

This summer, I've discovered something exciting about fishing rod I've owned for quite some time. I now appreciate the completeness and versatility it has for warm weather efforts. For the longest time, I used a 6'6" Laguna Texas Wader 2 from about April through October, then switched over to a 7' Med. Lt. Classic for fishing during the colder months.

More recently, I began using a 6'6" Latis Stik in place of the 7' Classic. The Latis Stik has a soft feel similar to that of the Classic, and is much lighter overall. I like a rod with quite a bit of flex when fishing a soft plastic, and when using a Corky in cold water, when I prefer subtle presentations. My presentation style is somewhat spastic and forceful, and a softer rod helps me tone down the movement patterns of the lure without having to think so much about it, which is good when water temperatures are low and cold-blooded creatures can't move around quickly.

On the other hand, when the water is hot and I incorporate plenty of sharp, quick, erratic movements into my presentations, I prefer a shorter rod with less flex. This type of rod allows for more direct and immediate control of the head of a lure; consequently, it makes using topwaters easy and it's better for creating vigorous side-to-side movements with a Corky.

Last summer, I stuck mostly with my Latis Stik, though I knew it was not perfect for use with topwaters and for fast-twitch Corky techniques. I used the Latis Stik because I frequently fall back on soft plastics in hot water, and the old Wader 2 never worked for me with the worms. It simply doesn't have enough flex to allow me to sharply yank soft plastics up and let them fall on a slack line like a softer rod does.

This year, I discovered I had a rod in my quiver that somehow manages to be perfect for use with a Super Spook Junior **and** a soft plastic on a light jighead. This 6'2" rod has been in my hands since the heat settled in, and I'm loving it.

The words Extreme 2 were painted on it before the guys at Laguna sent it to me a few years back, and the same blank was later used in production of what was called a Light Texas Wader 1, but Chris Williamson (rod builder for Laguna) tells me the rods of that name are now made with a different blank. Chris and I plan to get together soon so he can see exactly what blank was used in the rod and start making something as close to it as possible. I know other people who favor Spook Juniors and soft plastics as their primary summer lures will love the rod like I do.

Stay tuned, as I will be writing again on this topic. Eventually, I'll have a specific rod to recommend, one that's the same as the super-effective tool I've been using.