

# SOFT PLASTICS 101

## CHAPTER 1

### WHY SOFT PLASTICS?



Soft plastic lures have their birth date listed at around 1949, becoming more popular in the late 1950's and early 1960's as word spread of anglers successes fishing these artificial baits.

Many early soft plastics were in the form of moulded plastic worms that were stiff and had little action. Fast forward to 1972 and the birth of the curly tail profile that is still popular today. From this point soft plastics have continued to evolve in terms of materials, styles, colours and features, resulting in arguably the most advanced soft plastic lures to date, ZMan's ElaZtech plastics, with their 10X Tough, super-soft and flexible realistic feel and natural buoyancy that sees them come to life in the water, with a natural 'tail up' feeding pose or 'claws up' defensive pose when at rest on the bottom.

### SO WHY ARE SOFT PLASTIC LURES SO POPULAR?

#### RANGE

The ability to mould plastic into an almost infinite number of shapes and sizes has seen tackle shop walls explode with soft plastics, from the traditional curl tails and paddle tails, to frogs, crustaceans, creature baits and more. This has allowed anglers to more closely match what the fish are feeding on (match the hatch) or offer the fish a profile and action unseen in their natural environment, in turn attracting their attention and triggering a response. Along with this range of shapes there has also been an explosion of colours, allowing anglers to better match the prey the fish are feeding on or select a colour that better stands out in the environment they are fishing. The addition of glitters and flecks, scent, UV reactive materials and more have then taken this to another level and we will explore colour, UV, scent and much more in future chapters.

#### VERSATILITY

Unlike a lure that has a set diving depth, or is designed specifically to sink or float, a soft plastic can be rigged in a myriad of different ways to fish the entire water column, from the surface to deep water offshore. The same plastic can be rigged unweighted and fished high in the water column, or the weight can be increased to fish deeper and this is commonly achieved based on jighead selection. The jighead is the hook and weight that the plastic is threaded onto and in future chapters we will look at soft plastic rigging and the array of specialist jigheads that are available to suit specific techniques, environments and applications.

#### AFFORDABILITY

The ability to mass produce soft plastics has made them extremely affordable for anglers, with packs containing multiple lures and the ability to rig the same soft plastic to suit multiple species and applications means one lure effectively replaces multiple other lure types. ZMan's 10X Tough ElaZtech material is extremely flexible and durable, with anglers reporting over 50 fish landed on a single soft plastic, making soft plastics excellent value for money.

#### SMELL / MESS / AVAILABILITY

Other benefits associated with soft plastics include reduced mess and smell when compared to bait, and they also won't go off like bait, although it's a good idea to avoid extreme heat and not mix different brands of plastics together as they may react. There are also times when bait is hard to find, whereas plastics can always be at the ready in your vehicle, boat, backpack, etc.

#### EFFECTIVENESS

Most importantly all of these things combine to make soft plastic lures super-effective and that's the key for anglers. They look real, feel real, can be scented to smell real, can be rigged to suit virtually any species or situation and fish love to eat them.

### NEXT UP IN CHAPTER 2: JIGHEAD ANATOMY

