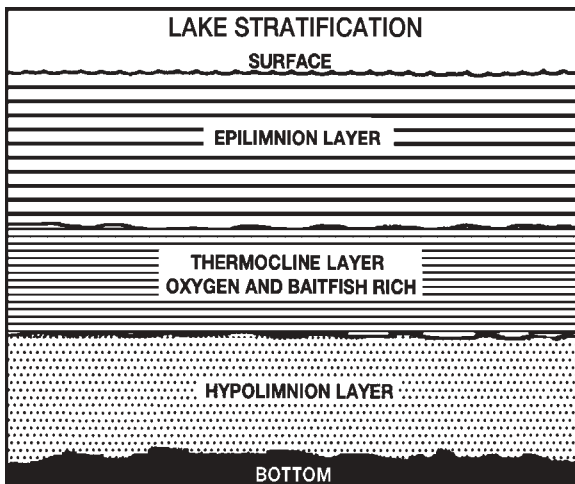


baitfish (stunned, struggling or dying) engineered into it. Available in 17 sizes from 1/6-oz. to a whopping 20-oz. model perfect for deep or heavy current conditions. See Luhr-Jensen *Tech Sheet #548* for a complete guide on how to most effectively fish with this lure.



Cast Champ®

**CAST CHAMP®** -- Long a favorite casting wobbler, this is an excellent jigging spoon, having an erratic, fluttering action when allowed to free-fall. It comes in nine sizes from 1/10-oz. to 3-oz. and is available in 11 finish variations on *Brass, Chrome* and even *Genuine 24K Gold Plate, Prism-Lite®* accents are available on many models.



### PROSPECTING OPEN WATER

Fresh and salt water gamefish all relate, in one form or another, to either structure (bottom contours) currents or temperature zones. Here are some tips to make your search pay off in the shortest amount of time when coupled with the use of a quality depth sounder.

**TEMPERATURE / OXYGEN (Fresh Water)** -- In large fresh water lakes and reservoirs, the critical factor in finding fish is the location of the preferred

temperature level, as it relates to different species, and the thermocline. With the onset of warm spring weather, lakes stratify into three distinct layers and remain that way until fall. The middle layer of water, where there is a large concentration of dissolved oxygen, baitfish and therefore predator fish is called the thermocline and can generally be found from 10 to 80 feet down. This not only is an oxygen-rich layer but also a temperature layer as well and fish relate to it, both as a comfort zone and an area where their body metabolism functions efficiently.

**The peak feeding and optimum temperature for coho and chinook salmon is 55° with an active range from 44° to 58°. For lake trout, peak feeding and optimum temperature is 50° with activity from 43° to 53°. For steelhead, optimum temperature is between 50° and 55° with activity from 40° to 75°. Brown and rainbow trout have an optimum temperature preference between 55° and 60° with activity from 44° to 75°. Striped bass exhibit a range of temperature preference from 60° to 78° with the optimum temperature between 70° and 72°.**

Fish rarely venture out of these preferred temperature zones, except to catch a meal, and then will return quickly. One thing to remember when fishing temperature layers such as the thermocline is that they can change from day to day because of wind and/or wave action and you'll have to relocate them each time out.

**TIDE/CURRENTS (Salt Water)** -- Just as knowledge of temperature layers is critical for fresh water fishing, a knowledge of tides and currents is essential for salt water drift jigging success. Feeding activity of salmon and other salt water gamefish is at its maximum during the period from one hour before, through and one hour after a tide change. A tide cycle has two highs and two lows so there are at least two daylight tide change periods to fish each day which provide optimum conditions. Charting one tide period, we would have low slack (the time of change), ebb (run out) and back to low slack. If the tide fluctuation is minimal between high and low, say 3 to 8 feet, fish will be active throughout the tide cycle along rips, in eddies and many times in open water. But the period before slack tide, during the slack and just after will still provide you with top angling as salmon and bottomfish will feed most actively when they don't

have to battle currents. You'll have about three hours of prime fishing time around each tide change and it's extremely important to fish these periods intensely. Purchase a tide book for your area and become familiar with it and schedule your trips, if possible, to coincide with the change periods.

If the tides are moving fast, salt water species such as salmon, which are ordinarily open-water feeders, will seek shelter around structure such as points of land, underwater islands and other areas where they won't have to battle current. These will be the places to seek them out with your jigging lures. Bottomfish, on the other hand aren't influenced by the tides and always are close to rocks, pinnacles and dropoffs so your search for these should be concentrated near structure.

### SHARP HOOKS PAY OFF

One of the easiest things you can do to improve your fishing success is to maintain super-sharp hooks on your lures at all times. A fine-toothed file such as Luhr Jensen's *Sharp Hook File™* is the absolute best hook sharpening tool available. Hold the file parallel to the point and with gentle, one-way strokes, remove a small amount of metal on at least two sides to obtain a sticky-sharp point with a knife-like cutting edge.



**This is one of a series of more than 25 detailed technique reports produced by Luhr Jensen & Sons. For a complete set, a patch for your jacket or cap, a price list and a full-color catalog featuring all of our quality fishing lures and accessories, send \$3 (credited to your first order of \$20 or more) along with your name and address to: Luhr Jensen, P.O. Box 297, Hood River, OR 97031. Attn: Customer Service.**

Visit us on the web at [www.luhrjensen.com](http://www.luhrjensen.com) #8822-021 Revised 051603 Litho in U.S.A.



# TECH REPORT #21

## A Complete Guide to OPEN WATER DRIFT JIGGING TECHNIQUES

(Revised)

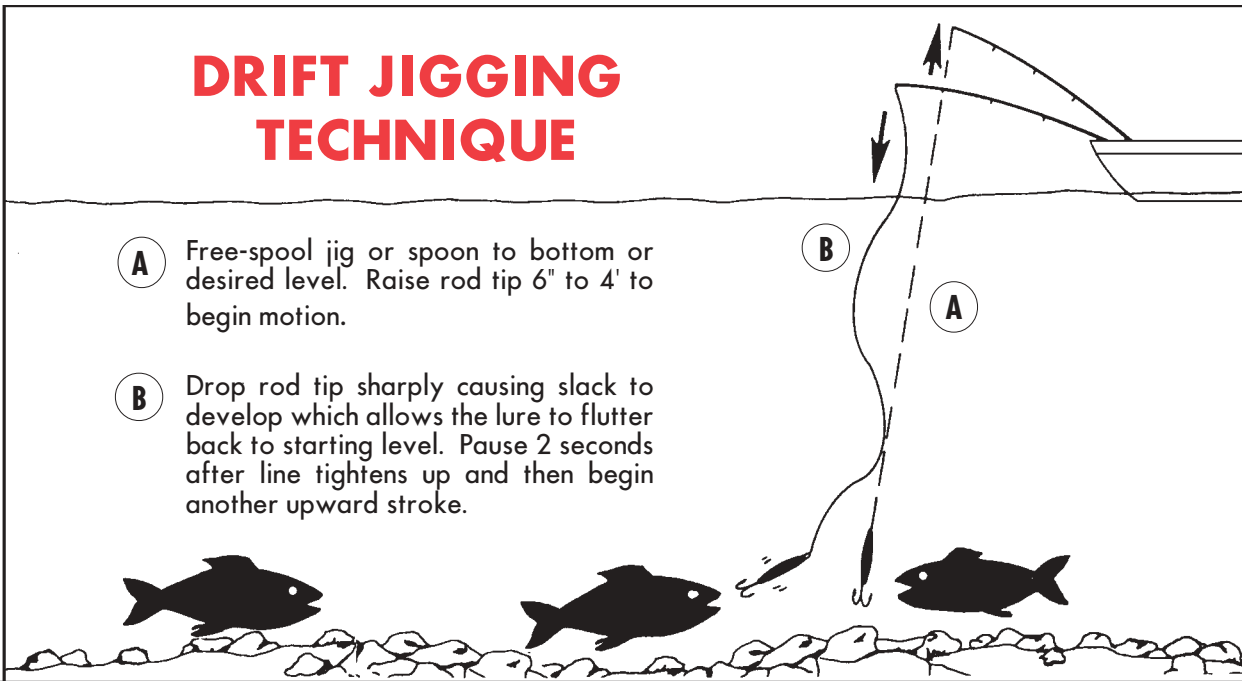


Drift jigging in open water is a fishing technique being used by an ever increasing number of anglers as they discover its effectiveness and ease of application. It's a technique tailor-made for open water, fresh or salt, where fish are oriented either to bottom structure or temperature layers. With the aid of a depth sounder, drift jigging allows pinpoint presentation of a spoon or jig within inches of a fish, providing you with a distinct advantage not easily obtainable with other fishing methods.

© Luhr Jensen & Sons, Inc.

# DRIFT JIGGING TECHNIQUE

- A** Free-spool jig or spoon to bottom or desired level. Raise rod tip 6" to 4' to begin motion.
- B** Drop rod tip sharply causing slack to develop which allows the lure to flutter back to starting level. Pause 2 seconds after line tightens up and then begin another upward stroke.



By using wind or current to change your boat position, in open water drift jigging you will be prospecting different areas until a concentration of fish is located. Then, either by using a motor or oars to hold your position, or by motoring back and repeating the drift, you will be able to stay over them.

Once fish are located, free-spool the jig or spoon to the desired depth and then begin a series of varied jigging motions which impart erratic actions to the lure.

The jigging technique consists of raising your rod anywhere from six inches to four feet, throwing some slack in the line as the rod tip is lowered toward the water, pausing and then raising the rod upward again. A two second pause is recommended after the lure has been allowed to fall. It's best to vary the distance of the upward rod motion with each sweep so the spoon or jig produces the most erratic and varied actions possible.

Strikes which come when working a jig or jigging spoon almost always occur as the lure is falling. Hesitation in the descent of a lure, a twitch of the line, a "tap" or any other unusual motion or happening as the lure is falling should be immedi-

ate reason for setting the hook. Many times you will not be able to detect the "strike" but will feel resistance as you begin to raise the rod. This too signals "set the hook".

An aid in detecting strikes when a lure is falling is the use of a premium-quality high-visibility line such as *Trilene XT*<sup>®</sup>, which also has high knot strength and thin diameter in relation to pound test. By carefully watching the line as the jig or spoon is falling, you will be able to detect slight twitches in the line as the strike occurs.

If you haven't developed any strikes in a particular column of water, change the location of your boat slightly, either by drifting or motoring so you will constantly be covering new water. It is important to keep moving until fish are located.

## DEPTH SOUNDERS

There is no substitute for a good quality depth sounder, such as those made by *Bottomline*<sup>®</sup>. In drift jigging open water where fish can be just about anywhere . . . it will take the guesswork out of otherwise countless hours of blindly prospecting for them. A fish finder unit will pinpoint the depth at which fish are suspended and, to the knowledgeable eye,

reveal structure and fish close to structure. A fish finder unit also will enable you to spot underwater contour changes such as ledges, dropoffs and islands that otherwise can't be located or fished over with any degree of consistency.

The beauty of a depth sounder in drift jigging lies in its ability to tell you exactly at what depth the fish are, how many of them there are, whether they are near structure on the bottom or suspended and, above all, it allows you to move with them once they're found and keep your lures within inches of them.

## JIGGING LURES

Lures used for drift jigging can take on several forms, the most popular being jigging spoons such as the *Krocodile*<sup>®</sup> and *Cast Champ*<sup>®</sup> and fish-shaped lead jigs such as the *Crippled Herring*<sup>®</sup> and the *Deep Stinger*<sup>™</sup>. Regardless of whether you're fishing salt or fresh water, you should try to match the size of the jig or jigging spoon as closely as you can to the prevalent baitfish in the area as well as to your tackle. If using lightweight lures, you'll need lighter tackle -- heavier tackle for jigs and spoons from three to seven ounces.

The desired depth also has a great deal to do with your selection of a spoon or jig. For example, you will need a heavier lure for fishing in 100 feet of water than needed for fishing 20-foot depths.

It is advisable to carry several sizes of Krocodiles, Crippled Herring, and Deep Stingers so you can match any water and depth condition.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF COLOR

A wide variety of painted finishes and color combinations are available on Luhr Jensen jigging spoons and jigs. Color becomes very important related to the depth you'll be fishing, with colors changing depending upon how deep they go. Red filters out of the color spectrum first at about 30 feet and yellow and chartreuse at about 60 feet with blues, greens and darker colors the last ones to turn gray. White and/or pearl turn gray at about 60 feet and black is always black, regardless of depth. This means a fish in deep water will see blacks, grays, blues and greens in terms of day-to-day food while a shallow water fish would be tuned in to all colors.

The special glo finishes produced by Luhr Jensen are designed specifically for deep water jigging. They contain phosphor pigments that absorb light on the

surface and then give it off down deep. **Note: Phosphorescent finishes contain light-sensitive pigments which can be burned and turn gray if exposed to strong, direct sunlight for more than 15 minutes.**



Deep Stinger™

**DEEP STINGER™** - This solid lead body, minnow-shaped jig is available in sizes 3/4-oz., 1-oz., 2-oz. 4 1/2-oz, 6-oz. & 10 oz. It is a low drag, jigging and casting spoon which can be bent to enhance its action. It features heavy duty, welded ring construction.

When vertical jigging, the all-purpose bend should be retained. It produces a fluttering, rotating motion on slack line. An S-bend or C-bend (half-moon) will yield an erratic, fluttering action when trolling or casting.



Krocodile®

**KROCODILE®** -- Versatility best describes this lure which has the reputation for catching all kinds of fish in all kinds of conditions. It can be cast or trolled, and the thicker models make excellent jigging spoons as many bass anglers will attest. The "Kroc" comes in a wide variety of finishes to suit every fishing situation and weighs from 1/6-oz. to 7 ozs. for heavy-tackle, deep-water fishing.



Crippled Herring®

**CRIPPLED HERRING®** -- This is the hottest jigging lure out today. It is natural both in appearance and action and can be used worldwide, every day of the year, for all baitfish-eating gamefish, in fresh and salt water. It is programmed to take advantage of the strong, natural predator instinct common to all game fish, with every movement of any type of distressed