

A Complete Guide on How to Effectively Fish with

# DODGERS & FLASHERS

TO ADD ATTRACTION & ERRATIC ACTION TO TRAILING LURES

Coupled with the effectiveness of trolling technique, flashers and dodgers are deadly fish attractors in both fresh and salt water. They are rigged in the line between the lure and downrigger release, diver or lead to provide attraction and impart erratic action to trailing lures such as plugs, spoons, flies or plastic squids.

Trolling with dodgers or flashers produces excellent results because you can cover a large amount of water in a very short time, thereby locating concentrations of fish with the least amount of time and effort expended. The flash and sound of these attractors draws fish from considerable distances, allowing you to cover a wider swath of water effectively with each pass... a big advantage when prospecting unknown waters or when fish are scattered.

Successful trolling requires a knowledge of fish and their habits, proper equipment, the ability to troll various depths and a willingness to experiment with different attractors, lures and color patterns.

Tackle for trolling dodgers or flashers consists of a stout 7- to 9-ft. trolling rod, free-spool-type star drag reel filled with 20- to 30-lb. test premium Sufix® monofilament line and a downrigger, diver or selection of lead weights to get your offering down into fish territory.

all can be used with a dodger, which transfers a crippled baitfish action to these lures. Flies and squids are best used behind a Coyote or Abe & Al rotating flasher because they have no action of their own in the water and the flasher will give them a lifelike, erratic natural baitfish action.

For dodgers, the correct fish-attracting speed and action is achieved when the attractor has a side-to-side swaying motion. With your boat moving "dead slow", place a rigged dodger-and-lure setup in the water (see illustration) and slowly increase your speed until the dodger has developed the proper action. This is your optimum trolling speed.

Optimum rotating flasher speed, on the other hand, is obtained when the attractor is working in regular full 360° rotations. With your boat in motion, place a rigged flasher-and-lure setup in the water (see illustration) and increase your speed until the flasher develops these regular, full revolutions. Note: Flashers generally work better at slightly faster speeds than dodgers.

## DODGER RIGGING

The dodger hookups illustrations show various ways to rig a dodger for trolling. Note the recommended leader-to-lure lengths and leader from weight-to-dodger lengths carefully as too long a leader will negatively affect lure action. Also, too short a leader from lead, diver or downrigger release to the dodger will restrict the action of the dodger and inhibit its fish-attracting capabilities. These leader rules also apply to flashers.

Dodgers can be used with a keel-type sinker, behind divers such as the Pink Lady, Deep Six™, Double Deep Six™ or Dipsy Diver® or behind a downrigger release, all of which are diagrammed above.

## FLASHER RIGGING

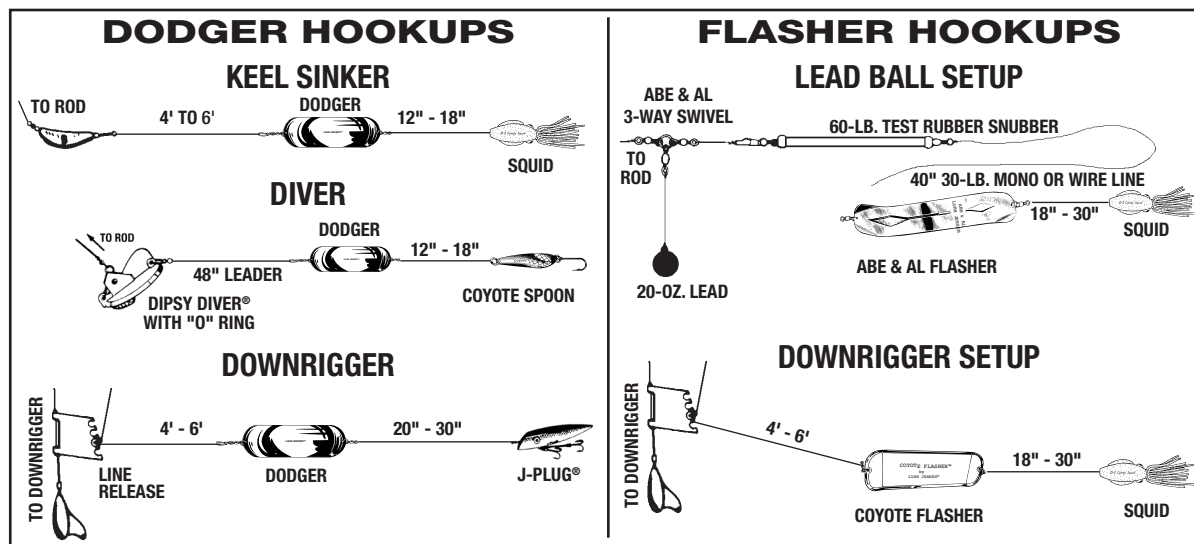
The flasher hookups illustrations shows two proven ways to rig a flasher for trolling. Remember that the correct fish-attracting speed for a rotating flasher occurs when it is being pulled through the water just fast enough to make complete 360° regular rotations. This will result in a steady throb-throb-pause, throb-throb-pause action at your rod tip.



## DODGERS vs. FLASHERS

The big difference between dodgers and flashers is the way they run through the water when being trolled. A dodger has a side-to-side swaying action while a flasher develops full 360° rotations. This provides you with two completely different types of attractors, each giving off specific flash and vibration patterns.

Flashers and dodgers impart an erratic, darting action to trailing lures and produce fish-attracting flash and sound. Plugs, spoons, flies and squids



When using up to six ounces of weight, keel-type sinkers are adequate, but when more weight is required, it is suggested that you use an Abe & Al 3-Way Swivel and round lead ball as it will maintain maximum flasher-to-lure transferred action and minimize the possibility of tangles and line twist.

The size of dodger you select should be based somewhat on the size of the trailing lure you

wish to use. For instance, a large J-Plug™ might overpower the action of a small dodger so a larger one would be used. If you're going to fish deep, larger dodgers will provide more flash and stronger vibration which can draw fish from farther away. In clear or shallow water conditions, a smaller dodger might be used.

Flashers are available in many sizes. The smaller sizes are best used for trout on light gear and the larger for salmon, other big fish and deep trolling situations. The largest should be used for deep, heavy trolling conditions.

## FISH PREFERENCES

Following are some helpful tips relating to particular fish species. Although there are no hard and fast rules when it comes to fishing, there are many regularly observed fish habits and preferences that will give you a definite edge if you're familiar with them.

**COHO:** When the temperature is right in fresh water and during most of their life in salt water, coho salmon are surface or shallow water oriented. They generally can be found at depths less than 50 feet and are a fast fish when compared with chinook or lake trout. They especially like the fast action of a dodger in combination with flies and squids.

The rule of thumb for a fly or squid lure behind a dodger is to use a leader of about 1-1/2 times the length of the dodger. In the Great Lakes, some anglers have been successful with leaders as short as 6". These impart incredibly fast action to the trailing lure. The principle here is to use a longer leader for slower action and a shorter for faster action. Since it is easier to shorten a leader then change to a longer one, start with 12 to 18 inches and then shorten it until you get the desired lure action. A superfast action fly or Coyote Spoon used in combination with a dodger is deadly for coho.

**CHINOOK:** When compared with coho, chinook salmon prefer deeper water and larger, slower-action lures and attractors. They often shy away from unnatural movements in the water, so longer leaders are generally used. The Coyote Flasher is a proven attractor for deep water chinook and its lazy, rotating action is often exactly what turns them on. When used with flies or squids, leader lengths between the lure and flasher should be 1-1/2 to 3 times the flasher length or between 18" and 40". The longer the leader, the slower and more deliberate the action imparted to the trailing lure.

Chinook and coho grow to trophy size by aggressively feeding on baitfish. Lures and baits sized to imitate the available forage are what work. If you try real baitfish, such as herring, it will be the most effective when rigged to spin when pulled through the water. Try a fast-spinning bait when targeting coho and a slower spin (and longer leader) for chinooks.

You can enhance the action of your herring by rigging it in combination with a spinner blade.

The Coyote Spoon can outperform real bait when the right size, trolling speed and color combinations are employed. Remember that the forage you're trying to imitate will be smaller in the spring and increase in size as the season progresses. For example, you might start your season with a size 3.5 Coyote Spoon and switch to larger 4.0 or 5.0 sizes later in the summer or when targeting chinooks.

Remember to experiment with different sizes and color combinations until results are achieved. You'll be surprised at the difference this can make.

The right trolling speed can make the difference between success and failure. Try trolling fast, say 3.5 MPH, when prospecting areas for fish and slowing down, to say 2.5 MPH, after you locate them. Of course, speed can influence the bite. Try speeding up if you're in fish and not getting bites. If you're getting strikes but not hooking up, try slowing down some. It might be that your lure is moving too fast for the fish to get hold of.

If you're in need of a quality speed indicator, consider our Luhr-Speed mechanical trolling speed indicator. It's more accurate (at slow speeds) than electronic fish finder speedometers, is corrosion resistant, reads-out in either knots or MPH and (when mounted correctly) is unaffected by wind or water action.

**LAKE TROUT:** As with chinook, lake trout prefer slow, deliberate-action attractors and lures. Dodger-and-fly, dodger-and-spoon or dodger-and-plug combinations are all effective provided they are fished slowly and deep with adequate leader lengths between the attractor and lure.

For lake trout, leaders should be from 16 to 24 inches (sometimes even longer) between the dodger and lure as this will promote slower action from the lure itself, an action often productive for lake trout. Small squids and flies, usually rigged with a treble hook if allowed, are preferred.

## SALT vs. FRESH WATER

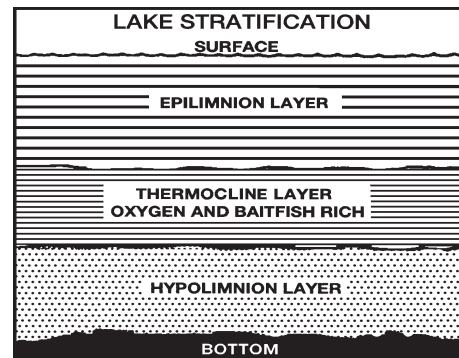
When trolling in saltwater, you'll find the optimum feeding and fish-catching times during low light periods and from an hour before, during and an hour after a tide change. Fish areas where birds are working on baitfish schools and troll the clean sides of rips.

In freshwater, such as in the Great Lakes, the time of day isn't nearly as critical as locating the depth of the preferred temperature level for the fish species you're seeking . . . the thermocline.

Lakes stratify into three separate layers of water in the spring and stay that way until cold weather. The middle layer, where there is a larger concentration of dissolved oxygen, baitfish and therefore predator fish, is called the thermocline and can usually be found from 10 to 80 feet down. This is a temperature layer as well as an oxygen-saturated layer and fish will relate to it as both a comfort zone and one where their body metabolism functions the most efficiently. These fish will be suspended and feeding on alewives, smelt or other forage fish.

The peak feeding and optimum temperature for coho and chinook is 54° with an active range from 44° to 58°. For lake trout, the peak feeding and optimum temperature is 51° with activity from 43° to 53°. Fish will rarely venture out of these zones, once stratification has taken place, except to catch a meal and then will quickly return to it.

One thing to remember when fishing the thermocline is that its depth can change from day to day because of wind and/or wave action. It may be several feet deeper or shallower from one day to the next so you'll have to relocate it each time you go out.



*Most lakes stratify into three layers during late spring, staying that way until late fall. The middle layer of water, the thermocline, contains both a large amount of dissolved oxygen and forage fish. To be most effective, you should troll close to or in the thermocline. This will be from 15 to 50 feet down in most lakes.*

## ADDITIONAL TIPS

Know the fishing area BEFORE going. Talk with local anglers and sporting goods personnel, study charts and maps and read local fishing publications.

Save valuable fishing time by pre-rigging/pre-tying all of your gear at home. Leaders can be pre-tied with snaps or snap swivels and all you'll have to do to change lures, attractors or weights is undo and refasten a snap or two.

Try to match the size and color of the baitfish in the water you'll be fishing.

One of the easiest things you can do to improve fishing results is to sharpen dull hooks with the Luhr-Jensen's Original Hook File.

If the hook is too damaged replace them with premium quality VMC Hooks.

**Sufix** FISHING LINE RECOMMENDED You should always use a premium quality braided or monofilament line that has superior knot strength, small diameter in relation to pound test and is abrasion resistant.



Purchase a quality depth finder which will help in locating fish as well as prime underwater fish-holding structure which can't otherwise be detected.



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