

A Complete Guide on **LAKE TROLLING THIN-BLADE SPOONS** FOR TROUT

Of the many techniques used for catching trout, trolling with lake trolls trailed either by a lure or bait is the most consistent day-in and day-out fish producer. However, this method does not readily lend itself to light spinning or fly tackle, as a fully-rigged troll will overpower ultra-light gear. Nor is it applicable in shallow water situations. This Tech Report will provide you with information on how to troll effectively with light weight tackle and thin-blade spoons.

Light tackle trolling of thin-blade spoons allow you to enjoy the effectiveness and productivity of trolling with an absolute minimum of gear while providing maximum sport from even small trout. It also allows you to effectively troll shorelines, weed beds and other areas too shallow for standard lake trolls.

Trolling as an approach results in more and larger fish being consistently caught because an entire body of water or large section of a lake can be efficiently prospected and fish concentrations pinpointed with a minimum of effort.

Trolling thin-blade spoons with light tackle is both easy and fun. Tackle consists of the rod and reel of your choice, either fly or spin, 4-lb. test monofilament line (15 feet of 4-lb. test leader in the case of a fly outfit), a few split shot and assorted spoons. The big reason many anglers prefer this technique over other trolling methods is that it only requires a minimum of terminal gear. NOTE: When fishing very light tackle, it is important that you use a premium quality monofilament. Hard strikes will test your gear.

Thin-blade spoons are most often from 1- to 2-inches in length and are manufactured from very light gauge metal. Extremely light in weight, they're unsuitable for casting applications on their own, but for trolling their slim profiles produce vibrant action. Most come with a small single hook which adds both a swimming tail to the blade and ensures a solid hookup. Line attachment devices on thin-blade spoons will take the form of a split ring, welded ring or ring-and-swivel combination. In the case of the Super Duper, the attachment device is a lightweight wire snap. Because of the lightweight construction and delicate balance of these lures, you should not add other snaps or rings as this can destroy their action. Other popular thin-blade spoons include the Needlefish® and Kokanee King.

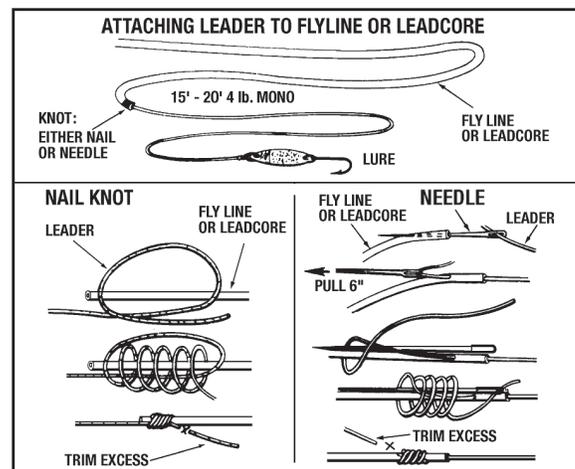


When using light tackle and 4- to 6-lb. test monofilament line, all that's required is to tie one of these spoons to the end of your leader or main line, let out 60- to 100-feet of line behind your moving boat and begin to troll. At a normal slow trolling speed, with plenty of "S" curves worked in, your spoon will run from 12- to 16-inches beneath the surface. To achieve deeper depths, split shot can be added ahead of the lure (about 36 inches).

Obviously, trolling thin-blade spoons will produce the best results when fish are shallow. On smaller bodies of water without great depth, this may be all season long. On larger, deep lakes, trout are most commonly shallow in early spring. Coming out of a cold winter surface waters are the first to warm, congregating early insect hatches, bait fish and trout high in the water column. During this period you'll find fish in open water, as well as relating to structure and food sources. Shallow weed beds and ledges are always hot areas of activity providing a source of food for foraging fish throughout the seasons. As summer wears on activity in these near shore areas will gravitate towards cooler morning and evening periods.

Because thin-blade spoons do occasionally turn over in the water, regardless of speed, some line twist will occur. This can be prevented by tying a barrel swivel, preferably ball-bearing, roughly 36-inches from the lure and adding split shot as needed ABOVE the swivel.

For fishing thin-blade spoons on a fly rod, use 15 to 20 feet of 4-lb. test leader, utilizing a nail knot to attach the leader to your fly line.



Depending on the depth you wish to reach, fly lines can be floating, sinking or sink tips. The 10- and 15-foot sink tip models lend themselves very well to thin-blade spoon trolling in deeper lakes as they will position your lure right above or in the thermocline. Deep trolling with a thin-blade spoon and fly line is possible with a fast-sink or 30-ft. sink tip line. Once you have chosen the line, based on the depth you wish to fish, tie the spoon to the end of your leader, strip out 40 to 60 feet of fly line and begin to troll.

Another variation for trolling thin-blades deep without using heavy leads or large trolls, is lead core line. Lead core is color-coded in 10-ft. sections and anglers often refer to distances in terms of how many colors they have out. For example “three colors” would translate to 30 feet of lead core plus whatever leader length was used. Lead core line does require the use of a large capacity fly reel or casting reel due to its bulk.

Colors and finishes on thin-blades spoons are practically unlimited with many anglers developing their own favorites for particular waters. Each small spoon has its own action and vibration pattern in the water. Having several different models and colors available will allow you to fit the lure to the fish’s preference on a given day.

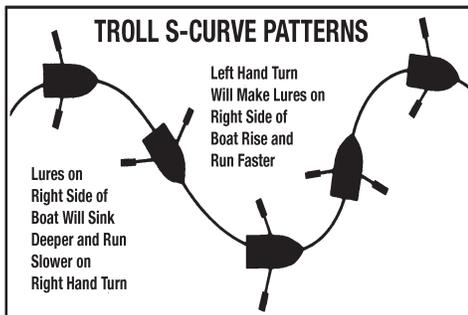
Regardless of the trolling method you choose, whether it includes a lake troll or not, here are several suggestions which will help you regularly catch more and larger trout:

1. TROLL SLOWLY Large fish will not spend any more energy than they absolutely have to in catching a meal. Most spoons will not perform correctly at a fast speed because it causes them to spin in the water, create line twist and lose their fish-enticing wobble and vibrations pattern. The best advice is to troll slowly, the slower the better.

2. VARY YOUR SPEED While slow is the key word in successful trolling, this does not mean slow all the time. A spoon running through the water at a constant speed, constant depth and giving off the same vibration pattern will not catch many fish as there’s just nothing there to indicate to a predator that an easy meal is available or that something’s in trouble. Alter your speed every few minutes to disrupt the spoon’s constant speed and vibration pattern.

3. WORK IN “S” CURVES

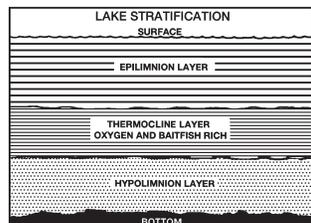
Optimum trolling results require that you do everything possible to keep from running in a straight line. Working between two points in a “S” pattern, whereby the boat is always on a turn, will provide the maximum number of



strikes and fish. Every time the spoon is on an inside swing of the boat, it will drop deeper in the water and produce a slower wobbling action. On each outside turn the lure will rise and produce a faster wobble. With each turn you will generate different action from the spoon. It’s these changes that trigger strikes from nearby trout.

In addition to these three basics of trolling strategy, another element to consider is that fish relate to shelter/cover/structure and will always be close to an area which can provide immediate escape from predators and direct sunlight.

Locate food items in a lake and you will find concentrations of trout nearby. Surface activity of either feeding trout, bait fish or an insect hatch is an instant giveaway of where to fish. Highly-oxygenated water concentrates both food and fish. Most lakes stratify into three layers during early spring and stay that way until late fall with the middle layer of water, the thermocline, holding a high concentration of dissolved oxygen and forage fish. Other than those cases where there is obvious surface feeding activity, you should concentrate your fishing efforts in or near this thermocline layer (15 to 20 feet down in most medium-sized lakes).



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.



ADDING VARIETY

Utilizing the same equipment and techniques outlined for thin-blade spoons, there are other lure types you can employ to add variety to your presentation. These include spoons of thicker profile and small swimming plugs.

The Luhr-Jensen Krocodile® and Hus-Lure due to the weight inherent to their thicker material, are most commonly associated with casting applications. But make no mistake, the slow wobble these spoons offer is just as productive in trolling as it is in cast-and-retrieve presentations. Fished on a comparable setup as a thin-blade spoon, the heavier Krocodile or Hus-Lure will achieve slightly greater depth. When fishing multiple rods from a boat, mixing a heavier spoon with a lighter one on another rod is a great technique for prospecting, as different depths are covered simultaneously.

Small swimming plugs, like the #60 and #70 Hot Shot® or K5 Kwikfish®, will fish at depths very similar to thin-blade spoons when fished on comparable gear. The plugs, however, bring a larger profile and distinct side-to-side action to the spread. With the keys to successful angling including both locating fish and delivering presentations that initiate strikes, these plugs are excellent tools to include in your lure selection. Like the Krocodile and Hus-Lure, the small plugs can be very effective when prospecting new water.



ADDITIONAL TIPS

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. Simply hold the file parallel to the hook point and, with gentle one-way strokes, remove a small amount of metal from at least two sides of each point to make them sticky-sharp. If the hook is too damaged replace them with premium quality VMC Hooks.



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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