



The Rooster Tails Fishing Club of Northern California, Inc.

Educate ~ Entertain ~ Enhance

Volume 8, Issue 5 — June 2018

Rooster Tails Fishing Club of Northern California, Inc.
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Michael Lavoie — Branson Swim Baits

- US made, hand-poured super swim baits that repetitively catch fish—trophy size, toothy, monster fish
- Lowrance Electronics Factory Technician

Adventure Travel & Kokanee Tournament
August 7 & 8
Stampede Reservoir

The Rooster Tails Fishing Club invites all interested fishing men and women to learn about a new approach to catching trophy fish using custom US made, hand-poured swim-baits at their June 15th breakfast meeting. This will be a unique seminar to hear their special guest speaker, **Michael Lavoie**, owner of **Branson Baits**. **Michael's** seminar will be on how to use custom baits incorporating electronics as a weapon to finding, marking, and target vulnerable big fish in salt and freshwater. In addition, Michael will be bringing with him a factory technician from Lowrance Electronics to up-date RT member's fishfinders/GPS units for free. Members are encouraged to bring their Lowrance units early to the meeting. You don't want to miss this special presentation if you are interested in scoring a wall-hanger fish.

Live bait has long been a fixture of the fishing scene. Since the sport's Dark Ages, countless fish have fallen for the inherent attraction of various earthly-born forage impaled on a hook. However since fishing labs have toiled-away to find an alternative to live bait that mimics their size, features, swimming motion, color, and even the smell to be better than what nature

created. Too often though, the bait was created in mind to catch the angler to buy it, rather than catching fish. The result is that many lure and bait manufacturers put considerable emphasis on packaging, displays, and promotion rather than proof that their product actually catches fish.

The Rooster Tails are proud to have Michael at their meeting, his entrepreneurship as the founder of his custom bait business is more than just a lure manufacturer. He is also a successful tournament fisherman and winner of multiple fishing tournaments and has personally field tested his products. Michael meticulously compiled data on the positive attributes of hundreds of swim baits and incorporated them into one design. **Go to page 4**



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Calendar of Events

June 15
RT Breakfast
Speaker—Michael Lavoie, Branson Baits
Lowrance Factory Rep

June 20
Charterboat Ocean Fishing for Striped Bass & Halibut

July 20
Kokanee Fishing Speaker on Stampede Reservoir

June 2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

Striped Bass Fishing in San Francisco Bay

Going Vertical

The development of super-braids like Yo-Zuri SuperBraid Dark Green has allowed anglers to gear down. The lighter tackle, coupled with lifelike metal jigs now available in countless color schemes, sizes and weights, enable us to probe the depths and catch a wide array of species, including the **striped bass** that invade San Francisco Bay's rock reefs and bars from spring through autumn. Such structures rise from the bottom enough to create current up-welling that stack up bait and attract feeding striped bass. These ambush zones are prime target areas for vertical jigging and, depending on where you are in the bay; both incoming and outgoing tides produce nice stripers. But the best action usually happens on tides that rise or fall at least 5 feet.



1. Acme Kastmaster
2. Luhr Jensen Krocodile
3. Hopkins Shorty Hammered Spoon
4. Luhr Jensen Cripple Herring
5. P-Line Laser Minnow

Tackle and Lures

A quality one-piece, 7-foot conventional or spinning rod with a -matching reel loaded with 20-to-30 pound braid is ideal for the task. Connect a 2½-foot length of 20-30 pound fluorocarbon to the braid with a swivel, and then attach a snap on the other end to change lures more quickly. There's a wide selection of jigs and spoons well suited for vertical jigging, but those that are best mimic natural baits such as anchovies, sardines and herring. Lures with weights ranging from 1 to 4 ounces cover the depths you'll encounter in San Francisco Bay.

Drift – Drop and Hop

The presentation is easy. Cast down-current, a short distance from the boat, and allow the jig to drop freely. By the time the boat begins to approach the upside of the reef or hump, the jig is in the strike zone and the line angle is perfectly vertical or close to it. When you feel the jig tick bottom, snap the rod tip upward about 2 feet and immediately allow the lure to settle back down and tick bottom again.

As the boat begins to drift over the structure, adjust for the depth change by picking up some line before continuing to bounce the jig. When working spots in 15 to 20 feet, 1 to 2 ounces will do, but in spots where the depth drops to 40 feet or more, 3- to 4-ounce jigs will be needed.

Suspended Fish

Though often you will find fish stacked up on the bottom, sometimes stripers hang much higher in the water column and even push bait to the surface, triggering bird activity. When that happens, keep tabs on your line as the jig drops and immediately strike on any pause or hesitation. If you don't get bit by the time the jig gets near the bottom, hop it all the way up to the boat.

The hard reefs at the south tower are another striper hangout. Down south, a short distance below the Oakland Bay Bridge, more hangouts include the hard bars at the west and east sides of the bridge. The hard reefs at the south tower are another striper hangout. Down south, a short distance below the Oakland Bay Bridge, more hangouts include the hard bars at the west and east sides of the bridge.

CALIFORNIA STRIPED BASS REGULATIONS:

- DF&W Striped Bass Recreational Regulations minimum total length 18 inches.
- Total length: tip of the snout to the longest lobe of the tail without tail manipulation.
- Anglers can keep two striped bass per day

Tackle

- **Rods:** One-piece, 7-foot spinning or conventional rated to 30-pound line, like the Cousins LSW 703C and LSW 703S or equivalent
- **Reels:** Matching spinning or conventional with smooth drag and at least 200-yard line capacity, like the Penn Slammer 360 and 965 level-wind or equivalent
- **Line:** 20- to 30-pound braided line
- **Leader:** 2+ feet of 30-pound-test fluorocarbon with appropriate swivel and snap placed at the respective ends

FISHING FOR HALIBUT

CALIFORNIA HALIBUT REGULATIONS:

- DF&W Halibut Recreational Regulations minimum total length 22 inches
- Total length: tip of the snout to the longest lobe of the tail without tail manipulation
- 3 fish bag and possession limit

The 22 in. minimum size limit protects immature CA Halibut from fishery take. No more than one daily bag limit may be taken or possessed by any one person, regardless of whether

the fish are fresh, frozen, or otherwise preserved. See CCR Title 14 sections 1.17, 7.00, 7.50(a), 27.60(c) and 195. For more information see: www.wildlife.ca.gov/regions/marine.

Best methods for handling short Halibut: If the Halibut is obviously undersize (AKA a 'shaker') and does not need to be measured. Leave the fish in the water or dangling over the water, and shake the fish off the hook. If necessary, hold the leader line and use pliers to unhook the fish without touching it.

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Time to Catch American Shad!

By J.D. Richey

Thanks to all this late-season rain we've had lately, we're looking at having a really good shad run in the Central Valley rivers... most notably, the Sacramento, Feather, Yuba & American. In case you're a newbie to this sport, American shad are basically big, mutant members of the herring family that live in the ocean for most of their lives and then come up the Valley's rivers to spawn in the spring. They typically run 2-4 pounds, with some larger 5 and 6 pounders mixed in occasionally for good measure. On light tackle, these visitors from the briny depths of the Pacific put up a considerable scrap. They're kind like the fishy version of Jack Russell terriers - not huge in stature but tenacious little buggers that battle to the bitter end.

While not considered much of a food fish on the West Coast, American shad are a delicacy on the Eastern Seaboard - in fact their scientific name, *Alosa sapidissima*, means "most savory" in Latin. Exactly why they really haven't caught on as table fare out here is anybody's guess, but when you ask somebody about eating shad you'll get the same response: "they're too bony." Being that they're related to herring, I'm sure there is some merit to the bony theory but I guess I'm just going to have to break down and give one a try someday.

I have heard from some folks that they are good smoked but I also contend that you could, with the right brine, smoke up an old tennis shoe and probably make it taste okay. But I digress. We're here to discuss the sporting qualities of the American shad and, more importantly, how to catch 'em. So let me start with this: All you'll need to get involved with the fun spring pastime is a 7-foot spinning rod and a quality reel spooled up with 4- or 6-pound test line. Throw in a handful of 1/32-ounce lead heads, some pink and chartreuse 1.5-inch curly tailed grubs and some split-shot and you're in business.



To rig up, tie a pink, bright red or white jig head to the end of your line, slip a grub tail onto the collar and add a split-shot 20 inches up the line. That's it!

Shad are not the fans of rapidly moving water, so you'll need to target them below rapids, falls or dams. Additionally, they like slow flats that are 6' to 12' feet deep. Look for areas that feature current that's flow-

ing at the speed of a leisurely walk. On the American River, some of the better spots include the flats below Gristmill, the Log Hole, the top of the Arden Rapids, Rossmoor Bar, Upper Sunrise Flat, Sailor Bar and Nimbus Basin. On the Feather, try Verona, Shanghai or the Outlet. On the Sac, Los Mollinos, Woodson Bridge and Red Bluff are the spots. Shad will bite all day long, but there definitely seems to be a spike in the mornings and again in the late evenings, so if you want to really hit prime time, try to fish during one of the low light periods of the day.

As far as catching shad goes, you're going to want to cast straight out and allow the current to swing your jig in a downstream arc. If you end up tapping the bottom, go lighter with your weight. Ideally, you want to be within a couple feet of the bottom but not right on it. Shad hang pretty low in the water column, but will rise up a few feet to grab a passing morsel. As your lure swings downstream, follow your line with the rod tip and give it an occasional pop to add a little extra attraction. At the end of the swing, the lure will be in a position immediately downstream of you. As long as the jig's not sitting directly on the bottom, allow it to hang in the current for a few seconds before you crank up and cast again. Bites often come just at the end of the swing and then when the lure's dangling straight below you. Speaking of bites, shad sometimes smack a grub with reckless abandon (there's no mistaking the grab) but they can also be a bit finicky and barley slurp it. Be on the look-out for anything different as the lure drifts and give a sharp hookset if you feel something - even a slight pause or light "tick."

Fishing for Halibut—continued

If handling the fish is necessary to remove the hook, gently clamp down on the gill cover with one hand. Remove the hook using your other hand, while the fish is held over the side of the boat. If the Halibut is close to the minimum size and it must be brought onboard to be measured: Wet your net/measuring device/hands/cloth before handling the fish. Use a soft, knotless landing net with small-mesh and avoid contact with the deck. Handle the fish by supporting both the head and tail. Place the fish on top of the measuring device. Ease the fish back into the water if it is short.

What to avoid when handling short Halibut: Do not allow the fish to come into contact with the deck or any other rough

surface. This can cause boat rash, which makes the fish more susceptible to infection. Do not let fingers or pliers come into contact with the gills. Do not hold the fish only by the tail without supporting the head or body. Do not use large-mesh nets to land short Halibut. These nets cause tail-splitting which makes the fish more susceptible to infection.

If the Halibut is close to the minimum size and it must be brought onboard to be measured: Wet your net/measuring device/hands/cloth before handling the fish. Use a soft, knotless landing net with small-mesh and avoid contact with the deck. Handle the fish by supporting both the head and tail.

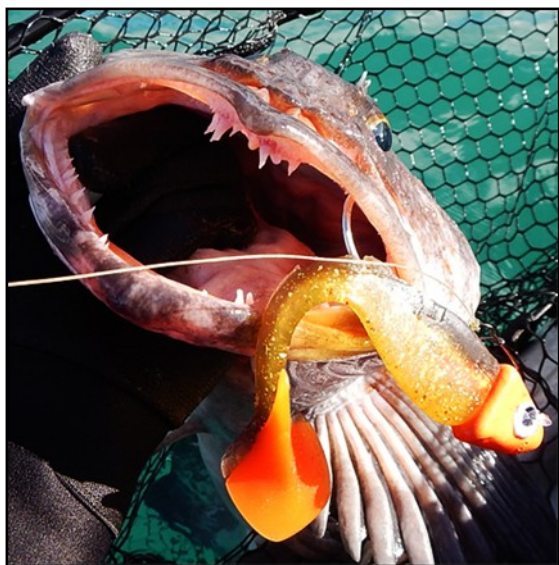
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Michael Lavois—continued from page 1

It took him over a year to come up with a finished mold that was used to make a hand-poured super-bait that repetitively caught fish. Not just any fish, but trophy size, toothy, monster fish! His baits are now in demand by Pro Tournament Anglers as well as by fishing guides in the know. Branson baits have proven results specializing in saltwater and freshwater fish including halibut, striped bass, ling cod, rock cod, Cabazon, largemouth bass, and other large predator fish species.

As a pro angler Michael is also rapidly accumulating endorsements from major industry names such as Lowrance Electronics, EGO Adventure Products, Daiwa, Lews boats, US Hobie Kayaks, fishing team member and a brand ambassador for Scotty Downriggers.

You can find out more about Branson Baits at www.bransonbaits.com



Halibut—continued

Place the fish on top of the measuring device. Ease the fish back into the water if it is short. Tip: If the Halibut is gut-hooked, cut the leader line and leave the hook. Attempts at hook removal may increase the chance of death. However, if the Halibut is mouth-hooked attempts should be made to remove the hook instead of cutting the line. For more information see: www.wildlife.ca.gov/regions/marine.


How to Fillet a California Halibut —

Click here to find out how:



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A3XBRo8AqhM>

Jackpot Contest

ANNUAL JACKPOT CONTEST		LENGTH	WEIGHT	WATER	DATE	ANGLER
	Kokanee	16"		WHISKY TOWN	5-22	B. MIERKEF
	Landlocked Salmon	21"		DROVILLE	5-15	OLIN SOUTHERS
	River or Ocean King Salmon	39"	22lb 6oz	SACTO RIVER	10-11	SHAWN CONLAN
	Striped Bass	34 1/4"		FEATHER RIVER	4-25	TOM HYDE
	Rainbow Trout	24 1/2"	5.43	PON PEDRO R.	3-15	B. MIERKEF
	Brown Trout	23"	5lb 10oz	SHASTA LAKE	5-6	B. MIERKEF
	Steelhead	27 1/2"	9lb 7oz	AMERICAN RIVER	1-17	PETER ZITTERE
	Lake Trout (Mackinaw)	23 1/2"		DONNER LAKE	6-23	SHAWN CONLAN
	Large Mouth Bass	16 1/2"	2 Lbs	FOLSOM LAKE	5-4	Rik Cox
	Small Mouth Bass	19 1/2"	4lb 3oz	BERRYESSA	2-15	Rik Cox
	Catfish	28 1/2"		CLEARLAKE	11-18	MEL EWING
	Shad	19 1/4"		AMERICAN RIVER	6-23	GREG HICKS
	Croppie	16 1/4"		CAMANCHE	3-9	JOHN HESS
	Shurgeon	34"		SACTO DELTA	11-18	MEL TAKAHASHI

2017 entries in red – 2018 entries in black

KOKANEE— **Bev Mierkey**, 16", Whiskeytown, 5/22/18

LANDLOCKED SALMON, **Olin Souders**, 21", Oroville, 5/15/18

RAINBOW TROUT, **Bev Mierkey**, 24 1/2", 5.43 lbs., Don Pedro, 3/15/18

BROWN TROUT, **Bev Mierkey**, 23", 5.10", Shasta Lake, 5/6/18

STEELHEAD, **Peter Zittere**, 27 1/2", 9 lbs. 7 oz., American River,
1/17/18

LARGE MOUTH BASS, **Rik Cox**, 16 1/2", Folsom Lake, 5/4/18

SMALL MOUTH BASS, **Rik Cox**, 19 1/2", 4 lbs. 4 oz, Berryessa, 2/15/18

Grand Slam Fishing Challenge

[illegible]

LARGE MOUTH BASS, **Mac McKendree**, 12 1/2"

SALMON (RIVER OR OCEAN), **Mac McKendree, 12"**

LARGE MOUTH BASS, Shawn Conlan, 14"