

## Using Cut Bait for Stripers

A fishing technique we need to know more about is 'cut bait fishing' (sections or filets of baitfish). Some of the biggest stripers ever recorded were taken on cut bait fished on a bottom rig. This method is similar to live bait fishing except that the boat is positioned over a likely spot and moored with a bow and stern anchor. The second anchor keeps the boat from swinging and tangling the fishing lines. Dead baits, such as shad or herring are hooked to lines and cast around the boat. Baits are fished on the bottom while others are suspended at various depths. When available, live bait is used in conjunction with the dead bait. The bait can be cut into various shapes or slashed to give off more scent. Larger baits can be cut in half to make two baits. The head section will be used on one line while the tail section is hooked to another. Fresh dead bait will attract more fish than frozen bait. Another idea is to use scissors and cut the tail section off a bait. Drop it to the bottom and let it flutter around. It's a sure fire technique if someone is home. If not the bait will die in 10 minutes anyway. At this point you are still cut baiting.

Some of the best cut baiting is done from spring through late summer. Position your boat on a hump or flat near deep water. Use both anchors to hold you still. Start by chumming a couple dozen baits in to small "Fingernail sized pieces. Make sure you drop some directly under the boat. Also, you want to throw some out where your lines will be. I like to use a whiffle ball bat with the top cut off. Fill the body of the bat with your chum and sling it out there. Cast your lines in a 360 degree radius around the boat. I like to position my rods like the clock. I try to fish about 12 rods. People will fish as many as 30 rods doing this, keeping some right under the boat and casting others as far as they can.

The tackle setup is fairly easy. Slide a 2 oz. egg sinker on your main line. Tie a barrel swivel and possibly a bead to keep it from your hook. Tie a leader from the swivel to your hook. The leader should only be 1-3' long. Shorter is better. Another method is to tie on a slide or fish finder rig. Even a ready rig works well. Just clip it on above your swivel and clip on the appropriate sinker. Do not tie a downline weight directly to your line. When the fish picks up the bait he will feel the weight.