

# New Tackle: What's Hot for 2008

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Well, it's been a long winter, but spring is here. And to paraphrase a famous poet, "In the spring, an inshore angler's fancy turns to thoughts of fishing tackle!,, Way back in March, when it seemed that spring might never come, many of the top tackle manufacturers gathered at the Rockland County Community College in Suffern, NY to show off all their new stuff. New rods, reels, lures and another new jigging system were all on display. To top it all off was reaction to last year's major corporate takeover. What follows are highlights of what's new and hot in saltwater tackle for 2008.

**Note: Clicking on any logo will take you to that company's website.**



Over at the Daiwa booth Capt. Blaine Anderson gave me a tour of Daiwa's hottest saltwater gear. Their popular Saltist line of conventional reels with their "Full-Metal Jacket,, construction now include smaller 20 and 30 sizes which should be popular for fluke and all around light tackle fishing. Both reels have 5 bearings, including two of Daiwa's special corrosion resistant ball bearings (CRBB). Each has a gear ratio of 6.1:1, which takes in 36,, of line per handle turn. The maximum drag is listed at around 15 lbs. The STT20H holds 210 yards of 20# mono. The STT30H holds 295 yards.



In 2007, Shimano's new Butterfly jigging system and their Trevala series of jig rods were a tremendous hit. So it was no surprise to see that quite a few manufacturers now have their own series of jigging sticks. Nine models make up Daiwa's new Saltiga jigging series of rods (5 conventional and 4 spinning). They are built on Daiwa's "Power Slim,, bias ply graphite blank and are outfitted with Fuji Alconite guides, Fuji reel seat, EVA grips and an oversized butt cap. They will sell for around \$100 to \$120 and come with a lifetime warranty.

Although they are designed primarily for jigging, Capt. Anderson explained that this series could be very versatile for all types of fishing. He told me, "I'll be using them on my charters. I love the lightness of them!,, He also added that, "The heaviest model will make a great blackfish rod.,,



Also new to the Daiwa lineup are the geographically specific Saltiga Northeast Cod & Striper rods. There are seven rods in this series (2 cod and 5 striper rods). They range in size from 6'9,, to 8' and are built on "Bias Construction High Modulus Graphite,, blanks. They also sport Fuji Alconite guides, Fuji reel seats and cork grips. They will retail for around \$100 to \$125 and come with a lifetime warranty.



Samurai Braid is Daiwa's newest entry into the fishing line market. The difference between this new braid and others, according to Capt. Anderson, is that Samurai is made up of 8 strands. Most other braids (like Power Pro) are made up of 4 strands. These extra strands of fiber translate into a much tighter weave. The line is extremely limp and smooth. The captain told me that it casts very well. If you're planning to try some of this line, understand that you will pay significantly more for it. Surprisingly, the lower pound test lines are actually more expensive than the higher ones. This is due to the intricacies of making an 8 strand line in smaller diameters. For example, a 300-yard spool of 40 lb. test will run you about \$45, but a 300-yard spool of 15 lb. test is almost \$75! It comes in 150 to 1500 yard spools and is available in 15 to 150 lb. tests.





Although you may never have heard of the Jarden Corporation, I'm certain you will recognize many of the brands of this Fortune 1000 corporation. Here are just a *few* of them: Ball®, Bee®, Bicycle®, Diamond®, First Alert®, Forster®, Hoyle®, Java Log®, Loew-Cornell® and Pine Mountain®; Consumer Solutions: Bionaire®, Crock-Pot®, FoodSaver®, Harmony®, Health o meter®, Holmes®, Mr. Coffee®, Oster®, Patton®, Rival®, Seal-a-Meal®, Sunbeam®, Coleman®, JT®, Marmot®, Rawlings®, Sevylor®, and Stearns®.

Last April this behemoth purchased the Pure Fishing Corporation, which includes the well known Berkley, Abu Garcia, Fenwick, Stren, Mitchell, Johnson, Spider and Seven Strand brands.



Then in August of 2007, in a \$1.2 billion takeover (that's a "b., by the way), they scooped up the K2 Corporation, which included the fishing brands Shakespeare, Pflueger, All Star Rods, XTools, and Penn.



It's hard to say how this will affect the fishing industry or the consumer right now. My first inclination is that it can't be good for either. In talking to some of the industry folks who are directly affected by this takeover, I got a sense of apprehension and nervousness at what this may mean for business and their jobs. One tackle insider even told me that Jarden is being investigated for this maneuver. Personally, I believe that less competition is never a good thing for consumers. We will, of course, have to wait and see if that holds true in this case. For now, Pure Fishing, Penn and Shakespeare/Pflueger/AllStar will operate as separate entities under the Jarden banner.

What follows is what's new at each of these companies.



Ray Goeke started our conversation by saying; "This is an exciting year for Penn. We have a lot of nice new products for this year.,,

In showing all the new products coming out from his company, Ray said, "The word this year at Penn is Sargus.,, The Sargus may just be Penn's nicest new spinning reel introduction in a few years. The charcoal colored reel features and all aluminum body and rotor, five ball bearings, waterproof drag and a main shaft that's up to 20% bigger than the competition. The reel comes in five sizes from the 2000 (115 yards of 6 lb test) to the 6000 (230 yards of 17 lb test). The Sargus retails from around \$75 to \$100.



Penn has also added a bigger reel to its Slammer series. The 760 Slammer and Slammer Live Liner are just what many Penn fans have been asking for. Sporting the same features of their smaller cousins such as Leveline Wrap System, Techno Balanced Rotor, Full Metal Body, and Oversized Main Shaft, the larger size now accommodates an incredible 300 yards of 20 lb test. Ray noted that either of these would be a great reel for



a 10 or 11 foot surf rod. I imagine that they would be great for offshore applications as well. MSRP is \$149.99.



On the conventional side, Penn has beefed up their famous Senator reels with the introduction of the Metal Senator. This new Senator incorporates a machined aluminum frame and side plates, three stainless steel ball bearings, a double-dog, multi-stop anti-reverse and Penn's Integrated Side Plate design which translates into more power with a higher retrieve ratio. They are available in 4/0 and 6/0 sizes. The 4/0 has a 4.25-1 gear ratio and holds 475 yards of 30 lb. The 6/0 has a 3.75-1 gear ratio and holds 475 yards of 50 lb test. Expect to pay \$229.99 to \$249.99 for these.



Building on the tremendous success of their Torque reels, Penn has added the Torque 100. This is the smallest reel in the Torque family. It holds 450 yards of 12 lb mono or up to 550 yards of 30 lb braid. The Torque 100 boasts all the features of its big brothers; an Integrated Side Plate, forged & machined frame, spool, and side plates, infinite anti-reverse roller bearing, machined stainless steel main gear, heat-treated stainless steel pinion gear for strength, Versa-drag, multiple drag-stack arrangement, disengaging pinion for superior free spool, and five stainless steel ball bearings. Plus this reel is equipped with the same magnetic cast control found on the popular 525 Mag. By the way, this smallest Torque is certainly no lightweight when it comes to power. Ray told me, “The drag on this reel is listed at 22 lbs, but it really gets up to 30 lbs. I caught tuna with this reel and had fish up to 125 lbs on it!,, The Torque 100 costs about \$380.



Penn now has a new lever drag reel with the Torque name on it. In addition to all the features mentioned above, “the Torque Lever Drag is the first lever drag reel with a stacked drag system. This is going to give the reel a lot of versatility,, according to Ray. It has a blisteringly fast 6.4:1 gear ratio and will hold 360 yards of 30 lb mono or about 360 yards of 80 lb braid. The Torque Lever Drag 300 retails for \$599.99



Penn's new Torque Jigging Rods are designed to be matched up with (what else?) the Torque reels of course. There are five models in all (two spinning and three conventional). All the rods in this series boast Titanium Nitride guides and triangular EVA foam grips. They are super thin, yet very strong. Ray put one in my hand to show me how powerful they really are. "Plus,, Ray pointed out, "these reels feature a higher framed guide, which keeps the line from touching the blank.,, He was referring to a complaint often made about the first series of the Shimano Trevala jigging rods. Penn's rod series come in sizes from a 5'8,, conventional rated for up to 130 lb test to a 7' spinner rated for 30-50 lb braid. All models retail for \$99.99.







When I stopped by the Pure Fishing booth I thought I would be there all day. After all, there are eight different companies that make up Pure Fishing (Berkley, Abu Garcia, Fenwick, Stren, Mitchell, Johnson, Spider and Seven Strand). However, when I asked Capt. Jim O'Donnell what's hot at Pure Fishing, all he wanted to talk about was the new Berkley Gulp! Alive! Capt. Jim told me how this was the latest version of Gulp! It comes in two size buckets. The small (pint) size has an MSRP of \$19.99 and the large (quart) size sells for \$39.99. Capt. Jim told me, "Everything eats it. It disperses 20% more scent than the old Gulp!,, Another great thing is that "you can put your used Gulp! baits back in the bucket to re-charge them.,,

When I asked him for his personal favorites, he told me that he prefers the swimming mullets in chartreuse and white or the "new penny,, color shrimp in a 3,, size for fluke. Capt. Jim said he will scale down to a 2,, size for sea bass "so you can catch more without them tearing so many baits up.,,

I tried the Gulp! Alive! towards the end of last season and had some good success with the 4,, chartreuse Swimming Mullet. I will add one thing from personal experience, and I've heard this from others as well. *Don't trust the lid on the buckets that these baits come in!* I had an experience in which I was sure that I tightened down the lid securely. However, when I got home from my fishing trip, the jar was tilted over and the juice had leaked out all over my tackle bag. Some had even gotten into the carpet of my trunk. What a mess!

I contacted Berkley about this problem and they were gracious enough to send me a replacement for the spilled bucket. I don't believe they've fixed the problems with the lids staying sealed though. So, after that experience I purchased some Tupperware type containers with screw on lids, which sealed much better than the Berkley containers. If

you will be using the Gulp! Alive! this season, I recommend doing the same. It may save you from having a big mess or an even bigger headache!



My visit to the Shakespeare/Pflueger/All Star/XTools booth got off track right away. When I asked Greg Nisito about the new tackle from these companies, he changed the subject. All he wanted to tell me about was a new line of laminated fish and wildlife identification charts and a gadget you may have already seen on this site, the [ARC Dehooker](#). ARC stands for Aquatic Research Conservation, Inc. The following is taken directly from their website:

Aquatic Release Conservation, Inc. (ARC) is a technology, research and manufacturing company dedicated to research, development, distribution and sales of equipment technologies and educational outreach materials and programs to enable recreational anglers and commercial fishermen to practice careful handling and release techniques and other fishing practices to increase post-release survivability of hooked and released fish and other aquatic animals.

Greg explained that the ARC Dehooker and the venting tool are already mandatory equipment on some boats in certain areas of the country. He also said that eventually they would be made mandatory on *all* fishing vessels (including recreational) due to the fact that they greatly reduce the mortality rate of released gut-hooked fish.

He explained that this would be a good thing for the entire fishing community. This is because of the way the NMFS surveys work. When a captain fills out his mandatory catch report, the NMFS takes a portion of the *released* fish and adds that to the total quota. This is due to them figuring a certain portion of these released fish will die anyway.

However, since the ARC dehooker is proven to reduce the mortality rate of released fish, the actual percentage of fish that would go towards the yearly quota would be reduced significantly! While I was a bit disappointed that I didn't learn anything about what's new for Shakespeare, Pflueger, All Star and XTools, it was very interesting to hear about this exciting new product.



Area sales representative Randy Birchler had quite a few new items of interest to NJ anglers on display at the Okuma booth. Two spinning and three conventional models make up the Cedros Speed Jig rods. All rods are six feet long and are built to handle jigs

from 2 to 12 ounces and line up to 150 lbs. All models are built on E-Glass blanks, are fitted with machined aluminum reel seats, Zirconium PVD coated guides and split rear grips. MSRP \$99.99.



The Red Isis baitcaster should be a great reel for all types of inshore fishing. With their bright red, machined aluminum frames and gold side plates, these reels look sharp! Inside they boast five stainless steel ball bearings, precision machined cut brass gears and multi-disk Carbonite drag washers. They are available in four models and two sizes. The 250 size holds 170 yards of 15 lb and the 400 holds 180 yards of 20 lb test mono. Both models are available in either a machined aluminum power handle (shown) or a twin paddle carbon fiber handle. MSRP on these beauties is \$159.99



If you're looking for something a little beefier, the Contoura conventional series comes in five sizes with models designed for 20 to 50 lb line. They feature a graphite frame, machined aluminum spool, magnetic cast control, multi-disk Carbonite drag system, three stainless steel bearing drive system, and oversized stainless gearing. There are three high speed (6.2:1) and two standard speed (4.0:1) models. Prices range from \$89.99 to \$124.99.



For you spinning fans, the new Salina Bait Feeder looks like a real winner. Based on the popular Salina saltwater spinner introduced last season, the Salina Bait Feeder features Okuma's patented bait feeding system, AlumiLite construction, "EOS,, Elliptical Oscillation System, and Dual Force Drag. There are four models from a 40 size, which holds 170 yards of 12 lb test to an 80 size, which has a capacity of 260 yards of 25 lb test. All reels have 5 HPB sealed bearings and sealed drags. These reels retail from \$129.99 to \$139.99.





For those of you who are looking for something a little easier on the wallet, Okuma has redesigned their Avenger reel for 2008. This reel is available from the tiny size 15, which holds 80 yards of 6 lb, to the monster size 80, which holds 260 yards of 25 lb test. They feature a 6 ball bearing drive, multi-disk Japanese oiled felt drag washers, an aluminum spool, spare graphite spool and Okuma's Hydro Bloc water tight drag seal. They range in price from \$34.99 to \$49.99.



Also of note from Okuma are their Baidarka series of kayak rods. The series is comprised of five casting and two spinning models from 7'0,, to 7'6,,. Specifically designed for the kayak fisherman, they feature shorter butts, lengthened fore grips, double foot Pac Bay guides, and an integrated leash attachment point. One of the best features for kayak anglers is that if you happen to drop one overboard, it will float! The Baidarka rods come with a lifetime warranty and go from \$99.99 to \$119.99.



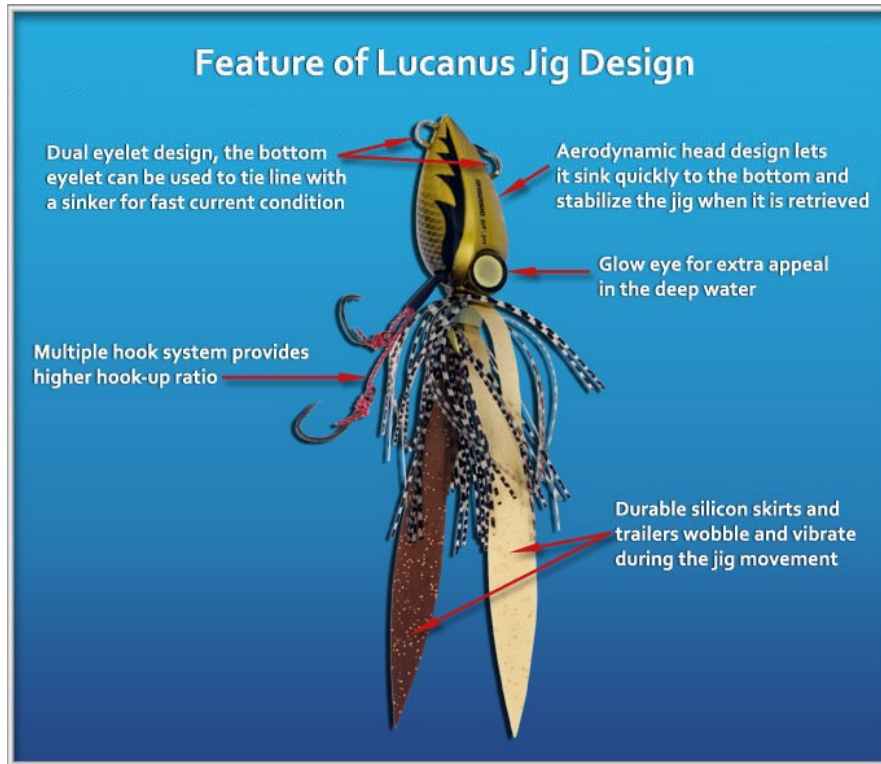




# SHIMANO®

Shimano had their usual large spread of products at the show. Greg Kondak showed me around the hot new stuff that Shimano has to offer for 2008.

The absolute hottest item that Greg had to show me was Shimano's new Lucanus Jigging System. This new bottom fishing system made its world debut at this show. Based on Japanese commercial fishermen's "secret jig,, it is truly unique. With their large, aerodynamic heads, fluttering strips of rubber, spinnerbait type skirts, and tiny assist hooks, they really look like nothing else on the market today. They are currently available in six colors and weights from two to seven ounces.



But the jigs are only one part of the system. There are seven specially designed Tescata rods (three spinning and four conventional), a Lucanus Jig Version Calcutta TE reel and monofilament wind-on leaders. In addition to this Shimano also offers jig keepers, storage bags and replacement skirts and hooks for this system.

## CALCUTTA TE 400LJV



Although this system was originally developed in Japan, Greg assures me that it has its applications here in New Jersey as well. Some of the fish caught in our local waters include cod, haddock, black sea bass and fluke. I will have a more complete article about the Lucanus Jigging System in the very near future, as well as a complete field-testing report on its effectiveness. MSRP are as follows: Tescata rods \$199.99, LJV Calcutta TE \$449.99, jigs \$14.99-\$17.99 and wind-on leaders \$12.99.



Shimano has also introduced a brand new spinning reel for the saltwater fisherman. When Greg handed me the new Saragosa, my first impression was that it felt like a Stradic on steroids. It definitely felt smooth yet powerful. Priced between Shimano's top of the line Stella and the always-popular Sustain, this reel is overbuilt from top to bottom. This reel is available in seven sizes, from a 3000 (140 yards of 10 lb test) to the 18000 (250 yards of 30 lb test). Although they weigh a bit more than a similarly sized Stradic, it really isn't all that noticeable. All the reels in this line feature an all-metal body, the Paladin Gear Durability Enhancement, Shimano's new S-ARB (shielded ball bearings), a "stopperless,, design (no anti-reverse switch), direct drive mechanism and titanium spool lip. There is also an optional manual bail kit available for the 14000 and 18000 size reels. MSRP \$189.99 to \$299.99.

## ***Saragosa***



Shimano's recently introduced Socorro is a quality saltwater spinning reel that won't cost you an arm and a leg. The Socorro comes in four sizes from the 4000 (160 yards of 12 lb test) to the 10000 (220 yards of 20 lb test). Socorro reels feature Shimano's Propulsion Line Management System, Propulsion Spool Lip, a lightweight graphite frame and rotor, shielded stainless steel ball bearings, cold forged aluminum spool and waterproof drag. All sizes of Socorro reels sell for \$69.99.

## ***SOCORRO***





By now many of you have probably heard of US Reel's Supercaster. This is the spinning reel with the extremely wide spool. At first glance it reminds one of the old Penn 704Z, but with a skirted spool design. The manufacturer claims that the wide spool design makes it cast further with less line twist and memory. These reels won a Field & Stream Editor's Pick Award for 2007.

I spoke with Joe Poms at the US Reel booth. He showed me the latest addition to the Supercaster family. The 180 size is the smallest one yet. The spool size is similar to that on most manufacturer's 3000 size reel. However, it weighs about the same as other brand's 500 or 1000 size reel. Although this reel can hold an incredible 626 yards of 2 lb test, it comes with a spool arbor that will save you from having to put that much line on the reel. With the arbor it will still hold about half that. Currently, there are now three sizes (180, 230 and 240) and two styles (the SX and XL). Joe told me the SX (silver) reels are the ones made for saltwater, as they are more corrosion resistant than the XL models. Expect to pay \$99.99 to \$169.99 depending on the size and model.







Last and, at a retail price of between \$850 and \$1300, *certainly* not least is the ZeeBaaS. Rob Koelewyn, designer, engineer, founder and President of ZeeBaaS was on hand to show me the many innovative features of these reels. For quite a few years now the benchmark in saltwater spinning reels has been the Van Staal. Rob is well known and respected as the man who brought the Van Staal to market. After working with Van Staal for a number of years, Rob left to create the ZeeBaaS line of spinning reels.

The surf fishermen of Montauk were the inspiration for ZeeBaaS reels. These anglers are among the toughest on their tackle as they climb rocks, wade, and even swim to get to the fish. More than just reels, these are truly an interchangeable fishing reel system. There are eight models available. However, with one ZeeBaaS reel you can create many other reels, so you can customize your reel for different situations. For example, you can change it out with one of four different size spools, thus making a smaller or larger reel. Each spool has a different drag rating for various pound test lines, up to 80 lb braid. The sealed drags are an offshore type, utilizing a ceramic plate and carbon fiber and are capable of putting out 25 lb to 40 lb of drag! They also require very little maintenance and are designed to be fished dry (no lube).

ZeeBaaS reels are offered in bail-less models with either single or dual line rollers or with a traditional type bail. Each model weighs less than 17 oz. and can be converted from left to right hand retrieve. Line capacities range from 350 yards of 10 lb mono on the smallest model ZX20RS to 360 yards of 20 lb mono or 500 yards of 50 lb braid on the largest model ZX27RD.

The reels themselves are *totally* sealed and are impervious to saltwater intrusion. ZeeBaaS reels are made of aerospace grade aluminum, Titanium and marine grade stainless. The phrase “built like a tank,, is often overused. However, in this case it’s the only way I can describe these truly incredible reels!

ZeeBaaS reels are manufactured in the USA and come with a limited lifetime warranty.



This is just a small sample of what's new and hot this year in saltwater tackle. For more information on any of the products mentioned, just click on any logo to go to their respective website. Remember, you probably don't *need* all this fancy new tackle, but it sure is fun! Don't you think?