

Boat Fishing Information

“Fishing for success” ...



“Anglers who consistently catch trout in our lakes are successful because they have a basic understanding of trout, trout food and conditions that influence them...”

Angling Success - we all want it!

There is nothing quite like a day on the lake fishing - the scenery, good company and plenty of fresh air - but let's face it, catching fish is what adds icing to *our* cake! Simply getting to know our quarry and its environments will enable us to better succeed...



Success formula

- Knowledge of trout, smelt and insect lifecycles and water temperatures = *location of trout*
- Understanding when and how to use the different fishing methods = *catching trout*

Icing!

Water temperature - a key to locating trout

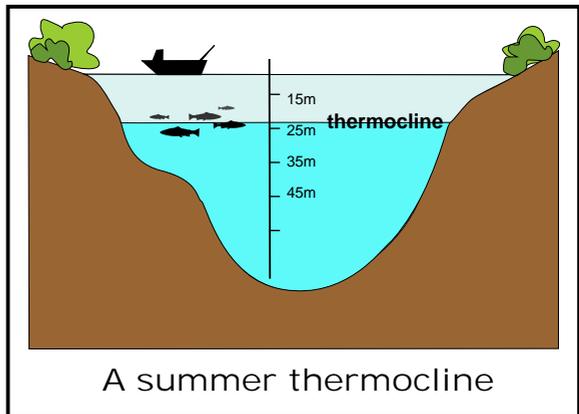
Trout are cold blooded and the speed of their metabolism is dependent on the temperature of the water they live in. Energy gained by feeding is used first for metabolic needs (breathing, blood circulation, digestion) then what remains goes into growth. Optimum temperature for trout growth is between 16°C and 18°C. As water temperatures drop below 16°C trout generally have to feed less, so they are less active to meet metabolic and growth needs. Above 18°C their energy requirement just to stay alive increase considerably so they seek out cooler water, feeding during the cooler periods of the day, then resting in cooler areas to make the most from their food energy gained.

The thermocline explained!

During the winter the lake is the same temperature from the bottom up to the lake surface. As the summer approaches the surface waters become warmer and in deeper lakes temperature layers develop. At the height of summer the warm water on the surface is separated from the cooler water in the depths by a layer of water known as the thermocline.

The thermocline layer is one where temperatures drop suddenly

(8-10°C within 10m depth) and it is the depth of the lake where lots of biotic (life) activity can occur. It can be rich in nutrients and this provides food for all stages of the food chain. It is also cooler than the surface, so with food and cool summer temperatures it is a good place to find hungry trout.



A summer thermocline

Finding the thermocline will result in finding trout!

...The thermocline explained!

The warmer the surface water gets the deeper the thermocline will be. The depth will vary from lake to lake, but as a guide, in deeper lakes it might be around 10-20 meters in early summer, 20-25 meters in mid summer and possibly deeper during the heat of a late hot summer period. A prime place to locate trout is at the depth where the thermocline meets the lake bed as this location is where trout frequently hunt for food. In shallow lakes thermoclines may only exist for brief periods of settled weather. Frequent winds over shallow lakes can provide enough energy to overcome the build up of temperature layers, and in these lakes trout need to find other cold water areas like cold water stream mouths or underwater springs.

Smelt - favourite food of the trout

Smelt, a small 'whitebait' like fish, are found in many of our lakes in huge numbers and are the main food of trout. Adults are 30-70 mm long, have a white belly, silver or clear flank sometimes with a purple sheen and grey or green backs. Smelt spawn in clean, fine sand along the shoreline or at river mouths at depths of 0.5 to 4



Photo Steve Moore

An adult smelt

meters from November to January. There is another minor spawning in March and some adults may die during the summer. During the rest of the year they stay in large shoals throughout the lake feeding on zooplankton. During the brightest part of the day smelt prefer to stay in deepwater forming dense shoals. They move to the shallows or surface during the evening, throughout the night and mornings and can be seen forming dimples on the surface during these times.



Fly representing a smelt

Other trout food

In addition to eating smelt or in lakes where smelt don't exist, trout will feed seasonally on a number of other food sources. Some lakes are abundant in aquatic insects such as damsel and dragon flies and these food types can dominate during the warmer summer months. During these periods fly fishing near a shoreline will be the preferred method.

Terrestrial insects such as beetles and cicadas, plus bullies, koura, snails and tadpoles are also targeted by trout. Keep an eye on the conditions and stomach content of the trout you catch.



Photo Alton Perrie

Bully



Cicada

Trout will feed on whatever is available

Sounders and fish finders - Your eyes underwater



Depth sounders or fish finders help you locate trout, the thermocline, water depth, surface temperature and general lake bed structure. All of this information will help you locate prime trout locations.

While your sounder won't actually show you where the temperature change occurs, by maximising the sensitivity settings you will be able to find the location of fish such as smelt and bullies.

It's likely these bait fish will be located near the thermocline as will the trout. Additionally, bathometric charts of the lake will quickly enable you to target specific depths and likely shoreline locations.

Successful anglers depend on their sounder equipment.

Lures -

Many lures for trolling and spinning imitate smelt or bullies so are ideal for fishing lakes. The lure's action, the way it swims through the water, can attract trout from a great distance. Most lures 'swim' with an erratic action to imitate an injured or distressed prey. Check the lure action at various speeds by holding it next to the boat while you troll, varying your boat's speed will make the lure swim differently so try experimenting. It's also a good idea to keep an eye on the tip or your rod while you troll, some lures transmit their action to the rod in turn making the tip vibrate. If the vibration stops suddenly you will have picked up weed and should clear your lure.

Specific colour or flashes will attract trout too. You might copy or match the natural colours of the trout's food closely, or use something that stands-out, like say fluro pink! Either way, try different colours until you find something that is working - some colours will work with specific light conditions, others won't, so you'll need to experiment. If you have multiple lures fished from the boat vary the colour selection until you can find what works. Also, don't be shy asking successful anglers for their favourite choice of colours, most anglers will be happy to give you some good advice.

Lure size is also important but frequently overlooked. Trout in lakes will feed on tiny juvenile smelt, perhaps as small as 15mm, as they hatch in spring and might go onto large 100mm smelt late in the Autumn. Again, experiment with a variation of sizes until you are successful. Try trolling with a combination of both flies and traditional trolling lures.



Fishing methods - How and when to use them

There are a multitude of different ways to fish lakes. The most successful anglers will try them all at different times.

Trolling and harling



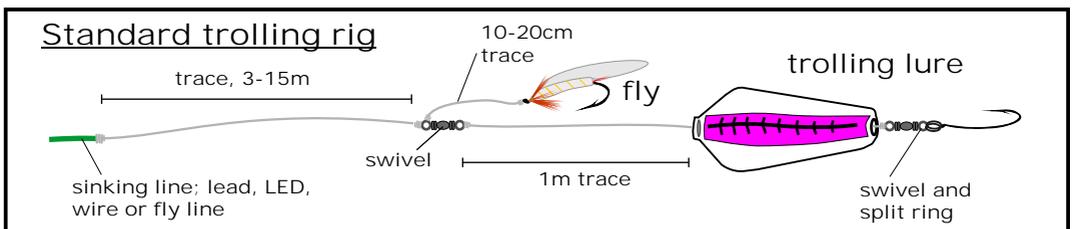
Trolling simply means dragging or trailing lines and lures behind a moving boat, it is a very productive and popular way of fishing lakes. It might include paddling a kayak, rowing a dinghy or moving slowly along with the aid of an outboard motor. The two common types of trolling are deemed as *shallow trolling* and *deep trolling*.

Shallow trolling, as the name suggests, means fishing the lake edges and drop-offs with a slow sinking fly line, LED, or a short section of lead line or monofilament. It is the ideal method between April and December or on cool cloudy days during summer when fish are feeding in the shallows. Early morning and late evenings are best for shallow trolling at depths of 2-7 meters or at the edge of weed beds. Harling is a term used to describe shallow trolling with flies. This method is very effective when the fish are chasing smelt near the surface and is the choice of kayak and dinghy anglers. Deep trolling uses lead or wire lines, or a device known as a downrigger.



Commonly lines reach depths of 10 to 20 meters or 30 meters with a downrigger. Deep trolling is the best option when the thermocline has formed and trout can be targeted in deep areas. It is very productive during summer but will catch fish throughout the year also.

...deep trolling is one of the most successful methods



Lead line, wire line and downriggers may not be permitted on some lakes. Check local regulations.

Jigging

Jigging can be a very successful method of taking trout but requires a thorough learning period before you reap the benefits. Unlike trolling, jigging occurs from a stationary or slow drifting boat. The basic idea is to position your boat over a key trout location and lower lures or flies directly into the zone where the fish are congregated. As all water depths can be reached, jigging can be done successfully at any time of year, but summer in particular, when the thermocline has formed, is a good time to jig fish.

Locating fish by using a sounder is essential to jig fishing. Many anglers spend a lot of time locating a spot before even dropping their lines. Marking your line with depths will help target fish quickly. Again, think about the keys to locating trout already discussed in this pamphlet. Favourite flies are smelt, koura and bully patterns in varying sizes.



Jig fishing

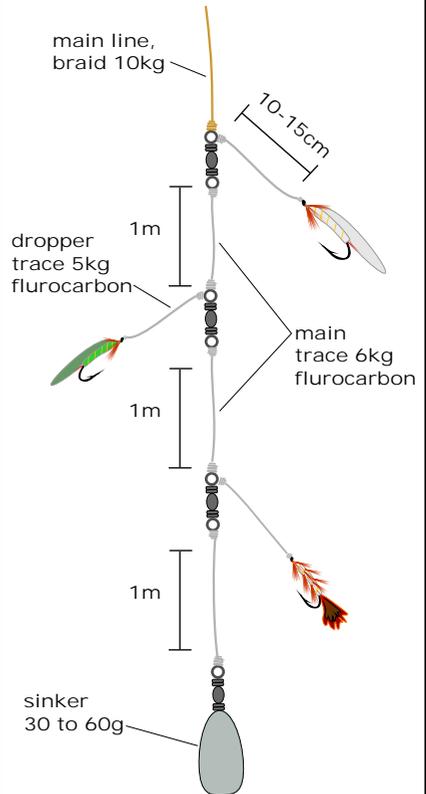


Jigging tips



- Spend time locating a good spot before dropping your lines
- Continue to use the sounder while fishing. Note the best depth and target it
- Use tackle set up specifically for jigging, see a tackle store for advise
- Use braid main line with flurocarbon trace and droppers
- Set three flies each 1 meter apart

Standard jigging rig



Spinning

Perhaps the simplest way of fishing for trout is by casting and retrieving a swimming lure; *spinning*. It can be done easily from the shoreline or from a boat in shallow water. Spin lures generally represent bait fish like smelt, so spinning is particularly productive when trout are feeding on small fish near the shoreline.

Autumn and spring are especially productive times for spin fishing.



Spin fishing

Trolling speeds



The speed of your trolling effects both the lure action and its depth. Commonly accepted speeds are between 1 and 4km/hr (0.5 to 2 knots) or about walking speed. Again, experimentation helps. Try some likely runs at differing speeds and watch how other boats are going. Short bursts of a slightly higher speed can also induce a strike from otherwise uncooperative fish. The pulsing action of your rod tip when using "tassie" style lures will also indicate good boat speeds. Consider wind direction too as this might greatly effect the speed of your trolling.

It can be a good idea to complete your turns at a slightly higher speed, otherwise lures fished deep tend to sink into the weed beds.

Trolling tips

- Familiarise yourself with the area before you go. Have a look at some charts or maps.
- Start a little deeper until your gear is out, then move in towards the shallower water where you want to fish.
- Drop-offs, ledges and the edge of weed beds are always prime locations.
- Sudden changes in lakebed shape such as points tend to concentrate trout numbers.
- Use a sounder and landmarks to stay at your chosen depth. Don't just troll along aimlessly.
- Shags feed along dropoffs - a line of shags is a good line to troll
- When a fish strikes, maintain your speed until you are sure it's well hooked and under control.
- Re fish areas where you have had success and mark them on a GPS or in your diary, trout will be in groups or the same location

Caring for your catch

Lake fish can be superb for the table. Carefully selected fish will be endowed with tasty orange/pink flesh and good preparation will ensure their eating qualities are maintained.

- Land fish quickly and select bright, well conditioned specimens only for the table. Inferior looking fish will not taste as good
- Iki spike the trout and cut a gill to bleed the fish
- After bleeding has finished put the fish on ice or in a cold chilly bin, not in water
- Gut and clean as soon as practical wiping slime clear with a paper towel
- If eating within 24 hours simply wrap in clean dry news paper and refrigerate
- Generally, cook lightly as overcooking will dry out flesh

Protect our waters



Unwanted aquatic weeds, algae and pest fish threaten freshwater environments for the trout fishery, native species, and all recreational users. Be a responsible user...



Check, Clean, Dry

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