



Angler Info

For

Catching Salmon

by Mike Ryan

Fishing success is in the details, so we want to give our customers the “how to” information they will need to have a fun and successful Alaska salmon fishing adventure.

You will be using a salmon rod with a right hand level wind reel. Your Captain and crew will rig your rod with a line weight, a long leader and a herring bait with top and trailer hooks. While waiting to start fishing, **CONTROL YOUR LINE WEIGHT**. If you let it swing free you may hit someone in the face or head. If you need to, hold the weight in your hand.

When the Captain tells you to start fishing, hold your rod about level and lower your bait slowly. If you drop the bait rig too fast, the herring will end up above the weight and wrap around the line. We can guarantee you will not get a strike with a tangled bait. When you release the reel spool to let out line, **KEEP YOUR THUMB ON THE SPOOL AT ALL TIMES**. With your left hand, strip a foot or so of line off the reel and release the line to let the weight down slowly to prevent a fowled bait. You will strip line a couple thousand times a day but your fish count at the end of the day will be worth the effort. After an hour of fishing, line stripping will become second nature.

Lower your bait until the weight hits the bottom. Start retrieving your bait immediately. To attract a strike, reel fast enough to make the herring spin like a lure. Your Captain can help you get the right speed. If the Captain announces that fish are at a certain depth, use the line counter on the reel to see the depth of your bait and try to get it below the fish before starting your retrieve. You have now maximized your chances of getting a strike.

When a salmon takes your herring, you feel a couple of hard taps. **DO NOT SET THE HOOK! I repeat DO NOT SET THE HOOK!!!** If you jerk on your rod now, you will pull the herring out of the salmon’s mouth. You **MUST** let the fish swim on and eat the bait. When you get a strike, you will feel pulling pressure on the line. **What you do next will determine if you hook the fish or NOT! LOWER YOUR ROD TIP TO THE WATER WHILE THE FISH IS PULLING**. “YOU BOW TO THE FISH” If the fish is still pulling when your rod tip touches the water, **SET THE HOOK BY JERKING THE ROD STRAIGHT UP. “FISH ON!!!”**.

Your salmon will instantly take off or “run”. (King Salmon, Chinook, will always make a long run. If that happens, you know you’ve hooked a King.) LET THE FISH RUN. Do not try to stop the run by pressing your thumb on the line spool; the leader will probably break and you’ll have a VERY sore thumb! Your reel is equipped with a “drag” that controls the amount of pressure needed to strip line off the reel when the spool is locked. DO NOT RESET THE DRAG WITHOUT LETTING THE CAPTAIN CHECK IT FIRST.

Keep your rod tip high and start reeling. You **MUST** always keep pulling pressure on the fish. Any slack in the line will give the salmon a chance to “throw the hook” and escape. With a little practice you will learn to raise and lower your rod tip or “pump” the rod to reel in the fish. With the rod tip high, you reel very fast, gaining line while lowering the rod tip. Then you raise the tip without reeling and pull in the fish. Your fish may run at any time and you **MUST LET IT GO**. As long as the fish is solidly hooked, it will eventually tire and you will bring it to the boat.

Your Captain or crew will tell you which side of the boat to bring in your fish for netting. When the fish is in the net and brought aboard, your line weight will be swinging wildly about head high and could really hurt someone. Immediately try to **CONTROL YOUR WEIGHT**. Let the Captain know that you’re going drop your weight to the deck. Put thumb pressure on the line spool and move the reel’s spool lock handle to release the spool. Use your thumb on the spool to control the amount of line you need to release and to prevent a “bird’s nest” of tangled line on your spool. Remember, the more time you have to untangle the line on your spool is time you are not fishing!

Congratulations! You’ve got your salmon on ice. Now get another one!