

TARGET

KING SALMON

LEARN TO FISH FROM ANCHOR, CHOOSE COLOR CAREFULLY, AND NEVER FORGET ABOUT SCENT



THE KENAI KING

• **Larry LaRue**

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Alaska's Kenai River is home to some of the world's biggest king salmon, and knowledgeable guides lean heavily on LaRue's Looney Lures to boat the bruisers. LaRue is a Gulf War veteran who custom-paints spoons, spinners, and Kwikfish, using his incredibly deep understanding of how fish respond to color to create one-of-a-kind patterns. It started as a simple hobby when he retired from the military in 2004. LaRue's best king pinned the needle at 54 pounds, and his lures have accounted for 60-plus-pound fish.

• **Bait:** *Salmon roe.* "The water in the Kenai and other Alaska rivers is often turbid and milky. That's why lots of locals use Pro-Cure to dye their salmon eggs dark purple. The color seems to really

TIP: "Salmon secrete a fear pheromone that gets on your line when they're hooked. If you don't cut your leader down and rerig after landing a salmon, the others will smell that pheromone on the line and won't touch it."

Crowned An angler with a big Alaskan king.



stand out. But aside from color, scent is everything when it comes to kings. When I fish eggs, I also incorporate a sand shrimp and usually a chunk of sardine onto the rig. Nothing holds more oil than sardines."

• **Big-Fish Conditions:** "June and July will always be the best months for Northwest kings, and 53- to 55-degree water is ideal. But I like the 55- to 59-degree range. When the water is a little warmer, the fish are more apt to hit hardware, like Kwikfish, as opposed to bait. As for the weather, I'll take a cloudy day over a bright, sunny day."

• **Outfit:** "The Lamiglas X90HC is my go-to rod for Kwikfish. It has a lot of backbone but a sensitive tip. I match it with a Shimano Tekota 500LC. It's a tough reel and has a line counter, which is very important. Spool that with 65-pound Tuf-Line XP braid, and add a 50-foot bumper of 40-pound Maxima leader."

• **B.S. Call:** "I catch many

GO-TO RIG



more fish anchored or back-trolling than just driving around the river with lines out. In my opinion, many people troll because they don't take the time to learn how to catch fish on the anchor." **FS**

GO-TO LURE

KWIKFISH K10, OUTLAW PATTERN

"Outlaw combines a lot of salmon roe colors in different stages, so even though there might be a better single color on a given day, some color in this lure will turn salmon on. I let my lines out at anchor or back-troll these lures. Big kings don't want to hold in heavy current, and the biggest will often be in water 12 feet deep or less. To work this lure in shallow water, I'll let out 120 to 125 feet of line. The more line out, the more subtle the wobble and the shallower you can use a Kwikfish."

PATRICK ENDRES/ALASKA STOCK