

# The Serious Tackle Box

With Chris Gonzales

## Serious Red Snapper Bottom Drop

While most sizeable red snappers of 15 to 25 pounds and over tend to suspend somewhere in the mid-depths of the water column, they do go to the bottom area regularly to feed. This red snapper bottom drop leader system will get you down there, bit, and is durable enough to bring your sow red snapper to the gaff.

I don't recommend fishing with a double drop bottom rig, the illustration has one only to show the two different knot and hook arrangements. If you feel that you must use a double drop, dropper knots are a must for both legs. Using two surgeon's loops has the danger of the top knot being pulled apart and the mono failing when a heavy pull is put on the bottom leg. If the top leg of a double surgeon's loop bottom rig has the fish on, it's not a problem, the knot is working against the hook's pull as it is designed to do. What this also means is that a surgeon's loop, single drop bottom rig is OK to use. Proper tying of a dropper loop or surgeon's loop knot is in just about any good fishing knot book or on the info sheet on knots that comes with various brands of mono.

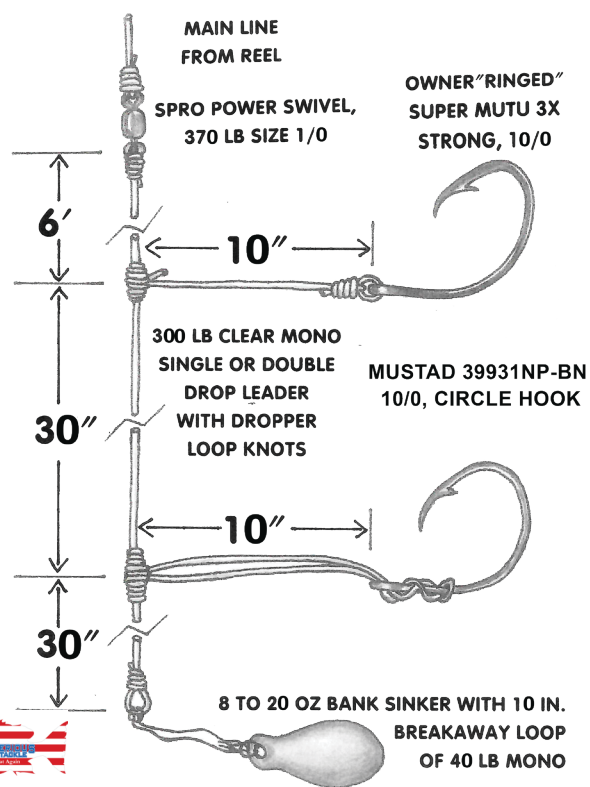
Don't forget to lubricate your mono with saliva before tightening your knots. Dry friction is a bad thing that will damage/weaken your mono — not only that, but dry knots don't seat as tightly as when lubricated. Wearing gloves also gives some hand protection while letting you tighten knots securely - watch out for those sharp hooks too. While the 300# clear mono and the 6 ft. vertical section from the dropper leg to the swivel may sound like overkill, they do have a specific purpose. The 300# mono provides high abrasion resistance by its size alone; that 6 ft. section is additional insurance against a cut-off should your big snapper or grouper get into a structure. When some sort of structure hang-up comes your way, give slack for a minute or two, fish do swim out at times when the pull on them is gone. Give'm slack, wait, and wind tight - you might get lucky and the fight will be on again.

The illustration's uppermost hook is an Owner "Ringed" Super Mutu, 3X Strong in 10/0 size. These guys are sharp, strong, and expensive and they hook and hold with a vengeance. The ringed feature allows for a freedom of movement that lets a live bait swim with less restriction and gives a strip or chunk bait a bit more enticing look as it works in the current. The Owner is shown on a single mono-strand dropper leg. To get this single leg, cut the top strand of a dropper loop knot and tie your hook on. The illustration's lower leg is a dropper knot loop. This double-strand mono is naturally stiffer and therefore less prone to tangle on the vertical section of the leader on the drop to the bottom.

*Experienced Fishing Advice To  
Make Fishing Great Again*



### Serious Red Snapper Bottom Drop



Leg length of around 10 inches isn't a problem; longer ones may twist on the drop a bit but will usually unwind when at the bottom due to the current flow and the swivel connection to your main line. The bottom hook shown is a Mustad Demon Perfect Circle Hook in 10/0 size. This is another sharp, strong, extreme penetrator that's relatively inexpensive; they also hook and hold till the gaff is struck.

The Mustad is shown looped directly on the dropper loop; the loop must be inserted through the hook's eye from the "bend" side of the hook, then looped and twisted around the shank twice as shown, then snugged against the hook's eye. Securing the hook to the loop in this manner, from the "bend" side causes the hook to rotate into penetration as the line comes tight.

The breakaway loop of weaker mono that is the connection to the short surgeon's loop at the bottom of the vertical section and the sinker is one of those simple things of importance. The name says it all, "breakaway", that's what this weak link does should your weight get hung up in a structure. This saves your rigging without a lot of heavy pulling and the over stressing of anything, including yourself.

This bottom rig should always be fished vertically or very near it; use enough weight to get it there, then reel up until you just feel the weight of the sinker. A vertical drop gives you more "up and away" from structure motion per turn of the reel handle after the hookup. While on the subject of the hookup, circle hooks demand that you don't try to "set the hook". You must wait for the line to come tight, bowing your rod deeply — then, and only then, wind like crazy to get your trophy's head up and coming your way. Backing up a bit, don't mask/obstruct the hook gap (point to shank) of a circle hook with your bait -- hookups will be difficult if the bait is firm enough — I've seen "hookups" turn into lost fish more than once because of this masking.

Should you be using a live bait, the strike and hookup can be hard and fast. A big strip bait such as an 8" x 3" x 1" piece of bonito, bluefish, or blue runner is another story. Small fish nibbling on your strip are doing more than making your rod tip do that annoying dance. They are also helping to send out a scent cone down current. The stopping of the nibbling doesn't necessarily mean that your bait is gone, it could be that your real target has shown up and is eyeing

your offering. The nibblers don't want to be eaten, so they have moved on. Give it a minute or so; a bowed rod may be your first indication of a big take and hookup.

The details and why of this red snapper bottom drop are some of the things that let 10% of the fishermen catch 90% of the fish. Whatever the kind of fishing, you are ahead of the game when the big one gets on and the details are covered. Using this rigging as described will get you to the bottom with a bait presentation that results in hookups — you just need to be fishing over where your targeted sow red snapper lives.

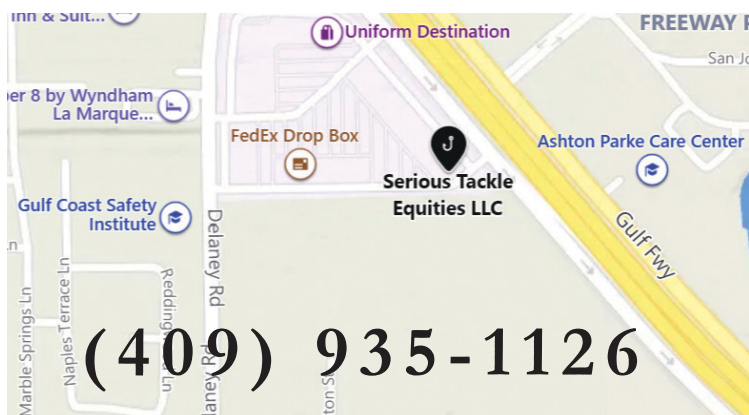
If you have any questions, stop by Serious Tackle or email me at

[chris@serioustackle.com](mailto:chris@serioustackle.com)

Chris Gonzales  
Owner - Serious Tackle



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



(409) 935-1126

## Pro Fishing Gear & Tackle

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

