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Position Statement on the Use of the “Alabama Rig” in Vermont Waters

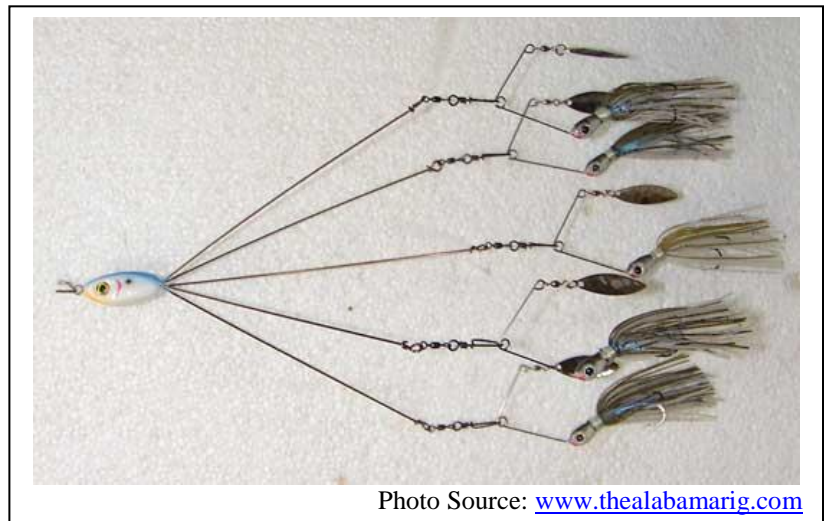
Background

The “Alabama Rig” is a fairly new lure in the bass fishing world that has recently garnered national interest and attention following a well-publicized \$100,000 win by professional bass angler Paul Elias during a Forrest L. Wood Tour Open event on Lake Guntersville, AL in October 2011.

Technically, the Alabama Rig is not a lure in and of itself, but rather it is an apparatus that allows an angler to attach and fish up to five lures on a single line, with the possibility of catching more than one fish at a time. The Alabama Rig is basically a castable “umbrella” rig.

The Rig consists of a hard body with a line-tie, followed by five wire strands in a fanned out design each with a snap swivel at the end. Anglers can attach a variety of lures to each swivel for a look that is meant to mimic a school of baitfish.

Following Paul Elias’s tournament win while using this technique, bass fishing websites, forums, and online and print magazines abounded with stories regarding the fish-catching abilities of the Alabama Rig. The device has quickly become the most sought-after piece of tackle in the bass fishing community.



As with state agencies in many other states, the Department has been receiving many calls and emails asking about the legal status of using an Alabama Rig in state waters. Many agencies have responded with official positions on the legality of use within their jurisdictions.

This position statement describes regulations that pertain to the use of the Alabama Rig in Vermont waters.



Regulations

All regulations pertinent to the use of the Alabama Rig in Vermont waters can be found in 10 V.S.A. App. §122.

Section 3.2 of paragraph **3.0, Angling, legal methods of taking fish**, provides for an angler fishing in open water to use up to two lines, each having no more than two lures attached:

3.2 Whether still fishing, casting, or trolling in Vermont waters, a person may take fish only by using not more than two lines over which he or she has immediate control and to each of which lines is attached not more than two baited hooks, or more than three artificial flies, or more than two lures with or without bait, except that at Seymour Lake and Little Averill Lake a person may take fish only by using not more than one line.

Section 3.1 Definitions, of paragraph **3.0, Angling, legal methods of taking fish**, defines a lure as:

3.1.2 Lure - A man-made device designed to catch only 1 fish at a time, to include a spoon, plug, spinner, bait harness, tandem hook streamer or lead head jig.

The Alabama Rig does not constitute a "lure" in and of itself, since it is hookless. As such, it can be construed as nothing more than terminal tackle, such as a wire leader, except with 5 strands of wire instead of one. The Alabama Rig does not become a lure intended to catch fish until hooks are added. As such, the Alabama Rig is legal to use in Vermont **provided no more than two lures with hooks intended to catch fish are attached to it.**

Additionally, if an angler were to attach hookless attractors to the remaining 3 wire strands, such as rotating blades (i.e. spinnerbait blades), or hookless soft plastic baits, it would also be legal to fish in this manner.

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