

Salmon Trout Steelhead



**LOST
UNDERWATER
IMAGES 60**

**RECIPE:
SEAFOOD
DELIGHTS 12**

**SURPLUS
STEELHEAD 30**

**WORLD RECORD
CHINOOK 70**



**SUBSCRIBE AND GET A FREE REEL!
SEE PAGE 37**

311120 1/1/2018
2 000*043
*****5-DIGIT 98203
|||||



30

FEATURES

SURPLUS STILLWATER STEELIES 30

Gary Lewis • *The fish have to go somewhere*

SETTING THE HOOK ON KINGS 34

Alex and Dennis Maurizi • *The right angle*

PIMP MY RIDE, DRIFT BOAT STYLE 36

Scott Haugen • *Maximize the operation*

EVOLUTION OF A LURE 42

J.D. Richey • *Start to finish with Buzz Ramsey*

SALMON FISHING IN CRAIG, ALASKA 48

Kris Olsen • *Catch-A-King lodge and charters*

6X TO 60 POUNDS 54

Tom Alkire • *Fly fisher tries gear fishing*

SURPRISE CATCHES! 56

J.D. Richey • *Interesting and crazy stuff*

FOUR HOUR UNDERWATER JOURNEY 60

Scott Haugen • *Lost underwater camera images*

WORLD RECORD CHINOOK 70

Larry Ellis • *71-pound fly-rod Chinook*



42



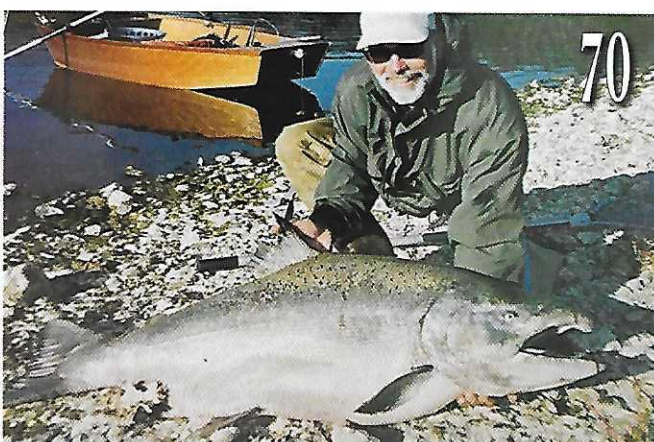
48



60



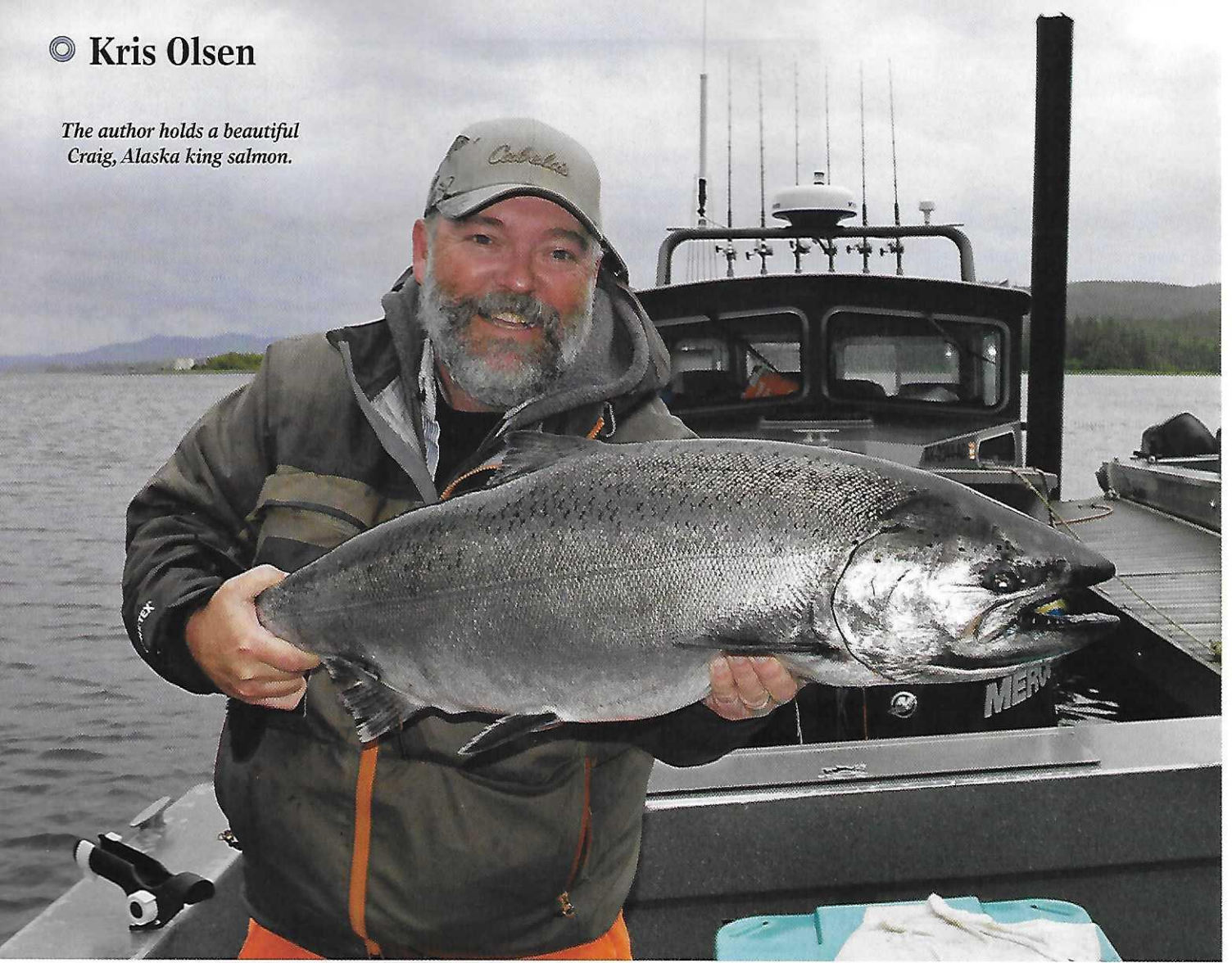
56



70

ON THE COVER: Angela Rushton caught this incredible “fish of a lifetime” coho on the north end of Vancouver Island. It weighed just over 23 pounds. Yes it was legal to retain. Will Rushton image.

*The author holds a beautiful
Craig, Alaska king salmon.*



CATCH-A-KING LODGE AND CHARTERS

Craig, Alaska relies on commercial and sport-fishing, fish-processing, and the timber industry for those intrepid enough to make a living in such a remote, yet beautiful part of Alaska.

Some of my fondest memories as a young boy are the days I spent mooching cut-plugged herring off the charter boats of Westport, Washington, hoping and praying I would feel the tug of an actively feeding Chinook. To me, there was simply nothing that could compare to seeing your perfectly spinning bait disappear into the depths and having it engulfed by a hungry salmon. Trying to perfectly time the hook-set was always the challenge.

Once the salmon capital of the Pacific Northwest, Westport was home to a huge fleet of charter vessels. Over the years the fleet has diminished, but not my memories of those very special times. Getting to spend a summer day on the ocean was always a special treat and is truly what led me later in life to purchase a boat of my own. I made numerous trips out of places such as Sekiu, Neah Bay and Westport in my Bayliner.

While trolling with downriggers has long taken over as the preferred method of most saltwater salmon fishermen, there remain places where the standard old “weight and a bait” are still the norm. Places where mooching a herring is simply how things are done. I used that old reliable method while on a coho fishing trip out of Bella Bella, B.C. a few years ago and fell back in love with it. Not only was it super productive, but it brought back wonderful

memories of my youth. Craig, Alaska, is another one of those places where old-school salmon-fishing tactics are alive and well.

I have been fortunate over the years to experience many outstanding fishing venues in Alaska and other enchanting places where those afflicted with the angling bug can enjoy success on a grand scale. These are places where catching fish isn't even in question, it's only a matter of how many and how often. Craig certainly fits into that category and I was enormously excited to embark upon my first visit to the small hamlet with the huge reputation.

What made it especially meaningful was that Rich Manning, co-owner/operator of Catch-A-King Lodge invited me to bring my son along for the adventure. Kris Jr. has been battling life-threatening cancer since first diagnosed in February 2016, so every day we can spend together doing what we love becomes an extremely treasured moment for us both. There is no telling what our future holds, so I can't even begin to thank Rich enough for his incredibly thoughtful and generous offer.

Rounding out our crew were two good friends who have enjoyed many such trips with me in the past, Pete Perry and Steve Swain. Pete has a real love for salt-water fishing which has been further stoked by some recent trips on which he accompanied me. Steve and I have been friends for over thirty-five years and have been avid fishing partners the entire time. When I told him of our plans to travel to Craig for an adventure with Catch-A-King Lodge, he wasted zero time in clearing his already open and retired schedule.

Located on the western side of Prince of Wales Island, for centuries the Tlingit and Haida peoples utilized the area around Craig due to its rich, abundant resources. In 1907, a fish saltery was built on nearby Fish Egg Island by Craig Miller, the town's namesake. Between 1908 and 1911, he constructed the Lyndenburger Packing Company and cold storage plant at the present-day site of Craig. In 1912, a post office, school, sawmill, and a salmon cannery were also constructed.

In 1972, a large sawmill was established nearby providing a steady source of year-round employment. The commercial salmon fishery over the decades has gone in cycles, with seasons becoming more regulated to protect the valuable resource for years to come. Today, Craig relies on commercial and sport-fishing, fish-processing, and the timber industry for those intrepid enough to make a living in such a remote, yet beautiful part of Alaska.

As for our initial planning, Rich

suggested the 5-night/4-day fishing package with dates set for June 1-6, 2017. The season is just getting started at that time, but there are certainly fish around by then and we could not wait to get our shot at them. Our target species was Chinook salmon, with halibut and other assorted bottom-fish on tap as well. The thought of working a herring while holding our rods had us all excited, if not forgetful as to how much work that actually is. As our departure came closer, the texts and phone calls became more frequent among us and it was clear we were going to have a pretty darn good time, regardless of our success or, God forbid, lack thereof.

Getting to Craig is a relatively painless process. The flight from Seattle to Ketchikan is only two short hours and the thirty-minute flight from there to Klawock aboard Island Air is included in your Catch-A-King package. We were immediately met in Klawock by lodge staff to load our gear into a van for the short ride to Craig. I was not exactly sure what to expect upon our arrival, but I was taken by complete surprise at how understated their website is regarding their location, facilities and accommodations.

The lodge itself is very low-key and does not even sport a sign on the front of the place. However, the business comes to life on the back side of the building with a sprawling paved and grass area and a large building that houses the fish-processing,

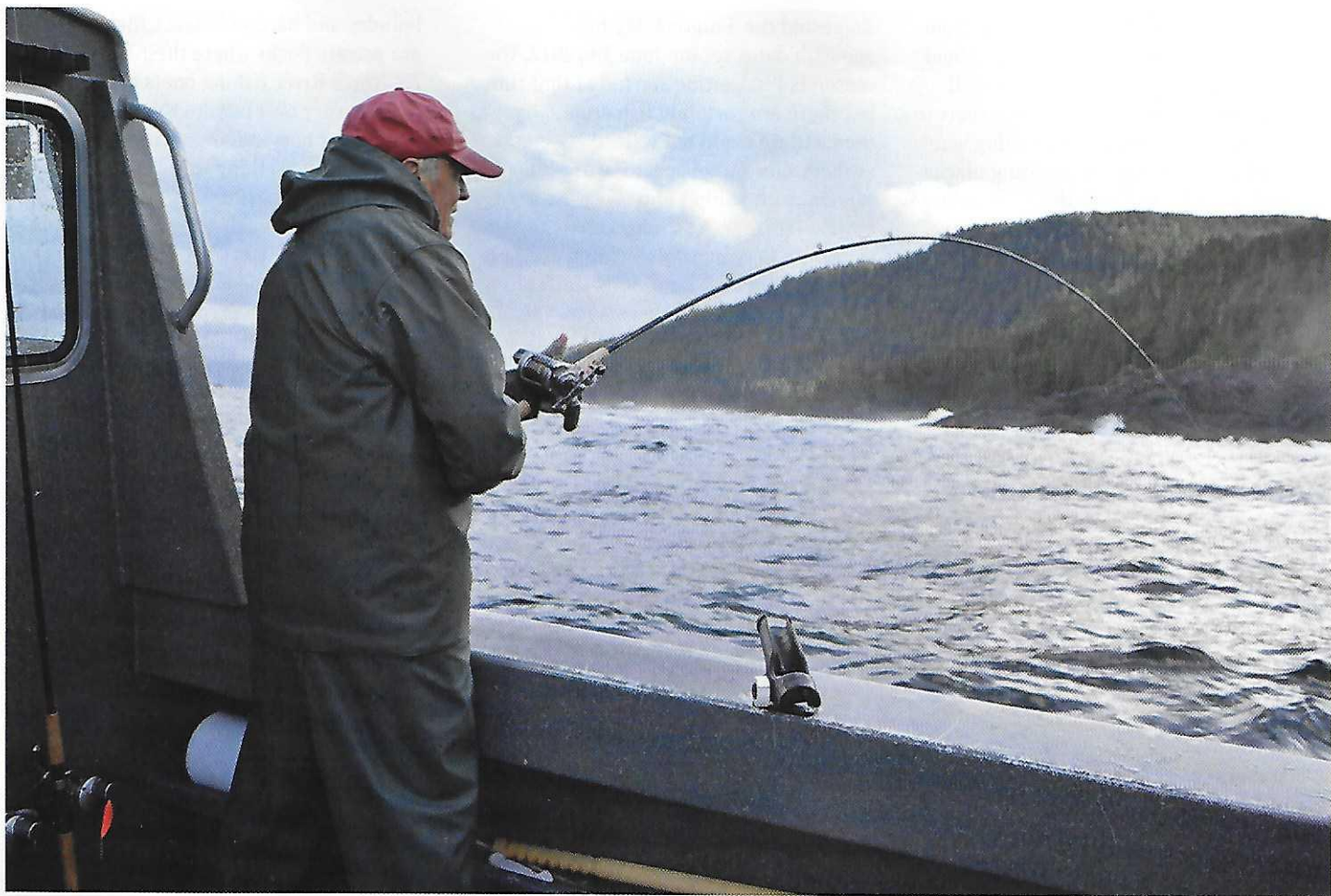
laundry and hardware space. Beyond that are private docks where their fleet of ten 26' North River fishing boats are moored in their very own private bay. I was simply stunned at how well-organized and easily accessible everything was. I read none of that on their website.

We were quickly shown to our room, which essentially is a small apartment with three large bedrooms, a full kitchen and living room with satellite TV. Each bedroom has two beds and there are two large bathrooms easily shared among your group, which is nice when everyone is racing for the shower after a hard day of fishing. They are perfectly set up for groups up to six anglers. The view from our second story window looked right out over the bay and the docks, very peaceful and serene as afternoons turned to evenings.

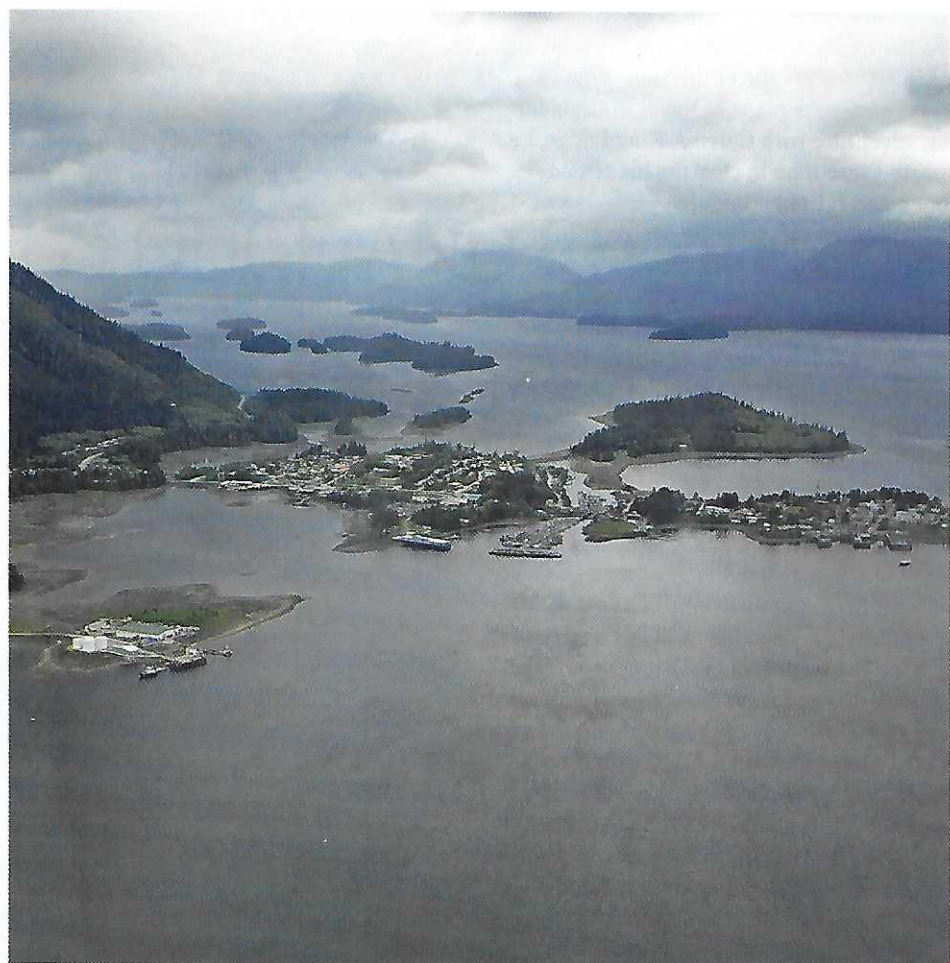
Twenty-nine years ago, after guiding six seasons for Waterfall Resort, Rich teamed up with partner and co-owner Paul Roop to form Catch-A-King Charters. Starting with just two old Olympic fiberglass boats, the pair worked 20-hour days. Gradually, they learned more and more each year about how best to serve the sport-angling community. I am certain that between the two of them, by now they have forgotten more about fishing than most ever learn in the first place. To see the extent of the operation they have built from scratch is a real testament to their determination and love for what they do.

You most assuredly want to obtain your daily limit of black rockfish to include in your box of fillets. Kris Olsen Jr. with a dandy.





Pete Perry battles a large king salmon while enjoying spectacular scenery.



Getting to Craig is a relatively painless process. The flight from Seattle to Ketchikan is only two short hours followed by a short thirty-minute flight from there to Klawock.

Most of the guides had arrived for the season and while some were busy with clients, others were occupied prepping the rest of the fleet for battle as only about half of the boats had been actively deployed for the season. We had the distinct pleasure of having Rich personally guide us over a four-day period. Maybe it was his plan all along to get out of the dirty-work by taking us fishing but regardless, we were extremely grateful that he chose to share with us his personal attention and expertise. He instructed us to be ready for a 5:00 a.m. departure and the countdown to morning began on the spot.

We were under the impression we would have to find dinner at one of the local restaurants, but Lodge Manager Joni told us dinner would be served at 6:00 p.m. with appetizers prior to that. Seems they feed all their guides in the main dining area and there just happens to be enough food to feed guests as well. Most of the meals are made and prepped off site then brought in buffet/catered style or cooked fresh on the BBQ's and they were fantastic. Again, this was just another bonus you won't find reading their website.

5:00 a.m. finally came around and we jumped onto Rich's boat full of anticipation. He had four G. Loomis rods rigged and baited, and the Daiwa line-counter reels let us know we would be effectively fishing any depth necessary to engage our quarry. The North River boats these guys utilize are top-of-the-line fishing machines. They are each powered by

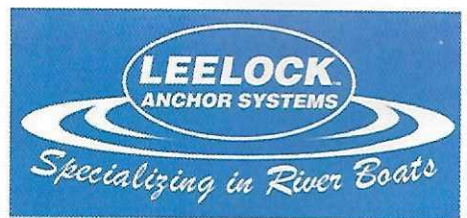
twin 150hp Mercury outboards with 9.9 Yamaha kickers. The hydraulic-suspension passenger seats make traveling very comfortable in all conditions, especially if napping between moves, but don't ask me how I know.

The weather for our entire trip was less than ideal, but early June in SE Alaska is a crap-shoot at best. We had rainy, breezy conditions for most of our stay. As we departed Craig for our first run, it only took a few minutes before we realized how remote and undisturbed the entire area is. The guides prefer to fish on the "outside" whenever possible, meaning the open ocean sides of Noyes, Baker or Suez Islands, so it's a bit of a run to where the magic happens.

Getting there takes about 45-minutes in perfect conditions, around an hour or so in conditions that are less so, but once on scene, good things usually happen. Swells can be prevalent on the outside, so if motion sickness is a concern, be sure to take precautions well ahead of time. If by chance ocean conditions are not ideal, there are plenty of little bays or islands that provide ample protection and opportunity for good fishing. We enjoyed some of our best fishing in just such places.

Very quickly we saw our first hump-back whale via its telltale blow of air, our first of hundreds in the area surrounding Craig. They would breach, often in pairs, right near our boat when we were drifting and working our lines, something right out of Wild Kingdom. After eventually making

Rich Manning filleting salmon and bottom fish.



FOR A DEMO ON YOUTUBE:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=pq9RsTy7E8I

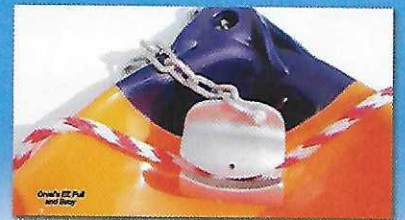


Leelock Anchor Systems has the most versatile power boat anchor "system" available.

It allows the boat owner to easily and quickly switch accessories depending upon fishing and boating needs.



The Leelock Magnum Steg is now available for the Power Drive and similar models. Improves steering response and extends battery life.



NEW DESIGN CONCEPT

This new concept in anchor/crab pot pullers simplifies the work of lifting and pulling up heavy anchors or crab pots loaded with your catch. It is the patented open side-slot and line-locking mechanism that allows snap-it on and off control, saving time, effort, and money.

IT'S JUST THAT SIMPLE

When anchoring there is no threading and holding a line lock open. Just pay out your anchor line, then snap Orval's EZ Pull™ and buoy on the anchor line. Toss buoy and puller in the water. Buoy, chain, and line sold separately.

Dealer
Inquiries
Welcome!

360-380-1864
www.leelock.com

our way around Cape Ulitka off the north end of Noyes Island, we finally got to drop our lines for what I was sure would be an instant hookup with a trophy Chinook. Reality soon came face to face with expectations and of course the reality is that Chinook fishing is most often a game of patience and perseverance.

We dutifully worked our herring up and down throughout the water column as Rich instructed. He would tell us at what depth he could see fish crossing the screen and we would try to get our baits in the area as quickly as we could. The morning was slow as the kings are spread out in early June and not stacked up in any one area. I eventually felt a quick double-tug near bottom and buried the hooks into a feisty fresh Chinook which we landed. Things again slowed and I think Rich could sense we were ready for a little more action. He suggested a short move that he knew would quickly start filling the meat locker and have us all smiling.

We moved a little closer to the cape on top of a pinnacle and the instant our baits hit the water the black rockfish (aka sea bass) were all over us, with doubles and triples a common occurrence. Rich would gaff them and toss them onto the deck as fast as we could bring them to hand, all while keeping everyone freshly baited.

While not the world's most sporting catch, the table quality of those black rockfish is such that you most assuredly want to obtain your daily limit to include in your box of fillets.

Once we acquired our black rockfish, Rich moved us a bit farther out to try for some halibut. He likes to use his salmon gear for the big flatties, providing a bit more of a challenge to say the least. Rather than anchor like a lot of guides, he uses his kicker motor to control his drift, very effectively I might add. Things went from good to great as we battled numerous halibut in short order, including one around 100 pounds or so that we released. We kept four flatties and a pair of lingcod before spending our last couple hours of the day trying for Chinook again. About halfway back to Craig, Rich stopped at one last sneaky side-channel where Kris Jr. punched his ticket with a beautiful Chinook on our last drift as Rich said to reel'em up.

On our second day, Rich headed straight for Suemez Island, where he stopped right on top of a big school of kings. I hooked up right off the bat as did Kris Jr., Steve and Pete. Another of the Catch-A-King boats was fishing near us and they too were fast into them. In less than an hour of fishing we had our daily limit of king salmon in the hold, a far better start

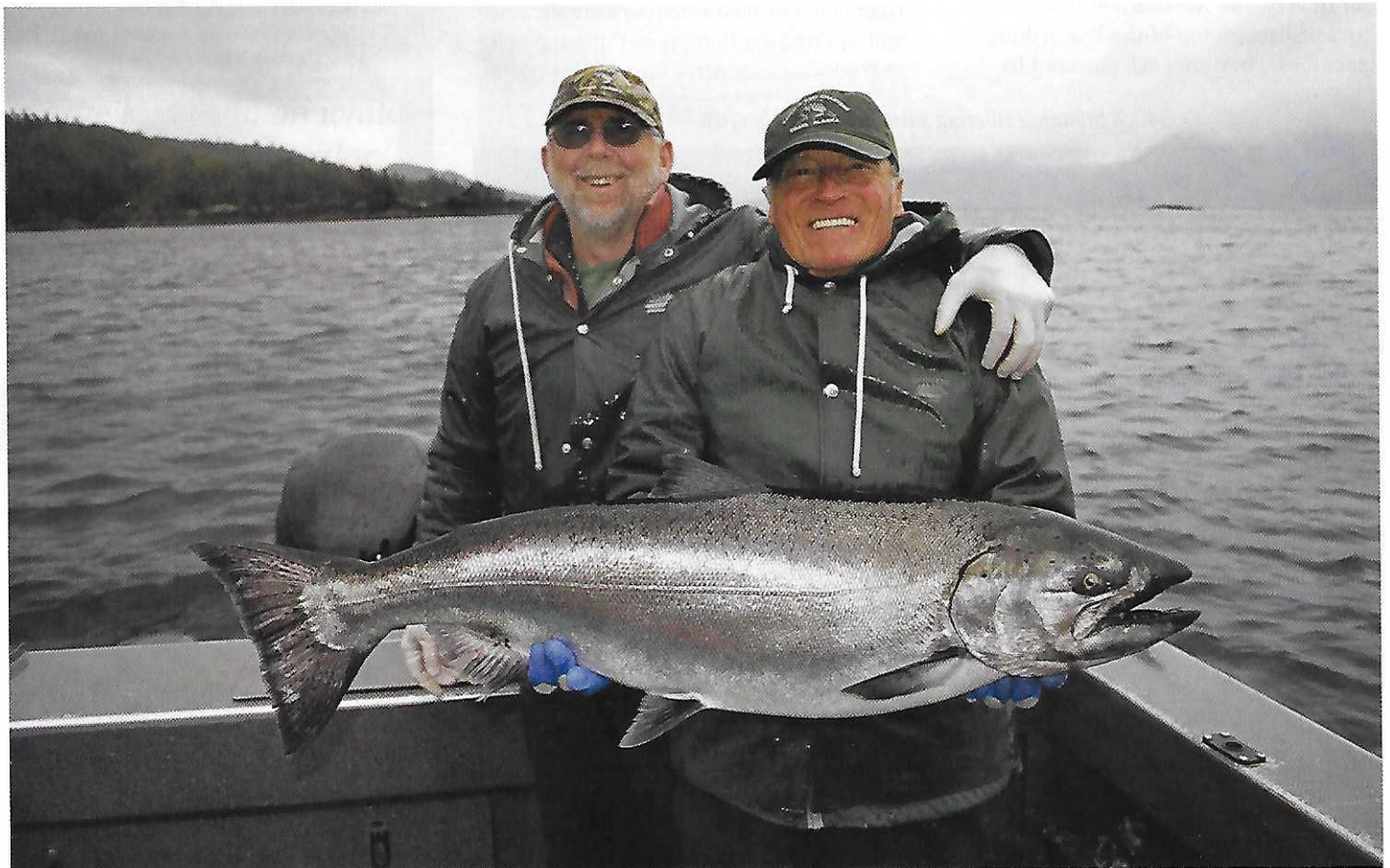
than our first day previous.

There is nothing quite like letting your line slowly drop towards bottom and 30' down having it go completely slack in 90' of water. Your heart skips a beat as you quickly reel, feeling your rod tip loading up just before setting the hooks. With our salmon catch secure, it was off for more black rockfish and halibut of which we once again limited on both. Our catch tally was quickly adding up with two more days of fishing still ahead of us.

Our third day, June 4, was a weather-beaten windy bitch. While we tried to get to our same starting point as day two, the ocean had other plans. It's just too hard to fish when you can't even stand up. Instead, Rich simply ducked into a perfectly flat calm little bay where Pete landed a nice halibut and Kris Jr. put the hurt on a fine Chinook. The rest of our morning was quiet as could be with very little action, even after trying several more likely spots. This is where Rich's many years of experience paid us big dividends.

Around noon he made a very long run to a well-protected area among some smaller islands north of Noyes, yet still near the open ocean. It took a while to get there, but when we did, it was as though someone hit a light switch. Rods started going off right and left and Rich could barely

Rich's many years of experience paid us big dividends. Rich Manning and Pete Perry show off a fine Chinook.





Kris Jr. put the hurt on this Chinook.

keep fresh bait on our rigs. I think he could rig herring blind-folded, all while working his kicker-motor, landing fish and keeping one eye on the electronics.

In two short hours, we landed three more nice Chinook, all our black rockfish, and rounded out our possession limit of lingcod, releasing several that were bigger than anything we had previously kept. All the while there were humpback whales breaching a stone's throw from us with more in nearly every direction. The ride back to the lodge had us all wearing huge smiles as we were previously resigned to the fact it simply was not going to happen for us that day.

June 5, our last fishing day, brought a dreadful wind advisory and Rich made it clear we would likely only get a few short hours in before having to run for home. The ride out to where we had finished the day before was the proverbial calm before the storm, with smooth, flat sailing all the way to the fishing grounds. As soon as lines hit the water I had another 30' slack-line moment, then set the hooks into what was likely the nicest Chinook of our trip. I got one good look at it near the surface before it made a torrid, determined run for the bottom when suddenly the hooks came loose.

Time was running short as we could feel the wind and seas starting to quickly build. We all hooked up on more Chinook, even landing some despite an epic line tangle we had to that point somehow avoided. With the clock ticking, we put as many black rockfish into the hold as we could manage before mother-nature and Rich's wise sense of it had us heading for the barn.

Upon our return to the docks, our fish were promptly processed as always. They are quickly filleted, vacuum packed in well-marked bags, then flash frozen for optimum freshness. It is an exceptionally professional operation they have honed from their many years of experience. When all was said and done, we returned home with 300 lbs. of fillets between the four of us that filled six 50 lb. boxes. Included in the mix were King salmon, halibut, lingcod and black rockfish. Not a bad haul for an early season trip where things were just cranking up.

At 70 years of age, Paul is looking to slowly and gracefully retire from his duties around the lodge and is cutting down on his busy schedule. North of age 60 and living full-time in Craig, Rich still wakes up and attacks each morning with the enthusiasm of his youth, setting a remarkable example that his younger guides will have a hard time living up to. His life-long passion for guiding and intimate knowledge of the area left an enormously positive impression upon us.

I want to give a personal, heartfelt thank-you to Rich Manning, who made this unforgettable trip possible. If you are looking for an outstanding fishing experience in one of Alaska's most beautiful and remote coastal environments, get in touch with the folks at Catch-A-King Lodge & Charters. Their season runs late May through mid-September, with great fishing throughout. They offer fantastic accommodations for your group, top-shelf boats and equipment, with service that will venture far beyond what you read on their website. You will find all their contact info at <http://www.catchakingcharters.com>.

MORE THAN JUST GREAT TOPS!



WE ALSO HAVE BOATING ACCESSORIES!



H HAXTON'S OVER 28 YEARS EXPERIENCE
CANVAS & UPHOLSTERY
12111 S.E. HWY. 212 CLACKAMAS, OR 503-722-4200

CHASIN' TAIL!

John's SIGNS CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE:
www.johnsfigs.net
(425)823-5227

DOUBLE X TACKLE by Rainbow Plastics
AMERICAN MADE FISHING TACKLE

Quick Float

Align notches in rubber with slot in float. Lay line in slot and press into the notches of the rubber.

Once secured, make sure the slots in rubber are not aligned with slot in float.

Adjust to the desired position, then twist rubber multiple times to secure.

From the makers of the AJUSTA BUBBLE
rainbowplastics.com 970.532.7090