



After the Scouts learn to identify most local fish, organize an identification contest.

FISHERMAN'S KNOTS. Usually, the weakest link between fish and fishermen is the knot used to tie leader to hook, leader to line, or to connect two pieces of leader. Some knots won't slip, but they break faster than others. The blood knot for tying two pieces of monofilament together; the clinch knot for tying monofilament or nylon leader to a hook or snap-swivel; the perfection loop; and the line-to-leader knot are easy to tie and have been developed for present-day synthetic lines. (See the *Fishing* merit badge pamphlet for how to tie these knots.) In learning to tie them, while practicing and during games, use the real thing—monofilament line or leader, not string or rope.

LIVE AND ARTIFICIAL BAITS. Live bait can be a couple kinds of worms, grasshoppers, crickets, grubs, hellgrammites, crayfish, minnows, clams, crabs, or other animals. Artificial baits run from dry or wet flies, streamers, bucktails, and nymphs aimed more at attracting fishermen than fish. Each has its use and place. In this project, make up an exhibit of different kinds of live and artificial baits with notes on how to use them and the fish they are intended for. Get the help of a fishing tackle dealer or accomplished fisherman.

FISHING REGULATIONS. While the trend is toward fewer regulations—open seasons, size limits, creel limits, time of day—there are still regulations everyone must know. Write to your state conservation department or ask a fishing tackle dealer, license issuing agent, or game protector for a folder about regulations. Learn the regulations and then explain them to the troop.

HOW FISH LIVE. Get help from a fishing expert or conservation agent, or refer to the *Fishing* merit badge pamphlet. Make a chart of a local lake, river, stream, or bay showing where fish are likely to be found in spring or summer; morning, afternoon, or evening; and on hot or cool days. Different fish have different preferences, and unless you fish in the right place at the right time, you'll quickly find out why 10 percent of the fishermen catch 90 percent of the fish.

CARE OF TACKLE. Refer to the *Fishing* merit badge pamphlet and get help from your tackle dealer in order to demonstrate oiling and cleaning a reel, sharpening hooks, rejuvenating feather lures with steam, repairing or replacing windings on a rod, varnishing a rod, tightening ferrules, replacing guides, checking line for weak spots, and replacing hooks on lures.

SURVIVAL SKILLS IN FISHING. Use milkweed fibers, the inner bark of elm, hickory, and basswood, or other natural fibers (or even an unraveled handkerchief, neckerchief, or shirttail) to twist 10 feet or more of line. Make a gorge hook, safety-pin hook, or thorn hook and tie it to the line.

TROOP DEMONSTRATIONS. For each demonstration, try to have enough tackle on hand for each Scout to have a chance to practice. You will also need enough tackle for contests and games.

During each demonstration, have the expert explain the tackle and how it works, show how to rig it up, and discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the type of casting being shown. Have him emphasize the importance of safety when casting overhand from a boat or pier.

GAMES AND CONTESTS. This fishing program feature lends itself to numerous games and contests. Here are some ideas:

1. Cast at bike tire, trash can top, hoop, or other target. Bull's-eye counts ten. Subtract one point for each foot the lure lands away from the target. Each patrol member casts once. The patrol with the highest score wins.
2. Mount specimens of live and artificial baits, with each one numbered. The purpose is to identify the baits and name the fish for which they are intended.
3. Mount pictures of fish found locally. The purpose of the game is to identify each fish, tell what bait to use, and where you expect to find the fish.
4. Provide each patrol with spool of thread. The first patrol to make 10 feet of four-strand twisted line wins the game.
5. Provide each patrol with four hooks, four pieces of monofilament line, and four pieces of bait-casting line. The first patrol to connect four sets of line to leader to hook with correct knots wins the game.