

# Fall Salmon & Bass Fishing In The Net with Fish'n Dog Drew

By Drew Gidlof Photo by Janie Thompson

*Drew Gidlof, owner of Fish'n Dog Drew Guide Service, offers his expertise on fishing the vast waterways of the Delta.*

There is nothing like hot summer days and a Sacramento River full of water from abundant snow pack in the Sierra Mountains to get very excited about fall Chinook salmon season. The season opened July 16 for the inland waterways of the state. The following is an overview of a technique for salmon fishing that you may not have tried before in the Delta and Sacramento River, along with some helpful ideas for the upcoming Bass Derby.

Over the last couple of seasons a new and improved technique for fishing salmon has become popular for the Sacramento River and Delta: using large flashers, sometimes called fenders, with a cut plug packed with tuna.

This style of fishing uses a three way splitter tied to the main pole line. On one end of the splitter tie a two to three foot drop line using an eight to ten pound test fishing line. A non-braided line works best. At the end of this line, attach a ten to fifteen pound weight. Water depth, conditions, and tide, are factors to consider when selecting the weight. Using a lighter test line for the weight allows this section of your trolling rig to break off when you get into a snag situation. It is a lot cheaper to lose a weight than an entire lure rig.

On the other end of the three way splitter, attach a three foot section of fifty pound fishing line with a swivel attached to the other end. The swivel is used to attach an eight inch Pro-Troll flasher. The flashers come in a nice variety of colors. Start out with popular colors Glow Green and Blue. Experiment with other available colors to find out what works best for you on any given day. Attached to the other end of the flasher is another swivel with a three foot section of fifty pound fishing line attached to a cut plug using another swivel.

You may wonder, "Why use such a heavy fishing line for leaders and so many swivels?" First off, you don't want to lose fish. The swivels allow you to quickly and efficiently change your flashers and cut plugs to a different color combination. Plus, it reduces the effect underwater grass can have on your fishing rig. Time out of the water changing a setup, or removing grass, reduces your opportunity to catch fish.

The final ingredient to your setup is placing tuna inside the cut plugs. Simply open the cut plug, pack it with tuna, and close up the plug by sliding the rubber band back into position. Try tuna packed in oil found in any supermarket.

Now that the salmon rig is complete you are ready to fish. Putting a rig setup like this into the water can be a challenge.

The secret is to be patient and to start by placing the cut plug lure into the water first and feeding the rest of rig out in a slow manner to prevent creating a tangled mess. Another technique you may wish to try is laying the cut plug rig out along the top of the side wall of the boat. Drop the plug into the water first and continue placing your rig into the water in a sequential manner until everything is out.



*Local fisherman Tom Thompson celebrates a successful day of fishing with his grandsons.*

Fish this setup thirty to forty feet back from the boat. Using a bait caster reel allows you to "let it out" in a slow, and meticulous, pace. Once you are out the desired distance, set the clicker, check the drag and make adjustments as needed, and set the pole into your pole holder.

With this fishing technique use a medium heavy pole that is seven to eight feet in length. Sensitivity of the tip is not critical with this setup. You need the additional stiffness in the pole to handle the movement created by the flasher in the water, and to retrieve your fish, along with the cut plug rig when you catch your fish.

Do not be afraid to try a variety of speeds on the boat while trolling.

The upcoming bass tournament is a good opportunity to address some bass fishing techniques. As you know, the Delta offers a lot of opportunities for bass and other species of fish. Finding bass to fish can be just as challenging as any other species. The various types of structure in the water need to be pursued when fishing bass. Look for the rock walls or ledges, rip rap areas along the levees that protrude into the water, the remains of trees that have fallen or floated into the area and are now underwater, and the inevitable assortment of vegetation that exists.

If the variety of options for hiding out was not enough for the bass, consider the impacts of the tides from the San Francisco Bay and our old friend – wind. Know what the tide schedule is when you go out and be prepared for the changes it creates.

Some of the favorite presentations to use with bass are the tried and true selections: Jigs, Top Water plugs, and Buzz Baits. It never hurts to have a plastic mouse lure for those times you need to go extreme, or think outside the box. It may be the lure that puts you over the top for the day.

*In closing, "remember to keep those fishing lines tight", and "take time to take a child fishing..." Drew and Boonie the river dog hope to see you on the water this fall!*