

The Serious Tackle Box

With Chris Gonzales

Serious Trailer Baits

*Experienced Fishing Advice To
Make Fishing Great Again*

I don't know where the idea came from; other fishermen, a magazine? If I was writing this piece and was- 22 years old again, I'd know, but today, its facts are forgotten. Whenever it was, the two ways used were simple. First were pieces of wooden broom handle cut to about 5 inches long, with a long screw eye in each of their squared-off ends. They had about 6-8 inches of mono connected to a 1/4-ounce silver spoon or yellow bucktail-dressed treble hook. That one worked well when specks were chasing shrimp, etc. to the surface. The other was a 1/4-ounce silver, Mr. Champ™, hook removed, trailed by a yellow bucktail-dressed treble hook. This was a hot setup for me when fishing for flounder on the Galveston beachfront, working between the legs of the Pleasure Pier or parallel to those old wooden groins and bouncing it off the washouts' bottom. The flounder would see the flash and puff of sand and then nail the following dressed treble. The point of this is that the trailer fishing method has been around for a long time.

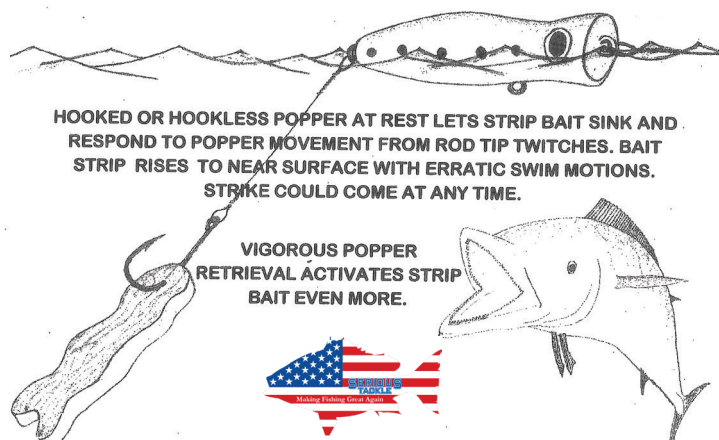
A topwater lure seems to work best when the back treble hook is removed and the trailer connection is tied to the eye. With a heavier, sinking lure, this combo has the appearance of the smaller trailer following at a safe distance. The trailer's freedom of movement, giving a natural look, comes partially from its relatively lightweight—like a flag waving in the breeze—and we all know how good that looks. This all happens whether it's behind a popper, sinking lure, etc. Poppers call in an assortment of predators from a distance with their surface commotion. Whether it's a strip bait, a glob of squid, whole squid, baitfish lead head jig, etc., it has a good chance of getting bit. Naturally, wire comes into play when kingfish or wahoo are involved. The distance between

the popper and trailer of 2 feet is a good one. Regardless of the connector links material, loop connections are important to give the trailer presentation maximum freedom of movement. Kingfish and wahoo really respond to a big Krocodile™ spoon with a dressed hook trailing when virtually skipped across the surface. Sight fishing, surface casting, and skyrocketing kingfish or wahoo are a hard-to-beat offshore combination. Strip baits, 1/2" x 2" x 6", of bonito, bluefish, etc. are all strike attractors.

Ling in particular seems to covet a big glob of squid. They also like crab, eel, and big worm soft plastics. After floating back, let your presentation sit at about 100 ft., giving periodic rod tip twitches to activate the popper, etc. work it back a bit, and let it drift out again. When fished from a rod holder "long" with the reel in gear, you have one of the best combinations working. The boat's movement from wave action and a premier hook setter — the rod holder. At any time when the popper is at rest, the strip bait will sink a bit and respond to popper movement from rod tip twitches, making the bait strip rise erratically. Be especially careful when your trailer bait is at or very near the surface --- A predator striking from below pushes a



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pressure wave ahead of it which may blow your hooked trailer out of the water. You can't set a hook in a blowup. You must feel the weight of the fish on the hook. Premature hook setting could have everything coming back at you.

When fishing the mid-depths to the bottom, treble hook trailers may cause hangup problems if structure is around. A much better choice is 'T' or circle hooks. When targeting reef fish at any depth, in Federal waters, and using natural bait, circle hooks are mandated by NWFS regulations.

Fishing the mid-depths to the bottom is best done with a light or floating trailer behind a spoon, sinking lure, etc. I always remove the spoon's hook and tie it onto the split ring or the spoon itself with the trailer's connecting link. The trailer can be a floater or "flotation added" as in a piece of styrofoam in a strip bait, keeping your strip bait etc. in view, up and away from bottom obstructions; lighter colored trailer baits are easier to spot. When casting any presentation with a trailer and bait combination, it's important to slow your cast just

before your lure and trailer are about to enter the water, straightening it all out away from you immediately before entry.

As in most fishing situations, it's the combination that counts.

Surface lures or deep runners with a baited trailer will put fish on the boat, whether you're fishing offshore, near shore, or in the bays,

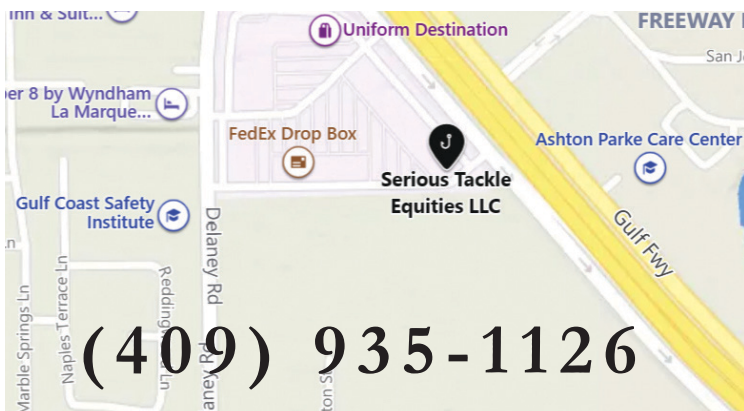
Serious "Trailer Baits Get' Em".

If you have any questions, stop by Serious Tackle or email me at chris@serioustackle.com

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