

## The amazing, versatile fluke

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Hot weather, cold weather, clear water, stained water, I don't care. The fluke can produce when other baits do not and they will catch an amazing variety of fish species. The fluke is a specially designed type of soft plastic worm. There is a variety of ways to fish it. I prefer just a four or five-ought hook and no weight.

The fluke can be used in shallow or deep water and when properly rigged is about as weedless as you can get a lure. It is primarily a bass and stripers (rockfish) lure. The fluke is simple to fish. Just cast, let settle, twitch and let settle again. Being so weedless, they are superb for fishing in heavy cover. My favorite tactic is to cast into shallow water and let settle until out of sight, then twitch it and bring it back to the surface and repeat. Most of the strikes come just as it settles out of sight. Often in shallow water, when fish are feeding tight on the bank, the strike comes the minute the fluke hits the water.

One day, on Old Hickory, with a witness, I cast a little long and the fluke actually hit on top a rock at the water's edge. A small bass, about 10-inches long, came out of the water and hit the fluke on top the rock. I like to skip it back under overhanging tree limbs. It is like skipping a flat rock.

In one morning, I caught a catfish, a crappie, a black perch, a bluegill and several bass on one fluke. Another day, fishing standing timber and heavy brush, my partner and I put 53 bass in the boat with 30 over five pounds using just flukes

Another day, on Center Hill, the spotted or Kentucky bass were up tight on the timber. I have no idea how many bass we caught but it was several and that is just an estimate. It seemed we caught fish on just about every log or stick. Sometimes we caught four or five off one log.

I even caught a sauger caught on a fluke one day on Old Hickory.

Then, there was the blistering hot day in AL. Temperatures were well over 100 degrees in the

front of the boat. We wore our arms out throwing big, deep running crankbaits and heavy weighted worms. We assumed the fish would be deep. In an effort to rest my arm, I tied on a fluke, cast it up tight on the bank and that started it. The first fish was over seven pounds and I got a suntan, too.

I recall a morning on Percy Priest we found the stripers (rockfish) in schools of shad. We would cast into the middle of the school and with one twitch or two, the fish hammered it. I know we caught at least a dozen before our arms gave out. I recall doing the same thing with hybrids. Before my arm quit working, I would actually fish for those striped buzzards.

Bass in moss or heavy grass are especially vulnerable to the fluke. You can cast right into the weeds or moss and just work it out. It can get exciting when the bass go over three pounds.

I prefer using a medium to heavy action spinning rod with a 10-15 pound line. I have seldom had my line broken when the drag is adjusted right. The spinning rod gives me good distance and accuracy and plenty of backbone and does not hurt my left wrist.

It takes a little practice to understand how to fish the fluke. You have to be able to read the strike to know when and how to set the hook.

Sometimes I let them run a little and other times I set it immediately. On an aggressive strike, just set it and start reeling. However, when a fish just slowly sucks it in, I prefer to let them run a little. I just let them turn, start away, then, I sock it to them. It pays to be a line watcher.

As for color, I use white 99% of the time. I am sure several other colors would work well. I just seem to have the best luck with white. Just experiment a little and see what works for you.

As it keeps getting hotter, try the fluke early in the morning and late in the evening up tight and watch for fish in the jumps.

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