

FISH STICKERS: Archers enjoy the thrill of their pursuit

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pounds of pull. In addition, bow fishermen don't need sights that can snag in line playing out from a reel. Archers need to learn to shoot fast, instinctively and quickly through lots of practice.

In the old days, bow enthusiasts would tape spinning reel spools or other objects to their recurve bows to create a reel and load it with heavy twine. Now, archers can choose from a wide variety of equipment designed specifically for fishing with different types of bows. Some reels look like old pushbutton spin-cast reels. Others resemble plastic bottles that hold a lot of line with crank handles to retrieve it. Some reels use friction trigger systems to retrieve line. For line, use high visibility heavy-duty braid instead of monofilament to withstand the force of the arrow carrying it.

For arrows, leave the broadheads at home. Pick specially designed fish arrows with heavy, durable sinking shafts. Barbs keep fish from sliding off the arrow so use one with either a detachable head or retractable barbs



Polly Dean and Jack Horan look for something to shoot at while bow fishing.

to facilitate removing the arrow from the fish. Fish arrows don't come with feather fletchings, but rubber or flexible plastic ones. Many bow fishermen use brightly colored arrows or add some colored tape to the shafts so they can see where they hit or find any arrows that go astray.

Many archers prefer to hunt fish at night. Serious bow fishing enthusiasts rig specially configured craft with raised shooting decks surrounded by

battery- or generator-powered lights. However, archers can hunt out of just about any stable shallow-draft craft. Many people use airboats to get into thin waters, but others hunt out of small flatboats gliding quietly along on electric power. For hunting at night, anglers could use lanterns, headlights or flashlights or hunt as a team with one person shining a light while the other shoots.

Not everyone likes to hunt at night. During daylight hours, many archers get out of their boats to walk through shallow flats or along weedy shorelines. People can walk up the middle of a hard-bottomed creek looking for carp and other rough fish to arrow. A good pair of polarized sunglasses makes it easier to spot fish in daylight. At night, wade fishermen might use battery-powered headlights to keep their hands free.

Archers don't need to wait for deer season to begin in order to enjoy hunting with a bow. Even after the season ends in the winter, they can keep hunting fish all year long.



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