

## CARVING FISHING LURES



These crayfish lures are towed backwards the way a real crayfish swims. The eyes are turned brass pegs and the claws are purchased spinner blades.

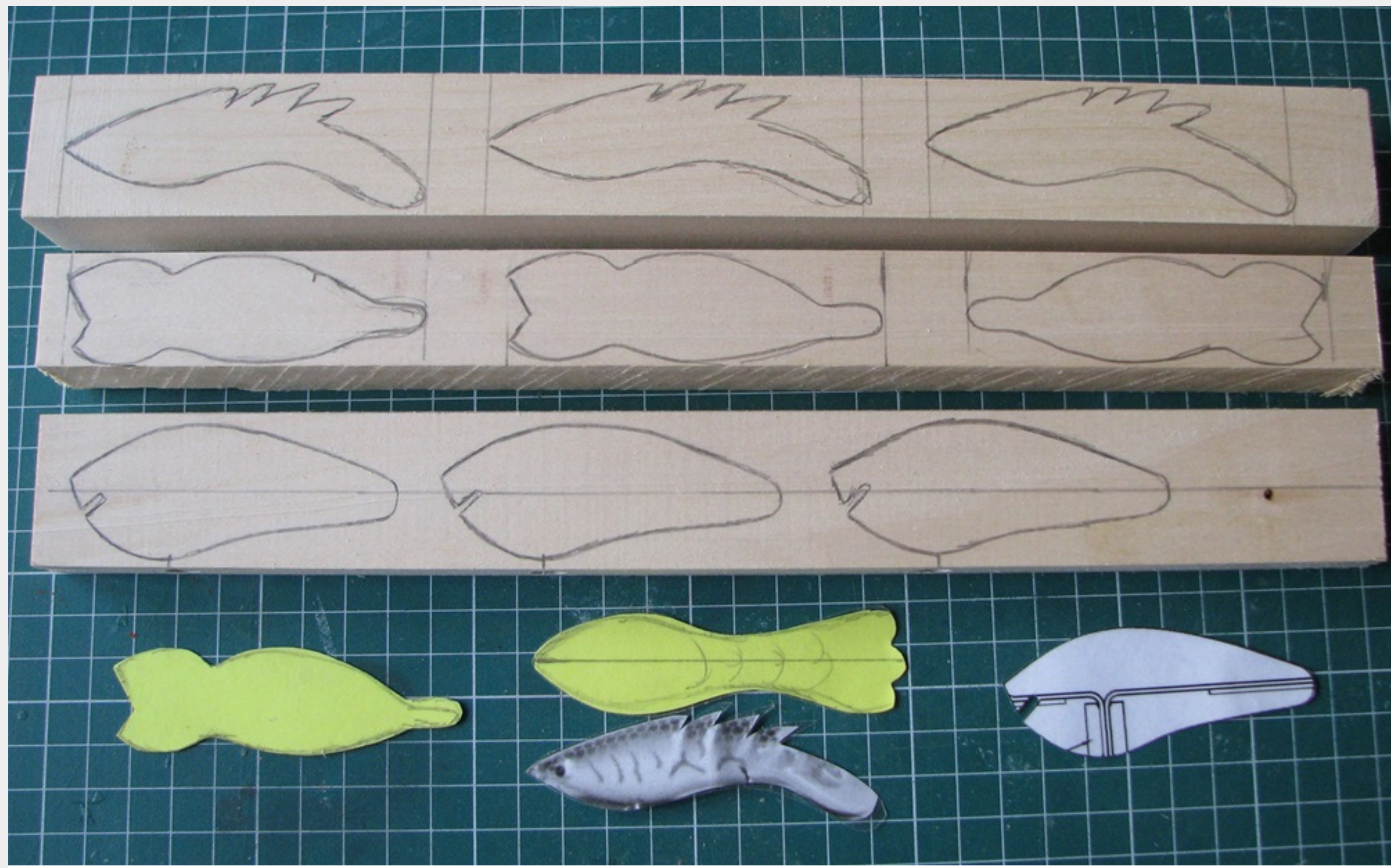


These hula-popper-style lures are hand painted and fitted with hooks and skirt.



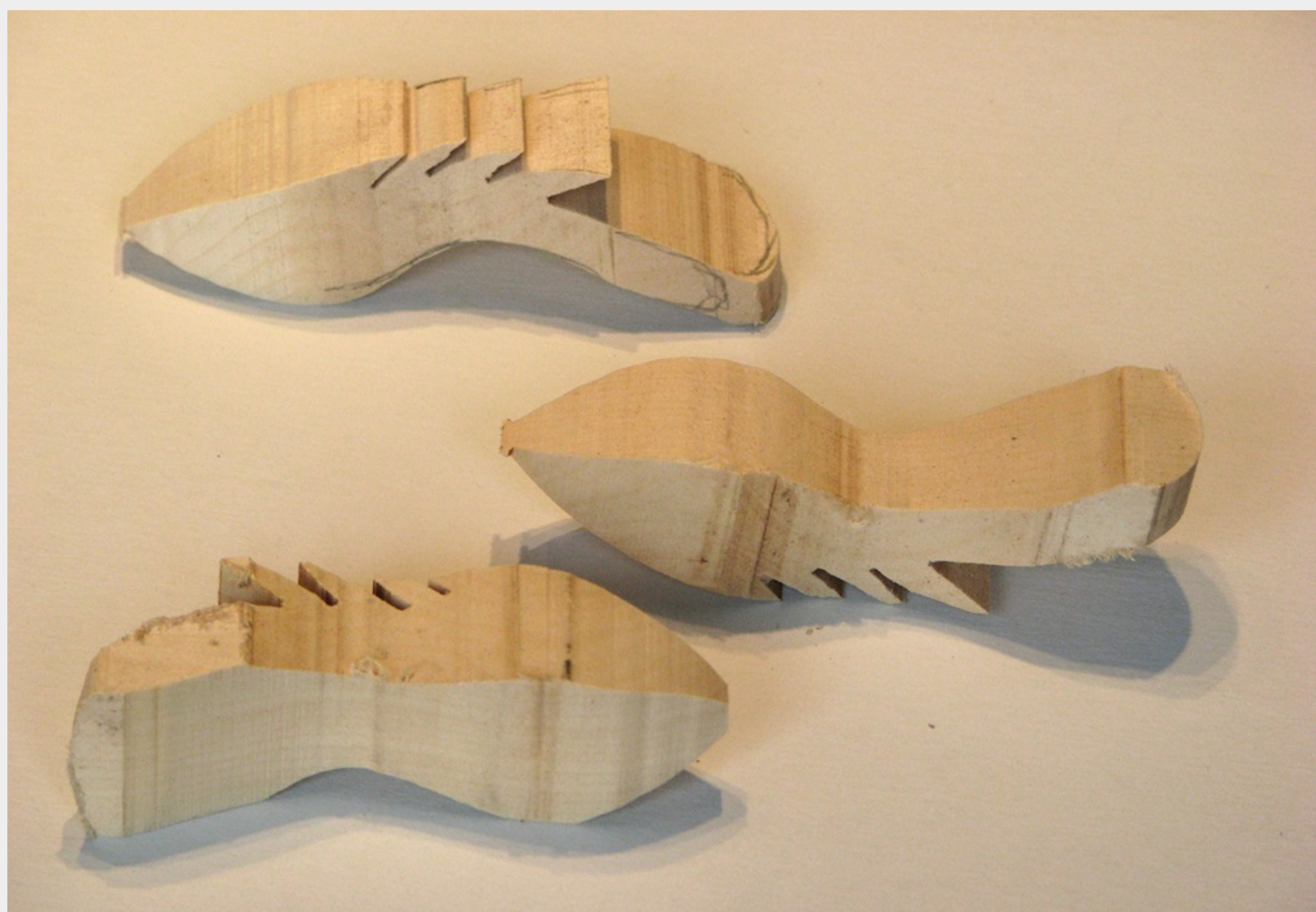
These are hand-carved jitterbug-style lures. The author later found it much faster and easier to turn the blanks on the wood lathe. After painting, they're fitted with a jitterbug blade and hooks.

With a source of numerous basswood offcuts, I was always on the lookout for something interesting and useful to carve out of them. Last summer, I decided to have a go at carving some fishing lures. These basswood blanks are about 1" square x 12" long, so I can usually get three or more lures out of one. Depending on the style of lure I'm carving, I may draw a rough outline onto the blank and use my bandsaw to rough out the shape, which saves a lot of carving time. For others, I round over the blanks on my belt sander, again to save some time.



The top basswood blank (1" thick x 1-1/4" wide) shows crayfish lure designs that will be cut out on the bandsaw. The middle basswood blank shows hula popper lure designs, which will be hand carved. The bottom basswood blank shows crankbait lure designs. Rip the blank to 5/8" thick x 1" wide, drill a 5/16" hole in the bottom and saw cut a 1/16" kerf about halfway through from the bottom for rigging a weight and hook attachment loops.

Using lure photos I found on the Internet as well as commercial lures in my tackle box for inspiration, I carve the shape using a Flexcut® pelican knife. The first lures I made, I went to considerable lengths to hand-sand the surface perfectly smooth, but have since found people prefer the look of a "whittled" surface. The whittled surface is gently sanded to remove any fluff or rough spots.



The crayfish blanks were cut on the bandsaw. Later, a hole is drilled in the bottom to add weight.

Once I'm happy with the shape, I drill small holes using the Modelmaker's drill holder for the various bits of hardware that will be attached after the painting stage is completed. Depending on the application, larger holes may be drilled using Forstner or brad-point bits to accept weights and/or rattles, which are glued in place with slow-cure epoxy. Towing and hook eyes are bent from stainless steel "snare" wire, glued in place and masked off. I prime each lure with a Krylon® gray primer spray bomb. I then apply a base coat of Krylon color spray paint and allow it to dry.

The crankbait lures are rigged up using a stainless steel weight and wire. The loops are formed by twisting the wire. These will be glued into the body of the crankbait lure after carving is completed.

Detail painting is done with various enamels (Testors® Model Master®) in a variety of fluorescent, pearlescent and other bright colors. I sign and date the piece before applying a coat of clear multi-colored glitter paint and, finally, multiple coats of Krylon clear gloss. On some of the lures, a fish-scale effect is achieved using the fine netting that garlic is often sold in (or a product called wedding tulle). This is stretched over the lure, which has had a base coat of silver or gold paint applied. The netting is held in place with clothespins. I apply a couple of very light sprays of "fishy" blues, greens or orange paint, peel off the netting and apply clear coat to the piece.



The finished crankbait lures have a clear acrylic diving bill glued into the slot cut into the head.

After the clear gloss has hardened for a week or so, I fasten the hook hangers in place using tiny stainless screws and then fit the hooks. Alternatively, hook hangers can be bent from stainless wire and glued in place. Silicone "skirts" are fitted on some of the top-water hula-popper-style lures. I source the various bits and pieces of tackle accessories from [www.lurepartsonline.com](http://www.lurepartsonline.com).

Text and photos by Peter Reisiger



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