



## LIVE BAIT



**SHRIMP**

**SURFACE / SIGHT / BOTTOM RIGGING:** Freeline, Carolina, Texas, Popping Cork

- Extremely effective year round.
- Shrimp is a universal bait fish used all over the world.
- Always have live shrimp in your livewell or bait bucket. Very easy to keep alive.



**PINFISH**

**BOTTOM BAIT**

**RIGGING:** Freeline, Carolina

- Pinfish are born in in the spring (so too small for bait then) and by the winter they are usually one pound fish, so too big for bait.
- 4-5" is the ideal size.



**FINGER MULLET**

**SURFACE, SIGHT, PITCHING RIGGING:** Freeline

- Mullet migrations take place during the end of spring & early summer, and again at the end of summer & start of fall.
- They are everywhere. Always fish with the bait that is in the area you're fishing.



**PIG-FISH**

**BOTTOM BAIT**

**RIGGING:** Freeline, Carolina, Popping Cork

- 5" pigfish are the secret bait of the commercial trout fishermen.
- Pigfish make a croaking noise that attracts trout from a long way away - they love them!



**CROAKER**

**BOTTOM BAIT**

**RIGGING:** Freeline, Carolina

- Great bait fish - they cannot be bought, they must be caught.
- They are great on the beach, in the surf, and in the passes.
- Big snook love them, trout and redfish also eat them.



**PILCHARD**

**SURFACE / SIGHT**

**RIGGING:** Freeline, Carolina

- Every predator fish eats them.
- These baits are "high oxygen-demand" so your livewell requires a lot of bubbles or a lot of water circulation to keep them alive.
- They are good to use year-round and can be caught at any size.
- Larger ones can be caught with Sabiki rigs, the smaller ones with cast nets.
- When there are too many of them, the fish tend to stay away from them - this is particularly true in the summer and fall.
- The bigger fish will pick off weak white baits here and there, but throwing a pinfish, pigfish or croaker in the vicinity of these schools of white bait will draw the attention of the really big game fish.



**THREADFIN SHAD**



**SARDINE**

# SEASONAL SELECTION

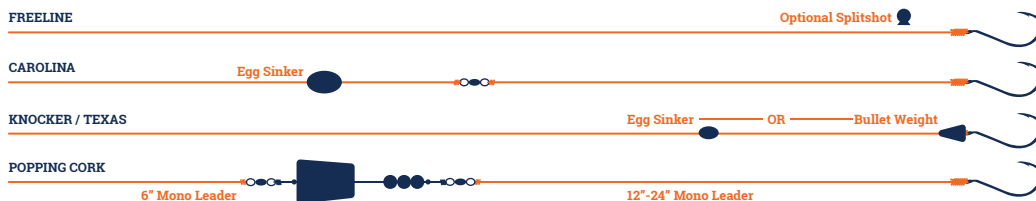
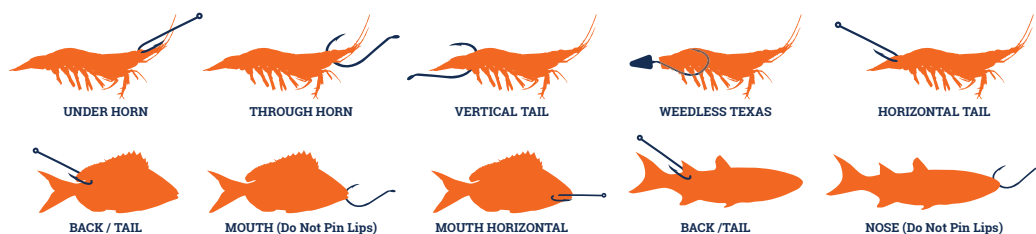
● OPTIMAL

	SHRIMP	PINFISH	WHITEBAIT	MULLET	CROAKER
WINTER	●	●	●	●	●
SPRING	●	●	●	●	●
SUMMER	●	●	●	●	●
FALL	●	●	●	●	●

## KEY POINTS

- Whitebait is the universal term for pilchards, sardines and threadfin herring.
- Game fish crave shrimp and crustaceans in cold temperatures.
- Shrimp do not swim very fast so are relatively easy targets
- You must actually "fish" the live bait - to make it look natural.
- Match your equipment to the bait you use, not to the fish you're targeting.
- "Match the Hatch" - fish with the bait that is in the area.
- Healthy, lively good swimming baits are critical.

## RIGGING METHODS



## FRESH VS. FROZEN

Catching live bait and putting it on ice if you wish to fish dead baits is preferable to buying frozen bait from a store. Frozen Shrimp are ok for catching baitfish like pinfish. There is nothing visually appealing about a frozen Shrimp, you may catch small reds, sheepshead or black drum on frozen shrimp but you will not catch trophy fish on frozen shrimp as these are visual predators and a frozen shrimp offers nothing visually. Fresh dead shrimp (unfrozen) can work by ripping of the tail, hooking them through the tail and working it as you would a live shrimp.

**PRO TIP**

Pouring rock salt or kosher salt onto your fresh baits while on ice (brining) will firm up the meat and keep them good for up to a week.

