

The

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Mack Attack

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THESE SPINNERS CATCH TROUT AND THAT'S A PROMISE!

by John Kruse

I've got to admit that when it comes to trout, I'm a spinner and spoon junkie. I can cast flies well enough to fool the occasional cutthroat and can troll for rainbows as well as the next guy, but casting for trout with spinning gear remains my favorite way to hook into these fish.

It must be the way I was raised. My first lessons in trout catching occurred on the Poudre River in Colorado, where I used spinners to catch these silvery fish while the grown-ups cast dry flies. As a teen my father and I would venture over to the Yakima River for day trips where I would catch feisty rainbows and whitefish with brass spinners. As a Boy Scout, I discovered the joys of hiking to alpine lakes, and catching fish with spinners and spoons came naturally.

Today, I still enjoy fishing in lakes

for trout. Some of these lakes are alpine lakes I fish in the summer months. Others are Eastern Washington desert lakes that offer good fishing in the spring and fall. For both types of lakes, I've often found I need a small lure I can cast a great distance. The reason is simple, many of these lakes are basin-shaped, starting off shallow and slowly dropping

off. The majority of the fish are hanging in deeper water and you need a lure that can get out to them.

I've been disappointed by several popular spinners. They work great for small streams, but their non-aerodynamic shape or lack of weight works against them when it comes to casting for distance. Because of this I started fishing spoons

"As a Boy Scout, I discovered the joys of hiking to alpine lakes; and catching fish with spinners and spoons came naturally."

Tip of the Month

Let 'em Have It

by Tony Glynn

We often hear or even read about how difficult it is to catch walleye when they're in a negative or neutral mood... Well, I say "Let 'em have it".

How often have you had your planer board flag or planer board



twitch only to have no fish on the other end, or worse yet, your night crawler bitten off right at the back of the hooks?

This used to happen to me all the time on the Saginaw Bay. I just figured it was a perch or a gobie or some **TIP... continued on page 2**

Continued on page two



Trout readily fall for the Promise Keeper spinner as author John Kruse has learned.

more and more. They were sometimes not as effective as a spinner, but at least I could get them out there.

A few years ago I discovered the Mack's Promise Keeper spinner. I'm glad I did. The 1/8-ounce spinner is shaped in a way that I can cast it much farther than any comparable spinner. This extra distance – coupled with the nice spinning of action of the mylar blade even at slow speeds – has been a Godsend. I can cast it, let it sink for a bit, and then either reel it in at a steady pace or by using

a stop and pause retrieve. Both ways work well for drawing strikes from hungry alpine trout, big Lahontan cutthroat, or chunky 14-inch Dry Falls Lake rainbow trout like the one I caught, photographed and released.

Promise Keeper spinners come in a variety of colors and patterns. If one color is not working, don't be afraid to switch to another until you find the pattern the trout are looking for. Look for them at your local sporting goods store or at the Mack's Lure online store (www.mackslure.com).

TIP... from page 1

other small fish. Since the planer board just barely moved it couldn't have been very big... or could it? I used to think nothing of it until one day last summer while fishing a popular local hot spot with my Dad.

My Dad's an old river rat, a beat the banks for bass kind of guy. He likes to hold the rod in his hand rather than use a planer board while trolling. I told Dad to send the lure back 35 to 40 feet and every now and then pump the rod and let out five to ten feet of line. Every time Dad hit 50 feet back on the line counter reel he would feel a hit. He would start to reel the fish in and a few seconds into the fight, the fish would pop off the hook. This happened four or five times before I finally told Dad, "The next time you feel a fish, just open the reel up and "let 'em have it". I'm not sure whether the look I received was from the frustration of losing the fish or Dad thinking I had finally flipped my lid, but... I was pretty sure that it was no time to laugh.

Anyway, my Dad did follow my suggestion and he proceeded to put three nice fish in the boat just as quickly as he could put a fresh crawler on.

Now, back to what I want to say about neutral or negative fish. Unstable weather, low barometric pressure, no wind or bluebird sunny skies are just a few things that will put fish in a mood that makes them hard to catch. Slowing down your presentation is critical when the fishing is tough. Getting your planer boards farther away from the boat than normal, dumping line at regular intervals (stopping and starting your planer boards) and running your lures at or near the bottom can be a big

TIP... Continued on page 4

Public Panfish #1

By Stan Fagerstrom
Part 4

You've managed to find spots where the crappies are concentrated. You've also been careful to determine the exact depth at which the school is holding. Those two steps are essential to successful crappie catching. However, you're still not going to catch very many unless you know the speed at which your bait or lures must be manipulated to get maximum results.

What is the right speed? It's not at all involved. What you need to remember always is that you simply can't fish too slowly if it's crappie you're after. That sounds simple enough, but some would-be crappie fishermen never do figure it out. I've fished crappie a few times with one of these guys. He's one of those nervous individuals who is just not happy unless he's jerking and twitching his rod tip and retrieving his lure so fast a starving barracuda would have trouble catching up with it. That flat won't work where crappies are concerned.

Sometimes the best speed of retrieve for a crappie bait or lure is simply not moving it at all. One of the most effective methods to catch crappie under many conditions is to suspend a little jig, fly or miniature plastic worm beneath a

float. Cast your float out where you know the crappie are holding and let it set. Now retrieve it a couple of feet. Let it rest again. Do this all the way back to your boat.

Now and then, depending on how rippled the surface is, many of your hits come while the lure is seemingly dead in the water. Just the up and down movement the float imparts to the lure as it bobs on the surface is enough to attract crappie.

Tiny tube lures, flies dressed with marabou feathers and miniature plastic worms are all super crappie baits. Use all of these lures with a leadhead jig of appropriate size and remember that the best size weight isn't necessarily always going to be the same. I prefer to use the lightest leadhead I can get by with and still fish efficiently. I say efficiently, because while I might generally favor a 1/32nd-ounce leadhead, I don't want to use something that falls as slowly as

a 1/32nd-ounce jig does if the fish are feeding at 25-feet.

I recall fishing some bushes on a favorite lake that always hold crappie in the spring. The guy I was with couldn't figure out why I was catching one fish after another while he wasn't getting a bump. I had given him lures identical to my own.

Finally, knowing something was haywire and wanting to see him get his share of the action, I asked to see his jig. One glance was enough to discover his problem. We were fishing water only 3 to 4-feet deep. While the miniature grub he had been using was the same as my own, the little jig he was using it on was 1/16th of an ounce. Mine was only 1/32nd-ounce.

His lure was falling so fast the crappies didn't have time to get to it before it hit bottom. As soon as I gave him a leadhead the weight of my own he started catching fish. To an inexperienced crappie fisherman that slight difference in jig size might not seem significant. It was and is. Little things can make a really big difference in any kind of fishing. The sooner you make that discovery, the sooner your catches will increase.

If you have read my book, *Catch More Crappie*, you will recall a chapter in which I mentioned a man named Tom Jones, of Longview, Washington. Tom has been gone a long time now, but I always regarded him as the best all around crappie fishermen I ever met. He went after crappie the way us bass nuts go after large-mouth.

I used to see him often at a favorite lake I fished 50 years ago. He had the crappie holding



Stan's leadhead choices

spots pinned down. Every now and then I'd take a break from bass fishing and run by to check how Tom was doing catching crappie.

I did that one day and thought my eyes were deceiving me. Tom had a pair of burlap bags attached to the side of his boat. He showed me a couple of fish out of the bag on the starboard side. They were average sized fish. Then he reached into the bag attached to the port side. In it he had a bunch of crappie larger than anything I'd seen in Tom's part of the world. They were beauties.

I asked Tom, he was as nice a guy as he was a good angler, how he caught those fish. He showed me. He had a small bucktail fly that looked something like a cross between a Royal Coachman and a Cowlitz Spe-

cial. The fly was suspended under a float. Tom cast this rig out and then inched it back. Many of his fish were caught when the fly seemed dead in the water.

I've always remembered the tips Tom shared with me. One of them was how slow you must fish to catch crappie consistently. It's something you also need to remember if you hope to fashion a successful approach to catching them yourself.

In the last four columns I've shared the three main keys to successful crappie angling. Once again they are location, depth and proper lure speed. These keys aren't something I read about somewhere. They are based on a lifetime of fishing experience.

TIP... from page 3

help as well.

My tournament partner Jared Ayres and I found the following system very helpful: As soon as we saw any movement of our planer boards or planer board flags we would grab the reel, open it up and let out 15 to 20 feet of line. This action caused the lure to slow down and start to fall. In turn, this forced the fish that were following to make a split second decision whether or not to eat an easy meal. Most of the time the fish made the choice to take our offering. Almost all of our bigger fish this year have come by this method. Hmm.... Makes me wonder just how many big fish I could have had.

So the next time the bite is tough, your crawlers are coming back half eaten, or your boards are just barely twitching, slow things down, pay close attention to details and "Let 'em have it".

Photo of the Month

We want your photos! Send your photos to bernie@mackslure.com.



Two-year old Jamie Shackelford is off on the right foot... his first fish is a trout caught on a Mack's Lure Wedding Ring spinner with a piece of worm. The fish was caught at Langlois Lake, Washington with the help of his grandfather Craig Brissey.

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