

dom escapes from this hook. The best sizes for local waters are 4 through 3/0.

**Circle Hook** The hook's point faces the shank. This design allows the fish to 'hook itself.' The hook simply slides into the corner of the fish's mouth. See circle hook on page 20



Typical circle hook

Special bait holding hooks are available in all the above hooks. Bait holding hooks have barbs on the shank and sometimes also on the bend below the point. Weedless hooks can also hold bait. A weedless hook has a thin wire that protects the hook so it will not snag. It also helps hold a bait. While weedless hooks are used primarily in fresh water, they can be used effectively in saltwater.

The single most important aspect of a hook is its sharpness. Laser honed hooks are the sharpest now available. The sharpness of a hook is easily checked. Place the hook on your fingernail and drag it slowly across. If it does not catch as it is moved, the hook needs sharpening. For smaller hooks up to 5/0, sharpen just the point. Above 5/0, sharpen the edge like a knife.

There are a variety of stones, files, and other devices for sharpening hooks, some of which are battery driven. It is a good idea to have a hook sharpener in the tackle box and to check the sharpness of the hook periodically while fishing. If the hook is dull, sharpen or replace it.

Barbless hooks are also available. If you wish to practice catch and release, such hooks are excellent. Many fisherman, after catching a number of fish and still wanting to continue fishing but not keep the fish, crimp the barb with pliers so a fish can be removed easily.

Line twisting, natural movement of lures and baits, placement of bait at the proper depth or site, and numerous other problems a fisherman must solve in order to catch fish are reasons for swivels, snaps, split rings, weights, leaders and other terminal tackle.

How and where the angler fishes and which fish are targeted decide which terminal tackle will be used. Whether the fisherman is casting, trolling, bottom fish-

ing, using a float, working from a bridge or pier, or fishing under other conditions, the choice of terminal tackle significantly effects how many fish will be caught.

## SWIVELS

Line twisting is a fundamental problem that must be overcome or it can significantly interfere with casting, particularly with spinning and spincasting reels. A line with substantial twist is more susceptible to breaking and can change lure or bait action.

Swivels are designed to defeat twisting, and also serve as the attachment point for remaining terminal tackle, such as weights, leader, snaps, and hooks or the lure.

Swivels come as rated or non-rated. Non-rated swivels do not indicate how much weight they are capable of sustaining. When fishing for small fish, this is not a particularly important consideration, but for fish above 10 pounds, it is better to have a weight tested swivel. Rated swivels usually start at 10 pound test and progress upward.

Three-way swivels, used most frequently when the angler needs to have a line to hold the weight and a line to hold the baited hook, do not come rated.

Almost all swivels are made of brass and come in three finishes: natural brass, chrome, and blackened.

Blackened swivels are recommended. Shiny swivels can cause a fish to hit the swivel rather than the hook, or just the opposite, spook the fish.

Swivels are sized like hooks. The following numbering illustrates the progression of smaller to larger: 12, 8, 6, 2, 1, 1/0, 3/0, 5/0. For fishing in the harbor and freshwater, sizes 10 to 5 are the most common sizes required, while for near-shore and off-shore, sizes from 3 to 4/0 will handle most fishing needs.

Ball bearing swivels are the most effective for defeating line twist and are recommended for all fishing situations, and especially for trolling.



Split ring, swivel, snap swivel