

Salmon restrictions

Schenk, 73, was among the first to offer bottom-fishing charter trips out of Ilwaco as a result of restricted salmon seasons in the '70s.

"In the '70s they started restricting the salmon fishing. They cut us out one year around July and there was nobody on the port, so I started bottom-fishing," he explained.

"I ended up taking four trips in a row down there for a total of 12 people," he said. "We lost money on each trip doing that, but the next week I was hauling more and more because the word got out and people got excited. I was the only boat doing it. I made some money that year, not tons, but before Buoy 10 opened up. It paid for my overhead because all we had was Buoy 10. That's how it got started. I was the only boat going down there for quite a while."

Over time, Schenk honed a bottom-fishing method influenced by salmon and tuna fishing.

"Originally we had sinkers with salmon baits on them. It worked okay but was kind of expensive because those banana sinkers weren't cheap at the time. Then we went to using plastic worms with a coho fly."

Today, Schenk prefers a finesse approach on bottom-fishing trips, using a ¾-to 2-ounce egg sinker with a live anchovy on a single hook, rather than a traditional top and bottom rig.

"I like to try new stuff all the time, to me that's what fishing is all about," Schenk said.

"The cove where we fish is pretty shallow water and the bottom is real jagged. If you're using metal jigs they'll hang up all the time and cost you a fortune. If each guy loses four jigs, which is not uncommon, that's like \$25 and that's your profit on the trip. I came up with an idea of using egg weights and just a single hook like they do tuna fishing, about seven or eight years ago and it works well."



A customer poses with a keeper lingcod caught while fishing aboard the *F/V Sea Breeze* during a bottom fishing trip off the Oregon coast.



Charter customers head down the dock to board their respective boats for a bottom fishing trip in Ilwaco.



Anchovies have emerged as a popular bait for bottom fishing after charters experimented with salmon and tuna fishing tactics in earlier years.



A customer aboard the *F/V Sea Breeze* bottom fishes for rockfish and lingcod near Tillamook Rock Lighthouse off the Oregon coast.

Black Rockfish

Black Rockfish, *Sebastes melanops*

Also known as black seaperch, black bass, black rock cod, sea bass, black snapper

Features: Black rockfish are dark gray to black on top, with a lighter belly, and black spots on their dorsal fins. They can grow to be 25-inches long.

Habitat: They are found over rocky reefs most typically shoreward of 180 ft. of depth, and are common along jetties and other structure in estuaries. Occasionally schools of black rockfish will come all the way to the surface.

Technique: Rockfish feed on squid, octopus, krill, and other fish. They readily take both bait and lures. Common lures include rubber-tailed lead head jigs and shrimp flies.

—Sidebar information from the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

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