



Everything You Need to Know About Waxies or Wax Worm Bait

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In this article, we'll talk about wax worms, and wax worm bait, also known as waxies. This is an extremely common bait used for various fishing scenarios. Here's everything you'd want to know.

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What is Wax Worm?



Wax worms are the larvae of the wax moth (*Galleria Mellonella*). These larvae are produced commercially and are popularly called waxies. The wax moths are usually larger and have wings. But the larvae of the wax moth are small and soft, making it a great dish for a fish.

Generally, waxworms are less than an inch in size and the outer surface of their body is very soft, dry, and waxy. Their internal texture is creamy and when pierced with a fishing hook, emits a smell that attracts fish. They are usually off-white or light yellowish with two eyes in the front, and a body structure similar to caterpillars.

Wax worms are often used for ice fishing, pan fishing, or feeding pets (often reptiles). Wax worms can be mailed to your door alive, picked up at stores, or mimicked by fly fisherman, or spin fisherman with lures and flies.

Where Are Wax Worms From?

Wax worms are native to a large portion of the planet. From Europe, to North America, and have unnaturally spread to places like Australia. In all of these locations, wax worms naturally reproduce and lay eggs in beehives, but are also commercially produced for other use cases.

Are Waxies and Wax Worms the Same?

Yes, waxies, and wax worms are the same, with some nuance. Commercially produced wax worm bait is called waxies by the shopkeepers and anglers.

However, **wax worms** will only be called waxies when they are larvae and, when sold commercially as bait or pet reptile food in cans or packets. These amazing feeder insects are also good for the environment (we won't go into detail, but scientists are finding that wax worms can consume large amounts of plastic to reduce waste).

Mature waxworms or wax moths aren't referred to as waxies. Waxworms that are born in nature, or used for any other purpose than commercial or household are typically called wax worms but not waxies.

What are WaxWorms Used for?

Wax worms are used by anglers and fishermen as live bait and an alternative to artificial bait. They are also popularly used as a complementary food for pet reptiles, insects, birds, and amphibians.

They can be raised and cultivated by anglers for their regular use. Usually, anglers use wax worms to catch trout. A handful of wax worms are thrown to the water by anglers along with some bigger ones hanging on the hook to attract trout and other fish.

It is one of the most effective tools for trout fish cultivation. However, it is also one of the best bait used for shallow water fishing and **ice fishing** as they are easy to manage and handle.

In addition to fishing, wax worms are often purchased or raised to feed pets, like lizards and snakes.

How Good Are Wax Worms as a Bait?

Wax worms are an excellent fishing bait. Even though they are most popular as bait for trout, nearly any fish species would be attracted to wax worms as well given their close resemblance to many other insects in the larvae stage.

They are also popular for ice fishing. However, the use of wax worm bait is not limited to cold water fishing only. They work pretty well in warmer waters

since fish pretty easily can see this calorie dense meal.

Pan fish may respond to wax worms even better due to waxies being different from other bait seen in heavily fished waters. They end up coming across a calorie packed meal, and have trouble passing it up. One of the [benefits of fishing](#) using wax worm bait is that they are extremely soft which makes them easier to rig.

How Long Do Wax Worms Last?

Waxworms are one of the hardiest baits. They can adapt well to most temperatures and can tolerate extremely low temperatures as well, which is one of the reasons why they are ideal for ice fishing.

If stored properly, waxworms can survive for several months in a can or plastic box. They are usually stored by anglers at room temperature in their house, basement, or garage. Many anglers keep them slightly refrigerated as well as this keeps them even longer.

However, waxworms should not be stored in extreme temperatures as that might lead to their death. Keeping them at room temperature for a long time may not a good idea as they will make cocoons and gradually turn into wax moths inside the can or container they are being stored in.

Wax worms often take around 20 days to develop into pupa stage, but if kept in cooler temperatures, this can be extended up to potentially 5 months. This means, when purchasing or raising wax worms, cold temperatures near freezing can keep the worms in a ready to fish or use as pet bait for a very long period of time.

Can You Fish with Dead Wax Worms?

Waxworms are considered great live bait. They are in their best state as bait when they're alive and healthy. However, dead wax worms work well too as long as they look fresh and retain moisture.

Waxworms turn brown, mushy, and stale very quickly after their death which may fail to attract the fish. An alternative for that can be preserved waxworms that are frequently found in bait shops in packs of 10 to 20.

These commercially preserved waxies are dead waxworms that are stored in scented preservatives and attract fish as effectively as live bait.

What Type of Fish are Best Caught by Wax Worm?

As said before, waxworms are popular as bait for trout. However, they are great for fishing other pan fish too. This may include, but is not limited to, sunfish, catfish, bluegills, crappies, perch, whitefish, and many more.

Apart from catching pan fish with waxworm bait, anglers many times use this super effective bait to catch bass and walleye as well, even though they are not considered ideal for these bigger fish.

How Much Do Wax Worms Cost?

The price of waxworms is variable. They do not have a fixed rate. The cost differs with commercial producers, bait shops, and the quantity in one pack or can.

Usually, a can of 250 waxworms costs about 8 to 15 US Dollars. However, the price can be higher or lower based on the quality and the place of buying.

Is Wax Worm Better than Artificial Bait?

Well, here's a catch, live worms are almost always better than artificial bait. Artificial baits cannot completely mimic the look and smell of live worms no matter how good they are.

The smell of live worms is much more effective to attract fish than the artificial scent of preservatives. Therefore, live wax worms are a better choice of bait than artificial ones. It is worth noting that regulations for certain areas

may prevent anglers from using any type of live bait. In these situations, or if a fly fisherman, utilizing an artificial bait is necessary.

Wax Worm Alternatives

Apart from wax worms, there are several other live baits used by fishermen as an alternative to artificial baits. They are very effective for fishing particularly those, that are attracted to that very bait.

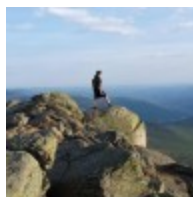
These natural baits include earthworms, grubs, maggots, roe (fish egg), beetles, crickets, tadpoles, aquatic snails, bees, grasshoppers, small frogs, tadpoles, crayfish, ants, leeches, and a variety of other worms.

In addition to live bait alternatives, there are hundreds of artificial bait alternatives. Fly fisherman would use a gray nymph or mop fly, spin fisherman will use small rubber worms to mimic wax worms. Nearly all of these alternatives are effective, but the level of effectiveness is determined by tons of factors (temperature, fish species, depth, time of day, etc).

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Max DesMarais is the founder of Hiking & Fishing. He has a passion for the outdoors and making outdoor education and adventure more accessible. Max is a published author for various outdoor and marketing websites. He is an experienced hiker, backpacker, fly fisherman, trail runner, and spends his free time in the outdoors. These adventures allow him to test gear, learn new skills, and experience new places so that he can educate others. You can read more about him here: [hikingandfishing/about](https://hikingandfishing.com/about)

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