

Live Lining Striped Bass

Written by FishingMOZ - Dave



Fishing for striped bass is a really popular sport as of late with more and more fishermen targeting stripers in areas such as the Chesapeake Bay, Hudson River, and many inland lakes around the country. Often stripers can be caught by boat trolling artificial lures such as bucktails, crankbaits, or umbrella rigs. However there are times when live bait is the cats meow for stripers and will often outperform artificial baits by big margins. Often you will hear reports of fishermen catching summertime stripers in the Chesapeake Bay "Live Lining" spot, or inland fishing with shad, alewives, or live trout. Slow trolling live bait for big stripers works in almost any impoundment from saltwater to freshwater.

The setup I always use for live lining stripers is lightweight planner boards and large floats being trolled with an electric trolling motor. If your boat doesn't have an electric trolling motor a small 4 stroke kicker can be used as well. The trick is slow and quite and the speed needs to be below 1.5 mph for this to work effectively.

Lightweight Striper Planner Boards

My favorite planner boards for live lining bait is by far the planner boards made by WaterBugz, they are lightweight and very inexpensive and easily handle large spot, shad, alewives or even trout. The setup we use with the WaterBugz planner boards are as follows.

No Weight Option

15 to 20 foot drop from the board to the swivel then 5 to 6 foot section of 17lb fluorocarbon to a 1/0 or 2/0 circle hook depending on the size of the bait we're using.

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With Trolling Sinker

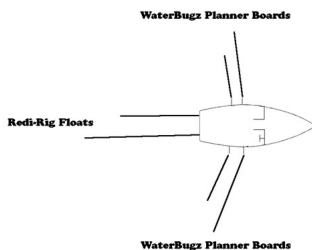
8 to 15 foot drop from the board to the ½ oz trolling sinker to 5 to 6 foot section of 17lb to circle hook. (1/0 or 2/0 circle)

Generally I'll run 4 boards with the two outside boards free lining without weight and the inside boards will be run with the ½ oz trolling sinker option.

Redi-Rig Bobbers

Redi-Rig floats are awesome for striper fishing or any type of live bait fishing that requires you to be able to fish a specific depth. The beauty of the Redi-Rig float is the ability to attach your line to the plunger at any depth you choose. I always use a ½ oz or light trolling sinker with my Redi-Rig floats with a 6 foot section of 17lb test fluorocarbon.

So here's the setup:



First unclip the snap swivel on the top of the Redi-Rig then put your main line through the snap and snap it closed. Next if your marking fish at 20 foot you'll count out 20 feet from the trolling sinker and attach line between the rubber plunger. Done! You're now fishing your bait in 20 feet of water behind your boat.

When a fish takes the bait the float will either go under or move all over the place, since you're using circle hooks don't set the hook just lift the rod and reel like crazy till the fish is on. Circle hooks are probably the single most important thing you can use when live lining bait!

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Here's a diagram of what my setup looks like when fishing with 4 WaterBugz planner boards and 2 large Redi-Rig floats behind my boat.

Catching Live Bait or Purchasing Bait

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Ok so here's the real dilemma catching live spot, hearing, or shad to troll with. Probably one of the best tactics for catching live bait is learning to use a cast net.

A cast net can be deployed and you can easily catch enough bait in short order if the baitfish is easily found in schools.

Often gizzard shad and alewives are easily caught in the shallows around weedbeds either during the daylight hours or with a green light at night. Hearing and Spot can be caught using Sabiki rigs or spot are easily caught with small pieces of bloodworms when they are around. Spot can be caught in the hot summer months in bays when they move in.

Hearing is caught on the Hudson River using Sabiki rigs when they enter the river to spawn in late April and May.

Live trout can be bought in some states, which often require you to receive a trout tag when purchasing the trout from the bait store.

One such place is Lake Raystown in Pennsylvania which live trout are one of the better baits to use on the lake.

Shiners can be bought at almost any bait store and can be fished in the same manor with the boards and floats.

So the next time you're out fishing for stripers and they just won't bite the parachute rigs or bucktails give live lining some bait a try. It's probably one the most effective presentations for summer time striped bass anywhere.

Tight Lines,

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