

# WACKY JIGS

break off on a hook-set or sudden dive, or by running around underwater cover. I've found 6-pound-test fluorocarbon a safer bet, and its diameter is thin enough to create a squirming worm. Evans and other experienced wacky-jiggers favor Sunline FC Sniper Fluorocarbon in 5- or 6-pound test.

Mono works fine, too, and matching a thin superbraid or fused line with a fluorocarbon leader is a great option that provides better feel of the worm, a sure hook-set, and allows more pressure to be applied to bass. Braids float, however, so sink rate is sacrificed. A long leader (10- to 25-foot) alleviates this problem. In getting started with wacky-jigging, experiment with tackle until you find systems you're comfortable with and achieve success. Experienced wacky-jiggers use an array of tactics that are growing as you read this. I'm sure you'll immediately get enough bites to inspire confidence in the approach.

## Tactics

Reports from experienced wacky-jig tacticians emphasize the importance of shaking the worm. Indeed, the jighead acts as a fulcrum that allows an angler to impart action on the fall or on bottom. Some fish it as a fall bait, casting to targets. Others retrieve it above bottom, shaking to tempt strikes from finicky bass.

In fishing Minnesota lakes, Ross Evans has found that when bass seem aggressive, a large worm and heavier head (3/16- or 1/4-ounce) are more efficient, due to the faster fall and dramatic wobble. "And the larger offering attracts more big bass," he says.

"One downside to a heavy jig," he adds, "is that energetic shaking can generate so much movement that finicky bass seem reluctant to eat it. In my experimental fishing last year, the best rod action was a nervous coffee twitch that makes a worm pirouette like a live crawler. At times, however, I did better when I didn't shake the rod until the worm landed."

Like other anglers, Evans finds it very effective for enticing bites from key spots that had produced fish on other techniques then turned unproductive. He uses a Humminbird Side Imaging Unit to locate high-percentage spots, then fishes them patiently with a wacky jig. In the clear, weedy, natural lakes of Minnesota, he found his most productive depths to be 8 to 15 feet.

Mark Tyler is a veteran bass pro who's lived in California, Arizona, and now in Oklahoma. He holds the mark for the largest bass ever taken in a Bassmaster tournament, a 14-pound 9-ounce behemoth from the California Delta. After fishing with a