

The fishin' is fine where river meets ocean

It's called jetty fishin' — not fishing or just fishin', but *jetty* fishin'.

Among avid fishermen, the kind that rise before dawn to brave the wind and rain in the bleak, dark morning, the distinction of an adjective preceding the word fishin' is important indeed.

When an angler gets skunked — returns from a fishing trip empty-handed, without even so much as a tall tale to offer — he tells everyone "Oh, I was just fishin'." No adjective.

He usually says it matter-of-factly, like he was really saying, "Oh, I was just messin' around."

The real fishermen understand this. It's like some private code among them; when there's an adjective in front of fishin', their ears perk up.

When a rod that's pulling several pounds of chrome-bright flashers and a gored herring suddenly doubles over and a 25-pound Chinook salmon defies gravity and seems to dance across the water on its tail ... well, that's *salmon* fishin'.

And when a fisherman's arm starts to ache from hours of cranking up three feathered hooks connected to a thick nylon line from more than 300 feet off the bottom of the ocean, usually carrying a sea bass, snapper, cod or sometimes all three, that's *bottom* fishin'.

An adjective is paramount in the fisherman's code. One

word, preceding fishin', sets off a myriad of images in the hardcore fisherman's mind. An adjective places its respective form of fishin' in a category all its own.

The beauty of jetty fishin' is it's just as available and just as appealing to the casual fisherman as it is to the avid one. Anyone who wants to clamber over huge rocks the size of a Volkswagen bug to get to the edge of the water can enjoy jetty fishin'.

A jetty is an intrusion into the ocean, a giant, long, narrow pile of rocks placed by man that extends the land. Jetties dot the Oregon coast, virtually at every hole in the beach. Wherever a river or bay dumps into the Pacific, a person is likely to find a jetty.

Jetties extend beyond the ocean's breakers, out where the sea is a bit calmer. When a jetty is built, the mouth of the river or bay becomes tamer and more appealing to boats seeking the open sea.

And when a jetty is built, it provides the world with a new fishing hole. A spot in the ocean, teeming with God-only-knows-what kind of sea life, becomes accessible to hook and line.

The closest jetty to Eugene is about 60 miles due west at the mouth of the Siuslaw River in Florence. All it takes is an Oregon fishing license, an hour's drive from Eugene, and the effort to climb across the



Jetty fishin' is a fine sport for the stout o' heart and steady o' feet. A prime spot can be found where the Siuslaw River meets the sea near Florence.

rocks, and anyone can experience *jetty* fishin'.

The fisherman's code translates jetty into unpredictability. A person might catch anything fishing from a jetty.

The avid fisherman might say he's fishin' with shrimp because the perch are running, or he's using night crawlers because the sea trout are in. But he's not really surprised if he catches a bass instead. And he's not surprised if he catches a cod or salmon or crab or some God-awful-looking thing off the bottom or, heaven forbid, he hooks a seal.

He's not even surprised if he

doesn't catch anything. Who can predict? It's one of the few times a hardcore fisherman uses an adjective when he gets skunked. He still says, "Oh, I went jetty fishin'."

A person interested in doing some jetty fishin' should remember to travel light; the climb over the rocks is not easy, especially with a lot of baggage. Besides, there are always roads right to the edge of jetties, so any extra refreshments or clutter need not be packed to the water's edge but can be left a few feet away in the car.

In Florence, jetty-seekers can turn west on Rhododendron

Drive off Highway 101 and drive directly to North Jetty Road, which, obviously, leads to the jetty.

Remember, too, to take a windbreaker and perhaps some rain gear — this is Oregon. And take a variety of bait to offer the sea life if serious about hooking something.

Kelp worms, shrimp, night crawlers, eggs and herring all have, at some time or another, baited creatures off a jetty. After all, it is *jetty* fishin'.

Story and photo by Jim Moore

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