



Fishing Scenario ID #284

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Sekiu Coho



“During their peak periods, Sekiu and Neah Bay have been, for us, **many, many** times more productive for migrating salmon than Puget Sound saltwater, or the San Juans, or even Port Angeles!” says Fishing Coaches President Dale Dorcas. “In August, Neah Bay is far better Than Sekiu, as the silver schools haven’t yet committed entirely to the Strait. But by mid-September, Sekiu is as almost as good.”. That means when conditions are right—and when anglers employ electronic fishfinders, downriggers using a “dummy” flasher and properly prepared plug-cut herring baits—each may expect 20 plus hook-ups per day. And for most of travelers, Sekiu’s about 30 minutes less of a drive, one-way.

September 19 is the traditional “epicenter” of Sekiu’s best silver fishing, with the highest catch rates. Later September brings in more of the larger “northern Coho,” providing your best shot in the Strait/Puget Sound/San Juans for a 15-20+ pound silver streak.



Sekiu Coho

Timing Details

- 1. **Go in the most productive window-period!: September 15 through 24.**
- 2. Always check [sekiu weather conditions](#) in advance!
- 3. Get there by—or before—the crack of dawn! The low light of early morning is a great time to fish for silvers. And, given the crowds at the boat ramps here, an early arrival will help you get the time fishing you came for.
- 4. Whenever you get out, fish the flood tide, and both changes of tide. (Middle of ebb tide is poor.) See [Sekiu tides](#) for current conditions, <http://www.olympen.com/cgi-bin/tidetable> for a long term chart. For fishing reports, go to <http://www.olsonsresort.com/wordpress/?p=3>
- 5. **Don't go when** high winds are forecast!
- 6. Remember the "Fourth Trip" Rule – it can take as many as four trips to a specific scenario location to learn it well enough to catch up to full potential. For your first three trips, focus on following the Game Plan, also on learning and experimenting! Ideally don't give up, even if you get skunked, until after four trips.



Equipment/Gear

- 1. A seaworthy boat of 16 feet or more!
- 2. Charts: www.salmonuniversity.com/sjf_sekiu.html
- 3. A GPS (and experience using it!)
- 4. Safety gear (see [Fishing Coaches Reminder List: Boats](#))
- 5. 7 to 7.5 foot light-heavy action rods—steelhead tackle will do in a pinch—with conventional reels carrying a minimum of 250 hundred yards of 12-pound test line. *We strongly advise you have two rods per angler, both rigged and ready at all times.*
- 6. Polarized sunglasses: amber lens for low light, gray for bright.
- 7. Rain gear.
- 8. **Seasickness remedy.** There are many: Seth favored Dramamine™ taken the night before, but now prefers [Bonine®](#) chewable tabs, which can be gnawed the morning before launch. For a comprehensive article on this subject by LeeRoy Wisner, see <http://pugetsoundanglers.org/fishing/AvoidSeasickness.htm>

Equipment Tackle (con't)

FOR STANDARD AND "DUMMY" DOWNRIGGER APPROACHES

- 1. A manual or electric downrigger. (For a general description of downriggers see www.scotty.com.)
- 2. For "dummy-flasher" setup:
 - a. 11-inch (not 8") Hotspot™ brand flashers, green blade on one side and chrome on the other.
 - b. 80 lb. test monofilament
 - c. four or six bead stainless steel swivels whitesboots.com
 - d. # 5 stainless snap swivels
 - e. Scotty Snapper Release Clips
 - f. Downrigger stacker release clips
 - g. #5 Sampo ball-bearing snap swivels



- 3. PLUG-CUT HERRING IS BY FAR THE MOST PRODUCTIVE OFFERING!
For three anglers, **at least** 4-dozen fresh or frozen herring in the "Red or Green Label" sizes, per day, with plastic Tupperware™ containers and paper towels for storing these.



- 4. Brining solution, or *rock* salt (not table salt.)
- 5. A herring cutting guide tool to help you consistently get the proper angle, such as the Folbe™ "Coho" model (see www.folbe.com under "miscellaneous," or email david@folbe.com for a retailer near you), or the Danielson™ tool on the "Coho" setting.



- 6. For building herring leaders:
 - a. # 5 Sampo™ swivels
 - b. Spools of 10 lb. test Maxima Ultragreen™
 - c. # 2/0 Mustad 9263 hooks (heavier gage hooks tear the plug-cut herring.) **Sharpen them.**



- 7. #4 or #5 Coyote Spoons™, in case you run out of bait.



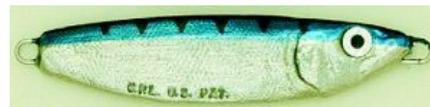
FOR JIGGING OPTION

- 1. Selection of the following lures in two- to four-ounce sizes:
 - a. Zzingers™ www.tyeetackle.com/zzinger.htm
 - b. Crippled Herring™ www.cabelas.com
 - c. Buzz Bombs™ www.tyeetackle.com/buzzbom
 Colors should include:
 - all white
 - white/green
 - white/blue
 - white/pink

a.



b.



c.



- 2. Add scent (Dale likes "Smelly Jelly—Shrimp/Salty Sticky Liquid") to jigs and lures.

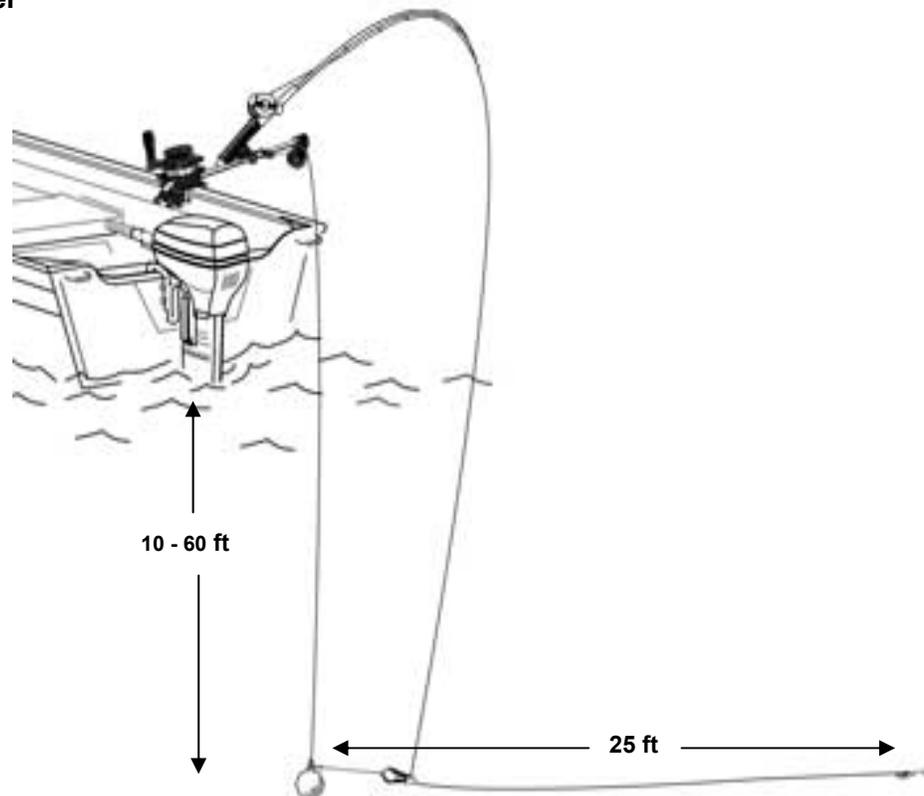


Rigging

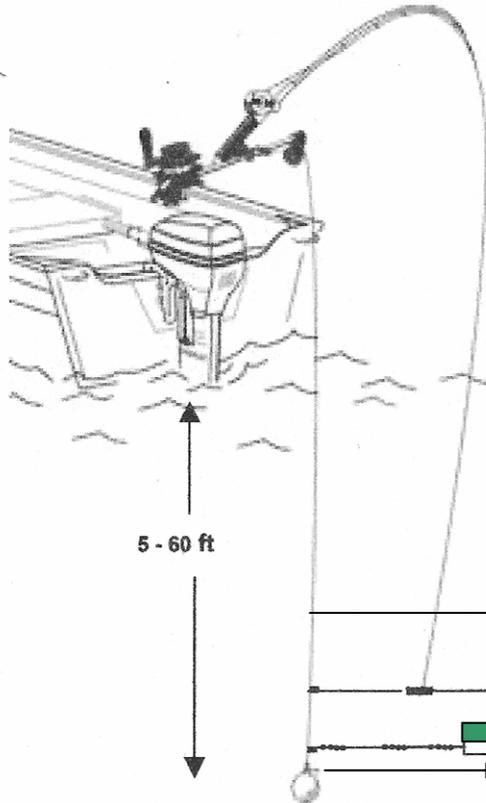
STANDARD AND DUMMY FLASHER DOWNRIGGER APPROACHES

- 1. The night before a Sekiu trip, brine all whole herring baits. For a full description of how-to-brine, see "How to brine herring" at www.salmonuniversity.com. Alternatively, use FC's simpler system: dissolve four cups of rock salt in a gallon of water, add herring, let stand over night. *Brining is a simple, important step that will make baits tough enough to stay on the hook.*
- 2. "Plug-cut" brined herring baits using a sharp knife. A Folbe™ or Danielson™ herring cutting guide tool will help to consistently get the proper angle, but for illustrations showing how to proceed without one see [herring prep](#). Prepare about 2.5 dozen herring baits to start the day. Store cold in a small Tupperware™-type container with a paper towel on the bottom
- 3. For each angler in the boat, for each day, pre-tie three five-foot leaders, each with a # 5 Sampo brand swivel at one end and a size 2/0 Mustad 9263 hook at the other.
- 4. If you do have two rods per angler, keep spares rigged with herring to avoid wasted time. *This can increase your catch rate by over 20 per cent.*
- 5. Figure below shows a downrigger set-up, *without* a flasher rig. This technique is roughly 75 per cent as effective as the dummy flasher rig described on the next page.

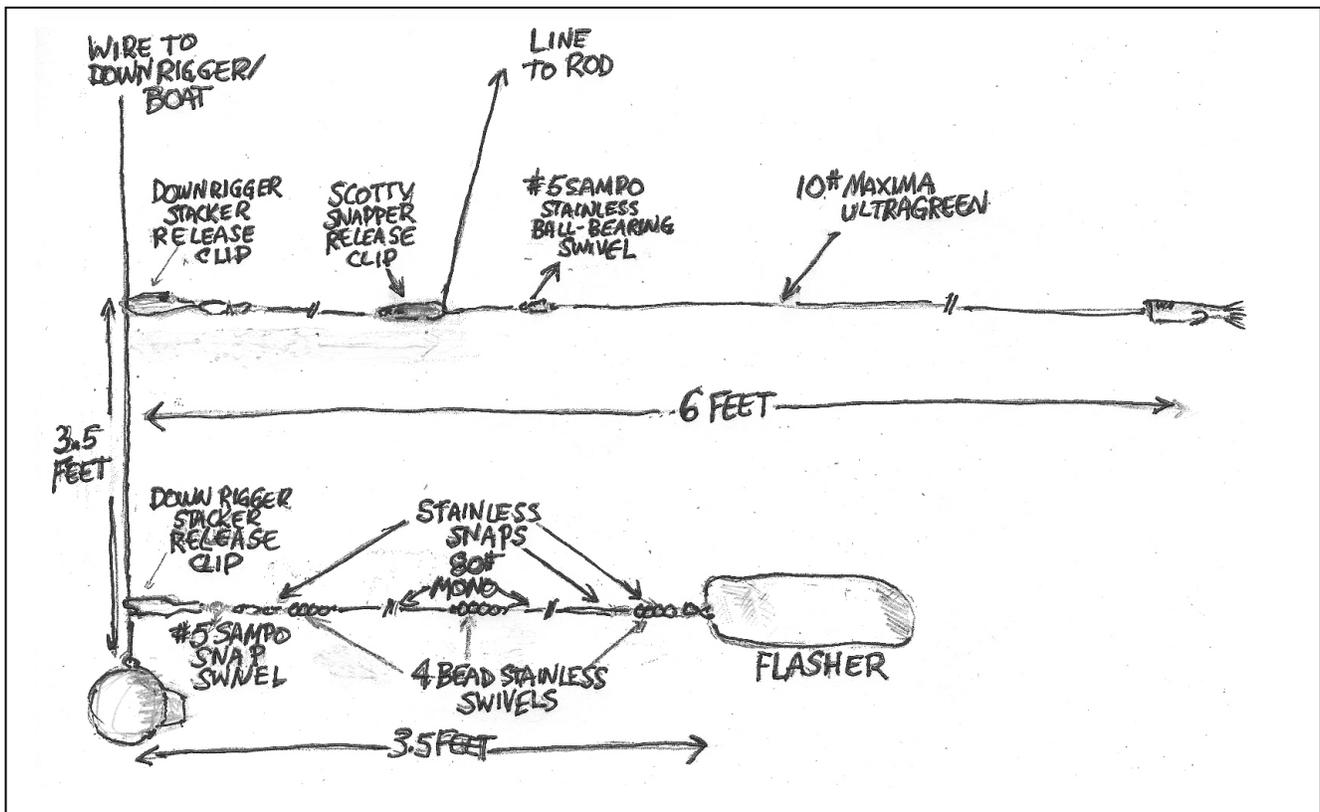
Standard Downrigger Trolling



Rigging (con't)



The Dummy Flasher Rig takes advantage of saltwater Cohoes instinct to chase. While not attached to the fishing line itself, the flasher still draws silvers in range of the plug-cut herring: flasher and bait together create the most attractive and effective combination.





Techniques

STANDARD AND DUMMY FLASHER DOWNRIGGER APPROACHES

- 1. Be on the water by daylight, when Cohoes bite best. Great bet: dawn at a tide change.
- 2. Test each cut bait by pulling beside the boat. Make sure you get a *tight* SPINNING action – not spinning but wagging back and forth! If the action's wrong, toss bait and rig another! For a video showing that action, see www.salmonuniversity.com
- 3. Attach line to Offshore™ brand release clip. For standard approach bait should trail 25 feet behind downrigger. For the Flasher Dummy approach, only 6 feet.
- 4. Always baby your baits, lowering them slowly so they don't pull loose!
- 5. Troll **with** the current at about 1.8 knots, as assessed by a surface paddle wheel speed gauge attached to your boat **not** per your GPS, which will fail to compensate for currents. The goal is to maintain just enough speed to keep the herring spinning continuously.
- 6. Watch rod tips like a hawk! If you see a tip dip and bob, but get no hook-up...**wait** 60 seconds, in case a fish is still following, then check bait!
- 7. If no strikes after nine minutes, **tops**, check bait to make sure its action is right. Present again but change downrigger depth by ten feet, working from 10 to 60 feet deep.
- 8. Move the downrigger deeper as the day wears on.
- 9. If you run out of herring, use a #4 or #5 Coyote spoon #4 or 5. Note: this spoon typically performs about half as well as herring. Troll at between 1.6 and 2.0 knots.
- 10. If you get a strike, immediately troll back through same area! *You've found fish, don't lose them!*
- 11. Have outfits rigged with Buzz Bombs, ready to cast during any “downtime” when one angler is playing a bigger fish.

12. An old timer told Dale that 27' was “the magic depth” for silvers. Dale agrees, but the numbers below provide a *general* guide to optimum trolling depth:

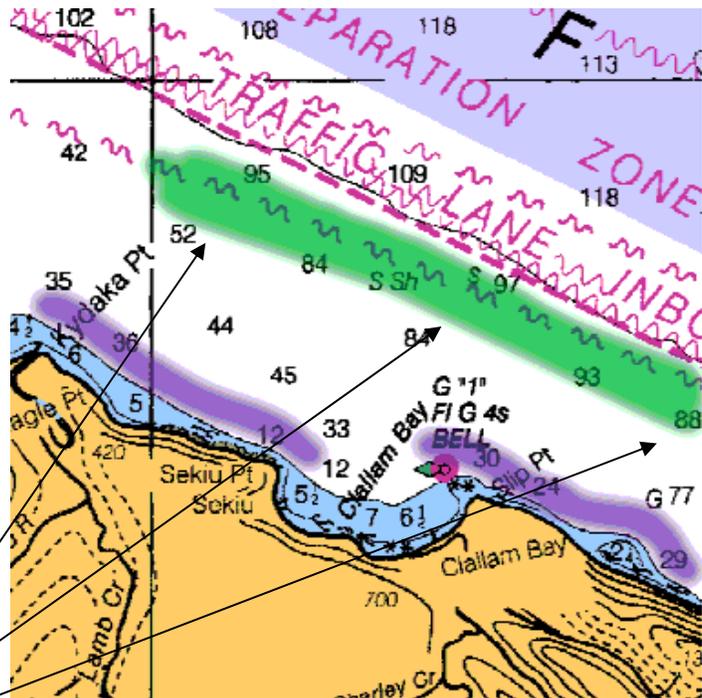
	6AM	7AM	8AM	9AM	10AM	11AM	12AM	1PM	2PM	3PM
Sunny or light clouds:	15'	25'	30'	35'	40'	50'	60'	75'	75'	75'
Fog or thick clouds:	5'	15'	25'	30'	35'	40'	45'	50'	50'	50'

SPECIAL NOTES ON DUMMY FLASHER TECHNIQUE

- 1. While it's often difficult for novices to believe, when Cohoes are feeding on top they are actually attracted to the engine prop wash, probably because it resembles a panicked school of baitfish. When this is the case, the Dummy technique can produce one of the most exciting strikes—silvers racing up to take a lure just beneath the surface and hardly a rod length from the stern!

Location Details

- 1. **Safety First!** Keep a keen eye out for rocks and floating logs. Be especially observant of ships when in the shipping lanes. *Without radar, don't enter the lanes when visibility is less than a mile.*
- 2. Watch for salmon or schools of bait on your fish finder, for leaping salmon, bait striking the surface, and diving birds! (Coho will usually be nearer the surface under low light conditions, deeper when light is bright.)
- 3. Fishing is often excellent in water 300 feet deep, where you may find fish from 20' to 55' down. Slip Point or Clallam Bay are good places to start (or you can follow the crowd).



LOOK FOR COHO

- 4. Fish where other people appear to be *catching* the most fish! Make sure to take a few minutes to identify the drifts of other boats, then fit in at a respectful distance. Smile a lot and carry a large pistol in a shoulder holster. (If asked, say it's "for halibut." Then smile harder.)
- 5. Look for *tide rips* – places where slick water is met by rippled water, often defined by lines of debris collected on the surface! Begin fishing at or near the edge of these rips, ideally on the smooth, non-debris side.
- 6. If no strikes within 20-30 minutes, **move to another spot!**
- 7. If you find and lose track of a school of Coho, try moving *eastward*, since Coho often migrate from west to east as the day goes on.
- 8. Coho at Sekiu are generally deeper than at Neah Bay/Tatoosh. The farther inland you go (from Neah Bay to Tacoma), the deeper Coho generally run.

Sekiu COHO GPS coordinates:

Slip Point Western-end-start-of-troll

48 17 13
124 14 30

Slip Point Eastern-end-start-of-troll

48 16 97
124 12 14

Out from Clallam Bay, 300' bottom, Western-end-start-of-troll start

48 17 04
124 17 30

Out from Clallam Bay, 300' bottom, Eastern-end-start-of-troll start

48 16 97
124 16 72

Slip Point 2 miles out from shore

Out from Clallam Bay a way

48 17 37
124 16 88

Out from Clallam Bay a way

48 17 48
124 15 50



Rigging/Techniques

DAVE VEDDER'S JIGGING OPTION

Note: per FC's expert Dave Vedder, jigging can "work wonderfully at times, but it "can also leave you skunked." While not as *reliably* productive as fishing cut herring with downriggers, it sure is fun!

About Jigging: cast and allow lure to sink to desired depth. Begin retrieve by quickly lifting your rod tip anywhere from six inches to six feet. Vary lifts so the jig produces erratic action. As you drop the rod down, allow enough slack line that jig can free fall. *Most takes will come on the fall*, so pause one or two seconds as the line tightens: strike hard if you feel tension, or see the line twitch.



1. See first "Location Details" for downrigger techniques (above). (Note: Dave heads for water 150 to 500 feet deep.)
2. When you see fish working the surface, motor to within a long cast. Kill or idle engine.
3. Cast ten feet in front of fish and begin jigging as soon as the lure hits the water. If no take, let the next cast drop four feet deeper, the next four more feet,
4. If no strikes, drop jig to 20 feet, then begin rapid retrieve. Drop jig five feet deeper on each successive cast. (Remember, by noon on a bright day, Coho may drop to 80 – 100 feet!)
5. Since you're not covering much ground since you're not trolling, work an area for only 15 minutes with jigs. If no action, ***move to another spot!***



Sekiu Coho

Location - General



Services and Facilities:

- 1. Olson's Resort is where Dale and his family have chosen to camp—cabins and RV hook-ups are available, also to launch, and buy fresh herring. <http://www.olsonresort.com/> (also on this site, a fishing report) or call 360-963-2311
- 2. A variety of other options for lodging, food and services can be found at the Sekiu Chamber of Commerce site <http://www.sekiu.com/>