



Time and Tide Wait for No (Wo)Man



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Before reading the weekly tide tables as gospel, let's take a moment to review a few essentials. First, don't mistake precision with accuracy. What? Just because we can predict the tides to the second as far into the future as you could imagine (after all, we certainly know the rotations of the Earth, Sun and Moon to exquisite precision), it doesn't mean that the times are accurate! Why aren't they? "We can put a man on the moon..."

First, the weather matters. Picture the Inlets that punctuate the south shore of Long Island as a straw between one big balloon (Moriches Bay, for example) and one REALLY big balloon (the North Atlantic). If there are strong winds from any northerly heading, someone is blowing back out the straw while the tide itself is trying to come through the straw and into the Bay. What happens? The tide wins, but it arrives later than the computer model, based on celestial relationships between the Earth, Sun and Moon, predicted. Go through all the combinations about wind with the tide (outgoing/ebbing), wind against the tide (incoming/flooding) and you can see. Times are approximate...

Secondly, the tidal range (height, top to bottom) varies too. Wait! What about all those computer models? We know when the Sun is lined up with the Moon, creating "Spring" tides (higher highs, lower lows, during new and full moons). We know when they are exactly NOT lined up, i.e., at right angles to the Earth, creating "Neap" tides (lower highs, higher lows during quarter moons). Well, have you ever heard the weather man say, "There is a high pressure area coming..." Well, air has weight (14lbs/square inch at sea level.) If pressure increases, it matters! It lies on top of the water like a blanket. Similarly, and with much more to worry about, if the weather man says, "There is a low-pressure area building...", be ready for strong winds (filling the vacuum/imbalance between "normal" pressure and the low pressure) and higher tides. Someone took off the heavy blanket and replaced it with a sheet! By the way, if the wind is starting to rise, face it and point straight out to your right. If you are pointing towards water, start to double your dock lines. That means the center of the storm is over water, from whence it derives its power... Think about it. Face northeast and point straight out to the right. What are you pointing at? The North Atlantic... Ever wonder why Nor'easters are so powerful..?

With all that as background, one last thing... Tides change at different times in the same bay... Wa? Well, think about it. When the tide starts to form outside the Moriches Inlet, it eventually has to work its way around the shoal island just inside the Inlet. Then it has to work its way east and west towards Shinnecock and the Great South Bay, respectively. The wide expanse of those two reaches takes some of the power out of the "straw" that is still being fed by the tidal surge...

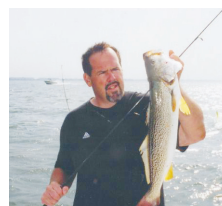
So, what to do???

1. Don't mistake precision with accuracy. These are estimates, good estimates, but estimates nonetheless. Use your "seaman's eye" to anticipate how the times might be effected by the weather.

2. Be aware of the Moon's phase inre the range of the tide. She is beautiful indeed and will have her way...

3. Remember to adjust the tide table times for your locale. If the table of offsets isn't close enough to your home port to give you comfort, take some time and watch the tide in your creek or at your dock. I live between the Inlet and Potunk Point. The tide reaches me 75 minutes before it reaches Potunk Point...!

BTW, if you are interested in being part of USCG Forces, email me at JoinUSCGAux@aol.com or go direct to the D1SR Human Resources department, who are in charge of new members matters, at DSO-HR and we will help you "get in this thing..."



■ by TONY SALERNO

FISHING WITH TONY

IT'S A FLUKE FIESTA AT SHINNECOCK

Back in the good ole days, if you wanted to increase your chances at catching a fluke in the doormat range, (9 1/2 pounds or better) a run to Montauk, especially during late August or early September was in order. And though Montauk continues to be the doormat capital, the area just south of Shinnecock Inlet has given the Mecca a run for the show as countless amount of monster flatties have settled in 75 to 80 feet of water, particularly at the Shinnecock Reef.



Joel from Manorville with a 11-pound fluke caught on the Hampton Lady

"The bite has been nothing short of phenomenal when conditions are right" explained Captain Jim Foley of the Hampton Bay based open boat the Hampton Lady. Whether anglers are jigging bucktails or dragging bait along the bottom, the results are the same as just about every patron that leaves the boat do so with happy smiles and hefty bags of filets. While most keepers do range in the 4-pound class, many others have tipped the scale at over the 8-pound mark with plenty of 10-plus pound fluke in the equation as well. During the week, Joel from Manorville, while fishing aboard the Hampton Lady, nailed his three fish limit weighing in at an astounding 27-pounds. Yes, you read right, Joel's fish weighed in at 11, 10 and 6-pounds. Talk about a catch of a lifetime. Aside from the Hampton Lady, the Shinnecock Star has also been cashing in on the current influx of fish. Even the open boat the Rosie from Center Yacht Marina in Center Moriches has been running to the east and enjoying the fiesta as well.

Up along the north shore, porgy fishing has been nothing less than outstanding according to Candy Caraftis of Caraftis Fishing Station on Main Street in Port Jeff. However, you will need to chum to bring the scup to the boat. Candy adds the porgies are just about anywhere you would like to fish. Lots of blue fish and nice keeper striped bass are at the Middle Grounds with fish to 17-pounds weighed in by Capt. Jack C. Bunker is the killer bait for the blues and bass as well as sandworms. It's status quo on the fluke front, lots of flatties, but just way to many shorts. If you want to up your chances at bringing home fluke dinner, try fishing along the drop-offs at Mount Misery and Roanoke Shoals jigging 1-ounce chartreuse or white bucktails tipped with sand eels.

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