

A Fast 8' Taper for Coastal Sea Trout

by Jens Dahl Mikkelsen

In Denmark, we have more than 7000 km coast line, where much of it is suited for fishing sea trout (sea run brown trout). Fishing for the sea trout is popular, and over the the last 50 years or so, fly fishing has become increasingly abundant.

The fishing is typically performed wading in the shallow water. Flies are either bait fish or shrimp patterns, typically size 2 -6. Most places, the sea trout will come quite close to the shore, and can be caught in knee deep water – or even shallower. At other times, long casts are desired in an often windy environment.



Typical Sea Trout Habitat, Helnaes, Denmark

When you cast your fly out, you may get the feeling that the ocean is so big, and your fly only fish very little of it, so fly fishers have optimized their gear over time to cast as far as possible. This means shooting heads with thin shooting lines, or short head WF lines. The standard equipment is a 8-10 foot (mostly 9 foot) fast action #6 graphite rod casting 14-16 grams shooting heads. Thus, the classification is not true to the AFTM system, but to modern WF lines with a somewhat heavier weight.

I have used this type of gear successfully as well, but I wanted to see if I could make a bamboo fly rod that would cast equally far as my graphite rod with a short head WF line, but still have the "bamboo feeling".

After some iterations, I have now made a couple of 8' rods that do just this. I would like to share the taper with other rod makers, encouraging you to try make one if you need long casts in windy situations.

I use hexrod.net a lot for finding tapers, as well as analysing these and develop my own tapers. I found two promising tapers – a 7 weight 8 foot Bob Nunley salt water taper, and a Dickerson 8013 8 footer. I made both of these and tried them, and they cast very well. But I couldn't help modifying the tapers to even better fit my desires and the intended lines.

At one point, hexrod had an experimental feature called "Speed Index". It has been removed again now. I don't know why, nor the calculation behind it, but it gave a clue on how fast a taper is. Many English tapers from the past have a speed index below 1, Garrison tapers around 1, and e.g. the Dickerson 8013 has a speed index around 1,6. The taper I finally came up with I call it the "Coastal Seat Tout" has a speed index of 1,74!

I have now made it as a solid 2-piece rod, a hollow 2-piece rod, a solid 3-piece rod, and a solid 3-piece rod with spliced connections. They do cast a little differently, and the fishing buddies who have tried casting them like them, but there is no consensus to which one is the best – casting style and personal preferences vary! Personally, I like the 2-piece solid rod the best.

The hollowing I make is of the "bridge" type – having groves of 13 mm width separated with a small bridge. The butt has 1,7 mm wall thickness, the top 1,5 mm. The butt section is hollowed from a little bit above the handle to around 5 inches from the ferrule, and again in the top from 5 inches from the ferrule until the splits are 1,5 mm themselves. Thus, the hollowing is not so "aggressive" as other makers describe for their rods – I want to be sure the rod can take some "beating" (double hauling) while being fished! The hollowing only reduces weight ca. 6 g, but it does change the action slightly, which may be described as more "crisp" compared to the solid rod. I have kept the same measures for the hollow built version as for the solid version.

The taper is as follows (unvarnished):

JDM Coastal Sea Trout 8' #6

Station (inches)	mm
0	1,88
5	2,38
10	2,77
15	3,18
20	3,56
25	3,93
30	4,26
35	4,62
40	5,03
45	5,44
50	5,80
55	6,18
60	6,60
65	7,11
70	7,59
75	8,10
80	8,64
85	9,16
90	9,16
95	9,16

The 2-piece version has a 15/64 nikkel silver ferrule and the guide placement is (cm from top of rod, assembled): 0 – 11 – 22,7 – 37,8 – 54,6 – 72,5 – 92,7 – 117,8 – 145,3 – 180,5 (stripper).

I use a 15 - 16 g short head WF line having a thin coated shooting line, as I am annoyed with shooting heads connected to very thin mono-shooting lines – the connection clicks in the guides when stripping line and casting, and it is harder to stretch the leader in the cast than with a full WF line.

I believe a rod with this taper may be useful for other species of fish as well, especially under windy conditions. Personally, I have been very successful with it when in Greenland being a fishing guide, and fishing rivers for sea run arctic char. There, it is also commonly windy, however the very long casts are not necessary, but the taper is fine for fighting the fish, which are most often in the 1-4 kg range, similar to the sea trout in Denmark.

If you make a rod with this taper, I would like to hear your thoughts and what you use it for.

You can contact me at jens_dm@yahoo.dk.



*Coastal Sea Trout rods.
From right:
2-piece solid,
2-piece hollow,
3-piece solid w. ferrules,
3-piece solid w. splices*