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(54) **ARTIFICIAL FISHING LURE**

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(51) **Int. Cl.**
A01K 85/16 (2006.01)
A01K 85/00 (2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.**
CPC **A01K 85/16** (2013.01); **A01K 85/00** (2013.01); **A01K 2227/40** (2013.01)

(58) **Field of Classification Search**
CPC **A01K 85/00**; **A01K 85/18**; **A01K 85/16**; **A01K 85/02**

See application file for complete search history.

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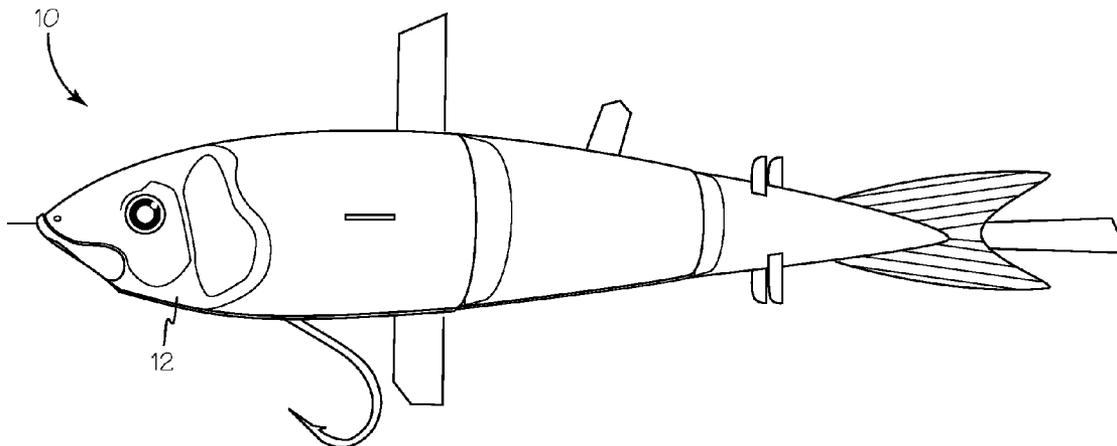
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A multi-segmented, soft-bodied, artificial fishing lure or swim bait with a natural profile includes plastic control planes in each body segment to generate a lure that is stable in the water, and demonstrates realistic swimming motions in a range of retrieve speeds and even when allowed to sink. At least one clear, stiff plastic control plane is inserted in each body segment to generate a lifelike swimming motion when the lure is retrieved. Each control plane may be moved within a range of positions to provide realistic motions for specific fishing techniques. The control planes inserted into and sometimes through the lure body are invisible in the water and are adjustable to accommodate a range of water conditions, densities and temperatures. The placement of control planes create the ability to limit unnatural/undesirable movements and expand or accentuate natural and desirable movements in each segment of the body of the lure.

8 Claims, 3 Drawing Sheets



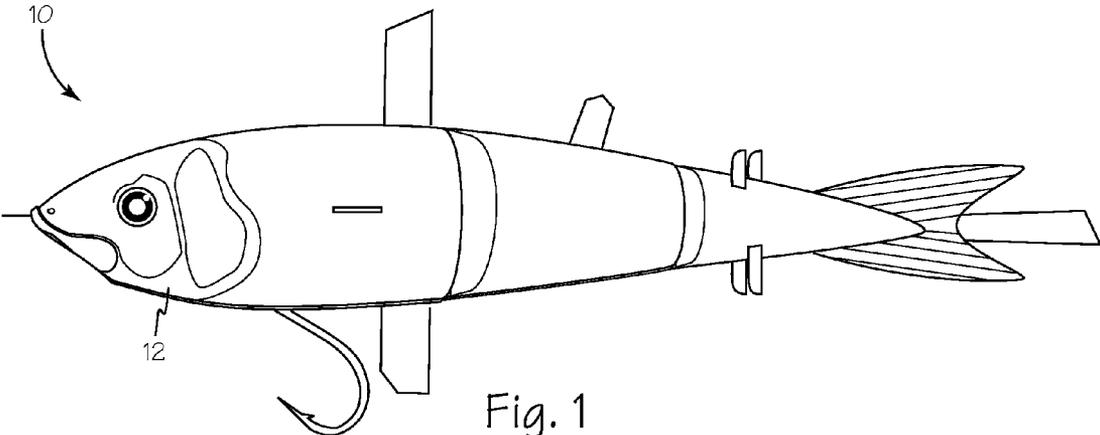
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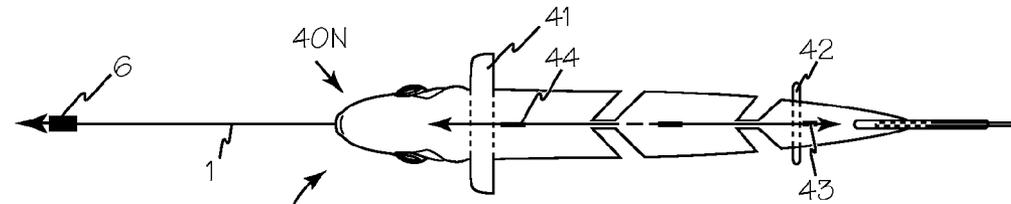


Fig. 9

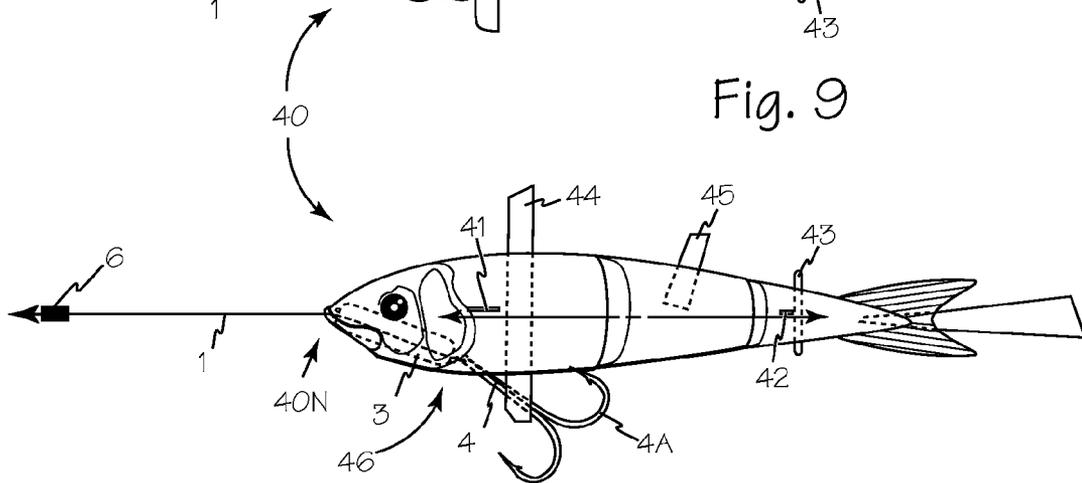


Fig. 10

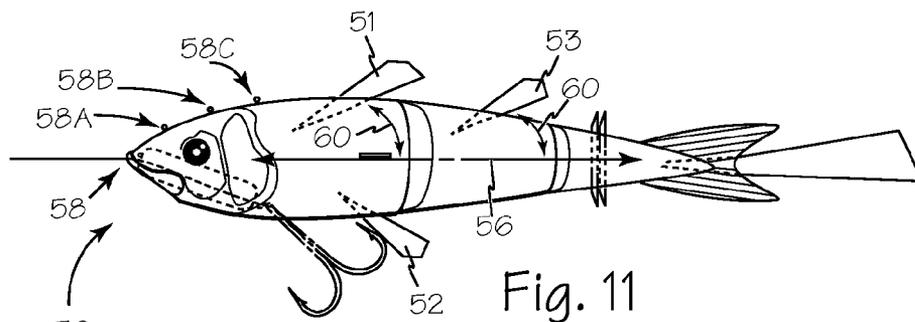


Fig. 11

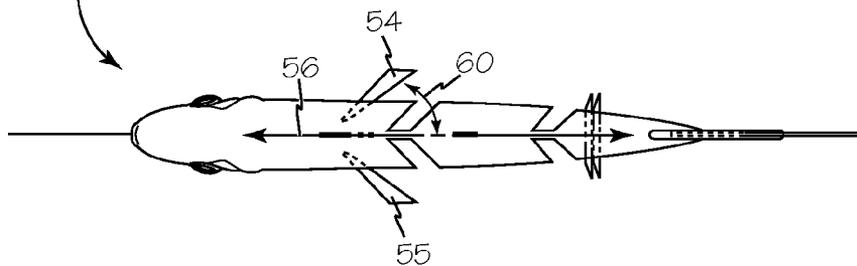


Fig. 12

ARTIFICIAL FISHING LURE

RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 14/166,742 filed Jan. 28, 2014 now U.S. Pat. No. 9,179,656.

FIELD OF THE INVENTIONS

The inventions described below relate to the field of fishing lures and more specifically to realistic fishing lures that accurately simulate live, healthy, swimming baitfish.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTIONS

Artificial fishing lures such as swim baits attempt to simulate baitfish and to stimulate a strike response from gamefish. The swim bait has become extremely popular with game fisherman. These devices attempt to emulate the look and motion of smaller swimming fish and other creatures, attracting larger game fish to the hook and capture. Swim baits often closely resemble a shad, minnow, bluegill or any fish in size, shape, and color. The body is segmented in sections to allow it to move back and forth through the water.

Conventional sectioned, straight tailed and soft plastic swim baits do not perform natural swimming motions on their own when compared to the live bait fish the lures are simulating. The problems with conventional swim baits are: 1) an unnatural lateral, side to side head wobble producing a wide lateral arc in the front of the lure, this motion is more of a snake like action than of a natural baitfish; 2) an exaggerated head wobble produces the same snakelike, exaggerated, lateral, side to side, wide lateral arc in the tail, similar to what is seen in the head; 3) the swim bait rolls with a longer/wider unnatural rocking about the longitudinal axis, a natural baitfish swims with a slight body roll; 4) the swim bait is unstable during faster retrieves or trolls spinning and rotating about both longitudinal and vertical axis' due to the exaggerated head arc, tail arc and body roll; 5) the swim bait does not swim down or dive downward naturally or glide with an upright orientation. In most cases, when the retrieve or troll is stopped, a conventional swim bait's tail does not beat or move as the bait sinks down toward the bottom, instead, the swim bait just tumbles and sinks.

Many conventional swim bait lures modify the natural, organic look of baitfish to provide twist, curl, paddle, or vortex tails and other visible non-lifelike extensions to generate motion in the lure or to simulate organic fish fins. Often the generated motion of these extensions generate erratic and unnatural motions and they do not look real. In addition, there is some variation in the weight and balance of conventional lures leading to inconsistent performance between two swim baits from the same package.

The fins and shape of living fish enable them to move through the water with very little gross motion as is generated when retrieving many conventional lures. In addition, living baitfish are generally stable in the water and maintain an upright orientation when moving slowly through the water which is very different from many conventional lures that lean and bob in unnatural orientations when they are not being actively retrieved or allowed to sink or rest on the bottom.

SUMMARY

The devices and methods described below provide for a multi-segmented, soft-bodied artificial fishing lure or swim

bait with a natural profile that is stable in the water, and demonstrates realistic swimming motions in a range of retrieve speeds and even when allowed to sink. At least one clear, stiff control plane is inserted in each body segment to generate a very lifelike swimming motion when the lure is retrieved or worked. Each control plane may be moved within a range of positions to provide more precise motions for specific fishing techniques. The control planes inserted into and sometimes through the lure body are invisible in the water and are adjustable to accommodate a range of water conditions, densities and temperatures. The stiffness of the control planes also provides a very lifelike mouthfeel to a gamefish that strikes the lure which simulates the stiff spines of a baitfish which extend out when threatened or consumed. The strategic placement of control planes create the ability to limit unnatural/undesirable movements and expand or accentuate natural and desirable movements to specific segments of the body of the swim bait. Adjusting and controlling the forces applied to each body segment and therefore the motion of each body segment enables fine tuning adjustment of the gross motion of the swim bait lure.

The control plane configuration disclosed here provides similar performance in a variety of fish body geometries from the torpedo shape of shad and minnows to the upright planar shape of crappie and bluegill. Control planes may be formed of any suitable clear, generally stiff material such as plastics, polymers and even ceramics such as glass.

The control planes in a multi-segment swim bait allow an angler to alter the way the swim bait moves through the water expanding the range of potential swimming motions/actions without changing the appearance of the lure because the alterations are made by adjusting the low visibility, clear plastic control planes. The forces generated by the control planes damp out unwanted motions and accentuate desired motions to more accurately simulate the motions of a live and swimming baitfish. The ability to adjust one or more control planes on each lure enables multiple lures to be adjusted to perform consistently if that is desired.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a side view of a multi-segment soft-bodied fishing lure with control planes inserted.

FIG. 2 is a side view of a multi-segment soft-bodied fishing lure illustrating the control planes and weight and hook.

FIG. 3 is a top view of the fishing lure of FIG. 2.

FIG. 4 is a bottom view of the fishing lure of FIG. 2.

FIG. 5 is a front view of the fishing lure of FIG. 2.

FIG. 6 is a cross section view of the first segment of the fishing lure of FIG. 2 taken along A-A.

FIG. 7 is a cross section view of the second segment of the fishing lure of FIG. 2 taken along B-B.

FIG. 8 is a cross section view of the tail segment of the fishing lure of FIG. 2 taken along C-C.

FIG. 9 is a top view of a fishing lure with control planes configured for jerkbaiting.

FIG. 10 is a side view of the fishing lure of FIG. 9.

FIG. 11 is a side view of a fishing lure with control planes configured for high speed retrieves and trolling.

FIG. 12 is a top view of the fishing lure of FIG. 11.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTIONS

FIG. 1 illustrates lure or swim bait 10 with realistic and adjustable swimming performance generated by the inter-

action of the multi-segment, soft body and the one or more clear and generally stiff control planes in each body segment.

Lure or swim bait **10** of FIGS. **2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7** and **8** has a soft, multi-segmented body **12** having first or front segment **13**, second or middle segment **14** and a third or tail segment **15** with a realistic tail **12T**. One or more control planes are frictionally secured in each body segment such as segments **13, 14** or **15** with all the control planes generally coplanar with horizontal axis **23C**. For example, first body segment **13** includes front vertical control plane **16** and front horizontal control plane **17**. Control planes such as control planes **16** and **17** are generally stiff, clear plastic and may extend from one surface of body **12** or they may extend completely through the body as shown. Any suitable plastic may be selected for control planes, however they should be selected of a material that is generally invisible to fish in the water. Any suitable tool such as a narrow blade knife, razor blade or sharpened piece of plastic may be used to create a slot or opening to accommodate a control plane. The control planes are not sized, shaped or located to simulate the appearance of any natural appendages of any water creature.

Second or middle body segment **14** includes a middle, dorsal control plane **18** which generally extends from top or dorsal surface **12D** of the body although any other suitable orientation may be used. Third or tail segment **15** includes first and second control planes **19** and **20** and collinear tail control plane **21** which is parallel to longitudinal axis **23C**, and generally coplanar with vertical axis **23A** and extends back, away from tail **12T**. Horizontal orientation of tail control plane **21** in which the control plane is coplanar with horizontal axis **23C** may also be used. Radial orientations of tail control plane **21** between vertical and horizontal may be used to generate swimming motions of a crippled baitfish.

Properly placed and aligned control planes such as planes **16, 17, 18, 19, 20** and **21** function to change the dynamic forces exerted on a swim bait by the water enabling the lure to achieve desirable, natural swimming motions. To generate natural swimming motions at a range of retrieve speeds as well as when sinking, a segmented, straight tailed, soft polymer or plastic swim bait needs one or more control surfaces to limit unnatural movement in its front and middle segment/sections(s) and one or more control surfaces to enhance and control the movement in its tail segment/section(s). The generally stiff and clear control planes such as planes **16, 17, 18, 19, 20** and **21** provide controlled force to the lure body whether the control plane ends are rounded, squared, diamond, rhombus shaped or even forked as illustrated. Rounded control planes such as control planes **19** and **20** are preferred because there is not a corner or sharp edge to cut or nick the line during the cast or retrieve and rounded control planes shed weeds best. Positioning of hook **5** and any suitable weight such as weight **2** in front segment **13** maintains a forward center of gravity to aid in stabilizing the entire lure.

Generally, control planes **16, 17, 18** limit back and forth, lateral head wobble, limit vertical roll, twist and rocking, and provide overall stability. Tail control surfaces **19** and **20**, and protruding tail plane **21** controls movement to the tail segment/section and add stability. Often, additional tail movement stimulation is required due to the limiting of forces/movements by control planes **16, 17, 18** in the front and middle sections which tend to reduce desired tail movements. Tail control surfaces **19** and **20** are oriented at about 45 degrees from vertical and horizontal axes **23A** and **23B** respectively. Control planes such as control planes **16,**

17, 18, 19, 20 and **21** may be oriented at any suitable angle relative to body axes **23A, 23B** and **23C**.

An angler may adjust or tune the performance of an individual lure or swim bait at the time of use to perfect the desired motions according to the existing water conditions. For example, small changes can be made to the positions of the control planes as well as the size and location of weights and hook placement and orientation that will enable the angler to fine-tune the lure to achieve the desired swimming motions. These fine adjustments can easily be made by adjusting the length of the control planes by pulling them out or pushing them in further into the body, or pushing them through farther to the opposite side of the bait.

For example, as placement of control planes **16, 17, 18** moves back toward the tail, the side-to-side motion/action/wobble/lateral arc of the front head portion of the swim bait become more limited. Additionally, control plane width **28** and length **30** of control plane **16** factor in limiting head movement, a wider and longer control plane **16** will limit movement more than a thin, short control plane. Extending the length of control plane **16** to protrude farther from bottom **12B** of lure **10** will also limit head movement. Additionally, extending this control plane **16** to protrude from the bottom will limit vertical roll of body **12**.

Control planes may be located in a range of positions within each segment of the lure body. Referring now to FIG. **3**, range **34** is the range of positions available for control planes **16** and **17**. Horizontal control plane **17** generally limits the roll/rocking or twist along horizontal axis **23C**. A thin, generally short control plane is generally sufficient to accomplish this for most water conditions. The combined effect of the front vertical and front horizontal control planes, planes **16** and **17**, is to create stabilization at a higher threshold retrieve speeds. Additionally, the combination provides stabilization when the swim bait is diving or coasting after a retrieve or troll is stopped. All motions discussed for lure **10** are based on retrieve force **6** applied through fishing line **1** along longitudinal axis **23C**.

Range **36** is the range of suitable positions for control planes in the second or center segment of a swim bait or lure such as lure **10**. Control plane **18** functions to limit the motions of the middle segment/section of the swim bait. Limiting movement in the middle section of the swim bait factors in limiting exaggerated head and tail movements when the lure is moving relative to the water. Control plane **18** also helps middle segment **14** stay aligned with front segment **13** and tail segment **15** which aids the baits speed and diving stabilization. Moving control plane **18** toward tail **12T** has a limiting effect on the tail's motions as does increasing the width and length of control plane **18**.

Range **37** is the range of suitable positions along horizontal axis **23C** for control planes such as control planes **19** and **20** in third or tail segment **15** of a swim bait or lure such as lure **10**. Control planes **19** and **20** are used together to create overall stability and control the movement in the tail section. Control planes **19** and **20** may be used in any suitable radial orientation about longitudinal axis **23C** as illustrated by radial range **35** of FIG. **8**. If control planes **19** and **20** are oriented in line with vertical and horizontal axes **23A** and **23B**, they hinder the ability of the lure to dive with its tail beating or appear to swim down when coasting or sinking at slow speed. When control planes **19** and **20** are aligned with the vertical and horizontal axes without a protruding tail control plane, the lure is very stable when sinking with very little movement in the tail section and provides subtle and subdued tail movements during a wide range of retrieve speeds. The addition of a protruding tail

control plane provides the magnitude and direction of force necessary to make the lure appear to swim down when combined with the stabilizing vertical and horizontal tail control planes.

Protruding tail control plane **21** provides overall stability to the swim bait by increasing the overall lure length **38**. Protruding tail control plane **21** also adds enough lateral resistance to allow tail **12T** to move back and forth and simulate swimming, when the front sections of the lures movements are limited by the other control planes. Tail control plane **21** enables the natural motion of a moving tail when the retrieve is stopped and the swim bait is drifting or sinking. Adjusting the size, orientation and length of protrusion **39** provides a way for an angler to alter the tail beat frequency and arc. A longer protruding tail control plane slows the tail beat frequency and limits the lateral, side to side arc, more than a shorter and or narrower control plane. Orienting control plane **21** coplanar with horizontal axis **23B** enables a slow tail beat at lower speed than when oriented coplanar with vertical axis **23A**. In a horizontal orientation, control plane **21** enables swim bait **10** to glide horizontally with less vertical drop but, without the swim down action or motion.

Referring now to FIGS. **9** and **10**, increasing the length and width of front horizontal control plane **41** of lure **40** will induce an increased horizontal glide but limit the lure's ability to swim straight down or dive under it's own weight. A more forward orientation of control plane **41** will also induce more of a glide and less overall stability at speed and dive. This motion may be enhanced by orienting control planes **42** and **43** parallel to front horizontal control plane **41** and front vertical control plane **44** respectively. A skilled and knowledgeable angler may recognize that the forward placement and increased size of the front horizontal control plane creates a desirable swim motion for an angling technique called "jerk baiting" (as it is commonly referred to by professional anglers and described in fishing journals). This technique involves a cadence of sharp pulls and pauses of a lure, (not continuous reeling or troll) in which the angler tries to mimic the motion of a wounded or struggling bait fish. When fished in this manner; front horizontal control plane **41** produces a wide, side to side darting action, with a relatively small amount of forward progress of the lure, both characteristics of a good jerkbait.

With front vertical control plane **44** and middle/dorsal control plane **45** positioned on the top side of lure **40**, these control planes would extend above a hook located on the top of a swim bait, impeding the hooks ability to penetrate a fishes mouth. Also, a hook that comes out the top of the swim bait can impede the placement of front vertical control plane **44**, therefore a bottom hook arrangement is preferred as illustrated in FIGS. **2** and **10**.

Any suitable weight may be used, however, as illustrated in FIGS. **2** and **10**, lures **10** and **40** use cylindrical or oblong shaped weights **2** and **3** respectively, with a pass through in its center for fishing line **1**. This configuration lowers the center of gravity and provide keel weighting for added stabilization. Any suitable weight such as weight **3** is positioned within the nose **40N** and angles down toward the tail generally extending from lure bottom **46**. Any suitably sized weight or weights can be inserted into the lure body. After the weight is inserted, fishing line **1** is inserted through the front/nose of the lure through the weight and then a single hook, such as hook **5** of FIG. **2**, or a treble hook such as hook **4** of FIG. **10** is attached to line **1**. One hook of a treble hook such as hook **4A** can be inserted into the underbelly of the lure or permitted to dangle from lure bottom **46**.

There are a multitude of potential positions that differently sized and shaped control planes can be inserted in the body of a segmented, sectioned, straight tailed, soft plastic swim bait. Any control plane inserted into the body of a swim bait or lure changes the way that the bait moves through the water. Referring now to FIGS. **11** and **12**, swim bait lure **50** is configured for high speed retrieves and trolling. At higher speeds drag and frictional forces applied on the control planes can make a lure unstable. Orienting control planes **51**, **52**, **53**, **54** and **55** at angles such as angles **60** of less than 90° relative to longitudinal axis **56** of lure **50** improves the stability of the lure during high speed retrieves and trolling. A low angle orientation of control planes may also be used where larger control planes are used to dampen the effects of the large control planes. Additionally, the orientation of the line tie location will have an effect on the lure motion and will change the size and orientation of control planes required. For example, line tie location **58** necessitates the use front horizontal control planes such as control planes **17**, **41**, **54** and **55**. For lures with tie locations higher on the lure top such as locations **58A** and **58B**, the size of the front horizontal control plane can be made smaller and for a line tie location such as **58C** the front horizontal control plane may be omitted.

If the control planes are placed incorrectly or misaligned, they can generally be re-inserted into the body of a soft, plastic swim bait multiple times until placed to achieve the desired motion or action.

Two or more clear, generally invisible, adjustable plastic control planes may be added to any conventional soft bodied baits such as tube baits, worms, salamanders, crawfish and hollow bodied shad baits to control the motion of the lure when sinking, drifting or during active retrieves and may be used in an angling technique called "dropshotting."

While the preferred embodiments of the devices and methods have been described in reference to the environment in which they were developed, they are merely illustrative of the principles of the inventions. The elements of the various embodiments may be incorporated into each of the other species to obtain the benefits of those elements in combination with such other species, and the various beneficial features may be employed in embodiments alone or in combination with each other. Other embodiments and configurations may be devised without departing from the spirit of the inventions and the scope of the appended claims.

We claim:

1. An artificial fishing lure comprising:

a soft lure body having at least a front segment and a tail segment, the soft lure body having a lifelike profile and longitudinal, vertical and horizontal axes;

a first control plane removably secured through the front segment, the first control plane formed of generally stiff and clear plastic and oriented coplanar to the longitudinal axis and the vertical axis of the lure body;

a second control plane removably secured through the front segment, the second control plane formed of generally stiff and clear plastic and oriented coplanar to the longitudinal axis and the horizontal axis of the lure body;

a third control plane removably secured through the tail segment, the third control plane formed of generally stiff and clear plastic and oriented coplanar to the longitudinal axis of the lure body and radially oriented between the vertical and horizontal axes of the lure body; and

a fourth control plane removably secured through the tail segment, the fourth control plane formed of generally

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stiff and clear plastic and oriented coplanar to the longitudinal axis of the lure body and generally perpendicular to the third control plane.

2. The artificial fishing lure of claim 1 wherein the third control plane is oriented coplanar to the longitudinal axis and at 45 degrees to the vertical axis of the lure body and the fourth control plane is oriented coplanar to the longitudinal axis and generally perpendicular to the third control plane.

3. The artificial lure of claim 1 further comprising:

a fifth control plane removably secured into a body segment between the front segment and the tail segment, the fifth control plane formed of generally stiff and clear plastic and oriented coplanar to the longitudinal axis of the lure body and the vertical axis of the lure body.

4. The artificial fishing lure of claim 1 further comprising: a protruding control plane inserted into the tail segment, the protruding control plane formed of generally stiff and clear plastic and oriented along and coplanar to the longitudinal axis of the lure body.

5. An artificial fishing lure comprising:

a multi-segment soft lure body having at least a front segment and a tail segment, the multi-segment soft lure body having a lifelike profile and longitudinal, vertical and horizontal axes;

a first control plane removably secured through the front segment and oriented coplanar to the longitudinal axis and the vertical axis of the lure body;

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a second control plane removably secured through the front segment and oriented coplanar to the longitudinal axis and the horizontal axis of the lure body;

a third control plane removably secured through the tail segment and radially oriented between the vertical and horizontal axes of the lure body; and

a fourth control plane removably secured through the tail segment and oriented coplanar to the longitudinal axis of the lure body and generally perpendicular to the third control plane.

6. The artificial fishing lure of claim 5 wherein the third control plane is oriented coplanar to the longitudinal axis and at 45 degrees to the vertical axis of the lure body and the fourth control plane is oriented coplanar to the longitudinal axis and generally perpendicular to the third control plane.

7. The artificial fishing lure of claim 5 further comprising: a body segment between the front segment and the tail segment; and

a fifth control plane removably secured into the body segment and oriented coplanar to the longitudinal axis of the lure body and the vertical axis of the lure body.

8. The artificial fishing lure of claim 5 further comprising: a protruding control plane inserted into the tail segment and oriented along and coplanar to the longitudinal axis of the lure body.

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