

## The Long and Short of Jigs

Spring is here and that means most of us will be using the venerable jig in order to bring a few of our glassy eyed friends up topside to give them a quick look at things from our perspective. Yes, most of you are fully aware of how effective jigs are and I would venture to say that there has been sufficient material written about this to overflow the Library of Congress. But, that does not mean that the subject has been exhausted. There are always subtle nuances and new things to consider for those who tend to fall into a rut.

I will touch on a couple of contrasting jig styles I feel you should be using. The most common ball type jigs come equipped with a medium length hook. As good as these are, I would implore you to go to either end of the spectrum. Very short jigs such as the JB Lures Smacker serve even better in the traditional role of using fathead minnows. Cinch the minnow tight to the jig by running the hook up through the mouth and out the top of the head. This is a very compact and tempting package that lends itself to vertical jigging, short distance pitching and moderate snap jigging without constantly losing your bait. The small profile also cuts current very well, so is great for river outings. Time honored and proven...short shanked jigs are often forgotten or overlooked.

Going with a more unique head design such as the stand up style Odd Ball jig from Bait Rigs can offer a decidedly different look and due to the hook design, lends itself very well to use with plastics and can even be very easily be fished in a weedless manner with the hook point just slightly exposed or even hidden. Giving us a higher profile bait that excels in distance casting and aggressive snap jigging scenarios with your chosen plastic body providing a seductive swimming motion and added attraction. And, we can always revert back to traditional vertical jigging as the standup capabilities always leave the hook riding in an upward position. As we have plenty of hook gap, a great option is using two minnows for a distinctive look that often seals the deal.

To properly deliver these jigs, a rod that is extremely light and sensitive is needed to get the most out of the system. If the rod is overly heavy, you will soon lose concentration as you tire of holding it all day and if you cannot detect the bites you are getting-you had just as well put the cheapest rod you can buy in a rod holder and hope the fish commit suicide. If you are the frugal kind and simply can't justify having a complete lineup of premium rods, I would at the very least get at one that will serve your needs for this function and maybe even serve double duty as a livebait rod.

For this, my personal first choice recommendation would be to with technique specific rods such as St.Croix's Jig-n-Rig in a LTWS66MLF Legend Series. Or, if you are looking to stay a bit more economical and still have a top flight rod, the Jig-n-Rig in a LTWS66MLF Eyecon Series is a great choice and most likely the best value out there today as is evidenced in the Eyecon being Field & Stream's 2011 Best of the Best award winner for spinning rods.

An indisputable fact is that good jigs and great rods coupled with a no stretch braid will enhance your feel and easily double the number of fish you bring in.