

Kokanee Basics

by Phil Johnson

Kokanee fishing is increasing annually throughout the western USA. Not only an outstanding table entree, these fish are hard fighters when matched up with ultralight tackle.

State agencies like the low cost involved in rearing Kokanee to a size where they can be released as fingerlings. Kokanee are delivered from hatcheries to lakes when about 2 1/2 inches long, on the average. The abundance of plankton, the Kokanee's primary food source, allows Fish & Game to release Kokanee when they are very small, thus lowering hatchery time and food costs.

Catching Kokanee can be very exciting. Most often, it starts with a calm "fish on". About that time, another rod is loaded. Total chaos reigns at this point.

The major factor for this type of action is speed. I like the Luhr-Speed trolling speed indicator by Luhr-Jensen. It's highly visible and still easy to read several feet from the mounting position. In my experience, the most productive speed is 1.2 MPH. True, Kokanee can be caught at many different trolling speeds, but, day in and day out and under most weather conditions, 1.2 is the number.

Pro-Cure Oil mixed with your corn is a must. I use all that are available and at times blend several together. I have observed Kokanee requiring as many as four scent changes in one day. I take at least three different blends with me always.

Pro-Cure Predator is a favorite, and I never blend or mix it with other scents. A great scent starter package would be freshwater shrimp, herring, and anise. This combo will give you four different scents - shrimp/anise, herring/anise, shrimp/herring/anise, and plain anise. While I don't use anise alone, many people tell me that it is all they use.

A lot depends on the fishing pressure where you fish. Without much fishing pressure any scent or blend works. Where there is a lot of pressure, with more and more awareness of scents, you will have to be different with your blends. Mix and blend to suit yourself.

After draining a can of Shoepeg corn and blending oils into it, keep it refrigerated or on ice while fishing. It will stay fresh for about three weeks.

Most of the time, Kokanee frequent their normal staging areas. Always check the prevailing wind direction. The zooplankton drifts with the surface movement of the water driven by the wind. Fish the down wind shorelines. Sheltered bays also hold zooplankton. Which area of the lake has the most sunlight hours? This will hold the warmest water and the most zooplankton. Kokanee find these conditions very much to their liking. -PJ