



New Jersey Fishing Report

by Nick Honachefsky



To start off, two great points are worthy to note for Jersey anglers. One, the backwaters have officially reopened for striped bass as of March 1, with a two fish bag limit, minimum 28 inches per fish. You can now officially fish surf, offshore and back bay for bass. Two, the winter flounder season got underway when it reopened on March 23 and will extend through May 21 with a 12-inch minimum size and 10 fish bag limit.

That being said, April should be a fantastic month for Jersey anglers because all signs point to a hoppin' spring fishery for both species. We've had an uncharacteristically warm winter, one of the warmest on record, and historically, when we have warmer winters, the flounder bite seems to ignite early and often. Since back bay temps have barely even dropped below 44 degrees, many stripers probably haven't left the waters but stayed put through the winter. Usually mid-to-late March sees the first official bite of stripers, but as I sit here in early March, there's already been bass caught off the beaches and in the back bays, meaning that by April the bite should really be on the hook.

Northern Jersey

The striper bite in the surf off Sandy Hook pretty much died out with only a few taken here and there off the beaches, which is the norm for February. Be prepared though; stripers will begin

their springtime bite in earnest usually somewhere around the second week of April. It's almost always a clam bite, with smaller 20 to 30-inch bass moving through, but it can be sure and steady action if you set up your clam slick right on the last of the outgoing tides. The big news you want to be aware of up here is the fact that the Raritan Bay winter flounder fishery has been the best in the state for the last three years, with the snowshoes showing up in Raritan better than anywhere else.



Two years ago six-pack charters were catching sometimes over 200 fish in a day and going back for more the next day, with a seemingly endless supply of the flatties. Last year the bite quelled down a little bit, but there were still plenty of flounder to be put in the cooler. The hottest spots seemed to gravitate back inside the bay, in areas such as the Keyport Flats, Morgan Creek Flats, and way back inside almost to the Driscoll

Bridge. The flounder in March are usually just unearthing themselves from the mud, and you'll notice the early emergers have mud on their bellies, which is a good sign if you want to tell that the flounder bite is just beginning to kick off. If they have white bellies, then the run is underway.

Wintertime flatties will stack up in the backwaters, but will progressively move on outward into the ocean waters as April and May come full circle. Late April and May, you want to be setting up your slick in the area of Romer Shoal, since the flatfish stage there during the later part of springtime, sunning themselves on the shallower shoals and preparing to leave the bay. You'll only have until May 21 this year to fish for them; then it's all over for the entire year. Most likely you'll be leaving them biting since the run will sometimes last well into June, but those are the regs we have to live with for now. Be sure to bring plenty of corn chum, bloodworms, 1 to 3-ounce bank sinkers, and yellow beads with you to put a formidable array of blackbacks into the boat.

Central Jersey

Ling! Ling! Ling! I can't say enough just how hot the ling fishing has been in this part of the state once again. Just when you thought January was smokin', February comes around and blows it out of the water! No joke, individual catches of

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HIGH TIDES FOR FIRE ISLAND INLET APRIL 2006

April 1	10:38 AM	10:57 PM	April 16	10:55 AM	11:07 PM
April 2	12:32 AM	NONE	April 17	11:37 AM	11:50 PM
April 3	12:49 AM	1:28 PM	April 18	12:27 AM	NONE
April 4	1:43 AM	2:24 PM	April 19	12:42 AM	1:26 PM
April 5	2:38 AM	3:21 PM	April 20	1:43 AM	2:28 PM
April 6	3:36 AM	4:20 PM	April 21	2:48 AM	3:33 PM
April 7	4:35 AM	5:20 PM	April 22	3:54 AM	4:39 PM
April 8	5:35 AM	6:16 PM	April 23	5:01 AM	5:43 PM
April 9	6:30 AM	7:05 PM	April 24	6:06 AM	6:42 PM
April 10	7:16 AM	7:46 PM	April 25	7:05 AM	7:35 PM
April 11	7:58 AM	8:24 PM	April 26	7:59 AM	8:24 PM
April 12	8:35 AM	8:58 PM	April 27	8:49 AM	9:10 PM
April 13	9:11 AM	9:30 PM	April 28	9:38 AM	9:55 PM
April 14	9:45 AM	10:01 PM	April 29	10:27 AM	10:41 PM
April 15	10:19 AM	10:33 PM	April 30	11:18 AM	11:29 PM

High Tides For Other Locations:

Bay Shore	+ 2:46	Moriches	- 0:18	Jones Inlet	+ 0:19
Hempstead	+ 4:16	Greenport	+ 3:19	Pt. Jefferson	+ 4:10
Port Wash.	+ 4:27	Oyster Bay	+ 4:11	Amityville	+ 2:59
Patchogue	+ 4:01	Shinnecock	- 0:12	Montauk Point	+ 0:09
East Rockaway	+ 0:32	Freeport	+ 1:16	Sag Harbor	+ 3:14

Moon Phases



April 5, 2006
First Quarter



April 13, 2006
Full



April 20, 2006
Last Quarter



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New

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