

Fishing Journal

Information For The Serious Angler

by John Martinis

November 2014

Fishing Dates

Area 7

Aug Dec 1-April 30

Daily limit two

Chinook, hatchery only

Area 8-1

Nov 1-April 30

Daily limit two

Chinook, hatchery only

Area 8-2

Nov 1-April 30

Daily limit two

Chinook, hatchery only

Area 9

Nov 1-Nov 30

Daily limit two

Chinook, hatchery only

Snohomish River Coho

Sept 1-Dec 1

Daily Limit 3 Coho

Skykomish R. Coho

Sept 1-Dec 1

Daily Limit 3 Coho

Stillaguamish R. Coho

Sept 1-Dec 1

Daily Limit 2 Coho

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Workshop

Bayside Salmon Derby November 1-2

Tickets \$30

1st Place \$2,000

Available at John's Sporting
Goods

The Derby is for Blackmouth and Coho Salmon. One entry fish per ticket. Your biggest fish, you may "bump" your Saturday fish out if you catch a bigger fish on Sunday. [More Information](#)

Advanced Techniques for Winter Chinook Fishing

I know that most of you know all the common salmon vernacular, but a refresher course is always necessary when we transition from summer Salmon fishing to winter Salmon

fishing. For many years, Chinook we caught in the winter were called Blackmouth. Hence, the term, "Winter Blackmouth fishing." Most of the salmon derbies in the winter and spring months are still named, "Blackmouth Derby". Don't get confused, all these salmon are Chinook.

Before I get started on tackle, gear and locations, let's go through the basic seasons. Read your rule book for more details.

Area 7: December 1-April 30 Daily limit two Chinook, hatchery only

Area 8-1: November 1-April 30 Daily limit two Chinook, hatchery only

Area 8-2: November 1-April 30 Daily limit two Chinook, hatchery only

Area 9: November 1-November 30 Daily limit two Chinook, hatchery only

Area 9: January 16-April 15 Daily limit two Chinook, hatchery only

Area 10: October 1-January 31 Daily limit two Chinook, hatchery only

All these areas could close earlier if the Chinook quota is achieved.

As you can see, there is at least some place to fish every day of the week all the way to the end of April.

Three principal ways to effectively fish for Winter Chinook are: flashers with spoons; plugs and herring. I will address all three methods and make suggestions on how to combine them.

Flashers and spoons are extremely effective for Winter Chinook. You need only five pieces of gear to have the right combination for fishing all winter.

These five pieces are:

Gibbs flasher IUVGRMJRS (Red racer)

Just Fishing



Gibbs flasher 0777-1PUSUV (Purple Haze)

Goldstar 3.5 Kingfisher Spoon #964 (Green Spatter Red Racer) #1 recommended spoon!

Goldstar 3.5 Kingfisher Spoon #683 (White Lightening)

Goldstar 3.5 Kingfisher Spoon #675 Cookies n Cream

These Kingfisher spoons come rigged with a 4/0 Mustad stainless hook on a swivel, the way all 3.5 spoons should be rigged.

If you want to add some flash to the Kingfisher spoon, I recommend putting any of the Goldstar Ultra Violet (UV) Octopus squids on the hook. To do this, simply apply a small amount of super glue gel to the top quarter of the hook shank. Next, slide a squid up the hook so that the top part of the squid is resting against the eye of the hook, ([Illustration](#)). The best squid sizes are 1.5 and 2.0. Two good squid colors I would recommend are: OKM142 (green spatter UV) and O2259 (purple spatter UV).

Rig the spoons 42 inches behind the flasher tied with 30 lb. PLine Fluorocarbon leader material. The 42 inch measurement is on the leader from the swivel at the end of the flasher to the spoon.

The proper speed when trolling flashers/spoons for Chinook is approximately 2.5 to 3.0 mph. The reason I say approximately: because the tide and direction of travel can influence the trolling speed. For example; trolling in the same direction that the water is moving requires higher speed to make the flasher rotate. In all situations, the angle of the downrigger cable (45 degrees) has precedence over actual speed.

Plugs are very popular in the Winter

Chinook fishery. Chinook anglers choosing plugs prefer the following:

Tomic 602 5" (mother of pearl/glow/pink face)

Tomic 603 5" (mother of pearl/glow/red face)

Tomic 632 5" (pearl/green herring scale) formerly 84FLG

The same plug colors are also popular in 4".

The nice thing about trolling Tomic plugs is that they can be trolled at nearly any speed. They were designed for a fast troll. These plugs can also be trolled comfortably at the same speed as a flasher. If you are planning to fish more than one line on a downrigger (stacking), plugs are a good choice for the uppermost release. If you choose to stack, keep the releases at least 25 feet part.

The reason for using plugs when you are stacking releases on a single downrigger is that when turning, the flasher will sink and the plug will float up. This makes tangling less of an issue.

Trolling plugs also make sense when there is an abundance of shakers (sub-legal Chinook) around. Plugs give you more quality fishing time because shakers are less likely to attack a plug. Remember I said, "Less likely." You will still catch some shakers with plugs. However, using a plug will dial it down to a good bit.

Chinook fishing with whole or cutplug herring never goes out of style. This is a very popular way to fish because it eliminates the need for a flasher. If you want the full force of a Chinook on the end of the fishing line, give it a try.

Fishing with whole herring can be done with just a herring or with the aid of a Rhys Davis Anchovy Special

(used with 4"-5" herring). If you are going to rig a herring by itself, take a [look at this video](#). If you are going to use a Rhys Davis Anchovy Special to rig the herring, take a look at this illustration.

I prefer the Rhys Davis Anchovy special because it will always keep the herring on the end of the line regardless of your trolling speed. This makes trolling with flashers on one downrigger and trolling with herring on the other downrigger a good combination. I like the flash from a flasher for attracting Chinook on either rig. Many times, offering finicky Chinook natural baits will put fish in the box when no one else is catching fish.

[Rhys Davis Anchovy Special Clear UV Purple Haze.](#)

If you are tying your own hooks for cutplug herring or whole herring, use 15 lb. PLine fluorocarbon leader material and 3/0 hooks. Tie the leaders 6 feet in length. 15 lb. leader is only used when you are not using the herring with a flasher.

If you are using a herring behind a flasher, use 30 lb. PLine fluorocarbon leader material. Also, use a six foot leader for the flasher/herring rig.

Top Winter Chinook Spots

Now, let's get down to the top spots for Winter Chinook. The west side of Possession Bar has been so continuously reliable in November and December. You can fish either tide on the west side. Most importantly, the fish will bite on most tide changes during the morning hours. If you had a choice of days to

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fish, pick days when the tide change is later in the morning. These are not necessarily better fishing days, they just offer more fishing hours before the tide change.

Don't discount the east side of Possession Bar. If you cruise by looking for bait on the south east corner and discover bait, then stay and fish. The south east corner can be a herring magnet that can produce good Chinook fishing.

If you are thinking Bayside Derby (November 1-2), I highly recommend Pilot Point. On Saturday, the high tide is at 1:05 PM. Pilot Point consistently puts out larger Winter Chinook than most areas in the Sound. I recommend fishing Pilot Point only when the tide is coming in. Sunday, the high tide is at 12:54 PM (daylight savings time ends Saturday night).

Also, I would highly recommend Jeff-Head if you are looking for Bayside Derby winning Chinook. Fish the south side of the bar in 120 to 150 feet of water on either tide. Gary Krein told me that if you fish Jeff-Head, keep your gear at least 15 feet off the bottom. There is a tremendous sand sole population off Jeff-Head. If you are close to the bottom, you will be towing one around almost immediately. This would be a great area to use a 5" Tomic plug to keep those critters off the end of the line. You can immediately see just how you can strategically use different gear so that your fishing time can be maximized.

Chinook Fishing Spots Re-Cap

[Possession Bar Map](#)
[Possession Bar SE Corner](#)
[Pilot Point Map](#)
[Jeff-Head Map](#)

Fishing Depths for Chinook

After Coho fishing, fishing for Chinook will feel like a little more work. These fish usually feed near the bottom in 90 to 150 feet of water. You have to keep your boat in that depth range at all times. That takes some work! The better you maintain that depth range, the more Chinook you will catch. The ability to maintain these depths is the reason why some anglers do extremely better than other anglers.

Use this rule of thumb for letting your downrigger cable out while fishing for Chinook. If you are in a 100 feet of water, under most circumstances, you can comfortably let out 115 feet of cable if you are trolling with a 45 degree downrigger cable angle.

Controlling your depth so that you are fishing close to the bottom at all times is extremely important! Try to maintain a distance of 5 to 10 feet off the bottom at all times. This is better accomplished by carefully following the bottom contour than by running your downriggers up and down.

Stacking With Less Headaches

Stacking is the art of putting two downrigger releases on one cable and fishing two rigs. This can either be a giant pain with enormous tangles or you can do it correctly and add an extra line to the mix. Most anglers want to try this when they have two downriggers and three anglers in the boat. As you know, I was not a proponent of stacking in the past. I did experiment with stacking this fall while Coho fishing and had some realistic success. This is what I found out. On the lower line nearest to the downrigger ball, I used a flasher. I let the flasher out approximately 15 to 20

feet, which was 5 to 10 feet shorter than normal. I did this because flashers rise up while the downrigger line is going down.

Once the first piece of gear is set, I let the downrigger down forty feet. Then, I snapped another release to the cable using a small halibut snap. I used a second flasher on the upper most rod. I let this flasher out 40 to 50 feet behind the boat before snapping it to the downrigger release. Now, I let the downrigger down to the desired depth.

The first time I did this, I was expecting a huge mess at some point during the day. Happily, no tangles happened - not even once.

When you are fishing for Chinook with this method, one rig will be near the bottom and the other rig will be about 40 feet up from the bottom. So, if you were fishing in 100 feet of water, one rig is at 100 feet and the other is at 60 feet.

Much to my astonishment, we did not get a tangle with the top rig all day. Either, this works quite well or we were just lucky. My personal feeling is that we found the winning combination of lengths that were compatible enough so that any tangles you might expect didn't happen.

Re-Cap for Stacking

First release near the downrigger ball
Let the rig down 15 to 20 feet
Second release 40 feet up from the first release
Let the rig out 40 to 50 feet
Let the rigs out to the desired depth

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