

## Crankbaits

Put emotion into your presentation with crank and minnow baits. One of the things that trigger a response in bigger fish is a sign of panic in a particular baitfish. Try using stop-and-go, bursts of speed, and slow struggling motions. This is effective with either lipless crankbaits, lipped crankbaits or minnow baits (Like X-Rap) that suspend.

Sometimes a bass will slap at your lure and if you feel a hit sweep your rod forward and crank your reel fast so you have no slack and then stop the lure dead in the water. Most of the time the bass can't resist an easy target that seems to be stunned.

You can also reel your crankbait to make the lure bounce off the bottom. Many times this will trigger strikes when a clear steady retrieve won't.

Remember to experiment on how you work a lure and let the bass tell you what they want. To understand a lures action experiment off your dock and see how it reacts to different speeds and stop & go motion. If you watch baitfish they don't swim in a straight line.

Basically, you need enough crank baits (probably 3 or 4) to cover water depths from 1 to 15'. The most effective lures are those designed to cover depths in small increments such as 1 to 4', 4 to 8', 8 to 12', etc. To make sure crank baits reach the desired depth, make long casts. A long rod 6 ½ or 7' is desirable. The rod is held pointed down but at an angle from 45 to 90 degrees away from the lure. This allows the rod to flex when a bass hits the bait and helps the fish to hook itself. Fast retrieves trigger reflex strikes and produce more strikes than a slow retrieve. Stop and go retrieves also trigger strikes.

Crankbait vibrations are described in three ways: a wobble, a wide wobble and a tight wobble. Normally, a tight wobbling crankbait usually works better in clear water but not always. There are a number of crankbait manufacturers but Rapala Shad Rap, Strike King and Excallibur Fat Free Shad are excellent baits.

Crank baits can be used in conjunction with top water baits in early morning or late evening. In the morning start with the top water bait and when the bite stops switch to the crankbait as the fish are moving deeper. The reverse is true at dusk. Start with the crankbait then switch to the top water bait.