

a moderately sized bass of 20 pounds can open up standard-strength hooks in short order, especially if you are using a high-strength super line and have a lot of drag applied.

Built in Rhode Island, field-tested and proven in local waters, the Tattoo Dannies ride high in the water with a wide wobble and are particularly effective over and around structure – which we have more than our share of. Fishing the rock piles of Westerly last fall, I landed several bass of 20 to 30 pounds and a bunch of big bluefish on these lures, and they held up splendidly.

With eels becoming scarce and more expensive all the time, I knew I needed an artificial substitute for this highly desirable bait, and I can now say with total

confidence that I've found one. That lure is the 9-inch, rigged Slug-Go.

Not long ago, I recommended to my friend Rob Bartolini that he try one of my favorite haunts in Narragansett at low tide with a rigged Slug-Go. The place I recommended is also one of my favorite autumn locations. It is not an easy spot to fish, requiring a long walk over wet rocks, and it's the kind of place where you can lose a lot of plugs. But Rob is a young guy who does not mind working for his fish, and even though it was only his first visit, he managed to take a bass a little over 30 pounds while his partner, Tony Orlando, landed one that weighed 26 pounds. They also had a lot of bluefish bite-offs (the only real disadvantage of this soft plastic bait)

and some smaller bass. According to Rob, the big fish that took his Slug-Go "inhaled it."


This spot has been one of my premier eeling locations over the last 10 years, but I have found that the fish here have shown no reluctance to chase a Slug-Go in place of the eel. I have also found this to be the case virtually everywhere I've tried them. The rigged Slug-Go, whether rigged with one hook or two, has taken Rhode Island waters by storm over the last several seasons as more and more anglers discover this alternative to the live eel.

The beauty of Slug-Gos is that unlike large, bulky lures, many of them can be carried and stored with ease, they require no maintenance and help you avoid frequent trips to the tackle shop. You get most of the upside of live eel fishing without the downsides of dealing with bait.

A Slug-Go 3-Pack will only set you back about \$5, so you can get just as adventurous with them as you could an eel. Rhode Island surfcasters know that the fish are often not on the edge of a rock pile or adjacent to one but are often in the rocks. Throwing custom lures into the rocks can quickly make our hobby

approach golf with respect to cost. I have always felt it's good to have something on the end of my line that I am O.K. with losing on occasion.

Regardless of the hype bestowed on a product by advertisers, experienced fishermen have a highly tuned B.S. Meter. It does not matter if their dads gave them lures along with their first rod-and-reel combos, or they picked a few up the weekend after they bought those telescoping fishing rods. Today's better fishermen are more discerning than ever. The questions they ask about their tackle before they make purchases are the ones we should all be asking.

The Kastmaster is the king of day-fishing along the Rhody shore – particularly as we approach November. The Tattoo Danny will give you a classic Rhode Island surf-casting experience as you ply the rocky bars of Matunuck in October or drift one along an outgoing tide at any of the breachways. And the Slug-Go represents the best of the new generation of soft plastics and is a true innovation for surf-fishermen. Together, these three go-to plugs should be the basis of your arsenal, even if you insist on lugging a virtual tackle shop in your backpack. 

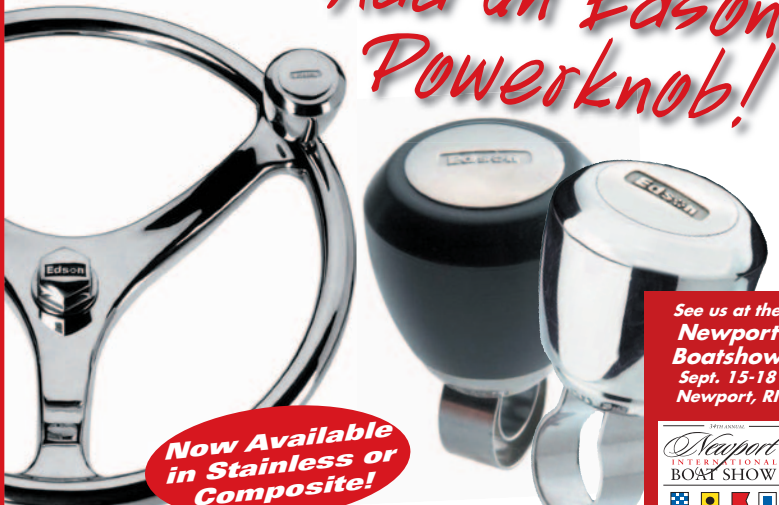


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