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Noodling for Monsters

If you want to catch monster fish you have to fish the deep fast water with the right rod

Timothy Kuserets



Take a look at the bend of this Noodle Rod! The flexibility and strength of this rod is such that I'm able to fish with six to twelve-pound monofilament and land salmon, steelhead, trout, and stripers as heavy as ninety-pounds! For maximum function brace the butt of the rod against the forearm and hang on!

If you ever want to have the ultimate advantage of fishing the fall and winter run of salmon and steelhead, you've got to get out and get yourself a noodle rod.

Every year I hear the same old things, from a myriad of fishermen, about the gear and the way I fish for salmon and steelhead, ironically, the lamentations almost always come from the guys that are chomping at the bit to know how I'm getting all the fish when they're not. Occasionally an angler will come over to me to ask me about the fishing rod and why it doesn't break under the weight of the fantastically large fish. In terms of species, the salmon I hook into are almost always in the deep fast water where they tend to be as big as monsters. The only thing I say to fishermen who want to know about the rod is "The line will break before the rod does and the line doesn't cost that much to boot."

The best things about a noodle rod, aside from catching huge fish, are on the basis of Length, Weight, Height, Guides, Strength, and Sensitivity. All of the qualities of a noodle rod help me to land some of the most tenacious fish in the water, and most other fishermen swear they would never use such a flimsy rod if their lives depended on it; at least, that's what they say in the morning and by midday they're all over me asking me where they can pick one up just like it. They tend to ask the same questions, just not at the same time or in the same

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order; however I feel that the first quality of the rod is to discuss the length of a noodle rod.

The length of any noodle rod is going to be a minimum of ten and a half feet on up to fifteen feet. Most noodle rods are flimsy enough to give the impression that pasta has about the same strength, but nothing could be further from the truth. They are strong rods and if used correctly, they will never break...not ever! Even with the impressive length of this kind of fishing rod they are still incredibly light.

I have never heard of a noodle rod heavier than half a pound; not even close. The light weight of the rod is really important to those anglers who travel over hill-and-dale. Most of the guys I know, who fish from the bank, traverse trails three to five miles long before they get to the river, and that doesn't even cover the honey-holes that they have to get to once they get to the bank. Grandfathers and grandsons are really going to appreciate the weight of these rods simply because of the range of ages that can use them. I've seen seven-year-olds master the noodle rod in less than two hours. There are many great fishermen under the age of ten who have shown me that they too want to hook the monsters by doing that very thing. Some of them have told me about the intimidating height of the rod and then I went on to tell them how the height of the rod helped them to catch their fish.

With the length of the rod being no less than ten-and-a-half feet long the height of it in the angler's hand keeps the mainline out of the water. While the line is out of the water and the leader follows the drift the sensitivity of the line is increased. Fall run fish are notorious for "mouthing" offerings, especially steelhead and salmon. With that extra line out of the water no extra belly forms in it and everyone knows that you get a better telephone connection if the cord between the two cans is tight (ha, ha). The height of the rod, with the line out of the water, affords anglers the benefit of setting the hook much faster than without a noodle rod. It's true. The longer your noodle rod is the harder the hook will set and that translates into fewer lost fish. Another benefit of the height is the increased range of the drift. Most anglers won't even think about how long a drift is until they combat fish shoulder-to-shoulder. The fisherman with the longest drift is almost always the one with the noodle rod, but did you know that he is also the same angler who gets most of the strikes? It just makes sense doesn't it? The longer your line is in the water the more opportunities you'll have to make proper presentations to the fish and that means more fish on the bank. The ability to use the noodle rod is all about the guides, and the guides are unique in the flexibility of what fishing line to use.

Did you know that one of the primary things to look for in a noodle rod is the amount of guides in it? The more guides you have the better off you're going to be. The distribution of stresses between the guides allows an angler to use extremely light line; which is exactly what I do. As long as your rod has at least ten eyes (guides) on the rod you'll be able to use line as light as six-pound test on fish that weigh as much as fifty-pounds! It's true, I've done it and you can too. If all of this doesn't convince you then perhaps you might want to consider that the light line allows the rod to become even more sensitive than it would be without it.

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Battling a huge salmon, the bow of this rod can take the punishment! The length of the rod is such that I have at least three options to land this fish: tailing, netting, or beaching. Using light line and a ¼ ounce spoon I'm able to make extremely long casts. Fish can be put off the bite from anglers who pound the same water, but because I "can" cast much farther, hitting into fish that aren't pressured is very easy!.

The weight, height, guides, small test fishing line, and a taught drift through the river will increase the sensitivity of the rod so much that you'll be able to hook the tiniest fish; and if you can hook one of those than you can hook a monster. The noodle rod that is properly outfitted will aid you in many more hookups and sometimes that means you'll actually catch small leaves! I know, I said it; small leaves! It might not sound like a big deal to fishermen who use 1/0 and 2/0 hooks but for those who use a size two and four you know just how small the hooks are. If the noodle rod is sensitive enough to detect a leaf then the whoppers don't have a chance against you. All of these qualities together add up to strength of the noodle.

The punishment of what a noodle can take is legendary amongst veteran fishermen. I've never seen one break due to any "manufacturer defect". It's the excuse many fishermen have used to replace the rods they themselves broke, which in many cases had nothing to do with fishing. A noodle rod can take an enormous amount of abuse. The hook-setting power of one of these rods is amazing! I've seen hooks sunk deeper in fish from noodle rods than any other kind of freshwater fishing rods there are; there simply is no equal. John Gray of Lamiglass Incorporated showed me just how tough these rods are by taking one and abusing it for me. John is a great guy, but he's not small. While grabbing the very tip of it he had an assistant hold the midsection of the rod. He then put his entire weight behind it (well over two-hundred pounds) and dropped to his knees. The rod stayed in tact. It was an awesome thing to see. He told me that the tip of any rod was never meant to experience the kind of pressure applied to it by anglers who try to grab the fishing line off the rod in an effort to land or grab a fish. While they do that the anglers tend to bend the tip of the rod sharply enough the tip bends right off.

"How much weight do you think I just put on that Timothy? If you think that was something, watch this." He then took the upper portion of another rod and with two fingers snapped the tip right off! John told me that the pressure needed to break the tip off was less than two pounds. Just to make sure I was a believer he had an entire rod strung up with line and reel. The tensile strength of the line was four-pounds. While his assistant held on to the rod he pulled on the line and walked closer to the rod closing the arch of the rod. When he got within two feet of the butt of the rod the tip of the rod snapped off. People, the line was four-pound test! I know that there are many fishermen who would never let that happen, but the strength of a noodle rod has gotten a bad rap from just a few guys; but enough to convince unsuspecting fishermen that "noodle" means weak. I personally

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have hooked thousands of fish on noodle rods and have never broken one...that way. I was guilty of snapping of a tip just the way John showed me. It was a little embarrassing.

All of the constituents that comprise a noodle rod keep me coming back for more each year. Many of the rods come with lifetime manufacturer warranties that make each rod worth every dollar, but they're really not that expensive. If you want to catch monster fish you have to fish the deep fast water where they hold; and to do that you need a noodle rod when you fish rivers and lakes. Everything you could possibly need from a fishing rod is there for you to enjoy. For those fishermen who would rather fish for smaller species of fish, guess what? You can fish for pan fish if you want with one of these rods, of course, that's a little overkill.



This huge salmon was fought using a Lamiglas 10.5 feet long Noodle Rod. The awesome ability of it to flex allows my rod to be fished with ultra-light line that would otherwise snap on any other kind of fishing rod. Fishing with light test like that makes it very hard for fish to zero in on it and streamlines their attention so they can focus on the offering, which keeps fish on the bite longer and as a consequence gets more hookups!