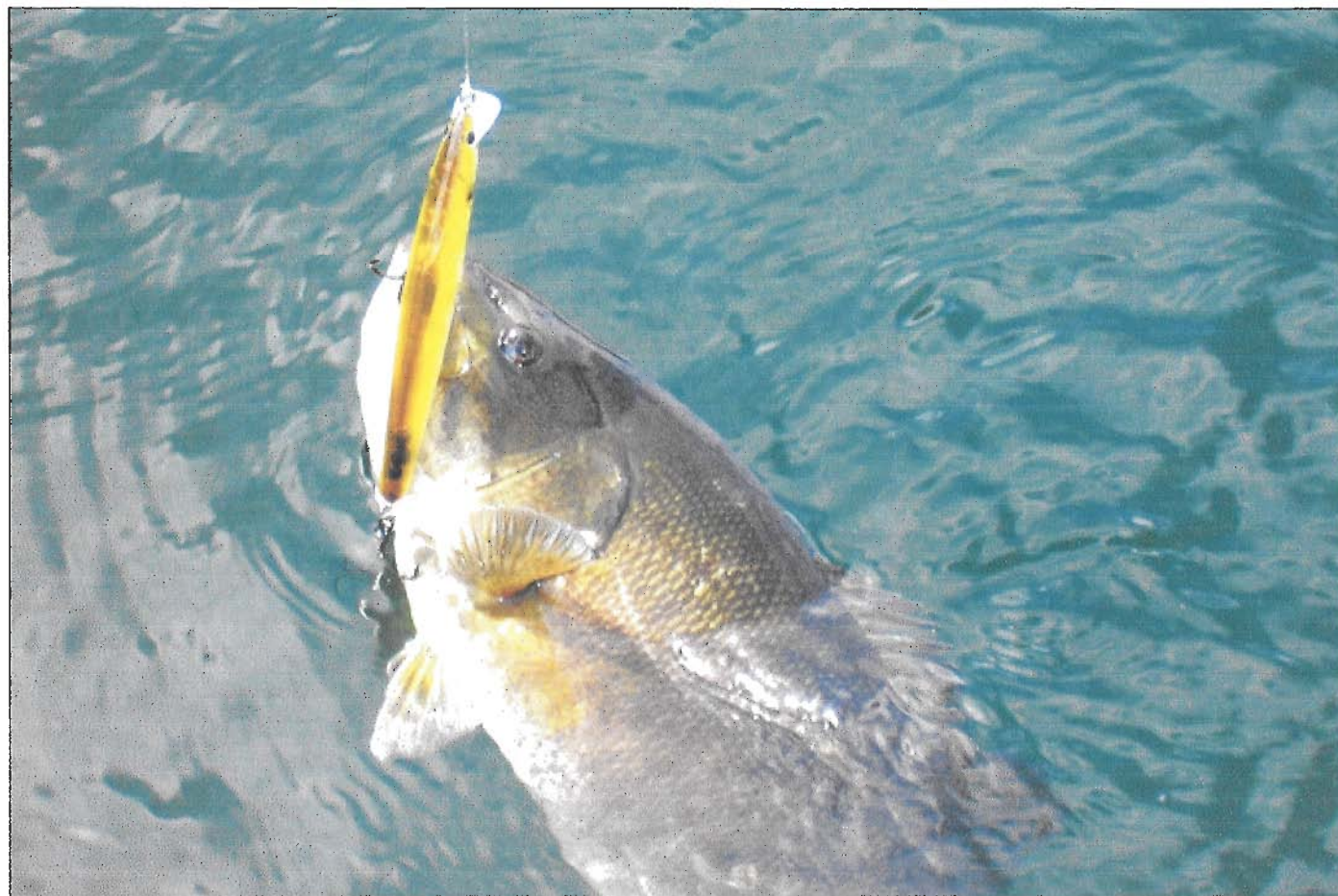


Cold Water

Jerkbaits

by Burnie Haney



No doubt countless words have been written and ideas shared on the art of jerkbait fishing in cold water, so what you're about to read here won't be new to some, but it's my hope it will be helpful to others. With this installment our focus is on hard jerkbaits, Lucky Craft jerkbaits in particular.

Since around 2000, this family of baits has grown every year

and with good reason. Four level anglers started using these baits and they quickly started winning and winning big. The most televised win with a Lucky Craft jerkbait was when Strike King Pro George Corcoran won a B.A.S.S. event on Lake Guntersville using a Lucky Craft Pointer. During the tournament the ESPN camera crews were very good at their job and with each fish Corcoran landed the viewers could easily see him removing the Lucky

Craft Pointer from the fish's mouth. I think that short story speaks volumes about these baits and their effectiveness; so let's take a brief look at this family of baits.

See the list of Lucky Craft jerkbaits by make, model, weight, and swimming depth on the following page

These baits produce very well during the cold water pre-spawn period and again late in the fall, just before winter arrives. Water

temperatures during these two calendar periods are usually in the 45-55 degrees in the spring and then 60-45 in the late fall. The key to finding success in jerkbait fishing rests with three ingredients; the angler has to know when, where, and how. We've covered the when, but let's concentrate on the pre-spawn period and review the where and how.

Location... location... location, how many times have we

Flash Minnow

Model Number	Length	Weight	Depth it Dives
95	3.75"	3/8 oz.	1-2 ft.
110	4.5"	5/8 oz.	1-2 ft.
130	5.25"	3/4 oz.	1-2 ft.

Pointer

Model Number	Length	Weight	Depth it Dives
65	2.5"	3/16 oz.	1-2 ft.
78	3"	3/8 oz.	1-2 ft.
100	4"	5/8 oz.	2-4 ft.
128	5"	1 oz.	2-4 ft.

Pointer DD (Down Deep)

Model Number	Length	Weight	Depth it Dives
65	2.5"	3/16 oz.	5-7 ft.
78	3"	1/3 oz.	7-8 ft.
100	4"	5/8 oz.	6-7 ft.

Slender Pointer

Model Number	Length	Weight	Depth it Dives
97	4"	3/8 oz.	3-4 ft.
112	5"	1/2 oz.	3-4 ft.
127	5"	3/4 oz.	3-4 ft.

heard that before? Jerkbait fishing is all about the location and finding the right location determines if you're going to load the boat or just wash your lures all day. I realize that might sound bizarre to some, but it's true, especially in water that's 45-55 degrees. The right move can turn an unproductive day into a winner, or it can turn a good bite into no bite. The key is to know when to move and where to move to. With a little home work, there are few things to look for that can help put you in the right location most of the time.

Anglers are well advised to do some lake study to improve their odds of finding the best locations quickly. For Northern anglers, a good time is during the hard water period when the boat's put away. If you live in areas that experience open water year round that doesn't mean a little chart study won't work for you too. Think of it this way, you could go to the lake and start driving around with your graph looking for potential areas or you could go on-line, or get a map and let your fingers do the

walking for you. Select your areas mark your map and when you get to the lake you've already completed 50% of your search. Elites Series angler Mike Iaconelli likes to use paper charts for his pre-fishing trips while sitting in his living room. He'll mark each contour line with a different colored marker to quickly identify similar areas across the lake. I've tried this and it works very well for visually identifying like areas across any body of water, lake, river or reservoir.

During the pre-spawn period look for migration routes into shallow water from near by deep-water areas. Secondary points, fingers and channels swings adjacent to flats, and near deep water are solid areas to start your search. Each of these areas provides a good navigational highway the fish will use as the leave deeper water in route to their spawning areas. Often times the first major warming trend after ice out will draw good numbers of fish into these areas in just a day or two. Something to pay particular attention to is where you are

when you hook that first fish of the day. How deep were you, how far off shore, what's the structural element? Did you hook that fish off a finger, underwater hump, or channel swing. After you've hooked a few fish in a given area and your bite slows down it could be time to check similar areas near by. Remember that contour map that's color coded, it can certainly help when deciding where to go next. In my experience once you identify these migration routes they tend to produce every spring year after year. The science behind that is because largemouth bass are basically home bodies and they usually spend their entire life within a 1/2 mile to 1.5 miles from where they were spawned. Small-mouth bass are a bit more nomadic, but generally speaking they too tend to use the same spawning areas year after year. Whether you're targeting small-

mouth or largemouth the one constant to success is using the right presentation to generate the most strikes.

With water temperature running from 45-55 degrees it seems the smaller profile baits work best. The Pointer DD in size 65 & 78 or the Slender Pointer in size 97 & 112 and the original Pointer in size 78 all produce on a slow jerk-pause-jerk retrieve. As the water gets warmer you can go up in size with your baits, but remember in this colder water it's best to pause for longer period between jerks. Sometimes pauses from 20-25 seconds or more are needed to generate the strike. Cold water often means clear water and you'd think since the bass can see the lure so well that they'd come from greater distances to strike, but in cold water they won't chase bait very far. That's why the colder the

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Jerkbait.....

water the longer the pause in between jerks and that usually produces best. I recommend starting with a pause of 6-8 seconds and if that won't get you bit then add a few more seconds of pause on each cast until you find the right cadence. The fish will tell you when you've found the right cadence. Once you find that right cadence it might produce for the entire day or maybe just a few hours a day, but most often it will hold up for a good period of time until something dramatic changes. I've also had days where the same cadence held up for a couple of days before I need to adjust, but that's not the norm. Most often you'll have to read the fish; listen to what they tell you and be prepared to adjust your presentation as needed.

For my pre-spawn jerkbait fishing I use fluorocarbon line in 8-10 lb. test with a 6' 6" medium action rod and a 6.3:1 reel. I tie direct to the split ring, I don't use any snaps or swivels because I'm using a long pause and the fish has more time to look at the lure before they strike it. When I graph



a point, finger or channel swing that has some solid marks on or near it I usually start with the lure that runs within a foot or two of where the fish are on the graph.

For fish at 5-7 ft., I'll use the Slender Pointer that dives 3-4 ft and if I mark fish at 8-10 ft. I select the Pointer DD 78 that dives 7-8 ft. In my experience fish will come up slightly in colder water to strike, but they won't chase far and that's why the

extended pause during the retrieve is so critical.

As the water continues to get warm and the fish get closer to the spawn you can speed up your cadence to cover more water, but generally speaking the colder the water the slower your cadence.

If there's a key tip I can offer for your next cold water jerkbait fishing trip it's this; slow down your cadence, down size your bait and use lighter line. Oh, and one last

thing, you're fishing a suspending bait in cold water... so slow down.

Haney is a 28 year retired Army veteran now employed at Fort Drum as Chief of the Installation Operations Center. He's a regional Bass tournament angler and Pro Staffer for Lucky Craft and Secret Weapon Lures. When he isn't chasing bass or steelhead he spends his time as the Conservation Director for the New York BASS Chapter Federation and as a freelance contributor to various publications. www.nybassfed.com/Data/Conservation/Index.htm

New

ing formula. Included in their new baits are: a six inch boot tail type of swimbait, molded in eyes and scales. This is great bait when searching for the big one and can be rigged on a variety of jigheads. Another new bait is their **Mega-Do**, reaper style of bait comes in three sizes; 3 3/4", 7 1/4" and 9". One bait that is sure to get anglers attention is the 4" **Hippie Head**. It looks just like an ordinary tube bait; however that

is where the likeness ends. This bait performs just like your favorite stick bait. It is solid not hollow like normal tubes and has an action that is irresistible to fish. Rounding out Bearpaws new offerings is a 3 1/4" **Paw-a-Craw**, this is also a solid body lure, it can be rigged a variety of ways. Like all Bear Paws Baits these new baits are available in over 100 different colors!

For more information contact: www.Bearpawshand-pouredbaits.com

For years, anglers have relied on Blakemore Roadrunners for

panfish and now they have come up with a go to bait for bass anglers. They have added a metal plate to the front of a Roadrunner creating the deadliest Roadrunner in 50 years called the **Rock-'N Runner**. It features a Daiichi Bleeding Bait hook and a Sampo Swivel. It comes in 3/8 and 1/4 ounce sizes and five colors.

For more information contact: www.ttblakemore.com

Swimbaits are a huge rage in all parts of the country. Finding a hook to properly rig the swimbaits on has been a problem until now. Daiichi Hooks have added a

6/0 and 7/0 to their **ButtDragger** and **CopperHead** Series of hooks. The HitchHiker coil on these hooks firmly holds the plastic while it increases lure life. Both the CopperHead and ButtDragger hooks allow the angler to Pre-rig swimbaits, before the fishing trip begins.

For more information contact: www.daiichihooks.com ♦

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