Slug-O's give anglers edge over picky bass

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Outdoors Writer

There have been numerous innovations over the last few years designed to give you, the angler, an edge over finicky bass.

From scum frogs to gitzits, none have achieved the same overnight success of the new Slug-O.

With its debut this Spring, this soft stick bait has become the latest craze in fish-catching tactics. I use the word craze because this is exactly what has happened.

Word got out that people are catching 20 to 30 fish per day from the Fayette County Reservoir on this new plastic "worm" that has incredible action. Sporting goods shops can't keep these things on the shelf. Guides are gobbling them up by the hundreds and weekend anglers are taking what's left.

What is so special about a Slug-O?

It catches fish.

With every twitch of the rod tip, this lure zigs and zags, jumps and dives.

When watching it in the water, it looks just like a shad that has been knocked stupid by an angry bass. A bass can't resist such an easy meal when this thing flutters right in front of its nose.

Mastering the proper Slug-O retrieve is relatively simple. The trick is to fish it slow, real slow. Cast it out and allow it a good five to ten seconds to let it sink a few feet. Give it a couple of twitches and this will cause the Slug-O to dart around in a side to side motion.

Since it is relatively weightless, this lure will try to move towards the surface with each twitch so give it a few seconds to settle back down to the desired depth. This series of twitch, twitch, let it sink, twitch, twitch, makes the Slug-O look exactly like a crippled shad, trying to keep from going belly up.

I played around with an imitation Slug-O called a "Chatter Box". The Chatter Box works on the same principal except that it has a special cavity for a rattle tube to be placed near the head for that little extra attraction.

What I found was that fish do not hit this lure very aggressively. The life-like imitation is so convincing that bass are almost lackadaisical in picking it up. They just suck it in and swim away with it.

This makes line watching essential. If your line suddenly tightens up or begins to move to one side, hit it hard to get the hook out of the plastic body and into the fish's jaw.

Guides on Fayette County have had tremendous success fishing Slug-O's over hydrilla beds or along the rocks near the dam. Since it is rigged like a plastic worm, it is relatively snag-free and settles on grass nicely.

People at Gibbons Creek have not faired as well as those on Fayette County with this new invention. Some have speculated that this could be due to the differences in water clarity between the two lakes. Fayette County is more of a clear water impoundment while Gibbons tends to muddy up after periods of sustained rainfall like those in the past few months.

Once the weather settles and Gibbons begins to produce the monsters it became famous for, you can bet that some will be fooled by a Slug-O. If you can get your hands on one of these new items, your chances of putting more fish in the boat will be greatly increased.

I can't wait to go home and try one out in the bay. If this bait works as well on redfish as it does on bass, I'll be in for a great summer.

Fishing Report

GIBBON'S CREEK- Guide Clark Wentlandt reports some bass are still holding in the shallows. Lizards and buzz-baits worked in one to four feet of water have been the best producers.

The bass are beginning to move out from their spawning beds and into other areas of the lake besides Gibbons Creek. Fish have been showing on Sulpher Creek and in the main lake which is scattering fishermen a bit. Water is now at its new level and is stained from recent rains.

Guide Paul Place reports three fish came out over the weekend weighing from seven to nine pounds. They all came from shallow water and the nine pounder hit a Slug-O.

SOMERVILLE- Crappie are good around the Big Creek area but most are running small. Whites bass have hit the main lake and should be hungry for the next couple of weeks. The island off of Welch Park would be worth checking out.

Thespillway is open and a variety of species are coming out of the turbulent water. Some large flathead catfish were caught from the discharge over the weekend, with large shad being the best bait.

LAKE CONROE- Lynn Phillips reports that catfish action has been better than excellent. They are spawning in shallow water and are hitting live shad. Weather conditions do not look favorable for the KILT bass tournament that will be held at Anchorage Marina on Saturday.

FAYETTE COUNTY- Slug-O's, ring-worms, and Rat-L-Traps have all been producing fish over hydrilla beds. Guides catching 15-20 fish per day are not out of the ordinary even with the unstable weather this past week. Local Outdoors writer, Jim Butler boated good numbers of bass towards the end of the week using Slug-O's along grass edges.

Got a report? I would like to hear it. Give me a call at 696-5440 and leave a message. Whether it is a hot spot or a nice fish, let me know about it (make sure you leave your name).

Major League Wrapup

NL Standings

East Division

Team	W	L	Pct.	GB
Chicago	6	3	.667	-
New York	6	4	.600	½
Pittsburgh	5	4	.556	1
St. Louis	4	5	.444	2
Montreal	4	6	.400	2½
Philadelphia	3	6	.333	3

West Division

Team	W	L	Pct.	GB
San Diego	6	2	.750	-
Houston	5	4	.556	1½
Los Angeles	4	4	.500	2
Atlanta	3	4	.429	2½
Cincinnati	3	4	.429	2½
San Francisco	3	6	.333	3½

Tuesday's Games

Chicago 4, Philadelphia 3, 13 innings
Montreal 4, St. Louis 1
Pittsburgh 4, New York 2
Atlanta 10, Houston 4
Cincinnati 1, San Diego 0
San Francisco 8, Los Angeles 6

Wednesday's Games

Chicago 4, Philadelphia 1
Los Angeles 6, San Francisco 2
Montreal 1, St. Louis 0
Pittsburgh 4, New York 0
Houston 4, Atlanta 3
Cincinnati at San Diego, (n)

Thursday's Games

Los Angeles (Ke.Gross 0-1) at San Diego (Nolte 1-0), 4:05 p.m.
Chicago (Sutcliffe 0-0) at Pittsburgh (Drabek 0-2), 7:35 p.m.
Philadelphia (Mulholland 1-1) at St. Louis (Tewksbury 0-1), 8:35 p.m.

AL Standings

East Division

Team	W	L	Pct.	GB
Toronto	6	4	.600	-
Cleveland	4	4	.500	1
Detroit	4	4	.500	1
Milwaukee	4	4	.500	1
Boston	4	5	.444	1½
Baltimore	3	4	.429	1½
New York	3	6	.333	2½

West Division

Team	W	L	Pct.	GB
Oakland	7	1	.875	-
Chicago	6	1	.857	½
California	5	3	.625	2
Kansas City	4	4	.500	3
Texas	2	4	.333	4
Minnesota	2	6	.250	5
Seattle	2	6	.250	5

Tuesday's Games

Boston 5, Kansas City 2
Texas 3, Cleveland 1
Detroit 6, Toronto 2
Chicago 4, New York 3, 10 innings
Seattle 3, Minnesota 0
Oakland 8, California 5, 11 innings

Wednesday's Games

New York 10, Chicago 1
Boston 6, Kansas City 2
Detroit 5, Toronto 4, 10 innings
Milwaukee 7, Baltimore 3
Minnesota at Seattle, (n)
Oakland at California, (n)

Thursday's Games

Kansas City (Saberhagen 1-1) at Boston (Clemens 2-0), 1:05 p.m.
Detroit (Tanana 0-1) at Chicago (McDowell 2-0), 2:35 p.m.
Baltimore (Ballard 1-1) at Milwaukee (Knudson 1-0), 2:35 p.m.
Texas (B.Witt 0-1) at Cleveland (Swindell 0-2), 7:35 p.m.
Oakland (Dressendorfer 1-0) at California (Lewis 0-0), 10:35 p.m.

Astros beat Braves; Cubs move into first

ATLANTA (AP) — Mark Davidson drove in two runs in a three-run Houston first inning Wednesday night and the Astros held on for a 4-3 victory over the Atlanta Braves, who continued to stumble at home.

Houston took a 3-0 lead in the first off Steve Avery (1-1). Rafael Ramirez walked, Craig Biggio singled to extend his hitting streak to eight, Ken Caminiti hit an RBI single and Davidson added his two-run single.

Mark Portugal played hurt and was forced to use his head as well as his arm.

Portugal, 2-0 this season and 4-0 lifetime against the Braves, gave up three hits in the opening inning — including a two-run homer to Jeff Treadway — and a double in the second. After that, he retired 14 of 15 Braves before Jeff Blauser's solo homer in the seventh.

Cubs 4, Phillies 1

CHICAGO — George Bell homered and drove in two runs.

Shawn Boskie (1-1) went 6 1-3 innings, allowing one run and four hits.

Pirates 4, Mets 0

PITTSBURGH — John Smiley pitched a one-hitter to continue his domination of the Mets and Jeff King hit a two-run homer.

After allowing Kevin McReynolds' one-out double in the second, Smiley (2-0) retired the final 23 Mets in order.

Expos 1, Cardinals 0

MONTREAL — Bill Sampen pitched seven shutout innings and Barry Jones finished the six-hitter.

Reds 5, Padres 1

SAN DIEGO — Rookie Chris Hammond gained his first major-league victory by allowing five hits in six innings.

Hammond (1-0) made his first start of the season and just the fourth of his career.

Tigers 5, Blue Jays 4

DETROIT — Milt Cuyler's speed and mistakes by Toronto catcher Pat Borders acounted for the winning run, after game-tying pinch homer from Lou Whitaker.

Yankees 10, White Sox 1

NEW YORK — Chicago lost its first game this season as Chuck Cary made the six-run second stand up with eight strong innings.

The White Sox (6-1) return home Thursday to open the new Comiskey Park with an afternoon game against the Detroit Tigers.

Red Sox 6, Royals 2

BOSTON — Jack Clark, benched for a game after going 0-for-9 with eight strikeouts, celebrated his return with a two-run homer and a double.

Brewers 7, Orioles 3

MILWAUKEE — Paul Molitor doubled to cap a two-out, four-run rally in the fourth inning and Gary Sheffield homered.

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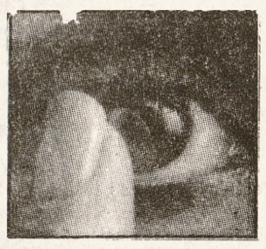
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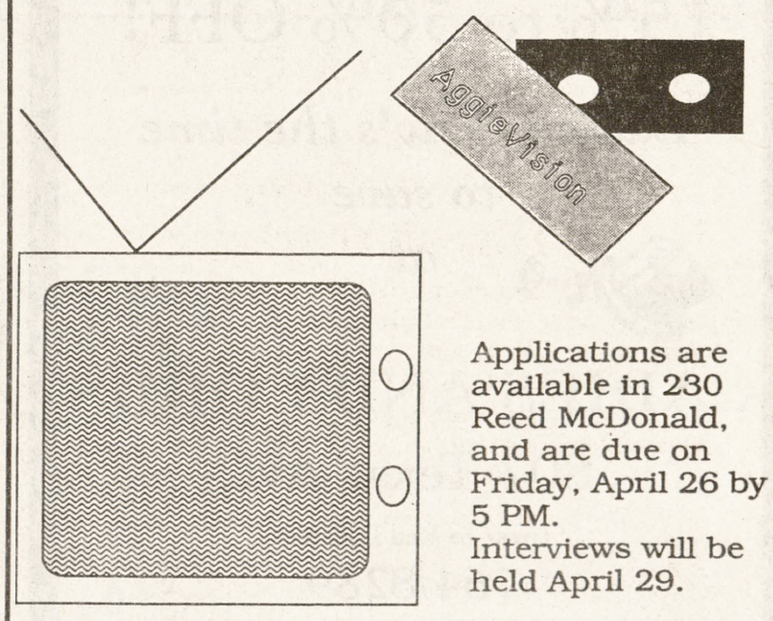

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Interviews will be held April 29.

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