

## A Complete Guide for Effective **J-PLUG TROLLING** A RATTLING BUOYANT LURE THAT FLOATS AT REST



Many years ago a derby-winning salmon or lake trout was almost certainly a plug-caught fish. More and more anglers today are switching to J-Plugs® because, as in the past, plugs are known to produce more and larger fish on a regular basis.

Today's J-Plug® is better-built and more effective than its predecessors as it's made of super-strong materials and designed for maximum action and strength. Another advantage is the availability of special finishes designed specifically for deep water trolling and low light conditions such as Everglo patterns which are charged with light at the surface then glow down deep and UV Bright which reflects light energy, strengthening the lure's visibility. There is a J-Plug style and finish available today to fit any fishing situation, whether you're after salmon, lake trout, stripers, brown trout or any large game fish.

### SUPERIOR MINNOW DESIGN

J-Plugs are fast-action, darting plugs ideally suited for trolling. They are effective because they project an outstanding minnow image and action that all fish relate to in any water condition. This is a wounded minnow, fast darting action which comes from a combination of special swivel chain rigging and lure head chamber design. The precisely engineered tolerance between the rigging and head chamber allows the swivel chain to shift and reposition itself within the chamber. This repositioning constantly changes the plug's attitude and direction in the water and creates its erratic, fish-catching action.

The swivel chain rigging also allows a direct rod-to-fish connection after the strike as the plug body will slide up the line, free of the chain and hook assembly and away from the fish. This eliminates any leverage against the plug body that causes many fish hooked with solid body-to-hook plugs to free themselves. Because the J-Plug is buoyant and separates from the hook assembly, it will float to the surface where it can be retrieved in the case of a line break or bottom snag.

The J-Plug is fished successfully with a variety of trolling techniques. Trolling is effective, particularly on big waters, as you can cover the greatest amount of water in the shortest time, allowing you to locate concentrations of fish quickly and easily. Following are recommended J-Plug trolling techniques.

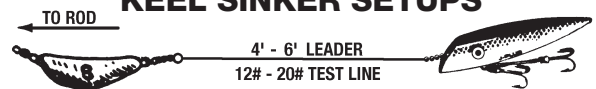
### SURFACE SETUPS (FLATLINE)



**FLATLINE** With the surface or flatline technique, the plug is tied directly to 12- to 20-lb. test main line. No additional weights are used or, at most, a small 1/8- to 1/2-oz. keel-type sinker is added six feet up the line from the plug. The lure is let out behind your moving boat 50- to 100-feet and the troll began. NOTE: Anglers fishing for lake trout or

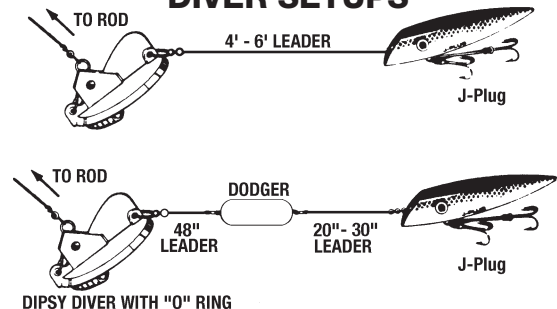
brown trout sometimes let out at least 200 feet of line (and as much as 500- to 600-feet) as these fish can be very skittish of the boat wake. This technique is most effective when stripers, lake trout, salmon or brown trout are feeding just subsurface or when there's an abundance of visible surface activity.

### KEEL SINKER SETUPS



**SHALLOW/MEDIUM** Incorporating keel sinkers of 1- to 8-ounces, shallow to medium depths can be effectively targeted. Place the selected keel sinker 4- to 6-feet in front of the J-Plug and as in flatlining, let out 50 to 100 feet of line behind your moving boat and begin the troll. Recommended main lines for this application are 12- to 30-pound, depending on the size of weight used and depth desired. NOTE: Always attach a swivel chain-rigged keel sinker with the single swivel end knotted to your main line and the swivel chain end back to the plug.

### DIVER SETUPS



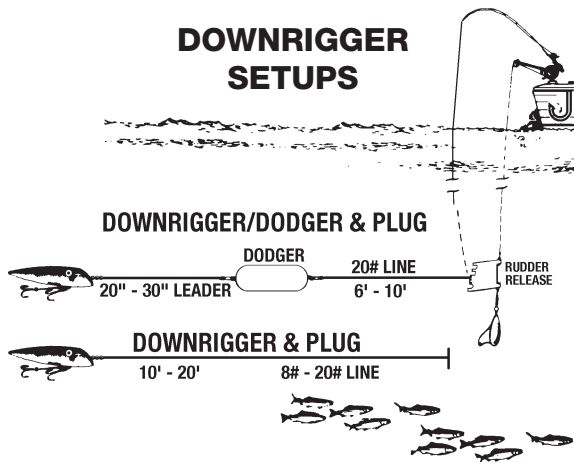
**DIVERS** One effective way to get a plug deep without excessive lead weights or the use of a downrigger is with a diving planer such as the Deep Six™, Double Deep Six™, Pink Lady or directional Dipsy Diver®. Standard rigging is with 4- to 6-feet of leader between plug and diver and 20- to 30-lb. test main line to your rod.

Set the diver to the diving position, or in the case of the directional Dipsy Diver set both the depth and side angle desired, with your boat moving, let out roughly 2 feet of line for every foot of depth desired (slowly to ensure that no tangles occur) and begin the troll.

**DOWNRIGGERS** The most popular way to fish J-Plugs are off a downrigger, by themselves. With a downrigger you will be able to work all depths and will have the advantage of no weight between you and a hooked fish. Anglers who troll J-Plugs by themselves behind a downrigger often prefer 10 to 20 feet (some as much as 40 feet) between the line release and plug. The longer lengths add to the erratic, darting action of the plug.

Jensen Dodgers can be used as attractors in conjunction with a J-Plug behind a downrigger with good results. Be sure to allow at least six feet of line between the dodger and downrigger line release

## DOWNRIGGER SETUPS



so as not to inhibit the dodger's action. Allow 20 to 30 inches of leader between the J-Plug and dodger (shorter leaders impart faster plug action and longer leaders, slower action).

### LARGE PLUGS / LARGE FISH

Larger fish do prefer large plugs. Big fish will spend the least amount of energy necessary to catch a meal, so larger baitfish mean less energy is expended to fill up. Size 4 J-Plugs are incredibly popular because they appeal to a broad spectrum of fish under a wide range of conditions. They perform well with all rigging styles and fishing applications, from shallow to deep. Because of their versatility, size 4 J-Plugs are available in the broadest selection of colors.

Size 3 J-Plugs are the smallest available. They offer a tactical advantage when fish are selectively targeting small bait or when extremely clear water forces you to downsize your presentation to get strikes. Size 3 J-Plugs will also produce the most active action at the slowest trolling speeds, a key feature when lethargic fish seem to want a highly active bait, but will not chase it down aggressively.

The performance of all J-Plugs will be enhanced by taking just a few steps. Before placing your plug in the water, check the swivel chain dacron harness for wear and to ensure the knot is cinched tight. If the harness needs replacing they are available in tackle stores. The harness is built from 80-lb. test dacron, doubled. The hooks that come with it are high quality, 4X strong and plated to resist corrosion. When not actively fishing the lures, keep them in your tackle box. Extreme heat can deform a plug's shape and direct sunlight can cause the finish to fade.

### J-PLUG FINISHES / COLORS

One of the big reasons today's J-Plugs are effective is because of the wide variety of finishes and colors available; one to fit any angling situation. Following is a rundown on some of the more popular finishes and what each represents and accomplishes in the water.

**METALLICS** Highly reflective metallic finishes match the flash and colors of baitfish. Metallic finishes are most effective when ambient light is available at the fishing depth to reflect off the lures.

**EVERGLO** These are designed specifically for early mornings, late evenings and deep water trolling because they contain phosphor pigments that give off light down deep. Everglo finishes are UV stabilized and will not "burn" when exposed to direct sunlight.

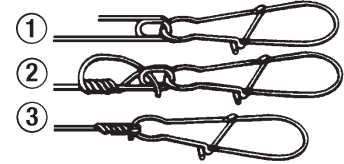
**UV BRIGHT** finishes reflect more light energy strengthening the lure's visibility. Our UV finishes are a unique combination of fluorescent paints, reflective surfaces and optical brighteners that make the lures more brilliant in any available light. They have proven to be very effective for all species in situations where fish are feeding by sight.

### J-PLUG TROLLING TIPS

- Trolling a straight line between two points is the least successful path you can take, once fish have been located in an area. By trolling in zig-zag patterns or in "S" curves, you will impart regular changes in depth and speed to a trolled plug, creating the impression of a wounded baitfish which fish will view as an easy meal.

- Vary your speed. While slow is most often a key element in trolling, this does not mean slow all the time. A lure running through the water at a constant speed, at a constant depth and giving off the same vibration pattern will not catch many fish as there's nothing there to indicate an easy meal is available or that something is in trouble. Slowly, yes, but adjust your speed every few minutes to change the lure's speed and vibration pattern.
- Use a solid knot for connecting your plug to your line or leader such as the improved clinch and always use a premium quality line.

### IMPROVED CLINCH KNOT



- Keep your plugs above the fish as fish can't easily see downward. On sunny days fish will be deeper as their eyes are sensitive to strong, direct sunlight.
- When trolling plugs 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. Try areas where birds are working on baitfish schools and troll the clean side of rips.
- In freshwater such as in the Great Lakes, the time of day isn't nearly as critical as the depth and the location of the preferred temperature level for the fish species you're seeking. Lakes stratify into three separate layers of water in the spring and stay that way until cold weather hits in the fall. The middle layer of water, where there is a large concentration of dissolved oxygen, baitfish and therefore predator fish, is called the thermocline and can generally be found from 10- to 150-feet down.
- 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 rarely venture out of these zones once stratification has taken place, except to catch a meal and then quickly return to it.
- Remember when fishing temperatures layers such as the thermocline is that it can change from day to day in terms of depth because of wind and/or wave action. It may be several feet deeper or shallower one day from the next so you'll have to locate it every time you go out.
- Surface temperature breaks are also prime areas to find concentrations of fish. Look for areas where surface temperatures change rapidly due to pockets of warmer and colder waters intersecting one another. These temperature crossroads often hold quantities of bait fish and the predator species that congregate to feed.

### 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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