· *Distinctive Features*

The Wahoo is a slender, oceanic fish with a body covered with scales. Jaws are elongated to form an almost beak-like snout; the teeth are triangular and finely serrated. Two dorsal fins are present; the first is several times the length of the second.



Option 1
Where - Deep water ledges provide prime cover; look for structure in more than 200 feet of water.
When – Winter
How – Run two rigs in the prop wash, one 15 feet from the stern and the other 10 feet behind the first. Rig a Mako Jet head behind a 14 ounce trolling sinker and drop it 100 feet back. Run 12 – 15 knots.
What (to use) – 12 ounce Rag Mop rigged with Double Trouble hooks.
Tip – A following sea really helps the action of a high speed lure.

Option 2
Where – Deeper than 180 feet or 30 fathoms.
When – Fishing is best on either side of the winter full moons.
How – Run three rods at 12 – 15 knots at 250 feet, 200 feet, and 150 feet back. Troll from shallow to deep in exaggerated "S" turns or tight figure-eights over structure.
What (to use) – Three lines, each rigged with a 14 ounce blue and white or red and black Wahoo Express by Ballyhoo International. Rig with two 9/0 Mustad hooks connected with heat shrink coated wire so that one hook points up and the other is pointing down. Add a strip of bonito belly to the hook.
Tip – If you miss a fish turn hard to the side that was hit, often this will attract them back.

Option 3
Where – Watch for floating wood.
When – An hour before high tide and two hours on the out-going tide in 200 – 400 feet of water
How – Eight to 11 knots
What (to use) – Use bait and TLD 25 reels with Horse ballyhoo behind a blue and white islander on No 9 single strand wire four feet long. You can run 5 or six lines until you find the fish; then drop to 3 or 4.
Tip – Split tail mullet following 30 feet behind a 16 ounce cigar sinker, wire line is best with this rig.

Option 4
Where – Wrecks or platforms like FPT
When – Temperature breaks improve your odds.
How – Rigged with three feet of 108 pound single strand wire and pulled at 6 knots
What (to use) – Fish three lines, a dark colored Braid Marauder in the prop wash, a chrome and sliver, blue, or pink Mann's Stretch 30+ about 45 feet behind the boat, and a Hot Pink MirrOlure 75 feet off the stern.
Tip – Keep two heavy spinning rods rigged with Wahoo Bombs and throw these as the hooked up Wahoo is being fought to the boat – reel these as fast as you can.

Search for Wahoo: Capt. Brant McMullan

Pulling artificial swimming plugs and lures at speeds between 7 and 12 knots has proven very effective for not only finding packs of Wahoo but also catching them. This technique of fast trolling artificials is my particular favorite when targeting Wahoo.

Typically I put lines in the water when I reach 25 fathoms and troll at 8 knots while working across the continental shelf break between 25 and 35 fathoms. A typical spread consists of 8 lines with 3 swimming plugs such as the Yozuri Bonito or Braid Marauder run from the back of the boat on flat lines, all rigged with #10 wire leaders.

Always on my flat lines and some times on my rigger baits, I will run a custom designed trolling sinker that I created called a “Wahoo bomb”. A Wahoo bomb is a cigar shaped trolling lead that has a hole through the center, like an egg sinker, instead of the traditional swivels on each end. I slide the Wahoo bomb onto the line before tying the #10 wire leader with rig to the line. I then hold the Wahoo bomb between my fingers, keeping it at the boat while free spooling line through the Wahoo bomb, thus pushing the lure or rigged bait some 50 to 75 feet behind the Wahoo bomb, which I feel helps the bait draw more strikes. I then simply take a small #8 “dental style” rubber band and half hitch it behind the Wahoo bomb and then take the loop and run it over the head of the Wahoo bomb where a groove in the head of the weight catches the rubber band and thus locks in place. It may sound complicated, but its incredible simply and amazingly effective.

February and March - You have to keep a close eye on the sea surface temperature charts, and if you see a warm water eddy push in across the 30 fathom curve, chances are it will be holding Wahoo. You want to look for the eddy to bring 72-76 degree water and the best case scenario is for the eddy to push across good bottom structure such as the 100/400, Black Jack or Steeples. This occurrence is not common, but I saw it January 2009, and the results were catches of monster Wahoo. Two of the best days of Wahoo fishing I have ever had took place in February. The Wahoo fishing technique to watch this year will be fast trolling artificial's at 10-15 knots. The OIFC has recently picked up the well known Black Bart line of fishing lures for this very purpose. The Black Bart lures are known for the fish catching and they have a special series of lure designed specifically for Wahoo fishing. You can buy the lures, the rigged trolling weights, leaders.... everything ready to go, or you can rig them yourself. The technique is not used much in this area, but watch what happens with it this Spring! So, all said, keep an eye to the weather and the surface temperature shots and get your Wahoo rigs ready as we wait for the perfect Wahoo fishing conditions.

Wahoo fishing aboard the *Calcutta*, Capt. Jenkins prefers to go with an all-natural spread. He trolls medium to large rigged ballyhoo behind Carolina Gentleman skirts on #10 wire leaders and prefers to use red/black and blue/white color combinations as he trolls at speeds of 7-8 knots. Capt. Jenkins notes that part of the fun in Wahoo fishing is the incredible aerial strikes that he often encounters. If the fishing is particularly good, and he wants to spice up the trip, Capt. Jenkins will often deploy a 9" purple/black Moldcraft Super Chugger and fish it from the flatline closest to the boat. According to Capt. Jenkins, the Wahoo go crazy over the "Bonito-like" lure and crash it with added intensity right behind the boat. Conversely, if the Wahoo fishing is slow, Capt. Jenkins will deploy a #32 planer from an 80 pound rod/reel outfit with a 20 foot, 200 pound mono "spacer" behind the planer and then use either a Drone Spoon or rigged ballyhoo as bait. He notes that the depth of the planer is determined by how far behind the boat it is set and that you should experiment to find a particular depth that may work better than another.

Capt. Jay Weaver of Charleston takes a completely different approach to his Wahoo fishing aboard his *Ali L*. Capt. Weaver uses 130# fluorocarbon leaders on all his baits and no wire at all. He feels like the fluorocarbon generates more strikes from leader shy Wahoo and notes that he rarely loses Wahoo due to a cutoff. In fact, in the past two years Capt. Weaver has boated Wahoo over 90 pounds, both caught on 130# fluorocarbon leaders. Capt. Weaver says that hands down his favorite and most productive setup for Wahoo is his wire line. Capt. Weaver uses a #6 planer run from wire line and heavy, bent butt rod. Behind the planer, he uses a 60 foot "spacer" of 250# monofilament which then connects to his fluorocarbon leader via a 200# SPRO swivel. He does make one slight change with his leader on this outfit in that instead of using his typical 130# fluorocarbon, Capt. Weaver will use 200# fluorocarbon leader as the drag must be set very tight on the wire line rod in order to keep the planer set in position**.** He also notes that in adjusting the distance of the planer from the boat, there will typically be a "sweet spot" which presents the bait at the desired depth for the Wahoo, so it is important to regularly adjust the wire line to find the perfect depth. The remainder of Capt. Weaver's spread consists of an assortment of ½ - 1 ounce Sea Witches rigged ahead of medium ballyhoo with standard trolling speed at a relatively slow 6 knots. Capt. Weaver's typical spread includes a blue/black Sea Witch on the shotgun at 300 yards, plumb/black or pink/white Sea Witch on the long riggers at 250 yards, crystal Sea Witches on the inside riggers at 150 yards, a green/black Sea Witch on the inside shotgun at 125 yards, the wire line run as a flat line at 50-70 yards back and a naked, split billed ballyhoo on the other flat line at 40-50 yards

Once a Wahoo strikes, it will typically peel off line for a few seconds then do a 180 and head back at the boat. This is when the majority of Wahoo are lost. It will likely repeat the procedure several times as it lunges away from and then back toward the boat. The angler must be prepared to wind like mad the second the Wahoo turns to the boat while the boat driver must also be prepared to move the boat ahead to help the angler keep the line tight. Next the Wahoo will begin its second highly effective means to escape, head shaking. If the line is not kept absolutely tight, the hooks will drop. The boat driver can assist at this time as well by moving the boat ahead, again to help the angler keep the line tight. The angler must be extra careful at this time to keep the line tight, and the boat driver should keep the boat in slow ahead while turning the boat toward the fish. This turn is what is referred to as "getting the fish inside your circle" and is a big help in keeping fish out from under the boat. A smart way to handle Wahoo on the gaff is to have the fish box open when the fish comes over the side. The gaff man and the angler should be the only ones in the cockpit and the gaff man should swing the Wahoo aboard on the side opposite of the angler.

More Wahoo tips **(mostly from Frying Pan Tower members)**

WHERE: Wahoo tend to congregate near structure/bottom areas. We catch the majority of our Wahoo between 130'-300' on the good ledges. With that being said, we have some areas where the bottom is like a pancake on the machine but nearly every time we get in the vicinity of that area we find at least a Wahoo or two hanging out there. Why this is I don't know, something down there must hold bait is all I can figure. The point of the matter is, if you find an area that is permanent (i.e. not a floating weed mat or temp break) that holds Wahoo, you would do well to remember where that is so as to easily find in during future trips.

WHEN: The best times of the year for me are Aug.-Oct. with November being weather dependant. The full moon periods (5 days before and 5 after) are especially productive!! There is also a good bite in the spring from the 1st of April to mid-May. Also keep in mind that Wahoo tend to bite on the tidal changes. Know when the major tide changes are going to be the day you are out there and make sure you are over a good area when the "bite" goes off. It might mean the difference between 1-2 fish and a limit.

TROLLING SPEED/INFO: For the most part I troll a mix of natural's w/skirts and lures at around 3-9knots. This varies depending upon ocean conditions and what the fish are acting like on a particular day. Change it up and see what works and where your bait is running the best. As a general rule we speed up just a hair and work at about 7knots when Wahoo fishing.

BAIT: I will go over skirts and lures in just a minute but right now I want to talk about the naturals. By and far the most used bait would have to be ballyhoo; they represent a wide variety of baitfish and can be rigged many different ways. For most fish I tend to use smaller ballyhoo with one or two big ones mixed in. For Wahoo however I switch that around and use mainly larger baits. I don't know why but 9 times out of ten the Wahoo will go after the bigger/biggest baits in the spread. When I say "bigger" I am talking o f like a healthy Med sized hoo.

Lures/Skirts: This is probably the most debated topic you will find; every person has certain things/colors that work better for them and certain stuff that they don't like. Take for instance me; I can't stand to pull any type of green/chartreuse lure. I just haven't had success with that color; I have several buddies however that swear by it and hate some of the colors I use, so just try different things until you find a combo you are comfortable with. Overall Wahoo tend to gravitate towards the darker colors such as red/black, black/purple black/orange pink/black. One thing I would not go Wahoo fishing without however is the red/black islander/jag/witch lure… This is hands down my top Wahoo producing color. I personally like the Islander or Jag because they give a larger profile and run well… I will also never be caught without at least one blue/white lure out there; this is my top all around color as well as good Wahoo bait. I will go over exactly what I use in my spread and where I use it in just a minute. One other lure I have started using in the past year is the Braid Marauder plug, I know it is pricy but they hold up well and are a fish catching fools. You don't have to go out and buy all the most expensive lures to catch fish. For the most part, you can get a bunch of sea witches for around $3ea and be just fine. I personally like some of the islanders and jags/mini-jags for Wahoo but you don't "need" them.

Other less costly baits are the drone spoons, strip bait under a skirt, or a plastic squid rigged w/flash and fished over a bally; these will all work fine. Wahoo like flashy, any higher speed flashy lure is apt to snag a hoo. That drone spoon when run off a planer can be deadly.

SPREAD: The spread run off of my CC consist of 7 lines. Two flat/deep baits, two “short rigger” baits, two long rigger baits, and one WWB shotgun. The reason I emphasize deep is because Wahoo love a bait that is run deeper than the rest, sometimes it only has to be 6’ but that little bit makes a big difference. On the close baits I run a planer bridle rig on one, and semi-deep bait on the other with a trolling lead. There are many ways to run a high-speed planer, some more complicated than others. The set-up I utilize is run In-line off of a big reel and bent-butt rod; #8 planer. I understand you most likely don’t won’t to invest in such a costly rod/reel set-up at this point so I would recommend doing a search on several of these forums and reading of the different methods to see what might work best for you. The planer is the only rig I run with a long wire leader, It Is constantly getting hit by Wahoo and can prevent a few cutoffs and such. The leader needs to be at least 12-18’ long. I fish a larger ballyhoo with a bright pink/blue jag off of this, Make sure whatever color you chose shows up deeper in the water column such as chartreuse, neon pink, violet, blue, ex. The other close bait is my red/black islander/ballyhoo combo. This is run with my short wire rigging behind a 48oz trolling weight. The way I rig the weight is unique, and as far as I know, I am the only one who runs it. I would be difficult and pointless to try and explain how to rig this set-up without pictures so I will get some and go over rigging later. Just trust me when I tell you that this is the thing you definitely want to have in your spread. Next come the two short riggers, on the first I fish the Marauder plug in blue/black and on the other I normally fish a b/w lure that leaves a smoke trail w/bally. For the long riggers I fish some type of pink combo on one in either mini-jag, witch, or sailure w/bally, (Pink/blue, pink, pink/white are all good colors) and on the other I use either a purple/black if just targeting Wahoo, or a naked split bill bally with just a tiny piece of wire if the bills and tuna are around. The shotgun bait is the second most productive Wahoo bait; make sure to run it far enough back so that it is in totally clean, undisturbed water. The bait/lure is a blue/white islander or jag with a 12” trace of wire and a larger ballyhoo. I don’t know what type of rods/reels you have but if you have one larger 50lb class reel I would recommend fishing it here. When the bait is already 150-200yards back it doesn’t take a slob Wahoo long to reach the spool on a 25. Let me remind you that I fish mainly TLD 25/30’s on 50lb class rods; everything I explain can be fished off of that sized gear.

So here goes the actual rigging part of it.

Let me start by going over hook(s). My favorite large Wahoo hook is hands down the Mustad 7731AD in 9/0size. This has performed very well for me on all fish but especially Wahoo.

On most of my strictly Wahoo rigs I fish a short (12-14") piece of wire. This wire is either Malin hard wire in 108lb, or tinned piano wire in the same strength range. Whatever type you pick, make sure it is the BRIGHT or SILVER color. Believe it or not, this color actually shows up less in the offshore water than the coffee color and will lead to more strikes. When making my rigs, the components I use are a 12-15' piece of 130lb smoke blue moimoi leader, one spro 200+lb heavy swivel, your piece of wire, necessary crimps, your skirt of choice, your hook, and a small (3") squid. I think this squid is a very important part of this rig, it serves to purposes. The first is to conceal the swivel/crimps so as not to have all of that rigging running along directly in front of your bait. The second purpose it serves is to look like a larger fish (actual bait) chasing and feeding upon a smaller fish (squid). It has been proven that illusion may at times entice a reaction strike even when the fish aren't in a "feeding" mode.

Start by using a haywire twist to attach the spro swivel to one end of the piece or wire. Slide your skirt on the other end and again using a haywire twist, attach the hook (make sure to leave enough tag end on your haywire for the "pin"). Next prep your mono, start out on one end and make your loop that will be attached to the snap/mainline, or if using a wind-on as I do, simply crimp that end to your wind-on swivel. On the other end slide on the small squid and using properly sized crimps, attach to the already completed wire portion of your rig. Simple as that! **JRJBfishing**

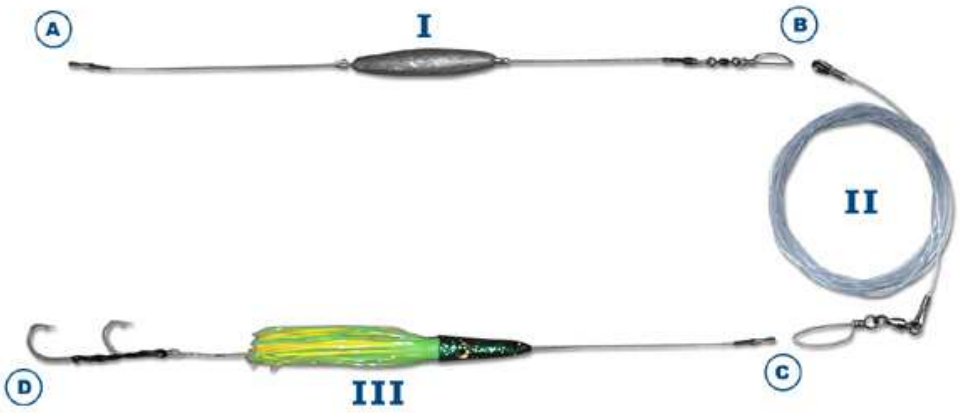
Typically good areas to fish for Wahoo are in 135-300' of water from the Big Rock down to the Swansboro Hole. Find the good breaks and ledges holding bait. Check your ocean conditions as described above and try to find the area where the good water is laying over a good break. This creates the "ideal" offshore fishing set-up.

Sea witches will work fine, 6' of # 8 wire and a 8/0 hook (7731) w/ a 3/8 oz. chin weight

First of all this time of year (August/Sept) when you look at an sst shot most of the time the hot water is everywhere. Most of the time I do not even pay attention to the temp shot. I concentrate on Mixed Layer Depth, Current, & Chlorophyll. But my best advice is to read the fish finding from space & look at the videos on Super Map. Once on the water after looking at the shots I pay close attention to my temp. & look for visual changes such as rips; slick looking spots basically any visual change because there is something underneath it making it look this way. Also I pay very special attention to direction & speed of current. Most of the time there will be a major change in currents just before & just after an eddy. Maybe this will help out a little. **Capt Shane**

You would be surprised at how little pressure a 48oz lead will put on your gear. I fish the trolling weight on my lightest rig, a TLD 25 on a 30-80lb class beastmaster rod w/40lb line. I wouldn't recommend using your downrigger. You can pull up to a #3 planer on the downrigger and still make around 6 knots but it puts a lot of pressure on it. I have seen some booms snapped because too much pressure was put on them while fast trolling. I normally use my downrigger to pull the teaser. If you want to pull a planer just run it with a hand line down about 40'-50' with a clip. When I get the chance I am going to download some pictures and a little write up on the bridle system that will work on light tackle (30-50lb). **JRJBfishing**

Used 2 rods with 48-0z in line weights all wire rigging and an Ace **Wahoo** head naked when I am looking for **Wahoo** or running between spots tuna fishing. You can pull them very fast. If they get a hit we will mark it and then put out a regular 6knot meat spread with a planer and a Yozuri Bonita or Mann stretch 30+ off the corners and fish the area hard. They are a great way to fish while you move to different spots and to find **Wahoo**. It is a great sound when you are rolling along fast and one of them goes off. I fish both on 50's. These are red/black and purple/black with a very flake/shiny head.
This is what they look like:



A. To snap swivle from Rod double line 80lb. mono, Bimini Twist.

B. Snap swivle from "B" Cigar lead to thimble on shock leader.

C. Snap swivle from "C" Shock leader to loop of (cable 1/16" S.S. 480lb.) leader.

D. S.S. Cable leader through ACE lure crimped to High Speed (Wahoo) Pro Rig.