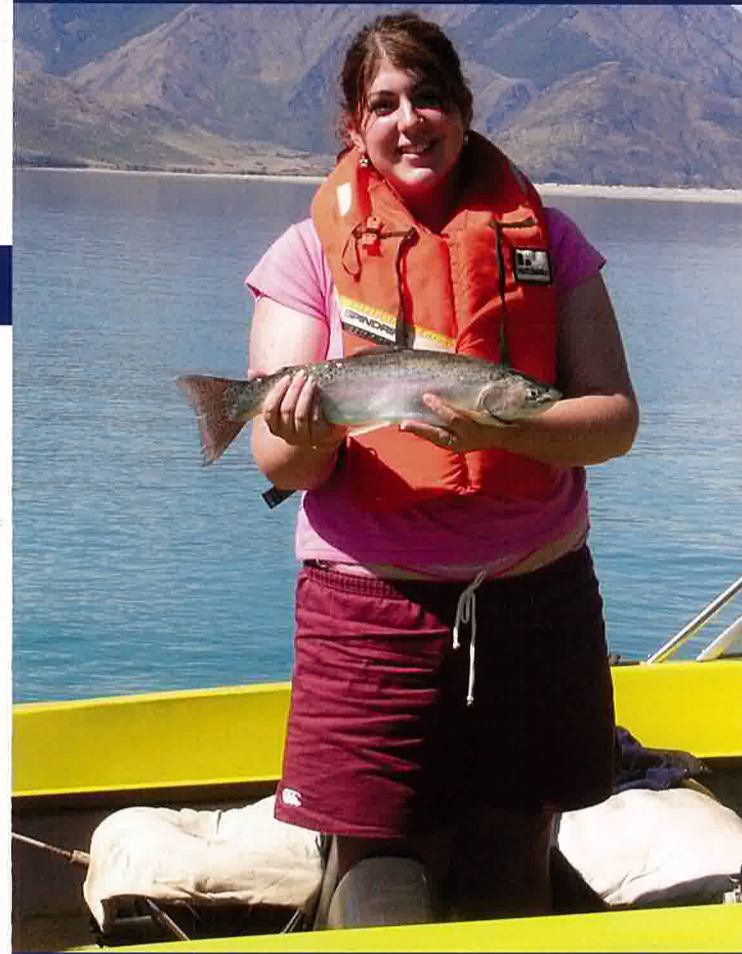
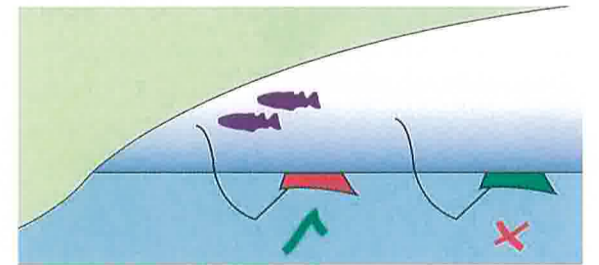


Successful Boat Fishing On Southern Lakes



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What am I doing wrong? The most common fault is fishing in water much too deep or with equipment that is not capable of fishing close to the bottom.



The Golden rule is that the lure needs to be close to the bottom (within 1-2 metres). Select the depth you want to target and troll along the lake drop-off following this depth contour.

An echo sounder or 'fish finder' makes a huge difference. If it shows the depth increasing then turn towards the shore. Similarly if the depth is decreasing turn out into the lake.

How Deep Am I Fishing?

Trolling with a standard threadline and lure: Using this method your lure will reach a maximum depth of about 2-3 metres. Therefore following our very first tip which says the lure should be within 2 metres of the bottom, for best success this method should only be employed in water up to 5 metres deep.

Harling: Again harling is a shallow water method and is best used in water less than 5 metres deep.

Leadline: Anglers fishing with leadlines generally think they are getting a lot deeper than they actually are. Each colour on the leadline represents 10 yards. Generally, with 10 colours out in the water (100 yards of leadline) your lure will be at 10-12m deep (depends on speed of trolling). Putting 20 colours (200 yards) out will only put your lure a further 5m deep. Therefore leadlines are only truly effective to around 20 metres depth.

Downrigger: A downrigger is the only moving method that allows you to fish at depths greater than 20m and accurately. Most downriggers come with approximately 40m of wire on the spool.

Jigging: Jigging is barely used at all down this end of the country, but it is becoming more popular on North Island lakes and is proving rather successful under certain conditions. Jigging can effectively fish down to about 40m, after this you tend to lose touch with your lure and miss strikes. Jigging is particularly successful on landlocked salmon when they are schooling near the dam end of Lake Hawea.

Angling Manners on the Lake

Anglers trolling or harling may have up to 200m of line trailing behind their boat. Give them plenty of room before cutting across behind them or you may cut their lines.

Try to 'go with the flow' which is usually to troll parallel to the shore rather than at right angles to everyone else.

When you meet another boat head on, leave them room to manoeuvre. Skilled skippers will be trolling their lures close to the bottom and will be unable to turn to shallower water without snagging their lines.

Give shore anglers plenty of room. Remember, you have the whole lake at your disposal while they have far more limited area to fish. The regulations say you can't fish within 100m of a shore-based angler. Give them at least that much room if not more.

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1. Familiarise yourself with the area first.
2. Start in deep water and then move to the fishing area after the trolling gear is out.
3. Drop-offs, river and stream deltas and edges are prime areas to fish.
4. Sudden changes in lakebed shape, such as points of holes, tend to concentrate fish.
5. Use the sounder and landmarks to stay at the chosen depth and to plan ahead your trolling path.
6. Match trace length and weight to water clarity - the clearer the water the longer, and lighter the trace.
7. The best strike zone is within 2m of the bottom.
8. Vary trolling speed and direction.
9. When a trout is hooked, slow the boat and only stop when the fish is under control.
10. Re-fish areas where you have hooked or caught trout as they travel in groups.

Top Ten Quick Tips For Success

Trolling speed: Other than harling, which is done as slowly as you can possibly go, the ideal speed for all trolling is around 1.4 - 1.9 knots. If you are unsure of the speed to go trail your lure close to the boat and adjust your speed until you get the maximum action/movement of the particular lure. A lot of people tend to troll too slow, which makes the lure drag lifelessly through the water.

Time of day is important: Fishing at the change of light (dawn or dusk) is the most productive time of day, fish tend to move from deeper to shallower water and feed actively. Methods that fish closer to the surface such as harling and threadline trolling are often most successful around the change of light at each end of the day.

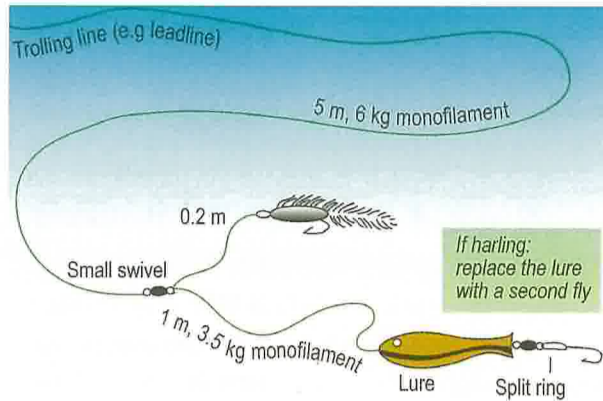
Weather affects the fishing: Fishing is generally better on a dull day with some breeze than in flat calm sunny weather. If the weather is bright and calm, deeper fishing methods such as leadlining, jigging or downrigging are often more productive.

Releasing fish so they survive: If you wish to release a fish with a good chance of survival, a net is invaluable. Ensure the fish is not out of the water for more than a few seconds. Hook removing pliers are efficient and safer! Never touch the fishes gills. The fish will stay calmer if you hold it upside down while removing hooks and don't squeeze. Never throw fish back overboard. Once the hook is removed you may need to hold the fish upright alongside the boat for a few minutes until it regains energy and swims away by itself.

Other Factors

Rigging Different Methods

Standard Trolling Rig: The most basic trolling rig used is simply a spinner in the end of a threadline, which is tossed over the back of the boat and dragged around at random. This will catch fish, with a lot of luck and not a lot of consistency. Get the basics right with rigging and you can dramatically improve your chances of success.



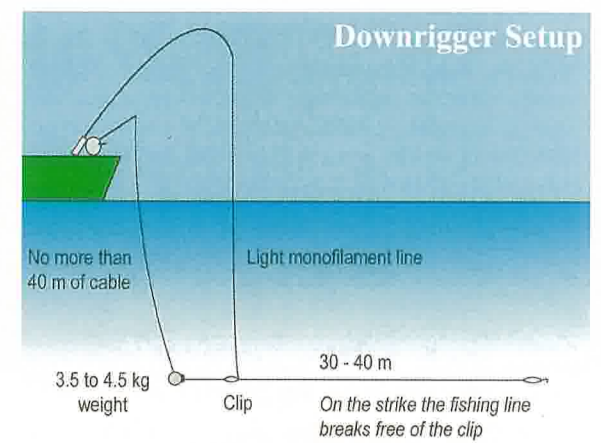
Tip:
Thread the line through the lure in place of wire if using cobra type lures

Fly and spinner combination: Many of the huge range of spinners available have a lot of action in the water and are great for attracting fish from quite a 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.

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 overrun 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 freespool 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 to at least 100m of dacron or monofilament backing material. Alternatively, you can use an ordinary spinning setup with a small lead sinker 1m above your fly/flyes 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.

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 Ahuriri and Tekapo River deltas. 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, Rugged 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 tow 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 boaties 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 Fishermen's Bend camping area below Lake Aviemore on the northern shore.

HOT SPOTS

OTAGO

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 hear about lagorasyphon, 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 downrigging and leadlining being most popular. As with all of 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 delta in approximately 20-40m of water.

Lake Wanaka: Similar to Hawea in that all methods can be used. From Glendhu Bay there is easy access to Paddock Bay and the Matukituki 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 Glenorchy 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 jigging or downrigging.

HOT SPOTS

SOUTHLAND

Lake Te Anau: Lake Te Anau is Southland's most popular lake fishery, the largest lake in the province and has the longest shoreline of any New Zealand lake. Use of downriggers has yet to really gain popularity, but would increase your success. The South Arm is by far the most popular, but this has more to do with proximity to the boat harbour than the quality of the fishing. For a change of scene try one of the other arms, or along the Eastern shore.

Lake Manapouri: Lake Manapouri has more shallow productive areas than Te Anau and receives less angling pressure despite being a better fishery. The extensive flats from Frazers Beach right around to Shallow Bay are well worth investigating. As with Te Anau, stream mouths are also hot spots. An increasing number of land-locked Chinook salmon may add an unexpected bonus to your day.

Mavora Lakes: Boats are only permitted on the larger North Mavora Lake, which is becoming increasingly popular with anglers. Numbers of rainbow trout are increasing, and while catch rate may be below our other lakes, the quality of trout caught is high. Harling (trolling a large fly) is a method that works particularly well in Mavora, targeting the large cruising brown trout.

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 bullies 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!