

Using the Mustad Flasher Rig

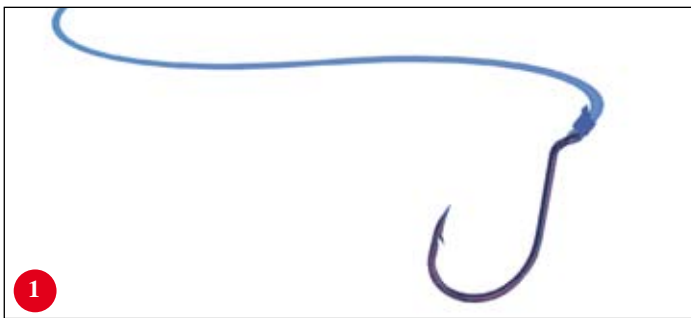


by Michael Rendle



Feature Product
Mustad Thor Ultra Line

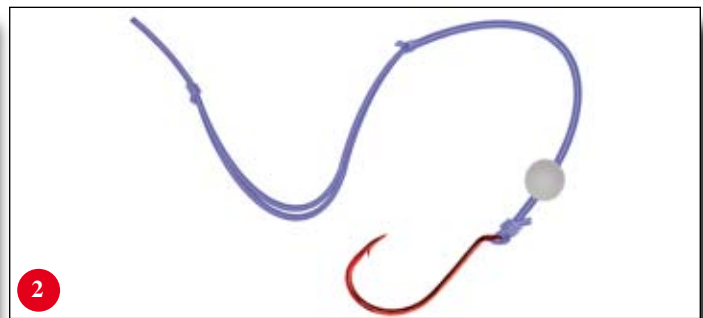
WITH apologies to our many lower South Island readers, the undeniable fact is that for most of the NZ fishing population, snapper are the prime target. There's no point in writing us letters; its how it is. The cool thing is that when targeting snapper we have lots of other species that become by-catch, that is if you consider JD's, gurnard, tarakihi and blue cod to be 'by-catch'. There are many, many ways to rig for, and target snapper. As is so often the case, local knowledge can be a key ingredient. For example, we regularly see East Coast fishermen join us in Raglan and try to strayline for snapper. The fact is, the technique just doesn't work. Whether we like it or not, the reality is that a standard two hook dropper rig with a big sinker on the bottom will catch more fish. Don't ask me why, it just does. With so many techniques used and local variations in tackle, we decided it was time to take a step back and show you some of our favourite simple rigs for snapper...



1

1/ The Direct attachment

Hook: Mustad Big Mouth or Long Red
Trace: None
Main Line: as light as you dare!
How to fish it: cast or strayline



2

2/ Trace and double

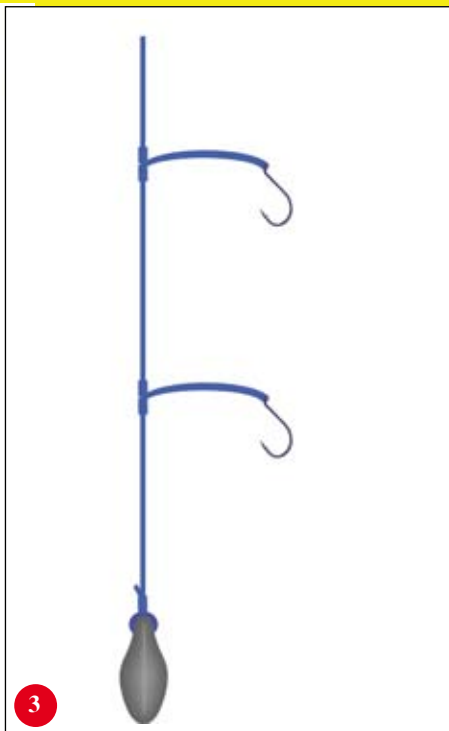
Hook: Any Mustad pattern. Big Reds are great!
Trace: Mustad Thor 30lb or Platypus in various sizes.
Main Line: a great rig for light line fishing
How to fish it: cast or strayline

Occasionally snapper can be particularly difficult. Winter is one time when snapper can be hard. That is a subject that Bruce Duncan has written on for us; he is a master at catching fish at these times and we recommend his articles on the subject to you. Even when the fish are there they can be slow and timid biters. At this time it essential to make the most natural presentation possible. So keep it really simple; tie your hook directly to the mainline without a trace or any other encumbrance. I really like the Mustad Wide Gap patterns here as the fish almost always hook in the corner of the mouth and trace is basically redundant. A small ball sinker may need to be added depending on depth and current.

This is my favourite rig. Start with a doubled mainline. I use a spider hitch as it rarely fails and is fast to tie. The double connects to the trace either by way of a Mustad swivel, or else by tying a no-name knot or Albright knot. At the business end is a large hook; I like 7/0 Big Mouth hooks. This is attached with a uni-knot or an improved clinch, to the trace. A ball sinker can be added first if required.

Options – use a two-hook rig. The second hook can be sliding (not IGFA legal) or it can be fixed; there are a number of knots suitable for that job.

Simple Snapper Rigs...



3/ Two hook bottom rig

Hook: Any Mustad pattern. Big Mouth hooks are great when fished on nylon in deepwater.

Trace: 30-80lb Platypus

Main Line: Any, or braid.

How to fish it: used with a sinker and fished on the bottom

Being able to tie a dropper rig is an essential skill that any fisherman needs. Sure, you can buy one of the wonderful Big Red Flasher Rigs, and you should, I recommend you carry at least six. However sometimes the fish respond best to hooks fished without any flash. Plus if there are barracouta or other problem fish around it hurts less to lose a nylon trace than it does to lose an expensive flasher.

The key thing to learn is how to tie a drop-per loop. Often I will start my day by preparing several traces. This is easily handled by tying loops at the right distance along the trace, leaving enough length between each pair to allow the attachment of sinker and swivel or loop.

4/ The Drifting Rig

Hook: Straight patterns, like the Big Red, behind a Mustad flasher rig

Trace: 30-80lb Platypus

Main Line: braid – it's all about keeping in touch with the bottom and gelspun lines win here with their thin diameter.

How to fish it: Some drift is required to get the best from the rig. Bottom contact is important.



This is a variation on the bottom rig theme. This trace can be built in a number of ways; a flasher can be used followed by a sinker, swivel and single trace. The flasher can be used after the swivel instead (particularly deadly on gurnard) or it can be built with traces only. Remember that using more than two hooks won't comply with IGFA requirements and long traces will create the same issues. A sea anchor can be an important part of the equipment if it's windy. Have a bottom anchor ready to go. We use this rig to prospect then anchor when we find fish. Braid is almost essential to reduce the resistance when drifting which keeps the sinker on or near the bottom. There is lots of movement to this rig and by having it bounce on the bottom it becomes irresistible to fish.

