



Tips & Techniques

Connecting Big Lures and Hook/ Hook Size Selection



Having headed fishing charters in different countries for more than 12 years I, personally, and the team at GFA, have seen well over a few thousand anglers from across the globe. Some have used a lot of different connections to connect the big lures that are required to go after monster GT's. As we said earlier, the prime reason we all love fishing so much is that you don't always win, and you keep learning as you go along. The angler who does not adapt his equipment and techniques will not progress as much as one who does and is prepared to innovate.

Each different way of connecting lures to the leader (that is different) is justified by its user and we understand that this can make it quite difficult for the angler starting out on GT fishing to understand and go with the best choice from day one.

Another constant debate we have is on the size of hooks to use and here again we have seen variations in hook selection, from bizarre in some cases to ridiculous in others, again all justified by the users as to why they would want to fish for the likes of *Caranx Ignobilis* or

Mr. Giant Trevally with the setup they have in place.

Single or Treble Hooks for GT fishing?

We recommend going with the biggest treble hooks that will enable you to work your lure (i.e. popper or swimbait) correctly. It is our personal opinion that for GT fishing a large treble hook is ideal for the largest of GT specimens. There are a number of quality treble hook manufacturers to select from and their offerings are different in terms of sizing. We would suggest that it would be wiser initially to stick with one manufacturer and get hooks of the appropriate size to fit the lure selection you plan to use on your fishing trip. There will always be arguments against using treble hooks, but we have seen that it is certainly easier to hook GT's with treble hooks and if you use large treble hooks and large lures you end up hooking the bigger fish most times, with little to no damage. Of course, we do insist on having treble hooks de-barbed as it is much safer for both angler and fish.



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Fastening Systems – at the Leader end



Heavy leaders can be tied to a quality heavy duty swivel or solid ring with a uni or tube knot; any other knot you are also confident will not slip under high tension is perfectly acceptable as well.



A double barrel crimp also provides an extremely secure connection and, if done correctly, is neater, slimmer in profile on heavy leader and probably stronger than a knot.

We have seen that in some cases with large GT's the entire lure is swallowed. In this case the crushing power of the powerful vice-like jaws and sharp teeth can cut through the heavy leader leaving the fish with the entire lure, hooks and all, in its mouth. In this case unless the fish can spit out the lure it will surely die. This is a scenario we do not want at all and we would recommend a twisted doubling back of the heavy leader at the swivel or solid ring for a length of about 10 inches. This is then crimped again to lock the twists into place as shown in the picture at left. (Note how we have crimped the leader as close to the swivel as possible to ensure minimal contact area for the fish's teeth, with only a single leader strand).

Apart from being near bite-proof for GT's, this also stiffens the leader section near the lure and helps to prevent the leader tangling on the hooks as well as facilitates working the lure better.



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Correct Hook Sizing – How big is just right?



Correctly sized treble hooks, in this case Decoy 8/0 hooks on a 160 gram Kokari Popper

You want the biggest hooks the lure can accept, and for a hook to work properly you need to get past the hook point and to the bend. This will give you a connection with the fish that will not open. Most hooks that are opened during a fight with a fish - no matter the size of the treble hook - are because the hook has in most cases improperly penetrated and the hook set is incorrect.

When going for the biggest hooks for the lure you can go with the recommended sizes of a given brand as specified by the lure maker. However, if you happen to use a different brand of hook then consider the following points:

- The belly treble hook should be as wide or wider than the body of the lure
- With the largest pair of treble hooks connected, a floating lure should float at a 20-25 degree angle to the perpendicular
- In a floating lure 15-20% of the lure should be out of the water with the hooks connected, as a rule of thumb; less than this and the lure just floats or sinks. The hooks are too big/ heavy, or your lure is full of water
- If your lure pulls through instead of chugging or swimming, your hooks are possibly too light, and you may need to try a hook size up (go with the belly treble first).
- The belly and rear treble hooks should touch if possible but not overlap so they don't snag on each other (see picture next page)



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Oversized treble hooks in this case Decoy 10/0 hooks on a 160 gram Kokari Popper note the hook overlap between the belly and rear trebles

In summary, your connection rig should in no way hamper the action of the lure. Be easy to prepare and connect or change a lure while your hook selection should effectively give you the best chance to get your hook securely into that fish of a lifetime.

When you are out on any fishing trip you want to be as prepared as you can possibly be to stack the odds in your favor and the best way to do this is to know your tackle inside out. This way you are not experimenting or assuming when you are out fishing but can immediately take corrective action and change if your lures are not working the way they should.

Maximize your chances of success always fishos!

Tight lines and good luck
Darran Davis