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(54) **HOVERING, STROLLING FISHING RIG**

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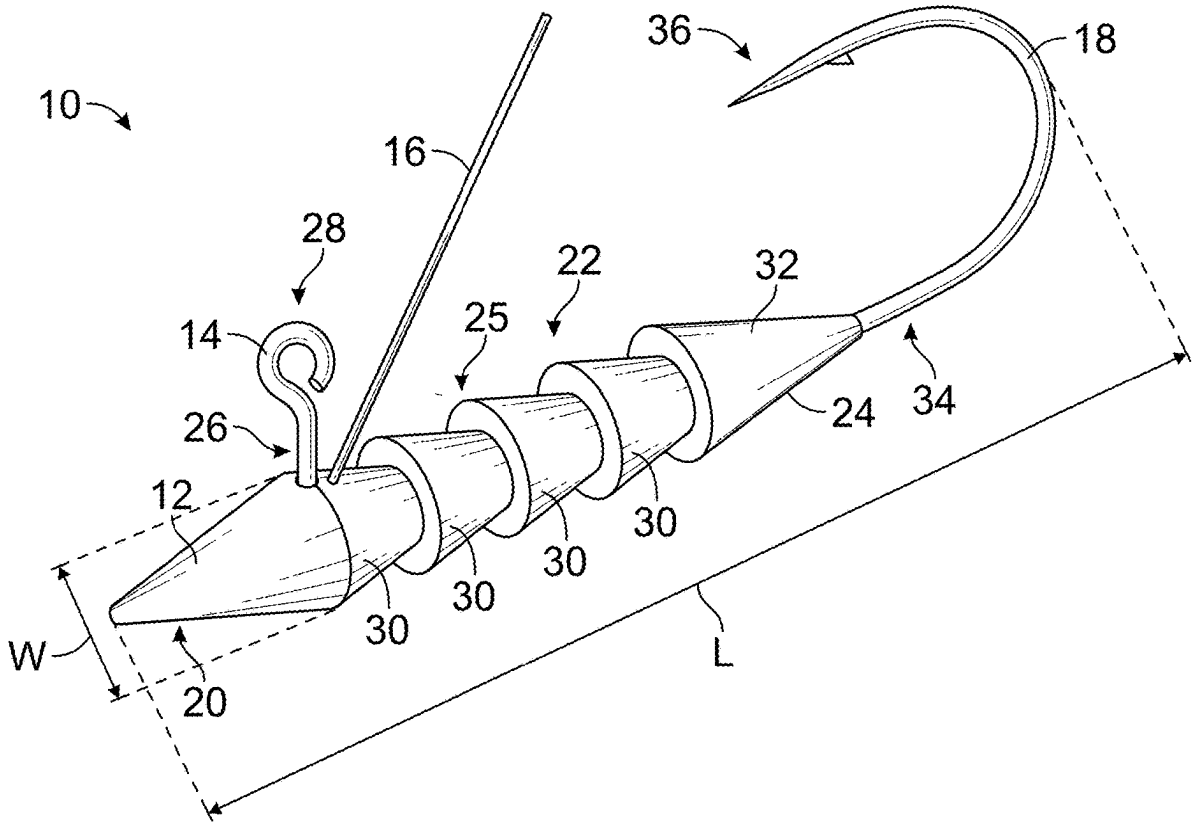
A01K 83/06 (2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.**
CPC ***A01K 83/064*** (2022.02)

(57) **ABSTRACT**

The present subject matter discloses systems and methods for a fishing rig related to hover strolling techniques. Specifically, the rig disclosed herein includes a rig body, an eyelet, and a hook. The rig body includes a first end and a second end. The eyelet is located on the rig body spaced from the first end and extends in a first direction. The hook extends from the second end of the rig body and includes a proximal end and a distal end. The distal end extends from the rig body in the first direction.



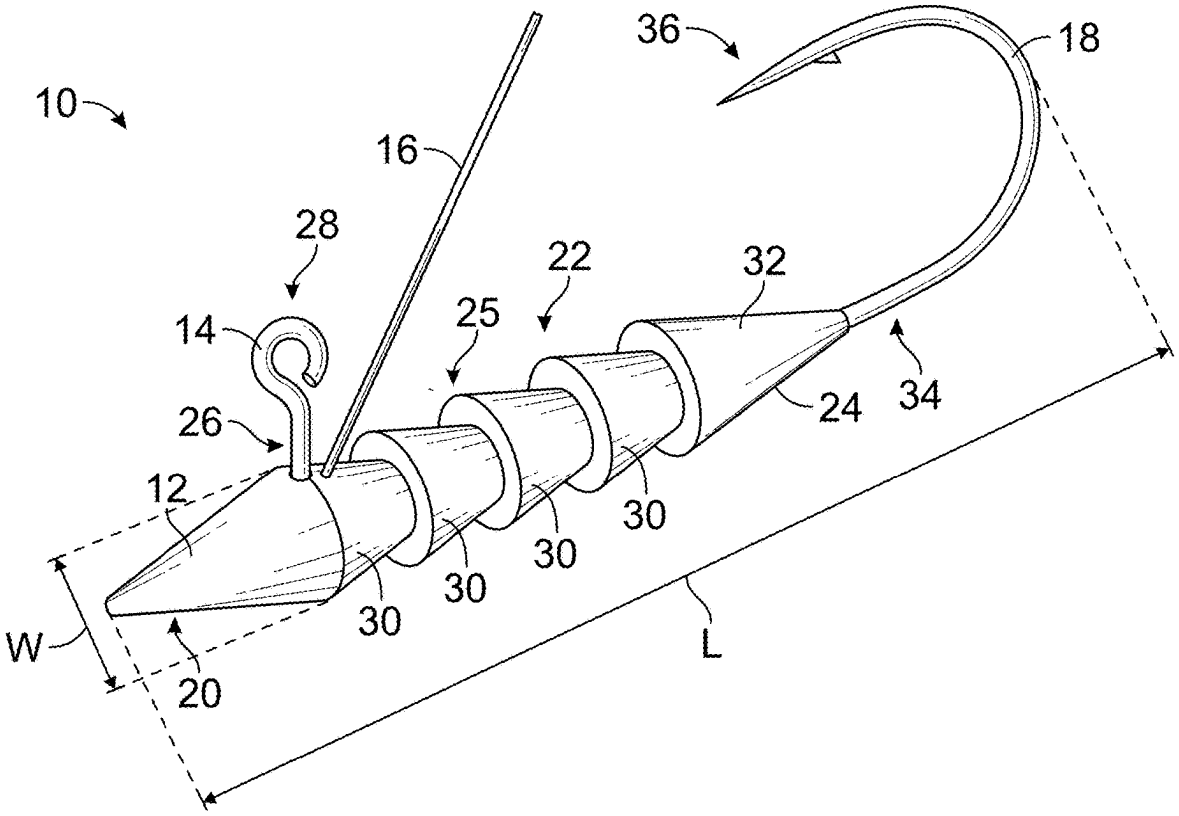


FIG. 1

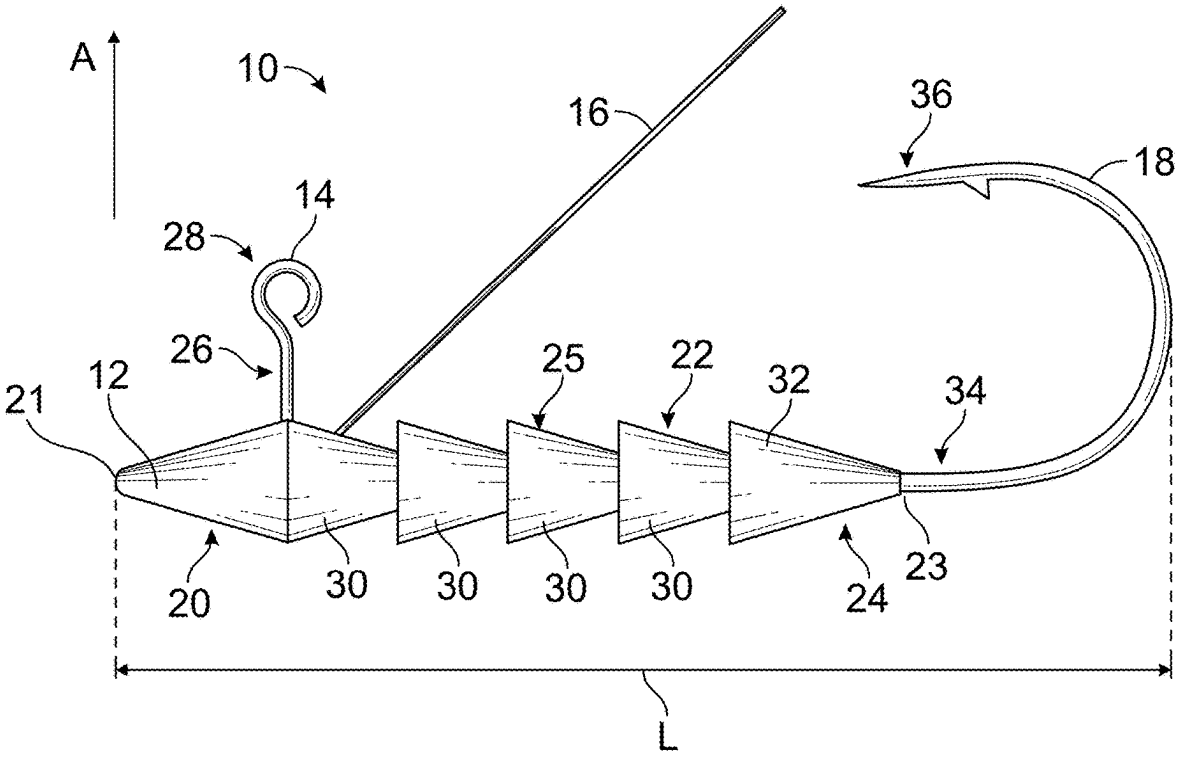


FIG. 2

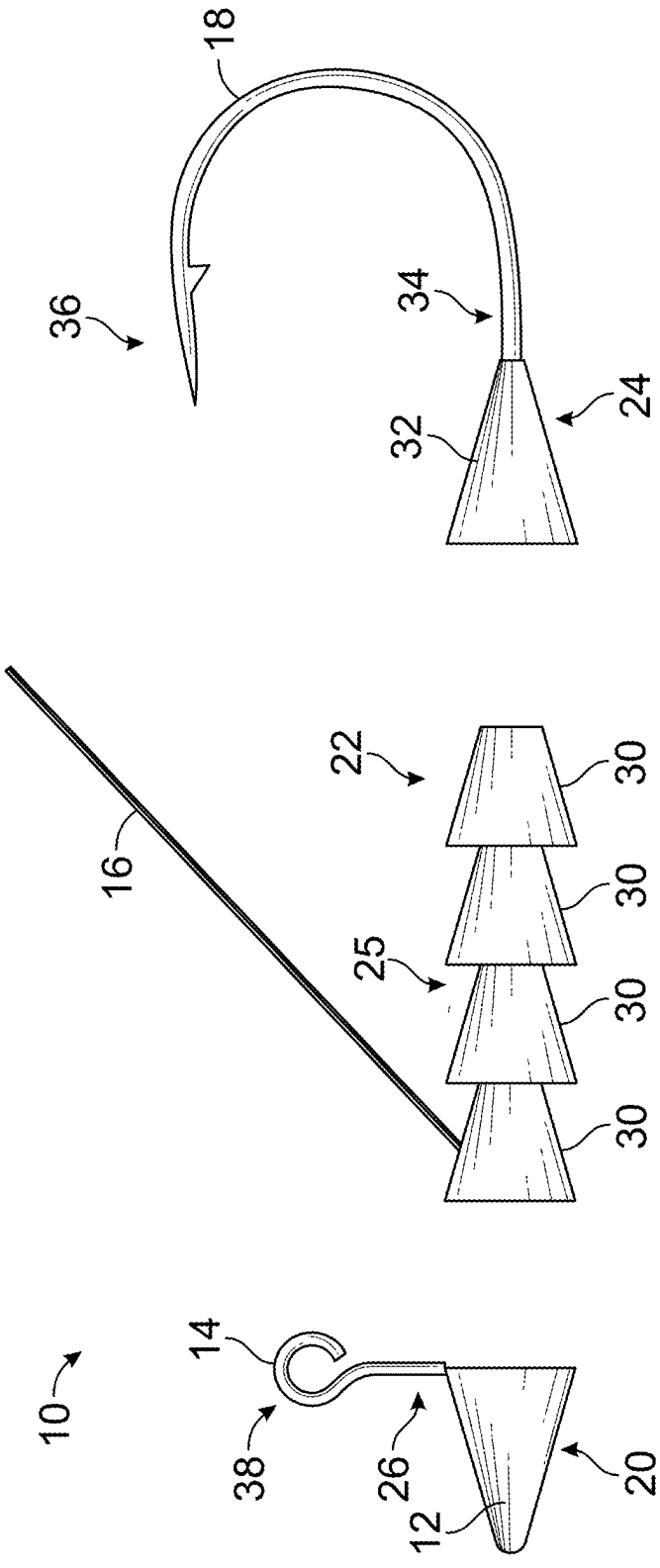


FIG. 3

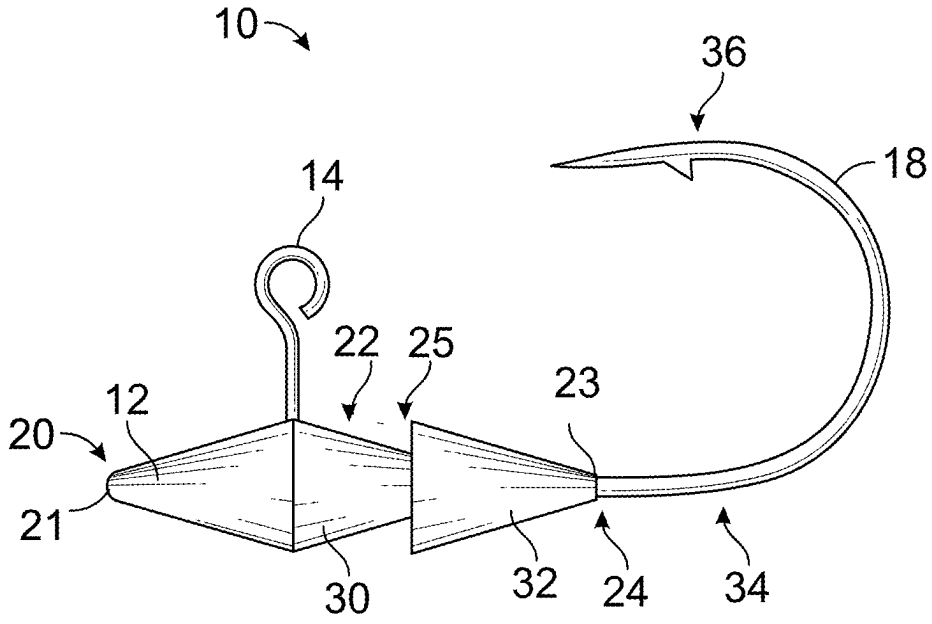


FIG. 4A

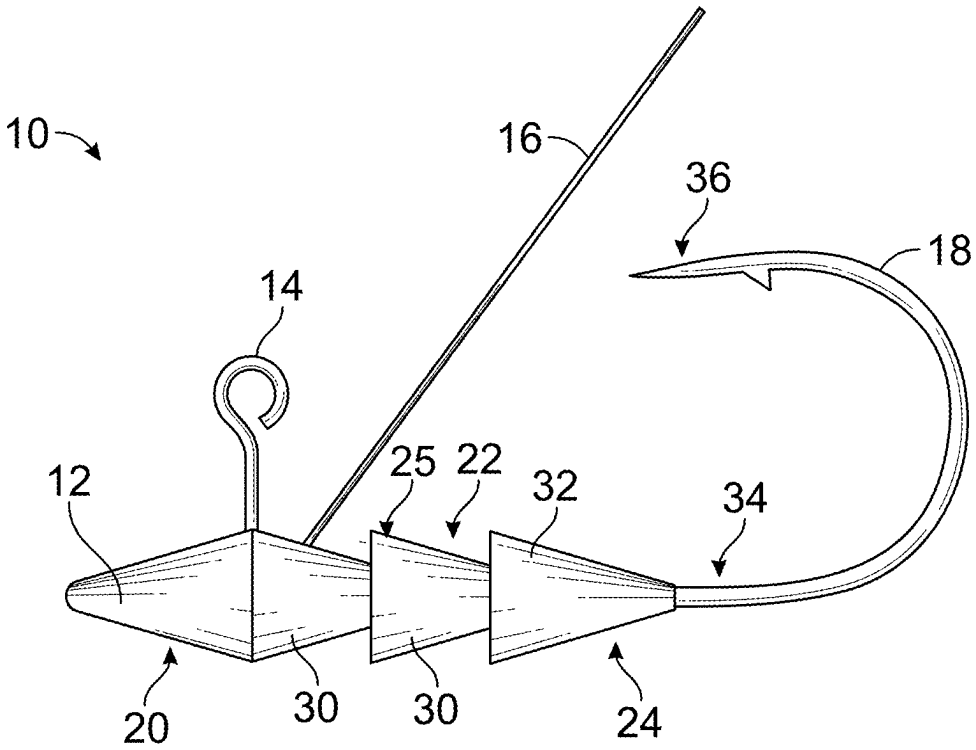


FIG. 4B

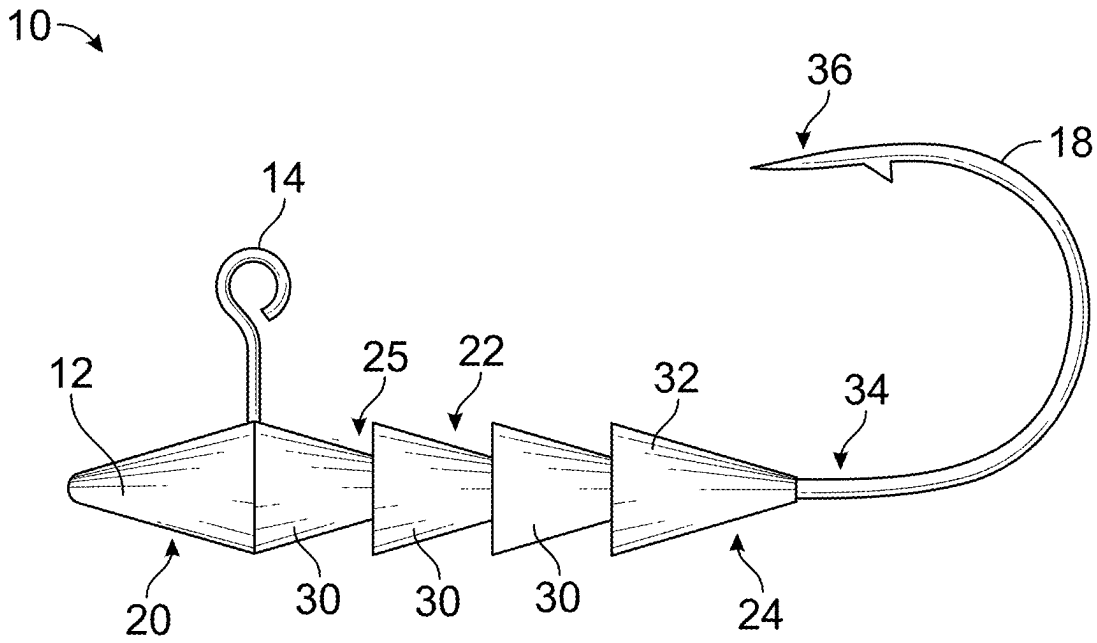


FIG. 4C

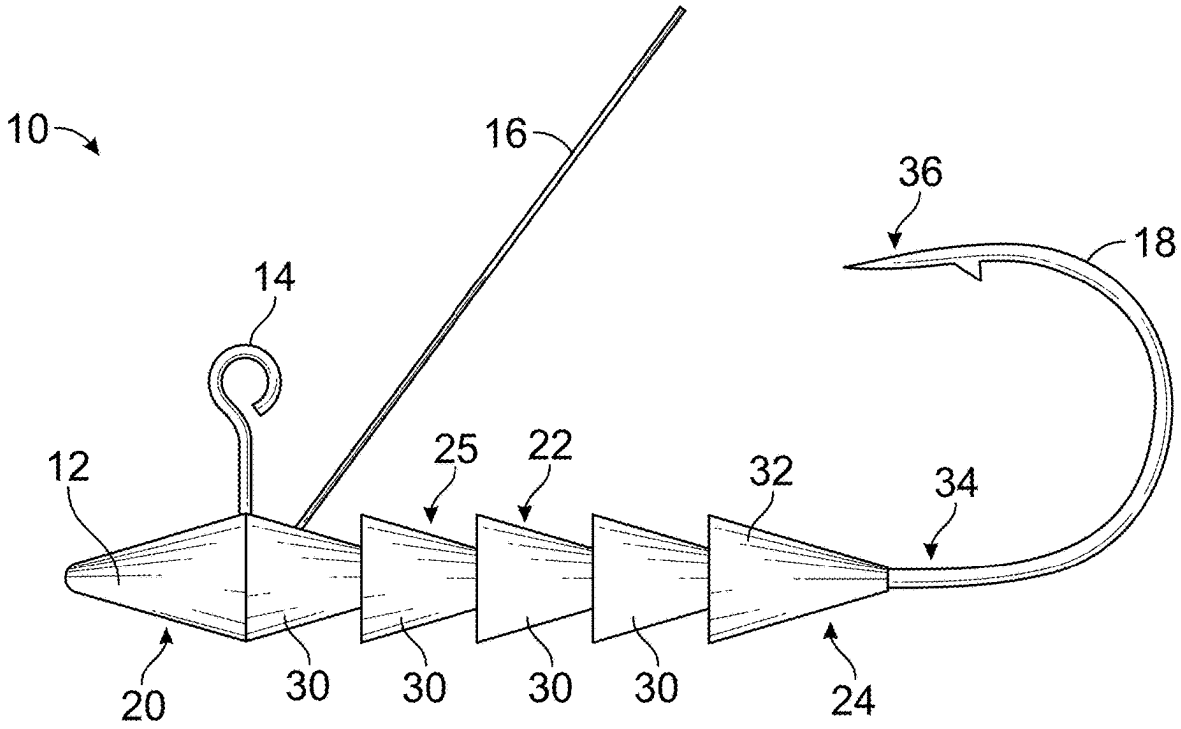


FIG. 4D

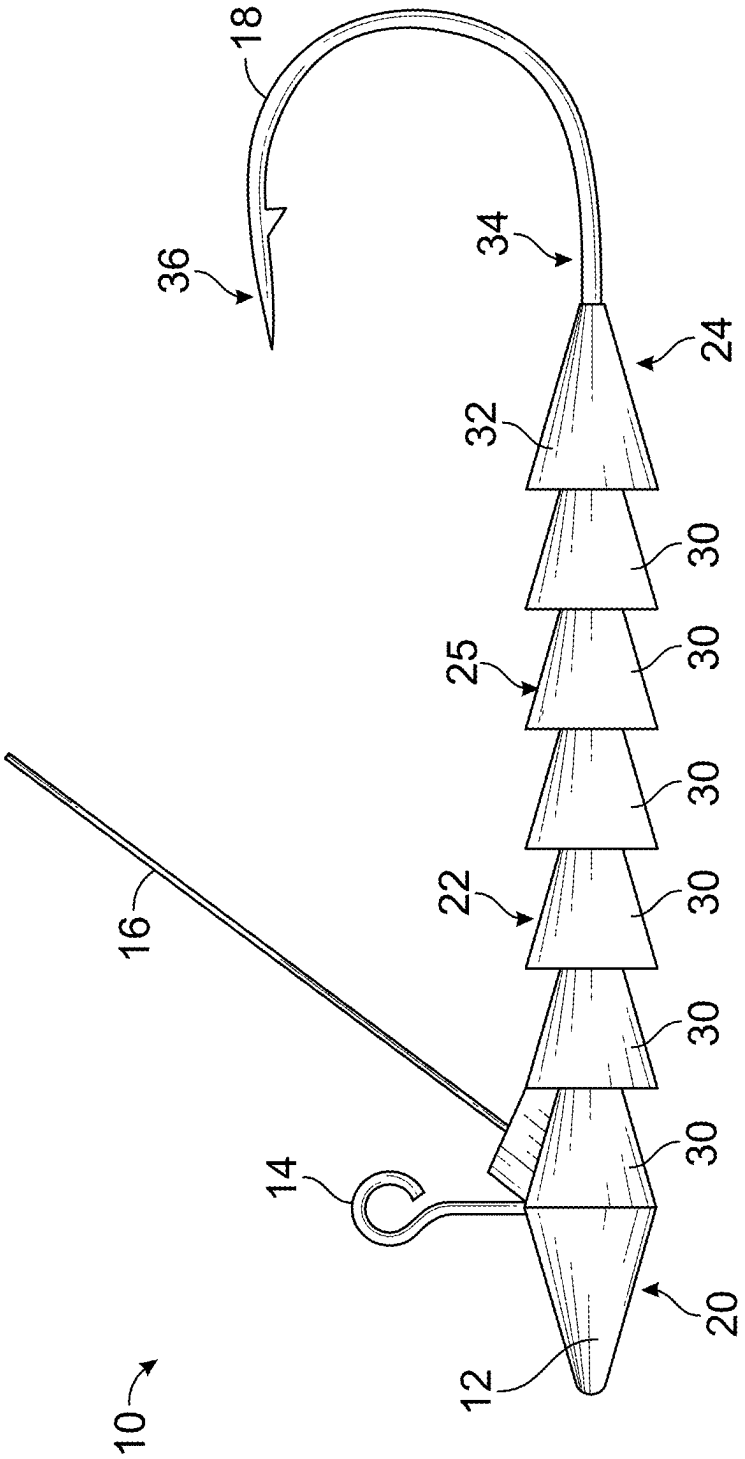


FIG. 4E

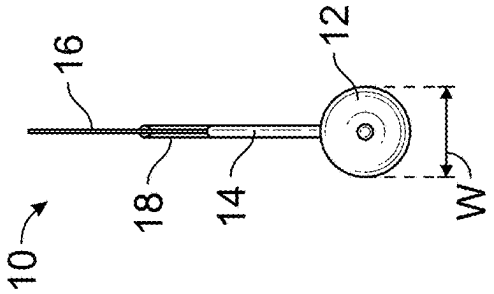


FIG. 5

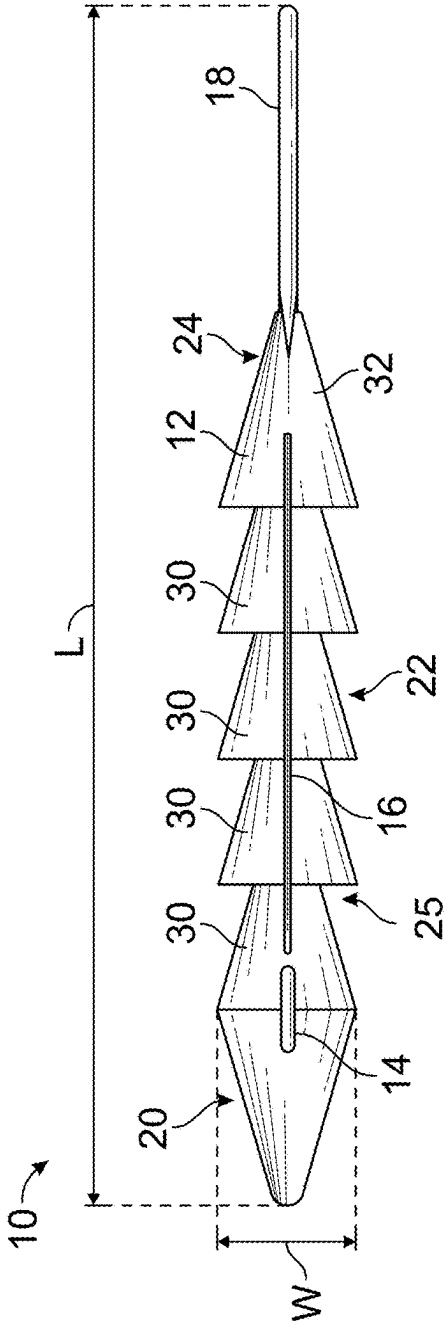


FIG. 6

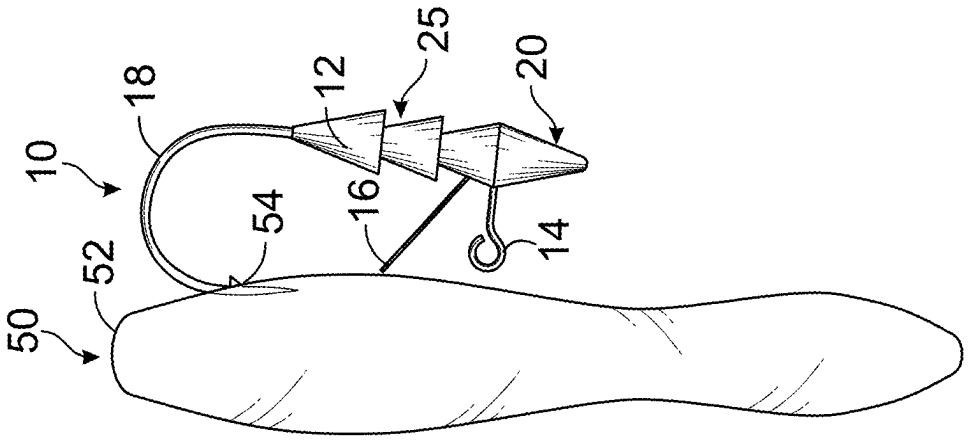


FIG. 7B

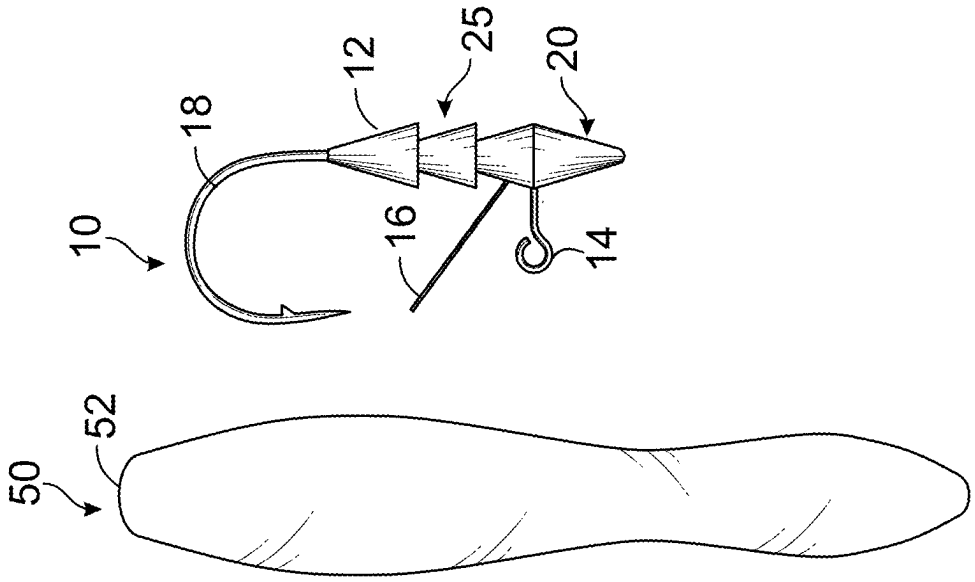


FIG. 7A

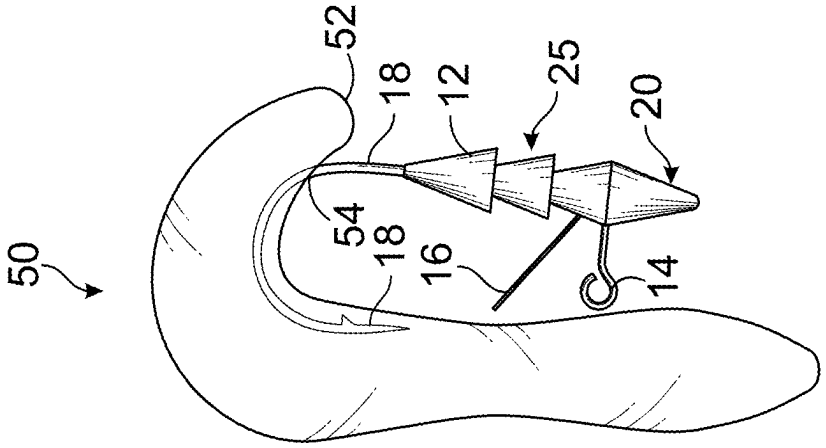


FIG. 7D

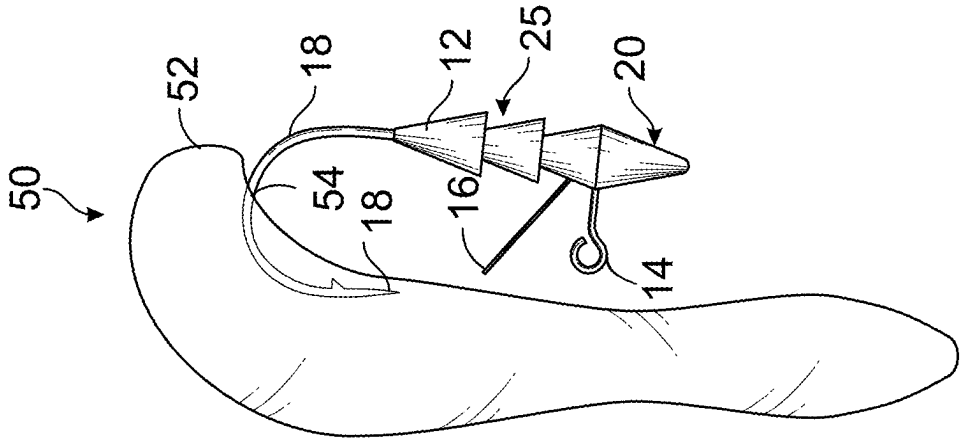


FIG. 7C

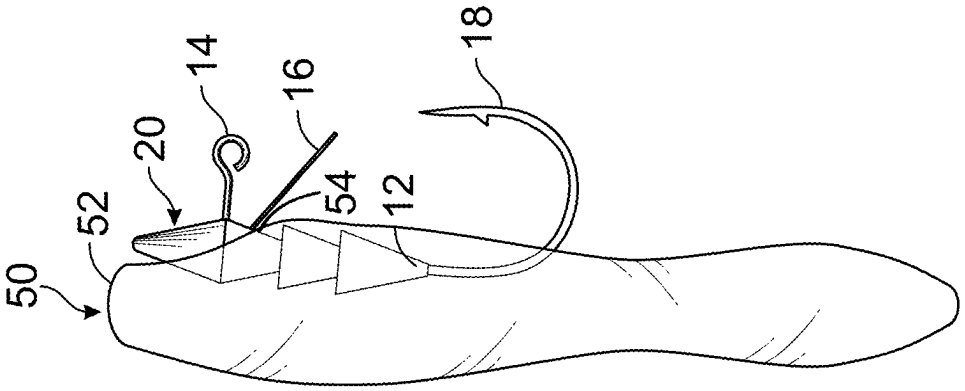


FIG. 7F

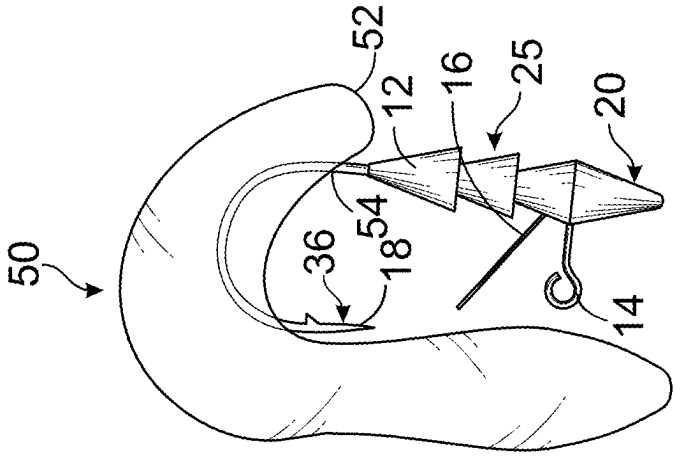


FIG. 7E

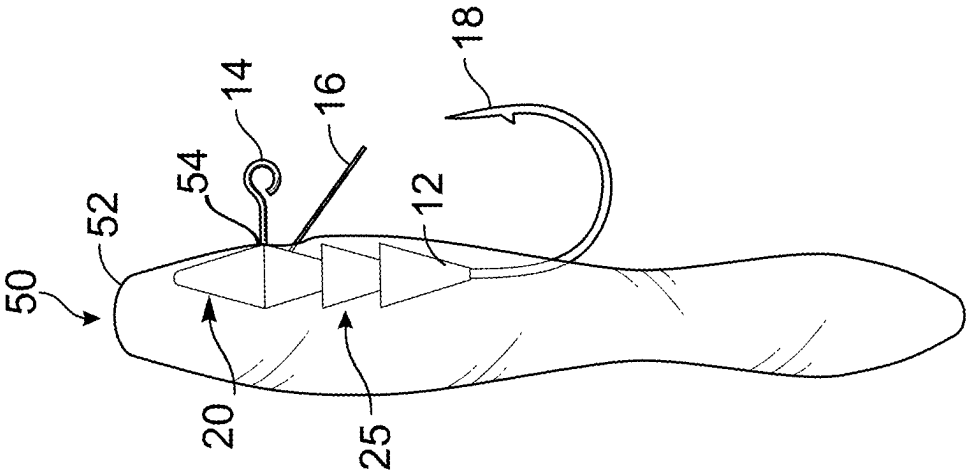


FIG. 7I

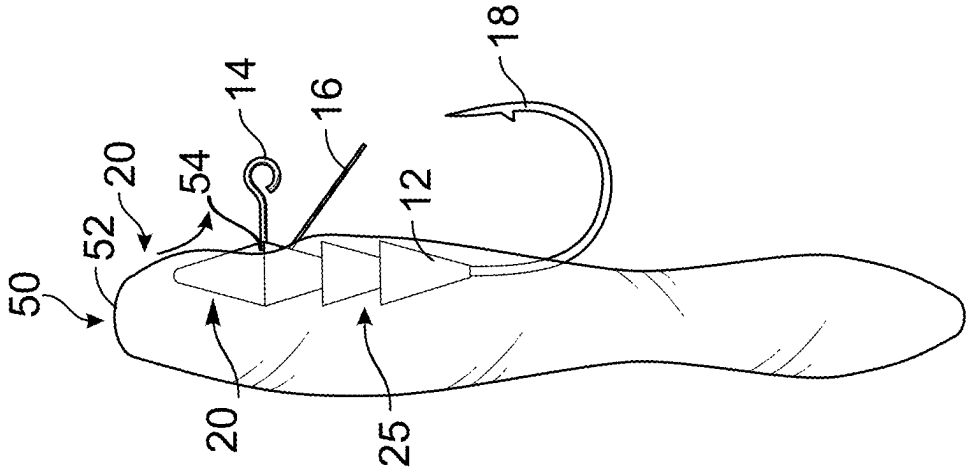


FIG. 7H

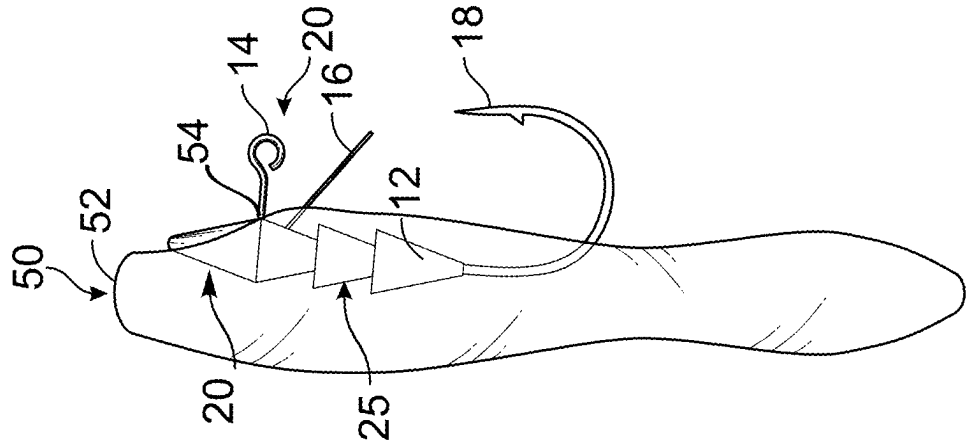


FIG. 7G

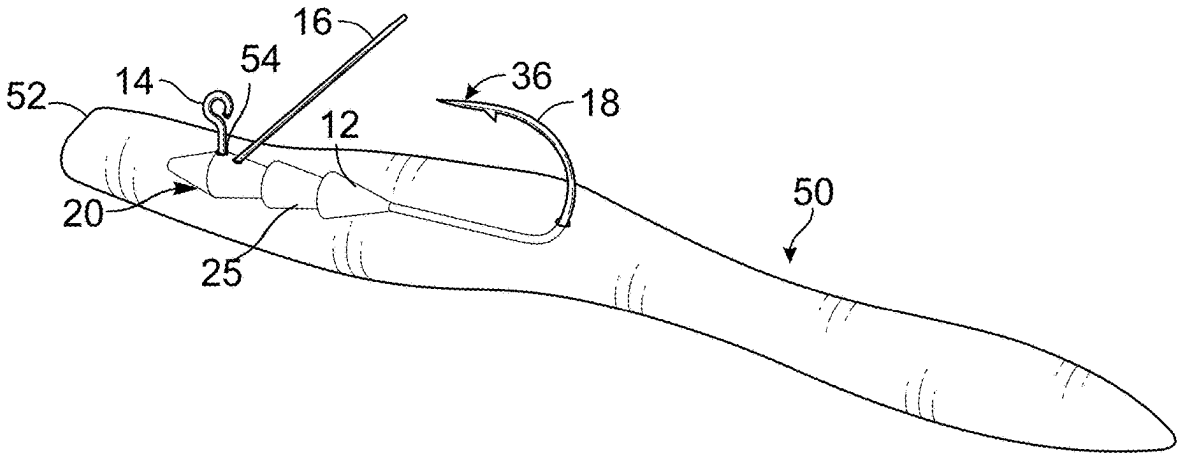


FIG. 7J

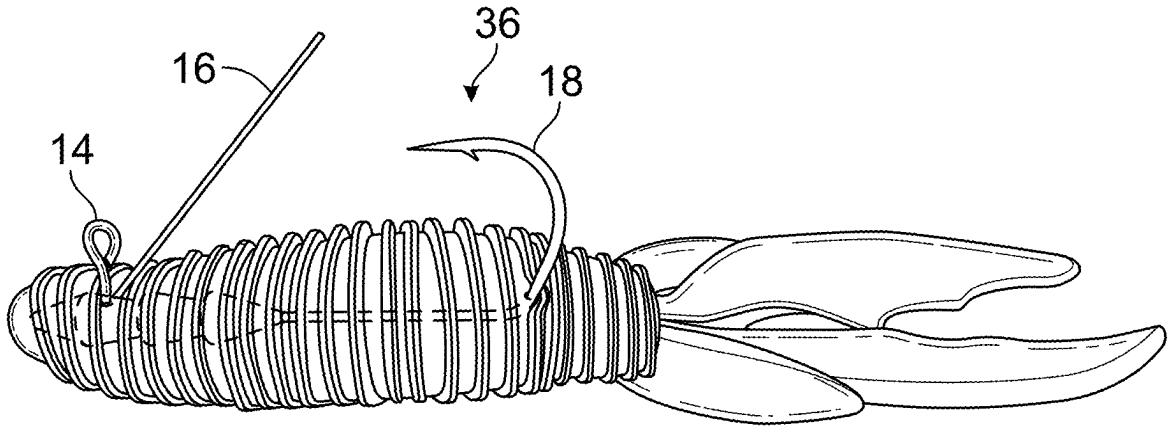


FIG. 8

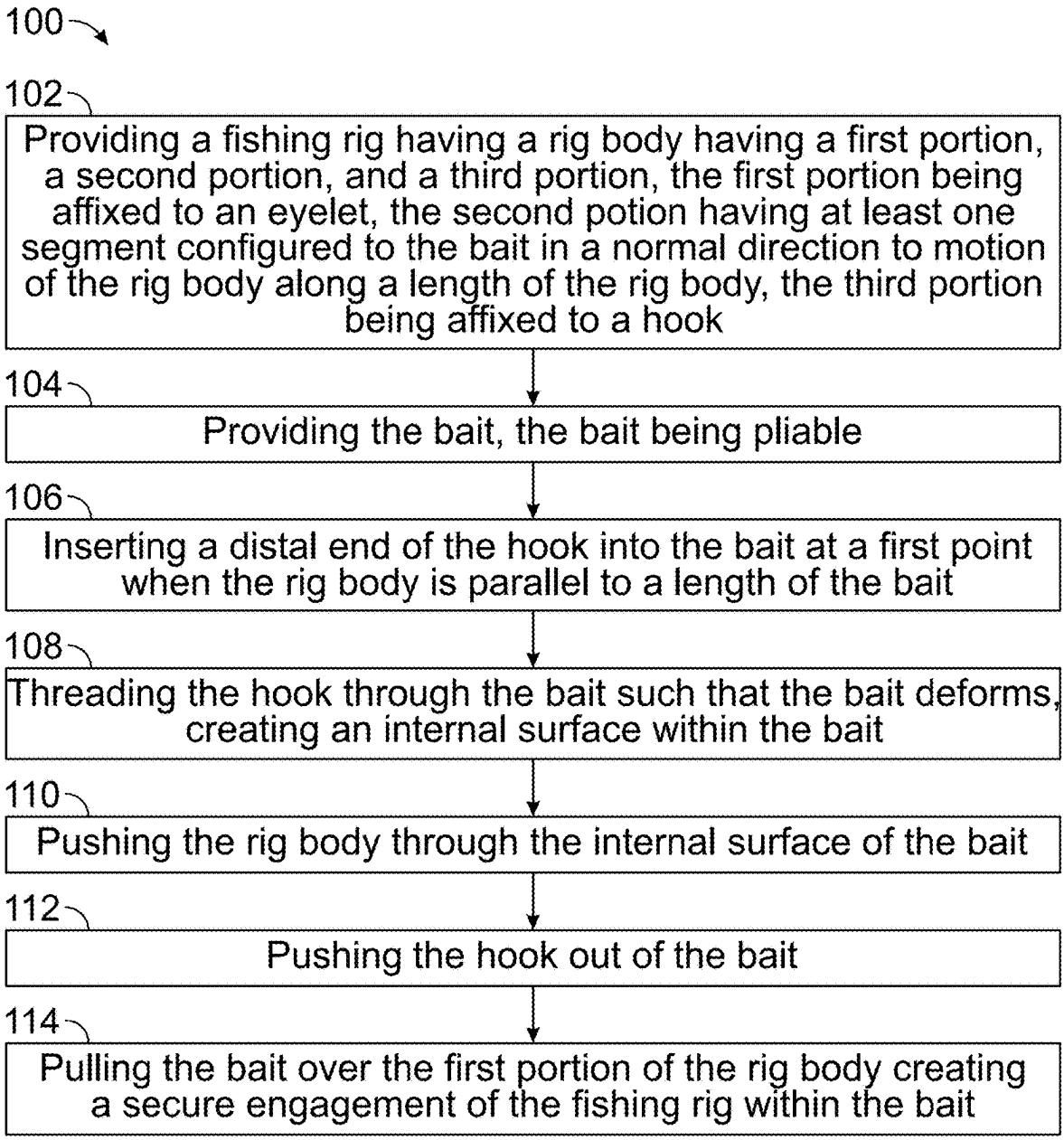

100
102
Providing a fishing rig having a rig body having a first portion, a second portion, and a third portion, the first portion being affixed to an eyelet, the second potion having at least one segment configured to the bait in a normal direction to motion of the rig body along a length of the rig body, the third portion being affixed to a hook
104
Providing the bait, the bait being pliable
106
Inserting a distal end of the hook into the bait at a first point when the rig body is parallel to a length of the bait
108
Threading the hook through the bait such that the bait deforms, creating an internal surface within the bait
110
Pushing the rig body through the internal surface of the bait
112
Pushing the hook out of the bait
114
Pulling the bait over the first portion of the rig body creating a secure engagement of the fishing rig within the bait

FIG. 9

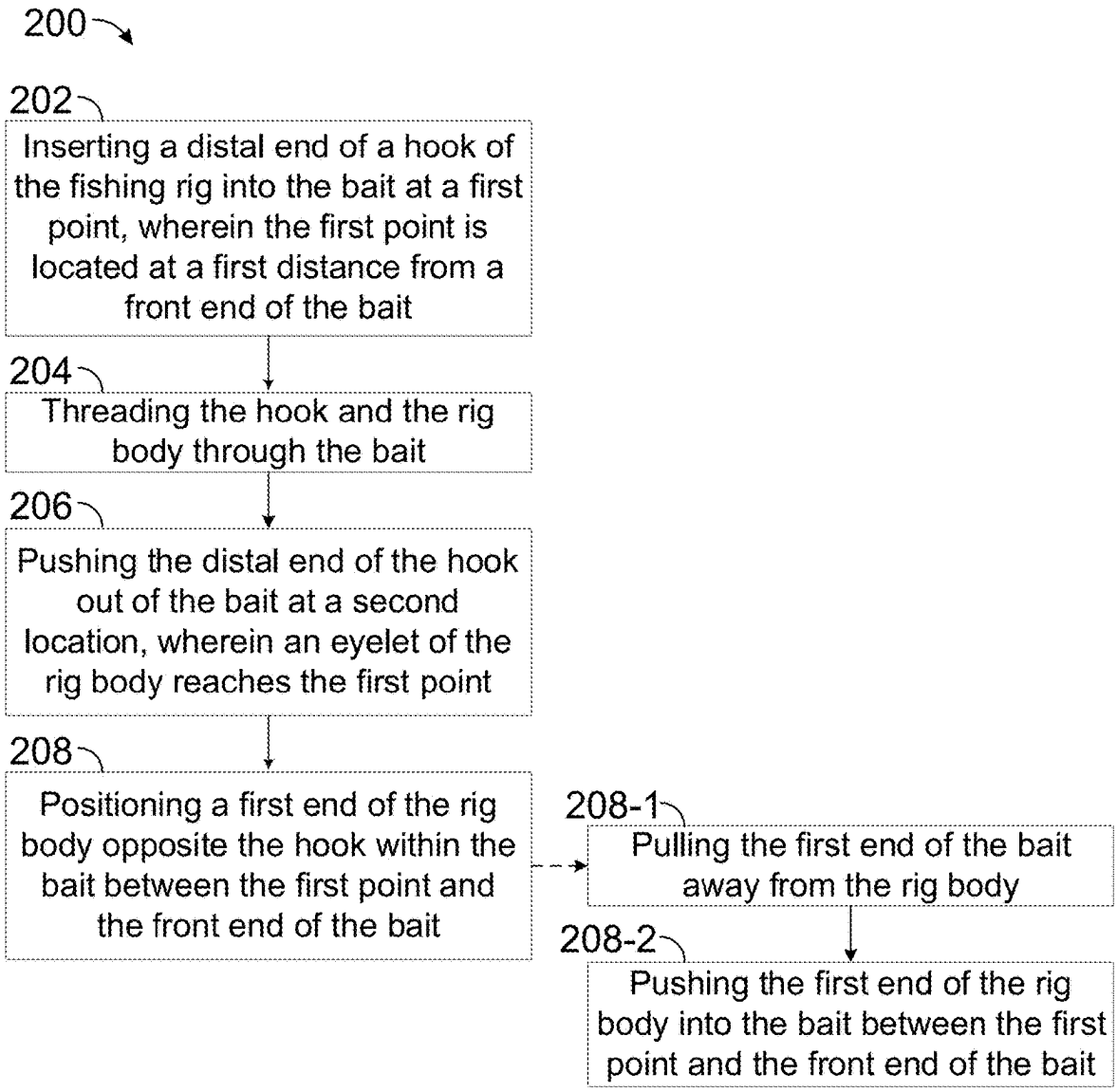

200
202
Inserting a distal end of a hook of the fishing rig into the bait at a first point, wherein the first point is located at a first distance from a front end of the bait
204
Threading the hook and the rig body through the bait
206
Pushing the distal end of the hook out of the bait at a second location, wherein an eyelet of the rig body reaches the first point
208
Positioning a first end of the rig body opposite the hook within the bait between the first point and the front end of the bait
208-1
Pulling the first end of the bait away from the rig body
208-2
Pushing the first end of the rig body into the bait between the first point and the front end of the bait

FIG. 10

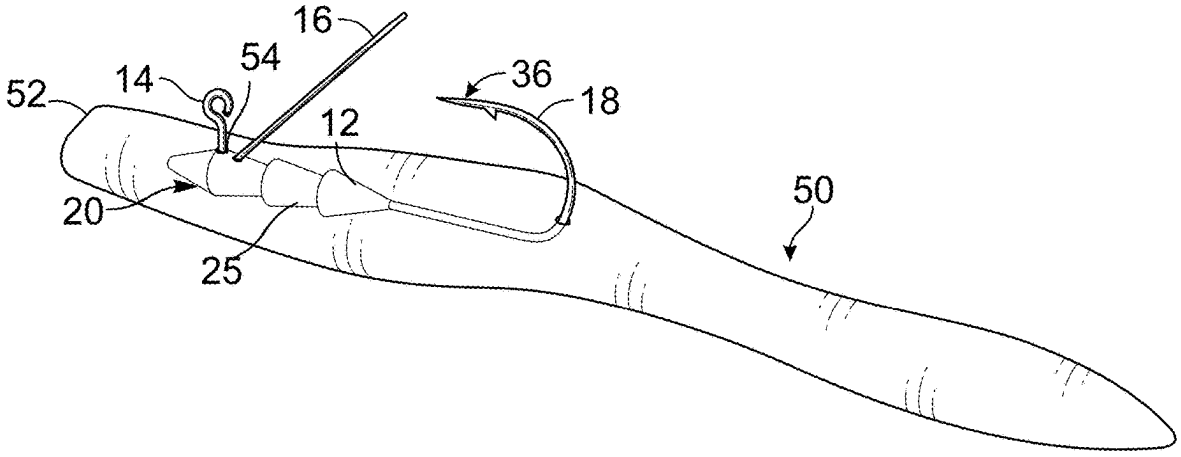


FIG. 8

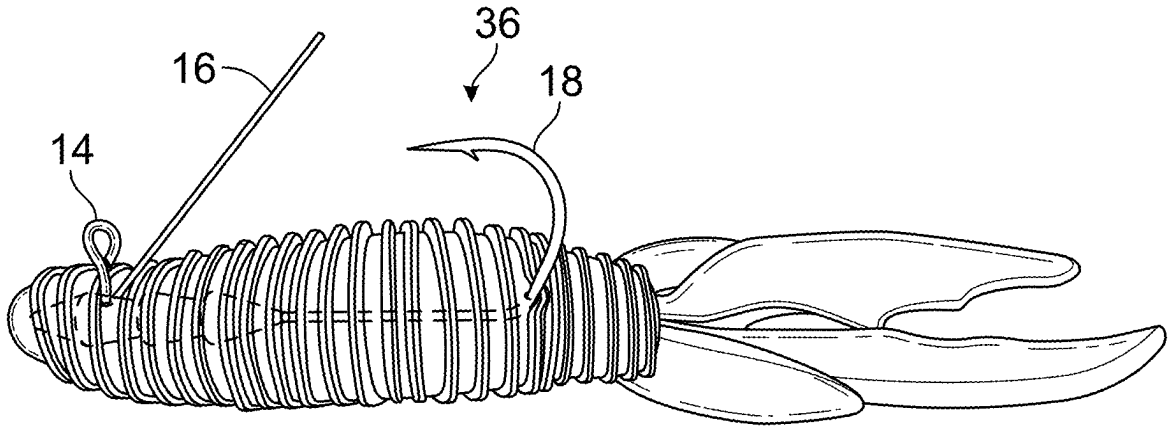


FIG. 9

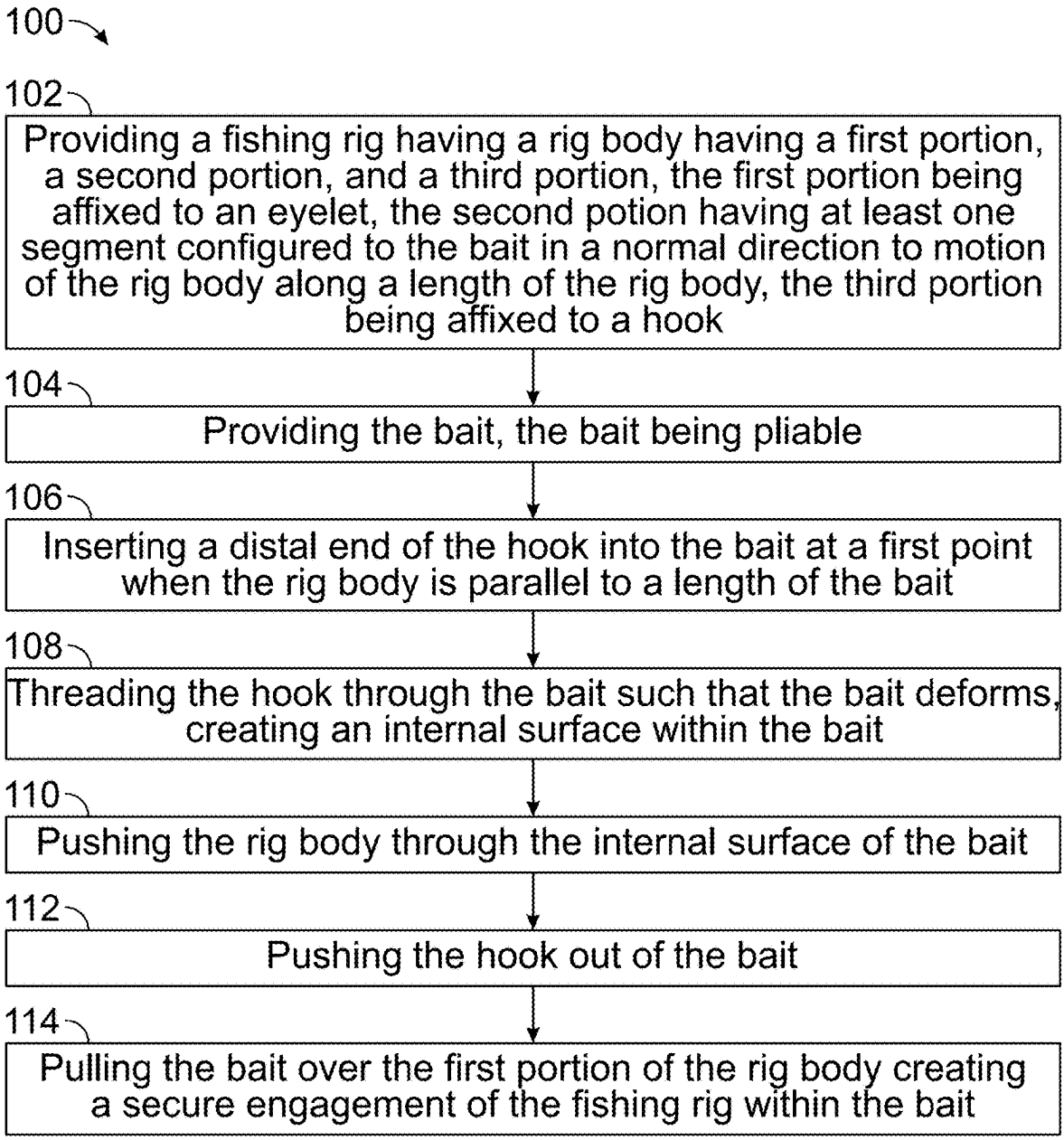

100
102
Providing a fishing rig having a rig body having a first portion, a second portion, and a third portion, the first portion being affixed to an eyelet, the second potion having at least one segment configured to the bait in a normal direction to motion of the rig body along a length of the rig body, the third portion being affixed to a hook
104
Providing the bait, the bait being pliable
106
Inserting a distal end of the hook into the bait at a first point when the rig body is parallel to a length of the bait
108
Threading the hook through the bait such that the bait deforms, creating an internal surface within the bait
110
Pushing the rig body through the internal surface of the bait
112
Pushing the hook out of the bait
114
Pulling the bait over the first portion of the rig body creating a secure engagement of the fishing rig within the bait

FIG. 10

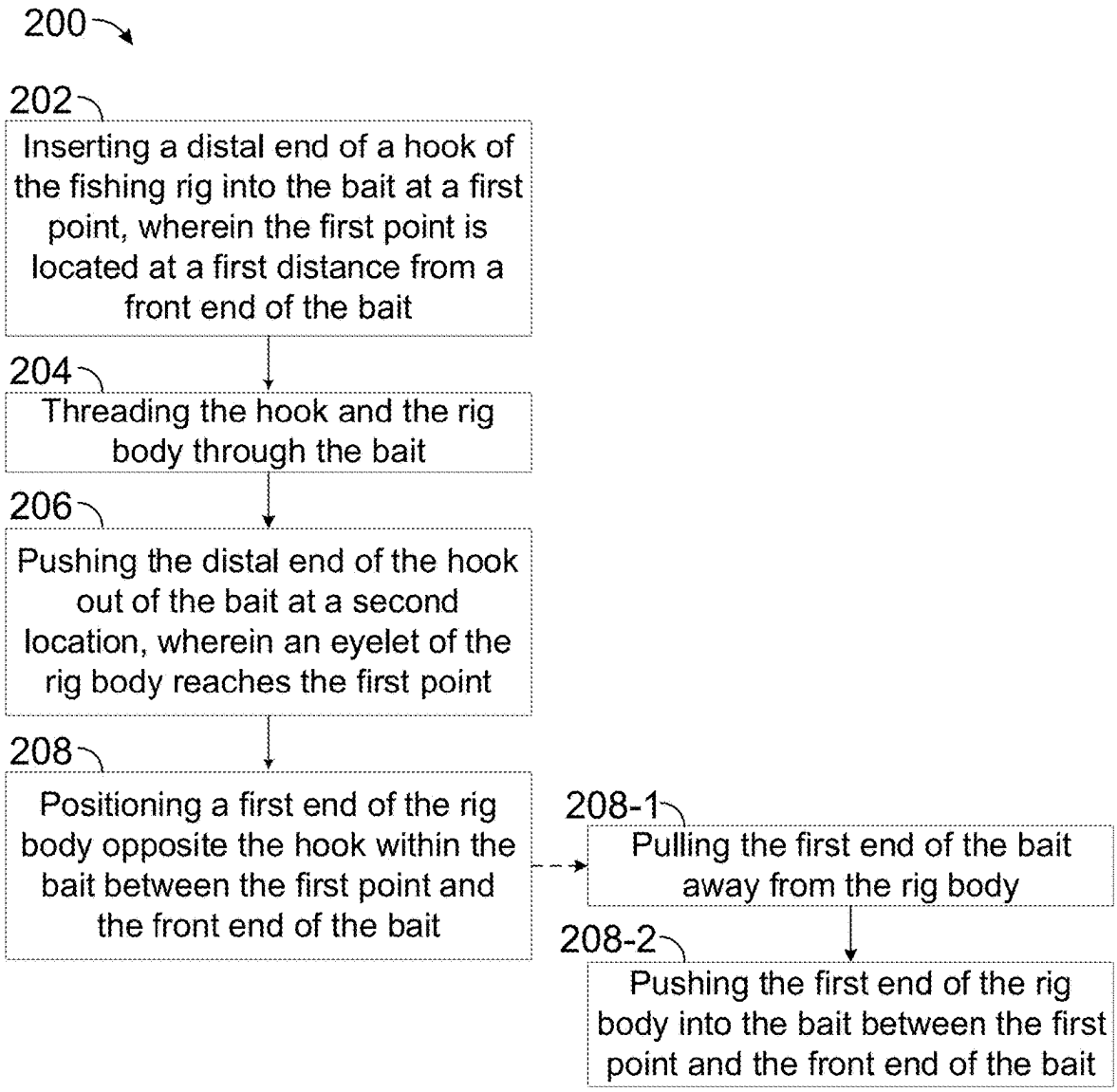

200
202
Inserting a distal end of a hook of the fishing rig into the bait at a first point, wherein the first point is located at a first distance from a front end of the bait
204
Threading the hook and the rig body through the bait
206
Pushing the distal end of the hook out of the bait at a second location, wherein an eyelet of the rig body reaches the first point
208
Positioning a first end of the rig body opposite the hook within the bait between the first point and the front end of the bait
208-1
Pulling the first end of the bait away from the rig body
208-2
Pushing the first end of the rig body into the bait between the first point and the front end of the bait

FIG. 11

HOVERING, STROLLING FISHING RIG

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application claims the benefit of priority to U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 63/554,771 filed on Feb. 16, 2024, the entire contents of which is incorporated herein by reference.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] Hover strolling is a known fishing technique used to catch suspended fish, such as bass, in pressurized bodies of water. This technique involves suspending the bait within a water column to control the vertical depth of the bait in the water. Once suspended, gliding motions are preferred as the fish targeted by hover strolling techniques are fish that are less receptive to fast-moving bait or bait that sinks quickly in water.

[0003] There are at least two common problems with hover strolling. First, hover strolling is typically performed using a highly buoyant baitfish-style soft plastic lure through which a 90° hook is inserted. The depth at which the lure stays suspended in the water is influenced by the weight of the lure and can be adjusted by adding a nail weight to the front of the lure achieve the desired flotation depth. However, using a nail weight moves the center of gravity of the lure and focuses the weight at the front end of the bait, causing the bait to fall head first down the water column instead of providing a more natural horizontal bait presentation that aids in performing a preferred slow gliding motion, a spiraling motion, or even a darting motion in the water.

[0004] Second, it can be difficult to maintain the bait on the hook, as the hook is not secure within the bait. Once the hook separates from the bait, the bait is often lost in the water. This problem can create frustration in those who fish as there is variability in efficacy of the technique.

[0005] There is no successful solution on the market that addresses these concerns. Accordingly, there is a need for a secure rig which enables a user to utilize hover strolling techniques without losing the bait and rig bodies, as described and claimed herein.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0006] The present subject matter discloses systems and methods for a fishing rig related to hover strolling techniques. Specifically, the rig disclosed herein includes a hook, a rig body, a weed guard, and an eyelet having specific characteristic and being configured in a specific relationship to each other.

[0007] In one example embodiment, the fishing rig of the present disclosure includes a rig body including a first end and a second end, an eyelet located on the rig body spaced from the first end, and a hook extending from the second end of the rig body. The eyelet extends from the rig body in a first direction. The hook includes a proximal end and a distal end, and the distal end extends from the rig body in the first direction. In some embodiments, the rig body includes a first portion between the first end and the eyelet, wherein the first portion is tapered.

[0008] A surface of the rig body may be shaped specifically to increase the engagement forces between the rig and the bait into which it is inserted. For example, the rig body may include: a stepped, frustoconical shape; a cylindrical spiral screw shape; or a ribbed shape. In some embodiments, the shape of the rig body is configured to increase at least one of friction and normal force between the rig body and the bait.

[0009] The fishing rig may include a weed guard extending from the rig body, wherein the weed guard has a proximal end and a distal end, the proximal end being located on the rig body adjacent to the eyelet. The weed guard extends from the rig body in the first direction and forms an angle with a longitudinal axis of the rig body.

[0010] In light of the disclosure herein and without limiting the disclosure in any way, in a first aspect of the present disclosure, which may be combined with any other aspect listed herein unless specified otherwise, a fishing rig for use with a bait comprises a rig body having a first portion, a second portion, and a third portion. The second portion has a saw-toothed surface. The fishing rig further includes an eyelet affixed to the first portion of the rig body, the eyelet defining an aperture and a hook affixed to the third portion of the rig body.

[0011] In another aspect of the present disclosure, which may be combined with any other aspect listed herein unless specified otherwise, the first portion is tapered.

[0012] In another aspect of the present disclosure, which may be combined with any other aspect listed herein unless specified otherwise, the rig body is configured to increase friction and secure the attachment between the rig body and the bait.

[0013] In another aspect of the present disclosure, which may be combined with any other aspect listed herein unless specified otherwise, the rig body is comprised of at least one of tungsten, steel, alloyed steel, vanadium, brass, and lead.

[0014] In another aspect of the present disclosure, which may be combined with any other aspect listed herein unless specified otherwise, the fishing rig further comprises a weed guard adjacent to the eyelet, the weed guard having a proximal end and a distal end, the proximal end being affixed to the second portion of the rig body, the weed guard sloping from the proximal end towards the distal end from the second portion of the rig body towards the third portion of the rig body.

[0015] In another aspect of the present disclosure, which may be combined with any other aspect listed herein unless specified otherwise, the weed guard is a twisted shape.

[0016] In another aspect of the present disclosure, which may be combined with any other aspect listed herein unless specified otherwise, the hook is a barbed hook.

[0017] In another aspect of the present disclosure, which may be combined with any other aspect listed herein unless specified otherwise, the bait is one of a fluke style bait, a flat tail worm bait, a craw bait, a soft stick bait, a soft jerkbait, a paddle tail swimbait, and a pin tail swimbait.

[0018] In another aspect of the present disclosure, which may be combined with any other aspect listed herein unless specified otherwise, a method for rigging a fishing rig to a bait includes the steps of inserting a distal end of a hook of the fishing rig into the bait at a first point, wherein the first point is located at a first distance from a first end of the bait, threading the hook and the rig body through the bait, pushing the distal end of the hook out of the bait at a second location, wherein an eyelet of the rig body is positioned adjacent to the first point, and positioning a first end of the

rig body opposite the hook within the bait between the first point and the first end of the bait.

[0019] In another aspect of the present disclosure, which may be combined with any other aspect listed herein unless specified otherwise, the step of positioning the first end of the rig body comprises pulling the first end of the bait away from the rig body and inserting the first end of the rig body into the bait between the first point and the first end of the bait.

[0020] In another aspect of the present disclosure, which may be combined with any other aspect listed herein unless specified otherwise, the eyelet and the distal end of the hook are outside of the bait after positioning the first end of the rig body within the bait.

[0021] In another aspect of the present disclosure, which may be combined with any other aspect listed herein unless specified otherwise, the rig body includes a first portion between the first end of the rig body and the eyelet, and wherein the first portion is tapered or otherwise shaped to facilitate a more secure engagement with the lure.

[0022] In another aspect of the present disclosure, which may be combined with any other aspect listed herein unless specified otherwise, the rig body is shaped to increase at least one of friction and normal force between the rig body and the bait.

[0023] In another aspect of the present disclosure, which may be combined with any other aspect listed herein unless specified otherwise, a weed guard extending from the rig body adjacent to the eyelet extends from the bait after positioning the first end of the rig body within the bait.

[0024] In another aspect of the present disclosure, which may be combined with any other aspect listed herein unless specified otherwise, a method for rigging a fishing rig to a bait includes the steps of providing the fishing rig having a rig body having a first portion, a second portion, and a third portion, the first portion being affixed to an eyelet, the third portion being affixed to a hook; providing the bait, the bait being pliable; inserting the hook into the bait when the rig body is parallel to a length of the bait; threading the hook through the bait such that the bait deforms, creating an internal surface within the bait; pushing the rig body through the internal surface of the bait; pushing the hook out of the bait; and pulling the bait over the first portion of the rig body creating a secure engagement of the fishing rig within the bait.

[0025] In another aspect of the present disclosure, which may be combined with any other aspect listed herein unless specified otherwise, the eyelet and a portion of the hook are exposed after pulling the bait over the first portion of the rig body.

[0026] In another aspect of the present disclosure, which may be combined with any other aspect listed herein unless specified otherwise, the first portion is tapered.

[0027] In another aspect of the present disclosure, which may be combined with any other aspect listed herein unless specified otherwise, the rig body is configured to increase a secure engagement between the rig body and the bait.

[0028] In another aspect of the present disclosure, which may be combined with any other aspect listed herein unless specified otherwise, the rig body is comprised of at least one of tungsten, steel, alloyed steel, vanadium, brass, and lead.

[0029] In another aspect of the present disclosure, which may be combined with any other aspect listed herein unless specified otherwise, the fishing rig further comprises a weed guard adjacent to the eyelet, the weed guard having a proximal end and a distal end, the proximal end being affixed to the second portion of the rig body, the weed guard sloping from the proximal end towards the distal end from the second portion of the rig body towards the third portion of the rig body.

[0030] In another aspect of the present disclosure, which may be combined with any other aspect listed herein unless specified otherwise, the weed guard is a twisted shape.

[0031] In another aspect of the present disclosure, which may be combined with any other aspect listed herein unless specified otherwise, the hook is a barbed hook.

[0032] In another aspect of the present disclosure, which may be combined with any other aspect listed herein unless specified otherwise, the bait is one of a fluke style bait, a flat tail worm bait, a craw bait, a soft stick bait, a soft jerkbait, a paddle tail swimbait, and a pin tail swimbait.

[0033] An advantage of the methods and systems disclosed herein is that the rig securely engages with the bait to decrease the likelihood of losing bait in the water.

[0034] A further advantage of the methods and systems disclosed herein is that, compared to prior methods and systems in which a nail weight was added to the front of the lure to adjust the weight of the lure, the center of gravity of the rig is shifted towards the middle of the bait to enable a smoother descent into the water.

[0035] Additional objects, advantages and novel features of the examples will be set forth in part in the description which follows, and in part will become apparent to those skilled in the art upon examination of the following description and the accompanying drawings or may be learned by production or operation of the examples. The objects and advantages of the concepts may be realized and attained by means of the methodologies, instrumentalities and combinations particularly pointed out in the appended claims.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0036] The drawing figures depict one or more implementations in accordance with the present concepts, by way of example only, not by way of limitations. In the figures, like reference numerals refer to the same or similar elements.

[0037] FIG. **1** is an isometric view of a hovering, strolling fishing rig, according to an example embodiment of the present disclosure.

[0038] FIG. **2** is a right side elevation view of the fishing rig of FIG. **1**, which is a mirror image of the left side elevation view.

[0039] FIG. **3** is an exploded right side elevation view of the fishing rig of FIG. **1**.

[0040] FIGS. **4**A-**4**E are right side elevation views of alternative embodiments of the fishing rig of FIG. **1**, each embodiment having a varied number of body segments.

[0041] FIG. **5** is a front elevation view of the fishing rig of FIG. **1**.

[0042] FIG. **6** is a plan view of the fishing rig of FIG. **1**.

[0043] FIGS. **7**A-**7**I illustrate the process of loading bait onto the fishing rig of FIG. **1**.

[0044] FIG. **8** is an isometric view of the fishing rig of FIG. **1** inserted into a worm style bait.

[0045] FIG. **9** is a front elevation view of the fishing rig of FIG. **1** inserted into a fluke style bait, according to an example embodiment of the present disclosure.

[0046] FIG. **10** is a flow chart illustrating the bait insertion process, according to an example embodiment of the present disclosure.

[0047] FIG. **11** is a flow chart illustrating the bait insertion process, according to another example embodiment of the present disclosure.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0048] The present disclosure provides for a hovering, strolling fishing rig related to hover strolling techniques. Referring to FIGS. **1-6**, the rig **10** disclosed herein includes a rig body **12**, an eyelet **14**, an optional weed guard **16**, and a hook **18**.

[0049] The rig **10** is designed to be inserted into a bait **50** (FIGS. **7-9**). As used herein, the term "bait" may refer to live baits or artificial lures. "Bait" includes any bait or lure into which at least a portion of the rig body **12** may be inserted. In some embodiments, the term bait or lure may refer to fluke style baits, flat tail worm baits, craw baits, soft stick baits, soft jerkbaits, paddle tail swimbaits, or pin tail swimbaits. It will be appreciated that the identified baits are purely exemplary and other types of baits may be utilized with the rig **10**.

[0050] As the rig **10** is designed to be inserted into a bait **50**, the rig body **12** may be any material suitable to exert a force against the bait **50** when inserted into the bait **50**. The rig body **12** is configured to secure an engagement between the rig body and the bait **50**. As one such example, the rig body **12** may be comprised of tungsten, steel, alloyed steel, vanadium, brass, lead, or other such dense materials as known to a person having ordinary skill in the art. In other embodiments, the rig body **12** may be comprised of more than one material.

[0051] In some embodiments, the rig body **12** includes opposing first and second ends **21**, **23** along a length or longitudinal axis thereof. In some embodiments, the rig body **12** includes a first portion **20**, a second portion **22**, and a third portion **24**. FIG. **3** illustrates an exploded view of the rig **10** to clarify each of the first portion **20**, second portion **22**, and third portion **24**. In a preferred embodiment, the rig body **12** is a single unified member and, therefore, the exploded view is not representative of the various portions actually being separable. However, while in some embodiments, the first, second, and third portions **20**, **22**, **24** are integral with one another, in other embodiments, one or more of the portions **20**, **22**, **24** are separate and secured to one another.

[0052] The first portion **20** is designed to create a secure engagement of the rig **10** within bait **50** due to the penetration of the first end **21** of the rig **10** into bait **50** when the bait **50** is loaded on the rig **10**. In some embodiments, the first portion **20** may be a tapered head such as that shown in FIGS. **1-6**, with the narrowest region on a front end of the portion **20**. This conical head shape allows for the front portion **20** to be inserted into soft bait **50** to fully secure the rig **10** within the bait **50** as described in greater detail below. In other embodiments, the first portion **20** may include other shapes in addition to those illustrated. In still further embodiments, the first portion **20** may include additional features to enable easy application of the bait **50**, such as a pointed end.

[0053] The first portion **20** also adds mass to the rig **10** in front of the eyelet **14**. The mass skews the center of mass of the rig **10** towards the first portion **20**. The weight distribution of the rig **10** may be varied depending on where the weight of the rig **10** is concentrated between the first, second, and third portions **20**, **22**, and **24** and can be intentionally designed to promote a slow gliding motion, a spiraling motion, or even a darting motion in the water to attract fish, depending on how the weight is balanced. The weight distribution may result from enlarging one or more of the first, second, and third portions **20**, **22**, and **24** relative to each other, the use of a heavier or lighter materials in any of the first, second, and third portions **20**,**22**, and **24**, or other suitable means.

[0054] As shown in FIG. **2**, the eyelet **14** extends from the rig body **12** in a first direction A to allow for a fishing line to be tied to the rig **10**. In one example embodiment, the eyelet **14** is located on the first portion **20** of the rig body **12**. In the illustrated embodiment, the eyelet **14** is positioned on an edge of the first portion **20** of the rig body **12** near the second portion **22**. The eyelet **14** includes a bottom end **26** affixed to or formed integrally with the rig body **12** and a top end **28** having a curved shape to define an aperture. In some embodiments, the top end **28** of the eyelet **14** may form a fully enclosed aperture. In other embodiments, the top end **28** of the eyelet **14** may form a circular shape defining an aperture having a gap along the circumference as illustrated. The eyelet **14** can be any material capable of holding its shape. As one such example, the eyelet **14** may be a metal such as high-carbon steel, steel alloyed with vanadium or stainless steel, lead, tungsten, or other such materials as known to a person having ordinary skill in the art.

[0055] The rig body **12** further includes a second portion **22** having segments **30** to increase the weight of the rig **10** and assist in creating a secure engagement of the rig **10** within the bait **50**. As shown in FIGS. **4A-4E**, the number of segments may vary. FIG. **4A** illustrates a rig **10** with one segment **30**. FIG. **4B** illustrates a rig **10** with two segments **30**. FIG. **4C** illustrates a rig **10** with three segments **30**. FIG. **4D** illustrates a rig **10** with four segments **30**. FIG. **4E** illustrates a rig **10** with six segments **30**. Assuming a consistent weight for each segment, the number of segments **30** included in the second portion **22** of the rig body **12** may help to determine the gliding motion of the rig **10** and bait **50** within the water as lighter rigs **10** (such as the rig **10** of FIG. **4A**) may have more erratic motion when compared to rigs **10** with more segments **30** (such as the rig **10** of FIG. **4E**). Additionally, rigs **10** having greater weight may be used in water columns that have heavier brush and debris. Any number of segments **30** may be used, with the length of the intended bait **50** guiding the maximum number of segments **30** that may be preferred.

[0056] The segments **30** may be comprised of the same material as the rest of the rig body **12**, different materials than the rest of the rig body **12**, or each segment **30** may be comprised of different materials entirely. The segments **30** may be any shape including spheres, cones, cylinders, cubes, or may resemble other three-dimensional shapes, though some shapes may be preferred to more securely engage the bait **50** and the rig **10**. Alternatively, the segments **30** may differ in size from one another.

[0057] The segments **30** may form a shape **25** on the rig body **12**. The shape **25** may be: a stepped, frustoconical shape, a cylindrical spiral screw shape, a ridged or ribbed shape, and/or any other shape. In some embodiments, the shape **25** is designed to increase at least one of friction and

normal force between the rig body **12** and the bait **50**. In one embodiment, the segments **30** form partial cones or frusto-conical portions adjacent one another to create a saw-toothed side profile that can be seen in FIGS. **2-3**. In this embodiment, the saw-toothed surface comprises all segments **30**. The frustoconical portions create surfaces or teeth which engage the interior of the bait **50** to secure the rig **10** in the bait **50**. In this embodiment, the frustoconical portions are oriented such that a base with the greatest diameter is closer to the first portion **20** on each segment **30** relative to an end with the narrowest diameter. This orientation ensures that as the rig **10** moves through the water in the intended direction (i.e. with the first portion **20** leading the rig **10** through the water), the part of each segment **30** with the largest surface area in the direction of motion engages the bait **50**. The normal and frictional forces generated between the bait **50** and the segments **30** retains the bait **50** on the rig body **12** while moving.

[0058] In the embodiment illustrated in FIG. **1**, a weed guard **16** is affixed to the segment **30** nearest the first portion **20** of the rig body **12**. The weed guard **16** is a rod that extends diagonally from the second portion **22** of the rig body **12** towards the hook **18**, with the rod extending above the hook **18**. The weed guard **16** includes a proximal end **17** on the rig body **12** and a distal end **19** extending in the first direction A away from the rig body **12** and forming an angle with the longitudinal axis L of the rig body **12**. In some embodiments, the proximal end **17** of the weed guard **16** is located on the rig body **12** adjacent to the eyelet **14**. The weed guard **16** may be disposed such that a distance between the distal end **19** of the weed guard **16** and the longitudinal axis L of the rig body **12** is greater than a distance between the distal end **36** of the hook **18** and the longitudinal axis L of the rig body **12**.

[0059] During use, the weed guard **16** catches brush and debris in the water and blocks the hook **18** to prevent the hook **18** from becoming stuck in the debris. The weed guard **16** may create a surface for brush and debris particles to be dispersed before contacting the hook **18**, thus ensuring that the hook **18** does not become entangled with brush or debris.

[0060] The weed guard **16** may be a rod of any material known to those having ordinary skill in the art. In some embodiments such as those illustrated in FIGS. **4**B, **4**D, and **4**E, the weed guard **16** has a spiral shape. In embodiments where the weed guard **16** has a spiral configuration, the spiral may bias the brush and debris to move along the length of the weed guard **16** and away from the other rig **10** components as the rig **10** moves through water. In this way the weed guard **16** may act as a sort of corkscrew to disperse the brush and debris. In other embodiments such as those illustrated in FIGS. **4**A and **4**C, the rig **10** does not include a weed guard. It should be understood that the weed guard **16** may be included or excluded from any embodiment without deviating from the scope of the present disclosure, and that figures which exclude the weed guard **16** are not intended to limit the scope of the embodiment in such figures.

[0061] Referring to FIGS. **1** and **2**, the third portion **24** of the rig body **12** includes a tail **32** that connects to a proximal end **34** of the hook **18**. In some embodiments, the tail **32** may taper such that a width of the tail **32** is approximately equal to a width of the hook **18** at the point of connection between the rig body **12** and the hook **18**. In some embodiments, the proximal end **34** of the hook **18** may be coupled to the rig body **12** through the use of adhesives glues such as epoxies or contact cements or through mechanical coupling. It should be appreciated that the identified adhesives and coupling mechanisms are exemplary and other adhesives and coupling mechanisms may be added or omitted in other embodiments of the rig **10**. In other embodiments, the hook **18** may be formed integrally with the tail **32**.

[0062] In some embodiments, the hook **18** is a "U"-shaped, cylindrical hook including the proximal end **34** on the rig body **12** and a distal end **36** that is sharply pointed. The hook **18** can be any material suitable to pierce a fish's mouth and be pulled by the user's rod. As one such example, the hook may be a metal such as high-carbon steel, steel alloyed with vanadium or stainless steel, lead, or tungsten. In some embodiments, the second end **36**, which is intended to pierce the side of the fish's mouth, may be a barbed hook as shown in the illustrated embodiments. In further embodiments, the second end **36** may include two or more points. Other embodiments are also contemplated which may incorporate different types of hooks.

[0063] As shown in the illustrated embodiments, the eyelet **14** and the distal end **34** of the hook **18** extend in the direction A from the longitudinal axis L of the rig body **12**. In some embodiments, the distal end **18** of the weed guard **16** is positioned at a distance from the longitudinal axis L of the rig body **12** greater than a distance between the distal end **36** of the hook **18** and the longitudinal axis L of the rig body **12**.

[0064] In some embodiments, the eyelet **14**, weed guard **16**, and hook **18** are located within the same plane parallel to direction L as shown in FIG. **6**. As shown in FIG. **5**, when viewed from a front side, the eyelet **14**, weed guard **16**, and hook **18** are affixed to the rig body **12** at the same point along a width W of the rig body **12**.

[0065] FIGS. **7**A-**7**I illustrate a process for inserting the rig **10** into bait **50**. Because the insertion of the rig **10** internally deforms the bait **50**, the rig **10** can be secured within the bait **50**. Inserting the rig **10** into a pliable bait **50** creates a compressive force within the bait **50** that helps to facilitate a secure engagement of the rig **10** within the bait **50**.

[0066] FIG. **7**A illustrates the rig **10** and bait **50** prior to insertion. Before inserting the proximal end **32** of the hook **18** into the bait **50**, the user determines a first point **54** at which the eyelet **14** will extend from the bait **50** after insertion in order to allow sufficient space between the eyelet **14** and a front end **52** of the bait **50** for the first portion **20** of the rig **10**.

[0067] In the first step shown in FIG. **7**B, the user inserts the hook **18** of the rig **10** into the bait **50** at the first point **52**. Additionally, the second end **36** of the hook **18** may be near parallel to the bait **50** upon insertion. FIG. **7**C illustrates the second end **36** of the hook **18** being further pushed along the length of the bait **50**.

[0068] As the second end **36** of the hook **18** continues to be pushed into the bait **50**, the bait **50** is threaded along the curvature of the hook **18** from the second end **36** to the first end **34** as shown in FIG. **7**D. The rig body **12** travels along the path created by the hook **18**. Since the bait **50** is pliable, the user curves the bait **50** such that the second end **36** of the hook **18** does not pierce through the bait **50** as the bait **50** is manipulated. Once the hook **18** is inserted at least the length of the rig body **12** through the bait **50** such that the eyelet **14**

is positioned at the first point **54**, the user pushes the second end **36** of the hook **18** out of the bait **50** as shown in FIG. **7**E.

[0069] FIG. **7**F illustrates the rig body **12** on the bait **50** after pushing the second end **36** of the hook **18** out of the bait **50**. As the rig body **12** is pulled through the bait **50**, the bait **50** deforms and creates an internal surface that engages with the rig **10**. The user pulls the rig body **12** through the internal surface of the bait **50** until the second portion **22** and third portion **24** of the rig body **12** are mostly inserted into the bait **50**. At this point, the first portion **20** of the rig body **12**, the eyelet **14**, and the weed guard **16** remain outside of the bait **50**.

[0070] The user then positions the first end **21** of the rig body **12** opposite the hook **18** within the bait **50** between the first point **54** and the front end **52** of the bait **50** as shown in FIGS. **7**G-**7**I. To insert the first end **21** of the rig body **12** in the bait **50**, the user grasps the front end **52** of the bait **50** near the first portion **20** of the rig body **12**, as shown in FIG. **7**G and stretches the front end **52** of the bait **50** **50** away from the rig body **12** in order to receive the first end **21** of the rig body **12**. The user then inserts the first end **21** of the rig body **12** into the bait **50** by pulling the bait **50** over the first portion **20** of the rig body **12** as shown in FIGS. **7**H and **7**I.

[0071] FIGS. **8** and **9** illustrate the fishing rig **10** when properly inserted into the bait **50**. FIG. **8** depicts the rig **10** inserted into a flat tail worm bait **50**. FIG. **9** depicts the rig **10** inserted into a fluke style bait **50**. When properly rigged, only the rig body **12** and the first end **34** of the hook **18** are inside the bait **50**. This is particularly valuable for fishing as fish may be deterred by certain shapes or materials unknown to them. Instead, with only the eyelet **14**, the weed guard **16**, and the hook **18** unobstructed, fish may be more likely to approach the rig **10** when in use.

[0072] The process **100** for inserting the rig into bait **50** may be summarized by the flowchart shown in FIG. **10**. In a first step **102**, a fishing rig having a rig body having a first portion, a second portion, and a third portion is provided. The first portion is affixed to an eyelet. The second portion includes at least one segment configured to engage the bait **50** in a normal direction to motion of the rig body along a length of the rig body. The third portion is affixed to a hook. In a second step **104**, the bait **50** is provided. The bait **50** is pliable such that it may be manipulated by a user. In a third step **106**, the hook is inserted into the bait **50** when the rig body is parallel to a length of the bait **50**. In a fourth step **108**, the hook is threaded through the bait **50** such that the bait **50** deforms and creates an internal surface within the bait **50**. In a fifth step **110**, the rig body is pushed through the internal surface of the bait **50**. In a sixth step **112**, the hook is pushed out of the bait **50**. In a seventh step **114**, the bait **50** is pulled over the first portion of the rig body creating a secure engagement of the fishing rig within the bait **50**. It will be appreciated that the order of the steps is purely exemplary and other arrangements of the above-listed steps, including an omission of one or multiple steps, may be used and known to a person having ordinary skill in the art.

[0073] An alternative way to describe the insertion of the rig of the present disclosure into the bait by the process **200** may be summarized by the flowchart shown in FIG. **11**. The flowcharts in FIGS. **10** and **11** are not intended to be considered different methods, but rather different descriptions of the same method. In a first step **202**, a distal end of a hook of the fishing rig is inserted into the pliable bait at a first point, wherein the first point is located at a first distance from a front end of the bait. In a second step **204** the hook and rig body are threaded through the bait. In a third step **206** the distal end of the hook is pushed out of the bait at a second location until an eyelet of the rig body approaches the first point. At a fourth step **208** a first end of the rig body opposite the hook is positioned within the bait between the first point and the front end of the bait. The fourth step **208** may itself comprise substeps. Such substeps may include a first substep **208-1** where the first end of the bait is pulled away from the rig body, and a second substep **208-2** where the first end of the rig body is pushed into the bait between the first point and the front end of the bait. It will be appreciated that the order of the steps is purely exemplary and other arrangements of the above-listed steps, including an omission of one or multiple steps, may be used and known to a person having ordinary skill in the art.

[0074] It should be noted that various changes and modifications to the embodiments described herein will be apparent to those skilled in the art. Such changes and modifications may be made without departing from the spirit and scope of the present invention and without diminishing its attendant advantages. For example, various embodiments of the method may be provided based on various combinations of the features and functions from the subject matter provided herein.

We claim:

1. A fishing rig for use with a bait, the fishing rig comprising:

a rig body including a first end and a second end;

an eyelet located on the rig body spaced from the first end, wherein the eyelet extends from the rig body in a first direction; and

a hook extending from the second end of the rig body, wherein the hook includes a proximal end and a distal end, and wherein the distal end extends from the rig body in the first direction.

2. The fishing rig of claim **1**, wherein the rig body includes a first portion between the first end and the eyelet, wherein the first portion is tapered.

3. The fishing rig of claim **1**, wherein a shaped portion of the rig body located between the eyelet and the second end increases a strength of engagement between the rig body and the bait into which it is inserted.

4. The fishing rig of claim **3**, wherein the shaped portion of the rig body includes one or more of: a stepped, frusto-conical shape; a cylindrical spiral screw shape; and a ridged or ribbed shape.

5. The fishing rig of claim **3**, wherein the shaped portion of the rig body is configured to increase at least one of friction and normal force between the rig body and the bait.

6. The fishing rig of claim **1**, further comprising a weed guard extending from the rig body, wherein the weed guard has a proximal end and a distal end, the proximal end being located on the rig body adjacent to the eyelet.

7. The fishing rig of claim **6**, wherein the weed guard extends from the rig body in the first direction and forms an angle with a longitudinal axis of the rig body.

8. The fishing rig of claim **7**, wherein a distance between the distal end of the weed guard and the longitudinal axis of the rig body is greater than a distance between the distal end of the hook and the longitudinal axis of the rig body.

9. The fishing rig of claim **6**, wherein the weed guard has a spiral shape.

10. The fishing rig of claim **1**, wherein the bait is one of a fluke style bait, a flat tail worm bait, a craw bait, a soft stick bait, a soft jerkbait, a paddle tail swimbait, and a pin tail swimbait.

11. A method for rigging a fishing rig including a rig body, a hook, and an eyelet to a bait, the method comprising:

inserting a distal end of the hook into the bait at a first point, wherein the first point is located at a first distance from a front end of the bait;

threading the hook and the rig body through the bait;

pushing the distal end of the hook out of the bait at a second location until the eyelet approaches the first point; and

positioning a first end of the rig body opposite the hook within the bait between the first point and the front end of the bait.

12. The method of claim **11**, wherein the step of positioning the first end of the rig body comprises:

pulling the first end of the bait away from the rig body; and

inserting the first end of the rig body into the bait between the first point and the front end of the bait.

13. The method of claim **11**, wherein the eyelet and the distal end of the hook are outside of the bait after positioning the first end of the rig body within the bait.

14. The method of claim **11**, wherein the rig body includes a first portion between the first end of the rig body and the eyelet, and wherein the first portion is tapered.

15. The method of claim **11**, wherein the rig body comprises a portion of the rig body shaped to increase at least one of friction and normal force between the rig body and the bait.

16. The method of claim **11**, wherein the fishing rig also includes a weed guard extending from the rig body adjacent to the eyelet such that the weed guard extends from the bait after positioning the first end of the rig body within the bait.

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