

The Serious Tackle Box

Experienced Fishing Advice To
Make Fishing Great Again

With Chris Gonzales

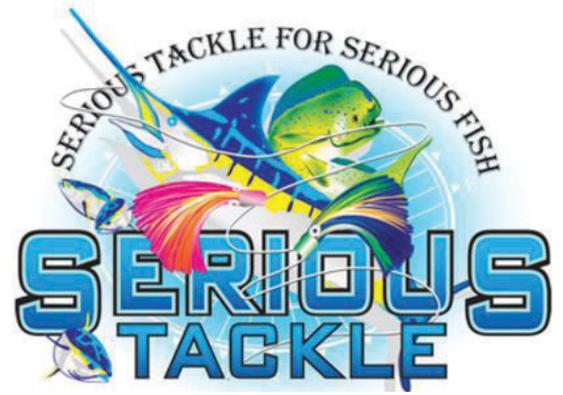
Kingfish Surprise

What's slower than a speeding smoker kingfish and yet fast enough to trick it into striking? It's a Kingfish Surprise! The reliable, 4-6 oz. Chrome Diamond jig by Bead, when mated with a high-speed reel for its motivation, will get the job done.

While Diamond jigs are effective on most occasions, kingfish at times, strike a bit short. This missing of a Diamond jig could be because of its wobbling motion, a too-slow retrieve speed, or simply because the kingfish recognizes it as a fake. The stealth green stinger wire and hook will be the "surprise" that a kingfish doesn't see and therefore can't expect. The green swivel and leader wire complete the stealth package. What hiding everything but the chrome Diamond jig body does is to make only the jig's body the speedy kingfish's target. With this stealth treatment, a short striker will be converted into a hookup by the stinger. Since kingfish many times strike Diamond jigs from the side and slightly from the rear, chances are that they will hit the rear half of the jig. The bite on the jig's tapered body will let it and the stinger's wire slide through the kingfish's jaws, with the hook to follow in an instant.

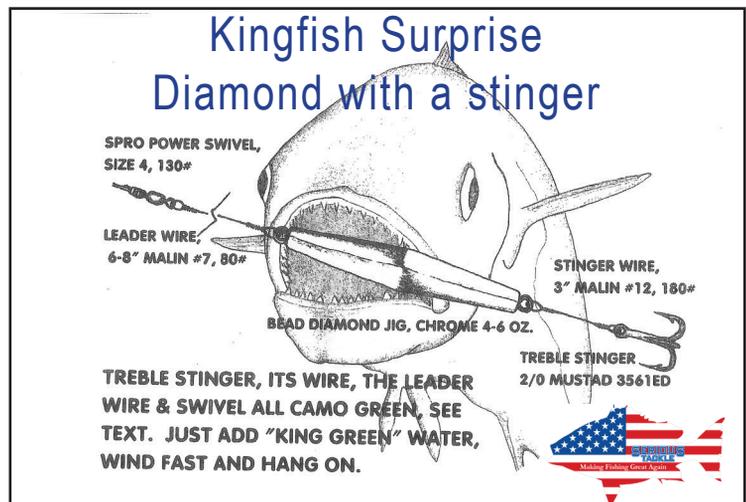
Recommended for the 6-8" leader wire is #7, 80#, Malin with a size 4, 130# Spro Power Swivel. The stinger wire is heavier for greater kink/curl resistance. Use #12, 180# Malin for the stinger's 3" hard wire link to the stinger hook. A haywire twist is used at all connecting points. Treble hooks for the stinger that work for me include the 2/0, Mustad 3561 0, 3X strong or a 2/0, Owner ST-66, 4X strong. Give the illustration a look for a clear view of the total arrangement.

The stealth green which almost disappears in "king green" water is Rust-O-Leum, John Deere 7435. A top coat of Rust-O-Leum, Clear Matte 7902, reduces the reflection of sunlight off the green color coat. Kingfish also strike at a "flash"; reflection reduction is important. Apply these spray paints to both the swivel/leader and the stinger wire/treble hook...color them gone; leave the "flashing" up to the jig's body.



High-speed retrieves get bit most often by kingfish—they don't get a good look at the fleeing "baitfish", your Diamond jig. The Shimano Speedmaster II and its 6.0:1 retrieve ratio fill the bill. Its 44 inches of line retrieved per turn of the handle with a full spool, gives you speed to burn. The Speedmaster's capacity of 330 yards of 30# mono is adequate, but I prefer about 120 yards of 40# mono under 300 yards of 100# braided line. The braided is the size of 20# mono and has almost zero stretch, which aids in the hookset. It's a bit pricey at about \$57 for 300 yards, but its many advantages, including lasting almost forever, making it worth the price to me. Hi-Vis yellow or white is my color preference; with it, you and everyone else can monitor your line's location in the water. My Braided has about 15 feet of 60#, clear mono leader; they are connected with a "Tony Pena" knot that was fully described in one of my articles.

It's also the knot used to mate the mono backing to the Spectra. You can delete the type of mono leader that I use by tying a 10-turn surgeon's loop into the Spectra, use a 10-turn offshore swivel knot to attach your swivel, then twist on your wire leader. The first 15 to 20 feet of the bright Spectra can be easily made difficult to see by any predator chasing your jig - take a green Marks-A-Lot permanent marker, carefully split the tip lengthwise, then run the Spectra through it.



Now, it's as stealthy as the wire on the Diamond jig. Rods I use for casting these 4 to 6 oz. Diamond jigs are 7', rated for 15 to 40# with 30# to 80# line, castability, power and quick recovery. I set my drag at 12 to 14# with this reel, line and rod combination.

When casting a Diamond jig and stinger, just before it hits the water, thumb the spool a bit more, slowing everything down. This straightens out the jig and stinger hook away from you, virtually eliminating fouling when it enters the water. Let it sink 2 to 3 feet, then burn it back to the boat with your rod tip pointed away from you; use all of the speed you can get out of that reel and hang on for the strike. At times you may have to increase the sink depth to 20 feet or more to generate a kingfish strike. Watch your leader and stinger wire closely for any kinking or excessive curling. One good strike/hookup and you could be there, if anything is in question tie on another one. Pre-rig at least four of these Diamond jigs with a stinger for each trip, cutoffs and damaged wire can be expected.

A last fishing comment: With this stinger arrangement, there is the chance that at the strike, the kingfish will have the jig body only in its mouth. For a more assured hookup, keep winding at the strike until your drag slips, then load the rod. If the kingfish starts to open its mouth to drop the jig, the tight line will snap the hook into

penetration - most of the time...

To many of us, this rig's name would sound like an appetizing seafood dish, which I'm guessing is exactly what it's supposed to mimic for our target. The Kingfish Surprise is indeed a short-striking kingfish's worst nightmare. Twist and paint some up, the short strikers are out there now, looking for their surprise package.

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



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