

CHAPTER 4

BAITS AND LURES

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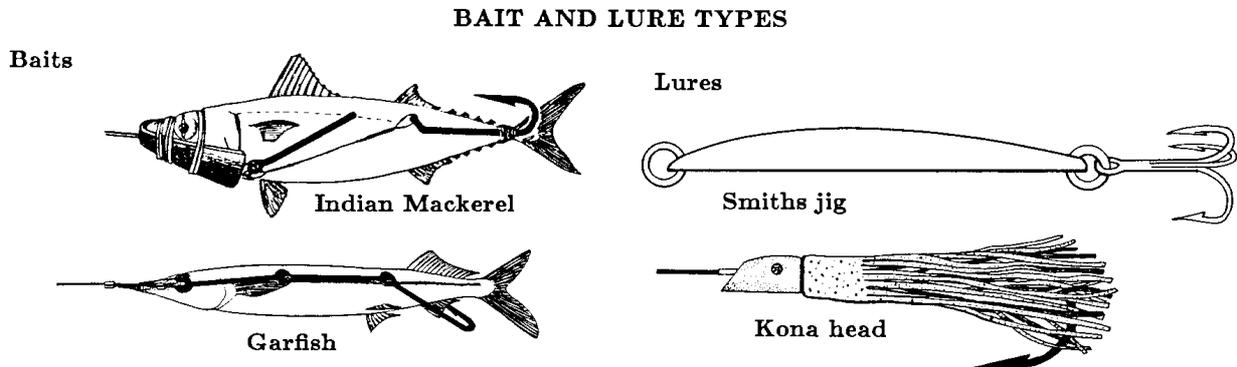
H. RIGGING LURES *-Rigging lures with an attachment point -Rigging octopus and similar lures*

I. LURE MAINTENANCE AND STORAGE *-Keeping lures clean -Checking for damage -Replacing hooks
-Touching up -Storage*

CHAPTER 4: BAITES AND LURES

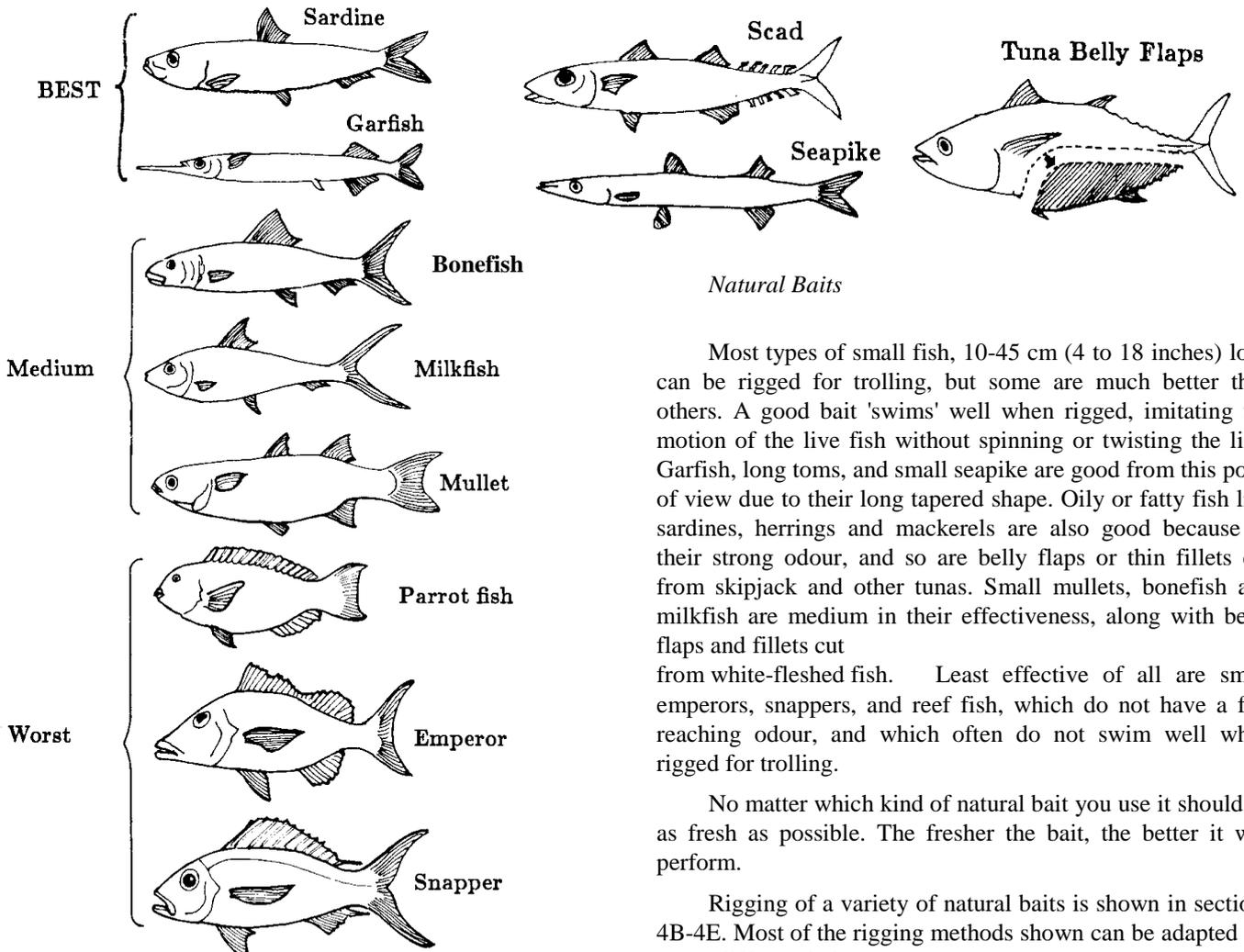
SECTION A: BAIT AND LURE TYPES

The two major types of bait or lure used when trolling are 'natural' -that is real fish or pieces of fish -and 'artificial', or man-made substitutes for these. In this book, when talking about 'baits', we mean natural baits and, when referring to 'lures', we mean artificial or man-made lures.



Many things affect the fisherman's choice of whether to use baits or lures. These include their availability, cost, ease of use, and effectiveness for the types of fish he hopes to catch. Natural baits can be caught in most coastal areas, but bait capture can be time-consuming and may only be possible at certain times or seasons. If the fisherman chooses to buy baits, then obviously this will add to his costs, especially as most baits are only good for one or two fish, and deteriorate rapidly. In contrast, artificial lures can be used repeatedly for a long time. Natural baits have to be replaced or re-rigged almost every time a fish is caught, and this is much more time-consuming than fishing with artificial lures. However, most fishermen agree that natural baits are usually more effective than artificial lures, especially in areas where there is plenty of fishing going on, and the fish are wary and difficult to catch.

NATURAL BAITES



Most types of small fish, 10-45 cm (4 to 18 inches) long can be rigged for trolling, but some are much better than others. A good bait 'swims' well when rigged, imitating the motion of the live fish without spinning or twisting the line. Garfish, long toms, and small seapike are good from this point of view due to their long tapered shape. Oily or fatty fish like sardines, herrings and mackerels are also good because of their strong odour, and so are belly flaps or thin fillets cut from skipjack and other tunas. Small mullets, bonefish and milkfish are medium in their effectiveness, along with belly flaps and fillets cut from white-fleshed fish. Least effective of all are small emperors, snappers, and reef fish, which do not have a far-reaching odour, and which often do not swim well when rigged for trolling.

No matter which kind of natural bait you use it should be as fresh as possible. The fresher the bait, the better it will perform.

Rigging of a variety of natural baits is shown in sections 4B-4E. Most of the rigging methods shown can be adapted for many different bait types.

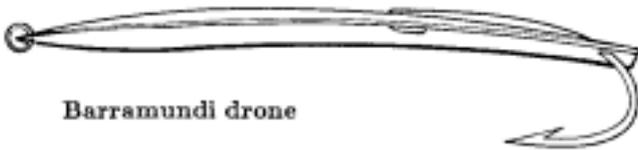
Artificial Lures

These fall into two main categories, soft lures and hard lures.

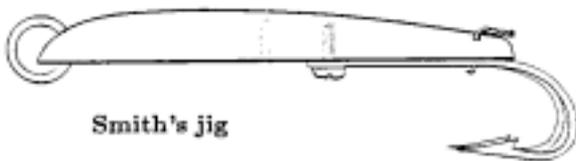
SOFT LURES are those which can become seriously damaged during fishing and which have to be periodically patched up. They normally consist of coloured rubber, plastic, feather or cloth decoration fixed onto a usable solid head. The most common is the standard rubber 'octopus' or squid lure which is used worldwide. These come in a wide range of colours and sizes and can be very effective in certain situations, for instance when trolling through tuna schools. Section 4G shows how to make and repair octopus lures.

The standard soft lure swims in a straight line with a slight fluttering movement. There are many other types which claim to be more effective for certain types of fishing because they flash, or make bubbles, or dart from side to side, etc. These include hexagon, jet, and Kona lures.

HARD LURES



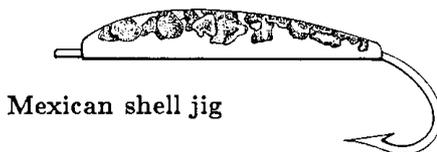
Barramundi drone



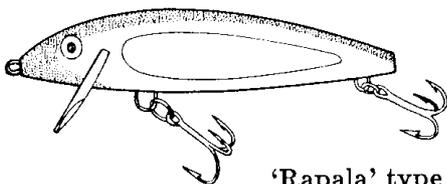
Smith's jig



'Tomic' lure

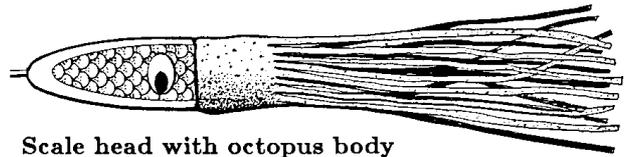


Mexican shell jig

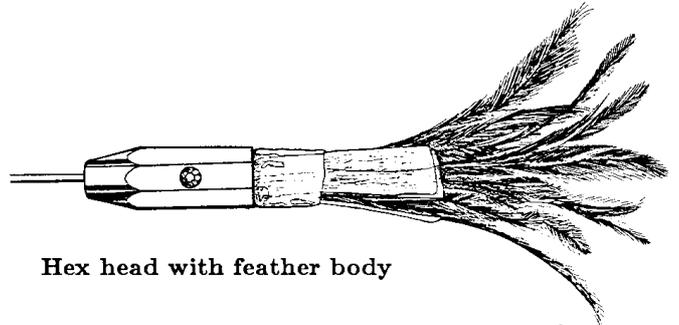


'Rapala' type lure

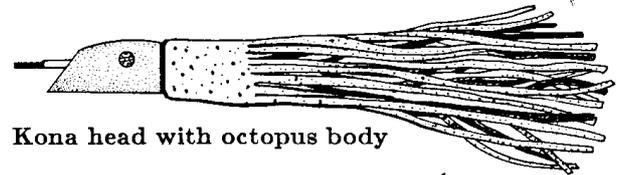
SOFT LURES



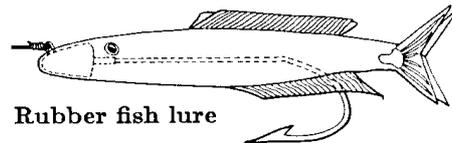
Scale head with octopus body



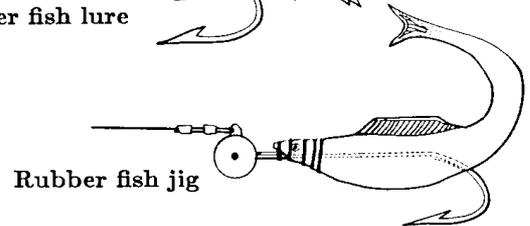
Hex head with feather body



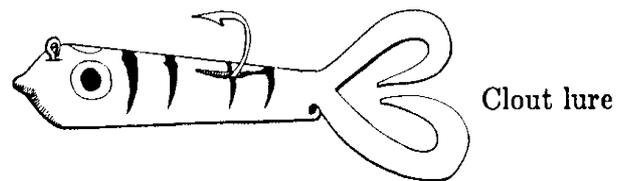
Kona head with octopus body



Rubber fish lure



Rubber fish jig



Clout lure

HARD LURES are usually metal or hard plastic and are meant to resist damage from an attacking fish. Many hard lures attract fish by a combination of an erratic swimming motion, and brightly coloured or reflective surfaces. Popular types include spoons, plugs, diving lures and many more. Although durable and resistant, many hard lures suffer from poor hooking rates -that is, many fish which strike the lures do not get hooked. Metallic lures need to be polished regularly to keep them shiny, and the hooks will usually rust rapidly due to the galvanic effect of the lure body. Non-metallic lures will become scratched or chipped and will need repainting or touching up from time to time.

Details of lure rigging and maintenance are shown in sections 4H and 4I.

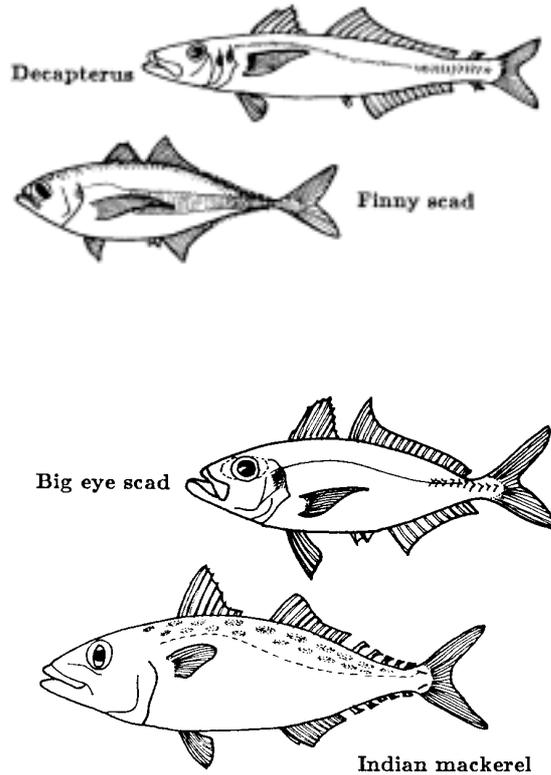
CHAPTER 4: BAITS AND LURES

SECTION B: RIGGING MACKERELS AND SCADS

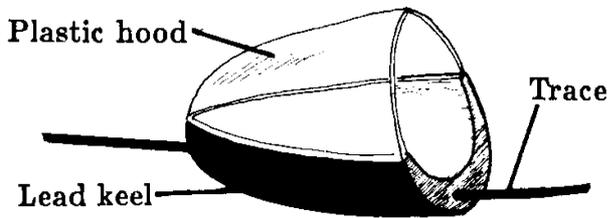
True mackerels (different from the much larger Spanish mackerels) are found in estuaries and coastal areas of a number of Pacific Island countries. Scads, which are somewhat similar in appearance, are found near the outer reefs of almost all Pacific islands.

The oily flesh and strong odour of this group of fishes make them good bait fish. However, the high oil content causes them to spoil rapidly, and the flesh can quickly become soft and mushy during towing. They will go soft within a few hours unless they are iced on capture, and they do not freeze well. Herrings and sardines are popular bait among anglers and sport fishermen, but are mostly too small to be used with the heavier commercial type gear described in this book. Small to medium-sized mackerels and scads, from 10 -25cm (4 -10 inches) long, are the best size.

MACKERELS AND SCADS



**COMMERCIAL CHIN CAP
(JAPANESE STYLE)**



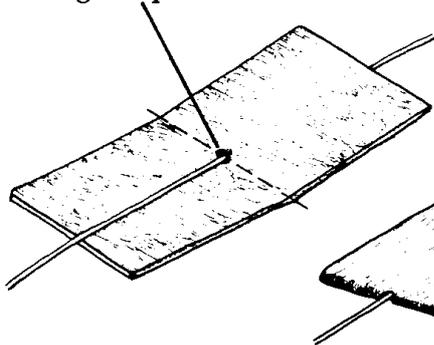
Preparation

Many mackerel like species have a body which is somewhat flattened from side to side and tends to spin around when towed. To prevent this, it is usual to fit a lead 'chin-cap', which acts as a keel and balances the bait in the water. The chin-cap also prevents the mouth of the bait from opening.

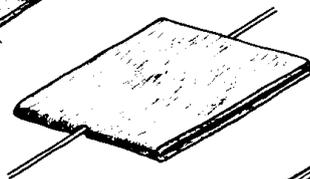
Several types of chin-caps are commercially available, but if these cannot be bought locally, a home-made version can be improvised from sheet lead, as shown below. Note that the chin-cap must be threaded onto the trace before rigging the hooks.

HOME-MADE CHIN-CAP

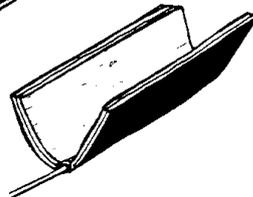
Make hole in middle of rectangular piece of lead



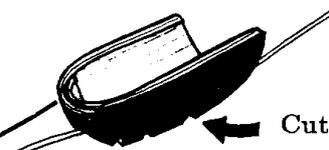
Pass line through and bend over



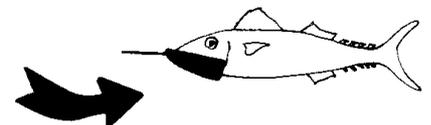
Fold up



Bend front edges together, trim to shape with cutters

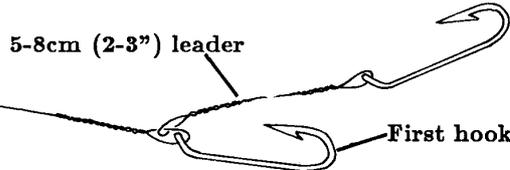
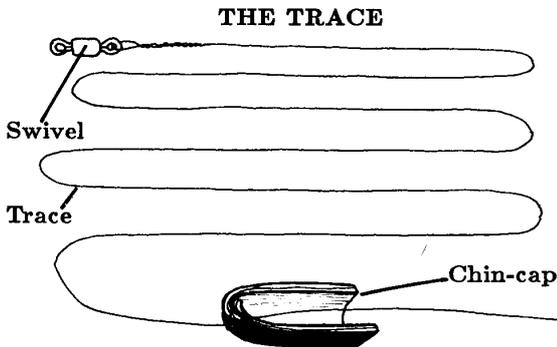


Cut notches beneath



The trace

The trace used should be of wire or cable, rigged with two medium or large single hooks, as shown below. The second hook is attached via a short leader, 5 -8 cm (2 -3 inches) long, to the eye of the main trace (not to the eye of the first hook).



Rigging

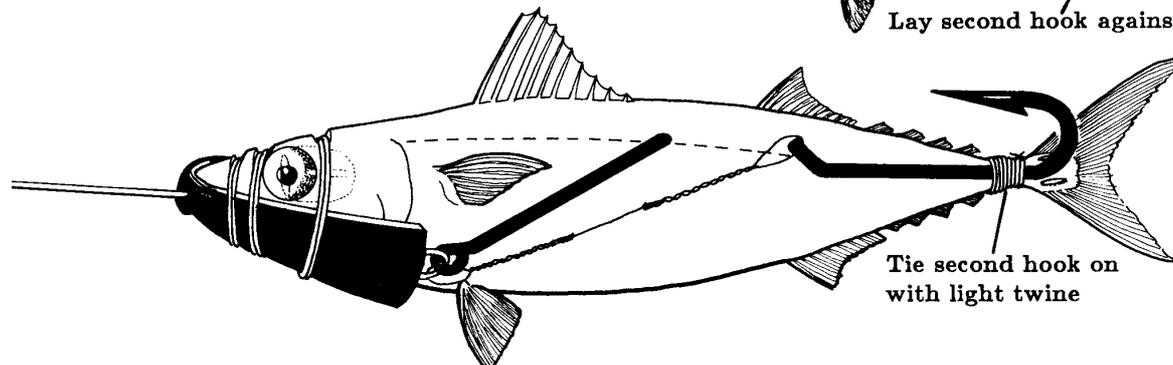
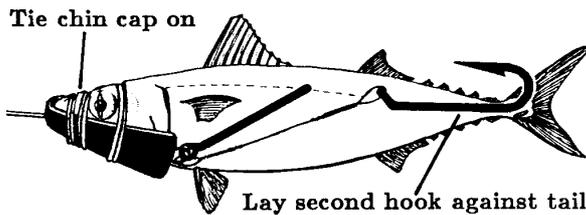
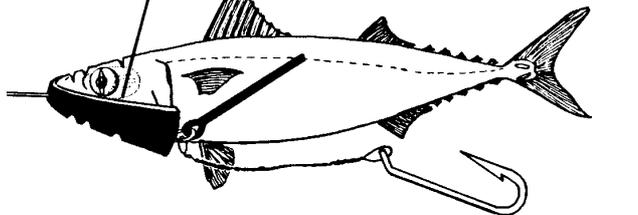
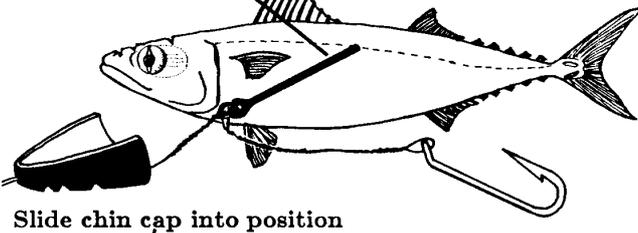
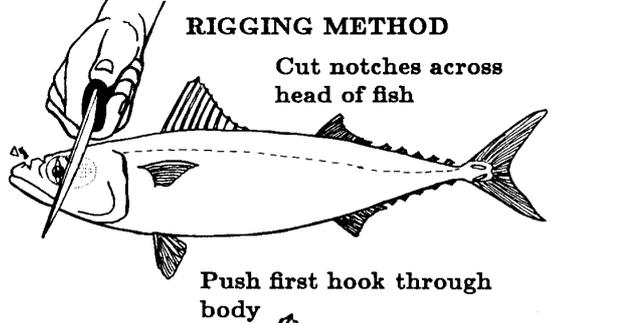
With a sharp knife cut two or three notches across the top of the fish's head.

Take the first hook and pass it through the body of the bait below the dorsal fin. Adjust its position so that the shaft lies diagonally over the belly, with the hook eye near the pelvic fin.

Slide the chin-cap down the trace and over the chin of the fish. Ensure that the end part of the trace lies along the bottom of the chin-cap.

Tie the chin-cap firmly onto the head of the fish with rubber bands, dental floss or light twine, using the notches already made.

With rubber bands or twine, tie the shaft of the second hook to the fish's tail.



The bait is now ready for use. (Some fishermen prefer to partially cut away the fillet on one or both sides of the bait in order to release more odour. If this is desired, it should be done before rigging the bait.)

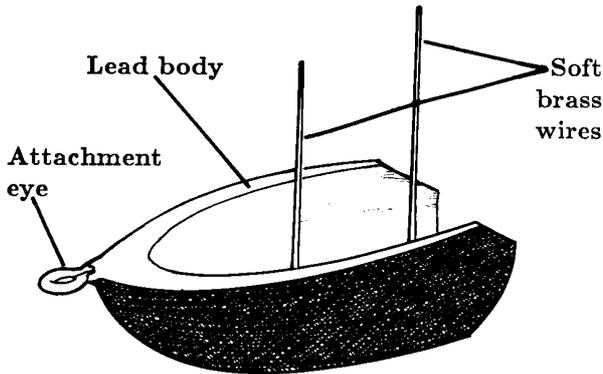
CHAPTER 4: BAITS AND LURES

SECTION C: RIGGING FLYING FISH AND SMALL, ROUND-BODIED FISH

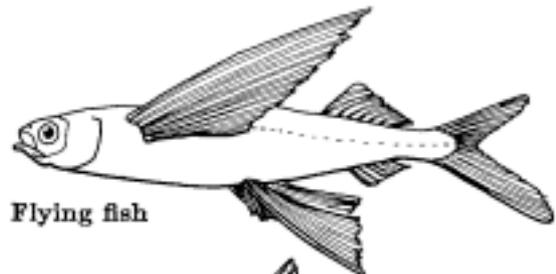
Several species of flying fish are present throughout the Pacific, and in many countries these form the basis of important local fisheries. As well as making good eating, flying fish are also excellent bait.

The rigging method shown here is also suitable for small mullets and other species which have a similar body shape.

COMMERCIAL CHIN CAP (AMERICAN STYLE)



SUITABLE BAITS



Flying fish



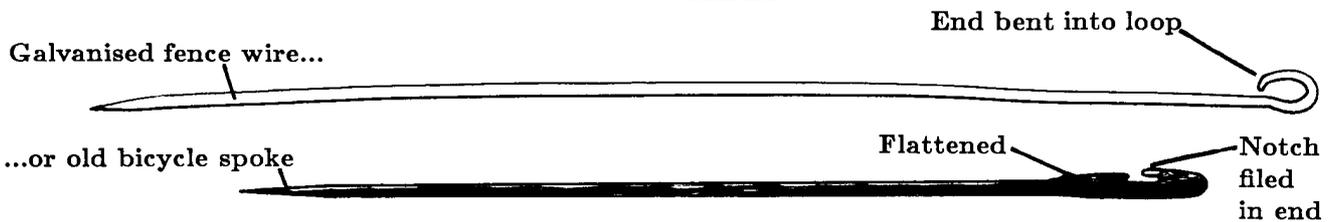
Mullet

Preparation

As with mackerels and scads (Section 4B) a chin cap is required for this type of rig. The most suitable is the commercially manufactured type shown opposite. Alternatively, the types shown in Section 4B can be used.

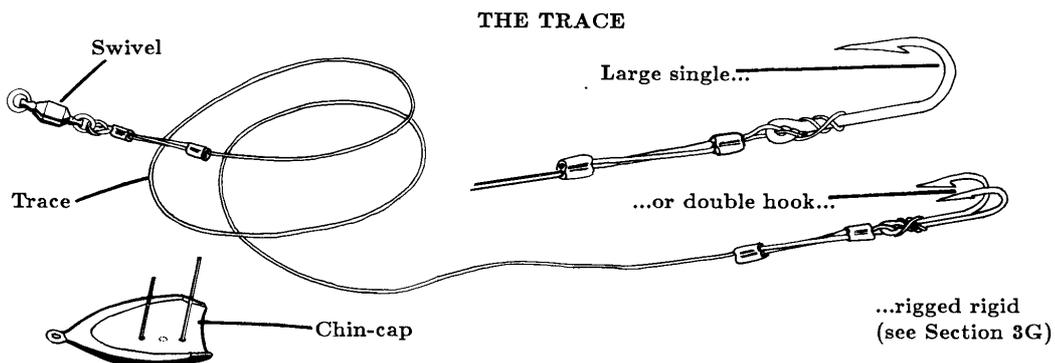
For this type of rigging, it is necessary to thread the trace through the body of the fish. The job is made much easier by using a bait needle, which is easy to make from wood or from an old bicycle spoke, heavy galvanised fence wire, etc. Sharpen one end to a point, and hammer the other end flat. Cut or file a notch into the flat end which the trace can be hooked.

BAIT NEEDLE



The trace

To rig the flying fish, a wire or cable trace, rigged with a large double hook is needed. The chin-cap should be tied onto the trace with wire or light line, so as not to be lost if it comes loose from the bait when a fish strikes. The double hook should be large enough for the fish to sit neatly between the two points. If a double hook is not available, a large single hook can be used instead. Which-ever type of hook is used, it should be tied rigid, as shown in Section 3G.



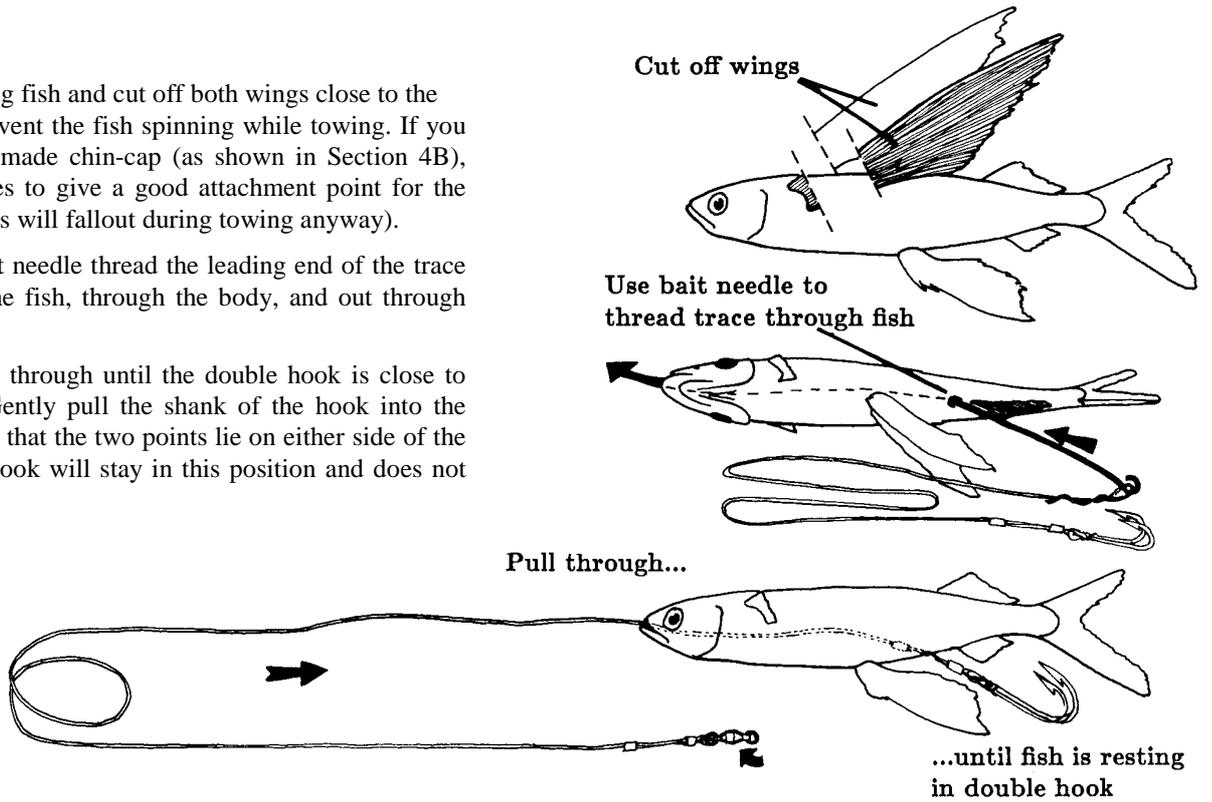
RIGGING METHOD

Rigging

Take the flying fish and cut off both wings close to the base. This will prevent the fish spinning while towing. If you are using a home made chin-cap (as shown in Section 4B), pluck out both eyes to give a good attachment point for the tie-string. (The eyes will fallout during towing anyway).

Using the bait needle thread the leading end of the trace into the anus of the fish, through the body, and out through the mouth.

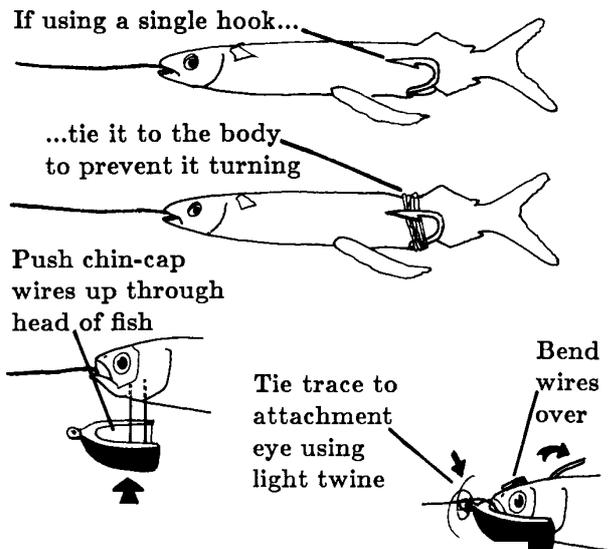
Pull the trace through until the double hook is close to the fishes body. Gently pull the shank of the hook into the anus of the fish, so that the two points lie on either side of the fishes body. The hook will stay in this position and does not need tying.



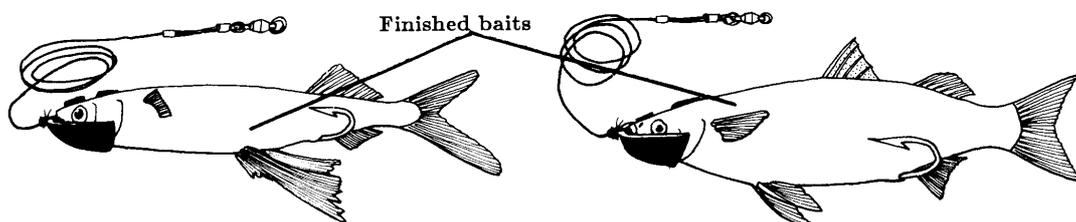
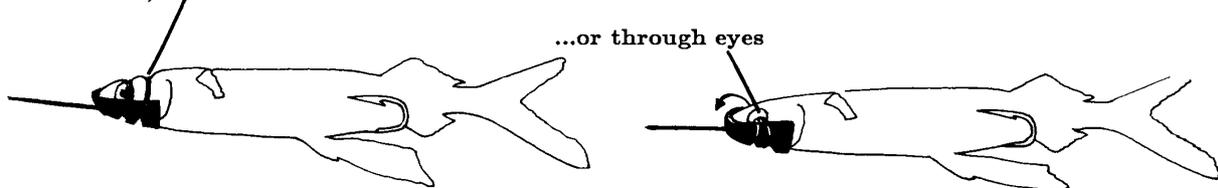
If using a single hook, the procedure is the same, but the hook may need to be tied in place using a rubber band, dental floss or light twine.

Slide the chin-cap down to the fish and push the wire spikes up through the head from underneath. Bend the ends of the spikes over to hold the chin-cap in place.

If using a home-made chin-cap tie it in place using light twine or wire passed through the eye socket. Alternatively, tie onto notches cut across the fishes head as shown in Section 4B.



For home-made chin-cap (see Section 4B) tie on around head...



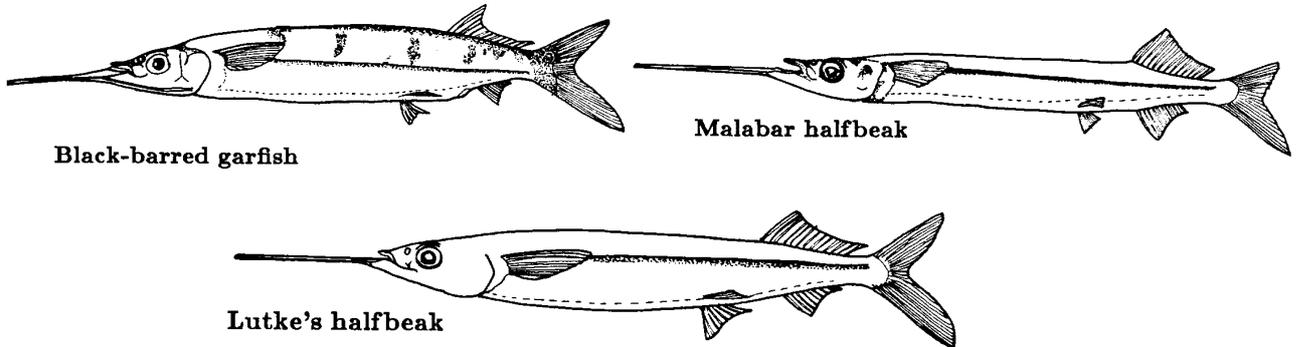
The bait is now ready for use.

CHAPTER 4: BAITS AND LURES

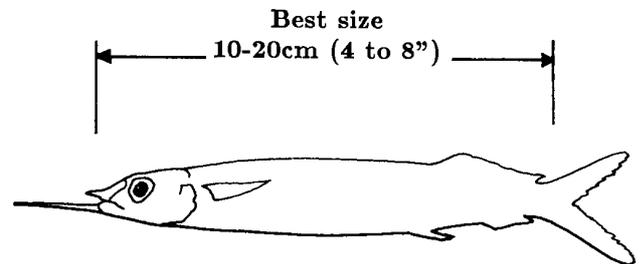
SECTION D: RIGGING GARFISH AND SMALL, LONG-BODIED FISH

Garfish are coastal species found in estuarine areas, near reefs and over weed beds in many Pacific Island countries. They are good bait for Spanish mackerels and a wide range of other coastal or reef-associated pelagic fish. Garfish have a reasonable odour without being too soft and oily. They remain firm after having been frozen, and can be towed for several hours without falling apart.

GARFISH



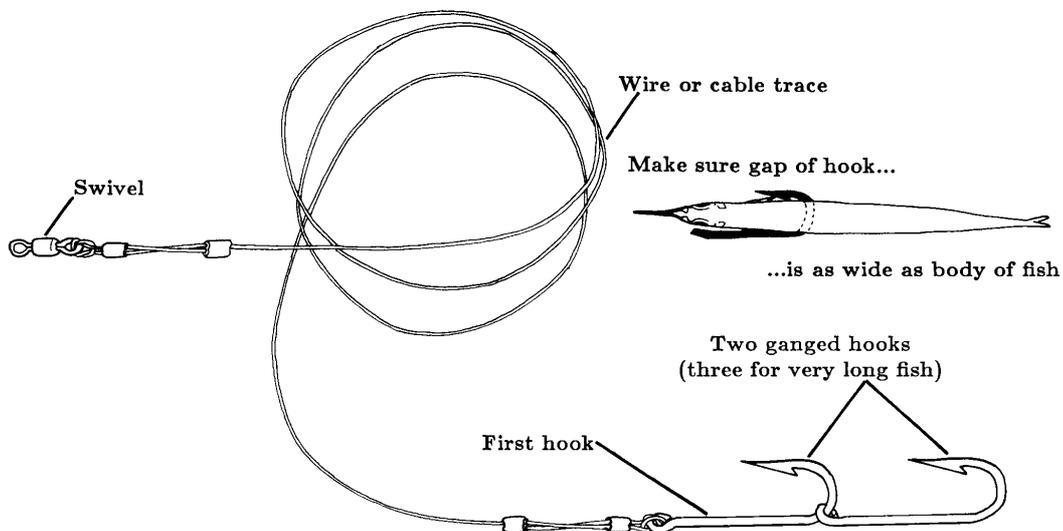
Some garfish species grow to lengths of 45cm (18 inches) or more. The best size for trolling is from 1020cm (4 to 8 inches) excluding the beak. Garfish can be caught in gill nets or by angling using light tackle.



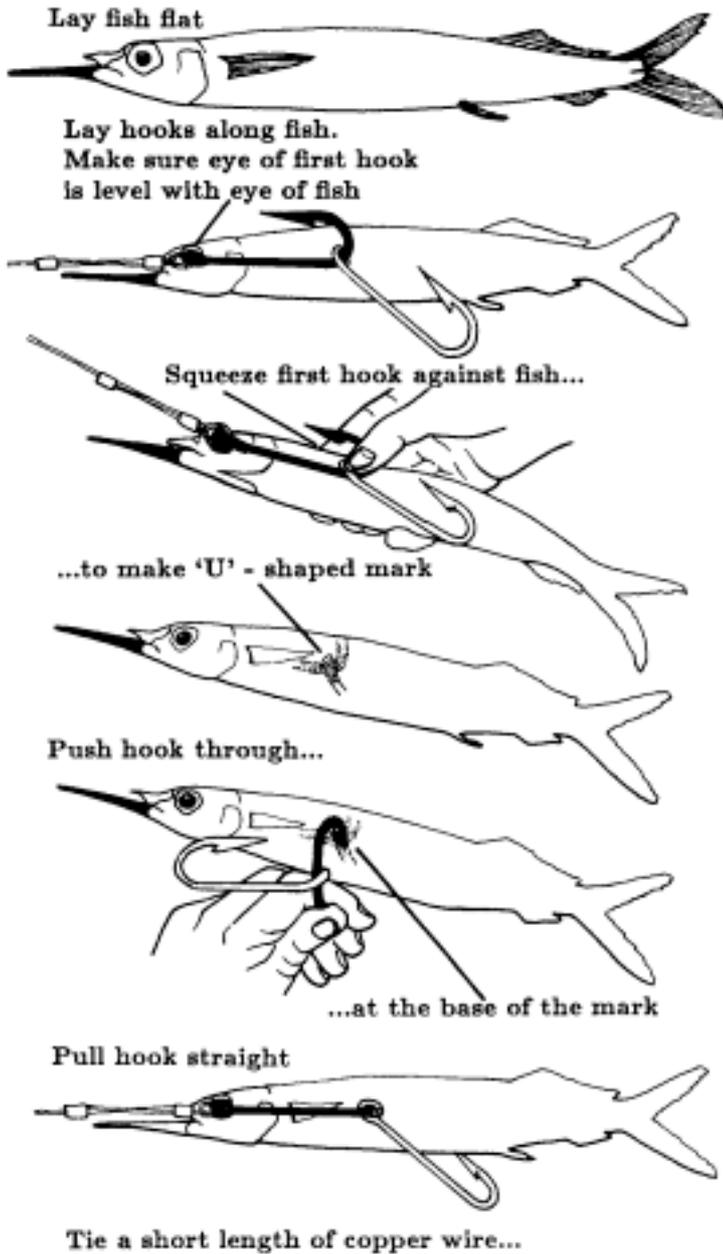
Preparation

To rig the garfish, two (or, if the fish is a large one, three) hooks are needed, ganged together as shown in Section 3B, and rigged on a trace of wire or cable. The hooks should be the same size, and the gap should be at least as wide as the thickest part of the fish. Use oversized rather than undersized hooks if the right size is not available. Use two hooks whenever possible, three when absolutely necessary. A three-hook rig makes the fish swim badly and may cause it to spin, twisting the line.

THE TRACE



RIGGING METHOD



Rigging

Take the garfish and lay it out straight on a flat surface. Lay the trace on top of the fish so that the eye of the first hook lines up with the eye of the garfish. Press the first hook down firmly on the fish to make an impression of the hook on the fishes side.

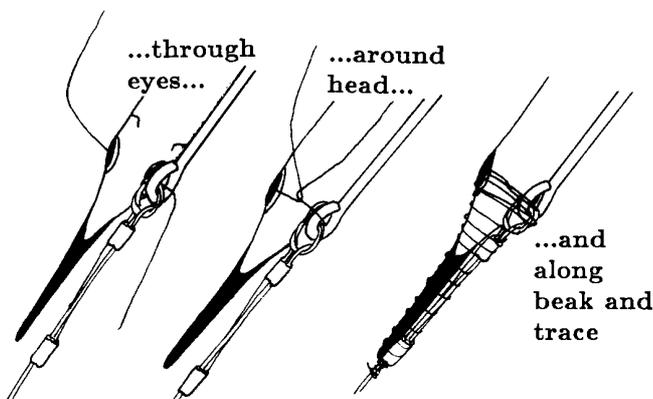
Use the 'U'-shaped impression made on the fish as a guide to where to insert the hook. Insert the point of the first hook at the base of the 'U'. Push the hook completely through the body, then adjust the position so that the hook eye lies alongside the fishes eye.

If using a larger fish and a three-hook rig, the procedure is slightly different. The trace is laid on the fish, and the eye of the first hook lined up with the fishes eye, as above. However, the second hook is pressed to make an impression on the fishes side. The second hook is inserted through the fishes body, using the impression as a guide. The first hook is then also pushed through the fishes body. The eye of the first hook should line up with the eye of the fish.

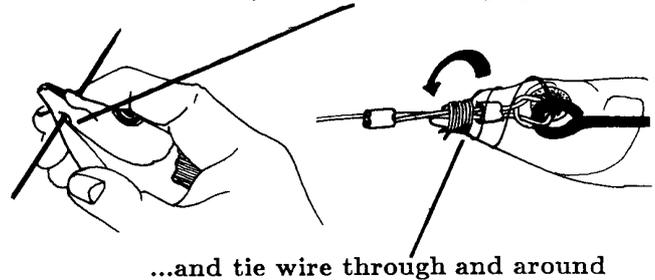
In both cases, the last hook (closest to the tail of the fish) is allowed to swing free.

Pass a 15 cm (6-inch) length of light tie-wire through the eye of the first hook and through both eyes of the fish. Twist the wire back on itself to secure it, then make tight wraps around the head, mouth and beak of the fish, working forwards towards the trace. This prevents the mouth of the fish opening, or the beak coming away from the line, both of which can cause the fish to spin during towing. When you come to the end of the wire, break off the rest of the beak.

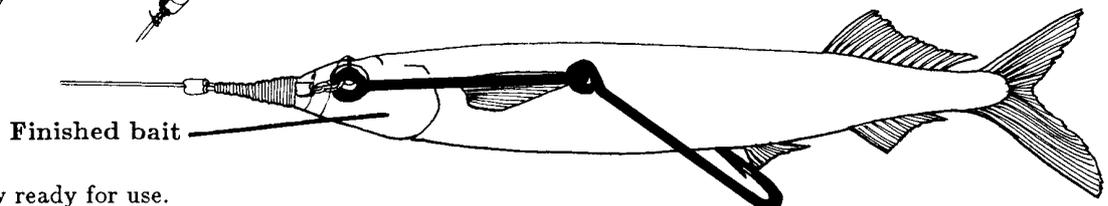
If the beak was already broken before you started, it may help to pierce a small hole through the upper and lower jaws of the garfish, using the point of a hook or other sharp object. The tie-wire can be passed through this hole several times to help keep the mouth closed.



If beak is broken, make hole through jaws...



...and tie wire through and around



The bait is now ready for use.

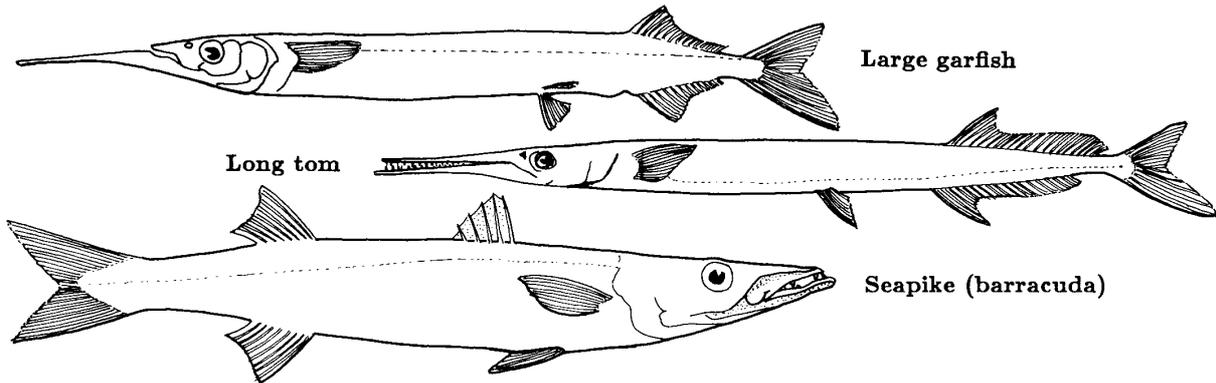
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SECTION E: RIGGING SEAPIKE AND LARGER, LONG-BODIED FISH

Seapike are actually small barracudas, and are caught throughout the Pacific Islands in nets, by trolling, and when line-fishing in lagoons or passes, especially at night. There are several species of barracuda, some of which attain large adult sizes. In many locations, barracuda have been known to cause ciguatera fish poisoning, and are unpopular eating fish, so their use as bait avoids waste.

The most practical sized seapike for trolling are those between about 25 -60 cm (10 and 24 inches) long. Other long-bodied fish, such as long-toms, large garfish, etc., are equally suitable. The rigging method shown here is intended to allow a single bait to be re-used several times, thus avoiding waste of these reasonably large fish.

SUITABLE BAIT

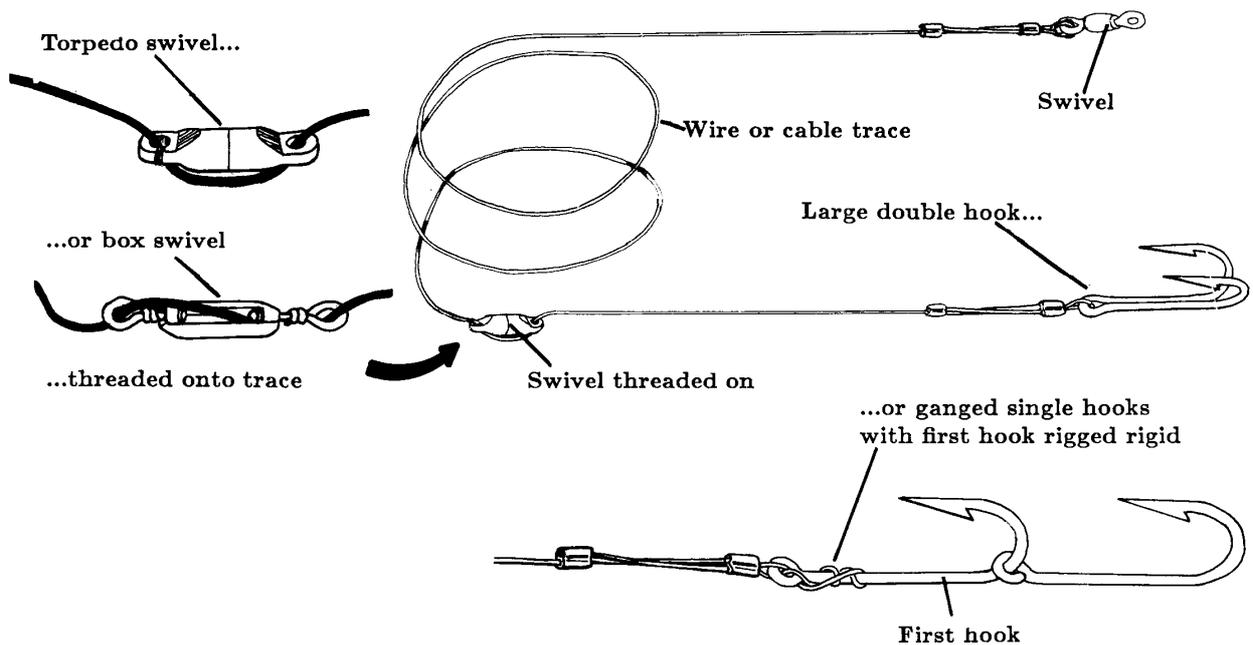


Preparation

The fishing rig is a trace of cable fitted with two medium-sized single hooks ganged together, or a large single or double hook (see Section 3B), depending on the size of the bait. If using ganged hooks, tie the first one rigid as shown in Section 3G.

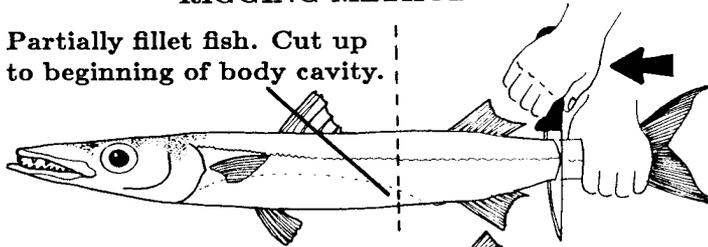
When making the rig, thread a box swivel, torpedo swivel or similar item onto the cable as shown. The swivel should be of a size such that it holds quite tightly on the cable, but can be slid along by hard pulling.

THE TRACE



RIGGING METHOD

Partially fillet fish. Cut up to beginning of body cavity.

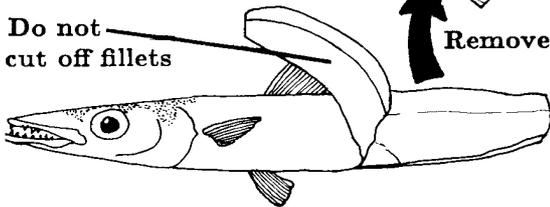


Rigging

Lay the fish on a flat surface. With a sharp knife, partially fillet the fish by cutting alongside the backbone from the tail towards the head on both sides. Fillet as far forward as is necessary to open up the back part of the belly cavity. Do not cut the fillets completely off the fish.

Cut or break out the backbone and tail where the fillets have been separated from it.

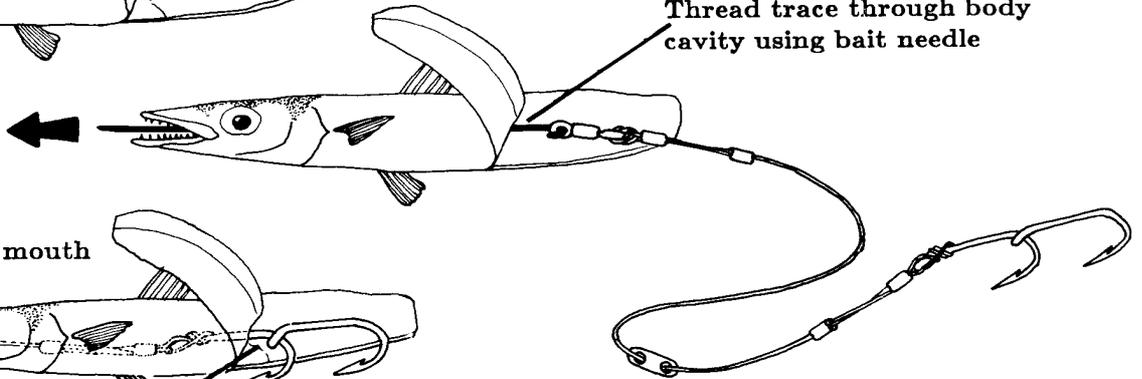
Do not cut off fillets



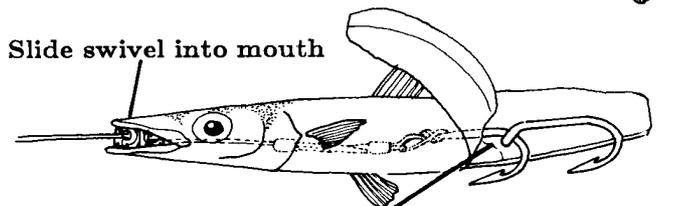
Remove backbone

Using a bait needle (see Section 4C) pass the trace in between the fillets, through the gut cavity and throat of the fish, and out through the mouth. Pull the trace through until the hooks lie between the fillets.

Thread trace through body cavity using bait needle



Slide swivel into mouth



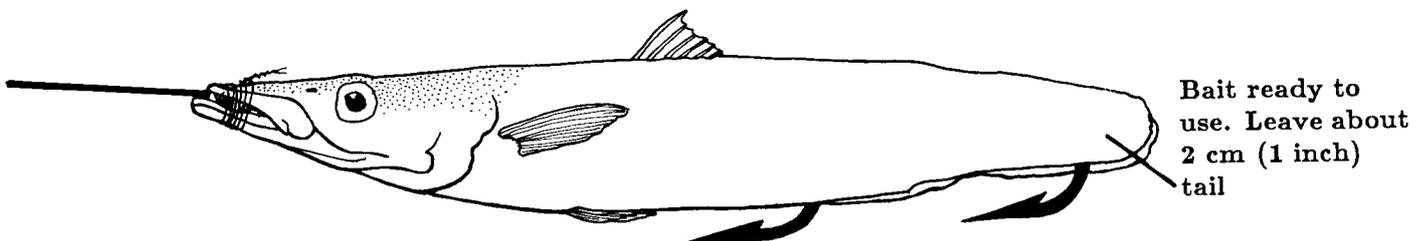
Pull hooks close to body.

Slide the swivel along the trace and into the fishes mouth. Tightly wrap a 15cm (6-inch) length of tie-wire around the fishes mouth several times, closing it firmly over the swivel. The swivel will then act as a stopper and prevent the bait from sliding too freely along the trace. (If using large garfish, wire the beak closely onto the trace as shown in Section 4D).

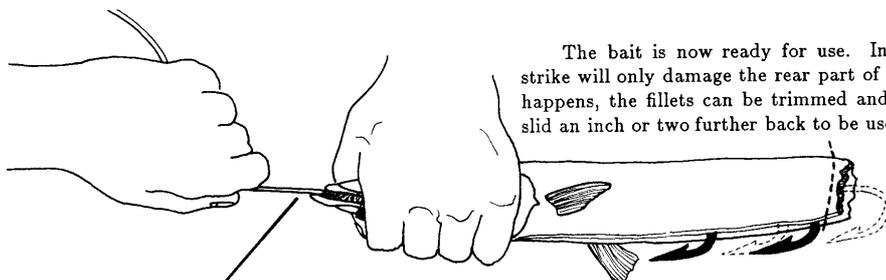


Tie mouth shut with wire

By gripping the head firmly, pull the bait along the trace until the hook is just covered by the two fillets.



Bait ready to use. Leave about 2 cm (1 inch) tail



If bait is damaged, hooks can be pulled forward and tail trimmed ready for use again

The bait is now ready for use. In many cases, a strike will only damage the rear part of the bait. If this happens, the fillets can be trimmed and the whole bait slid an inch or two further back to be used again.

CHAPTER 4: BAITS AND LURES

SECTION F: RIGGING CUT BAITS

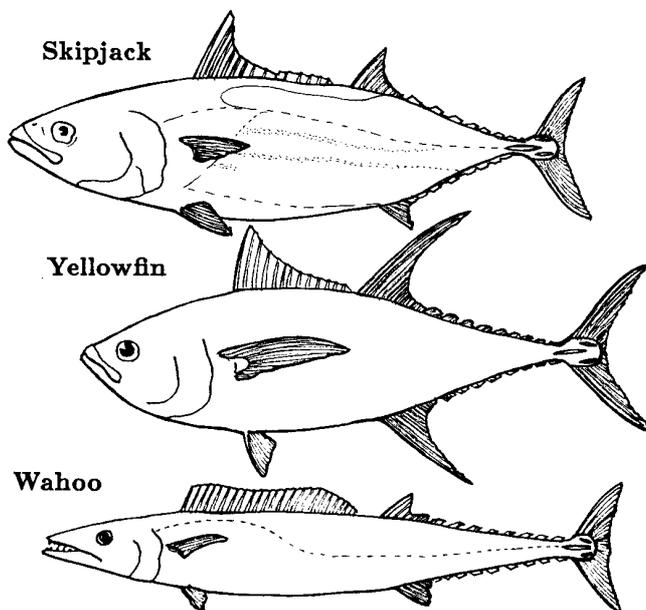
'Cut baits' are baits cut from the least desirable part of fish which will be eaten, or from fish which are intended for bait but which are too large to troll whole.

Belly flaps are the walls of the fishes belly cavity, and are the best cut baits of all. This part of the fish is usually tough, and is often infested with parasites and therefore not of very good eating quality. The outer skin, a strong membrane lining the gut cavity, and, often, a series of bones inside the flap itself, all help the bait to remain firm and keep its shape during towing.

The best belly flaps are those cut from skipjack, small (under 10 kgs, or about 25 lbs) yellowfin, and other tunas. They have a good odour and are about the right size, shape and thickness (1 -2 cm, or about 1/2 -1 inch). Wahoo and Spanish mackerels also give good belly flaps, and many other species are suitable.

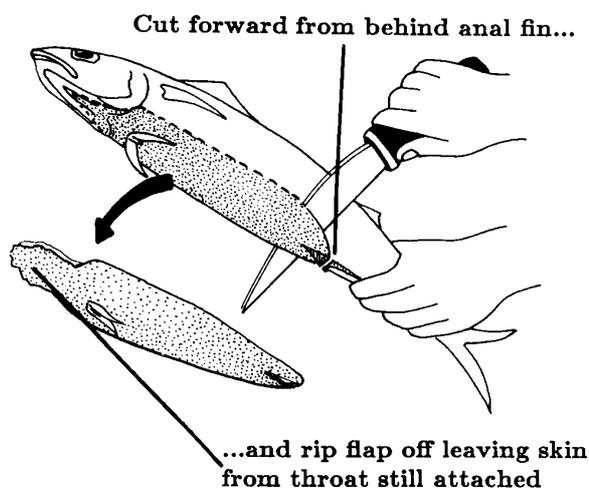
Strip baits are strips of flesh, usually with the skin left on, cut from large belly flaps or from any other part of the fish.

SUITABLE BAITS



REMOVING BELLY FLAPS...

...FROM SMALLER FISH

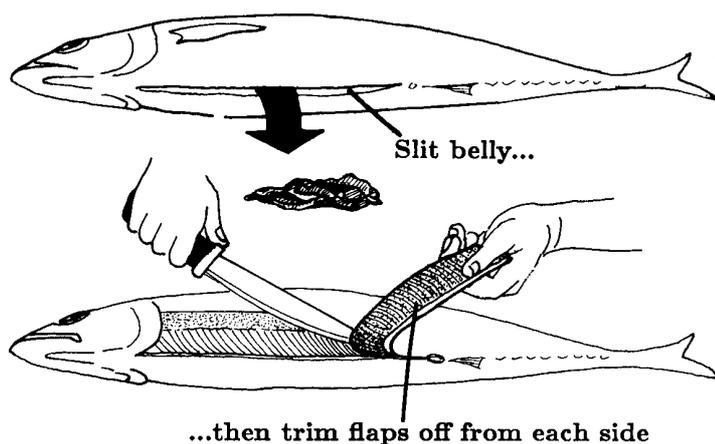


Cutting off belly flaps

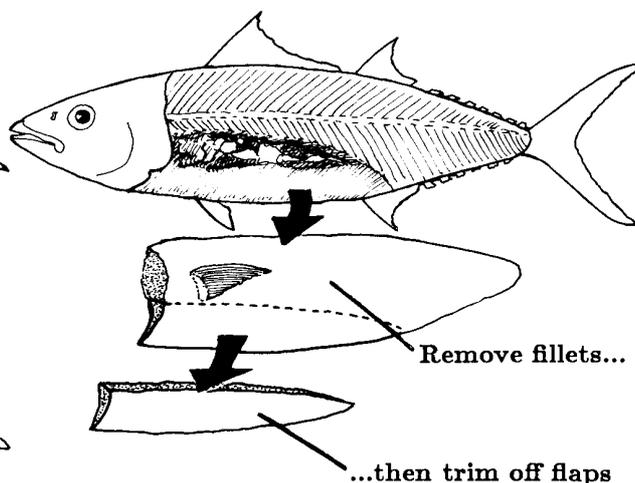
The way to cut the belly flap from the fish depends on the size of the fish and how it will ultimately be prepared or processed for sale. For small, whole tunas, the best way is -to hold the fish by the tail and cut forward from behind the anal fin to behind the gills, then rip the cut piece off by tearing forward and down. This results in both flaps being joined together, with a sheet of skin from under the gills still attached. The skin can be used in rigging the flaps (see facing page).

For larger fish, the belly should be slit from vent to throat, and the flaps trimmed off one at a time. If the fish is to be filleted, the flaps can be trimmed off the fillets.

... FROM LARGER FISH



...FROM FISH THAT WILL BE FILLETED

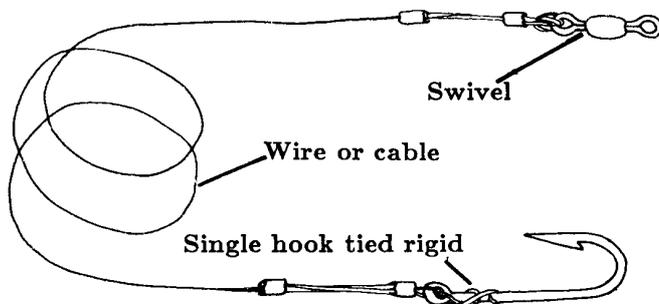


Size and Shape

Belly flaps from smaller fish should be left joined together with the skin from under the gills still attached. Larger belly flaps should be trimmed so that they are 15 - 20cm (6 to 8 inches) long by about 5 cm (2 inches) across at the widest part, tapering to a point at one end. A long triangular shape is ideal. Several baits like this may be cut from one large belly flap.

Fillets or other pieces of fish can also be used as cut baits by trimming them to the same triangular shape. However, they will not hold together as well as a belly flap and may become raggy during towing. Cut baits should always have the skin left on one side, and should be cut thin enough so that the hook point can protrude clearly when rigged.

THE TRACE



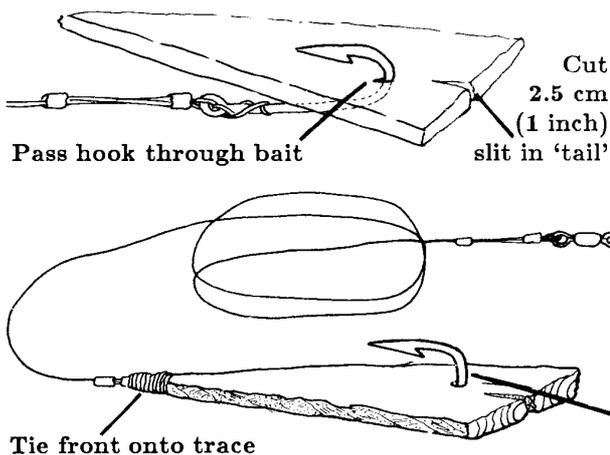
Rigging

For small flaps with skin still attached, push the hook through the centreline of the bait forward of the vent.

With light twine or cotton, tie the loose skin onto the trace by wrapping tightly.

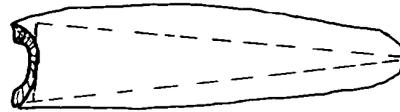
Cut out the anal fin from behind the hook to leave a 'V' shaped gap. This forms an artificial 'tail' which will flutter during towing.

...FOR CUT BAITES

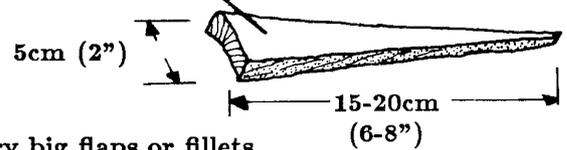


SIZE AND SHAPE

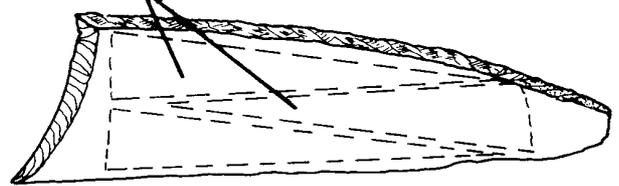
Leave smaller flaps double



Trim larger flaps to size



Very big flaps or fillets will give several baits

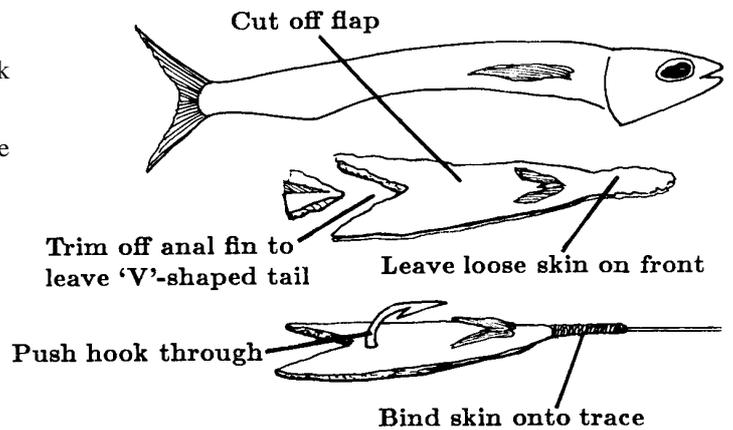


Preparation

A cable or wire trace is required and this should be rigged with a large single hook, tied rigid as shown in Section 3G.

RIGGING METHOD...

...FOR SMALL BELLY FLAPS



Rigging a cut bait is very similar. Cut a slit 2 cm (1 inch) into the base or 'tail' of the bait. This will give it a little extra motion during towing.

Push the hook through the bait about 4 -5cm (1 to 2 inches) from the 'tail'.

Using twine, wire or rubber bands, tie the pointed end of the bait tightly onto the trace, to prevent it sagging on the hook.

The bait is now ready for use.

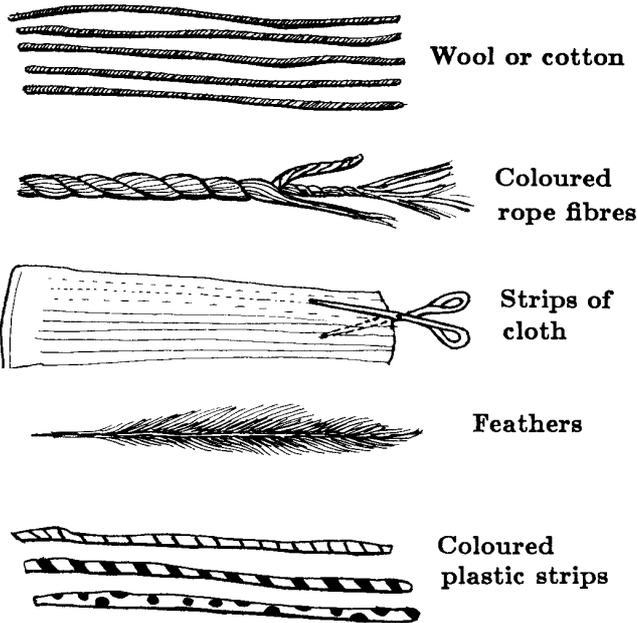
Make sure bait is thin enough so that hook sticks out

CHAPTER 4: BAITES AND LURES

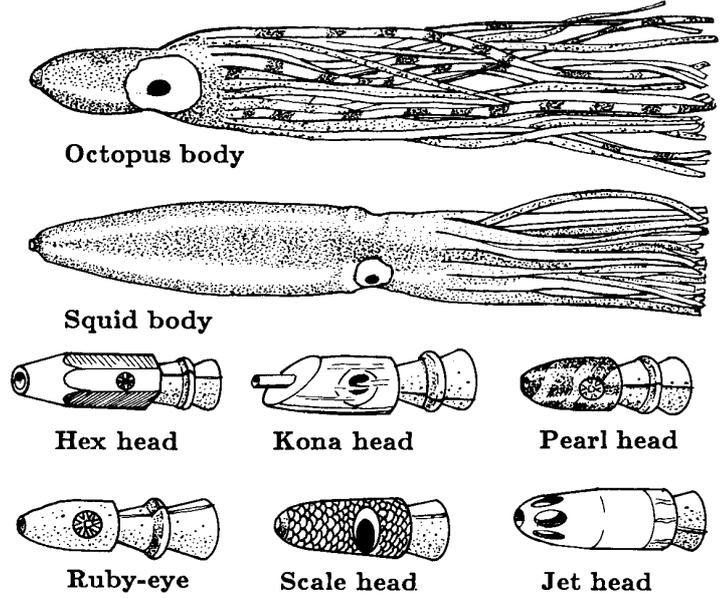
SECTION G: MAKING 'OCTOPUS' LURES

Of the 'hard' and 'soft' lures described in Section 4A, one basic type has become especially popular in the Pacific region because of the ease with which it can be made and used. This is the 'octopus' lure, so called because the plastic lure skirt looks like a small octopus. There are many other lures which are made to the same basic pattern, that is a skirt of feathers, fibres or other material bound around a solid head, which has a hole drilled through it to take the trace. Feather and jet jigs, ruby-eyes, pearl head, squid, hexagon and Kona lures are all in this same group.

MATERIALS FOR LURE SKIRTS



COMMERCIAL OCTOPUS LURE TYPES



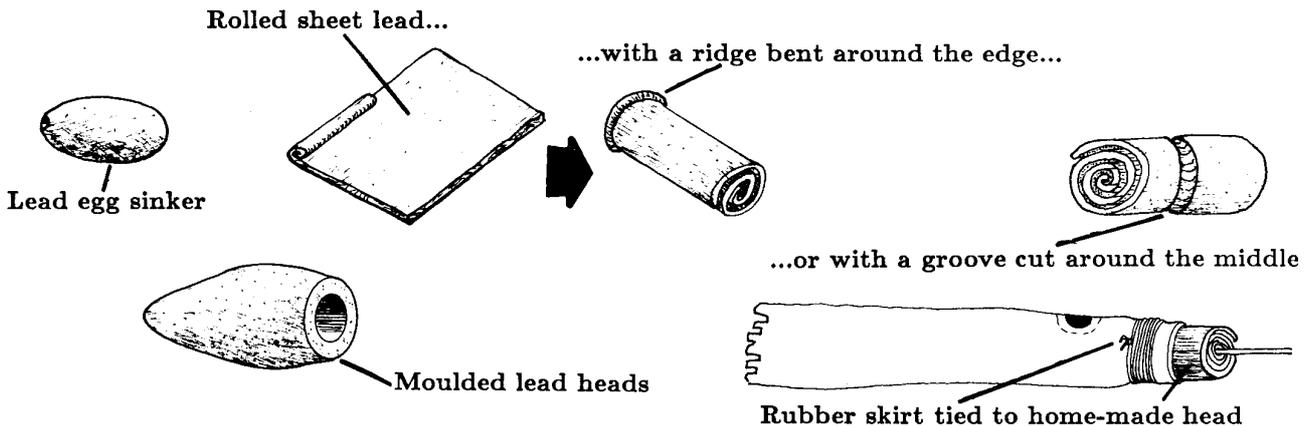
Skirts

In preparing these lures, a variety of materials can be used for the skirt. Commercially available types consist of a moulded rubber or plastic cylinder fused at one end and cut into tassels at the other. These are brightly coloured and come in a variety of patterns and sizes. Other skirt materials, such as dyed feathers and iridescent plastic fibres ('firtail') are also commercially available. Alternatively, a variety of household materials can be used including coloured rope fibres, strips of cloth, cut-up plastic or string bags, wool, chicken feathers and a wide range of other items.

Heads

The best heads to use are those specially manufactured for the purpose. They come in a variety of sizes and colours, are made of bright or iridescent plastic or shell, and are usually weighted with a solid lead core. The tapered neck ensures that the skirt will not slip off. If commercially made heads are not available, alternatives can be improvised. An ordinary egg-shaped lead fishing sinker can be used with octopus or squid skirts. Sheet lead rolled into a cylinder can be used with other lure materials if a groove is scored or crimped around the middle or a lip bent onto the end. Other materials which can be used include metal, plastic resins or wood, depending on locally available materials.

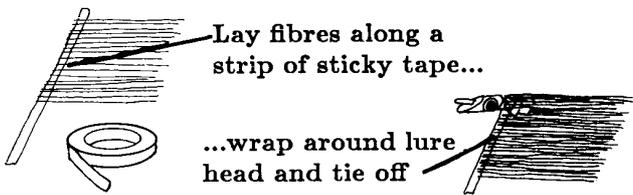
MATERIALS FOR LURE HEADS



Tying rubber skirts

Attaching an octopus or squid skirt to a lure head is easy, if awkward. The skirt should be the right size for the head or slightly oversized. The sealed end of the head is cut off to leave a little smaller than the head width. The skirt is then turned inside out, and moistened with saliva so that the head can be pushed through. Once the base of the neck is level with the cut end of the skirt, the skirt is tied on tightly with several wraps of cotton or twine. The twine is secured with several overhand knots, and then the skirt folded back into the correct position.

TYING ON FIBRE SKIRTS

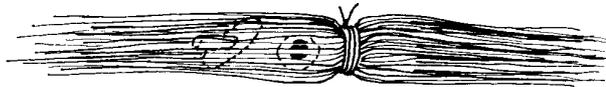


OR

Wrap twine around lure several times...



...adding a few fibres with each turn...



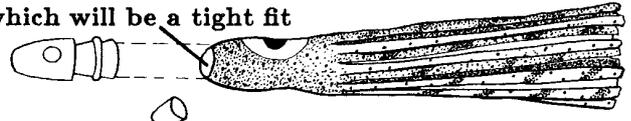
...until you have enough...



...then double back and tie again

TYING RUBBER SKIRTS

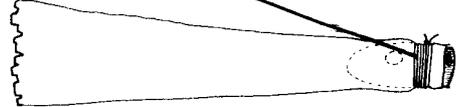
Cut tip off skirt, to leave hole which will be a tight fit



Turn skirt inside out and pass head through backwards



Tie skirt on using dental floss, cotton, or light twine



Turn skirt back



Tying fibre skirts

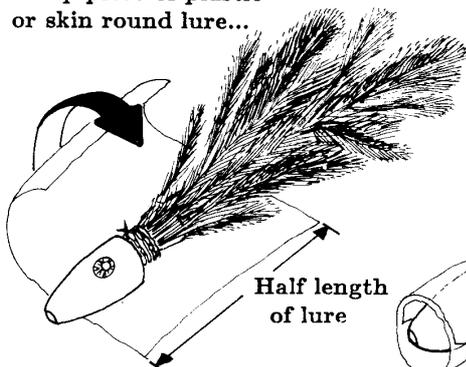
When using fibres or feathers to make up a lure, the easiest way is to stick a single layer of strands onto a length of sticky tape. Wrap the tape around the lure head several times until you have enough fibres on it, then tie the tape down tightly using dental floss or light twine. If you have no sticky tape, start by wrapping the twine, and then add a little lure material with each extra wrap. By building up little by little, it is easier to ensure the lure material is evenly distributed round the head, and that each piece is properly secured. Finish tying by making several overhand knots. With long fibres a long leading edge doubled back will add to the body of the lure and save on the number of strands you need to add.

Protecting lures

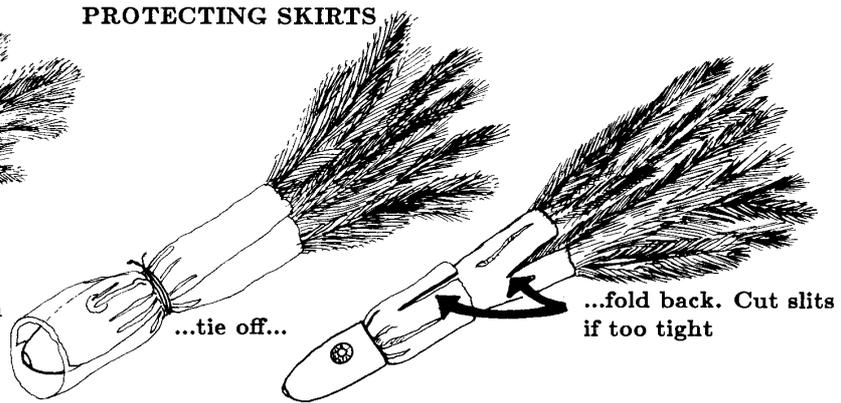
Some lure materials, especially feathers, quickly become ragged in use and lose their streamlined shape. This can be prevented, and the feathers protected by tying on a protective sheath. Sheet plastic, such as a strong carrier bag, can be used. Dried dolphin-fish skin is also good for this purpose.

To fit the sheath, just cut the plastic into a strip half as wide as the length of the lure and more than long enough to go completely round the lure head. Tie it on very tight, and then fold back the leading edge. If the plastic is too stiff to fold easily, or holds the lure material too closely together, cut one or two slits into it to loosen it as necessary.

Wrap piece of plastic or skin round lure...



PROTECTING SKIRTS



Half length of lure

...tie off...

...fold back. Cut slits if too tight

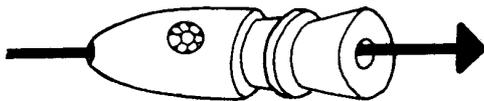
CHAPTER 4: BAITS AND LURES

SECTION H: RIGGING LURES

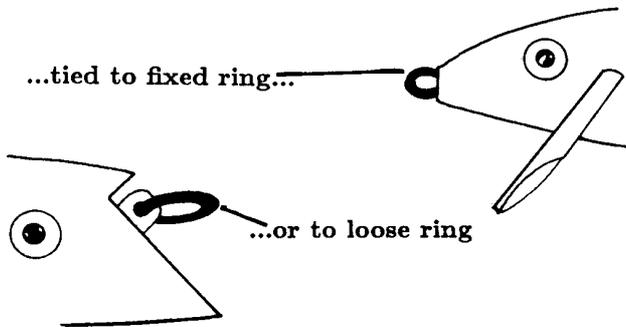
Artificial lures are available in a variety of shapes, sizes, and colours. Even so, they are normally rigged in one of only two different ways, depending on whether they have a hole drilled through the head (many soft lures) or an attachment point of some sort (some soft lures and most hard lures).

Like baits, most lures should normally be rigged on wire or cable. Only use a nylon or other non-metallic trace when you are reasonably confident that the fish you will catch cannot bite through it.

LURE ATTACHMENT POINTS



Trace is threaded through lure head...

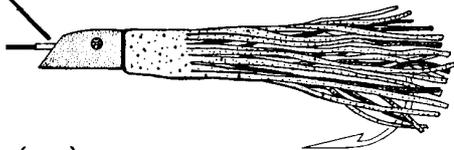


...tied to fixed ring...

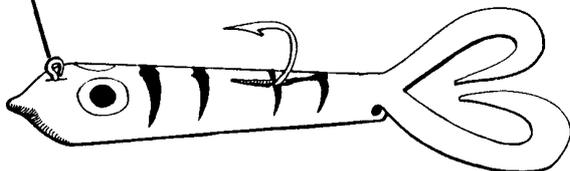
...or to loose ring

SOME EXAMPLES

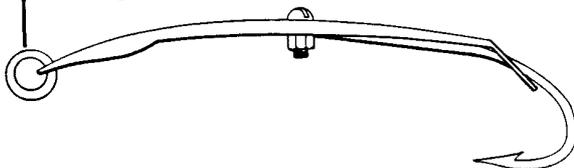
Trace threaded through



Fixed ring (eye)



Loose ring



TRACES FOR LURES

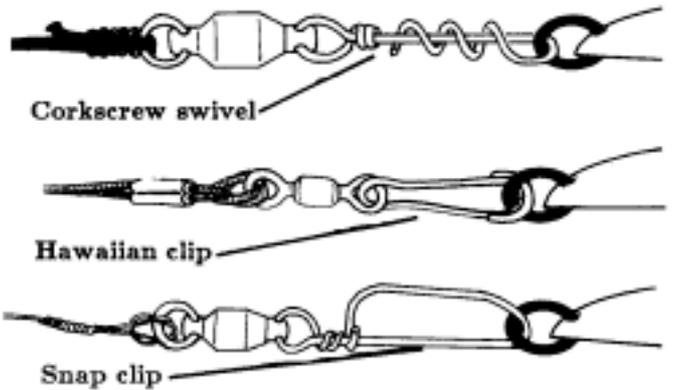


Only use nylon when you are catching fish which cannot bite through it

Rigging lures with an attachment point

Many lures have an attachment ring or eye into which the trace can be fastened directly by tying or crimping, depending on the trace material. Alternatively a snap swivel, Hawaiian hook or similar fastener can be used so that the lure on a particular trace can be changed over. This saves on trace material and makes lure storage easier, but care must be taken that the fastener is strong and not liable to come open when struck or bitten by a fighting fish.

ATTACHMENT USING CLIPS...



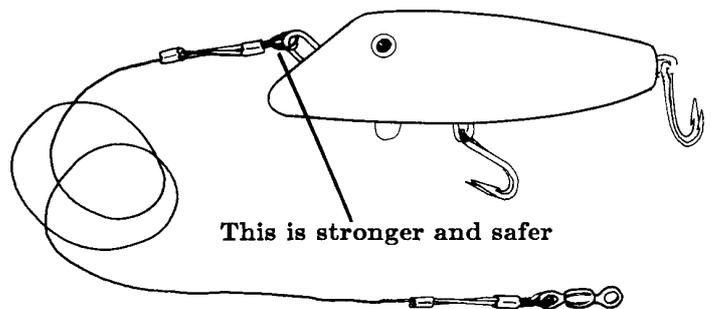
Corkscrew swivel

Hawaiian clip

Snap clip

These allow lures to be changed over using the same trace

...OR DIRECTLY

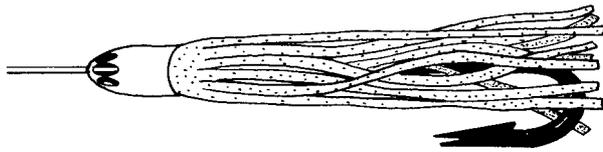


This is stronger and safer

Since many lures in this category are designed to spin, dart from side to side, or otherwise attract fish by their erratic movement, it is normal, and usually essential, to rig a swivel onto the forward end of the trace to prevent twisting of the mainline.

RIGGING OCTOPUS LURES

Rigging octopus and similar lures



Ways to make these lures are described in Section 4G. They all have a solid head with a hole drilled through it.

Loop or swivel (swivel is best)

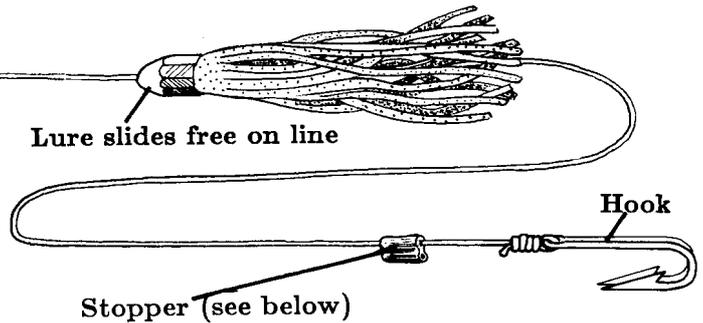


To rig these lures, the trace is just threaded through the lure before the ends are tied or crimped. These lures are often rigged on monofilament nylon as they are used for catching tunas, which cannot bite through it. It is normal to use a double hook of a size such that the points protrude slightly through the skirt. However, on larger lures, a large single hook, or ganged hooks, are preferred by some fishermen.



Wire or nylon trace

When rigging this type of lure, the hook should be tied on first, then the stopper position (see below) determined, the stopper fixed on, the lure threaded on the trace, and finally, the other end of the trace finished off.



Lure slides free on line

Hook

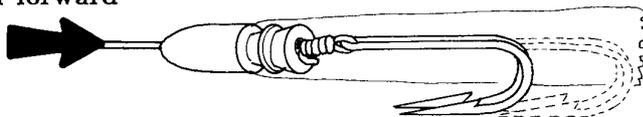
Stopper (see below)

Stoppers

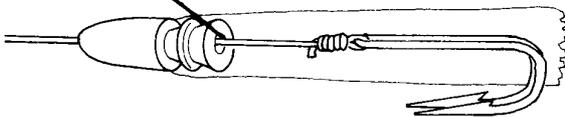
The best position for the hook is at the tail end of the skirt. This increases the number of hookups when the fish only nip at the tail of the lure. However, since the lure is free to slide along the trace, it will normally be pushed up against the hook during towing, with the result that the hook is too far forward. To avoid this, a stopper can be put on the trace. This may be a crimp, a series of plastic beads, a rubber band or a piece of twine tied lightly on the trace, depending on the trace material, and the choice available. It is very bad practice to tie a knot as a stopper, since this will greatly weaken the line.

POSITIONING THE HOOK IN THE LURE

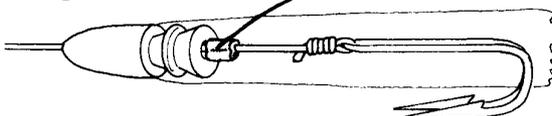
Lure tries to slide back down line, so hook is too far forward



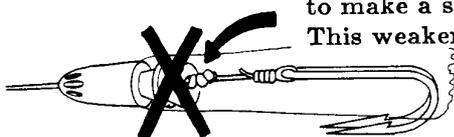
This is where the lure should be



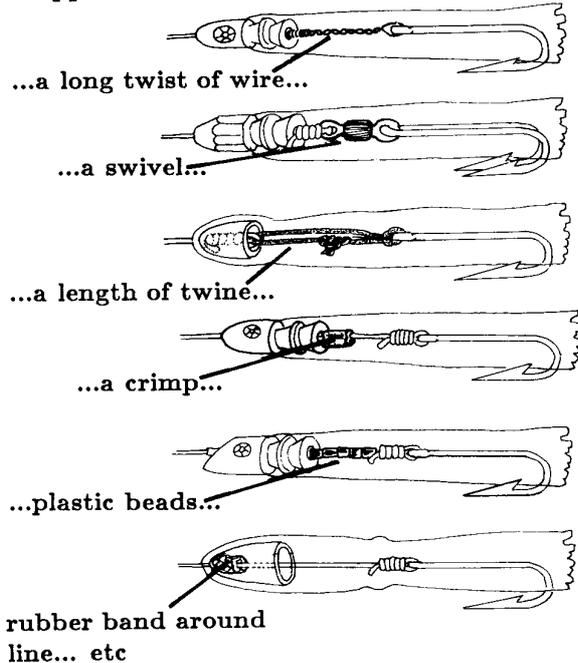
To keep it there, fit a stopper onto the line



Never knot the trace to make a stopper. This weakens the line



A stopper can be...



...a long twist of wire...

...a swivel...

...a length of twine...

...a crimp...

...plastic beads...

...a rubber band around the line... etc

Even though ordinary octopus lures tow without swimming or darting about, it is still good practice to rig a swivel on the forward end of the trace. This is because a hooked fish will sometimes spin and cause the line to twist if not attended to quickly. When rigging Kona and other flat-headed lures, which spin and twist continually during towing, a swivel on the forward end of the trace is needed.

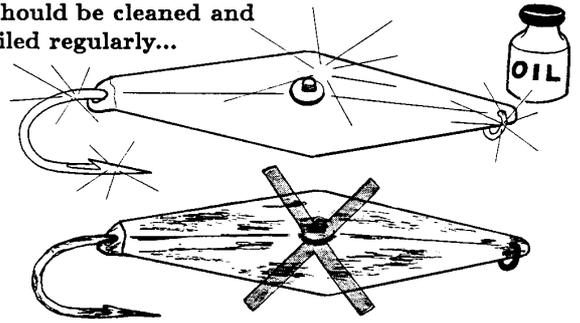
CHAPTER 4: BAITS AND LURES

SECTION I: LURE MAINTENANCE AND STORAGE

A major advantage of artificial lures is that they last a long time compared to natural baits. However, many types of lures will spoil rapidly unless they are properly cleaned and stored when not being used. This is especially true of metal lures, which, because they usually contain more than one type of metal, suffer from the effects of galvanic action. This means that some parts of the lure -often the hook -will rust quickly unless the salt water is washed off them after use.

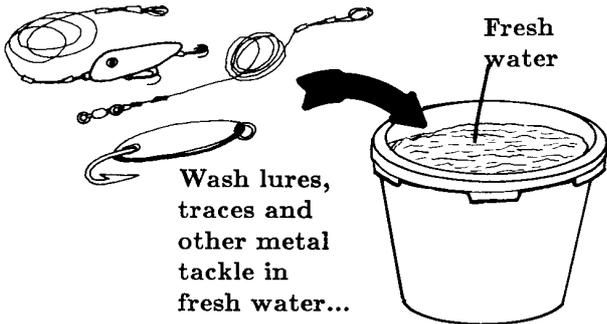
METAL LURES

Should be cleaned and oiled regularly...



...or they will rust up and become useless

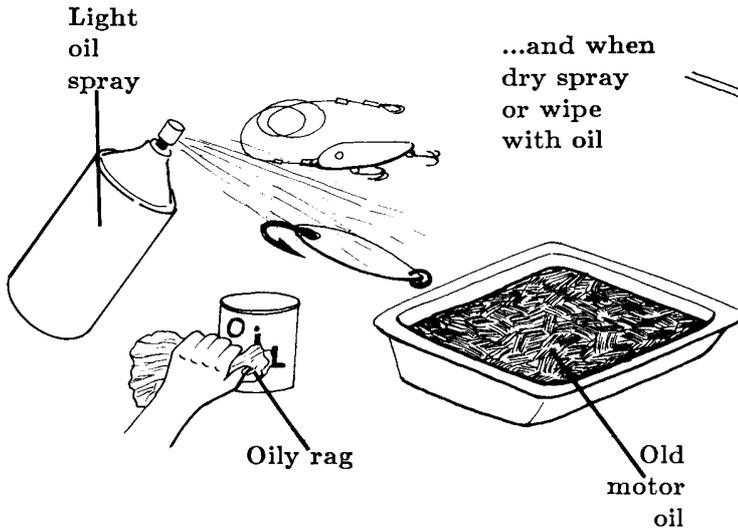
KEEPING LURES CLEAN



Keeping lures clean

It is good practice to rinse all lures and traces after the fishing trip is over. When dry, spray metal parts with CRC, WD-40 or a similar light lubricant, or wipe them with an oily rag. Keep new gear separate from that which has already been used, so that the new gear does not become contaminated with salt.

CHECK FOR DAMAGE

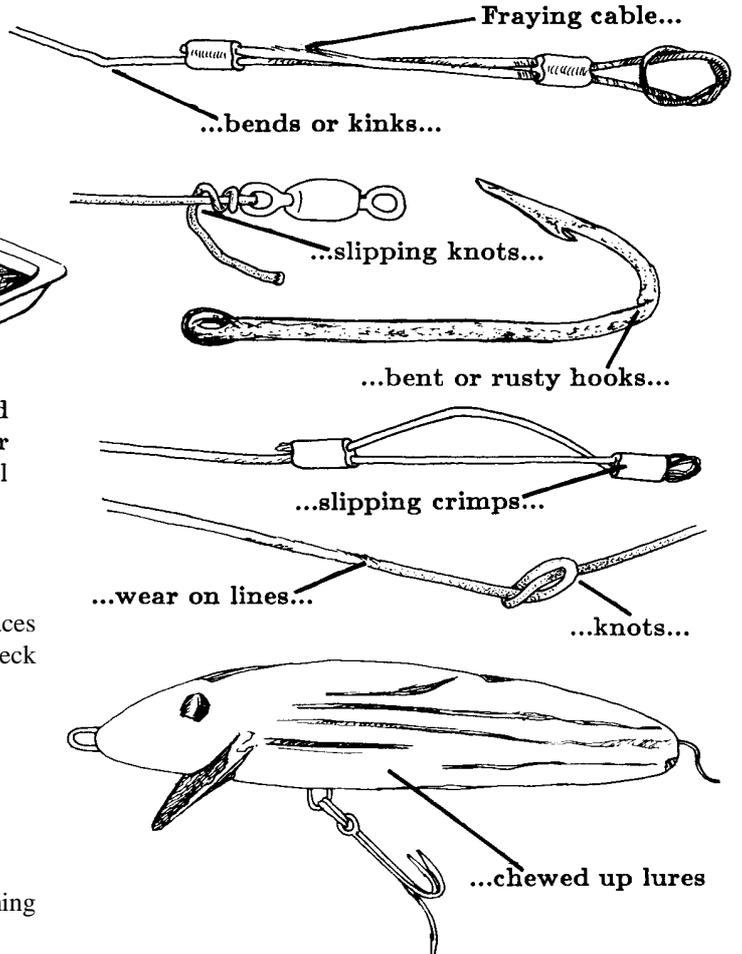


Checking for damage

Before putting the gear away, check the lures and traces carefully for damage and deterioration. In particular, check for:

- bent, cracked or rusting hooks;
- rusting, fraying or kinks in wire and cable;
- abrasion or knots in monofilament and multifilament lines;
- sleeves, knots and splices which are slipping or coming undone;
- damage done to lure bodies by fish teeth.

Decide whether the damage needs repair before the next trip. In doing so, remember that neglect of the gear means you may lose the next big fish to strike.



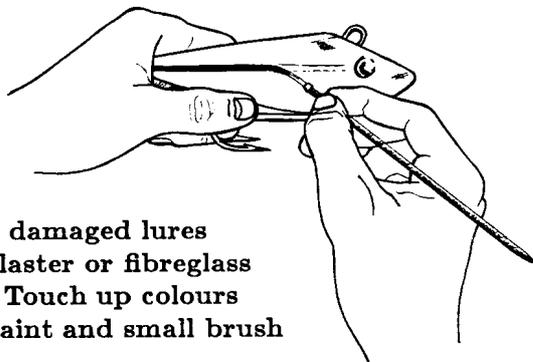
Replacing hooks

Keeping hooks in good order is very important. A lot of hard lures suffer from bad hookup rates, and this will be made worse if the hooks are blunt or bent out of shape. Hook sharpening is described in Section 3B. When a hook gets to be very rusty, or if it has been bent and straightened several times, it should be replaced. Also, consider changing the hook(s) on any lure which shows a consistently bad hookup rate, as it (they) may be too small, or the wrong shape for the lure. Try to avoid those lures which have permanently attached hooks that cannot be changed, or those with special types of hooks which may be hard to get.

Touching up

Coloured plastic, wooden or metal lures will in time become chipped and scratched and gouged by fish's teeth. As these lures are often quite expensive, they are worth fixing up whenever possible. Fibreglass filler putty can be used to fill in deep cuts and gouges in lures, and paintwork can be touched up or redone using nail varnish, car paint or model paint, all of which come in small bottles and bright colours. Repairs to octopus-type lure skirts can be made by tying on new lure material as described in Section 4G.

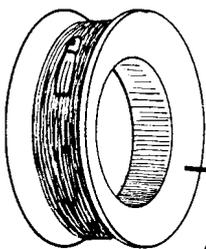
TOUCHING UP



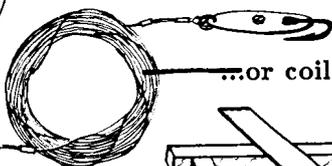
Fix up damaged lures with plaster or fibreglass paste. Touch up colours with paint and small brush

STORAGE

Store lines on old plastic bottles...

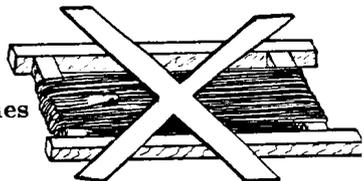


...or on plastic handcasters



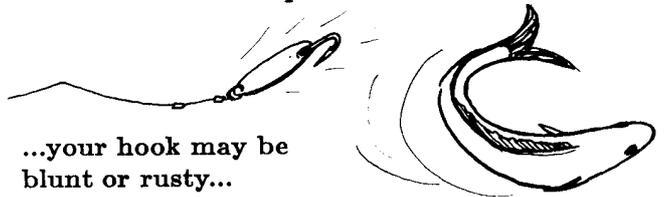
...or coiled in loops

Never store lines on frames like this - they will kink

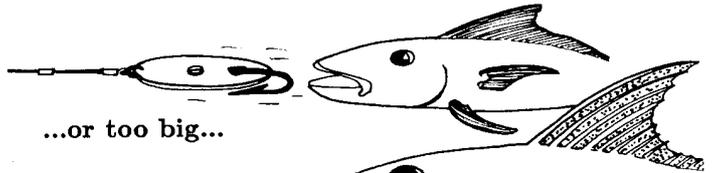


REPLACING HOOKS

If you get many strikes which do not hook up...



...your hook may be blunt or rusty...



...or too big...



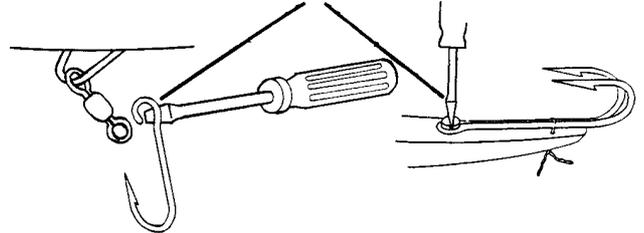
...or too small...

...so change it!

On some lures it's easy to change hooks...



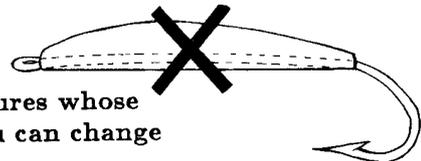
...on some it's more difficult...



On some, special hooks are needed...



...and on some it's impossible



Stick to lures whose hooks you can change

Storage

Finally, make sure lures and traces are stored neatly in a dry place. If they are thrown haphazardly together, the traces and hooks will become tangled and some will get kinked or bent the next time it is necessary to try to get a lure out of the box. Coil traces up or, better still, wrap them around a large plastic bottle or similar item. The bigger the bottle or spool, the better it is for keeping your lines straight. If the lures are detachable, take them off the traces so that they will not get snagged or tangled.



Location: Niue Island

Photo: P.D. Mead

Coastal trolling using American snapper reels



Location: Upolu, Western Samoa

Photo: L.B. Chapman

Making a close pass by a FAD