

Lure Art Background

Introduction

There are hundreds of different types of fishing bait. Bait comes in a variety of shapes, sizes, colors, and materials and is generally put into two categories; natural or artificial. Bait is either a material found in nature or artificially made to attract fish. Anglers use varying types of bait in order to target certain species when fishing.

Natural Bait vs. Artificial Lures

Natural

Natural bait is something living or once living. For freshwater fishing this includes earthworms, leeches, and crayfish. For saltwater fishing, this includes bunker, spearing, squid, and sandworms. In most cases, natural bait is a better choice, but this depends on your location, the weather, and fishing conditions. Most fish will go for something that looks and smells natural, with natural movement.

Artificial

Artificial bait is manmade. Commonly referred to as lures, examples include soft plastics, spinners, spoons, flies, bucktails, poppers, rubber shads, and crankbaits. There is a large variety of lures, which can be quite intimidating to the beginner angler. However, lures can be quicker and easier to use. Simply tie or snap on your lure and start fishing! Moreover, if that lure is not producing, then switch the color or type and see what happens. Although natural baits are usually chosen first, there are times when artificial lures are a better choice. For example when fishing at night, in murky water, or quick moving water an artificial lure can come in handy.¹ In dark or murky water, a fish's field of view is lessened; therefore the display (color, sound, vibration) of artificial bait can improve your chances of attracting and catching fish. When using artificial bait, you must move the lure so that it appears real to the fish. Using lures is all about practice. Before using any lure, check out its movement by making it "dance" in the bathtub or at your local water body.

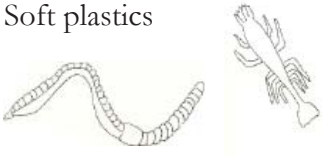







Lures

Freshwater (FW)

Freshwater lures include flies, spinners, spoons, bucktails, rubber shads, crankbaits, and soft plastics that resemble worms, smaller fish, or amphibians.

Saltwater (SW)

Saltwater and freshwater lures share commonalities in type such as spoons, flies, bucktails, and soft plastics; however, saltwater lures are heavier and bigger as they are made to cast farther and catch larger fish. Common lure types and their descriptions are listed in the chart below.

Lure Type	Description	Target Species
<p>Soft plastics</p> 	<p>Many shapes/colors meant to look like worms, amphibians, or crustaceans; FW or SW</p>	<p>Fish with little to no teeth; <u>example</u>: largemouth bass, weakfish</p>
<p>Spinners</p> 	<p>Metal or plastic blade that spins around; sometimes colored feathers or beads; treble hook; emits vibration and flash much like a baitfish in distress; usually FW</p>	<p>Predatory species; <u>example</u>: trout</p>
<p>Spoons</p> 	<p>Thin metal piece with single treble hook; roundish shape with side-to-side movement; reflects a lot of light, resembles baitfish; FW or SW</p>	<p>Toothed fish; <u>examples</u>: trout, walleye, pike, bluefish</p>
<p>Flies</p> 	<p>Made from wool chenille, fur, hair, feathers, tinsel, and others; fly fishing only; imitates insect, worm, fish egg; FW or SW</p>	<p>Depends on location in water; <u>examples</u>: mostly trout and striped bass</p>
<p>Bucktails</p> 	<p>Colored hair on metal head; single hook; FW or SW</p>	<p>Any; <u>examples</u>: striped bass, summer flounder</p>
<p>Plugs (crankbaits, divers)</p> 	<p>Surface or diving; depends on placement of metal lip; wooden or plastic body; 2-3 treble hooks; frog, mice or baitfish mock; FW, larger in SW</p>	<p>Predators; <u>examples</u>: striped bass, bluefish, black bass</p>
<p>Poppers (pencil poppers)</p> 	<p>Type of plug; only on surface; imitate baitfish splashing at the surface; two treble hooks; usually SW</p>	<p>Predators; <u>examples</u>: bluefish, striped bass</p>
<p>Rubber shads</p> 	<p>Soft rubber lure shaped as a small baitfish with single hook; FW or SW</p>	<p>Fish with few to no teeth; e.g.,: striped bass, largemouth bass, large panfish</p>

Artwork by Nim Lee and Ann TeNyenhuis

Selecting a Lure

Match the Hatch

“Match the hatch” means to choose bait, artificial or natural, that resembles the diet of the target species in both color and size. Commonly a fly fishing expression, match the hatch has become a general term from trout fishing to tuna fishing. Remember that light levels and water clarity play a significant role in the presentation of a lure. For example during a hard rain storm, the clarity of the water will be altered. Thus, be sure to have different types and colors of lures when fishing.ⁱⁱ

Additional Resources

Kozlowski, Greg. *Getting Started: A Beginner’s Guide to Freshwater Fishing*. New York State Department of Environmental Conservation; call 631-444-0280 for a free copy.

Vocabulary

- Bucktail: Metal head with single hook; colored hair protruding backwards from head; cast and jig; fresh or saltwater
- Crankbait: Tube or fish-like shape with at least 2 treble hooks; usually made of wood or plastic; may dive at various levels (surface, shallow, deep); cast and retrieve; fresh and saltwater. (plugs)
- Fly: Handmade, small lure; often looks like a fly; used for fly fishing; cast and float; fresh or saltwater
- Jig/Jigging: Method of retrieving a lure; “dancing”, bounce up and down slowly and smoothly or quickly and erratically.
- Pencil Popper: Long, slender lure with at least 2 treble hooks; usually made of wood or plastic; cast and splash on water’s surface; does not dive into water; usually saltwater
- Rubber Shad: Rubber lure shaped as a fish with a single hook; cast and retrieve; fresh or saltwater
- Spinner: Lure has a spinning piece with a treble hook; cast and retrieve; metal and usually colored; usually freshwater
- Soft Plastics: Made out of soft plastic; often shaped as a worm, small fish, frog or lizard; cast, let sink to the bottom and slowly bounce or cast, let sink and retrieve slowly, jigging; fresh or saltwater
- Spoon: Spoon shaped lure with a treble hook; cast and retrieve; metal; fresh or saltwater

ⁱ“Live Baits or Artificial Baits for Striped Bass.” 8 December 2008
<<http://www.arkansasstripers.com/live-baits-or-artificial-baits.htm>>.

ⁱⁱ Marshall, Brian. “Match the Hatch.”
<<http://www.insideline.net/2000/marshall-0304-00.html>>.