



# The Rooster Tails Fishing Club of Northern California, Inc.

*Educate ~ Entertain ~ Enhance*

*Volume 7, Issue 11 — November 2017*

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## Tom Reeves, Owner, Bilt to Bite Wooden Lures

- Custom Handmade Wooden Lures
- Wall Hanger Trophy Trout
- Hand Turned, Hand Painted, Hand Assembled Lures
- Made for Fishermen by Fishermen

The Rooster Tails Fishing Club invites all interested fishing men, women, and non-member guests to learn about a catching trophy fish using custom handmade wooden lures at their November 17<sup>th</sup> breakfast meeting. This will be a unique opportunity to hear a special guest speaker Tom Reeves, owner of Bilt to Bite wooden lures he makes and uses to score wall hanger fish.

Live bait has long been a fixture of the fishing scene with lure manufacturers striving to create artificial lures that imitate nature's creations. Since the sport fishing Dark Ages, countless fish have fallen for the inherent attraction of various earthly-born forage impaled on a hook. However since, the fishing labs have toiled-away to find an alternative to live bait that mimics their size, features, swimming motion, color, and even the smell to be better than what nature created. Too often though, the bait was created in mind to catch the angler to buy it, rather than catching fish. The result is that many lure and bait manufacturers put considerable emphasis on packaging, displays, and promotion rather than proof that their product actually catches fish.

The Rooster Tails Fishing Club has discovered a very special entrepreneur and custom wood lure manufacturer and club member Tom Reeves. Tom says he has always enjoyed making things from wood, so his wood working foundation was set. As a prolific fisherman, Tom could not find lures that he wanted to perform to his satisfaction. He studied various materials, shapes and of course color patterns that he felt would attract quality fish. Although he was using other wood lures and began to "hunt" larger fish without a lot of success with them he decided to explore making his own wood lures. This became a passion with hundreds of hours dedicated to making his own lures.

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## Calendar of Events

**November 8**  
4th Annual RT Turkey Tourney  
Lake Englebright

**November 17**  
Rooster Tails Breakfast  
Tom Reeves, Owner  
Bilt to Bite Lures

**December 15**  
Annual Awards & Holiday Brunch



## November 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	19
19	20	31	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

## A LOOK AT WOODEN LURES

To some anglers, it may seem like a step back in time to build fishing lures in wood. Plastic and the injection-mold production process are responsible for the success of the best-known names in today's lure-building industry. Yo Zuri, Heddon, Lucky Craft, Rebel, Strike King, Bomber and others all rest their share of the hard-lure market on plastic lures.

Wood simply lends itself best to both the creative process and the physical characteristics that prove the value in the investment. Yes, lures can and maybe even should be investments in your fishing... That's because wood lures often outlast plastic models, if not physically, then in their designs and collectible value.

Woods of many kinds are used for lure-making, and all of them have characteristics that make them more attractive to an angler than plastic offers. Plastic lures chip, plastic cracks, and wood lures will too, but wooden lures can sustain a lot of abuse and still look good. The cell structure of wood can accept pressures like striking riprap-rock without losing much of its painted finish. Paint on wooden lures is more elastic than the hard finish typically applied to plastic lure blanks.

Across the industry, lure manufacturers recognize that when plastic was first used for lures, it was done mostly for lowering the cost of production. A prototype lure design is typically completed in wood, and a plastic injection mold carries the production process forward to create copy after copy of the original wood lure at much lowered costs. Lower production costs mean lower retail costs enabled a lot of anglers to buy lures they might not have bought in models made from wood. However, a lot of those wooden lures, when manufactured in plastic materials, lost the look and feel, as well as some of the action, of the original wooden lure. You just can't make a plastic lure do exactly what a wooden lure can do or look exactly like a wooden lure can look.

A lot of plastic lure manufacturers switched to plastic even when they lost the features originally built into the wooden prototypes. Let's say you're a lure manufacturer and you just spent \$35,000 on a plastic lure mold, but it didn't quite capture what you wanted. You're likely to produce those lures anyway. The cost of creating the mold almost requires you to do so. Sure, manufactured wooden lures are not always going to be exactly right either, but when you build with wood, you just change the angles of the saw to correct the design. Sometimes, a 1/72 of an inch can make all the difference in the world.



*Valuable antique wooden lures*

### A LOOK BACK AT WOOD

The new plastic lures that soon filled the display racks and shelves of tackle-shop stores in the late 1960s and early '70s soon filled many tackle boxes. For decades, plastic lures have made some of the greatest lures affordable for millions of anglers. Some of the best are still bargains! Decades ago, you built with wood by necessity, but they were expensive compared to plastic. Prior to painting, a wooden lure already will have cost about four times the cost of its plastic counterpart. Labor does that. And that cost

ratio is only going up in completion of the lure. When you paint a wooden lure, it requires several coats from the initial conditioners and sealers to the finishing gloss. Plastic lures are typically racked and sprayed two or three times and off to packaging.

Wood lures purchasing can be viewed as an investment. If you want a lure that your grandchildren can use, too, you buy wooden lures. Nobody has a plastic lure they're still using that's 30 years old, wood lures just hold up better... The key to success with wood lures is not only its design, but the materials it is made with. Wooden lures, and unlike the typical plastic counterpart, the wooden lures actually float like they are supposed to and are just that much more durable.

### WHY WOOD?

The Heddon Zara Spook was first developed in the 1930s as a wooden lure named the Zaragossa, but it was transformed into a plastic model around 1940. No one in bass-fishing circles can argue about the success the Spook has brought to top-water fishing.

Building lures with wood has its problems. No two wooden lures are exactly alike. Wood isn't consistent at all... Build 10 identical lures out of it, all of them will work and probably better than plastic, but only three of them might work exactly the way you want them to in the water. Individual wooden lures will always have some variable characteristics. It's the nature of wood grain to be a bit different from one cut to the next. Each lure will have its unique look and feel for that one action the angler really likes.

Lure makers agree that fishing with wooden lures can also have problems. Wooden baits can dent and they do at times crack, especially near the nose and bill of the lures. Eventually, water can leak into the wood, it swells, the paint may crack and the bait loses some of its performance. But the trade-off is that fishing with wooden lures catches more fish.

## California Anglers Shafted Again - Courtesy Coastal Conservation Association (CCA)

California boasts a large population of angling enthusiasts, for whom fishing is important recreationally and socially, as it is vital to the state's economy. Yet unlike most states, California inexplicably continues to deny them the opportunity to buy a one-year fishing license. Once again, sportsmen and women are truly amazed at California politics and fisheries management. The Assembly Appropriations Committee, chaired by Assembly Member Lorena Gonzalez Fletcher who represents a San Diego coastal district (second largest fishing license sales in the state), did not report out Senate Bill 187. SB187, legislation authored by Senator Tom Berryhill, would have created an annual fishing license that would be valid for 12 months from the date of purchase like just about every other state in the union.

In April, many California anglers were rejoicing that the state appeared to finally be moving toward a 12-month fishing license when SB 187 unanimously passed the senate's Natural Resources & Water Committee. Anglers had complained for years that Department of Fish and Wildlife licenses are essentially a state rip-off. No matter when purchased, the annual fishing license expires on December 31, even though most anglers wait until the spring or summer fishing season to renew their licenses. "Fishing is important for so many Californians," said Berryhill, who has introduced a 12-month-license bill three times. "From anglers who love the sport to people just trying to feed their families, this bill would improve the quality of life for our constituents."

Recreational fishing contributes more than \$4.6 billion annually to California's economy and is a major source of outdoor tourism, jobs and tax revenue for state and local governments. However, sales have plummeted as rates have increased. In 1980, when licenses were a reasonable \$5, California sold more than 2.2 million licenses. In 2017, Fish and Wildlife charged residents \$47.01 for a license that may be valid for only a fraction of the year, depending on when you buy it. If an angler wants to use a second rod in inland waters, an additional fee \$14.61 is required. On top of that, Southern California saltwater anglers must pay a \$5.14 "ocean enhancement" fee.

California has over 2.7 million anglers, yet there is a growing concern that the unprecedented decline in fishing license sales will threaten funding for fishery and conservation programs, as well as millions of federal dollars tied to the number of licenses sold. SB 187 was supported by nearly every statewide organization representing small business, labor, travel, hospitality, local government and outdoor recreation. Nonetheless, the bill hit the Assembly Appropriations Committee, died there without even a vote and there is no good reason why. If nothing is done, the state's fishery program will continue to bleed millions of dollars a year due to declining fishing license sales. The state's Fish and Game Preservation

Fund — which is funded by license revenue — is currently running a \$20 million deficit.

On the plus side, another bill (Assembly Bill 986) is making its way through the process and may be acted on in January 2018. The legislation, sponsored by State Assemblyman James Gallagher, R-Sacramento, also aims to increase fishing license sales and revenue by making annual fishing license sales valid for a full 12-months from the date of purchase and also discounts annual fishing license for American veterans by 25 percent, and by 50 percent for veterans who have a 50 percent or greater service-connected disability. Coastal Conservation Association is an organization of thousands of recreational anglers and outdoor enthusiasts working for the conservation and enhancement of our marine resources. CCA California will certainly work to ensure this common-sense legislation is adopted, but until it is, California will inexplicably remain one of the few states that doesn't sell a 12-month license.



Annual Sport Fishing Licenses (valid January 1, through December 31, or for the remainder of the year if purchased after January 1) A sport fishing license is required for any person attempting to take fish, mollusks, crustaceans, invertebrates, amphibians, or reptiles in inland or ocean waters. Additional validations and report cards are required for certain species and areas.

### **Resident 2018 Sport Fishing License about \$48+ Resident Second Rod Validation \$15+**

**Note:** Starting January 1, 2017 the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) will no longer accept cash at CDFW's License and Revenue Branch and regional license counters. Individuals who want to make payments at CDFW's License and Revenue Branch or a regional license counter can use checks, money orders, or any debit/credit card with the Visa or Mastercard logo. This "no-cash policy" will improve customer and employee safety, department efficiency, customer service and provide cost savings. Accepting cash payments is costly in both the staff time it takes to process and in armored car services.

A resident is any person who has resided continuously in the State of California for six months or more immediately prior to the date of their application for a license or permit, any person on active military duty with the Armed Forces of the United States or auxiliary branch thereof, or any person enrolled in the Job Corps.

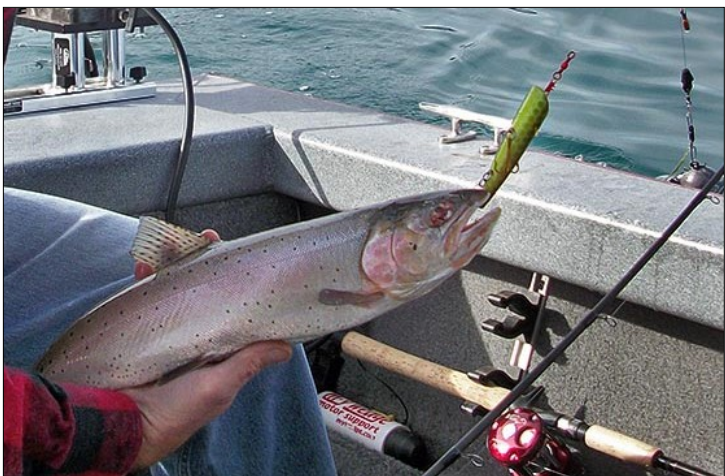
Most fees include 5% license agent handling fee and 3% non-refundable application fee.



## Tom Reeves - continued

It became a lengthy learning process for eight years, that included fishing with some of the best fishermen that he knew, while experimenting with all sorts of shape, sizes, and color patterns, and of course field testing and putting in the hours of work and attention to detail which resulting in one of the finest wooden lures on the market. The true test was when other fishermen caught fish on his hand made, one of a kind lures.















Tom, his wife of 40 years, and their two grown children have lived in Auburn for the past thirty years regularly enjoying camping, fishing and the outdoors together. He retired from thirty-five years with the Placer County Water Agency in 2016. Tom grew-up hunting and fishing in the Foothills and beyond, literally fishing every creek, stream, pond, and lake around adding to his depth as a knowledge of what fish want...



You can contact Tom at [info@bilttobite.com](mailto:info@bilttobite.com) to introduce yourself, order lures, request special color combinations... all custom.



## Jackpot Contest

ANNUAL JACKPOT CONTEST							
2017	2016	LENGTH	WEIGHT	WATER	DATE	ANGLER	
	Kokanee	17 1/2"	26.7oz	WHISKEY TOWN	8-5	BEV MIERKEY	
	Landlocked Salmon	21"	36.4oz	DON PEDRO	4-28	SHAWN CONLAN	
	River or Ocean King Salmon	39"	22.6oz	SACRO RIVER	10-11	SHAWN CONLAN	
	Striped Bass	34 1/4"		FEATHER RIVER	4-25	TOM HYDE	
	Rainbow Trout	25 1/2"	86.4oz	BLAIR LAKE	5-14	GARY ROBERTS	
	Brown Trout	19"		LAKE SHASTA	9-6	CHUCK MIERKEY	
	Steelhead	27 1/2"	96.7oz	AMERICAN RIVER	1-17	PETER ZITTERE	
	Lake Trout (Mackinaw)	20 1/2"		DONNER LAKE	6-23	SHAWN CONLAN	
	Large Mouth Bass	23"	6 lbs	LOP	7-2	RUSS WILLIAMS	
	Small Mouth Bass	19"	36.8oz	BERRYESSA	5-4	RICHARD COX	
	Catfish	31 1/2"		CLEARLAKE	11-30	MEL EWING	
	Shad	19 1/4"		AMERICAN RIVER	6-23	GREG HICKS	
	Croppie	16 1/4"		CAMANACHE	3-9	JOHN HESS	
	Sturgeon						

### 2017 Entries in Red

KOKANEE, **Bev Mierkey**, 17 1/2", 2 lbs 7 oz, Whiskeytown Lake, 8/5/17

LANDLOCKED SALMON, **Shawn Conlon**, 21", 36 lbs 4 oz, Don Pedro, 4/28/17

RIVER/OCEAN KING SALMON, **Shawn Conlon**, 39", 22 lbs.6 oz., Sacramento River, 10/11/17

STRIPED BASS, **Tom Hyde**, 34 1/4", Feather River, 4/25/17

RAINBOW TROUT, **Gary Roberts**, 25 1/2" Blair Lake, 5/14/17

LAKE TROUT (Mackinaw), **Shawn Conlan**, 20 1/2", Donner lake, 6/23/17

LARGE MOUTH BASS, **Russ Williams**, 23", 6 lbs., LOP, 2/14/17

SMALL MOUTH BASS, **Richard Cox**, 19", 3 lb. 8 oz., Lake Berryessa, 5/4/17

SHAD, **Greg Hicks**, 19 1/4", American River, 6/23/17

CRAPPIE, **John Hess**, 16 1/4", Camanche Lake, 3/9/17

## Wooden Lures—continued

Vibration is the most important thing... and the right vibration is achieved by the cut in the wood. Visual senses are the least factor in getting a fish to take a lure. Fish 'feel' the lure a lot earlier and longer than they see it. They feel it with their inner ear, swim bladder and lateral line. Color is probably only a blur to them when they strike it. On any given day, a well-built wood plug will give the advantage over other anglers, because a quality wooden lure holds the features needed to catch more fish, bigger fish and maybe even win a tournament!

Fishing lures come and go, but few have stand the test of time, as have wooden lures. If you don't have wooden lures in your fishing gear line up, you need to get on the ball! Wooden lures can make all the difference in turning teasers into takers!