

PEOPLE'S  
EXHIBIT NO.

170

SC55500A

PEOPLE v. SCOTT PETERSON

DATE JUL 26 2004

By MARYLIN MORTON  
Deputy Clerk of the Superior Court

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mainly of a flat bottom topography, the sturgeon will spread out far and wide over this open floor plan, thus creating thin migratory lanes of fish.

Hitting or intercepting one of these thread like lanes can be tough, but if your depth finder's transducer has a wide angle, it helps immensely in finding elusive targets while scanning shallow water.

When I'm approaching a stretch of water that I suspect is holding fish I'll slow the boat down to one or two knots and begin scanning the water by moving the boat in a slow and wide zig zag pattern. I normally travel with the current direction because the sturgeon often swims with the tide.

I know this fact from direct observations my brother and I made while scuba diving with the fish in the Marin waters during the herring spawns.

As I scan the bottom I'll continue to meander down current. If I'm lucky enough to find a fish or two I'll keep scanning with the depth finder to see if more marks are passing on this lane. If heavy marks of fish repeatedly appear on the screen I'll quietly anchor over this lane of fish.

At times you'll see high cruisers traveling several feet off the bottom, and if it happens to be a very active passing lane beneath your anchored boat, you may eventually encounter what I call "rubs." These rubs are actually caused by the sturgeon's body brushing against your line as they cruise by. Rubs may be first telegraphed on your line and rod tip as a light vibration, followed by the rod tip suddenly jerked down violently and then bounces back up. Don't set the hook because this is not a feeding response, and you stand the chance of snagging the fish. What's interesting about these no bite encounters is that with bigger fish passing and hitting your line, the sensation of rubbing will last for a longer duration on your rod tip.

It's been my experience though, if you stick it out with the tide, you'll eventually run into fish that are hugging the bottom and feeding.

#### Waiting Out Tide Fish

There will be many occasions when you see no sign of fish on the San Pablo Flats. Nothing jumping or appearing on the screen of your depth finder to indicate anything. When I don't have any positive clues to work on, I'll then anchor the boat on a bottom change or a known traveling lane that consistently attracts fish. It's then a patient waiting game, biding your time for that push of the tide that may bring action.

This is what I call sticking it out for "tide fish." Nothing happens for a long period, but when the tide makes that critical shift or push, like magic suddenly you'll experience bites or you'll see fish passing beneath on the screen.



*The fight comes to a conclusion as Abe swings over-board a keeper sturgeon for Les Lowenthal. Action took place just east of China Camp while fishing an incoming tide. This fish was taken on live mud shrimp*



All of the above zones covered can be effectively fished with ghost, mud and grass shrimp. Some anglers also do relatively well on anchovies and herring. Of interesting note, in discussions I had with professional charter captains, they noted wherever the drag boats are consistently working their bottom nets, that's an indicator where most of the grass shrimp are. Of course, where high concentrations of food can be located, that's where the sturgeon will be browsing as well.

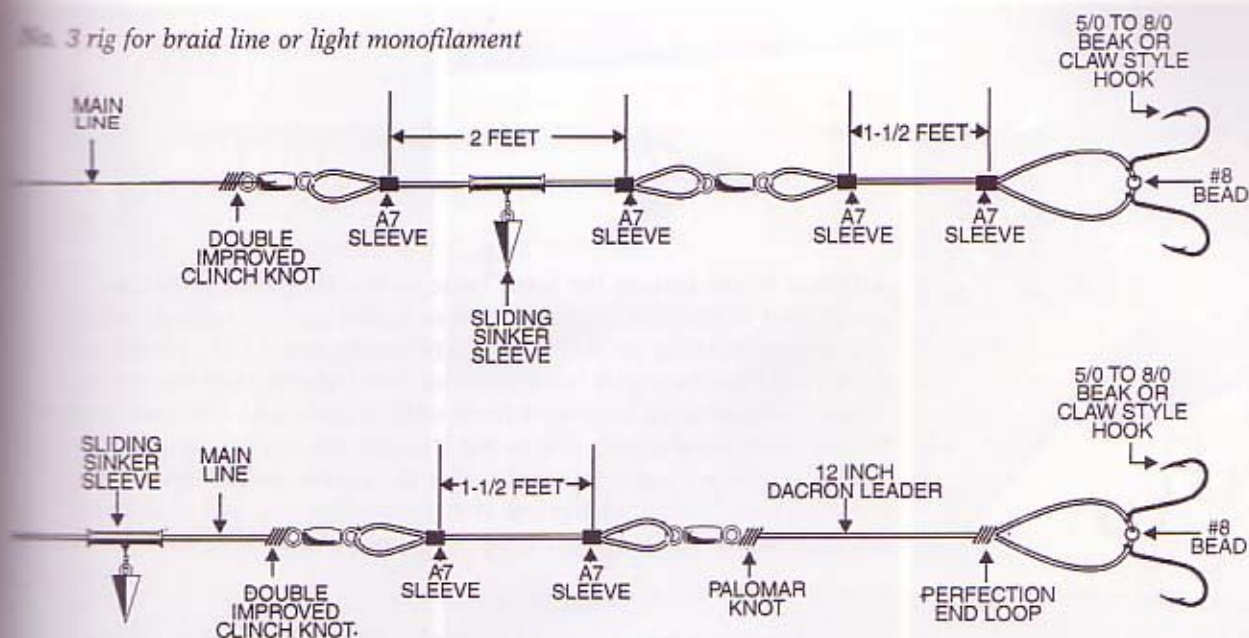
As a constant reminder pick the optimum tides for best results. Should those optimum tides coincide with the aftermath of a storm make a strong effort to get out.

*Rich Shears hauls aboard a heavy white sturgeon for Angelo. Fish was hooked on the shallow flats north-east of the Pump House.*





No. 3 rig for braid line or light monofilament



#### (4) Dacron leader

A rig that has found favor with anglers in the lower Columbia River employs a section of dacron. Expert guide Jerry Sitton who fishes the lower Columbia on nearly a daily basis has had great success with this leader and says it should work for the bay area as well. The basic construction is similar to the standard rig except that the lower 12 inches is composed of 100 pound test dacron. The dacron section is secured to main leader via swivel. Opposing hooks and plastic bead separator are secured by forming perfection end loop.

The whole concept with this rig lies with the dacron. Jerry says this rig is effective when sturgeon get finicky on the pickup. The soft dacron does not feel foreign in the sturgeons sensitive mouth, hence picky feeders will pick up bait more readily. The idea seems logical. For the bay area this setup would be great advantage when fishing herring spawns.

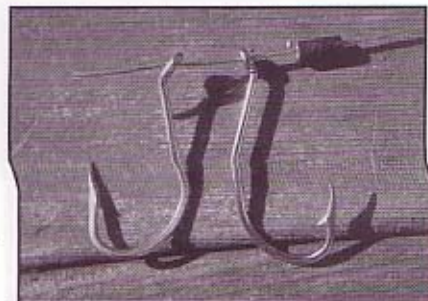
Which rig to use? In most cases the standard sliding sturgeon rig will be used. But when dealing with extremely fast currents and deep water say on the edge of shipping channels I would lean toward rig number 2. When using light monofilament or synthetic braids, leader 3 would be a smart choice. This rig is also good when fishing deep water and fast currents.

#### The Preferred Sturgeon Hook

The general rule followed in big game angling is that the bigger and stronger the fish, the bigger the hook used. It seems pretty straight forward, but contrary to this standard of practice, a smaller hook is employed when sturgeon fishing.

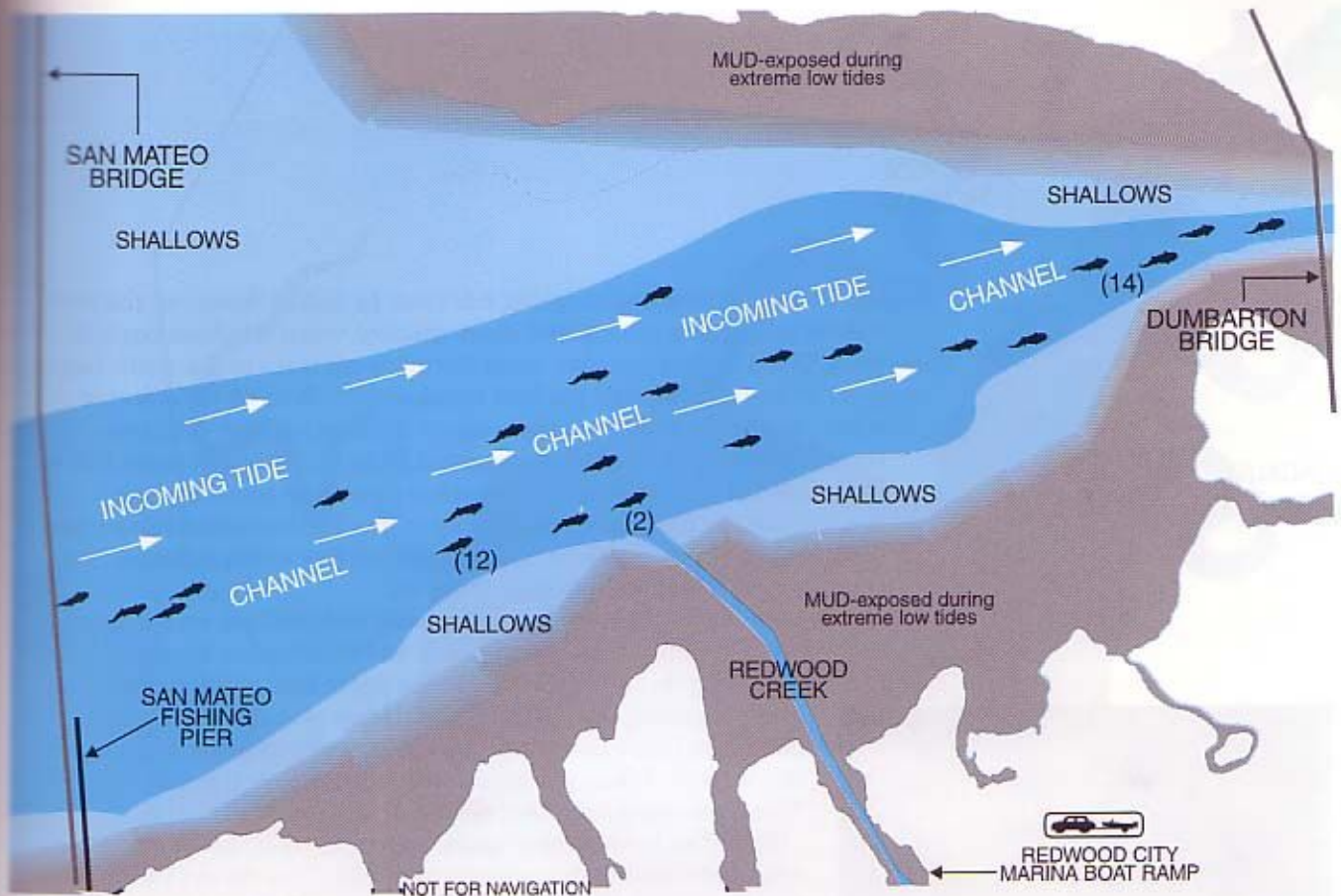
The reason is that too big a hook does not cover well. Too much exposed metal will taste and feel foreign to the delicate and cautious feeding nature of the sturgeon. The result is a quick rejection of the bait. For the angler who is not holding the rod or watching its tip closely, this does not leave much time to set the hook. In fact, the strike may go undetected.

The preferred hook for sturgeon fishing is one that is light, very strong, and of a size that is easily covered by a minimum of bait. The successful technique is to present the bait to the sturgeon in the most natural manner possible. The hook that I've had good success with through the years is a beak or claw style hook from sizes 5/0 to 8/0. Hooks I would recommend include: Gamakatsu, Owner, Mustad.



*For sturgeon fishing we prefer using beak or claw style hook in sizes 5/0 to 8/0.*





San Mateo Bridge to Dumbarton Bridge Between these two bridges is a lot of open water, and most migrating fish here will hold along channel edges and slopes. Both the incoming and outgoing tides will produce. Fish that I've metered along channel slopes have been surprisingly receptive. After anchoring over them within a relatively short time, hookups have occurred. The mouth of Redwood Creek Channel can at times provide consistent fishing, and I have metered good bunches of fish holding in 50 plus feet of water. As with other regions of the bay, visually scan for jumpers and watch your depth recorder for positive marks. If the above are not showing, concentrate your fishing on channel slopes. When scouting for potential fish hop scotch along channel slopes. This entails covering a spot say for an hour or two. If nothing happens pull anchor and follow current direction while metering bottom. When positive marks are seen on the depth finder anchor up and commence fishing.

*Excitement fills the air as this trio prepare to land a nice sturgeon. Fish was hooked on edge of channel north of the San Mateo Hayward Bridge.*

