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- ▶ Fish in Connecticut with a Connecticut Charter & Party Boat Association Member
- ▶ Why Connecticut is a Great Choice for your Fishing Adventure
- ▶ "Bucktailing" for Fluke in Long Island Sound
- ▶ Black Sea Bass Fishing in Long Island Sound
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- ▶ North East Canyon Tuna Fishing
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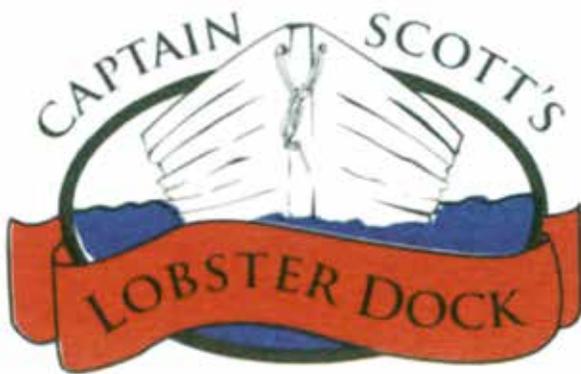
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# **FISH IN CONNECTICUT WITH A CONNECTICUT CHARTER AND PARTY BOAT ASSOCIATION MEMBER**

*By Captain Marc Berger*

In the past, I've written about the advantages of chartering with a member of The Connecticut Charter & Party Boat Association. I'd like to reiterate some of my previous points as well as share some additional information about fishing in our local waters and other attractions that Connecticut has to offer. Whether you want to fish on a large capacity party boat, a six passenger private charter or a light tackle/fly fishing boat, there are some very important considerations as to why you should go with a CCPBA member. Fishing on a CCPBA boat along the Connecticut coast is a short ride from almost anywhere. We have boats available for charter from Stamford to Stonington and all ports in between. You can spend the day fishing with us and extend your stay with the many attractions that Connecticut has to offer such as the casinos, aquariums or terrific shopping outlets.

When you fish with a CCPBA boat, after you have made your reservations all you need to do is show up at the dock and you're ready to go. Your captain will take you to the most productive areas and when you return back, your fish are filleted and packaged for you to take home and enjoy. We often hear from our customers that it is less expensive to take several trips a year with us rather than have your own boat, considering the cost of fuel, dockage or trailering, insurance and tackle.

CCPBA boats fish daily and have the advantage of knowing the most likely spots to target. We are in contact with each other to give you your best shot at landing your trophy and having a great day on the water. Unlike some of the other Connecticut charter boats available, CCPBA boats all carry the proper licenses and permits so there's no need for you or your friends to purchase a fishing license. We all carry the appropriate equipment and electronics to offer you the highest degree of safety.

Like a diamond in the rough, CT is a well-kept secret when it comes to awesome fishing. There's no need to make the long drive to other states. We are easy to get to and the fishing is as good as it gets. CCPBA members are dedicated to making your experience the best it can be. Check out our website at [www.ctsportfishing.com](http://www.ctsportfishing.com), choose the boat you like, pick up the phone, ask any questions you may have and then book a trip with a CCPBA boat!

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## Why Connecticut is a Great Choice for your Fishing Adventure

*By Captain Bob Veach*

Our states waters are rich with sea life. There are dozens of ports and harbors along the coast that provide access to some of the most productive fishing in all of New England. Our state is the choice of anglers who want to catch local species such as Striped Bass, Bluefish, Black Sea Bass, Fluke, Scup and Bonito. Those that would like to target Shark, Tuna and Mahi-mahi can venture offshore.

Captains who are members of the Connecticut Charter and Party Boat Association operate their boats from ports west to points east, enabling them to fish the waters of Connecticut, New York and Rhode Island. As the fish move, so do we, and because of our close proximity to these other areas, we can consistently put our clients on fish.

Striped Bass and Bluefish are migratory species. Stripers begin to arrive in May, although the Housatonic, Connecticut and Thames Rivers hold large numbers of these fish year round. Hard fighting Bluefish are not far behind and usually arrive in good numbers toward the end of June. Winter flounder move from rivers to near-shore waters in April. Summer flounder (fluke) fishing is excellent from May through September. Porgy

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(scup) and Black Sea Bass fishing is very good from June into October. False Albacore and Bonito Tuna populate our waters from August into November. Blackfish (tautog) fishing begins in October and they will hold on reefs and wrecks right into December. Shark arrive in June and Tuna and Mahi-mahi start arriving shortly thereafter.

Connecticut has a unique coastline that is heavily structured with many natural reefs, rivers and estuaries. This combination creates strong tides that attract and hold bait which draws Striped Bass, Blues and other species. Popular areas such as "The Race", "Southwest Reef" and "Middle Ground" are recognized as some of the best fishing locations in New England. These hotspots hold bait and fish throughout the spring, summer and fall. Migrating schools of Striped Bass and Bluefish take up residence on these structures seeking out baitfish. As some move on, others take their place, making them some of the most dependable fishing locations on the East Coast.

When you charter a boat from the Connecticut Charter and Party Boat Association, you will be fishing some of the best areas in the northeast with an experienced professional captain and crew whose knowledge of these waters contribute to consistently putting fish in the boat.

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## **"Bucktailing" for Fluke in Long Island Sound** *Captain Joe Devine*

Fluke are one of my favorite fish to catch in Long Island Sound. I have actively fished for fluke since the mid seventies and have always used the Bucktail as my go-to lure. I had a Mako center console in 1978 and loved to drift small bucktails tipped with squid and mummies and I would catch a lot of fish. The size limit back then was 14 inches but we self imposed our own size limit of 17 inches to make going through the effort of filleting the fish worth the trouble. With this size limit, needless to say there was a lot of catch and release and this certainly made us learn what caught the bigger fish and what didn't.

### **Tackle and Presentation**

With the advent of better tackle and braided lines years later, catching bigger fluke in deeper water became a realistic goal. When bucktailing you need to use a heavy enough jig to keep in contact with the bottom for the entire drift. I have tried many methods of jigging and the most accepted by "Mr. Fluke" are small hops done by just a flick of the wrist over and over. There are a lot of different types of bucktails, the "smiling bill", the "bullet" and my personnel favorite the "lima bean". I have them in many

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colors including pink, chartreuse, red, white and yellow. In my experience they are the best colors and I have them in sizes from 1/2 oz. up to 10 ounces.

For rods and reels, Tsunami makes some very nice rods that are affordable and do the job. I love using a medium heavy or an extra heavy baitcast set up. For reels, all the major manufacturers make reels that work excellent for fluke. I personally like the Okuma Cortez; it is a rugged yet light reel with a smooth drag. Load the reels with braid, as it is a must for bucktailing. It will help you tend bottom better than conventional monofilament and you can fit a lot of line on the reel with it. Use whatever braided line you like; personally I only fish 30 lb test line or greater.

### **Baiting Up**

The most important thing to remember is freshness. On our boats, we go to great lengths to obtain the freshest bait possible, even if the cost is high, because it just plain works better. Squid strips, fluke belly, bluefish belly and sea robin fillets all work well. You can't go wrong fishing a strip bait and tip your hook with a spearing also. A lot of bites are the norm when bucktailing with spearing and when the bites stop, it is a good indication that your spearing is gone. Don't get me wrong, you

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can get bites with just a bait strip but you will receive a lot more bites by adding spearing. Adding a stinger hook at times is also extremely effective. Some days fluke will jump right on the bucktails and on other days it seems like whatever you do you can't hook a fish. That's the day you might need a stinger. Gamakatsu makes pre packaged stingers sized as 2/0 and 3/0; I recommend the 3/0.

Fluke arrive in May and whether you fish on your own boat or one of the many private charter or party boats in Connecticut, I hope these tips for fluking will help you tighten up your game. Go to [ctsportfishing.com](http://ctsportfishing.com) to find a boat near you!



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## **Black Sea Bass Fishing in Long Island Sound** *By Captain Frank Blume*

In recent years we have seen a steady increase in the numbers of Black Sea Bass in Long Island Sound. Not only are there more of them but larger ones, as well. If you have not yet targeted these great tasting fish, you may want to give it a try. Although they do not grow as large as other species that roam the waters of Long Island Sound, what they lack in size they sure make up for it in taste! These are among the best tasting fish in the northeast and on light tackle they are pretty feisty.

### **Habitat**

Black Sea Bass usually arrive from their deep wintering grounds off New York and New Jersey in the month of May and are around until the fall. Look for them in water from 20 feet up to 120 feet in depth. Water temperature preference is in the 59 to 65 degree range. They can be found on the bottom in rocky areas, sharp drop offs, wrecks and around pilings.

### **Bait and Lures**

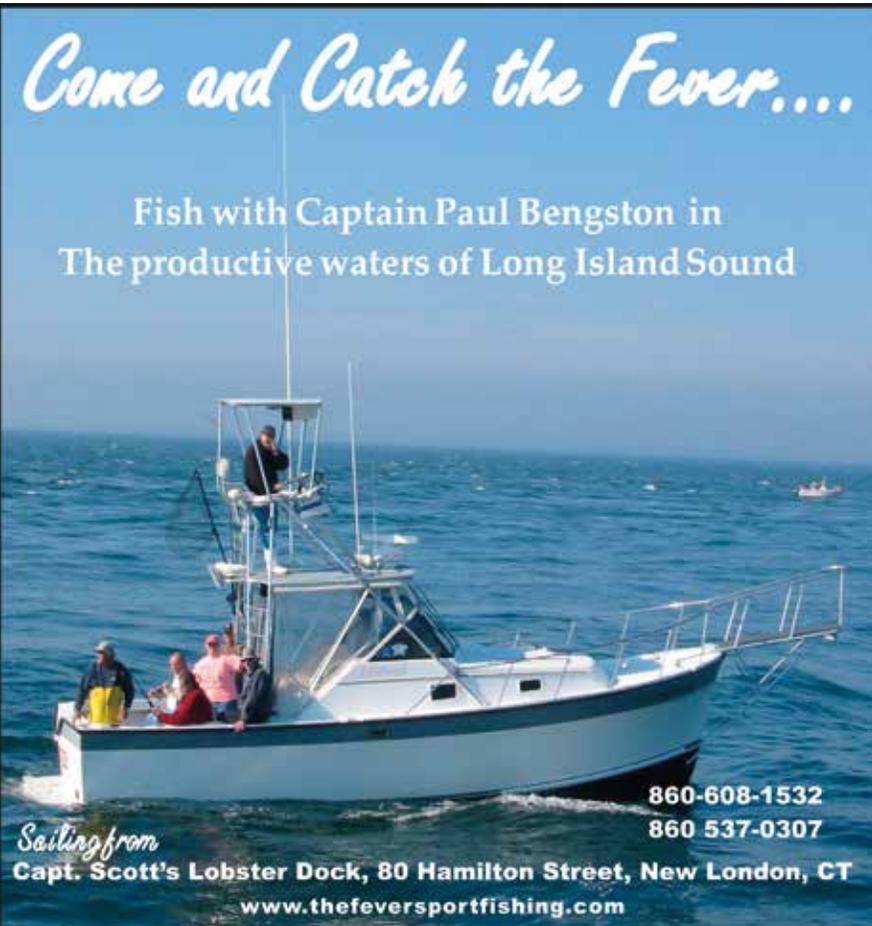
These bottom dwellers feed on crabs of all sorts, including Asian Shore Crabs, Hermit Crabs, Rock Crabs as well as Squid and small baitfish. The most prominent bait that I have found them feeding on, are these invasive, small brown crabs known as the Asian Shore



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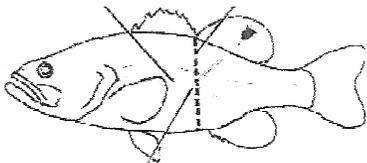
Crabs that are thought to have arrived here in the ballast of a cargo ship that docked in New Jersey in 1988. Most commonly used baits are squid and clams, usually fished on a high-low rig consisting of two #2 hooks about 16 inches apart with a sinker at the bottom. I prefer the Mustad #92642 gold beak hooks and usually attach a squid strip about an inch and a half in length. The bait can be combined with a Twister Tail Grub or something similar if you wish. Fish them just off the bottom while drifting. You can jig occasionally if you like but if you have enough current it is not necessary. If you prefer to use lures, try squid imitations, Twister Tail Grubs, Deadly Dick lures, small diamond jigs, spoons or small Smiling Bill Bucktails.

### Catch and Release

If you are fishing in water deeper than 60 feet or reel in your fish too fast, you will undoubtedly encounter fish that come to the surface with an inflated swim bladder. This displaces the fish's internal organs and pushes the esophagus out of the fish's mouth. If an under-sized fish is caught or you wish to release a legal size fish you must release it in a manner that will allow it to survive. To avoid bringing fish to the surface with inflated swim bladders you can refrain from using high-speed retrieving reels, reel

them in slower or pause for 30 seconds or so when you get them up to 40 or 50 feet. You can determine when you have the fish in the “deflate” area by counting the number of turns to the surface on your first drop, then figure out when you should pause. Another method of returning them safely is to hook the fish you wish to release to another line with an attached sinker no longer than 60’ and return them to the water while you continue your drift. When ready to start a new drift, retrieve the fish and it should be ready to be safely returned. You can also puncture the swim bladder with a hypodermic needle as shown in the illustration below.

Swim bladder      Imaginary line



Insert hypodermic needle here

*To release air from an over-inflated air bladder, insert a hypodermic needle under a scale at a 45 degree angle pointing forward, at the mid-way point on either side of the fish and exert pressure on the stomach.*





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## Trolling for Striped Bass and Bluefish

By Captain Mike Pirri

The stage is set, it's six o'clock in the morning, the sun just breached the horizon, you look at your friends and there are grins all around. That's right you're going FISHING!

As the diesel engine speeds up so does your excitement. One month ago, you surfed the internet for a Connecticut fishing charter and booked a professional from the Connecticut Charter and Party Boat Association. Your target is Long Island Sound Striped Bass. Anticipation builds and your next question is how are we going to catch them.

### Techniques

A Charter Boat Captain primarily uses three tactics to attract striped bass to your fishing lure. All of these tactics can achieve excellent results; rest assured your Captain is selecting the right one.

**Anchoring**- Holds the boat stationary over a rock pile. Anglers then send chunks of bait to the bottom and wait for a bite.

**Drifting**- Positioning the boat updrift of a rock pile, then allowing your baits to drift downdrift with the current. This momentarily presents your bait in the "strike zone" in a natural fashion.

**Trolling**- The boat idles forward slowly with artificial lures consistently in the strike zone, while anglers and Captain work lures together to catch fish.

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Among all of these listed methods, there are typically many questions regarding trolling. Hopefully we can explain this method a little better here.

Captains frequently troll spots where the current converges with rock piles or reefs. This creates an upwelling of water known as a "Rip Line". These turbulent "Rips" contain disorientated baitfish such as sand eels, squid, herring, bunker or even juvenile fluke; all a favorite meal of the striped bass. There are many very popular lures for trolling and all Captains have their favorites. The most popular lures in the Northeast are: Umbrella rigs, tube and worm rigs, diving plugs, parachute jigs and the bunker spoon. One of my favorite lures is the "parachute jig". This lure is a weighted leadhead jig with synthetic hair facing forward and back in which an angler works the rod back and forth in a sweeping motion allowing the lure to mimic a live squid or wounded fish.

My other favorite lure is the "bunker spoon". This lure is a large tear dropped shaped piece of metal with a weighted keel. This lure looks like a wounded bunker or small fluke swimming. Green, white, yellow and red are my preferred colors and draw the attention of small "schoolie" striped bass all the way

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up to our largest trophies. Presenting the lures at the right depth is very important and seldom do we see striped bass feeding on the surface. This is why Captains troll stainless steel wire line or use a "downrigger" to exactly match the depth that the striped bass are feeding. Anglers are able to control their fishing depth by simply letting more line off the reel to fish deeper or by cranking some in to fish shallower. Trolling has several advantages. One is that the lure is constantly in the "strike zone". The Captain is able to compensate for the effects of wind and tide on his boat. The Captain steers the boat a few degrees above parallel to the "Rip Line" which allows the lures to fish in the strike zone continuously. Simply put; more time in the strike zone translates to more striped bass caught. Another advantage of trolling is that a charter boats high powered sonar will often show striped bass or baitfish in the "Rip Line". The Captain is then able to focus on a specific area of the reef, unlike drifting or anchoring which does not allow you to use your sonar to "see" fish other than those immediately under the boat. This is why many Captains favor this technique. Sonar will also "mark" fish that are hesitant to bite. A common trick often employed by Captains, is to apply quick bursts of throttle or turn



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hard uptide. This simulates a startled, fleeing baitfish and triggers a reactive strike. This tactic works very well.

### **Hooked up!**

One of the most difficult skills for an angler to acquire is acknowledging all different types of striped bass bites and setting the hook properly. Water temperature, water clarity, bait size, moon phase and tide strength are all factors on the bite. Your Captain will coach you on the right way to set the hook. Stripers can win their freedom by making a fast run at the boat. To defeat these runs an angler needs to maintain steady pressure, and then pick up line even faster when the striper makes his turn toward the boat, your mate with net in hand watches every move the fish makes, as the leader breaks the surface, the mate will direct you to keep fighting the fish and take a step backwards. This step allows the fish to be guided into the mate's net. Now it's time to celebrate and high five's are all around!



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The advertisement features a photograph of the fishing boat 'Middlebank II' with several people on board. The boat is white with blue accents and is docked at a seaport. The background shows trees with autumn foliage.

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## North East Canyon Tuna Fishing

*By Capt. Doug Luginbuhl*

*The North East Canyons include more than 70 canyons ranging from 300 feet to approximately 11,500 feet. They lie approximately 65 miles south of Long Island and extend to over 200 miles off the coast of Maine along the continental shelf in which the "Gulf Stream" travels. This massive ocean current is visibly noticeable by its color that ranges from clear blue to green due to its high levels of phytoplankton and chlorophyll that reflect the sunlight. Within these warmer waters thrives abundant sea life such as marlin, tuna, sharks, mahi-mahi and whales.*

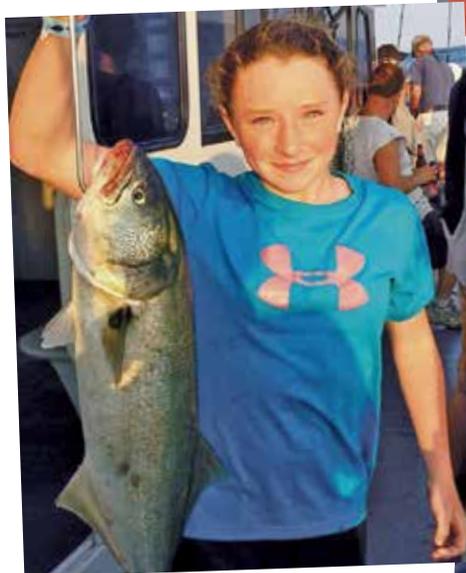
### A Canyon Fishing Adventure

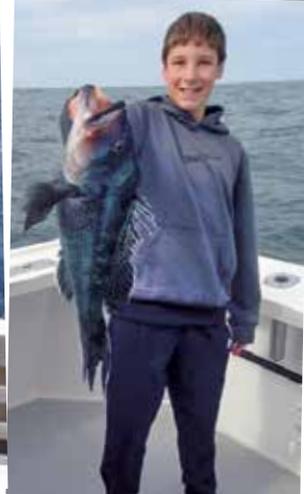
The boat was loaded with ice, bait, tackle and the crew was all smiles as we pulled out of the marina leaving reality and commitments behind. Soon Montauk was beginning to disappear into the horizon as we were on our way to the legendary fishing grounds of the North East Canyons in search of tuna.

When targeting tuna species such as Yellowfin and Albacore we look for water temperatures to be within the 68 to 74 degree temperature range. Sea surface information is a great tool to find water



temperature breaks, warmer water, and the direction the water is moving. Online sea surface temperature (SST) information can be obtained easily from a number of satellite imagery sites including Ocean Temp, Rutgers, FishTrack and sstcharts.com to name a few. This is a necessary piece to the puzzle when putting an offshore trip together. This particular trip we were in search of Yellowfin, a highly sought after gamefish who's fighting capability pound for pound is one of the best. Yellowfin tuna can reach weights of 400 lbs and are found around the globe in tropical water temperatures. This pelagic species is warm blooded and can swim in speeds upward of 50 mph spending 85% of their life in water shallower than 250 ft. Yellowfin eat a variety of sea life including crustaceans, squid, flying fish, butterfish, sardines, mackerel and skipjack tuna; a member of their own family. With this in mind, we brought sardines and butterfish for bait, along with some fresh frozen large squid. Our plan consisted of trolling squid bars and jet heads until dark and then changing over to "chunking" (fishing with bait) throughout the night. The ocean was teeming with life as we traveled to the Canyon that summer day. Schools of baitfish, pods of porpoises and even a large leatherback turtle were

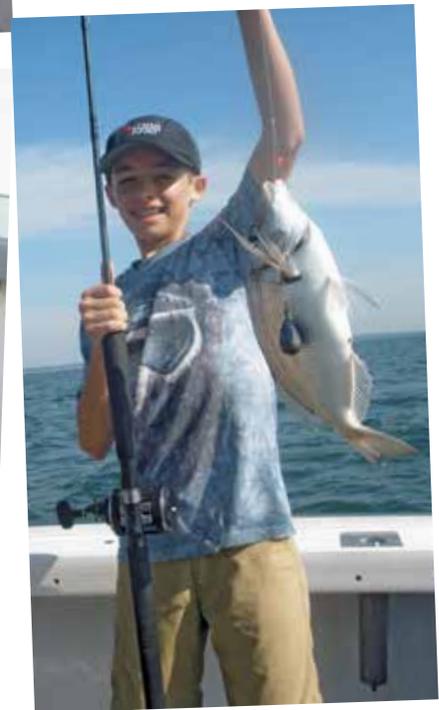




spotted as we headed toward our destination. A few hours later, upon arrival at the 100 fathom line, we found a cluster of boats in the vicinity trolling, while others were chunking. We decided to troll for a bit which availed itself no fish. The sun was now setting and the fleet of boats began to look like a large, lit city. Flawlessly, we transitioned from trolling gear to chunking and hooked a large clear eyed butterfish and set it to 100 feet. We had just set another at 50 feet when a lone squid came up from the depths under our lights, "Net" someone yelled and within seconds we had a live squid pulsating on the shank of a Mustad circle hook that we had begun to spool out. "One more rod" I told my mate and just as he was reaching for the rod, the Penn 70 loaded with 100 lb mono and the hooked squid bounced once and began to scream. "Fish on" was the chant as the fish continued to take line. 15 minutes later a bloody gaff flopped a fat 70 lb Yellowfin onto the deck. "Fine way to start" I thought as I gutted and packed ice into the stomach cavity of the tuna. Throughout the night we were able to net multiple squid that all yielded beautiful Yellowfin. One fish was unstoppable and pulled the hook after a near two hour epic battle. Regardless of "the one that got away", it was a successful trip that none of us will soon forget.

## Safety

The North East Canyons offer some great fishing and an unforgettable experience that will keep you wanting more. When booking a trip to "The Edge" keep in mind that most of these trips are two days and your Captain will want to take advantage of a favorable weather window. If you intend on going on your own private vessel, be sure to thoroughly check the weather and have the proper safety equipment. Items such as a SSB radio or satellite phone, EPIRB, life raft and offshore life jackets are recommended. Feel free to consult one of our CCPBA members for advice.





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## **Shark Fishing**

*By Capt. Rick Roy*

The plan is to go shark fishing tomorrow on an early July day with one of my charter groups. The offshore forecast, which is extremely important, was for light winds out of the south with seas predicted to be 1-2 feet. I spoke with the group leader and told him that we are still on for tomorrow and that I would like to leave the dock at 4:00 am. I also told them to rest.

The next morning I met my first mate Ron at the boat at 3:00 am to get things ready for the trip. At 3:45 am the group shows up and by 4:00 am we throw off the dock lines and pull away from the dock. Everyone is very excited about catching sharks. We have a 2 1/2 hour ride to one of my favorite shark fishing spots, just needing to stop to catch some fresh bluefish for bait. It is daylight as we near Montauk Point. Ron sets out two umbrella rigs and we catch 10 bluefish for the live well and fish box and we are off to the shark grounds.

We arrive at our 'spot' and I check the drift while Ron puts the chum bucket in the water. The charter decides the order of the anglers to determine who will fight the first shark. The first angler tries on the fighting belt and harness so he will be ready when we hook up. Ron and I set out

the baits at different depths and distances from the boat using balloons as floats.

Now we have to sit and wait for the action to happen. After 45 minutes one of the balloons starts to move and a Penn 50 reel begins to scream. Ron grabs the rod, sets the hook and hands the rod to the first angler. After a 15 minute fight, we get the shark next to the boat. It's a blue shark so we release it and reset the baits. Although the next two sharks put up a worthy fight they are also blue sharks so they are also released.

After resetting the baits for the fourth time, we start drifting over some really productive structure. The farthest balloon goes under and that reel starts to scream. Ron grabs the rod, sets the hook and hands it to the fourth angler. All of a sudden the hooked shark jumps

about 8 feet out of the water. I yell, "MAKO!" Mako's can be quite acrobatic, often jumping out of the water trying to throw the hook. After a 20 minute fight and two more jumps we get the mako to the boat. Ron leads the shark and I stick it with a harpoon. The shark runs again but we get it back to the boat. After a few minutes we get a tail rope on the shark. A lot of high fives, this mako is ours. Once it is safe to bring it in the boat, we pull it into the cockpit and tie it off. We've landed a nice 79" mako (measured to the fork in the tail). Legally they have to be a minimum of 54" to keep. It is 1:30 pm now and we still have a 2 1/2 hour ride back to the dock with some very happy but tired anglers. A great day on the water with some great memories and a lot of delicious mako steaks for the grill.



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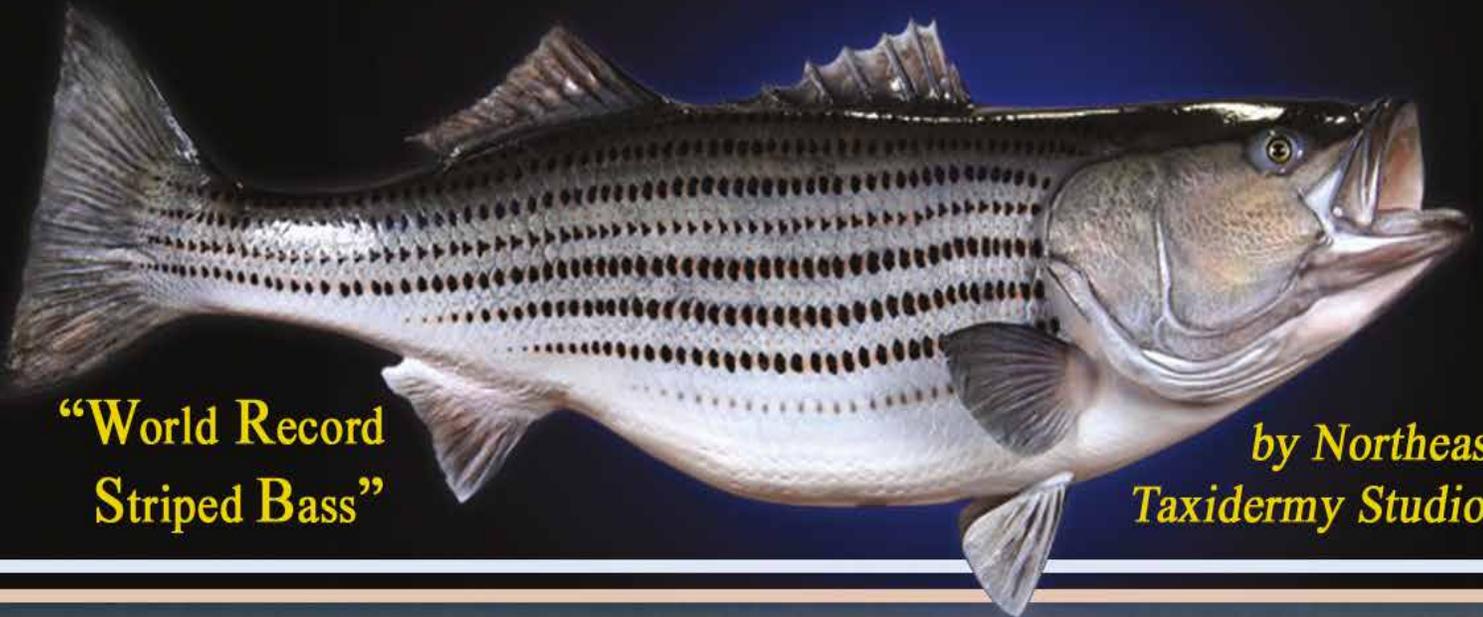
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