

TOP FISHING SECRETS

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Saltwater Fishing Terms

The Angler's Arsenal of Fishing Information

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Abrasion: depletion of line strength due to nicks and frays caused by, but not limited to, rubbing up against hard objects such as rocks and tree branches.

Adipose fin: a small fin on the back of a fish just forward of the caudal fin (tail).

Anadromous: fish migrating from freshwater to the sea to fresh water systems again to rivers to breed.

Anal fin: located on the underbelly of fish. It is the fin between the ventral fin and the caudal fin. One way of identification of species is to count the rays of the anal fin. Salmon will have thirteen or more rays while steelhead will have twelve or less.

Angler: one who fishes with a hook and line.

Asphyxiate: to cause an extreme decrease in the amount of oxygen in the body accompanied by excess carbon dioxide leading to unconsciousness or death. Asphyxiation begins for all aquatic animals that have gills the moment they are taken out of water. The main indicator of it is dark discoloration of the body soon after initial oxygen deprivation.

Bail: rests at the top of the reel but outside of the spool. The bail is open (flipped) by moving it up and over the spool, which allows for the line to pay out as it is cast. The bail is closed by the reverse action that allows the fisherman to retract the line by reeling the handle of the reel.

Back-eddy (horizontal and vertical): a horizontal pool of water that swirls in the opposite direction of the main current of a primary body of water. An outcropping of land and a swift current can cause a back-eddy to form. When you are saltwater fishing you should bear in mind that currents are also formed underneath the surface and sharp changes in depth cause them to form. The direction of the vertical back-eddy is delegated by the flood and ebb tides in the exact same manner that the horizontal back-eddies are formed.

Barb: the small sharp point that is in the opposite direction of the main point of a hook. Some fishing areas require that fishermen use barb-less hooks. The alternative to buying barb-less hooks is to pinch the barbs down by using needle-nose pliers.

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Barometric pressure: the rising and falling of the barometer that forecasts the coming weather by either rising or falling atmospheric pressure. It is identified as high or low system that indicates clear or cloudy conditions. A low-pressure system may carry precipitation. A high-pressure system is typically void of precipitation.

Barrel swivel: a connector between lines that tie the two together by knots threaded through an eyelet that can be found at either end. The swivel action allows for the lines to remain stationary while allowing the offering at the leader end to spin if it needs to in order for it to function properly, such as a spinner, spoon, or bladed artificial lure without causing line twist.

Bite area: the area of hook that is exposed to allow a fish to be secured by a hard hook-set by exposing more of the tine and barb for deeper penetration.

Black mouth: Chinook salmon that is immature. Many fishermen confuse the two-year-old fish for an entirely different species of salmon, but that wide misconception may be the politically correct way for them to accept that those who fish for them, are wiping out entire runs of fish before they ever have the chance to mature and spawn.

Blank: the shaft of the fishing rod that functions as the body. It is stout and stiff at the butt area and flexible at the tip. Ordinarily the rod blank is composed of two halves; the bottom portion represents the butt.

Blood knot: combination of two lines of equal tinsel strength tied together. It is used in cases of emergency when no other line is available to replace the diminished spool capacity on the reel. The strength of the knot is about eighty-five percent.

Boil: is water that undulates in a back-eddy, or pool, which is also slow water that holds fish. It shows that there is fish in slow moving water where water movement otherwise would not be indicated by an undulation that indicates fish are in the area.

Brackish: bodies of water that are both fresh and salt which are lesser or greater in saline content which is dictated by tidal pulls. As the floodtide comes in and raises the water the saline content raises, conversely, as the ebb tide recedes so does the level of salt content, which in turn is aided by the continuing flow of fresh water from rivers and creeks to estuaries.

Buck: a term used to describe the gender of a male fish. The upper jaw (maxillary) protruding past the eye identifies a Buck. The lower jaw (mandible) is also called the Kype.

Buzz bomb: duplicates the vibration of an injured fish as it flutters from the slack that it is given by the fisherman.

Candlefish: also called sand lance, are an oily edible baitfish that can be found in northern Pacific waters and in the Puget Sound of Washington State. They are thin and long resting in the sand of beaches as the tide goes out, reemerging as the tide comes back in. They are part of the mainstay diet of most feeding salmon.

Casting: the motion of your rod from the three o'clock position to the ten o'clock position and releasing your line towards the body of water that you want to fish. For the most part, casting is done over the shoulder, but can be done from the side using the same premise of clock identification for positioning purposes.

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Catch and release: a method of fishing that allows you to document your fishing with a camera and release it. By placing the fish back into the water a good brood stock is ensured for the next year and escapement becomes greater. It is the bedrock of good sportsman-like conduct.

Caudal fin: the caudal fin is also known commonly as the tail. Spot identification, or the lack of them, on the tail is used to determine species of salmon.

Caudal wrist: or peduncle is the terminology for the area of the fish between the adipose fin and the tail. For tailing purposes, it is the ideal place to grab the fish without harming it.

Change it up: if you are not catching fish then do something to help the situation.

Checklist: a necessity for weather confirmation and of needed materials for fishing excursions.

Chinook salmon: in the sea, Chinook feed on herring, sand lance (also called candlefish) and many other baitfishes ranging widely in the ocean.

Chum salmon: the mature chum shows maroon or burgundy barbs across the sides of the body and some have blotches of gray. The males develop a sharply hooked kype and large, dog-like teeth (hence the common name "dog salmon").

Chumming: mass broadcasting of blood, mulched fish, and oil are attempts to lure fish to boats.

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Clinch knot, improved: a double loop knot used primarily to tie other lines together via a swivel. The improved cinch knot may also be used to tie directly to the hook or artificial lures.

Clipped fin: a hatchery fish that has had its adipose fin clipped for tagging purposes.

Coho salmon: as seagoing adults, Coho have silvery sides and a metallic blue back with irregular black spots. Spawning males, in fresh water, exhibit bright red on their sides, which may also include bright green on their back and head, with darker coloration on their belly. They develop a marked hooked kype which gives rise to the slang "hooknose".

Colored water (turbid): silt that flows from a creek or river to an estuary diminishes the visibility of the water. It is the movement of silt that gives the idea that the water is colored or muddy. The primary reason fishermen like to fish in colored water is that it puts most fish at ease, giving them cause to rise closer to the surface of just about any body of water thus making them more easily spotted by the adept fisherman.

Combat fishing: the presence of many fishermen in a very small area. The anomaly occurs when there is an overabundance of fish in the water. These areas are great places for the novice to learn how to fish.

Combat manners: many fishermen can co-exist in a very small area if they all know the proper etiquette.

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Cut plug: a herring, smelt, or anchovy that has its head cut at an angle that follows the top of the head, gill plate, and down through the body.

Dart: simulates the body and actions of an injured baitfish that in turns stimulates a strike from a food fish that can include steelhead, salmon, and cod. A dart can look like a candlefish, herring, smelt, or anchovy.

Dorsal fin: the only major fin located on the back of most fish.

Drag: resistance that is set up on a fishing reel to resist against the pull on fishing line that pays out when a fish is hooked.

Egg loop: the difference in practical application between fresh and saltwater fishing egg loop used in this book will not actually hold eggs or yarn; rather, you use it to rig a cut plug, or fillet strip.

Ebb tide: The ebb is water that recedes backward which exposes more of the shore for a period of about six and a half hours. It is the opposite of the flood tide. The time between the ebb and flood is called slack tide.

Entrails: internal organs.

Escapement: a term that is used in the state hatchery system to measure the volume of fish that are tracked as they go down a river into the ocean or salt water system.

Estuary: the point in which the mouth of the river and a body of saltwater meet is an estuary. It harbors a mass of marine life.

Eye: refers to the guides on a fishing rod. They rest on both the top and bottom portions of the rod with the lower portion having the least amount of eyes.

Fall run: fish that migrate from saltwater to freshwater during the months of July, August, September and October are called the fall run. Primarily the entire run can be summed up chronologically with the pinks, sockeye, Chinook, Coho, and chum rounding out the fall season.

Fathom: a nautical expression used to measure a unit length of six feet. Nautical chart soundings are measured in fathoms. One fathom is equal to six feet.

Felt: a non-woven fabric or matted material of compressed animal fiber that may be fur or wool. It is placed on the bottom of boots that are intended for wading, and affords fishermen the ability to walk along surfaces of rocks that might be covered in algae.

Fighting: from the moment the fish strikes to the setting of the hook into the jaw of the fish thereafter is called the "fight". The angle of the rod, water depth, direction of the fish, test of the line, and the knowledge of the fisherman determine the outcome of the fight.

Filing: a motion that places a sharp point on the end of a hook. It is that action that is performed by using a hardened steel tool with cutting ridges for forming, smoothing, or reducing metallic surfaces.

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Fillet: A style of fish preparation that allows the meat to be frozen for lengths of time that can range from six months to a year dependant on how well the fish is processed and stored.

Fillet strip: smelt and herring that have the sides of the body removed to be used as bait strips primarily for Coho salmon. Ordinarily when the strips are used two snelled hooks are employed to give an exaggerated rotation that is meant to attract salmon close to it.

Fish on: a vocal exclamation to indicate to other fishermen that one is fighting a fish.

Optical perspective (fish): based on the reverse refraction of light and angle of the fish in the water presents a unique perspective of how fish perceive our image from beneath the surface of water. The shallower a fish is the less he can see out of the water, conversely, the deeper he is the greater his field of vision.

Flashlight: an absolute necessity for traveling and setting up your gear in the dark.

Flood tide: the flood tide diminishes shoreline beaches by slowly advancing forward from the sea, bay, or ocean.

Freshet: a sudden overflow of a stream resulting from a heavy rain or thaw.

Game warden: an official charged with the enforcement of certain laws and regulations, in particular, fishing and hunting.

Gear: anything that is necessary for the purposes of saltwater fishing. Gear can include but is not limited to: rod, reel, line, hooks, pliers, zingers, darts, and buzz bombs.

Gear oil: a petroleum-based derivative that is used to aid in the lubrication of gears and bearings in a fishing reel.

Gill: the respiratory organ of fish that allows them to breathe water to obtain oxygen. The gills are found directly underneath the gill-plate.

Gilling: an action that involves the removal of gills from legally retained fish.

Gill plate (Operculum): a covering that protects the gills of fish. The gill plates are located at the head and encompass that area from the top of the head to the lower portion of the jaw.

Glare: water that reflects light on the surface making it nearly impossible to see below the surface without the aid of polarized glasses. It can inhibit the ability to take photographs substantially. Even on cloudy overcast days you can experience glare.

Handling fish: When handling a fish the fisherman needs to take care not to mortally wound a fish by careless actions.

Harvesting pens: designed to prevent fish from going up any river or creek.

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Hatchery: refers to rearing ponds that are sponsored by the state in which fish eggs are harvested, incubated, hatched, and then reared for a short period of time.

Hats: wide brimmed hats used to cool and warm the head, also aid polarized glasses by blotting out invasive light rays that interfere with their optimal function.

Hen: a term that is used to identify a female fish.

Herring: a commercially important food fish. It is used as fillet offering when fishing for Coho and Chinook. The herring is elongated with a blue back and white belly.

Honey hole: a secret spot that routinely holds fish.

Hook-set: the moment of recognition that your line has stopped in the water and you pull back on your rod as hard as you can to set the hook firmly into the jaw of the fish.

Hooks: refer to single, double, triple, octopus and snelled. For the purposes of this book, we refer to the treble, and single point octopus style hooks for saltwater fishing.

Horse: describes an over-anxious fisherman who attempts to land a fish prematurely by pulling on his rod and line in a way that exceeds the test capabilities of the monofilament.

Identification markings: an array of methodologies identifies species of salmon predominantly through the mouth and spots along the body.

Inlet: a recess of water such as a bay or cove. Waters that are surrounded by land on three sides are inlets.

Jetty: a small protruding landmass into a body of water that influences current. Typically a jetty precedes a back-eddy.

Knives: refers to fillet knives, which are essential tools to prepare fish for consumption, transportation, and storage.

Knots: encompass the double clinch, egg loop, and the blood knot. The double clinch knot is used for either tying line to the hook, lure, or swivel. The egg loop is used to give a snelled hook a natural hook set while also enabling the shank of the hook that is applied to baits that are either cut plug or a fillet strip. The blood knot is the conjoining of two like test lines when one by itself is not long enough to fill the spool of a reel.

Kype: is that part of a fish's jaw that protrudes out, down (upper jaw), and upward (lower jaw). The kype of a male fish is usually more pronounced than that of the female.

Lateral line: a series of sensory pores along the head and sides of the body of fish by which water currents, vibrations, and pressure changes are perceived.

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Legend: a table or list of symbols appearing on a nautical chart or map that can be found on or in the perimeter of either. The legend will show you where to look for storm warnings, cable areas, nautical miles, and the declination of your compass. Declination shows true north.

License: indicates what species of fish or animal you are legally able to retain. The tracking system of the license allows for quick verification of legal fishermen.

Line-belly: is formed when the wind catches fishing line as it is cast.

Line memory: a term to describe twisting of line that occurs from a brand new spool of line.

Line mending: straightening line out after it has been cast into the wind is called line mending. It is an endeavor to diminish line-belly.

Line test: monofilament tensile strength is based on pound resistance against it to its breaking point.

Line twist: the twisting action of a line as it is transferred from one spool to the next causes it to tangle around itself making it very difficult for distance casting and reeling line back onto the spool.

Line viscosity: an indicator that line lies somewhere between a solid and a liquid. Monofilament is found to be in a gelatinous state. The state that it is found in allows for the line to stretch without breaking when it is stretched violently. This viscosity is also known as line test.

Lunker: represents to all saltwater fishermen a larger than normal fish. A large fish is also referred to as a "slab".

Mandible: the lower jaw of the fish that does not include the kype. The kype is found at the end of the lower jaw of spawning males.

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Marked fish: identifies whether a fish is a hatchery-reared fish or native.

Maxillary: the posterior and lateral element of the upper jaw. The length of the upper jaw establishes the gender of the fish. If the jaw does not proceed past the eye of the fish then it is female; if it does, then it is a male.

Monofilament: a strand of synthetic line used for fishing.

Mortality: refers to the rate of species that dies during migration either to or from a fresh water system during the spawning cycle. It is the death rate.

Native: that species of fish that is not hatched or reared by the state hatchery system. Natives tend to be stronger fighters than their hatchery counterparts and over a period time they become larger and stronger than reared fish.

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Nautical chart: a marine map utilized to identify depth variances in bodies of water. Nautical charts can be found for both fresh and saltwater fishing. The meat of the map is the "soundings" that are reflected in numbers that represent fathoms. Each fathom is a measurement of six feet.

Needle-nose pliers: pointed pliers that blunt at the end. Needle nose pliers can be used for cutting toothpicks and lead. They are consistently used to remove hooks from fish and other objects.

Netting: the act of properly landing a fish with the use of a net.

Neutral gravitation: fish that neither gravitates near the bottom of the bay or the surface of it are said to live at neutral gravitation.

Offering: describes what is on or near your hook. It is your choice of gear that has been dictated by observing weather conditions, barometric pressure, water clarity, and human presence.

Olfactory: have or relating to the contribution of smell.

Oxidation: occurs to unprotected metals that are introduced to saltwater. Rust and then corrosion occurs from a molecular breakdown as the atoms of the element lose electrons and ultimately cohesion.

Pectoral fins: the two most forward fins on the underbelly of a fish.

Plastic bags: are used to isolate fish scents and to keep items dry and free from possible damage.

Play: to let a fish fight until it is too exhausted to resist being pulled in by a fisherman.

Polarized glasses: refract ultra-violet rays and diminishes glare.

Ponds: concrete rearing pools at state-funded hatcheries.

Precipitation: meteorological term that refers to any form of water that falls to the earth's surface. Rain, sleet, snow and ice are all forms of precipitation.

Presentation: a term that is used to describe how your offering looks to the fish as it travels through the water, whether it is in front or above it. Presentations will differ by the offering, weight system, and how far you cast.

Pre-setting drag: setting the drag on a spool prior to actual fishing.

Pre-sharpening hooks: sharpening hooks right out of the package.

Pressuring fish: things that put fish off the bite are said to cause pressure; not to be confused with barometric-pressure.

Pumping the rod: action that requires fisherman to lean forward with a quick motion in an effort to create slack so he can reel in line as he is fighting the fish.

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Punch card: an area of the fishing license that documents the zoned area, amount, and type of fish that you caught and retained legally.

Raingear: anything that protects you from a cold and wet environment; such as Micromesh, Gortex, or any other clothing that allows your body to breath and stay dry at the same time.

Ray: an articulated or jointed rod that supports the membrane of the fin of fish. One way of identification of species is to count the rays of the anal fin. Salmon will have thirteen or more rays while steelhead will have twelve or less.

Reading water: the ability to look at the surface of water and determine whether or not fish will hold in that area based on the fluctuations and movements of surface currents.

Recon: an advance trip to a system that you want to fish, without the intent of fishing.

Reel: the reel is situated on the lower half of most fishing rods. The location of where it sits is called the seat.

Refraction: the displacement of light rays through a prism. In this case it refers to water and the perception of objects as seen through the surface of bodies of water.

Regulation handbook: an authoritative collaboration of rules and regulations that govern legally defined parameters of fishing behavior within each state.

Rip tide: also called a rip current. It is an occasional anomaly that is associated with undertows that are created at the shoreline as water that recedes back to the sea just after it has broken the shoreline. Rip tides are formed when two currents in a semicircular fashion collide into each other at the shoreline from opposite directions.

Rod: primarily consists of two halves that are referred to as blanks until guide eyelets are introduced to them.

Rod-butt: the lower half of the rod. The rod butt is also the same place where the fishing reel is placed.

Roe: the eggs of a female fish. Roe come in skeins that hold thousands of eggs.

Run: slang term for a migration of fish that intend to spawn.

Salmonid: belonging to, or characteristic of the family (genus) Salmonidae, which includes salmon, trout, and whitefish.

Scale: refers to the outer layer of the skin of a fish.

Seals: any of various aquatic carnivorous mammals found chiefly in the northern hemisphere.

Seam: the seam is exactly what it sounds like, it is two bodies of water that come together that are flowing in either opposite directions or at different speeds.

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Seasons: are distinctive months out of the year that dictate to species of fish when to migrate up fresh water systems to spawn. The Fish and Game Department determine when and where what systems sport and commercial fishermen may harvest fish, which in turn delegates the seasons.

Setting the hook: represents the proper action that is taken to solidly plant a hook securely into the jaw of a fish by the quick pulling action of a rod backwards when the fisherman has an indication that a fish has picked up his offering.

Shank: the longest and straightest part of the hook. It starts at the eye and travels downward until it begins to bend.

Shaker: an immature fish that has sexually developed. A shaker can range from two pounds to ten depending on the species of fish.

Shore fisherman: a person who fishes from shore.

Sideways: a fish that has been snagged. A sideways fish is almost always snagged in either the dorsal or tailfin.

Skein: the membrane that surrounds unfertilized roe.

Slab: refers to an uncommonly large fish.

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Smelt: any of various small silvery marine and freshwater food fishes of the family Osmeridae found in cold waters of the Northern Hemisphere.

Smoking: a process of curing fish by which it is placed into a smoker that slowly burns wood chips.

Snagging: attempting to take fish with a hook and line in such a way that the fish does not voluntarily take the hook or hooks in its mouth.

Snap swivel: a barrel swivel with a clip attached to one end of the barrel.

Soundings: a measured depth of water that is taken to express a specific number associated with a fathom. One fathom is equal to six feet.

Spawn: to produce fertilized eggs in large numbers during migratory cycles of species of fish.

Spinners: any kind of lure that rotates in the water to attract a fish.

Spool: is either found on the top of the reel or used for storage. Spools can hold either monofilament or braided line.

Spooled: a fish that makes a tremendous run causing the fisherman to lose all of his line.

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Spotting fish: reflects the ability of a fisherman's to read water successfully. Spotting fish also means that a fisherman has the ability to discern water height, speed, depth, temperature, and flow in order to understand the location of fish.

Stringer: anything that can be placed through the gill-plate and lower jaw to restrict the motion of any legally retained fish.

Surfcasting: fishing from shore with rod and reel. More often than not, surfcasting is done near estuaries, inlets, bays, and oceans.

Swim bladder: also called an air bladder. It is an air-filled organism in fish that maintains buoyancy. It is the expansion and contraction of the bladder that allows fish to ascend and descend quickly.

System: various bodies of water that are fished. This book refers to bays, inlets, estuaries, and oceans when the word "system" is used.

Tackle box: compact storage for portable transportation.

Tag end: defines the end of a fishing line that is manipulated in a way to secure a knot. Tags are usually cut very short to whatever they are tied, to prevent tangles.

Tagged fish: a fish that has been marked for tracking purposes. A tagged fish can have a tag on its head, a clipped adipose or ventral fin.

Tailing: a technique for landing fish with a gloved or bare hand. It is a way for fishermen to release fish back into the water without causing undo harm.

Tail walking: done when a hooked fish jumps out of the water and uses his tail to propel himself along the surface of the water in an effort to throw the hook out of his jaw.

Taxonomy: the classification of organisms in an ordered system that indicates natural relationships. It is a division into ordered groups or category. The genus salmonidae represents taxonomy of salmon, trout, and whitefish.

Terminal gear: can be found at the end of the mainline and the beginning of the leader, and includes the barrel swivel, snap swivel, bumper, bead, and weight system.

Tides: a body of water that is affected by the gravitational pull of the moon, and consequently the sun, which affects the level of water.

Tide book: the book, which shows tide cycles, breaks down the day into four tides. Two tides are low, which are measured in feet that sometimes go to the negative, and two tides that are high, that are sometimes extreme enough to warrant coastal flood warnings, but all four cycle in a twenty-four hour period.

Tine: the portion of the hook that is inserted into the jaw of the fish, as the hook is set.

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Treble hook: a triple-tined hook that is soldered at the shank solidifying them together.

Tyee: a word to describe fish that are over thirty pounds. Predominantly it is used to describe Chinook salmon because they are the largest fish of the salmon family.

Undertow: the seaward pull of receding waves after they break on a shore.

Undulate: to cause to move in a wavelike motion. It is a regular rising and falling or movement to alternating sides. It is movement in waves.

Unmarked fish: a native that has not been touched by man. A native will not have any blemishes that might be associated with a hatchery fish. Historically an unmarked fish will have all of its fins and will not have a tag anywhere on its body.

Ventral fin: is the set of fins that lie between the pectoral and anal fins located around the abdominal-pelvic area of fish. Most fish that are marked by having their right ventral fin removed are to be put back into the water in which they were hooked.

Waders: are distinguished by two categories. Hip-waders come up to your waist and are made up of neoprene or very thick rubber. The water that they are used in is shallow and slow. Chest-waders are nearly a full-body suit and come in either neoprene or thick rubber up to the waist and taper to a thinner material at the chest; both are waterproof.

Zero: also called Smolt. It is a young salmon at the stage when it becomes covered with silvery scales and is ready to migrate out to the ocean.

Zingers: a style of lead shaped lure that simulates the body of an anchovy. You can either cast the zinger and retrieve it so that it mimics an injured fish, or you can jig it from the bow of a boat for deeper water.