

YAKIMA BAIT. KNOW-HOW REPORT

WRITTEN BY:
Buzzy Ramsey



FREE TAKE ONE!

FISHING ROOSTER TAIL SPINNERS

Fish are attracted to spinners due to their size, color, flash, and vibration. And while any one of these ingredients will attract fish when combined into one package (a well-designed spinner), this lure style has proven itself effective for nearly every type of game fish that swims. While the above factors all play a role in attracting hungry fish, spinner vibration is often credited as a key factor in spinner appeal. And although some blade styles produce more noise than others, all spinners generate underwater noise created by the blade spinning around the metal shaft as your spinner is moved through the water.

Weighted spinners, with a casting weight built into their design, can be fished any number of ways with the "cast-and-retrieve," "troll," and "jig" representing the three major methods.

CAST AND RETRIEVE - LAKES

Without a doubt, the most popular way to fish a spinner is to employ the cast-and-retrieve method. It's so easy, just tie a spinner on the end of your line, cast into a nearby body of water and reel/retrieve your spinner back to you.

In lakes, most anglers searching for fish, cast-and-retrieve spinners while working their way along the shoreline or from a drifting boat. What I've observed is fish are likely to be found cruising near the surface when water temperatures are cool, early in the morning, on overcast days, or evening time periods. Fish are more likely to be found near bottom (or at some level above it) during the middle of the day when the sun is bright or at times during the heat of summer when the surface water temperature is warm.

To determine the depth your spinner is running, and be able to return to it, may require you to practice what's known as the "count-down" method, which is mostly used in lakes or other still water. In preparation for learning the "count-down" technique, realize that most weighted spinners will sink at a rate of one foot per second. Here's how: cast out, and allow your spinner to fall freely to the bottom, counting one-one thousand, two-one thousand etc. until it hits bottom signified by your line going slack. Now that you know the bottom depth, based on counting, you can begin your retrieve after the next cast at varying depths above bottom, which will help you avoid snags and hang ups. Using this simple procedure will allow you to search for fish at different depths and reliably return to the fish-producing level on subsequent casts.

In addition, working your lure near bottom may require you to step up to a larger/heavier spinner size; for example, a light to medium weight spinner will likely perform best when fish are near the surface, say in the top ten feet of water, but you may need to step up to a larger/heavier spinner size to get down when fish are lurking deep in the water column.

CAST AND RETRIEVE - RIVERS

The most common method used in rivers is to cast your weighted spinner out, across and slightly upstream; allow it to sink near bottom while reeling up any slack line, then pulling back on your rod tip slightly, causing the blade to start its spin before beginning a slow retrieve. The current will sweep your spinner downstream as you reel it back, so your location on shore is important; meaning, you should position yourself at or just above the most productive areas. Once your spinner swings in near shore, it's time to reel in and cast again.

You will be much more successful if you don't get caught up in a steady, ridged, retrieve mode. Let your spinner work with the current. If you feel a burst of water grab your spinner, slow down or momentarily stop retrieving and let it work in the current. Spinners are the most effective when retrieved slowly, just fast enough to keep the blade turning and spinner working just above bottom. Strikes are usually definite, but some fish will just stop the spinning blade, so when in doubt, set the hook.

Upstream casting is a productive method and best accomplished with a high-speed spinning reel. This method allows you to avoid spooking weary fish when waters are clear since they will be facing upstream and are less likely to see you when approached from behind. Here's how: position yourself just downstream from the best looking holding water and cast across and upstream. Begin your retrieve as or just before the spinner hits the water. Reel as fast as you can until you pick up all slack line and begin to feel the resistance of the spinning blade as it fans out in the water, then slow down and retrieve just fast enough to keep your lure working near bottom.

Another productive river fishing method is downstream casting, which works best on wide tail-outs or large, wide holding areas. Cast your spinner out across and downstream. Since the current is moving away from you, it requires a slow or no retrieve as your spinner swings through the holding water.

FORWARD-TROLLING

Trolling, that is: trailing a spinner 30-to-100 feet behind a moving boat is a method used on lakes and slow-moving rivers that works best during times when fish are scattered over a wide area. With your boat moving slowly, 1/2-to-3 MPH, cast or let your lure out behind your boat and begin your troll.

When forward trolling, the most effective strategy is to run each person's spinner at a different distance from the boat. Staggering the distance your lures run behind your craft (for example, varying the amount of let-out from 30-to-100 feet) is a solid trolling strategy since doing so will increase the number of times fish will see the lures.

Regarding troll speed, the general rule is: when water temperatures are cold, a slow troll speed will likely produce best; likewise, when water temperatures increase, a little faster troll speed might be what the fish want.

To increase your rate of success, try trolling in a zigzag pattern. A zigzag troll can be more effective than a straight-line troll because following fish may become bored and not strike due to your lure not reacting (running or attempting to flee) when moving along at a consistent speed and direction. Also, when zigzag trolling, keep track of which side of the boat is producing strikes, since the outside rod (opposite the way you are turning) will pull your lure faster, and the inside rod slower with each turn of your craft. If all the strikes are coming on the inside rod, it's an indication you're trolling too fast. Likewise if all strikes are coming on the outside rod you may increase your catch rates by speeding up slightly.

THE STRIKE

Strikes are easily identified but can, at times, be subtle as fish will take a spinner in a variety of ways; which may include arm wrenching strikes, swimming with the spinner while closing their mouth around it, or just stopping the blade and/or forward movement of your spinner. In all cases, it's important to set the hook hard, yank back on your rod tip, when noticing any change in spinner action. Sharp hooks not only ensure that fish can't let go, but can greatly increase the ratio of fish landed per strike.

JIGGING

Jigging produces best when fish are concentrated into tight schools due to underwater structure, temperature, cover or current. This is when a fish finder (like those made by Humminbird) might reveal their location and the depth they're running. It's pretty simple to place your boat above the fish and free spool your spinner to the fish holding depth. Jigging involves the lifting and lowering of your rod tip such that your lure will move, dart and flutter as it falls downward. Most anglers will give their rod tip a little flip after each 6-to-18 inch upward movement and follow their line/lure downward with the rod tip just fast enough to keep the line slightly slack as the lure falls. Since most strikes occur when your lure is falling (on the drop) or at the bottom of the fall, it's good to pay close attention and quickly set the hook if your lure stops falling or darts to the side. Tipping your lure can make all the difference when jigging with a spinner (see below tipping section).



FREE TAKE ONE!

FISHING ROOSTER TAIL SPINNERS

There are 4 distinctly different styles of Rooster Tail so you can tailor your presentation to the specific species and water condition you're fishing.



DEALING WITH LINE TWIST

Spinners do just that, they spin and therefore can, and will, twist your fishing line. With a spinner, it's the price you pay to produce the sonic vibration that drives fish crazy. When performing the cast-and-retrieve method, I deal with line twist by allowing my main line to untwist at regular intervals; normally allowing it to untwist every five-to-ten casts or when noticing any build-up of twist in my line. Removing line twist is easy, just stop reeling when your line is six-to-ten feet from your rod tip, hold your rod tip high, with your spinner above the water, and give your line 30 seconds or so to unwind. Monofilament line resists twist, therefore the longer you allow twist to go unchecked the farther it will travel up your main line.

When trolling or jigging, you should employ a swivel to keep line twist at bay. The best way to accomplish this is to rig a barrel swivel a few feet above your spinner or halfway down your leader. Swivels are available in different styles with a standard barrel swivel being the most popular; however, a chain swivel or ball-bearing swivel will perform better. To reduce line twist, some anglers will connect a snap swivel directly to their spinner, but this really isn't the best option, since adding a snap swivel to your spinner can upset spinner balance and give your lure an un-natural look.

CHOOSING SPINNERS

Of course, spinners come in a variety of different body configurations and blade shapes, which affect their sonic vibration, pulling resistance and retrieve speed; for example, a narrow blade shape will perform at faster retrieve speeds while producing minimum drag - meaning they can be more easily pulled through the water. Wide blade shapes generate more cranking resistance (drag), especially when pulled fast, but will maintain high action and blade vibration at slower troll or retrieve speeds.

The versatility of Worden's® original Rooster Tail® (available in 10 sizes, from 1/32-to-1 ounce, and over 100 finishes) combined with its pulsating hackle tail and genuine silver, brass, copper, or painted blade is what makes this spinner perform under such a wide range of situations and for so many different fish species; for example, the fact that its semi-narrow blade shape will perform when pulled both fast and slow means you can quickly cover an area when searching for concentrations of fish but then slow down your retrieve speed to more thoroughly target fish once they're located.

Although the original Rooster Tail is the most popular style available, the Rooster Tail family has been expanded to include other versions; all featuring the same pulsating hackle tail that made the original famous.

The original "Rooster Tail" pulsating hackle tail, combined with an offset body that reduces line twist, and noise producing in-line blade makes the Vibric Rooster Tail® a popular option for many anglers. The Vibric Rooster Tail is available in sizes ranging from 1/24-to-1/2 ounces.

A wide, sound producing blade combined with brass body and original "Rooster Tail" pulsating hackle tail make the Sonic Rooster Tail® a popular choice where mid-to-slow retrieve speeds produce results. The Sonic Rooster Tail is available in sizes ranging from 1/16-to-1/4 ounces.

A two part urethane overcoat impregnated with ultraviolet (UV) pigment on body and blade, combined with an offset body that reduces line twist, original "Rooster Tail" pulsating hackle tail, and wide blade shape that performs at slow cast or troll speeds is what the Rooster Tail Lite® is all about. The Rooster Tail Lite is available in sizes ranging from 1/8-to-3/8 ounces.

MAKING THE RIGHT COLOR CHOICE

Spinners come in a variety of different colors, which can have a huge influence on your success. What finish works best will likely change depend on the amount of



The results speak volumes...Rooster Tail spinners are the most effective trout spinners made. They are also equally effective on nearly every gamefish in North America.

available light (which can vary depending on time of day or whether it's sunny or overcast), water clarity and the type of natural forage that's available; for example, if minnows are abundant, like shad, there is a good chance silver, white, gray, or metallic finishes with a little blue, green, black, or red color added will produce best. If chub or perch is the main forage a brown, yellow or metallic finish with a tinge of gold, yellow or brown color in combination with a brass or copper blade might comprise a decent arsenal. Your color selection might be pretty simple if small rainbow, brown or brook trout make up the preferred forage.

When aquatic insects are the main forage spinner body colors in black, brown or yellow will likely perform best; for example, black might be the very best choice when leech or flying ant are included in the forage mix; black, brown or dark green when emerging insects or salamanders are available; green might trigger strikes when frog are about; yellow, black/yellow or black/red when flying insects are available. During times when the light is low or in stained water try a fluorescent red, orange, pink, white, chartreuse, fluorescent green or fire tiger finish in combination with a brass or copper blade. Ultraviolet and luminous finishes have proven themselves effective during times of low light. Chartreuse is the go-to color when waters are turbid. What I do is follow these basic guidelines and let the fish tell me what color they like, which they quickly will.

TIPPING SPINNERS

While tipping (adding a small chunk of real bait or section of prepared bait to the hook) is a common practice employed among bass and walleye anglers, the trick is often overlooked when using spinners or by those chasing other fish species. With spinners, what works is to tip the hook of your spinner with a short section pinched from a scent-filled worm - like the 3-inch PowerBait or Gulp! worm. When choosing worm colors for tipping it's good to match spinner color. In clear water, what produces for me is to add a short section of worm in black or fluorescent red.



Tipping your Rooster Tail with a small piece of scent-filled plastic worm enhances the Rooster Tail's effectiveness.



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 Steelhead-ers 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 - yakimabait.com.



YAKIMA BAIT®

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

P.O. Box 310, Granger WA 98932