

How to Catch Salmon ©

Salmon Fishing Techniques by Dick Pool

It is often said that ten percent of the fishermen catch ninety percent of the fish. Unfortunately, this is frequently true. The difference between those who catch salmon consistently and those who do not is technique. Experienced salmon fishermen know when to fish, where to find salmon, how to determine which lures and bait to use and maybe most important of all; how to setup their lures and bait so they catch fish. More salmon are taken by trolling than by mooching or jigging so we will concentrate this section on open water trolling. The techniques apply to saltwater trolling and trolling in freshwater lakes and reservoirs.

We will address salmon techniques in several sections.

Chapter 1 - Fundamentals

There are five species of salmon found in North America. The Chinook (King), Coho (Silver), Sockeye, Pink, and Chum Salmon. The techniques we will describe here apply primarily to the Chinook and Coho salmon because they are the largest and most popular of the sport fishing species. Some of the techniques also apply to the other species.

Most salmon are caught by trolling bait or lures. Anchovies and herring are the two most popular baits. The bait is usually mounted in a bait holder or modified to give it action. Some bait setups are rigged with slider hooks to bend the bait or are cut in a diagonal way to get action on it. The Pro-Troll bait holders include two models containing the EChip electronic attractor ([linked here](#)) The object of all these setups is to get the bait to roll and wiggle as it is trolled. Salmon are also taken very effectively on a variety of spoons plugs and other lures. Flashers and dodgers also play an important role in taking salmon.



Rule #1. Bait Action: This is the most important fundamental if you want to catch salmon. Get action on your bait or lure. If you have good rolling and erratic action, you will have a much better chance of catching salmon. When a salmon hits your bait or lure he is looking for dinner. If your bait looks like a wounded struggling baitfish you have a much better chance of getting the salmon's attention. Let me explain. Salmon have three sensing mechanisms they use to find their prey. They are sight, smell and lateral line response. If you are trolling and your lure passes within a few feet of a salmon and he sees it, you will probably catch him. The problem is that in the ocean and most other bodies of water the salmon can't see more than four or five feet. The water is too murky. If you are relying on sight alone, you probably won't bring home many salmon. The second sense is smell. Salmon have an extremely sharp sense of smell but if you are trolling a bait forty feet down and the salmon is at fifty five feet he will never smell the scent trail left by your bait unless he gets right behind it. The third sensing mechanism is the one you want working for you. Down a salmon's side and on his head and back there are tiny hair-like projections called cupula. Each of these has a nerve cell at the end. These cells are used to pick up vibrations in the water. If a salmon is swimming thirty feet down and a school of baitfish swims across the surface above him, he senses the vibrations and knows

exactly what's going on. His lateral line cells pick up the vibrations made by the wiggling tails of the baitfish. He doesn't see them or smell them but he knows exactly where they are. If some of them are wounded and swimming erratically, he knows he has his next meal. This is the mechanism you want to take advantage of. If your lure is putting out erratic vibrations twenty or thirty feet from a salmon you can pull him like a magnet. He will follow the vibration like a radar beam and attack your bait. This is why we say action on your bait or lure is the most important strategy you can use. Lures like the Krocodile, the Pro-Troll Elures and the Pro-Troll bait holders put out the erratic vibrations that will get you salmon. Whenever you put a bait or lure in the water you should carefully check its action. If it is not rolling or shaking, don't let it down. Sometimes the bait needs adjusting or a hook is lodged at a funny angle. Another possibility is that your boat trolling speed is not right for the lure you are using. Sometimes all you need to do is speed up or slow down.

Rule #2: Sharp Hooks. This seems like an obvious thing but most fishermen ignore it. In the author's experience, very few salmon hooks are sharp enough even brand new. The author and his Pro-Troll team worked eight years filming salmon hitting baits and lures in the ocean. We learned that the salmon come after your bait time and time again. The average salmon misses or just grazes the bait at least two times before he hits solid enough to get hooked. We observed one salmon hitting a bait twenty-two times before he got hooked on the twenty-third try. If your hooks are sticky sharp, you have a much better chance of that hook digging in as a salmon hits and slashes at the bait. Carry a small file or emery stone and sharpen those hooks often. You will definitely be rewarded with more salmon in the fish box.

In later chapters we will elaborate on some of these points as well as others and try to give you some specific steps you can take to ensure you bring home more salmon.

Chapter 2 - How to Find and Attract Salmon



If you are going to catch salmon in open water the first thing you have to do is to find where they are. The Pacific Ocean, the Great Lakes and other lakes and reservoirs have vast expanses of water. Some parts of these waters hold salmon and some do not. Knowing the habits of salmon can help a lot. If you are contemplating fishing out of a certain port or harbor, the first thing you should do is get the salmon fish reports. The newspapers, marinas, bait shops or local websites can usually tell you if the salmon fishing has been good or bad in a given area. Over their lives, salmon may migrate hundreds or even thousands of miles. They are constantly in search of food and ideal water temperatures.

If baitfish are abundant and the water is in the 54 to 57 degree range, salmon will stay in one locality sometimes for months. If the baitfish disappear, the salmon will soon disappear also. If the water gets too warm the salmon will either go deep to cooler water or move out of the area.

Once you establish that salmon have recently been caught in the general area where you want to fish, the next problem is finding the schools. They may be shallow or deep and they may be concentrated or scattered. If they are shallow (in the top 40 feet of water), your best strategies are to look for baitfish schools on your electronic fish finder or look for birds diving and feeding. Salmon attack shallow baitfish from underneath and push them to the surface. Sea Gulls and other birds will then dive on those same baitfish. Diving birds are usually an excellent indicator that salmon are present and are feeding. If the salmon are not at the surface, look on your fish finder for deeper balls of bait. Sometimes these will be near the bottom or along reefs or rocky structures. These deep baits

will usually be herring (in the saltwater), which are another good food source for the salmon. In this instance, you likely will need downriggers to get to the salmon, which may sometimes be hundreds of feet down. In finding salmon you should also look for concentrations of boats that have found the school and are catching fish.

Salmon have some definite likes and dislikes. Knowing these can help you find and catch them.

They like large schools of baitfish in the three to seven inch range. They will follow and stay close to these baitfish as long as their other likes are also met.

They like other salmon. They depend on each other for company and assistance in navigation and will usually travel in loose schools. Smaller salmon will frequently follow the larger ones back towards the spawning rivers.

They like cloudy water full of plankton or other particles so they feel safer from larger predator fish and mammals.

They like a disturbed surface on the ocean or lake. Whitecaps make them feel more secure in coming to the surface to get food.

They like to be ready to spawn when their biological clock says go. They will forgo all their other likes, including food, in order to be at their spawning river on time.

By the same token, salmon also have some very strong dislikes.

They don't like warm water. Temperatures of 58 degrees and higher will send them elsewhere, either down deep or north. They may enter the warm water briefly to eat, or, if they are moving towards their river to spawn, but they won't spend much time in the warm water.

They don't like bright light or clear water. They will come to the surface at night or as dawn breaks, but sun or clear water will usually send them deep in a hurry unless they are mighty hungry and the baitfish are on the surface.

They don't like calm water with lots of boats on it. This particularly applies to chinooks. If the water is choppy they don't mind the boats nearly so much.

They don't like predators. Sea lions, sharks and other large fish will usually convince them to leave the area fast.

As salmon begin to mature and start their move back to their spawning rivers, they become very predictable in their habits. They will usually migrate along the same paths each year at approximately the same time. This migration starts months ahead of when they will finally enter the fresh water. If you know these patterns or can get information about them you will frequently be rewarded with abundant catches of large salmon.

Attracting Salmon to Your Bait or Lure

Under the section on fundamentals, we pointed out that the most important factor in attracting salmon

is action on your bait or lure. Erratic or wounded fish action is the best. When salmon get ready to feed they will look for a tight school of baitfish. If they find one, they will go crashing through the middle of the school hitting the baitfish with their heads and tails. They will then turn around and look for the cripples, which they will eat. If you are fishing a school of baitfish you want your bait or lure to look like the baitfish and to look injured. If the salmon are feeding on anchovies you want an anchovy bait in a harness or a lure that is the same size and color as an anchovy. If they are feeding on squid or krill you want hoochies and if they are feeding on herring you want herring or herring imitations. I will often open the stomach of the first salmon I catch to see what it is feeding on and what size.

Chapter 3 - Downriggers, Rods, Reels Etc.

Modern downriggers have revolutionized trolling for salmon. With a downrigger the sport fisherman now has the capability to take his lures to the exact depth where salmon are feeding. Sometimes this can be hundreds of feet below the surface. The counter on the downrigger tells the fisherman exactly the depth of his lure. A downrigger coupled with an electronic fish finder is a deadly combination. The fish finder locates the fish and the downrigger takes the lure to the depth.



Both manual and electric downriggers are available. In recent years more salmon fishermen have moved to electric downriggers because they can be easily and quickly brought to the surface when a salmon is hooked. In concept, a downrigger is not a complicated device. It is a spool of wire mounted on a boat gunnel. A heavy weight (typically ten pounds or so for salmon) is snapped to the end of the cable. A salmon lure is rigged on your rod and reel and ten to twenty feet of line is pulled out from the reel as the boat is trolling. This places the lure ten to twenty feet behind the downrigger cable. The fishing line is then connected to the downrigger wire with a downrigger release. This release is going to pop open when a fish hits and the fish is then landed on the rod and reel. After the release is hooked to the line, the downrigger is lowered to the desired depth. As it is lowered the fishing line is pulled out from the rod and reel. For a complete discussion of different downriggers, what to buy and how to use them, read the Pro-Troll book Downrigger Fishing Techniques (linked here). This will explain how to select downriggers, rigging techniques, weight sizes needed and much more. You can see downrigger rigging techniques in the Appendix to this book.



Downrigger Rods and Reels

Most fishermen using downriggers prefer long and light rods in the ten to twenty five pound class. Fiberglass works very well and holds up to the heavy loading on a downrigger. The author uses an eight-foot six-inch fiberglass rod with a light tip. This is excellent for both trolling and mooching. A long light rod helps catch more fish, particularly when you are fishing deep with your downrigger. After the downrigger is at depth we recommend tightening the drag just enough to be able to bend the rod tip in a big arc. When a fish strikes there is a momentary period of slack line. The rod tip will spring upward helping take the slack out of the line.

For non-downrigger trolling applications you will need a heavier rod to hold the weight or planer device used to take the lure down.

There are three important characteristics in selecting a downrigger salmon reel. It should have the best drag you can buy, a retrieve ratio of at least four to one to keep up with your downrigger and

and plenty of line capacity. The author fishes with Shimano Charter Specials with lever drags. Twenty pound test monofilament line represents a good compromise between enough strength to land large salmon and a thin diameter which minimizes the drag through the water.

Chapter 4 - The Black Box

Salmon have a strong sensitivity to very weak electrical charges in the water. Your boat and your downriggers generate small natural charges of electricity on your downrigger cables any time your boat is in the water. If these charges are in a salmon's comfort range (0.5 to 0.6 volts) he will be attracted to your boat and your downrigger cables. If the charge is too high or too low salmon will be repelled. A Black Box is a device you can hook to your boat and downriggers that allows you to set the ideal charge for salmon. Most experienced salmon fishermen use a Black Box. You can learn about it on the Pro-Troll website. Click on Black Box Technology ([linked Here](#)).



Chapter 5 - The EChip Electronic Attractor

It is well known that salmon and a lot of other fish guide themselves to baitfish by detecting the electric nerve pulses discharged by baitfish. In the early two thousands, Pro-Troll developed the EChip electronic attractor which works to attract salmon by mimicking these nerve pulses discharged by baitfish. The EChip consists of a small stainless steel tube. Inside the tube is a small stainless ball that rattles back and forth as the EChip wiggles. There is a proprietary crystal at the end of the tube which in turn gives off 2 millivolt pulses as it is agitated. 2 Millivolts matches the same nerve discharge as a baitfish. The EChip never wears out. We strongly recommend it.



The EChip was another revolution to salmon fishing. It increases catches everywhere it is used. Pro-Troll and several other manufacturers now insert EChips in most of their lures and attractors. EChip kits can be purchased from retailers or from Pro-Troll. [Click here](#).

Chapter 6 - Lures, Attractors and Bait Setups

There are eight or ten lures or bait setups that probably catch ninety percent of the salmon. If you have these lures or equivalents in the popular salmon colors you are armed for action. In bait holders, the



Pro-Troll Rotary Salmon Killer and E-Rotaries lead the pack. These are small plastic clips with a diagonal fin on the side that makes them rotate erratically.

They come in two sizes and several colors. In spoons and lures, some of the best are the Pro-Troll E-Lures with EChips, and the Krocodile and Silver Horde Goldstar spoons. All of these come in a variety of colors and sizes. Some also come in glow in the dark which can be very effective when fishing deep. The most popular salmon colors are green, chartreuse, white and chrome. Blue, red, white and black combos also do well in some circumstances. One day one color may catch every fish and another day some other color may be the best. Salmon have a well developed color sensitivity in their sight. We recommend carrying a variety of the common salmon colors in the popular lures and bait setups. If you are into salmon and they are not biting, try different colors. This could make a huge difference in your success. The same color rules apply to flashers.



Chapter 7 - Flashers and Dodgers

Flashers are big time salmon catchers. More salmon are caught on flashers every year than on any other rigging setup. If you know the principles of flashers and how to rig them you will have a big advantage over those who don't. The flasher shown in the photo is a large colored plastic blade with silver or colored tape on both sides. The most common saltwater salmon flashers are eleven inches long although other sizes are now also very popular. Flashers and dodgers round out the important pieces of terminal tackle to attract salmon. Both of them attract salmon to your boat by putting out powerful vibrations in the water similar to the vibrations made by the tail of a charging salmon. These devices will pull salmon from up to thirty or forty yards away. Salmon detect the vibrations with their lateral line and are tricked into thinking your flasher is a feeding salmon. They will charge the flasher like a homing missile on a radar track.



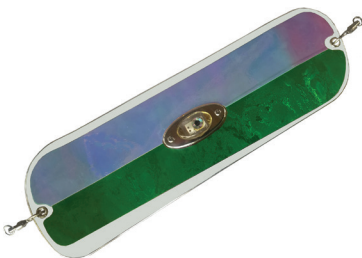
The Pro-Troll HotChip and ProChip flashers are the world leaders in catching salmon. They include the EChip electronic nerve pulse generator. The flasher is hooked to your fishing line with a bait, lure with a fly or hoochie trailing a few feet behind. For a full rundown on rigging flashers go to the Appendix Section at the end of the book. If rigged properly, a Pro-Troll flasher is deadly for salmon. Proper rigging is a big part of the secret to success.

Greens, chartreuse and chromes are the most popular flasher colors. Reds and combo colors are close behind. In recent years The Witchcraft company (WTP) has released some dynamite flasher tape finishes. They include UV transparent and opaque tapes plus a variety of splattered and mixed color finishes. The best ones of these are available at most salmon retailers.

I suggest you carry several of the top flasher finishes in your tackle box. Chrome is one of the top producing finishes but there are times when you don't want it. If the salmon are shallow, the water is clear and the sun is out, chrome can be a bright reflector and spook the salmon. In that case, you would be better to use maybe a softer colored blade like green or chartreuse. If you are fishing deep (50 to 100 feet down or more), use whites, glows and the colors that will pick up as much light as possible or use a lighted flasher.

Lighted ProFlash Flashers

In 2018, Pro-Troll introduced lighted flashers. A blinking light is mounted in the center of a conventional flasher. It is water activated and blinks in green red and white. The battery lasts about 80 hours and the whole light can easily be replaced when the battery goes dead. These lighted models have been another boon to salmon fishing. They work the best when you are fishing deep, on cloudy days or early in the morning before the sun is up. The flasher on the left is the lighted Green Hornet. It has been a big success.



Flashers vs. Dodgers

Flashers are made to kick and rotate as they are trolled. The narrow tapered end is the front. A bait or lure is connected to the back of the flasher by a tail leader. A dodger is metal and a size 0 dodger is about nine inches long as shown in the photo. The dodger is uniform at both ends and is not made

to spin. Its action is like a pendulum swinging back and forth as it is trolled. If you troll too fast and the dodger spins, you have lost its strong fish attracting ability. Dodgers and flashers do the same thing in attracting salmon. Their action puts out strong vibrations in the water that can be detected by salmon thirty or forty yards away. The salmon are attracted to these vibrations because they are the same as the vibrations made by the tail of a feeding salmon on the attack. Salmon in the vicinity will charge the flasher or dodger hoping to get in on the feed.



There is a major difference in the way flashers and dodgers are rigged. Rig them wrong and you may catch a few fish. Rig them right and you will catch ten times as many fish. Flashers are made to ride from five feet up to twenty feet behind your weight, planer or downrigger release. Then you want your bait or lure three or four feet behind the flasher (tail leader). The size 0 (nine inch) dodger is close coupled and only about twenty-six inches behind your weight or release. Then you want the tail leader to the bait also close coupled about twenty inches behind the dodger. The rigging dimensions for

both these devices is critical particularly the tail leader length. For a complete description on how to properly rig flashers go the Appendix section on "Rigging the Pro-Troll Flashers". It will give you all the specifics. The author has used both dodgers and flashers but in recent years has moved almost exclusively to flashers. Flashers are more speed insensitive than dodgers. In other words, they will work over a wider range of trolling speeds than a dodger. Dodgers tend to have one speed where they work best. If this speed is exceeded the dodger spins and you lose its attraction to salmon.

Chapter 8 - Special Tips from Dick Pool

Dick Pool has spent many years researching salmon techniques. He is best known for his work using an underwater TV camera. He produced two movies showing salmon techniques to thousands of salmon fishermen. "Salmon Attack" played at the popular West Coast Sport and Boat Shows for a number of years. His other movie "Pacific Ocean Salmon Fishing" was released on home video. These pages present some of the results of his work not covered in other sections.

Trolling Speed

A lot of salmon fishermen are concerned about trolling speed. I tend to discount speed in its absolute sense. Some salmon fishermen are successful while barely moving. Other boats catch fish at speeds where you could almost water ski. The key is not speed itself but lure action. Salmon can swim twelve miles per hour so they will never have a problem catching your lure if they want it. Most salmon lures perform very well trolled between two and two and one half miles per hour. This would represent the most common trolling speed. Every time you put a lure in the water you should watch its action to see that it is shaking, wobbling or rolling in an erratic manner. This is what will get you fish. If you are not getting good action, either adjust your trolling speed or change lure to better match the speed you are going.

How Salmon Attack

Most fishermen do not realize that salmon frequently miss your bait. In fact the average salmon will miss your lure two or three times before he gets hooked. In one of our movies we show a salmon that hits twenty-two times before he gets hooked on the twenty-third try. Salmon usually attack so fast that they can't make the final adjustments to hit your lure. They will graze it or miss it altogether. If they like it, they will make a quick turn and come back for another hit. The lesson is this: By the time the salmon finally gets your lure, he has usually slowed down and ends up chasing it down by the tail.

For this reason, you want your hook at the tail or behind the tail of your bait or lure. You also want your hook as sharp as you can get it. If it is razor sharp, frequently it will dig in as he grazes it and you have hooked a fish. Fishermen used to think salmon hit the head of a bait fish because they almost always swallow the bait fish head first. What they actually do is kill or seriously injure the bait fish and then swim around and swallow it head first.

Shallow Chinooks

Most of the time salmon pay no attention to your boat or the noise of the boat. However, there are some instances where Chinook (King) salmon are spooked by the boat. The condition arises if the fish are shallow (top 20 or 25 feet of water) and the water is very calm. In this instance the boat appears to spook the fish and they will not hit directly under the boat. The trick in this instance is to get your bait or lure 50 to 60 feet behind the boat and 20 to 25 feet down. You can accomplish this one of two ways. Either pull very long leaders before you hook your line in the downrigger release or fish with a planer (deep six, pink lady, dippy diver etc.) that runs shallow but rides way back. When the wind is blowing and the surface of the water is disturbed with waves and white caps you don't have to worry about this. The action of the water and noise from white caps drowns out your boat noise. I once hooked a thirty pound salmon eight feet under the boat in a rolling sea.

Extra Deep Salmon

Often you can find salmon in the top 100 feet of water but sometimes you need to go much deeper. The larger salmon spend more of their time near the bottom, sometimes hundreds of feet down. I have some favorite reefs I fish each spring where I can always catch salmon between 200 and 250 feet down. They will cruise the deep reefs picking up schools of herring and baby rockfish. I drop my downrigger until I feel the wire go slack when the weight hits the bottom. I then pull the downrigger up five or six turns and troll a flasher and bait in the bottom ten feet of water. It is very productive. I have used this system as deep as 350 feet and successfully caught salmon. To get this deep I use 20 pounds of weight on my electric downriggers and I slow my trolling speed to about 1.5 MPH to minimize the water drag on my wire. When you slow down to troll this deep you need to change your lures to ones that have good action at the slower speeds.

Underwater TV Lessons

Our research into salmon behavior using underwater TV cameras provided insights into salmon mysteries that have baffled fishermen for centuries. Much is known about salmon but no one has ever been quite sure what exactly happens in that last split-second before he either attacks your bait with the savagery of a half starved wolf, or turns away and is lost forever because something about your rigging gave him that turnoff signal. Through the miracles of television, video recorders and stop-action we can now study his every move and almost read his mind as he decides his fate. Here are some of the lessons we learned from this video research and how you can put it to work.



Salmon catch bait by chasing it down and grabbing it by the tail. There is a popular myth that salmon hit bait from the head because when fishermen open the stomachs of salmon, they find they have swallowed the bait head first. The facts are that salmon wound or kill a bait by crashing through a school of bait and injuring some by hitting them with their head or tail. They then swallow the cripples head first.

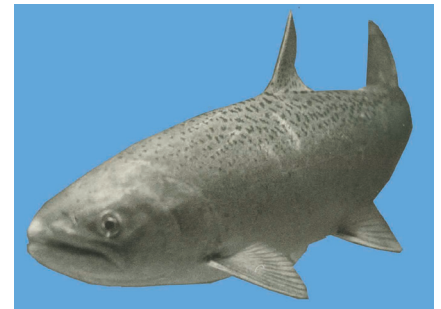
In spite of their speed and maneuverability, salmon have a hard time catching your moving bait. Most

salmon miss your bait at least once or twice before they get it. If they approach at high speed from underneath or the side, they will almost always miss. After they miss, they will turn around and run your bait down from behind often just grabbing it by the tail. Larger salmon, particularly those over 20 pounds, almost always approach at very high speed and invariably miss your bait on the first pass.

The smell of your lure or bait is important, but it is more of a turn-off than a turn-on. Salmon do not find your bait by smell. Once they do find it, however, if it smells wrong they will turn away. The best example is a bait that has snagged a jellyfish. The salmon will always turn away as soon as he smells the jellyfish. Remember that a salmon has an uncanny sense of smell. This is how he traces his way to his place of birth when on his spawning mission. He can smell differences in the water so minute that sophisticated instruments cannot even measure them. The lesson: Keep your bait and lures clean. Avoid getting obvious strong smelling substances like gasoline, motor oil or tobacco on your hands. If you hook a jellyfish, always change your bait.

Salmon will quite often follow your bait or lure for a long period of time. They are particularly likely to follow a dodger or flasher. I have one video sequence showing a salmon following a bait behind a dodger for four minutes. He periodically hits it but never gets hooked. The lesson: Do not be over anxious to pull up your bait once you have a hit. If the bait is still acting properly, even though it is damaged, you may yet catch the salmon.

Salmon frequently do not get hooked even when they hit the bait clean. We have watched hooks bounce off a salmon's mouth in every possible direction. It can be hard to believe this until you see the incredible speed and violent slashing action of a charging 20 to 30 pounder. Our movie showed one salmon grab a bait to kill it with the hook sticking right out the side of his mouth - and when he lets go to grab again, the hook slides right through his mouth, clean as a whistle. Fortunately, he kept returning for more until we finally hooked him. The lesson: A single relatively large (4/0 to 6/0) and extremely sharp hook is your best bet. It will dig in better and will not bounce off or miss hooking like a treble or smaller hook.



Mistakes

Time and time again we have watched fishermen do everything right until they finally hook that monster they have been after for five years. At that point something upstairs can click into gear and Mr. Salmon's chance of survival improve dramatically. We've seen fishermen literally freeze in their tracks unable to perform. Even worse, some will forget all logic and proceed to do everything wrong. They suddenly act as if that fish must be in the boat in 20 seconds or it will get away. Mistakes are common but the solutions are just as simple.

Mistake No. 1: Tightening the drag.

A large salmon hits and your reel is screaming as the fish makes that first frantic run for freedom. Your reaction: I've got to set the hook and stop him. Result: You tighten the drag and boom -- something breaks or the hook tears out, and he is gone. This error probably causes the loss of more big salmon than all the other mistakes put together. When you hear the story, "He was so big that he broke my line," then you know exactly what happened. Some people never learn. Instead, after a hookup, partially loosen the drag immediately so the fish can run. Meanwhile you can assess his size and lay a plan to work him in slowly. As long as you hold your rod tip up with some tension on the line, he

will rarely get away. Sometimes a little mental exercise will help. Keep in mind that somewhere, your line likely has a cut or nick in it and if you tighten the drag, it will break at that weakened point. This outlook can do much to help you fight a fish properly. Since I use light line, I always loosen the drag when a fish first hits. My salmon rigs are wound with 20 pound test line.

Mistake #2: Trying to land a fish too quickly.

Even if they handle the drag properly, most fishermen still get an anxiety attack and try to bring in the salmon far too quickly --- quite a distressing experience for the fisherman and often a lifesaving one for the salmon. A big salmon has a tremendous ability to fight and thrash about in the water. The closer he is reeled to the boat, the more he wants to dive, jump and spin in an attempt to throw the hook. The first time he sees the boat you can expect to see another frenzied burst of energy --- this is when many salmon are lost. By far the best technique is to exhaust the fish completely before bringing it to the side of the boat. This takes a light limber rod (held tip up), a light drag set so you wind line only when he is resting, and a lot of patience. With a large fish, this frequently can take 30 minutes to an hour. Believe me, however, you will come home with far more salmon if you use this technique, and a lot more excitement to boot. Don't worry about the salmon throwing the hook. I only use barbless hooks and haven't lost a fish yet as long as I keep a steady tight line. Don't ever let the line go slack, or you are likely to lose him. The extreme in trying to land a salmon too quickly is hand lining. I cringe every time I see someone grab a fisherman's line and start pulling it in hand over hand. It not only removes the sporting element, but the salmon is frequently lost.



Mistake No. 3: Improper netting.

Some fishermen will practically climb out of their boats as they desperately thrash a net at a salmon. One of the most common mistakes is to try to reach too far or too deep with the net. To net properly, the salmon's head should be at the surface and he should be close enough to the boat to knife the net under him in one quick movement. Don't ever try to net him by pulling the net over his tail --- he'll see the net and swim or jump right out of it. We emphasize that his head should be at the surface, head upward. If he lunges from this position he can only go one direction --- up and right into the net.

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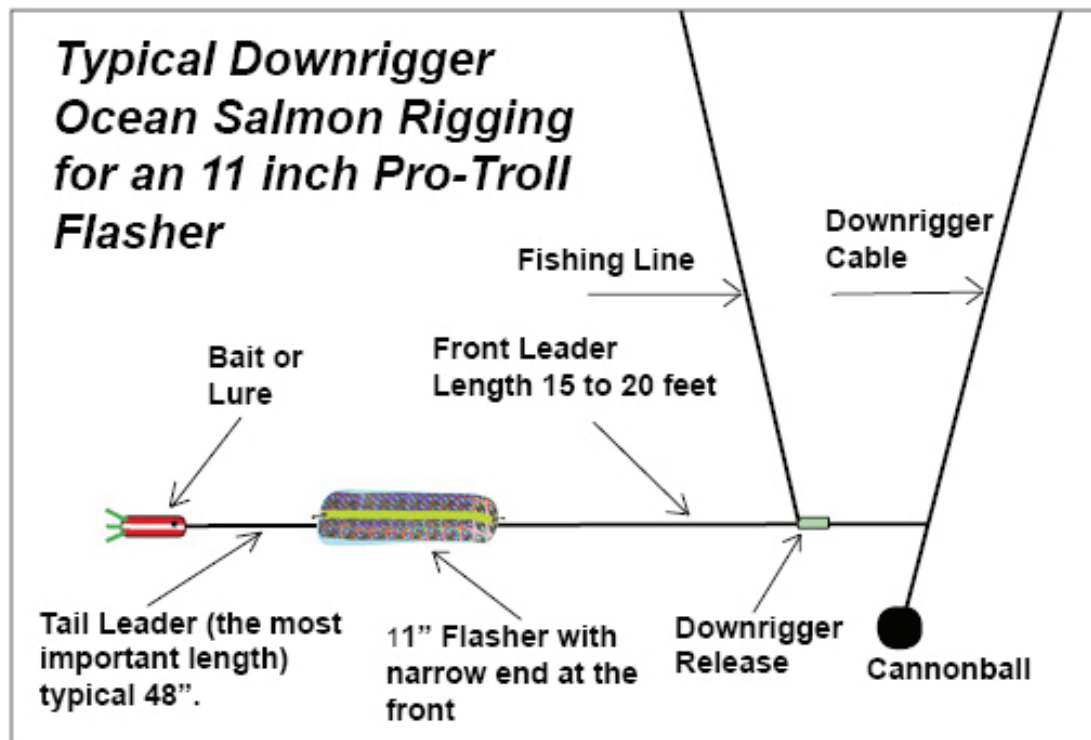
About Dick Pool

Dick Pool is an engineer and lives in Northern California. He is the founder and owner of Pro-Troll Fishing Products. Dick has researched salmon, their anatomy and their habits extensively including his eight years of trolling research with his underwater TV camera. He has written two books and produced three movies on how to catch salmon.

Pool has also been a leader in developing new technology for catching salmon. His inventions include the Rotary Salmon Killer, The Sportfishing Black Box, the EChip Electronic Attractor, the ProChip kicker fin flashers and the ProFlash lighted flashers.

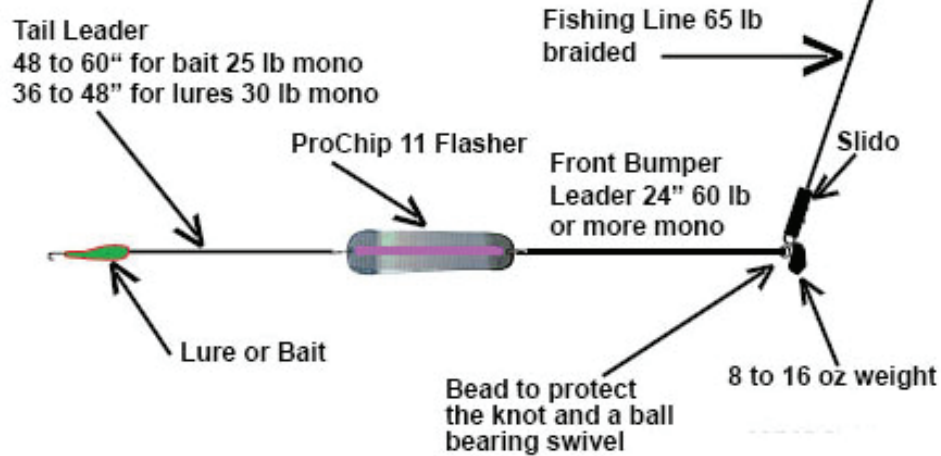
He has also been a leader in salmon conservation. He has spent thirty years working on policies and actions to recover the West Coast salmon. He spent six years on the Board of the American Sportfishing Association and currently remains involved in several salmon advocacy organizations. He has received several prestigious awards for his conservation achievements. They include receiving the American Sportfishing Association's Lifetime Achievement Award in 2009 and Induction into the California Outdoor Hall of Fame in 2019.

Appendix - Flasher Rigging Setups

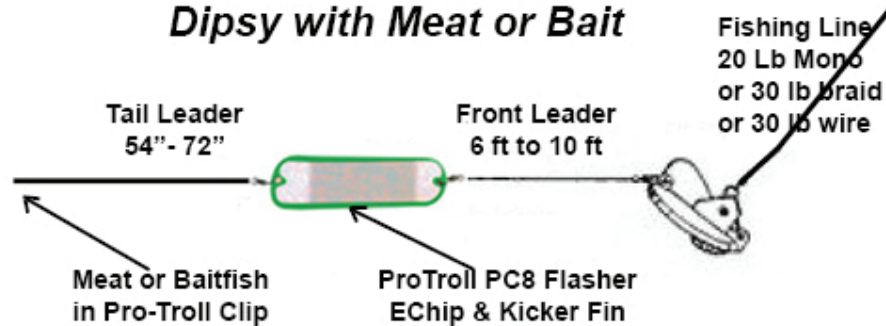


**Great Lakes rigging techniques
courtesy of Capt. Ernie Lantiegne
Fish Doctor Charters**

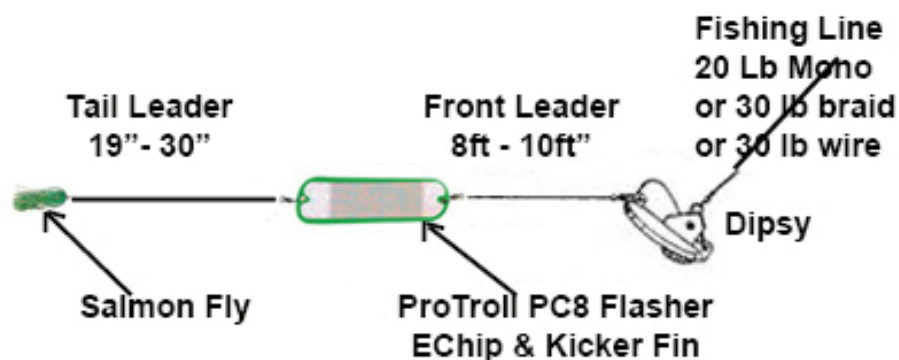
Rigging the Pro-Troll ProChip 11 Flasher for the Columbia River



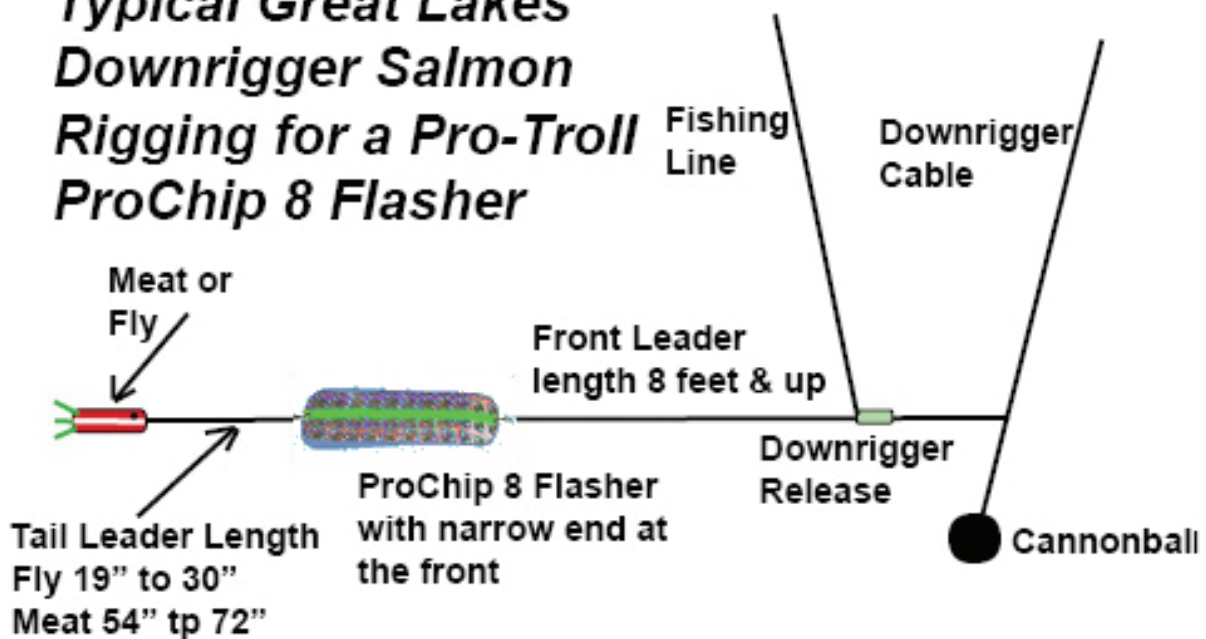
Rigging a ProChip 8 Flasher on a Dipsy with Meat or Bait



Rigging a ProChip 8 Flasher on a Dipsy with a Salmon Fly



Typical Great Lakes Downrigger Salmon Rigging for a Pro-Troll ProChip 8 Flasher



Typical Great Lakes Downrigger Salmon Rigging for a Pro-Troll ProChip 11 Flasher

