



Event: Horne Lake

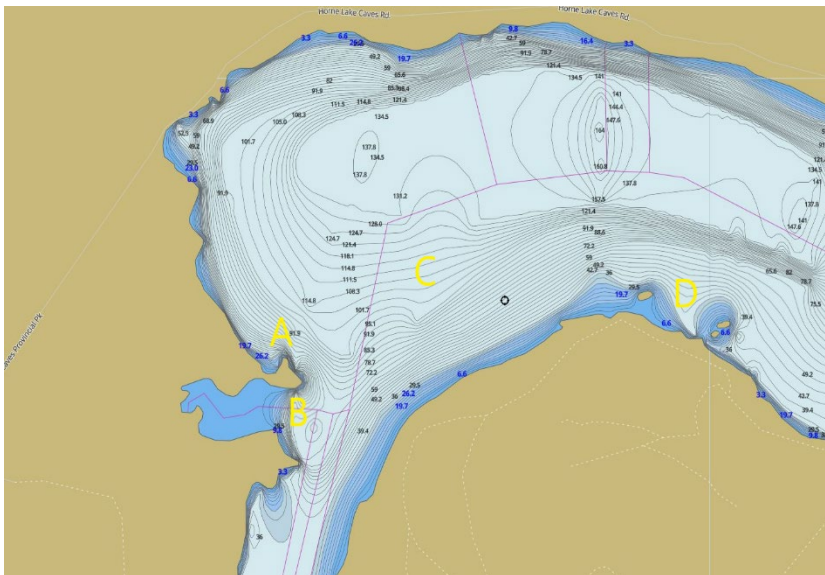
Date: April 16-18

Tips, Tricks & Techniques

Thanks to Henry Cole for sharing his knowledge and experience with us. Make sure you check out is YouTube channel: [Left Coast Kayak Fishing](#)

Overview:

When fishing Horne lake in the spring I try to take advantage of the cool water temperatures in comparison to summer, when larger fish tend to head down to depths of 40-110 feet. I almost always only fish near the west end of the lake, at or near the mouth of the incoming Qualicum River. My initial technique in almost any lake is to troll and try to pick up some active fish right as the day begins (see trolling techniques below). My starting point at Horne Lake is to leave



the boat launch at the campground and head towards the river staying close to the shore, roughly in 20-50 feet of water. I mostly run my gear within 10 feet of the bottom, unless I see bait or fish higher in the water column, then I'll raise it up. This is where having a downrigger to choose the exact depth can really help in putting more fish in the kayak. A good spot is the steep shoreline right before the north river mouth point, spot "A" on the map. Once I round the point on the northern side of the river mouth I try to line my next trolling pass to go either right on top of the very lip of the drop off at the river mouth or just on the deep water side of the lip. This is probably going to be one of the most productive locations to fish the whole lake (other lakes too), spot "B". I troll perpendicular to the river current staying parallel to that lip for as long as I can see a discernable drop off on the fish finder. Once past the river mouth I will continue down the other side of the river mouth, trolling along the shoreline in the same 20-50 feet of water for probably a half kilometer.

Once the pass is complete, I turn around, reverse my direction and follow the exact same path back, finishing after I have trolled past spot "A". Sometimes I find fish are more inclined to strike when the lure is going one direction as opposed to the other. If I have not caught any fish or marked bait balls on the fishfinder as I made these two passes, I move out into the open part of the lake looking for them



suspended in the water column while still trolling, see spot "C". I generally make big looping patterns through the open lake on my way to the small islands on the south side, spot "D". Once I have exhausted my trolling options without catching fish or enough fish that I think another technique would be more productive, I move to jigging or still fishing (see jigging techniques below). I typically start at the river mouth, spot "B", and slowly work my way around the shorelines casting a jig and working it back.



If I am having a lot of trouble getting fish to bite my "go to" is to downsize my lures, my fishing line, and really focus on colors. I keep an ultralight rod on the kayak spooled in light line (6 pounds or less), typically a small 1/8 ounce jig, in a black, purple or brown color. Small leech patterns are good for this as I can jig them very slowly and still have a natural presentation.

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Trolling Techniques:

I find trout to be shy of boats and loud noises which gives kayak fishing a definite advantage. When I troll from my kayak, I still let out a lot of line behind the kayak, roughly 100 feet. Even if I am using a downrigger I still run the terminal tackle a 100 feet back. For Horne Lake there are 2 lures I use on a regular basis. The classic wedding band in red colors with a worm, and Daiwa Dr Minnow Jerk baits. The Dr Minnows do an amazing job of "matching the hatch" with local baitfish. Even though they are Jerk baits I use them as you would with a crankbait. I have found them to outperform every other lure I have tried in BC lakes when fishing for wild trout. They come in three sizes, 2", 2 3/4", and 3 1/2". All sizes work equally well but keep in mind the two larger sizes require you to maintain a speed of 2 mph to get the proper action from the lure, the 2" works well at 1 mph. This smaller size can help you pick up some of the more lethargic or semi interested fish that don't want to expend a lot of energy chasing food. My go to colors for the Dr Minnows are "Wakasagi", "Iwana" and "Crystal Black Pearl", in that order. Don't be afraid to add scent to the lures if you are not getting strikes,



I prefer Berkley Powerbait Trout Attractant and Pro-Cure Trophy Trout Baitwaxx. If I am fly fishing I will troll a Beaded Woolly Bugger on a sinking line so slow as to have my line 45 degrees into the water, giving it the odd twitch, or I will vary my speed and depths while pulling an epoxy minnow.

While trolling around I am always watching my fishfinder for bait balls or actual fish marks. When I see either of them, I bring my gear up 5 to 10 feet above where the fish marked. If a fish is at 30 feet on the fishfinder I will place my cannon ball at 20 or 25 feet deep. This is because the lures run a little lower in



the water column than the cannon ball as well as almost all fish species hunt looking in front as well as up, this is especially true for trout. I Zig Zag back and forth as well as increase and decrease my speed when trolling, generally speaking, you will find trout will strike your lures when you turn or increase speed. Good speeds for trout are much slower than salmon, 1 to 2 mph works well for me.

Jigging Techniques:

This can be a highly effective technique, but it requires getting into a location that is either holding fish or has fish travelling through it. You want to situate your kayak just inside your casting distance from where you think fish will be holding, ie. the river mouth or shoreline structure. You will be in deeper water casting towards the shore, letting your jig sink as you gently twitch it back towards yourself. This technique is also referred to as "twitch jigging". As you slowly work it back to yourself the jig is sinking deeper and deeper as the depth of the lake increases. You want to move around to different spots doing the same thing, trying to locate the fish.

For jigs I typically imitate leeches in Horne lake and have found it to work well when there is a lot of fishing pressure. My "go to" jigs are Berkley Gulp Leech (in 3") and Bunny Leech Jigs. I prefer jig heads with large eyes on them (I know! What leech has eyes?) and in dark colors. You will want them in a few different weights, but I usually run from 1/8 to 1/2 ounce, depending on water depth and how finicky the fish are being.

Depending on the jig you will find that you can get "short bites" where the fish grab onto the back end but miss the hook. They usually come back for 2nd and 3rd strikes but if you still don't hook up, tie on a small stinger hook at the back of your jig, just make sure to leave the line a little loose so that it doesn't restrict the action of the jig body as it twitches through the water. The Gulp Leeches come scented but whenever I use a different pattern, like a rubber worm or bunny leech, I will put the above-mentioned scent on it.



BERKLEY GULP 3" LEECH



Bunny Leech



Big Eye Jighead



Berkley Powerbait Trout Attractant



Pro-Cure Trophy Trout Baitwaxx

Gear:

Trolling gear is not too critical, I prefer a rod with some backbone to it and a soft tip, but almost any rod in line weights 6 through 15 pounds will do. I spool the reel up with 20-30 pound braid and use a 12 pound fluorocarbon leader. I find it helpful to use the small Scotty downrigger clip as it holds the line a lot better than the large ones. For a downrigger a small scotty laketrroller will do when paired with a 2 or 3 pound cannon ball. In the early season fish will tend to be in the top 40 feet of the water column.

For jigging you can use the same rod as trolling but you may lose some sensitivity and casting distance. I prefer ultralight rods, up to a 6-pound rating. I pair this with a smaller reel, 4000 size and under. A little extra rod length helps cast a lot further (7 foot is good), as well as making sure your reel is fully spooled. I use the thinnest braid I can find and usually run 4-6 pound fluorocarbon leader. You want your drag pressure set pretty light when going under 6 pound test to avoid break offs.