

The Sound Advantage

A SPECIAL REPORT by Captain John Kumiski ©2010

As if, in the antiquity of artificial fishing lures, popping plugs weren't enough evidence that sound both attracts fish and entices them to strike, the Rat-L-Trap/Cordell Spot and similar type of crankbait craze that swept through the world of Florida saltwater fishing 10 or 15 years ago should have been proof enough for anybody. Today most plugs sold have some type of rattle chamber incorporated into them for this very reason.

However, when we look at the shallow grass flats of the Indian River Lagoon system we find that plugs have some significant drawbacks as shallow water baits. The gang hooks catch grass constantly, ruining presentations and deterring strikes. Then, if the fish does strike, all those hooks make practicing catch and release problematical even if one presses the barb down on all those points. They just don't function well in this situation.

My favorite lures in for flats fishing, especially over grass flats, are soft plastics-jerk baits and soft plastic shrimp imitations. They cast well, maneuver through the grass quite easily, and only have a single hook for ease of releasing the catch. But as they come out of the package they lack the sound advantage.

Woodie's Rattles (www.woodiesrattlers.com) solves this problem with several different products that add sound to almost any soft plastic lure. Larry McGlashan, the owner of the company, says, "We've designed our products to help fishermen catch more fish by adding sound to almost any type of soft plastic bait. The Rattling Hook can be used with almost any jerk bait and several of the soft plastic shrimp and crabs, the Worm Rattle can be inserted into almost any soft plastic bait, and the uses of the Versatile Rattle are limited only by the angler's imagination. They can be added to the weedguard of weedless spoons, used as a peg in a popping cork, placed on the line itself, and any number of other applications."

Larry fished with me recently on the Mosquito Lagoon where he demonstrated the effectiveness of the Rattle Hook. "The Rattle Hook comes in three colors, from size 2/0 through 5/0. Our first color was black, but with the success of the red hooks we thought a red rattle would be a good idea and some of our testers report that they catch more fish with them. It adds a little of that gill flash or blood color that seems to stimulate reluctant fish to strike. We also have a Nite Glow rattle that we tested on Lake Conway. We could see it 15 feet down. It works real well in low light situations or in discolored water."

This rattling hook also adds 1/32nd ounce of casting weight to your lure, making it fly farther on the cast, often an important consideration when trying to cover water. And if you compare the volume of sound it makes compared to a plastic worm rattle that's inserted into a bait, it's six times louder, attracting fish from that much farther away.

Woodie's Rattles are all made from plastic. There are other brands on the market, many of which are made of glass. As far as producing sound, in spite of rumors to the contrary, the glass and plastic rattles that are inserted into baits produce about the same volume of sound until you place them into a bait. The bait itself seems to act as a resonance chamber with a plastic rattle, increasing its volume and effectiveness. The plastic rattles never break, and unlike the slick glass rattles they seldom slide out of the bait.

Most of us prefer to sightfish in shallow water venues, and one could argue that in that situation the rattles are of questionable value. You might have a point. However, for anyone whose casting skills aren't up to snuff, or for any situation where visibility is less than 100 percent, the rattles are an invaluable addition to your arsenal. Try them and you're sure to like them!

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