

**When buying a reel**, it should be fitted on a rod and handled like it would be under fishing conditions. Different reels feel different and weigh different amounts.

Casting reels require more hand effort than spinning reels. If you doubt that, hold a conventional reel and loosen your grip slightly. The rod will rotate and the reel will revert to an upside down position.

Baitcasting reels come with a number of additional features not discussed here, including retrieve ratios, multiple drag adjustments, and quick change spools.

The selection of various options is an individual one, but there are now conventional casting reels available with features that will meet most needs.

## SPINCASTING REELS

Spinning and baitcasting reels are equally at home in fresh or saltwater environments. That is not true of spincast reels, which operate best in freshwater, but can also be used for light saltwater fishing.

Spincast reels are sometimes viewed as a combination spinning/baitcasting reel because the line spool is fixed like a spin-



ning reel, and it mounts on a baitcasting rod.

Easily recognized by the cone shape that covers the spool, they are referred to as closed faced reels. Line is attached to the spool through a small opening in the center of the cone face and is retrieved by a spinner head that drops it loosely around the spool. Casting is controlled by a thumb button located at the rear of the reel.

Depressing the button readies the reel for a cast, and when the thumb is lifted, line is released. Because the spool is fixed, the reel will not backlash. This feature has made the reel very popular with freshwater fishermen.

Spincast reels come in a wide range of sizes, from micro reels capable of casting a 1/32 ounce lure

with line weights of 1 to 4 pound test to magnum reels that use 20 pound test monofilament or some heavier braided lines. Some of the most popular spincast reels are designed for crappie/spec and bluegill fishing. These reels can be quite light, 5 to 6 1/2 ounces, and when matched with an ultralight graphite baitcasting rod can be fished all day without significant fatigue. They are particularly comfortable for children and others who do not have great arm and wrist strength.

While extremely easy to use, spincast reels are not without problems, the most significant being line pinching and twisting. All spincast reels come pre-spooled with the appropriate line for the reel. The way line is collected and placed on the spool makes it difficult to not have some twist in the line when it is replaced. A good tackle shop can dismantle the reel and place the spool on a winding machine to insure no twisting. This is normally not a costly service.

The problem of line pinching results from the way line is placed on the spool during retrieval. The spinner head has a pin, either metal or ceramic, that picks up the line and drops it loosely on the spool. A fighting fish pulls line tight on the spool during the fight and can cause line to be buried between the loose coils. After the fish is landed and subsequent casts made, the pinched line can stop the flow of line off the spool. To correct the problem, the reel face must be removed and the line worked free.

## ROD AND REEL MAINTENANCE

*It is imperative that an angler spend time after each fishing trip doing simple maintenance of their fishing equipment.* Each rod and reel should be rinsed off with fresh water to get the salt off. Clean the guides by running fingers around them to break loose the salt residue. Do not use a hard spray, rather rinse the rod with a gentle column of water. The reel seat should be exposed periodically and cleaned to stop salt build up.

The guides, their ceramic inserts, and the feet and wraps should be visually checked.

Reels can to some extent be salt proofed by a thorough application of saltwater resistant grease inside the body of the reel. Even new reels should be given a coating to stop the intrusion of saltwater. Saltwater resistant grease is also heat resistant. Cork and composite handles that are stained by hand oils can be cleaned using rubbing alcohol.