**Successful Boat Fishing On Southern Lakes**

**General Tips:**

- **What and why wrong?** The most common fault in fishing for trout is using a rod too long. An excellent fishing rod for trout fishing is in the 7-8 foot range. Nowadays, most anglers use 8-16 foot rods but this is not necessarily better. Using a long rod can be a hindrance and limit your ability to cast accurately.

- **The golden rule is that the bar needs to be close to the bottom (within 3 feet).** Select the depth you want to target, then adjust the length of your fishing rod to achieve this. This will help you to cast more accurately and increase your chances of catching trout.

- **The depth of the fish will vary depending on the time of day and weather conditions.** For example, on warm, sunny days, trout are likely to be found in deeper water, while on cold, cloudy days, they may be found in shallower water. Understanding these factors can help you to adjust your fishing strategy accordingly.

**Successful Boat Fishing On the Lake**

**Top Ten Quick Tips For Success:**

1. Familiarise yourself with the area first.
2. Start in deep water, then move to the shallower fishing area after the rolling gear is out.
3. Deep-water, river and stream delays and changes in light, fishing techniques are often most successful in the rolling areas.
4. Use the sounder and landmarks to locate spotted trout in the rolling areas.
5. Use weight to concentrate the area to the rolling spots.
6. Use a spinning rod to locate and concentrate the rolling spots.
7. The best strike zone is within 2m of the rolling area.
8. Very slowly speed and direction.
9. When a trout is hooked, force the bar and do not stop when the fish is under control.
10. If fish are found in the lake, catch them as they travel in groups.

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**Trolling with a standard trolling depth and length of line:** Trolling speed: Other than when you are using the ideal speed for all situations, it is not recommended to use a speed that is too slow or too fast. In the event of your line or lure becoming stuck, the ideal speed is around 1 - 1.5 knots. In the event of your line becoming stuck, the ideal speed is around 1 - 1.5 knots. The speed is not recommended to be too slow or too fast. In the event of your line or lure becoming stuck, the ideal speed is around 1 - 1.5 knots.
Length and weight of trace material: Again, because of the clear water, trace length and weight is crucial to success. This is especially important when harling or leadlining. The trace from the end of your trolling line (eg. leadline) should be a minimum of 5m in length and needs to be no heavier than 6kg. Use good quality monofilament that has low diameter and is supple. Supple line allows your lure to swim more freely in the water giving it a far better action to attract fish. Always use a lighter weight trace between your swivel and your fly and spinner. This means if you snag one lure or the other you are less likely to lose the whole rig.

Downriggers: Downriggers can be used to target any depth with accuracy, depending on the length of downrigger cable. They are a bit fiddly to use at first, but you can soon develop an easy routine. Use a light, flexible rod and reel filled with 3-4kg monofilament. To set:
1. Move the boat ahead slowly.
2. Let out approximately 30-50m of line.
3. Put the rod in the rod holder.
4. Slide the fishing line into the clip on the downrigger.
5. Disengage the reel so that line can run out freely, keeping control so it doesn’t over-run or tangle.
6. Lower the downrigger ball slowly to the desired depth (the fishing line should run freely of the spool).
7. Put the reel into gear and gently wind in the slack line until you get a good bend in the rod (be careful not to pull the line from the clip).
8. When a fish strikes, the line will pull out of the clip and the rod straighten to take up the slack.

Jigging: Use a light, fast action rod and freestreet reel filled with 3-4kg monofilament. Let your weight or lure to the bottom and move it gently up and down. Regularly check that the weight is touching the bottom and let out more line if necessary. It is often easier to fish with the reel out of gear so extra line can be regularly released - just keep your thumb on the spool so that you can strike any fish. If the angle of your line streams past 30 degrees wind up and start again. Some strikes are obvious, but fish will often pick up the lure or fly as it is fluttering down. If you sense something is not quite right, clamp your thumb down on the spool and strike sharply.

Harling: Use a very fast sinking flyline or 10 metres of leadline joined at no less than 100m of dacron or monofilament backing material. Alternatively, you can use an ordinary spinning setup with a small lead sinker 1m above your fly/flies to take the line down. Put out most of the flyline or the leadline plus 15-20m of backing. Target sandy areas or channels amongst weed-beds less than 10m deep, or on a deep shoreline, stick very close to the bank. When harling you want to be moving as slow as possible, therefore it is an ideal method to use from a rowboat or canoe, especially on smaller lakes.

Fly and spinner combination: Many of the huge range of spinners available today bring a lot of action in the water. Many are great for attracting fish from quite sizeable distance. Due to our lakes being very clear, fish do get to have a very good look at the lure before deciding whether or not to strike. Fish will often be drawn in to look at a lure with a great action, but then put off at the last minute as it doesn’t look real enough. This is where the fly comes in, it is less intimidating, more realistic and more often than not, taken in preference to the spinner.

**HOT SPOTS**

**WAITAKI LAKES**

Lake Benmore: The lake is divided into two arms formed by the flooding of the Ahuriri and Waitaki rivers. The Ahuriri Arm between Omarama and Otematata, and the Haldon Arm, East of Twizel offer safe family camping and fishing. Best fished by trolling a spinner or feathered lure in the shallows around the tributary stream mouths especially the Omarama and Tekapo River delta. Popular trolling lures for all three lakes include: Tasmanian Devil, Rapalas and the ever useful black and gold Toby.

Lake Aviemore: Lake Aviemore is completely encircled by tar sealed roads leading to 5 concrete ramps two of these incorporating deep water anchorage and a jetty. A popular trolling lake, the preferred areas are around the Otematata River mouth, Ragged Ridges, and Parsons Rock. Rainbow and Brown trout are available with the occasional chinook salmon also being caught. Early morning and evening around the northern bays before the water toys and boat boats begin to move can also be rewarding.

Lake Waitaki: Lake Waitaki is the oldest of the Hydro Lakes, it is less popular than the larger lakes to the west but produces both brown and rainbow trout. Trees remain in the lake, many of these submerged. On a low lake these can be visible, but at other times they lie hidden from view and boats should be aware of their location. Lake Waitaki is primarily a shallow lake excepting for the old river channel which meanders through the middle towards Waitaki dam. Trolling is successful along most of the shore line except the deep water areas near the Waitaki Dam. The lake level can alter markedly due to electricity demand. The most used launching ramp is at Fishermans Bend camping area below Lake Aviemore on the northern shore.

Lake Dunstan: Lake Dunstan is suited to most trolling methods, but the one that consistently catches more fish than any other is harling. The Clutha arm is the most popular and productive area of the lake, and, despite all the bad press we have here about lagermetry, close to the weed banks is where you will find most of the fish. If the weedy areas aren’t producing for you, try a deeper fishing method such as leadline or downrigger along the eastern shoreline around some of the rocky points.

Lake Hawea: All methods are suitable here, with downrigger and leadlining being most popular. As with all the glacial lakes, it is very deep, and the productive zones for fishing are all close to the edge, with the exception of the head of the lake, which is shallow for quite a distance from the shore. Hotspots are the Neck, with its varied terrain, all of the river mouths, Silver Island and the ‘gut’ directly off the Dingle Burn Dam in approximately 20-40m of water.

Lake Wanaka: Similar to Hawea in that all methods can be used. From Glenorchy Bay there is easy access to Paddock Bay and the Matakiaki River Delta. From Wanaka township Stevenson’s Arm is the place to head, but the best fishing of all is at the head of the lake on the Makarora Delta.

Lake Wakatipu: There is good fishing right in Frankton Arm, especially at dawn and dusk when other activities settle down. The delta area around Glensorey is very productive and from there you have good access to the Greenstone and Von River mouths. In the Kingston Arm there are a number of stream mouths with terrific drop-offs into deep water, just made for jiggling or downriggering.

Lake Monowai: Monowai provides yet more variety, having had its levels raised early last century, which flooded the forest margins. These dead trees now provide a vast amount of habitat for small fish such as bullyies and galaxids. Fishing as close to the tree skeletons as possible will reward anglers, and dawn or dusk provides the best opportunity for that fish of a lifetime!