

Fishing Tip – “Lure Color...is it Over-rated” *by C.A. Richardson*

The argument that lure color is over-rated is an old one but for in-shore anglers I believe it's just as important as presentation and profile. Because most in-shore anglers focus on water that is generally shallow all the color hues in the spectrum come into play and can make a difference whether the fish bite or reject a lure.

Several conditions must be factored into the equation when determining what color is the best for a particular scenario. Some of the factors that have to be considered are water clarity, atmospheric conditions, and available forage. My competitive fishing background and my successful Flats Class Charter business have given me years of experience to draw from when it comes to the right color particular scenarios. Below are some of the progressions that help me select the best color for targeting fish in Shallow water.

Water Clarity

Seventy five percent of the time I'm fishing in clear water on the flats... natural hues like silver, white, and colors that match the bottom (browns & greens) are perfect for clear water scenarios. Silver spoons, chrome finished plugs, and pearl white lures are perfect choices when imitating baitfish in crystal clear water. Earthy colors like bone, watermelon, and root beer are equally effective in clear water when using crustacean or small minnow profiles. If the water is clear, just think natural and you'll be on the right path.

When I am fishing tannin water (tea colored)... I typically choose orange and red color hues or gold finishes that look very natural in that environment. Plus these colors increase the strike zone because they are much more visible from a greater distance. Gold spoons, orange bellied plugs, new penny soft baits, and craw colored crank baits excel in tannin water fisheries. In my opinion, there is nothing better than a black backed, gold-sided, orange bellied plug for fishing creeks for snook in the fall... its truly magic.

And turbid conditions (muddy) usually have me tying on chartreuse, black, or fire tiger colors. These colors create easier visual targets for fish in dirty waters. For instance, one of my favorite colors to present to feeding redfish in mullet or stingray mud's is the color black... because it is much easier for the redfish to find in turbid water. Always think contrast when fishing turbid conditions... remembering that they've got to see it to eat it.

Atmospheric Conditions

What I mean by atmospheric conditions is what type of sky you are fishing under... clear blue bird, grey overcast, or even dead of night. Cloud cover effects light penetration below the surface and consequently effects color selection. The standard among most anglers is to fish lighter colored baits under bright skies and darker colored baits on cloudy days... for the most part, this is true. I adjust my colors based off changing conditions. For example, if I start my fishing day off in the pre-dawn hours, I will use a darker top water bait to silhouette against the twilight. As conditions get brighter I'll switch up to a chrome colored suspending plug or a pearl colored soft bait. When the afternoon storms roll in and the skies get a little darker, I'll add a chartreuse jig head to my soft baits or maybe roll a green or pink colored spoon that attracts a little more attention in that low light scenario.

Sometime I'll also consider wind conditions as well... smooth water allows for greater light penetration whereas choppy water diffuses light minimizing light penetration. There again lighter more natural colors work better in calm waters and conversely darker or brighter colors will probably get better results on those windy days.

Available Forage

The "match the hatch" mentality... is pretty important! The best rule here is to be aware of the forage that your target species is focused on at that time of the year... albeit shrimp, crab, mullet, pinfish, or whitebait. Don't be the angler throwing a new penny colored soft bait if the big trout are blasting chrome

finished top water plugs during the seasonal mullet run. Always match the color and profile to what the fish are feeding on in that particular area or what food source is available at that time of year and you will be on your way to pulling in a few good fish.

Wrap-UP

Hopefully, some of the information I've provided you will steer you in the right direction when it comes to choosing lure colors in various situations. There are always exceptions to the rule... but the above guidelines are a great starting point to start your fishing excursion. In my opinion, color does matter most of the time!

Keep them Bent!

Capt. C. A. Richardson