

Handlining Sinkers

by Ron Welch

Most Handliners take the sinker that they use for granted and don't give it much thought. Instead, they concern themselves with what bait, what color, etc.

Since maintaining perfect contact with the bottom is so important, the sinker becomes a key part of your tackle and should suit the conditions of the area that you're fishing. Things such as speed, bottom material (sand, gravel, mud, rock, etc.) need to be considered.

When I'm fishing the river in general with a soft or gravel bottom, I use the standard teardrop sinker with a wire through the center. The wire is 5/32" in diameter and is 12' long. The body is 5 1/2" long and the wire extends out of the bottom 5". It weighs 1 1/2 lbs.

I've tried lighter sinkers but in the river they drop to far behind the boat and don't give me the sensitivity that I want. When fishing an area such as the Livingston channel with its current speed and depth, I use a 2 lb sinker, which is still difficult to keep on bottom.

On the rock piles in Lake Erie or any other rocky or snaggy area, I use a sinker developed by fellow club member, Bob Boston. It consists of a piece of copper tubing filled with lead and a cotter pin to attach to your shank. I use a sinker made of 14" of 1.2" copper tubing. This gives me a 1 1/2 lb. Sinker. Bob also makes some from 3/8" diameter tubing about 20" long. You can make them longer or shorter to arrive at the weight that you desire.

When making these sinkers, you drill a piece of wood 1" deep the diameter of your tubing, to stand them in to pour the lead in them. You also need to preheat the tubing before you pour to prevent air pockets from forming.. Bend the ends of you cotter pins into a U shape so they won't pull out of the lead.

Try this type of sinker in those snaggy areas and see how well they work.

Good Fishing!!

(Click on pictures to view full size)



Note: There are several other good handlining articles on the site. Click on the links below to go to them.
by Dan Boileau

