

Whim-Away's Trolling Lures: Part 2

The Bibbed & Bibless Minnow Pack.

The Skirted lures I listed in last month's column are fantastic fish takers, though in areas where fish are thick, or are of a toothy nature, these lures can get knocked around to the point that re-skirting is necessary to get them to work efficiently again.

There are times that these lures may not be the most practical or durable.

Enter the Minnows.

There are 2 types of "minnow" shaped lures that have been selected for Whim-Away.

Some have a bib that makes the lure dive to a predetermined depth of anywhere from 1 to 7 metres. The bib shape, plus the shape of the lure cause the wobbling, shimmy, swimming motion that is common with these lures when trolled or cast.

Proper alignment of the bib and the hook hangers are essential to keep a bibbed minnow tracking straight at speed. If a particularly large or aggressive fish misaligns something, the lure will not swim properly until it has been re-tuned with pliers and hand pressure.

The others are bibless. These lures rely on body shape and lead inserts

THE TACKLE BOX



in the lures chin to stay under the water's surface. They generally have a flattened section across the head of the lure, which causes the lure to shimmy along at troll speeds of 4-18 knots. The depth range they attain is usually around 1-1.5 metres, though the faster you troll them, the more likely they will be just under the surface.

Bibless minnows are particularly good lures that can take repeated attacks from all pelagic and reef species without fear of a bib being misaligned or broken off. It is this durability that sets them apart from the other trolling lures; however, the bibbed minnows are better for deeper presentations without the aid of planing boards or downriggers.

In other words, they compliment one another, which is why there is a mixture of both.

Over the next few pages, I will discuss the lures I have picked. And why.

With Aaron Concord

Halco Laser Pros

In the first photo are the largest bibbed minnows that Whim-A-Way will carry unless PW starts feeling more adventurous? I can get minnows up to 50cm long if

he likes.

These are 3 Halco Laser Pro's and at 190mm represent the biggest offering. They are a plastic lure range that floats at rest, though they dive to a depth determined by the shape and size of the bib they have. Being hollow, they also have added rattles as an extra audio attractant.

The first lure is actually one of Halco's "Crazy Deep" Laser Pro 190 minnows, which can dive to a depth of 7 metres. To the uninitiated, this may seem fairly shallow, though in actual fact, there are very few lures that can reach this depth without additional lead, downriggers etc.

The colour number is #H52, which is often referred to as "banana fish".

I have found that having a truly deep diving minnow mixed in with some shallower offerings, this deeper lure will sort out the more wary fish. The colour also stands out very well at these deeper depths.

The next Halco Laser Pro 190 is a great rendition of a **Pilchard**, which is why I picked it. There isn't too many predatory fish that will swim past a pillie. It dives to 2 metres and is a favourite for all pelagics. The colour number of this lure is #H50.

The Halco Laser Pro 190, colour #H58, has been picked because, for reasons only fish know, they love to knock it off. Wahoo in particular seem to love this Blue/Pink/White/Yellow combo. It's a case of it works, don't change it.

It too, dives to 2 metres.

The Halco's described all have Lexan bibs that are specially "pinned in" rather than glued.

Halco claims that this results in a stronger unit, as glues can break

Halco Laser Pro 190 Minnows - note the top lure is the deep diving 7m model.



Rapala CD18s and Williamson Impala 18s

plastics down over time. They have a classic bait fish shape that catches fish.

Rapala Magnum CD-18 & Williamson Impala 18.

The name Rapala is synonymous with quality timber bodied lures.

There wouldn't be too many serious offshore trollers that would go to sea without a few sinking CD or Count Down model Rapala's in their arsenal.

With their baitfish profile plus their trademark stainless steel bib, Rapala's CD Magnum Range has the inbuilt action that game fish love.

Due to their lower price tag and tougher plastic body, the Williamson Impala range, as blatant a copy you may say they are, the fact is they are a very reliable fish taker as well.

In photo number 2, from top to bottom are: Rapala CD-18, colour **GM SS**, which stands for their highly reflective "stainless steel" body, with a Green Mackerel back that is 18 cm long. This lure imitates a **Slimy Mackerel**, in both size and appearance.

The next in the photo is an Impala 18; colour is **H86**, which is a dark blue back, tiger stripes, with a fluro pink belly. I must say, that this lure is not a colour I would pick as a fish taker.

Damon Olsen proved me wrong by putting this lure out and, at times, out fishing everything else. Might have something to do with the contrasting colours. Who knows? Fish love it. Don't fix what isn't broken!

The next lure is another Rapala. It is a CD 18 **BM SS**, which is identical to the stainless steel colour Green Mackerel, though this one is Blue.

As an imitator, it has Pilchard written all over it.

Lure number 4 in photo 2 is another Rapala CD 18. The colour is **GM**, which is Rapala's long time favourite, Green Mackerel. As with the other Rapala's, the colour isn't absolutely the same as a particular baitfish. More so, it does a good job of fitting a wide variety of baitfish in colour, shape and size.

The last lure in this photo is an Impala 18. The colour number is **H78**, which is their code for Red



Head/White body. Now, I defy anyone who can show me a baitfish of this colour.

Someone, somewhere, somehow figured out that fish love eating lures of this colour.

It works so well that it is an underlying theme throughout the trolling minnows and even the surface poppers. As a colour for Mackerel, it has few peers.

All of the above Rapala's and Impala's have a diving capacity of around 2.5-3 metres when trolled.

Smaller Rapalas and Impalas: Top lure is a Lively Lure Blue Pilly to show the size difference.

Their stainless steel bibs act as mini teasers by flashing light out side ways as the lure swims. I believe this attribute helps, particularly with the Mackerel clan.

The Smaller Bibbed Minnows.

At the top of photo number 3 is a Lively Lures Blue Pilly. What the lure is trying to imitate is self explanatory.



The bibless minnows. Top is a Halco Giant Trembler, middle two are 7" Mack Baits, and the bottom lure is a 5" Mack Bait

The lure is 19 cm long; is made from tough plastic and dives to 2 metres.

The reason I put this lure in this photo, was to physically show the different sized lures I have stepped down to.

The majority of these lures are 14 cm, though the little one on the bottom is 11.

The lures are: Rapala CD 14 **BM SS**, which is a Blue Mackerel lure. It's a smaller profile version of the CD 18 described above.

The next lures are Impala 14's, colours are **H86, H78 & H82**, which again are smaller versions of the Impala 18's listed above. The **H82** being another "banana fish" variant that works well.

The smallest lure in the photo is a Rapala CD 11 **RH**, Red head/White body, which at 11 cm is the smallest minnow I have picked for offshore trolling work. It is a brilliant lure for all pelagics.

Don't be fooled by its small size; some serious sized fish like eating this lure.

The reason for having these smaller lures is at times, fish become fastidious about lure size, particularly if the dominant baitfishes of the area are 6 or 7 cm shorter than your offering. It also pays to have a smaller lure mixed in with larger ones; it could be the difference between a bent rod and catching

fish, to a nondescript day of fuel burning.

Another reason for pulling these lures out is if your target species are the Mackerel and Wahoo clan, you can have days where the bigger lures get bitten often, but your hook up conversion rate is lousy. Mackerel can bite down on areas BETWEEN the hooks and not get pinned. The smaller minnows don't suffer as badly in this department since the hook exposure is better for their length. Then, you may ask, why have any larger lures in the collection at all? The number one reason is durability; the bigger lures take the knocks better than their little brothers. Smaller lures require more tuning after aggressive fish eat them.

The positions I would run any of these lures follows: The more subtle metallics and the fluoro greens - run the longest. The lures with the darkest or most contrasting colours - run shortest.

The best speed to troll ANY bibbed minnow is the fastest you can go without them blowing out of the water or tracking crookedly. This is usually between 6 and 10 knots.

If a lure is bent after a fish has attacked it, you may have to re-tune it with pliers.

Generally it will be the "hot" lure of the day, so you will need to be able to tune lures quickly and efficiently. It's worth the time, especially when

you have a 20 kilo Wahoo to show for it!

The Bibless Minnow Gang.

Photo number 4 contains the bibless minnow range.

Number 1 is a Halco Giant Trembler. The colour number is **R15**. It has a nice metallic purple that works particularly well very close to the boat. The rattles it contains are louder than a baby's rattle. Sometimes this may put shy fish off, but the fish that want it certainly cream it.

The other three bibless minnows are all Lively Lures Mack Baits.

The first is a 7 inch Mack Bait, colour **Purple Bonito**. This is another great short or long flat position lure.

The second is another 7 inch Mack Bait. Colour is **Red Head**. This colour is a two way beast. For 90% of the time, run it right down the centre in the prop wash.

The other 10% run it as your shotgun lure. Areas of high boating traffic or where Big Spaniards and Wahoo are shy push this colour into the 10% category.

The last bibless minnow is a smaller 5 inch Mack Bait. Colour is **Banana Mack**.

This little minnow does its best out in the clear water as a shotgun lure.

The great thing about bibless minnows is their operating range. You can troll them in a spread of baits at 4 knots, or at the other extreme, place them with your Wahoo skirts and troll them at up to 16 knots.

As with time and experimentation, certain lures and colours end up being front-runners, which is why I have chosen these lures over the 10,000 other variants that are available.

This accumulation of knowledge stems from being on the water enough to see lures catching fish. Remember, there are many lures that have caught their first fish, though there isn't as many that have caught their second. If a lure does catch its second, then third in quick succession, you probably are on to a great lure.

Next month, I will start on the various casting lures.

F&B