

August's heat is the time to change tactics and target some inshore pelagics between fluking the deep and trying to pick keeper sea bass from the wrecks and reefs. Beginning with the eastern half inshore, fluke, striped bass, sea bass and porgies will still be going great guns. Having less fishing pressure, cooler water temps and far more structure than the west, Montauk to Orient you can expect practically all inshore species to be more cooperative. Clams, clams and more clams, and maybe some squid or fish-bait, on the bottom for porgies, sea bass and triggerfish. Try drifting instead of anchoring when the conditions are right. Time is your enemy and anchoring eats up daylight.

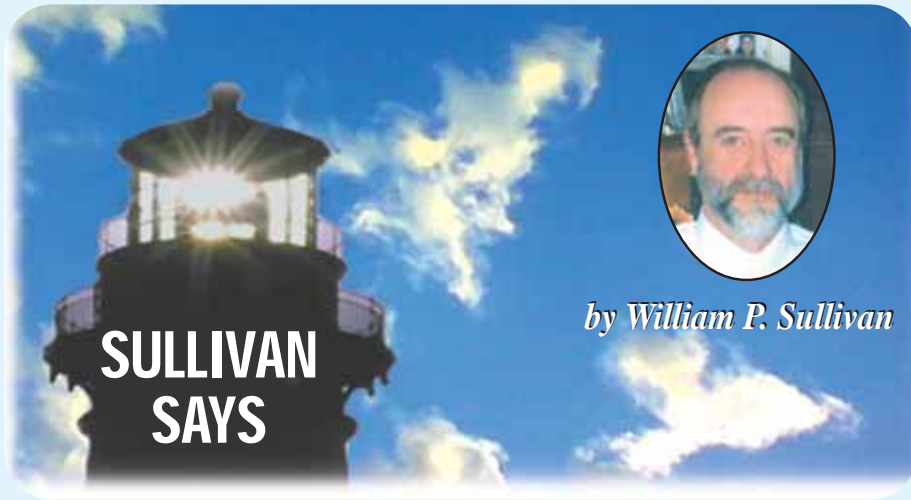
Striped bass will most likely be better on the troll during the day and on eels, live legal porgies and bunker chunks at night. Chunking bass out east means using lead line to compensate for the heavy current. Pick a piece of structure, anchor up-current and drift the baits back to the structure. Out east, frozen bunker chunks work better than fresh, they sink.

Bluefish will be a lay-up with jigs under the birds or on the troll. Drifting bait down deep at the Race, rips and Gut should produce some beasts.

Fluking will take some work to put keepers in the box and the size of the bait will be the difference between culling through shorts and concentrating on doormats. Leave the 2/0 hooks, killies and squid out of the equation. Go 5/0, tandem slider rigs and big baits like whole squid, sea robin fillets, smelts, tinker mackerel, finger herring, etc. You will shake off the 18-inchers but, the big fish will have no problem inhaling your rig. If you take the kids in the bays or the Lake, by all means go small and beat them up with shorts.

Mid-range, sharks, mahi, bonita, false albacore and some tuna will be taken well within 20-miles of Montauk. The small tuna family stuff will be well inshore and fly fishing around the Light and Gardiners should produce. By now the yellowfin tuna will be taking chunks but, night fishing will out-produce daytime chunking. Troll in daylight. When trolling, be prepared to match the natural feed. To consistently produce tuna you need to have a load of trolling lures in sizes from 3/4-ounce on up and a variety of styles and colors. Offshore the Canyons, Dip, Fishtails et al will yield various tunas, blue and white marlin, swordfish, mahi and tilefish. Same old methods, troll feathers, Zukers, Green Machines, jet-heads, Kona Head, soft heads, hard heads, and all kinds of heads the list just keeps going on ... and of course squid spreads and spreader bars during the day and anchor with chunks at night. Trolling patterns and speeds need to be tailored to the fish's gourmet of the day tastes. You may be tight to the wash, back three wakes or way back in the wake. Speed and direction can make the difference too. But, you need to find a spot of ocean with life. Spraying bait, whales and dolphins are what you are looking for. Check out any weed lines or floating junk for mahi hiding in the shadows.

Offshore fishing is all in the planning.



To the west (Fire Island to Rockaway) inshore, snappers in the bay will keep the kids busy and make great bait for drifting live-lines around the bridges for big fluke. I've never seen live-lined snappers work all that well in the ocean and dead ones are even worse in my opinion. More on snapper fishing later. Outside, same fluke deal that I mentioned above, go big and start working the structure for doormats.

Drift Cholera, Middle Ground, Angler, Three Sisters, Broadcast, Eureka, Scallop Ridge, Ambrose Channel, Lightship Ridge, the edges of all of the reefs and wrecks, even the 90- to-120 foot deep pieces. Also inshore, expect bonita, false albacore, mahi and the very rare but possible white marlin on trolling spreads. When working any spot that has lobster pots, sneak up with spinning gear and small drone spoons or Kastmasters and pick off the chicken mahi under the floats. Another way to fish the inshore tunas is to get a bunch of spearing for chum and hook bait. See if your bait shop has any 2-or-5 pound blocks of spearing. You use them for chum just like chunking, a few at a time and then an occasional spray. The

bonita and albies will charge through the spray of spearing, then you drop hooked baits in.



Joe & Buddy with a yellowfin tuna taken on the charterboat "Big M Express," Brooklyn.
Courtesy Capt's Steve & Mario

Bottom fishing on the reefs and wrecks for all intents and purposes is shorts and more shorts. The yield in keeper sea bass isn't going to pay for your efforts. Those pieces have been pummeled for three months and pretty well picked over. For what it's worth, if you want sea bass, go find new bottom or go find deeper pieces that haven't had the pressure. A suggestion, rather than spend time and money fishing the same old pieces of Hempstead, Rockaway and Atlantic Beach, go off to the Yankee, San Diego, Coimbra, Linda, Dodger, Edna's, Oil Wreck and down in the Mudhole area to see what's up...or down actually on the bottom. You may find the dead zone but, at least you're in the deep and can troll some inshore top-water fish or bring a can of chum

and play with the sharks and small tuna family. Stripers will be feeding at night in the bay as the daytime water temps will put them down. Dark, dawn or dusk is when you need to fish in the back.. If you want to try bass during the day, start live-lining bergals in the inlet at early morning, clam chum at dawn, bunker chunking the structure tight to the beach or look for the bunker pods. Forget eels to the west this time of year, they're just bluefish candy. For fun, if you have a small boat, work the flats, drains and meadows with surface poppers at dusk. Its loads of fun watching bass and bluefish attack surface lures and it's a lot cooler on the water than sitting in town.

in offshore fishing, nail every detail down before you start off and of course, don't forget the weather.

Shark fishing at Montauk will produce considerably more makos and threshers than to the west. Cooler water temps and more bait will keep them hanging around. Naturally, the blue sharks will rule but, skill, knowledge, patience and luck will play a hand.

Call it mid-island if you will, Moriches and Shinnecock, expect very similar opportunities, plus the run up into Peconic Bay adds more choices for bay fishing. Shinnecock and Moriches Bays being shallow may overheat for the fish's liking so think about going through the Canal. Both inlets will produce bass during daylight with clams on the drift, eels do work here at night and clam chumming the bridges should prove to be successful. The inshore wrecks and reefs should produce well but, not as well as the east end. Offshore anglers will be working the same spots as Montauk.

Offshore, sharks are anywhere from inshore, on out to the Canyons. Bait up, file your float plan, pick your structure and start your chumstick. Nine times out of ten, you're going to hang a blue shark. That one in ten will be a mako, thresher or even a tiger at this time. Remember whites are protected and look an awful

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