



By Allan Sherson

CONSIDER before you go fishing whether you want to catch big fish or just have a good time. You can do both but either way you are going to have to work at it. Trolling is easy, you throw the line in and drive around..... right? If its so easy why is it that some boats consistently score a lot of fish and most are lucky to get one a day? As with anything else, you have to work at it.

The key to all trout fishing anywhere is;
1/ Fishing where the fish are.
2/ Getting your gear to the depth they are feeding.
3/ Imitating what the fish are feeding on.

I have owned a converted trailer sailer for the last 8 years so never went anywhere fast but had good electronics and could see what was going on all the time. We found the fish and not where you would expect them to be either.

I look for trout when I'm trolling. At first light they will be in close stacked around the lake shores. The normal places like the Dogger Bank on Okataina, the reef on Okataina, Stony Point, Rangiuuru Bay, Twin streams, White cliffs on Tarawera. The sounder will have fish everywhere. As the sun comes up and the boat traffic gets up they disappear..... for years I thought they went down deep and disappeared.

For the last six years I've hardly put out my lead lines, they have become decoration on my boat. I catch most of my fish trolling LED lines or on a #6 weight, fast sinking fly line or on the down-rigger. Even then I never set it at more than 30 feet and I catch fish all day.

I have not fished Rotoiti very much but I have guided for a time on Okataina and spent a heap of time on Tarawera and I have found that the fish spend all day at 30' plus. They are out there, in the middle, in depths of around 200' feeding on smelt..... and guess what, they are there all year round though the depth alters as the water temp changes.

I took a mate out to Tarawera a couple of year's back. We pulled out of Boat Shed Bay and took a course for the

outlet about a 1km off Rangiuuru Bay. We hit the school and trolled for the next hour and a half straight for the outlet and never left the school. We caught fish out there in the middle, there was a heap of them and we were the only ones fishing for them as we watched the procession of lemming, playing follow the leader all around the lake edge.

Getting your gear to the depth required.

There are many experienced trolling people out there who have no idea what depth they are actually fishing. There are a lot of misconceptions as to how deep different lines reach.

Let's start at the beginning.

Lead line. It is said that each color out (10m per color) is equal to 5' deep so 50' deep is ten colors or 100 yards of line out. But this is only true for 27lb line, as soon as you go to the 36lb and 45lb line they don't go as deep, as these are thicker not heavier.

It still has the same amount of lead per meter in it but more cord to give it the higher breaking strain. Basically the thinner lead line goes deeper, fatter line gets pushed up by water pressure.

Then there are the deep water dredgers who like to run 20 colors of lead line hoping to get to the elusive 100' depths but sorry guys there is a point that no matter how much lead line you put out there, you just will not get any deeper. For the expense of bigger reels to hold all this line and the





total lack of feel I believe it's just not worth it.

If you have to get to depths greater than 50' with lead line, take the motor out of gear for 30 seconds or 60 seconds then back in gear for the same amount of time. This proves effective because the lures are changing height through the water column and seem to be attractive to trout.

Years ago you could buy lead line that was plastic coated like a fly line and that was good for 60'. You can't seem to buy it any more (well I haven't seen it for years).

LED line stands for lead impregnated Dacron. 100m of LED in the water trolled at 2 knots is good for 30' deep. For some reason, even when there doesn't seem to be heaps of fish at that depth it constantly produces the goods. I took a lot of convincing on this one too but my LED rigs have consistently produced fish compared to the lead lines.

The more expensive way to get to the same depth is to use #6 airflow DI7. This is a tungsten impregnated line with a good sink rate. This is the heaviest, thinnest fly line that I know of and gets to a good 30' depth at 2 knots with about 50m of backing out too.

A fast sinking fly line of #6 weights will give about 15- 20' deep

An intermediate fly line will give 5-10' deep.

A downrigger will get you to about 80' or anything in between.

Time now to consider the art of presenting

the imitation, the old match the hatch. Trout in the Rotorua lakes mainly feed 80% on smelt and bullies.

Following is what I do.

Fishing the edges I usually run 2 rods. Some people run 2 different lures. I run 6 as it is legal to run three lures or flies per rod. I try to maximize my opportunities to tempt the suckers! I will explain the rig shortly.

Daylight on opening day will find me on Stony Point with only two rods out. Both will be fly rods, one with an intermediate fly line, the other with a slow sinker and both running between 5' and 9' and three fly's. One will be a large Parsons Glory another a Green Orbit the third an Orange Waitaki Warrior .

Rod two will have a Jack Sprat, Green Waitakai Warrior and Purple body parsons. My rig for this shallow area is a rod length of 12lb fluorocarbon to the fly's then a # 12 or #14 swivel with 20lb mono for 1 1/2 rod lengths then 40m of 30lb Dacron backing followed by fly line finally backing again. I like to get my gear way back, about 100m, in the water. This set up still tracks well behind the boat as I do tend to weave around and do tight turns to work over areas I like. It seems to really produce the strikes.

I started with a 40m mono trace but there was too much stretch and I lost about 50% on the strike. How effective is this rig? Well, double and treble hook ups are not uncommon. I like to work the flies over the drop off. The best is when the terminal tackle is coming off the deep water on to the shallow banks. This

is the time for the multi hook ups.

By 8.00 am I will generally be on my way down the lake. I will leave one of the shallow runners out and I'll put out two LED lines, one rod length of fluorocarbon, two flies and a Tazzie on the back. That should be around thirty' down .

At that depth the smelt are cleaner in color as apposed to the green colors around the weed beds of Stony Point. I will tend towards Jack Sprat, Gold body Parsons, Silver Rabbit, Yellow Rabbit, Grey Ghost, and Yellow Taupo Tiger and a Tazzie to suit. This is were I say I work to catch fish, every 15 minutes I change 1 rod so that I am always continually trying to find what they will be feeding on.

When I do catch a fish I change the other rods to something similar but not the same because I may be in the color spectrum but not right on it. Yet my next guess could really be the one and I'll only change the two that didn't catch the fish. I continue to work the lure selection all day long. When trout are feeding on smelt they are very fussy so that it is necessary to be continually changing patterns to find out what is working. In a short time the cloud cover could change and then the lures and fly's will look completely different. Unfortunately this is a never ending battle.

This technique of methodically working through the gear works. I have used this all over New Zealand from Manapuri to Wanaka, Hawera, Waikarimoana, Taupo and the Rotorua lakes. Just keep at it!

We took a trip down south in 2000. On the way up the West Coast we spent a nice couple of days on Lake Kawini in from Hokatika. We got on the water around 4.00pm and fished till dark. Then off again on day light. There were fish every were on the sounder. It rained all morning. Around 10 am after my 3000th rig change I nailed a nice brown of 5lbs; in the next hour we landed ten more. We were instant legends on the lake that day.

Opening day a few years back it was blowing like hell and the fishing was bad. In two days on the water all I got was two fish. On the third morning, on the way home we landed 11 fish all over 6lb in 2 hours. I told my mate who was out guiding, unsuccessfully, on the lake. That afternoon he took his clients out and landed 22 in three hours on the lure we used which is what I would call a wild card as it seldom produces the goods but did so then and for the rest of that week.

How I do my rigs on the business end is totally based on quick change rigging. I use swivel and snaps to put my tassies on using the tazzie wires and hook which are quick to change. Proof is in the fish in the bin. These are available through your local tackle store.

Above that, say 3', I have a three way swivel which has a 6" dropper coming off for one fly. Then I cut the swivel off a size 14 snap and tie that on to clip my fly's on with. I'll do the same again 2' above that.

I understand this tactic is not for every one but I hope it will be of some help to some of you. There are methods that will work this opening but not next year's opening, but that's fishing is it not? Every year I plan my strategy for open morning and every year I throw it out the window and be ready to take the opportunities as I need to.

Good luck for the new season .

