



Trolling Bunker Spoons For Striped Bass

It's well known that striped bass will eat anything they can fit inside their capacious mouths—and occasionally things that don't fit. Yes, stripers are always looking for the biggest meal they can swallow, which is why big baits and big lures are favored when targeting big fish. And when it comes to big lures, it's hard to beat the bunker spoon.

The bunker spoon was invented to imitate a large, shiny menhaden or herring. The idea is to troll the spoon slowly—very, very slowly—around the edges of menhaden or herring schools, where stripers are looking to pick off stragglers or injured fish. The lure also works well outside river mouths when mature herring are dropping back to the ocean after spawning.



Tom Richardson photo

But here's something that might come as a surprise: bunker spoons also imitate flounder, which stripers also consume (presumably scooping them off the bottom like flapjacks). Indeed, veteran Rhode Island charter captain Bill Brown has, over his illustrious career, encountered several striped bass that apparently choked to death while attempting to ingest large fluke.

Naturally, a bunker spoon must be trolled close to the bottom if it's meant to imitate a flounder, so you'll need the proper tackle to make this happen. Most pros troll their bunker spoons on long (9'-11'), limber rods and wire or leadcore line to get them deep.

Braided line can also be used in some cases, with a drail or cigar weight to position the lure near the bottom. A long (15'-25'), heavy (60-80 lb. test) leader



Bunker spoons come in a variety of sizes and colors. (Tom Richardson photo)

ending with a ball-bearing snap swivel is used ahead of the lure.

While trolling, the rod should be left in a holder while its "parabolic action" delivers a gentle, pulsing motion to the lure. Best speed is 1.5 to 3 knots. Ideally, the spoon should flash and wobble from side to side, occasionally kicking up puffs of sand or mud.

Good spots to fish bunker spoons when fluke or winter flounder are on the menu include beachfronts, channel edges, muddy depressions and sand shoals with good current flow—basically any place that tends to attract flatfish and stripers.

When it comes to choosing colors and patterns, chartreuse/white, yellow/white, red/white and silver/white all work well. A good approach is to troll 2 lines with different colored spoons to see which works best.

BONUS

Last fall, the N. E. Boating TV Show did an episode on Wickford and featured Capt. Dave Monte on RI fluke fishing. It's a great segment on fishing for big fluke and the fall. Check it out.

Here's the online link:

<http://newenglandboating.com/videos/fall-fluke-fishing.html>



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