

Pike Anglers Club of Great Britain



My Top 6 In-Vogue Lures by Dave Kelbrick

These days I am sure most lure anglers will agree that lures seem to come and go out of fashion at an alarming rate, one minute a lure is the dog's do-dah's, there is a scramble to get the latest 'in vogue' lure. Next, there is a stock pile of that very same lure as it falls out of favour.

Quite why this should be I don't really know, but as individuals we do all have our own personal favourites of course and what works for one angler may not do so well for another. One of my all time personal favourite lures was a winner over here in Britain and in the States and sold really well, then for reasons unbeknown to me it went out of production, typical! More mention of that lure later anyway as what I intend to do in this article is to highlight the top six in vogue lures of my choice that work for me on a regular basis.

You may think that a little bias is involved at some point as two of my top six are in fact lures of my own design, I can assure you though that bias is not the reason that these lures are mentioned, it is simply the fact that they catch pike for me and get results, nuff said! So having explained what this article is about I will now get on with the job at hand and in no particular order of merit I will reveal what I believe to be my top six in vogue lures.

Stanley Musky Boss



Surely I am not the only one who still catches on this good old big Stanley Spinnerbait? No, I thought not and to be honest there are plenty of other big Spinnerbaits around too at the moment as everyone seems to have jumped on the bandwagon, however it was probably the Muskie Boss that first became one of the most popular big boys to take off in the UK. Sadly they were getting a little on the expensive side over here and that is probably why hardly anyone seems to stock them these days, luckily I acquired a few off a mate some years back direct from the States which proved to be a wise move for me.

The Muskie Boss really is a great Spinnerbait and it offers pike a good mouthful in any environment and they tend to get hit often. They are good cast into open water and equally effective for drawing pike from heavy cover when buzzed over the top of or even through weed. They can be trolled to very good effect too and can be obtained in a choice of willow-leaf blade for deeper running depth, or Colorado blade for a little more lift in the water.

I am pretty sure that if you had a scout around then you could probably still find someone who stocks them in this country, maybe Sue Harris still has a few nesting in her warehouse somewhere. If not then the Muskie Boss is still available in the States and can be obtained mail order through Roly & Helens, they will probably set you back around twelve dollars. These lures really are a good pike catcher and work equally well in both summer and winter alike, it's well worth having a few to chuck around as they have accounted for some very big pike in the UK over the years.

Super Sandra



These excellent soft plastic baits are a big hit for me and have been playing an important part in my pike fishing now for the past eleven months or so. They originate from France I believe where they apparently use them to catch catfish would you believe? Sandra's have a nice broad fluttering tail with a series of holes in it and they really do look so enticing in the water even when retrieved slowly. Sandra's come un-rigged so a jig-head does have to be added to these soft plastics to aid casting and sink rates, it is also advisable to wire in a stinger treble at the base of the tail on the underside to improve on hook-up rates.

Best way to work these baits is either on a simple steady retrieve after counting them down to the required working depth, the odd twitch thrown in now and then mid-retrieve will also aid in triggering any stubborn followers. Expect hits to be either fast and violent or at the other end of the scale they may just be gentle plucks that are hardly noticeable, in either case set the hooks at anything you feel or suspect to be a hit. As with any soft plastics

the only draw back is a short life expectancy due to the attention they get from pike's teeth, however any slashes can simply be welded back together with a hot blade or by melting a spare plastic worm or grub and

dripping it onto any gashes. I expect these superb baits to carry on catching for me at least for a couple more seasons as soft baits do not seem to get wised up to by pike as quickly as hard bodied lures do. Situations that seem best to fish these lures in are deep water areas and they also lend themselves well to trolling if that's what you get off on. The only drawback as far as I'm concerned is that there are only six colour choices available that I know of at the moment, still I expect that way change as they become more popular, we will see. Whatever the case is, they are a top lure in my box!

Bagley's B Flat



Now here's a real classic as far as I am concerned and it is probably one of the first popular imported jerkbaits that a lot of us came across around eight years or so back. Unfortunately the folks Stateside for some unknown reason, must have decided that the B Flat was not popular enough, as they ceased manufacturing it. I am not sure but I seem to remember the company being taken over by someone else and they just decided to drop this very popular jerkbait.

I have some very happy memories of this excellent summer-choice lure and it was especially effective twitched and popped in and around weed and reed lines and worked over heavy cover. When popped the B Flat could be made to just work inches under the surface, or if worked a little more harshly you could get a depth of around three feet out of it, either way takes on this lure

are often visually stimulating with pike coming clean out of the water.

The B Flat floats at rest until you pull it under and when worked in a standard jerkbait retrieve (jerk, reel, jerk, reel), it darts erratically back in to you to good effect. There was also a suspending B Flat available which sank pretty slowly and was handy for using on deep water pike, luckily I still own a few each of these superb lures and they are still put to good use and get results each year. Once more, if you ask around there may just be an outside chance of picking up one of these lures in the UK still, the States would probably be a safer bet and even then it may be touch and go as to whether you find one or not. However, even though this lure is not in production any longer I still had to include it in my choice as it is a great pike catcher and will continue to be so if you are lucky enough to own one.

Hell Tail



Well, this is one of my babies and I don't mind admitting that I am proud to say so either. The Hell Tail has only been available to the public through British mail order now for about a year. I first came up with the design in the winter of 1999 and I am the first to admit that it has some similarities to the Bulldawg. I wanted a lure that had that enticing tail but that was more buoyant and had a more pike-friendly hook set up too.

This way the lure could be worked on a slower retrieve and higher in the water layers and unhooking would not be a problem if the lure was inhaled. The weighted wooden body combined with the eight inch mag grub was the perfect answer and the fact that the Hell Tail only has one treble and one single hook solved any unhooking problems. The first few lures that I made

up were an instant success with both myself and my wife Den taking some good doubles and two twenties to 28.04. I then passed the design on to Phil Griffiths of Ace lures and he put them into production but unfortunately there was a fault with the filler in the first main batch. Thankfully, Phil has now put the manufacturer right and this problem has now been sorted out and amended and the Hell Tail continues to do well. It seems to work on most water types and certainly works on Llandegfedd, as I witnessed a few pike caught on Hell Tails there last year, I like to fish it over drop-offs and around cover and we have also caught pike by slow trolling the lure too. A steady retrieve is good, but if you twitch it you will get a nice break-back action too, the choice is yours.

Just how popular the Hell Tail is in years to come remains to be seen, but I for one will still be using them as they work for me, but maybe you think I am biased as I said earlier, we will see.

Bull Dawg

Well you didn't really think that I could do my top six without including the Bull Dawg in it did you? These superb soft plastics have been around since 1994 and the first person I saw using them in this country was my buddy big Tony Martin that same year. Tony had a twenty-five pounder on a blue Dawg that day and that was enough to tell me to get hold of some myself.

Since then I have taken big pike on this lure from almost every water I have fished in this country and from as far as Sweden too, you just can't seem to go wrong with Dawgs, they're a real pike slayer. They don't really appear to have a lot of



in-built action to be honest with just a straight ripple out of it's tapered tail, however that seems to be all that is needed and hits are usually real savage affairs. Once more a steady retrieve is often all you will need to trigger strikes after counting them down, but a stop-start jerk will also see pike hitting them at times.

Letting Dawgs stall n' fall mid-retrieve can also be effective on cautious pike at times and to be honest as long as you give these babies a fair trial then it is only a matter of time before you start scoring big time on them. Open, deep water is one of my favourite types of areas for fishing Bull Dawgs as you can cover water and find pike real quick with them. They also work well when cast to cover but it can work out a dear do if you start losing them as they ain't cheap, the Yanks certainly know how to get you hooked with lures like these. Still, give them a try and you won't be disappointed as they seem to act like a magnet to big pike, at least they have had that effect on my lure fishing for pike anyway and that's good enough for me, you can make your own mind up.

Super Scud



This is the second lure out of my in vogue choice of six lures that is one of my own designs and once more I offer no apologies for including it as it deserves to be here. I have been making the Scud for around five years now and it has proved it's worth on many various water types for both myself and various fishing companions. If you doubt it then ask Tony Martin or Neil Airey and I dare say Neil Hardacre may remember me catching on them on a trip we had about four years back. The Scud is a jointed slow-sinking jerk-bait and it really is quite versatile in the fact that it can be fished in a manner of ways. You can slow-troll it and it will swim enticingly behind your boat, the same goes for a straight retrieve or crank on the cast too and if you twitch the Scud it will do a 180 degree turn on itself.

Again this lure has worked on many water types over the years and they look a treat held back in the current of a river underneath overhanging branches just sat there wavering slowly waiting to get nailed. At the time of writing (Feb 2001) I have not long ago passed the design on to Ace lures and I have received the first samples which are spot on. Jan Eggers was sent some samples and he was into fish with them straight away and he seems to rate the Scud very highly, so that in itself is encouraging. However, I am only having confirmation of what I already know, as if I did not rate the lure I would never have carried on using it to the extent that I do and it would not be appearing here now. Best areas to use Scuds in vary from open shallow flats to trolling medium depth runs of water in the ten to fourteen feet depth range, though I have caught on them in over twenty feet of water. As I said earlier, rivers also seem to be favourable venues for these lures too. Scuds already play an important part in my lure collection and I think they will probably become a lot more popular with other anglers as they come across them soon.

Well there you have it, my in-vogue top six.

Of course, others will no doubt have their own thoughts on what are the top six lures for them and indeed those choices may well not even include one of the lures that I have mentioned. Different waters often do respond in totally different ways in other parts of the country, maybe someone out there would care to enlighten us and give an account of their top six. Any offers?

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