



TECH IT OUT

By Jim Hutchinson, Jr.

CHUM KING

A key to scoring big on the chunk - or simply while chumming - is being able to set your hook baits at the precise level as your chum pieces - strategically speaking, that's where your quarry will be. This is the reason for using floats when sharking to put baits at increasing depths leading out away from the stern; or when varying the depths out on the edge while pulling a late summer overnigher.

In setting up for stripers, we always referred to laying out chunks as *setting the table* - more appropriately, it's creating a *scene of the crime*. You want those big old trophy stripers to follow the scent upcurrent towards your structure, find a layout of chunks as if a bluefish blitz just took place, and ultimately pick up that big juicy bunker head with the 10/0 hook impaled in it.

There are several methods for keeping chunks from drifting too far down-current away from your structure, and ultimately out of casting distance. We've stood at the bow hurling baits forward to allow time to sink farther into the depths and closer to our hook baits; the old time paper bag trick is messy but works to put baits directly beneath your stern; you can also go through the hassle of hooking small bait bits on a Sabiki rig to "jig" down beneath your cockpit.

About a year ago, a little yellow barrel caught my eye at one of my local tackle shops; emblazoned with the tag Chum-King, this mini chum bucket is wholly unique and definitely not your old winter flounder chumpot. Made of rigid plastic, the Chum-King bait release canister is fundamentally two parts that come together to make a single unit. Unscrew the top, place your chunks inside and then screw the lid back on.

Attach as much cord (3/16-inch is fine) as needed to get the barrel to the depth of your choice, and

depending on the rate of current, add enough sinkers or small sash weights to the chamber at the bottom of the Chum-King to get the barrel down.

There are struts built into the unit so that the bottom can actually be dropped out underwater - adjusting the tension of the screws will allow the bottom to drop with more or less pressure applied to the length of rip cord.

Keep the top and bottom pieces together and the Chum-King functions as a slow-release chum pot.

Yank the cord, the bottom falls out and your barrel full of chum is released all at once there beneath your stern. Set the table at the depth you want - or, to really drive a school of fish insane at the precise depth where your rigs are sitting, fill the Chum-King with a batch of live peanut bunker or minnows to create an instant live bait explosion.

Chum exactly as you would with a bag or wire pot, and instead of dealing with messy clean-up and tedious table-setting methods, just give the Chum-King a couple of good shakes in the water to remove excess chum and then toss into a five-gallon bucket to take home. Chum-King is an ideal way to put baits into the zone, from the back bay channels and dredge holes to the inshore rockpiles and local wrecks - even out at the edge where bigger kings are crowned.

To see the Chum-King bait release system in action, check out the live video stream at www.chum-king.com. Retailing for around \$24.95, Chum-King is also available at most local tackle shops - just look for the bright yellow football-sized barrel. 🐟

