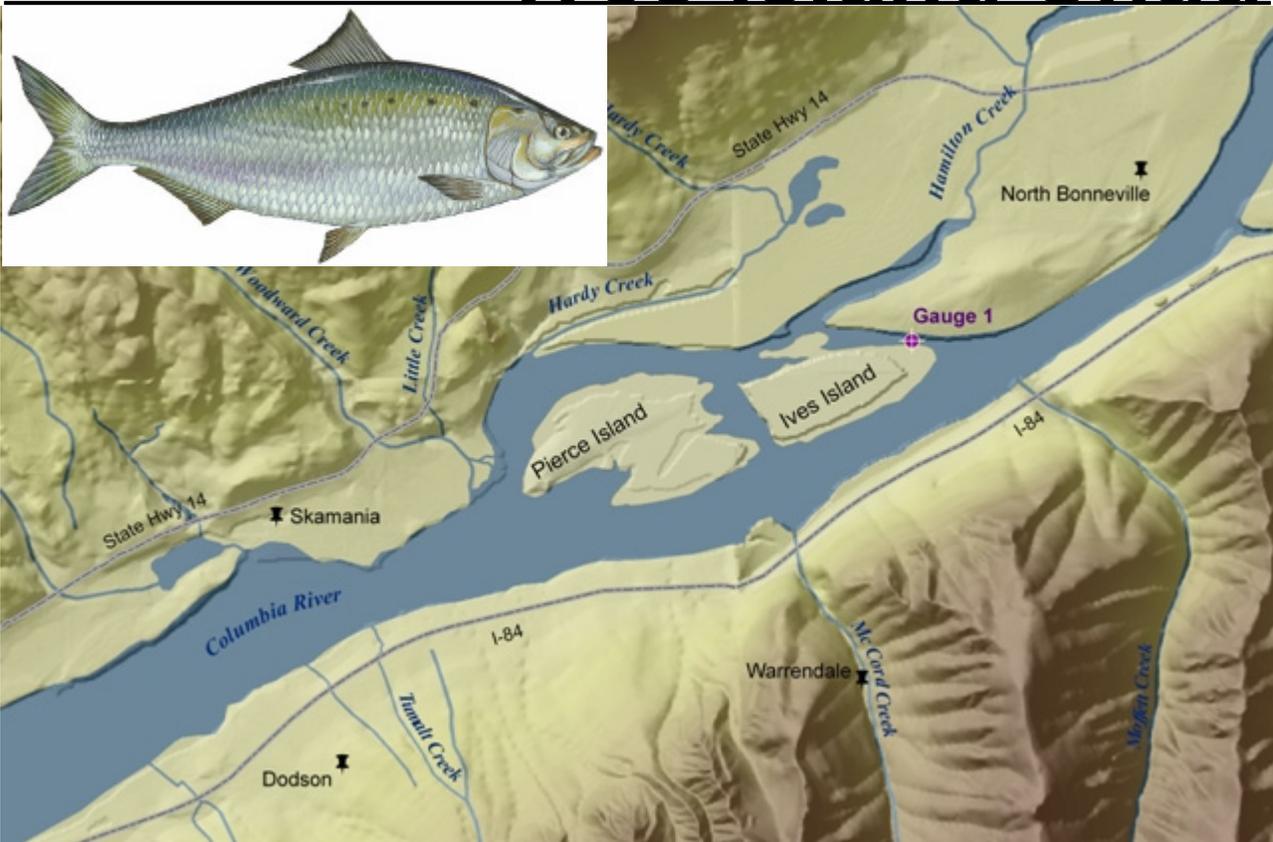


Fishing Scenario ID #46
©GAMEPLAN

Ives Island Shad



Location, location, location: roughly three million American shad run up the Columbia River in recent years. If you're in the right place, at the right time, with the right gear, by the end of a great day you may feel you've caught just about half that many of these two to four pound second cousins to tarpon. (More likely it will be 30 to 40 per angler per day.) But time your trip wrong, show up a mile or two upstream or down from the hotspot, fail to anchor properly or use enough weight on your line—or perhaps just throw the wrong size or color of jig—and you may feel instead like you're hunting snipe.

The Ives Island Scenario requires a boat of at least 15 or 16 feet and a motor with muscle. Almost as important as the appropriate craft is a special anchoring technique—for safety, and to make certain you've positioned yourself for a shad-feast, not futility. Big river gear is required, rods suitable for back-trolling for salmon that can handle as much as six ounces of weight. Follow this Gameplan carefully and you'll fare well.



Ives Island Shad

Timing Details

- 1. DATE: June 1 to June 21—preferably on weekdays, when fewer anglers make it easier to move into premier spots.
- 2. River flows are critical to this Scenario. **Don't go if flows are above 460,000. See [Ives Isle temp and flow](#).** At flows look for "Basin List" links to specific sites/projects, click hourly data--John Day in the Lower Columbia section.
- 3. Fish counts are as important as flow. **Daily shad counts at Bonneville should be 40,000 per day or higher--ideally 80,000+.** See www.fpc.org/fishcounts
- 4. Weather can knock-out a trip regardless of the above. Call The Fishery for a forecast, at 541-374-8577. Use your best judgment, but note that 10 to 15 knot west winds can raise 3 foot chop and 25+ knots make fishing impossible.
- 5. For a good general source of information, Dale looks first at www.seattletimes.nwsource. Other valuable sites include
 - [Oregon Dept. of Fish and Wildlife](#)
 - [ODFW Latest Oregon Fishing Reports](#)
 - [Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife](#)
 - [WDFW Weekender Report](#)



Dale's Personal Preference: He goes only when--

1. **Flows are below 460,000 and fish counts are 80,000 or higher, AND**
 2. **Oregon Fish and Game has closed fishing for Chinooks, which reduces crowds, AND**
 3. **He can arrive at the crack of dawn, AND**
 4. **Winds are not too rough to manage comfortably.**
- 6. Prepare to observe carefully! Shad are changeable from day to day, often hour to hour. Watching other anglers is often the best way to find out where to find schools and anchor, what depth fish are swimming, their preferences that day—in color of lures and the style and speed of back bouncing.
 - 7. Prepare to experiment *with all the above* on your own! (You might be the angler all the others watch.)

Special Regulations:

- 1. At this time there are no limits on shad, though anglers should obviously limit their take. For Oregon regulations and license applications, please check [ODFW](#). and <http://www.dfw.state.or.us/RR/columbia/>



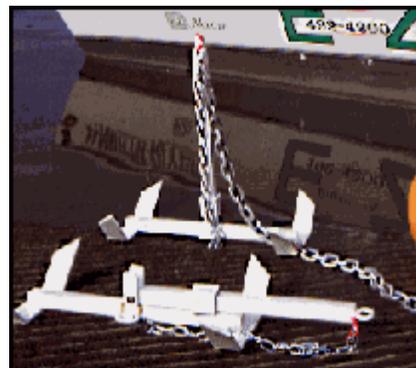
Ives Island Shad

Boats and Anchors

1. The Lower Columbia is a big, *big* river, deep and swift, subject to rapid changes in water level and current; and it flows through a canyon that can funnel high winds, especially in the afternoon. The greatest problem people have here is anchoring well enough to grab the bottom and hold, particularly after a tug-boat wakes hits the boat! Among other perils, boats yanked loose may collide with properly anchored boats below them.
2. Fishing Coaches **strongly** recommends that anglers new to the river acquire extensive information from experienced sources: individuals, agencies and companies servicing sportfishers. (“Dale’s note: “If you’re intending to go after shad in shallower water, consider going with a guide first. It’s not required, but it sure is helpful! And a combo shad-sturgeon trip is popular for a variety of reasons.”)”)
3. This is particularly important when it comes to anchoring. **Boaters have developed special gear and techniques for Columbia conditions that improve fishing and reduce risks.** Dale recommends the 40 lb “rocking chair” anchor pictured here as part of a system sold by Stevens Marine at two locations: In Milwaukie, OR, 1-800-576-7371 (503-652-1444 Fax: 503-653-5378) at 1-8023 SE Addie Street Milwaukie, OR 97267 and in Tigard, OR, 1-800-225-7023 503-620-7023 Fax: 503-684-8952 9180 SW Burnham Street Tigard, OR 97223 (<http://www.stevensmarine.com/blog.php>)

“Make sure to grill the salespeople about proper set up and use,” Dale suggests. “Bring gloves, in case hand hauling is necessary, and always have a sharp knife handy.” In addition:

1. First practice anchoring in water less than 10’ deep, with virtually NO CURRENT! (When fishing shad, you’ll rarely want to anchor in water over 18 ft deep.) **Familiarize yourself with your system, because anchoring and re-anchoring is how you’ll position and move your lures.**
2. If there are boats nearby (and there will be at Ives), you probably won’t be able to use the boat engine to pull the anchor, so you will need to pull it up by HAND! That typically requires having TWO ADULTS on board—one to run the motor, and one to heave ho.
3. Remember that the Columbia CAN RISE A FEW FEET IN A FEW SECONDS, so have plenty of rope out.
4. Not too much, however; at Ives, if you have more roughly 75’ of rope out, boats upstream from you may catch their lures in your anchor line.



For more information more information on anchoring, see
<http://www.boatoregon.com/Safety/Anchoring.html>
<http://www.boatoregon.com/Library/SafePassage/Anchoring.htm>
http://www.nwfish.com/Sturgeon/anchoring_and_boat_handling.htm

For a general description of what to expect navigating different parts of the river, see
<http://www.boatoregon.com/Library/ColumbiaGuide.pdf>

For a one-stop wealth of information, try <http://www.boatoregon.com/Site.html>



Ives Island Shad

Equipment and Gear

- 1. While back-bouncing techniques do limit the amount of tackle lost to snags, you will be fishing deep, just above a bottom sometimes rocky. It's wise to bring plenty of everything whenever possible, and to pre-tie rigs and leaders.
- 2. A light- to medium-action rod casting rod, 7 to 9-feet long, capable of managing 2 to 6-ounce weights in heavy currents, and a conventional reel spooled with 10- to 12-pound test Maxima UltraGreen™.
- 3. Two small or one large (300 + yards) spool of 6lb Maxima UltraGreen™ for dropper leaders.
- 4. A large collection of 2 to 6 ounce **round** sinkers (4-5 ounce is usually best.)
- 5. Size #8 gold-colored Rosco™ R3W-50-Z 120 degree swivels.
- 6. A hook sharpener.
- 7. A long handled net.
- 8. A long neck hook disgorger:
- 9. Smelly Jelly™ Anchovy or Shrimp Liquid Scent.



Lures, in order of preference:

- 1. For recommended Triple Lure Rig
"Shad Killers™" in red, (if possible, bring a few also in chartreuse and pink) manufactured and sold by Bill Ezell, (541)567-8201; 943 E. Ridgeway Hermiston, OR 97838 cwezell@eot.net. Shad Killers are also available at stores along the Columbia: Dinty's Market, 541-739-2236; Fishermen's Marine and Outdoor, in Oregon City: (541) 557-3313; Big's, in Biggs; at the Rufus General Store, 3 miles west of where you fish; 541-739-2534, also at Wind Mountain Resort. 50561 Highway 14 Home Valley / Stevenson, WA 98648 (509) 427-5152.
- 2. For Simple Single Lure Rig
 - 1) Wee # 0 Pearl Red Hothead Dick Nite Spoon™, Model #015
 - 2) Wee # 0 Red & Pearl Dick Nite Spoon™, Model #004



Preparation & Rigging

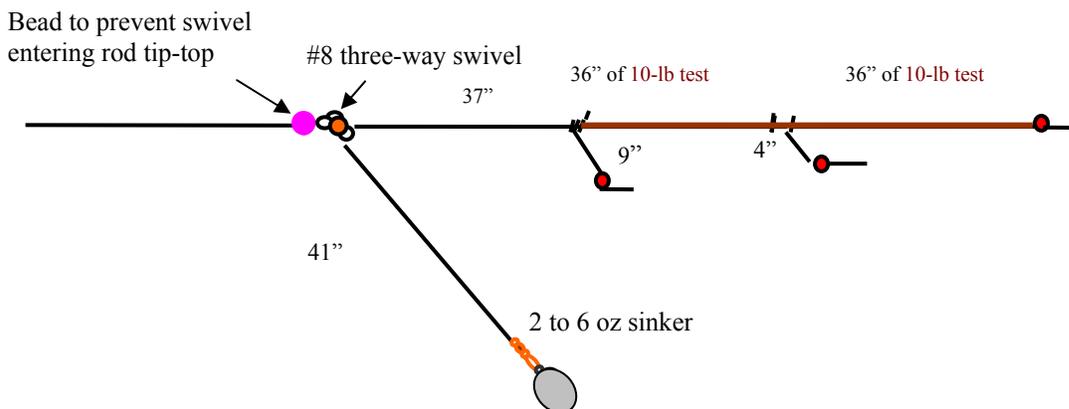


Dale recommends a three-lure rig for fishing shad from a boat at Ives, using weights from two to six ounces: do not expect to cast. (*Don't.*) To save time on the river, you may wish to pre-tie Shad Killers on three and nine inch leaders (add several inches for knot to main line).

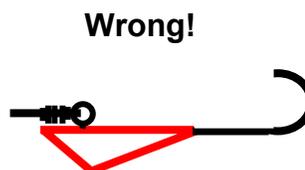
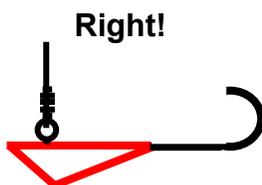
Please note: A three hook set up requires an angler to take special care when landing fish, (beginning with 1.a below).

Three Lure Rig:

- 1. Prepare Shad Killers™:
 - a. **De-Barb and sharpen hooks.** "The barbless hook is more efficient, and makes it easier to release non-targeted species (such as juvenile salmon) that you may accidentally catch." *From "Shad Fishing in Washington" WDFW*
 - b. **Clear any paint from the hook eyes of extra Killers.**
 - c. **Pre-tie spare Killers on appropriate length leaders of Maxima UltraGreen™ 10 pound test (leave 12" extra line).**
- 2. Tie a size #8 gold-colored Rosco™ R3W-50-Z 120 degree swivel to your main line.
- 3. To a second swivel eye tie on enough 6-lb Maxima UltraGreen™ to create a 41" dropper of 6-lb test for the sinker, then a 37" leader to the first lure.
- 4. The two 36" leaders between lures should be 10-lb test, so when two fish are hooked at once they cannot break each other off!



- 4. Note! When tying on Shad Killers™, make sure to **clinch the knot tight at the top of the hook eye, not pointing forward.**



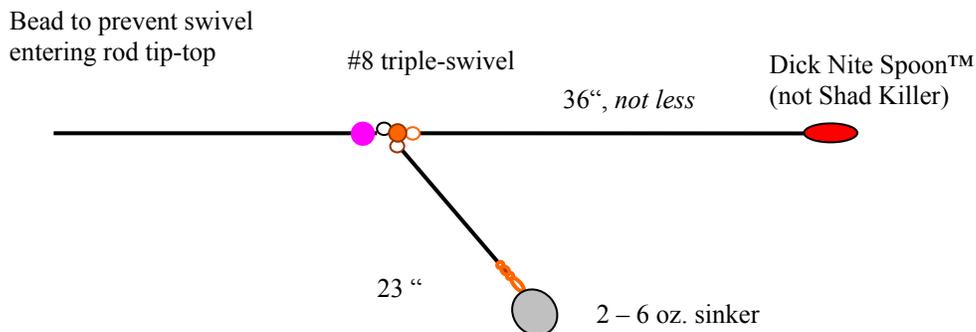


Ives Island Shad

Preparation & Rigging (con't)

For those who prefer to use as simpler, if less productive system, Dale recommends the one lure rig as tied below, using Wee (Size 0) Pearl Red Hothead Dick Nite Spoon Model #015 (top choice by far), or Wee # 0 Red & Pearl Dick Nite Spoon #004. (Note that leader lengths have changed from triple lure rig.)

Simple Single Lure Rig:



Techniques

For those unfamiliar with this relatively simple but distinct approach, an overview may help. The basic principles are these:

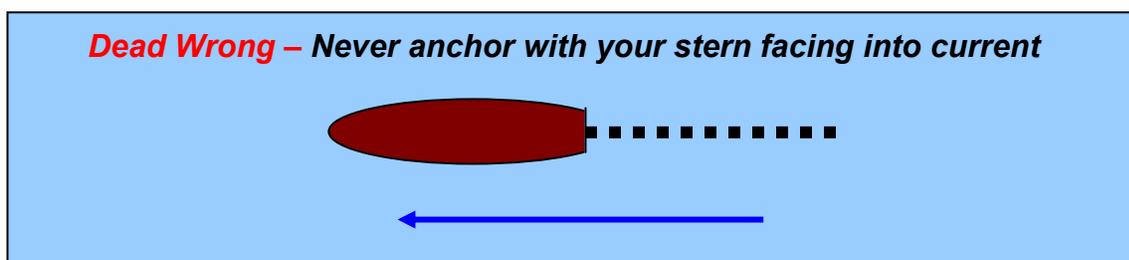
- 1) The location where you anchor your boat—not areas you might reach with casts from the boat to either side—will determine where and how lures will fish in current seams downstream from the stern. In shad fishing you have either positioned your boat correctly and are catching...or you haven't and ain't. Presume you will re-anchor several times, maybe many!
- 2) You begin each "drop cast" by lowering your rig directly down from the boat, then proceed by **releasing** line to slowly "bounce" your rig back along the bottom (down current) until you have fished as far as possible. Thus our term, the "Drop Back Bounce Cast."
- 3) The retrieve of your lure(s) back to the boat is less productive, so reel in as quickly as possible, then recast. (A slow retrieve *upstream* is also more likely to snag on the bottom.)

Correct

Wrong



Dead Wrong – Never anchor with your stern facing into current





Drop-Back Bounce-Cast Technique

- 1. Check your drag. Shad have soft mouths, so set the tension lighter than usual.
- 2. Apply scents to jigs, then carefully free-spool the triple rig to the bottom.
- 3. When you feel the weight strike, strip 18" to 21" of line off the reel.
- 4. Slowly pump (or jig) up and down, keeping tension and "touch" with your lures.
- 5. Wait five seconds, pump again, then release 1.5 strips of line (appx. 25 to 30 inches).
- 6. If you can't feel the weight tapping bottom, reel in and switch to a heavier sinker. You want a weight that will allow you to bounce for about 50-60 feet. *IF the weight stays on the bottom, and does not drop back with less than 40" of line out, switch to a lighter sinker.*
- 7. Continue the drop-back and bounce. Count to 5 between each strip and release, pumping every two to three seconds.
- 8. Keep your rod tip as low as possible. Aim to the side to help detect strikes. Watch the rod tip, which may signal hits you cannot feel!
- 9. At the end of the "drop," **wait**, experiment with allowing the lures to work, *jigging* at distinctly different rates. Just don't get too excited and jig too fast.
- 10. At the end of a drop back cast, reel back quickly to begin another.
- 11. If find yourself missing strikes, try a smaller lure in the same color. Do the same if the fish you do land are barely hooked. If fish are hooked too deep, experiment with a bigger lure.
- 12. When you have a hit, *no matter how violent*, set the hook gently—those soft mouths—using only enough pressure to bend the rod slightly beyond the optimum necessary to play the fish.
- 13. Whenever possible while fighting fish, keep your rod at a right angle to the line of pull.
- 14. After fighting a fish, or hanging up on rock—and at least every hour—check your hook to make sure its sharp.
- 15. On Shad Killer lures: also after a strike or hang-up, make sure the knots are properly positioned at the top of each hook eye! 
- 16. **If the triple-Shad Killer-rig doesn't get two or more strikes in 5 drop-back bounce casts...**
 - a) Make sure you've covered all the area you can, fishing from one side of the boat to the other—more than a 20 foot swath, usually. If this does not produce, "Sheer" the boat side to side. If still no action--
 - b) **MOOOVE!** Finding the precise slot is your **top** priority!
- 17. If you have been doing well in a spot for some time and fishing slows, change lure colors, but move if no hits within 20 minutes.

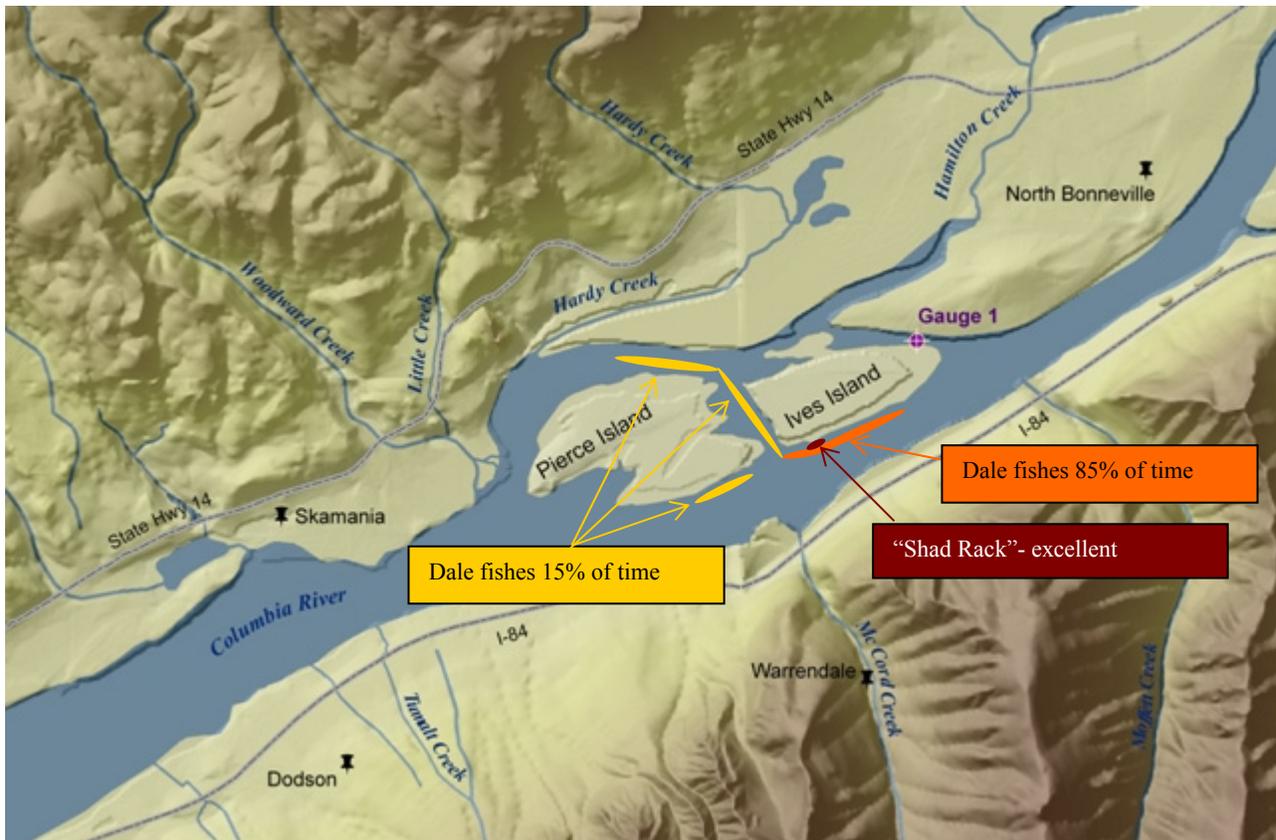




Location Details

Preparation:

- 1. Call or stop at the The Fishery (541-374-8577; exit #35 off Freeway 84) to find out where the best shad spot has been recently.
- 2. 85% of the time Dale fishes somewhere in the **orange zone** below, usually the **“Shad Rack”!!** If possible, boat up to the “Shad Rack” the evening before the day you intend to fish, to see where fish are being caught (see map). You’ll likely see the greatest concentration of boats in this area. Unless the water is high, you’ll see the pilings of the “Shad Rack”. (Don’t get your own anchor tangled in these!)
- 3. Without intruding upon other anglers, take GPS coordinates of the area where you find the most boats catching the most shad. Look for surface current (on your gauge) of 1.8 – 2.0 knots!



Trip:

- 1. Double your catch by launching at the crack of dawn--or earlier, but be careful!--to get to the best spot you scoped out the evening before!!
- 2. Follow “Techniques.” If you fail to get hook-ups quickly, move!
- 3. If other boats find fish first, anchor above or below them, **in the exact line (“slot” or current seam)** but do NOT intrude on them: Drop the anchor at a spot at least 80’ below them, or 180’ upstream of them. (If anchoring downstream of them, Dale signals to them to the effect of “is it ok to drop here?”, right where Dale wants to drop anchor.)



Location Details (con't)

If water at Shad Rack is too high, or the area too crowded:

1. IDEALLY, YOU WANT TO FIND A POSITION IN THE “15% “ZONE” WHERE THE SURFACE CURRENT SPEED IS BETWEEN 1.8 – 2.0 KNOTS, although currents between 1.5 – 2.3 knots can hold fish. (Note: To get the most accurate surface speed data, Dale has attached a paddle-wheel surface-speed indicator to his boat transom.)

2. SHOOT FOR A RIVER DEPTH OF BETWEEN 9’ AND 15’, IDEALLY 12’.
(Outside this range Dale hasn’t done well!)

NOTE: Dale often starts at 11’ early in the morning, and may move to 13’ in the afternoon: the “hot slot” typically moves deeper as the day wears on. Because the river bottom can be somewhat flat, finding that 2’ difference in depth might mean moving 35’ farther out from shore...which can make all the difference...Remember that shad generally travel almost “single file” in a long line.

3. You might begin by checking just upstream from the Shad Rack (N45°37.378' W121°59.290). This area often has faster current, so only anchor over bottom slightly shallower than usually recommended, between 8-13’ deep (but check the current’s surface speed).

4. Other good areas where you will find fewer boats:

- Between Ives and Pierce Islands.
- The North side of Pierce Island.
- South side of Pierce Island.
- North side of Ives Island.



Services and Facilities:

1. Boat Launch, Tackle and Camping:

The Fishery in Oregon is your main source of local information. There you will find a launch, a tackle store with sundries—snacks, not meals—and a limited number of campsites (no sewer or water hook-ups, but they do have electricity). Call 541-374-8577; or take exit #35 off Freeway 84, go right, then take another right at the first stop sign. Go under freeway: it will look as if you’re headed onto the on-ramp, but take the small road on the left, travel 2.miles. Note: The Fishery’s hours vary by season. Early on they’re open 6a.m. to 3pm, Thursday through Sunday 6-3, 7a.m. to 3p.m. Monday through Weds...Call in advance.

2. In Washington: Beacon Rock State Park, off the Evergreen Highway 14 has both camping and a launch.

In Oregon, check out John B. Yeon State Park, off 84; also Ainsworth State Park

3. Lodging may be found in Cascade Locks, at a Best Western or Econo Lodge; also at Multnomah Lodge. Also in Stevenson [Wind Mountain Resort](#) 50561 Highway 14 Home Valley / Stevenson, WA 98648 (509) 427-5152 and [Best Western Stevenson](#), or www.hotels.com/

4. For an excellent map of the general and specific area, see [google for Ives et al](#)

Beyond Basics

- 1. Shad's reputation as high and low cuisine has changed a dozen times in American history. While they *are* bony, the meat is excellent, so see <http://wdfw.wa.gov/outreach/fishing/shad/shad.htm> for cleaning instructions and recipes. Also consider pickling, which FC Director Seth Norman considers the best way to go.

~~Herring~~ *Shad* in Sour Cream Serves 6

Ingredients	Method
5 Herring, soaked in brine	Soak herring in cold water in the refrigerator for 24 hours. Change the water several times during this period. Fillet herring and cut into bit sized pieces. Combine the remaining ingredients, add the herring pieces and mix lightly. Place in a glass jar or bowl and cover. Store the herring in sour cream in the refrigerator for about 12 hours before serving.
1 cup Sour cream	
2 tbsp. Cider vinegar	
1 tsp. Worcestershire sauce	
1/2 tsp. Dry mustard	
2 Onions, sliced	
Dash Cayenne pepper	
Parsley, chopped	

Recipe from a Cornell Cooperative Extension Holiday Seafood Sampler

