

Fishing Tip – “Top Water” *by Frank Przybylski*

One of the most exciting strikes an angler can experience is an aggressive game fish exploding on your top water presentation. It's such a visual affair...the bulge of the water that appears behind your plug, the hollow POP on the take and the rolling boil that's left when the fish takes the plug under the surface. Nothing can get my heart pumping and my adrenaline flowing quite like explosive top water bites.

The number one question most anglers have about using top water plugs in general is..."When do you fish them"? The answer is whenever game fish like snook, trout, redfish, and bait are active in the same area. Naturally dawn, dusk, and overcast skies are perfect times to use surface walking plugs. Quite frankly, anytime you see game fish busting in close proximity to bait fish...top water is going to be a great choice.

There are several productive retrieves that will make top water plugs excel with inshore species. For active redfish, yes they will hit a top water lure, the standard walk-the-dog retrieve at a steady pace gets the job done most days whereas big gator trout often prefer an erratic walk-stop-swim and then pause cadence. Wily "ole" snook are even harder to fool and prefer a fast and frantic retrieve to get their attention, like a bait fish trying to escape. I find that when the plug hits the water let it sit for several seconds. Then give it a twitch or two and pause. Then give it several twitches and pause again. You are trying to imitate a wounded bait fish with this presentation. The secret is to keep experimenting until you find the cadence fish react to.

Now I would be remiss if I didn't mention the following...you have to exhibit a little self control when you see that signature explosion on your top water plug. **Don't set the hook ala' BUCK FEVER.** This will send your plug skipping wildly across the surface and out of the strike zone. Instead, after the strike keep working your lure until you come tight to the fish then set the hook. You will stay connected to your quarry more often than not. Just exercise a little patience!