

Plagiarism is the most sincere form of flattery

I've been fishing Winco Custom Lure's flutter jigs for the past year. Al Winco donated some to PRSC a few years back for membership night, and I was fortunate enough to get a few. These jigs are virtually snag proof in rocky ledge-filled rivers. The only time I lose one is when the jig impaled submerged wood or with an errant cast. Winco's flutter jigs are so nice, Jeff Little started making a similar one through his company Confidence Baits. Jeff markets them as a dragin' head jig. I got a sample from Jeff and figured, hey, I could make these.

These jigs are similar, but very different from the commercially marketed swim bait jigs. I believe the tapered lead by the eye of the hook make Al and Jeff's jig is more snag resistant when slow dragging plastics across the bottom of the river. The commercial swim bait jigs are made by Owner, Mustard and Gamakatsu and the lead is on the shank of the hook down by the bend. Also, the lead is round with ridges that could snag. Another thing I didn't like about these manufacturer's jigs is the thick wire hook. I figured if I could find a thin wire hook, I could customize these jigs to my fishing style.

I spend a few nights researching the internet literature on molds, hooks, and hook thickness. The online Do-It catalog has a swim jig mold. It was for ice fishing, but looked very similar to the flutter & dragin' head jigs. I figured with the swim jig mold and a dremel tool I could reproduce the jig. Talked to a few of my buddies about my idea, and one had the Do-It swim jig mold, so I talked him into sending me a couple jigs he poured. As soon as I saw my buddy's jigs, I knew I could make a jig similar to Al's and Jeff's.

The hook is a 28 degree bend hook and not many manufacturers make them. I discovered that Yamamoto contracted with Owner and they make a thin wire jig hook for swimming senkos. The Owner is an expensive hook, but it's what I wanted. Also ordered some Mustard 28d bend hooks, because not only are they cheaper than the Owners, but I believe this is the same hook that Al and Jeff pours their jigs with. The model number for the Mustad hook is 91768BLN and 5167 twistlock light worm hooks for the Owner. The Owner hook is a thinner wire than the Mustard. The other manufacturers of the 28 degree bend hooks use a very thick wire. The reason I like the thinner hooks, is I believe they penetrate the fish's mouth better.

After getting the mold, I had to drill out the hook eye section and the bottom part of the mold where the shaft of the hook sits on the 1/8, 1/4 and 3/8 oz molds. The pour cone on the 3/8 oz also had to be cut out at the bottom to get a complete pour.

Before cutting the mold, I placed the hook in the mold so that it could be completely covered by lead. Then I marked what I needed to cut in the mold with a Sharpie and slowly took off aluminum with a carbide pencil-tool dremel bit. The dremel was set to its highest speed. You have to cut carefully, because the carbide tip will cut aluminum like butter. Work slowly and follow the lines marked by the Sharpie. If you cut too much, you can always repair the mold with JB Weld. Then I blackened the inside of the mold with a candle. In order to get a good pour, the mold and lead has to be very hot. In the colder months, I've even heated up the hooks in a toaster oven to get a complete pour.

To paint them, hold the eye of the hook in an old set of hemostats so you get no paint in the eye. Next heat the over an alcohol Bunsen burner and coat with powder paint. Then clean out any residual paint in the eye. Allot is going on in the eye with the hitch hiker screw in lock and the line, so you it as paint free as you can get it. Lastly, bake the jig in a dedicated toaster oven at 350 degrees Fahrenheit for 20 minutes to cure the powder paint. You want a dedicated toaster oven because you do not want lead fumes mixed with your morning toast.

Here are the results before painting.



After painting, I added the hitch hiker to screw on the soft plastic. The jigs are labor intensive to clean make, but well worth it. I can fish all day with one and not lose it. Here is what they look like finished



I rig these jigs on small swim baits, paddle tail grubs, stick baits and even a tubes. Here are some of the results of the jigs in action.



