Baitcasting Gear Ratio and Inches-Per-Turn (IPT) Technique Matching Matrix

Companion Reference Sheet for: Bass Fishing Gear Ratios: Match Retrieve Speed to the Bait
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Key Takeaways

Question	Quick answer
What does a reel ratio tell you?	How many times the reel's drive turns for each handle turn. It does not give an exact line pickup or lure speed.
What is a versatile gear ratio for bass fishing?	A middle ratio, around 6.3:1, suits many moving baits and offers useful line recovery for varied techniques.
Is a 6.3:1 ratio good for bass?	Yes. It sits in the middle range and can work well for anglers who want a flexible retrieve without choosing an especially slow or fast reel.
At what speed should you retrieve a lure?	Use the pace that keeps the bait working in its intended zone. Handle cadence and rod movement set that pace more directly than the ratio alone.
How can two reels with the same ratio pick up different amounts of line?	Their spool sizes and line fill can differ, changing how much line each turn collects.
When is fast line pickup most useful?	When you need to recover slack quickly, keep contact with a jig or soft plastic, or take up line before a hookset.

What a gear ratio tells you, and what it does not

Ratio	Approximate line pickup per handle turn	Typical retrieve role	Tradeoff
5.1:1	20 to 22 inches per turn on a standard sized baitcast reel, according to Louisiana Sportsman.	Sustained resistance and slower presentations	More leverage, slower slack recovery
6.3:1	Middle range, with actual pickup depending on spool size and fill	Versatile moving bait work	Balanced pace and recovery, without the leverage of a slower reel

Ratio	Approximate line pickup per handle turn	Typical retrieve role	Tradeoff
7.1:1	Fast pickup, best compared by inches per turn	Quick slack recovery and line pickup	Less mechanical advantage under sustained load

Step by step field checklist for choosing and tuning a ratio

☐ **Identify the bait.** Estimate its resistance and running depth, then decide whether the technique needs steady pressure, quick slack pickup, or fast line recovery.

☐ **Choose a starting range.** Start slower for sustained resistance, in the middle for mixed moving bait use, or faster when line recovery is the priority.

☐ **Compare inches per turn.** Check line pickup as well as ratio, especially when comparing different spool sizes or reels with different fill levels.

☐ **Test a controlled retrieve.** Make several casts at a consistent handle cadence, then adjust handle speed and rod movement until the bait stays in its intended zone.

☐ **Assess the feel under load.** If the retrieve feels laborious, choose more leverage; if slack recovery or contact feels slow, look for more line pickup.

Keep this process simple and your setup becomes easier to dial in. Savvy anglers match the reel to the job, then use cadence and rod control to make the presentation their own.

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