

Fishing Rods and Reels

Fishing is one of the world's oldest and most popular activities. Because of this, there is an unlimited amount of fishing equipment available on the market. Knowing how to choose the proper fishing rod and reel is important in becoming a successful fisherman. With so many options to choose from, it can be confusing when trying to select the necessary equipment. How much you spend on a rod and reel will depend on how much you plan to go fishing and the kind of fish you want to catch. The size, food habits and depth of the fish make a difference in choosing equipment. For large fish, heavy tackle is a must. For small fish, light tackle should be used. Another thing to consider when choosing a rod and reel is the type of water being fished in and the size of the body of water. One of the most important things in fishing equipment is to choose a balanced rod and reel. The action of the rod and reel should match each other and the action of the rod and reel combo should match the bait size and what you are trying to catch. The most important information about a rod and reel can usually be found written on the particular piece of equipment. The information generally given on the rod is the length, the action, the recommended lure sizes and weights, and the recommended line size in pounds. On the reel, the action, the recommended pound of line and amount of line that will fit on the spool is printed on the handle.

Fishing Rods

Fishing rods come in one piece, two pieces, and telescoping styles. One major advantage of the one piece style is that it is thought to be stronger than the two piece style. A disadvantage of the one piece style is that it is much more difficult to store than the two piece style, which breaks down into smaller pieces. Easier storage of a two piece style is probably the deciding factor when choosing this type of fishing rod. Some disadvantages of the two piece style of fishing rod is that it is weaker than the one piece style, there is the potential for it to separate under extreme pressure, and the connection between the two pieces could weaken, causing the two separate pieces to turn.

Fishing rods come with many different actions. Action describes the way a rod is designed to perform when casting or reeling in a fish. It also relates to the lure or bait you need and the strength of the reel that should be used. Action ranges from ultra light to heavy. Rod actions are easily described as how a rod bends or flexes in relation to its overall length. The type of action needed is dependent upon the size of the fish. The smaller the fish, the lighter the action, and the heavier the fish, the heavier the action.

Fishing rods come in many different lengths. The length that is used is dependent upon what type of fishing is being done. For a heavier line and lure, the longer the rod should be. Fishing rods can vary from about 4 ½ feet to about 9 feet in length. Most spincast

rods, which are designed for fresh or very light salt water fishing, vary between 4 ½ feet and 6 feet in length.

There are numerous types of construction materials that can be used in the making of a fishing rod. Materials commonly used today are graphite, fiberglass, or a composite of the two. Graphite has been refined over the years to provide lighter, more flexible rods that give you “sensitivity,” a big plus in feeling when a fish begins to nibble on your bait. This material is also strong enough to land a larger fish. Fiberglass provides more durability than graphite but sacrifices some sensitivity and is heavier than graphite. New composite rods give the best of both graphite and fiberglass. They give durability of fiberglass combined with the lightweight, power and sensitivity of graphite.

Fishing Reels

Different types of fishing reels can be used based on the type of fishing being done and the experience of the person fishing. Three types that are going to be covered are spincast, spinning, and bait casting reels.

Spincast reels are the easiest type of reel to use. The line is released through a small hole in the nose cone of the reel. It comes straight out and allows the casting and fishing of lightweight lures and bait. In spincast reels, the line is held on a shallow spool within the nose cone. The reel fits on top of the rod handle. The reel handle is usually on the right side of the reel, but some newer reels have right/left interchangeable handles. The drag system can be a simple drag, set by a small lever or knob on the top or side of the reel, or a star drag system as seen on bait cast and salt water reels. The anti-reverse lever or knob prevents turning the handle backward and forces the drag to control or slow outgoing line as a fish runs. Spincast rods are designed for fresh or very light salt water fishing. They generally vary between 4 ½ feet and 6 feet in length. Most rods will be of medium action for casting ¼ to ¾ ounce lures. The easy release of line from the spincast reel makes casts with lighter lures possible. Spincast tackle is best used for small fish in fresh water. It is ideal for panfish, small catfish, bass, trout, sauger, and white bass. It is rarely used in salt water, but could be used for small inland species. It is also ideal as a beginner’s or occasional user’s tackle since there is no possibility of tangled loops or spool overruns, which can occur with casting tackle. It can be used with lures or bait, and most modern outfits have a good drag system and line capacity.

Spinning reels work on the same principle as spincast reels; however, on spinning tackle, the spool is exposed and hangs underneath the rod. This provides a more comfortable feel and balance for a long day of fishing. Spinning reel spools, because they are not enclosed in a nose cone have a larger line capacity than spincast reels. Spinning reels, also called open face reels, come in a very wide range of sizes. Spinning reels work on the principle that the cast lure pulls the coiled line from the reel rather than causing the spool to rotate as with a bait casting reel. The line is released from a stationary spool by flipping a bail wire which is a piece of wire across the spool. The weight of the lure or bait propels the line forward. Spinning reels are ideal for most fishing. Spool sizes vary with reel size, and line capacities range from as little as 100 yards of four pound test line

to as much as 200 or more yards of 20 pound test line. Handles on spinning reels are usually interchangeable so that both right and left hand casters can use the same reel. Spinning tackle can be used for everything from ultra light panfishing to trolling offshore for marlin and sailfish.

Bait casting reels are versatile and can be used for all types of fishing. On casting tackle, the spool of the reel revolves while casting. This often results in overruns of the line during or at the end of a cast. These overruns are called backlashes and have caused many anglers to avoid this type of tackle. Because of this, bait casting reels are generally used by more experienced fishermen. However, modern reels have added some new developments that help stop backlashes, making it more possible for the novice to master this gear. In some cases, bait casting tackle can cast lures as light as those cast with spinning tackle. Also, bait casting tackle can frequently be cast as far as lures cast with spinning tackle. Bait casting tackle can be used for all types of fishing. With ultralight outfits, it is possible to cast with lures as light as 1/8 ounce. Heavy outfits can be used for trolling or casting heavy 3 ounce plugs for muskie, stripers, bluefish, shads, redfish, and barracuda. While this type of tackle is designed for casting, it can also be used for trolling, deep jigging (fishing vertically with heavy lures) and still fishing (fishing deep with bait or bottom fishing). Casting reels are designed to allow the fisherman more control over the cast by casting the line overhead or flipping the cast in locations where trees or other obstructions prevent an overhead cast. Casting tackle is often used for fresh water bass fishing and for walleye, trout, salmon, carp, and catfish. Except for stream fishing or river smallmouth fishing, there is no fresh water fish that cannot be caught with casting tackle.

Fishing reels, like fishing rods, come in different actions. These also range from ultra-light to heavy.

The construction material of the spool and frame of a fishing reel is usually the same for both freshwater and saltwater reels. The spool is the part of the reel that holds the line. It is typically made of either graphite, which is lighter or aluminum, which can cost more. The frame of the reel can also be made of graphite or aluminum depending on how much you want to spend and if you want the reel to be lighter.

Hopefully, you will now be able to make a more educated decision when purchasing a fishing rod and reel. With so many options to choose from, it is important to determine what you are going to be fishing for and where you are going to be doing it. One of the most important things to remember is balance. Fishing with an unbalanced rod and reel combination could result in an unpleasant experience. The wide array of fishing equipment available today makes it possible for people of all ages and experience levels to enjoy this popular outdoor activity.

Sources:

Texas Agricultural Extension Service Consumer Decision Making Contest 1994
Study Guide: Fishing Rods and Reels

<http://www.cyberfishing.homestead.com/bguides.html>

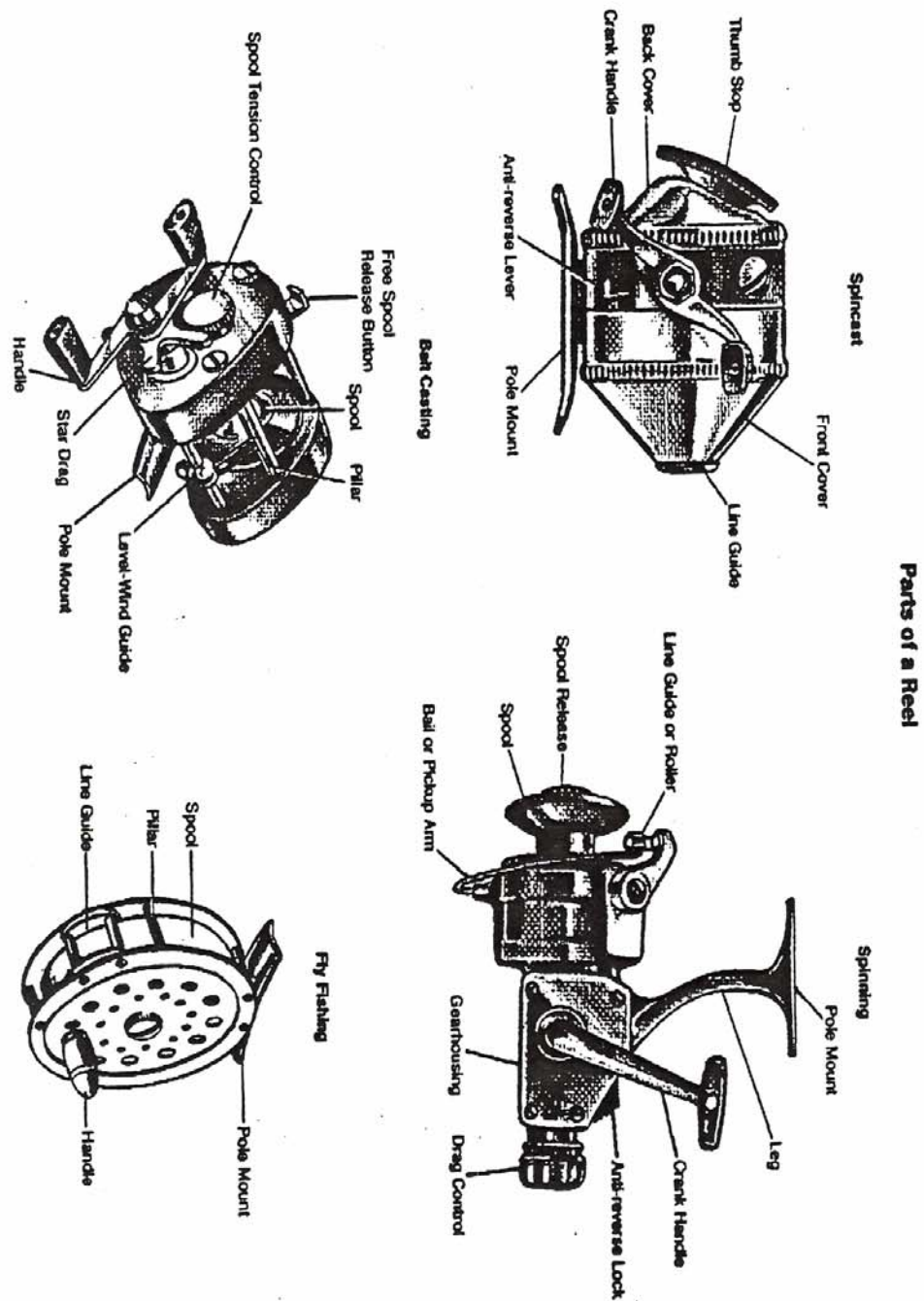
<http://www.sports-equipment-1.com/fishing%20freshwater%20reel.htm>

Helpful Web Sites:

<http://www.cyberfishing.homestead.com/bguides.html>

http://www.myoan.net/fishingart/buy_fresh_reels.html

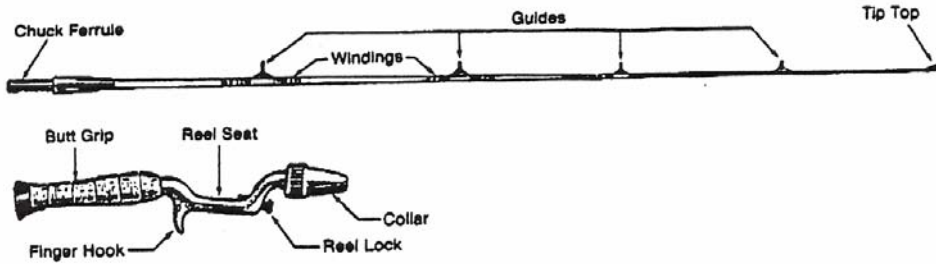
Prepared by: Rick Willey, Extension Associate
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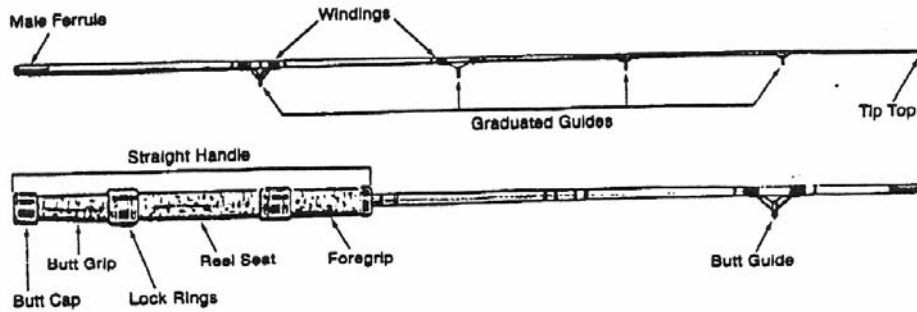
Source: "Aquatic resources Educational Curriculum," AFTMA Sportfishing Educational Foundation Barrington, Ill., 1987.

Rods

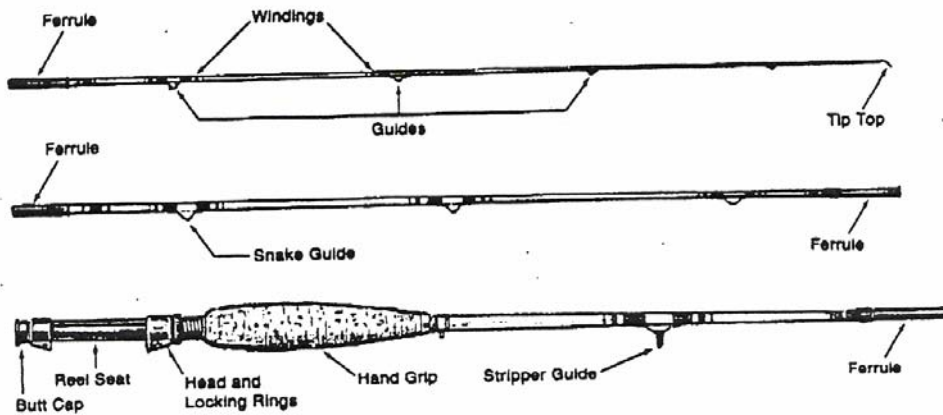
1. Salt or Spin-Casting



2. Spinning



3. Fly Rod



Source: "Aquatic resources Educational Curriculum," AFTMA Sportfishing Educational Foundation, Barrington, Ill., 1987.