

Trolling?

Tips for boat fishing on Lake Taupo

TAUPO FISHERY



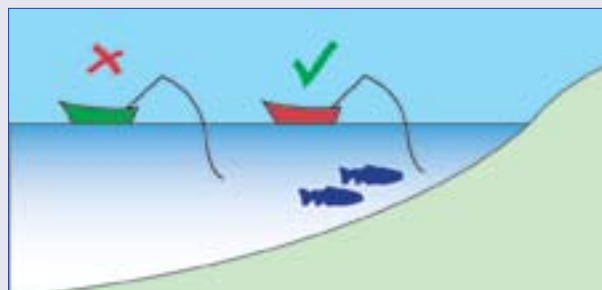
Trolling on Lake Taupo

What am I doing wrong?

The most common fault is fishing in water much too deep or with equipment which is not capable of fishing close to the bottom.

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

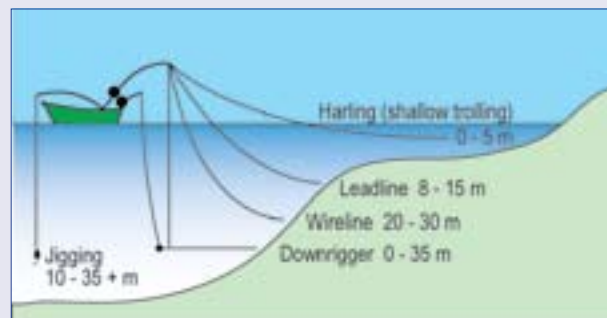
Using an echo sounder makes a big difference. If it shows the depth increasing then turn towards the shore. Similarly if the depth is decreasing turn out into the lake. You can get a feel for what twists and turns to expect by looking at the Lake Taupo bathymetric map or chart which shows the depth contours.



Which method should I use?

Different methods for fish at different depths.

Trout change the depth they live at over the year in response to changes in water temperature and the location of their food (smelt).



Spring. Trout follow the spawning smelt into the shallows. Try harling at dawn and dusk or on grey, windy days. During the day the fish move slightly deeper so fish leadlines or any of the deeper methods along the drop off.

Summer and autumn. The trout lurk around the thermocline which is a narrow layer in the lake marking the transition from warm surface water to cool bottom water. In December this layer is at around 15 metres and in reach of leadlines. However it gets progressively deeper so that by March and April it is 30 to 40 metres deep. At this time deep fishing methods like wirelines, downriggers and jigging are best.

Winter. The lake mixes and the water is all the same temperature. The fish are spread up the drop off (but not into the shallows) and all fishing methods except harling are equally effective.

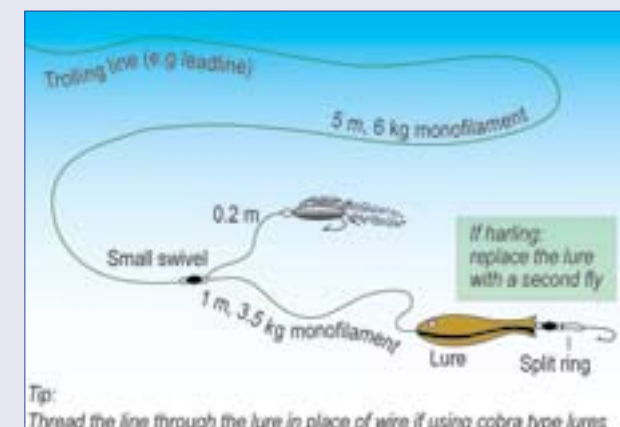
How fast?

Harling with flies: Go as slow as you can.

Trolling: 1.4 to 1.9 knots. If unsure trail the lure close to the boat and adjust your speed until you get the maximum action from the lure without it spinning out. Most anglers tend to troll too **slowly** rather than too fast.

How do I fish each method?

Harling: Use a very fast sinking flyline or 10 metres of leadline. If using monofilament use a small lead sinker to take the line down. Put out most of the flyline or the leadline plus 15 metres of backing. Target sandy areas less than 10 metres deep or troll close against the cliffs.

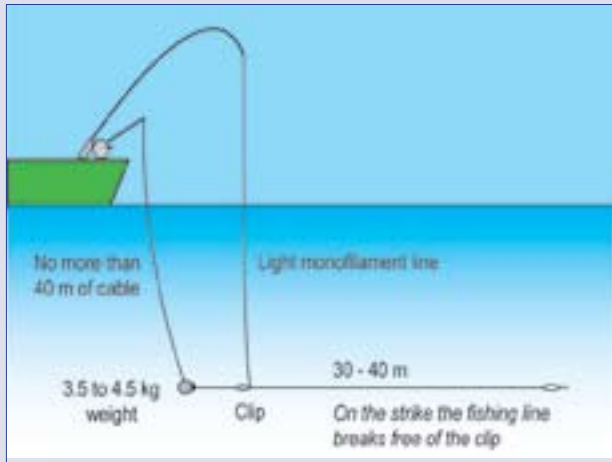


A suitable rig for any trolling method

Leadlines: Each colour represents 10 yards. Generally fish with 10 colours out in water 10 to 15 metres deep. Putting 20 colours out (200 yards) allows you to fish 5 metres deeper.

Downriggers: Downriggers can be used to target any depth down to 35 metres. They are fiddly to use the first time but you soon develop an easy routine. Use a light, flexible rod and freespool reel filled with 3.5kg monofilament. To set:

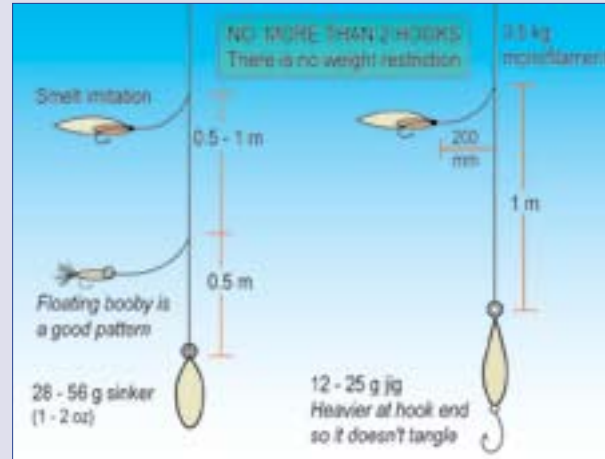
1. Move the boat ahead slowly
2. Freespool the lure back 30 to 50 metres
3. Leave the reel out of gear but put the clicker on so that it won't overrun
4. Put the rod into the holder
5. Slide the fishing line into the clip on the downrigger
6. Lower the downrigger weight to the desired depth (the fishing line will run freely off the reel)
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 line



Jigging: Use a light, fast action rod and freespool reel filled with light 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 very obvious but fish will often pick the lure or fly up as it is fluttering down. If you sense something is not quite right clamp your thumb down and strike sharply.

Target steep sloping areas or headlands, and depths up to 40 metres. Ideally fish on the drift to cover more water. However if it is windy you may drift too fast to keep contact with the bottom and it is better to anchor.



What lures and flies should I use?

Favourites include the similar Cobras, Tasmanian Devils, the black Toby, and Kiwi lures in yellow, green or whites. On overcast days try fluorescent pink or orange patterns. Flatfish work well on wirelines but avoid trolling more than one at any time or otherwise they will tangle.



If using two flies, use one that looks like a smelt (whitebait) and one that is dark green, brown or all yellow.



Regulations and issues

- You must not troll or jig within 300 metres (3 rugby fields) of most stream mouths. These are marked by a white post with black and yellow hoops.
- Any trout you keep must be at least 450 mm long (18 inches) and you must stop fishing once you have killed your third fish on any day.
- Downriggers must not be fitted with more than 40 metres of cable.
- No weights or weighted lines may be used with downriggers.
- If trolling with lines of different depths always turn to the side that the deepest line is on to avoid tangles.
- Remember other boats may be trolling with several hundred metres of line out so give them plenty of room when crossing behind.

For more information

- Volcanic Trout - A Complete Guide to Fishing the Taupo Region. Brendon Mathews. Longacre Press Ltd. 2003
- Technological Trolling. Target Taupo, Issue 40. Department of Conservation. July 2002
- Downriggers - down and dirty or just fishing smarter? Target Taupo, Issue 44. Department of Conservation. November 2003