



Fishing Scenario ID #100

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# HARRISON RIVER PINK SALMON



*For countless years anglers have convened at the confluence of Frazier and Harrison rivers, to harvest shares of what are now the largest salmon runs remaining in the world. Sockeye, Coho, Chums and Kings all make returns.*

But for sheer numbers, no spawning horde is greater than that of their smaller cousin—pink salmon, or “humpies”—fresh from the ocean. For anglers with a boat and the right gear, arriving at the right time, the Harrison provides more weight of fish for each cast, often as much as five pound per, than any other Fishing Coaches scenario.

*Never caught a salmon? Never caught 30 in a day? This is a great place for either, or both. But it's also a fine day of fishing for anybody who likes action, lots—for even such savvy anglers as FC source Dave Vedder.*



## Harrison River Pinks

# Timing Details

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- 1. **DATES WE RECOMMEND: September 19 – October 18 (odd # years ONLY)**
- 2. Weather and other factors can vary the timing of runs, so it's best to check in advance *with a live person* at Fred's Custom Tackle Store, 5580 Vedder Rd, Vedder Crossing, B.C. 604-858-7344. You can also hear daily recorded reports at 1-888-858-7344, or read these on the Internet at [Fred's Custom Tackle](#). Don't go unless Fred's says fishing's been very productive.
- 3. Search for fish at the crack of dawn, to get the best spot. However, surprisingly, pinks on the Harrison are usually *less* eager to bite w/in the first 30-50 minutes of the day. Overcast skies are better than bright sun.
- 4. **Don't** go to the Harrison when Fred's Tackle reports reveal the run is late, or weak; or that heavy rains have spoiled visibility (see above).

### Special Issues and Regulations:

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- 1. US anglers will need a BC Freshwater License and a Salmon Stamp. Licenses are available at most Canadian tackle stores, including Fred's (see above). When you purchase, make sure to pick up *and read* a copy of the BC regulations booklet. Before you go, see <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/fw/documents/Region%202.pdf> for current regulations, and <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/fw/index.html> about licenses.
- 2. Fishing is "Daylight only", from an hour before sunrise to one hour after sunset
- 3. **All hooks must be barbless.** (See page 8).
- 4. Canadian and US customs regulate what you may bring across the borders- Check carefully at [Canadian Customs](#). and [US Customs](#) for the most current information about acceptable ID and other regulations. Play it straight when you approach border officials: take off sunglasses, and keep in mind that wisecracks will often set your trip back an hour or two, longer if the agent decides to remove your seats, wheels, gas tank and camper shell. **If you have a child with you, you must carry a permission-to-travel note signed by any parent(s) not in the vehicle, specifying where you will go and how long the visit will be.**
- 5. Watch for Tug-boats hauling log booms downstream...they can't stop, so you have to move! Also be careful navigating the channels on this river, which can be tricky and shallow.



# Tackle and Equipment

- 1. **“Fish from a boat”** is the number one rule on the Harrison. At least a 12-foot boat, preferably stable enough that you can fish while standing. Aluminum is best, since you may wish to beach occasionally. **Make sure you have an engine powerful enough to run up river against strong current, along with a kicker motor for emergencies.** (Check gas prices: you may wish to carry a full tank from the US.)
- 2. Bring a supply of \$1 and \$5 Canadian dollars for the launch site fee drop-box at Kilby.
- 3. A good anchor system, preferably a break-away rock anchor system; and a spare anchor.
- 4. Boot/chest waders for launching boat.
- 5. Steelhead spinning outfits will do well. The rod should be light enough to cast jigs, but strong enough snap a hook home while jigging. Rig you main-line with 8-pound test line.
- 6. 10lb test fluorocarbon leader material.
- 7. Small, Size 5 black swivels.
- 8. Size 7 **brass** (attracts these fish!) Duolock or other *lock-down* snap swivels.
- 9. ¼ ounce, short-shank, heavy wire jigs (get at Fred’s...these are a specialty item).
- 10. **1.5” (to 2” if needed) pink crappie squids!**  
We haven’t been able to catch as many using spoons, or marabou jigs, etc.
- 11. Scent—Smelly Jelly, Shrimp/Salty Sticky Liquid™.
- 12. Hook hone or sharpener.
- 13. A large, long-handled landing net.
- 14. Cotton gloves for handling fish.
- 15. **Needle nose pliers for de-barbing hooks and hook removal.**
- 16. A heavy duty line clipper.

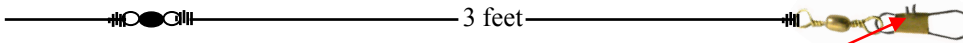


**TIP:**  
Pre-tied Harrison Pink jigs with squids and tubes, wrapped around foam. A selection like this can save valuable time on the river.

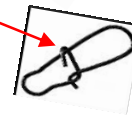


## Harrison River Pinks Rigging

- 1. Tie main line to a small, high-quality black swivel.
- 2. Tie a three-foot (four-foot if you can cast it ok) 10 lb fluorocarbon leader to the opposite end of the swivel.
- 3. Knot on locking snap-swivel.

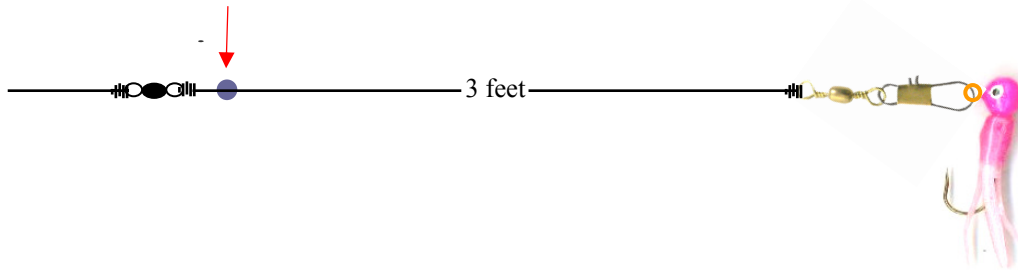


- 4. Attach jig hook to snap. With pliers, cramp down snap keeper to insure the snap (wire) does not open.



- 5. NOTE: If you need to add weight to this rig, place split shot(s)...

...here



<http://www.zoology.ubc.ca/~keeley/pink1.jpg>

## FINDING FISH: \_\_\_\_\_

- 1. Begin searching for fish right at the confluence of the two rivers—from where the muddy water of the Fraser joins the clearer Harrison. Work upstream. **Your #1 goal is to locate the biggest concentration of fish on the river!**

Note: Sometimes ANY slight cloudiness at that area from the Fraser's muddy waters will completely turn off the bite along that confluence edge (you'll only snag fish,) *even though this is often where the largest concentration of fish occurs!* Move to the *clear* Harrison water, even if it's only a few feet away from the Fraser mouth!
- 2. Look for rolling fish. Find an area where pinks are rising at least every five seconds in a stretch 100' long. The **best** fishing will occur where rises are every half second to four seconds!
- 3. Understand that the fish you see rolling on the surface are actually hugging the bottom most of the time. **The biters may be on the bottom.**
- 4. Also look for areas where other anglers hooking fish.
- 5. Usually don't fish that spot if there are probably not at least 20 fish in that spot.
- 6. When anchoring, position yourself 20 feet *directly* upstream from where the most rises are. Cast directly downstream, unless the current is quite strong.
- 7. **Remember:** watch for tugboats and barges, either anchored or towing logs—these can create deadly dangerous situations! *A tug pulling logs cannot move for you—so move!*
- 7. **DO NOT**
  - 1. DO NOT Fish to salmon pairs on gravel bars. They have important business to attend.
  - 2. **DO NOT Fish in less than five feet of water, no matter how “stacked” up the fish. On the Harrison, pinks rarely bite in water that's not at least five feet deep!**
  - 3. DO NOT Fish to the center of very very tightly schooled pinks. Try the edges instead.
  - 4. DO NOT Fish sockeye salmon with this rig, if you happen to encounter these.
  - 5. DO NOT Fish water moving faster than 1.5 miles per hour





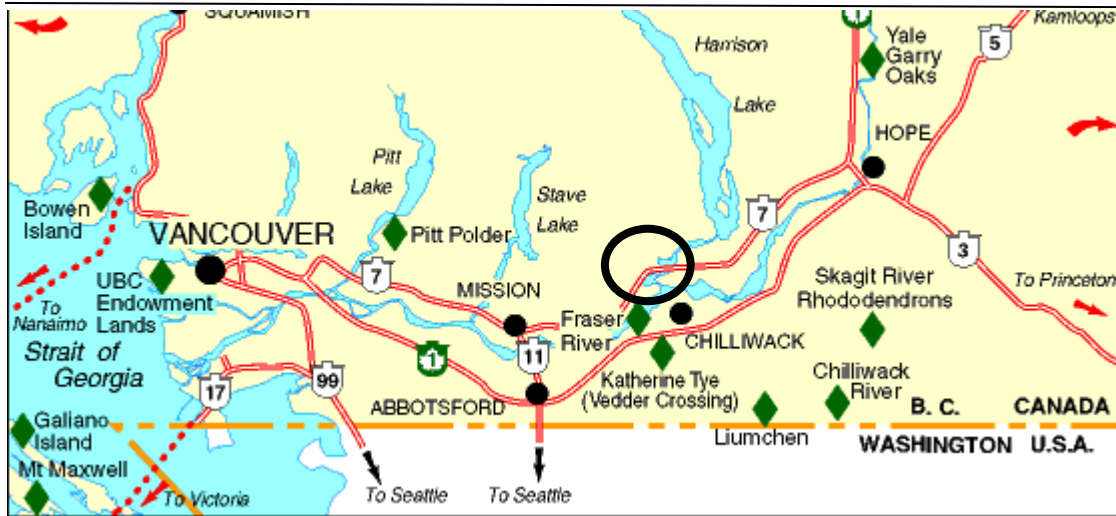
## Techniques (con't)

### FISHING THE JIG \_\_\_\_\_

- 1. Set your drag fairly tight, for setting the hook, but be ready to *let off* tension while fighting the fish.
- 2. Make sure your jig hook is razor sharp, or sharper. Check often, since jig hooks bang on bottom. *Dull hooks make for dull and frustrating days.*
- 3. Cast across or quartering downstream, depending on the speed of the current. **YOUR JIG MUST USUALLY FALL CLEAR TO THE BOTTOM—FEEL FOR THE TAP.**
- 4. LONG casts can sometimes be key here, especially in slow, clear water.
- 5. When your jig strikes bottom, slowly lift your rod tip two feet, then **suddenly** drop the jig, reeling as it falls (on the down stroke). Only reel in slack—*do not restrict the jig's free fall.* Repeat this process *all* the way in—until the jig is directly beside the boat.
- 6. Retrieve *slowly*, so the lure works to the fish's' depth! *Working your lure way above the fish is the easiest mistake to make here.*
- 7. **Watch and feel for subtle takes.** Fish will often take your jig on the fall, so if you feel the slightest tension, **strike!!!**
- 8. Be prepared to add or subtract split shot weight(s).
- 9. It is possible to work the jig too deep, so that it does not raise high enough to attract attention. On occasion, you may even wish to work the jig above the fish—but see  6 above. As always, if you're not catching enough fish, *experiment.*
- 10. Watch other anglers. Try to talk and learn from four each day! Experiment with other approaches, such as those at [http://www.salmonuniversity.com/ol\\_humpy\\_pink\\_fishing.html](http://www.salmonuniversity.com/ol_humpy_pink_fishing.html) . Their advice for *river humpies*:
  - In rivers, casting the Dick Nite hot pink spoons is almost a standard for good fishing. If you think Humpies are aggressive in salt water, they are even more aggressive in the rivers. Small (1/8 oz.) pink jigs fished under a float or bounced across the bottom is also an excellent way to catch Humpies if you are river fishing.
- 11. MOVE. If you don't hook fish w/in 30 minutes, or see others hooking fish, change lures or depths, then find a new part of the pool or a new pool altogether!
- 12. Remember the Three Hour Rule: even on great days, the "bite" is sometimes off for up to two hours. If you only fished during that period, you might mistakenly think the fishing is no good! So, fish for three hours at least, so you're more likely to sample the day's great potential.



# Location Details



## Services and Facilities:

- 1. Launch at Kilby.

If Kilby is full, you might consider parking across the road (on the shoulder) from the restaurant by the railroad track about two blocks up the road. Early some mornings we've parked in the restaurant's own parking lot—as far out of the way as much as possible- and slipped \$2 through their door along with a note and our license # (or we've given them the \$ in person if they're open)...but you're on your own with that technique.

- 2. Camping...**Expect rain.** Stay at Kilby Park (at the Kilby launch,) or at Harrison Hot Springs - where you'll also find electrical hookups.

- 3. For Lodging, Dale prefers Harrison Hot Springs.

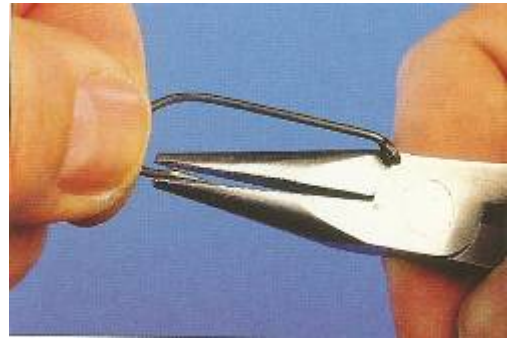
- 4. Food and Travel recommendations, try [Chilliwack listings](#). Note also that we hear good things about the Bar at the Rainbow Country Inn, Hwy 1 and Lickman Rd., and that the coffee shop attached opens at 5:00 a.m.



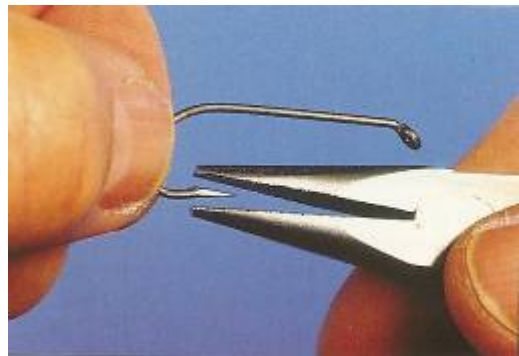
# Responsible Catching

While opinions vary as to whether you'll land more fish with crimped barbs, or less, no one argues that improved *catching* makes it critical for anglers to practice the most responsible *releasing* techniques for fish they do not keep. This begins by pinching down the barb of hooks you use in nearly all Fishing Coaches Scenarios, and finishes with the proper landing and reviving of tired fish.

**Step 1. Hold the hook by the bend and position the jaws of a pair of flat needle-nosed pliers over the barb. Only the flat hook spear should make contact with the jaw face. (Do not insert pliers far enough to press or scrape against the bend.)**



**Step 2. Squeeze the pliers to bend the barb down. Use the lightest pressure that will still do the job. Most barbs will not bend completely flat, and some may require touch-up with a file.**



Text and illustrations courtesy of Ted Leeson and Jim Shollmeyer, *Fly Tier's Benchside Reference*, [amatobooks.com](http://amatobooks.com)

## Catch and Release Tips

From the British Columbia Federation of Drift Fishers [www.bcdf.com](http://www.bcdf.com)

- Play the fish as quickly as possible.**
- Prior to landing, look for a suitable site free of sand, where you can ease the fish into.**
- Remove woolen gloves, as they remove the fish's protective slime, which promotes disease.**
- Leave the fish in the water, don't slide it up the bank.**
- Never remove the fish from the water in freezing conditions.**
- Don't force the hook out. If it can't be easily removed, cut the leader near the hook- It will fall out in a few days.**
- Never try removing a hook lodged in the fish's tongue or gill- cut the leader near the hook.**
- Never poke a finger in the fish's gills, or lift it by the gills.**
- After removing a hook, face the fish upright into the current. When the fish is able to swim away on its own, release it to swim out of your hands.**
- If a photo is desired, quickly lift fish up (not longer than 5 seconds out of the water) holding it under the pectoral fins, and the other hand supporting the wrist of the tail.**
- Fish kept out of the water for more than 30 seconds will almost certainly suffer brain damage, and may not survive.**