

Refined

Wacky

Rigging

By Lonnie King



Wacky rigging soft plastics has been around for a long time, but it has really gotten a second wind with the advent on cigar shaped soft plastics like the Senko. Other popular brands include Berkley's Sinking Worm, Bass Pro Shops Stik-O-Worm, the Yum Dinger and the Phantom Salty Dog just to name a few. Many of these baits are heavily fortified with salt which makes them easy to cast with baitcasting tackle without needing to add weight. By hooking these baits in the middle, it leaves the head and tail to waiver tightly back and forth as it sinks, not unlike the shiver of a dying minnow.

The same generous injection of salt which makes these baits heavy, also makes them quite fragile, so if you pierce the hook directly through the soft plastic,

it doesn't take much to tear the bait. Alternate rigging makes use of silicone tubing, split

rings or rubber o-rings to hold the hook to the bait without actually damaging it. Having tried all of the options listed above, I prefer to use silicone tubing because it holds the best, although admittedly it is often challenging sliding the tight fitting

silicone tubing around the bait. I use a pair of pliers to stretch the silicone tubing and then slide the worm through the opening. You need pliers with a wider end than needle nose, in order to make an opening big enough to slide the bait through.

You can fish the bait on your favorite wide gap bass hook, although recently I've started fishing this rig with circle hooks and I'm very impressed with the results. For starters you only need to use a 1/0 hook, which is comparatively smaller than the 3/0 to



The author proudly displays this nice smallmouth bass he caught using a refined wacky rigged bait

Photos: courtesy of author

5/0 wide gap hooks typically used by bass anglers. The tendency for circle hooks to

hook the fish in the corner of the mouth further reduces the chances of inflicting damage on the fish.

When fishing circle hooks, resist the urge to set the hook. It's a hard habit to break, especially for bass anglers, but you actually want to give the fish time to turn away from you before applying just enough pressure to have the hook slide out of, and



This bass was caught with a popular cigar shaped bait, surgical tubing and a circle hook, which reduces damage to the fish

catch in the corner of the fishes mouth.

In Ontario, it is not customary to find circle hooks in every store you stop at, but the brand of hook that I use is available to local retailers if you ask for it by name. While I have tried several styles, the one I have had the best success with is the Mustad Demon Circle, Ex-Fine 39951BLN.

It really is amazing how some truly great techniques get forgotten, but thanks to the advent of the Senko, Wacky rigging is back, and based on the reports I'm getting, I think this time, it's here to stay.

Lonnie King is a well-rounded multi-species angler, and he formerly hosted his own cable television show entitled 'Niagara Outdoors'.