

Magical Gliders: The Art of Jerkbait Fishing

by Bertus Rozemeijer

*Bertus Rozemeijer
+ Salmo slider =
Big Pike*

Left right left. Once seen in the water, you'll realize that your lure, well fished, is like a soldier - always marching. In many cases, gliding jerkbaits are jerkbait anglers favourite lures. And yes, there are a number of reasons to fish these lures. There are numerous gliding jerkbaits out there and among them a lot which don't always do what you expect them to do. But before we always blame the lure don't forget much of the action is down to your own technique.

While fishing the big lakes, I do come across a lot of other anglers. Watching them fishing lures always fascinates me. The behaviour in the boat is already more or less an indication of the man in the boat. Some really show a body language screaming vitality and trust in what they do. Others? Believe me, if you would show an attitude like that, I would kick you right out the boat! Imagine a brand new location, somewhere in the Swedish archipelago. You often find bays in a bay and often these bays are pretty big. They also are often shallow and if not shallow, there are always hazards like rockbars and boulders. Steering carefully you and your partner are standing up and watching for these spots. Not only to avoid damage to the boat, but just as important, to fish them. Rocks and boulders under the surface are often the hot spots that hold fish. And then of course there is weed to be looked for. And if you find weed covering the rocks, you are close to pike. No question about it and for sure, you will find fish there. Now imagine a couple coming in the same bay. One is steering the boat, seemingly uninterested in the structure of the bay, the other laying in the front, head on one gunnel, legs over the other, waiting for the boat to stop. They could have seen and learned a lot but don't know or care where they are going to fish. Honestly I have seen this happen and it happens a lot! Fishing is not just throwing lures left and right but it is knowing where you put the lure. It is about knowing to keep the lure up or instantly work it down! No more, no less and it's always those anglers who work for the fish who catch the most.

Then comes the style of fishing. Sometimes I wonder why jerkbait anglers fish their baits so aggressive. I have seen quit a few jerkbait fanatics work their lure with such hard strikes that I find it a miracle that pike can hit the lure at all. And if they do, I am pretty sure they suffer whiplash ... in the neck! Of course we should not forget that pike often likes a fierce approach. There are periods that pike fall for fast swimming lures and in the case of jerkbaits, there are times

too when nothing but a fast and aggressive presentation work best. Keep this in mind, but don't forget that a more delicately fished lure will often bring you more fish. Describing how to fish a lure, let alone a jerkbait is not that easy. In short; I use two styles in slow working these gliders. Generally I crank the lure back in one steady speed. So there is no pause and go action here. With the top of the rod, I dictate the action of the lure itself. It's like dropping the tip of the rod with the rod very loose in my hands. For me this is a perfect way to fish tirelessly all day. Dropping the rod and seen as a clock, the rod tip moves up and down from eight to seven. Sometimes I speed up a bit in between. I have had a lot of success with especially the shorter built gliding jerkbaits, like Salmo's Slider and the smaller Cobb's products. Then again, there are gliding jerkbaits and gliding jerkbaits. Take a longer jerkbait like the Hell Hound. This is typical for a lure that swings way out to the left and right. That is, if you let the lure swim like that. Again, I hold the rod supple in the hand but bring the rod up to nine and drop it to again seven. At seven and up to nine, I reel in line, but stop at the drop of the rod. Mind you, this pause takes one a bit over a second, but that is just enough to move the lure way out to the sides.

Gliding jerkbaits come in many shapes and of course as floating and sinking models. I have tried many of them and can't find out what would be the best of them all. However, one thing is clear for me. I don't use floating gliders anymore. If I like to fish the upper layer of the water I rather like to use topwater lures. Many anglers have some fear using sinking baits and jerkbaits are no exception. And that is a pity for all sinking jerkbaits don't sink that fast and in retrieve show a tendency to climb to the surface. You'll seldom come across jerkbaits that really swim deep, so don't be afraid using them. At the same time it is again the angler who thinks that a jerkbait must be fished with downward movements of the rod. This - Is - Crap! If you fish in shallow water, or if you have to start the lure in shallow waters, keep your rod upwards and fish the lure back with upward strokes with the rod. Just as you do with downward strokes. What you see is a lure, despite that it is a sinking lure, will move in the upper water column and this gives you the possibility to fish slow and shallow. If you know that after the first few meters the water deepens, than drop the rod and switch to the known downward movements. Working like this in often very shallow spots have brought me a lot of pike and especially so in post and pre spawning areas in the Baltic.

In a future article I will talk in more depth about rods and reels but when it comes to fishing with Jerkbait the basic essentials are a jerkbait rod and a casting/multiplier reel. The very simple reason is that using this combination helps you to present the lures in an optimal way. And yes, there are other advantages, like casting the



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