

Quality Troll Salmon

From water to ice, it all begins on the back deck.

To ensure the highest price possible and continued market placement, salmon trollers must produce the highest quality product possible. The handling of a salmon, from the time it leaves the hook to the time it is iced down, will go further to determining the quality of a salmon than any other stage in its movement from the ocean to the consumer's plate. During the past few years, some new techniques have surfaced to guarantee that troll salmon is truly the king of salmon. Washington Sea Grant, the Makah Tribe, Pacific Marine Conservation Council and the Washington Trollers Association strongly urge all trollers to follow these simple steps to ensure the highest quality salmon attainable.



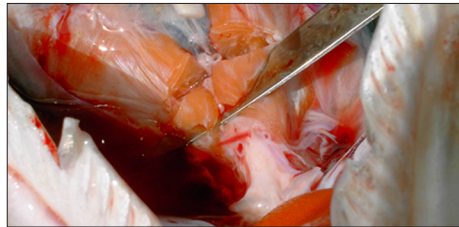
Salmon are stunned in the water and should be landed on a surface to ensure minimal or no scale loss. (An ice blanket works very well for this.) Sticking the salmon with a knife, directly behind the gills (as shown), quickly bleeds the fish.



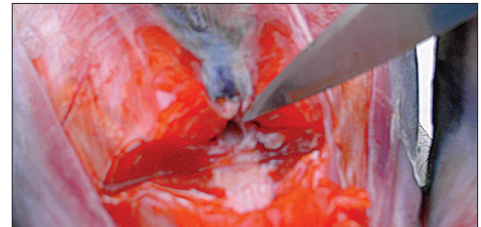
The gills are then removed and the fish is prepared to be flushed of all blood. Making two cuts in front of where the kidney ends does this. The knife tip is pointing to the spot where the first cut will be made, right where the kidney ends.



The first cut is made straight down to the backbone, being careful not to cut through the backbone.



The second cut is made forward of the first cut, cutting back to the first cut at a 45-degree angle. This takes out a notch, very similar in appearance to a felling notch in a tree.



With the notch removed, a large vein will be exposed. This vein runs through the kidney along the backbone and spreads throughout the entire fish. It can be seen at the tip of the knife blade.



A pipette tip or similar device is inserted into the vein. Notice the slight bend of the pipette tip to ease insertion of the tip. Be careful not to use too much water pressure; a stream that shoots about six to eight feet from the tip of the pipette is sufficient.



The pipette tip is inserted and the water is turned on. Notice the blood being flushed from the entire fish. Also notice that it is easier to do this with only the gills removed; once the kidney is removed, this technique cannot be done.



The fish should be flushed for at least 30 to 60 seconds, depending on the size of the fish. The gills can be removed from the next fish at this time while the tube sits in the first fish, flushing out all the blood.



The tube is removed and the fish is cleaned. This fish was just rinsed with no massaging of the veins and the kidney bones are not cut. Notice that no blood is visible in the veins of the belly wall.



With a little more work, the kidney bones are then cut and flushed clean of all blood. Make sure to only cut the first four of the kidney bones taking care not to cut along the back bone into the flesh of the fish. The collar is also trimmed and cleaned of all remaining kidney on the sides of the backbone. The fish is then put into slush ice for a quick chill and then iced, or, without pre-chilling in a slush tank, put quickly into ice. Letting the fish sit on deck can cut the shelf life in half.

This flushing technique is recommended for all troll salmon. It is quicker and easier than massaging the belly and backs to remove any blood and, by doing so, ensures a firmer salmon. The final photo on this poster shows the finished product — a high-quality salmon worthy to be served at the highest quality restaurants throughout North America. Many buyers are willing to pay extra for fishermen to flush their salmon. Ask your buyers for price incentives.



Flush your salmon. Its easy and quick and it pays, now and in the future.

For more information, contact Sarah Fisksen, Washington Sea Grant Program, at sfisksen@u.washington.edu, 206.543.1225.