

Covert feathers cover the quills of the primary and secondary feathers of a bird and are located at the front of the wing and tail. In the water, these feathers display a spreading and flexibility that is attractive to fish. Feathers used today come from turkeys or are artificial.

The casting technique most commonly used with this type of jig is called flipping. The angler, using a 6-1/2 foot rod or longer, suspends the lure the length of the rod, swings it toward the target site, then releases the lure so it pulls line from the reel and settles gently in the water. This technique doesn't cause the kind of water vibration that a long cast does, thus doesn't spook fish holding close to structure in shallows.

It is recommended that jigs be fished with the flow of the water.

With plastic and other artificial materials have come some problems when storing these lures. The angler must be aware that the materials on some lures bleed or melt so the most fundamental rule is never place a soft plastic lure on a hard-bodied plastic lure.

ARTIFICIAL LURES/PLUGS

Artificial lures or plugs, as most fisherman refer to them, come in a multitude of sizes, shapes, colors, actions, and weights. Usually made of plastic or balsa wood, there are lures that float, dive shallow or deep, swim in a straight line or erratically, splash, chug or make popping sounds.

The same artificial lures can be used in either saltwater or freshwater, with the caveat that stronger hooks are needed for saltwater fish.

Lures resemble minnows, crippled fish, other creatures fish commonly eat, or act in ways that antagonize or intrigue a fish to strike. Anglers use lures when live bait isn't practical, or fish aren't active and the fisherman experiments with different lures in an effort to produce a strike.

For many anglers the most enjoyable lures to use are floating 'topwater' or surface plugs. There are few fishing experiences more exciting than working a lure across the water surface and seeing a fish explode on it.

TOP WATER Surface and floating lures

Surface lures are most productive during the warmer months in both fresh and saltwater. While a number of lures work well in Charlotte County waters, there are six well known plugs that are representative of

the types of lures that are consistently productive. They are,

Heddon's Zara Spook,
Rhoden's Johnny Rattler,
Bomber's Rip Shad,
MirrOlure's 7m series,
the Rapala minnow,
the Bang-O-lure.

The first three lures are **noisy lures** and the last three are finesse lures. Noisy lures produce a sound or sound-and-motion, while **finesse lures** rely on motion alone.

Noisy lures: Heddon's Zara Spook is one of the most effective of all surface lures, and one of the most difficult for an angler to master and use for any extended period of time. The lure is designed to zigzag on the surface of the water and make a loud splashing noise as it moves toward the angler. To achieve this, the fisherman must move the rod tip back and forth while reeling. *This technique is called "Walking the Dog."*

It can be extremely successful in attracting fish, but is a retrieve that takes time to master and is physically demanding. While the technique can be used with spincasting equipment, it is easier to do with a baitcasting rig.

The Zara Spook comes in different sizes like the *Pooch*, *Puppy*, and *Spook*. The Spook is the largest at 4 1/2 inches and 3/4 ounce. It can be bought with a rattler, and all three sizes come with two treble hooks. The more popular colors are red and white, chrome with black back, and green back with glitter. This is an easy lure to cast.

The Johnny Rattler by Rhoden is an easy lure to use. It comes in two sizes, the Baby Rattler and the Johnny Rattler. The plug has multiple indentations on each side and comes with a propeller blade on the back.

The techniques used are to let the lure sit and then twitch, or use a short sporadic retrieve. As the lure comes through the water the propeller creates a splash or



Heddon's Spook