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Featured Review



Watercraft Accessory Review

Transporting your pontoon float boat has never been easier, introducing the cleverly designed EZ Packer



Date:	7/08/05
Tackle type:	Watercraft Accessory
Manufacturer:	EZ Packer
Reviewer:	Zander

Total Score: 8.66 + **INNOVATION AWARD**

Introduction: Pontoon boats are agile on the water, some even capable of effectively navigating whitewater, but on land these watercraft become awkward to carry even short distances, and transporting them long distances usually requires completely breaking them down. The EZ Packer is a new boat hauling product that takes advantage of your 2" or 1 1/4" receiver on your truck, SUV, RV, or ATV to make transporting your float boat easier than ever before.

EZ Packer (Single) Specifications	
Overall Length (Upright)	66"
Width (At fork)	15"
Material	Steel, powder coated black
Weight	35lbs
Foldable	Yes
Locking	Yes (via hitch pin)
Capable of holding	Multiple brands of boats
Boat length requirements at bar	16-18" length
Boat width requirements at bar	16-22" width
Boat clearance beneath seat at bar	1" clearance
Additional Features	Made for various boats (no drilling required), wall bracket option, height adapter option for RV's
Price	\$239.00

Transporting pontoon float boats: Pontoon boats are a favorite among trout anglers for their ability to maneuver on rivers, and more and more bass anglers are starting to appreciate the fishability of these affordable and customizable watercraft. My biggest complaint about these boats is their portability on land. Often anglers need to disassemble and deflate their pontoons when transporting them over even the most moderate of distances. The frames of these boats can still be quite large



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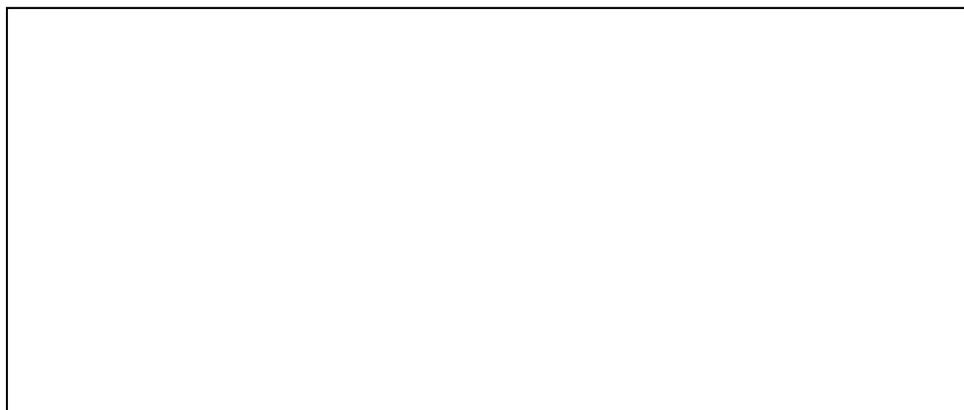
for many vehicles, and if you own a SUV instead of a truck you often have to spend time cleaning them off before putting them away. Enter the EZ Packer, the newest boat hauler product on the market, as well as one of the most innovative we have ever seen.



Ever wish you could traverse long distances with your pontoon fully assembled and still carry a full load in your car? Now you can with the inventive EZ Packer

Impressions: The best way to describe the EZ Packer is a mutant bike rack on steroids. This rack was mechanically engineered for the unique purpose of hauling float boats. The EZ Packer is constructed out of solid steel, and looks and feels extremely sound. This unit is no lightweight, and the EZ Packer single weighs just over 35lbs by itself. While a lighter unit would be easier to carry around when not in use, we would take "heavy" as a tradeoff for increased strength and durability any day of the week. The unit is extremely sturdy, and while it isn't designed to carry anything heavier than a 50-80lb float boat we just couldn't resist stress testing it by taking turns suspending ourselves from the rack. Suffice to say the unit held up nicely.

Overall we were impressed with the build quality of the unit all the way down to the generous welds between joints. We were eager to find out just how easy the unit would be to install and employ in practical fishing applications.



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Zander tests the strength of the EZ Packer (not recommended) by hanging on the unit prior to usage

Materials: The entire steel unit is coated black to shield the steel from the elements as well as provide a slick scratch resistant surface for loading and unloading of the unit. The only plastic on the EZ Packer are the caps at the end of the bars. The inside forks of the unit have a foam pad so that your pontoon will not get scratched or rattle during transport. For added security the unit comes with a safety chain that secures the entire rack to your hitch.



The EZ Packer is built with extremely sturdy steel and quality welds, powder coated for durability, and has numerous nice features like pads for pontoon protection, locking pins for ease of use and security

Real World Test: To test the EZ Packer we went on quite a few long distance trips and tested the unit's capabilities moving from point to point on a river as well as in a bass fishing application by seeing if the unit would benefit anglers launching into reservoirs. We have now used



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the EZ Packer for a total of 3 months and have logged just over 1000 plus miles with the EZ Packer in tow.



Installation: The EZ Packer will accommodate many pontoon boats including Cabelas, Creek Company, Dave Scadden, Water Skeeter, Trout Unlimited..etc. For the full list of approved boats [click here](#). The EZ Packer comes shipped in a oversized and insulated cardboard box. Setup of the unit literally takes 2 minutes as you must bolt in the standing leg into vertical position since the unit must ship with it collapsed. Once that single bolt is secured you are ready to install the unit onto your receiver. The EZ Packer comes in both 1 1/4" and 2" receiver sizes, and our test unit even came with a special anti-rattle hitch pin. The unit isn't exactly light but it isn't any more difficult to install than your typical bike rack.





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Watercraft Accessory Review

Transporting your pontoon float boat has never been easier, introducing the cleverly designed EZ Packer (continued)



EZ Loading: The best thing about the EZ Packer is the ability to transport a fully built pontoon just about anywhere. This makes it possible to take your time and build your boat up in the shade of your garage rather than having to unpack and build up the boat on site. Once your float boat built up and the individual pontoons are fully inflated and strapped in your ready to load your boat. Simply remove the safety pin and safety chain and lower the EZ Packer down flat. The center bar on the EZ Packer is longer than the forked end so it is possible to simply lift the center crossbars of your boat onto the main EZ bar and then slide the boat right into the fork without having to much lifting.

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Featured Review



After removing the safety pin lower the EZ Packer into position on the ground

Once the center crossbars are within the confines of the fork a locking pin at the end of each fork secures the boat. Simply lift the entire boat back into parallel position with the back of your vehicle, reinsert the safety pin and secure the chain and you are ready to roll. This entire procedure is undemanding, and takes less than 5 minutes. EZ Packer has a **short video** on their website that details the entire installation



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The EZ Packer's fork design can accommodate many brands of Pontoon float boats

Driving: Depending on the size of your pontoon and vehicle it is very likely that some part of your pontoon is going to extend above the back of your vehicle (unless you are driving an RV). We were worried about wind resistance when driving at high speed, like on the freeway for example. Our fears were soon put to rest as we took our very first trip. We found that the pontoons were surprisingly aerodynamic and there was little to no movement of the rack at high speed as a result of wind resistance. When moving at low speed over uneven surfaces the EZ Packer and pontoon will sway back and forth a bit but never so much that it became a safety issue. This can be countered by using the supplied spring loaded hitch pin and bungee cords to secure the pontoon to a fixed point against the back of your car or truck. We found on our test vehicle, a Land Rover Discovery II, that visibility was still adequate around the angles of the pontoon, but visibility will vary depending on your individual vehicle.



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Lift the front of your pontoon boat and rest the crossbar beneath the seat on the center EZ Packer bar

EZ Launching: When we drove to the lake or the river to launch our boat with the EZ Packer during the field tests the unit garnered a great deal of attention. None of the other float boat owners had ever seen anything quite like this product. There were numerous times that other anglers approached us to see just how the product worked, and marveled at how quickly we were able to go from the car to fishing on the water.



With all the weight of the pontoon boat supported on the EZ Packer main bar it is easy to slide the pontoon into the fork

While loading the pontoon was undemanding, we found unloading our Water Skeeter downright effortless. Simply remove the safety pin and chain, lower the unit and pull back on the pontoon to slide it right off the rack. Like a boat trailer the EZ Packer allows you to back your car right to the waters edge and launch your float boat. No more lifting



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oversized pontoons on dry land, or wasting fishing daylight by having to assemble your frame and pump the pontoon chambers up in the field. The entire unloading process takes as little as 3 minutes.



Once you have the pontoon loaded onto the fork simply place both security pins on the end of the fork to secure the pontoon, then lift the pontoon into vertical position and lock the EZ Packer back into transport position with the safety pin

Maintenance & Durability: The EZ Packer is very maintenance free, and all you need to do to clean the unit is spray with water and wipe the unit dry. It is a good idea to lubricate the main pivot point once every few months, but other than that there is no routine upkeep required. The EZ Packer is all about being "easy." Easy to install, easy to operate, and easy to maintain. In terms of durability the unit received high marks and survived an off-roading expedition fully loaded with our pontoon. The only area that received some wear is the fork surface that comes in contact with the pontoon crossbars. After plenty of loading and unloading both the pontoon and the EZ Packer had a few cosmetic scratches on the black finishes. This can be easily avoided by placing a strip of clear packing tape over the forks loading surface.





Re-apply the safety chain onto your hitch and your ready for transport, the whole loading procedure takes only 5 minutes

Applications and increased freedom and range: While the concept behind the EZ Packer is relatively simple the implementation of this idea is phenomenal. The easy to use design spells a quick and uncomplicated operation for anglers, and because the EZ Packer is so easy to use it makes it possible for anglers to increase their chances of success on fishing trips. Bass anglers can carry more gear, and get into the water quicker by being able to launch wherever they can drive to on the lake. Trout and smallmouth anglers can work multiple points on the river by quickly relocating the boat to various spots across a much greater span of water. If you own a SUV it makes it possible to move around the waters edge without having to disassemble your boat, and if you own a truck it means you can transport two fully boat built up pontoons in your bed, and another on the EZ Packer. For those looking to fish with even more friends the company produces a EZ Packer dual model capable of holding two float boats! Finally, for those very adventurous anglers looking to fish those hard to reach honey holes the EZ Packer makes it possible to carry your pontoon boat into the backcountry on the back of an ATV!



No longer do you need to break down the pontoon between trips, the EZ Packer also allows you to change locations on the river quickly, or transport more equipment or passengers in your car or truck. Perhaps coolest of all the EZ Loader will fit on ATV's as well for even more mobility

Price & Warranty: The EZ Packer is an superb product when it comes to functionality, and it becomes even more attractive with a price tag that is no more than a quality baitcaster. The unit retails for \$239.00 ready to go, and other available options include a wall bracket that makes it possible to use the EZ Loader as a storage device for your pontoon in your garage, and a height adapter making the EZ Packer RV capable. The unit is guaranteed for 1 year against all manufacturer defects. Overall the EZ Packer is well worth the money for any float boat owner on the go.

Ratings:

EZ Packer (Single) Ratings(?/10)		
Construction/Quality	The EZ Packer is well built, and features all steel construction, an attractive black finish, and quality welds in all critical areas	9
Performance	The EZ Packer was easy to install and operate. Never before have we been able to unload a fully built pontoon right into the water	9
Price	The EZ Packer is a reasonable price at 249.99 and while not extremely cheap it is worth the money for this quality product	8
Features	The EZ Packer is designed to be extremely easy to use and the units swing down design and quick securing pin make it easy to use	9
Design (Ergonomics)	The design is excellent, and the only area where we thought the EZ Packer could be improved is in weight, the unit is no lightweight at 35lbs. While the unit is somewhat heavy we are willing to accept the weight as a trade-off for the excellent durability we saw in our tests	8
Application	The EZ Packer is much more than just a carrying rack for your pontoon. This is a product that will improve the fishing experience for float boat owners	9
Total Score		8.66

Pluses and Minuses:

Plus	Minus
☺ Innovative design!	☹ Durable design requires the unit to be somewhat heavy at 35lbs
☺ Quality construction	
☺ Easy to use	
☺ True fishing advantages for pontoon owners. Get to fishing faster, and ability to relocate quickly	

Conclusion: Some watercraft accessory products are gimmicky, but the EZ Packer is not one of them. The EZ Packer is quite ingenious, not only from a design standpoint but also the fact that it addresses a need as unique as float boat transport so well. The EZ Packer is all about making it easier for anglers to get on the water and get to fishing. The unit is easy to install, easy to use, and quite affordable. The EZ Packer allows float boat anglers a much greater amount of freedom when it comes to moving about across expanses of land to target multiple locations on large lakes or rivers. Because the unit is so quick to use much less time and effort is expended during each relocation. We decided to award the EZ Packer our Innovation Award not only for a innovative quality design, but also for the pioneering thinking that went into the implementation and production of a product that truly addressed a actual need for pontoon anglers. The EZ Packer is much more than just a carrying rack, this is a product that will improve the fishing experience for anglers. If you own a float boat, the EZ Packer is one upgrade that is definitely worth investing in, and eliminates all of the negative time consuming issues associated with the setup and transport of these versatile watercraft.



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