



# Boating At Night Without Running Into Anything

by Hank Foglino

caught a striped bass was when I was fishing for something else.

Nighttime is no exception, only things are not pleasant, for me anyway. Nothing is where it's supposed to be and you have to grope about to find tackle, tools, flashlights, bait, etc. The eels you are using for bait take their revenge by first wrapping themselves around your arm, coating you with a slime that is a powerful attraction to all the gnats, mosquitoes and bugs from near and far. I swear that I have swatted some that seemed to be carrying passports. After the eels are unwrapped from your arm, they invariably slip out of your grasp onto the deck. By the time you get the flashlight and find them, they have covered your bottom with slime trails fore and aft. Put them in ice, I'm told, or stun them with a small club. This, I believe, only makes them madder, for when on the hook and deployed, they start twisting and turning, all the while picking up line, and when you retrieve your line, you'll find a slimy ball comprised of monofilament and eel. Try to unravel that in the dark.

However I'm going off on a tangent. Seeing all those lights from the ferry made me realize how hard it would be to navigate at night in unfamiliar waters. When we learn how to operate our boats safely, we learn about aids to navigation, among which are buoys that light up at night. They are different colors, telling us on which side to

pass them. They go on and off in different patterns to give us more information re: their purpose. This sounds really great. However, go out on Long Island Sound at night and try to find them. With the background lights on shore and the boats with their illuminated running lights, which are the same colors as the buoys', finding a lighted buoy is no easy task. I used to go out of the Nissequogue River on Long Island that had a mid-channel buoy marking its entrance. This buoy has a white light flashing a Morse code A signal, one short and one long. Many is the time I would be coming back from a late afternoon fishing trip that went on into darkness and I would try to find that light against the background of shore and boat lights to no avail. What can we do to make things better to be able to operate a boat safely at night?

First, let's look at the design of our eyes. Light enters the eye through the cornea and eventually reaches the back of the eye called the retina, which senses the light. The retina is made up of two types of cells, rods and cones. The rods handle the vision in low light and the cones take care of color vision and detail. When stimulated, these cells send electrical impulses to the brain and we see. When we have to see at decreased light levels, the first thing that must happen is that the pupil, the dark part of your eye, must dilate up to its max-

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