

## Split Shotting the Kut Tail Worm

Written by Mark Fong

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If I were to tell you there is a technique that is easy to master, catches finicky fish, requires a minimal tackle investment and is just plain fun, what would you say? Ok, now that I have your attention, the answer is, of course, the venerable split shot technique.

The split shot rig is a minimalist's dream. In its most common form, the split shot rig consists of a small lead shot crimped 12 to 24 inches above a light wire worm hook adorned with a four inch finesse worm. Split shotting excels when the bite is difficult. Post frontal days, blue bird skies and pressured fish are all prime conditions for split shotting. When properly configured, the split shot rig can be effective in water as shallow as a foot all the way down to depths of fifty feet or more.

Fishing the split shot rig is simple. Start by making a long cast, allowing the rig to reach the bottom before beginning the retrieve. Pay attention to the activity level of the fish. Once you

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have determined the proper speed and cadence that best triggers the bite, take note and be quick to replicate it.

By using the wind and trolling motor to manipulate boat position, a controlled drift is a great way to cover large expanses of water efficiently. A key point to keep in mind is to ensure that the sinker maintains regular contact with the bottom. As the sinker drags along, the worm will flutter and dance enticingly behind.

The split shot bite can range from a subtle 'tick' to the classic pressure bite. A sweep set will increase the strike to hook up ratio by allowing the super sharp hook to penetrate the fish while protecting the light line from breaking.

Light line finesse applications like split shotting are perfectly suited for spinning tackle. I like to use a 7' Medium Light Action St. Croix Legend Xtreme LXS70MLF spinning rod paired with a 2500 Series wide spool spinning reel. A larger diameter spool serves to manage line twist and coiling that is common with both monofilament and fluorocarbon lines. Before the introduction of fluorocarbon, monofilament was the gold standard. Today's fluorocarbon lines offer a level of stealth and sensitivity not available in monofilament. I have found that Sunline Sniper FC is the perfect blend of strength, abrasion resistance, and sensitivity. Under most conditions, I favor 6lb test, but if the bite is tough or if the water exceptionally clear, I will lighten up and use 5lb test instead.

Let's talk about the split shot itself. A good place to start is with a traditional #4 round lead split shot. Split shot weights with the removable wings are not a recommended option as they tend to hang up frequently. Carefully position and crimp the weight in place. Sliding the crimped weight up and down the line can weaken it. When fishing in deep water or in heavy winds, upsizing the weight may be necessary. Conversely, when exploring shallow areas, switching to a smaller split shot is often the right choice. A more recent alternative to the traditional split shot is the use of small cylindrical weights that are pegged and held in place with small rubber strands.

