

Fishing Scenario ID # 292

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# Silver Lake Rainbows



Photos courtesy  
[www.whatcomcounty.us/parks/silverlake](http://www.whatcomcounty.us/parks/silverlake)

Although not as consistent as lakes where trout are stocked just before Opening Day, Silver Lake is usually one of the best producers around, especially when using Dale's trolling technique. Silver also offers bonuses other lakes don't: along with hatchery rainbows and holdovers, this 175-acre impoundment offers a shot at giants -- triploid trout to ten pounds -- along with cutthroat, kokanee salmon and some hefty largemouth bass. Rental rowboats are available (bring your own motor), also kayaks and pedal boats; and there are 92 campsites, stable and separate horse camp facilities, trails for riding and walking, the Gerdrum Historical House Museum, swimming beaches, a food concession and large group dining areas.

Dale and his dad have had 100 fish days here, but it's wiser to keep expectations to 34 fish per day per angler when fishing from a boat with Dale's Troll technique, or 70 per cent of that using the Simple Troll System. Bank fishers may also score from places on shore suitable for fishing fish with kids. And for a chance at some serious grown-up fun, check the Sight-Casting with flies option.



## Silver Lake Rainbows

# Timing Details

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- 1. A five-day window opening the last Saturday in April (beginning of the season at Silver). *In 2006, April 29 to May 3.*
- 2. Prime fishing usually runs from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., then tapers off until a good bite begins at 7:30 and lasts until dark.

### **Don't go to Silver when forecasts predict:**

- a. High winds --+30 mph -- create dangerous conditions, or difficult trolling conditions. Check within 36 hours of launching at [Maple Falls](#) weather.
  - b. Rapid changes in barometric pressure (barometer lines within 120 miles of each other -- see. [weather.unisys.com](http://weather.unisys.com)\*)
  - c. A drop in high air temperature of more than 7 degrees from the previous day! [Maple Falls](#)
  - d. Or...within one to two days of a major change in weather.\*
- 3. Remember the "Fourth Trip" Rule – that it can take as many as four trips to fish a Scenario to its full potential.



[www.castforkids.org](http://www.castforkids.org)

## Special Regulations:

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- 1. WDFG regulations for Silver Lake allow statewide minimums for size and daily limit (5 trout) and other species. Anglers fishing catch-and-release should use barbless hooks with no bait, and, per regulations, "Keep any fish (that) has swallowed the hook or is hooked in the gill, eye or tongue if legal to do so."



## Silver Lake Rainbows

# Equipment/Tackle

- 1. A boat between 8- and 20-feet in length, with a motor suitable for trolling, preferably electric, with infinitely variable speed control. Gas engines limited to 10 horsepower are allowed.
- 2. Hemostats or needle-nose pliers to pinch down hook barbs. (See page 8.)
- 3. Polarized glasses.
- 4. *Recommended:* a thermometer for water temps.

## Dale's Trolling Technique

- 1. A single-action fly reel set up with a floating line, a second spool holding an intermediate sinking line, and a third holding a Type III or IV full-sink line.
- 2. A 7- to 8-foot, medium-light action spinning rod *rigged with the fly reel* suggested above, or an 8- to 9-foot, five-, six- or seven-weight fly rod, preferably with ring guides.
- 3. 6 lb. Maxima Ultragreen™ monofilament for leaders.
- 4. Rosco™ brand barrel swivels, size 12 to 14.
- 5. The following lures, terminal tackle and bait:
  - a. Triple Teaser™ spoons in size #3940, with a red/pearl finish;
  - b. Dick Nite™, size #1, also in red/pearl;
  - c. #8 Egg-suckling leeches, black-bodied with flame red head;
  - d. # 10 Olive Woolly Buggers, tied with Krystal Flash™.
- 6. A box of red worms or *tiny* sections of pork rind.



## Simple Troll Option

- 1. A 7- to 8-foot, medium-light action spinning outfit, reel spooled with 6 lb. Maxima Ultragreen™.
- 2. Triple Teaser™ spoons in size #3940, red/pearl finish.
- 3. #5 Sampo™ ball-bearing barrel swivels
- 4. ¼ ounce sliding sinkers.



## Sight-Fishing Fly Option

- 1. Either a five-weight fly rod with a weight-forward floating line and 9- to 13-foot leader tapering to 5 X, **OR**
- 2. A light-weight spinning outfit loaded with 4- to 6- lb. test Ultragreen Maxima™ and
  - a. # 5 Sampo™ ball-bearing swivels.
  - b. Assorted split shot.
- Size #10 Red Doc Spratley....but if this isn't working, try the flies illustrated above.



## Silver Lake Rainbows

# Rigging: Dale's Troll

Dale's unusual trolling set-up outperforms traditional techniques when hatchery trout congregate near the surface in early spring, and works great on many Northwest lowland lakes. Each rig takes times to tie up, however, and will twist after 2 hours, so *pre-tie* four spares per angler—leader, droppers, lures. Note: never use a Triple Teaser on a dropper.

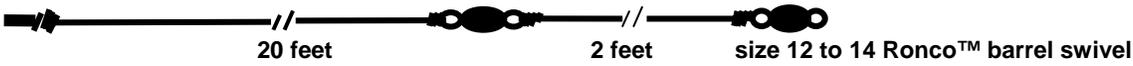
- 1. Attach a 20-foot leader of 6 lb. Maxima Ultragreen™ to the floating fly line, preferably with a nail-knot coated by a thin, slick layer of Plio-bond™, since this connection will be moving through the guides. [page 266 *Fishing Encyclopedia*],



- 2. Attach the end of the 20-foot leader to a size 12 to 14 Ronco™ barrel swivel barrel swivel using an improved clinch knot.



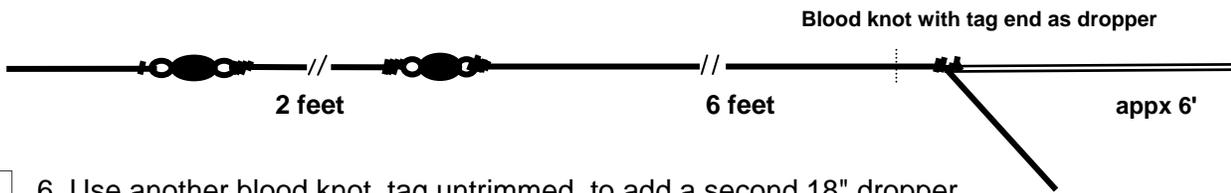
- 3. Use another improved clinch knot to tie on enough 6 lb Maxima Ultragreen™ to tie on a second size 12 or 14 Ronco™ barrel-swivel two feet from the first.



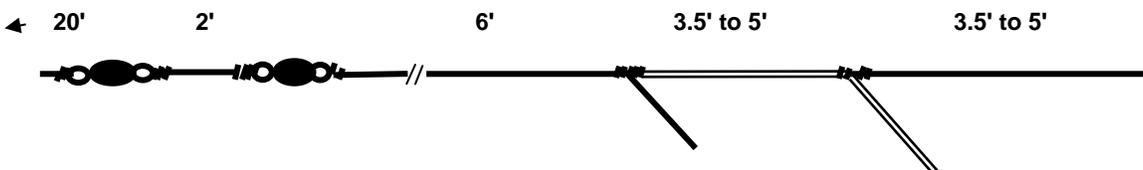
- 4. Use an improved clinch knot to add approximately 9 more feet of leader.



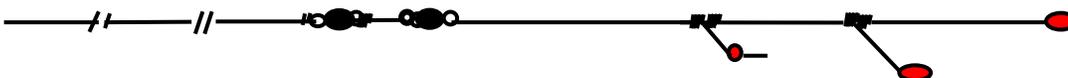
- 5. Six feet down this 9-foot segment, tie a blood knot to another 7-foot section of Maxima™. Leave 3 feet of the 9-foot segment — one tag end of the blood knot—to create a dropper for your first lure. For a fly, this dropper should be 11". For a Dick Nite™, 18".



- 6. Use another blood knot, tag untrimmed, to add a second 18" dropper



- 7. Sample of complete rig with egg-sucking leech, Dick Nite™ spoon, Triple Teaser™.





## Silver Lake Rainbows

# Technique: Dale's Troll

- 1. TROLL -- DO NOT ATTEMPT TO CAST THE RIG DESCRIBED. (Don't even *think* about it!)
- 2. Begin with the floating fly line, but switch to the intermediate, then the faster sinking line if results don't come quickly. Often stocked a month before opening, Silver Lake trout don't always school near the surface. Many have started to key on insect life, so may take flies more readily.
- 3. Test your lures' actions by trolling beside the boat. While the Dick Nite spoon™ will wobble properly at slow speed, if the Triple Teaser™ only wobbles, speed up until you see a "figure 8" action (observed from front or rear). Keep speeding up until the Triple-Teaser™ spins -- too fast! -- then slow just enough to return to the figure 8 action. **Aim to keep the boat moving 2 feet per second.**
- 4. If water temperature is below 51 degrees, slow your troll slightly, even if it affects the Triple Teaser's action.
- 5. Spoons generally perform better than flies if the water temperature is lower than 49 degrees, and during early spring mornings before insect activity begins between 8:00 and 9:00 a.m.
- 6. After 8:00 to 9:00 a.m., *if* water temp is over 49, *and* more than two anglers are in boat, rig one rod with flies, the other with spoons, as fish sometimes show a preference.
- 7. When you've established your trolling speed, *slowly* pay out your entire fly line (approximately 90 to 100 feet) while maintaining tension so the droppers don't snarl.
- 8. *Hold* each rod with the tip aimed *straight back* toward the point where the line enters the water – say, four inches from the surface.
- 9. If rigged only with flies, troll as fast as your motor will go, then slow down until you stop missing strikes. *Adding a tiny piece of worm or shred of pork rind to a fly will increase hook-ups by 30%!*
- 10. Avoid trolling in a straight line: Turn as often as possible!
- 11 When you hook a fish, continue moving at slow speed to prevent droppers from tangling.
- 12. **After landing or losing a fish, *immediately* turn around and troll back through the area where you hooked up. You've found fish, so don't move away from them!**
- 13. **Experiment** with flies, then intermediate line, then the Type IV sinking line!





# Rigging: Simple Troll

- 1. Begin tying what will become a 4.5-foot leader by knotting one end to a Triple Teaser, the other to a #5 ball-bearing swivel.
- 2. Slide a ¼ ounce sliding sinker onto the main line from the reel.
- 3. Tie the main line to the opposite end of the #5 ball-bearing swivel.



# Techniques: Simple Troll

- 1. Test the Triple Teaser's™ action by trolling it beside the boat. Speed up until you see a "figure 8" action (observed from front or rear). Keep speeding up until the Triple-Teaser™ spins -- too fast! -- then slow just enough to return to the figure 8 action. **Aim to keep the boat moving 2 feet per second.**
- 2. When you've established your trolling speed, *slowly* pay out 60 feet of line.
- 3. Avoid trolling in a straight line: Turn as often as possible!
- 4. **After landing or losing a fish, immediately troll back through the same area!**
- 5. Begin fishing along the downwind side of the lake. If action is slow, methodically cover entire lake. Watch for rises!
- 6. **Experiment.** Change speeds, and the amount of line out, from 30 to 90 feet.

# Rigging: Sight-Casting Option

While hit and miss, here's an exciting opportunity for adventurous anglers who don't mind taking a few minutes to explore. It's site specific, and only happens when conditions converge in the small and shallow cove at the far southwestern side of the lake. (See Location Details)

*If* the water is clear enough, usually when the sky's overcast, *and* there are enough insects to interest the fish, this area fills with trout you can see if you approach carefully. It's called "sight fishing," but you're hunting, really, and can't have more fun with a rod in your hand.

- 1. If using a fly rod, knot on 3 to 5 feet of 5 X tippet to a nine-foot leader, then a red Doc Spratley.
- 2. If using a spinning outfit, tie on a red Doc Spratley, then pinch enough split shot ahead of the swivel (toward the rod) to let you make casts of 60 to 70 feet.

# Technique: Sight-Casting Option

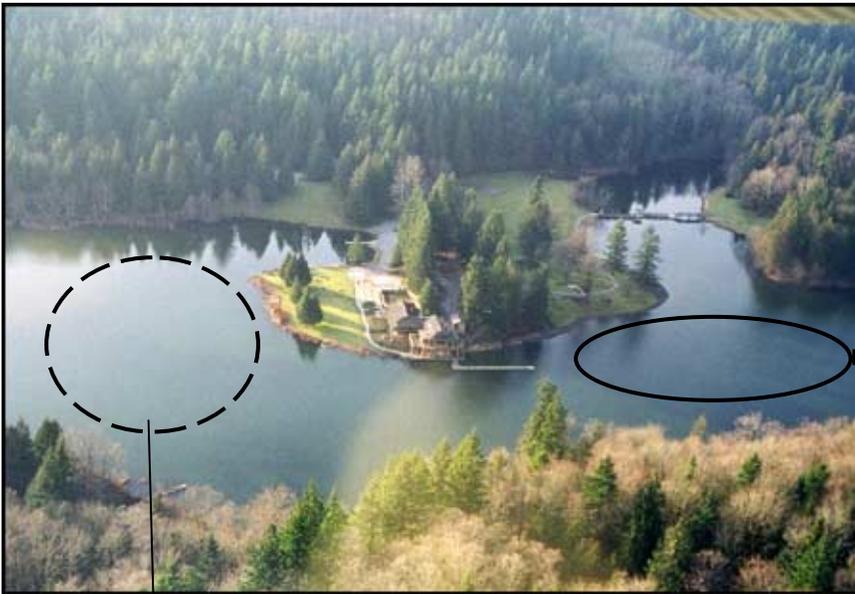
- 1. Slowly and quietly row or motor your way into the Southwestern cove, watching for schools of trout through your polarized glasses.
- 2. When trout are sighted:  
With a fly rod, cast at just ahead of and slightly beyond the trout; then begin to strip.  
With a spinning outfit, cast at least 4 feet ahead of and 10 feet beyond trout, then begin to reel.



## Silver Lake Rainbows

# Location Details

- 1. **Silver Lake is located southeast of Bellingham, at the northwest corner of Washington State.**  
From I-5, take the Mount Baker Highway (Exit 255) exit and drive east 28 miles to Maple Falls. Turn left on Silver Lake Road and follow the signs to the park (about three miles).
- 2. There are two boat launches on the lake...For a map of the park, hours, and a description of facilities, check [whatcomcounty.us/parks/silverlake](http://whatcomcounty.us/parks/silverlake)



Trolling – to main lake

**Southwestern cove  
Sight fishing**

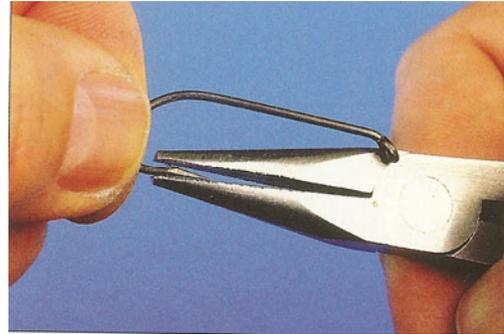
photo from [whatcomcounty.us/parks/silverlake](http://whatcomcounty.us/parks/silverlake)



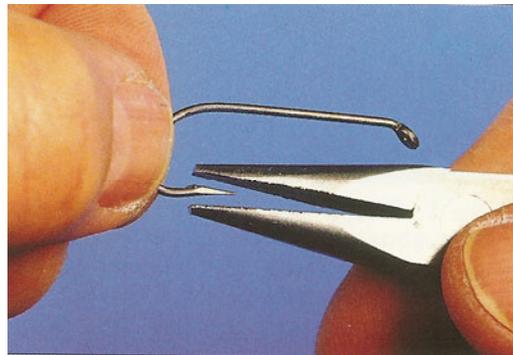
# Responsible Catching

While opinions vary as to whether you'll land more fish with crimped barbs, or fewer, 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 from *Fly Tier's Benchside Reference*, courtesy of Ted Leeson, Jim Shollmeyer, and [amatobooks.com](http://amatobooks.com)

## Catch and Release Tips

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

**Play the fish as quickly as possible.**

**Leave the fish in the water.**

**Never poke a finger in the fish's gills, or lift it by the gills.**

**After removing the hook from an exhausted fish, maintain a gentle grip and rock the fish back and forth to flush its gills with water. 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 with 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.***