



TECH BULLETIN

OREGON / WASHINGTON

SHAD FISHING

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

Shad by the hundreds of thousands migrate up the Columbia and Willamette rivers from late May through the month of June and provide some of the most exciting fishing action you'll find anywhere.

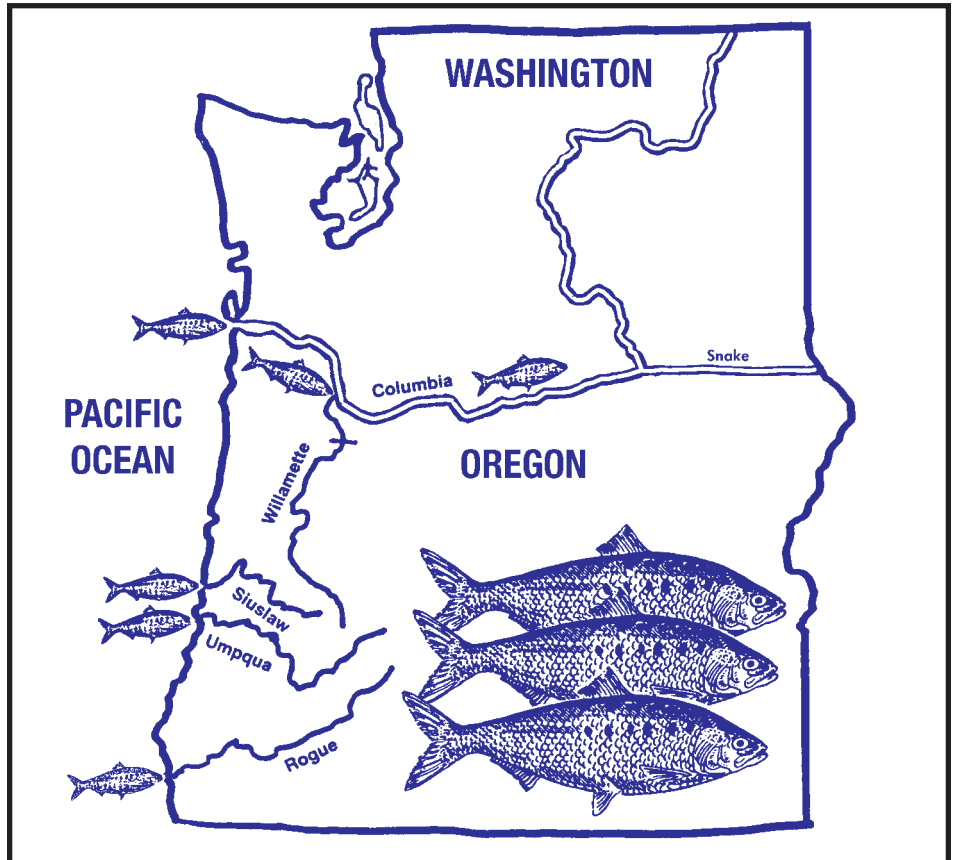
Biologists who keep track of fish passing over fish ladders at Bonneville and The Dalles dams say that over the past few years, there have been runs of from slightly less than 2 million to nearly 4 million shad! That makes it the strongest and healthiest run of anadromous fish coming up the Columbia. In addition to such large numbers, they are also unmatched fighters, pound-for-pound.

A native of the Atlantic Coast — shad were brought to the West by Seth Green of Rochester, New York in 1871, shortly after the Civil War. Green is considered the father of fish culture in the United States. He transported 12,000 young shad, obtained from the Hudson River, via railroad in milk cans and planted them in the Sacramento River near Temeha, California.

During the next 10 years, 790,000 more were transplanted into the Sacramento River. The transplants fared well and shortly had established populations in several Sacramento River tributaries as well as rivers in Oregon and Washington.

Commonly called shad, the species name is American shad and the scientific name is *Alosa sapidissima* (*Alosa* means "shad", *sapidissima* means "fine tasting").

Buck shad average 2-3 pounds and



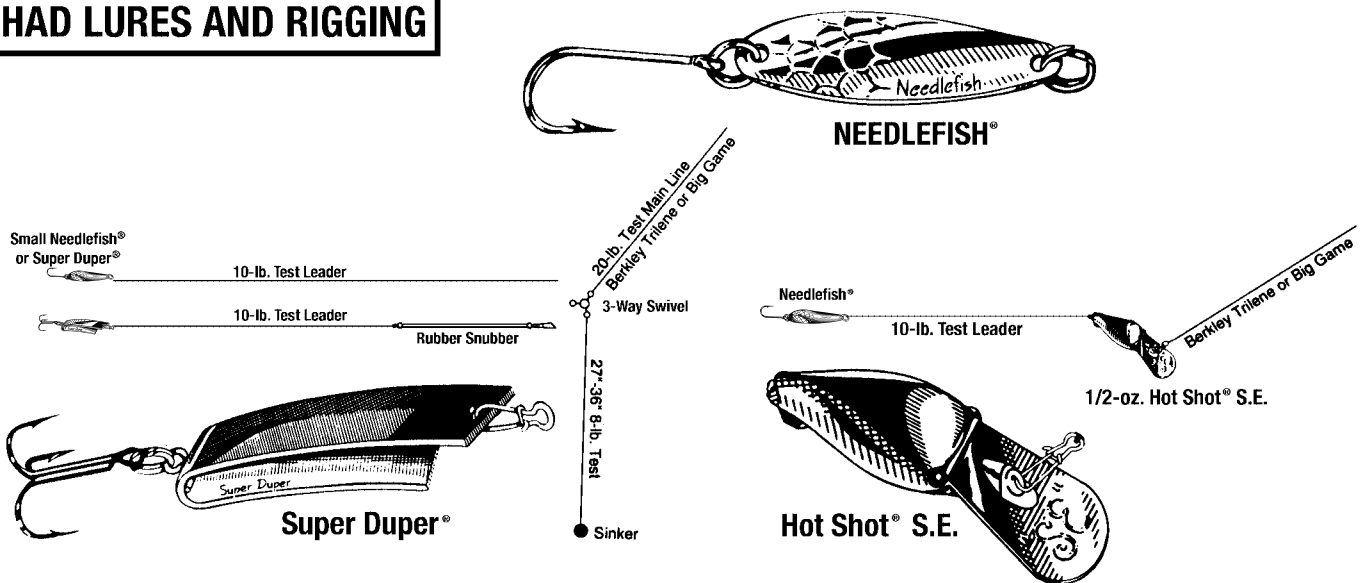
roe shad (females) 3-4 pounds. They have a row of decreasing-sized spots on the side, are metallic blue to green on the dorsal surface and shade from white to silvery on the belly. The side spots sometimes are not visible, but show up when the fish is scaled. The body shape is somewhat like that of a small salmon.

Like salmon, shad enter fresh water

rivers and streams in the spring to spawn. However, unlike pacific salmon, they usually don't die after spawning unless water temperatures are high. In lower temperatures, some adults will live to spawn again.

For both sexes, spawning appears to start as early as age two and continues as late as age seven. Actual spawning

SHAD LURES AND RIGGING



occurs at night, with the semi-buoyant eggs being laid near the surface, where they are fertilized. They drift with the current and hatch 3-6 days later.

Shad may return to their stream of origin but are not as rigidly determined to do so as are salmon. This is thought to be a major contributing factor to their relatively quick expansion so shortly after their introduction.

On light tackle, shad are spectacular fighters that make reel-singing runs and perform heart-stopping, topwater, tail-walking acrobatics.

Many people think of them as bony, overgrown members of the herring family. However, properly prepared, they are delicious, and are especially good pickled or smoked and canned. Add to that the fact that there's no limit, it's surprising that shad remain one of the most underfished resources in the Northwest.

FISHING TECHNIQUES

An excellent way to fish for shad is to anchor in water from 9 to 22 feet deep with the current running two to seven miles-per-hour. The Willamette River at the mouth of the Clackamas is one of

the very best fishing areas. Try using a 36" long lead dropper line which should put your lure at the right depth. In this section, the river currents are slow enough that you don't need to use as heavy an anchor or as much rope as you need on the Columbia below Bonneville Dam. There, because of the swifter current, it is better to shorten the dropper line length to 27" so you'll be fishing at the right depth.

Like kokanee, shad have a very soft mouth, so on the swifter Columbia in particular, rig a Luhr Jensen **Trout Snubber** (#9700) on your leader to help keep from tearing the hook out of the fish's mouth.

The best-producing lures include 1/16-oz. **Bang-Tails**®, size "O" **Needlefish**® and #500 or #501 **Super Dupers**®. The Needlefish and Super Dupers work best from the boat, while the weighted Bang-Tail spinners work well for casting from the bank.

#0003 **Copper** and #0133 **Pearl/Red Head** are very good standard colors for the Needlefish. The #0814 **Metallic Perch** and #0076 **Cerise/Pearl** colors of that lure also are excellent.

When fishing the swifter Columbia's

waters, try adding a **Bigfoot**® 5mm **Chartreuse** and a 4mm **Red** bead to the leader above the wobbler so its action will slow down and make it even more effective in enticing the shad to bite.

SUGGESTED TACKLE TO USE

A good fishing rod to use in the heavier current is a medium back bouncer fitted with a reel loaded with 20-lb. test **Berkley**® **Trilene**® or **Big Game**® line. Use 10-lb. test leader, but for the lead dropper line, use 8-lb. test. Being lighter than your leader, if the sinker gets hung up, you can break loose without leaving your lure on the bottom of the river.

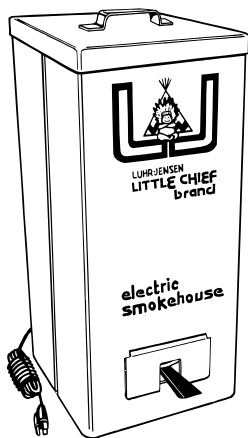
Another good way to fish the heavier water is to use a size 20 **Jet Diver**™, rigged free sliding. This eliminates needing a heavy weight to get down to where the fish are.

Once you've found the fish, you can get back to proper depth each time simply by counting the pulls from your reel to the first guide on the rod. This will put you right back into the "strike zone" and improve your chances of consistently catching fish.

Alosa (Shad) Sapidissima (Fine Tasting)



Big Chief™
Home Electric Smokehouse



Little Chief™
Home Electric
Smokehouse



Luhr Jensen
Smokehouse™
Fish Seasoning

SMOKED SHAD CHUNKS

- 1 pkg. Luhr-Jensen™ **Smokehouse™ All-Purpose Brine Mix** or
- 1 pkg. Luhr-Jensen **Smokehouse Buzz Ramsey's Deluxe Trout & Salmon Brine Mix**

Mix with one cup of hot water. When dissolved, add enough cold water to make two quarts of brining solution.

Place the fish chunks in a plastic, stainless steel or glass container (don't use aluminum) and pour the mixture over them, making sure they are totally immersed.

Soak larger chunks for eight hours in your refrigerator and smaller, or previously frozen chunks, four hours. Rotate the chunks or stir the solution occasionally.

Remove the chunks, rinse them off and pat dry, allowing them to air dry until the surface appears to be lightly glazed.

Load them into your **Little** or **Big Chief™ Electric Smokehouse**. Use two to four pans full of your favorite Luhr-Jensen **Chips 'n Chunks™** wood fuel, finishing the smoke-curing process with heat only.

For thick chunks — smoke for 8 to 12 hours, using three pans full of chips. Smaller chunks need only 5 to 8 hours and two pans full of chips.

PICKLE MARINADE

- 1 cup white vinegar
- 3/4 cup white sugar
- 1 cup pineapple juice
- 2 tbsps pickling spice

Boil spice in vinegar-pineapple juice mixture for 10 minutes. Strain out spice and add sugar, cool, then pour over fish. For best results, allow fish and marinade to sit for 5 days before eating. NO CHEATING!

FRIED SHAD

Clean a 3 to 4 pound shad and split it down the backbone. Cut into 6- or 7-inch pieces and gash each piece in several places. Soak in salt water for an hour. Drain and roll in corn meal with salt and pepper added. Put enough shortening into an iron fry pan to almost cover the fish. When the shortening is hot, put in the fish and fry to a golden brown.

SHAD WITHOUT BONES

- 1 large shad (4 pounds or larger)
- Melted butter
- Melted shortening
- Salt & pepper
- Aluminum foil

Clean shad and rub inside with the melted butter. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Wrap in foil and bake at 300 degrees for five hours. The bones will disintegrate.