

A GUIDE ON THE SELECTION OF HOOKS TO USE FOR SALMON

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Of all the Salmon that are hooked, how many are actually landed? And what proportions of Salmon hooked, are lost? It is worth giving these two questions some thought. If the proportion landed is very low, then it could be due to either bad handling by the angler, inexperience, bad tackle selection or just pure bad luck. However, it is more likely to be due to using indifferent hooks!

The hook is the contact point between fish and angler. Therefore, careful thought should be given to what hooks we actually use. With this in mind, we should make sure, at all times, we are using the highest quality hook of the right size and shape.

All hooks should be well tempered. Avoid soft hooks that easily straighten and, conversely, avoid hooks that are too brittle. All hook points should be very sharp and kept sharp. It is advisable to always carry and use a small sharpening stone to achieve this. Blunt hooks can be the main cause of many abortive pulls, due to the blunt hook point not penetrating sufficiently beyond the barb. It is essential that the hook buries itself past the barb for a secure hold. The position of the barb on the hook is also significant, as the nearer to the point of the hook the barb is, the less pressure has to be exerted upon it to set the hook.

The question of whether to use singles, doubles or treble hooks depends on circumstances and water conditions on the day. A good guide is to use singles on droppers, as they are less likely to tangle, and also during autumn when there are quantities of leaves drifting down the river. During the last two seasons, my preference has been to use more double hooked flies. This is because some beats are now banning the use of trebles, due to catch and release. Also, I find them easi-

er to tie flies onto, especially the pot belly pig style, as they make the boar bristles kick up that bit better on the rear of the hook! I can see, in the near future, the use of trebles being phased out altogether. Now I am tying more flies on doubles to pre-empt this when it happens. The make of doubles preferred are the Salar doubles because they have a very large gape and a good round bend. Loop produce doubles that are similar and, when the straight-eyed ones are used on tubes, they

tion of leverage with all hooks has to be taken into consideration, as the longer the shank and narrower the gape of the hook is, the greater will be the leverage, so shorter shanked hooks have an advantage. As to hook eyes, upturned are the most popular choice for most Salmon fly hooks and these are also better for tying turlé knots onto. Straight eyed hooks are recommended for all tube flies and lures. What I like in a hook is: short point, short shank and round bend with wide gape!

Now the all important aspect of hook size! A useful guide is: big hooks-big fish, small hooks-small fish. It is unwise to fish size ten flies for forty pounders in Norway, or size four trebles for summer Grilse on the Derwent. We need small hooks with needle sharp points for active Grilse.

Fishing the colder waters of spring or autumn, demands the use of larger flies or lures. Consequently, the hooks used should be, at all times, in proportion to the size of the fly or lure. For example, it's no use putting tiny trebles on large tube flies or big metal lures. For a rule of thumb guide, the width of the hook should match the width of fly or lure to which it is attached.

Finally, beware of damaged hooks. In every case when hooks have been opened out or bent, the metal has been weakened and can be further weakened again by forcing it back into its original shape and the hook will most likely break when into a good fish. If this happens, you have only yourself to blame. Finally, all rusted hooks should be ruthlessly discarded, regardless of the condition of the fly attached to it!

Attention to detail may save a blank day. Remember that next fish could be the fish of a lifetime!!

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are excellent. When using small flies, size ten and below, I prefer the Esmund Drury trebles. These are excellent for Grilse and summer Salmon and usually take a good hold, although, as we know, fresh Grilse are notorious for coming off, due to their soft mouths and being very active when played.

As to the type of hooks, outpoints used to be quite popular and hold very well. The new Salar hooks with the inturned points work very well; the idea being, the angle of pull when a fish is hooked, will be more direct with the point in line, or turned slightly inwards. The ques-