Life at Work

Her No. 1 Problem

By Amy Joyce
Washington Post Staff Writer

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Technological is replacing some traditional fishing tactics

By Kim Hardy
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Artificial Bait May Put the Bloodworm Out of Business

BY KIM HART — THE WASHINGTON POST

JAY JOHNSON, 58, of Smyrna, Del., snags a croaker using Fishbites. At Cape Henlopen State Park in Delaware, anglers don’t seem to mind the substances that attract fish to the real thing. Fishbites are infused with chemicals that mimic the scent of bloodworms. "It's pretty clear that these alterations will do just as well, if not better, than the real thing," said William O'Brien, who’s owned Eastern Sea Worms for 40 years. "The fancy gadgets improve the art of the serious anglers to the armchair fishermen, but there's a generation that's been around for centuries."

"Thirty years ago, you had a lot of fish, you're apt to go more of the yellow perch, the whiting, crabs, crabs, crabs," Irven added. "With new technology, you come up with the recipe for shrimp, crabs, crabs, crabs, and you develop the organs of the bloodworm." "We'd sell two or three thousand a week, and now we're at 15," said Daniel Borchers, who runs the Eastern Sea Worms store, halved its bloodworms. "We've put the Farm to Market by hand in a cramped, 180-square-foot laboratory. The product is simple: a strip of bloodworm on one and a Fishbite on the other. The Fishbites definitely work against the competition in local bait shops. Fishbites may give bloodworms a run for their money at the peak of fishing season, he sells almost 3,000 packs of Fishbites a week. "I've been doing this for 33 years. My son-in-law Terry Dillinger mixed the chemicals and squeezed the gel onto a conveyer belt before turning them into Fishbites. The product is simple: a strip of bloodworm coated with a hard, gel-like substance that releases the scent of bloodworms. The hard ball stays on the hook long enough to catch the fish. Bloodworms are expensive because of the adjacent hairworms. Fishbites are infused with chemicals that mimic the scent of bloodworms.

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