

# Go ultralight to catch bream



Photo by John N. Felsher

Amy Gable displays a bluegill she caught on a SteelShad blade bait.

## Sometimes less is more in conquering feisty panfish

BY JOHN N. FELSHER

Pound for pound, or more appropriately, ounce for ounce, bluegills, shellcrackers, goggle-eyes and other panfish that fall under the collective heading of “bream” will out-fight about anything in fresh water. Couple that pugnacious attitude with ultralight tackle and anglers can enjoy incredible fun.

Most bream anglers dangle a worm or cricket under a float and drop it next to a fallen tree or other cover. They catch a lot of bream, but not everyone wants to sit around watching a bobber. Anglers who prefer a more active role might pick up an ultralight spinning or spin-casting outfit loaded with 4- to 6-pound-test line and tip it with diminutive lures to tempt these feisty little scrappers.

Assorted panfish frequently hit tiny spinners, crankbaits, jerkbaits and even topwater lures. Anglers who throw ultralight tackle with pint-sized lures typically target trophy fish, at least for the species. They probably won't catch as many fish, but would more likely catch bigger

ones than people using natural baits.

A beetle spinner probably tops any list of popular panfish lures other than fly tackle. A beetle spinner generally consists of a single-bladed harness spinner attached to a jighead. On the jig, anglers can put any number of soft-plastic creations. Hot colors include black with a chartreuse stripe or white with a red dot.

Beetle spinners work exceptionally well in grassy delta marshes and around the woody structure of the Mobile-Tensas Delta. Toss a spinner near a grass edge, lily pad, fallen tree, shoreline or other cover. Let it sink a little to reach the preferred depth. It sinks about one foot per second. After it hits bottom or the desired depth, slowly retrieve it just over the bottom or tipping the tops of submerged grass. In really deep water, anglers can add a split-shot or two to the line above the lure to make it sink faster.

Anglers can also “buzz” beetles over the surface or “wake” them just beneath the surface in a steady

See **BREAM**, Page 14

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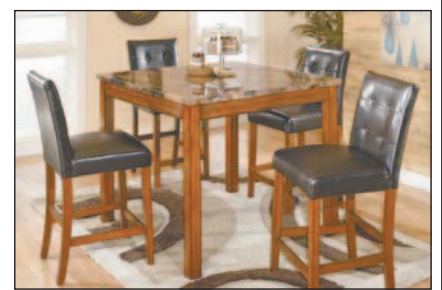
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