

Over the years, my opinions about lures change. I have long considered Corkies (now called Paul Brown's Original Lures by MirrOlure) to be among the best plugs of all to use for targeting trophy speckled trout. That opinion has not changed. I have, however, adjusted the details of exactly how and when I use various lures within the Corky family.

I've published information several times about my favorite Corkies. Since MirrOlure bought the rights to Paul Brown's lures, they have come up with new color patterns, some of which have been developed with the advice of me and other Corky addicts. Accordingly, I have developed a new list of Corkies I don't want to be on the water without.

If I'm fishing water that's knee-deep or less (say 2 feet or shallower) I prefer floating Corkies, and I generally fish Fat Boys, though I believe Originals are probably interchangeable with them for this application. My favorite floating Corky of all is a pearl/chartreuse Fat Boy. Many times, when I'm fishing shallow, grassy flats, the water is a little off color, so the bright yellow line on the back gives me confidence in the fishes' ability to see the plug. I can also monitor it easily because it is visible to me. Substitutes for this staple plug would be pearl/pink, pink/pearl/pink, pink and TX Chicken.

If I'm fishing the same depth of water, but the water is crystal clear, I often throw something more natural. For many years, this meant the pearl/black floater. I also now love all of the clear ones with silver glitter and darker backs, like green/silver/white, the copper top and emerald silver, among others.

When I'm fishing a little deeper water, say crotch to waist-deep, I prefer sinking Fat Boys if the wind is blowing less than 15 knots or so. My favorites in this situation depend on the color of the water and amount of light in the sky.

If the water is clear to trout green and the sky is dark (especially at night) I throw a strawberry/black almost exclusively. Alternatives to this would be chartreuse/black (which I call the greenie) and black/gold/orange.

In the same dark conditions with dirtier water, I prefer lures with contrasting colors, with the lighter color on the tail of the lure. My favorites in this category are morning glory/chartreuse and strawberry white.

When the sky is bright and I'm working the same depths (3-4 feet), I prefer natural colors when the water is clear or trout green. My most recent favorite in this category is the color pattern 18, which has long been the best seller in all MirrOlures. It's green on the back with silver glitter and a white belly. Alternatives to this lure are 15 (bone/silver/white) 49 (bayou green/silver/white) and pearl/black.

When the sky is bright and I'm working these depths in water that's a little off color, I prefer brighter lures like all the pink ones and pearl/chartreuse. If the water becomes really murky, like when it's tainted strongly with brown tide, I often choose bright lures with a contrast line, where the less prominent color is found on the front of the lure...like 14 and 22, both of which have red heads and lighter colors on the remainder of the lure.

If the wind gets really strong (especially above 20 knots), mucking up the water and making it difficult to keep a Fat Boy down in the water column, I like to take a sinking Original Corky and bend the tail down sharply to about 75° or so. This creates a different movement pattern in the plug and keeps it sub-surface better. My favorite lure for this application is strawberry

with a white tail. I also like morning glory/chartreuse. Both of these are great if skies are cloudy. If the sky is clear, I tend to prefer the 14 and 22 color patterns.

I know, I know, that was a lot to keep up with. If I reduce the lists above to their essence, here are the lures I don't want to be without...

Floating Fat Boy in pearl/chartreuse

Sinking Fat Boy in green/silver/white

Sinking Fat Boy in pink

Sinking Fat Boy in strawberry/black

Sinking Original Corky in strawberry/white tail

Stay tuned; next year the list may be slightly different!