

FREE!



Volume 28, 2021



Chairman of the Boards BRUCE DESHANO
COO NICK DESHANO
Editor MARK ROMANACK

Both black and white crappie can be caught trolling. Crappie are aggressive predators and can be caught in both warm and cold water conditions.

**Tips and Techniques brought to you by
Your Leader In Trolling Technology,
Off Shore Tackle LLC.**



The OFF SHORE TACKLE LLC RELEASE

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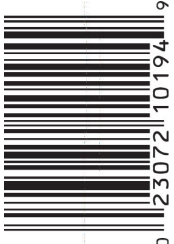
One of our proudest moments at Off Shore Tackle is when our founder and "Chairman of the Boards", Bruce DeShano, was inducted into the Freshwater Fishing Hall of Fame along with OST Pro Staffer Tommy Skarlis in January of 2020.

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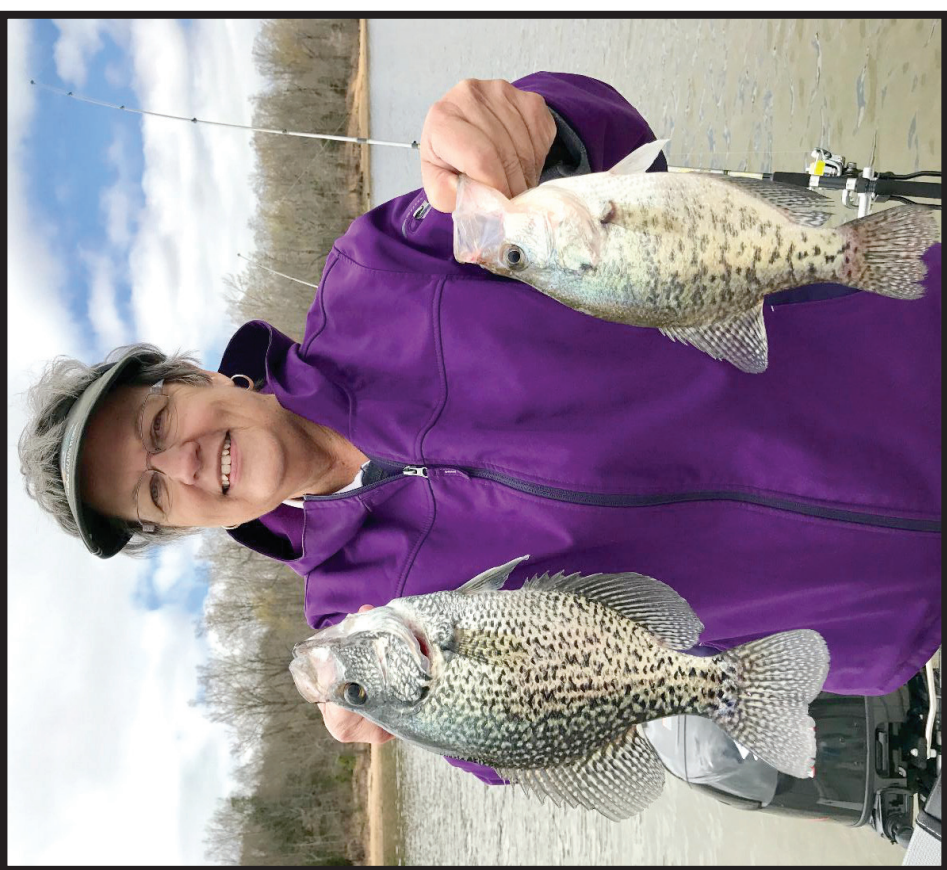


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A TRIBUTE TO TOMMY SKARLIS



God is with you Tommy, rest in peace.

BY: MARK ROMANACK AND
THE OFF SHORE TACKLE PRO STAFF

In September of 2020 Off Shore Tackle lost one of their most cherished and loved Pro Staff members, Tommy Skarlis. Tommy lost his battle to brain cancer, but his spirit will live on with everyone who came in contact with this inspiring man.

Those of us who knew Tommy Skarlis best recognized his passion for fishing and also his love of God, family and country. It was hard not being inspired by Tommy's work ethic and passion for all things outdoors.

To list Tommy's fishing accomplishments as a tournament angler would take up all the space allotted for the annual Off Shore Release newspaper. He was perhaps best known for being a tournament angler who excelled not only in professional walleye fishing circles, but also on the professional crappie fishing tour.

Recently Tommy was awarded the highest honor given to sport fishermen when he was inducted into the Fresh Water Fishing Hall of Fame. For those of us who knew Tommy personally and worked closely with him, his passion for fishing, loyalty to his sponsors and fierce competitive spirit on the water made him a perfect candidate for enshrinement.

While Off Shore Tackle will never be able to fill the shoes Tommy Skarlis wore on our team of professional anglers and communicators, every one of us is better for having known and worked closely with this man.

IN-LINE PLANER BOARDS, PICK YOUR POISON

BY: MARK ROMANACK

At Off Shore Tackle, anglers will find an in-line planer board for every occasion. It all started several years ago when OST introduced the OR12 Side Planer. At the time, there were a few in-line boards on the market, but nothing that was functional, durable and also user friendly.

fitted to the bracket or the tail of the versatile OR12 Side Planer. Having so many release options allow anglers to set up their boards for any kind of trolling chores.



The OR12 became the first ballasted board injection molded from plastic and also featuring a closed-cell foam for floatation and equipped with legendary Off Shore Tackle line releases.

Tough as nails, the OR12 soon took over the market and started an evolution of in-line boards and board fishing technology that continues to this day. It wasn't long before new releases and clips such as the OR16 Pro Clip, OR18 Snapper, OR19 Adjustable Heavy Tension Planer Board Release and the OR39 Sam's Pro Release were introduced and applied to board fishing.

All of these releases can be retro-

The innovation of the OR12 didn't stop however with line releases and clips. The OR12TF Tattle Flag™ HD Upgrade Kit revolutionized the way anglers fish in-line boards by being the first articulating flag kit on the market. The Tattle Flag™ is aptly named because it tells a tale when a fish is hooked or debris is snagged on the lure and the flag goes down. Such a simple concept is critically important because it allows anglers to troll in-line boards efficiently, even in waters plagued with non-target fish, small fish or floating weeds and other debris.

Not long after the OR12TF Tattle Flag™ HD Upgrade Kits hit the market, Off Shore Tackle continued their innovation by offering the OR12TFEK Tattle Flag™ HD Economy Kit that allows anglers to upgrade their boards to Tattle Flag™ boards without having to invest in new clips or a new flag.



OR38 AWESOME CRAPPIE BOARD

The need for a smaller planer board that could be used with light line and for light duty trolling chores did not go unnoticed at Off Shore Tackle. The OR38 Mini Board was introduced with crappie anglers in mind, but this pint sized in-line board has also found favor with a host of other anglers who have figured out all kinds of creative ways to use the OR38 to catch all kinds of fish.

The OR38 features a floatation chamber that is mounted to the top of the board. If you have older OR34 Mini Boards, the floatation chambers can be purchased separately and glued in place on those boards.

Perfect for trolling jigs, small lures, trolling in rivers and anytime a lighter approach is called for, the OR38 truly is an "awesome" in-line board.

OR37 SST PRO MAG PLANER

They say that size doesn't matter, but tell that to a charter captain who's trolling 450 feet of copper wire! Clearly, there is a niche for larger planer boards like the OR37 SST Pro Mag among anglers who are pulling long lengths of lead core line, weighted stainless steel wire, stranded copper line and jumbo sized muskie and saltwater style crankbaits.

The SST Pro Mag does an excellent job of handling these heavy duty trolling chores while at the same time being much less expensive to own and

use than a planer board mast system. You'll find the SST Pro Mag on Great Lakes charter boats, everywhere anglers troll for muskie, widely in use among striper anglers and catching all sorts of saltwater big game species.

The SST Pro Mag has also made a name for itself on the professional catfish tours among anglers who use this board to suspend heavy Snap Weights and live bait rigs while trolling for monster river cats.



SUMMING IT UP

Off Shore Tackle was the first company to create an in-line planer board that was functional, affordable and user friendly. The OR12 Side Planer literally took trolling into the mainstream. The Side Planer set the stage for other innovative products like the OR38 Awesome Crappie Board and the OR37 SST Pro Mag. Everywhere anglers depend on in-line boards for their trolling needs, they depend on Off Shore Tackle, "Your Leader in Trolling Technology."

TUNING CRANKBAITS FOR BETTER FISHING SUCCESS

BY: MARK ROMANACK

Crankbaits are amazingly effective fishing lures. Sometimes I marvel at how well these plastic or wood minnow imitators perform on a wide variety of species including walleye, brown trout, lakers, bass and even salmon. If crankbaits have an Achilles heel, it's the fact that not all of the hundreds of cranks on the market come out of the package ready to fish properly. Often crankbaits need a little "adjustment" to convert them into the fish traps they were intended to become.

WHY ARE CRANKBAITS NOT ALWAYS IN TUNE?

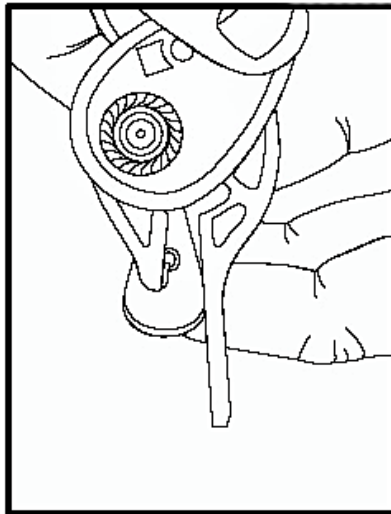
Plastic crankbaits often end up not in tune because they are designed to be two identical halves that are hand glued or sonic welded together to form a water tight and finished lure. If this gluing or sonic welding process is only slightly off kilter, the bait will not be perfectly balanced and will swim in the water favoring a course that is either left or right of center.

In the case of wooden crankbaits, the diving lip must be installed by machining a small slot into the nose of the lure. The diving lip is then glued into place. Small imperfections in how the diving lip is installed of course can cause crankbaits to perform differently from lure to lure.

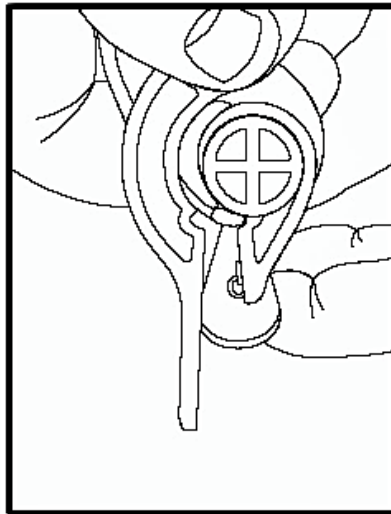
CRANKBAIT TUNE

Crankbaits often suffer from the failing of not being properly tuned. A tuned crankbait will run straight in the water

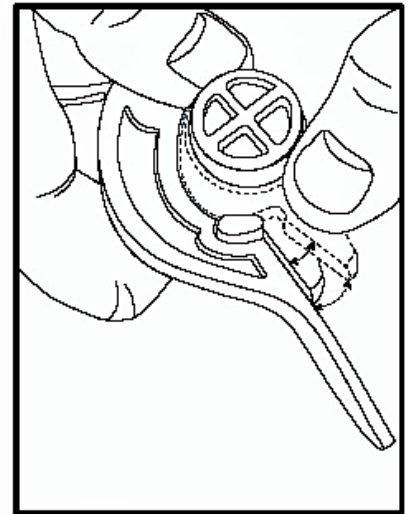
Always start with a lighter setting and adjust tension as needed.



1. Place short jaw on line tie and long jaw against bill at a 90 degree angle.



2. Squeeze until you hear a click.



3. Reset by squeezing jaws together.

4. If bait doesn't make a change, give adjustment knob 1/2 turn for more tension.

SHORT JAW MUST BE RESET AFTER EACH ADJUSTMENT

at all common trolling speeds, dive to its intended maximum fishing depth and also deliver its maximum life-like action. A lure that is "out of tune" generally runs right or left of center, causing the bait to canter slightly in the water and killing the lure's ability to dive properly.

Out of tune crankbaits simply don't catch many fish and the problem is many anglers are not skilled enough at "tuning" a crankbait to correct the situation. An angler who doesn't know how to properly tune a crankbait will soon find himself frustrated with the process. A rookie at the art of crankbait tuning

often makes a bad lure worse instead of better.

PULL POINT ADJUSTMENT

Tuning a crankbait requires making very minor adjustments to the lure's wire pull point or what is often called the line tie. Located on the lure's diving lip, the operative word here is minor because it only takes a very small adjustment to dramatically change the way a crankbait is running.

Lures that are running to the left of center will require the pull point to be slightly bent to the right to correct this situation. Lures that are running right of center will need the pull point bent to the left for correction. The traditional tool for this job used to be an ordinary pair of needle nose pliers to tune any crankbait. In the hands of someone who isn't so skilled, a needle nose pliers can lead to a very frustrating situation for anglers who are in a hurry to get the job done and move on to the process of fishing.

The process of bending the pull point is fairly straight forward, but it requires trial and error to achieve the desired results. Often a crankbait that is seriously out of tune is subjected to so many adjustments the wire on the pull point becomes softened to the point it will no longer support the lure running in a predictable manner.

THE EZ CRANKBAIT TUNER

Thankfully a tool designed especially for tuning finicky crankbaits is on the market. Known as Off Shore Tackle's OR40 EZ Crankbait Tuner, this unique product features a slip clutch jaw design. One half of the jaw on the EZ Crankbait Tuner is long and slender and the other half of the jaw is shorter. This feature allows the long jaw to be positioned against the lip of the crankbait while the short jaw is placed against the wire pull point. This fundamental design gives the angler more control to make very small adjustments to the pull point.

The slip clutch features an adjustable

spring tension located right at the junction where the jaws come together. Applying more or less press to the slip jaws makes it possible to tune crankbaits of different sizes that feature different wire diameters on the pull point or line tie.

When the clutch on the EZ Crankbait Tuner slips you will hear a loud click. To reset the tuner for another adjustment, simply use your thumb and forefinger to click the jaws back together. **This "resetting step" must be taken each time an adjustment to the lure's pull point is made.**

The process of using the EZ Crankbait Tuner is easy. First, make sure the slip jaws are reset by pinching them together until they click. Then place the long jaw on the edge of the crankbait's diving lip and the short jaw on the wire pull point. Squeeze the handle on the EZ Crankbait Tuner until the jaw slips and clicks again.

A small adjustment has been made to the wire pull point. Cast the crankbait to see how this adjustment has impacted on how the lure is running and then make another adjustment as needed until the lure is running and diving straight down into the water. Remember, you have to "reset" the OR40 jaws prior to making each adjustment.

The adjustable spring tension on the slip jaws helps tremendously in the process of determining how much pressure is needed to adjust various different design and sizes of crankbaits. The EZ Crankbait Tuner can be used to tune all crankbaits from oversized saltwater and muskie lures to pint-sized walleye and crappie baits.

SUMMING IT UP

Off Shore Tackle's OR40 EZ Crankbait Tuner takes the trial and error out of tuning crankbaits. With a little practice this tool becomes intuitive to use, making sense out of what has historically been a complex and confusing process. Even better, the EZ Crankbait Tuner can turn "dud" crankbaits into fish catchers once again.



Pro Staffer Gary Parsons of The Next Bite TV series knows the value of tuning crankbaits to maximize their performance.

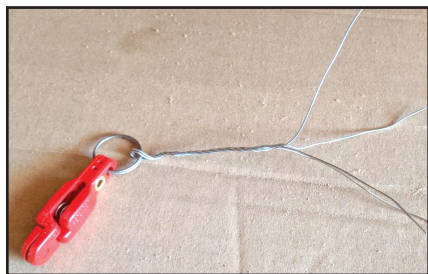
WEED GRAPPLERS

BY: TOD CONNER

Weeds and walleye go hand in hand, but during the summer months weeds floating on the surface can be a trollers worst nightmare. Jet skis and pleasure boat traffic clip off the tops of the weed growth, which in turn float on the surface and foul trolling lines.

There is a simple solution that eliminates 90% of the problem associated with floating weeds. Place an Off Shore Tackle OR16 Pro Clip on the fishing line about six feet in front of the lure. This simple trick prevents weeds that catch on the fishing line from sliding down to the bait.

Most days adding just one OR16 on the line makes it possible to troll without fouling lines constantly. On days when the floating weeds are especially bad, I double down by adding two OR16 clips to the line, one at about four feet in front of the lure and a



second one at about six feet in front of the lure.

Adding these clips to the line reduces the lure's natural diving ability, so I compensate by adding about 10' of extra trolling lead for this set up.

I have also been testing out another version of this trick my son Clayton and I call the "weed grapple". We use .020 diameter stiff wire and wrap it on the split ring of the OR16 so that it ends up having 4 dangling legs. What we have been finding out is that this rig lays right against the line when trolled and does not spin or tangle line.

Adding wire "weed grapple" legs to the OR16 clip keeps weeds from sliding down the line even better than running two OR16 clips on the line. It's important to check lines often and remove weeds that accumulate on the OR16.

Also, when board trolling, using the Off Shore Tackle OR12 with the Tattle Flag™ HD Upgrade will make it easy to tell when weeds are accumulating on the line. The added resistance of trolling with weeds on the line causes the spring-loaded flag to tilt down, tipping the angler off that it's time to reel in and clear weeds from the line.



It's always a great time spending time on the water with family.

GETTING DOWN WITH DOWNRIGGER RELEASES

BY: MARK ROMANACK

Anyone who understands downrigger fishing will attest that the weakest link in using riggers is routinely the line release. Almost since the invention of the downrigger, anglers have been cutting corners when it comes to selecting and using downrigger line releases.

Off Shore Tackle is an industry leader in the manufacturing of line releases designed especially for trolling with downriggers. All of these line releases feature large soft rubber pads that securely hold the line, but allow the angler to trip the release easily when a fish is hooked or when it's simply time to switch out lures.

Every line release in the OST line up is designed to function flawlessly and to never damage the fishing line.

OR1 MEDIUM TENSION DOWNRIGGER RELEASE

The OR1 Medium Tension Downrigger Release was the product that started it all. The standard that all other downrigger line releases are measured by, this iconic product is hands down the most widely used downrigger line release on the market.

The medium spring tension and large rubber pads of the OR1 make it perfect for most salmon, trout and steelhead trolling conditions.

OR2 MEDIUM TENSION STACKER RELEASE

For anglers who wish to fish two rods/lines using a single downrigger,

the OR2 Medium Tension Stacker Release is the answer. This stacker release features two line releases. One is used to hold the line from a second rod, the other release is pinched on the downrigger cable to position the second line/lure a desired distance from the primary line/lure.

A stacker release is perfect for trolling situations where species like steelhead are found higher in the water column, while other species like lake trout or salmon are found deeper. Stacker releases literally allow anglers to double down on their trolling efforts without having to invest in expensive extra downriggers.

OR4 LIGHT TENSION DOWNRIGGER RELEASE

The "one size fits all" philosophy just doesn't cut it when it comes to downrigger fishing. Anglers who are targeting smaller species such as coho salmon, brown trout, ciscoes and walleye need a downrigger release with a lighter spring tension. The OR4 is the ideal choice for these species and also when targeting hatchery trout commonly found in natural lakes.

OR7 LIGHT TENSION STACKER DOWNRIGGER RELEASE

A light tension stacker release is just as important for targeting smaller species as they are for large species. The OR7 allows anglers to set up stacker

rigs without having to compromise on performance.

OR8 HEAVY TENSION DOWNRIGGER RELEASE

Anglers who fish in deep water, troll at high speeds or for those who routinely use heavy gear like oversized flashers and paddles, the OR8 Heavy Tension Downrigger Release is just what the doctor ordered. This release features a doubled up spring that firmly grips the line.

Just a few of the trolling situations that call for the OR8 include muskie trolling at high speeds and with larger baits, pulling oversized paddles and flashers for salmon and trout and also trolling for big game saltwater species.

A WORD ON FISHING LINES

All the Off Shore Tackle downrigger line releases are designed to function with monofilament, co-polymers, fluorocarbon and hybrid lines. Each of the above releases will function flawlessly when used with lines from 10 to 25 pound test in size. The OR8 can also be used with larger lines such as 40 or 50 pound test commonly used for saltwater trolling.

GETTING THE MOST FROM DOWNRIGGER RELEASES

Off Shore Tackle recommends burying the line about two thirds of the

way in the rubber pads. This strategy ensures that the tension required to trip the release is strong enough to insure a positive hook set.

When fishing riggers in very deep water, sometimes it can be challenging to trip the release when it's time to switch out lures. The "loop trick" solves this problem.

Before burying the line into the downrigger release, grab the line and wrap it around your index finger to create a small loop. Spin your finger several times and place the twists of line between the rubber pads, leaving a loop of line about one inch long protruding from the release.

This rigging method increases the purchase at the release, eliminating any false releases, but makes it very easy to trip the release even when fishing in deep water.

REPLACEMENT PADS

All the line releases in the OST line up feature rubber pads that can be easily replaced when they become worn. This simple step eliminates the need to purchase new line releases and helps to keep anglers on the water longer.

SUMMING IT UP

No other manufacturer produces more line releases designed especially for downrigger trolling than Off Shore Tackle. A release for every trolling situation, Off Shore Tackle prides themselves on producing iconic products that have stood the test of time.

LEARNING TO FISH CRAPPIE WITH OFF SHORE BOARDS

BY: DOUG WYNN

“We’ve got to get rid of you Kentucky boys so we can catch some crappie.” says a guy from Alabama.

Say WHAT? Those could be fighting words in many situations. Calmer heads prevailed. Let me put it into context. We were on Grenada Lake in Mississippi pulling Off Shore OR12 Side Planer boards with crankbaits. The time was early August with high 90 degree temperatures predicted.

We started our day as the only boat for hundreds of yards and were catching several of the quality crappie that Grenada is known for. As the sun got above the horizon, we began to have company. Other boats would ease our way to check out that big blue and silver Excel Storm Cat that had the funny looking vertical rod holders and 4 guys yucking it up. Once they realized we were onto something special, they decided that was the place to be.

As you probably know, crowds and planer boards can be a disaster in the making if things get too cozy. We were one of only a couple of boats that opted to pull boards. We were running river channel points and inside turns. We would start each day in the area of standing timber in 16 to 20 feet of water. Our cranks were set from 30 to 100 feet back. We were running three OR12’s off each side with a couple of flat lines off the transom.

Our outside board was often 75 feet from the boat with spacing of 20 feet or so between boards. As things started getting crowded, we decided it was in our best interest to start moving out of the crowd. Before we could, the guy from Alabama eased closer than I would have liked to let us know our secret was up.

As the spider riggers and longliners took over our area, we eased down the submerged river channel toward the dam, deeper water, and no other boats. We finished our 40 boat limit of crappie in 40 feet of water during the mid-day heat. The baits behind the boards accounted for 90+% of our total catch during that trip.

Our setup was pretty familiar. We were using rod trees to keep the 7’ medium action rods equipped with line counter reels correctly spaced apart, and used 12 lb monofilament line to pull cranks in every color. One of the guys was constantly changing baits that didn’t draw strikes often to those that did. We were targeting submerged white crappie that were following baitballs of shad minnows.

I was watching my electronics to give us a constant depth of the schools of crappie. They also showed us a very real situation that most anglers don’t consider. As we would move over the schools of crappie, even deep ones, the fish would move away from the boat. I had seen this scenario in relatively shallow water, but this was happening in



Another relaxing day on the water fishing with Off Shore Tackle’s OR38 Awesome Crappie Board!

water up to 30 feet deep!

No wonder we were the envy of those other anglers in our chosen area, we were putting our cranks where the fish were, away from the boat. This exact same pattern was what my partner, Justin, and I had used the previous September in the Crappie Masters National Championship on Grenada to weigh in a 7 fish limit weighing 14.09 pounds the first day.

Pulling boards for crappie is something I had toyed with for years before I decided I was going to bear down and learn. A friend, who is also a guide on Chickamauga Lake in east TN, took me under his wing and spent two days answering my questions as we pulled tiny jigs behind his homemade boards.

I came back to Kentucky Lake with a better understanding of the technique. Now, I had to make it work for my style of fishing. Kentucky Lake is a huge body of water connected to Lake Barkley via a mile-long canal. With nearly 180,000 acres of water to choose from, I had to be able to find fish somewhere that would take a bait swimming away from the boat behind a board.

I start out in very early spring as the crappie are just starting to move up toward the shallow flats. I can ease up into the shallow areas and run my jigs very close to the rocky banks that the black crappie love. Moving slowly, 0.6-1.0 mps with my OR38 Awesome Crappie Boards, I can target pre-spawn crappie in clear water areas that have yet to see the spring rains.

Once the surface temperature rises into the 40’s, I work north banks that have had sunshine on them most of the day. The bait fish will move in to feed along the rocky and gravel banks and

the crappie, as well as all three bass species (largemouth, smallmouth, and spotted bass), will be there to greet them. Don’t be surprised to also find catfish, sauger, bluegills and redears, and even an occasional yellow perch has taken a liking to your jig and plastic offering.

My go-to bait will be a willow-leaf horsehead jig with a 1.5-inch curly tail grub, tipped with a Crappie Nibble of course. I like to vary my depths so I may run a 1/16 oz head to a ¼ oz head, depending on the depth I’m searching and the speed I’m running. My speed will always be determined by the surface temperature of the chosen area.

I’m not apt to be running 1.0 mph in 40 degree water but I’ll use this same technique until the surface temperature reaches the low 60’s and the crappie begin to finish up spawning, then I’ll switch over to crankbaits. Don’t be afraid to run the OR38’s in very shallow water with the jig no more than 3-4 feet behind the boards. I have caught some huge Kentucky Lake crappie where my trolling motor was digging in the mud. The boards allow me to run the baits well away from the turmoil.

I’m not the guy who goes by the norms. I will always have some very dark colors in my spread, regardless of the water clarity. Dark green, dark blue, black, chartreuse and even solid black have been very productive for me. I like the action of a curly tail but the minnow imitations with straight tapering tails also have their place.

A bait that I’ve done very well with over the last couple of years is the Spinie Minnie. I also don’t shy away from putting my boards and baits very near to cover, both visible and below the surface. Kentucky and Barkley Lakes

have huge numbers of man-made structures we call stake beds; some call them cribs. These are often placed by Fish and Wildlife for fish attractors in very shallow water. The boards allow me to run a bait very close to the edge of these without having to get the boat anywhere near the structure.

As a guide, I must put my clients in the best position to catch crappie in a very short time. I often see a client, when I bring out the boards, roll their eyes with skepticism. Many are intimidated by a technique they may have only seen on Outdoor Channel for walleye.

Once we get the basic rig set out, it can be a lot of work for me but a load of fun for clients. I’ve had many book my trips to strictly learn how and where to use the boards. I prefer the OR12 boards with the Tattle Flag™ HD Upgrade for using crankbaits even though a crappie may not pull the flag back and keep it back like a walleye or catfish.

The OR38 is big enough to pull medium-sized deep-runner cranks but I prefer it for long-ling jigs in shallower water. The OR38 can be used in a variety of situations if money is a factor and I tell my clients the OR38 may be an easier choice for a beginner.

There are a wealth of videos about pulling boards but the average angler will do best if he takes in all that information then forms what technique works best for his equipment and situation. Planer boards may not be for everybody, but they can be a very productive way to put a bunch of tasty crappie in the livewell.

DISCLAIMER

Product features, opinions, and/or individual’s contact information may have changed since these articles were originally composed.

USING THE 50 PLUS 2 METHOD

BY: GARY PARSONS

Everyone who trolls with crankbaits eventually comes to the conclusion they wish they could get their favorite lures to dive a little deeper. Thankfully, the use of an Off Shore Tackle product known as the Snap Weight makes it easy to get crankbaits to greater depths and also to fish deep while enjoying the benefits of using shorter trolling leads.

A Snap Weight is a OR20 series Pro Guppy Weight mounted to a line clip that can be easily added to any trolling line. A special line clip known as the OR16 Pro Clip looks like an ordinary planer board line release, but inside the release jaws a small plastic peg provides an added benefit not offered on other line releases. By opening the OR16 clip and placing the fishing line behind the peg, the Snap Weight is effectively “pinned in place” on the fishing line.

When a fish is hooked using this system, the angler simply reels in the fish and removes the Snap Weight when it nears the rod tip. It only takes a split second to put a Snap Weight on the line or to take it off, making Snap Weights the most seamless way to add trolling depth to any crankbait.

THE 50 PLUS 2 METHOD

Using a Snap Weight to get crankbaits to deeper depths makes great sense, but the question remains how much weight, lead length and trolling speed is required to get specific lures to target depths? Thankfully the Precision Trolling Data phone app has already done the hard work and documented the trolling depth of

popular crankbaits fished in combination with a two-ounce Snap Weight.

This unique data is only available on the Precision Trolling Data app and was created by using specific crankbait models, common lead lengths, popular trolling speeds and the 2 ounce Snap Weight. The 50 Plus 2 Method starts by selecting a crankbait. Currently the PTD app features over 50 popular crankbait models that feature the 50 Plus 2 data.

The 50 Plus 2 data appears under the “Line Type” option on the Precision Trolling Data App. Clicking this option on your phone allows the angler to select data for 10-pound test monofilament, 10/4 Fireline and also the 50 Plus 2 data.

Click the 50 Plus 2 option on the “Line Type” and let the desired crankbait out behind the boat 50 feet. All the lures included in the 50 Plus 2 Method are based on using an initial lead of 50 feet. Once the lure is 50 feet behind the boat, place a two ounce Off Shore Tackle Snap Weight on the line. Now to achieve a desired target depth, on the app select the desired “trolling speed” and also the “feet down” using the picker wheels. The PTD app will automatically calculate the “feet back” required to achieve the desired target depth.

It’s important to understand that the “feet back” includes the initial 50-foot leader and provides a total overall lead length required to achieve the desired target depth. Using the 50 Plus 2 Method anglers can easily get their favorite crankbaits to deeper depths and also shorten the overall trolling lead in the process.

FISHING TADPOLE RESETTABLE DIVING WEIGHTS

BY: MARK ROMANACK

They say that necessity is the mother of invention. In the case of the OR36 Tadpole Resettable Diving Weights, Off Shore Tackle felt it was necessary to develop a better in-line trolling weight.

Most in-line trolling sinkers achieve depth based on their size/weight, how much line is deployed and also trolling speed. The OR36 Tadpole is a true diving device that achieves depth in much the same way as a crankbait dives. Because Tadpoles are made from die-cast zinc, they are environmentally friendly and they can be used to target deeper fish without having to play out the exceptionally long trolling leads so common with other in-line trolling weights.

TADPOLE SIZES

Tadpoles come in four sizes including the No. 1, 2, 3 and Magnum. The sizes 1 and 2 are ideally suited for trolling in the top 10-25 feet of the water column and have become very popular with walleye anglers who use them to deploy spinner rigs and also trolling spoons.

The size 3 and also Magnum models dive much deeper and are routinely used by walleye, trout and salmon anglers targeting the 30 to 50-foot depth ranges.

RIGGING TADPOLES WITH CRANKBAITS

One of the reasons the Tadpole Diver has so quickly become popular is they are easy to rig and fish. Each Tadpole comes factory supplied with two heavy duty snaps. Place one snap on the tow arm of the diver and attach this snap to the main line. The second snap is placed at the tail of the Tadpole. When using the Tadpole Diver to pull crankbaits, simply add a six to seven foot leader tied directly to the lure. Drop the Tadpole and crankbait in the water and watch to see that the snap slides into the elbow of the tow arm. Once the snap is in the elbow, the Tadpole is in diving mode and the desired amount of trolling

lead can be played out.

When a fish is hooked, the snap on the tow arm will slide to the forward position effectively converting the Tadpole from a diving device into a simple in-line weight. The beauty of this design is the Tadpole dives to reach deeper fish on shorter lead lengths, but when a fish is hooked, the angler doesn’t have to fight the resistance of the diver, only the struggling fish!

Compared to other diving devices, the Tadpole is simple to use and flawless in function. The release mechanism functions perfectly every time and does not require any trip arms or tension settings.

RIGGING TADPOLES WITH SPOONS AND SPINNERS

When fishing spoons or spinner rigs, Off Shore Tackle recommends adding a ball bearing swivel to the snap at the tail of the Tadpole to eliminate any issues with line twist.

BOARD FRIENDLY

Every member of the Tadpole Diver family can be used in combination with in-line planer boards like the famous OR12 Side Planer, the OR38 Awesome Crappie Board and the OR37 SST Pro Mag board.

The Awesome Crappie Board will handle the No. 1 and 2 sizes of the Tadpole Diver nicely. The OR12 Side-Planer will handle the No. 1, 2 and 3 sizes of the Tadpole Divers and the SST Pro Mag Board is ideal for anglers who are using the Magnum Tadpole.

DIVING DEPTHS

The diving depths of all the Tadpole sizes are included in the popular Precision Trolling Data phone app, which includes popular line diameter, lead lengths and also trolling speeds. Using the PTD trolling app anglers can dial in any depth necessary to present Tadpole divers in the strike zone.



Tadpole Divers are wildly popular among anglers who troll spinners for walleye on places like Saginaw Bay, Lake Erie and Green Bay.

SUMMING IT UP

The invention of the OR36 series Tadpole Diver has taken in-line trolling weights to a whole new level. If necessity is the mother of invention, the Tadpole may well be the most necessary piece of fishing equipment in your

boat. Not only does the Tadpole achieve deeper depths, these unique trolling devices trip automatically and are 100% functional, 100% of the time! With Off Shore Tackle’s Tadpole Divers, anglers spend their time fighting fish instead of fighting the diver, a trip arm mechanism or a tension screw!

WHY SO MANY PLANER BOARD RELEASES?

BY: MARK ROMANACK

One look at the Off Shore Tackle product line up and it's obvious that planer board releases make up a huge portion of the overall product line. Line releases are a critical part of so many trolling situations and no single line release can adequately meet the needs of trollers nationwide.

Off Shore Tackle manufactures a large selection of line releases and clips designed to meet the needs of trollers targeting everything from panfish to big game saltwater species.

OR3 LIGHT TENSION

The OR3 (white) is a popular release among planer board mast anglers who target walleye, brown trout and also spring coho salmon. The large pads on the OR3 make it easy to get a secure grip on the line without damaging the line through repeated use.

The OR3 is sold in two packs or in 50 bulk packs by ordering through the Off Shore Tackle web page.

OR10 ADJUSTABLE LIGHT TENSION

The OR10 (yellow) is hands down the most popular line release among charter captains and other anglers who routinely troll for walleye using a planer board mast system. Available in packages of four and also in bulk 100 packs, the OR10 is adjustable by simply sliding the spring to the forward position (toward the pads) to increase tension or backwards (away from the pads) to decrease the tension. A flat bladed screwdriver is the best tool for adjusting the spring tension on all Off Shore Tackle line releases.

OR14 ADJUSTABLE MEDIUM TENSION

The OR14 (black) is the same size as the OR10, but this release features a slightly stronger spring tension. The OR14 is ideal for trollers pulling large or deep diving crankbaits or for those anglers who routinely troll at faster speeds.

OR16 PRO CLIP

The OR16 (red) Pro Clip is not a line release, but rather a line clip. This product comes standard on the OR12 Side Planer board, the OR38 Awesome Crappie Board as well as in the OR20 Pro Weight System kits. A small plastic peg in the middle of the rubber jaw pads is designed to hold the line securely.

The OR16 allows anglers to release their in-line boards while keeping the board "pegged" in place on the line. When using the OR16 in combination with an attached Guppy Weight (AKA Snap Weight), this "pegged" feature allows Snap Weights to be fished in-line



Travis Bohy of Jay's Sporting Goods in Clare, Michigan caught this beautiful brown trout trolling a plug behind an OR12 Side Planer Board. Off Shore Tackle makes the widest assortment of planer board releases on the market. This is just another reason why Off Shore Tackle is your Leader in Trolling Technology.

without fear of losing the Snap Weight while fighting a fish.

OR17BWW MEDIUM TENSION

The OR17 (black) is a full-sized line release designed for Great Lakes trout and salmon trolling with a planer board mast system. The large rubber pads of the OR17 make it ideal for achieving just the perfect amount of tension required to a deliver solid hook sets on fish such as chinook salmon, steelhead and lake trout.

OR18 SNAPPER

The OR18 (black) Snapper is not a line release, but rather a line clip. The cam acting jaws of the Snapper are designed to hold firmly on slippery super lines. The Snapper is standard equipment on the bracket of the OR37 SST Pro Mag board, but this clip is routinely used on the OR12 Side Planer.

The Snapper tension is adjustable by tightening or loosening a set screw found under the jaws.

OR19 ADJUSTABLE HEAVY TENSION

The OR19 (orange) is standard equipment on the bracket of the legendary OR12 Side Planer board. This release's heavy tension setting is ideal for trolling

at all speeds while using the Side Planer. The OR19 can also be used as a line release for planer board mast fishing in situations where a stronger spring tension is required.

The OR19 is gaining in popularity among anglers who troll at high speeds for muskie and also among saltwater trollers.

OR30BWW HEAVY TENSION

The OR30 (red) is the heaviest tension line release in the Off Shore Tackle line up. The heavy tension provided by this release is necessary for anglers who troll at high speeds or those who use large baits.

Muskie anglers swear by the OR30 when trolling at high speeds bucktails and oversized body baits. The OR30 shines especially well when extra weight is needed to achieve the desired depths.

Big game saltwater anglers also find the OR30 ideal for pulling large plugs and also for trolling at speeds upwards of 6 to 8 knots.

OR39 SAM'S PRO RELEASE

The OR39 (black) Sam's Release is actually manufactured by the Silver Horde company and is private labeled exclusively to Off Shore Tackle. This unique and fully adjustable line release is

designed to function with super braids.

The Sam's Release is most commonly used on the bracket of the OR12 Side Planer and also the OR37 SST Pro Mag board. Wrap super lines next to the barrel toward the end of the pin and then the plunger is snapped into a jettison clip that is tension controlled with a set screw. The Sam's Release makes it possible to fish in-line boards and to trip the line from the release on the bracket. Meanwhile the board is still attached to the line thanks to a second line clip mounted at the back of the board.

This unique rigging method makes it easier to reel in the board when a fish is hooked, and it also allows for multiple board lines to be fished on each side of the boat without the need to clear lines to fight hooked fish.

The Sam's Release is very popular among Great Lakes anglers who troll using sinking lines such as lead core, stranded copper line and also weighted stainless steel wire.

SUMMING IT UP

No one makes more planer board releases and clips than Off Shore Tackle. No matter what type of trolling or the species being targeted, Off Shore Tackle produces the perfect line release or clip for the job.

THE OFF SHORE TACKLE MISSION STATEMENT

Our company's foundation is based on presenting products to the consumer that result in a more productive fishing experience. We strive to use the best available materials that are as eco friendly as possible. Our products are "Often Imitated but Never Duplicated". You can buy cheaper products, but you can't buy better designed, built, longer lasting or more functional trolling products than those produced by Off Shore Tackle. That's why Off Shore Tackle LLC remains your "Leader in Trolling Technology."

WEEDS, WALLEYE AND SPINNERS

BY: TOD CONNER

Messy, troublesome and labor intensive pretty much describes the art of fishing in the weeds. It's true that fishing in the salad takes more effort, but there is no denying that weeds and walleye go hand in hand. However, fishing in the weeds doesn't have to be a daunting task.

Most anglers troll spinner rigs while trying to stay on the outside of the weeds. It doesn't take long before the boat wanders into the weeds and every line is quickly fouled.

First let's look at the approach, if you are only tracing the weed edges chances are you are missing the majority of the fish. Instead of trolling the weed edges, consider trolling right through the heart of the weeds!

Adding an Off Shore Tackle OR20 series Guppy Weight set up as a Snap Weight to the line helps to block weed debris from reaching the harness. I typically like to adjust my weight size to weed height and treat that as my depth to achieve. So, if I'm in 18 feet of water and the weeds are 8' from the surface I will treat the 8' as the "bottom".

The Guppy Weight has a bit more drag than a traditional in-line sinker making them easy to control the fishing depth by simply manipulating the trolling speed. I recommend setting lines while the boat is outside the weeds. In this case I'd set my rig to be fishing 8' down at 1.5 speed over ground, then turn the boat to head into the weeds while dropping my trolling speed to about 1.1-1.2. As soon as I start see-

ing weeds on the graph, I increase my speed to 1.5 speed over ground or higher to raise the baits up.

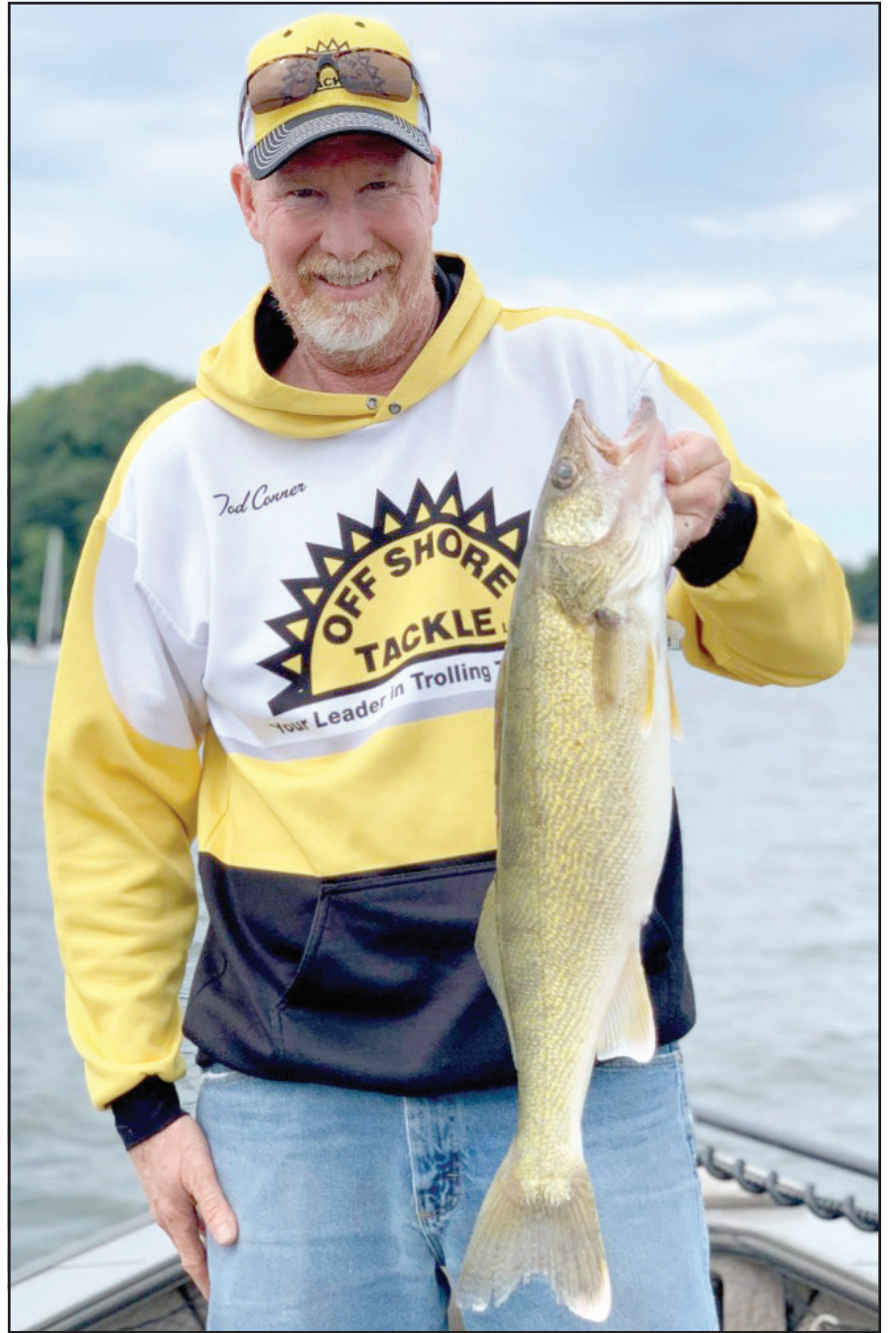
If done timely you will flutter your spinner rigs directly over the tops of the troublesome weeds, now keep on going and do the opposite down the back side of the weed bed. With a little time and practice you can really dial this in, optimizing the whole weed bed instead of just fishing the edges. It's amazing how many fish spend most of their time right in the thick of the weed cover.

Additionally, I run braided line. Why braid? Braid tends to cut weeds better than monofilament and reduces the chances of dragging individual strands of the troublesome weed growth.

When employing braided lines, Off Shore Tackle has you covered! You can convert the OR12 Side Planer for running braided line by simply replacing the factory standard OR19 release that comes on the board with an OR18 Snapper Release on the bracket of the board.

The Snapper Release has a cam design that is intended to hold braided lines firmly. If you prefer to rig your board so the line can be tripped when a fish is hooked, the OR39 Sam's Pro Release can be substituted for the Snapper.

It's true that trolling in the weeds requires more effort than open water trolling. Thankfully with the help of some Off Shore Tackle products a few weeds can't keep you from catching fish.



Tod Conner is the Michigan Pro Staff Director for Off Shore Tackle.



Congratulations to long time Pro Staffer, Dave Kolb, on a great win!

MAG BOARDS FOR WALLEYE

BY: DAVID KOLB

I spend a lot of time running the Off Shore Tackle OR37 SST Pro Mag boards when faced with shallow and clear water conditions. While most guys consider this board strictly for salmon or muskie fishing, I find that the SST Pro Mag is buoyant enough that trophy sized walleye can't sink the board even when fishing lead lengths as short as 20 feet.

Also, because the SST Pro Mag is larger, it planes to the side better giving me more outward lure coverage when fishing in ultra-clear waters. I recommend using the SST Pro Mag for outside board lines and the OR12 Side Planer for inside board lines. I credit the OR37 SST Pro Mag for producing the last two fish I boated which turned out to be critical to my win on the National Walleye Tour at Sault Ste Marie in August of 2019.



THE HEAVY DUTY TATTLE FLAG™ WIRES

BY: MARK ROMANACK

Everyone who has fished Off Shore's Tattle Flag™ system raves about how sensitive these articulating flag systems are at telegraphing strikes, hooked fish, hooking non-target species and even making it obvious when a lure has fouled on weeds or other debris. When a fish is hooked or debris snagged, the flag goes down making it obvious it's time to reel in that board. Tattle Flag™ systems not only make it easy to detect bites, they keep anglers fishing instead of wasting time while on the water.

A simple linkage system that uses a length of stainless wire to connect a stainless spring to the flag has revolutionized how anglers troll with in-line planer boards. No surprise, Off Shore Tackle was the first to offer anglers a "Tattle Flag™" system. Off Shore Tackle enhanced the Tattle Flag™ system by imple-

menting a thicker in diameter and stiffer wire linkage arm. These Heavy Duty Tattle Flag™ Wires (WIRE BE) resist bending and keep those flags dropping day in and day out.

The Heavy Duty Tattle Flag™ Wires are included in the OR12TFEK Tattle Flag™ HD Economy Kits that feature the linkage wire, stainless spring, plastic washer and hardware. As well as in the OR12TF Tattle Flag™ HD Upgrade Kit that includes a replacement flag, linkage wire, stainless spring, replacement OR16 Pro Clips, plastic washer and the necessary hardware.

If you have not already, 2021 is the perfect time to upgrade your OR12 Side Planer boards to Tattle Flag™ boards. The HD Tattle Flag™ Wires (WIRE BE) will keep your boards working flawlessly for years to come.

CATCHING SKIP JACK AND MONSTER CATS WITH OFF SHORE BOARDS

BY: MARK ROMANACK WITH TIM "DOC" LANGE

What could be almost as much fun as catching monster catfish? Planning a trip and catching the bait used to catch those cats of course! On the majority of the big rivers flowing across America there are monster blue catfish to be caught. Just some of the places anglers target blue cats include the Ohio, Tennessee, Missouri, Mississippi and Illinois rivers. All these catfish destinations have one thing in common. Before these fish can be tempted into biting, anglers are first tasked with catching the unique baitfish known as the skip jack.

The skip jack is a herring-like baitfish that loves flowing water. These baitfish are most often concentrated directly below dams where water cascading over the spillway provides current and plenty of oxygen and plankton rich water.

Skip jack are baitfish, but they grow up to about three or four pounds in size. Tim "Doc" Lange has developed a very unique way of catching skip jack using small jigs and the Off Shore Tackle OR38 Awesome Crappie Board. "I tie a half dozen 1/32 ounce crappie style jigs on my line spaced out about a foot apart," explains Lange. "My boat gets anchored with the bow facing into the current. Straight out the back of the boat I'll run two rods set up with half a dozen jigs each. Next I use an OR38 Awesome Crappie Board to position two additional rods including one on the port and another on the starboard side of the boat."

With this many lines and hooks in the water, it makes it lot easier to catch enough skip jack for a day or two of fishing for catfish. Skip jack are oily fish that do a good job of putting out a scent stream in the water.

"Because skip jack are hard to keep alive, I generally put mine on ice and plan on using them within a day or two," explains Lange. "Everything we catch goes on ice because even the bigger skip jack make ideal bait for monster blue cats. What we don't use can be frozen and used for bait on future trips."

RIGGING UP FOR BLUE CATS

Doc Lange targets blue cats on the bottom and also suspended in the water column. "When rigging up for blue



Tim "Doc" Lange caught this massive blue cat pulling live bait rigs using the OR12 Side Planer and also the OR37 SST Pro Mag board.

cats, I tie up a rig that features a D85 Daiichi circle hook on 80 pound test fluorocarbon line. I make my leader 18 to 24 inches long and thread a four-ounce pencil sinker on the line. The rig resembles a Carolina rig, but is baited with a whole skip jack hooked through both lips."

An electric trolling motor is used to slowly troll the boat upstream while these catfish rigs are played straight out the back of the boat. "I like to stagger two flat lines, so the baits are not fishing exactly the same water," says Lange.

Once Lange gets a couple flat lines set out the back of his boat, he takes a couple similar rigs with two to four ounce weights on them. These rigs are

lowered part way down in the water column and then hitched up to an Off Shore Tackle OR12 Side Planer board.

"The OR12 will pull rigs with up to about four ounces of weight out to the side of the boat," explains Lange. "I'll typically fish an OR12 board on each side of the boat."

Lange completes his catfish rig by deploying two more catfish rigs with eight ounce weights. "The rigs with eight ounce weights are fished deeper in the water column using the OR37 SST Pro Mag board to get them out to the side of the boat."

By using the electric trolling motor to slowly troll upstream about .5 mph, this unique catfish set up covers the bottom and also targets fish that are

suspended in the water column.

BEST TIME TO FISH

Prime time for targeting blue cats is in the fall, winter and early spring. "Blue cats are very active in cool to cold water," says Lange. "Other species of catfish such as flatheads and also channel cats tend to bite better in warmer water."

BIG BLUES

Blue cats grow to enormous size and fish upwards of 40, 50, 60 and even 70 pounds are caught! The larger skip jack baits are prized as they tend to produce the biggest catfish.

LANCE VALENTINE HONORED WITH NATIONAL PROFESSIONAL ANGLERS ASSOCIATION 2019 MEMBER OF THE YEAR AWARD

Lance Valentine, a long time member of Off Shore Tackle's Pro Staff, was presented the prestigious National Professional Anglers Association (NPAA) 2019 Member of the Year Award at last year's NPAA National Convention in Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin. The award is presented annually to a single NPAA member in recognition of outstanding accomplishments and contributions to bring awareness to sportfishing through enhancement of professional skills, fishing skills and educating others.

"Lance was an easy choice," said NPAA board member John Gillman. "We have watched Lance for years dedicate himself and his organization to helping other anglers learn not only how to fish, but to love fishing, and pass on their passion. We are proud that Lance is an NPAA member and has finally been properly recognized for his two decades of educating anglers."

The NPAA Member of the Year

Award has been given out annually since the inception of the NPAA in 1997. Honorees must be nominated by a board member and receive a majority vote of the board. Valentine was chosen for the 2019 award due to his two decades of educating anglers through his "Walleye 101" seminar and DVD series, his educational charter trips, countless speaking engagements and his current "TeachinFishin" education platform which kicked off in January 2020.

"Some minutes change your life forever" Valentine said. "To receive this award from this group of anglers is overwhelming and a complete surprise. I do what I love, hoping it makes a small difference to someone, and to know that the best professional anglers in the country, most I have never met, recognize and appreciate what I am doing is amazing. My passion to teach fishing is burning brighter than ever."



Lance Valentine honored with National Professional Anglers Association 2019 Member of the Year Award

PLANER BOARD CRAPPIE

BY: GREG MCCAIN WITH DAN DANNENMUELLER

Crappie anglers are a resourceful collection of individuals. They take time-honored traditions and make them better. They develop new techniques and make them their own. They've even been known to borrow tactics from other types of fishing. Their imagination knows few limits.

Such is the case with the continued rise in popularity of planer boards. Borrowing a trolling technique once reserved for the walleye world and one that originally evolved in saltwater, crappie anglers far and wide have come to appreciate the fish-catching effectiveness of fishing planer boards.

Dan Dannenmueller is among the many believers who use planer boards often when targeting crappie. When he sought to improve his long-lining techniques, he turned to Off Shore Tackle planer boards as an alternative.

EFFECTIVE IS AN UNDERSTATEMENT

One event in particular illustrates just how effective planer boards can be. "It was the Crappie Masters Grenada Championship in the fall of 2016, and we were still fishing summer-time patterns," Dannenmueller said. "Summer-time fishing is a great time to use the planer boards. I was pulling crankbaits and Road Runners with Bobby Garland plastics. The fish set up perfectly for pulling planer boards. They were on ledges 12-14 feet deep, and they were just off of a 12-foot drop, hanging out there suspended off that edge."

"The bait was also out there," added Dannenmueller. "When I zeroed in on that depth, I put planer boards where I could pull them wide so that the trolling motor wouldn't spook them. The planer boards allowed me to go 150 feet out from the boat on each side, 300 feet total. They also allowed me to get to the exact right depth to most efficiently catch all those big fish on Grenada."

To those who haven't used them, the use of planer boards to pull lures looks like a complicated maze. Dannenmueller acknowledges the complexity of the technique and the hesitancy of inexperienced anglers to use planer boards. However, mastering a few basic concepts allows just about anyone to effectively apply the technique.

"There is an intimidation factor, without a doubt, any time you experience something different," says Dannenmueller. "People want it easy, just the way we started with cane poles and a cork. A situation with an eager-to-learn young angler, reveals how quickly planer boards can become a go-to approach to crappie fishing. It may seem like this is a very complex process, but we taught a 13-year-old how to do it in one hour," Dannenmueller said. "It's just a matter of being dedicated to learning how to rig and to learning something new."

BOARD RIGGING TIPS

Rigging is the first thing you need to learn when fishing in-line boards like the Off Shore Tackle OR12 Side Planer or the OR38 Awesome Crappie Board. The Side Planer is dedicated as a left or right model, while the Awesome Crappie Board is reversible and can be fished on either the left or right side of the boat.

A wealth of lures and trolling weights can be effectively fished behind these in-line boards. For crappie fishing jigs and also crankbaits are the most com-

mon lures fished in combination with boards, but at times diving devices like the OR36 series Tadpole Diver are also used in combination with planer boards.

"I let my lure out the desired distance behind the boat and then clip the board on the line using both the line release on the bracket and the second release mounted at the tail of the board," explains Dannenmueller. "Once the board is attached to the line, I drop the board in the water, place my rod in a rod holder, open the reel bail and set the bait clicker on the trolling reel so line slowly plays off as I troll away. This rigging method makes it possible to be setting two lines at the same time."

In-line boards do an excellent job of spreading out trolling lines as much as 100 to 150 feet out to the side of the boat. By staggering boards 25 to 50 feet apart, it's easy to rig two, three or even more board lines per each side of the boat!

"Lead length or the amount of line played out behind the boat is a big factor in dictating how deep those lures will fish below the surface," says Dannenmueller. "I use the Precision Trolling Data phone app to determine exactly how much line needs to be played out and also the appropriate trolling speed needed to dial my baits into the strike zone. The PTD app offers a "crappie specific" version of this popular app that includes all the common crankbaits used to target crappie, jigs ranging in size from 1/32 ounce to 1/8 ounce and also in-line weights like the Off Shore Tackle Snap Weight and Tadpole Divers."

While jigs and crankbaits are typically the "go to" lures used for crappie trolling, the Tadpole Diver fills an important niche among crappie anglers. "I use Tadpole Divers behind planer boards," says Dannenmueller. "The beauty of a Tadpole is they can be used to fish a host of baits. I like using Tadpoles to get things like jigs, live bait rigs or shallow diving crankbaits to deeper depths".

When using a Tadpole Diver, attach the main line to the snap that comes standard on the tow arm of the Tadpole. A four to six foot leader is then added to the back of the Tadpole and the desired lure attached.

When the Tadpole is placed in the water, watch to make sure the snap slides into the elbow of the tow arm. When the snap is in the elbow, the Tadpole will dive much like a crankbait. When a fish is hooked using a Tadpole Diver, the snap on the tow arm slides forward converting the Tadpole into an in-line weight.

TIMING MATTERS

"Post-spawn, in late spring and summer time, are prime times for targeting crappie with planer boards," Dannenmueller said. "In the spring these fish will suspend out off of points and in deep water making board fishing the perfect way to target those fish.

"Summertime through fall is also a great time to target crappie with boards," adds Dannenmueller. "At this time of year crappie tend to spread out over large flats and it's important to cover a lot of water to both find and catch fish."

Off Shore Tackle makes great products that work well. For those anglers out there who might be hesitant to try them, don't be put off by preconceived ideas. In-line boards work and can help you catch more and bigger crappie.



OFF SHORE TACKLE

Your Leader In

Our products can used with any monofilament

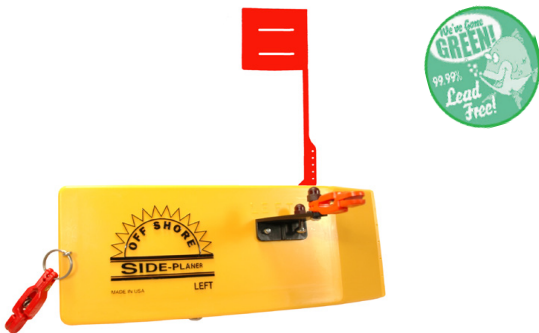
Planer Boards

Model # OR38 Awesome Crappie Board



Each OR38 Awesome Crappie Board includes an OR10 release, OR16 Pro Clip, black bracket, split ring, lock nut, 6/32 x 1/2" screw, and instructions. One board...Dual Purpose...It's Reversible and runs directly off of your rod line! Ideal for several species of fish not just crappie. Don't let the size fool you.

Model # OR12L Side Planer Left
Model # OR12R Side Planer Right



Each OR12 Side Planer includes a stationary flag, one OR19 release, one OR16 Pro Clip, instructions and is carefully ballasted to run flawlessly in rough water off of your rod line. Ideal for several species of fish.

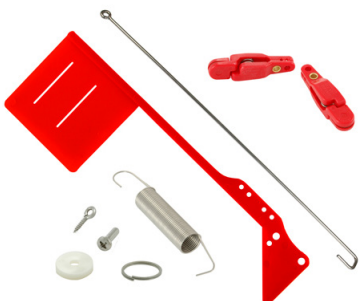
Model # OR37L SST Pro Mag Planer Left
Model # OR37R SST Pro Mag Planer Right



The SST Pro Mag Planer includes a stationary flag, one OR18 release with lock nut, one OR16 Pro Clip, instructions and is designed to carry large, heavy baits further to the side than any other in line planer! Perfect for long copper and lead core lines. The OR16 Pro Clip on the tail of the board ensures that your board will stay on your fishing line.

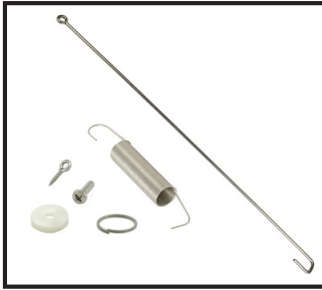
Tattle Flag™ HD Upgrade Kit

Model # OR12TF Tattle Flag™ HD Upgrade Kit



Each kit includes flag, 2 OR16 Pro Clips, HD wire, spring, washer, screw eye, split ring, 6/32 screw and instructions. One kit will upgrade one OR12 Side Planer.

Model# OR12TFEK
Tattle Flag™ HD Economy Kit



This kit works by using your OR12 Side Planer and the release/clip that came on your OR12. This kit just contains ONLY the hardware which consists of a HD wire, spring, washer, screw eye, split ring, 6/32 screw and limited instructions.

Planer Board Releases

Our three full size planer board releases come with a quick clip for use on dual planer boards. Also available without quick clips. Their large diameter pinch pad design holds monofilament lines securely. Tensions can be adjusted further by how deeply the line is placed in the pads.

Model # OR3, OR3BWW or OR3BWOW
Light Tension Planer Board Release - White



This release is ideal for small light biting fish.

Model # OR17BWW or OR17BWOW
Medium Tension Planer Board Release - Black



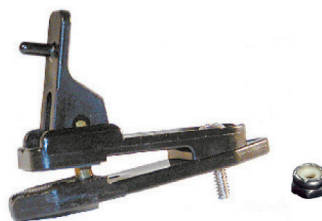
This release is ideal for deep water good size fish.. It can also be used to pull lead core, snap weights and deep diving crankbaits.

Model # OR30BWW or OR30BWOW
Heavy Tension Planer Board Release - Red



This release is ideal for large lures and high speed trolling.

Model # OR18 Snapper Adjustable Tension In Line
Planer Board Release—Black



The OR18 is designed with an adjust-able cam action locking arm that can be set to release at a range of tension settings or tightened down to hold even super braid lines and lead core securely. This release comes standard on our OR37 SST Pro Mag Planer and is made to attach to the bracket of our OR12 Side Planer as well.

Model # OR39
Sam's Pro Release-Black



Manufactured by Silver Horde, the OR39 Sam's Pro Release incorporates a jettison design that allows low stretch super lines to be wrapped around a rubber plunger that in turn fits into a pressure fit housing. This release is good for all species that the super lines are ideal for.

Our three half size adjustable tension planer board releases come with quick clips for use on dual planer boards and split rings for use on in-line planer boards. They are also available without quick clips and split rings. Tension can be further adjusted by simply sliding the spring toward the pads to increase tension or away from the pads to decrease tension.

Model # OR10, OR10BWW or OR10BWOW
Adjustable Light Tension
Planer Board Release—Yellow



This release is ideal for small light biting fish.

Model # OR14, OR14BWW or OR14BWOW
Adjustable Medium Tension
Planer Board Release—Black



This release is ideal for deep water and/or good size fish as well as most commonly used for rigging add-a-lines or fixed slider lines among downrigger anglers.

Model # OR19, OR19BWW or OR19BWOW
Adjustable Heavy Tension
Planer Board Release—Orange



This release comes as standard equipment on the OR12 Side Planer and is ideal for large lures, high speed trolling.

DON'T BE FOOLED

We are "Often Imitated, Never Duplicated". Make sure that when you purchase your products that they are Original Off Shore Tackle products that have proven to be successful and dependable! We take pride in bringing you the BEST quality!

PRODUCT SHOWCASE Trolling Technology



line, for best results we suggest a minimum of 10 lb. test.

Pro Weights



Model # OR20
Pro Weight System



Each system includes instructions, four OR16 Pro Clips, four split rings, two of each of the following guppy weights: 1/2 oz., 3/4 oz., 1 oz., 1 1/2 oz., 2 oz., and 3 oz. all contained in a plastic tackle box. Use as Snap Weights or In Line Weights - you decide. This system is used off of flat lines, dual planer boards and side planer boards.

The OR16's and guppy weights are available to purchase separately so you can create your own custom Pro Weight System!

Model # OR16, OR16BWW or OR16BWOW
Pro Clip—Red



This half size clip has an extra heavy spring tension and includes a split ring. They are also available without the split rings. You simply position your fishing line behind the pin that protrudes through the center of the pads to hold your snap weight securely on the line.

The OR16 comes as standard equipment on the tail of the OR37 SST Pro Mag Planer, OR12 Side Planer, OR38 Awesome Crappie Board and in our OR20 Pro Weight System. It is ideal for use with snap weight fishing, super braid lines and with our tattle flag™ HD system.



Replacement Pro Guppy Weights

Model # OR20 1/2
1/2 Ounce Pro Guppy Weight

Model # OR20 3/4
3/4 Ounce Pro Guppy Weight

Model # OR20 1
1 Ounce Pro Guppy Weight

Model # OR20 1 1/2
1 1/2 Ounce Pro Guppy Weight

Model # OR20 2
2 Ounce Pro Guppy Weight

Model # OR20 3
3 Ounce Pro Guppy Weight

These items, replacement parts, and promotional items (including apparel) are all available through our website.



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Resettable Diving Weights



Model # OR36 1
Tadpole Size 1

Model # OR36 2
Tadpole Size 2

Model # OR36 3
Tadpole Size 3

Model # OR36 MAGNUM
Tadpole MAGNUM Size

Downrigger Releases

Our downrigger releases are all full size and therefore have the large diameter pinch pad design that holds monofilament lines securely. Tension can be adjusted further by how deeply the line is placed into the pads.

Model # OR4
Light Tension Single
Downrigger Release, White



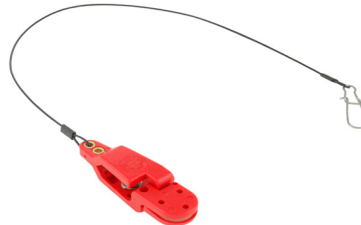
This release is ideal for light biting fish.

Model # OR1
Medium Tension Single
Downrigger Release, Black



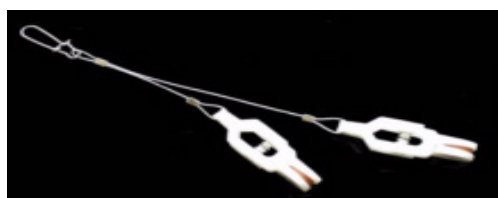
This release is ideal for deep water and/or good size fish.

Model # OR8
Heavy Tension Single
Downrigger Release, Red



This release is ideal for large lures and high speed trolling.

Model # OR7
Light Tension Stacker
Downrigger Release, White



This release is ideal for small light biting fish and allows you to run two lines off of the same downrigger.

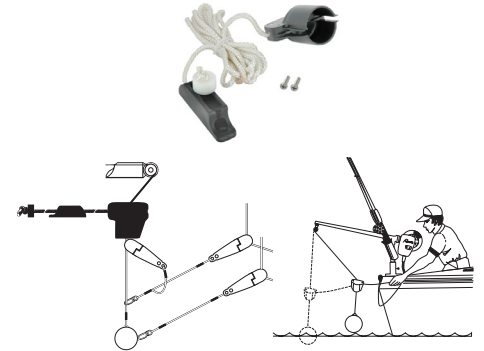
Model # OR2
Medium Tension Stacker
Downrigger Release, Black



This release is ideal for deep water and/or good size fish and allows you to run two lines off of the same downrigger.

Stacker Stripper/Weight Retriever

Model # OR6
Stacker Stripper/Weight Retriever



Stacking two lures on a downrigger is quicker and easier with the OR6 Stacker Stripper.

As the weight is raised, the Stripper will automatically strip the stacker release from the cable so you won't have to stop the cannonball. The automatic stripping eliminates the grooves worn into stacker pads from sliding on the cable.

The OR6 doubles as a Weight Retriever to bring the weight into the boat for resetting lines. Using the retriever cord will reduce damaging cannonball sway.

Replacement Pads



Model # ORRP8
Replacement pads for OR1, OR2, OR3, OR4, OR7, OR8, OR17, and OR30 releases.



Model # ORRP8SN
Replacement pads for OR18 releases.



Model # ORRP16
Replacement pads for OR10, OR14, and OR19 releases.



Model # ORRP16HL
Replacement pads for OR16 clips.

EZ Crankbait Tuner

Model # OR40
EZ Crankbait Tuner



These unique tuning pliers feature a long and short jaw design that includes an adjustable spring tension setting making it possible to tune any crankbait.

LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARDS, BRUCE DESHANO

What an up and down year 2020 was! 2020 started with my induction into the Fresh Water Hall of Fame along with Tommy Skarlis. An awesome and unexpected honor, especially being on the stage with Tommy. Jenna and I traveled to the Northwest Sportsman's show to receive this honor along with my entire family (Dad, Nick, Renee and Ari), making it even more special. My good friend Rich Mealey and Nick did the introduction prior to the award.

After the induction and a trip back to Cancun, we came home to the Covid pandemic which shut down the country and the economy. Then this fall, Tommy lost his battle with cancer and we lost a great friend, angler, father and husband. Tommy will be missed by all that knew him. His legacy will drive all of us to be better people.

Tournaments were turned upside down with dates, rules, and venues being changed. But our pro staff persevered by finishing high and winning several of them. Fishing was good for the most part with the big waters of Erie, Green Bay and Saginaw Bay producing some great catches. We all hope that during 2021, things get back to normal with fishing being top on our list of things to do, especially with family. We are always appreciative of all the support given to us here at Off Shore Tackle and we will be doing our best to keep up in the new year.



Tommy and I from several years back; lot's of great memories!

ABOUT THE EDITOR

Outdoor writer and TV producer Mark Romanack does the necessary editing for the annual Off Shore Release newspaper. Mark is a graduate of Northern Michigan University and is one of Michigan's most celebrated outdoor writers and television personalities.

During Mark's 30 something writing career he has authored over 3,000 full length magazine articles in 60 different outdoor periodicals. In addition, Mark has authored 13 different books on fishing including the wildly popular Precision Trolling depth guides and Mark is also the founder of the Precision Trolling Data phone apps.

In 2007 Mark took the plunge into outdoor television when he created the Fishing 411 TV series in combination with Off Shore Tackle Pro Staffer Mike Avery. The Fishing 411 series is currently airing season 15 on the Sportsman Channel and also on World Fishing Network. Fans of the show can also watch Fishing 411 TV at the Fishing 411 YouTube channel.

FROM THE DESK OF NICK DESHANO



Wow, what a year 2020 was! The highlight was back in January when my dad, Bruce, was inducted into the Freshwater Hall of Fame. It was a great honor to be able to speak at his induction in front of many industry leaders. What made it even better was that he was inducted alongside of Tommy Skarlis, who was not only a loyal pro staffer for Off Shore Tackle, but a great friend.

Sadly, Tommy lost his battle with cancer and passed away in September of 2020. He touched the lives of many people throughout his lifetime and will surely be missed. It is said often, but Tommy was truly one of a kind and made everyone around him a better person. The Off Shore Family would like to Thank Michelle, Nick and Jake for sharing Tommy with us all those years.

COVID-19 has made for an interesting and sometimes difficult year, and I want to thank everyone for their patience. Due to material shortages and increased demand, we were struggling to catch up throughout the year. A huge Thank You to all of our hard working production and office team: Jeanne, Kim, Kevin, Josh, and all the others that have worked their tails off to meet up with increased demand. They are the backbone of Off Shore Tackle and I'm very proud to have all their support. Speaking of support, I couldn't have done it without the unrelenting support of my wife, Renee. She often doesn't get the credit she deserves, but her advice, encouragement and willingness to give me a push when I need it is hard to understate. To top it all off, she has now taken on teaching duties, homeschooling our 10 year old son, Ari.

I don't think there's any way to guess what all 2021 will bring, but I know one thing is certain, "We at Off Shore Tackle will do everything we can do to provide the highest quality products with great value to ensure you maximize your time on the water!"

Be prepared when you hit the water – purchase your Off Shore Tackle Company LLC products at your local dealer or send in your order today!



Prices in effect January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021



Order Blank

MODEL NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	UNIT PACKAGE	NUMBER OF PKGS. ORDERING	PRICE	EXTENDED AMOUNT
OFF SHORE TACKLE COMPANY LLC SIDE PLANER BOARD PRODUCTS					
OR38	Awesome Crappie Board With Float	Pkg. of 1		\$19.99	
OR12L	Side Planer Left	Pkg. of 1		\$39.25	
OR12R	Side Planer Right	Pkg. of 1		\$39.25	
OR12P2	Pigtail and Split Ring For OR12L and OR12R	Pkg. of 2		\$3.85	
OR12TF	Tattle Flag™ HD Upgrade Kit	Pkg. of 1		\$27.10	
OR12TFEK	Tattle Flag™ HD ECONOMY KIT (No Release/Clip or Flag Included)	Pkg. of 1		\$9.99	
ORS2	Tattle Flag™ Replacement Spring	Pkg. of 2		\$7.75	
OR37L	SST Pro Mag Planer Left	Pkg. of 1		\$56.15	
OR37R	SST Pro Mag Planer Right	Pkg. of 1		\$56.15	
OFF SHORE TACKLE COMPANY LLC PLANER BOARD					
OR3	Light Tension, White With Quick Clip (Bulk 50 Packs Available Through Our Website)	Pkg. of 2		\$16.00	
OR17BWW	Medium Tension, Black With Quick Clip (Available Without Quick Clip Through Our Website)	Pkg. of 24		\$182.50	
OR30BWW	Heavy Tension, Red With Quick Clip (Available Without Quick Clip Through Our Website)	Pkg. of 6		\$54.85	
OR18	Snapper Adjustable Tension, Black With Lock Nut	Pkg. of 1		\$15.60	
OR10	Adjustable Light Tension, Yellow With Split Ring and Quick Clip (Bulk 100 Packs Available Through Our Website)	Pkg. of 4		\$22.50	
OR14	Adjustable Medium Tension, Black With Split Ring and Quick Clip (Bulk 100 Packs Available Through Our Website)	Pkg. of 4		\$22.50	
OR19	Adjustable Heavy Tension, Orange With Split Ring and Quick Clip (Bulk 100 Packs Available Through Our Website)	Pkg. of 2		\$11.60	
OR39	Sam's Pro Release, Black With Split Ring and Lock Nut	Pkg. of 1		\$13.99	
OFF SHORE TACKLE COMPANY LLC PRO SNAP WEIGHT PRODUCTS					
OR20	Pro Snap Weight System	Pkg. of 1		\$51.25	
OR16	Heavy Tension Pro Clip, Red With Split Ring (Bulk 100 Packs Available Through Our Website)	Pkg. of 2		\$13.45	
OR20 1/2	1/2 Ounce Replacement Pro Guppy Weight	Pkg. of 3		\$4.85	
OR20 3/4	3/4 Ounce Replacement Pro Guppy Weight	Pkg. of 3		\$5.35	
OR20 1	1 Ounce Replacement Pro Guppy Weight	Pkg. of 3		\$6.40	
OR20 1 1/2	1 1/2 Ounce Replacement Pro Guppy Weight	Pkg. of 2		\$4.75	
OR20 2	2 Ounce Replacement Pro Guppy Weight	Pkg. of 2		\$5.80	
OR20 3	3 Ounce Replacement Pro Guppy Weight	Pkg. of 1		\$4.20	
OFF SHORE TACKLE COMPANY LLC RESETTABLE DIVING WEIGHTS					
OR36 1	Tadpole Size 1 – Includes Two Coast Lock Snaps	Pkg. of 1		\$7.30	
OR36 2	Tadpole Size 2 – Includes Two Coast Lock Snaps	Pkg. of 1		\$7.55	
OR36 3	Tadpole Size 3 – Includes Two Coast Lock Snaps	Pkg. of 1		\$12.87	
OR36 MAGNUM	Tadpole MAGNUM Size – Includes Two Coast Lock Snaps	Pkg. of 1		\$12.99	

Continued on reverse



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Prices in effect January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021



ORDER BLANK CONTINUED FROM PRIOR PAGE

MODEL NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	UNIT PACKAGE	NUMBER OF PKGS. ORDERING	PRICE	EXTENDED AMOUNT
OFF SHORE TACKLE COMPANY LLC SINGLE DOWNRIGGER RELEASES					
OR4	Light Tension, White	Pkg. of 1		\$9.95	
OR1	Medium Tension, Black	Pkg. of 1		\$9.95	
OR8	Heavy Tension, Red	Pkg. of 1		\$14.00	
OFF SHORE TACKLE COMPANY LLC STACKER DOWNRIGGER RELEASES					
OR7	Light Tension, White	Pkg. of 1		\$16.20	
OR2	Medium Tension, Black	Pkg. of 1		\$16.20	
OFF SHORE TACKLE COMPANY LLC STACKER STRIPPER/WEIGHT RETRIEVER COMBINATION					
OR6	Strips The Stacker Release Off Of The Downrigger Cable As The Weight Is Raised. Also Doubles As A Weight Retriever By Pull Cord. Line Loc Included.	Pkg. of 1		\$13.83	
OFF SHORE TACKLE COMPANY LLC REPLACEMENT PADS					
ORRP8	Pads For OR1's, OR2's, OR3's, OR4's, OR7's, OR8's, OR17's, and OR30's	Pkg. of 8		\$3.60	
ORRP8SN	Pads For OR18's	Pkg. of 8		\$8.50	
ORRP16	Pads For OR10's, OR14's, and OR19's	Pkg. of 16		\$4.60	
ORRP16HL	Pads For OR16's	Pkg. of 16		\$6.20	
OFF SHORE TACKLE COMPANY LLC OTHER ACCESSORIES					
OR40	EZ Tuning Tool, Black With Lanyard	Pkg. of 1		\$22.99	

Prices and packaging subject to change without notice.

These items, replacement parts, and promotional items are all available through our website:



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Shipping Charges Within The 48 Mainland United States	\$8.99
Subtotal (Product Total Plus Shipping Charges)	_____
<i>Michigan Residents and Orders Being Shipped to a Michigan Address from Non Residents, Add 6% Sales Tax Based On Subtotal</i>	
Total (Subtotal Plus Sales Tax) U. S. Funds Enclosed	<input type="text"/>
★ ONLY ACCEPTING ORDERS BEING SHIPPED TO AN ADDRESS WITHIN THE U.S.A. ★	

Send THIS completed order form, along with your U.S.P.S. money order or COMPLETE credit card information to:

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Please allow 2-3 weeks for delivery.

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Name: _____

c/o: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Telephone: (_____) _____ - _____

E-Mail Address: _____

SHIP ORDER TO (Must have street address for UPS/FedEx delivery):

Name: _____ Please check: _____ Residence _____ Work _____ Other

c/o: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Telephone: (_____) _____ - _____

How did you hear about us? _____

Your mailing address MUST match the address that your credit card bill is mailed to – no exceptions.

Please check: To charge your order on your MasterCard or Visa, enter your credit card number, expiration date, card ID number and sign below, or call 989-738-5600.

____ MasterCard **Number** _____ **Exp. Date:** _____ **ID Number:** _____

____ Visa **Signature** _____

(ID Number is usually located on the backside of your MasterCard or Visa after your credit card number [3 Digit Code]).

WORKING THE NIGHT SHIFT WITH OFF SHORE TACKLE PLANER BOARDS

BY: ROB BARNES

My preferred method to target inland lake walleye is by punching the time card for the night shift. I live in the most population dense portion of Michigan and in my neck of the woods inland lakes are highly pressured by both pleasure boaters and anglers during daytime hours. This means that finicky walleye become even more selective and key in on very specific bite windows. After putting in the time on the water I have discovered that the most efficient means of putting inland walleye in the boat is by covering water and slow trolling crankbaits behind OR12 Side Planer boards equipped with the Tattle Flag™ Upgrade.

BITE WINDOWS

These inland walleye seem to be more efficiently targeted during specific times of the day. I attribute this to daylight transition periods and feeding patterns around dawn and dusk. An hour or so before sunrise and sunset are key times to have your trolling spread set and course set. Focusing in on steep drop-offs and ‘funnels’ connecting two deeper portions of the lake will pay dividends. The night shift requires anglers to focus trolling efforts into areas which concentrate bait and provide ambush points for walleye.

Getting bit means maximizing the time that baits are in the water. I tend to run a majority of my baits behind planer boards on the structure side of the trolling pass. This is where a majority of the bites tend to occur. During the evening I slow down and find that the best speeds seem to be between .9 – 1.3 miles per hour. I have found that these slow speed works in the warm summer months when water temperatures peak.

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

If you are a Great Lakes troller you most likely have everything you need already but just need a few minor tweaks. Long and deep diving minnow style baits consistently put fish in the boat for me. I have found success on larger sized baits such as size 12 Deep Down Husky Jerks and size 11 Flicker Minnows. Natural bait colors seem to work best.

The beauty of Off Shore Tackle planer boards is their adaptability for any given fishing task. This helps the tried and true, OR12 shine during night applications. Some anglers prefer to rig their boards with battery powered tea lights or aftermarket light kits. In my experience water and electronics create potential failure points which can literally leave you in the dark. In my efforts to maximize the time that my lines are in the water and reduce illumination issues I have chosen a utilitarian approach; I wear a bright headlamp on my noggin and apply highly reflective DOT tape to the tops of my planer boards and Tattle Flags™. This highly reflective

tape can be viewed from hundreds of feet away from the boat, even in rough water.

You may recognize this reflective tape from the back of semi-truck trailers; it is commonly available at hardware stores and is inexpensive. To illuminate my boards at night all I have to do is turn my head and look at them. I do not have to change light batteries on individual boards. It is far easier to swap batteries on my headlamp than to remove a board from my trolling spread. Best of all, I can leave the reflective tape on for daytime fishing applications and it does not impact catch rates. To validate this claim I have trolled both standard configuration and DOT taped OR12 boards side by side while targeting salmon and trout during the day on Torch Lake, one of Michigan’s clearest lakes. The taped boards caught just as many fish as the untaped boards!

SHALLOW WATER MIXED BAGS

Another fun way to fish the night shift is to employ a similar trolling pattern in the weedy shallows. I prefer to run shad style baits with very short leads behind DOT taped OR12 Side Planers in depths of 3 to 5 feet of water. Often times you can call your shots by listening to where bait fish are being pushed to the surface and predatory fish are jumping then steering your boards into the ensuing feeding frenzy. I have found that this a great way to target bass which are feeding on shallow flats. This can be an effective “scouting” tool for daytime fishing. I will use my electronics to drop GPS waypoints to mark the specific weed pockets where I’m catching bass then come back to cast for them when the sun is up another day. Fishing this way does require some dedication and patience because you will certainly be spending time cleaning weeds off your crankbaits. But the rewards are discovering new areas which hold fish with the occasional airborne crash of hooked gamefish!

WRAPPING IT UP

Off Shore Tackle’s tried and true OR12 Side Planer boards equipped with the Tattle Flags™ are effective multispecies tools for inland lake night fishing. I have suggested practical tips to illuminate planer boards at night without the hassle of dealing with potential electronic failures and swapping batteries on aftermarket board-mounted lights. Slow trolling popular minnow-style crankbaits near funnels and steep drop offs can produce walleye on tough inland lakes during dusk and throughout the night. Lastly, covering water while trolling the shallows is an excellent method to search for new areas which hold fish during the day while catching bass which are on the prowl.



Off Shore Tackle Pro Staffer Rob Barnes uses OST boards to target walleye at night on places like Lake St. Clair and Lake Erie often.

LOOKING FOR SOMETHING

Maybe you missed some of our past editions of the “Off Shore Release”, or are need of more information on our products and their usage. All of this information is always available 24/7 on our website, www.offshoretackle.com!

THINKING INSIDE THE TACKLE BOX

BY: AMBER BALLANTYNE

Just wanted to give you guys a big shout out, with COVID-19 being a big factor this past Halloween, my dad, mom and I were trying to figure out how to safely give out candy at a safe distance. A few minutes later and a pillage through my dad's tackle box we created a drive through window where we used the Off Shore Planer Board Releases to attach the bags of candy to and the kids were able to just pull

the bags off. Throughout the night, the kids loved the idea and the parents couldn't believe what an awesome and safe idea it was! #covidhalloween2020 #fishingtacklereallydoescomeinhandy #howwedohalloweenincanada

Editor's Note: Thank you Amber for sharing and keeping things safe out there!



NEW SNAP WEIGHT DATA

BY: KEITH KAVAJECZ

For those anglers who enjoy trolling with the Off Shore Tackle Snap Weight, new Dive Curve data for these popular in-line weights has been added to the Precision Trolling Data phone app. In the past only one trolling speed, 1.5 MPH was provided in the PTD trolling app and not all the sizes of the Snap Weights were included.

Recently the staff of Precision Trolling spent considerable time expanding this invaluable data to include several more popular trolling speeds for the .5, .75, 1.0, 1.5, 2.0 and 3.0 Snap Weight sizes. This new data is available for both iPhone and Android phone users. To access this data, visit the Google Play or Apple App Store respectively and search Precision Trolling Data. Anglers can purchase this data individually for each Snap Weight size at a cost of \$1.99 each.

HOW THE DATA IS COLLECTED

The trolling data published in the Precision Trolling app is collected by trolling popular lures and/or trolling devices past a scuba diver positioned in open water. Several specific lead length measurements are visually documented by the diver using a tape measure suspended in the water. Once a lure or device has been tested, an identical product is tested to ensure the data can be effectively replicated.

These numbers are in turn used to create a "Dive Curve" that documents the diving depth at all common lead lengths and trolling speeds. The process of using a scuba diver to visually document the diving depth of trolling lures and gear is expensive, time consuming and challenging to say the least. However, it's also important to note that visually confirming the data is the only way to ensure the data published in the Precision Trolling app is as accurate as humanly possible.

HOW THE SNAP WEIGHT DATA WORKS

The Dive Curve data in the PTD app provides anglers the running depth of Snap Weights at all the common lead lengths and trolling speeds. Because Snap Weights are commonly used to deploy spinner rigs and spoons that have no Dive Curve of their own, the app provides the diving depth of the Snap Weight at various lead lengths and trolling speeds. Varying the lead length from the Snap

Weight to the spinner or spoon doesn't influence the diving depth. The critical numbers to know is how far the Snap Weight is behind the boat and what speed the boat is moving.

LIFETIME MEMBERS

Anglers who purchase the "lifetime" package for the Precision Trolling Data app receive all the data that is currently available on the app. Currently the app contains more than 900 Dive Curves for popular crankbaits, diving planers such as Off Shore Tackle's Tadpoles, sinking lines and other trolling devices. As new data is tested and added to the PTD app, lifetime package customers get that additional data at no additional cost.

Lifetime app customers also receive new data before it is made available for individual purchase as an incentive to invest in the PTD app. The PTD app is updated several times a year. When new data is available app customers will receive a prompt on their phone. Uploading new data requires a good connection and phone service. Once the data is uploaded to the memory of the phone, it is not necessary to have cell service to access or use the data.

MULTIPLE DEVICES

The PTD app can be uploaded to multiple devices at no additional cost. For example, an iPhone user can also upload the data to an iPad if desired or an Android phone user can also upload the data to an Android tablet.

Data purchased as part of the PTD app can also be transferred to a new device. For example, if a customer owns the Dive Curve data for three separate lures, that data can be transferred to a new phone at no cost so long as the new phone is with the same carrier and the same user ID is employed to upload the data to a new device.

It is not possible to transfer data from an Android to an iPhone or from an iPhone to an Android device. However, customers who opt to switch phone platforms can keep the data they purchased and update that data by simply keeping the device and user ID they originally uploaded the data to.

CHOOSING LINE COUNTER REELS AND TROLLING RODS

BY: MARK ROMANACK

It could be said that a dependable line counter reel is a troller's best friend. I think the operative word here is "dependable" and the truth is not all line counter reels are created equal.

YOU GET WHAT YOU PAY FOR

These days line counter reels are popular enough that the major manufacturers produce a host of models ranging from inexpensive models to reels that can literally break the bank! Most avid trollers will find that inexpensive line counter reels fit into a category I call "too good to be true" in that the price is very attractive, but these reels will let the angler down sooner rather than later.

Regardless of the many brands on the market, I can't find a single entry level line counter reel I could recommend even to novice anglers. The problem with these reels is they are primarily made of plastic parts that will fail even after a modest amount of use.

Reels that fall into the "middle of the road" category are a far better investment for anglers who are just getting into trolling or for those who only have an opportunity to troll a few times a year. Most of these reels are going to cost around \$100.00 each.

Avid trollers who fish often are going to be better served with a line counter reel that is designed to stand the test of time. Reels that retail from \$125.00 to about \$150.00 each are going to be dependable and offer good service for many years. Many of these reels feature a combination of carbon fiber and milled aluminum parts.

Anglers who fish for a living, such as charter captains, or those who simply fish often enough that they demand the best are going to be candidates for "professional grade" reels that are designed to be used every day and to last for decades.

Reels in this class are going to retail from \$200.00 to \$250.00 each. Typically these reels feature machined aluminum parts with only a modest number of carbon fiber parts. Historically these reels have all been round frame designs, but in recent years some very nice low profile line counter reels have hit the market. The advantage of the low profile reels is they are smaller, lighter and they have a more modest line capacity. For many trolling applications it's not necessary for a reel to hold 300 yards of line or more.

BAIT CLICKERS MATTER

Believe it or not, some line counter reels don't come equipped with a bait clicker feature. This critically important feature is a button on the side of the reel that when engaged allows the spool to slip and line to slowly play off the reel. One of the most common ways the bait clicker is used is after the lure has been deployed and the in-line planer board is attached to the line. A bait clicker feature allows an angler to set one board line, then start setting another as the first board is slowly being deployed.

Not only does the bait clicker feature make it easier to set lines, once the line is set and the rod is placed in the rod holder, the bait clicker plays another important role. I like to keep the bait clicker engaged and back off the drag on my line counter reels so that the drag is just tight enough to prevent the resistance of the board from pulling line off the reel. When a fish strikes and is hooked, the instant there is resistance on the line, the line will slip from the spool and the bait clicker sounds off.

The audible sound of the bait clicker telegraphs that a strike has occurred and makes it easy for everyone in the boat to know what line has hooked a fish.

MONOFILAMENT OR BRAID?

Time once was when most serious trollers were using monofilament on their line counter trolling reels. Monofilament is affordable, has excellent knot strength, it's difficult to see in the water and functions well with a wide variety of planer board line releases.

However, these days the anglers who use monofilament only represent about half of those who are putting in serious time trolling. A growing number of anglers have found that super braids feature a host of properties beneficial to the

open water troller.

Super braids are thinner in diameter allowing trolling gear to fish deeper while at the same time using shorter lead lengths. It's also true that super braids have near zero stretch helping to gain rock solid hook sets even when trolling with long leads.

Perhaps the biggest advantage of super braids is their longevity. Anglers who use monofilament are obligated to replace their line at least once a year. Super braid users can get two, three or even more seasons from reels spooled with lines made from Spectra or Microdyneema fibers.

If super braids have a down side, it would have to be the price. A 150 yard spool of super braid costs about double that of 300 yards of premium monofilament. Many anglers argue that because super braids last longer, the cost ends up being a wash.

The final step when using super braids is to add in a six foot leader of fluorocarbon line using a double uni knot. Fluorocarbon is the perfect leader material in that it's very abrasion resistant, offers exceptional knot strength and is nearly invisible in the water.

TOP DRESSING REELS

One of the easy ways to keep the cost of fishing line manageable when spooling trolling reels is to use monofilament as backing line and then to simply top dress the reel with 150 yards of fresh monofilament or a premium super line. When spooling new line make sure to apply the line under pressure by holding the line firmly between the fingers of a gloved hand. This step is especially important when spooling super braids which have a tendency to bind if they are not spooled under pressure.

A WORD ON TROLLING RODS

It's no secret that investing in quality trolling rods and reels can get spendy. The best approach is to invest most of your rod/reel budget into the reels. Thankfully, the market is literally flooded with reasonably priced trolling rods that are very functional and capable of lasting many seasons.

Avoid trolling rods that are made of high grade carbon. Trolling rods made from carbon fiber tend to be expensive and potentially fragile. A better investment in trolling rods is to seek out rods made from a composite of carbon and fiberglass. Composite rods tend to be about half the cost of high grade carbon rods.

Another suitable option are fiberglass trolling rods. Fiberglass is a little heavier than carbon or carbon/glass composite rods, but they are exceptionally durable and affordable.

OFF SEASON MAINTENANCE/STORAGE

During the off season back off the drag on trolling reels to prevent the drag washers from sticking. Wipe rods and reels down with a wet cloth and store them in a clean and dry place. If any of your reels need repairs such as new bait clickers, the off season is the perfect time to have these reels serviced.

Vertical rod racks mounted along the walls of a garage, basement or pole barn help to keep expensive gear organized and ready for action. If the walls on your garage or basement are not tall enough to vertically store trolling rods/reels, building horizontal rod racks in the rafters is another good option.

A FINAL THOUGHT

One final thought regarding trolling rods/reels is to consider investing in rod sleeves as an added protection. Constantly putting rods/reel combos in and out of rod lockers can take a toll on valuable gear. Rod sleeves are inexpensive and enable rods to slip in and out of lockers without hanging up on the guides. Using rod sleeves also makes it possible to double up the number of rods stored in the boat without fear of damaging the rods.

WANTED

Attention retailers that carry Off Shore Tackle products! We are looking to add you to our list of RETAILERS on our website. Please email us at otcproducts@yahoo.com with your company name along with your location and web address (if you have one) for you to be added.

If you happen to be missing out on carrying our products, we would be more than happy to supply you with a list of distributors that would happily accommodate you in adding the Off Shore Tackle products!

PLEASE NOTE

Before using any fishing/rigging method, make sure to consult your local Department of Natural Resources fishing directory to confirm local fishing regulations.

TROLLING FOR THE GREAT LAKES GRAND SLAM

BY: MARK ROMANACK



Jake and Mark Romanack of Fishing 411 TV pride themselves on fishing and filming on all five of the Great Lakes each year. This spring chinook salmon was taken near the Niagara River in the New York waters of Lake Ontario.

For those who love trolling for Great Lakes trout and salmon, the fishing opportunities are almost without limit. Yes, there is a “creel limit” but there is almost no limit to the places an angler can master the art of trolling.

The species of trout and salmon commonly found in the Great Lakes include lake trout, brown trout, steelhead, coho salmon, chinook salmon, pink salmon, Atlantic salmon, brook “coaster” trout, splake, lake whitefish and the cisco. It’s true that some of these species are more popular and or abundant than others, but outstanding fishing opportunities exists for each of these species if you know where to look.

Some anglers describe the Gland Slam of Great Lakes fishing as landing a lake trout, brown trout, steelhead, coho and chinook salmon all on the same day. I say the real Grand Slam trophy should go to anglers who target and catch all the different species of trout and salmon while fishing all five Great Lakes!

LAKE TROUT

The lake trout is found in abundance all five Great Lakes. In Lake Erie, lake trout numbers are largely concentrated in the Eastern Basin where the water is deep enough and cold enough to support this species.

Because lake trout are so abundant, they are routinely caught using a wide variety of presentations. One of the most popular ways to catch lake trout involves trolling spoons on downriggers and diving planers and also trolling spoons in combination with sinking lines such as lead core, weighted stainless steel wire and stranded copper line. Sinking lines are routinely fished in combination with the famous Off Shore Tackle OR12 Side Planer board to spread out lines and cover more water.

Second only to spoons, lake trout are regularly taken on an iconic lure known as the Spin-n-Glo. The Spin-n-Glo is fished on a short 18-24 inch long leader behind a dodger or paddle style flasher/rotator. This rig is then fished in combination with either a downrigger or diving planer.

BROWN TROUT

Once stocked widely throughout the Great Lakes, the brown trout is currently only being stocked in significant numbers on the Wisconsin side of Lake Michigan, the Wisconsin waters of Lake Superior and in the New York waters of Lake Ontario. This species is traditionally targeted in the spring of the year immediately following ice out.

Trolling the shallows with a combination of spoons, wobbling plugs and stickbaits in combination with in-line planer boards is one of the most productive ways to target brown trout. Brown trout can also be caught targeting mid-depth structure during the summer. Anglers in Lake Ontario routinely catch brown trout during the summer months by targeting 40-80 feet of water. Because brown trout can tolerate warmer water than other salmonid species, these fish provide bonus near shore action.

STEELHEAD

Steelhead are stocked heavily in lakes Michigan, Huron, Erie and Ontario. A wild and self-sustaining population of steelhead also occurs in Lake Superior. Some of the best Great Lakes steelhead fishing action currently can be found along the Wisconsin shoreline of Lake Michigan, in the New York waters of Lake Ontario and also in Lake Erie’s Central and Eastern Basins.

Steelhead are most commonly caught

trolling spoons in combination with downriggers, diving planers and also sinking lines such as lead core. Steelhead are often found high in the water column, making them one of the most exciting species to hook and land. Acrobatic leaps are one of the major reason’s anglers love to target steelhead in the Great Lakes.

COHO SALMON

Once the species most stocked in the Great Lakes, in recent years coho salmon planting efforts have been reduced in most waters. Currently the biggest numbers of coho are found in Lake Michigan. During the early spring, coho salmon planted by Michigan, Wisconsin, Illinois and Indiana all converge at the southern end of the lake. Limit catches are the norm rather than the exception during late March, April and early May. A few of the productive ports include Michigan City and Portage Indiana plus Waukegan and Racine Wisconsin.

Coho are one of the most aggressive and easy to catch of all the salmonid species. This goes double in the spring when fish are generally hungry and concentrations of coho can be exceptional. Trolling spoons, wobbling crankbaits, stickbaits and also flasher/fly combinations routinely produce coho in the spring of the year.

CHINOOK SALMON

The Michigan waters of Lake Michigan were once the place to be for targeting adult chinook salmon. In recent years that rein has been disputed by the Wisconsin waters of Lake Michigan that is currently stocking about four times as many chinook as Michigan. During June, July and August the chinook fishing action in the Wisconsin waters of Lake Michigan is red hot.

The New York waters of Lake Ontario are also enjoying significant numbers of chinook salmon. In late April and throughout May salmon show up in impressive numbers near the mouth of the Niagara River. Often these fish stick around for the month of June, simply moving a little further offshore. Summer finds Lake Ontario chinook evenly distributed from the ports of Wilson on the West to Pulaski on the East.

In the spring chinook are routinely taken by trolling spoons and wobbling plugs. During the summer months a mixture of spoons, meat rigs and flasher/fly combinations produces the most action.

PINK SALMON

The pink salmon of the Great Lakes are the Rodney Dangerfield of salmonids. It seems no one gives this species much respect. Accidentally introduced into Lake Huron several decades ago, the adaptive pink salmon has populated much of Lake Huron and also Lake Superior where it finds ideal streams for naturally reproducing.

While no one seemingly targets pink salmon intentionally, they are a common by-catch among anglers who are targeting other salmonid species.

ATLANTIC SALMON

The Atlantic salmon is unique in that they do not die after spawning like Pacific salmon species. On average these fish live six to 10 years and may spawn several times in their lifespan.

The Atlantic salmon is stocked in Lake Huron by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and also by Lake Superior State University as part of their fisheries management curriculum. Limited fisheries take place in the St. Mary’s River and isolated ports along the Northern Lake Huron shoreline such as Alpena and Oscoda. In the spring of the year, Atlantic salmon turn up in southern Lake Huron at ports such as Lexington, Harbor Beach and Port Huron.

The majority of Atlantic salmon caught in the Great Lakes fall prey to spoons trolled using downriggers, diving planers and sinking lines. Using in-line planer boards to spread out trolling gear is the best bet for tying into one of these unique salmonids.

COASTER BROOK TROUT

The coaster brook trout may well be the most difficult to find and catch of all the Great Lake salmonids. While brook trout numbers in general are abundant, coasters who inhabit the waters of the Great Lakes are rather rare and limited for the most part to Lake Superior.

Coasters are caught most commonly from the Keweenaw Peninsula west to the Wisconsin and Minnesota waters of Lake Superior. A limited and isolated population of coaster brook trout can also be found around the shores of Isle Royale National Park. Special fishing regulations aimed at preserving this fishery are in effect within five miles of Isle Royale.

Coaster brook trout can also be found along the Ontario shore of Lake Superior where major river flows dump directly

into Lake Superior providing brook trout both spawning and open water habitat.

Those who have targeted the coaster brook trout in the Great Lakes know that these fish aren't difficult to catch, they are only challenging to locate. Arguably the easiest of all the salmonids to catch, trolling spoons and small plugs, using in-line planer boards to spread out gear is overwhelming the best approach for targeting these members of the char family.

SPLAKE

The splake is a hybrid created by cross breeding lake trout with brook trout. While splake can occur naturally in the Great Lakes, stocking efforts are what create the limited splake fisheries currently

available.

The most noteworthy splake fishing takes place in Lake Superior along the Keweenaw Peninsula also so in Wisconsin near the town of Ashland. The Michigan DNR and also the Wisconsin DNR have been stocking splake in Lake Superior for decades and there is no indication that these efforts will stop anytime soon.

A lesser known splake fishery also exists in Northern Lake Huron around the Les Chenaux Islands. Like brown trout fishing, splake are most often targeted in the early spring right after ice leaves the Great Lakes.

Trolling with spoons and also wobbling plugs fished in combination with in-line boards produces the majority of the fish.

LAKE WHITEFISH AND CISCO

While whitefish and cisco are two separate species, they are similar enough to be lumped together. A growing fishery for cisco is emerging in both East and West Grand Traverse Bays. This fishery is believed to have rebounded due to tribal stocking efforts. In recent years as lake whitefish numbers have declined, stocking cisco has become a growing part of the management plan for the future.

Whitefish are sometimes caught trolling in the Great Lakes, but this species is not nearly as aggressive as their relative the cisco. Cisco are very aggressive and can readily be targeted by trolling small spoons, spinners and also wobbling plugs.

In the spring and fall when the water is cold, cisco are regularly found near shore in water from 30-40 feet deep. During the summer months cisco are more often found in deeper water usually suspending 50-100 feet below the surface.

WRAPPING IT UP

The Great Lakes come by their name naturally. While fishing on these sprawling waters has seen many ups and downs over the years, for those anglers who do their research, the Great Lakes routinely produce the best trolling for trout and salmon on Earth.

MASTERING THE LOOP TRICK

BY: JAKE ROMANACK

No matter how many times we talk about and demonstrate the "Loop Trick" on Fishing 411 TV, we still get flooded with questions regarding this unique board rigging method. The loop trick makes it easy to fish multiple OR12 Side Planer boards on each side of the boat while eliminating the need to clear boards when fighting fish or switching out lures.

GETTING THE BOARD RIGGED UP

The loop trick works flawlessly with the OR12 Side Planer just the way the board comes factory rigged. Straight out of the package the OR12 comes equipped with an OR16 (red) Pro Clip at the tail of the board and an OR19 (orange) Heavy Tension Planer Board Release on the bracket of the board.

These clips are designed to be fished with 10 pound test or heavier monofilament, fluorocarbon, co-polymer and hybrid (half mono/half fluorocarbon) lines. For those anglers who wish to fish super braid lines, Off Shore Tackle has a different set of releases for this job. I'll cover rigging suggestions for super braid lines a little later in this article.

SETTING LINES

The loop trick starts by setting the desired lure or trolling device behind the boat. Once the desired lead length has been achieved, reach up to the rod tip and grab the fishing line. Wrap the fishing line around your index finger and spin the line a few turns to create a loop of line about an inch long. Pinch open the OR19 on the bracket of the board and place the twists of line near the back of the rubber pinch pads. The loop of line should extend beyond the jaw of the release about an inch.

Twisting the line to create the loop has a couple functions. For one it increases the diameter of the line allowing the release to have a firm purchase on the line. This eliminates any "false releases" even when fishing in heavy seas and at faster trolling speeds. Secondly, the loop can easily be pulled through the rubber pinch pads, creating a smooth release by simply giving the rod tip a quick snap.

The ability to trip the board easily is important and I'll explain why in a moment. Once the loop of line is placed in the OR19 release, grab the line going back to the lure, pinch open the OR16 clip and place the line in the back of the clip, being sure to get the line behind the plastic peg that's found in the middle of this clip. With the line behind the plastic peg, the planer board is pegged in place

on the line and will remain at the exact spot on the line when the line is tripped from the bracket of the board.

Rigged in this manner any number of boards can be fished per side of the boat without the need to clear lines when fighting hooked fish or switching out lures. Should a fish be hooked on an outside or middle board line, the angler only needs to give the rod tip a quick snap to trip the line from the OR19 on the bracket. When tripped the board ceases to plane to the side but remains pegged to the line thanks to the OR16 at the tail of the board. Once tripped the board quickly drags back out of the trolling pattern, clearing other lines and allowing the angler to reel in the fish.

Fighting the fish with the board tripped makes it much easier to reel in the fish and also prevents the fish from tearing free during the fight. The "loop trick" is easy to learn and works flawlessly in all trolling conditions.

USING SUPER LINES

A version of the "loop trick" can also be employed when fishing super lines on

the OR12 Side Planer. When using super lines, I prefer to equip the board with an OR39 Sam's Pro Release on the bracket and an OR18 Snapper Clip at the tail of the board.

The Sam's Release features a rubber plunger that clips into an adjustable tension arm. A set screw is used to adjust the tension required to trip the release.

The Snapper is not a release, but rather a line clip designed to hold slippery super lines firmly. A set screw is also used to control the tension so that super lines of different diameters can be securely held in this clip.

Once the lure is set the desired distance behind the boat, the line is grasped near the rod tip and wrapped three or four times around the barrel toward the end of the pin on the Sam's Release. The rubber plunger is then snapped into the tension arm preventing the line from uncoiling from the rubber plunger.

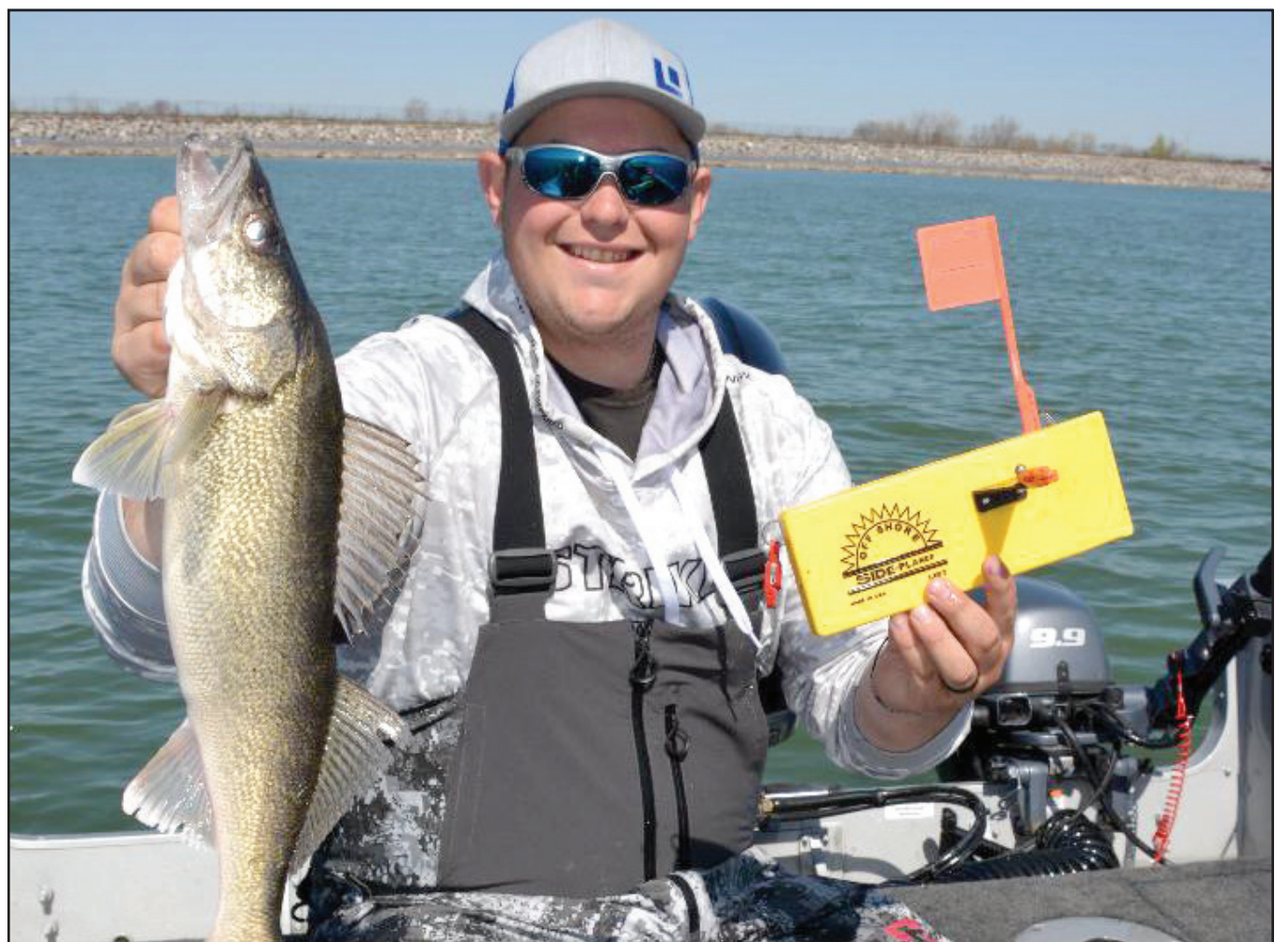
Next the line is placed between the pads of the Snapper Clip and the clip snapped shut to hold the line firmly at the tail of the board. Rigged in this manner the board is deployed to the side and can

be tripped at any time by simply giving the rod tip a quick snap. When the plunger on the Sam's release is popped open, the line uncoils from the rubber plunger and the board is no longer planing, but remains pegged to the line thanks to the Snapper clip.

The ability to trip board lines when fighting fish or switching lures is huge. It's far easier to reel in a tripped board than one that is still planing. Also, when fighting a fish with a tripped board, the fish doesn't have a firm wall to pull against. The natural flex in the rod and the reel drag prevent the fish from making a powerful run and tearing free.

Anglers who fish nylon lines and also super lines can benefit from these simple in-line board rigging methods. It's simply a matter of using the right line releases and clips for the job.

Editor's Note: Jake Romanack is an Off Shore Tackle Pro Staffer and the co-host of Fishing 411 TV broadcast on Sportsman Channel and also World Fishing Network.



Jake Romanack of Fishing 411 TV uses the "Loop Trick" to stack multiple board lines per each side of the boat. The "Loop Trick" makes it easy to trip the board, yet keep the board pegged in place on the line. The OR12 comes factory equipped for this rigging method.