Get A Buzz On

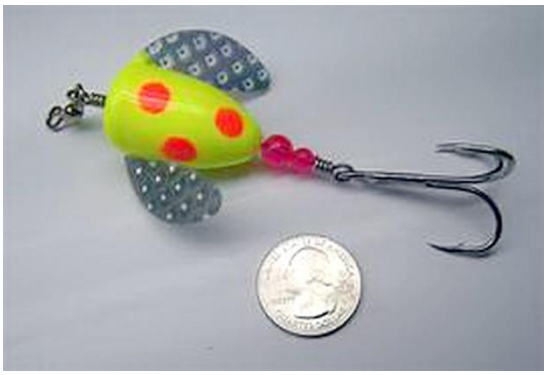
By TubeDude

Over the years there have been innumerable new designs in lures. Some of them do a better job of catching fishermen than fish. But there is one feature on many successful lures that seems to demonstrably catch more fish. That is the use of spinner blades.

There is a bewildering number of spinner blade designs and lures available that use almost any kind of blade…in almost any color and design imaginable. The good news is that almost all of them work for some species…on some waters…under some weather and light conditions…some of the time.

As a longtime maker of my own lures, I have experimented with a lot of different types of spinner blades in creating many my own lure designs. Obviously, some of them work better than others. A few have become regular weapons in my fishing arsenal.

I always keep my antennae up and my eyes open for potential new lures to try making for myself. Over the past couple of years I have been increasingly intrigued by the potential for making my own Spin N Glo lures. These are also known as "winged drift bobbers". They have been a popular lure for fishing salmon and steelhead on the west coast for quite a few years. I even used a few myself.



"Winged bobbers" are available in a wide range of sizes and colors. Their primary effectiveness is based upon bright colors and lots of spinning action…which creates both visible and auditory (vibrations) to get the fishes' attention and draw them in to the (usually) baited lure.

It was probably only natural that anglers pursuing the salmon and trout in the great lakes should also discover these lures. They have successfully fished them not only in the inlet streams and rivers in which the fish moved upstream to spawn but also for trolling them in the big lakes for salmon, rainbows, browns and even lake trout.

This is a lake trout (mack) that was taken on a tandem Spin N Glo rig…with two different colored lures rigged in tandem. Macks are aggressive and respond well to big noisy lures.



In recent times Spin N Glos have become faves around the country, on many waters and for many species. Catfish anglers have learned that they are a good choice for attracting whisker fish to their baits…fished either as baited lures or as part of a "Santee Rig"…as floating attractors.

Many walleye fishermen have also adopted them as part of their arsenals. They can be effective either as inline attractors…ahead of rigged crawlers, leeches or minnows…or as baited lures. And they can be presented on regular bottom bouncer rigs, behind a downrigger or even on lead core line.



A nice walleye taken on a baited Spin N Glo. Just as with fishing for salmon and steelhead, you can fish these lures for walleyes by trolling, bottom bouncing or even casting and retrieving.

One of the more interesting applications of the good old winged bobber is in rigging for big Pacific halibut. ling cod and other bottom fish…from Washington to Alaska. These active lures are showing up ever more frequently either as baited lures or as attractors ahead of a baited hook.





The effectiveness of the winged bobber lures is predicated upon several factors. First, their buoyancy keeps them up off the bottom…helping to avoid snags as well as appealing more to fish that feed above the bottom. Second, is the spinning motion. This provides both visual appeal and sound vibrations to help draw in fish with sensitive lateral lines…especially under low light or poor visibility conditions. Last but not least is color and flash. Metallic blades and bright high-vis colors really get more visual attention.



I have been designing and making "fligs"…floating jigs…for many years. I make them from high density foam…in a lot of different designs…and paint them with a wide range of color patterns. One of my more recent design innovations includes adding a small propeller blade…either at the front or rear of the foam flig.



Examples of my first fligs rigged with small spinner blades, either at the front or rear of the painted foam body. Both designs have proven effective when fished with a variety of baits.





I now make and use whirly fligs in many different colors…most of which work most of the time…for many species. And I make them in two sizes…standard and mini. I also make some of them into crawler rigs and those work very well for bottom bouncing or slow trolling.

I also experimented with the use of commercially sold "Smile" blades. These lightweight non-metallic spinner blades are very light and spin freely at the slightest movement in the water. They worked well on my fligs, but are pretty "spendy".

These are some of the larger "Gorilla" sized fligs…for catfish…to which I added the popular "Smile" blades. Those lightweight little blades really turn well at even low speeds. And the fish love them.



I next tried making my own special blades by laminating shaped plastic blades with prism tape on one side and painting my fish-catching color faves on the other side. And because I made the blades with one end curving up and the other side curving down, I called them "snarl" blades rather than smile blades.









My own designed "snarl" blades have caught a lot of fish…of multiple species. I make them in a couple of sizes. Like the popular "Smile" blades they are light weight and spin well at even low speeds.

Back to the subject of Spin N Glows. I am widely known as the guy to talk to when you want a special lure design. Recently a number of anglers have requested me to make up a reasonable facsimile for the Spin N Glows. I have observed that there are more Utah anglers using them for catfish…and walleyes…and for Flaming Gorge macks. Some are even finding success with them on kokes and trout.

I hoped to translate my flig making skills into crafting a suitable substitute for the winged drift bobbers. And I did come up with a few working models. But they required a lot of work and neither looked or worked better than the originals.



These are some of my first efforts to create my own Spin N Glos. They had good colors and the right spin in the water…and even caught a few fish. But they weren't any better than the originals. I prefer to create new lure designs that work better than other stuff on the market.

I went back to the drawing board and put Spin N Glos on the back burner. Then, while doing some reorganizing of my tackle crafting shelves, I pulled out a plastic box I hadn't seen for years…labeled "buzz blades". While living and fishing in California and Arizona I used buzz baits a lot for bass fishing. After I started making my own, I acquired and maintained a pretty fair supply of buzz bait blades…of several sizes and colors. When I saw that box the light went on.

Buzz baits catch fish. While they were originally designed for topwater bass fishing, they have proven effective on other aggressive surface-feeding species as well…like pike and muskies. They have even worked well on stripers and wipers during shad boils. Because they have outwardly fluted edges on the bottom of the blades, they really catch the water and spin wildly at even the slowest speeds. I imagined that they would work as well underwater as they do on top…maybe even better.



There are quite a few different sizes and types of buzz blades available. Some are made of polished aluminum. Others are molded from plastic. All can be dressed up with custom paint jobs or by adding prism tape to create your own custom colors and designs.





I had already experimented with adding buzz blades to other lures…to add more noise and attraction. I am fairly proficient in properly bending wire to make loops and spinner lures. So it became a simple matter to attach a buzz blade to any other existing lure…to create a totally new lure design. I tinkered with adding buzz blade noise to wood or plastic-bodied surface lures or even to diving crank baits.

As an experiment, I made up some simple rounded floating buzzbaits as in one of the pictures below. I gave a couple to a young angler who was just getting started on the pro bass circuit. He dressed them with rubber skirts and he actually won a tournament with them.





As previously mentioned, I have been dressing up some of my fligs…floating jigs…with small spinner blades…either in front of or behind the painted foam body. And there have been many days on the water when the "whirly fligs" definitely called in more fish. So it only made sense that adding even bigger and noisier blades might work even better to catch fish when they were active and would respond to additional attraction.

One of the first designs I created was the "Mack Buzz Flig"…at the request of an angler who had successfully used Spin N Glos on Flaming Gorge for macks. He wanted me to make some large SNGs, but I convinced him that he should try the buzz blade fligs in sizes and colors appropriate to the species targeted.





I did not want to make my new experiment in "buzzology" too complicated. So, out of the various sizes and designs of buzz blades I narrowed it down to a basic 2 types…a small standard aluminum single blade and a lightweight plastic model with 4 blades. I then painted up a few in each of several basic proven flig colors and began assembling my line of "buzz fligs". Some I made with the blades at the front. Others I made up with the blade at the rear…to simulate a beating tail of a frightened prey fish.



These ae some small single blade buzzers. They are lightweight aluminum and their fluted lower edges really catch the water and create a noisy spin…even at low speeds. I use these blades both in front and back of the flig bodies.

These small molded plasticl 4-bladed buzz blades have a lot of uses. They work well both in front of and behind flig bodies. But they also work well for making crawler harnesses or for use with hootchies for koke fishing.





Here are some examples of buzz fligs make with the buzz blades at the front…using the single blades. But the quad blades also work well at the front. Most of these are made with single hooks…for adding crawlers or cut bait. But in the lower right corner there is a sample of one made with an optional treble hook,

When I put the buzz blade at the rear of the lure, they become "buzz tails". It takes some special wire bending to keep the rear blade riding free and to not get compressed and restricted…so that it will spin freely at all speeds.



I also plan to try out some large buzz blades fished "inline"…ahead of some lures and/or baits…as "flasher" attractions. A number of noted walleye anglers have been using buzz blades ahead of both crawler rigs and trolled crank baits…to create flash and vibration to call in fish from greater distances. The pics below show the "Add A Buzz" line sold by Yakima Baits.





They work for a lot of anglers. Here is a pic of some of the first experimental inline buzz attractors I have come up with. I'm betting they work for multiple species.

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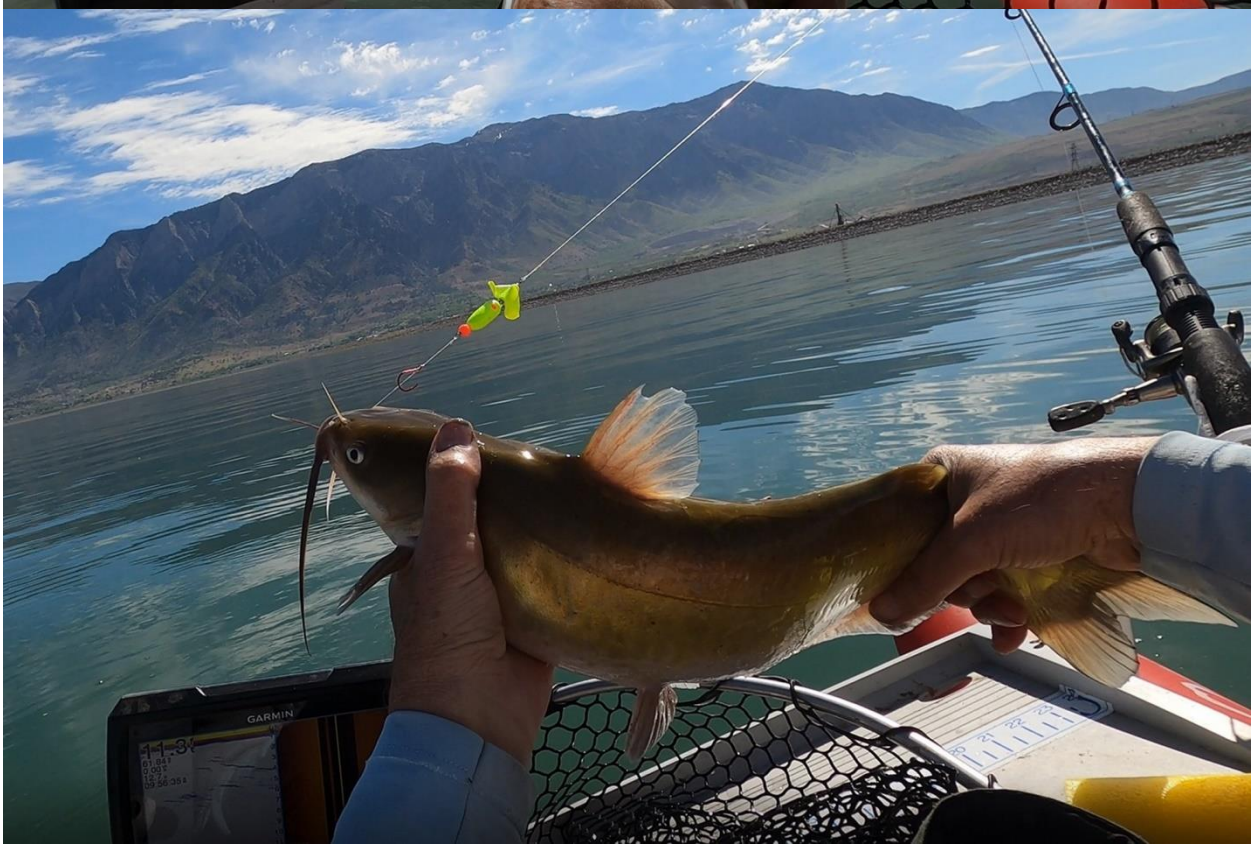
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