

Accu-Cull: Angling for the Win



Tournament Bass Fishing turned 50 this year and along the way has transformed itself into a multi-million dollar industry with highly skilled competitors and high-dollar sponsors. Brent Shores hasn't been in the industry all that time, but has committed the last 20 years of his life to tournament fishing and creating tools that have helped grow the industry.

Background

Brent moved to Emmet, Idaho when he was 11 and immediately took to the outdoors. After a stint in the marine reserves (and a tour to Desert Storm), Brent finally found himself with a job that gave him weekends off, and he threw himself into tournament fishing. It didn't take long before he recognized the limitations of the culling systems then in use, which gave rise to launching Accu-Cull in 2008. His timing wasn't great—the start of the recession—but his products were so intuitively simple and easy to use that the business took off.

ACCU-CULL
The ultimate culling systems and accessories

3D Design

To meet Brent is to know his restless nature and drive for achievement. Accu-Cull has been successfully selling culling systems for the past ten years, but Brent felt he could reach a new market with some product modifications. He came to Intermountain 3D with his current product, and ideas of what he wanted to try next. "I sat down with the team at Intermountain 3D and starting explaining what I had in mind," Brent said. "We filled up a few sheets of design paper with different ideas, and then I left them to work on creating CAD."

Iterative Prototyping

Before Brent goes into production with his tags, he puts them through rigorous in-field testing. Not only does he use them himself, he asks others to try them out and give him feedback. The first prototype he tried out was a flop. "One of the improvements I was looking to make was the locking mechanism. We didn't get it right on the first try, but we just went back to the literal drawing board in Intermountain 3D's offices, and came up with a whole new way to think about that lock," said Brent.

With a new design in hand, it was simple to make new prototypes for the next round of testing. "We printed prototypes in multi-jet materials, standard nylon and glass-filled nylon with SLS," commented Brian Hoffmann, president of Intermountain 3D, "and were able to iteratively change the materials and design to ultimately meet Brent's performance specifications."

Production

Brent's design was getting high marks from anglers, even as he went through modifications. Lighter, smaller and simpler than most culling systems, the Econ-tag Elite makes it possible to secure the fish without fear of it damaging itself in the live well. And since as much as 50% of a tournament purse can be deducted for dead specimens, anglers are choosy about the systems they use. "Professional tournament anglers are telling me they want this new system," says Brent, "and so we are motivated to get it into the market."



Accu-Cull Econ-Tag Elite

Brent finalized the design after a season of fishing, and moved to injection molding for final production. He already has pre-orders, and expects it to be on the shelves next week. "Intermountain 3D took an idea in my brain a few months ago, and here I am in production," says Brent. "And I've already got them lined up to work with me on my next product."

More information on Accu-Culls culling-systems and products can be found on their website at www.accucull.com