

Meat Sticks

What components should you consider when selecting a suitable deep drop rod?

Of course, there are traditionalists who claim that deep dropping is nothing more than commercial fishing. There is, however, much more involved than one would think and selecting the proper equipment is only the first step to success. Deep drop rods feature a few defining attributes, although you've likely noticed a variety of designs. To get to the bottom of the rod selection process we contacted Scott Greenberg of Merrick Tackle. With over 50-years experience distributing rod-building components, the professionals at Merrick Tackle (www.merricktackle.com) are bona fide know-it-alls.

FSF: What's the need for such variation in regards to rod strength and length?

MERRICK TACKLE: A variety of species inhabit the bottom in depths from 300 to 3,000-feet, with anglers required to utilize specialized tackle and unique techniques for each. Whether you fish for burrowing tilefish in the mud, snowy grouper on deep wrecks or monster daytime swordfish, having the appropriate gear will lean the odds in your favor. While a stout rod is necessary if you plan on winching up broadbills, if you're fishing a broomstick with tilefish in your crosshairs it may be impossible to detect subtle strikes hundreds of feet below.

FSF: What's are some of the characteristics of deep drop rods?

MERRICK TACKLE: Heavy-duty 80lb. class deep drop rods feature bent butts and medium-heavy action. These rods are generally shorter than traditional trolling rods and feature anywhere from two to four guides and a tip. The shorter rod reduces the bend and enables greater pulling power while also offering easy

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access to the rod tip. For lighter applications utilizing smaller, feature-packed power assist reels anglers can get away with lighter, faster tip rods.

FSF: Why do most deep drop rods feature ring guides?

MERRICK TACKLE: With modern braided lines the only viable option when deep dropping, quality ring guides designed to withstand abrasive braid are primarily utilized so the ultra-thin diameter lines do not get pinched between the roller and the frame, keeping in mind that when targeting fish so far below anything that can go wrong will go wrong. However, many crews do just fine fishing rods with modern rollers that feature very precise tolerances. Really, it's all about personal preference.

FSF: What about swivel tips?

MERRICK TACKLE: While in the past swivel tips were standard features on deep drop rods, today's anglers are learning they aren't essential. However, they can be beneficial and shouldn't be overlooked

altogether. If your line is coming off the tip at a strange angle and jumps off the roller it could chafe against the frame of the guide. A swivel tip can help eliminate this unwanted resistance.

While you likely won't invest in an arsenal of deep drop outfits, you should purchase a rod designed for the specific conditions and species you expect to encounter. Don't try and save money by combining a powerful electric reel with an old trolling rod. Specialized deep drop rods must withstand tremendous pressure and are designed specifically for this purpose. —Staff Report **FSF**

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