

**CATFISHING: THE SANTEE - COOPER RIG**  
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**NEW MEXICO DEPARTMENT OF GAME AND FISH**  
PHOTOS BY DENNIS SEGURA



# SANTEE RIG

THE SANTEE RIG IS GREAT FOR STILL WATER FISHING, AND IT'S ALSO ONE OF THE BEST CATFISH RIGS FOR BANK FISHING FOR ANY OF NEW MEXICO'S THREE CATFISH SPECIES. THE TACKLE IS EXACTLY LIKE THE SLIP SINKER RIG, BUT WITH THE ADDITION OF THE PEG FLOAT.

THE PEG FLOAT IS ADDED TO THE LEADER, WHICH GIVES YOUR BAIT ADDED BUOYANCY, LIFTING IT OFF THE BOTTOM AND PUTTING YOUR BAIT IN FRONT OF THE CATFISH WHERE THEY ARE USUALLY HOLDING. THIS RIG ALSO WORKS WELL WHEN CATFISH ARE FEEDING NEAR THE SURFACE. SIMPLY REPLACE THE LONGER LEADER WITH A SHORTER LENGTH FOR SHALLOW DEPTH. THE SANTEE RIG CAN WORK THE ENTIRE WATER COLUMN FROM TOP TO BOTTOM AND IS A FAVORITE AMONG ANGLERS.

TARGET SPECIES – PRIMARILY CHANNEL CATFISH, AS WELL  
AS SMALLER BLUE AND FLATHEAD CATFISH.  
(PHOTOS COURTESY OF NMDGF)



# TACKLE FOR THE SANTEE RIG – TARGET SIZE- SMALLER TO MEDIUM SIZE CHANNEL CATFISH

1. **SLIDING EGG OR BULLET SINKER**- USE SIZES 1, 1/2, 1/4 OR 1/8 OUNCE. THE LARGER SIZE SINKERS ARE USED FOR DEEPER WATER.
2. **PLASTIC BEADS**- BEADS ARE USED TO PROTECT THE LINE TIED TO THE BARREL SWIVEL FROM BEING HIT BY THE SINKER REPEATEDLY, WHICH WEAKENS THE LINE.
3. **BARREL SWIVEL** - SWIVELS ARE USED TO CONNECT THE MAIN LINE TO THE LEADER.
4. **LEADER LINE** - CUT 18 TO 24 INCHES. ALLOW EXTRA LINE FOR KNOT TYING.
5. **HOOKS** - USE CIRCLE HOOKS SIZES 2/0, 4/0 OR 6/0; TREBLE HOOKS SIZES #4 OR # 6; AND REGULAR HOOKS SIZE #4 OR #6.
6. **PEG FLOAT** – USE FLOAT SIZES 2 INCH OR 2 1/2 INCH.
7. **ROD AND REEL** - A 6-FOOT TO 7 1/2-FOOT ROD WORKS WELL WITH A SIZE 30 (300) OR 35 (350) SPINCAST REEL WITH 6 TO 10 LB. TEST MONOFILAMENT LINE. HOWEVER, THIS RIG ALSO WORKS WITH A CLOSED FACE PUSH-BUTTON REEL, WITH 6- TO 10-LB. MONOFILAMENT LINE.

# TACKLE FOR THE SANTEE RIG

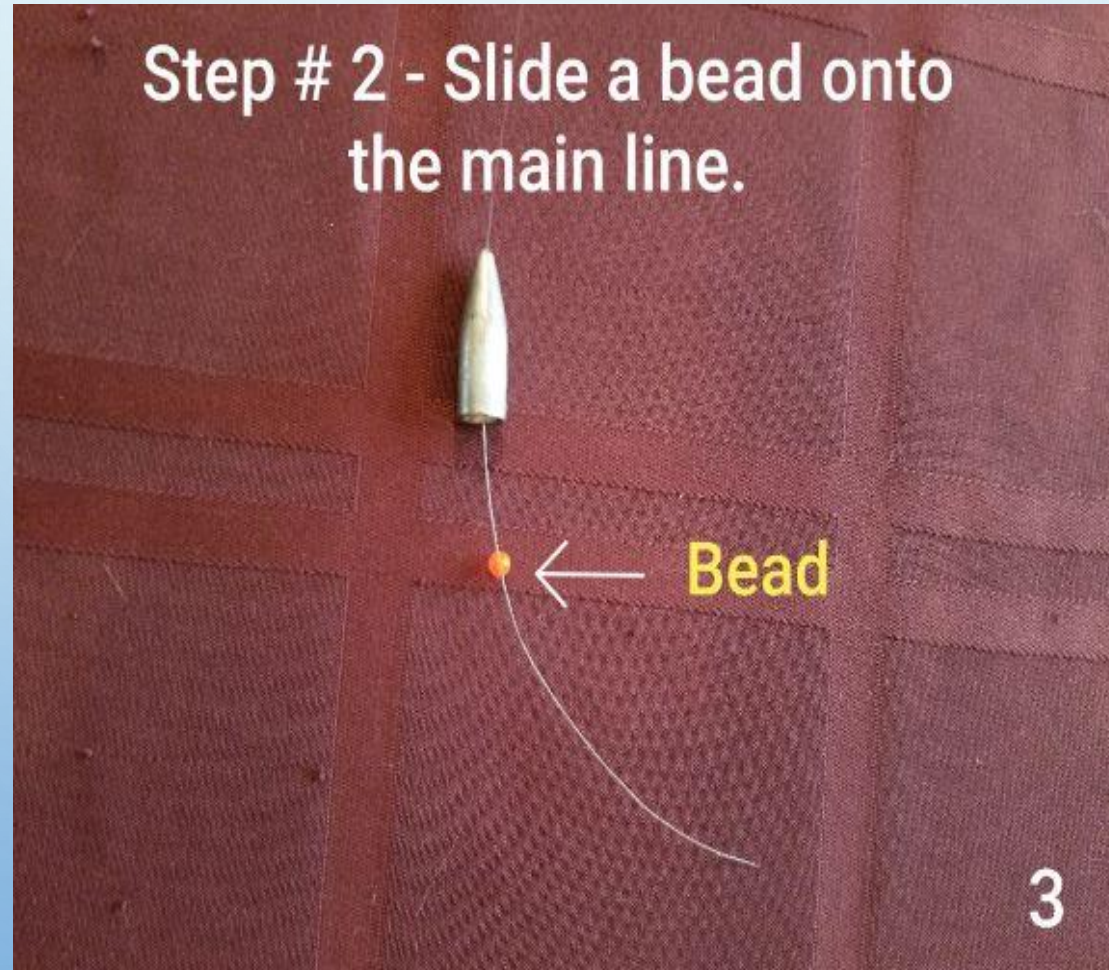
- THE SANTEE RIG REQUIRES LITTLE TACKLE AND IS EASY TO SET UP. THIS RIG ALLOWS FOR QUICK LEADER CHANGES FOR DIFFERENT FISHING DEPTHS, AND ANY NUMBER OF BAITS CAN BE USED WITH THIS RIG.



# STEP # 1, SLIDE AN EGG OR BULLET SINKER ONTO THE MAIN LINE.



**STEP # 2, SLIDE A PLASTIC BEAD ONTO THE MAIN  
LINE.**

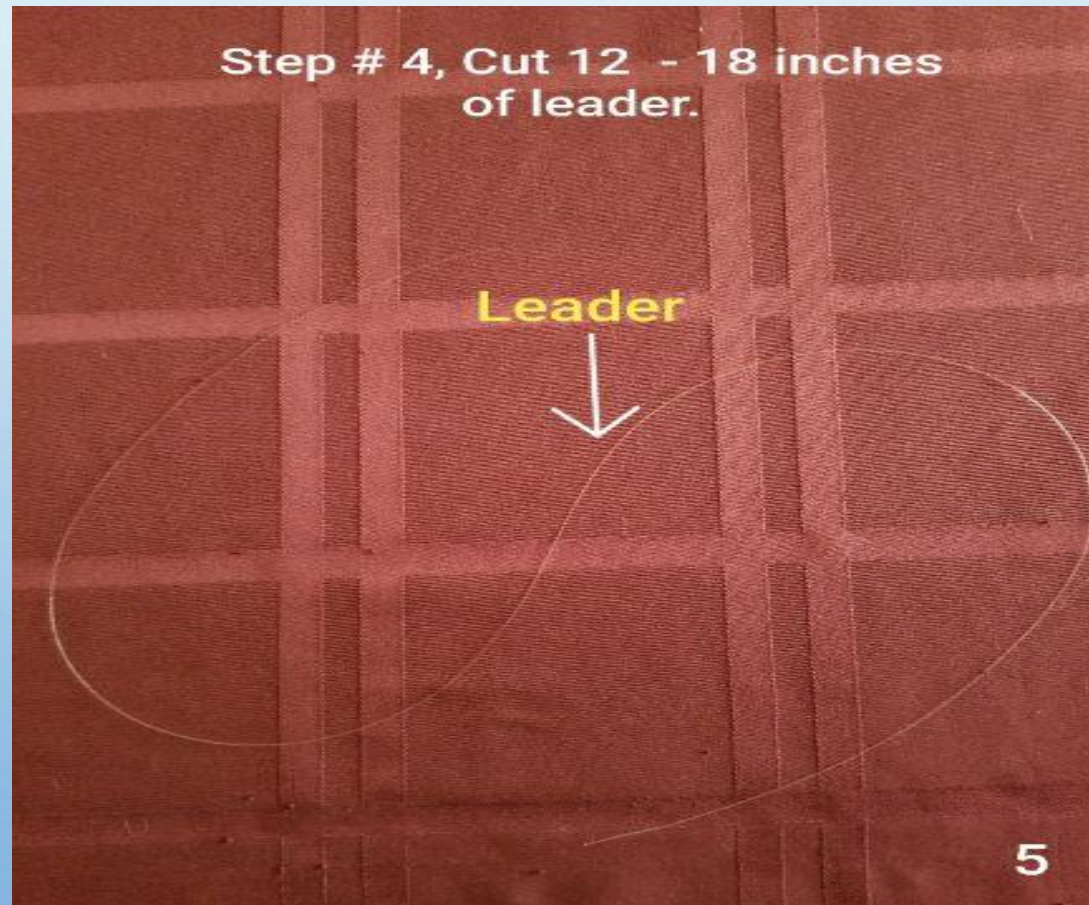


# STEP # 3, TIE THE END OF THE MAIN LINE TO A BARREL SWIVEL.

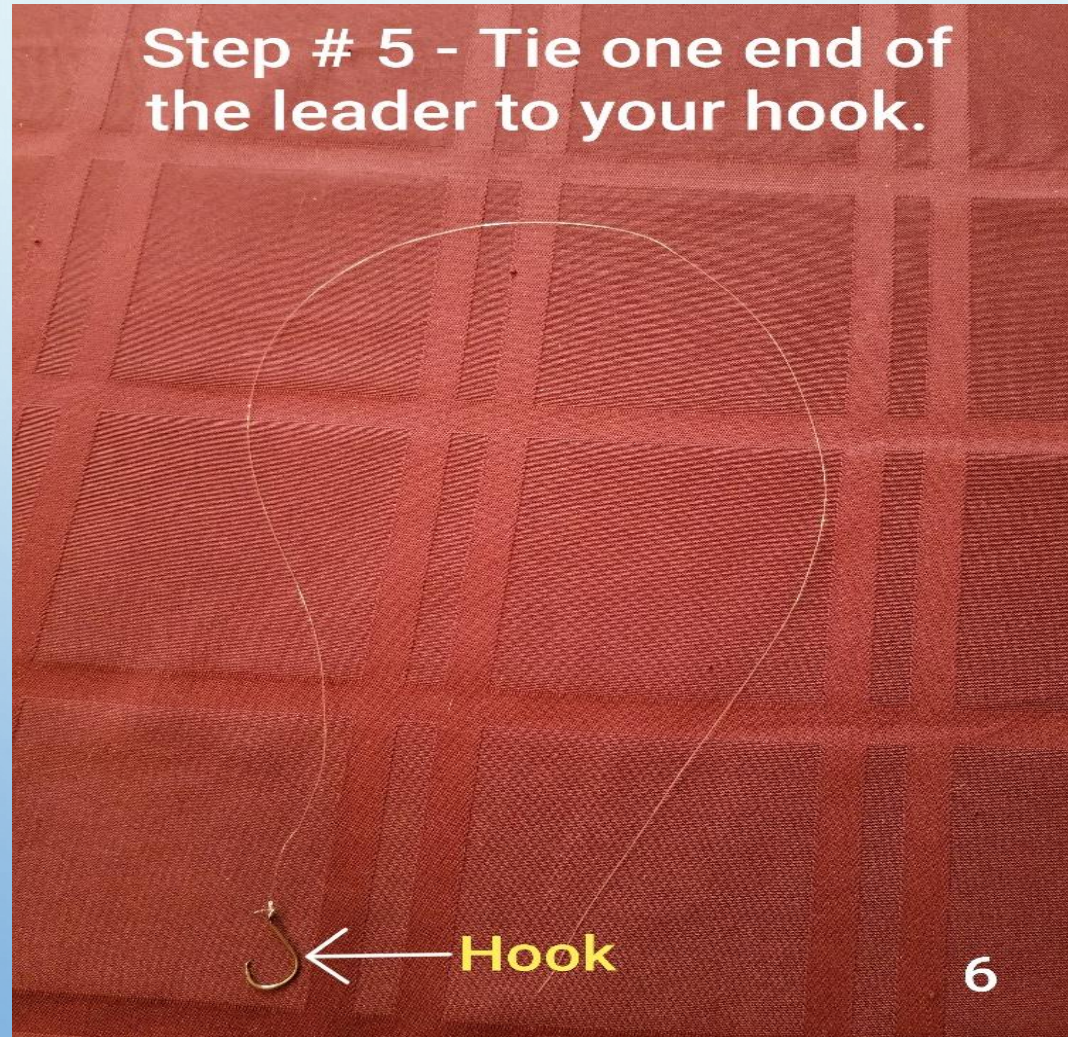




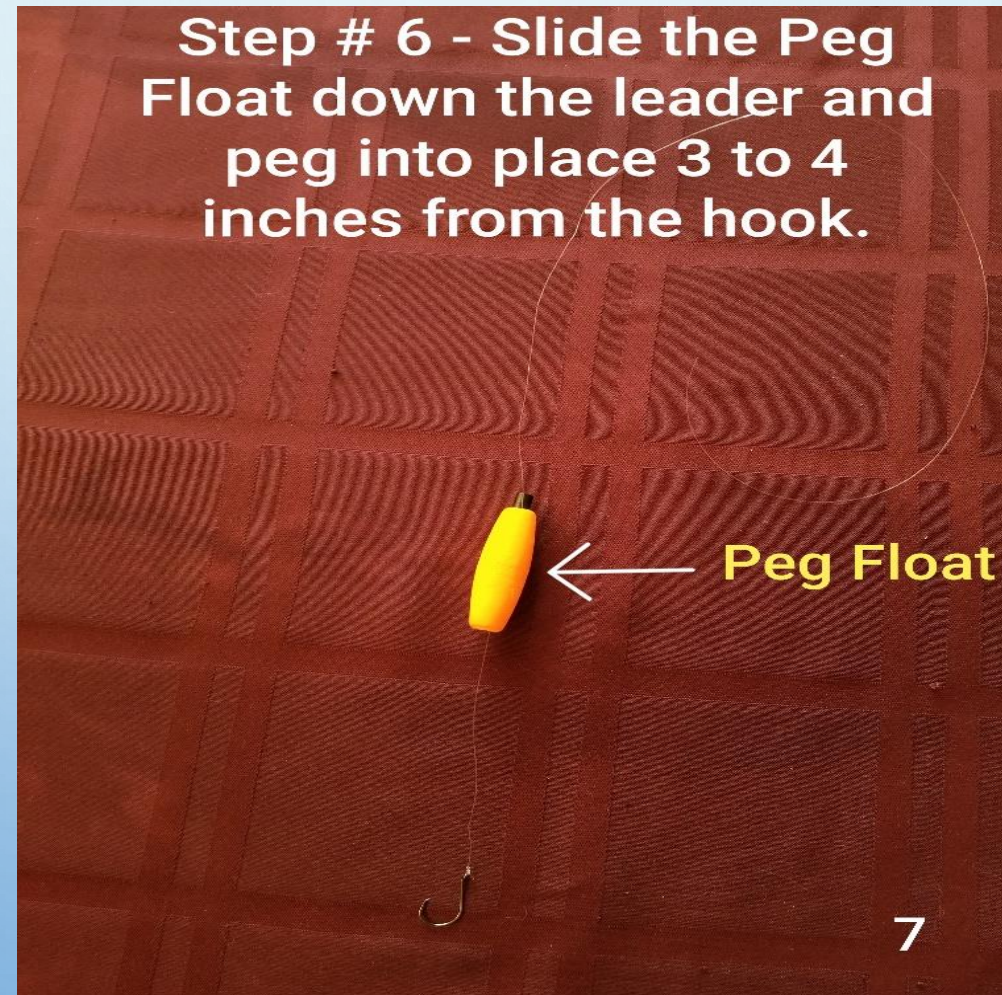
**STEP # 4, USE 12- TO 18-INCHES OF LEADER-CUT ADDITIONAL LENGTH FOR KNOT TYING. YOU CAN USE A SMALLER SIZE OR THE SAME SIZE LEADER AS YOUR MAIN LINE.**



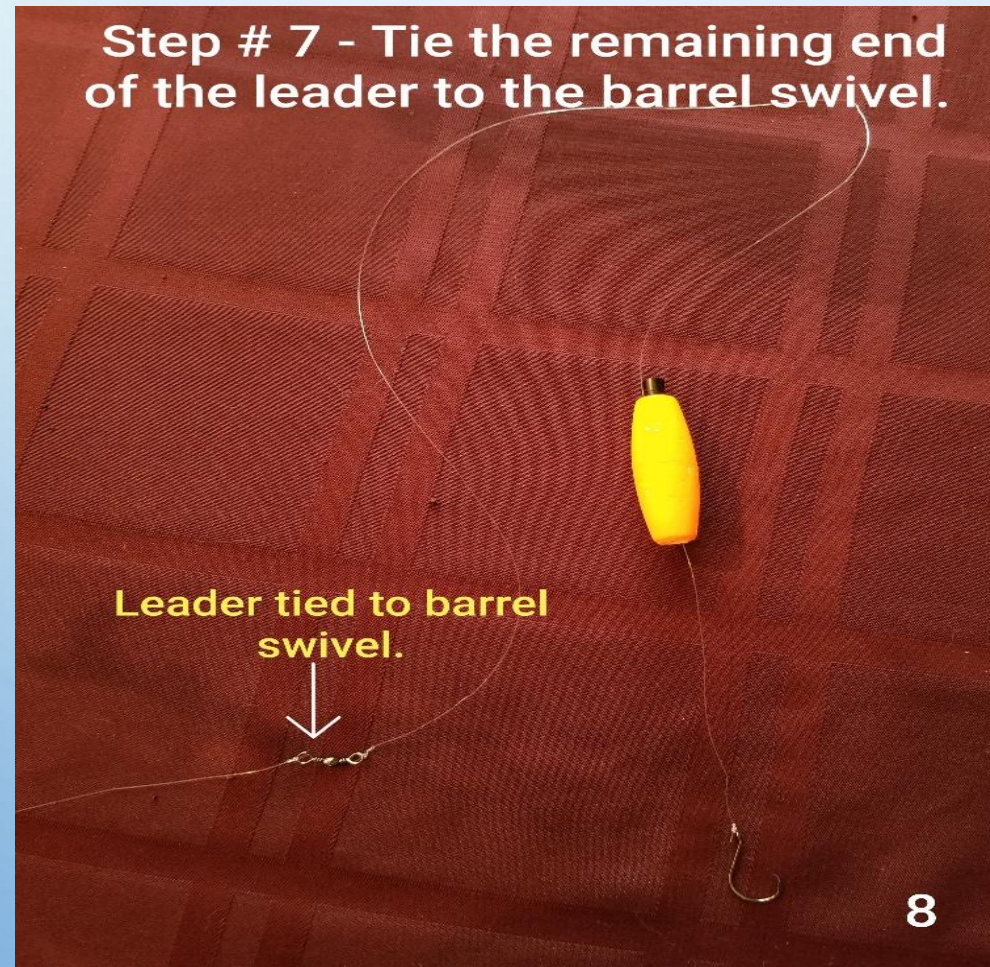
# STEP # 5, TIE ONE END OF THE LEADER TO THE HOOK.



**STEP # 6, SLIDE THE PEG FLOAT DOWN THE LEADER AND PEG INTO PLACE 3- TO 4-INCHES FROM THE HOOK.**



**STEP # 7, TIE THE FREE END OF THE LEADER TO THE BARREL SWIVEL. YOU ARE NOW READY FOR BAIT.**



# COMPLETED SANTEE RIG.



# BAIT YOU CAN USE WITH THE SANTEE RIG

1. NIGHTCRAWLER WORMS – THIS BAIT IS ESPECIALLY EFFECTIVE WITH CHANNEL CATFISH. THE BIGGER THE WORM, THE BETTER. IF YOU HAVE SMALLER WORMS, HOOK AS MANY AS YOU CAN, AS CATFISH DO NOT CARE ABOUT PRESENTATION. WORMS WORK ESPECIALLY WELL WITH THE SANTEE RIG.
2. CHICKEN LIVER – ITS STRONG MEATY SMELL WORKS WELL, ESPECIALLY FOR CHANNEL CATFISH UP TO 10 POUNDS AND SMALLER BLUE CATFISH. ALLOW THE LIVER TO GO BAD FOR MORE EFFECTIVE RESULTS, ADD SMELLY CHEESE AND YOU HAVE A GREAT COMBINATION.
3. CRAWFISH – A GREAT BAIT YOU CAN USE, LIVE OR DEAD. LOOK UNDER ROCKS IN SHALLOW WATER TO FIND CRAWFISH. INSERT THE HOOK A HALF-INCH FROM THE TAIL FOR A MORE NATURAL LOOK.
4. SPAM – A FANTASTIC BAIT FOR ALL THREE SPECIES OF CATFISH, ESPECIALLY THE LARGER FISH. CUT THE CHUNKS JUST BIG ENOUGH TO COVER MOST OF THE HOOK FOR BEST RESULTS.
5. CHICKEN SKIN – THIS BAIT IS GREAT FOR SMALLER TO MEDIUM CATFISH. THE OIL FROM THE SKIN RELEASES A SCENT IN WARMER WATER AND STAYS ON THE HOOK WELL.

# BAIT FOR CATFISHING - CONTINUED

6. HOT DOGS – HOT DOG PIECES ARE A STAPLE OF CATFISHING. USE THE CHEAPEST BRAND YOU CAN FIND; EXPERIENCED ANGLERS SWEAR CATFISH PREFER THE CHEAPER BRANDS.
7. SHRIMP – CATFISH LOVE SHRIMP, ESPECIALLY IF IT HAS GONE BAD. THE STRONG STINKY ODOR ATTRACTS ALL THREE SPECIES OF CATFISH.
8. CANNED DOG FOOD – CANNED DOG FOOD WITH CHUNKS OF MEAT WORKS GREAT. SIMPLY THREAD THE MEAT CHUNKS ON YOUR HOOK. DROP SOME OF THE JUICES FROM THE CAN INTO THE WATER TO ATTRACT CATFISH.
9. FRENCH FRIES – THE GREASE IN FRENCH FRIES ATTRACTS CATFISH AND IS A SURPRISINGLY SUCCESSFUL BAIT. HOOK SEVERAL FRIES AT ONCE FOR BETTER EFFECT.
10. STINK BAIT OR PUNCH BAIT – PREPARED OR HOMEMADE STINK BAITS WORK EXCLUSIVELY WITH CATFISH. STINK BAITS WORK BEST IN WARM MOVING WATER OR WHEN WATER VISIBILITY IS VERY POOR, BUT IT CAN BE USED ANY TIME IN ANY WATER CONDITIONS FOR ALL THREE SPECIES.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT CATFISH LOG ONTO THE  
NMDGF WEBSITE AT [WWW.WILDLIFE.STATE.NM.US](http://WWW.WILDLIFE.STATE.NM.US)

1. CLICK ON THE **FISHING TAB**.
2. CLICK **GAME FISH AND REGULATIONS** IN THE DROP BOX.
3. CLICK ON **WARM WATER SPECIES**.
4. CLICK ON **CATFISH** FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT EACH CATFISH SPECIES, SPAWNING, FISHING FOR CATFISH, BEST CATFISH WATERS AND FISHING POINTERS.
5. YOU WILL ALSO SEE INFORMATION ABOUT OTHER WARM AND COLD WATER GAME SPECIES FOUND IN NEW MEXICO. GOOD LUCK AND GOOD FISHING.

