

How to Rig Ballyhoo

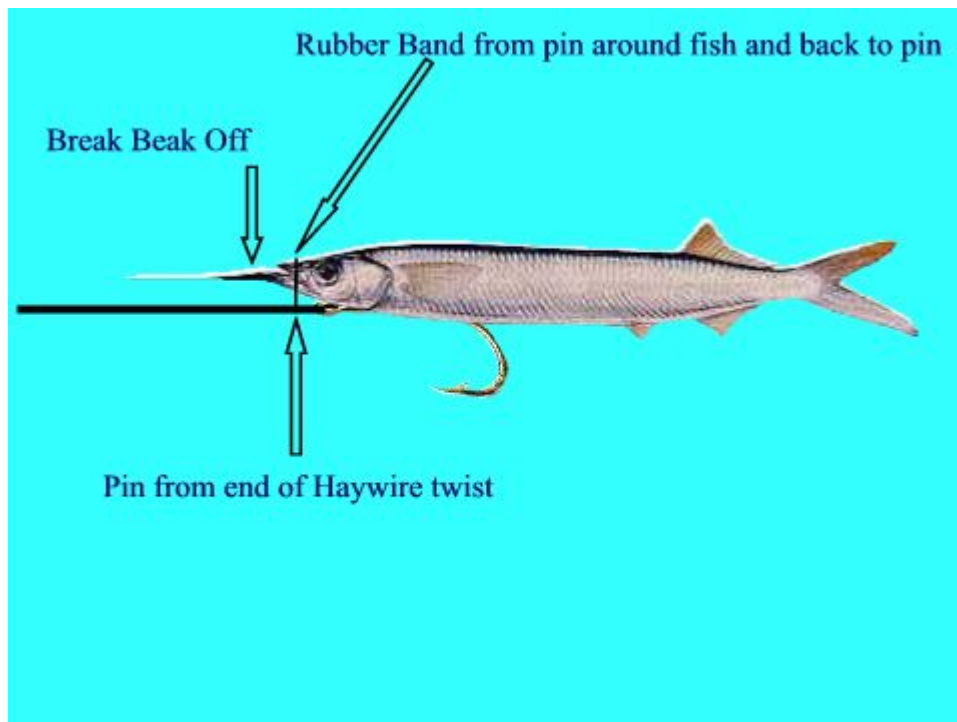
How to Rig Ballyhoo

By Captain David T. Tilley

Ballyhoo or Garfish are an excellent choice for bait when targeting offshore game fish.

Rigging these baits is a little harder than sticking a few hooks in it and tossing them over the side. First let's talk about the quality of bait that you are using. Most of the time when you buy Ballyhoo they are frozen. Look for the packages that are frozen solid with NO frozen blood or other type of fish yek in the bag. This is very important because a bait that has had a chance to thaw out then be refrozen is not worth the plastic bag that contains it. Refrozen bait is easy to spot because the hooks pull free and the bellies split soon after they hit the water. OK, so we now have fresh frozen bait and we have thawed it for use. Before we put any hooks in it we need to break the fishes back. Take your thumb and forefinger on both hands and put them at the top of the fish near were the backbone would be. Now kind of wiggle the bait back and forth between your fingers. You should be able to feel the backbone as it breaks. Work your way all the way down the baits back. When complete, the bait should move freely back and forth. If you need to know how to tie wire leaders look in the article " How To Tie Wire".

Single Hook Rig

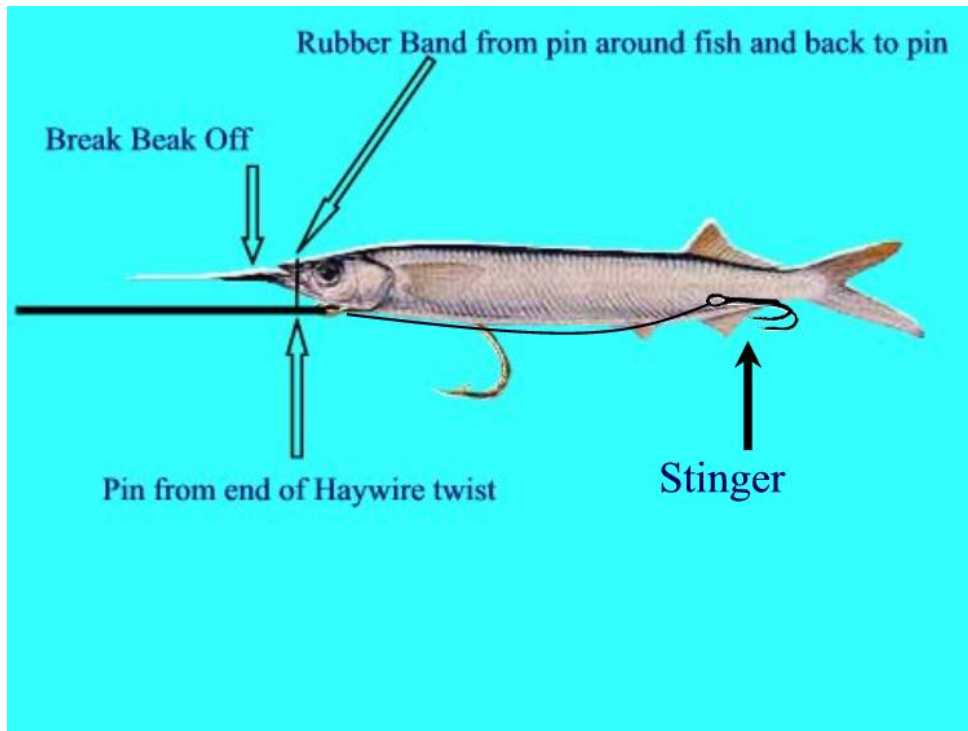


The single hook is best for larger fish, shy fish. I make mine from 32 lb coffee wire with a black 50 lb barrel swivel run 7-12 feet to the first hook. First break the beak off. I do not break the wire at the end of the

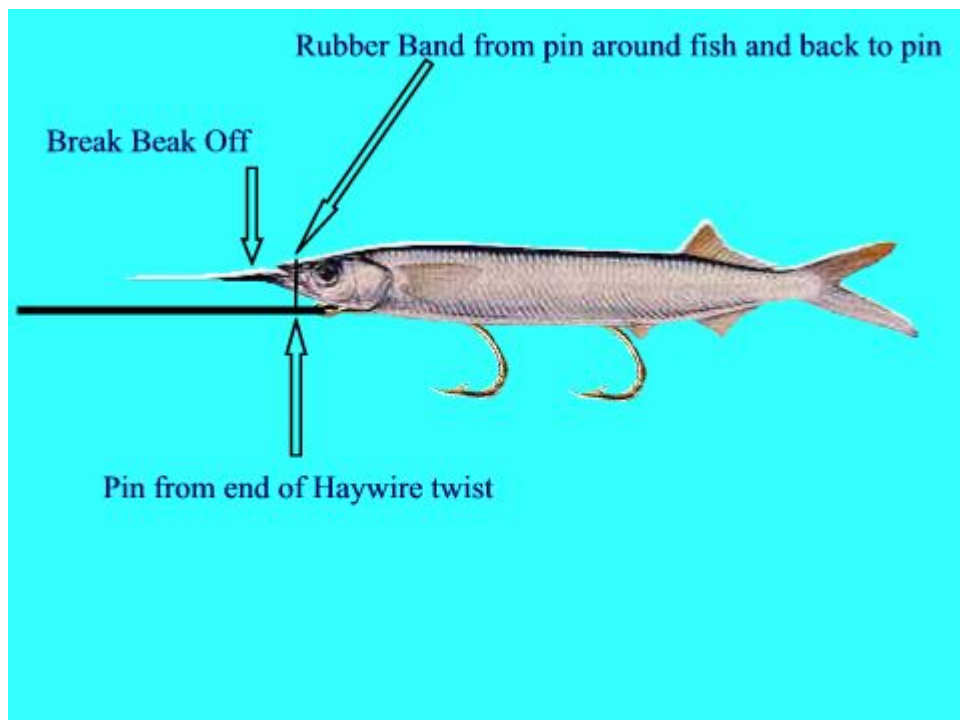
haywire twist but leave a piece sticking up. This is called a pin. Make sure that the pin points away from the hook. Insert the hook into the bottom gill plate of the Ballyhoo, bending the Ballyhoo around the hook. You want the eye of the hook to come level with the eye of the Ballyhoo. Now take the pin and insert it through the nose of the fish. It should be long enough to stick all the way through the fish. Now take a rubber band, the kind you would get from a dentist for use with braces, and loop it over the pin. Pull it around the fish and loop back over the pin again. This will hold the fish straight and make it track nice.

Single Hook Rig with Stinger

You can also make this same rig with a single hook + a stinger by adding a treble hook like this....

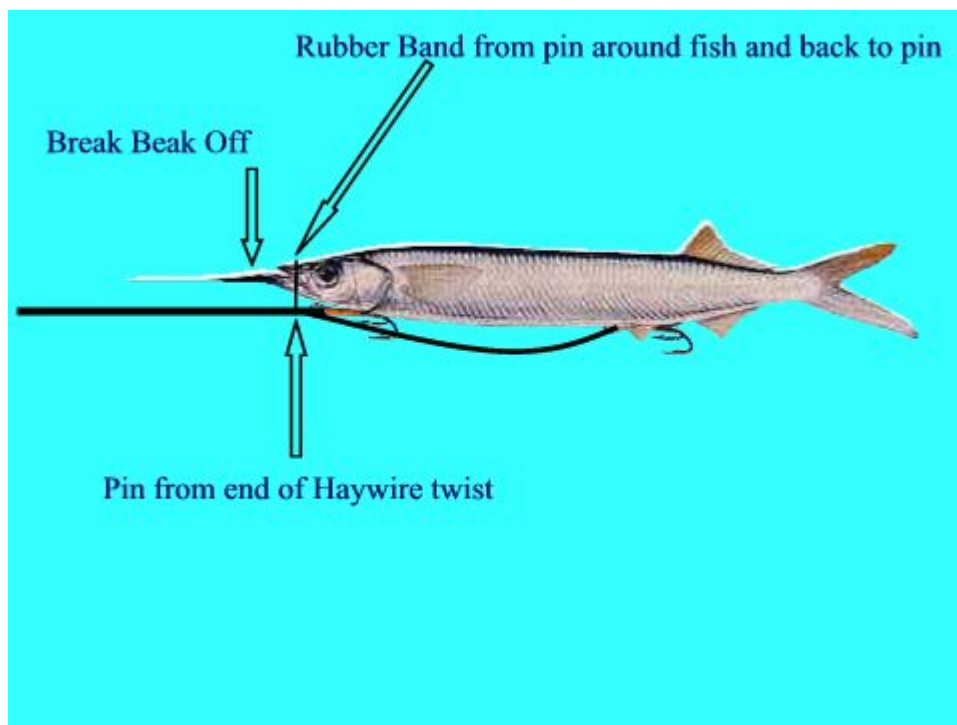


Double Hook Rig



The Double Hook rig works the same way as the single hook except that the second hook is inserted first.

Double Treble Rig



The double treble rig is my favorite for fishing for Kings. The trebles have to be bent first. I do this before I make the rigs. Look close at a treble hook. Notice that the point is angled in toward the shank. Take a pair of pliers and bend the points so that they are angled out instead of in. The first treble is inserted just below the gill plate and the second is inserted into the anus. This is a hard rig to get to track straight. So you may have to mess with it a little. Sometimes for the ones that just do not want to track right, I take a piece of rigging wire and run it through the eyes of the ballyhoo and through the eye of the hook and pull it tight. this will usually solve the problem.

Squid

All of the above rigs can be used with Plastic skirts, Witches or Whole Squid. Leave the beak on when using Squid or large skirts. Try them, they make the tracking easier to get straight. The colors Red, Hot Pink and Blue have been my best producers.

Tight Lines and Slight Seas

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