

YAKIMA BAIT® **KNOW-HOW** **REPORT**

WRITTEN BY:

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FREE TAKE ONE!

TWO-TIMING STEELHEAD RIG

It was co-worker Jarod Higginbotham who turned me onto the Two-Timing Steelhead Rig when he hooked two fat steelhead on a double rig fished below a float while another friend and I couldn't raise so much as a sniff. Truth is, Jarod has been using this double rig to catch steelhead for more than ten years and while doing so he has caught a fair number of salmon, trout, and whitefish too.

Besides being effective for nearly every fish species, the Two-Timing rig is easy to tie-up and use. It's float fishing with a steelhead jig having a leader extending from your jig to a LiL Corky® Drifter and hook. The sizing of the hook and Corky are important because your goal is to offset the buoyancy of your Corky with a hook large enough to make it sink below your jig but not so heavy a hook that it inhibits the Corky's ability to look natural as it drifts along. In addition, your Corky should be positioned below your float and jig far enough so it will nudge bottom occasionally as it proceeds downriver.

I remember Jarod being more than a little excited as he explained to me how the buoyancy of the Corky helps float the hook point up (meaning you get hung on the bottom a lot less) and how the larger hook required for this set-up produces more hookups per strike due to its larger point-to-shank gap.

The first time we tried it together we landed four steelhead; three came on the Corky as compared to one on the Nightmare colored Maxi Jig™ located just two feet up the line. With success like this, it's like: why not add a leader and Corky to your steelhead jig when float fishing?

THE BASICS OF FLOAT FISHING

Float fishing is similar to the drift fishing method in that you cast out, across and slightly upstream, pick up any slack line, and allow your float, jig and Corky suspended below it to drift through the holding water. Your drift is complete when your outfit nears the tail out, jig begins hitting bottom, or you cannot eliminate line drag by mending, which is when you'll need to reel in and cast again. Float fishing consists of a series of casts, drifts, and retrieves. Because you're fishing with your eyes rather than by feel, you'll need to keep tabs on your bobber at all times. When your bobber goes down/disappears (signaling a fish has taken your offering) you must quickly/immediately set the hook.

In all cases, a drag-free drift with your float moving at or a bit slower than the river current is critical to success. If you're fishing a current edge, that is, where slack and moving water meet, on the near side of the river, you should have no problem with line drag. It may be a different story if you're casting out into a hole or drift where the current, especially a strong one, can grab your main line the moment it hits the water surface and pushes it downstream faster than your float is moving.



Yakima Bait Pro Jarod Higginbotham with a Two-Timing Rig caught steelhead.

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rolling your rod tip and line upstream. When you mend, it's important to do so aggressively enough that your main line will be tossed upstream all the way to your float. Given a strong current, you may have to mend your line several times during a single drift.

Casting out at a slight downstream angle and feeding line off your reel fast enough that your bobber won't be overcome by line drag can reduce or eliminate the effects of line belly on your bobber. If you're a boater, you can cast out to the side or at a 45-degree angle downstream too, but you may find better success and eliminate all line drag by anchoring above the area you wish to fish and maneuver your bobber directly downstream.

Float fishing works best when the rivers are medium to low in height and clear in color. And although float fishing will work anywhere fish hold it's especially effective for fishing current edges – steelhead like to hold where fast and slack water meet.

Most anglers will suspend their jig half to three quarters of the way to the river bottom when fishing areas where the water is eight feet or less in depth and within a few feet of bottom in deeper water.

The two-timing rig means adding a 24-inch leader to your jig – just tie it to the bend of your jig hook and slide the knot up the hook shank toward the jig head, which allows the jig to suspend below your float in a horizontal position (the fish like this jig presentation best).

Corky drifters float so it's important when fishing one under your jig to offset the buoyancy of your Corky with a hook large enough



The Two-Timing Rig is relatively simple to rig and fish. It's also a very effective method for catching steelhead.

to make it sink/drift below your jig and the hook to tap bottom occasionally as it drifts downstream in the current. For the right amount of buoyancy, what works is a size 12 Corky rigged in conjunction with a size #1 red hook – (what I use is the needle point hook made by Owner®.)

In more turbid water or at times when fish might respond to a larger egg imitation, try a size 10 or 8 Corky rigged in combination with a size 1/0 red hook. The key here is to peg your Corky 2-to-3 inches above your single hook with a round tooth pick. The buoyancy of the Corky floats the hook point up so you get hung up less with it as compared to using a bead or other non-buoyant egg imitation.

For more Yakima Bait Know-How visit www.yakimabait.com



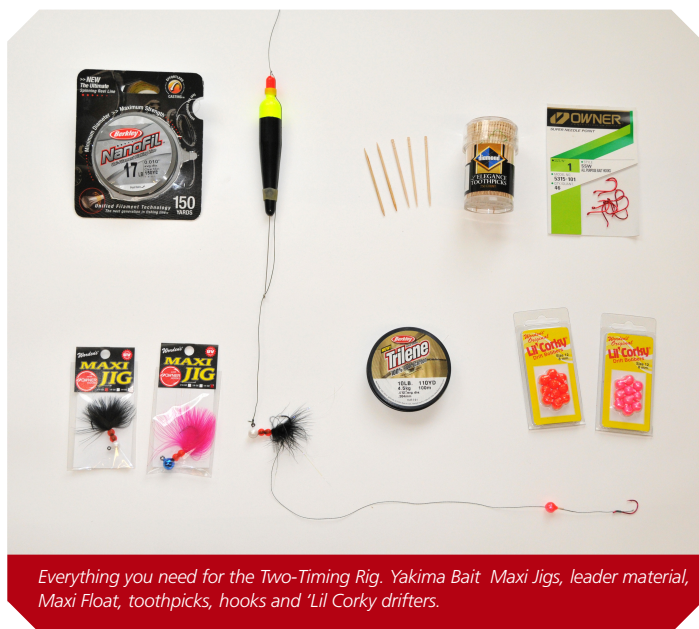
Although not a guide, Buzz is considered a sport fishing authority for salmon, steelhead, and trout. He writes a regular outdoor column, is a seminar speaker and has appeared on many TV fishing shows. He is a hall of famer for The Association of Northwest Steelheaders and The National Fresh Water Fishing Hall of Fame. Berkley offers a line of Air IM-8 rods Buzz Ramsey designed for salmon and steelhead. Currently, Buzz is Brand Manager for Yakima Bait Company and a member of the management team – www.yakimabait.com.



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Everything you need for the Two-Timing Rig. Yakima Bait Max Jigs, leader material, Maxi Float, toothpicks, hooks and 'Lil Corky drifters.