

YAKIMA BAIT KNOW-HOW REPORT

WRITTEN BY:
Buzz Ramsey



FREE TAKE ONE!

PLUGGING SALMON WITH MAG LIP®

Mag Lip is an extra-deep-diving salmon plug featuring a strike-producing wiggle in slow current and erratic, darting "skip-beat" action in medium to fast current. Although the 4.5 Mag Lip is considered the salmon size, Mag lip is available in a 3.5 size too. Both sizes have a maximum diving range of 8 to 14 feet with the 4.5 capable of a 20 foot dive under ideal conditions. Like all diving plugs, diving depth will vary depending on current speed, line diameter and the amount of let-out.

Although not always necessary for success, Mag Lip is designed to perform with a fillet of sardine or other bait strapped to its belly, which can make this lure even more effective! Mag Lip bait-wrap grooves help hold wrapping thread and fillet in place. For the size 4.5 Mag Lip, your fillet should measure 1-3/4 inches long and 5/8 inches wide. Center your fillet on the belly eyelet (skin side down) and hold in place by wrapping with light test mono or elastic thread – finish with 3-to-4 half hitches.

Mag Lip 4.5 is rigged from the factory with treble hooks (Size #1 round-bend trebles) but works with singles too! Mag Lip 4.5 swims correctly when rigged with double 1/0 or 1/0-2/0 (2/0 on tail) siwash style single hooks. It's recommend that you rig the belly single hook (point down) off two split-rings, and the trailing single (point up) off double split-rings.



MAG LIP TUNING

Mag Lip is straight running from the factory when using the included round-eyed connector snap. This plug can be fine tuned by bending (a slight amount) the pull-point eyelet the opposite way the plug is running. You should realize the erratic skip-beat Mag Lip action should not be confused with it being out of tune. Rather than pulling this lure beside your boat, to check its action: place Mag Lip in the current behind your boat with your rod tip pointed downstream and observe its wiggle and how it tracks before attempt to adjust the eyelet.



TROLLING

Mag lip is an excellent trolling lure in that it will perform at multiple trolling speeds and has a diving range of 8 to 14 feet with the 4.5 capable of diving up to 20 feet due to its large diving lip. Additional weight, a diver or downrigger can be used to take Mag Lip even deeper.

When forward trolling, the most effective strategy is to run your lures (plugs) at different distances behind your boat. (This is the opposite of back-trolling, where running all your plugs the same distance from your craft may intimidate territorial fish into striking.) Staggering the distance your lures run behind your boat (varying the amount of let-out from 50-to-100 feet, for example) is solid trolling strategy since doing so will increasing the number of times fish will see your lures.

Another tip is to zigzag troll. A zigzag troll works because following fish may become bored and not strike due to your lure not reacting (running or attempting to flee) when trolled at a consistent speed and direction. Mag Lip's erratic, darting "skip-beat" action can overcome this to some extent but be made even more effective when combined with a zigzag troll.

BACK-TROLLING

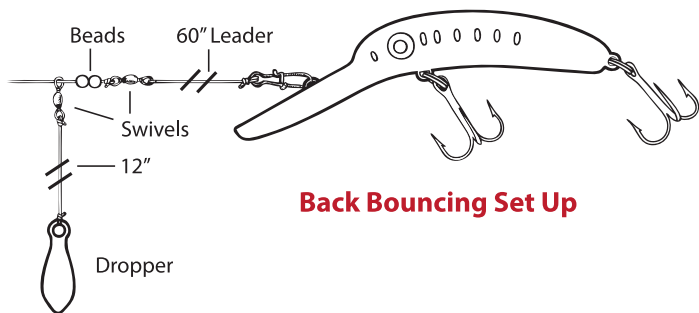
Mag Lip is fast becoming a favorite back-trolling lure for many guides and anglers because it will often dive near the bottom without having to add a diver or weight to get it down.

Back-trolling is a river fishing method where your boat is positioned in the current upstream from the area you wish to fish by holding your craft (drift boat or jet sled) steady in the current by rowing or with a trolling motor. While holding your boat steady (as if you were anchored) let Mag Lip out/downstream behind your boat 30-to-100 feet – depending on water speed and river depth. When you stop letting out line, the current will cause your Mag Lip (plug) to dive near bottom. Now, while holding back in the current, allow your craft to slowly slip downstream such that your Mag Lip will dive near the bottom while marching downriver at a steady pace.

While back-trolling, your Mag Lip should be diving just above the bottom and not dig into it, which can be revealed by watching your rod tip. A steady rod tip action means your plug is working above bottom. If your rod is working other than this it could be a signal that your lure is digging into the bottom; try reeling up your line in 10 foot increments or until your rod tip yields a steady throb.

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BACK BOUNCE MAG LIP

Back-bouncing the Mag Lip with a weight attached to a dropper line 50-to-60 inches above it is an effective method for fishing deep/roily holes found in many rivers – a place where chinook salmon often accumulate. (Realize that the wide-action of a FlatFish makes it an excellent lure choice too.)

This method is much like back-bouncing bait but with one important difference: rather than continually bouncing; you'll need to hold your rod steady once your lure reaches the strike zone. The amount of weight you use is critical; too much and your lure won't bounce out and away from your boat. Not enough and you may not feel your sinker hit bottom or may be unsure where the bottom is in relation to your Mag Lip.

Once you've selected the right size sinker, you'll need to back-bounce or walk your outfit downstream from your boat until your line is at a 45 degree angle. Given the right size weight combined with the pull of your Mag Lip working in the current, your weight should be suspended 6-to-24 inches above the bottom. Now, hold your rod steady while back-trolling your boat and trailing lure through deep water areas likely to hold fish. Since the depth can change, you will need to occasionally check the depth by dropping your rod tip to ensure your weight/lure is near the bottom.

WAIT BEFORE "SETTING THE HOOK"

The strike of a salmon taking a salmon-size Mag Lip equipped with a sardine fillet may be the hardest you'll ever feel, however, don't set the hook until Mr. Salmon is holding your rod tip down steadily, peeling line from your reel, or until your rod tip pulsates up and down three to four times. Under most conditions, waiting on the bite will increase your chance of a solid hook up, while yanking too soon can result in a miss or later losing your fish. If you're using a baitcast reel, realize that it's important to have your thumb firmly planted on the reel spool when you set the hook. After the hook set, you can let the reel drag take over.

PLUNKING

Mag Lip is an effective plug when still fished in rivers. This method works best for migrating fish and when/where there is enough current to provide plug action. Keep in mind Mag Lip may require a longer weight-dropper line (especially in fast currents) to prevent it from digging into bottom; for example, I usually run a 30-to-36 inch weight-dropper line combined with a 60 inch leader when plunking a Mag Lip and 24 inch weight-dropper line when employing a medium dive plug like an M-2 or T-50 FlatFish.



Scott Byrne and Kurt Kruger with a beautiful spring chinook caught with a Mag Lip.

3.5 MAG LIP

Although originally sized to target steelhead and other similar size fish the 3.5 Mag Lip works for chinook too. This smaller size is worth trying when clear perhaps low water conditions cause salmon to become skittish or non-responsive to larger offerings. The extra deep dive combined with its ability to perform with larger hook sizes make the 3.5 Mag Lip a viable option for chinook. If you attempt to add a fillet of sardine or other bait to its belly make sure to keep your fillet small and thin as this lure will only handle a tiny bait wrap.

"HOT TAIL" FINISHES

Mag Lip "Tail", "Hot Tail", or "Triple Tail" finishes, where the accent color is painted on the tail end of the lure, have become Yakima Bait's most popular finishes. The popularity of the "Hot Tail" finishes is confirmed by years of "fishing research" that clearly demonstrate salmon zero in on the colored end of the lure which, with "Hot Tail" finishes, is where the trailing hook is located. "Hot Tail" finishes have proven so effective that many anglers (including me) now remove the belly hook from Mag Lip or FlatFish having "Hot Tail" paint patterns. Removing the belly hook makes adding your bait wrap easy and aids in the gentle release of wild fish.



BLUB - Blue Bandit



GRIN - Grinch



FISHM - Fish Monger



MDCL - Mad Clown

Friend and guide Mike Kelly and Buzz Ramsey with Mag Lip caught chinook from the Lower Columbia River.



Although not a guide, Buzz is considered a sport fishing authority for salmon, steelhead, and trout. He writes a regular outdoor column, is a seminar speaker and has appeared on many TV fishing shows. He is a hall of famer for The Association of Northwest Steelheaders and The National Fresh Water Fishing Hall of Fame. Berkley offers a line of Air IM-8 rods Buzz Ramsey designed for salmon and steelhead. Currently, Buzz is Brand Manager for Yakima Bait Company and a member of the management team – www.yakimabait.com.



For more Yakima Bait Know-How please visit yakimabait.com

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