Big Lake Bass Team

Lure, Lures, Lures





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Spinnerbait

The <u>spinnerbait</u> didn't land itself on the Mt. Rushmore of bass <u>lures</u> for no reason. Something about their flash and vibration calls out to bass, and they're one of the few baits that are effective on any lake, at any time of the year.

The spinnerbait stands the test of time – it's been a mainstay in tackle boxes for as long as people have been chasing fish. Recently though, there has been a decline in the use of spinnerbaits for the simple fact that new baits and innovative lures have come onto the market.

A lead head of varying weight is combined with a wire framework, sharp hook and one or more flashing spinner blades. A soft-rubber, plastic, silicone or "lumaflex" skirt is added to cover the hook. The spinnerbait has a smooth, flowing action that mimics a swimming baitfish.



Chatterbait

The ChatterBait bladed swim jig burst onto the bass fishing scene in 2006 following several tournament successes and became a highly-sought-after bass lure virtually overnight.

With its patented design and unique, hex-shaped ChatterBlade, the sound, vibration, and action of the Original ChatterBait brand bladed jigs is unmatched. This combination provides a versatile lure that offers the erratic action of crankbait, large profile of a jig, and irresistible flash of a spinnerbait, available in a variety of sizes, finishes, and configurations for fresh- and saltwater fishing.

When should you throw a ChatterBait?

The #1 time to opt for a **chatterbait** over a spinnerbait (or even a swimjig) are when bass are dirt shallow in cool (45-60 degrees) stained water. You can use them in other conditions, but this is when they really shine





Swimbait

Swimbaits are well known for being big bass lures, and they have more than earned that reputation. The bites are mostly few and far between, but when they come they can be from some of the biggest bass in the lake. When you're swimbait fishing for bass you need to stay committed to it all day, so you don't miss those big bites.

There's different types of swimbaits designed to mimic various species that bass prey on. More often than not the designs are made to mimic fish, but some are made to mimic rodents, small waterfowl, and even turtles.

In general, swimbait designs can be broken down into three categories: hard bodied, soft bodied, and paddle tails. There are subcategories of each type and some come in a combination, like having a hard body with a soft rubber tail. Overall they are typically made of wood, hard plastic, or soft plastic.

Hard Body - Multi Jointed / Single Jointed / Glide Baits

Soft Body - Full Body / Line Through / Top Hook

Paddle Tail - Hollow Body / Solid Body / Full Body



Buzzbait

Fishing a buzzbait just might be the most exciting style of bass fishing there is. They are one of the best topwater lures you can tie on, and any bass fisherman will agree that there is nothing like seeing a bass explode on a topwater lure. But especially a buzzbait, these are fast moving baits so the explosions tend to be bigger and more aggressive.

Similar to the framework of a spinnerbait, a buzzbait is a bent wire where one end is molded into a jig head. The jig head is dressed with a rubber skirt and the line is tied where the wire bends. The other end of the wire has a propellor attached that gives the bait lift and keeps it on the surface.

What sets a buzzbait apart from most other topwater lures, is that it sinks. To keep a buzzbait on the surface it needs to be in constant motion, meaning once the bait hits the water you have to start reeling immediately and continuously reel until the bait is retrieved. They also create a unique sputtering noise that is hard for bass to ignore. In fact, a bass will often hit one just to shut it up.



Frogs / Topwater / Poppers

Top water lures come in all shapes and sizes, and in most cases float. The bulk of them are made of hard plastic and are equipped with treble hooks. Treble hooks help increase your chances of having a fish get and stay hooked when they strike, since bass can often miss a topwater lure, or barely hit it. This is especially true for the fast-moving models.



Frogs

Hollow body frogs might be the most weedless lure there is. They have a soft plastic body that is designed to collapse and expose the hook as bass bite down on them. The lure floats and the hooks face upright, leaving very little chances for getting hung up.



Poppers

Poppers are floating lures with a cupped mouth, meaning the front of the lure has an indented bowl shape. In the mouth is where the line attaches, and where all the action the lure creates comes from. This is one of, if not the slowest moving topwater lures.



Crankbaits

Bass fishing crankbaits vary in size, shape, color, action, depth and more.

Shape affects wobble or wiggle

The shape of a crankbait body can also determine its action. More roundedbodied crankbaits usually have more pronounced wide wobbles while more flat narrow sided baits will have tighter wiggles. A wider wobble is often more effective when bass are aggressive, schooled up and competitive, usually when the water is warm. Conversely, a tight wiggle can often be more effective when the water is really cold and the bass aren't apt to react to aggressive displacement by big bodied and big wobbling crankbaits



Crankbaits

Running depth created by lips

Shallow crankbaits include another variety of lipped crankbaits called square bills. We've talked in depth about square-bills but they are known for a more flat edged short bill that deflects well off of cover but doesn't dig water as much. These became extremely popular in recent years as a great technique for tempting shallow bass around wood and rock. But other shallow crankbaits produce as well and are marked by rounded stubby lips with a usually sharp angle off the nose of the bait.

As you start covering water in that 5-10 foot range, you'll get into the more medium-diving crankbaits. Usually these baits will be 2-3 inches long and cover the water column well really from 0-12 feet. The baits will feature a longer lip than shallow divers and come more out of the nose of the bait.

As you start fishing deeper than 12 feet, the bodies and lips of the crankbaits get larger from 3-5 inches depending on how deep the lures run. You'll need a bit stouter tackle to cast and retrieve these lures as the drag created by the larger lips can be arm tiring. You could hypothetically fish a deep diving crank bait in shallow water, but you'll wear yourself out and really dredge up the bottom and also run the risk of more snags.

Crankbaits

Matching line and diving depth

We like our crank baits to just tick the bottom. This is generally achieved by matching line size and running depth of a crankbait together. If you want a deep diver to not dive as deep you put it on 20-pound monofilament instead of 10-pound fluorocarbon. If you want a medium diver to get to its deepest depth, you put it on small diameter line like 10-pound fluorocarbon. We know guys who throw deep divers on 8-pound fluorocarbon to get them as deep as possible.

Good anglers, will have several rods on their decks with different size lines and crankbaits to touch all different depths effectively.

Colors matter most of the time

It seems that crankbaits come in every color under the sun, but that doesn't mean you need a tackle box full of every single color possible. Most good crankbait anglers recommend sticking with just a few crankbait colors like bright shad patterns, dull shad patterns, bluegills, crawfish and contrast patterns to cover the bases in bass fishing. Starting with shad patterns, A bright pattern like Bomber's Dance's Citrus Shad and Strike King's Sexy Shad are staples when targeting bass in bright sunlight. But we also like the more muted shad patterns from Rapala and Bandit for those cloudy, clear water days.

In dirtier water you can't go wrong with Spro's Spring Craw or the staple black back, chartreuse sides. In the spring, we'll always have a crawfish pattern tied on one of our rods. We love the old craw patterns on the Wiggle Warts and Flat A crankbaits for shallow bass foraging on crawfish. Bluegill patterns can have a time and place when you're targeting bass feeding on bream especially in the post spawn and around docks.

Lipless Crankbaits

Although they're called crankbaits, there's a lot of differences between a lipless crankbait and a regular crankbait. Of course, the biggest difference being the lip, or lack thereof. Really the only similarity between the two baits is that they wobble when they are retrieved.

But with a lipless crankbait it's more of a vibrating action than a wobble, some anglers actually call them vibrating baits. The action is more similar to a blade bait than a crankbait. The other thing they both have in common is they are both typically equipped with two sets of treble hooks.

Lipless crankbaits have a thin body with flat sides, as if a regular crankbait were flattened in a vice. Instead of the lip giving the bait its action, it's the flattened body that creates the action. As the bait moves through the water at at fast enough speed, it vibrates from side to side.

This action creates a huge racket in the water, while also putting out a ton of vibration that bass can feel in their lateral line. To enhance this even more, most lipless crankbaits have rattling beads or knockers inside them.



Jigs

Probably the best thing about bass jigs is how effective they are all year long. From freezing cold water temps to hot summer conditions, these lures continue to produce at a high level.

Of course, adjustments need to be made from season to season. Things like where you fish them, style selection, and tweaks in presentation all play a part throughout the year.

But no matter what time of year, when you're jig fishing for bass it's all about the bottom. How you get there, how fast you get there, and how you interact with it.

The objective is reaching the bottom by allowing the jig to sink naturally and without getting hung up. All while presenting an appealing presentation to nearby bass.

Bass jigs are typically fished slowly, requiring patience and your full attention every second the bait is in the water. You need to be constantly watching your line and trying to detect bites through the rod handle throughout the entire retrieve.

Jig fishing is all about feel and sensitivity. So you need to be using a good jig rod to detect the sometimes subtle vibrations traveling from the jig to the butt of the rod handle. Using the right rod is absolutely essential for jig fishing. Half of the time, a bass will eat a jig by picking it up off the bottom. The other half of the time, a jig will get eaten while it's sinking. So you need make sure there isn't any slack in your line and stay alert during its initial fall.

Jigs

Generally speaking, a **bass jig** is a hook with a metal head molded to it at the line tie. The vast majority of bass jigs are skirted with a rubber skirt, but the skirt material can vary. They also come equipped with a flexible fiber weedguard that is positioned in front of the hook to prevent snagging.

There are a handful of different types of bass jigs and ways to fish them, so determining which to use and how to use them takes some predetermining. When selecting the best bass jig, the first thing to determine is what types of areas you plan to target.

Certain types of jigs are better for certain applications. And what makes one bass jig different from another is the size and shape of the head. These two attributes affect how the jig performs in the water, and of course the weight of the jig.



Arkie / Casting / Flipping Jigs

The **arkie jig** is the most popular type of jig used in bass fishing. They are also sometimes referred to as **flipping jigs** or **casting jigs**. These are your "all-purpose" jigs, well-suited to cover the majority of jig fishing techniques. If you're just starting out, or only going to throw one style of jig, then this is the one you want.

Arkie jig heads are wide enough to give them good balance when sitting on the bottom, but slim enough to come through weeds well. This makes them ideal for flipping and pitching in to vegetation. But also versatile enough that you could use them as a swim jig too.

These are the best types of jigs if you're fishing a lake that has a bunch of different cover. They give you the flexibility to to mix up your presentation along the way. From swimming these jigs along docks or weed edges, to letting it sink down into some deep brush or rock, these jigs have got you covered.



Football Jigs

These heads, you guessed it, are shaped like a football. The shape of the head on a **football jig** makes them wobble as they sink. The same is true as they're being dragged along the bottom.

This wide-shaped head also gives it tremendous balance. This keeps the bait standing upright, for a better presentation while keeping the hook from getting snagged on the bottom.

This attribute makes football jigs the best type of jig for fishing rock and hard bottoms. Their stability makes them less likely to get hung up in the rocks the way a jig laying on its side would.

The best way to fish a football jig is to drag or hop it along the rocks. This is a great way of mimicking a crayfish. However, the wide head makes them less than ideal for jigging in vegetation.



Swim Jigs

The heads on **swim jigs** have a thinner overall profile, that come to a point where the line tie is. This allows them to cut through water and vegetation better than other types of jigs that typically have more of a rounded head. Swim jigs are most often paired with some type of paddle tail jig trailer.

A paddle tail trailer gives a swim jig a nice side-to-side tail kicking action. Unlike with most bass jigs, which are for the most part designed to mimic a crayfish, swim jigs are made to look like a swimming baitfish.

In a standard presentation, you never stop reeling a swim jig to keep it from sinking to the bottom. Similar to the way you would work a spinnerbait. This standard straight retrieve is the most popular way to fish them.

Letting it sink or giving the rod a random jerk periodically can trigger a bite if the straight retrieve isn't getting results. This is also a good idea when there is a tough bite in general.

Swim jigs are the ideal style of jig for power fishing in and around cover. You can cover a lot of water with these jigs while not getting the bait hung up like you would with most power fishing lures.



Finesse Jigs

Although similar in appearance, **finesse jigs** are smaller in size and designed for much lighter tackle. In most cases, the skirt is cut shorter around the head so the strands flare up around it.

These jigs are designed for a style of fishing called finesse fishing. This is a technique where you fish slowly while using only small baits with light tackle.

Finesse jigs are ideal for flipping around light cover, in clear water with hard bottoms. This is why they are one of the best smallmouth lures. Like with all finesse lures, they are great for when conditions get tough and bass don't seem to be biting anything.



Punch Jigs

A **punch jig** is a type of punching rig, that has a bullet-shaped head designed for plunging through thick vegetation. These jigs are strictly designed for this style of fishing, and require a heavy duty punching rod. Not only to handle the heavier weight of these jigs, but also to pull bass out of the thick cover that these jigs can get in to.

Punching jigs are usually much heavier than most bass jigs. They will typically weigh in the range of around three quarters of an ounce to as much as two ounces. They need to be this heavy so they can plunge through anything in their way and get to the bottom.

Ideally you want to tie on the lightest jig possible, while still being able to get through the weeds efficiently. The photo is of the BiCO Bomb, a really unique one ounce punch jig.



Determining Weight for Jigs

Bass jigs come in a range of weights that are measured in ounces, but mostly in fractions of an ounce. When selecting the best weight for a bass jig, there are two factors you need to consider.

The first is the **depth** you are targeting and second is the **wind speed**. These two factors will directly affect the sink rate of your jig. As well as how well you are able to keep the jig in the zone you want it in.

Depth Factor

The most frequently used weight for a bass jig is three-eighths of an ounce. This is the perfect weight for fishing in shallow water (one to six feet), on a relatively calm day. Once you start getting in to water ten feet or deeper, it takes a long time for a three-eighths ounce jig to get to the bottom. This is when increasing the weight to half an ounce can make a huge difference.

It doesn't seem like a huge difference in weight, but if you start adding up the extra sink time wasted on a full day of fishing, it's surprising how much more water you can cover with the appropriate jig weight.

Wind Factor

Wind speed can also have a major effect on jig fishing. Generally speaking, heavier winds call for heavier jigs. If the wind is blowing your line and not allowing the jig to maintain contact with the bottom or sink at a good rate, then the jig is too light.

You need the jig to be heavy enough to overpower the wind and pull the line through it so the jig to get to the bottom. But you never want your jig to be heavier than it needs to be.

The heavier a jig is, the less natural it feels to a bass when in its mouth. This will cause a bass to spit it faster than if it felt lighter. Like the weight of a crawfish for example.

Selecting Trailers for Jigs

You will never see a fishermen fish a jig that is not paired with some type of a jig trailer. A jig trailer is a soft plastic bait that gets rigged on the hook. It adds action to the tail end of the jig and completes the overall profile of the bait.

The endless variety of trailer types and sizes allows you to customize a jig to suit the exact presentation you want to achieve. Some popular types of jig trailers are ribbon tails, craws, and paddle tails. The biggest difference from one trailer to the next is the action they put out. Some trailers have a ton of action while some have no action at all. It all depends on what kind of presentation you are looking for. As a general rule of thumb, the warmer or murkier the water the more action you want. And the clearer or colder the water is the less action you want. You can combine just about any jig trailer with any jig.

But for a swim jig or bladed jig it is more common to see a paddle tail trailer used. This gives the jig a side-to-side, tail kicking action that a swimming baitfish would have. Rather than the up and down flapping motion most other jig trailers have.



Jig Fishing for Bass

Probably the best thing about bass jigs is how effective they are all year long. From freezing cold water temps to hot summer conditions, these lures continue to produce at a high level.

Detecting Bites

Bass jigs are typically fished slowly, requiring patience and your full attention every second the bait is in the water. You need to be constantly watching your line and trying to detect bites through the rod handle throughout the entire retrieve.

Jig fishing is all about feel and sensitivity. So, you need to be using a good jig rod to detect the sometimes-subtle vibrations traveling from the jig to the butt of the rod handle. Using the right rod is absolutely essential for jig fishing. Half of the time, a bass will eat a jig by picking it up off the bottom. The other half of the time, a jig will get eaten while it's sinking. You need make sure there isn't any slack in your line and stay alert during its initial fall.

Hooksets

Setting the hook properly is an essential component of jig fishing for bass. Without a proper and timely hookset, you are simply not going to catch fish with a jig.

Once a bass picks up your jig, you have a short window of time to quickly yank the rod tip towards you to bury the hook point past the weed guard and into the fish's mouth.

Jig Fishing for Bass

Fishing Cover

Jigs are ideal for targeting all types of cover because you can cast them just about anywhere with a pretty low chance of getting hung up. This gives you a great advantage because you are able to put a jig in front of bass that you wouldn't be able to with most other lures. Bass jigs have a flexible weed guard that is positioned in front of the hook to makes them weedless. As the jig is pulled through the water, the weed guard protects the hook from getting hung up by deflecting weeds and other objects.

Skipping Bass Jigs

Getting in to hard-to-reach areas is what sets bass jigs apart from other bass lures. And one way to get jigs into these areas is by skipping them. Two great areas to skip under are docks and low-hanging trees.

There's a huge advantage to getting a jig to sink down right in front of a bass that's sitting under a dock. As opposed to casting out in front of the dock and trying to draw the bass out.

Flipping and Pitching

Flipping and pitching is a technique that is frequently used with bass jigs. It involves making accurate, underhand casts that allow the jig enter the water quietly. This is close-quarters fishing. You're only flipping the jig out ten or twenty feet, so a silent entry is key for not spooking the fish. This method is ideal when you're targeting visible cover like weed edges, boat docks, timber, or big rocks emerged on the surface. The advantage is being able to enter an area loaded with cover and flip your jig to multiple spots quickly and efficiently.

Jig Fishing for Bass

Punching Jigs

You may have heard advanced bass anglers talk about punching mats. In bass fishing, the term "punching" means dropping your bait in to thick vegetation in order to plunge the jig through to the bottom. It's a very popular technique used with punch jigs and other styles of punch rigs.

During the hot summer months, bass bury themselves under thick weed mats to keep out of the sun and stay cool. The good news is you know where to target the fish if you can find some good matted vegetation.

The bad news is it can be difficult to horse the fish out of there. This style of fishing requires an adequate punching rod rigged with heavy duty line for leveraging the fish out.

Not only do the heavy weeds provide cooler water, but they are also home to a lot of forage. For example, crayfish will dart down from the weeds to get to the bottom and bass will pluck them off all day. When you punch a jig thought the weeds you are imitating that action.

Rigs

There are many reasons why it's important to learn how to rig a fishing line and a lure. Every rig has a different purpose. Some are weedless, which means you can throw them near or in heavy cover, and you won't pull back a ton of green.

Other bass rigs are for presentation. They create a natural appearance of the lure, which helps increase the likelihood of bass being curious about what it is. Regardless of what rig you prefer to use for bass, knowing the most popular bass rigs will give you more gas in the tank when you're out there fishing a long day.

Here's a comprehensive breakdown of all the things you'll need to buy for each rig on this list.

- Fluorocarbon leader (approximately eight pounds)
- Monofilament line
- Bullet or egg sinkers
- Bead weights or brass clackers
- Swivels
- 1-2 hooks, drop shot hooks, wacky hooks
- Variety of soft plastics including Senko worms and powerbait of varying sizes
- Shaky head jigs and mushroom jigs

Carolina Rigs

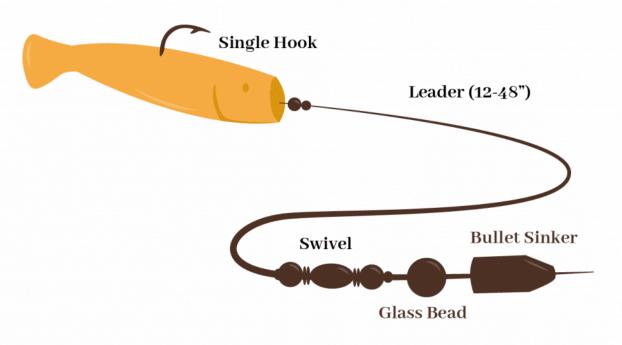
The goal of this rig is to separate the weight from the worm because it can mess up your presentation. If your weight is holding down your worm, it will ruin the action, which will tell the bass to stay away.

HOW TO RIG IT?

First, you want to take a bullet sinker and slide it on your line with a bead or brass clacker behind it. Attach a swivel to the end. Now you'll want to get about a four-foot leader and attach that to the swivel. At the end of the leader is where you'll attach your hook and then likely rig the worm Texas style.

As you can see – a Carolina rig has a lot less to do with the way you rig your lure and much more to do with the way you rig your line. It's important to understand that a Carolina rig has nothing to do with the soft plastic bait.

Carolina Rig



Drop Shot Rigs

Everyone should learn how to use a drop shot rig for bass because this is the rig that the professionals use. It's got some similarities to the Carolina rig in terms of the way you present the lure and the function of the weight. The main difference is the location of the weight.

With a drop shot, your weight is at the end. The way you present your lure with a drop shot is also much different than the "dragging the bottom" strategy of a Carolina.

HOW TO RIG IT?

To get started, you'll start by stringing up your hook like you normally would. You want to leave about four feet of line at the end of the hook.

This will vary based on where you're fishing. If you're fishing really shallow water, you can downsize that to one foot if you feel it's necessary. Always leave around four feet.

Next, you'll tie your hook up, and now you have that extra line at the end. Attach a drop shot or sinker to the end and boom; you've got yourself a drop shot. Simple right?

Drop Shot Rig



Hook faces up!
 Put loop through bottom,
 leave long tag line.



2. Tie an overhand knot



3. Pull hook through loop. Wet line and pull tight.



4. Hook must face up. Tie sinker on tag line

Ned Rigs

The ned rig is one of the simplest types of bass fishing rigs, and you've likely fished this before without even knowing you were rigging a soft plastic. It's a great strategy for when the bass aren't biting during the cold months.

HOW TO RIG IT?

Take your soft plastic and insert a jig head into it. Make sure to size down if you're fishing during cold weather months because the bass isn't willing to accept a challenge during this time. Many people prefer a mushroom jig head.

Then you want to attach that setup to a six-foot fluorocarbon leader. Tie it up using your favorite knot, and you've got yourself a ned rig. See, we told you it was simple! All you really have here is a typical jig setup.



Neko Rigs

Many anglers are killing it with this bass fishing rig setup. It's essentially a wacky rig with a weight at the end instead of the middle, that's all we're doing.

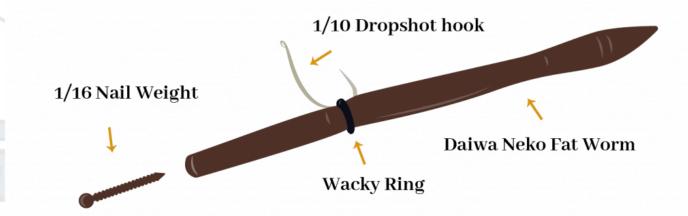
HOW TO RIG IT?

It's simple. Pierce the worm in the middle or use an o-ring as we did with the wacky rig.

Take a lead weight nail and insert it into the blunt tail end of the worm.

So, when you present this worm, it will stand vertically, but with each movement, it will pull horizontally and then return to vertical when you let it sink.

Neko Rig



Shaky Head Rigs

The shaky head rig for bass fishing is similar to the ned rig, but it uses a different kind of head. The presentation is still intended for when bass aren't biting, but you can use it at any time. Instead of using a mushroom jig, you'll use a round head and rig it Texas-style. It creates a natural presentation that the bass can't resist.

HOW TO RIG IT?

This one is super simple. The rig consists of a soft plastic worm like a Senko. They even have dedicated "shakey head" worms now that you can buy. Whatever choice you make, it doesn't really matter.

Take your jig head and penetrate the worm and wrap the hook all the way around so you can stick the end back through the bottom of the worm for a Texas rig.



Texas Rigs

The Texas rig is one of the most popular bass rigs, and you can fish a wide assortment of soft plastics this way. You'll use this weedless rig to help cast into heavy cover without bringing back a ton of vegetation into your boat.

HOW TO RIG IT?

You'll set this up by taking the hook and turning it around towards the worm. Push about a quarter-inch of the hook into the worm, so it pokes out the other side. You want the hook at a perfect 90-degree angle. Keep pushing the hook out until you reach the eyelet. You don't want to expose it.

Remember that the most important part of this rig is protecting the tip of the hook from exposure to vegetation. So, you want to push the end of the hook back into the worm if it pops out. The first couple of times you do this, you'll probably rip the worm, so we suggest testing it out on something you can afford to lose.

How To Setup A Texas Rig

1. Insert hook into nose of bait.

3. Pull hook through body, rotate hook and embed the point into bait.

2. Exit about 1/4 inch from tip of nose.

4. Embed the point right under or through the bait surface at an angle that keeps the bait straight.

5. Attach bullet weight to line.

Tokyo Rigs

The Tokyo rig captures parts of the drop shot rig with traditional aspects of the flipping and pitching setup. They are crafted in a unique way that makes them perfect for keeping your soft plastic bait up off the bottom. They come with only a few components but pack a big punch for punching through weeds or being fished around debris. Each Tokyo rig is outfitted with an extra-wide gap hook that will give you a perfect hook set each time. Attached to the hook is a split ring with a swivel and a wire attached to a dropper weight. These dropper weights can be made from lead or tungsten, depending on the angler's preference. The dropper weights come in a variety of sizes, from the smallest 1/8oz up to a 1.5oz weight. The heavier the weight, the better it will keep your soft plastic bait to the bottom.



Wacky Rigs

The wacky rig is one of the favorites for fishing open waters because we find it creates the most natural presentation, but it does have some downsides. This fishing method is not weedless by any means, so you need to be much more careful when fishing around weeds and stumps. It's easy to rig, though, and doesn't require as much gear.

HOW TO RIG IT?

To rig wacky style, you'll need a hook and a worm oring. You'll take the o-ring and wrap it around the worm and push it right towards the middle. It doesn't have to be perfect, but we think right in the middle is the ideal location.

You also have the choice of piercing right through the worm, but we've found that this strategy causes the worms to crack and break apart prematurely. We suggest using the o-rings and hooking them through there.

We'd suggest using a Yamamoto Senko or some form of Berkley Powerbait soft plastic lures for this rig.

