

Fishing Crank Baits - A Primer

For those fishermen who are new to the use of crank baits, I hope that my thoughts and observations will be helpful in starting you on a new method of bass fishing that, personally, is my favorite. For those of you who are already crank bait fishermen, I hope that you may gain something from this article.

My preferred choice, when possible, is to fish for largemouth bass with crank baits. The strikes are hard and the fishing is fast! When bass are active I feel there is no way to put more bass in the boat in a shorter period of time than with crank baits. I find that when I go out on a lake and am not sure where the bass are, how deep they are holding, or on what kind of structure, the crank bait is unsurpassed as a "searching" lure. For each type, size and color of crank bait there is a version that will dive 1-3ft. and skim over the weeds, one that will dive to 3-6ft. and ply the mid-depth along the edges of weed beds, one that will dive to 6-9ft. and scour the lower levels of our lakes. I can retrieve them fast, medium, or slow. I can jerk them while I retrieve, or stop and start. They find fish!

Depth

There are crank baits that sink and dive to depths of 30+ feet. There are crank baits that are neutrally buoyant and suspend at any depth you stop your retrieve at. There are crank baits that float. When you stop retrieving these they begin to float to the surface and when you begin retrieving again, dive down to their designated depth once again. Most every make of crank bait is available in colors and patterns that mimic bait fish, bluegill, trout, pike, and bass spawn, crawfish of all sizes and colors, and a range of "attractor" colors like red, white or chartreuse that do not replicate any living organism. They come in thin sizes and thick sizes. Thick sizes wobble more. They come with or without rattles. Most crank baits will have listed on the package the depth the bait will dive to. But there are other factors that will affect the depth. The heavier diameter (lb. test) on your reel, the shallower the lure will dive. How far you have cast the crank bait will also affect the depth. How fast you retrieve the crank bait will have a bearing on its running depth. My own personal preference is for a medium-heavy action, six and a half ft. length rod, a reel with fast retrieve (7:1 ratio), and 8-10lb. test for our area.

Colors

As I have mentioned, there is a wide range of colors available and new colors each year (although many end up discontinued the next year or so). Over the years I have found that there are a core group of colors that seem to be the most reliable producers. These are the ones I stock. My basic choices are: fire tiger, brown crawdad, olive crawdad, texas Shad, blue-Chrome, bass, shad, and solid chartreuse.

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Most quality crank baits come with a split-ring attached to the lures eyelet. Fishermen differ in their opinions on whether to tie the line directly to the split-ring, or to tie a snap swivel to the line and then attach it to the lure. I prefer to use a snap swivel. I feel that it maximizes the lure's action. One suggestion I do have is to avoid the "safety-pin" type snap swivel. Swivels are rated in lb. test like fishing lines are. I use the "fast Lock" or "interlock" type of swivel in black.

Crank baits can be fished on spin-casting rods, spinning rods, and the most preferred, bait casting rods.

Tight Lines! Bodhi



Firetiger



Firetiger/Orange Belly



Tennessee Shad



Chrome/Blue



Baby Bass/Orange Belly



Crawdada