

CHATTERBAITS

By Chase Klinesteker, CSI



½ ounce chatterbait with jig, skirt, plastic, and blade

Chatterbaits are not “magic lures”. They are **simply tools that help us control depth and speed**, as all other lures are. Specifically, chatterbaits are **crankbaits that work well at a very slow speed** when casting. They can be worked on the bottom at speeds **slower than most spinnerbaits or bladebaits** will work. The **slow, steady retrieve sometimes is more effective than a jump retrieve** (e.g. walleye) but they **can be used with a jump retrieve also**. The action is a slow, **wide wobble from side to side**. The chatterblade **creates a great deal of underwater noise**, likely greater than a bladebait, and that can be **important in darkwater lakes**. The design of this lure with the single hook riding up makes it **semi-weedless** so it can be used **in sparse weeds or moss**. The **single hook also insures good penetration on the hookset**. One unique feature is that it **works well on mucky soft bottoms because the blade pulls the lure up and keeps it on top of the muck** as it is retrieved. It **will pull off the bottom if the speed is too fast**, so to keep it down, **heavier weights and larger jigs are best**, usually **½ to 1 ounce**. In less than 20 feet, the chatterbait is fairly easy to present. **In depths over 20 feet**, one must **be aware of it coming off the bottom** and then **pause** on the retrieve so it will **settle back down**. It also **could be presented as a vertical jig** to create lots of noise and trigger fish strikes. **Braided line is best** for presenting this lure, as the **feel tells you when the blade is working properly** and helps you determine the speed.

Chatterbaits are **simple in design**. They consist of a chatterbait **blade** which is **attached to the eye of the jig** in the lower single hole. The best type of jig to use is **with the eye in front** so it will not catch weeds. A **snap** is placed **through the 2 middle holes in the blade** in front, and the line or snap is attached to that. Many types of **bulky plastics can be used on the jig** (crayfish, swimbait, ribbed worms, etc.) **as well as skirts**. I like to use different colors for some contrast. **Don't make the skirt or plastics too long behind the jig hook** or you will get short strikes and **miss fish**. It is a **good sized lure, casts far, and will attract good sized fish**. Commercial chatterbaits can run up to \$10. each in the stores. **To make your own, jigs with open eyes and chatterblades can be bought from the Internet** and put together (e.g. Netcraft). Attach the blade, then crimp the jig eye closed, put on the snap, and add the plastics.

As Buck Perry has emphasized many times over the years, **lures are the tools we use to control the depth and speed of our presentation**. We select, buy and use them mainly to help us check all depths and all speeds on structure. **Spoonplugging is that simple!**



2 Hess Lake bass, 19 and 21 inches, caught on chatterbaits 7/11/14