

FISHING FLIGS

By TubeDude...Revised Jan. 2020

“Fligs” is the cutesy little handle I have given my line of floating jigs. I have been experimenting with them for many years...making various types and using a wide range of floating materials, designs and colors. I have proven to my own satisfaction that they work...on many waters and for many species.



A couple of types of floating jig heads available commercially. Most will work.

Floating jigs have been around for a while. I first became aware of them when fishing for Walleyes in Arizona’s Showlow Lake. I was introduced to these trinkets by another angler who was knocking them dead while I was struggling.

So, I picked up a few in different colors and gave them a try. I first worked all the standard walleye stuff...crawler rigs, plastics, crank baits, etc. I managed a couple of fish but nothing noteworthy before I switched to a floating jig and crawler rig. It didn’t take long for me to finish my limit...and to gain a respect for the effectiveness of presenting my offerings on a floating jig head.

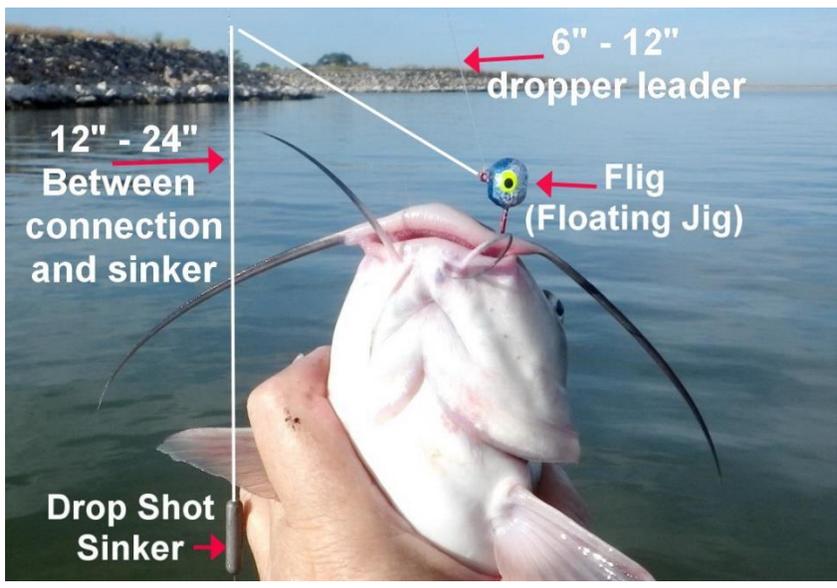
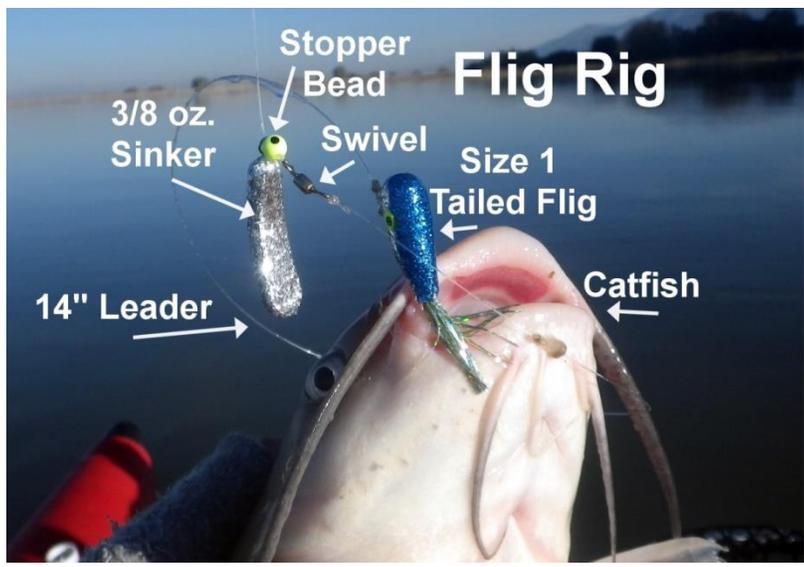
That was several decades ago. Since then I have honed my skills in fishing fligs. I have also become pretty efficient in making my own fligs...along with all of the other flies, jigs and hardbaits I use. My first homemade models were pretty crude...especially compared to some of the nifty stuff I now make. But they worked well enough to let me know I was on the right track and to encourage further experimentation.

RIGGING A FLIG

Size and color can be important factors in choosing a flig to fish. Proper rigging and presentation can also be critical...to fit the prevailing conditions and targeted species. You must choose the right head and hook, the best color, use the right bait and attach it to the flig the right way to achieve maximum appeal and hooking potential.

Choice of sinkers is also important. If you are fishing fligs over a fairly clean bottom, almost any sliding sinker setup will work. But streamlined rock-evading sinkers will always be better for avoiding snags...especially if you are dragging your baited fligs over a large area of varying bottom composition.

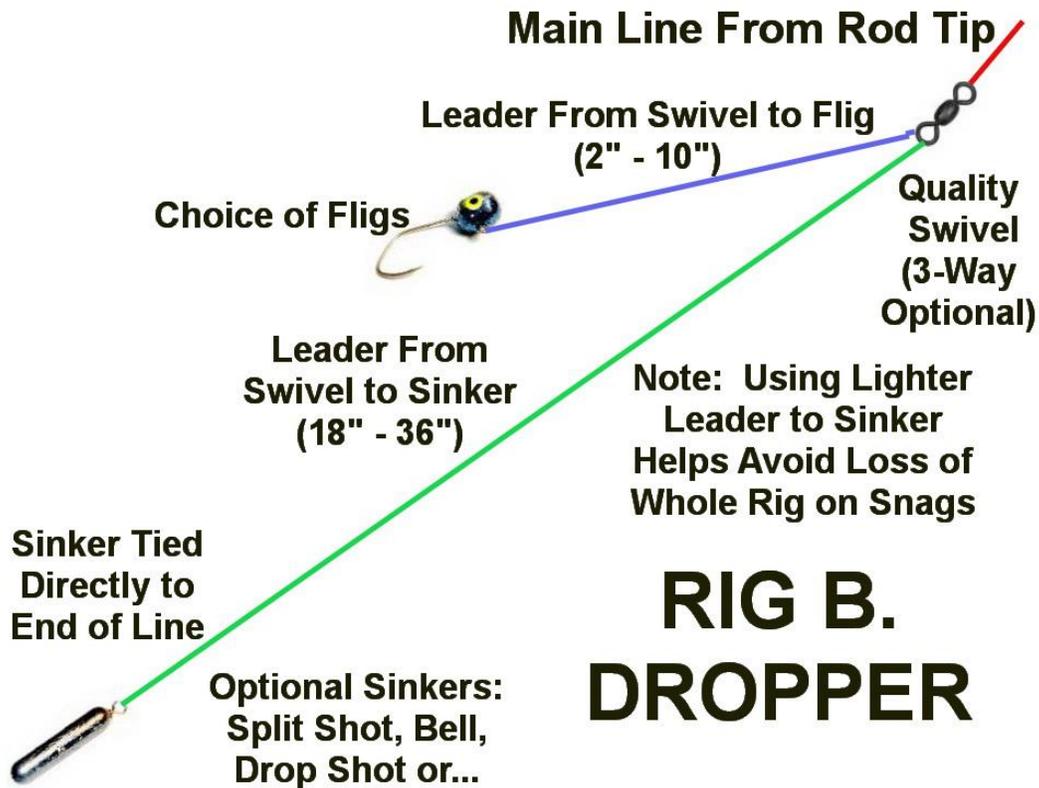
The following pictures show typical flig rigs...with different sinkers and different fligs. A “standard” rig usually has the sliding sinker stopped by a bead and a swivel, with a length of leader between the swivel and the flig. There are many options in how you rig and fish fligs...depending on waters, species, water conditions, food resources, etc.

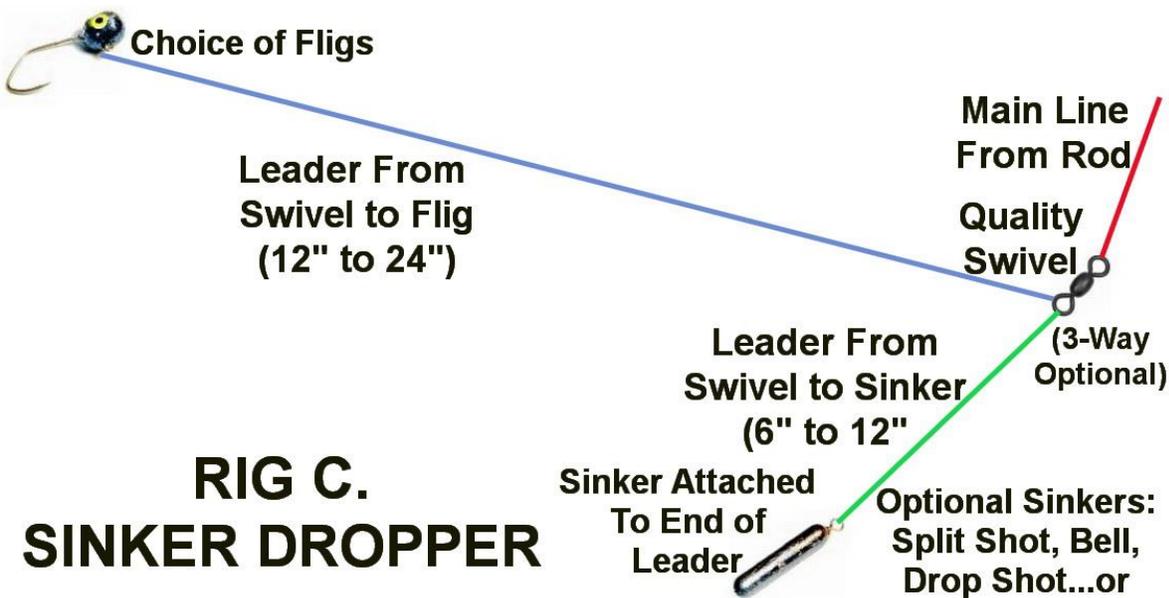


Another effective option is to rig "dropshot" style...with a sinker on the bottom and the flig on a short dropper off the line above the sinker.

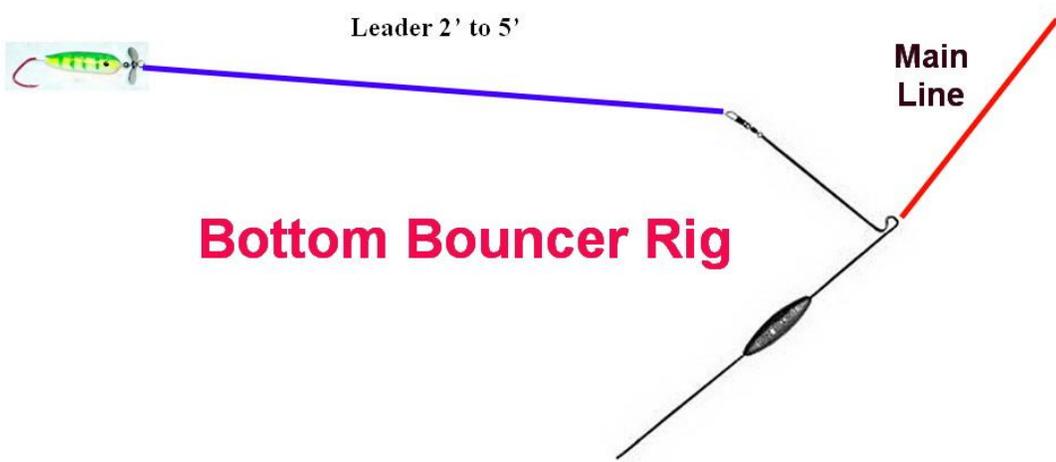
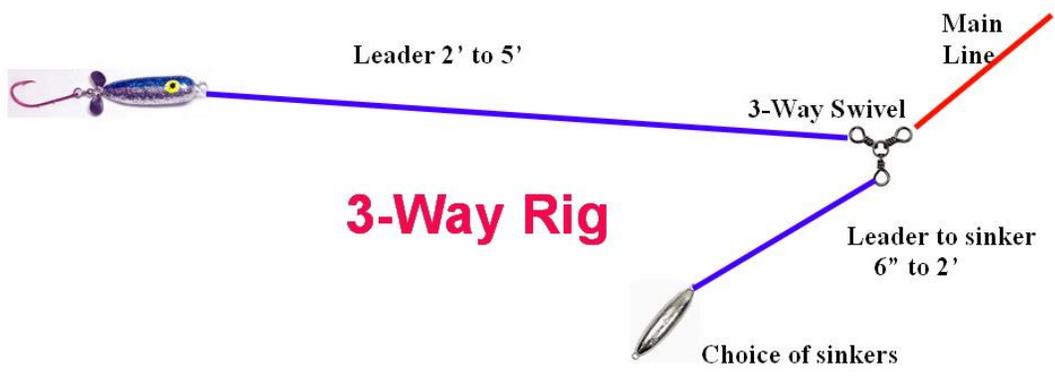
The following three diagrams illustrate some of the easier and more effective ways to rig a flig. After that we will discuss how to fish them.

RIG A. SLIDING SINKER





RIGS FOR TROLLING & BOTTOM BOUNCING



The previous picture shows several sinkers I use most for fishing fligs. Actually, you can use any kind of sinker that will provide the right amount of weight with minimal snagging. Two good options are plain old bell sinkers and specially made drop-shot weights...with the little line clips on the end. But they are more spendy. I make my own, using a jig mold I have for spinner bodies. I mold some with small swivels. Others I flatten and/or bend to create “walking” sinkers.

If you don't have all the terminal gear to make up any of the rigs suggested, do not despair. You can fish a flig just like fishing bait...with a split shot a foot or so above the flig on your main line. Most fish smack a baited flig pretty hard so you should be able to detect bites and set the hooks with a high degree of efficiency. Of course, the better quality (sharp) hooks you use and the better your hook setting techniques the better your hookup ratios will be.

FLIGGIN' TECHNIQUES

Fishing a floating jig is simple in principal. But, for maximum results you have to consider the size, shape and color of the flig...and then the bait, species, depth, speed, water clarity and light intensity...and several other factors. Then you have to rig and present your offerings accordingly.

CHUCK AND CHANCE IT:

There are some trips on some waters where you can do just fine by simply casting out a baited flig rig and letting it set...waiting for fish to find it and bite. This works while shore fishing or anchored afloat in a boat, pontoon, kayak or float tube. Just make sure you have enough weight to both cast your rig and to maintain a tight line once it is resting on the bottom. You want to be able to detect any “change in the force”.

Larger and more aggressive fish will often “gulp and go”...hooking themselves against the pull of the rod. Smaller and/or more tentative fish may just swim up and suck in your baited flig...without registering much on the rod tip. If you think you detect an “inquiry” raise the rod tip slowly. If you feel signs of life set the hook in the cagy critters.

Passive fligging can work well for several species. Trout often cruise just above the bottom and if they find a flig waving in their face...sweetened with worm, minnow or “bottle bait”...will generally open up and accept your offering. Ditto for walleyes. They are more prone to bite something above the bottom than if it was resting in mud or weeds.

Catfish are equal opportunity. They may be drawn in by the scent of your bait but are definitely not just “bottom feeders”. They will rise up several feet in the water column to chase live prey...or to slurp in a bait hanging below a bobber or floating up on a flig. And when cats respond they are usually not very dainty. One second your rod will be straight and unmolested. The next it could be bent over and heading for the water.

Wiper fans may also score by fligging a worm, a minnow or a wad of mussels. Again, the combination of above-bottom presentation and the “bling” of flash or color on the flig are helpful in getting them to climb aboard. Wipers are also known for dragging off poorly anchored tackle. Hold your rod or have a good rod holder and set the drag.