

The Serious Tackle Box

With Chris Gonzales

*Experienced Fishing Advice To
Make Fishing Great Again*



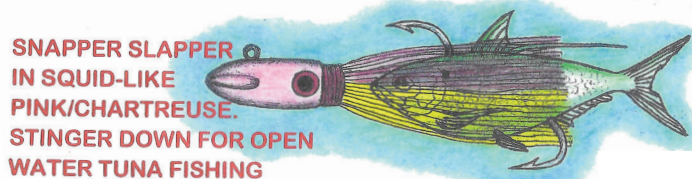
— Kingfish & Wahoo Nightmares —

The term “Kingfish and Wahoo Nightmares” refers to a pair of lure families - bullets and Snapper Slappers. These lures are also nightmares for an assortment of other offshore species including ling, dolphin, amberjack, groupers, snappers and recently, yellowfin tuna.

Bullets, also known as wahoo bombs, have chrome plated lead heads of about 5 ounces, mylar plastic skirting, and a large “J” hook with a swivel attached willow blade. Not only do they attract strikes from kingfish and wahoo, several years ago, when casting a blue skirted model, Mr. Lo, Galveston restaurateur, landed a 68-pound ling off one of Galveston’s beachfront piers. The group of species taken on a Snapper Slapper lure was expanded recently with a 95lb. yellowfin tuna while on an overnight trip on one of the partyboats. Just before daybreak, a 5-ounce red/white threadfin herring tipped the Snapper Slapper. At about 15 ft, the Snapper Slapper was inhaled, and the fight was on.

“There’s always another way” is a phrase I’ve used many times over the years when talking with customers. This piece brings out the point again. The two lure types aren’t new; the Bullet, or Wahoo Bomb, has been around since about 1990 and was developed for wahoo fishing on San Diego’s long-range boats. The Snapper Slapper, a leadhead with a sort of squid-shaped head, nylon skirting, and a pair of free-swinging “J” hooks, has been on the market since 1998.

The “Another Way” aspect of both is their somewhat lack of use in a couple of fisheries. First is the Bullet or Bomb and casting them for kingfish or wahoo in the Gulf of Mexico. The

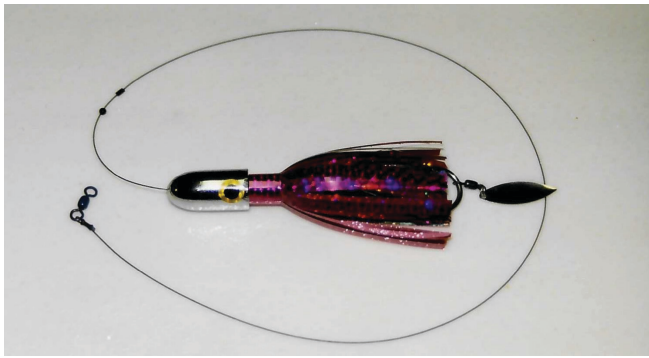


pier casting and great ling catch by Mr. Lo also shows their versatility.

The Snapper Slapper, advertised as an “all-purpose” lure, certainly lives up to that reputation. The “Another Way” light shines brightest on the yellowfin tuna catch. Myself and hundreds of others I’ve fished with over the years haven’t done the obvious... cast a Snapper Slapper for yellowfin tuna. Did the red/white color combination along with the baitfish look like a squid holding a prey item, occupied and vulnerable? Or did it mimic a diving baitfish?

Kingfish and wahoo call for all the retrieval speed you can generate; you can’t wind fast enough to outrun these speedsters. While the bullet type is primarily used as a sub-surface speedster, Mr. Lo and his slow to medium-speed retrieve ling hookup shows it has other uses too... such as casting for the numerous species previously mentioned.

The bullet or wahoo bomb and the snapper slapper lures



Rigged Wahoo Bomb

are available at Serious Tackle in LaMarque, Texas. There are slight differences in each of these models. The Serious Tackle wahoo bomb has chrome plated lead heads with multicolor mylar skirting. Important design features of all of them is a "sliding head" and a stop bead and crimp on their 90# cable leader system. The sliding head has an advantage and a disadvantage - the advantage is the head shaking kingfish or wahoo can't use the weight of the head to help dislodge the hook. The disadvantage is that, after the hookup, the head and its skirting could be slung up the cable to the swivel where it might generate a second strike from another kingfish or wahoo, resulting in a cutoff. The stop bead and crimp on the cable eliminates the problem. Hot color combinations for these sure-fire strike generators are black/purple, black/red, blue/white, and red/white.



Assorted Colors Available at Serious Tackle

When targeting toothy species with a Snapper Slapper, the addition of a 90# cable leader of 12 inches or so is a good move to make. The cable should be led by a black swivel, not a bright one that might generate a strike. While I have caught many kingfish with the supplied Kevlar cording on the two "J" hooks, for serious efforts I've replaced the Kevlar with cable. As I recall, the heaviest wahoo taken on a Snapper Slapper was a really nice 114 pounder which hit a purple/black fished out of Port Aransas.

When casting to wahoo in particular, and kingfish to some extent on the retrieve, point your rod tip at your line's entry into the water - at the strike, continue to wind until the drag slips and then raise your rod to about a 45-degree angle. When using a bullet primarily, and a Snapper Slapper to a lesser extent, a wahoo may have it somewhat sideways in its mouth and not hooked. Their bite motion, with the jaws open a bit and then closing, will allow your tight line to make a bullet slip quickly through the jaws, resulting in a solid hookup. A quick hookset rod motion at the strike can result in you allowing the lure to slip free when line tension is less at the rod drop... something to think about with wahoo.

"There's always another way", as in the use of a Snapper Slapper on the yellowfin tuna. There's also no reason not to cast a bullet or wahoo bomb for yellowfin or blackfin tuna. Wind'em fast or slow it down, the flash and motion of the head, skirt, and willow blade should call in tuna just as the combination does with wahoo and kingfish. Both lure types can also be fished from the mid-depths to the bottom. Cast far and vary the sink depth and speed to find what the voters out there want.

Bullet/Bombs and Snapper Slappers... get'em, rig up, and be ready. Wahoo and tuna are in deep water now and always, with wahoo and kingfish in closer soon; perceived distant events have a way of becoming current very quickly. Get and use these great family of offshore casters and let the kingfish and wahoo nightmares movie begin with you as the director. Any questions or comments? Reach me at:

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