



Get the Ezine
It's FREE!

Enter your e-mail address:

Update

Subscribe | Unsubscribe



[Home](#) [Get \\$15-\\$30 Off](#) [Hot Custom Baits](#) [Free Weekly Ezine](#) [Insider Forum](#)

Magazine :



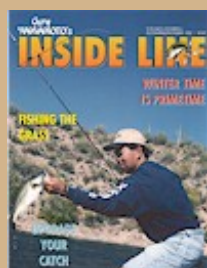
- [Subscribe Now](#)
- [Mailing Dates](#)
- [Sample Articles](#)



- [Coming Soon!](#)



- [Jan/Feb 2001](#)



- [Nov/Dec 2000](#)

Member:



[Sample Articles](#) [2001](#) [Jan/Feb](#)

Drop-Shotting . . . From A to Z By Terry Battisti

A cold mist hovers over the lake – it's January, the thermometer's marking a cool 38 degrees, but the water is a balmy 48 degrees. The meter reads 53 feet, bait at 45 and bigger marks showing below. In years past, the day would be spent "spoon feeding" the fish marked below the bait, but you have a new weapon. Head-hooking a little worm, you drop it over the side. The sinker hits bottom and you start shaking the rod – easy enough to do; your body is fighting off hypothermia.

Methodically bouncing the rod tip, you notice the line move to the side . . . ever so slightly. The rod tip begins to load; you reel as fast as you can. Feeling the pressure, the fish heads for the surface, spitting its morning meal of shad into the surrounding water. The 3.5-pound chunk is safely in the net - one drop, one fish and a banner day unfolds . . . so "this" is drop-shotting.

Drop-Shot History

The drop-shot rig is receiving a lot of national attention, due largely to its recent success in the west. The system has roots in the eastern US, dating back to the mid-70's, and was first seen in *Fishing Facts* magazine. About five years ago Japanese anglers resurrected the method for use on their highly pressured waters. The Japanese refined the technique and it soon returned to the States.

In 1997, drop-shotting was relatively unknown, except to a few Southern California fishermen who had ties to Japanese manufacturers and pros. The system worked extremely well, and those that knew about it did their best to keep it a secret. Then, in winter 1999, two major tournaments were won using the drop-shot rig - the B.A.S.S. Invitational at Lake Oroville, and the WON Bass Classic on Lake Cachuma. The proverbial cat was out of the bag – way out!

Basic Equipment

In the past couple of years, we've gone from rods designed for trout fishing, to rods better suited for the drop-shot technique. Prime considerations for choosing a drop-shot rod are: It should have a limber tip which imparts action to the bait, and a smooth transition into the mid, and bottom rod sections that are fairly stout, while still light enough for the light lines being used. Both casting and spinning rods work, but spinning rods are generally preferred when using ultra-light lines.

The rods I prefer are G. Loomis (casting) PR8400C and PR844C. Both are 7-footers and have the action described above. The lighter of the two, PR8400C, is rated for six to twelve-pound line, while the heavier is rated for eight to 17-pound test. Each rod has a light tip with ample backbone to set the hook. Spinning rods I recommend are the G. Loomis SR781-1, SR782-1, PR8400S, and PR844S - the first two are for ultra-light lines.

Reels are also an important consideration in drop-shotting. With light lines and small

Catalog:



Online
Store

Fishing Tips :

- [Ezine Archives](#)
- [Daily Tips](#)
- [Video Tips](#)
- [Ask The Pros](#)
- [Senko Tips](#)
- [Craw Tips](#)
- [Fat Boy Tips](#)
- [Grub Tips](#)
- [Jig Tips](#)
- [Tiny Ika Tips](#)
- [Tube Tips](#)
- [Darter Jigs](#)
- [Football Jigs](#)

About:

- [Our Bass Pros](#)
- [Our Friends](#)
- [Advertising](#)
- [Sponsorship](#)
- [Contact Us](#)
- [Site Map](#)



hooks, it's imperative to use a reel with a smooth drag system, and they should be capable of retrieving at least 24 inches of line per turn of the reel handle. This is crucial - nearly every time a deep-water fish is hooked, it swims (rockets, actually) straight for the surface.

Popular drop-shot lines range from three to eight-pound test, with six-pound being the most widely used. Recently there's been a shift toward fluorocarbon lines, like Yamamoto Sugoi and Berkley Vanish. Fluorocarbon allows you to go up one size without fear of your line spooking the fish. If you aren't a fan of fluorocarbon use any of the top monos, but I suggest green for low-visibility.

Terminal Tackle

Small hooks are the norm when drop-shotting, and the hook of choice is an Octopus-style in sizes six to two-pound. Some Japanese companies (Daiichi, Cultiva, and Gamakatsu) have hooks specifically for drop-shotting. The ingredients for a basic drop-shot hook are an open point, a short shank, and an up-eye. Octopus-styles work best in open water.

In heavy structure/cover situations, a different style hook is called for. One choice is the Series 53 Split-Shot hook made by Gamakatsu for Yamamoto - the point bends back towards the shaft, decreasing the likelihood of snags. In very thick cover, as when flipping the rig (yes, you can flip it!), you may need to go with a standard R-bend type worm hook.

Popular weights range from specialty styles by Japanese manufacturers, to simple split shot, crimped on the end of the line. The quick release weights produced by Duel, Zappu, and Bakudan (available at UMA-X Co - umaxco.com) have a line-stop integral with the weight, allowing the line to pull free when snagged. Another method is to use split shot, or a split shot/bullet weight combo. No matter which, use the lightest weight you can manage.

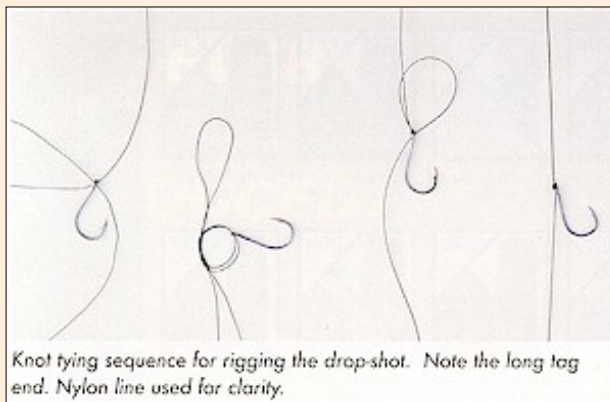
The Basic Rig

The basic rig resembles a standard dropper used in the ocean and for freshwater catfish, with one difference - there is no line (dropper) between the hook and the main line. Tie a standard Palomar knot - start by going through the "hook-point" side of the eye, and leaving at least two extra feet of line on the tag end. The extra line will be used to attach the sinker. Once the Palomar is tied, take the tag end and thread it back through the "hook-point" side of the eye, again. This last step forces the hook shaft to lay against the line, which aids hook setting.

Once the hook is in place, it is time to attach the weight. Choose one that is heavy enough to stay in contact with the bottom, but not too heavy. In most situations, 1/8 to



Basic Drop-Shot Arsenal - left to right: fluorocarbon line, basic Drop Shot hooks, heavy cover drop-shot hooks, and quick release weights.



Knot tying sequence for rigging the drop-shot. Note the long tag end. Nylon line used for clarity.

5/16-ounce, but 3/8 to 1/2-ounce can be used in extremely deep water or during windy situations. The "drop" (distance from hook to weight) can range from six inches to four feet, or more, depending upon where the baitfish are, relative to the bottom.

Business End

Drop-shot baits are generally small – three to four-inch grubs, worms, fluke-type baits, and leeches. Some companies, such as SnakeBite Custom Fishing Tackle and No Name Worms (available at UMA-X Co.), offer baits specifically for drop-shotting. Any smaller bait will work – but it's important to match the bait to the size of the baitfish. Larger baits will also work, particularly when drop-shot flippin'.

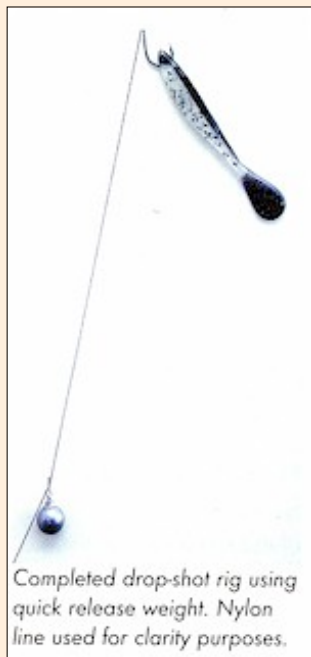


Common Drop-Shot baits. Top left: SnakeBite's three-inch Drop Shot Fluke & three-inch Drop Shot Paddle. Right: No-Name's Tsuchinoko. Center Bottom to top: Yamamoto's Series 30 and 40 Grubs, Series 04 and 07 worms, and 9J Senko.

Baits that are specifically manufactured for the technique are SnakeBite's three-inch Drop-Shot Fluke"and three-inch Drop-Shot Paddle, and No-Name's "Tsuchinoko" (all designed for use in Japan), along with Yamamoto's style 30 and 40 grubs, 04 and 07 worms, and the 9J Senko (this is one very versatile bait). But don't think you're limited to these - tubes, craws and leeches also work well.

Rigging the baits can be done several different ways. With the small baits and hooks normally used, "head hooking" is all that is needed. Simply run the hook point through the head of the plastic, about 1/4-inch behind the tip of the bait. Hooking the bait in this manner allows maximum action to be imparted to the bait. With the larger baits, and when fishing in heavy cover situations, the bait can be rigged weedless.

Technique



The drop-shot was initially developed for deep-water fishing. It works best when fish are suspended off of outside structure, in 20 to 80 feet of water. This requires good electronics, and a firm understanding of how to locate bait and offshore structure.

Once an area is located, cast the rig out, stripping line as needed, letting it sink to the bottom. When the weight hits bottom, raise your rod until you feel the weight of the sinker (about the 11:00 position). Then, lower the rod to create a slight bow in the line (about the 9:30 position). Once you have a slack line, start shaking the rod tip.

The most important thing about this technique is that you shake the bait on a slack line. Shake the rod for up to a minute and then reel down the slack, move the bait and start the whole process over. Do this until the bait is directly below the boat. In deep-water situations, it's usually best to position the boat directly over the fish, and work the rig vertically.

Because you are working the bait on a slack line, bites feel different than when fishing a standard worm rig. When a fish grabs your bait on a drop-shot rig, you typically feel a tightening sensation; the rod will start to get heavy. Do not set the hook in the *normal*

fashion - just reel as fast as you can. If you set the hook like you would on a Texas-rig, you are likely to pull the hook out of the fish's mouth.

Drop-Shot Alternatives

As with most techniques, the drop-shot is evolving as anglers are seeing its advantages, and experimenting with variations. One evolution is the use of a jig or weighted tube bait on the end of the leader, instead of the sinker. This allows you to cover two depths with the rig, and there's always a chance at a double!

Another option is multiple hooks on the line. The knot used with this variation should be changed - the Palomar knot is not designed to be pulled from the tag end. The knot I recommend for multi-hook rigs is the snell knot. When fish are stacked on structure, this can be a quick way to put a limit in the boat. (Check your local fishing regulations for the maximum number of hooks allowed in your area.)

Another variation that is gaining popularity is pitchin' and flippin' the drop-shot. This can be *deadly* when fish are suspended in grass, under docks, or in brush. Just use a jig (or other bait you prefer for flippin') in place of the weight. The other difference is the hook; standard worm hooks can be utilized, and the bait can be rigged weedless. Of course, due to the cover associated with flippin' and pitchin', it is best to increase your line size, also.

In all, the drop-shot is an easy and effective way to catch fish. It will undoubtedly become a staple technique in bass fishing circles, much like flippin' and finesse fishing have. Give it a try - put another weapon in your fishing arsenal!



Drop-Shot options. Left to right: Tube, jig, flippin'/pitchin' rig, and multi-hook rig. A snell knot is recommended to prevent break-offs.

Terry Battisti grew up in Southern California, the birthplace of finesse fishing, and was "bit" by the bass fishing bug at the early age of 12. At 14, he was working for one of the best bass shops in the state, where he learned from many of the "fathers" of finesse fishing. Deepwater finesse fishing is his biggest strength, but he's no stranger to power fishing.

At 36, Terry has been a serious basser for 24 years, except for the ten-year break to pursue his Ph.D in engineering. The Idaho resident stays busy with his job at a nuclear research facility, owning/operating SnakeBite Custom Fishing Tackle (custom hand pours), fishing three tournament circuits, and regular Internet contributions on the [Bass Fishing Home Page](#). As a result of contacts in Japan, Terry was one of the first Americans to use the drop-shot technique.

You can find the tackle mentioned in this article at these addresses and websites:

Gary Yamamoto Custom Baits, Inc.
800-645-2248
www.yamamoto.baits.com

SnakeBite Custom Fishing Tackle
510 East 17th St. #237
Idaho Falls, ID 83404
(208) 882-6160
www.snakebite.net

Uma-X Co.
Phone 562-434-7925
FAX 562-434-0521
www.umaxco.com
No-Name Worms available at Uma-X Co.





[[Home](#) | [Free Stuff](#) | [Free Ezine](#) | [Insider Forum](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Site Map](#)]

Copyright © 1993-2000 Gary Yamamoto's Inside Line Magazine | [Privacy Policy](#)

