

## **Fishing Tip – “D.O.A. C.A.L. Jigs”** *By Jerry McBride*

The C.A.L. jigs are a versatile series of jig heads and soft-plastic tails that can be adapted to virtually any fishing situation and species. If you lack the patience to let the D.O.A. shrimp settle to the bottom, tie on a C.A.L. They're also easier to throw and retrieve properly under windy conditions or in swift current.

Jig heads in the C.A.L. series are available in six different colors... chartreuse, white, glow, red, natural and black. Weights range from 1/16 oz. to 1 ounce, in both short and long shank models. Don't ask which one is best. We just held our annual D.O.A. Outdoor Writers Event, and among the 24 guides from around Florida who helped us take the 50 writers and sponsors fishing, each one had his own preference, even though many of them fish the same waters for the same fish.

The general rule is to fish dark lures in dark water, and light colored lures in clear water. A dark lure presents a silhouette that fish see more easily. We also recommend using contrasting colors in turbid water conditions...light head/dark body, or a plastic body with a contrasting tail. The Shad Tail, Curl Tail, and Paddle Tail models also create a vibration that the fish can locate under any water conditions. Of course the most important rule is to the color you have faith in.

Like the D.O.A. shrimp, C.A.L. tails are available in lots of color options...47 colors are currently available in a variety of models and sizes. The most popular model to fish is probably the 3-inch Shad Tail. Simply impale it on an appropriate-sized jig head to match wind, current and depth conditions (increase the weight as wind, current and depth increase) and throw it out. Although most fishermen employ so type of twitch/drop retrieve, simply letting it sink and reeling it in can also be very effective. The vibrating tail attracts fish with virtually no input from the angler. Some days, especially when the water is cold and fish metabolisms are slow, fish display a preference for a slow, subtle retrieve and a lure that requires minimal energy to chase down. This brings up another general rule: The colder the water the slower the retrieve.

## **Shad and Curl Tails**

The C.A.L. Shad Tail is also an extremely effective weapon for trolling, especially behind a kayak. Simply stick it on a ¼ oz. head, throw it behind the kayak, and start paddling. It is a great way to locate schoolie trout, but it also catches 50-inch snook. For the ultimate in action even at a very slow retrieve, tie on a C.A.L. Curl Tail. These are virtually foolproof lures. Even resting on the bottom, the tail wiggles. They are very effective when barely crawled along the bottom.

To fish either of these 3-inch baits weedless over shallow grass, D.O.A.'s specially designed Long Neck hook gets a better bite on the lure than standard worm hooks. A 1/8 oz. D.O.A. Pinch Weight, or even a portion of one, attached to the hook provides additional casting distance, but more importantly it acts as a keel to keep the lure from spinning.

C.A.L. series tails can also be rigged on weedless, screw-in hooks such as Owner's Weighted Twistlock CPS model. The Shad Tail works well for shallow-water use with a 3/0, 1/16 oz. weighted hook. These hooks also make it easy to add fish-attracting eyes and color contrast to any of the C.A.L. soft-plastic tails with D.O.A.'s Chug Heads or Hot Heads.

## **Paddle Tail**

D.O.A. Lures also makes a 3-inch Paddle Tail. Paired with a jig head, this lure looks great bouncing along the bottom. In addition to the beaver-type tail flipping up and down, the ribbed body produces pressure waves that make it easy for fish to locate. Bottom hugging species like founder, pompano, trout, snook, and redfish love it. Another attribute is that it is a very tough bait, standing up to much more abuse than typical soft-plastic tails. It is not uncommon to catch several dozen fish on the same tail, and find it's not the least bit mutilated at the end of the day. That makes it a very inexpensive lure to use...a dozen tails last a long time.

## **Jerk Baits**

In addition to Shad Tails, Paddle Tails, and Curly Tails, D.O.A. makes C.A.L. Jerk Baits in 4 and 5 1/2 inch models. These plastic baits offer the most rigging options.

Rig the 4-inch models on a short shank C.A.L. head, or weedless with the 3.5 Long Neck worm hook. The long-shank C.A.L. jig heads enhance the chances of a solid hookup with the longer jerk baits, or use the 5.0 D.O.A. Long Neck worm hook.

Especially early in the morning, add a D.O.A. Chug Head to the jerk baits and fish them as a topwater plug, either walking the dog or popping them. The concave head can be rigged to keep the lure at or near the surface, or turn it into a lipped diver by twisting the lip to the bottom.

Rigging it as a topwater bait has several advantages over traditional plugs. First, the single hook can be rigged weedless. That lone hook always makes it a lot easier on both the fish and the angler to remove; for kayakers especially, the idea of a snook, tarpon or ladyfish jumping around the boat with multiple treble hooks can be somewhat disconcerting, especially if fishing in the dark. And there are days when fish won't commit to striking a lure on the surface. They'll boil beneath it without grabbing a hook. With a soft-plastic C.A.L. rigged with a Chug Head or Hot Head, an angler can simply stop the lure and let it sink slowly, which leaves it in the strike zone like a wounded bait; the fish will often strike as it sinks. By slowing the retrieve, the jerk bait becomes a subsurface weedless twitch bait. A fish nervous about whacking a surface bait may, on the other hand, hammer a lure a foot deep. The C.A.L./Chug Head combination gives you the option of covering whatever portion of the water column you choose.