

In 1955 AB Urfabriken, as the Abu company was then called, extended the line of terminal tackle offered by adding to their range of spinners and spoons.

This expansion took place on two fronts, first by adding ten baits from the Heddon company of America and secondly by introducing their own range of baits.

One of the stipulations of this reciprocal agreement was that Abu would not sell the Heddon baits outside of Scandinavia and Heddon would only sell Abu lures in North America .

The Abu bait was called the Hi Lo Wobbler and it was destined to become one of the most famous baits of all time.



The components of the adjustable lip for the Abu Hi Lo

This patented lure differed from others on the market in that it had an adjustable lip that enabled the bait to be fished at various depths. A metal stamping was the key to this ingenious device along with a ball bearing, a spring and a locking device.

The spring forced the ball bearing against the stamping and this kept everything tight. Without this the lip would have been loose and the desired depth not achieved. The catalogue described these as very deep, deep, normal, shallow and very shallow.

There is some speculation that Heddon were involved in the design of this lure. At this point I have to say that had Heddon invented the movable lip they would not have been so generous as to allow another company to take the patent.

My opinion is that Heddon might have had some input into the general design, or Abu might have asked for the input. Then again they could have just copied the Heddon body and the hook hangers.

The Heddon Vamp Spook and the River Runt certainly look very similar in shape. The Heddon model 9750 Vamp Spook was the same size but at 18 grams, 6 grams lighter. Cosmetically they looked the same. They also have a similarity when it comes to the style of stencil employed on the bait.

They certainly had the same hook hangers, using the one piece for the front and belly hooks and the same tail hook hanger as the Heddon.

The difference in weight is explained by the fact that the patented mechanism that Abu introduced did have weight to it.



From the 1956 edition of Tight Lines, first English edition. The translation does vary from the Swedish

The lure was launched in two sizes and eight different colours. The large size weighed 26 grams (1 ounce) and was 110 mm (4½ inches) with three treble hooks fitted. It was a floating lure that achieved the correct depth when retrieved.

It was the same with the smaller one, but this was naturally sinking until it was retrieved when it too achieved the correct depth. It weighed 18 grams ($\frac{5}{8}$ ounce) and was 80 mm (3¼ inches) long with two trebles.

The bait could be fished at five different depth as shown in the picture. The belly of the bait was stamped ABU HI - LO SWEDEN.



First model belly marking.

The baits came in their own individual Perspex boxes. One end of the box stating the length, weight and colour; with the other showing how the bait could be fished.



The first Swedish Perspex box top and below the insert for this box.

Shortly after it's launch came the first change when the actual patent was granted and the word PATENT was added to the details on the belly.



The second model with PATENT.

The 1956 catalogue noted this change. These non-PATENT stamped baits are scarce. The other major changes in 1956 were an additional colour and a colour change.

BGL, Bluegill was added and BG, brown and gold, was replaced with XBG.

This is a good point to explain the colour scheme for those of you new to this. Here Abu followed the Heddon style by adopting the X to mean "shore finish". This is the pattern applied to a lure to make it look like it has ribs. These ribs were in the case of Abu black, white and silver.

From the information so far gathered it is easy to see that an Abu Hi Lo lure boxed in brown gold, BG, not stamped PATENT in either of the two sizes is the rarest of the production lures.

At this point it is a good idea to mention that like most companies new things were being tried out Consequently rare obscure colour patterns do occur.

There are also a number of baits with a black diving vane, another Heddon idea introduced by Abu. I believe that only the black and the brown lures came with this option.

The 1956 catalogue has two pages dedicated to the Hi Lo, and the same to the Heddon lures. At this stage both companies were working together in harmony, at least that is the impression given. However I am sure that dark forces were at work in the background.



The 1956 English version showing the colours available note the Punkinseed.

And it was not the younger new tackle company being exploited by the big bad long established company.

The research that I have done over many years leads me to believe that Göte Borgstrom, the owner of Abu, was one of the worlds most astute businessmen.

In 1958 the last major design change occurred when the bait was changed from a five position lip to a six one. The addition was the surface position. This was achieved by taking the lip even further back from the perpendicular.



Left the six position lip, right the five position lip

At this point I have also discovered that the shape of the lip for the six position lure was changed on the smaller size. This new shape matched that of the larger bait and it was only by handling the various baits that I discovered this fact. I could see the different shaped lips but assumed that one was made in Japan. When I had four baits in front of me and they all only went into the five positions then it dawned on me.

A friend of mine keeps emphasising to me the fact that it is only when you have the various items of tackle in front of you is it possible to make comparisons.

I assume that this change of shape was to overcome problems with the action of the bait in the water.

Another colour was added to the range and again Abu went along with the Heddon colour chart with D for green scale. The two pages that Abu used for their baits was complimented by the one for Heddon.

In 1959 another colour was added LYS for luminous. This was achieved by using a clear see through body moulded around a tube of yellow fluorescent material.

In 1960 another size was added this was 12 grams ($\frac{3}{7}$ ounce) and 65 mm ($2\frac{1}{2}$ inches) long. Originally this used the same hook hangers that were employed on the other baits in the range but a year later new hook hangers were introduced.

Again they used a Heddon hanger this time the "cup hanger". But unlike Heddon, who only used it for the tail hook, Abu used it for both.

There were baits made with the word HEDDON stamped on the belly and these are scarce. I did have an example in my collection but sometime in the last six months it has disappeared.

In 1961 the Heddon range of baits had been dropped by Abu and in North America the Garcia Corporation that had been selling the Ambassadeur reel now took on the Hi Lo's, however not the complete range. Only four colours in two sizes.

One anomaly to clarify here is the so called weight difference between the American and Swedish lures. They are quoted as $\frac{3}{8}$ ounce in America and $\frac{3}{7}$ ounce in Sweden. They were in fact the same lure.

In 1964 something happened with the design of the bait. Abu stated in the Swedish edition of their catalogue, Napp och Nytt that the large size Hi Lo $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches was floating except for the luminous coloured lures, LYS.

Was the original one floating or did it sink from the beginning? I suspect that it sank from the beginning but no one noticed for a few years. All the luminous ones of this size that I have looked at sank.

In 1969 there were major changes when two totally new designs were introduced.

The first was the largest bait that Abu sold the 150 mm (6 inches) 40 gram $1\frac{1}{2}$ ounce) floating Hi Lo. This was available in four colours and it looks like they had solved the problem of a luminous floating bait albeit only for this size.

The second was Abu's first articulated bait 90 mm, ($3\frac{1}{2}$ inches) long and weighing 20 grams ($\frac{3}{4}$ ounce). This was available in all the standard colours except LYS.

There was also some changes to the colours offered. XBG was dropped and BO, (brown and orange) introduced. This was only available on the new baits. In 1970 the brown and orange colour was made available to the all the baits.



The Abu Garcia bait made in the Far East.

And that was about it from here on in it was all down hill. First production was switched to Japan in 1981 and the later to Taiwan. According to some old time Pike fishermen the action of the modern baits is no where near as good as the original Swedish manufactured ones.



The belly markings of the Japan made bait.

A little bit of investigation and it is easy to see why. One look at the Taiwanese made bait compared with the Swedish

one and you can see that the diving lips are totally different in shape. This would give the lure a different action. The Taiwan manufactured bait has departed considerably from the shape of the original one and again it would be completely different in action.



The Taiwan bait and belly markings, note the change of the scooped lip design.

The packaging for the baits for the period 1955 to 1981 is, I believe, available in five different types.

First Swedish box with Perspex bottom and top.

Second, Swedish box with card bottom and Perspex lid.

Third, Garcia box, same as second Swedish.

Fourth, blister packing.

Fifth, the Heddon box.

I have never seen the Heddon box but having seen the bait stamped Heddon on the belly is it safe to assume that they would have been sold in a box. Does anyone have one?

There are also variations on the different boxes and again some of these are rare.



These two box inserts are from the first Swedish boxes I understand that there is possibly another insert. These are rare.



The Abu box, opened up. Note Abu is registered



Another, earlier Abu box, opened up.

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This is just a short piece to tie up one or two loose ends from the article that appeared in issue 31. I thank all the people who responded.

I did manage to get hold of another first issue Swedish box. This was for an 18 gr. luminous Hi Lo and naturally the box is smaller than that shown in the first article. There is also a difference in the wording on the bottom.

As I said in issue 31 these boxes are getting very hard to find and it is possible that there are still more variations of the wording out there.



The Garcia Box, opened up

I then managed to acquire a Garcia box, although constructed in the same "flat pack" fold out style, there is a difference in the print on the box. The Garcia box has an illustration similar to that found in the tackle guides. It shows the six

different lip positions and what depth they fish at. It has, like its Swedish counterpart, size and colour details on the box end. The Perspex lid is the same as the Swedish examples.

One word about the Perspex lids— there are differences. The first Swedish box had an ABU logo top right, RECORD logo top left and AB URFABRIKEN—SVANGSTA— SWEDEN on the bottom of the lid.

The next generation box had the ABU and RECORD logo's at the end of the box with the AB URFABRIKEN top and bottom. This was so that whatever side you looked at you could always read something.

The same boxes later dropped the AB UR FABRIKEN.



The boxed Abu Heddon Hi Lo River Runt Spook.

Then came the biggest find, a boxed Abu Heddon HI LO River Runt. It came in the standard Heddon River Runt Spook box with the plastic lid and had the Heddon number 9440 XBW. This is black x-ray shore. The lure belly was marked HEDDON ABU HI-LO RIVER RUNT SPOOK.



The belly markings of the Abu Heddon Hi Lo.

The box end was marked like the standard Heddon box of the time but had the additional ABU HEDDON HI-LO RIVER RUNT with Patents granted and pending.



The box marking for the Abu Heddon Hi Lo.

This was never catalogued by Heddon and is an exceptionally rare bait. You can buy a standard Abu Hi Lo for about £10 –20, but this one was considerably more.

We then have to add a sixth type of packaging, the lure mounted on card and it is at this point we end the research.



The sixth type of packaging the lure card mounted.

I would like to thank all those who helped me find and identify the baits in these articles. Also just a reminder that if you find anything else to add to our knowledge just let me know.

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