

Twisted Lines, Anyone?

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At times fishermen will be bothered by twisted lines when casting or trolling. Twisted lines while casting aren't nearly as troublesome as those that occur while trolling. If a fisherman isn't aware (by feel or observation) that the twist is occurring, the line can become so twisted that it may be difficult to straighten out, and in some cases may have to be discarded.

The first consideration is to get some idea why the twist occurs. After that, some thought can be given to what can be done about it.

WHY TWISTS OCCUR

Twists occur because the lure has become fouled in some manner. The lure is spinning or twisting due to the hooks becoming fouled with the line, or the lure has become fouled with some type of debris (muck, leaves, weeds, old lines, small "propeller fish") in such a way as to cause the lure to spin.

Fishermen must learn to FEEL the differences between the correct action or wiggle of the lure and a "spinning" or "twisting" lure (the rod tip and the feel of the lure will pulsate if the lure is spinning).

A bad twist when casting doesn't occur very often, and when it does, it is not difficult to straighten out. Most of the twist is caused by the hooks of the lure becoming entangled with the line in the air or as it sinks in the water. This occurs when a snap cast, such as is made with a spinning reel, imparts a tumbling action in the lure which fouls the hooks with the line. This is especially true with a lure carrying multiple hooks.

Most casts with a spinning-type reel will have a certain amount of loose line after the cast, and this allows a sinking-type lure (such as a spoonplug or sinking crankbait) to tumble as it sinks, allowing the hooks to grab the line. The cast is wasted, and some twist in the line occurs. A smooth cast, such as with a level winding reel, will keep the tumbling of the lure down to a minimum on the cast. A minimum of loose line can be maintained by light thumb pressure on the spool, and a slight tension on the lure as it

sinks will eliminate almost all lost casts or line twists.

Another reason for twists of line during casting may be the speed of the retrieve. It may be too fast for the type and size of the lure being used.

Some rods are so long and limber, and lines so soft and stretchy, that there is no "feel" as to whether the lure is running correctly. The fisherman is never aware when debris has fouled the lure, which may spin and twist the line. Stiffer rods and less stretchy lines will give a better feel and control of the lure on the cast and retrieve.

THE IMPORTANCE OF FEEL

When the water has mucky bottom or is infested with grass or weeds, the feel of the lure is most important. If debris of some sort is the cause of the lure becoming "dead" as it loses action, a hard, quick pull or jerk of the rod will often clear the lure of debris. However, do not allow loose or slack line to occur after the fast forward movement of the rod (to do so will allow the lure to sink and

tumble). When trolling, the fisherman should keep tension on the line until the rod drops back and the forward motion of the boat keeps the line taut again.

Two lines twisted together can be an annoying problem. It's best to guard against this happening. Most lines get twisted or wrapped together when a turn in direction of the boat is made while trolling. Lines joining together on a turn can be caused by the "outside" line cutting across the "inside" line on the turn. Both rod tips should be kept low (near the water) at all turns. The "outside" line can be brought against the side of the boat, or against a mounted stick, rod or a navigation light pole.

A major cause of two lines becoming twisted together is when the "inside" fisherman is letting out his line on a turn while the outside line is already out and trailing behind the boat.

Two lines can be tangled when one lure becomes fouled and is no longer running in a straight line, but is running to one side—grabbing the line of the other fisherman, whose rod is being held practically straight up.

If the feel is lost on either rod, a vigorous "pull" to clear the lure will be felt by the other fisherman and immediate action is called for. At such times the slowing or stopping of the boat is important. It sometimes is helpful to have one lure reeled all the way to the boat, while the other lure is held steady. In most cases, this will eliminate further twisting on the retrieve.

Much of the time while trolling, a line becomes twisted because the fisherman did not see that the lure was already fouled before he let the line out. The lure should be checked on a short line beside the boat to be sure it is running correctly before it is let back on the longer line.

In some cases the line or lines can become so badly twisted they appear knot-like, or look kinked or balled-up. To straighten out a single line, remove the lure and all hardware, then peel off the line into the water with a rather fast forward movement of the boat, being sure the line is not kinked or knotted due to an extremely heavy twist. Pull these doubled-up sections loose before letting line behind the boat. Let the total line twist run behind the boat for a while. Forward short jerks of the rod will hasten untwisting of the line and will let the fisherman feel when the line has become straightened and untwisted. 

