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## Mahindra

Tractors

## BREAM: Panfish offer excellent sport for anglers using ultralight tackle

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retrieve. This works well in areas with loose-floating vegetation mats or patchy grass. It also works when aquatic grass approaches the surface, but doesn't quite break through it.

Anglers can also try the stop-and-sink method around drop-offs and vertical structure. Toss to a likely spot and begin a slow retrieve. Occasionally, pause to let the bait sink. As the bait sinks, the spinner blade rotates, creating flash. After it sinks a foot or two begin reeling again. Keep repeating this process. Retrieval speed determines the depth the lure will run.

When bream hang deeper, anglers might remove the harness from a beetle spinner. Using just the jighead and soft body, work it across the bottom almost like fishing a plastic worm. Let it sink to the bottom and drag it along the mud. Pay close attention because a bream won't hit like a bass. It might only slurp the morsel. The angler might not feel anything except some weight on the end. Anglers can use these types of baits in places with clear, sandy bottoms like Big Creek Lake, but not as easily around weeds or entangling bottom structure.

Other hot artificial panfish temptations look like downsized versions of bass jerkbaits or crankbaits, but simulate smaller prey. Such "creature" baits might resemble minnows, crawfish, grasshoppers, bumblebees, horseflies, caterpillars or other



Photo by John N. Felsher

Steve Niemoeller unhooks a bluegill he caught on a small crankbait while fishing a swampy river backwater.

morsels. Work these baits with a steady retrieve or the more erratic stop-and-pop method. When the lip hits an object, pause to let the lure rise over it.

A Rebel CrickHopper Popper looks like a grasshopper, but instead of a diving lip, it comes with a concave nose that disrupts the surface when popped. Toss it over a bream bed or near structure and let it sit a few minutes. Then, pop it to make a commotion. Pause it several seconds and repeat.

Anglers can also try tiny plastic worms rigged just like bass lures only smaller. Use light bullet weights or split-shots and skinny worms no more than four inches long. Insert a long-shanked bream hook into the plastic body and drag it on the bottom like fishing a regular Texas-rigged bass worm.

On ultralight tackle, these micro-sized powerhouses provide excellent sport for any angler who likes a little more active role in tempting fish.