



THE SMALLMOUTH HORIZON

Helping to Protect and Preserve Quality Smallmouth Bass Fishing

August 2014

A ^{big} handful of essential baits for fishing river smallies

By Dan Johnson

Heddon Spook



If the fish are at all inclined to bite on top, then that's where you want to target them. Why? Simply because it's the most fun. The Spook's walk-the-dog retrieve is easy to master and the strikes can be memorable.

Torpedo



Another top-water bait, it has some of the appeal of a buzz bait with the added advantage that you can dead drift it between pulls.

Rapala Husky Jerk



The name says it, a jerk bait, but it is also suspending which allows it to drift at mid depth or just off the bottom. The X Rap is a similar bait with a different action and more casting weight. You'll want to use them both.

Fluke



Also a jerk bait, but in soft plastic. A great choice at the edge of weeds, below dams and rapids, in wind churned water or any place the bass are looking for hapless minnows.

Stick bait



Senkos and Yum Dingers are the best known. My number one, go-to choice. They are economical and can be rigged in a variety of ways. Wacky rigged and unweighted is a favorite, the ultimate way to dead drift, as the bait tends to quiver while it slowly sinks. Give it a twitch every now and then and you have an incredibly effective lure.

Rebel Craw



Like any hard bodied lure they are relatively costly. But digging into the bottom and bouncing off rocks, crank baits get noticed and turn smallmouth on. And you can't beat a mudbug imitation.

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Yum Craw Bug



The body is hollow so you can rig it just like a tube or you can put it on a jig head. Sometimes the smaller (two and a half inch) size matches perfectly the ones I see the fish coughing up when I'm landing them. Don't overlook regular tubes either.

Skirted jig with pork or plastic trailer



The classic way to explore the bottom and still one of the best. A mouthful of a meal, and the clicking of the jig head on the rocks can be enhanced with rattles. Be sure to have some in blue/black.

Twister-tailed grubs.



These are the ones to start with. Unsurpassed as search baits. Choose the weight for any depth you want to target. Economical, and they come in every color you could want. Can be had with paddle tails too.

The bottom line

By now you should have noticed three things: Sometimes you have to dead drift your bait. River smallmouth don't always want to chase their prey down, and they won't move very far for a meal.

I really like baits that imitate crayfish. Even with lures that don't specifically suggest them, you often can't go wrong with crayfish colors.

You must learn to work and feel a bait on the bottom. That's often where the pigtails are.



Wisconsin Smallmouth Alliance Ltd.

2701 Gust Road
Verona, WI 53593
(608) 843-3770

<http://wisconsin-smallmouth.com/wordpress/>

Jerry Pasdo
President
(608) 233-2774
japasdo@gmail.com

John Pritchard
Vice President
(608) 877-0344
john_pritchard@sbcglobal.net

Mike & Kathy Simon
Treas./Membership
(608) 848-3770
madisonmike@tds.net

Andy Davidson
Secretary
(608) 338-2639
buroakakd@gmail.com

Gerry Zingg
Board
(608) 233-7348
zingger@charter.net

Articles, photos, and calendar events for the newsletter are encouraged and should be submitted by the 1st day of the month to: Dan Johnson, 426 Glenway St. Madison, WI 53711. Send to: johnson7@tds.net, editor.

Dan Johnson
Board
(608) 233-6518
johnson7@tds.net

Our Next Meeting:

September 16th

Door County: Finding and catching trophy fall smallmouth

Dave McCoy of the Rock Valley Anglers in Beloit



Upcoming Meetings:

Saturday, August 2nd BFF picnic
Donald Park

September 16th WSA monthly Meeting
Dave McCoy "Door County: Finding and Catching
Trophy Fall Smallmouth"

September 22nd BFF monthly Meeting
Mike Miller - Stream Ecology"

Wisconsin Smallmouth Alliance meetings are normally held on the third Tuesday of each month. The Badger Fly Fishers meet on the fourth Monday. Both groups meet at the Mapletree Restaurant on Highway 51, in McFarland, Wisconsin. Programs begin at 7:00 p.m., dinner at 6:00 p.m. **Visitors and guests are always welcome!**