

Five Sure Ways to Catch Fish

Here's something to stick in your tackle box along with those fancy lures and rods—some simple tips from men who've made angling a sporting science

By ROBERT G. DEINDORFER

SOME 25 MILLION Americans are addicted to the frustrating but satisfying pastime of fishing, which may mean that the whoppers they tell are larger than those they land.

For beginners and old-timers alike, fishing is a sport unto itself, yet too many enthusiasts are unsuccessful for all their cane poles, fly rods, casting and spinning tackle, live baits, spoons, and feathered lures.

What makes this adversity especially tragic is the blunt fact that there's little reason for it. With some ingenuity, virtually anyone can hook and land fish. Here are five sure-fire angling gimmicks developed by guides and wily old-timers to catch fish in the rivers and lakes of America.

1. Feed the fish and flourish.



In some parts of Ohio, the real professionals have hit on a prize scheme to fill the frying pan. Despite an old suspicion that bait spilled into the water ruins fishing, these addicts deliberately dump live worms or minnows in the lake. Then they still-fish the same spot with similar baits.

Season after season, Ohio anglers bring home record catches by chumming with worms and minnows. Last summer, a fellow on Rockland Lake near Nyack, N.Y., got to wondering if the practice was confined to Ohio.

After dumping a can of worms over the side of the boat, he started fishing. He hadn't fished long before the rod quivered in his hands. Up boiled an angry bass, husky as a fullback. By the end of the afternoon, he had another bass, three catfish, and a nice mess of bluegills.

2. Fishing lights that fascinate.



If it's real hair-raising sport you yearn for, you might try the new night-fishing lights. As old-

timers know, night is when many fish do their most serious feeding. And besides, all fish are bigger at night—or seem bigger.

"It's no trick at all to rig up the lights," says Jimmy Pfeiffer, a short, squat Illinois night fisherman. "All you have to do is hang the light just below the surface of the water. Fish seem addicted to light. You can develop a good backache pulling them in."

3. Fish without fuss—if legal.



For jaded anglers, an old art form developed in lower Missouri may be just the thing. It yields the sort of catches most people are apt to notarize with a camera.

In Missouri and in some other states where it's legal, lazy-bone fishermen set out with nothing more than hooks, lines, boats, and some gallon jugs. Baited lines are tied to the necks of these jugs, and the jugs are thrown into the lake. Any time one of the floating jugs starts to bob, the fishermen row the boat over, pull up the jug, and remove a fish. When two or three jugs in different spots get to bouncing at the same time, it's more exciting than a 10-pound catfish on a two-pound line.

4. Find where the fish are feasting.



Down in the rolling Tennessee Valley country, a lean, laconic bloke named Al Duke minds a general store.

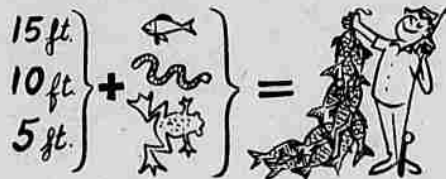
It isn't flourishing commercial success that has caused Duke's reputation to spread far beyond the narrow boundaries of his town. Al Duke is a fisherman—maybe the best there is.

"It's as simple as rolling a cigarette," he says. "To catch fish, you have to find where the fish are feeding. Well, I let them show me."

One bright summery morning, Duke showed me what he meant. After fishing a few minutes, Al flopped a scrappy bluegill into the boat. He removed the hook gently, tied a long piece of line through the bluegill's mouth, strung a floating plastic bobber on the other end of the line, and threw the fish back into the lake.

As the bluegill swam somewhere down below, the red and white bobber moved across the surface 15 or 20 yards to some shaded water. We promptly moved the boat and settled down to some serious fishing. In an hour, our party had 51 bluegills, along with two nice bass.

5. Fill up with a fishing formula.



Some of the wisest anglers on American waters swear by what they call "fishing by formula."

As enthusiasts see it, it's important to keep moving around while fishing. In a boat or afoot along the shore, they constantly change positions, alter the depth they fish, and change from one bait or lure to another until the lunkers start hitting.

Few people know the technique better than Jack Butler, a tall, bespectacled Ohioan. Last spring on Dale Hollow Lake, Ky., he fished a live minnow at a depth of 10 feet without raising his blood pressure any. Next he fished it at a depth of five feet, then 15 feet. Every so often, he changed from minnows to nightcrawlers to frogs.

After he fished one area, Butler rowed his boat to another spot. With a shrewd guile, he worked Dale Hollow for nearly two hours before he found his spot. Fishing minnows at a depth of five feet near an overhanging tree, Butler caught himself eight bass in about the time it takes to read this.

What makes these five foolproof methods of catching fish so important? With another season under way, more and more fishermen will be after the prizes. By following these guides, you can get your share without lapsing into the traditional exaggerations of angling. The literal truth will be hard to improve on.