

# Notes on Beach Fishing Presentation

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## Information Gleaned from the Presentation

### “Beach Fishing” April 25, 2017 IWFF General Meeting

#### By Roy Sorenson and John Snook

Club members were treated to a presentation by two “pros” who have fished the beaches for years. John and Roy have been members of IWFF in the past. Roy stated that he will fish a minimum of 40 days a year in his pursuit of beach salmon (mostly coho and pinks).

#### 1. Where?

Start at Nile Creek (for pinks) and at Lantzville (for coho) and work your way up the coast stopping anywhere there is beach access. Walk out to the waterline so you can see salmon, even if they are not jumping or porpoising. (Coho tend to be more “demonstrative”.) Look for groups of beach fishers and check out what they are doing. Don’t feel you have to walk into the crowds to fish. Often, there are other schools of fish nearby that are not being touched.

#### 2. When?

Pinks start showing up in northern locations in early to mid July and later in the south, with fish being on the beaches until September. The earliest fish are the most aggressive and will be readier to take a fly. By September there are a large number of fish suffering from “lock jaw”!

Coho start showing up in July, but the best fishing is in October/early November.

#### 3. What about Tides?

General opinion is that from a few hours before low tide and fishing the flood will produce the most consistent results. However, Roy pointed out that salmon have been known to bite on any tide, so don’t let it stop you going out if you have an opportunity!

Coho generally remain close to one location, so you have a better chance of being able to cast to them at low tide.

#### 4. Tactics

Vary your retrieve speed, especially if you are not getting any takes. Sometimes salmon will take a dead drifted fly and other times you can retrieve as fast as you can and get takes. This is true of both pinks and coho.

If you are not getting any takes (and there are fish present) then vary your retrieve, the colour of the fly, the depth you are fishing and change patterns if necessary as well. Later in the season, smaller, sparser flies retrieved very slowly tend to work better.

Be aware that if a school of jumping fish is moving towards you, you should get your fly in the water well ahead of the jumpers. The leaders of the school will be the more aggressive feeders and tend not to jump. You could miss them if you just cast to or beyond the jumpers. Be stealthy . . . salmon in shallow water near shore can be notoriously skittish . . . move slowly and try to keep your casts as quiet as possible.

## **5. Wading**

Don't wade out too far without first checking where the fish are holding or moving by. Everybody has stories of having fish jump behind them when they've waded right out to their limit. It's also fairer for the other fishermen, because the closer you stay to shore, the closer the fish will move in.

In times of stormy conditions and areas with slippery rocks, a wading staff is essential.

## **6. Fishing gear**

### **A. Flies**

For pinks—pink polar bear over silver tinsel was the common fly in John's box. Use from #4 down to as small as #12 late in the season. Always have some other colours in the box (Green, Blue, Blue-Green, Purple -Yellow or Yellow-Red (anything your imagination can dream up!)) Remember, change out the colour if fish stop taking what you are using.

For coho—it can be very frustrating to convince them to bite (pinks too!). Roy starts with a #6 green California Neal as his go-to fly and then will switch to a red Neal. If after trying varying size of flies, retrieves and depths there are no takes, he tries different flies in different colours. At times, it seems nothing will work . . . even for someone as experienced as Ray and John!

### **B. Leaders**

Use a 9 foot leader (15# tip) and attach 3 or 4 feet of 8 to 12# tippet then tie on the fly. You can use a loop knot (like Lefty Kreh's loop knot or Perfection Loop) or just an improved clinch knot. Ray feels that the loop knot does not work any better than a clinch knot while John feels that the loop knot will improve your hook up rate!

Overall length of the leader can be shorter for pinks. If you are using a sink tip or sinking line, you can also use shorter leaders.

### **C. Hooks**

Use the widest gape hooks you can find to improve chance of a hook up. Use smaller rather than larger hooks for beach fishing. It is your choice whether to use stainless hooks or not. Some people like a black hook because it is not as visible and will also rust out more quickly if broken off in a fish. But if not using stainless be sure to get rid of the hooks at the end of the season. Don't return a used fly to your main fly box if you don't want to open the box to a mess of rust the next time you fish!

#### **D. Lines**

Roy prefers a line suitable for use with a 7 wt switch rod (11 ft). A Rio Streamer Tip is a good choice with an intermediate (1 – 2 inches per second) sink tip. The Rio Outbound with a 37 ft belly is a good line to use as well.

John prefers to use a floating line on a single handed 9 ½ ft, 6 to 8 wt rod. He prefers using a line that is 1 line wt heavier than called for on the rod. In weedy water he will move to an intermediate sink tip to get below the weeds floating on the surface.

#### **7. Looking after gear used in salt water**

Wash everything in fresh water at the end of the day . . . don't put this off or you will regret it! Salt water is extremely corrosive. Ray suggests purchasing a product called "Salt Away" (available at Harbour Chandler) which will decrease the amount of time you need to rinse off the salt.

#### **8. Keeping your fish fresh**

If you decide to keep a fish or two, a burlap bag is much superior to plastic because the plastic acts as a greenhouse and will cause the fish to spoil quickly in the bright sun. The burlap if kept damp will evaporate the water and actually cool the fish instead.

Above all, get out and fish . . . you won't catch any fish on the beach if you are home watching Netflix!