

GETTING TERMINAL

Match Your Leader Size To Your Bucktails

By John Bette

Now that we're in full blown summer mode, there is one lure type that stands out above the rest. Bucktails (or as some will refer to them, in-line spinners) appeal to both the casting and trolling crowds. If you are fishing in the summer months, at some point you should give a bucktail a considerable amount of time. Their track record speaks for itself.

One misconception is thinking summer is the time of year to only use big-bladed bucktails, and that smaller bladed baits are better for early season fishing. While bigger bucktails have proven to be very effective, you don't want to fall into the trap of not downsizing in the blade department when necessary.

On the terminal end of things, we can make your day a little easier as well as

help you achieve better results. Most bucktails are not leader-sensitive. For the most part it boils down to personal preferences as far as size and type of leaders, especially with the average- to larger-sized bucktails like Double Cowgirls, Spanky Fireballs, and other lures in those categories. For these lures mentioned, if you want to use fluorocarbon, I recommend a 130- to 150-pound test leader measuring 12 to 14 inches in length. If you prefer solid wire leaders, a 12-inch 174- to 240-pound test leader will get the job done. If you are a fan of stranded wire, either seven- or 49-strand, 12-inch wire testing 135 to 175 pounds works great.

It is no secret, however, that a full day of fishing with such larger lures can wear you down. A great option to consider is to stick with bucktails, but maybe downsize to a smaller version to stay a little

more focused and fresh. Again, you want to consider leader options. If you clip a smaller bucktail to a standard heavy fluorocarbon or wire leader, you may not get the best performance from them. Heavier leaders on smaller lures can also wear you down more quickly by requiring more effort to cast.

Utilizing a lighter fluorocarbon leader will definitely help, but proceed with caution. Once you start downsizing fluorocarbon the risk of a bite-off becomes much higher, so keep that in mind anytime you downsize. This is a good time to consider going with wire over fluorocarbon for your leader. Wire is much thinner than fluorocarbon yet is still considerably stronger and abrasion resistant.

A few years back, Steve Heiting helped develop a small 124-pound test wire twitchbait leader for better balance with

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78

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