

# New Jersey Sushi

by J. R. Warnet

“Get outta here bird!” cried the deckhand as fresh chunks of butterfish were taken by greedy gulls. He was waving his tuna can on a stick at the air violently as he cursed something in Spanish into the breeze. Before we knew it, we were surrounded by winged assassins all hell bent on stealing our chum. The captain sat in his chair watching the events pass by. A small school of mixed tuna passed underneath while a sea of white and black feathers circled overhead.

It was still early in the morning but we had been up all night tying rigs and double-checking our knots, again. The last time we were out in the canyons off the coast of New Jersey, we noticed that the tuna hit our braided line and managed to strip our leaders at the knot almost every time. Doug and I had been trying different lines to see which one held up the best during the fall tuna run. We finally spooled our golden reels with 80-pound mono and stocked up on heavy-duty leaders and hooks. The yellowfins and bluefins had moved into the canyons for their final quest of the year and we had waited long enough.



My buddy Doug has been fishing his whole life in the dirty water off the east coast but he only had one trip left before he was to be deployed to Iraq in October. I wanted him to enjoy some sea air before he was surrounded by sand and bullets so I called our friend who owned a nicely setup 32 footer and asked him to take us out.

I told him I'd take care of the gas and other expenses and he kindly obliged. He owns his own charter service in the area and usually has high paying clients out on the weekends but when I told him about

Doug's situation, he cleared up a weekend and told me to keep my money.

We were out about 90 miles into the corner of the Hudson Canyon where we had success years before with tuna, mahi and surprisingly enough, tilefish. On this trip, we weren't looking to pull up a tile from 400 feet; we wanted the 300 plus pound bluefins that the tackle shops were raving about. Reports of monster blues had been all the buzz at the dock for about two weeks. Guys were heading out to their favorite canyons to partake in the festivities. You should have heard all the old salts back

at the dock babbling on about the glory days and how we weren't going to hook into anything over 100-pounds. I didn't care about the glory days or what some guy caught 40 years ago. I just wanted to show Doug a good time and take his mind off the war for a day or two.

We left port the night before full of anticipation and stamina. After tying rigs all night and talking about the wild times we had, Doug and I forgot all about October and just had fun. Laughing all night about the stupid stuff we did years ago put both our minds at ease. It was just what we needed to relax and enjoy the trip.

As the amber light hit the horizon the twin 350's calmed to a low rumble. Pedro, the deckhand, came down to where we were laughing and motioned for us to come up. He had a pair of white earphones in his ears that were so loud we could hear the music emanating from them. Pedro didn't say much but his body language was all we needed to comprehend what he was trying to get across.

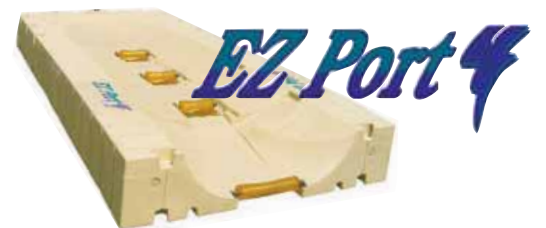
“You...take rod...come to me, Si”

Doug smiled a little as he grabbed his rod and came over to the bait board where the half frozen squid lay. We baited up and let out 75 yards of fresh line out behind the boat. We weren't trolling but it felt like it the way the wind was blowing. It didn't take long for the sun to peek out from behind a

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