



# FISHING FOR EVERYONE



A Complete Illustrated Guide

Scott Bowen  
Principal photography by David E. Dirks



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SCOTT BOWEN

PRINCIPAL PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID E. DIRKS



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# INTRODUCTION

## Starting with Rod and Reel

### Here's a step-by-step guide for becoming a successful angler

People with a good deal of fishing experience will be the first to tell you that casting a line is not always easy—although they often make it look easy—but it is always fun. Fishing with rod and line is a very old sport—the technique goes back to various methods developed in ancient Rome, China, Egypt, and Greece—that offers multiple pleasures: wonderful natural environments in which to go fishing; the camaraderie of fishing friends and fellow anglers; the beauty, vigor, and wiliness of many different species of gamefish; and the lasting satisfaction of a successful day on the water.

This book is designed to guide you, step by step, in becoming a capable and knowledgeable angler—one who, with a set of basic skills, starts catching fish and continues to do so, refining your techniques as you go. The term “angling” derives from the development of the sport in England: The V-shape made by the rod and the cast line led to rods sometimes being referred to as “angles,” and their use as “angling.” Since the early twentieth century, basic angling concepts and the hardware used for fishing have been largely consistent: rods fling line and lures, reels wrap line around spools, and lures have to imitate

the appearance and motion of the prey of gamefish. The materials that go into the making of tackle are what have evolved the most, as the science behind fishing devises newer and better ways to design and manufacture rods, reels, lines, and lures.

This book is the *how* about the *what*—how to identify the right stuff and put it to use, whether you want to fish for farm-pond sunfish and catfish, or trout in rivers, or off the beach for whatever fish are cruising by in the surf. There's also a good deal of information in here about minimizing trouble and maximizing enjoyment, such as how to wade properly, how to take great photos of your catch, and how to prepare fish for the table.





For freshwater fishing, the main choices discussed in this book are bait-casting tackle, spinning and spin-casting tackle, and fly-casting tackle. For saltwater fishing, the book addresses mainly surf-casting tackle and conventional tackle for inshore fishing. Innovative anglers can easily break strict rules about fishing tackle—the minute someone says, “You can’t catch a big salmon with a bait-casting outfit,” someone will do just so—but the type of lure or bait that you want to use, as determined by the species of fish you’re chasing, influences your choice of tackle, and sometimes a particular kind

of rod and reel is just right for a certain lure or bait. You have to ask: How heavy is the lure or bait rig I want to cast? How deep am I fishing it, in what kind of water? How big might the fish be? How far might I have to cast this lure, or bait?

For instance, largemouth bass often readily take a lure called a “crankbait”—an oblong plastic lure that mimics a baitfish. These lures tend to cause a good bit of resistance against the water when retrieved, and bigger largemouth are hard-fighting fish, so many anglers will choose a bait-casting reel because of its cranking power that helps bat-



tle bass, and pair this with a bait-casting rod stiff enough for use with crankbaits

In another situation, an angler casting bait to medium-sized catfish in a large pond could go with a number of choices: spin-casting, spinning, or bait-casting tackle, as long as the rod has sufficient stiffness to handle the weight of any sinkers, and the reel is powerful enough to haul in any fish you might hook.

A quality fishing reel these days is quite a good piece of equipment, especially when compared to the so-so reels American anglers had to use back in the mid-twentieth century, before the great innovations in tackle technology that occurred in the 1970s and 80s. In general, you can get away with using a slightly smaller reel

than you might think for most freshwater applications, as long as it holds enough line. Using too big a reel just adds unnecessary weight.

Knowing how to set up and organize your tackle is central to success and enjoyment, and a number of chapters and spreads discuss how to do this the right way, because the alternatives—broken rods, clumps of tangled lures, and tackle boxes that offer little but mysteries—can often end your willing participation. What you spend on tackle depends, of course, on every angler's personal budget. Some brand-new high-quality tackle can be wildly expensive; its saving graces are usually its superior performance and ability to out-last everything else. Before buying new gear retail, scour various Internet outlets for quality used tackle and equipment, and also look for close-out sales from retailers that sell online. Various nationwide fishing shows provide opportunities to buy cut-price tackle and gear. And you never know what you might find at a flea market or garage sale.

As for the quarry themselves, most of the fish discussed in this book are classified as "gamefish," a term used loosely, but which usually means those fish that can be pursued with legal sporting methods by individual anglers. Not all gamefish are good eating, while others, such as salmon, comprise major commercial fisheries. Having official gamefish status protects some species in a number of states, while some states do not classify catfish and vari-

ous panfish species as gamefish, but anglers pursue those fish just the same. In some jurisdictions or states, the lawful status of a gamefish often helps to promote the conservation of sport fisheries; a 2007 Presidential decision to classify striped bass as a protected gamefish prohibits the commercial sale of striper caught in certain East Coast waters and encourages eastern states to similarly declare the striper a protected gamefish under state law.

In a number of places in this book, you'll see mention of conservation of fisheries. As an angler, you have many avenues to make your opinion known about how we can ensure that your children, grandchildren, and generations to come will have as many—if not more—fishing opportunities as you do. There are a number of fishing groups and associations that you can join or support for the sake of the future of the sport.



Once you start fishing, you'll learn things from all directions—from other anglers, from real-time online fishing reports, from the water and the environment, and from the fish themselves. But you'll be able to turn back to this book again and again as you expand your endeavors, catch different kinds of fish, and develop new tackle needs.

Good luck, be safe, and put back more fish than you keep.

# ORIGINAL PART: THE HOOK

There's a specific hook to choose for each and every fishing technique

The hook is the oldest item of fishing tackle, with the first hooks fashioned from bone roughly 9,000 years ago. The earliest written notation of a fish hook made from steel needles dates to 1496, after the development of fish hook materials evolved from bone to bronze to iron over thousands of years. There is now a great variety of fish hooks, depending upon

their application; most are made from high-carbon steel, while others are made from stainless steel or alloys.

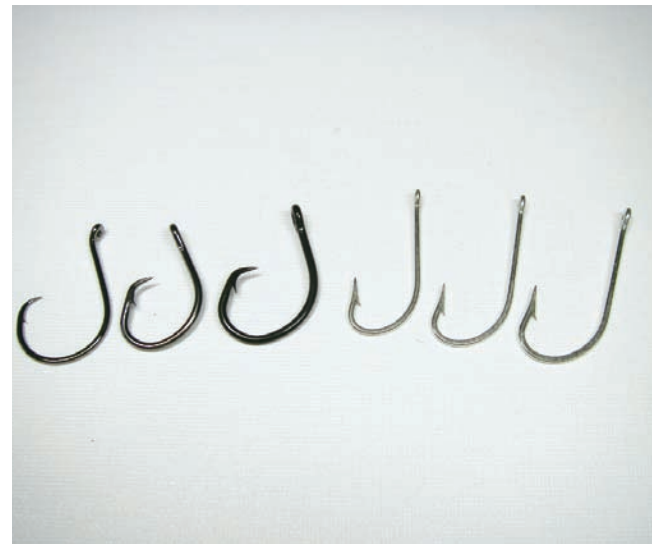
Single hooks (single point) and treble hooks (three points) are the most frequently employed types of hooks. Single hooks are almost universally used with bait or soft plastics (artificial worms and the like), while treble hooks are found on artificial

*Diagram of a Hook*



- The hook point penetrates, and the barb secures it. Various point-and-barb configurations can maximize penetration and holding ability.
- Sportfishing hooks usually have conical (rounded), curved (bent inward), spear, or knife points (a spear point is a heavy-bodied point section, and a knife point is a slightly concave spear-style point).
- Barb size depends on the fish species pursued, with larger, stronger, tough-mouthed fish calling for full-size barbs.

*Smaller-Size Hooks*



- Some hooks have an offset bend, left or right, to prevent the hook from spinning when fished with bait in current.
- Most hook types are named: Sproat (straight point), Aberdeen (round bend, light wire), salmon egg (very short shank), and claw (bait hook with offset point curved inward).
- The Limerick has a wide bend with a long shank.
- Long-shank hooks are often needed with artificial soft baits to be able to position the point midway down the lure body.

lures, such as plugs and crankbaits, and are not often used with bait. Some hooks are given a corrosive-resistant finish or a colored one, such as red, to play a part in the color scheme of a lure. Numerous hook styles have a bright brassy finish.

Hook size depends on the diameter, or gauge, of the wire used to make it. Fine wire makes small, light hooks for lighter game such as panfish and works best for dry flies that must float. Medium-gauge wire produces hooks for a variety of gamefish, from little bass up to smaller saltwater species. Heavy-gauge wire is used for the biggest species.

### *Large-Size Hooks*



- The hook gap determines the numerical hook size.
- The largest hooks are measured from 1/0 (“one aught”) to 19/0, getting larger as the first number goes up; these are almost all saltwater hooks.
- General freshwater hooks range from size 1 to 12, with fly hooks going as high as 24—the higher the number, the smaller the hook.
- Hooks do flex, but moderately. Too much flex and hook-sets are lost; too rigid and the hook can break.

## ZOOM

The pursuit of species that are to be released, including fish during their spawn run and species that face reduced numbers, benefits from the use of barbless hooks. A skilled angler can set, play, and land a gamefish on a barbless hook, assuming the point is sharp enough. To make a hook barbless, flatten it flush to the body of the bend—don’t mash it into the wire, just press it and make it completely flush.

### *Treble Hooks*



- Many manufacturers use acids to make hook points very strong and sharp, in a process called “chemical sharpening.”
- Treble hooks tend to be particularly strong, as they are often employed on lures bitten hard by big fish.
- Nickel, nickel-Teflon, and zinc-oxide-nickel finishes are commonly used to prevent corrosion and abrasion on freshwater hooks.
- Saltwater hooks endure a terrifically corrosive environment and are often given cadmium-tin or chrome-zinc coatings.

# REACHING OUT: LINES & LEADERS

The technology built into modern fishing lines gives anglers significant advantages

A look at any fishing-gear retail catalog reveals a near-confusing array of fishing lines. How do you figure out what you need? That depends on the type of fishing you're doing, the type of reel that you use, and what you want to spend.

Monofilament continues to be the most popular fishing line. You can use it most anywhere for anything, and it con-

sistently works very well with all kinds of fishing reels. In general, monofilament (nylon) tends to be the least expensive line. After that, there are fluorocarbon lines. This kind of line has extremely low visibility in water—some manufacturers will say it's invisible. If you fish very clear water, or for very spooky wild fish, it might be a key choice.

## *Monofilament and Fluorocarbon Lines*



- Monofilament will stretch, which absorbs some hook-setting shock but also affects the sensitivity of the line.
- Monofilament also suffers from "line memory," which is coiling in the shape of the spool.
- Both monofilament and fluorocarbon come in a variety of low-visibility colors, but fluorocarbon is less visible in the water.
- Fluorocarbon lines sink faster than monofilament and have less stretch.

## *Braided Lines*



- Braided lines are much more limp than monofilament and have minimal stretch, offering higher sensitivity to lure movement and strikes.
- Braided lines often have a smooth coating and are highly abrasion-resistant.
- Improvements over time have made braided lines usable with any conventional reel, and have ensured consistent knot strength.
- Line colors range from shades easily seen by the angler to colors that fool fish.

Then there are the superlines—braided lines that are fused or spun together using very thin synthetic fibers. These very small-diameter lines offer strength equal to or greater than their monofilament counterparts. They also tend to be more expensive than monofilament.

As for the terminal section of your line, the leader, you don't need to get into heavier stuff until you fish for sizable game or around rough structure. In light freshwater situations, a 10-inch section of monofilament with slightly greater breaking strength (meaning it will hold a greater load) than the

### Leaders



- Fluorocarbon leaders reach 80-pound strength and are tough enough for muskie and pike.
- Most light leaders are rigged with a ball-bearing swivel at one end and a snap at the other for connecting to the lure.
- Titanium leaders can be as flexible as monofilament leaders and range from 15- to 75-pound strength.
- Hand-wound (crimpless) wire leaders are sometimes necessary with certain lures that need exact balance.

main line is fine. Super-low-visibility fluorocarbon leaders come into play with very careful freshwater fish like trout.

When you fish for big bass, pike, muskie, large catfish, Great Lakes salmon, and saltwater species, consider using a leader section that can stand up against hard strikes, toothy mouths, rough scales, and sharp fins. Several different kinds of pre-rigged leaders can also be bought retail. Heavier monofilament and fluorocarbon—from 15- to 100-pound test or higher—nylon-coated steel, titanium, or wire cable form the strong, abrasion-resistant leaders that are necessary for big fish.

### Heavy-Duty Leaders



- Heavy monofilament comes in spools from 20- to 400-pound test.
- Big-game leaders for marlin, sailfish, and sharks are often made of very strong wire or cable.
- Most professional big-game anglers make their own leaders so that they know their exact strength.
- Heavy-duty big-game leaders range in length from 10 to 28 feet.

# FINDING DEPTH: SINKERS & FLOATS

Success means putting and keeping bait in the fish's feeding zone

Fish can be found anywhere in the water column. They can feed inches below the surface, or they can hug the bottom. They might work the edges of fast, deep water, or glide along a slow, shallow eddy. Getting bait to the right depth for those fish calls for smart use of sinkers and floats.

Sinkers have been around for almost as long as hooks and come in many different forms. Some sinkers are designed to

hold bottom, while others allow the line to have some freedom of movement. Some are designed specifically for trolling. Sinkers are also convenient to use, as most are easy to add to or remove from the line. They come in so many gradations of weight that you can carefully fine-tune the amount necessary to find the right depth without negatively affecting the performance of the line or rig.

## Freshwater Sinkers

KNACK FISHING FOR EVERYONE



- Most still-water situations in freshwater call for several split shot or a small dipsey sinker (sometimes called a "bass-casting sinker").
- Deep freshwater situations might require  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  ounce of weight, depending upon current.
- Heavy current, especially in deeper water, might necessitate 2 to 3 ounces of weight, with a sinker that sticks to the bottom.
- Egg sinkers and dipsey sinkers with snap-lock rings allow the line to move, and thus fish feel little resistance when they strike.

## Special-Purpose Freshwater Sinkers

- A number of sinkers can be used with soft-plastic worms, such as screw-in bullet weights and Carolina rigs, which make worms swim and dive.
- Trolling for walleye often calls for sinkers that bounce along the bottom but keep the lure or bait free of snags, such as a Lindy Rig.
- In-line weights are weighted, flexible sections of cord that form a section of the main line or leader.
- Streamlined "flippin' weights" help draw soft plastics through heavy vegetation and timber.

More and more sinkers are now made from steel, tungsten, bismuth, or brass, instead of lead. These materials are slightly more expensive than lead.

Floats are made from hollow plastic or very light wood and are often referred to as “bobbers.” Fishing with a round bobber puts the most resistance on a bait. This can work with fish that are hungry and grabbing the bait hard, but with much more wary fish, a slimmer-profile float is the right choice. Floats can be rigged as fixed floats (no line movement) or slip floats that allow some line movement.

### *Big-Water/Saltwater Sinkers*



- The design of the age-old pyramid sinker lets it punch into sand or mud and hold fast.
- The rounded sides of disc sinkers avoid snags in fast currents or tides.
- The heaviest saltwater sinkers range from 16 to 48 ounces apiece and are used to take big baits down to depths of 200 feet, as in halibut fishing.
- The squared edges of a bank sinker keep it from rolling down an incline, thus making it highly useful along holes and drop-offs.

### YELLOW LIGHT

A number of states, including New York, New Hampshire, and Vermont, have banned sinkers and lures that contain lead. Research has shown that waterfowl will ingest bits of lead as they feed in lakes and ponds, often resulting in poisoning and death. Many anglers are avoiding lead altogether in freshwater, and this will be easier as more alternative metals are used in sinkers.

### *Bobbers and Floats*



- Slim-bodied floats matched with one or two split shot on the line below do best to detect light bites in still or slow water.
- Split shot help put a slim float at its correct depth; a rising float indicates an upward strike by a fish.
- Cast a float rig upward, in a smooth lob, and not with any kind of snap of the rod.
- In current, use a float that rides higher on the surface so that the bait stays at the right depth but the float isn't pulled under easily by the current.

# CONNECTORS: SWIVELS & SNAPS

These joints absorb pressure, reduce line stress, and help construct various rigs

While many times the best way to connect sections of line or to tie leaders to lures is to tie good knots (see Chapter 19), there are a number of instances in which a quality swivel, snap, or the combination snap-swivel can be highly useful. Swivels do just that—each ring end turns on a vertical axis. This is useful for situations in which the action of a lure or

baited hook, or the pull of a sinker, might create twist in the line. The swivel serves as an intermediate connector, often between the leader and main line, that absorbs the torque created by fishing action.

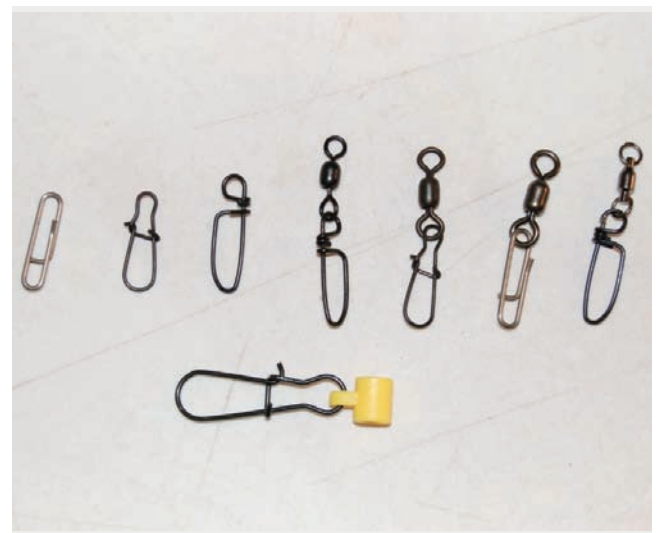
Swivels need to be matched to the kind of fishing being done. A swivel that is weaker than the strength of the line is

## Swivels



- There are two kinds of swivels: slide-bearing swivels and ball-bearing swivels.
- Most people use barrel swivels, which are technically slide-bearing swivels: The central wire strand that forms the rings and the rounded barrel body slide against each other.
- Ball-bearing swivels are superior to barrel swivels, especially those with solid rings instead of split rings, but are slightly pricier than barrel swivels.
- Quality swivels of both kinds are made of nickel and steel, and are corrosion-resistant.

## Snaps



- The effectiveness of a snap depends on the quality of its metal and how well it locks and holds.
- Duolock and crosslock snaps are probably the most effective at staying locked.
- Be sure the snap you use is rated to at least the breaking strength of your line.
- For saltwater or big-fish use, choose McMahon or coastlock snaps.

no good—you need swivels that can handle as much, if not more, tension than the line can. Cheap swivels break, as do those that are corroded or bent.

A metal snap is a wire connector shaped like a safety pin. In lieu of a knot, it allows for quick lure changes, and works well in conjunction with heavier leaders and bigger lures cast to tough-mouthed fish. Snaps come in a number of configurations, so always choose one that has a quality finish, exceeds the leader's breaking strength (see page 3), and snaps shut securely.

### *Using the Right Snap*



- The more round the bend of the snap, the more action a lure will have.
- Using snaps in lieu of knots is easier with lines that are difficult to tie, such as heavier monofilament lines and microfilament lines.
- Don't use snaps that are too light for the line and lures that you're using.
- You can use a snap with a wire leader, but be sure it is one of matching or surpassing strength.

The combination snap-swivel can be used to attach to leaders those lures that have an active swimming action that could put a twist in the leader. A twisted leader can throw off the action of the lure. You find this mainly with larger spinners, or when fishing big lures in heavy current. The snap-swivel isn't necessary for most smaller- to medium-size lures. A snap-swivel might also be used to connect heavy sinkers to the main line.

### *Three-Way Swivels*



- Swivels and snaps for saltwater use must have a strong corrosion resistance, such as stainless steel, or will need to be replaced frequently.
- Big fish can bend lesser three-way swivels, so match quality and strength to both the quarry and heaviness of the rig.
- The classic fish-finder rig hinges upon a three-way swivel, from which you can rig one or two hooks.
- A snap can be added to a three-way swivel for quick sinker changes.

# TERMINAL ACCESSORIES

Adding just a bit of color, flash, or flutter to a rig or bait can turn a fish's head

Given the amount of terminal tackle (tackle used at the end of a standing line) that comes ready-made from many manufacturers, you might not realize all the things that you can do with various lures and baits to create exactly the kind of style, coloration, and performance you want. The materials discussed here don't work with all gear, but are important to

## *Jig Heads*



- The shape of the jig head determines if the jig will sink quickly, flutter, or sink downward at an angle.
- Numerous jig heads are fitted with a small spinner blade that aids its swimming motion or acts as an attractor.
- Jig heads designed to hook to tube baits are meant to fit inside the tube.
- You can use fluorescent paints and stick-on prismatic eyes to heighten a jig head's visibility.

know about because of their usefulness in some situations.

If you have a bit of mechanical know-how, you can customize any number of store-bought lures, switching spinner blades, skirts, and jig heads. Such alterations can and probably should be made when you find out through experimentation that fish go after a lure much more actively because of a color change or

## *Terminal Blades*



- Add small spinner blades to natural-bait rigs, especially minnows, to give additional flash and vibration.
- Blade size and shape—round, long, or V-shape—affects the retrieval speed and the lure's vibration.
- Trolling rigs and bait harnesses are often assemblies of spinner blades separated by beads, which the angler makes to order.
- Spinner rigs are “in-line”—all the pieces attach to the leader or to a central wire, with clevises (small clips) securing the spinner blades.

reconfiguration that you created yourself. Changing the size and color of spinner blades on spinnerbaits can make them noisier and more visible, traits that under certain conditions (such as murky water or night fishing) can increase your odds. Adding a soft-plastic bait—a worm or a crayfish—to a heavy bass jig might give it that extra enticement to make a fish strike.

Even small touches, like the use of various beads as attractors on the line, aid in attracting fish and maximizing the performance of tackle. Live-bait anglers frequently place a colored bead just above a baited hook.

### Skirts



- Changing skirts on spinnerbaits or buzzbaits is relatively easy, as the skirts are secured with a rubber cuff around the jig head.
- Skirts often match the overall color scheme, but you can switch both blades and skirts for any combination.
- Trim or adjust a skirt as necessary to get as much or as little pulsation as needed.
- Instead of a skirt, you can add a soft-plastic lure (see page 87) to the spinnerbait hook.

## ZOOM

Some artificial lures can be tipped with a natural bait. Skirted jigs can often take a small minnow, grub, or waxworm, while a simple jig head can be hooked to a night crawler or minnow. A spinnerbait can be tipped with a piece of pork rind.

### Beads



- Beads can be used as spacers for placing spinner blades along a rig for trolling.
- The body section of a spinner-bladed lure can be made out of stacked plastic and/or metal beads.
- Put one or two beads on the leader of a plastic-worm rig as attractors or as spacers for a spinner blade.
- Use beads to prevent plastic cuffs (which allow the main line to slide past the sinker, such as on a fish-finder rig) from fouling on leader knots or swivels.

# ESSENTIAL HARDWARE

Fishing can be a lot easier with the right implement at the right moment

After all the hooks, sinkers, snaps, and line, there are a few other basic but crucial items that the angler needs before getting into lure or reel selections. These items are the tools that are required for successful fishing: hook-removal implements, a variety of knives, and fish-cleaning tools.

An effective hook remover is a must-have. Most likely, you'll

release more fish than you ever keep, and noninjurious release is important to conservation efforts and the future of fishing. Select a hook remover that is matched to the kind of fish that you're after, and learn to use it efficiently. You'll probably need a couple different kinds, given the various sizes and mouth shapes of the fish you'll catch.

## *Hook Removers*



- Smaller fish, such as panfish and trout, can be easily unhooked using forceps.
- Various hook-removal tools slip over the leader and let the angler put downward pressure on the hook bend.
- Spring-grip hook removers work well with fish that have big mouths and wide gullets, like big bass or pike.
- Have on hand wire cutters or pliers that can cut wire, in case you cannot remove an embedded treble hook but are able to reach in and cut the shank or bend.

## *Fisherman's Knife*



- The traditional freshwater "fisherman's knife" is usually a folding knife with a longer penknife blade and a fish scaler/disgorger (hook remover).
- A light fixed-blade knife with a penknife-type blade will also work well to gut fish.
- Gutting smaller fish calls for a 4-inch blade; medium-size fish take a 6-inch blade.
- Larger species and saltwater fish call for longer, heavier blades, up to 8 inches.

When you keep some fish for the grill or fryer, you'll need proper knives: one for gutting and cleaning, and another for filleting. You'll also want a general-purpose utility knife for cutting line or cord, and perhaps a Boy Scout-style pocket-knife for opening cans or bottles.

Beyond that, there are implements for cleaning fish—scalers, cleaning boards, and brushes—that make life a lot easier. The quality of your meal begins with the proper use of these tools and correct preparation of fillets and dressed-out fish.

### *Fillet Knife*



- A good fillet knife is flexible enough to bend slightly but the blade retains its shape.
- Choose a fillet knife that has a handle long enough for your hand.
- Select a knife with a blade long enough to cut across the fish's entire width with one stroke.
- The fillet cut requires a cut through the ribs, so on heavier fish, use a heavier-bladed fillet knife to make this cut.

### YELLOW LIGHT

Most people cut themselves when the knife they are using isn't sharp enough to deal with the task, and they end up forcing the blade and making a mistake. A knife that's kept properly sharp cuts easily and smoothly and lets you get the job done. Anytime you use a knife, take care to cut away from your body and don't cut toward your other hand or fingers.

### *Fish-Cleaning Tools*



- You can use a knife blade to scale fish, but the numerous scalers available today make the job easier and quicker.
- Various wire-bristle brushes are highly useful for removing bits of blood and entrails from the body cavity or fillets.
- A proper cleaning board has a clamp to hold the fish so you can clean it without the fish's body spinning and sliding.
- There are specially designed pliers to grip a fish's head to remove it along with the skin.

# LURE STORAGE: BOXES & BAGS

You can't put a handful of lures in your pocket and expect fun times

You will quickly find that fishing is a sport of stuff. If you're serious about it, you're going to come to possess a lot of hardware that doesn't help you do much else except fish. But that's the beauty of it.

Before you start shopping for lures, you ought to have a place to put them. You will find that eventually you will fill one, then

## *Tackle Boxes & Trays*

KNACK FISHING FOR EVERYONE



- The classic small tackle box is still in use, though not often, due to space constraints.
- Something small is perfect for kids just starting out—they can easily carry it and keep track of its contents.
- A smaller box is also right for a small pond or creek that doesn't call for a wide variety of lures or baits.
- A divided tackle tray that can be slipped into a cargo pocket might also suffice for small water.

two, and then easily three tackle boxes of some kind once you start fishing regularly. Fortunately, there is now such an effective variety of tackle storage that you can carefully select what best fits your needs and ways of fishing, whether you're simply out for panfish on the local pond or want to have an answer for everything any major gamefish would eat.

## *Tackle Boxes & Trays, Continued*



- Be sure to open your tackle box in a stable place, as its one drawback is that it dumps all of your lures if you knock it over.
- Tackle trays are designed for specific contents, to help organize sinkers, soft plastics, and hard-bodied lures.
- Use the bottom area for larger items, such as spools of line.
- Take care that your tackle box, especially the bottom section, doesn't become a mess of lines and hooks.

As you start out, you should probably get two tackle boxes—one that's the right size to take with you wherever you fish, and a larger one for storing lures at home. You can select lures from the bigger box and put them in your carry box before you go. The big box should be a bit larger than you think you need, because you will find that you will eventually fill it, and need another.

### *Tackle Bags*



- Chests with large, stacked tackle trays can accommodate the most tackle, maximizing the angler's lure selection.
- Adjustable dividers in the lure trays allow for storage of small, medium, and large lures in a variety of designs.
- Most tackle bags are built for durability and are water-resistant, if not waterproof.
- Some storage systems allow for hanging lures by their hooks rather than lying flat, but always dry a lure before returning it to a tray or bin.

## MAKE IT EASY

Fishing line and lures don't mix well in the same box or bag—tangles always occur. Store spools of line in separate drawers of a tackle box, or together in a separate bag. Don't store lures with leaders attached, as the leaders will also attract tangles with other lures.

### *Equipment Bags*



- Safe storage of reels and other gear in protective bags is crucial on a boat so that items are out of the way.
- Traveling anglers should use hard-sided cases to protect reels and gear on airlines or on the road.
- Numerous manufacturers make gear bags with wheels for easier movement through airports or in the marina.
- Boaters should consider having at least one "dry bag"—a watertight gear bag for wallets, keys, cell phones, and other electronics.