

Trolling Methods for Sac Metro Salmon

Smoke was spotted somewhere in the Sacramento Area. Luckily it was not a wildfire, but instead smoldering alder

wood chips. The sweet smell of sugar-cured smoked salmon will soon delight some lucky soul. Will it be you?

The question is: how do you catch chinook salmon in the Sacramento Metropolitan Area? One good answer is trolling.

Most people trolling from a boat these days are employing either Silvertron spinners or Brad's Super Bait Cut Plugs. The rigging for each is slightly different, with the cut plug setup being the more complicated of the two.

For either method, get a medium heavy salmon/steelhead type rod eight to ten feet in length. Attach a clicker-equipped bait casting reel spooled with 65 pound test braided line. If you can get a reel with a line counter, even better.

At the end of your main line, thread a plastic bead and then tie on a duo-lock snap. Snap this to a v-shaped wire spreader, the local bait and tackle shops will have them. On the 'bottom' side of the spreader, you will want to tie a 36 inch long 17 pound test mono dropper leader to your sinker.

I put snap swivels at each end of the dropper leader. This allows me to easily change sinker weights or replace the entire dropper if it kinks up or breaks off. The idea is that the dropper will snap off in snags so you don't lose the entire setup.

On the 'top' side of the wire spreader you will attach a leader to your recommend that you cut off the barrel swivel on the spreader replace it with a high quality chain swivel like the ones made by P-Line. From here, you will snap your main leader.

Everything I have described up until now will work with both the cut plug or spinner setup. The top side of the spreader rig is where things will be very different. I will start with the spinner setup, since this is the easier of the two to master.

With the spinner setup, attach a 4-ounce trolling sinker to the dropper leader. Next, run a 36-inch long 40-pound test fluorocarbon leader from the spreader chain swivel to your spinner. Again, I add a duo-lock snap at each end of the leader to ease changing setups. The fluorocarbon resists twists better than mono, making it my preferred leader material for rotating lures.

At the end of this leader, my lure choice is a Silvertron double-bladed spinner. I have had the most success with the double-silver blades and the double-chartrreuse blades. Bead color is your choice, but the purple with silver blades has been a favorite of mine. I also run the glow-in-the-dark models first thing in the morning.

I will rub some Atlas Mike's green 'Salmon' Lunker Lotion on the insides of my blades for some added scent. Alternately, the cut plugs have a scent chamber

that will emit all of the scent you need.

The cut plugs offer another possibility when trolling in the Sacramento Metropolitan Area. If you are new to the trolling game, I would suggest getting familiar with your stretch of water using spinners, and then switch to the cut plugs if you want to try something new.

On the cut plug droppers, use 10-ounce sinkers on the side rods and 6-ounce sinkers out the back. From the chain swivel on the top side of the spreader, tie a 36-inch long 80-pound test mono leader to a Pro-Troll ProChip 11 Fin Flasher. From the flasher, run a 36-inch long 40-pound test fluorocarbon leader to your cut plug. I like to add a chain swivel to the rear of the flasher to prevent line twist.

The cut plug comes with a scent pad inside of the chamber. I will remove this and replace it with a similarly sized anchovy fillet. These seem to last longer than canned tuna. I switch them out every hour or so to keep the scent trail fresh.

I suggest that you invest in a GDF flasher quick release cable to prevent lost fish when using flashers. I've also tried running the smaller 8 inch flashers, as well

as shortening the leaders on either side of the flashers to 24 inches instead of 36 inches. All of this is to make landing and netting easier.

While I'm on the topic of modifications, I will discuss changing out the hooks. On the Silvertrons, I cut off the stock hook and rubber sheath. Then I add a size 4 split ring, to which I attach a Gamakatsu or Owner size 1 black chrome 2X strong hook. I replace the stock hooks on the cut plugs with these same hooks.

Once I'm ready to fish, I will troll downstream with the current. For spinners I let my side rods out 40 feet, and the rear rods out 60 and 80 feet. With cut plugs, the side rods only go out about 25 feet, with the rear rods out 50 and 70 feet.

My speed will depend on the current, which is affected by the tides. I'm usually somewhere around 3.3 miles-per-hour on the incoming tide and 3.7 miles-per-hour on the outgoing tide. I like to focus on water that is 16 to 19 feet deep when trolling for river salmon.

Set your drags loose enough so that a salmon can peel out a little bit of line when they are hooked. Keep the reel engaged, and turn on your clicker so you can hear the buzzing sound when they strike.

There you have it – two methods for putting fall-run king salmon into your boat. Hopefully I've given you some new ideas for hitting the river. I'll look for smoke coming from your back yard, hopefully alder flavored.



FISH SNIFFER COUNTRY
by
Jack Naves



Fish Sniffer field editor Jack Naves bagged this big Sac Metro area king while trolling a large spinner this fall.

Photo courtesy of JACK NAVES, Fish Sniffer Staff.



Kirby was all smiles after landing this Capital City chrome during a late September outing.

Photo courtesy of JACK NAVES, Fish Sniffer Staff.

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