

## Why Texas Rig



There are several instances when a Texas Rigged (weed less) soft plastic can be a necessity for inshore anglers; they include negotiating floating grass, reducing snags when skip casting docks & mangrove shorelines, or merely desiring to have a slower sink rate than the typical jig head set up. Below are a few considerations that will make the reliable Texas Rig even more effective.

The description of a Texas Rig basically is the ability to utilize a soft plastic bait such as a fluke, worm, or tube by inserting a wide gap off-set rigging hook in a manner in which the hook point rests or is slightly hidden in the top of the bait... essentially making the rig virtually snag proof (see picture above).

I find myself wanting to employ the Texas Rig primarily when I'm annoyed with floating grass or debris in shallow water. Grass sheds almost always make working any open hook presentation impossible at times but the Texas Rig technique of rigging a soft plastic bait with a off-set worm hook seems to be the best alternative to combat this problem. Even when I spend time in extreme marsh environments like those found in Louisiana; where I like to probe around in the hydrilla mats for redfish mixed in with a few bass... the Texas Rig is often the best choice. Essentially, any situation where vegetation is creating a hook fouling problem, the weed-less benefits of the Texas Rig will make for trouble-free fishing.

Another scenario, where Texas Rigged baits excel is skipping mangrove shorelines because they reduce the number of snags by a high percentage compared to jig head presentations. Often on higher tide phases, the baitfish and mullet tuck up under the security of the mangrove roots to avoid predators like porpoise, snook, and redfish... when this happens only a snag less presentation can be used to extract game fish proficiently without continually being hung up. In this particular environment, I also enjoy being able to keep my lure in the strike zone after a good skip cast for a longer period of time with the Texas Rig and not having to burn the lure out from under the limbs like the jig head presentation forces me to do.

And finally, sometimes it's just necessary to Texas Rig when fishing super skinny turtle grass flats where I often find the big trout or tailing redfish. The weed less characteristics of the Texas Rig allow anglers to slowly and gently present lures without the fear of hanging up in the grassy cover or spooking wary game fish by forcing a speedy retrieve.

Naturally, there are a few equipment adjustments that will make the Texas Rig even more successful...here are my "top four" suggestions. Number one is braided line matched with a fluorocarbon leader because the Texas Rig often skins the hook point in the top of the soft bait. The braid and fluorocarbon combo have a "zero stretch" property which aids significantly in the hook setting ability of most anglers. Number two, a long (7' or better) extra fast action spinning rod is a must have component... it's essential to have the ability to punch the hook through the plastic bait. A longer, crisper rod effectively takes up the slack much faster and drives the off-set hook home before the game fish can expel the lure. Number three would have to be a large arbor spinning reel that can pick up line quickly so that coming tight on the fish is just a matter of a few turns instead of cranking like crazy. If the "zero stretch" property of the braid is going to work, a tight line is paramount, choose a reel with a higher gear

ratio! Finally, number four use an extra wide gap off-set hook that can accommodate soft plastic baits without encumbering hook penetration. Nothing is more frustrating than losing a quality fish because the soft plastic bait balled-up on the hook point allowing the fish to free itself... all due to a poorly chosen rigging hook whose hook gap was much too narrow! In short, these four tweaks will vastly improve the effectiveness of the Texas Rig... give them a chance and the results will make you a big fan of this technique.

So why Texas Rig? If for nothing else, at least it eliminates the aggravation of dealing with hook fouling and snags on a consistent basis. But more importantly the Texas Rig allows anglers the opportunity to fish trouble zones even more efficiently with fantastic results!

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