

The Serious Tackle Box

With Chris Gonzales

Chunk It!

*Experienced Fishing Advice To
Make Fishing Great Again*



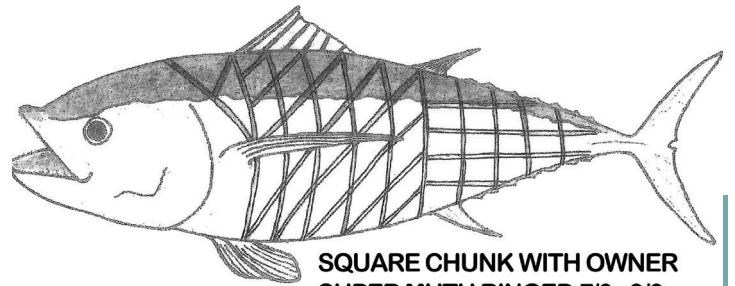
Chunk It! - A phrase related to throwing something when I was a kid on Galveston Island many years ago - throwing just about anything. Today's definition, however, is about the efficient method of attracting deep-water yellowfin tuna to an anchored or drifting boat; it's sending out a string of hookless bait chunks, "freebies", to draw tuna into striking distance of your hook baits.

The first step in this process is having a fish cut into chunks; a bonito or small blackfin tuna caught onsite is the freshest and best. See the illustration for chunk-cutting patterns.

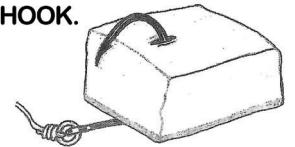
Start by making cuts vertically to the bone, about one inch apart. Notice the angle cuts in the forward section, again to the bone. This produces chunks that sink with a sort of swirl motion. The lengthwise cuts shown on the rear will give the traditional square or cube chunks. Whichever pattern you choose, the next cut will be from the head to tail in a filleting motion. Carefully make this cut about one inch below the skin. This will give many chunks with skin on. Now, make another similar cut next to the backbone to get another batch of chunks without skin. Repeat the procedure on the other side of your chunk donor. Skinned, skinless, square, or diamond-shaped chunks all work well.

Naming a "designated chunker" is the best way to go, otherwise, the down-current chunk trail may be broken, defeating the purpose of chunking. Start by broadcasting a few handfuls, then throw in 6-8 chunks as the previous batch go out of sight. It will usually take a while to draw tuna into range behind the

CUTTING PATTERNS FOR DIAMOND AND SQUARE SHAPED CHUNKS. SEE TEXT FOR SLICING PROCEDURE.



SQUARE CHUNK WITH OWNER SUPER MUTU RINGED 7/0 - 9/0 CIRCLE HOOK.



boat. A broken chunk trail may have those following it to the boat disperse when they come to a gap. They'll still be looking for something to eat, but not behind your boat. Handing out a few chunks at a time is critical; you want to tease them in, not overfeed them. A very important factor in chunking is that it must continue once tuna are seen, or if hookups start. If not continued, the school might lose interest and go elsewhere. Hooked chunk baits can be fished freeline or Carolina rigged. The amount of weight needed will naturally be dictated by the current and the depth of the tuna.

Circle hooks are the way to go when using chunk baits, as in the illustration, which is shown with a 5/0 to 7/0 Owner™ Ringed Super Mutu. Other hooks that work well are Mustad™ 39960D in sizes 9/0 and 10/0, or Eagle Claw™ L2004G, 6/0 and 7/0. Aggressive hooksets will likely result in a ghost fish; it won't be there because the bait and hook have been

pulled out of your tuna's mouth. If your chunk is being drifted out and down in the current, let the tuna run a few seconds, put the reel in gear, and you should be hooked up as the line comes tight. If the reel is in gear at the take, you can point your rod tip at the line's entry into the water, then raise your rod tip as the line comes tight; same results - hooked up.

Even at night, tuna may be leader-shy. Moonlight, lights on the boat or a production platform may make your leader visible to them from the light reflecting off the leader's surface. Fluorocarbon leaders work - but at a price. An alternative that works well at a bargain price is what I call "Poor Man's Fluorocarbon":

It's basically putting a crosshatch pattern on a mono leader's surface using a piece of Scotch-Brite™ pad. The crosshatch surface disturbance breaks up reflected light, making mono close to invisible in the water. Either of these stealth leaders is especially effective in bright sunlight, near the surface where your leader has the highest probability of being seen.

Without getting into a lot of detail as far as tackle goes, it's

sufficient to say that yellowfin tuna of say 70lbs. and over require the use of stand-up gear ... 5-1/2 foot to 6' 6" 50 - 100# rods with 2-speed reels loaded with BRAIDED line, a rod belt, and harness. Don't forget to bring your assortment of approved painkillers as you're going to need them after the smoke has cleared. These tunas are tough customers.

Get out there and chunk a chunk, hang on, and find out for yourself. Stop by Serious Tackle and see our selection of Tuna Tackle. "Serious Tackle for Serious Fish. M.F.G.A.

If you have any questions, stop by Serious Tackle or email me at chris@serioustackle.com.

Chris Gonzales
Owner - Serious Tackle



14065 Delany Rd.
LaMarque, Texas 77568
(In the Gulfway Plaza)

Pro Fishing Gear & Tackle

- Baits/Lures
- Custom Rods
- In-House Rod/ Reel Repair
- Reel Parts
- Rod Components
- Inshore/Offshore Tackle
- Custom Rigging
- Custom Splicing

(409) 935-1126

