



# Big on Wood

By Jim White

**R** pumped out a long cast into the predawn darkness and the touchdown sounded like a pelican making a score.

“Strike?” my partner asked. “You would think so, huh?” I laughed, as I engaged the reel. “That’s how a 3-ounce hunk of wood comes down. Whatever eats this monster topwater will make a heck of a bigger sound, trust me!”

I started a slow and steady retrieve moving the lure slowly across the surface, making it lunge with a side-to-side motion. Halfway back to the boat, I could just make out the plug and the bubbly turbulence in its wake. As I guided it over the top of a huge sunken boulder, a fish took it in a toilet flush swirl. My rod bucked as the big striper powered down. I reared back to dig the hooks in. After five minutes of give-and-take, the 40-pound-plus bass finally popped to the top. We kept our composure and got her alongside.

“Like they say, big lure, big fish!” my buddy crowed, and we got her under control to extract the custom-made swimmer.

The plug that fooled the trophy bass is one of a class of lures that came into favor in the early 1940s, considered the Golden Age of surf casting for both striped bass and bluefish. Once word got out, the big wooden swimmers caught on like wildfire.

## Freshwater Roots

James Heddon, founder of Heddon Lures, is credited for introducing big wooden swimmers to largemouth bass, muskie and pike anglers in the Midwest and Southeastern states. Those anglers who fished the salt as well suspected that the lures just might work on saltwater species. And they did, particularly for tarpon, snook, redfish