

ODUM Magazine™

Summer Fishing
May 2013

*Stripers
On The
Hudson*

**Costa
Rica
My
Return**

**A 350
Pound
Marlin**

**Northern
Adventure
Cajun-Style**

Tweaking Big Lake Tactics



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A person wearing a white long-sleeved shirt and a blue tie is visible on the left side of the frame, standing on a boat. The background shows a body of water and a forested shoreline under a clear sky.

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Occasionally, I like to go back through my editor's notes of the past few years to get a better perspective on how things have changed over the years or not. Here is an excerpt from my editor's note that I wrote back in 2010.

"This is what 'I was thinking about when I was not thinking about anything else' to quote a Fox business news analyst Cody Willard. A few of my colleagues and myself are beginning to see some signs of recovery in our industry. I personally believe we are tracking forward but have years ahead of us to get back in the glory days. Just ask any professional fishermen how hard it is for him to secure a sponsor and not just a cash-paying sponsor. Even a product only sponsor has to pay money to manufacture and ship the product. Have you noticed the size of various publications? Everything seems to be downsizing and it all revolves around revenue dollars and cash flow. You cannot make a house payment, vehicle payment or even pay your gas bill on product trade out. The best thing you can do is hope that whatever you are trading for will lead to cost avoidance which in turn will keep money in your pocket."

My question to you did you feel that anything has really changed since 2010? Is any of this still true? Have you seen any new print magazines? Is the web, Facebook, Twitter, Smart Phones, etc. starting to rule the world? Has the price of gasoline gone down?

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To me, the one great thing that has happened in the past few years is the fact that our loyal viewers (unique) continue to set monthly records. Last month, we had almost 26,000 unique visitors (25,760 to be exact) over 80,000 visits and in excess of 300,000 page views.

Thank you, for contributing to our success. Just remember the best is yet to come!!

Do me a favor and introduce someone new to the outdoors and help preserve our heritage before it's gone!

You can also follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

And please,
Enjoy the outdoors,

Larry Thornhill
Editor Chief
813-230-2346
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An advertisement for Bill Lewis Lures. The background is a large, detailed image of a fish (likely a bass) with its mouth open, showing a lure inside. The ad is divided into sections: "WHAT'S HOT NOW" on the left, "CUSTOMER REQUESTS" on the right, and a central text block. At the bottom is the "Rat-L-Trap" logo and website.

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- 558 Delta Craw
- 581 Lavender Shad

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Crocodile Bay Lodge - Costa Rica

My Return, Part 1

By Larry Thornhill

I have told numerous individuals that visiting Costa Rica is almost like eating a (Lay's Potato Chip™); you just can't visit it once. Costa Rica can become addictive, very addictive. I initially visited "Crocodile Bay" years ago before anything existed, other than the name and a few Quonset huts back in the 90's, and immediately fell in love with the area, the people and the fishing. An acquaintance of mine Todd Staley told my partner and I at the time about the new lodge he was working with called "Crocodile Bay" on the Osa Peninsula in Costa Rica. Todd's official title is "Fishing Director", but as you can imagine he has worn numerous hats over the years and still does. My first trip to the area and the lodge was when it was nothing more than a few Quonset huts in the middle of the jungle. We flew into San Jose and was met by Todd and directed to another single-engine plane that was



waiting for us and off we went. Now keep in mind that this was before the days of Internet explosion, and I had no clue what I was about to experience. Back then you could not go on the Internet, like you can now, and look at pictures or even a video of the lodge and country as you can now. <http://www.crocodilebay.com/resort> For this story I plan to utilize a lot of photos since a picture is worth a thousand words.



We departed Tampa International Airport for San Jose, Costa Rica with a short layover in Miami and then a direct flight on to San Jose where we were met by an English-speaking representative from Crocodile Bay that took us directly to our hotel. We stayed at the Double Tree Hotel by Hilton on the outskirts of San Jose. As you can see from the photos, the hotel



was gorgeous and the climate is to die for. If you look closely there are no doors at the entrance to the hotel. The room, dining and pool area were immaculate.

Our guide picked us up the next morning and took us to the airport were

we boarded the plane for Crocodile Bay.

Leaving San Jose in the single engine plane and flying over the mountains was just like a scene out of Jurassic Park. The airport is located just across the road from the lodge. The single engine plane with 2 pilots and room for 8 people landed across from the lodge and beside a cemetery. As you can see from the photos, the grounds and lodge are meticulously maintained, and if you take a close look at the one photo with the Quonset hut that I stayed in while the lodge was being constructed. I mean being cut out of the jungle and nothing but crocodiles, poisons' frogs and birds. What a change, the transformation is amazing.

"Part 2" of the adventure will cover our fishing adventure and what it feels like to be setting around the pool when a Point 7 Earthquake hit.



Tarpon Tides: Moving Water Stimulates the Silver King

By David A. Brown

It may have seemed like an impatient move, but Capt. Mac Gregory had a plan. He and a crew of four were working a school of tarpon just off the bar west of Anna Maria's Bean Point. Three bites in 15 minutes had put one fish in the air and gave former pro bull rider Luke Young a good arm-stretching that lasted well more than 7 seconds.

When Young's fish broke off, Gregory ordered his crew to pack it so we could make a run. At first, it seemed odd to leave a pile of biting fish, but when the captain explained his game plan, it all made perfect sense.



“When the tide starts falling out of the bay, the fish are going to position on the east side of Egmont Key and I want to be the first one there,” he said.

We had a little time to kill, so Gregory peeked inside the inlet to see if any poons were showing and then headed to Egmont. Like clockwork, the fish arrived right when the tide started gaining steam. As we drifted and watched, silver flash after silver flash lit up the surface, as the scene percolated with potential – thanks to the moving water.

And that's really the bottom line – moving water. Tidal flow triggers most marine fish to eat and tarpon are no exception. Anglers who pay attention to where moving water pushes the forage will have no trouble putting themselves in position to intercept hungry tarpon.

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During slack water, the fish will often hunker down near a channel edge, rock pile or sand bar. But once the tide starts rolling, expect the fish to perk up and often relocate. Don't get impatient if you find a school that plays hard-to-get during slow current. Give the water time to stimulate some stomachs and then it's game-on.

MOON MEANING

Unquestionably, the most vivid example of how water movement influences tarpon occurs during the strong tides of new and full moons. With heightened lunar pull accelerating the outgoing cycles a few days before and after a bright or dark moon, thousands of crabs are swept from their backwater haunts and washed through the passes. At major Gulf portals like Boca Grande Pass and the mouth of Tampa Bay, the "crab flushes" find tarpon stacked like cordwood in eager anticipation of gobbling all the crustaceans they can catch.

Gregory reported one of his best days ever on last month's full moon. During a 2-hour period on the afternoon outgoing tide, he and his group had 50 bites, jumped 35 fish and brought seven to the boat.

"It was insane," Gregory said. "The tide was flowing and those tarpon were chewing."

Such days are few and far between, but anglers who reference the lunar charts and fish on or around those new and full moons can expect plenty of shots at tarpon.

BAIT 'EM UP

During any period of moving water, tarpon will put the chomp on a variety of baits such as pinfish, threadfin herring and whitebait. Crabs top the list during periods of peak flow and savvy anglers can leverage the moon tide crab flushes to save some bucks at the bait shop.



With a steady stream of crabs drifting through the inlet, it's easy to gather a day's worth of bait by scooping what passes your boat with long-handle dip nets. You can do this while the boat's fishing by stationing one angler on the bow and one at the stern as a backup. When the bow scooper gets a crab, he dumps it into a bucket of water that's transported to the well when a half dozen or so meet the mesh. If the guy up front misses a crab, he'll advise his backup as to which side it'll pass.

Before tossing each crab into the live well, remove the moving sides of



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its pincers. This renders the crab unable to clamp your fingers when you grab a new bait and keeps the fishing process moving smoothly. The less time spent fiddling around with belligerent baits, the more time you can spend targeting tarpon fired up by the tides.

For tarpon trips, contact Capt. Mac Gregory at (941) 809-5783.

TWEAKING BIG LAKE TACTICS FOR TEENSIER WATER 'EYES

With a little modification, the same techniques work wonders no matter where walleyes roam!

By Mitch Eeagan

Well, you know what? By and large, they do. However, some big water tactics need a little tweaking to produce on your average sized natural lake.

Take the trolling ploys used to catch walleyes on the Great Lakes and huge reservoirs of the West; they'll also work wonders on small inland lakes. The size and depth of the watercourse, however, may restrict you from setting up as many lines before beaching on the opposite shore, or using the exact same lures and line, not snagging in the shallows with every trolling pass.

Nevertheless, it can be done. And





oftentimes the tactics normally used on big water will out produce the tried and true ones generally associated with smaller lakes.

Down and out

My own experiences with fine-tuning big water tactics for tiny water 'eyes come from the small inland lakes of Michigan's Upper Peninsula. For years, the small water techniques of jigging, rigging and casting crankbaits were the tradition on the tannic-stained waterways surrounding base camp. And we caught fish... well, most of the time. However, I'll admit there were times the fish were smaller and fewer than we'd like. And some years, honestly, they were nearly nonexistent.

However, since being exposed to the modified big-water trolling tactics from two Lund walleye pros, I've modified the way I fish small waters. And once I

started landing more and bigger fish than the others at camp; it didn't take long for everyone to follow suit.

Lead lowdown

The first ploy I practiced just a few years back was trolling leadcore, which I learned from

walleye wizard Mark Martin.

"Pulling leadcore in small lakes is probably the most overlooked method of them all," says the Twin Lakes, Michigan, pro. "Perhaps it's because the system is so easy to use, and anglers want to make things more difficult than they need to be."



Literally pulling plugs right behind his Lund Pro-V, Martin let's out only 3 to four colors of 'core (each color representing 10-feet of the line) depending on how deep the water is and where he's marking fish. To the tip of the lead-filled line, he ties on a 6-foot leader of 10-pound-test monofilament.

"In smaller lakes I may only have time to let out two lines before running out of room, so I'll have my partner deploying and fishing out one side of the boat while I do the same on the other. And we'll just hang onto the rods rather than put them in a holder, so we can immediately adjust the amount of line out if our lures hit bottom, or quickly reel in before starting another pass," he adds.

Martin's two best baits for trolling behind leadcore are #5 Rapala Shad Raps (see above) and spinners (aka: crawler harnesses) with plump night crawlers fresh from his Plano 745 Worm and Leech Box. When cranks are being pulled, Martin creeps along at .08 to 1.4 MPH, while he averages 1.2 to 2 MPH when trolling crankbaits. And he trolls one or the other on all rods, not a combination of both, because of the differences' speed requirements.

The first time I tried this was after several hours of jigging the usual shallow-water haunts without success.



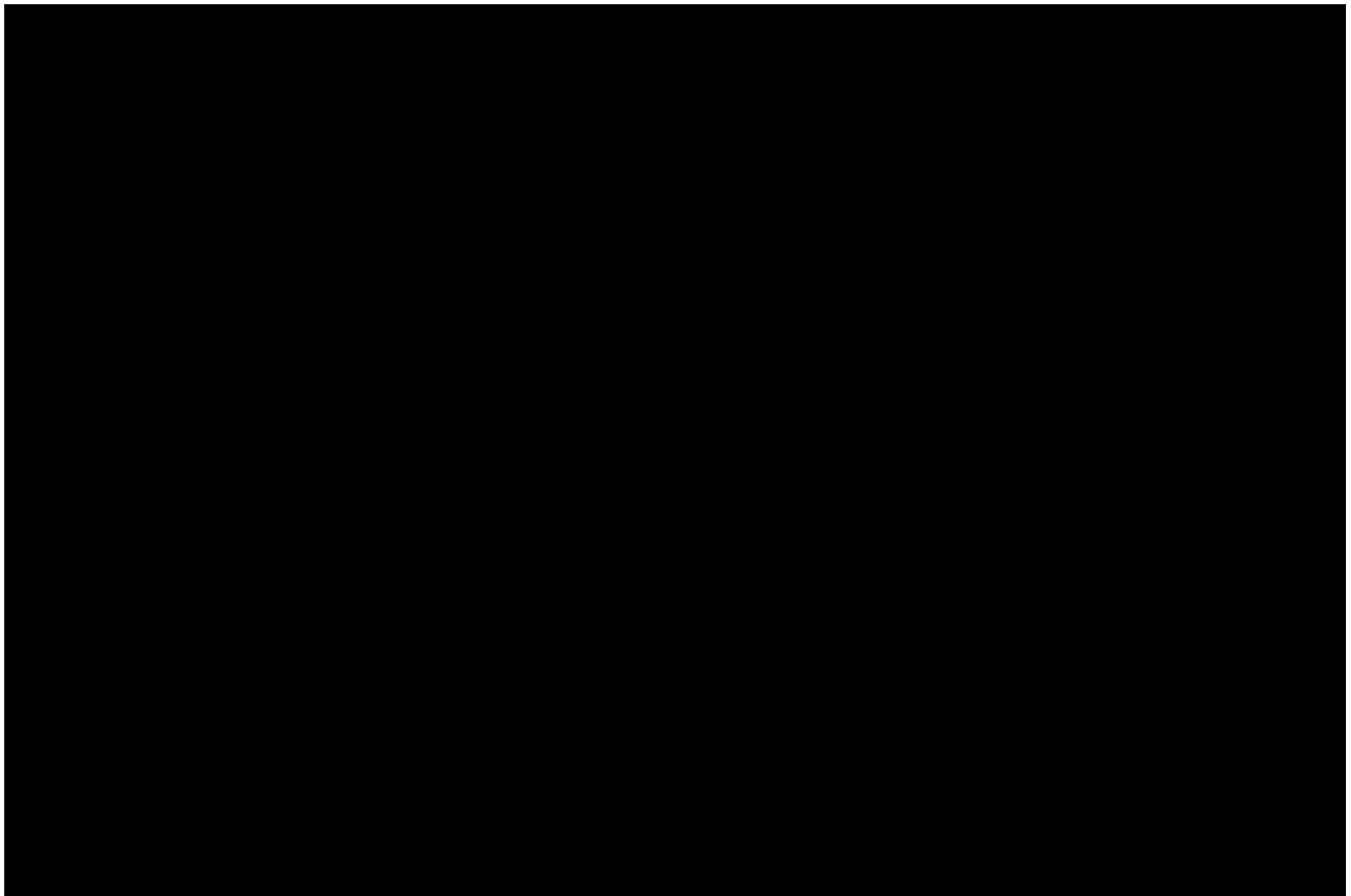
One pass while scanning with my Humminbird sonar, and I spied fish hovering about 10-feet off the bottom in 35-feet of water. With three colors of leadcore out on an 8-foot St. Croix Eyecon trolling rod and Daiwa line-counter reel with a crankbait in tow, it took only four passes through the short, few



hundred-yard areas to scoop a two-man limit of walleyes. It was a small water leadcore lesson learned.

There are still those days; however, when walleyes seem to disappear from sonar's sight over main-lake basins. When this is the case, more than likely, the fish are ultra shallow and tucked tight to cover.

“When walleyes are into skinny water they’re usually hanging close to weeds, wood and rocks. And when the bite is off, it’s best to cover as much water as possible and get your offering in front of as many fish as possible,” says guru-of-getting-walleyes-to-strike, Mark Brumbaugh. “But trolling in shallow weed-infested waters can be frustrating... unless you break out the



heavy line, that is.”

When pulling small Reef Runner crankbaits or spinners in shallow water, Brumbaugh ups his trolling reel’s main line to 20-pound-test monofilament and often ties the snap directly to the thicker-than-normal line.

“The water resistances due to the line’s broad diameter will keep the lure up and off the bottom, free from snags. And when tucked deep onto cover, walleyes will dart up and out for a quick strike, even when the lure is several feet over head,” he adds.

Only if the lure’s action is diminished because of the heavier, stiffer line will Brumbaugh add two feet of lighter 10-pound-test leader material, which he attaches via a small ball-bearing swivel. The swivel, too, acts as a “snare” if weeds are floating on the surface and catching and wrapping the line. If he’s fishing straight off the 20-pound test, Brumbaugh will pinch on a tiny split-shot about two feet above the lure to keep weeds off it.

Maximizing his bite, Brumbaugh employs Off Shore in-line planer boards to get as many lines extended from the path of his Lund and out to fish that haven’t been spooked.



It was literally just last year that I took Brumbaugh’s advice and spooled 20-pound to the reels on my St. Croix Eyecon rods and tickled the weed tops with crankbaits and spinners. The result was another upset bunch back at camp that didn’t know about this heavy-line trick.

Sorry guys. Well sort of...

High and low

Looking forward to landing more walleyes from small inland lakes when tried and true tactics don’t seem to be working? Look no further than plying the depths with leadcore and crankbaits or spinners if you’re marking fish deep, or going heavier than normal in pound test to keep your lures up and out of the shallow weeds.

Mitch Eeagan is an outdoor writer who lives in the heart of the mosquito-infested cedar swamps of Michigan’s Upper Peninsula. He lives to fish and hunt, literally, by eating only what he’s able to harvest from the land and water.

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A quick snap shot of a few of our 2013 classes



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Pompano are available and you do not have to have a boat.

By Captain Van Hubbard

Golden nuggets are a nickname because these fish can be so colorful; bright yellow to golden breasts and shinny silver sides. Florida's passes and inlets are perfect

ambush spots for anglers to intercept migrations. You can distinguish which way the pompano are coming or going, from their colors. Brighter silver shiny fish are coming inside from Gulf or ocean to feed, darker sides with vivid yellows are from inside. We'll share many secrets to help you enjoy fresh gourmet dinners and fun fishing.



to the fork six pompano and two permit fish with one pompano over 20 inches to fork. Check out regulations, for some reason, they choose to make them more confusing!

Next we need to select some gear to fish with. I recommend spinning gear

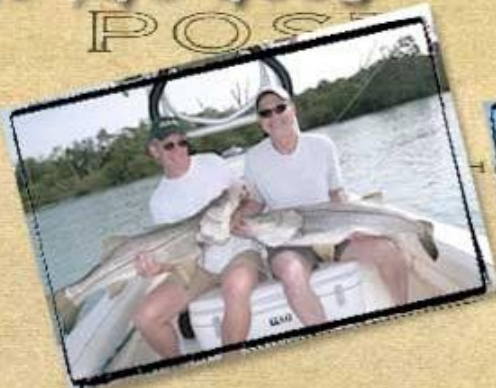


First, we need to learn to distinguish nuggets from jacks. The easiest way is the razor tails of jacks, also a bigger mouth and teeth! The pompano is also confused with the permit so the minimum sizes are the same, 11 inches



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POST CARD



Venice FL Fishing Charters

Fishing charters in Venice FL and Englewood FL with Captain Van Hubbard

I'm using the Quantum Smoke 30s, rigged with Cortland 15-pound Master Braid topped off with a 25-pound fluorocarbon leader. Try a fast taper rod about 6-7 feet long; Graphite is lighter; you'll be doing a lot of casting so keep it fun. I'm using more metal "Doc's Goofy Jigs"; there are a bunch of new copies available. The tradition jigs can be better but it's frequently harder to find good ones at bait shops. Sizes and colors depend upon depth and current speed. I carry a bunch from 1/8 to 1/2 oz. the colors are half white and the other half pink, yellow, or chartreuse. Some days' color is critical, other days fish didn't seem to care? It helps to add one of my custom pompano fly designs; everyone is copying them now too, so you should be able to find them at any coastal bait shop. The concept is simply to add a flashy teaser to entice the bite. You can rig jigs/teasers together on split ring or separated on a leader about a foot apart. I've done well every way imaginable, experiment. One other helper is to sweeten your offering with a small piece of fresh shrimp. I prefer the live ones chunked up because they stay on the hook longer.

Now the fun part; where and when do we fish? Pompano are frequently migrating up our Florida coasts in Spring time and down in Fall. I have caught some almost every month from my Venice to Boca Grande home port area. So select a local pass or inlet and start doing your homework. Yes, there is an easier way to learn than reinventing the wheel. Start visiting without your gear; learn to look and listen. Observe the successful anglers and without disturbing them offer a gesture of friendship for their assistance. You can cut the learning curve down dramatically if you go about this properly. Most of us are glad to help others; BUT we get taken advantage of usually so we keep to ourselves. If you share the experience, it works for both of us, if you use us and take advantage you get cut off from additional info! As you begin to learn and become



successful share back to your teachers. You will discover some current flows are definitely better than others, but the best time to fish is whenever you can! Even if fish aren't cooperative you can still learn something. Current eddies are perfect ambush spots for a hungry predator. Dinner gets delivered by the flow, you maintain position with least effort, and eat.

Additional treasures to take along from this. Cast at an angle, into the current flow and let your presentation hit the bottom and bounce along naturally with the flow until it stops; reel tight and hold on. Do not just let the flow lift your presentation up away from the bottom. Pompano are strong battlers; your drag needs to allow em to run, or they will break off. Note where you hooked your fish and hit that zone hard while it lasts; these fish don't sit still. Try to guess which way they are going and anticipate their movements. You may be able to walk along the jetty or shoreline with the school? Sometimes a boat is an advantage, but as you can see shore bound anglers have other teaches close if they build strong bridges!

According to the Fishing Tackle Retailer's April issue article by Rob Southwick fishing lures sales was up 30% last year and pompano fishing is up over 60%. Many of us have discovered just how much fun the challenge of pompano fishing is! They are delicious too. My favorite recipe is simply to broil filets skin-side down, seasoned with Old Bay and Everglades Seasoning on aluminum foil, directly under a red hot broiler until half done. Then remove and cover liberally with Dukes Mayo, observe constantly until it begins to bubble and turns golden brown. Shut off heat and leave in the oven a few minutes to allow the juices to marry into the meat. It works great with mackerel also.

Invest your energy and effort to learn about these wonderful fish; the rewards are abundant. Make time to share our bountiful waters with family and friends frequently! Let's go fishin', Captain Van Hubbard www.captvan.com. -- PH 941-740-4665



Stripers On The Hudson

By D & B Ice Adventures

Looking at pictures and articles from this past year has made us realize how much of our time on the water is dedicated to panfish. Maybe this is because it's what we know and have been locally available for us but when an opportunity to get out of our comfort level presents itself, it is hard to resist.

Two years in a row now, I have had the pleasure of fishing on the Hudson River aboard the Lazy D And Me captained by Dan Lussier. The target species for this destination is the mighty striped bass. Both years,

along with Captain Dan and I on the boat has been the owner of Fish Hounds Outdoors, James Vladyka and his father Larry.

Striper season on the Hudson River has the potential to produce trophy fish. According to the New York Department of Environmental Conservation, the Hudson is the main spawning ground for these bass. Stripers are an anadromous fish meaning that they are born in freshwater, spend the majority of their lives in salt water, and then return to freshwater to

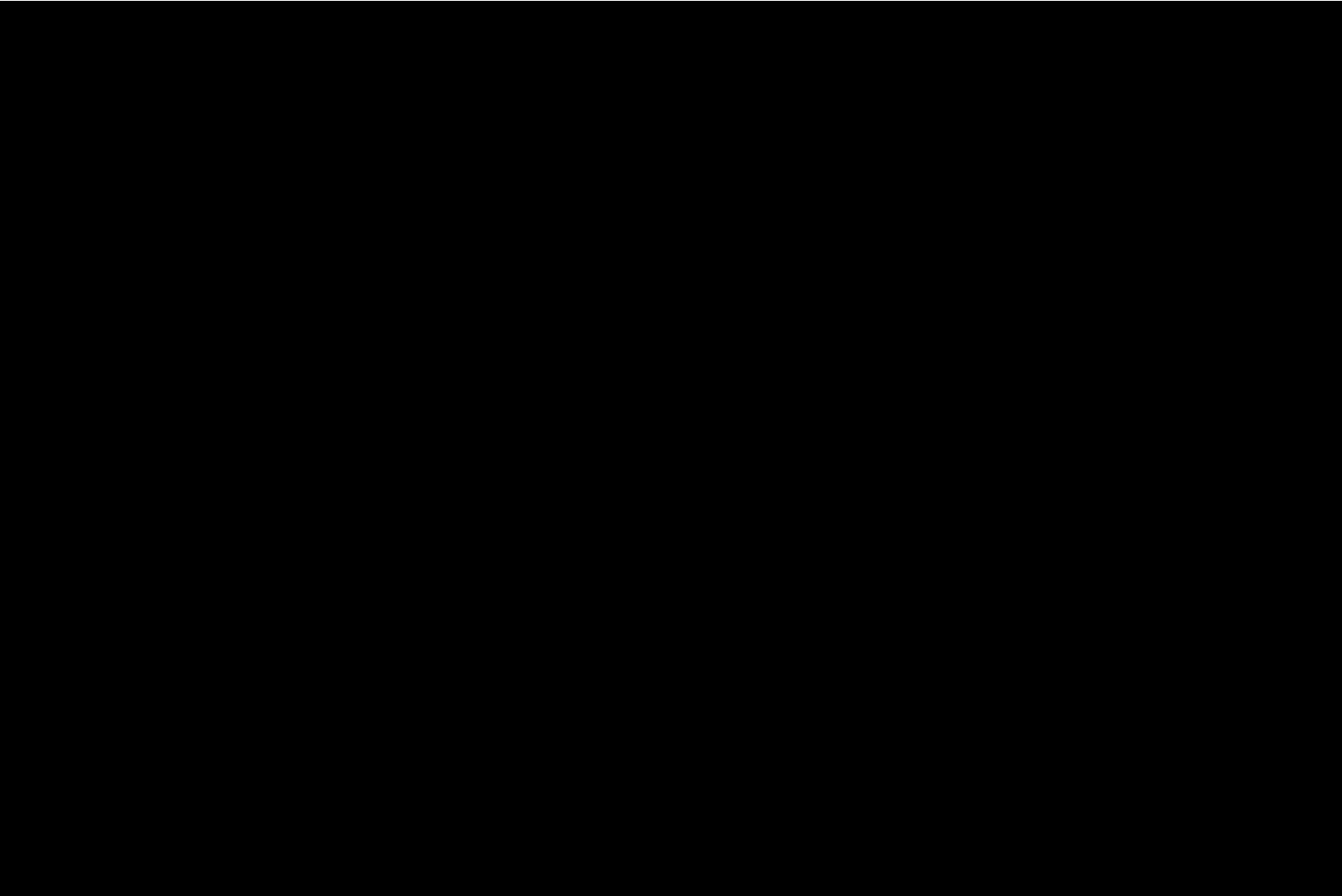


spawn. Timeliness of this transition to freshwater depends upon the weather throughout the spring as well as current weather conditions, water temperature, and growing vegetation. When all these factors align, May tends to be prime time with mid month being the best.

Watching the reports roll in throughout the two weeks prior had us pumped up! It was hard to sleep through the nights leading up to the trip with reports of 20, 30, and even 40 pounders being pulled! The season is short and is dependent, mainly on the water temperature. As the water warms, the water

chestnuts begin to grow. They exhibit extreme growth and can reach lengths of up to 16 feet. When the chestnuts (pictured) really take hold, the fish are on their way out as the water temperature is past its prime. Of course not all fish move down river at the same time but the few that are still wrapping up their business are hard to target. Trolling through these dense weeds leaves anglers constantly checking their baits.

Although catching these fish doesn't take a super-secret technique, before last year, I had never experienced fishing like this. For a basic set up all you need are downriggers and large





stickbaits which make this fishing possible by many, even those with smaller boats. Sure there are some big water boats out there trolling, but we see many "bass boats" and smaller 14' aluminums.

As we troll along, we see the majority of the other fishermen using the same method. Although productive, it is not the only option. Some of the other techniques are to use dipsy divers, chunked bait, and long-lining. Taken with a grain of salt, keeping tabs on the radio allows anglers to adjust baits, speeds, and depths depending on the fast-moving and finicky pods of fish.

Obviously, success comes to those who can piece together the correct sequence of moves. Just like every other species, these striped bass wants the bait presented precisely and on most occasions, different every day depending upon the water, weather, and their unpredictable movements. Through the years, Captain Dan has put together quite a collection of lures to target these fish. On our outings, we have mainly pulled the 7 " Rapala F18. Color depends upon the day, but it seems as though we always have a " hot steel " and " bleeding hot olive " behind the boat.

To put things into perspective, last year the trip that we made had pretty much of the same conditions but a little more wind. As we cruised around trying to locate fish with our staggered baits, the number of thumps that we were getting on our downrigger balls was unreal. The balls were brightly colored so we matched our baits. In general, we were running out lures 25-45 feet behind the down rigger ball. With no increase in the number of bites, even when large pods of

fish were present, we shortened up the distance. Running the baits within a few feet from the down rigger ball increased the number of fish that we hooked up with.

As we work up and down the river, speed is a big factor. Because we are on a river/tidal system, the surface speed is most likely different than whatever depth, we are running our baits at. Because of this, the use of a Sub-Troll 900 or similar unit is huge. This allows us to troll the baits at the perfect speed rather than at the speed of boat. The speed the fish seem to prefer hovers right around three mph at the ball.

A big upgrade for the Lazy D and Me this year was a kicker motor with remote steering. Not only does it save on some fuel from using the big motor, but it allows Dan to drive the boat without having to sit at the helm. Not to mention, he can really fine-tune his speed. At times, a tenth of a mile of a mile an hour can make all the difference. Another addition to Dan's arsenal is the new Lowrance HDS Gen 2 Touch Screen fish finder with structure scan and side imaging. This unit combined with a Navionics chip helps with locating these fast-moving fish. It is possible to not only locate these fish using the side scan, but you can get a relative idea of their size after looking at and comparing multiple pods.

Although there are constant conversations going on the radios, Captain Dan works with several other fishermen who are out there every day to zero in on fish. Having connections allows him and a few select others to consistently put their clients on more and larger fish. With over 15 years of experience on the Hudson River, it's hard to trust your time on the water with anyone else!

If you would like to experience exceptional striper fishing on the Hudson River, go to www.lazydandme.com or you can give Captain Dan Lussier a call at 1-802-558-7633.





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Net Your Fish

By Bob Jensen

There are many factors that will determine if you get a fish to bite and then get it in the boat or on shore. First, you've got to find them, then you've got to put a bait in front of them, then you've got to get them to bite. Once a fish eats your bait, that's when the fun begins. You've got to have a good knot and strong line, and you've got to have your drag set properly so it will give a little but not too much when the fish wants to run. Then, once you've got it tired out, it's time to land the fish. You can swing it into the boat or onto the shore, you can grab it with your hand, or you can net it. Many, many fish are lost when the angler tries to land it. If you want to increase your odds of landing that fish on the end of your line, you need to net it. Here's why.



Swinging a fish into the boat or onto the bank usually isn't a good option, although lots of people do it. Sometimes when we're fighting the fish, we under-estimate it's size. When you try to swing a too-big fish into the boat, lines and rods break.

Even if the fish is of swinging size, frequently the hook pops out. Sometimes the fish lands in the boat, but it's flopping around on the floor. That's not good for the fish.

Sometimes the fish lands on the deck of the boat or on the shoreline and flops back into the water. If you were going to release the fish, that's no big deal, but if you were going to invite him to supper, you're out of luck. Swinging a fish into the boat is not the best idea.

Landing the fish by hand works ok for some species, but you're increasing the odds of getting a hook in your hand, and that's not much fun.

Furthermore, if you land a fish by hand, you've got to really play the fish out, and that decreases its chance for survival if you release it. The best way to land a fish is with a net.

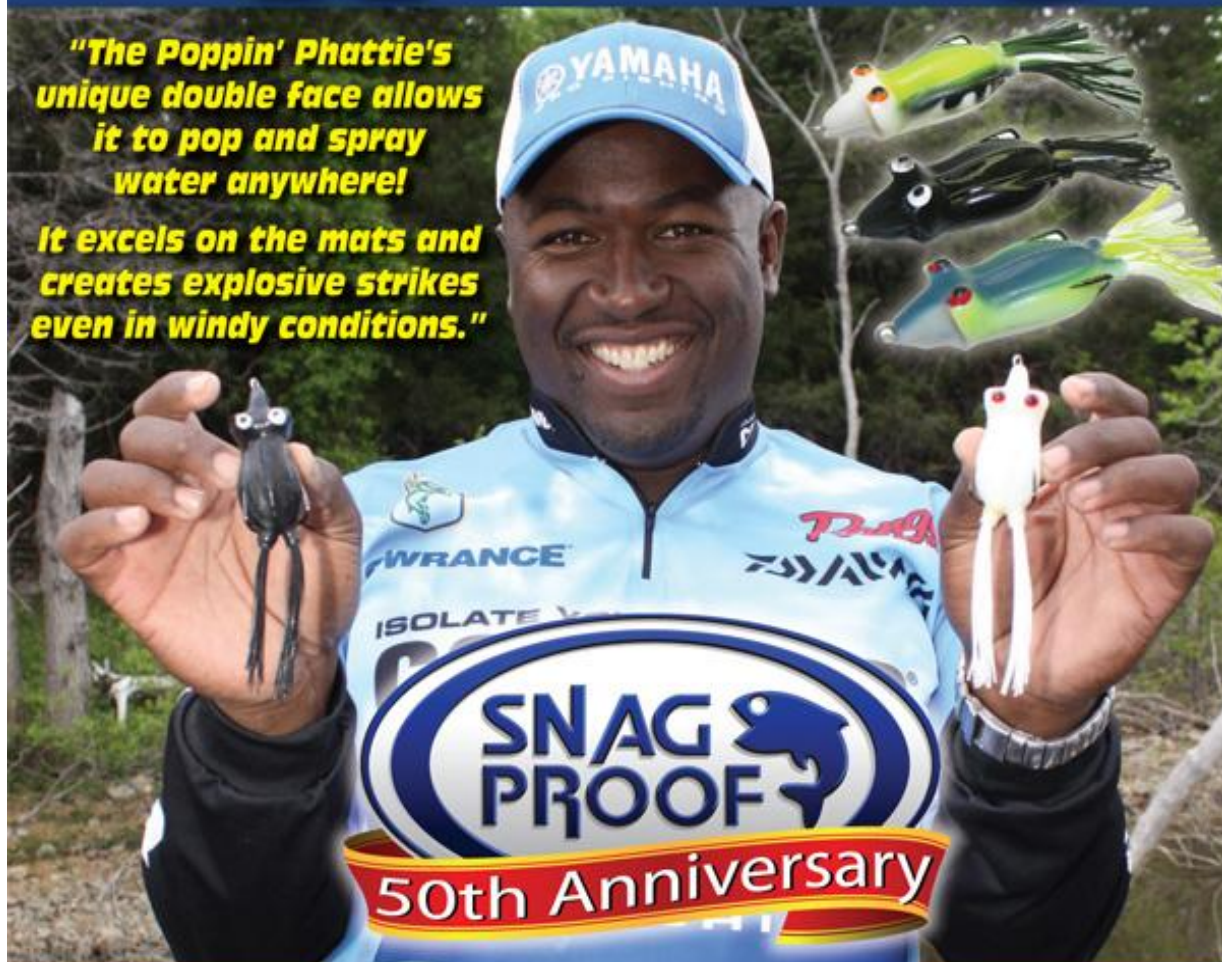
So, now you've got that fish within netting distance. Don't reach or over-extend to land it. You want to get it going in your direction, and you want it to go head-first into the net. Never try to land a fish tail first: Fish can swim faster than you can move the net. If you try to net it tail first, it will swim out of the net.

If you've got someone who's new to netting, show them how it's done on the first fish, then have them net every fish that comes into the boat that isn't on their line. It's good practice, and it keeps them interested even when they aren't catching the fish. It's usually a good idea for the netter to reel their line in when they're netting. This prevents rods from going over the side of the boat.

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Northern Adventure Cajun-Style

By Lawrence Taylor

Amid the endless oil platforms, gators and miles of estuary and bayou, Jean Lafitte redfish guide and outfitter Theophile Bourgeois (pronounced “Toe-Feel Bour-Jwa,” often with a “Aye-Eeeeeee” after it) carved a unique niche. Nowhere else on the Louisiana coast will a crazy Cajun fly you out to the Chandeleur Islands to fish for virtually untouched populations adult redfish and speckled trout.

Think Canadian fly-in, only with crawfish boils instead of walleye shore lunches.



Bourgeois has a love affair with flying and with catching big redfish and trout, so the combo is a natural. Along with a plush lodge, bar-like dock and the Coonass food that made New Orleans famous, the addition of the fly-out fishing makes the Bourgeois experience truly unique.

Bourgeois Charters is about 18 miles south of the Big Easy on a channel leading to great fishing for boating anglers. A number of charter captains base out of Bourgeois' facility and the

boats make for great “Plan B’s,” but it’s the fly-out trips that make it special. The reason is somewhat biological.

Redfish and speckled trout spawn in open water. The inshore fish that locals and charter captains catch are younger, smaller specimens. The fish around the islands are the spawners, far bigger than boating anglers can reach in half a day.

While plenty of 7- and 10-pound redfish are caught in the bayous and estuary, at age 7 or so both reds and trout depart the marsh for open water. Average Island redfish, however, go 15-pounds-plus, with plenty in the 20-, 30- and even 40-pound range.

Island anglers can expect to catch redfish all year long, and peak time is November to March. The best time for a gator-trout is from about the end of March through the summer.

“You will miss the trout of a lifetime if you’re throwing a topwater during prime time,” Bourgeois said. “Nine-out-of-10 times that big female will hit the bait with her tail, sometimes knocking it 8-feet in the air. When it lands, that’s when it’s game on.”

Average speckled trout from April through June are 3 ½-pounds, with half the daily take of 25 fish weighing upwards of 6 pounds. The biggest redfish he’s actually weighed on the Islands went 44 pounds, but has caught and released bigger specimens.

Bourgeois became interested in adventure and flying at age 5. Fishing turned into a career, but he never could get the idea of an Alaskan or Canadian fly-out fishing adventure out of his mind. He dreamed of moving Up North and piloting anglers into the wilderness, then realized that the Chandeleur Islands



provided the an “exotic” location right in his own backyard.

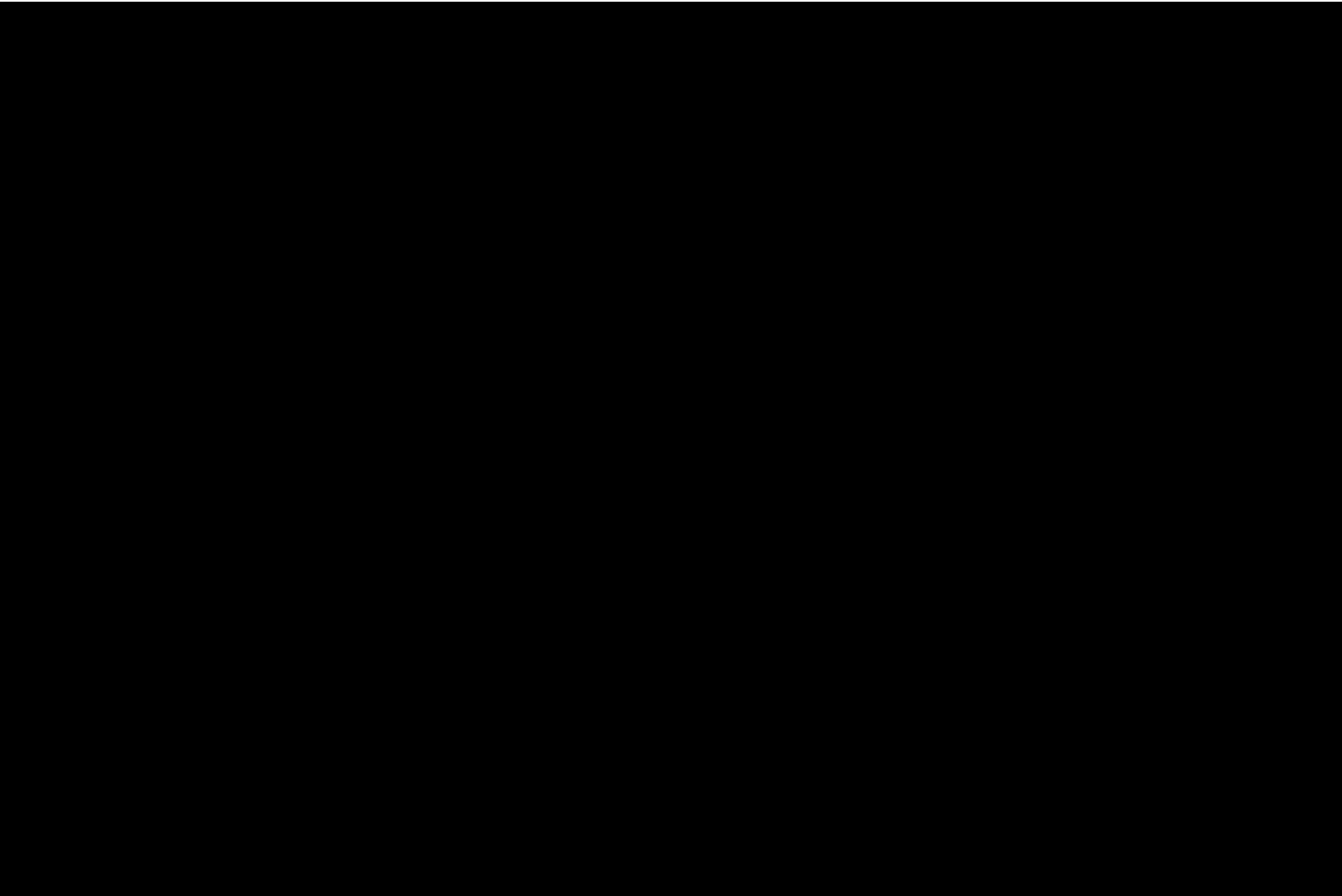


He makes the 6 ½-hour boat trip in just under a half-hour in his Cessna 185, carting three anglers at a time out to very lightly fished waters. Bourgeois prefers to fly out in the morning, lunch on the plane’s pontoons and fly back in the afternoon.

“After four or five hours of catching big redfish or trout, most folks are about ready to come in,” he said.

Fly-out trips are dependent on weather, of course. Strong winds or sea fog can delay or cancel the day’s flights, and the new bay boats at the dock make for a productive back-up plan. There are plenty of trout- and redfish-filled waters nearby, and anglers banking on the fly-out experience should book three-day trips to ensure a day or two in the plane.

Bourgeois provides all equipment during a trip, consisting of stout spinning gear and three lure types that work for both redfish and trout, soft-plastic swimbaits on jigheads, topwaters like the Bomber Saltwater Badonk-A-Donk and Heddon Spooks, and a gold spoon. Anglers can often



see the fish they're casting to, but if not, they move along the Island shoreline or slosh through shin-deep water until the school is located. Once found, anglers can hit the school again-and-again.

After a brief taxi the Cessna lifts off the water and Bourgeois swings over the town of Lafitte (pronounced "La-Feet") and then over miles of estuary filled with sea birds, waterfowl, snakes and alligators. Flying at only 700 feet, it's not unusual to see big gators swimming lazily across the canals that crisscross the bayou like tic-tac-toe playing fields.



"Dey out dere," he said. "Big gators."

It's impossible not to compare the experience to flying into a remote Canadian lake, complete with pilots and guides with strong accents and roots deeper than the sea oats growing in the shallow bayou water. It's the same feeling of not being in Kansas anymore, but you'll not sit down to a plate of crawfish or redfish coubion in Quebec.

After a smooth flight and water landing, Bourgeois taxis to a narrow strip of sand and the anglers unload. It takes only 15 minutes or so to find the schools of big redfish and for a time it's all Bourgeois can do to ensure bigger fish are landed and released safely while the smaller fish are strung up for dinner.

The Chandeleur Islands are approximately 35 miles off the coasts of Mississippi and Louisiana. Bourgeois' approach is to fly over Islands until he sees fish or big schools of bait before setting the plane down.

His main lodge sleeps 52 and all meals are provided. The area is good for anglers of all skill levels and for fly fishermen because they're normally casting to fish they can see. As if the Louisiana coast wasn't wild enough, Bourgeois' fly-out trips add a further sense of adventure that separates it from normal charter trips.

"My philosophy is this," Bourgeois said, "and I'm still working on it. Dad died at 58 and always said 'save up, save up for retirement,' and he never got to enjoy it. My grandfather lived to 98 and always said 'see the world, enjoy it,' and he drank and smoked cigars and cut the fat off his

pork chops, made a sandwich out of the fat and sopped the bread in the grease. Now, I don't know exactly where I fit in, but I'm going with 'enjoy it.'"

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Down Under Dreaming: Making those Aussie Fishing Dreams A Reality

By Jack Scrine



I come from a Land Down Under. Women do indeed glow, and men have been known to plunder, but more importantly; it is our various and abundant fisheries that glow brightest, and anglers who

know what they are doing are the true plunderers.

Having moved to Canada for work and pleasure several years ago, I have seen a lot of raised eyebrows directed at me. “Why the hell would you leave Australia for Canada?!” A common question, especially during the winter, and a tough one to answer. “What do you miss the most?” Another regular. The answer to this one is simpler though: “The fishing!”

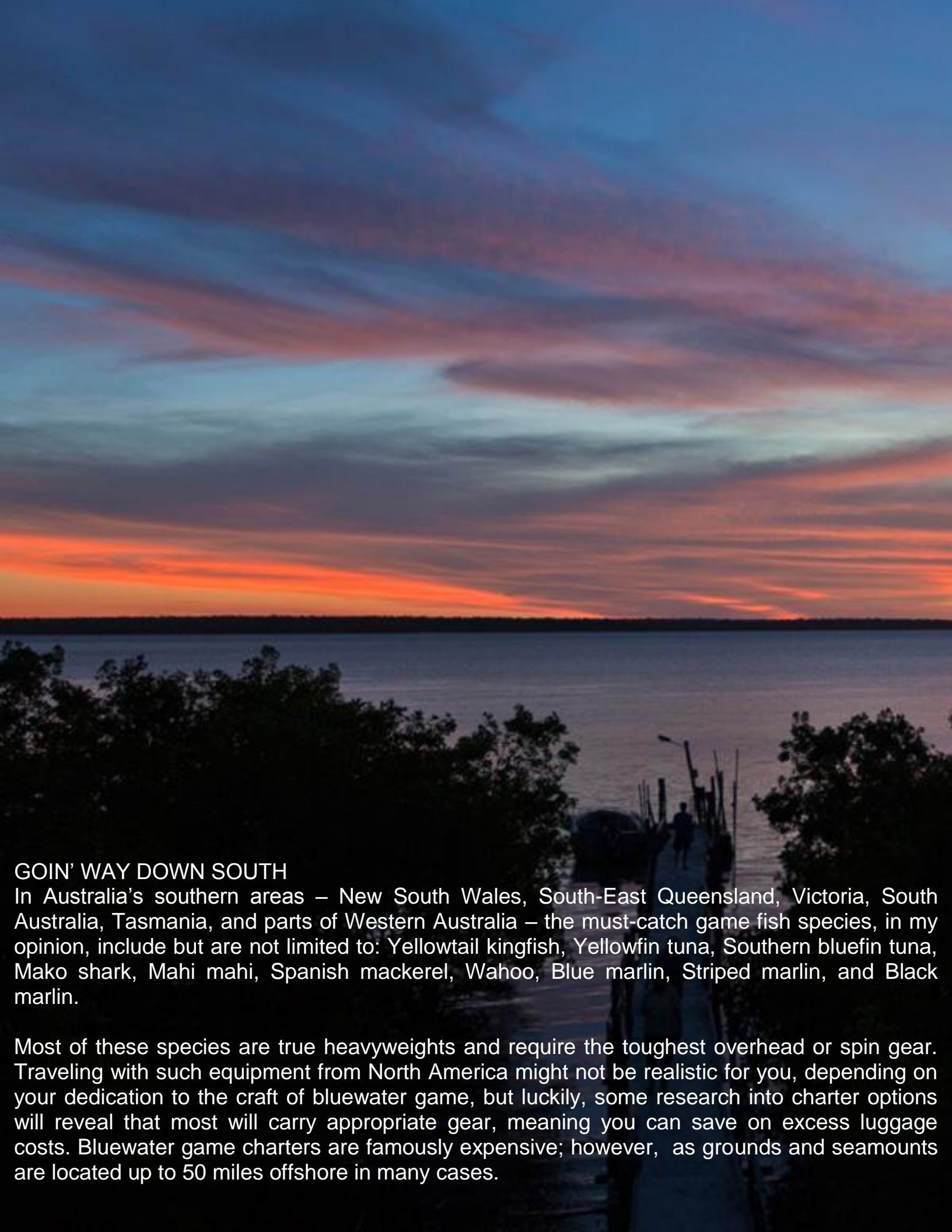
If you are serious about your once-in-a-lifetime Aussie fishing adventure, the options are vast and geographically divided. Australia is a huge place. Showing up at Sydney's airport with a fishing rod in hand, expecting to find your dream fish is a big mistake. She's swimming out there, somewhere, but research is required, as is a firm game plan, unless you want to sink thousands of dollars into a dream trip and have nothing to show for it!

DECISIONS, DECISIONS

Australia is home to so many iconic species. Some are available here in the Americas; some are restricted solely to our antipodean shores. In either case, I reckon we just breed them meaner Down Under! The recommended species to check off any list during an Australian fishing trip can be loosely divided into being available in Australia's tropical, northern states, or the cooler southern states.

Depending on your budget, you might be forced to choose only a couple of areas for fishing – maybe less – so selecting the type of fish you want to target is very important. This decision will also strongly impact the types of rods, reels, lures, clothing, and terminal tackle you bring with you.

Each fish described in this article is deserving of its own 2, 000-word feature, and mastering the art of successfully targeting any fish cannot be taught in a brief overview (I'm still many years away from fully figuring out any species!), but for whetting your appetite and targeting your research, a summary is important.



GOIN' WAY DOWN SOUTH

In Australia's southern areas – New South Wales, South-East Queensland, Victoria, South Australia, Tasmania, and parts of Western Australia – the must-catch game fish species, in my opinion, include but are not limited to: Yellowtail kingfish, Yellowfin tuna, Southern bluefin tuna, Mako shark, Mahi mahi, Spanish mackerel, Wahoo, Blue marlin, Striped marlin, and Black marlin.

Most of these species are true heavyweights and require the toughest overhead or spin gear. Traveling with such equipment from North America might not be realistic for you, depending on your dedication to the craft of bluewater game, but luckily, some research into charter options will reveal that most will carry appropriate gear, meaning you can save on excess luggage costs. Bluewater game charters are famously expensive; however, as grounds and seamounts are located up to 50 miles offshore in many cases.



Most available of these gamefish is the Yellowtail kingfish, which can be found offshore and inshore, and is targetable across a huge range along Australia's east and south coasts. They pull like freight trains, feed aggressively, and can be a lucky find for a prospecting inshore angler. They can be tackled on light gear at sizes of 50-75cm, but grow to huge proportions, and in the meter-plus class, will only ever be brought aboard with heavy tackle and locked drag settings.

Cheaper options than bluewater charters, and fisheries that can be explored more independently by the international angler, are the southern estuarine, inshore, and freshwater sportfishing options. Famous and must-catch species include: Dusky flathead, Yellowfin bream, Black bream, Murray cod, Whiting, Mulloway, Estuary perch, Australian bass, Australian salmon, Snapper, Cobia, Mangrove jack, Brown trout, Rainbow trout and Silver trevally.

The bream-fishing bug has bitten Australia hard, and the search for cunning, wily Yellowfin and Black bream on lures has spawned a tournament circuit similar to the bass market in North America.

Dusky flathead can grow to more than a meter long, though remember that all trophy-sized flathead should be released, as 75cm-plus specimens are all big breeding females.

Consider chasing Snapper on soft plastic lures; many charter operations offer this as an exclusive option these days.



If you'd like to go charter-free and explore fishing options independently, many companies offer boat hire options, and land-based shore-wandering can yield results. As can jetties and piers. If this is your game, I recommend you bring along a 2000-size spin stick spooled with 4-6lb braid, and a range of 1-2-inch soft plastic and hard-bodied lures. Target structure, drop-offs, and sand flats for best results on estuarine and lake species.

If fly-fishing for trout is your game, Victoria, Tasmania, and parts of New South Wales, and the Australian Capital Territory do offer options, but your best bet as a trout fanatic might be investigating the Brown trout fishery of New Zealand's South Island. Just a four-hour flight from the East Coast of Australia, New Zealand's South Island holds Brown trout so big, tough, and flighty, they need to be seen to be believed.

UP NORTH

As the weather becomes warmer, the fishing, too, becomes hotter. Parts of Queensland, all the Northern Territory, and the top half of Western Australia make up the tropical north of Australia.



If you can stand the constant muggy heat, ferocious burning sun, and dangerous animals that populate these areas, you will be rewarded by the best fishing our great nation has to offer. If you are visiting Australia for the fishing, and do not have a tropical trip as your priority, I would offer that you need to reconsider.

Hundreds of charter operations pepper the top half of our island continent, and these should be

considered to get the most out of fishing anywhere up here. Great fluctuations in tide, isolation, safety issues, and the benefits of local knowledge can make fishing alone in Cape York, The Northern Territory, or rural WA frustrating, and downright dangerous experiences. Competitive charter prices are, luckily, available up to north, and as many operations vie for fishing tourism dollars, affordable options abound.

The species list the tropical north offers is as abundant as the means that can be used to target them, and again, impossible to do justice to in the small space allotted here, but if I were to make a rough list of the most exciting and iconic northern targets, it would go to something like this: Barramundi, Threadfin salmon, Blue salmon, Saratoga, Queenfish, Golden snapper, Giant trevally, Spanish mackerel, Cobia, Black mullet, Red emperor, Coral trout, Sweetlip, Nannygai, Longtail tuna, sailfish, huge female Black marlin, and Wahoo.

BE PREPARED!

Before you get on a plane, these are the things you should have checked off your list when visiting Australia for angling purposes:

- Fisheries in Australia are state-regulated. Each state has its own restrictions, licensing rules, closed seasons, and closed areas. Ensure your trip complies with these before you get on a boat or cast a line. Fisheries inspectors have sharp pencils, and fines are hefty.

- Slip, slop, slap, wrap! The sun Down Under is hot, and combined with the glare off the water, can absolutely destroy a week-long fishing trip during the first day. A third-degree sunburn is no laughing matter; you will be burnt to a crisp in no time, especially in the tropical north. Lots of sunscreen, long-sleeved ventilated shirts, and a broad-brimmed hat, are all crucial. Quality polarized sunglasses, as well as protecting the eyes from sun or that stray treble hook, improve underwater vision, which can make sight-casting at surface species much easier.

- Know your gear! If you are booking a charter operation, speak with your guide before you even arrive in Australia. Your guide will be able to advise you about the best gear to bring along, including line classes, lures, rods, terminal accessories, and anything else. Shopping for a charter trip can often prove expensive, but the results will be worth it. The gear on board charter boats is often old and difficult to use; having your own is much better. Losing a guide's favorite lure to a big fish does not put you in the good books, either.

- Cast away! Of the most importance for many styles of quality lure-based sportfishing in Australia is the ability to cast with distance and accuracy. Unless you are trolling or "bottom bashing", your guide will often instruct you to put casts into tight territory, or land them in a specific area. When you are gathering your gear for your trip, spend a few hours casting at a targeted area at various distances with a hookless lure. A backyard or local park work as good areas for this. You may look crazy, casting a lure on a football field, but it is less embarrassing than missing a fish by sending a lure sailing into the trees in front of a boat full of clients – trust me!

- Know your knots! Learn how to tie a couple of strong and reliable knots. Charter guides will gladly help you with this, but it will save time, and thus allow for more time fishing, if you are able to tie your own. Popped leaders and stolen lures will happen if you are among good fishing, so being able to tie a good leader-to-main knot, universal knot, and loop knot are valuable skills to have.

- Get fit! The image of the overweight, beer-swilling fisherman should not apply to some of the serious sportfishing scenarios available in Australia. If you are not prepared to have your arms literally stretched, day in, and day out, especially in the sweltering north, you are going to have a miserable time of it after a couple of days. I've seen people unable to continue their charter trip because of pure exhaustion. So work on your strength training, and keep it to two or three beers the night before – regardless of the peer pressure us Aussies will undoubtedly pile on you at the bar! Your body will thank you the next day.

“Barra,” “Threadies,” and “Queenies” are mainstays in the brown, mangrove-lined tidal rivers throughout the north; but watch out for crocs! Trolling, live baiting, and casting shallow-diving minnows using low-profile overhead reels is the most popular method. You will need tough braid of 40lb-50lb with heavy mono leaders in this territory; the next person to be shredded in the logs by a trophy-sized Barra will not be the first, or even the ten-thousandth! Barra offers a spectacular fight that often includes a spectacular take, furious dashes for safety, and glorious leaps into the air. If I was to have to choose an image that represented Aussie promising sport fishing, I could not go past a leaping Barramundi. Barra can also be targeted alongside their prehistoric billabong buddies, Saratoga, in lily-covered, freshwater pools and wetlands.

Big Golden snapper (also called “Fingermark”), Red emperor, Nannygai, Sweetlip, and Giant trevally are all found around reef structure. And there is no greater reef structure than the Great Barrier Reef, off the coast of Queensland. These species are legendary for their ability to “brick” unsuspecting anglers; that is, to powerfully drive deep into the reef and steal expensive lures forever, before you’ve even been able to turn the handle of your reel. Such an experience carries symptoms of trembling fingers; a fast-beating heart, and multiple expletives uttered at top volume. Giant trevally offer the ultimate coral-casting heavyweight. You have not lived until you’ve witnessed the crash of a “GT” snatching a popper off the surface. Hold on and pray; it’s the best advice I can offer. With GTs, you’ll win some, and lose many.

Spanish mackerel, Cobia, Sailfish, Marlin, and Wahoo are all bluewater trolling targets. Wahoo and “Spaniards” in particular require thick metal leaders, as their razor-sharp teeth will make



short work of the monofilament line. Skirts and bibbed minnows are used in combination for northern bluewater fishing, and round-style overhead reels, or heavy spin gear from about size 8000 and up. Heavy braid is an expensive necessity.

The surface has barely been scratched, but already my palms are sweaty at the spectacular memories I have of each and every one of the fish I have

listed above. Take the time to investigate these great species online, and the geographic area in which they can be found. Make your choice based on both factors, and plan your trip Down Under around those locations and species that excite you most. Regardless of where you go, what your target, and how you do it, you will not be disappointed.



A 350 pound Marlin, The Modern Version of The Old Man and the Sea

By: Jake Bussolini

It was a chilly windy morning on the first Monday of May in Hatteras North Carolina. To get here, I had traveled seven hours with three of my fishing club friends from Mooresville NC. We had scheduled a charter fishing trip with Capt. Buddy Hooper, on his 53-foot Hatteras Fever II. Wind and cold weather were not going to deter us from making this trip. We had fished with Capt. Hooper several times before, so we knew from his years of experience and his boating skills, which helped ease our concerns about the weather conditions that morning, which were not expected to get better, perhaps even worse.

Our objective for the first day was to spend the day fishing for Mahi Mahi, Tuna and whatever other species were legal and running at that time. Our fishing team consisted of Rich Doering, 60 and Peter Enyeart, 71 of Troutman NC, Howard



Anger 71 from Tennessee, and me, I'm 77 from Mooresville NC. The entire team was rounded out with an excellent young first mate, Jack Graham. You will understand why I include our ages as this story progresses.

Capt Hooper felt that our best chance of getting a variety of fish was to fish the western edge of the gulf stream, which at this time is about 30 miles east, off shore, a trip that would take about two hours. This meant that we would get about six hours of actual fishing before heading back into port for a 4 pm return. We departed Hatteras Inlet at about 6:30 am. The weather was marginal at that time with winds of about 15 knots and wave heights of about four to six feet off shore. We were prepared for rain, but no rain was in the area at that time. The latest hurricane had closed some of the inlets north of Hatteras; so several boats had made the trip south through the Pimlico Sound to exit through the Hatteras inlet. Because of

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the weather conditions, several of these boats waited for Capt Hooper to leave port, so they could follow him through the narrow Hatteras inlet. Leaving port that morning was like a small holiday parade, with several boats following the parade leader.

We had a pleasant but slow day, catching about nine Mahi Mahi, the largest being about 25 pounds. This fish was caught by Peter Enyeart, but the fish is shown in this photo being held by Rich Doering since Peter was busy with other chores.

Rich also brought in a 35-pound Yellow Fin Tuna which can be seen in the next photo.

We were relatively pleased with our catch since everyone had a chance to catch at least two nice fish. Considering the wind and ocean conditions, we didn't consider this a bad catch. At around 4 pm, the time was approaching to begin preparing for the two-hour trip back to Hatteras. It was my turn in the fighting chair, but

we were starting to gather up our things for the return trip. A squall was approaching, and the rain was starting to fall heavily so we quickly put on rain jackets to help with the final clean-up.

Suddenly, the longest down line was hit hard. Something big was on the line. We were baited with Ballyhoo and didn't expect any real big fish, maybe a bigger tuna we thought. I handled the rod from the fighting chair but didn't bother to get strapped in. I didn't take me long to realize that I had a real battle on my hands, but I could have never envisioned the extent of that battle.

The rod I was using contained about 1100 yards of line. The spool line had 600 yards of 200 pound yellow braid, followed by 500 yards of 80-pound monofilament. These numbers became more important to me as time went on, because the change in line color let me know how far away the fish was from the boat. Just about the time I got organized in the seat, the squall hit us head on. The waves were breaking at about ten to twelve feet, and the winds were in excess of 30 knots. These conditions made it extremely difficult for Capt. Hooper to try to assist in the retrieve. More than an hour went by, with several retrieve attempts where I thought I was making progress only to have the fish make another run and take out all the line that I retrieved, and then





some. The mate thought it would be wise at this point to strap me into the seat and with some difficulty he managed to slip the harness assembly under me, which made it a little easier to control the rod. At this point, we realized that I had probably hooked a Marlin and the fish had probably become tail hooked, making it multiple times harder to retrieve it. "Here I am" I thought, "a 77 year old, the oldest guy on the boat, battling some kind of monster". At the end of my second hour of fighting this fish, I was exhausted, but I felt like I was starting to make some real progress. The first

mate was urging me on like my old football coach, because I had brought in more than 1000 yards of line, and it appeared that the battle was nearly over. Captain Hooper was attempting to back the boat toward, the fish to help me, but the waves were continually coming over the stern of the boat. Despite the soaking of the waves and the rain, the warm 70 degree gulfstream water felt good. I was totally exhausted, but this fish was mine and the battle was almost over, I thought.

The fish must have sensed that it had lost the battle because just as the mate started looking over the side to spot the fish, it suddenly made another hard run, taking out virtually all the line and there was not a thing that I could do to stop it. When this run was finished, I estimated that there were only about 100 yards of the line left on the spool, and I was totally spent. I could not muster the enough physical or emotional strength to make another attempt at a retrieve. At that point, rather than cutting the fish free, I handed the rod and the seat to Rich Doering. I felt that being seventeen years younger Rich had a better chance to be the closer in this battle. The rain was still hammering us, as were the waves. Nothing was getting easier; however, neither the captain nor the mate were going to let us cut that line. At this point, it was all simply gut motivation.

Another hour went by with Rich performing the same tasks that had frustrated me. After a total of about three hours of battle, there was



suddenly a huge tug on the line followed a few minutes later by another huge tug. These two pulls were so fierce that the rod actually was slammed down against the rail. At that point, the retrieval process started to look more encouraging. It seemed like the fish had finally given up. At the three hour forty-minute point, the fish finally surfaced. Unfortunately, the two big tugs were a shark taking the entire stomach out of this 9 foot Blue Marlin. The mate did manage to grab the fish, and the captain managed to get two photos. The battle was over, and we all thought instinctively of the story about the old man and the Sea.



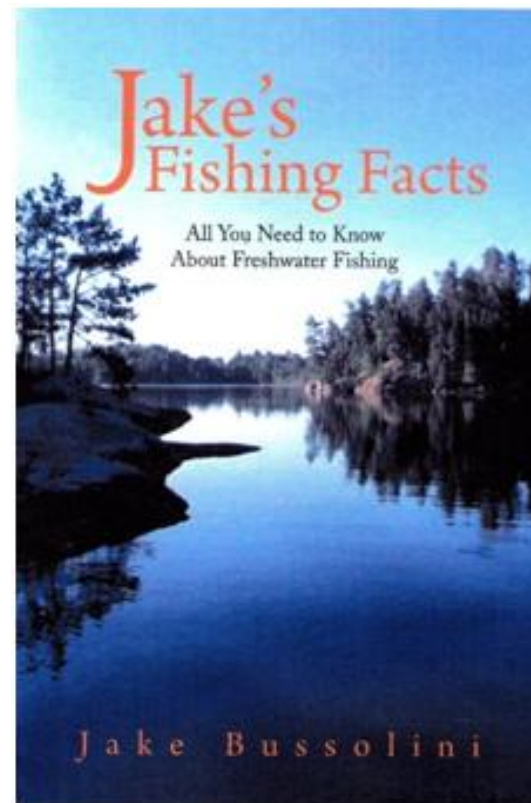
Our team had won the battle, but the shark had won the game. Four old guys battling a monster fish for four hours, only to have a shark, presumed to be a Makohi, take away our final reward.

Despite the rough seas and high winds, the return trip to Hatteras was a celebration for our entire team. We had an opportunity to re-tell the story many times during the return, and the captain could raise the

Marlin flag to the top of the mast as the Hatteras Fever II was docked at its spot at the Hatteras Harbor Marina.

Hemingway described it much more elegantly than I, when he wrote *The Old Man and the Sea*. Despite the outcome, this will always be a memorable life's experience for me. I was also reminded that this experience should eliminate the need for my next stress test. The fish is back in the sea, but it will always remain in my heart and my mind as one of the great experiences of my life.

Jake Bussolini is a freelance writer and author of several books about freshwater fishing. His latest book, *Jake's Fishing Facts* and all of his other books can be reviewed on his web site, www.Jakestakeonfishing.com.

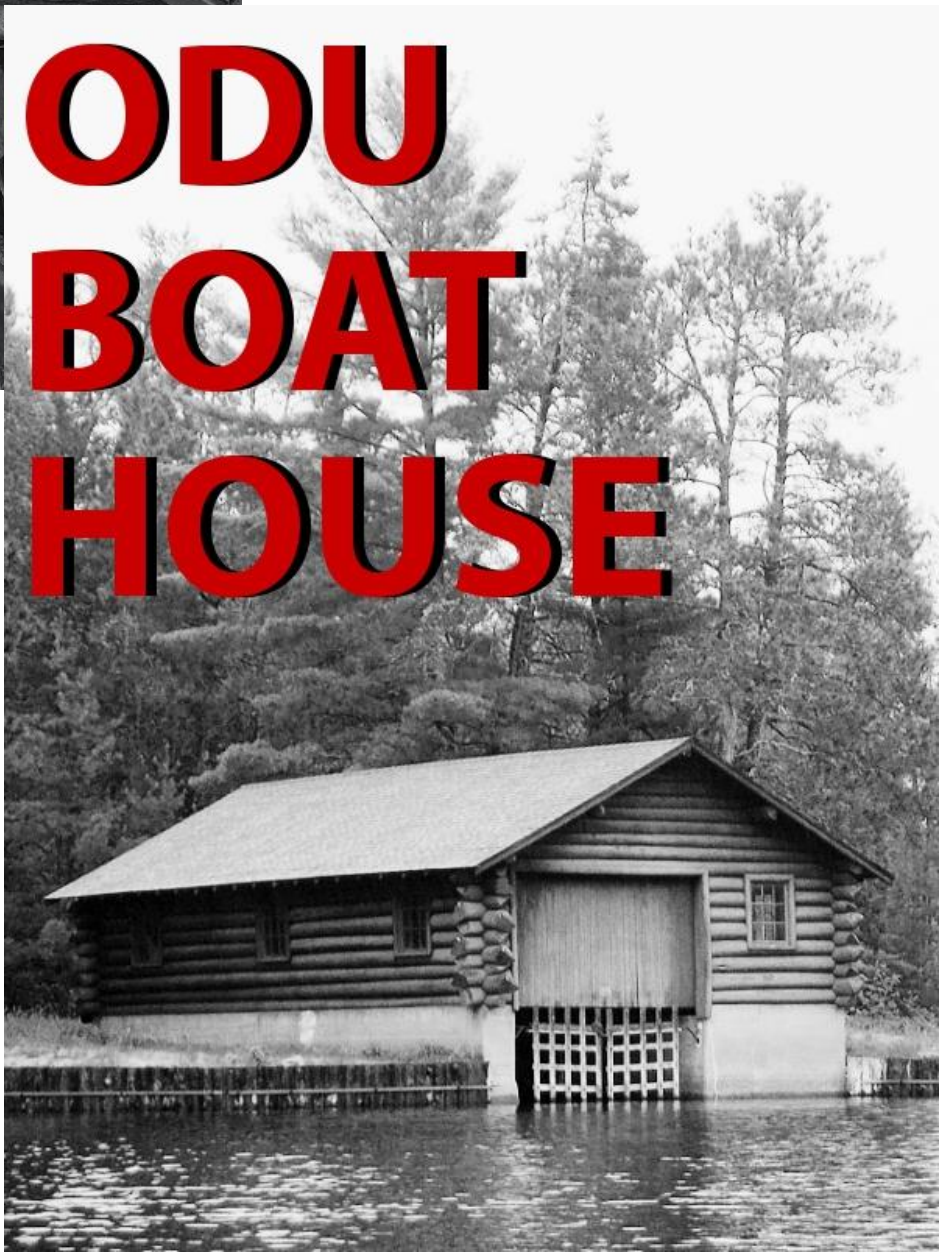




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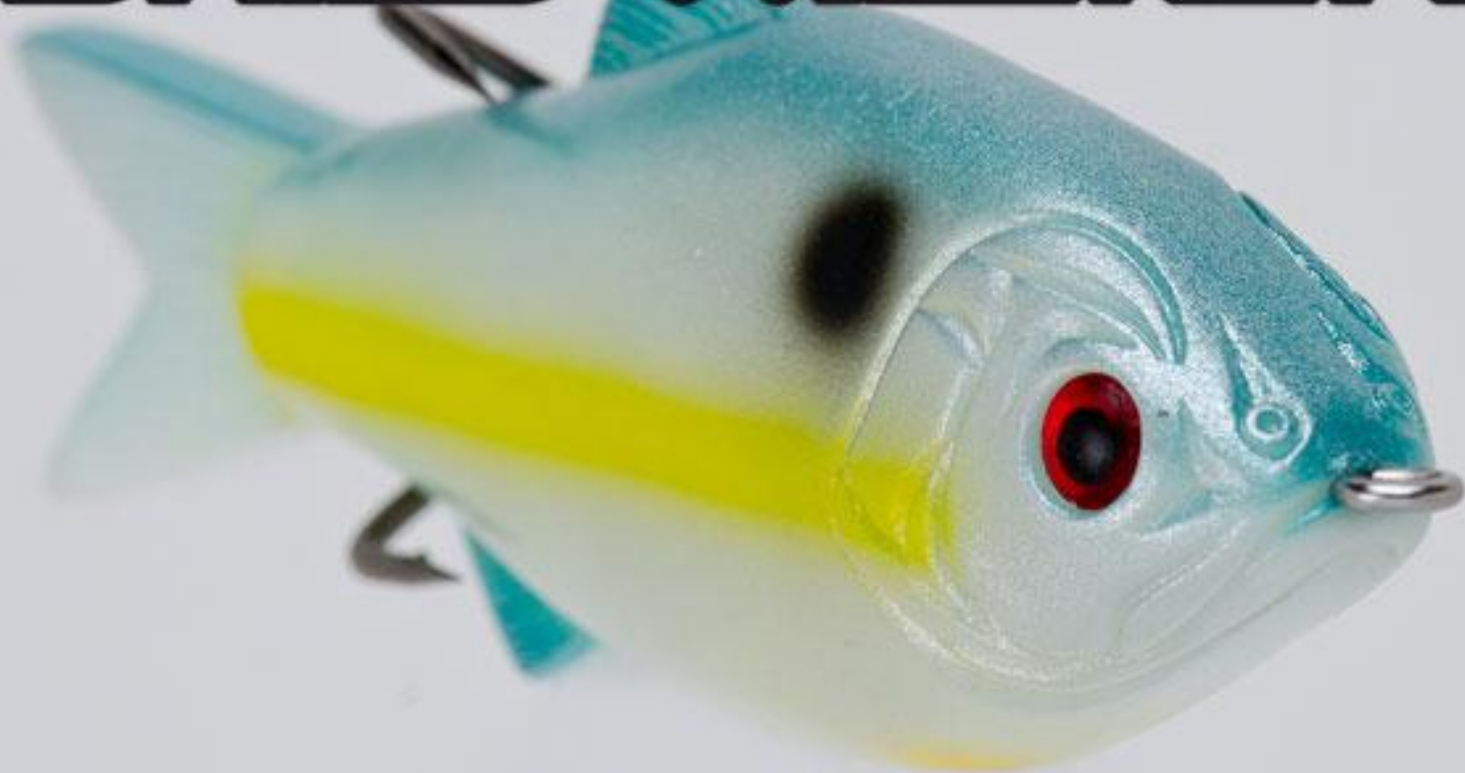


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Planning your Dream Alaskan Vacation

By Garrett Svir

If you're like most fishermen and women, you've probably always dreamed about taking a fishing trip to Alaska. You imagine yourself wading through the clear mountain streams chasing rainbows or taking a charter trip to catch giant barn door sized halibut. Maybe you would prefer casting into giant schools of bright-red sockeye salmon or floating a river in pursuit of the next world record king salmon. Originally, I assumed a trip like this would involve a remote location that was a huge investment in time, and well, let's not forget about money. However, I found an Alaskan vacation was easier than I ever



imagined. You can actually do all of these things with a flight to Anchorage, and a 52-mile drive to Alaska's Kenai Peninsula.

In the heart of Alaska's Kenai Peninsula lies the famed Kenai River. The Kenai River is home to many world-class fishing opportunities. The sockeye or "red" salmon enters the Kenai River in two runs starting in mid-May and continuing through August. The sockeye salmon fishery is the most popular fishery in Alaska because it is easily accessible to any angler wearing waders. The rainbow trout of the Kenai River are residents and can be pursued from April to October throughout the upper and middle stretches of river. These fish are known to reach magnum proportions of 30" plus. The Kenai was also home to nine of the top ten largest king salmon

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ever hooked. Anglers flock to the Kenai every summer in hopes of beating the current world record of 97 pounds 4 ounces.

The Russian River is located in the town of Cooper Landing and is one of the first towns you will encounter on your pilgrimage. The stretch from the Kenai and Russian River confluence up to the Russian River falls offers a great area to wade and fish. A ferry brings anglers across the

Kenai where they can choose to fish the confluence or travel upstream on the Russian. It is here that the term combat fishing was born. Anglers from all over the world flock to the area to intercept migrating sockeye salmon. While the area is not a destination for solitude, it does provide for some fantastic fishing. Pods of sockeye salmon can even be seen making their way into the Russian. Where you find big numbers of salmon, you will also find bears. Last year, my wife and I had a sow brown bear and cubs pop out right behind us while



fishing the Russian. We quickly surrendered our hot spot to mama and the cubs, and were left alone downstream the rest of the afternoon. I would highly recommend a can of bear spray in this area.

The area downstream from the Russian River confluence to Skilak Lake is known as the Kenai River National Wildlife Refuge. This stretch provides some of the best fishing for resident rainbow trout and dolly varden. Anglers have a few areas that can be accessed from the highway to wade and fish. Many guides also offer drift boat trips through this section. The section just above Skilak Lake is known as the canyon. This section takes you through the most beautiful remote section of the river. It is home to many white water runs, and also those magnum sized rainbows that you've been dreaming about.



A short drive will take you to the town of Soldotna, which offers restaurants, laundry facilities, tackle shops and all the other conveniences of the lower 48. The city also offers many areas to access the middle Kenai River. After learning a simple bottom bouncing technique, you will be ready to hook your first sockeye salmon. Remember to use a heavy diameter line because these fish know how to use the swift current of the Kenai to their advantage. Pound for pound these fish fights harder than any fish this guy has ever hooked. If you go too light, the first drag

burning runs from one of these rockets may leave you standing there with a dumb look on your face. Several public campgrounds in town offer camping safely outside of the bear country. Soldotna is also the place you will likely meet your captain if you plan on taking a king salmon charter.

The coastal towns of Seward and Homer are the most popular ports for halibut charters. Some charters will also offer multi species trips, which include ling cod, rockfish and salt water salmon. On your voyage out to the halibut grounds you will pass glaciers, see bald eagles and may catch a glimpse of sea otters, puffins and even whales.

Alaska has many regulations in place to protect this phenomenal fishery. Regulations exist that limit hook size, use of bait, and where fish can be cleaned just to name a few. To prevent the spread of invasive species, Alaska has a ban of felt sole wading boots that's new for the 2012 season. I wear Korkers wading boots that have an interchangeable sole and allow me to easily switch my felt soles to a rubber sole for Alaska. I would suggest you grab a copy of the regulations upon arrival.

Hopefully you will decide that your dream Alaskan vacation is more achievable than you ever imagined. I can smell the halibut fillets on the grill already! For more information please visit: www.1slabseeker.blogspot.com. Photography By: Kim Svir



Wild Striped Bass: Their Value and Management

By Dean L. Clark



The wild striped bass is pursued by millions of saltwater anglers every year, making it one of the most popular recreational fish that swims in Atlantic coastal waters. Nevertheless, stripers are at the center of a political tug-of-war between those who value the fish as a commercial species and those who are fighting to

realize its far greater value as a recreational or game fish.

According to the National Atmospheric and Oceanic Administration, the recreational catch of wild stripers on the east coast has dropped off dramatically in the last five years. Not so many years ago, an angler could catch a dozen or more quality striped bass in a day's fishing; today, he is lucky to catch one or two fish.

Although their numbers are greatly reduced, stripers are still one of the best fighting fish in the salt. There are many ways to pursue these great fish. They were once thought to only bite or feed during the dark of night. No longer. Recently, a new sight fishery has developed. In the shallows and estuaries and along ocean-side flats and gravel bars stripers are hunted, sighted and then cast to under the glare of the mid-day sun. On the east coast and especially in the northeast, the striper has become a sight-fishing challenge just like bonefish and redfish are in southern waters. Stripers in shallow water are usually fished with a fly rod and sinking flies like the Clouser Minnow, but soft baits; artificial top-water lures and natural fare like crabs, sand eels and silverside minnows are also effective for anglers using light spinning or bait-casting tackle.

Stripers are also great top water quarry. Fish in a feeding frenzy are often encountered by first spotting diving birds that give away the carnage



taking place below. In such a situation, plugs, metal, spoons and flies -- almost anything that resembles the bait fish being attacked -- will work. When a striper slams your lure on the surface, the ensuing battle can be a long one that tests muscle and willpower.

Trolling for stripers is thought to have been developed in New England and is now practiced up and down the Atlantic coast; down-riggers, outriggers, flat lines, lead core and wire lines all produce stripers under the right conditions. Some local anglers have trolling all figured out but are tight-lipped about their methods; others are eager to tell the world how they caught every fish, and maybe even where it was caught! Of course, one must remember that all fishermen are liars except you and me, and frankly, I am not too sure about you!



A fairly recent and very important management development is the recognition that the social and economic importance of the recreational striper fishery far outweighs the value of the commercial fishery. Angling for stripers first became a popular pastime for sportsmen in the 1800's, but it was not until after World War II that recreational striper fishing really came into its own. Soon thereafter the press caught on to the fun, and national stories began to be printed and circulated. Back then it was a common and accepted practice for most recreational fishermen to sell their catch to help cover

their fishing expenses and pay a few bills. By the end of the 20th century, however, the commercial compliment to recreational fishing was in the process of changing.

As the popularity of the striper grew exponentially, and more fish were being sold commercially, the numbers of fish began to decline sharply. The fishery managers had never needed to manage the species for recreational purposes before.

Their mind-set was pre-conditioned to support commercial harvesting, as long as there were fish to catch. However, when the killing pressure became too great and the fish nearly disappeared, there was a reluctant awakening among some fishery managers who came to accept the fact that the ocean's resources were no longer infinite.

After almost losing the striper as a viable species, six states realized that the only way to responsibly manage wild striped bass was to end the commercial exploitation. Stripers needed and received the protection of game fish status. Unfortunately, seven coastal states still continue to target and harvest this valuable fish as a commercial product. Doing so creates an under valuation of the resource and the continued over-harvesting of this hugely important and recreationally more valuable species.



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The actual worth of a commercially managed fish is myopically established by how many pounds can be brought to market and what its market worth is on a price-per-pound basis. In contrast, several peer reviewed professional studies clearly show that on a per fish basis the recreational fishery for wild striped bass is worth twenty times more to the economy than is the commercial harvest of a wild fish sold at market. However, because of the commercial bias of many regulators, over-harvesting is once again driving wild stripers into a serious decline. Sadly, history continues to prove that commercial interests are more concerned with exploitation than with conservation.

In this debate, there is a fairness component to be considered as well. Game fish management creates a true democratic fishery. There is a limited supply of fish in the sea and these fish rightfully belong to you and to me equally. Therefore, it stands to reason that there should be equal access to these fish for everyone and that everyone should have to follow the same harvesting rules when utilizing this public resource. Game fish designation does just that. It makes it fair and equal for everyone without special exceptions. Conversely, when striped bass are managed primarily for commercial interests, select individuals are allowed to personally benefit disproportionately from what is commonly owned resource.

There is one organization, Stripers Forever, whose sole focus is the welfare of wild striped bass. One of their key conservation goals is to have wild stripers declared a game only species throughout its range up and down the Atlantic coast. The "game" concept of setting aside a species that is being threatened by commercial over-harvesting or has a greater worth recreationally is not new or unique. Under circumstances like that of wild striped bass, it is the contemporary established and accepted management protocol. Sadly, some states are still managing stripers commercially just as they were back in the mid 1900's.



Every "game" species at one time was

harvested for commercial sale: elk, waterfowl, deer, turkey, trout, quail, etc. But because these species and many others were either threatened or too valuable to waste commercially; they were eventually designated as game species for recreational use only. In fact, as this is being written, legislators are preparing to vote on whether to manage the redfish as a game fish in North Carolina, just as it is already being managed in most other southern states where it swims.

Some might think that game fish status would prohibit the harvesting of stripers by recreational fishermen. No! A harvesting philosophy is the result of defined goals and motivations. For a commercial fisherman to receive value from a fishery, he must remove as much of his allotted quota as possible from the sea and sell it. The result is far fewer fish in the ocean. The motivation is to kill not conserve. However, for the angler, the value of a healthy resource is a rewarding recreational experience with the expectation of catching fish..... having more not fewer fish in the ocean. So a carefully managed public striped bass resource that allows for reasonable individual bag limits is the goal of those who believe in game fish status for wild striped bass. Besides, recreational interests – hunters and fishermen - have proven time and time again to be better stewards of our natural resources than those that harvest – exploit - for individual, commercial gain.

Stripers Forever believes that managing the wild striped bass as a game species is the responsible management path to take. Anyone wishing to learn more about their efforts and how to help wild striped bass is invited to go directly to the Stripers Forever web site: www.stripersforever.org. This is an all-volunteer, not-for-profit, conservation organization whose members are focused on the welfare and conservation of wild striped bass. Stripers Forever “lives” on the Internet and has no headquarters or meetings. Membership is free. Even if you are not an active striped bass fisherman, these valuable fish can benefit from your help. Please check out Stripers Forever and learn more about wild stripers and how you can help make a difference in their future welfare.



Heavy Weekend Traffic Fishing

By Captain Mike
Gerry



With the school year quickly coming to an end, the boat traffic on the lake will pick up by leaps and bounds, not only will the fisherman be on the lake but so will the pleasure boaters. There will be jet skis, pleasure boats, water skiers and fisherman all looking for the

same space on the lake; the question is what can you do to find fish. Here are some tips to help you during these heavy traffic weekends.

I believe the first thing you should look for are no wake zones, there is no doubt in my mind that the bass here the heavy boat traffic on these busy weekends and do more suspending than feeding and the no wake zones allow the noise to be filtered down and the bass are not as skittish as they would be out in the heavy fast flowing boat traffic.

I also believe that this is the time to slow down to a point while fishing that you just leave your bait sit on the bottom for a few seconds before you pick it up to move it. Give the bass time to see that bait, maybe twitch it on the bottom slightly but let it sit long enough for the fish to become interested in it. Along with that use bright colors, they intrigue the bass and a bright color sitting on the bottom slightly twitched is deadly. Fish slow, be precise and twitch the bait, and you will overcome the boat traffic.

The bottom structure is also a key, find the really unique bottom areas around the lake. Look for something different, maybe hard to reach spots with unique changes in the bottom that really can make a difference. An example would be a subtle drop, most other fisherman run right by a subtle drop as they are looking for the big contour break most of the time. If you can combine a subtle drop with some wood, like stumps or dead wood stuck on the bottom you have a unique spot that most fisherman miss. Go small, go slow, look for something different and you have an opportunity to overcome these busy holiday weekends!

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Chairman of the Boards

Big-Water Walleye Expert Bruce DeShano Gives Up His Best Secrets

By Ted Takasaki and Scott Richardson

Bruce DeShano seems laid back enough – until he talks about his passion for speed. The founder of Off-Shore Tackle likes to drag race a souped-up Mustang with 700 horses under the hood. He reaches speeds over 140 mph in a quarter mile.

He has another passion - the tactics he uses to pinpoint the location of monster walleyes on the big water of the Great Lakes.

He has a lead foot on the boat, too. He trolls fast until one of his Off-Shore planer board's darts backward and throbs, signaling, "fish on!" After that first catch, he slows down just enough to entice more strikes from the school. Nevertheless, he keeps the speed up covering as much water as he can.

"When the water is warm, you can't take a bait away from a fish," said DeShano, who spent 20 years as a charter captain and competed on professional walleye circuits. "They get fat chasing minnows. If they want your bait, they are sure as heck can chase it down."

DeShano's approach to fishing is the same one he used in the early days of Off-Shore Tackle when he could carry his company in a shirt pocket. He keeps things simple.





When he started Off Shore as a side business to his full-time job as a powerhouse mechanic with an electric company, his first product was a clip to hold weights to take baits down deep for salmon and lake trout. Unlike downriggers on the market during that time, his clip release let fishermen see the rod load up when they had a hit.

He first thought he'd sell clips to companies that were already making downriggers and planer boards. Nevertheless, when they

weren't interested, he went it alone. He made his own boards, after walleye professionals Gary Parsons, Keith Kavajecz and Mark Romanak lent their expertise to the design. Al Lindner soon dubbed DeShano, "the chairman of the boards."

DeShano added weighting systems for trolling to his product line as well. Off Shore's mission evolved into helping anglers cover big water fast, from top to bottom and side to side. These are the keys to finding fish fast, so these tools arrived on the scene at the right time. Anglers were hungry for the right tools and the information on how to use them.

Fish Finding Secrets

DeShano's method for finding fish begins before he launches the boat. He starts by sitting at the dinner table with a chart. He uses his knowledge of seasonal walleye movements and information to get a general sense for where fish might be. Fishing web sites are another great source of information.

He narrows the search by finding reasons for fish to be in a certain area – namely breaks and holes. Big waters like Lake Erie or Lake Huron are different than your neighborhood lakes, which may have breaks of several feet. Dropoffs in the Great Lakes may be extremely subtle. Even a foot or two is enough to hold fish. Electronic mapping coupled with GPS is a great tool to find and follow breaks in the middle of nowhere, far from shore.

Next, DeShano stops at bait shops on his way to the launch. He asks for the latest information on where fish are relative to shore and landmarks, such as islands. He asks how deep they are and what baits they've been hitting on. Popular baits give you a starting point,



from which you can do your own experimenting. DeShano warns us not to live and die by this information. Sometimes, “something different” will trigger more strikes than old standbys.

He also urges us to find out what the main walleye food source is for the body of water. If it's shiners, the fish will likely be closer to the surface. If it's shad, more in the middle zone. If it's suckers and Creek chubs, you will usually do better getting baits close to bottom.



I am more than a weekend warrior.

I'm also a dad. Soon my kids will be old enough to be out here with me. That's why I switched to lead-free weights and biodegradable baits. I pick up and recycle used fishing line. I never dump unused live bait into my lake. It's SAFE Angling, and it will ensure that my kids enjoy a clean and healthy lake. Now I'm more than a weekend warrior.

I am a steward.



Once on the water, DeShano spends more time looking for balls of forage fish than the hooks which could be walleyes. Find the food, find the predators! He gets especially excited when he sees tight, round balls of baitfish on his sonar unit. The ultimate are balls of bait with gaps in them or holes. That usually indicates panicked bait, a clue that walleyes are in attack mode around that food source.

There is a need to be precise. What good does it do to catch a walleye if you don't remember how you did it? The two most important questions to answer after that first fish or two are: where was your lure, depth-wise, and how fast was it moving?

“The biggest mistake weekend fishermen make,” says DeShano, “is they don't know where they caught the fish.



You have to be able to repeat it.”

Getting to the Right Depth

Weighting systems are critical for accurately duplicating depth. Thanks to Off Shore, you need just two kinds in the boat most days, namely Guppy Weights and bottom bouncers.

Guppy Weights can be used as snap weights and/or as in-line weights. Start with the snap weights. First, let out your lure 50 feet (line counter reels are crucial for this). Then snap on a weight, let out 50 more feet, and finally connect an Off-Shore planer board so your lure runs out to the side of the boat.

Repeat this process exactly, changing only the size weight. Employ 1-ounce, 1.5-ounce, 2- and 2.5-ounce weights in your spread. When you’re done, four baits are running at different depths. (Guppy weights also come in a half-ounce size, and up to 3 ounces. They’re made of zinc, a metal that allows Off Shore to be more precise about the weight. Lead tends to vary.)

When DeShano gets a hit on one lure, he duplicates that weight on one of the other three lines. Two are now running at the depth that produced, while two are running at other depths. If he gets another strike at the productive depth, a third line is put at the productive depth.

He always reserves the fourth line to experiment. If the action slows, weights are adjusted to run four different depths again, until a new productive pattern emerges. For very deep fish, Off Shore’s Tadpole weights will get baits down 30 feet.

Dialing in the Bite

DeShano also experiments with lure color, but lure action and speed are the two most important variables. Once lines are set, DeShano puts the hammer down – not as fast as he does in that Mustang, but quick in trolling terms. In summer when the water is warm, he speeds along at 2.8 to 3.5 mph, making “S” turns, which speed up the outside boards and slow the inside ones, until he gets a strike. When that strike comes, he’ll know what depth and speed produced the fish, so he can repeat the process precisely. The GPS and electronic mapping systems allow him to mark exactly where fish were caught so the boat can stay with active schools.

Snap weights are good when trolling spinners and ‘crawlers for suspended fish. Let the spinner back 5 to 50 feet behind the boat, then add a 2- or 3-ounce weight and let out a known length of the line, say 30 or 50 feet. You can repeat the successful combination that way. Bottom bouncers are often used to take spinner rigs all the way down to the bottom.

Spinner blades come in different styles, shapes and colors, too. Use big Colorado or willow leaf blades. They have an erratic action that makes a minnow, leech or ‘crawler irresistible. Spinners work best down to 0.8 mph and up to 1.7 mph.

DeShano uses in-line weights when fish are consistently at the same depth over a long period. However, weather can change that. When it does, he returns to snap weights. In-line weights also are good when walleyes are shallow. The baits can be run 10 to 12 feet back from the boards which allow for quicker turns.

The same concepts work on smaller lakes, too. Off Shore’s mini planer boards are perfect for local, small inland waters.

Big waters like the Great Lakes can churn up fast when a storm blows in. Make sure you keep an ear to the weather radio and an eye to the sky. Don’t venture out without a GPS to show you the way back to the launch if fog obscures shoreline details.

Nevertheless, don’t let big water scare you. A lot of fun and big fish are waiting, off shore.

FISHING A BOTTOM BOUNCER

SELECT THE APPROPRIATE WEIGHT FOR THE TARGETED DEPTH

Average boat speed .8 to 1.2 MPH

Less than 10ft.	3/4 oz
10 to 15ft.	1 oz
15 to 20ft.	1 1/2 oz
20 to 30ft.	2 oz
25 to 35ft.	3 oz
More than 35ft.	4 oz

To maintain bottom contact:
USE HEAVIER WEIGHT
for More Current, Bigger Blade,
or More Boat Speed

USE LIGHTER WEIGHT
for Less Current, Smaller Blade,
or Less Boat Speed

Main Line to Rod— Maintain 30-45 degree line angle

3' to 6'

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Quick-Change™ Weight Snap

3' to 6'

Rainbow Spinner Rig

Minnow—Single hook

Leech

Gum-Drop® Floater Rig

Nightcrawler—Double hook

Rock Runner® Bottom Bouncer

Rock Runner® Slip Bouncer

- Keep line at 30 to 45 degree angle to the bait.
- Troll at .8 to 1.2 MPH, however, you can go faster to cover water.
- Maintain bottom contact so tip of wire is just ticking the bottom.
- Strikes can be very subtle. Allow the rod to load and apply gradual tension to set the hook, otherwise the rig could be ripped from the fish's mouth.

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“Fishing With Mulberries”

By Dan Galusha

In these days of hi-tech lures, and all the other fishing equipment, who would think that something as simple as a mulberry could catch huge fish? That is exactly what happened when a few years ago the Dan's Fish 'N' Tales® TV crew was invited by Clayton Meyer of Davenport, Iowa to fish for carp and catfish with mulberries.

The first thing is selecting the right berries to pick. There are normally four stages of color – green, red, red/purple and purple. The two best are the red/purple and purple. The red/purple will stay on the hook better because of the firmness, but the purple will milk out into the water more. Be sure to keep the berries cool.



It doesn't seem possible, but catfish like this will take an offering of a nice, juicy mulberry.

Don't leave them in a metal can that is setting in the sun. This will cook the berries to the point of being too soft, and not holding to the hook. They will also become much messier to put on the hook, which is a problem even with firmer berries.

Clayton's technique is so simple that anyone can do it. The only thing to remember is to have heavy enough line. In fact, I had two fish break off, one of which was on 15-pound test braided line. Clayton suggests at least 20-pound test.

The hook used was a number 2 bait hook. I would also suggest trying a Daiichi Circle Wide, which will be great for holding the bait, as well as hooking the fish much easier.



Here are two of the best stages of mulberries to use for bait – red/purple and purple.

Hook the berry in the firmest and largest portion, being sure to get it as close to the center as possible, which is best for holding to the hook.

Clayton rigged his berry with a hook only, and flipped to the areas desired. He then allowed the berry to slowly sink before picking it up and making another flip.

I used a hook beneath a Mick Thill float. Since these floats are extremely sensitive, and normally balanced by light weights, the berry itself will work as a weight. This was rigged on a spinning outfit, so that I could flip, pitch, or use easy casts. Don't whip the cast, as this will throw off the berry. The berry would slowly fall to the depth of the float's setting, and when reached, I would pull it a few inches, allow it to fall again, and then retrieve for another cast.

In most cases, the strike came shortly after the berry started to sink. In Clayton's case it would be a line twitch or movement. For mine, the float would move along the surface or quickly be pulled under.

We caught grass carp, regular carp, channel catfish, and bluegill. Anything that would feed on berries will hit.

The best locations, naturally, are where mulberry trees are hanging over the water. When the trees are full of fruit, there is a constant chumming, which draws fish into the area. Be sure to target the areas first where fish are seen actively feeding under the trees.

The biggest problem is the berry stain. It can get on your clothing, boat carpeting, and most of all, hands. As Clayton said, “You look like you’ve been shaking hands with Barney”. The purple stain is a perfect indication of what an angler has been using. There is no hiding this bait. However, a good hand cleaner, and brush will remove most of it. As for the clothing, I poured a full cup of Cheer Free and Gentle detergent on the stain, and threw the shirt in with the remainder of the washing. Clayton also has another tip – wear a dark purple shirt.

During the show’s taping we ran into a couple of locations where the catfish was striking on every cast. This type of activity is not uncommon when the trees are in a “full fruit” condition. In fact, Clayton caught a 12.3-pound grass carp on camera. Our biggest never made a television appearance, as they found a way to break the line, or straighten the hook.

If you want the bait that will catch several species of fish, is easy to obtain, with no cost, can produce a “tackle busting” fish, and are simple to use - then try mulberries.

In case you don’t catch fish, the bait can be eaten. Mulberries are good fresh, or in a pie by themselves or with rhubarb.

Thanks Clayton for a great outing, and idea. In fact, because of this unique subject, and the great videography and production work by Brad Mosier, the show won first place in the 2008 AGLOW Awards in the TV Fishing category. This show can be seen on the Dan’s Fish ‘N’



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on the water,
and enjoy a
great day of
fishing.

This area of overhanging mulberry trees is the perfect location to find fish feeding on these sweet and juice morsels.

Esox Explosions in the Prop Wash

By Patrick Savard and Marc Thorpe



« Fish! Fish! Big Fish! » Are the three words that have been ringing in my fishing dreams over the past eight years or so. And this blessed sound is always combined with the song of a screaming reel and images of fish putting on Big Growls behind the Boat. Bent rod plunging from the sheer weight of the thrashing predator. The fight begins, but everyone on board agrees; a prolong fight is unnecessary. We want to make sure that the

beast will return to its lair as soon as possible. Once the monstrous fish is netted in a pen style net, we allow rest at boatside, quick picture, and then release, in hopes for future matches in coming years as it moves up the weight classes.

There are absolutely no words to explain all of this without losing a sense of the present, the smiles, the laughs, the eyes of the happy fisherman who is satisfied that all of his efforts were fruitful. And those who say that a picture is worth a thousand words are wrong. Marc would rather you “Leave your Smiles on shore” Save’em for the occasion of course!

I started fishing some 20 years ago, and I have always been an avid sportsman. Nevertheless, to tackle muskies for the first time, one has to be properly equipped and to know what to do and when. It is precisely for that reason that I deemed it a crucial investment to hire a knowledgeable guide to try this type of fishing. I never regretted my decision, as each dollar, I invested was clearly worth ten times more.

However, I will be honest with my readers. On our first trolling pass on an extremely warm day on the



Ottawa river, when Marc asked my fishing pal and I to set the lures 6 feet behind the boat, and when he adjusted the speed to approximately five mph, I could have sworn that we were on a boat ride. We had booked him for two days, and my first five minutes in his boat made me believe that we had completely wasted our money. I did say the first five minutes. Any doubt that I may have had faded away at light speed when the rod went off on a 48-inch beauty. The smile I lost, I regained!



“Short-line trolling,” Marc called it. I had read about it before. However, I never fully understood the true significance of “short” until I saw it for real. 4-10 feet of line, large lures dragged in the prop wash and speed. I also very quickly realized that to him, a structure was not to be perceived as something you fish close to. It is something you fish into. Weed flats and edges were the ticket. I was bound to ask Marc questions.

The logic behind each of Marc’s answers was crystal clear. Muskies sometimes prowl around structure, but they also spend a lot of time on the structure itself. When this happens, why would one waste time pull lures in dead water? Of course, heading directly into structure requires strategy, and all of it is based on one quintessential element: lure control. If you cannot tell what your lure is doing and where it is specifically, chances are that you will lose lots of tackle, or you will spend your time removing weeds on useless plugs. Hence, spending a few hours testing specific lures at different speeds and line lengths cannot be deemed a waste of time, for it is, in fact, an investment in future fishing success.

There are ways to fine-tune the lure presentation and to use your tackle’s characteristics at their best. For instance, using larger diameter braided lines will add friction in the water, keeping the lure closer to the surface, while the use of steel wire or thinner diameter super braids will allow the lure to go deeper as it offers less resistance in the water. The same goes for leaders. Because of their smaller diameter, braided steel leaders will have a tendency to let the lure go deeper, plus they will saw their way through the weeds instead of getting caught up in them, while larger diameter monofilament (fluorocarbon) leaders will keep a lure closer to the surface. It is therefore, possible to create the right combination of line, leader, lure, speed and line length to maximize the lure’s efficiency in specific fishing conditions. Understanding lift created by the



diameter of your line and leaders and the attained presentation is critical to the performance of your presentation.

The secret of line length is very closely associated with control. Indeed, any lure that normally dives to 20 feet on a more “normal” line length can easily be used in 6 feet of water, provided you only give it 6 feet of line or so. This way, it is possible to use almost any lure—deep or shallow runner—directly on structure. Besides the fact that trolling a shorter line enables you to control lure depth, there is also another major advantage with this technique. Putting a lure almost directly into or along the prop, wash prevents dense weeds from getting caught up in the hooks. The wash pushes the weeds down, leaving some clearance for the lures to go through and reducing snags tremendously.

And for people who may still believe that any fish will flee or spook as soon as fast-moving boat approaches, they are in for a major surprise. This belief is based on human logic. Our resources have become traffic ways, and its aquatic inhibitors have adapted. Marc even performs this presentation on walleyes!

Understanding the way an opportunistic predator thinks is the key. The wash of a fast-moving boat inevitably creates disturbances in the water, and those disturbances disorient smaller baitfish or make em flee. Smaller fish in distress will be marked as prey by larger fish, and thus perch, sunfish and crappie will take this opportunity to feed on minnows. This time of distraction from smaller prey will attract and allow even larger predators to feed. This is where we find muskies. It is extremely hard to



believe until one has seen it happen, as all of this takes place within just a few seconds. As the boat approaches, muskies will sit at the bottom or the weeds, and as soon as the boat has passed, they will instinctually grab any fish that may have ventured to feed on disoriented baitfish in the wash. Within two days in his boat, Though the weather was scorching hot, and regardless of the fact that there was absolutely no wind at all, we managed to release more than 20 muskies, including 40, 42, 48 and 51 inchers.

I know that some of you may think that all of this was just a matter of coincidence. A one-time pattern. But on every subsequent trip the haunting continued!

I should have mentioned that musky fishing quickly turns into an infatuation—the same technique enabled us to boat and release two double-headers, two 52 inchers in half an hour of fishing, and also a 53 and a 55 incher.

However, my true joy is not in listing all the muskies that I have caught with Marc. Instead, it is to think that all of these fish were released in very good health, simply because we took great care not to handle them in excessive manners. And through time, I have discovered that anyone who wishes to give musky fishing a try does not begin on the water. Fishing for muskie begins with proper tackle and laid-out procedures, long before one reaches the wharf. If not muskie fishing could turn out to be your next day to potential injury. What is needed is fairly simple: a pair of good bolt cutters in case the hooks cannot be removed without injuring the fish or oneself, a pair of long-nose pliers, a very large net with coated mesh to avoid splitting the fish's fins, perhaps a measuring cradle to let the fish rest prior to its release and in water measurements, and finally and most importantly a good camera for capturing your moments. It is essential to let the fish rest in the water immediately after the fight, and then to minimize the time out of the water while pictures are taken. Even more so, in warm and less oxygenated water, all fish take more time to recover, and thus it is preferable not to take the fish out in those conditions. Signs of stressed fish or water release fish tend to have slender bodies or display a rosy red coloration on the flanks upon resting in the net.

If capturing moments of healthy fish have been completed, allow the fish to rest in the cradle for some time if a measurement is desired, if not proceed to water release. When signs of renewed



vigor are displayed allow it the fish to swim off. If the fish remains on the surface, keep a safe distance and observe the safety of the individual. Marc does not recommend holding onto the fish if it wishes to depart and remains on the surface, many times this restraining tends to increase stress levels of confinement on the individual. Very few things in a fisherman's memory can compare to the sight of a very large fish that swims away after a memorable fight.

Regardless of its reputation, the musky is not really the “fish of 1000 casts.” Just as for any species one may wish to catch in one's life, it is important to understand where and how it lives, and this knowledge will reduce the learning curve significantly. And out of sheer respect for nature's incredible gift when a musky is caught, it is necessary for the lucky fisherman to let the fish go in good shape for the future generations to feel the same thrill of catching such beauties.

Develop Muscle For Saltwater Fishing

By Jake Bussolini

Most of us old and worn fresh water fishermen think we have it hard fishing for our regular catch of bass or other game fish. We spend six to eight hours in a single day, casting maybe five hundred times, or even dragging a lure behind the boat as we relax in our seat waiting for a fish to bite. In most cases, the line is only out 50 to 100 feet, and our reels are geared to make the retrieve as painless as possible. No matter how fast a retrieve we make, it is never really a chore, especially when we have a fish at the end of the line. I do remember one fishing experience in Canada where I caught more than 100 smallmouth bass each day for a week. Casting a crank bait five of six hundred times each day gave me real problems, the result of which was surgery to repair some nerve damage. I have to admit, even in this situation, I had some previous damage from a fall. Other than that incident, I never remember coming home at night with shoulder or arm pain from casting or retrieving a freshwater fish.



Now salt water fishing is another matter. I recently made a four-day fishing trip to Hatteras North Carolina. On a salt water charter boat, fishing deep water 30 miles off the coast at the western edge of the gulfstream, the equipment looks much different as shown in this photo.

The reel on the left holds about 1100 yards of line and the smaller reel on the right hold about 500 yards. That's right, I said 1100 yards not feet. The worse part of a long retrieve is that these

reels contain no leveler mechanism, so you have to use your thumb to guide the line to prevent the buildup during the retrieve. Picture yourself retrieving a fish that makes a run of 300 yards, several times during a retrieve. The reels are geared down a little, but it still takes heavy arm and shoulder effort to bring these fish in. If you happen

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to catch a good day when your group catches 40 to 50 large fish, you just might need the old Ben Gay that night.

My group recently has had a good day on the 54-foot Hatteras Fever II, owned and operated by Captain Buddy Hooper and assisted by his mate Jack Graham. The mahi mahi were schooling in the warm gulfstream water and six hours of intense fishing produced this crop of mahi mahi, wahoo and black fin tuna. All the fish were caught using ballyhoo as bait. Obviously, the fish wanted that bait on this day.

The gang for this day included from left to right, Frankie Monaca of Michigan, Howie Anders of Tennessee, Peter Enyeart, Rich Doering and Frank Monaco of Mooresville NC. I missed this day of fishing since I had to return home for a previous commitment. I think it is safe to say that there were five tired men at the end of the day. No one really counted the yards of line that they retrieved because the excitement of catching these fish took the focus off of the pain of the dozens of retrieves for each of the guys.

The previous day when I was still with part of this group, Rich Doering, Peter Enyeart and I decided to jump on a head boat to fish at Hatteras. We boarded the 73-foot Miss Hatteras, owned and operated by Captain Spurgeon Stowe, with his first mate Kenneth Scott.



There were about twenty anglers on board that day, and again, we headed for the warm gulfstream waters. The two-hour trip each way gave us about six hours of fishing. Using small pieces of squid as bait, with several ounces of weight and more than 200 feet of water, the fish that were in good supply trigger fish, sized approximately like the one I am holding in this photo.

These fish are bottom fish, so the technique was to rapidly let the line drop to the bottom, jiggling slowly once it reached the bottom. The rig used was similar to a drop shot, with two hooks attached to separate

short leaders. The secret to success was to feel the fish bite immediately after reaching the bottom. If you did not feel the bite and set the hook within second after reaching the bottom, your rig would come up empty of fish and bait. This resulted in retrieving more than 200 feet of line every couple of minutes. When the line came up empty, it was still a chore but when you were lucky enough to hook a fish or even two at a time, the retrieve needed to be fast and furious. After about three hours of this, the arms became sore and the wrist and fingers needed some rest. This was not as easy as freshwater fishing by a long shot.

I was fishing next close to a young lady named Jen Moore. She was a slight person, not someone whom you would think was even near a gym. Her Husband Steve was fishing a few yards down the rail, and I was sort of keeping track of the competition between the two. Actually, there was no competition at all, not with Steve or any other of the men on



the boat. Jen had found the right technique, pulling in fish after fish at a far faster rate than any of us guys on the boat. She was catching vermillion snappers like the one she is holding in this photo.



She had already filled more than two pails with trigger fish and snappers while my pail was not even half full. Her arms never seemed to tire, vigorously cranking on her reel like a real pro. By the end of this day, our crew of three caught more than 50 fish as shown.

caught. Incidentally, the only reason Jen is just holding one fish is that it fell off the stringer. Steve had to get up on a bench to show their fish properly. Most of the fish were the result of Jen's skills. Steve just did the heavy lifting. We found out at the end of the trip that Jen is pregnant, and we wish her well with that experience.

The stringer that Jen and Steve brought in had twice as many fish as we had

For most of us who do not live near the ocean, but want an occasional salt water experience, we have two choices. We can book a specific private charter or take a day on an open party boat (head boat). The other option of course is to have a friend who regularly fishes in salt water and has a boat. Most of us do not have that advantage. For us, it's the head boat or a charter. There are advantages and disadvantages to both. The advantage of a charter is the small size of the party, usually limited to your friends



and fishing partners. You will normally be targeting specific species of fish, and most likely they will be large fish. The down side of course is price. Charters tend to be more costly per person.

Head boats or party boats offer the opportunity of a much lower cost, because there are many more customers on board to share the operating cost of the boat. The fish on head boats are normally smaller, and the fishing is often much more crowded. A hidden advantage of a head boat is the opportunity to mix with and meet interesting people, like Jen and Steve Moore. Whatever choice is made, be sure to understand that salt water fishing can be much more tiring than a day of short casts and short retrieves on a fresh water lake or stream.

Jake Bussolini is a freelance writer and author of several books about freshwater fishing. His latest book, Jake's Fishing Facts and all of his other books can be reviewed on his web site, www.Jakestakeonfishing.com.



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Is There a Fishing Phenomenon for the Bass Fisherman?

Captain Mike Gerry

All my years of bass fishing I have experienced good days and bad days; I've been part of days where you catch a lot of fish, but has there ever been a day that I would call special so special you are



wowed by the results? Is there a day that the fish stack up in a small area and that small 20 yards of space on an enormous lake keeps replenishing itself with fish; a day where you can sit on that same spot for eight hours and catch fish after fish?

The kind of day where not only do you catch fish, but you catch big fish in big numbers; five, six pounds or bigger cast after cast. The kind of day that you never move your boat, you hunker down on one spot, don't move and the area keeps replenishing itself with bass like the bread man in a convenience store that keeps restocking your shelves.

It is a question I am sure that many bass fishing lovers have tried to answer; the day on the water we have all searched for; spent endless money and time for that day! Could it be possible that you experience this one day over a period of one life time for you and your fishing partner who have racked up a life time looking for this bass fishing phenomena?

Friday 5/17/13 I experienced what I believe would qualify as a day of bass fishing phenomena. I was with a father and son here from Indianapolis fishing Guntersville for a couple of days. We were wowed, blessed and amazed as we sat the boat down on a spot where the fish were moving out to a post spawn pattern from a creek. Cast after cast, we caught fish, big fish, no matter what bait we fished. We never moved the boat, and the small area kept replenishing itself; it was a bass fishing phenomena!

Fish Lake Guntersville Guide Service, www.fishlakeguntersvilleguideservice.com, www.facebook.com/FishGuntersville, Email: bassguide@comcast.net. Call: 256 759 2270



Youth Fishing with PotashCorp

By Rosie DeAnnuntis

Recently, when asked by an employee of PotashCorp Augusta (GA) Facility to help with PotashCorp's charity tournament as a volunteer, even though I knew exactly what I was getting myself into, I immediately, without hesitation, agreed for a number of reasons. Who am I? I was part of my community's youth angler team, North Augusta Fishing Team (NAFT) in 2012 responsible for sales, marketing and promotions for the team and currently the Assistant to the VP and Tournament Director of The Mr. Clark Hill Committee, an organization dedicated to promoting the growth and education of youth anglers in Georgia and South Carolina (for more information please check out the organization's webpage: www.mrclarkhillcommittee.com/). Who are and what does PotashCorp stand for? PotashCorp is an organization, as per their words found at their website, in their Core Values page, the first statement: "We are the world's largest integrated producer of nitrogen, phosphate and potash serving three distinct markets: agriculture, animal nutrition and industry. Our long-term strategy is to offer superior returns through perpetual growth, aspiring to link our financial performance with areas of extended responsibility to the environment and to social and economic stakeholders that depend on us." WOW! What a statement! As part of their core value (of doing business) fiscal failure, to them, is not upholding the environments they come into contact with; making the environments they come into contact better than before they arrived. PotashCorp is an organization that has learned from their preceding leaders and has a mission that plainly states they are aware and intend to make the world in which they do business better. Potash is the world's leader in producing fertilizer by producing the three primary nutrients found naturally in crop nutrients: potash (K), phosphate (P) and nitrogen (N). For more information about PotashCorp check out, their website at www.potashcorp.com.

PotashCorp's mission is to be responsible members of the communities in which they are part of. On a social basis, my youth angler team is fully aware of who they are and what they stand for.



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PotashCorp, as a sponsor of a local youth angler team from Georgia and South Carolina, supports those who are learning to be conservation ambassadors and environmental stewards. They understand the youth of our world are this world's future and has committed to taking on the responsibility to promote, encourage and educate youth the facts on how to make their world better. As part of their education program, subjects ranging from fertilizer use to environmental impact and safety are key topics. For example, their program to teach crop nutrients, Coaching Kids on Crop Nutrients, is an agricultural education program designed to teach kids from crop growing communities about the importance of, and facts behind natural origins of fertilizer and the role fertilizer plays in the world's agricultural arena. I want to be part of an event for an organization, like PotashCorp, who understands and actively promotes the

fact that future success as a planet falls squarely on today's youth. For more information about PotashCorp environmental impact statement, please visit their page at www.potashcorp.com/environmental_impact/overview/.



The Tackle Shop

PotashCorp's two-day charity tournament event, Fish Back Open Team Tournament, June 8-9, 2013, was designed with youth anglers and environmental stewardship in mind. In a joint collaboration with Fishiding

Artificial Habitats, The Mr. Clark Hill Committee and the tournament director

and brain child of the tournament, Joey Bruyninckx of PotashCorp Augusta Facility, the intent of the tournament is to 'fish' back; to the environment, the local youth angler teams and the Georgia Ovarian Cancer Alliance. All proceeds, yes 100%, will be donated to the Georgia Ovarian Cancer Alliance and to local youth angler groups. The premise of the tournament is all participating competing anglers, along with all local youth anglers, will help to install Fishiding Artificial Habitat structures into the Clark Hill Lake in Appling Georgia. What does this mean? At the first fishing hole, each boat visit or to any one place, the two-man team thinks the habitat would be most beneficial, the habitat will literally be bent to shape and dropped into the water. These structures are made from reclaimed pvc siding and come with an integral weighted base. After a short bit of time, periphyton and algae will grow on them, in turn producing food and a safe environment for fish to live, hunt and grow protected, thus ensuring more surviving to adulthood. Converting nutrients like phosphorus and nitrogen from the water naturally, this concept in long term habitat is being used Nationwide. For more information about Fishiding, check out their site at www.fishiding.com/.

I love the fact our local youth anglers will learn how to make their waterways produce more fish yet not destroy any part of their environment. I especially love how our youth witness their community leaders; their fathers, grandfathers, and other members of their communities take an active role in making their planet better for all future generations. What a grand way for our youth to learn how to be better leaders, more effective environmentalists and to be more aware of the fact that what one does for their world truly has a long lasting effect. Whether one does good or bad things, one's actions truly has a lasting effect. As an active member of my

community, and a mother with two children, I realize the role, I take in making my children's world better and how more positive actions help all, and not just immediate. As an angler, I hope to inspire all youth to do and be better – activists, leaders, parents (later on in life, after college) and to be involved, in their lives, their communities and their world. Why did I jump on the opportunity to do countless hours of volunteer work, only to help the immediate





community? During the short period, I worked in the NAFT youth, I have always preached to each of the 18 members to stay strong to your beliefs, to give back whenever possible, and team work pays off! I have witnessed at the beginning of the season, how each member had no idea what team work really meant. We had 18 kids from different walks

of life thinking competitive fishing was an individual sport. Even though the PotashCorp Fish Back Tournament is in June, when the youth angler season is over, I still have 18 kids wanting to give back and help out their community! This, my friends, means I have completed what I set out to do. Although we were tough on them and expected much from them, not only as a team, but as individuals, I hope each was inspired to be exemplary examples of environmental stewards, and be for their peers' community leaders and will carry the lessons learned throughout their lives and in whatever profession, they choose.

So folks, I must lead by example. Have I inspired you to help organize a youth angler team in your community at all? By the time my 10-year-old son goes off to college in 8 years, I hope tournament fishing is part of all high school's sports and in turn is part of the collegiate scholarship program. I hope kids have the opportunity to go to college on a full angler scholarship, just like a football or baseball scholarship. However, to accomplish this hope, communities must take an active role in their youth. Youth angler teams need one thing really...you! They need adults to teach them about the sport of tournament fishing, about the environment and how they can positively impact their world. Without you getting involved, how can they expect to be a biologist, a state's Natural Resource officer or a professional angler? Without the help of community leaders like PotashCorp or The Mr. Clark Hill Committee, where will tournament fishing be?

Have I inspired you to jump-start a kid's passion for fishing by starting a youth angler team? If so, you will need help. Visit websites like TBF – The Bass Federation. The TBF website, for instance, provides step by step instructions on how to start a TBF youth organization. So go ahead, my friends start a team! You will be blessed, and you will be inspired! To learn more about the PotashCorp Fish Back Open Team Tournament, visit their Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Potashcorp-Annual-Fish-Back-Tournament/>.



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