

The Power-Pole

This device is becoming an indispensable shallow-water tool

By David A. Brown

Shallow-water fishing has its ups and downs, but stopping your boat shouldn't become one of the latter. In many redfish patterns, stealth and success depend on the ability to fish a spot, slide down a few boat lengths and repeat.

Anchors are messy and noisy, so some opt for staking out with a push pole or a simple mud anchor made of PVC, wooden dowel or stainless steel. Both time-consuming options occupy your hands when they should be casting at fish.

Enter the Power-Pole shallow-water anchor. Invented circa 1998 by Wal-Mart FLW Redfish Series angler John Oliverio of Brandon, Fla., this tool has literally revolutionized inshore fishing.

Mounted on a boat's transom, just above the water line, the Power-Pole's hydraulic arm extends a durable composite spike and sticks it into the bottom. The original model reaches 6 feet below the water line in about eight seconds, while a newer high-performance version packs more power and reaches 8 feet in about six seconds. An optional power booster reduces the 6-foot model's cycle time to five seconds.

"It's like having brakes on your boat," Oliverio said. "If wind is blowing you along, and you're around fish, the first thing you want to do is stop."

Made of aircraft-grade aluminum extrusions with titanium enhanced castings and a high-gloss baked-on powder-coat finish, the Power-Pole fits boats up to 23 feet long or 4,500 pounds. Powered by Bennett Hydraulics, the Power-Pole stops your boat in a matter of seconds and holds fast with minimal sway.

Multiple switches can be installed anywhere on the boat, and each receiver box recognizes up to six wireless transmitters. Anglers can install as many wired transmitters as they want, but the standard is one at the bow and one on the console. Foot switches are popular for hands-free bow and poling-platform operation.

Oliverio's inventive inspiration came while snook fishing near a shallow bar in a 20-mph wind. Anchoring slowed his hastened drift but created another challenge.

"One moment we were on top of the fish and spooking them and the next we were out of casting range," he recalled. "So that's when I started thinking about something that would hold a boat in position. I couldn't quit thinking about it, and I found that no one made anything like this."

Essentially, the Power-Pole allows you to quickly stop, minimize your profile and decrease your intrusion – a strategy intrinsic to capitalizing on sudden opportunities.

"When one angler sticks a fish, it's imperative for the other angler to stop the boat and cast into the same area," Oliverio said. "There's a good chance there's more than one fish there, and if you don't stop the boat right away, you'll blow right over the fish."

That's how Oliverio and partner, Howie Green of Bushnell, Fla., won the FLW

Redfish Series Englewood, Fla., event in 2005. They caught their two money fish out of the same pothole – thanks to Oliverio's invention.

"If we wouldn't have stopped the boat right there after hooking the first fish, who knows where we would have ended up," Oliverio said. "I guarantee you I would not have put another cast into that same pothole."

Whether you're working a mangrove edge or drifting across a grass flat interspersed with sandy potholes, wind and tide will often influence your rate of travel and complicate stopping when you encounter a sweet spot. With a Power-Pole, anglers can stop in time to capitalize on every wake, boil or tail they spot.

The Power-Pole also helps freshwater anglers sit on bedding bass without spooking them with a trolling motor. Similarly, Florida Keys tarpon anglers can stake out on a flat until they hookup and then pull up the Power-Pole to chase their fish. Guides on poling platforms appreciate the ability to instantly stop their boat when they need to climb down and assist their anglers.

For wading, the Power-Pole enables you to either tow the boat with a waist rope and stop to work an area or simply anchor the boat while you move around and reposition as needed. The applications are many, but regardless of your target, stopping will be the least of your concerns.

To visit the Power-Pole online store, go to powerpole.com. ■

