencil Popper 135. Each of them will now be available in three new colors with Yo-Zuri's internal pearl finish. The colors include ghost sexy shad, ghost pearl shad, and gizzard shad.

The Yo-Zuri SuperBraid is a premium product offered in two versions: PE4 is a four-carrier braid available in sizes from 10 to 40 pounds test, and PE8 is an eight-carrier braid available in sizes from 50 to 130 pounds test. New for this year is a perfect in-between spool size of 600 yards. This is more than your standard filler spool and will allow you to spool more reels. It is available in blue, dark green, white, and a five-color metered option.



ADDED SALTWATER SIZES, COLORS, AND NEW LURE KITS

Saltwater fishing is a big focus for Yo-Zuri, and they revamped some of their popular lures with new colors to fit the needs of certain markets. One that will



The Mag Minnow Series is available in four sizes to match anything from inshore fishing on the flats to big pelagic fish offshore. It has a new magnet weight transfer system, 12 colors, and beefed-up hardware to handle ferocious fish.

Also new are two lure kits that include everything you need to target inshore species or stripers. Each includes handpicked lures and colors to get you started or build your arsenal. The inshore kit includes favorites like the 3D Inshore Twitch Bait, Crystal 3D Minnow, 3D Inshore Minnow, and 3D Inshore Fingerling. The striped bass kit consists of the 3D Inshore Pencil Popper, Hydro Minnow LC, Mag Darter, 3D Inshore Topknock Pencil, and other proven baits. They are all in proven colors; each box has six total lures with significant savings. The Striped Bass kit includes over \$75 of lures and sells for \$54.99, and the Inshore kit includes \$62 worth of lures for a \$44.99 retail price.

The 3D Inshore Series also has new colors, with the Twitchbait now offered in pearl, purple, black, and yellow. The Inshore Popper also now comes in pearl and yellow. The Hydro Pencil will be available in pearl chartreuse and yellow, and the Mag Darter will add a double white and black back. The unique 3D Squirt will now be available in pearl, a lifelike-looking squid pattern.

This year was about adding new colors, sizes, and things to improve many of their existing products. Company representatives hinted at a big year next year for bass lures, but there was still plenty to be excited about this year. ■

interest striper anglers is the Crystal Minnow Deep Diver, a very effective trolling lure. They added a bone color to the three sizes: 3-1/2", 4-3/8", and 5-1/4" of this proven bait.

Also new for the Hydro Minnow LC is yellow, a popular color for striped bass and any fish triggered by bright colors. Bronze shiner is a natural color; double white is a prism-scaled version of the white, and black back is a traditional baitfish imitator with prism scales on the side.



California MONSTER BASS ERA

By Marc Marcantonio



California has a rich history of producing monster bass, even world record size. It wasn't always the case, as California bass originally were northern-strain largemouth bass. All that changed in 1959 when a fisheries biologist (Orville Ball) for the City of San Diego successfully transplanted Florida bass fry into Upper Otay Lake. Closed to the public until the 1990's, Upper Otay Lake became the breeding ground for pure Florida-strain largemouth bass.

Biologists introduced these pure Florida-strain bass into other city lakes already containing northern-strain largemouth including Murray, Miramar, Lower Otay, Sutherland, El Capitan, San Vicente, Barrett, and Hodges. And from there the California Monster Bass era began.

FLORIDA STRAIN BASS

Florida-strain bass are notoriously fickle and are selective in their feeding habits. They are adapted to clear water and rely on their sense of sight more so than northern-strain largemouth bass, who are better adapted to limited water visibility by combining their lateral line sense for long range prey detection and sense of sight for close range attacks.

Florida-strain are sensitive to atmospheric changes that hardly phase their northern cousins. Along with other genetic differences these traits make Florida-strain are more difficult to catch, not to the liking of most bass anglers. What bass anglers love about Florida-strain is their rapid growth and immense size.

Largemouth bass were first stocked in California in 1873 with pure northern-strain largemouth bass imported from Michigan. After a century, the biggest caught northern



weighed 14-pounds and was caught in northern California at Round Valley Lake.

FLORIDA-STRAIN BASS START TAKING OVER RECORD BOOKS

Ten short years after the 1959 introduction of Florida-strain bass, a new state record bass was caught that shocked the bass world and began the California Monster Bass era.

The new state record of 15-pounds, 4-ounces was caught from Lake Miramar. Achieving 15-pounds of growth in 10 years was never seen, even in Florida.

The bass fishing world took notice and the race to catch a new world record began. San Diego was the epicenter and again produced the next state record of 16-pounds, 11-ounces in 1971 by Randall Danio reportedly fishing a spinner for trout on Lake Miramar.

What isn't readily apparent is that many of the early Florida-strain monsters were caught by trout fishermen and not by bass fishermen. One wonders if this wasn't an indication at the time that bass fishermen in California didn't understand the differences between Florida and northern-strain bass. Trout fishermen use smaller diameter line since trout are also sight feeders, unlike bass fishermen at the time typically using heavy line that looks like rope to a keen-sighted Florida-strain bass.

I still have my 1972 issue of Bass Master Magazine which included an article about the monster bass explosion in San Diego. Fisheries Biologist Larry Botroff was interviewed by writer Chuck Garrison. Mr. Botroff was responsible for stocking the San Diego lakes with Florida-strain bass from the Otay brood stock. His work and that article inspired me to become a fisheries biologist. Then in June of 1973 Dave Zimmerlee put the world on notice by catching from Lake Miramar a 20.94



largemouth on a nightcrawler, California's first bass over twenty-pounds.

After graduating from college in 1975 and having competed that year in the BASS Federation Nationals, I entered active duty in the military. After a tour in Germany, I was stationed in California, which is how David Zimmerlee came to San Diego. Towing my MonArk bass boat across the country the first lake I fished was, of course, Lake Miramar. I didn't land Mama Pesce, but my quest began (along with my understanding of the need to use light line).

SO, WHAT MADE SAN DIEGO FLORIDA-STRAIN BASS GROW SO FAST AND BIG?

We may never know all the factors, but several are apparent. As previously stated, pure Florida-strain bass are inherently harder to catch than northern-strain. This trait is somewhat diluted once they crossbreed with northern-strain bass. Their offspring are called F1 hybrids. It turns out these hybrids gain the best traits of both northern and Florida-strain parents. They grow even larger and faster than pure Florida-strain bass and live longer and bite better. The F1 hybrids can grow to 2-pounds in their first year! Unfortunately, as subsequent generations are produced these traits continue to change and explains why over time we are seeing less monster bass.

The other important role in producing monster bass is the availability of high protein prey. Many western impoundments are low in fertility which explains the clear water. This reduces the natural availability of nutritious prey. Enter the stocking of hatchery trout. Combine this highly nutritious prey in clear water where they cannot hide from Florida-strain bass that hybridize with northern-strain bass, and you have a monster bass explosion.

As Florida-strain bass were introduced north of San Diego the monster bass trend moved to Lake Casitas, Castaic Lake, Lake Isabella, and from there the Sacramento Delta, Clear Lake and others.

TWENTY-POUND CLASS LARGEMOUTH AND OTHER BESTS

Of course, this story wouldn't be complete without noting the huge bass caught in Castaic by Robert Crupi (22.01 pounds) and Mike Arujo (21.75)

both in 1991. Lake Casitas earlier made the hit list in 1980 with a 21.20-pound monster caught by Raymond Easley on March 4. More recently Dixon Lake in San Diego County made the news first with a 21.69 pound bass caught by Jed Dickerson in May of 2003. Then the world was shocked in 2006 when Mac Weakley caught a 25-pound, 1-ounce monster from Dixon Lake which would have shattered the world record had it not been accidentally foul-hooked.

My personal best largemouth wasn't a monster, but it did start a new trend as it was caught in the Castaic Lake afterbay in the early 1980's. Originally closed to boats, I approached lake management and asked why we could not put boats on the lake. Management didn't want gas motors being used. When I indicated we could use our electric motors only, they stated some might still use their gas motors regardless. I then asked if they would allow bass boats if we could guarantee to their satisfaction the gas motor wouldn't be used? They agreed with the concept but didn't see how this would be possible. I stated we could remove our propellor and tilt the motor out of the water so that all could see the outboard could not be used.

Having run out of logical reasons to prevent use, they relented. Karma rewarded my efforts as my personal best came here on a modified Zara Spook topwater at 13-pounds, 14-ounces. Angler Larry Kurosaki caught a 16-pound, 12-ounce lunker while fishing Castaic Lagoon on the morning of February 26, 2009. Butch Brown has caught many DD's here including a 19.3.

ALABAMA SPOTTED BASS

Largemouth bass are not the only bass in the spotlight during the California monster bass era. Alabama spotted bass hit the scene after being introduced in 1974 to Perris Lake in Riverside County. As the predominant bass species and an abundant population of shad, Perris Lake soon became a world class fishery of pure strain Alabama spotted bass.

One day in May of 1983, I managed a five spotted bass limit weighing 28-pounds, 14 ounces. The biggest of the limit weighed 7.6-pounds at a time when the world record was barely 8-pounds. Unfortunately, this world class spotted bass fishery transitioned into a Florida-strain largemouth fishery after bucket biologists imported largemouth.

In more recent years there has been an explosion





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BETWEEN
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in both the size and range of spotted bass in California reservoirs like Pine Flat, New Melones, and New Bullards Bar Reservoir. Pine Flat near Fresno produced several world records up to and including a 10.27-pound spotted bass caught in a tournament by Bryan Shishido in 2001. Then a 10.48-pound monster was caught in New Melones Lake (one hour east of Stockton) by Keith Bryan in 2014. The likely spot to produce the next world record spotted bass is on New Bullards Bar Reservoir. The current world record set in 2017 by Nick Dulleck is a 11-pound, 4-ounce monster spotted bass. High protein prey of both trout and kokanee salmon produces world record size spotted bass.

SMALLMOUTH BASS

Even smallmouth bass grow to monster size in California. The first smallmouth bass stocking in California occurred in the Napa River in 1874 from Lake Champlain, New York, and a second occurred a few years later into Crystal Springs Reservoir south of San Francisco.

This became the brood stock for successful stockings in northern California. The current state record is 9-pounds, 13-ounces caught in 2007 by Harold Hardin from Pardee Reservoir. Pardee has a healthy population of both crawfish and trout which provide the necessary nutrition to produce monster bass.

THE FUTURE OF THE CALIFORNIA MONSTER BASS ERA

Probably the smallmouth bass species is the least likely of the bass to exceed the current record, and the spotted bass species is the most likely to set a new State (and World) record with the optimal combination of ideal habitat and forage.

But don't count out a resurgence of monster largemouth bass. Because of increasing water demand for drinking water and irrigation, coupled with climate change, California reservoirs and river systems can essentially become "new" again.

A case in point is Lake Casitas outside of Ojai in Ventura County. Until recently the drinking water reservoir had shrunk in size due to demand and drought. Where water had once covered the shores became dense willows and other plant growth. Hatchery trout stockings ceased over time. Monster bass like Raymond Easley's 21-pounder faded as a distant memory. Catches of double-digit bass are

comparatively rare and are usually older fish with big heads and undernourished bodies.

But after record rainfall in 2023 and 2024, Lake Casitas is experiencing a rebirth, and I would predict it will once again become a monster bass lake, if stocking of hatchery trout becomes regular and often. Because the lake has doubled in size, the water has become fertile with nutrients. Resident populations of crappie, bluegill, and shad will experience rapid growth, and the bass population will follow. Soon there the big bass fishing could be off the hook, and if trout are stocked then monster bass could once again make a resurgence. Ideally a fresh stocking of Florida-strain bass would help the genetics by establishing F1 hybrids once again.

Diamond Valley Reservoir is another example with similar traits, as are other reservoirs in California that have been drawn down over years of drought, and then flooded after heavy rain. The influx of nutrients results in an explosion of plankton which kicks off the food chain and presents ideal feeding opportunities and rapid growth for prey and predators alike.

Also stocked with trout, Diamond Valley Reservoir, which was new in 2003, has produced bass over 16-pounds and with its recent rise in water level this will likely increase. San Vicente Reservoir has recently increased in size, making it another candidate to produce monster largemouth bass.

MONSTER BASS FISHING TIPS

Target lakes that are fertile due to recent flooding, and especially if they are stocked with trout and or Kokanee salmon. Having Florida-strain genetics is important, especially if stocked with pure Florida-strain bass within the past 10 years.

Remember monster bass are the apex predator in the lake and will occupy the prime habitat such as primary points with deep water nearby. Availability of high protein prey is important.

Monster bass get that way by being cautious and having superior eyesight and hearing. They shy away from fishing pressure, so it is important to avoid making your presence known to monster bass. Trolling motor noise, sonar noise, angler noise, angler visibility, unnatural presentations, heavy fishing line, and many other considerations should be considered if an angler is serious about catching monster bass.

Fishing during prime feeding opportunities tips the odds in your favor, such as fishing during falling barometric pressure with pre-frontal weather conditions. Ciao! ■





IMA GLIDE

ima Glide 125 Floating

Length: 125 mm, 4.9"
Weight: 23g, 0.81oz
Type: Floating

ima Glide 178 Floating

Length: 178mm, 7"
Weight: 70g, 2.5oz
Type: Floating

ima Glide 125 Sinking

Length: 125 mm, 4.9"
Weight: 28g, 1 oz
Type: Sinking

ima Glide 178 Sinking

Length: 178mm, 7"
Weight: 80g, 2.8oz
Type: Sinking



FLIT 120

Length: 120mm, 4.75 inches.
Weight: ½ oz
Type: Suspending jerkbait, dives to 7 ft.
Hooks: Three #6 treble hooks.



FLIT 100

Length: 110 mm, 3.9 inches
Weight: 3/8 oz
Type: Suspending jerkbait, dives to 4-foot deep
Hooks: Two #6 VMC treble hooks

Flit

cold weather KAYAK BASS CATCHIN' *with Sean Beach*

By John Myers



Image by PattiRey from Pixabay

Introduced to fishing by his dad, Sean Beach has never had a bad day of fishing in his life. He has been kayak fishing for over 10 years and tournament fishing on and off for the last seven. After feeling the bug, he decided to get serious the last two years. During these two years, he has been able to get two wins with several top-10 finishes.

One of his biggest accomplishments has been qualifying for the Bassmaster Kayak Series championship the last two years – one at Lake Murry and one at Lake Fork.

Here he shares with us his wintertime tactics for kayak bassin’.

WB: Thinking of highland reservoirs, which area do you search for winter bass?

BEACH: I focus a majority of my time, in the winter, on the high percentage stuff like main lake points, wood, rock, and docks, if available.

WB: What are the five main lures you would use to find winter fish and how would you work those?

BEACH: The jig, drop shot, spoon, A-rig, and Ned rig. When I work a jig, I will typically just drag it slow – no hopping. I want to make it as easy a meal as possible for the lethargic bass. I throw my jig on a 7”4 medium-heavy rod with 12- to 15-pound straight fluorocarbon. A dropshot is typically a Yamamoto Shad Shape worm and the Ned-rig is almost



always a Z-Man TRD. The new Yamamoto three-inch fat Senko is fished very similar – usually just dead stick them. It seems as if these fish (winter bass) don’t want anything erratic, these simple baits produce for me consistently. I throw the drop shot and Yamamoto Shad on the same rod a 6”10 medium-light 10- to 15-pound braid to 6- to 10-pound fluorocarbon. Normally, I throw an A-Rig in all water column levels. I have my best luck in the mid or bottom columns. Sometimes, I will slow roll it. I use a 7”- to 7’6” heavy-action rod usually with 20-pound fluorocarbon. When using a spoon, I throw a Duh Spoon in the Morning Dawn color or the Electric Chicken color in a 1 3/4-ounce to get it down quick to the schooling bass, I’ll jig it pretty aggressively. I have found that

throwing it on a 7’ to 7’4” heavy-action rod with 12- to 15-pound straight fluorocarbon works best. This set up, I find I loose very few fish.

WB: What key structure would you check to find fish?

BEACH: As someone who hasn’t jumped into the LiveScope game yet, I use my Down Imaging and SideScan to look for points that have big rocks or wood on them, if I can’t physically see it from the bank. Fish pull really tight to

cover this time of the year; so just finding the structure, is a good step in locating the fish.

WB: What depth do you check for the bass?

BEACH: I like to check all depths because there are always some fish in the shallows and some deep. Most of my time will be spent 20-feet or deeper. I believe a majority of the fish will pull out deeper water to chase bait or just sit on the bottom.

WB: If you only had two lures to use which two, what would they be and where would you use them?

BEACH: Jig is my number one lure to use in the winter with my go-to colors are Green Pumpkin 1/2-ounce either Keitech or Bass Union in brown and purple, paired



Bass-a-rig

cold before a tournament, I would just slow down all my presentations, even in the winter, you may find yourself wanting to impart action to your baits. In my experience, you just need to let the bait do the work that has worked out best for me.

WB: What search bait/technique or advice would you suggest for kayak anglers, since they have limited area to travel?

BEACH: Stick to the points and just alternate through all your baits. You know the fish are there, you just have to figure out what they want to eat. Also, fish in the middle of the day if possible, getting out early and suffering in the cold is no fun.

WB: What safety would you suggest during the winter months to keep dry and able to self-rescues?

BEACH: Don't go fishing by yourself, if you don't have to. Wear the proper attire, and always bring an extra pair of clothes, and a towel with you. Tell someone where you are going, if you do go alone. ■

with a Yamamoto Twin Tail grub or a Reactions Invocation Sweet Beaver. The Grub has much more movement and the Beaver has a more subtle action. I'll have both tied on to see what kind of mood the bass are in. Bass eat jigs pretty much every day of the year and the quality is usually better compared to the other four lures that I mentioned. I will throw it everywhere; wood and big rocks are an excellent place to target. The A-rig is a close second, again because you have a good opportunity to catch large fish and multiple fish. I will throw it everywhere just like the jig, because of its drawing power. I have caught almost all my fish on a Tactical Flex rig by Hog Farmer. They make some excellent A-rigs.

WB: If the weather became very cold between practice and the day of the tournament, where would you search for the fish?

BEACH: I am not one to say I'm tuned in with the movement of bass, but if it were to get really



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BASSMASTER ELITES

By Tyler Brinks



At one time, not too long ago, there was a relatively regular flow of western-based anglers to the top professional fishing leagues. The Bassmaster Elite Series was filled with anglers from the western states, and during the FLW Tour days, they had plenty as well – thanks to qualifying circuits to get there.

It's been a slower path in recent years, with a small handful of new West Coast names jumping to the top levels of bass fishing on a national scale. But this year, there are two more, with Cody Meyer and Andrew Loberg qualifying for the Bassmaster Elite Series. Both are originally from California, but now live elsewhere, with Meyer in Idaho and Loberg in Alabama. Still, each is proud of their upbringing in Northern California, and this gives all western fishing fans two more Bassmaster anglers to root for.

MEYER TAKES A BIG RISK

Each year since the split of anglers leaving Bassmaster for Major League Fishing (MLF) before the 2019 season, there has been talk of anglers "going back to B.A.S.S.," but that was not the case for Cody Meyer, formerly of Auburn, Calif. He only fished a handful of Bassmaster events before this year. He got his start and rose to national prominence in the other circuits.

"My whole career has been with FLW and MLF, and you get comfortable, being familiar with all the staff and anglers," he said. "It was hard to leave friends I've fished with for so long; it was a very tough decision."

Now that he's in the 2025 Elite Series field, Meyer can relax knowing he made it happen. However, it was very stressful to leave and try to qualify through the Bassmaster Opens. Ultimately, all was well, and he made it look easy, finishing the year in second place in the points. But it was nothing but easy for him mentally.

"It was really scary when I fished my first Open of the year because I looked around and saw kids half my age, and they're hungry and focused on making their dream come true," he said. "For the first time in a long time, I felt nervous about the risk I was taking. That was the scariest part because I was fishing on one of the upper echelon leagues on the Bass Pro Tour and had to take a step down a level, in a way, to try to qualify

for the top again. That was in my mind all year, asking myself if I made the right decision."

One primary reason for Meyer was the chance to fish for the Bassmaster Classic. "I've worked about 20 of them now, and I always wanted to fish one," said Meyer. "It would be awesome to compete in one someday, which was one of my deciding factors to leave."

LOBERG JUMPS TO THE ELITES

Previously from Rocklin, Calif., Andrew Loberg had plenty of success moving up the ranks in California, winning two college fishing events and two Toyota Series events with Major League Fishing before jumping to the next level. He fished two years on the Tackle Warehouse Pro Circuit and moved to Alabama before taking on the Bassmaster Opens this season.

Like Meyer, he did it with solid success all year to finish sixth in the points. Qualifying was a dream come true, and he credits his move to Alabama for making it happen.

"It's tough to climb the ladder and fish nationally, and that made my decision to move to Alabama a little easier, just because of the cost of living and it being much easier travel to events," said Loberg. "But it's not easy, and a big learning curve coming from the West because I've never



fished most of these bodies of water."

He also credits his time fishing with Major League Fishing for getting him more familiar with different fisheries. "The two years on the Tackle Warehouse Pro Circuit definitely helped speed things up for me, but it's still wild that it happened," he said. "Guys from all over make sacrifices to qualify for the Elite Series, but it's still surreal because it didn't seem possible because you seemed so far removed from it in California."

Growing up, Loberg watched the professional anglers and idolized many, including Meyer. "It's crazy because a lot of these guys, I looked up to, and now I'll get to fish against some of them," he said. "I remember watching Cody dominate the FLW Tour, and he was at a seminar by my house when I was super young. I lived close to it and had my dad take me, and it was super cool to meet him and talk fishing. It was a surreal moment when we both qualified because we only lived about an hour away from each other when he was still living in California."

Meyer remembers this, too, and knew Loberg was passionate about becoming a professional angler. "I remember seeing him doing the seminar, and here's this kid, maybe 13 years old, who is laser-focused and listening to every word I said," Meyer said. "We were talking about that this year, and it's great to see how some of these younger guys have moved up to the top level. Andrew, also being from



California, is also really cool."

LOOKING AHEAD TO '25

Both Loberg and Meyer are eager to start the 2025 season. They are going with the flow and are not concerned about the schedule. Each grew up fishing a diverse set of fisheries, and they feel prepared for anything.

Meyer has long been known for consistency, once catching a limit for every day across four seasons on the FLW Tour. It's much more complicated than it sounds, and he credits western fishing for much of that. "You have an advantage because of all of the fisheries we have on the West Coast," Meyer said. "You have Clear Lake, the Delta, and all spotted bass fisheries and desert lakes. So, I haven't spent too much time looking at the Elite Series schedule next week because I feel ready and have been to many of the lakes during my career."

Loberg feels good about the schedule and is up for the challenge. "I've been to four or five of the lakes on the schedule, which is nice, but I just go wherever the tournament is and try not to worry about it too much," said Loberg. "I really like power fishing; that's my main deal, but

I'm fine with the finesse stuff. I also think things from the West Coast, like swimbaits and other little tricks, will help me at some of the events next year."

The Bassmaster Elite Series will welcome a new class of anglers next year, and the representation from the western side of the country just got a little bigger. Meyer and Loberg will kick off the new season with the entire West Coast cheering them on. ■





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WINTER

for cold weather bites



Photo: Khalid Mehmood from Pixabay

PRIME TIPS

Presented by Fisherman's Warehouse

The winter season's cold weather can slow the bass bite down; however, it also can bring the opportunity for some of the biggest bass to eat. In fact, it can be the time of year to catch a personal best – of course, those PB windows are more limited and are focused on the end of the winter, when the water just starts to warm up a bit.

TIP: Some of the biggest bass – record bass – double-digit bass are caught in late winter, very early spring. When the water just hits 52 degrees, the biggest bass will start to eat in preparation as one of the limited first wave spawners. Don't discount the first-movers advantage.

Here are two different ways we target late winter bigs.

DOWN BAIT

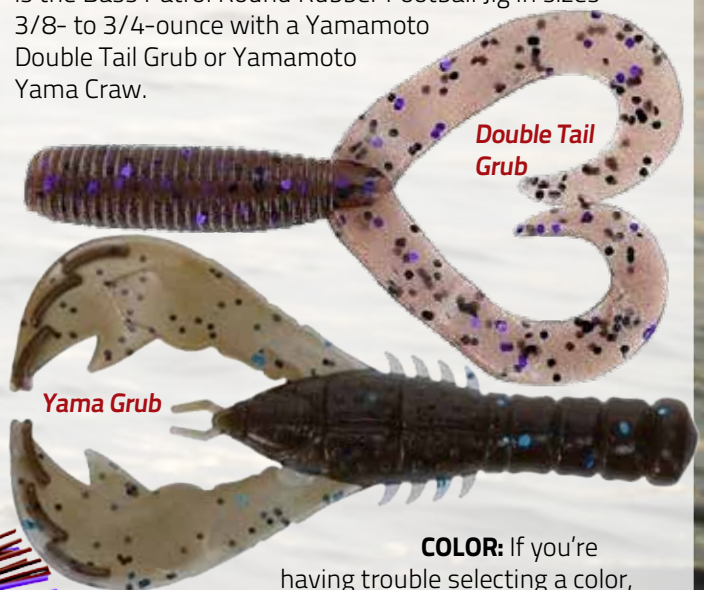
There are several types of jigs available for fishermen. For this time of year and this specific purpose, one of our favorite styles is the football head jig paired with a creature trailer.

LURE: An example of matchups that we like



Bass Patrol Jig

is the Bass Patrol Round Rubber Football Jig in sizes 3/8- to 3/4-ounce with a Yamamoto Double Tail Grub or Yamamoto Yama Craw.



Double Tail Grub

Yama Grub

COLOR: If you're having trouble selecting a color, you can always keep it simple in the brown/purple family. This is typically a darker, easier-to-see color for the bass, and it is a craw imitator that can tempt a bite.

LINE: A good line choice for this would be 15-pound braided line to a 12-pound fluorocarbon leader. This pairing will help you feel more bites and have less stretch for

hookset. The two lines can be married with a multitude of knots, such as a uni-to-uni, Alberto, FG Knot or any knot that feels comfortable to tie and secures the union of lines.

TARGET: A good place to start are the main lake points in 15- to 30-foot of water. Specifically, lake points at the mouth of spawning areas such as northwest bays that get the most sunlight and heat up first and faster than others.

BOAT POSITION: You can put your boat in 25-feet, cast up to 15-feet and work the bait back towards the boat. If no results, move the boat out deeper to 30-feet and repeat the process.

RETRIEVE: Keep the retrieve- slow, slower, and slower than that and if you think you're going too slow, slow down even more. It could be a tricky time; because you cannot necessarily feel all the bites; so be aware if anything "feels" different at all. The rod may just feel a bit lighter or mushier or heavier or different in general.

BIG SWIMBAIT

For those that find the down bait option less than exciting and want to chuck and wind. There is always the giant, shoe-sized, trout-mimicking swimbait. There is a reason that "Swimbait Dreams" is a saying and that there have been anglers that have made their name on this type of fishing – swimbaiting. It is known to attract the biggest of the bigs.

While some anglers keep their favorite swimbait of choice on the low, others are ready to share the bait and the bass that have fell to it. One of those most associated with the technique is Butch Brown known for the Deps Slide Swimmer. Here, we take a look at that option.

LURE: When tying on the Deps Slide Swimmer, there are a few sizes to choose from, such as the 250, 175 or the

Deps Slide Swimmer



145. For quantity of bites, we go to the smaller version – the 145 (5.7 inches) and when on the hunt for that one big girl, we opt for the largest 250 (9.87-inches).

COLOR: As we know, matching the hatch is always a train of thought; but in this case, water clarity is a very big factor. Swimbaits can be a visual thing for a bass – if they see them too well, it can be a turnoff or hindrance. Think of picking a color that is camouflaged within the water clarity. That being said – an easy go-to method for color choice is a trout replicator, if the body of water holds trout.

LINE: A line choice for a Deps swimbait is 25-pound monofilament. Mono works in this case due to its buoyancy which doesn't pull the nose of the bait down and allows the bass to eat the bait before you give the bad news.

TARGET: Again, main lake points can be targeted and varied depths can produce.

BOAT POSITION: The boat position can be on the shallow side of the point in five-feet of water.

RETRIEVE: From the shallow side, fan cast the point and retrieve from deeper water to shallower water, running the swimbait across the ridge of the point. Repeat at different speeds.

We hope that these two styles of big bass catching will help you put a big one in the boat this season! Tight lines. ■

Deps Slide Swimmer



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3DR-X™ SERIES

off-season activities to prep for your **NEXT FISHING SEASON**

By Glenn Walker



Chad Eddings photo

W

ith another winter ahead of us, many anglers stow away their boats and tackle until they get that spring itch to fish. For some that is February, for others it may be March or April. There are many things an angler can do to help prepare themselves and their tackle for next year's fishing season.

DO THE TREBLE TUNE-UP

Changing the treble hooks on your crankbaits and topwater plugs is one activity that can keep you plenty busy during the winter months. I like to go through all my baits with treble hooks and determine if any of the baits are not useable anymore.

After that I separate the baits into piles based on those that need new hooks and those that don't. I am not a big fan on sharpening treble hooks, if I have the time to put a new one on. That is why I take full advantage of my down time during the winter to put new treble hooks on my baits. This saves me time from having to change them during the next fishing season.

I like to swap out my treble hooks to Lazer TroKar Treble's as they are super sharp and strong, so they'll keep a big bass hooked. I like to swap most of my treble hooks during the offseason, but I will also keep a small case in my boat filled with my treble hooks so I can change the hook size on my baits, based on the bait, cover I'm fishing and how the bass are biting.



Many anglers want to tackle this project but run into a roadblock and become frustrated when they have difficulty making a split ring or treble hook change. This project can be accomplished and simplified into a quick procedure by having a good pair of split ring pliers.

TURN THAT PILE INTO AN ORGANIZED SYSTEM

There is nothing better to help cure the winter blues, than going through all your tackle and organizing it so when next season comes around you are ready. When I go





Photo: Carl Jocumsen

through my tackle, I look to pull out baits that I no longer use or that are broken.

You can either sell them and make a little spending money for new tackle or another positive suggestion is to donate the tackle to a youth fishing organization. This allows me to put together a shopping list for new items. Not only is this fun, but by organizing your tackle you will save time next season when you go to get a lure out of your tackle box.

GET FIT!

Throughout my life, I spent time working out and playing hockey throughout the winter. Now that I'm done playing hockey, I still stay active by doing some simple weightlifting, core exercises and running. There is no need for a complex workout; all you want to do is hit the major areas of your body that get fatigued during the fishing season.

These areas include your back, neck, arms and legs. The other activity/time that I feel is very important is taking care of your body via a chiropractor. I've been going to one now for over five years and it helps keep my back, joints and nerves all working together and me feeling good, which means more enjoyable and longer days on the water.

DO SOME READING

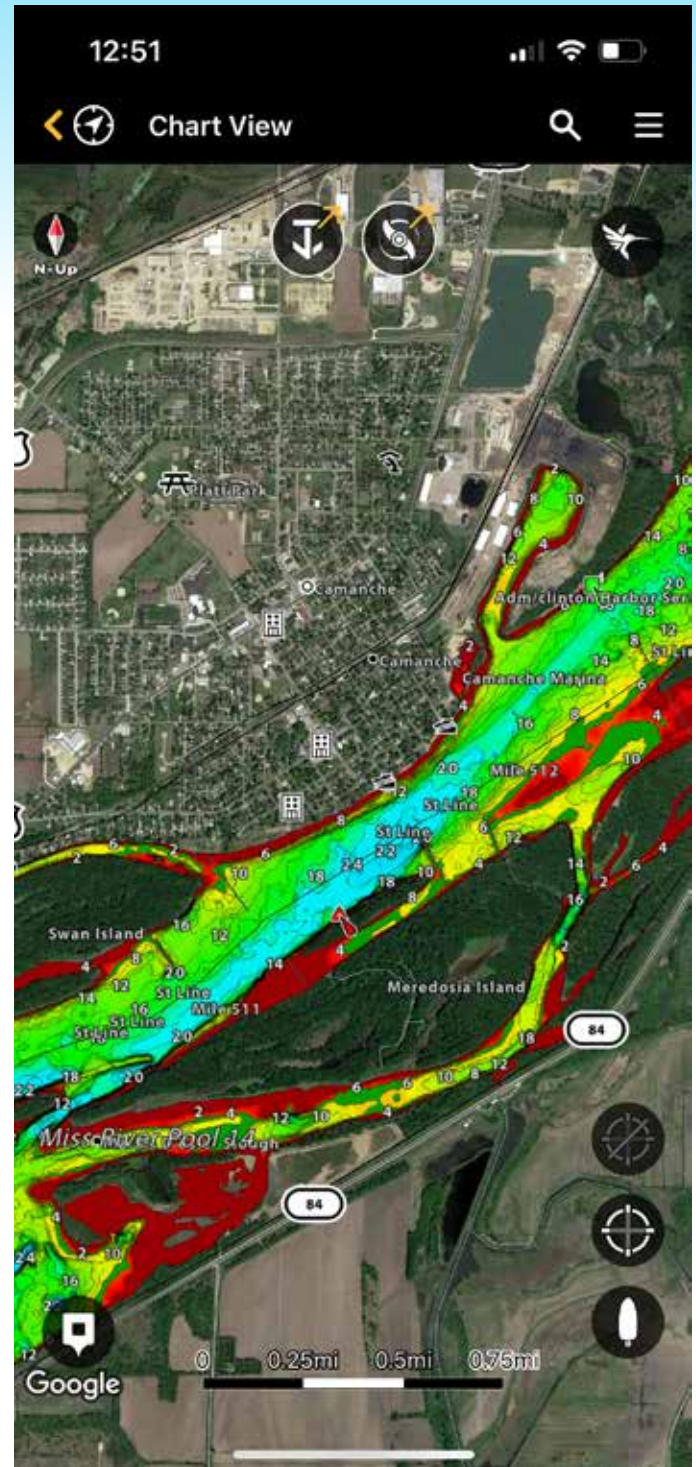
Now that you have prepared your tackle and your body for the next fishing season, it is time to prepare your mind. I am talking about doing some research, which could constitute you exploring the internet for tournament results from this past year on the bodies of water you will

be fishing. Reading through fishing magazines is another beneficial way to acquire knowledge.

This is also a good time to get more familiar with the bodies of water you'll be fishing. This is easy to do during the winter by looking at the lake map of those lakes on the Humminbird One-Boat Network App. What is great about this App is you can save waypoints on the App and then transfer them to your Humminbird units.

WAYPOINT MANAGEMENT

During the winter months, I take the time to go through all my waypoints from the previous year and organize them. For me, I do this in the HumminbirdPC program, and



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first will delete any duplicate waypoints that I may have. Second, I will rename the waypoints based on what they are indicating. For example, if the waypoint is a rockpile, then I will use the abbreviation RP, and if it is a weedline, I'll use the abbreviation WL.

I will also save my waypoints in a dedicated file for that given body of water, if I have enough of them for that lake or river, or a file for a general geographic area. I will save these files, both on the computer, in the Cloud, and on an SD card, this triple-redundancy will ensure I don't lose those valuable waypoints.

GET UNDER THE HOOD

Another off-season activity that will greatly benefit you next season and help keep you from spending more money on fishing tackle is taking the time to clean and perform some basic maintenance on your rods and reels. By spending a couple minutes on each rod and reel, you can greatly increase the life of the product. I start by wiping off the handles and the rod blank itself with a warm, wet rag. A Q-tip works well when it comes time to clean out the guides.

Taking care of your reels is of vital importance, that is why if you feel uncomfortable taking apart your reel, leave it

to a professional. I take the general frame of the reel apart; this allows me to clean all the muck and grim off the reel. Once I get the reel cleaned, I apply some oil and grease to the moving parts of my reel.

The hard work and preparation now can pay off huge dividends on the water! ■

Glenn has been in fishing tournaments for over twenty years, spreading his passion and knowledge of the sport via articles and videos.

PC_ToCheck.gpx		C:\Users\Owner\Documents\My_HumminbirdPC\GPX_Files\PC_Pool7and8.gpx\Waypoints						
PC_Pool7and8.gpx		Name	Icon	Shared	Visible	...	Depth(ft)	Date
Waypoints		BO009		✓	▼	☉	0.0	2016-07-20 10:27:27
Routes		BO010		✓	▼	☉	0.0	2016-07-20 10:28:18
Tracks		BO011		✓	▼	☉	0.0	2016-07-20 10:29:53
Groups		BO012		✓	▼	☉	0.0	2016-07-20 10:30:42
		P7001		✓	▼	☉	2.85	2011-05-19 16:06:07
		P7002		✓	▼	☉	2.43	2011-05-19 16:24:49
		P7003		✓	▼	☉	2.82	2014-05-15 06:58:04
		P7004		✓	▼	☉	2.0	2014-05-15 10:22:29
		P7005		✓	▼	☉	2.2	2014-05-15 17:29:03
		P7079		✓	▼	☉	5.38	2012-07-23 06:29:54
		P7080		✓	▼	☉	5.38	2012-07-23 06:53:21
		P7081		✓	▼	☉	5.12	2012-07-23 07:28:17
		P7082		✓	▼	☉	5.38	2012-07-23 08:59:14
		P7083		✓	▼	☉	4.76	2012-07-23 09:15:45
		P7084		✓	▼	☉	3.12	2012-07-23 09:44:23
		P7085		✓	▼	☉	3.44	2012-07-23 10:42:37
		P7086		✓	▼	☉	3.44	2012-07-23 10:53:46
		P7087		✓	▼	☉	2.36	2012-07-23 11:15:18
		P7088		✓	▼	☉	2.2	2012-07-23 11:23:41
		P7089		✓	▼	☉	2.43	2012-07-23 11:24:56
		P7090		✓	▼	☉	2.43	2012-07-23 11:48:37
		P7091		✓	▼	☉	2.69	2012-07-23 12:30:11
		P7092		✓	▼	☉	2.85	2012-07-23 12:31:42
		P7093		✓	▼	☉	3.05	2012-07-23 12:34:54
		P7094		✓	▼	☉	3.18	2012-07-23 12:42:31
		P7095		✓	▼	☉	3.31	2012-07-23 12:58:54
		P7096		✓	▼	☉	3.51	2012-07-23 13:46:36
		P7098		✓	▼	☉	14.34	2012-07-25 06:40:14
		P7099		✓	▼	☉	6.99	2012-07-25 08:40:24
		P7100		✓	▼	☉	5.05	2012-07-25 08:55:01
		P7101		✓	▼	☉	5.18	2012-07-25 09:03:47
		P7102		✓	▼	☉	5.25	2012-07-25 09:27:41
		P7103		✓	▼	☉	3.38	2012-07-25 11:23:53

My waypoint management system



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