

# Effective fishing

## On deep water with a shad

During the annual presentation of the Irish Speciman Awards at the Visma in Rotterdam a sea-angler named Mike Kollaard was invited several times to receive one or more Awards the last couple of years.

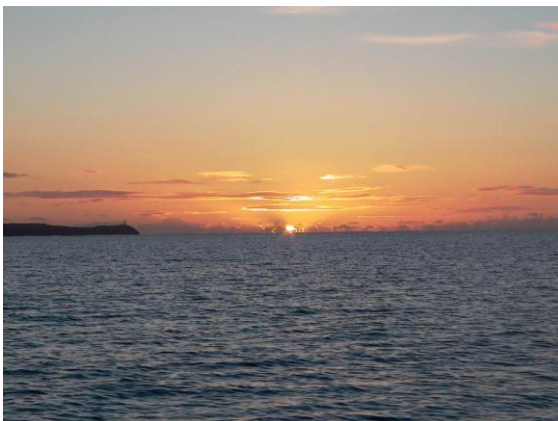
Mike has been a regular visitor since 1969 staying with Mark and Patricia Gannon from Courtmacsherry well known by many Dutch and Flamish sea-anglers.

As a result of practical experience he became a specialist on catching big coalfish and pollack in deep water by spinning.

In this article he wants to share his experience with some practical tips for other sea-anglers who appreciate this spectacular way of fishing and improve it.

I like to start with a report of some good days fishing last October. 2006 The weather forecast was promising 2 good days with weak winds, sunshine and neap tides: perfect conditions to visit the deep offshore wrecks! We could hardly wait. To be well prepared we started the day before to make a stop on our way home to catch a box of fresh mackerel with a couple of anglers. If the fish are not feeding on shads and pirks we could shift to use fresh bait.

Next morning skipper Niall was impatiently waiting at the pier at 7 o'clock. The engine was running and we took off straight-away when all anglers in the boat. Entering Courtmacsherry Bay we witnessed the sunrise close to the Old Head of Kinsale peeping through the clouds.



The sea was calm with a light breeze and the dolphins soon appeared to play their game with the fast boat.



Young dolphins even jumped completely out of the water in their play.

At 9.30 we arrived at a small wreck where we started. The colour sounder was showing small yellow spots around the wreck as well as high above it indicating coalfish was around.

I had prepared my rod and reel with the same system to be successful the days before. After some manoeuvres the boat was well positioned in front of the wreck and after a sign from Niall we dropped our lines to arrive after a while at 100 m. I started to rewind soon and just after 20 turns the resistance started to increase when the first coalfish hung on. The initial run almost surprised me but the line lost pressure after first gaining some line. After rewinding I checked my line to notice my hookkeeper and weight were lost. A small rough spot on the baitline proved it was caused the day before.

*Conclusion: Always check your mainline, trace or lure you used the day before you start fishing next day*

### **Fantastic fishing day!**

I just had finished renewing my trace when we started our next drift. I clicked my slip a little weaker. Next take did not take long and again about 15 to 25 m above the bottom. After a good struggle I was able to guide my first 16 lb coalfish to the net. Almost at the same time Paul landed a beautiful 22 lb coalfish.



After another 2 coalfish of 12 and 14 lbs the tide became weaker so we decided to move to a big wreck at a short distance. We moved over there to catch some conger and ling and after dropping the sand anchor upstream we drifted slowly to the wreck. It lasted a while until the first conger located our first mackerell-flapper but soon followed by several others. I caught 5 congers around 20 lbs and together we landed about 30 congers till the increasing tide pushed us away from the wreck. The sunshine was lovely and while we were curious how it would be at the other wreck we decided to give it a try on our way home.

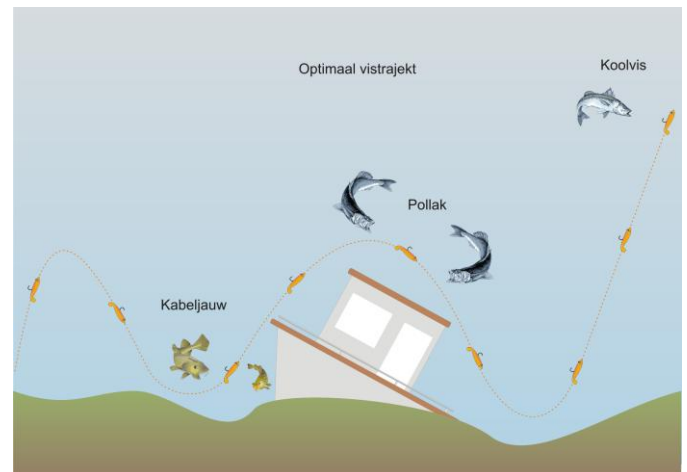
My first drop was perfect at the right spot. My line was pulled backward crossing other lines and only when the fish got tired I was able to get my line free from other lines. This time a coalfish of 21.7 lb. Skipper Niall was also trying to get a coalie with a light rod and spinning reel with a small pirk. After shifting to a blue shad with a heavy weight he was

successful and landed after a long fight his first 24.7 lb specimen coalfish ever!



When we entered the harbour at 18.30 hr we had a total of 5 specimen coalfish and numerous others and about 30 congers were released at the wreck: a fantastic days fishing!

*Conclusion: Always adjust your way of fishing permitted by weather and tide-conditions*



Trying to find the ultimate fishing position

### **Tip!**

Cod is mainly caught close to the bottom around a wreck Try to retrieve slowly in this area and speed up a little now and then. Pollack is usually caught at 30 – 60 turn above the bottom. Retrieve a little faster. Coalfish sometimes feed at the bottom but in general higher up till even 80 turns. Retrieve fast till very fast.

Next day Mark decided due to the excellent results the day before but despite the bad prospects the days to come to give it another try at the same wrecks. On our way out we passed another wreck. Yesterday no other nettingboats were around but today a boat was hauling his nets. Mark noticed he was too far off the wreck to be successful and the contents of the net proved too. The fisherman tried to attract our attention by waving with his arms. Without reason this is a bit unusual on a big distance from the shore so Mark made a turn to check if he was in trouble. By careful steering we slowly came close to his boat but he shouted if we had any cigarettes as he badly needed to smoke and he had run out of it. Lucky for him we had 2 anglers who could hand him half a box by our fishingnet what he gratefully took.

One hour later we arrived at the small wreck. Once again the sounder showed us lots of fish so I used the same successful hookline and shad from yesterday resulting in 5 coalfish. High above the wreck I had a take followed by a fierce dive over 30 – 40 m down to the bottom. It was difficult to gain line turn by turn but at the final 20 m the line suddenly went slack. When I checked my line everything was still there except my shad but the nylon was curled at the end

*Conclusion: Spend enough time to fix your line and trace even if you are catching well. My knot was trimmed too short and finally slipped under heavy pressure by a real big fish!*

### **Jelly-fish**

During the day the wind started to increase and it started to rain as well. I had another fish of 15.5 lb and a smaller one. We also caught more and more tentacles of jelly-fish in our lines.

When I hooked a fish I tried to retrieve slowly and remove the tentacles from my line in the meantime.

According to the coalie it lasted too long so he freed himself by a firm pull. The driftingspeed increased when both Alan and me hooked a fish side by side at the same moment.

As my fish was smaller (20.8 lb) than his fish from 22.8 lb I landed my fish before him.

To my own surprise my coalfish was marked with a bloody sharkbite near his tail.



**coalfish with sharkbite**

Despite worse conditions we had another 4 specimen and I lost another big one of course : that is why they grow big!



**Alan's 22.8 lb coalfish**

## Summary

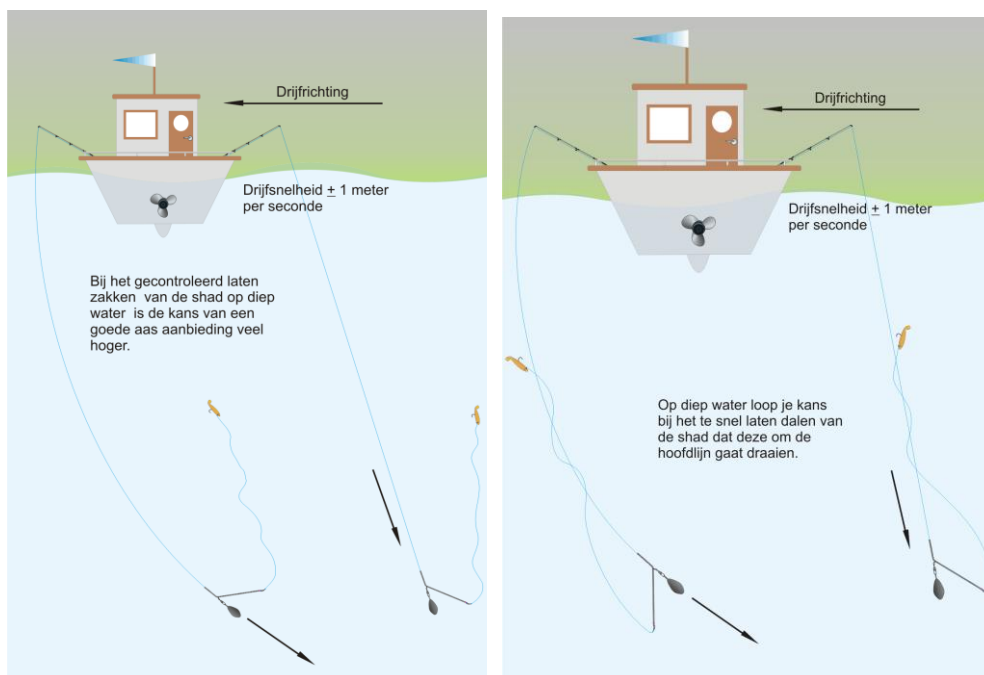
As a result of these two successful days last October and spring I can present you a few results I can use myself as you can to improve your results.

- last spring we caught more coalfish on light pirks this time on shads
- some shads were directly attached on the mainline
- most were caught by using hookkeepers with weights between 120gr – 220gr, a 2 m traceline and a shad with built-in weight of 43 gr.
- Last autumn orange was favourite on this wreck but I had prepared traces with blue, red and silver shads as well ready to use.



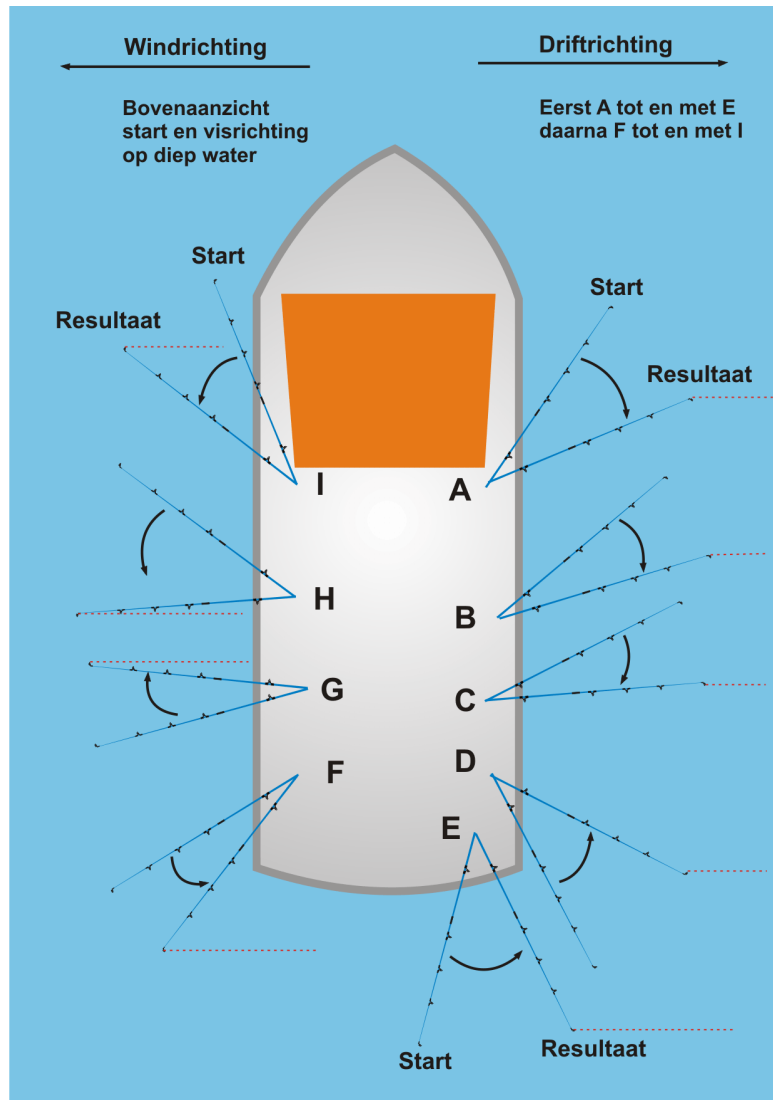
## Used materials

- supple, light but strong rod 2.40m and 20 – 30lbs (Ugly stick Black Tiger)
- strong small and fast reel with perfect adjustable slip like (Shimano Torium)
- strong but thin braid Whiplash Pro 10/100 and 30 lbs
- shockleader 3 x rodlength and nylon traceline 40 lbs
- stiff artificial hookkeeper with adjustable weight



## Fishingtips

- Drop your shad first in the water and prevent to twist your hookline around your mainline (see illustrations above and down)
- Count the number of turns of your reel to locate the right fishingzone
- Never pull at increasing resistance to set the hook but continue retrieving
- Clean your line from tentacles while you are dropping your line
- Check what kind of lure, seize or colour is successful by others when you are not catching fish with your way of fishing



There is no guarantee but if you watch this figure on the drift with A – E starting to drop their lure first and than F – I it will prevent linetwists as far as possible.

**Mike Kollaard**