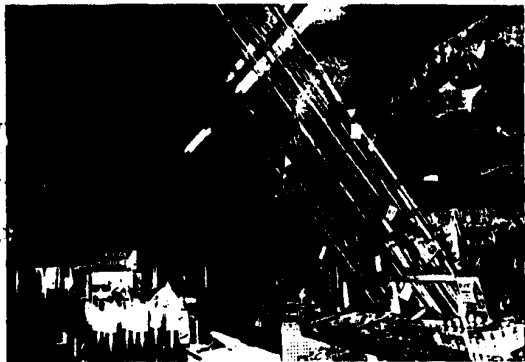




Low ceiling at Olivers Sporting Goods, Santa Maria, Calif., made it impossible to display rods upright, so they were positioned at an angle. The more dramatic appearance resulted in increased sales.

Squire of Winter Haven Takes a Look at Future for Tackle Sales and Finds Likely Index in the \$5,000 Bass Rigs

NEVER DID I think I would see the day when a single fishing lure would sell regularly at around \$5 each. Or even \$6 each, for that matter!

But it's happened, and one of the tackle manufacturers turning out such a bait is Jim Bagley, the effervescent squire of Winter Haven, Fla., where his plant is located.

Jim had a ready answer for my question: "What are your tips for selling lures that cost around \$5 each? As you know it is possible to make just one cast and lose that five bucks on a snag."

Said Jim: "Sort fishing, and bass fishing in particular, have taken such an astounding leap in the last 10 years that it boggles the mind to compare the difference of today's fishing against that of 10 to 15 years ago. For instance, can you imagine anybody in his right mind during the early 1960s paying \$5,000 to \$8,000 for a bass rig—just to fish out of? Not me!

"Also, 10 to 15 years ago you could buy lures such as the old Zorro Spook and the Old Creek Chub Darter for

less than a dollar. Today even your plastic lures normally list for \$2.50 to \$3. When fishermen will spend the fantastic amounts of money that they do for the latest professional-type fishing rods and reels such as Lew Childre's Speed Stick which you might pick up on a sale in the neighborhood of \$22 to \$25 or his new Speed Spool reel which will run \$65 or more (if you can find one), they are not going to cut corners on a lure, especially if it is one that will make them a winner.

"The Childre combination is certainly a winner, because sales have proved it and I feel that hand-crafted balsa wood lures such as ours will be around a long time despite the fact they sell for more than your average mass-produced plastic lure.

"As you know, these balsa lures have 33 different hands to go through

Anchor Hank Andrews with giant sea bass he caught off Florida's Marco Island in the Gulf of Mexico. Scale wasn't working, so Hank cannot specify the weight.

BEHIND THE TACKLE COUNTER

with

HANK ANDREWS

Fishing

Tackle

Editor

80-61 THE SPORTING
GOODS DEALER
NO. 12,100

FEB 1976

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us for.



Dick Kotis
President

New Prescott Sea-Gull



Comes in 7 weights

There's a Prescott Sea-Gull® lure for all your customers' needs—from trout and panfish to saltwater blues.

- Solid brass body
- Precision machined and balanced to prevent line twist
- Stainless steel rings
- Heavy plating resists tarnish
- Available with treble and single hook, plain or dressed with white bucktail
- Built-in action, even on short retrieve
- Arbogast quality throughout

The Prescott Sea-Gull comes in a nickel finish.

The Prescott Sea-Gull will be heavily promoted in selected outdoor consumer magazines in 1976. So order now and stock up. Call your Prescott rep or local distributor today or write for 1976 catalog, include your zip code.



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1802 Fairview Avenue
Hamilton, Ohio 45015

(For More Information Circle No. 103 on Page 45)

for

as well as a minimum of 13 coats of paint and a seven-day process time before we will allow them out of the factory. When people pay the price for one of our lures, we want them to be assured that they are buying the very best there is."

This writer can vouch for the fact that considerable time and effort go into the making of balsa baits. The wood, incidentally, is imported from Ecuador.

On my tour of the plant, Bagley showed me 12 machines that he has rigged up to turn out 1,000 balsa baits each for every eight hours. The machines can produce 12,000 unfinished baits daily.

The machines, which are covered from prying eyes, shape the bait from a block of wood.

After that, of course, comes the matter of drilling holes and various other operations. For instance, the baits are dipped in a special epoxy to preserve the delicate surface of the bait while it is being processed in the plant.

There is one woman who does nothing but dot little eyes on the lures. As Bagley pointed out, there is a difference in how the eyes are dotted because it is an individual operation.

Banner Year Predicted and Bagley Tells Why

Next I asked Bagley how 1976 shapes up for the lure business. He replied:

"In 1975 we had the best 12 months ever and 1976 looks like a banner year for all of us. Let me expound on this. As you know, a year ago last April and May any manufacturer, whether he was in the bait business or otherwise, was having to buy materials such as plastics, solvents and even wood anywhere he could find them and at any price. In fact, that's when sugar went to over \$3 for a five-pound bag.

"Needless to say, we were not the only ones who stockpiled raw materials anywhere we could find a place to put them. Then came the recession and a lot of people who had bought lures in great quantities found themselves unable to pay, so we lost some.

"From the sales collection stand-

point we have to consider the fact that the pipelines were all full and the consumer suddenly was not buying.

"This situation backed all the way up the tube to the manufacturer, who in turn had one of two choices—either get busy and find sales outlets or start going backward. We chose the former route and it has really paid off.

"Now the pipelines have begun to empty so I feel that 1976 will be the year when the consumer will be ready to buy. And the dealer has sold out of his 1974 merchandise and is ready to move some 1976 merchandise. The distributor is anxious to fulfill his dealers' wishes and the manufacturers will be hard pressed to keep up with it."

This writer then asked Bagley what merchandising ideas he would like to pass on to the individual retailer. To that he replied:

"The people who seem to be getting ahead are the ones who are disregarding the apocalyptic attitudes of some of our economy experts and certain of the news media. The ones who get ahead are the ones you will see still building, promoting and advertising.

"The ones who are standing still or, in many cases, backing up, are the ones who are waiting for doomsday to fall on them. They have taken a wait-and-see attitude and chances are this is where they will remain."

Calls for Fight to End Excise Tax on Tackle

Jim and I then discussed the American Fishing Tackle Manufacturers Association and I asked him how he felt the AFTMA could aid manufacturers and dealers.

"One way," he said, "would be to take immediate steps to remove the biggest cancer of the tackle industry, and that is the excise tax that is placed on even components of fishing lures. As I understand it, this was an emergency tax that was placed on certain items during the war years from 1941 through 1945. It was to be repealed at the end of hostilities.

"In the face of the other taxes the government is collecting it would seem that they would let our poor

Try Chargogoggagomanchaugochaubunagungamaug

The Massachusetts angler going fishing at a lake near the city of Webster may find it difficult to tell folks where he's going, but shouldn't encounter tangling of line with other anglers once he's there.

Chargogoggagomanchaugochaubunagungamaug is the lake's name. Local citizens explain, "It's an Indian name meaning, 'You fish on your side of the lake and I'll fish on my side.'"



Besse bait master Jim Bagley, right, Winter Haven, Fla., discusses his plant operation with Bob Fretlin, writer for Cincinnati Enquirer.

over-burdened people at least be able to relax without a tax.

"I do want to say this about the AFTMA. Its recent move to have our yearly show moved about to different parts of the country has got to be one of the best things they've ever done. And certainly our last show in August of 1975 was by far the best one we ever had. This, in my estimation, is a tribute to the AFTMA leaders."

While touring Bagley's plant, I noted that he had 11 Vietnamese employees. He said about them, "They are working out very well. We have only four who speak our language to any extent, but they are all going to school at night to learn English."

"As long as we even have one whom we can communicate with, they can pass on our instructions. As industrious as these people are, we have no trouble."

New Record Bass? Jim Looks to Lake in Cuba

Since Bagley is so close to bass fishing geographically, because he is in Florida and industrially because he makes numerous baits, I asked him where he thought one might go to get a world record bass. This is a subject that many of the consumer magazines are milking these days.

Bagley thinks the world record may come from Cuba, and he explained it this way: "Back in the 1950s, Wayne Dyer (who makes Rat Trap plastic skirts) had a camp on Treasure Lake near the Bay of Pigs in Cuba."

"I was among the many who went down before relations were cut off. I feel that this is the lake that the new world's record will come from; that is, if we are ever allowed to go back."

"California has received considerable publicity for large bass being caught from those fingerlings that they imported from Florida several

years back. No doubt about it, there is something in California waters that lends to the making of monster bass. As a native Floridian, I hate to admit that California waters could come up with a world record but facts is facts."

"Since we were on the subject of bass fishing, I suggested to Bagley that Florida waters no longer are as bountiful as they once were for bass. I said this because I had just been an observer at two bass tournaments—one sponsored by the Old Charter whiskey people on the St. Johns River and the other sponsored by American Bass Fisherman of Cocos Beach, Fla.

Drop in Florida Bass, and Could Get Worse

At neither of these tournaments were many bass taken. In fact, some pretty good anglers were skunked.

Bagley agreed that Florida fishing is declining.

"It's going to get worse unless the Florida fish and wildlife people are given the consideration and the sympathetic ear that they need. They know what has to be done, but apparently we don't have the same amount of outdoor enthusiasts in our law-making groups as we used to have."

"Therefore, it looks like the people are going to have to take a bigger hand in getting back what is rightfully theirs, and that is accessible fishing areas that are neither polluted to the point where a person would be fearful of eating the fish nor polluted to the point that fish can no longer propagate."

"I realize we do have one problem that is going to be very difficult for anyone to do anything about, and that is the hydrilla weed that is spreading so fast from one lake to another."

"But there are other things that a lot can be done to help. For instance, several years back somebody in the government got the idea that if they would dig one long continuous ditch from Lake Tohopekaliga bordering on the city of Kissimmee in central Florida to Lake Okeechobee in south central Florida that everything would be peaches and cream and that we would never have any flooding problems again. To tell the truth, our flooding problems were never that bad. Anybody who spends any time on these lakes can tell you that the flooding of grasses and the like are healthful in keeping the nutrient level and oxygen level in proper balance for fish to live and spawn. When they stopped the natural flow of water from Lake Tohopekaliga to Okeechobee, they put in motion the steps that were necessary to kill

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Your customers remember the "original" Water Cricket® lure and they'll want all they can get.

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- The Fin "original" Water Cricket is available with #8 and #10 hooks. Comes in a variety of the fast-selling colors. Packed singly or two in a bubble.

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(For More Information Circle No. 106 on Page 45)

in 7/8" this Lure could make the difference

Tournament proven, priced to sell, the Deep "N" series is a new brother to the "N" series, capable of diving deeper while maintaining the same swimming action with built-in fish-attracting rattle. Available in all the famous Bill Norman colors.

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(For More Information Circle No. 110 on Page 45)

New deep and deadly Bass Baggin' Bait

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MADE IN U.S.A.



six colors

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C-112 Silver Black • C-113 Silver Yellow
C-124 Silver Blue • C-128 Silver Pearl

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Your lunger-hunting customers will be asking you for Cheekies—and soon. This versatile new spinner, by Creek Chub is now being advertised in national fishing magazines to men who know good baits. And the suggested price is right—only \$1.85 list. Field-tested Cheekie is the all-round performer fishermen have been waiting for—an action-packed "deepie" that won't twist the line.

BAIT COMPANY
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(For More Information Circle No. 107 on Page 45)

Tackle Counter

these lakes.

"I understand there is now a movement afoot by the Corps of Engineers to rectify their mistakes by re-establishing the old meander of the Kissimmee River. When they take their first step in this direction, I will do my best to be the first to applaud them.

"The Florida fish people proved a point recently in bringing back a lake which was in the last process of dying. They opened the locks at the lower end of Lake Tohopekaliga and drained it to the point that a large area of the bottom was exposed to sunlight.

"Needless to say there was luxurious vegetation covering that exposed bottom, but that's what it took to do the trick. The plants gobbled up the nutrients while the sunshine did the rest. The locks were closed, the lake refilled, and right now it was the most productive lake for game fish of all types in that whole chain through the Kissimmee Valley.

"If they do the same to the rest of these lakes, either one at a time or all at once, you'll see a big part of our central Florida bass fishing come back, and in no uncertain terms."

Bagley Called 'Balsa King' by State Fishing Paper

You can see from all this that Jim Bagley has done considerable thinking about fish and fishing. He recently was written up in a Florida sportsman paper, "The Bucket-mouth," and in it he was named the "Balsa King" for his baits.

In the story, it was pointed out that Bagley served as a pilot with the U. S. 15th Air Force in Italy and was an electrical contractor after getting out of service until 1954 when he became a tackle manufacturer.

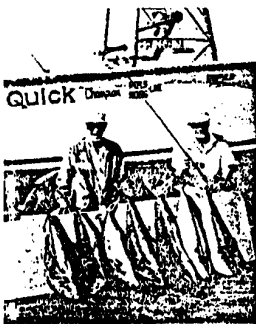
Bagley has various versions of his balsa wood baits. He has named them Balsa B, Divin' B, Shal'r B, Brok'n B, Scrub B. And he has other versions due.

He also makes spinner baits, plastic worms and other types of fish-getters. His plant employs 147 people, and he is stepping up his advertising program in an effort to expand sales.

I can't close this bit about Bagley without saying his welcome has been royally cordial. He possesses the unique quality of making people feel welcome.

Undoubtedly, you have heard that man-made reefs in lakes and oceans help to improve fishing. I've read that story often and now I can vouch for it.

Recently I had a chance to fish in



Seven for Rapala

The yellowtail were biting when Jed Welsh, left, sales manager, Quick Corp., and Phil Graystock, president, fished the company boat off North Coronado Island, San Diego, Calif. They did the job trolling No. 13 and No. 18 Rapala lures.

the Gulf of Mexico off Marco Island, and we fished over man-made reefs put out by the developers of Marco Island.

One reef was created of old auto tires compressed together over a 10-acre area. Another reef was made up of an old cement mixer, 4300 tons of broken concrete and other materials.

Man-Made Reefs Okay! Proof's in Hanks Catch

I had the opportunity to fish over the reef made of tires. And this reef has been working out well, too, according to Dr. Jay Harmie, chief of the Marco Marine Laboratory.

He claims there are now 90 varieties of fish using the reefs where before there were only sand sharks and a few catfish.

I believe the man. While I fished the reef with Larn O'Harra, a former guide who now works for the marine lab, I landed a giant sea bass (also known as jewfish). More properly, O'Harra and I landed it because it took the two of us to pull the huge fish over the transom of the boat.

We had used a two-pound sheepshead as bait to get this lunker. The fish took the bait and started to pull out line slowly when O'Harra told me to grab the rod. I did and it was hard work for 20 minutes to crank in the fish.

We attempted to weigh it back at the lab, but the scales were not working properly. Suffice it to say the fish

1800 J

Tackle Counter

weighed somewhere between 150 and 300 pounds.

Actually, the weight didn't mean that much to me. It did prove, though, that man-made reefs attract fish.

As most of you, know, some states are creating reefs in fresh water lakes to improve fishing. Also, some states have fishery workers cutting down trees along shorelines so that they fall into the lake and thus create fish shelters. Many smart fishermen take crappies from these fallen trees in spring.

PCB Pollution Growing Threat to Our Fisheries

Not all the news on the fishing front is good these days. Almost daily you can see references to PCB and what problems they create.

PCB is the term applied to polychlorinated biphenyls which are used as an insulating fluid in transformers and capacitors.

PCB is not biodegradable and once

it reaches a stream or lake it's around forever. And therein is the problem. Many fish contain high levels of PCB and it is national in scope. Fish containing PCB can be harmful if eaten, environmentalists say.

Nathaniel P. Reed, assistant secretary of the Interior's Fish & Wildlife Service, says: "The problem is national. I am very troubled by the exceedingly high levels found in fish in all our drainage systems. I do not mean just the Hudson and the entire Great Lakes system, but the Merrimac and Connecticut Rivers of the Atlantic Coast, the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers of the Midwest, the Columbia River in the Northwest, the Sacramento in the West, the Rio Grande and other Gulf Coast streams. Even the Yukon in Alaska."

Japan already has banned PCB and by the time you read this the U. S. likely will have taken some action toward restricting its use. Some companies are developing substitutes for PCB.

THE SPORTING GOODS DEALER/FEBRUARY, 1976