



Winterizing - Now or Later, It Has To Be Done



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Usually, as soon as I write a column on de-commissioning the boat for the winter season, Indian Summer arrives to bathe us in the last warmth of the year. And here we are. As I write this, it is 75+ degrees Out East.

This is but a reminder that many months of kindly weather are behind us and many months of dark, cold and dreary weather are ahead of us. So, here we go - Indian Summer or not! Even if you hand off your boat to your dock master and say, "see you in the Spring", there are some tips in here that you will want to be aware of. This column is about that.



Even Moriches Bay itself has frozen across over the years and I am talking about recent years. The only upside to storing your winterized boat in the water is that you don't have to pay to haul the boat and return it to the water in the Spring. I still believe that that can be penny-wise and pound-foolish if this watery winter berth isn't a very controlled environment... Recall that 80% of boat's that do sink do so at the dock (see SSP, "The Dangerous Dock!", 12/06/06). So, let's focus this column on spending the winter "on the hard"...

"On the Hard" or In The Water

Clearly, there are some basic steps to de-commissioning and one of them is to get the boat safely "onto the hard", as the old-timers call dry-dock. Storing your winterized boat in the water can only be done in a very controlled environment with, generally, professional and near-constant attention. Even with signs of global-heating all around us, (I think "global warming" sounds too benign), the creeks and coves of "Out East" freeze up for much of the winter. Even Moriches Bay itself has frozen across over the years and I am talking about recent years. The only upside to storing your winterized boat in the water is that you don't have to pay to haul the boat and return it to the water in the Spring. I still believe that that can be penny-wise and pound-foolish if this watery winter berth isn't a very controlled environment... Recall that 80% of boat's that do sink do so at the dock (see SSP, "The Dangerous Dock!", 12/06/06). So, let's focus this column on spending the winter "on the hard"...

Making a List and Checking It Twice

If you are going to hand the boat over to the dock master and say, "see you in the Spring", do so with a written check list, especially if you intend to do some of the work yourself. As you'll see, the advice below is not 100% extensive. I'd need most of the newspaper to give you a check list that could be used by every boat. (BTW, if you want a copy of the Boat-US/Seaworthy article on winterization, email me below and I will email a copy to you.) So, work with your dock master in signing off on what will be done by the yard and, if you desire to be involved, by you. Some ideas/categories:

1. Change the oil and oil filters
2. Change the lubricant in engine transmission or the outboard lower unit
3. Apply fogging if called for by manufacturer
4. Fill the boat's fuel tanks completely full
5. Add biocide and/or stabilizing agents to fuel
6. Change the fuel filters
7. Add antifreeze to the engine's cooling system
8. Add distilled water to batteries, charge completely and disconnect
9. Charge batteries to capacity

Before thinking about covering the boat with shrink-wrap or canvas, inspect the hull. Any blisters in the gelcoat? If so, that has to be addressed sooner rather than later as that will lead to water infiltrating the hull, making the boat less sea-worthy. Stress cracks, which often develop at the bow, need professional attention. Just putting a patch over it and sanding, a la the gelcoat blister, won't fix that one. It's structural. As to washing and waxing the hull, I opt for cleaning now and waxing in the Spring.

Does the boat have a cabin of any kind? Get the "moisture-soaker-uppers", i.e., desiccants, in there. Inexpensive and they inhibit the build-up of moisture that leads to mold. And don't forget the hatches, closets and lazarettes.

Other than covering the boat, the "mechanical system" is the most obvious place to start. Your mechanical system may only be your gasoline-powered 90-HP Johnson outboard. If so, you are going to flush the engine with fresh water (attached a garden hose to the intake and let it flush - engine OFF!), "fog" the engine with lubricating oil (be sure the fuel system is disconnected from the engine when you start the process), clean/replace the spark plugs and fuel filter, lube the carburetor and anything else that moves - choke, cam, starter linkage etc. Don't forget the lower unit (what the prop comes out of). Replace the lube oil. BTW, if you open the drain plug and water comes out first (oil floats), you need to replace the seal. Inspect the prop(s). Any dings? Get a professional to look at that. A bad "wheel" can shake your engine apart...

So that's your outboard. Did I ask if you had a diesel engine or an I/O? Does the boat have a transmission? In-board water system (sink/shower)? Air-conditioner? Electronics going to stay aboard or come home with the owner? So, as you can see, the list is far more extensive than the short list above.

But have fun! She's your boat!



by TONY SALERNO

FISHING WITH TONY

FALL RUN OFF TO A GOOD START

With fluke season now behind us until next May, now is not the time to put the sticks away until next season, as stripers, blues and black fish will keep anglers busy for all the fall and in some cases, through the early part of the winter.

Ever since Tropical Storm Irene made her presence felt along the northeast, striper fishing for the most part has been off the wall, as party, charter and private boat anglers have been taking advantage of the bite anywhere from Fire Island to Montauk as well as the Middle Grounds along the North Shore. According to Candy Carafitis of the Port Jeff based Carafitis Fishing Station, there are plenty of striped bass for the asking on chunk baits and diamond jigs at all the points and rip lines. Plenty of big bluefish can also be found at times sharing residence with the bass. Porgy fans will also find good action among the rock piles along the beaches and again at the Middle Grounds on clam baits.

Along the south shore, all the inlets and outer bars have been producing the best action on bass and blues, with live bait such as spots, croakers, bunker and eels getting the job done. During the early mornings and dusk, surface plugs and poppers have an advantage over the live stuff, particularly at the outer bars and rip lines. Stripers to 40-pounds and bluefish to 15-pounds have been reported this week.

Out in the deep blue, all the local reefs and rock piles continue to please anglers with porgies and sea bass, which the latter must be released until November 1st. The scup range from shorts to 3-pounds while the sea biscuits are being tossed back up to 4-pounds. And while all the species mentioned are in fall mode, the real surprise has been the strong start to the blackfish season at all the local wrecks and rock piles.

This past weekend I had the pleasure of fishing with my friends Paul Nilsson, Pete Ranaudo and Captain James Russo at a couple of shallow water wrecks just inside and outside Moriches Inlet where we enjoyed a slam fest with blackfish to 5-pounds releasing many keepers and only retaining our legal limit. Green, Asian, fiddler and hermit crabs all seemed to work equally well with a slight edge going to the green crabs. On Saturday, Pete had the big fish honors, while Sunday saw Paul catch a pair of slob tog.

This fall fishing season promises to be a good one. Therefore, get out there and enjoy the action.



Ready to Play Some Music

Everyone was back at the first MSC Kyle Sports For Special Needs Program on Saturday, October 8th at the Wm. Floyd Middle School in Moriches. With the introduction of our New MSC Kyle Sports Inclusion Music Therapy Program, all the children are excited and are ready to participate. Children with special needs will have an opportunity to learn music, and play basic instruments, all in our creative effort for all our inclusion programs to spark an interest and gain awareness as to how important socialization and interaction is for all our children with special needs.

MSC Kyle Sports Saturday Program enables all our children to participate in basketball, baseball, hockey, soccer, kickball, scooter activities, social skills and adaptive bowling and basketball... Socialization is key for all our children and with the entire programs of coaches, volunteers and parents everyone plays a key role in interaction, shadowing, compassion and patience while teaching and learning inclusion sports. Anyone interested in registering for MSC Kyle Sports please contact djmetz@optonline.net. View the new Facebook page Mastic Sports Club Kyle Sports For Special Needs.

By: Debbie Metz
Commissioner of Special Needs
Mastic Sports Club

