

## Lake Oroville Tactics

**Date:** May 14, 2010 & June 20, 2011

**Prepared by:** Gary Voet

**Lake:** Oroville

**Month:** Mid-May through August

**Areas:** Dam and 162 bridge are most popular and most productive places.

**Likely depth(s) fish will be at):** varies from surface to 30 feet

**Rod, reel, main line (e.g. # test, lead core, etc.):** If using lead core, two colors is probably limit; after that, recommend downriggers as these fish are real acrobats and the more line you have out, the more chance of them getting off when they start jumping. General rule of thumb is that for every color you go down 5 feet. If you want to fish 15 feet, that's three colors, which is 90 feet leadcore, plus the 50-70 feet monofilament leader. That's a 160 feet of line out, way too much opportunity for the fish to get off. Downriggers improve your chances of landing a fish.

**Terminal tackle (e.g. leader #/length, dodgers, side-kicks, wiggle fins, e-chips, flashers, lures/colors, side-planers, downriggers:**

**Scents/bait:** Pro cure anchovy gel; tip lure with piece of anchovy; put gel on anchovy.

**Tactics:** The lake is a very deep lake. Depending on where you fish, you will be in water anywhere from 150 to 400 feet. However, the fish being caught during the months of May through August are usually swimming around between 5-35 feet. If you have a graph and can set the upper and lower limits, set it at "0" upper and "50" lower. You will get a better definition of that area. THIS IS NOT THE SAME AS ZOOMING IN. Your depth will still show in the upper left-hand corner, but you never have to worry about running aground on this lake or losing a downrigger ball.

For downriggers, setbacks depend on how deep you are going. The shallower you go, the more setback and vice versa. General rule of thumb is 15 feet and shallower, let out 70 feet line; deeper than 15 feet can go 30-70 feet out.

**Peak times:** First light until noon.

**Boat handling:** Launching at the spillway launch can be easy or, what I call, can be "heart attack city." If the lake is down, there is a paved, lower launch ramp (with two docks). Problem is there is about a 150 yard walk (a steep one too) to the lower, flat parking lot when the lake is down to the lowest level that the spillway launch ramp can handle. When the lake rises, and it can come up fast, the hike gets less and less. But, when the lower ramp is finally covered with water that means the upper ramp is put in use and that means another 150 yard walk. UGH! Go to this address <http://cdec.water.ca.gov/cgi-progs/queryDaily?ORO> to see the lake level. The bottom of the bottom ramp is 700 feet, so when the lake starts going down in the late fall, you can check to see if you can still launch at the spillway.

**Amenities:** There is an excellent fish-cleaning station at the top of the upper ramp. Also some picnic tables and flush-toilet restrooms at the top of the upper ramp. Cost to launch is \$12 for seniors. Don't leave your ATM/charge card in the machine!

## Locations:

1. Dam buoy line
2. Cable/buoy line
3. Outhouse
4. Shale Point
5. N. Bidwell Hill bank
6. Hwy 162 bridge
7. Potter Ravine Cove



### Salmon Notes:

Coho Salmon fishing is productive throughout the year, but you need to vary your depth depending on water temperatures and where the forage fish are holding. Trolling is best in the spring and summer, though fish can also be taken using this method in the fall and winter. Troll minnow imitation lures, including Wee Tads, Needlefish, Crippures, Hum Dingers, Sparklefish and Rapalas. When the fish concentrate on schools of shad, bait fishing with cut anchovies and live minnows at the spillway and in the river arms is your best bet. Bank fishing with live minnows under bobbers is also productive throughout the lake in the fall and winter.

Black bass fishing is great year round, since the spotted bass that predominate in the catches continue to feed when water temperatures cool down and smallmouth and largemouth bass become inactive. Drop shooting with plastics is the most popular method, but dart heading and split shooting with a variety of plastic worms is also effective. Tossing top water lures and spinnerbaits can also be great at times.

Channel and white catfish provide fine action in the spring and summer when the water temperature warms. Fish from bank and boat with mackerel, clams, chicken liver and stink baits in the coves of the main body and forks.

Other fish found in Oroville include bluegill, redear sunfish, green sunfish, black crappie, white crappie, brown trout, rainbow trout and white sturgeon.