

Fall Plastics

By Kevin Dahlke

When the fall season comes along, it is always a guess as to what we are going to throw out there into the water to catch a fish. Fall can be a tough time to fish as well as there are fall days that no matter what you throw for a bait, fish just chow on whatever you are throwing them.

If you happen to hit a day that the fish are on fire and eating everything in sight, just throw what they want and catch as many fish as you can. But traditionally for fall time baits they consist of crankbaits and spinnerbaits and if you don't feel liking casting and cranking all day, there is another alternative that may get overlooked and you will have in the boat at all times, the plastic bait.

Lets take a look at a few plastics that have worked well over the last handful of seasons and we are going to look at what BearPaw Hand Poured Baits has for these selections. We are going to take a look at five of their baits and give an idea of what can be done with these baits in your fall fishing.

Four of these are plastics baits which consist of the Hippie Stick, Lizard, Grizzly/Mega Jerk and the Load Toad. The fifth bait that BearPaw offers are the jig lineup that can be used with these and other of their plastics. So let's start out by taking a look at their jig offerings.



The Spiked Football Jig has been known to catch a lot of fish across the country and is able to use multiple various plastic baits on this jig. The action for

this jig comes when the bait is lying on the bottom and the angler moves the line a little, this will make the back part of the jig flip upward while the head stays in position. What this creates is a bait that looks like it is moving into a defense position similar to what a crawfish does to protect themselves.

These jigs can and will be fished primarily around structure that may have little weeds around it. Rocks and gravel areas are prime places to fish this jig as the crawfish lives and frequents these areas consistently and bass know this. But this may also be fished in weeds and just need to make the bait weed-less by hooking the plastic bait over the hook point. The same effects will occur as working the jig in the weeds and you may be fishing this jig where others are afraid to put their bait.

Let's move onto a handful of the plastics that are fished regularly in the fall time when searching for bass. Next in line let's look at the Hippie Stick which is a straight plastic bait similar to the Senko style bait. These are generally fished weightless with spinning gear and can be casted with great accuracy in and around docks and overhanging objects.

Skipping is a great technique that takes some practice but once you acquire the skills to do this, any overhanging object, dock, tree, boat lift or anything else for that matter where, the fish that live in these areas are not safe anymore. Skipping is done by casting sidearm and having the bait hit the top of the water which will launch the bait along the surface as far as the line will allow it to go. It is very similar to skipping a rock and if you are able to do that, a little practice with a fishing rod and you will have this mastered.



The Hippie Stick is good for working along the shoreline with any type of structure that you can find to cast the bait at. By being weightless, the bait falls naturally through the water column and with each movement of the bait, resembles an injured baitfish as it is brought back to the boat. This bait really works well when targeting feeding cruising fish along the bank that are looking for that easy meal and also lets you take your time in working it through heavy cover as well.



Moving on to a creature offering lets look at the Lizard plastic bait that can be fished a number of ways. The most productive way to fish the lizard is on the Carolina Rig and this can be fished at any depth and through any type of cover as well. One

feature that is poured into each of these baits is the fact that there is a floatation aspect to these baits and with the Carolina Rig; the bait is actually hovering above the bottom when being worked through whatever is being fished.

Fishing with the Carolina Rig this can be fished in shallow water as well as deepwater and through heavy vegetation as well. This rig allows you to cover good portions of water somewhat quickly and this allows you to put the Lizard in front of as many fish as possible. The Lizard is a bigger bait and offers the fall feeding fish a better meal as they are looking to fatten themselves up for the long winter ahead and this bait definitely aids in that process.

Lizard plastic baits are known to produce numbers of fish in the spring around the fishes spawning time but are great fall producers as well. Bigger baits work very well in the fall time and should not be over looked at all. As the fall rains have been plaguing us here, these bigger creature baits are great possibilities as these fish are looking for these tasty morsels that are being washed into our local waters.

The next plastic bait that we will take a look at is the Grizzly/Mega Jerk bait that is an injured minnow soft jerkbait imitator. This bait when worked through the water imitates an injured or dying minnow that darts



to the left and right as it is being worked. Fall is a time when minnows and baitfish start schooling together and moving around the lake in search of warmer water and food. Also, as these schools are moving around some of the baitfish are dying as well and this is what the bass are keying in on as they follow these schools around.

The Grizzly/Mega Jerk will be worked similar to the Hippie Stick, as it is casted towards objects and structure in the shallower water. Skipping this bait is another great way to get it into areas that are missed by many and are holding those better quality fish. This bait is fished weightless as well as weighted and fished in shallow and deep water as well.

Something that we have been experimenting with is fishing this bait on the Carolina rig in shallow water and has been very productive. This bait has that floatation feature in it as well as all of the baits and when fished behind the Carolina Rig, this gives an erratic motion of an injured baitfish. There have been some very nice fish caught with this technique as there aren't many anglers fishing the Grizzly/Mega Jerk on a Carolina Rig.



The last bait that we will take a look at for "Fall Plastics" is the Load Toad which is a frog imitation. Bass are in love with the frog as this is a main staple in their diet and regularly available most of the season. This bait is fished weightless as well and worked on top of the water. As it is worked through the water the tail legs create good

action and commotion which alerts the bass beneath that something is coming towards them.

Being this is a frog imitation, bass know what to expect when the fall season comes around. As the temperatures of fall start getting lower, frogs start their migration back to the lake shores. Frogs hibernate in the muddier lake bottoms and the predator fish know that they are coming and wait in anticipation for an easy meal. Other fish other than bass know this as well and when a fish explodes on the Load Toad, you could have almost anything on the line.

The Load Toad is great for fishing around lily pads in the fall as there is a tendency that these are growing in softer bottom areas that the frogs are looking for. Cast these bait up to shore and work it all the way through the surface vegetation and be ready at all times as you never know when the fish is going to hit. On those warmer fall days is a prime time to fish this as this shallow water is teeming with life. Topwater baits are always a lot of fun to fish and especially in the fall when they are hungry, hard fighting fish waiting below the surface.

Fall fishing can be feast or famine and I won't tell you that it isn't. There are going to be those days that you can't get a bite if your life depended on it, but when you hit those days that the fish are on fire, you will definitely be thankful that you were out there fishing instead of watching football. These nice fall days are going by to fast and why not take advantage of these remaining days before the water turns hard.

You fish plastics all summer long and why not fish them throughout the fall as well. By trying some of these out on your next outing, you may have an upper edge compared to your fishing partner.

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