

I've been using rods made by Laguna Custom Rods for several years now. The guys in the Laguna shop over in Georgetown, Texas make some of the finest rods for coastal inshore fishing I've ever had the privilege to use. All these tools are feather-light, but strong and durable. Given the variety of models to choose from, it's possible to find a Laguna rod perfectly suited to all light-tackle saltwater fishing situations, particularly those involving artificial lures. For quite some time, I used a 7 foot medium-light Classic in colder weather, as I found it well-matched with soft plastics and for creating subtle presentations with my favorite twitch baits, the Corkies. In warmer weather, I'd switch over to a 6'6" Texas Wader 2, which performed better with floating plugs and helped me make more spastic, erratic and speedy presentations with the twitch baits. I've now replaced the 7 foot Classic with a 6'6" Latis Stik, which I find to be the most versatile and complete fishing rod I've ever used. It's the first 6'6" rod I've found adequate for use with soft plastics, it's great for twitch baits (especially in colder weather) and it will adequately deploy topwaters, even large ones, though it's better suited to smaller ones. More recently, I've begun using the "Light" versions of the Texas Wader series in warmer weather, normally from sometime in March through October or early-November. The first of these super-light, 6'2" models I tried was a Light Texas Wader 1. The action of this rod is somewhat similar to a Latis Stick, but slightly "firmer", making it an ideal partner for a small topwater plug. The Light Texas Wader 1 enjoys a dynamic and pleasant karma with lures the Super Spook Junior, Baby Skitterwalk and other members of the lesser floating-plug family. It also works well in creating fast, erratic presentations involving sharp side to side movements of the head of the lure with Corkies and other twitch baits. For me, doesn't match well with soft plastics, though some people might find it possible to make some productive presentations with them, particularly when the lures are rigged on sixteenth ounce heads or plain worm hooks. Lately, I've started using the Light Texas Wader 2 and I now believe it will be my staple warm-weather rod moving forward. Like the Light Texas Wader 1, it's a 6'2", super-light stick. The action is quite similar to a 6'6" Texas Wader 2, firmer than a Light Wader 1. The firmer flex of the Light Texas Wader 2 provides instant, constant and direct connection with the head of the lure, making it perfect for use with all topwaters, including large ones like Super Spooks and Rapala Xwalks. When paired with a Skitterwalk, it

achieves a karma similar to what the Light Wader 1 has with a Spook Junior. With minimal effort on the part of the angler, it's possible to use the Light Wader 2 to yank the head of the plug around and create enticingly erratic, jerky, spastic and speedy presentations with topwaters and twitch baits. For this reason, I find it to be the right stick for use in moderate and warm water temperatures, when such presentations tend to work best for me. I find it basically impossible to deploy soft plastics with it. In summary, I'd describe the Latis Stik as the most versatile rod Laguna makes, because it's good with all the plugs I use throughout the year (including, by the way, prop-baits), though it's not the perfect tool for warmer water applications. The Light Texas Wader 2 takes over as the right stick for me when water temperatures reach and exceed the 70° mark, precisely because the attributes which make it work best with topwaters and twitch baits render it nearly useless with "the worm".