

Spey fishing, Steelhead Clinic 12/14/2019 – Mike Spurlock

I am not a spey expert, largely self-taught, spey is my favorite way to fish for steelhead, salmon.

1. What spey is used for:

- Rivers vs lakes, overhead casting in the surf - uncommon
- Good when little room to back cast
- Can cover more water than single hand
- Can mend better (longer rod)
- Landing fish is hard without a partner, need to tail them, no net w/o a guide.

2. Rods:

- Spey weight scale is 2-3 line weights heavier than single hand shooting heads. Examples:

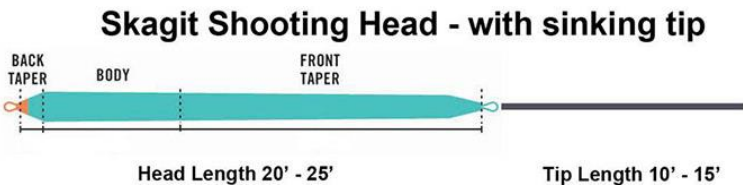
	6 wt	7 wt	8 wt	9 wt
Spey gr wt – body + 15 ft tip	420 + 85 tip	470 + 95 tip	600 + 110 tip	750 + 130 tip
Single hand shooting heads	250	300	360	430
Single hand gr wt	160	185	210	240

- Typical rod lengths 12-15 ft, switch rods shorter, becoming popular
- Trout spey emerging popularity – 2 to 4 weight.
- Traditional rod is slower and easier to learn vs non-traditional fast action. Bamboo is slower yet.
- My rods:
 - Sage 7 wt 13’6” or Echo 6/7 wt 12’6” = steelhead on Russian, Gualala, Garcia, Klamath, Trinity and smaller rivers in BC or Alaska.
 - Fly Shop 8 wt 13’6” = BC steelhead.
 - Sage 9 wt 15’ = BC for big river steelhead and for chinook.

3. Lines:

- Use Rio or Airflow website line selector to match lines to your rod.

○ **Skagit Shooting Head**
(developed on Skagit River)



- Winter, when the fish won’t move, splashy cast doesn’t matter
- big flies, heavy tips
- Tips – 10-15 ft tips to get fly into the zone: float, intermediate, type 3, 6, 8. Normally use type 3, type 6 on the Russian.
- Can make your own tips: 7.5 ft-15 ft lengths of T-8, T-11, T-14, T-20

○ **Scandi Shooting Head**
(Scandinavian)



- Can also use with 10 ft sink tips or poly leaders
- small flies, delicate presentation, easier to cast, not as splashy, not as deep

4. Tippet:
 - 4-6 ft 10-12 lb mono
5. Reels:
 - Click drag – when you want to hear that scream (and show off to others when you get a fish).
 - Or adjustable drag
6. Flies:
 - Regular straight hook flies
 - Articulated flies such as intruders, etc.
 - Tube flies
 - Can be weighted or unweighted
 - Typical for Russian – orange or black, comet, boss or polar shrimp, size 6-10, bead chain eyes or lead wire weight.
 - Bright day, clear water – use smaller fly, orange.
 - Overcast, dirty water – use larger fly, black (better silhouette).
 - Typical for Trinity at Lewiston – golden stone, copper john (buggy flies)
7. Casts:
 - Important – always cast over the **downwind shoulder** (could be either right or left).
 - Use protection (glasses, hat, hood), especially with heavy flies and sink tips.
 - Watch your anchor, stop cast if it is not right.
 - 180 degree rule for anchor
 - Watch for D-loop to form
 - Aim for the tree tops to get a tight loop for distance.
 - Don't power the cast with top hand like I do.
 - River left, right hander:
 - U/S wind: snap T – right shoulder
 - D/S wind: Double spey – left shoulder (cackhanded or left hand on top)
 - River right, right handed
 - D/S wind: Double spey – right shoulder
 - U/S wind: Snap T – left shoulder (cackhanded or left hand on top)
 - Use Perry poke when obstacles at your back
 - When there is lot of current, learn to hold running line in loops.
 - Splash & go casts are more efficient but have more difficult timing (can use with scandi or floating lines or light tips):
 - Single spey
 - Snake roll
8. If you want to get started spey fishing:
 - Hire a walk & wade spey guide (Jason Hartwig, Dillon Renton, Tony Wratney).
 - Attend a class (Jeff Putnam, Bill Lowe).
 - Go to Pleasanton (Feb 21-23, 2020)
 - Go to Spey-0-rama in Golden Gate Park (April 17-19, 2020).
 - Go to a lodge or float trip that offers spey fishing, you will learn it by end of week.

9. Locations where you can spey fish:

- BC - Skeena, Kalum, Kitimat, Copper, Dean, (steelhead, chinook)
- Oregon - Deschutes, N Umpqua, coastal rivers (steelhead)
- Washington- Olympic Peninsula (steelhead)
- Coastal Calif – Russian, Gualala, Garcia (steelhead)
- Trinity, Klamath, Eel, Smith (steelhead)
- SE Alaska –Prince of Wales Island, Situk River in Yakutat (steelhead)
- Canadian Arctic (sea run char)
- Canada East coast & Europe (Atlantic salmon)
- Tiera Del Fuego (sea run browns)
- Patagonia Lago Strobel (Jurassic Lake) (rainbows)
- Chile (chinook)