

## Part 1: Teaser Head Herring

Chinook salmon eat a diet which may include euphausiid shrimp, squid, sand lance, immature herring and adult herring, but I believe that the larger chinook – twenty pounds and above – have a strong bias towards adult herring and pilchards. Big salmon are lazy and big bait is easier for them to catch than small bait, and also provides a lot more calories. I've been on the water when perhaps forty salmon 50 lbs or larger were landed, and I've chatted with the fishermen and guides afterwards. Although a few were caught on hardware imitating small bait (for example flashers and hootchies or small spoons) and some were caught on big spoons, the majority of these salmon were caught on big bait.



**Tom with 40 lb Chinook Caught on Teaser Head Herring**

The trick when fishing big herring is getting it to roll properly. This is easy with the Rhys Davis Super Herring Special teaser head, which is a molded plastic head that is attached to the herring with toothpicks.

The herring with teaser head can be fished with a flasher or alone in the same manner as a plug or spoon. I use a six foot leader so I can use either approach. One flasher is usually enough to attract salmon to the boat, so I often set up one rod with teaser head and flasher and the second rod with

teaser head, no flasher. This is a very effective fishing method. Flasher and teaser head usually catches more salmon than teaser head alone, however I have also seen conditions where the naked teaser head did better. If there are coho in the area they will usually favour the flasher.

When fishing with the flasher it is important that the leader be long without making it difficult to net the fish. Since the rods are typically ten foot six inches and bend a bit when playing a fish, I've found that a six foot leader is about right. It is also important to use a heavy leader, since the fish can get quite a lot of leverage against the flasher. For personal fishing I use Maxima 30 lb test and when guiding I use 40 lb. An advantage of a heavy leader is abrasion resistance, the leader is less likely to break due to nicks and scratches.



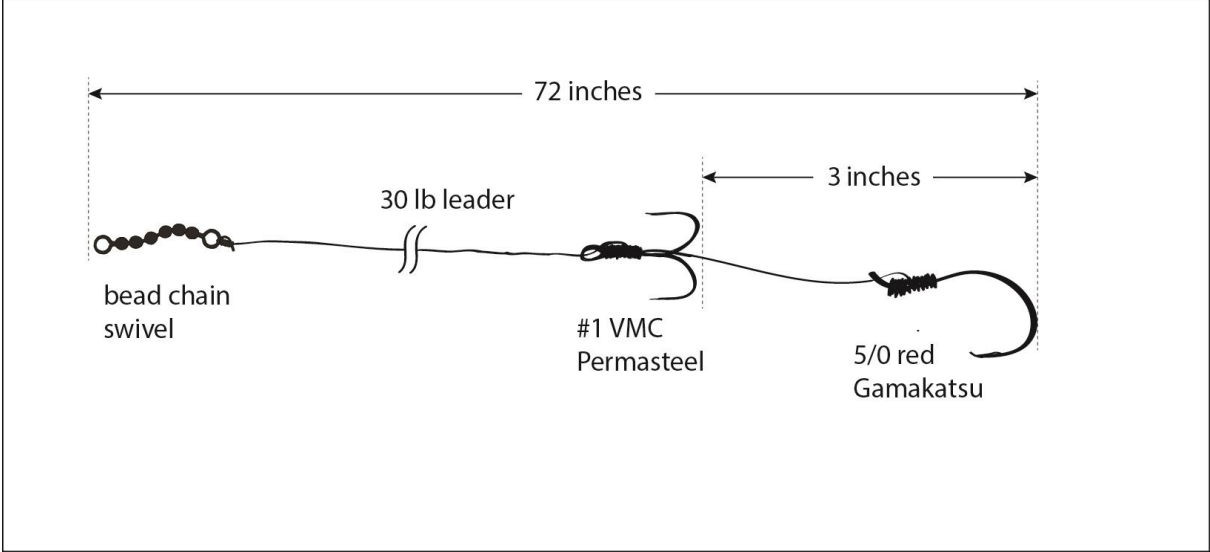
**Some Favourite Teaser Heads**

The photo above shows some favourite teaser heads. At the top is green glow, which is my all time favourite for murky green water conditions. The green splatterback glows but not as brightly and also works well in green water. At the bottom is blue splatterback which also glows and is my favourite teaser head in late July and early August when the water clears.

The Rhys Davis Super Herring Special teaser head is designed for blue (7 to 8 inch) herring, but I often fish at lodges which supply herring in the purple and black sizes (8 to 10 inch). To accommodate the larger herring I cut open the bottom (short side) of the teaser head.



**Bottom of Teaser Head Cut Open**



**Traditional Teaser Head Leader**

There are several ways of rigging the teaser head – first I'll explain the traditional method.

I use a #1 VMC Permasteel treble hook in the lead and a 5/0 single hook (Gamakatsu, red or black) for the trailer. The treble is important because one of the points is inserted into the herring and is used to draw the herring into a curved shape so it will roll nicely. The other two points on the treble face outward to catch on the salmon. The 5/0 trailing single is especially useful when the salmon are tentative and just mouthing the tail of the bait.

To tie the leader begin with a seven foot length of 30 lb test line. Attach the 5/0 single trailing hook using the salmon egg loop knot, then attach the treble in front, also with the salmon egg loop knot. There should be exactly three inches separation between the back end of the treble hook and the back end of the single hook. Feed the leader through the two holes in the teaser head, then attach a bead chain swivel.



**Completed Teaser Head Leader**

Insert a dry flat toothpick into the rear hole of the teaser head to tension the line, and clip off the end roughly one eighth of an inch proud. You may consider adding a stick-on eye to the outside of the teaser head. Don't forget to crimp the barbs and touch up the hooks so they are "sticky" sharp.

I've found that the leader often gets nicked or breaks between the two hooks. It is simplest to tie up a number of leaders consisting of the two hooks and the leader material, and to add the appropriate colour teaser head and the bead chain swivel later in the boat. The two hooks and leader material cost about \$2.00 per leader, while the teaser head is an additional \$4.00. I rarely lose teaser heads but tend to go through a lot of leaders, which I package in small zip lock snack bags. In the boat I save the used

hooks from damaged leaders and often tie up new leaders on the spot – I really like the VMC Permasteel and Gamakatsu hooks because they can be re-used many times.

Bill Haymond is author of “The Science of Salmon Fishing”, which is available at [www.thescienceofsalmonfishing.com](http://www.thescienceofsalmonfishing.com) .