

Of The Outdoors

Cranking Your Way To More Fish

BY GARY HOWEY
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The toughest part of fishing for all anglers is locating the fish as a very small percentage of the water in the lake actually holds fish.

There are numerous ways to find the fish, unfortunately, most of these take a lot of time and we all know that there's never enough time to go fishing.

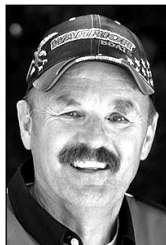
One method to help you to locate the fish and to catch the more aggressive fish would be to use crankbaits.

What exactly is a crankbait, well, it's a bait that needs to be trolled behind a boat or cast and retrieved, as this is how the vibrating side rocking action is put into the lure.

The action of the bait depends on the bill or lip of the bait, the larger the bill, the deeper the bait will dive.

There are numerous versions of when it comes to crankbaits, there's the floating, sinking as well as the suspending baits.

Crankbaits come in several sizes with the size 5 and 7 being the most popular.



Gary Howey

They come in every color imaginable, natural to almost bizarre colors, some are jointed while others aren't.

ers aren't.

A few of those that I carry in my bait box include: Shadling, Shad Rap, Thundestick and the Flicker Shad.

I prefer a floating crankbait in a size 5 as the bodies of water that I fish, aren't all that deep and a size 5 gets down to the depth that I want to fish.

The depth a crankbait will dive is directly related to the diameter of the line you're using. Heavier lines will have more resistance when being pulled through the water, so a crankbait snapped or tied to 10 pound test monofilament won't dive as deep as one tied to 6 or 8 pound test.

The diameter of the line you're using when fishing crankbaits is



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Team Outdoorsmen Adventures member Chuck Doom of Brandon is pictured with a huge largemouth bass caught down south while using crankbaits.

important, that's why I pull crankbaits using 14-pound Fireline as it has the strength of 14-pound line with the diameter of 6 pound, allowing my bait to dive deeper than it would if I were using standard 14-pound monofilament line.

The depth your baits runs is one of the most important things, as a bait that's up too high or too

low won't be seen by the fish.

It's best to put your bait above the fish, since their eyes are on the upper part of their head and their best vision is above.

Crankbaits run at different depths, with the size of the bill, line diameter and speed the bait is trolled or retrieved the things that influence the depth your bait will run.

To know exactly how deep each crankbait will run on different line weights, you can learn by taking them out on the

water and test them while fishing, which generally costs you a few crankbaits or you can pickup Mark Romanack's book "Precision Trolling."

Mark's book takes all the guesswork out of trolling crankbaits as it lists all the popular crankbaits along with the most popular line weights that you might use, including both monofilament and super lines.

It will tell you just how much line you'll need to put out while trolling a certain bait in order to get it down to the depth you

want to fish the bait.

As the weather warms up and fish patterns change, you can use them behind Off Shore planer boards or push them deeper by adding Off Shore Snap Weights or use them with leadcore line and downriggers.

They can be fished in numerous places, catch most species of fish and will work year round, so crankbaits are a win, win situation and once you start using them, you may not want to try any other methods.

I don't think you want to become a one-method angler, relying on only crankbaits to catch fish, as there are times when fish location makes it impossible to put a crankbait in front of the fish.

Crankbaits aren't super bait, but once you've become familiar with them, they'll help you to up your fish catching percentage.

Gary Howey, Hartington, Neb., is the producer/host of Outdoorsmen Adventures TV which can be seen throughout the upper Midwest or online at www.MyOutdoorTV.com If you'd like more information on fishing and hunting go to www.outdoorsmenadventures.com.

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