



TECH BULLETIN

CALIFORNIA

SIERRA TROUT TROLLING

Compiled from the Diaries and Logs of the Luhr Jensen Fishing Research Team.

Luck is really the least important factor in becoming a successful angler. A willingness to experiment with different lures and techniques, knowing the water you plan to fish and knowledge of the feeding and habitat characteristics of the fish species you're after are key ingredients for productive angling. The tips and techniques contained in this report will provide you with solid information you can apply immediately on your favorite California/Sierra waters and will help put more fun and success into each fishing trip.

A large number of California mountain streams have dams on them and the resulting man-made lakes provide trout fishing opportunities to fit every angling desire. Most of the larger impoundments offer one or more of the following trout species: Brook, brown, cutthroat, lake trout and rainbow.

Whether you're fishing the waters of Mono and Crowley near the Nevada border or the more centrally-located Shaver Lake, Wishon Reservoir or Pine Flat Reservoir, trolling will produce more and larger trout.

Trolling is easy, fun and productive. The angler who employs the techniques in this report, who understands trout and their habits and who is willing to experiment will consistently out fish anglers using other techniques on the same body of water. The reason is simple; an entire body of water or large section of an impoundment can be covered quickly and thoroughly by trolling and concentrations of fish pinpointed with minimum effort. You can cover more water faster, easier and more completely by trolling and it is effective!

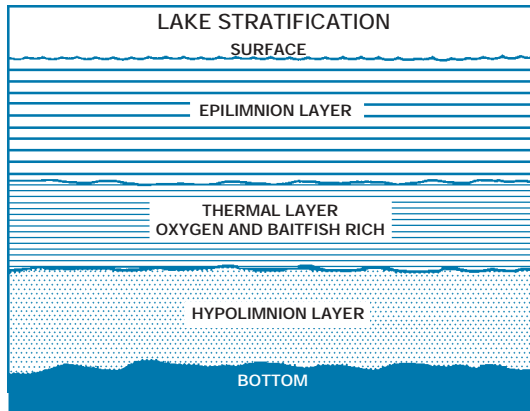
Trolling requires a boat, method of propulsion (motor or oars), rod and reel, blade string (troll) and/or lure. The troll or lure is let out behind your moving boat, with the line distance varying depending on the size lure or troll you select and how deep you wish to fish. The forward speed of your boat will dictate just how fast or slow the troll or lure will run and also will control the depth. Once the troll and/or lure is in the water and working properly, you must then locate fish.

PROSPECTING A LAKE

Whether you're using a troll, small lure on lead core line or lure and worm combination, you will find trout favoring certain areas. It saves a lot of time and energy if you are aware of these areas before you get on the lake and know in advance what to look for.

STRUCTURE: All fish relate one way or another to structure (shelter/cover). They use it for protection from predators, escape from direct sunlight, for feeding and in some cases, for spawning. Deep water, docks or other man-made structure, overhanging trees, shade, underwater rocks and cliff areas are all forms of structure likely to hold fish. Trout must have shelter both from predators and from direct sunlight so they always will be either next to or within easy reach of a shelter/cover/structure area.

FOOD SOURCES: Locate the food sources in a given lake and fish will be found nearby. Minnows, salamanders, crayfish, midges, surface insects, beetles and other such items make up a large part of the diet of a trout. Watch carefully for surface activity such as a school of small baitfish jumping or insect hatches. On a windy day, fish the part of the lake where all of the surface food is being blown and concentrated. Fish areas adjacent to inlet and outlet streams where food items will be prevalent, or next to grassy shorelines or near marshy, weedy areas where food is easily available. Overhanging trees or bushes harbor all kinds of



insect life and fish will be waiting below for morsels to drop into the water.

DROP OFFS: Fish all relate to structure and one of the easiest to detect is a drop off, because of obvious shoreline features. Be on the lookout for steep banks and then troll close to shore along them. A depth sounder (a small portable unit is fine for locating drop offs) like those made by Lowrance, is a fishing tool that will help you locate ledges, drop offs and underwater islands which are not apparent any other way, and will save you valuable fishing time in finding these hot spots as well as allowing you to troll next to them accurately.

OXYGENATED WATER: Most lakes stratify into three layers during spring (see diagram) and stay that way until late fall. The middle layer of water, the thermocline, contains both a large amount of dissolved

oxygen and forage fish. Your trolling should be concentrated close to or in the thermocline for best results. This layer will be from 15 to 50 feet down in most lakes depending on their size and depth.

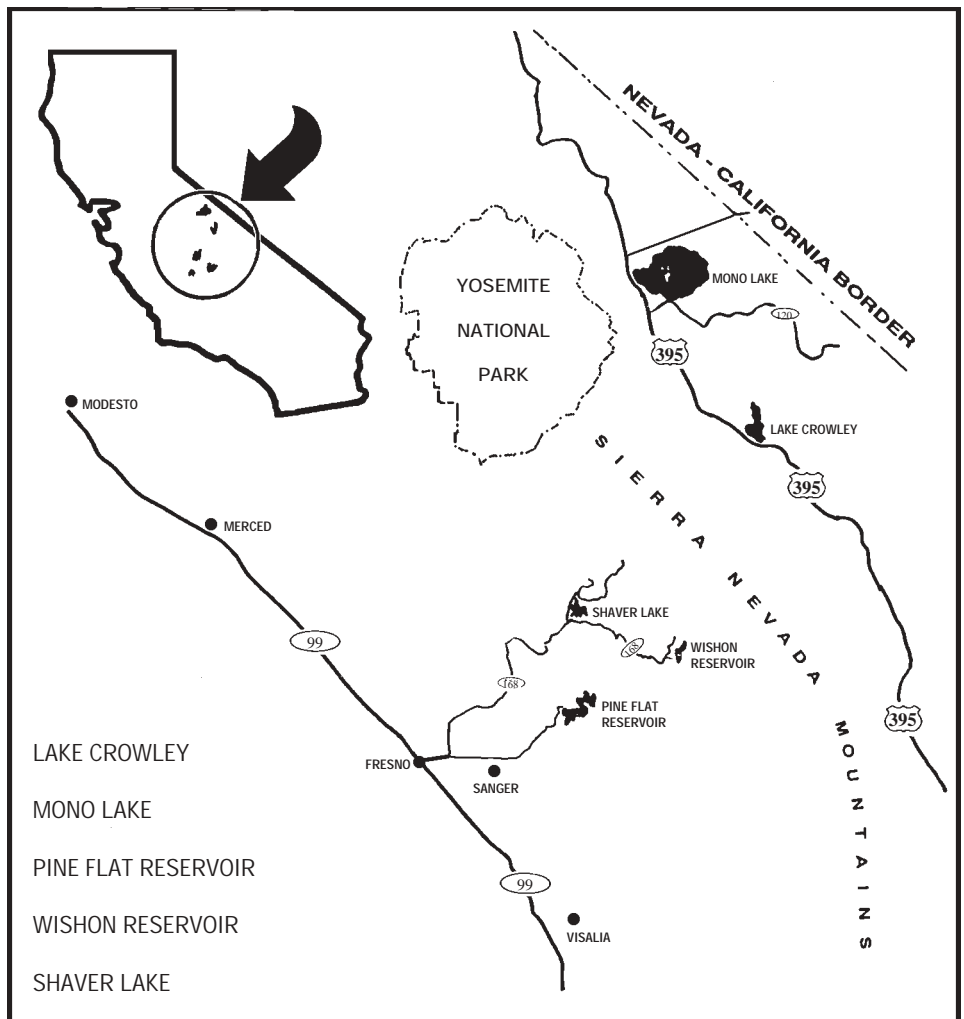
Fish also will regularly be found near drop offs just out from inlet streams where highly oxygenated water is flowing into a reservoir or around underwater springs or in old river channels which contain residual water flows . . . these areas all contain forage fish, oxygen and larger fish.

LAKE TROLLS

Because of their popularity, effectiveness and ease of use, Luhr Jensen now produces a wide variety of lake trolls including the original *Dave Davis*® model. These trolls were originally deswinging blades on a wire cable or shaft and a swivel signed and developed for and in California waters where their "big hammer" blades and specialized finishes have proved deadly for trout in a variety of lakes and water conditions.

Other trolls which have proven California track records include the Model T and Model A *Ford Fenders*®, *Kokanee Troll*™ (a two-blade *Dave Davis*® troll complete with 18" of 8-lb. test leader and a #6 baitholder hook), *Beer Can*™ and the *School-O-Minnows*™. These trolls have proved effective when trailed by bait such as a nightcrawler, or by a small, wobbling spoon such as a *Needlefish*® which can be tipped with bait.

Blades can be used in conjunction with just about any lure or bait, two of the most effective being small spoons or worms. A troll consists of a rudder at the front end which prevents line twist, a series of free-

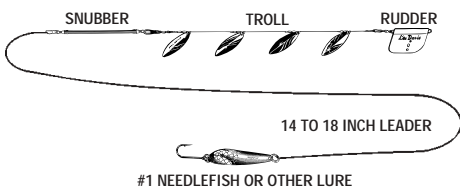


LURES & TROLLS FOR THE SIERRAS



on which to tie your leader. From the end of the troll, a leader of 6- to 10-lb. test monofilament should extend at least 12 inches (preferable 14 to 18 inches) and as much as 48" back to your chosen lure. When trolled,

TROLL RIGGING



the blades act as attractors, fish follow the sound vibrations and flash to the source, spot the trailing lure and go after it.

In dark, off-color water, brass, 50/50 Brass/Nickel or Copper often are the best blade finish choices. Clear water finishes would include Nickel/Silver Prism-Lite® or Hammered Nickel, light-reflecting blades. On bright, sunny days the nickel or 50/50 Brass/Nickel finishes work well, while on overcast days, brass blades produce exceptionally well.

It often is necessary to experiment with different sizes of trolls and different blade finishes so it pays to carry a variety of them at all times.

FLAT-LINING SPOONS

Flat-lining is a term used to describe a technique whereby a lure or one tipped with bait is trolled in the top 20 feet of water without any or very little weight and with few, if any, attractor blades. Flat-lining is particularly adaptable to ultra-light tackle where 4- to 6-lb. test main line commonly is used and where rods and reels are super light. It is a method whereby the lure is let out behind the boat and trolled close to the surface producing a flat angle of line to water (usually 10 to 20 degrees of angle compared to the 45 to 60 degrees angles commonly produced when deep trolling with blades or heavy lead).

Spoons are probably the easiest, most popular lures to flat-line. Weighted spoons such as the Krocodile® can be flat-lined without additional weight but remember they may turn over and spin in the water if trolled fast so a ball-bearing swivel 20 inches up the line from the lure is recommended.

In California/Sierra waters, Brass/Red, Prism-Lite®, Rainbow Trout, Frog or Bikini color patterns are effective.

Small, thin-bladed spoons such as the Needlefish® or Midge Wobbler® in Rainbow Trout, Brown Trout, Brass/Red Head, Frog or Brass Bikini lend themselves exceptionally well to flat-lining. They will produce more vibration and erratic action in the water than will weighted spoons when trolled.

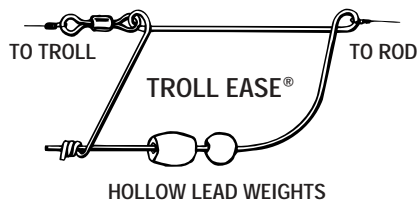
The Super Duper® has long been recognized by anglers as a deadly multi-species lure. One very effective way to fish it is to troll it on a flat line. A Super Duper® should especially be trolled with varying speeds to give it proper action. The larger sizes can be fished without additional weight, with the smaller sizes best trolled by adding a split shot or two 36 inches up the line. This lure have proved to be effective behind trolls for large, deep water fish species and also when fished on 15 feet of leader behind 18-lb. lead-core line.

When flat-lining either weighted or thin-blade spoons, let out 50 to 100 feet of line while your boat is in motion and then begin the troll.

TROLL EASE® AND RUDDERS

A rudder is an essential piece of trolling equipment if you are going to use lures or trolls that have a tendency to spin in the water. The rudder will keep blades tracking straight and prevent line twist. Small rudders can be used whenever you have some concern about line twist and, as an example, when flat-lining a spoon, you should consider adding a rudder 36 to 40 inches up the line from the lure.

Combining the rudder idea with the means to get some weight on a sport fishing line with minimal effort has resulted in the Troll Ease®, a wire frame rudder with the added feature of hollow-core sinker attachment capability. It's definitely one item a troller should have several of. It's simple, yet it eliminates a very big problem . . . how to change leads or add or subtract weight without having to tie



knots or break off pieces of line. By simply unsnapping the metal pin, you can easily add or remove the lead you desire. The additional bonus is that the Troll Ease® also acts as a line twist preventing rudder.

USE A SNUBBER

Strikes that come when trolling usually are vicious. If you're using a light rod and reel combination and are flat-lining, the rod usually will absorb the impact of the strike. However, if you are using a troll or are fishing for species known to have delicate mouths such as kokanee, a rubber snubber is an absolute necessity.

A snubber is a length of surgical tubing with a swivel attached to both ends of a coiled piece of heavy line running through it. When a fish strikes, the snubber stretches out to absorb the impact and then retracts.

TRICKS THAT TAKE TROUT

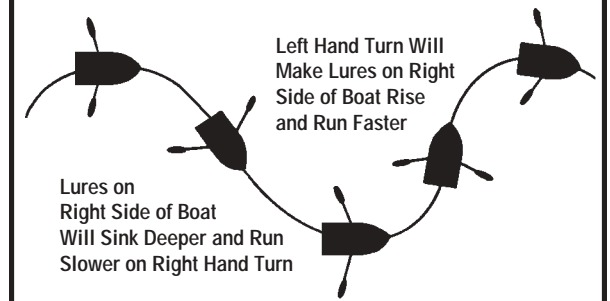
We've gone through much of the information you'll need to become a successful troller. Here are some specific tricks that will increase your catches even more.

TROLL SLOWLY: One of the biggest mistakes made by anglers is working a lure too fast. Bigger fish will not expend any more energy than they have to in catching a meal. Additionally, most lures will not perform correctly at fast speeds. The best advice we can give you is to troll slowly . . . the slower the better. Many expert trout trollers refuse to use a motor as they feel they just can't go slowly enough - they use oars instead. If you're going to use a motor, make sure it will throttle down to a crawl or purchase a multi-speed electric motor or a 1- to 2-horse gas motor in addition to the one you use for power.

VARY SPEED: While slow is the password to successful trolling, this does not mean slow all the time. A lure running through the water at the same speed, the same depth and giving off the same vibration pattern will not attract many fish . . . there's just

nothing there to make a fish feel an easy meal is available or that there's something in trouble. Slow, yes, but every few minutes speed up a bit so the lure changes speed and vibration pattern.

TROLL "S"-CURVE PATTERNS



WORK IN "S" CURVES: Trolling in a straight line between points is the least successful trolling path you can take. Consistent results require that you do everything possible to keep from running that straight line.

An "S" pattern between those two points will produce many more strikes and fish. Every time the lure is on the inside of a swing of the boat, it will decrease speed and drop deeper in the water. Each time it is on the outside, it will speed up and rise. With each turn of your boat you will produce different speed and vibration patterns from the lure you are trolling and that translates into an "easy meal" for a fish.

IF ALL ELSE FAILS: Here's a final trick that should outwit fish when everything else you've tried has failed. How many times have you watched a fish follow a lure right up to the boat and then turn and swim away? Probably a lot of times. The chances are that the fish has been following the lure for several yards, but the action of that lure just didn't entice a strike (it didn't appear to be an "easy meal").

When flat-lining or trolling a small blade string, every two minutes or so pick up your rod and give it two short, sharp jerks; pause, two more jerks, pause and then set it back down again; troll for two more minutes and repeat the procedure. If there's a fish following, which is often the case, the short jerks will bring an immediate strike.

Another thing to consider if strikes are few and far between is to go to a lighter line. A 6-lb. premium quality mono line with small diameter, such as Trilene XT or XL will be difficult for fish to see and yet has high knot strength and very high tensile strength in relation to diameter.

These are many of the tricks you can use to make your California / Sierra trout trolling easier, more fun and even more productive.

NEED MORE TECHNIQUE INFORMATION?

In addition to area-specific Tech Bulletins, Lühr Jensen & Sons has developed a series of more than 20 detailed Technique Reports that cover aspects of fishing with different types of lures.

For a complete set, a patch for your jacket or cap and a catalog featuring all of our quality fishing lures and accessories, send \$5 (\$3 credited to your first order of \$20 or more) along with your name and address to: Lühr Jensen and Sons, Inc, Attn: Customer Service, P.O. Box 297, Hood River, OR 97031.

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