

Sonar Blade Baits

By Al Winco

Fishing the Sonar Blade bait for Smallmouth and Largemouth bass-by Al Winco

The Sonar blade bait is an excellent fish locator and producer once the water temperature starts to decline from 67 degrees. I've been fishing various blade - baits for the past 15 years and manufacturing my own Blade baits for the past 8 years. Most anglers fish blades too fast and lift them too high off of the bottom. The trick (I.M.O. and experience) is to "burp " them slightly, pause and then drag them for 4-8 wiggles. These baits cannot be fished in weeds and wood. They are equally effective for smallmouth and largemouth bass.

I prefer the 3/4 oz models for lake fishing. Most bass (especially largemouth) hit them on the fall but smallies are notorious for "pushing them" when you drag-them across the bottom with slight "wiggles" in 40+ degree water. The blades will lay on the bottom between pauses and at times, I think this makes them hit when you slowly move the blades forward. Smallmouth can be difficult to hook in cold water when they are nose-bumping the blades on the slow drag and pause retrieve. Other times, the bass "are-on" when you pick-up the blade from the initial drop. I catch all of my fish on the nickel models w/ a small strip of gold or silver holographic tape. I specifically target rocky ledges w/ various rock compositions that rise to 8-14 ' of water. The 12' rocky high-spots that rise from a depth of 18-30 feet of water and form a small plateau with various rocky bottom compositions seem to produce the best for me.

I manufacture my blades w/ 3x strong lazer-sharp , short shank #6 hooks w/ split rings. I have personally experienced smallies in excess of 5 pounds open-up 2x hooks. I also prefer the 3-d eyes on the bait.

I recommend using braided line, 12lb. P-line fluorocarbon leader (joined w/ a double uni-knot) and a G-loomis IMX 6' light , fast action-#CR 721 casting rod for sensitivity. You must be able to feel every "wiggle" of the blade bait to be highly successful. Many times the "hit" is transmitted with a slight "push" or a brief stopping/elimination of the pulsating, vibrating feeling. I fish the blades horizontally (like in jig fishing) 90% of the time. I have caught many largemouth vertical jigging blades but never a smallmouth. (30 feet is the deepest part of the lake I currently fish) I would also recommend a good plug knocker to save many snagged lures. Depending upon the composition and size of the sub-surface rocks, many lures cannot be saved w/ a plug knocker. Moving the boat to the opposite side of the snag usually frees them.

I will break-off a snagged blade when I'm into a school of smallmouths on a hump or drop. I have found thru experience that they are easily spooked by a trolling motor and/or a LCG operating directly over-head in 10-15 ' of water. Blade fishing can be fast and furious when you are fortunate to find a school of 4+ pd. bass locate on a specific spot.

Finally, it is most important to check the sharpness of the treble-hooks, especially the front set which have more contact w/ the rocky bottoms.

I find the Berkly rotary hook sharpener does a fine job returning that all important- "stick -in the fingernail" hook point sharpness.

My Custom Manufactured Sonar Blade Baits

<http://i38.photobucket.com/albums/e133/smallmouthaholic/R-2.jpg>

A plug Knocker will save you some snagged lures

<http://i38.photobucket.com/albums/e133/smallmouthaholic/plugknocker002.jpg>

Happiness is a Sonar Blade caught Bass

<http://i38.photobucket.com/albums/e133/smallmouthaholic/VanSciverLake10-18-02008.jpg>

<http://i38.photobucket.com/albums/e133/smallmouthaholic/12-31-06VanSciver-1.jpg>

<http://i38.photobucket.com/albums/e133/smallmouthaholic/VanSciver10-16-06005.jpg>

<http://i38.photobucket.com/albums/e133/smallmouthaholic/VanSciver1-4-07004.jpg>