

Tips and Tricks for Outfitting a Pontoon Boat

Lee Ann Ross, Bend OR

Rods

The side bags easily hold two rods. I put the rods on my left side bag as I cast right handed. Be sure to put the rods in with the reel up so that the Velcro strap can hold the rod securely in the bag. (I have a Sage One rod at the bottom of the Deschutes River as testament to not securing the rod properly).



Additional Rods

When I lake fish, I take an arsenal of six rods. The four additional rods are placed in my milk crate. Dave Scadden made the rod holder on the left from PVC pipe using a band saw or a table saw. Not having that equipment available, I made the other three out of polypropylene flanged tail pipe used in sinks. I was able to cut the slots using a hacksaw. Be sure to cut the slot wide enough. I painted the rod holders using Black Fusion for Plastic spray paint. I screwed them into the milk crate securing them with self-tightening nuts so I wouldn't cut my fingers on the protruding bolts as I reach into the crate. I put a piece of foam behind the rod so it doesn't bang around in the waves.





Internet #205153885

Store SKU #1000050279

Everbilt

1-1/2 in. x 12 in. Polypropylene Flanged Strainer Tailpiece

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- White polypropylene material is extremely durable
- For use with tubular drains
- 1-1/2 in. x 12 in.

\$258 /each



Emergency Rod Holder

When you need to put your rod down you can wedge it into the seat strap. This holds the rod securely while you fiddle with tackle or eat lunch.



Anchor

I use a Scotty anchor mount system. You can get the adapter to strap it around a pontoon or you can mount it on the motor mount. There is a right and wrong way to attach the mount. As the anchor trolley drops into the mount, you need to spin it 180 degrees so that it drops down and secures itself so it won't pull out. Figure that out before you mount the bracket.

After many false starts, I use 3/8 inch, 50 foot length of rope that I purchased at Ace Hardware for my anchor rope. It is polypropylene, it floats and it is supple. 3/8 inch is about thickest diameter that I can get through the Scotty anchor trolley. The larger diameter is easier on one's hands when retrieving the rope.



I have used both the pyramid anchor and the spiky anchor and I vastly prefer the spiky anchor. It holds well and releases from the bottom easily. I find that the pyramid anchor impales itself into a lake bottom and can be extremely hard to dislodge. I have also had to cut off a pyramid anchor that got wedged into the rocks on a river. I find that a 12 pound spiky anchors holds well even on extremely windy days on a lake.

I keep the rope in a box that is used to hold a car battery. That way the rope doesn't all fall in the water off the flat deck of the Fuzion. I drilled holes in the bottom of the box to drain the water.



If I forget my anchor, I just put a rock in the strap below and I have an emergency anchor for the day. The gizmo is in my side pocket.



Battery

A battery for a trolling motor needs to be a deep cycle battery as one pulls power from it continually as opposed to a starting motor for a car. Within the deep cycle category, there are basically two choices. The large size marine deep cycle looks like a car battery and weighs 50 pounds or more. The alternative is the type of deep cycle battery that would be used for an electric wheel chair. These batteries are about half the size and weigh about 23 pounds. I use a Mighty Max 12 volt 35 ah SLA battery that I got on Amazon. I have two of them so that one can be recharging during the day when I am camping. I put both of them on the boat if I want to go really far.



Battery Case

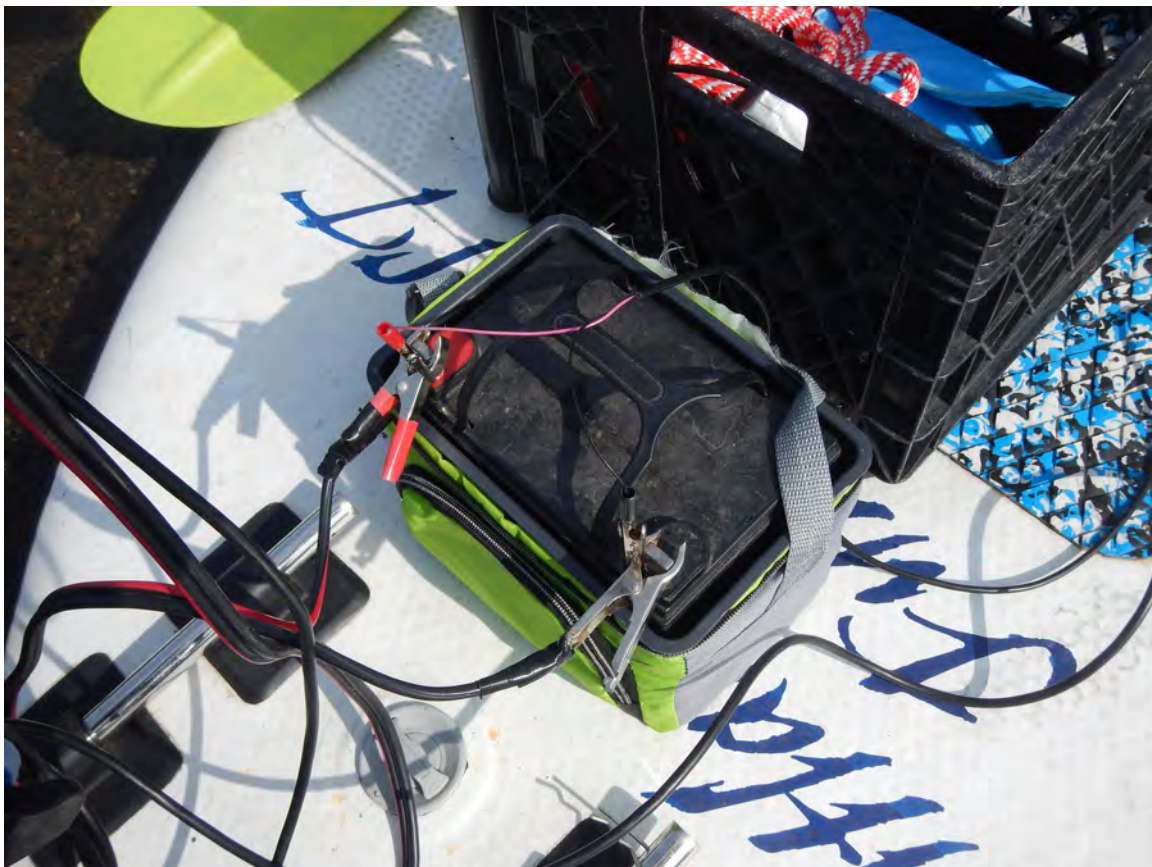
To carry the battery, I put it in a lunch box that I found at Walmart. It has a plastic insert the perfectly fits the battery. It is an Ozark Trail lunch box. I found it in the sporting goods section.



Motor

There are two types of Minnkota motors appropriate for pontoon boat, the Endura C2 and the Endura Max. The Endura C2 has five preset speeds, the Endura Max allows for variable speed control. According to the Minnkota web site, “motors with digital maximizers provide up to five time longer run time on a single charge by drawing only as much power as needed so they don’t waste any energy.” The smallest Endura Max is a 40 pound thrust model while the smallest Endura C2 is 30. The Max start at \$220 and the C2 starts at \$110.

I cut off the end connectors and put on alligator clips that make it much easier to attach the motor to the battery. I also put alligator clips on the fish finder cable to attach that cable to the battery.



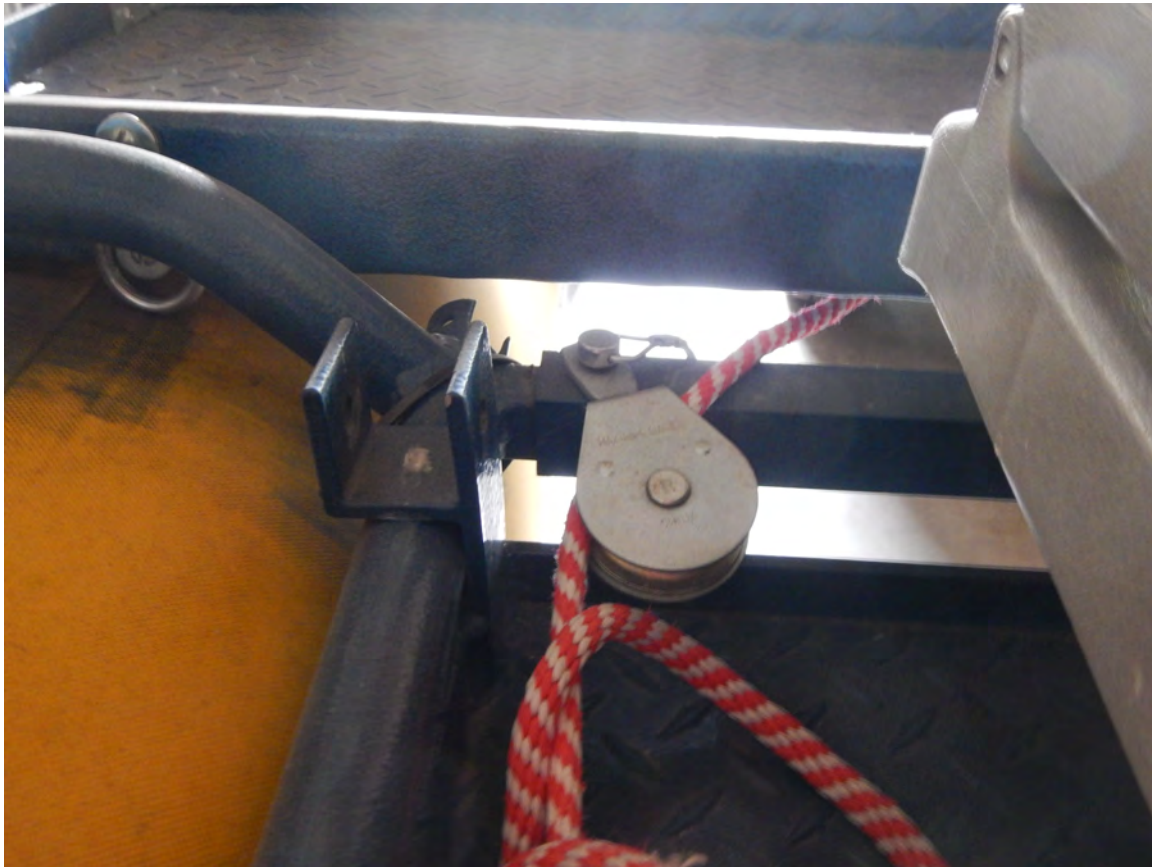
Motor Mount

When you put the motor mount on the Predator, Escape, Renegade, Rampage or similar boats, you have to attach it to a D ring. By strapping on a dog leash clip, you don't have to strap the motor mount to the D rings each time. Just clip it in.



Outlaw X Pulleys

I had a really hard time bring up the anchor on my Outlaw X5 so I increased the size of the pulleys and ran the anchor line outside of the frame. I used three pulleys.





Seat

On windy days, the waves can crash into the seat area on the Fuzion. On hot summer days, this is not an issue. In November, it gets really cold. I have taken a boat float cushion and put it in a dry bag and slipped it under the seat to raise the seat a few inches.



Attaching the Side Bags

It takes awhile to attach the side bags through the four D rings. I just added another clip to the extra strapping from the seat and I just attach the bag to that clip, thus not needing to run the straps through the D rings at all.



Hitch Pins for the Foot Bar

I find that the hitch pins attract my fly line and that the line keeps getting hung up on the hitch pins. I replaced them with the key rings and I get hung up far less often. I need to find a stainless steel one.



Binoculars

I carry a small pair of binoculars to see what the other boats are doing on the lakes, to find my buddies across the lake and to check out the insects.

Fly Patch

I glued a small fly patch on the boat to hold the flies as I change them throughout the day.



Nets

Attach your landing net to one of the D rings so it won't float away.



Carry a small aquarium net so you can scoop up the bugs on the water and see what they are.



Boat Numbers

In Oregon you have to register your pontoon boat if you use a motor no matter what size the boat is. I put my numbers on a piece of plastic that I had cut at a local plastic company. They are sized so that they fit in my side pockets when I am not using them. In order to hang them off the side bags, I used a nail to punch a couple of holes in the top of the side bags at a seam and I inserted a zip tie to make a loop to hang the license board from.



Fish Finder

I use a Humminbird Piranhamax 4 with down imaging. There are a million fish finders to choose from. Instead of placing the mount that came with the fish finder on the boat, I just slip the fish finder into the cup holder on the side bag. It works and it is one less item mounted on the deck of the boat for the line to catch on. I put alligator clips on the wire that goes to the battery to make it easier to attach. Once I attached the transducer to the bottom of the motor, I taped the wires on the shaft.



Steering

Steering the boat with the electric motor running can be frustrating but there are a few tricks. I put one of the fins (skeg) on the bottom of my boat for tracking. I also leave the oars in the water as that assists with tracking. One can steer the boat by moving one's fins left or right as you motor along.



Paddles

I have replaced my stock aluminum oars with kayak oars. I ordered two kayak paddles. Once I put them together, I cut off one of the paddles to make an oar out of the paddle. Using the stock oar as a guide, I then drilled a hole for the oar pin at the same distance from the end of the oar to the hole on the stock oar. I had a friend use his drill press so that I would get a hole that is exactly 180 degree to the oar blade. Make sure the hole is in the right place, if it is off by even a little bit it will not row well.

I think the kayak oars row more efficiently. I carry the stock oars as spares when I float the rivers. On my Predator, I just slid the extra oar in under the side pocket straps.

I have also reinforced the oar pin hole with Fiber Fix as I broke one of these oars on a river trip once and it wasn't pretty as I didn't have a spare oar. I now carry Fiber Fix in my side bag. The web site is www.fiberfixnow.com.

If you do break an oar, you can unscrew the other one and use it as a kayak paddle. That will at least get you to the next boat ramp.





Oars and Oar Grips

I purchased Carlisle Magic Mystic Poly kayak paddles from Amazon for about \$50 but there are lots of other choices. I'd order the longest one you can get as you can always cut them down. You will need oar grips for the end of the handles once you cut the kayak paddle. I found some at Walmart and Wholesale Marine.



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Pumps

There are a ton of choices. Most pontoon boats come with either a double action hand pump or foot pump. I use a couple of other options. I carry a K-Pump 200 with me on the boat when I float the rivers. Works great, small and compact, made right here in Oregon. They have several models to choose from.



K-200

This is a must pump for all rafts, cata-rafts, and pontoon crafts because you can stand upright while using it. The K-200 is almost twice the volume of the K-100.

Pumping a boat up from scratch with a K-pump can take some time so I am fond of the Bravo High-Pressure 12 volt pump. You can blow up a pontoon boat in a flash with this pump and you can get it super tight. It is available from NRS. Great for pumping up all your buddies' boats at the boat ramp.

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Max Pump

I found an interesting little pump on Indiegogo called the Max Pump. You can find it at <https://www.indiegogo.com/projects/max-pump-best-outdoor-tool-enjoy-your-leisure-time-technology/x/14604329#/>. It is smaller than the size of a beer can and is recharged via a USB. While it is not a high pressure pump, it will pump the boat up to about 90% full meaning you only have to hand pump the rest. You can also use it to deflate items. It is available on Amazon as Flextail Light Pump for about \$30. Super for backpacking.



Carrying the Boat

The easiest way to carry the boat is to put it on your shoulders.





Miscellaneous

Shoes

I carry a pair of water shoes big enough to fit when wearing my waders so that if I have to walk somewhere I am not ruining my wader feet.



Tow Rope

I carry a towrope to tow my friends who don't have motors or to retrieve my own boat. I did not anchor my boat properly at night and after a high windstorm, I woke up the next day to find my boat floating half way across the lake. A super nice guy in a motorboat took me out to retrieve it and tow it back. My rafting friends tell me I really should be using higher quality carabineers.



Bungee

I use a bungee to keep my seat from flapping in the wind when the boat is on the top of the car.



Miscellaneous Boat Items

There are a lot of miscellaneous boat items that one can get to make one's life easier but they can be hard to find. I have had pretty good luck finding such items via the Chinese web site aliexpress.com. You can add the disk in the upper left to create a longer or shorter reach for your foot bar. Here is a sampling of items:



Inflatable Boat Air Pressure Gauge with Hose Adaptor

Leaks

The valve tends to loosen over time. Most of the time I have a leak it is at the valve. Use the valve wrench shown above to tighten it. Count the number of sections in your valve to see if you need a 6 or 8 sprocket wrench.

Storing a Boat

We lack storage space so we hang our boats from the ceiling. We use electric car winches that we got from Harbor Freight. They are often on sale for about \$50.

