

## The Third Rod

I always like to have an extra salmon rod in the boat. A rod may break or there may be a bird's nest or mechanical problem with a reel, and it's always nice to have a spare rod handy and ready to go.

Most of the time two rods provide plenty of action, but when fishing is slow or I am targeting coho I sometimes put a third rod out the back. Often that rod has the most action and sometimes the largest fish.

My first two rods are usually on downriggers and set for fishing the normal depths. On the third rod I typically use a four ounce sliding weight set at ten to fourteen pulls so it runs at a depth of perhaps fifteen feet. This is excellent for shallow running springs (often the mature migrating salmon) as well as coho.



**Four Ounce Ball Weight on Plastic Slider With Rubber Bumper**

Use a plastic slider for attaching the weight. This has the advantage that when things get busy the weight can be unclipped and the rod put away in the holder. There should be a rubber bumper between the plastic slider and the stainless steel swivel.

The rubber bumper works in the same manner as a chironomid strike indicator used for trout fishing. It can be positioned several feet up the line to provide more separation between the weight and the terminal gear. When fighting a salmon the loop pulls out of the rubber bumper and the weight slides down to the stainless steel ball bearing swivel.

I've had good success during the early part of the season when running a Jughead style flashtail lure representing a small baitfish a few feet behind the motor wake. Salmon are attracted to structure and anything that produces shadows where baitfish may hide, which includes the bottom of the boat on a bright day. Don't run the lure too far back – just a few feet behind the bubbly part of the wake where it is tossed around a bit but can be easily seen by the salmon.

During the main part of the season the mature, migrating salmon often run shallow. One afternoon my brother caught a 35 lb spring at Bjerre Shoals near Pender Harbour, on a live herring at 15 feet (he was anchored in about 35 feet of water at the time). I believe that the salmon was attracted to the bottom of the boat.

When I was guiding I would occasionally run a Pro-Troll or teaser head herring on the third rod, just behind and a few feet deeper than the bubbly part of the motor wake. One slow afternoon my guest woke up with a start and said "Wow, a 25 lb salmon just came flying out of the water right behind the boat!". Both guests watched in astonishment (it was a center console boat and I was facing forward, so didn't see it) then realized too late that the fish had been connected to the third rod. Later that day we had another similar experience. I think the salmon might have been running deeper and in their haste to get to the bait their momentum carried them into the air, a beautiful sight.

Running the third rod makes sense during a quiet part of the day when the wind and wave are behaving, but I wouldn't bother when the seas are running six or eight feet and the wind is blowing thirty knots. Life is complicated enough already.

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