



# Fishing History

Keith Bell

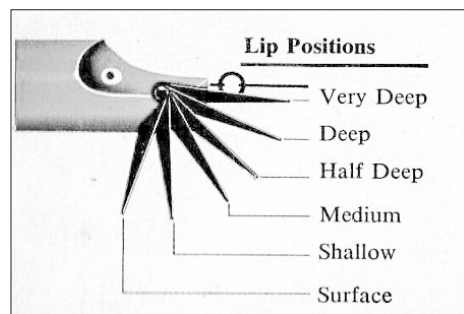
## ABU Hi-Lo



ABU Hi-Lo in Yellow Shore color with box.

Last month I covered the Heddon River Runt spook, one of the most successful American fishing lures ever made. This month, I am going to cover its "European cousin," if you will. A fishing lure that from a distance looks very similar, but upon closer inspection, you will find is very different. That lure is the ABU Hi-Lo.

The ABU Hi-Lo was made by the Charles Garcia Corporation. It was patented in Sweden in the 1950s (as is marked on the bottom on the lures). Interestingly, Heddon also had some arrangements with ABU to make these with them at some point, as you will find Heddon-marked ABU Hi-Lo's as well. This is believed to be for the overseas market, as there is no mention of these lures in the Heddon catalogs. They appear very similar to Heddon River Runt Spook Floater lures and will be marked Hi-Lo on the belly (either ABU or Heddon in rare cases). Earlier ABU Hi-Lo's will have a PATENT mark on the belly as well. While there are many similarities to the Heddon River Runt, there is one key difference: an adjustable lip.



An illustration showing the adjustable lip on the ABU Hi-Lo.

### Adjustable lip and sizes

The Hi-Lo lure has a patented adjustable diving lip unlike anything else that was in the market. The adjustable lip could be set to six different positions as shown in the accompanied Abu Garcia catalog illustration, so the lure's depth could be set from very deep to surface popping and various steps in-between.

The fisherman would pull the lip up or down to click the lip into the desired position. This allowed the ABU Hi-Lo to essentially be a 6-in-1 bait. Not many baits in the market can make a claim like that!

One other interesting note is that the lure was first advertised in 1956 as having only five lip positions and not six. However, the lure always actually had six positions. They quickly changed the advertising two years later to six positions. Speculation is, either a mistake in the advertising or the realization that the design would actually accommodate an additional position.

- This lure is known to have come in six different size configurations. They are:
- 65mm (approx. 2-5/8") (12 grams) Sinking
  - 80mm (approx. 3-1/8") (18 grams) Sinking
  - 90mm (approx. 3-1/2") (20 grams) Jointed Sinking
  - 110mm (approx. 4-1/4") (26 grams) Sinking
  - 110mm (approx. 4-1/4") (26 grams) Floating
  - 150mm (approx. 6") (40 grams) Floating

Of the six sizes, the Heddon came only in the 80mm size that I know of.



ABU Hi-Lo in Perch color.

### Colors and packaging

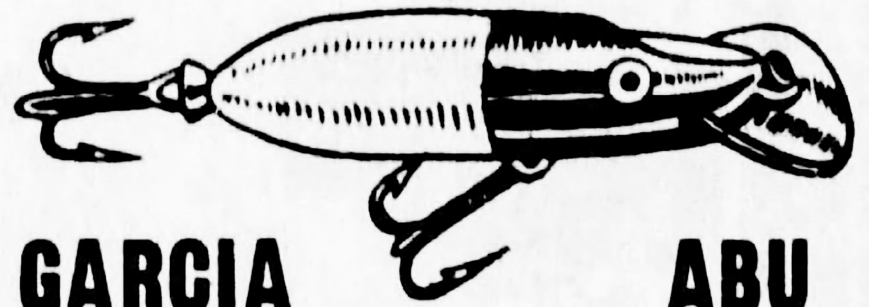
Colors for this lure in the earlier versions tended to be the more common colors and include Pike Scale (M), Silver Shore (XRS), Black Shore (XBW), Yellow Shore (XRY), Perch Scale (YP or L) and White, Red Head (RH). In later years, other colors were added. These include:

- Green (D)
- Brownish Yellow w/red spots (T) (also called Trout Scale)
- Brown & Orange (BO)
- Blue Flanks, Dark Back (BGL) (also called Bluegill)
- Luminous (LYS) (also called Fluor)
- Black & Yellow (BY)
- Rainbow (P)



The bottom of ABU Hi-Lo in Black Shore color with 'Sweden Patent' marking.

The lures originally came in a one-piece cardboard box with a plastic cover (as shown in photo). Later they were distributed on a variety of packaged cards and continue to be today.



## GARCIA ABU HI-LO MINNOW LURE

Reg. List \$1.95

Only **69<sup>c</sup>** EACH

A 1967 ad for the ABU Hi-Lo fishing lure.

### Collector's value

A vintage ABU Hi-Lo in its correct matching box can sell in the \$50 to \$60 range in excellent condition. On card or loose without the box, expect about half of that amount in excellent condition. The more difficult colors can be worth more. A Heddon-marked Hi-Lo typically can bring in a little bit more as well. Also be aware that ABU continues to make the Hi-Lo line of lures for the overseas market, although on a somewhat erratic basis, as they are not always

listed in their catalogs. With careful studying of the colors, markings, packaging and sizes, you can usually tell the difference. **MWO**

*Keith Bell and his family live in Neenah, Wisconsin but spend a lot of time fishing northern Wisconsin. Keith has been an avid angler and outdoorsman his entire life. His passion for fishing is matched only by his passion for fishing history and preservation. He is the founder and owner of MyBaitShop.com, the world's largest online vintage tackle and history website. You can reach Keith at his website or at keith.bell@mybaitshop.com*

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