



Fly Fishing 301

Fishing the Fall Salt Run

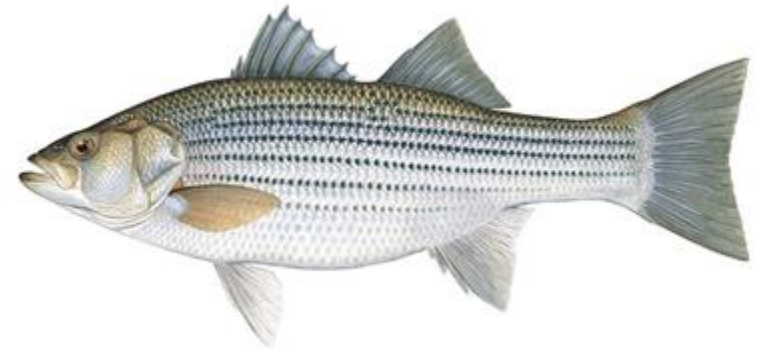


Striped Bass (*Morone saxatilis*)

Seasonal Behavior

- **Early Spring-** Water temps climb, spawning begins
- **Late Spring/Summer-** Fish range from shallow flats to rips and reefs offshore to feed
- **Fall-** Baitfish head south as water cools, feeding intensifies

Striped bass can range in size from 12 to 50 + inches, and live for over 25 years!



Identification:

- Silver flanks with 7 black stripes
- Large, square tail
- “Bucket-shaped” mouth characteristic of many bass species



Bluefish (*Pomatomus saltatrix*)

Seasonal Behavior

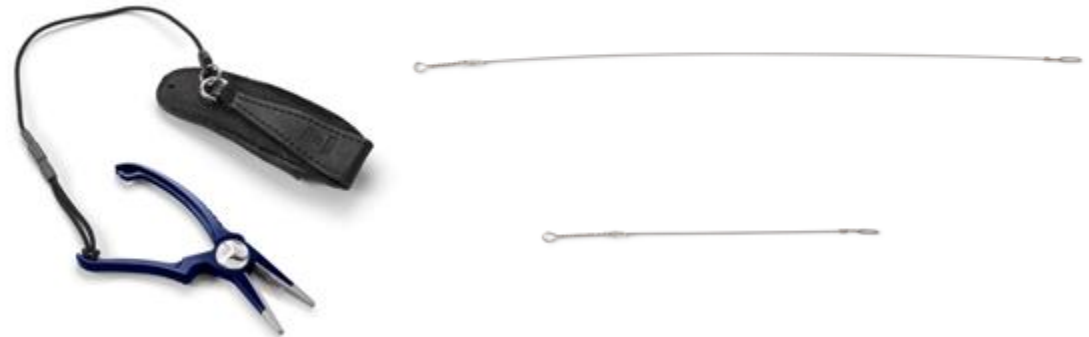
- **Spring:** Bluefish migrate north to spawn offshore, then return inshore to feed
- **Summer- Fall:** Prime time to feed and destroy tackle!

Safety: These fish have incredibly sharp teeth. Wire leaders and pliers are a must if you encounter them



Identification:

- Sea-green to deep blue back, gray flanks
- Forked tail
- Large, sharp teeth



“Hardtails”

Seasonal Behavior

Also known as “funny fish,” albies (*E. alletteratus*) and bonito (*S. sarda*) are highly migratory and enter our waters in late summer to gorge on plentiful amounts of baitfish



Identification:

- **False Albacore:** Torpedo shaped, worm-like markings on back half of body, two dorsal fins
- **Atlantic Bonito:** torpedo shape, long stripes along whole body, needle-like teeth



Habitat Checklist

- ☑ Current
- ☑ Sand, boulder fields, rips
- ☑ Deep Channels
- ☑ Salt Marshes



Holding Structure

- A. Compression Zones
- B. Sand bars
- C. Reefs/Rips
- D. Rock ledges and jetties



Eating Habits & Forage

Huge concentrations of bait are what make the Fall Run special!

“As water temps drop, baitfish of all sizes begin to leave the backwaters and bays, seeking warmer waters due south. This includes bait species like young of year menhaden (peanut bunker) to mullet and silversides.”



Eating Habits & Forage



Sand eels- Varying in size from 2- 10 inches, these fish are incredibly common on sand flats and in deep water



Anchovy- Often turning the water a rusty brown color, these small baitfish make for visually epic “blitzes” as they form massive bait balls tight to shore



Eating Habits & Forage



Atlantic Menhaden- A favorite food of stripers, common along the east coast. Juvenile “peanut” bunker also make for some incredible fall action!



Silversides- Somewhere between anchovies and sand eels in size, silversides are a staple on the fall menu



Flies



Clouser Minnows and **Deceivers** are the most popular saltwater fly, and imitate all species of baitfish if tied in certain color combinations



Surf Candies/Epoxy Bodies imitate sand eels, silversides, and anchovies. They're also more durable than most flies!



Hollow Flies are a large profile, large result fly, imitating adult bunker, pollock, and herring



Gearing Up - 8 Weight System

- Often considered the BEST option for New England saltwater
- Increases fly selection options (larger flies)
- Floating*, Intermediate, Sink Tip and Full Sinking Lines may be used
- Applicable in many saltwater situations in the US



Gearing Up - 9 or 10 Weight System



- Ideal for windy days or controlling large bass or albies
- Increases the size of our fly selection
- Use intermediate or sinking lines
- Sinking Leaders can be added



Fly Line & Leader Combinations

- Different types of fly lines allow us to present flies in different parts of the water column
- Water depth and speed are major considerations in making these choices
- These lines affect how our fly will look underwater (how it will “swim”)
- These lines affect how we are in “contact” with our fly (contact = successful hook-up)



Fly Selection



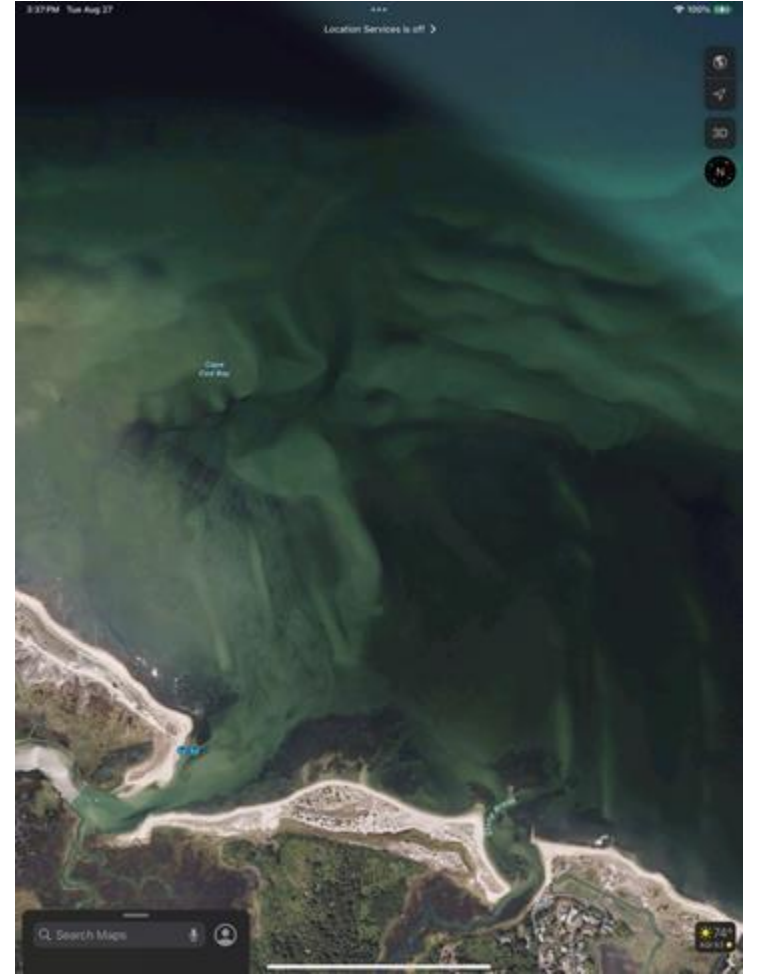
- Fly size should be chosen by
Rod Weight:
 - 8 weight - Size 2/0 and smaller
 - 9/10 weight - Size 2/0 and Larger
- Casting ability should also be taken into consideration
- Fly weight/material will cause different actions on different lines

Fly Line Type	Location	Water Depth	Flies
Floating	Beach/Flats	Surface - 3'	Poppers/Flats Flies
Intermediate	Beach/Flats/Jetty	2 - 4 Feet	Flats Flies SM/MED Bait Fish Patterns
Full Sink	Boat/Channel	4 - 8+ Feet	LG Bait Fish/Crabs 

Planning an Outing

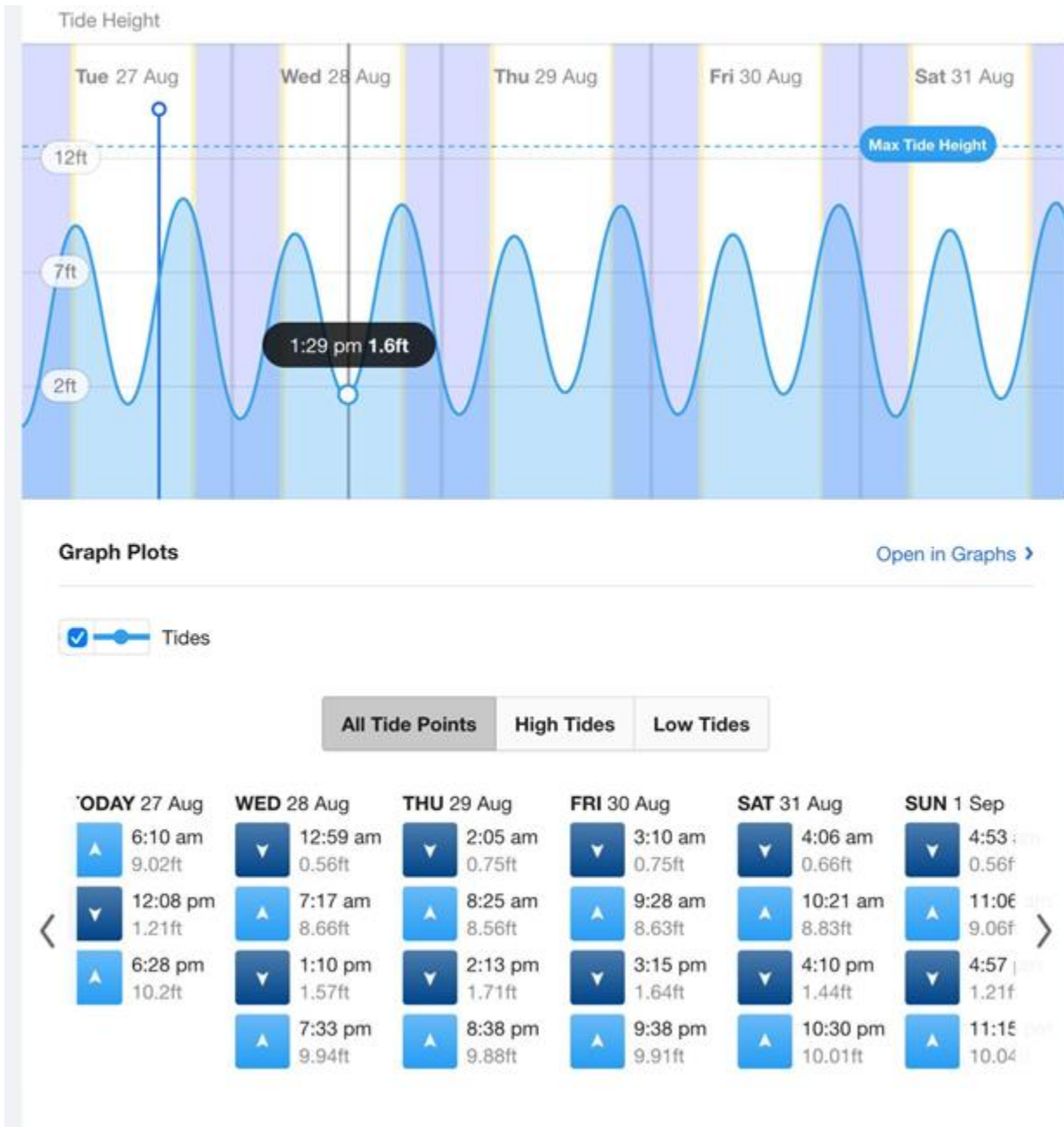
Planning is essential for success and safety!

- Aerial maps can help you scout a new area before you go!
- US Harbors/NOAA Data can indicate weather and water conditions
 - Tide Cycles
 - Water Temperature
 - Wind Speed and Direction



Start by checking the tide chart!





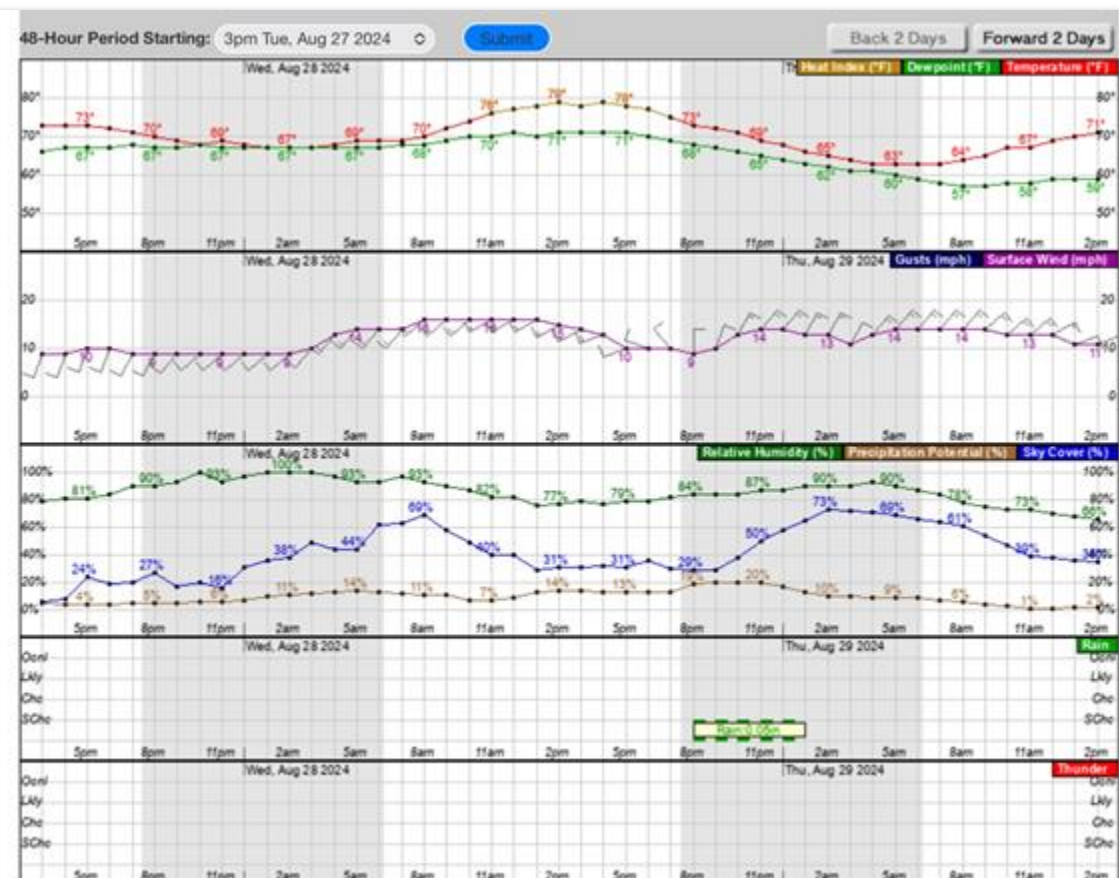
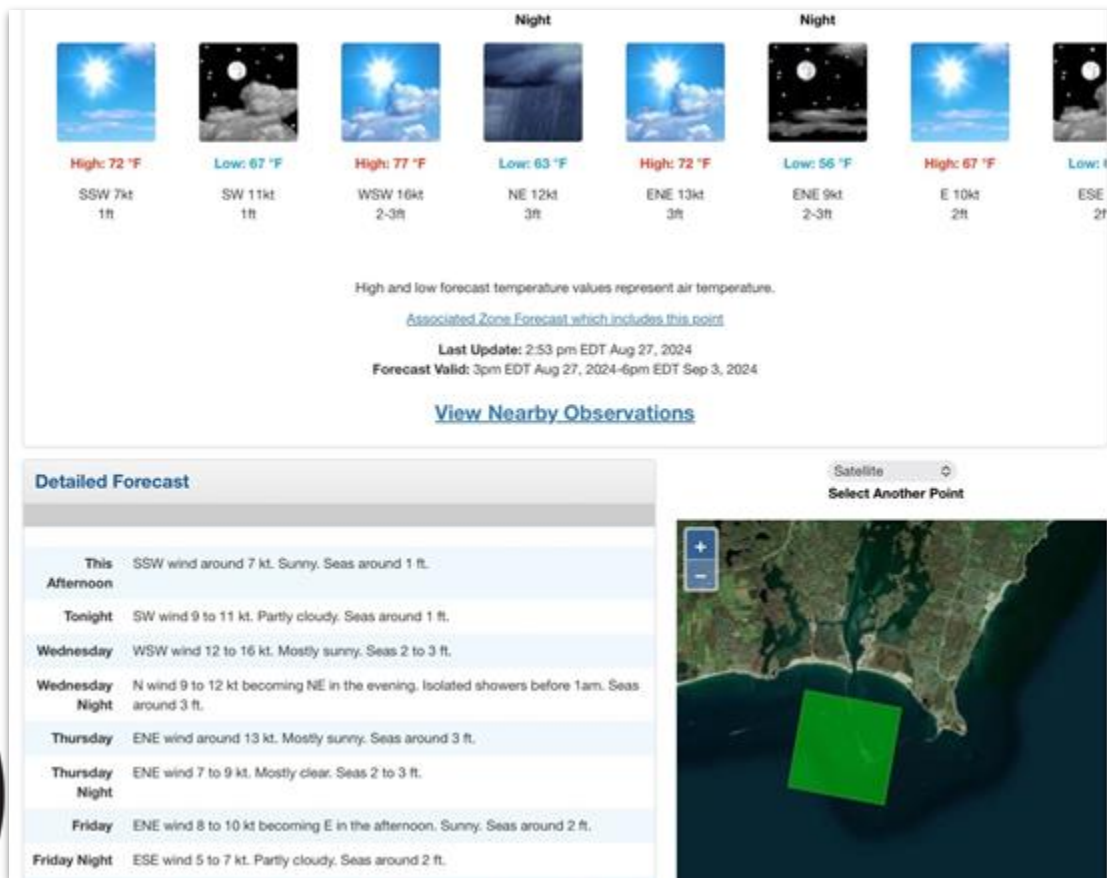
- Tides Rise and Fall on a 6 Hour Cycle
- Tide Height differs based upon Moon Phase
- Certain Tide Levels can improve fishing success!



Checking Wind & Weather Conditions

- Use credible sources for forecast information (NOAA)
- Forecasts can change quickly!

- Take notes for future outings!
- Have a back up plan!
- Dress appropriately!



Fishing Technique

...how do we fish our flies?

- Rod tip in the water!
- Try different retrieve styles
- Pay attention to baitfish location and behavior
- Strip Set!

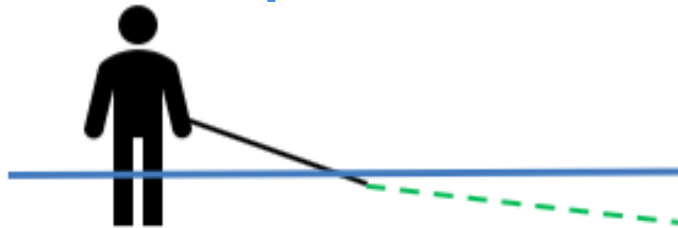
Long Slow Strips



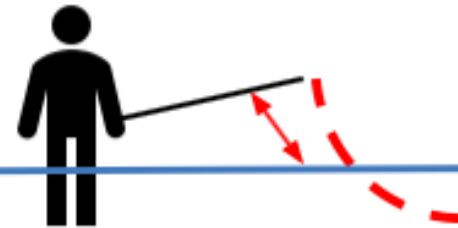
Short Quick Strips



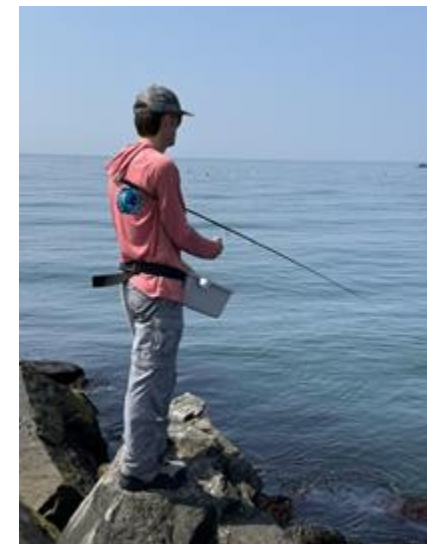
Two- Handed Retrieve



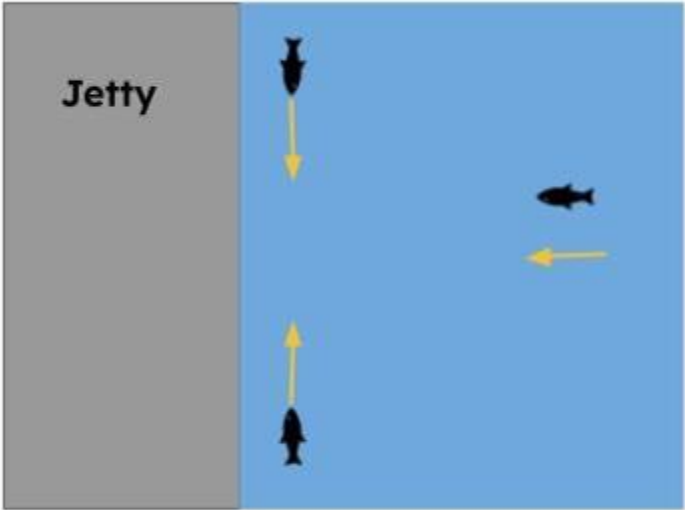
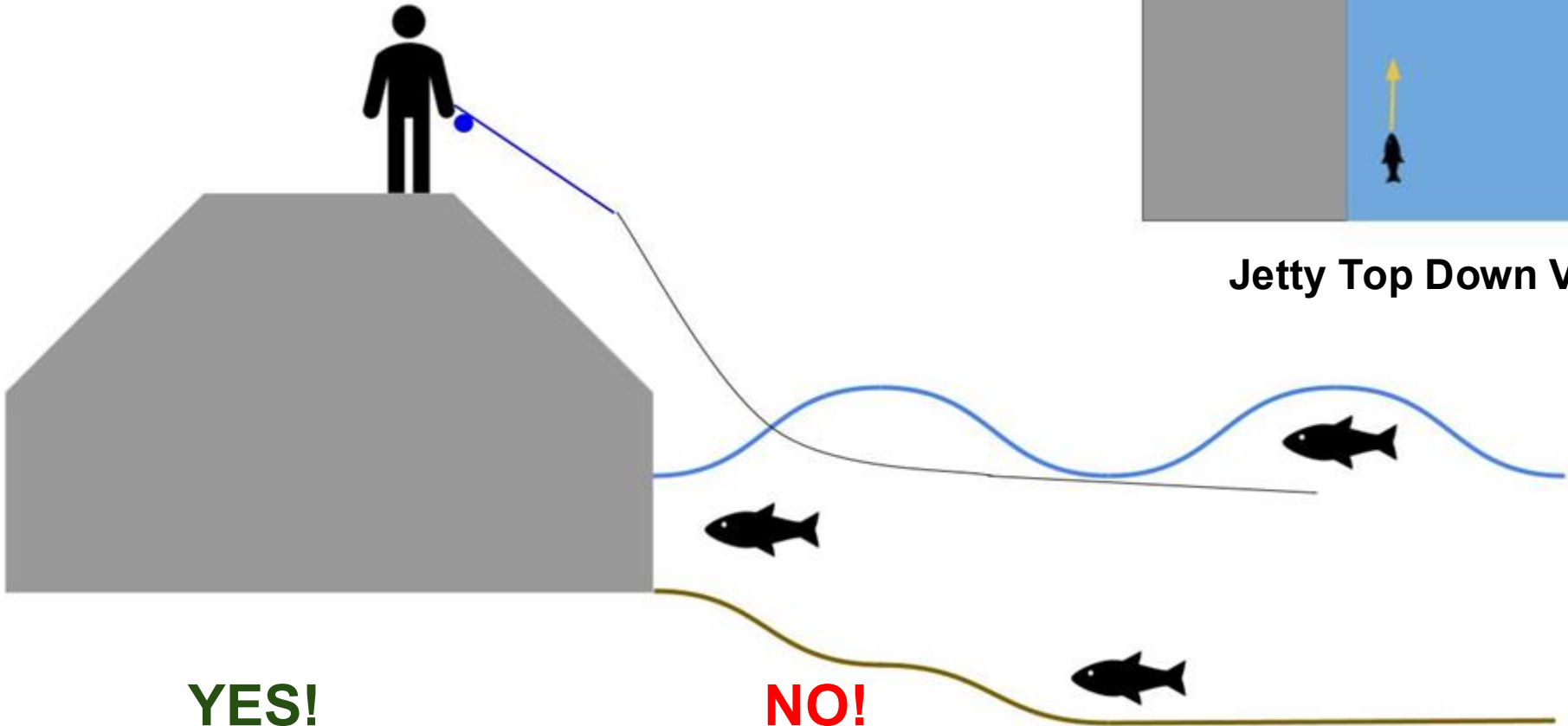
Keeping our rod tip in the water decreases the slack between our strip and our fly – this means we set the hook more quickly



Keeping our rod tip out of the water introduces slack into the line between the rod and the fly – this will delay the hook set as we must pull the slack out of the line before we set the hook



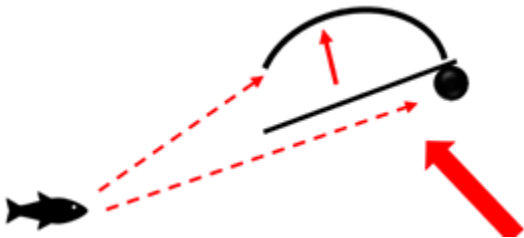
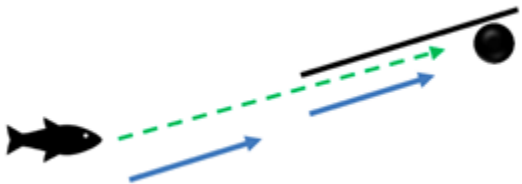
Fishing Jetties

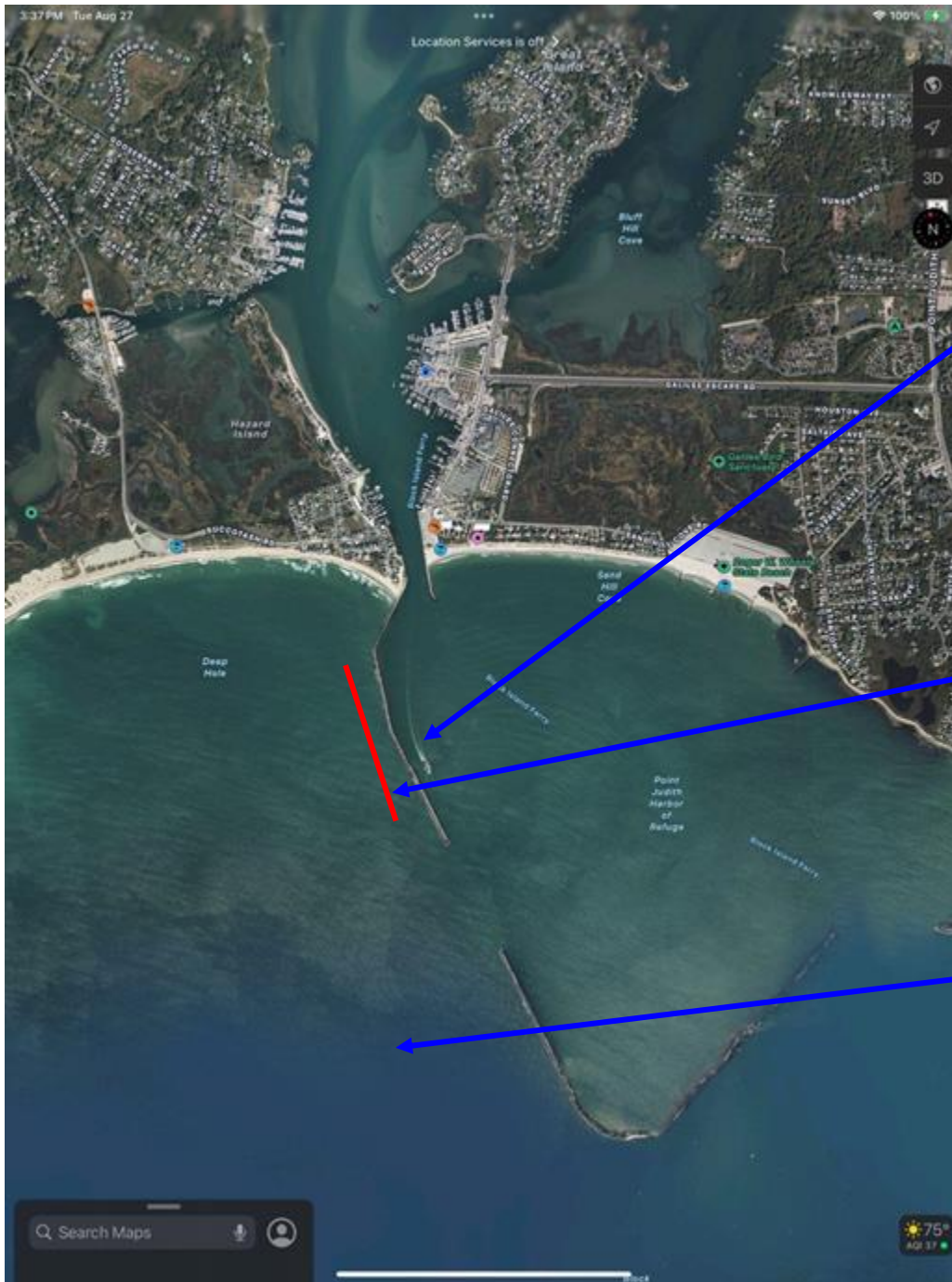


Jetty Top Down View

YES!

NO!





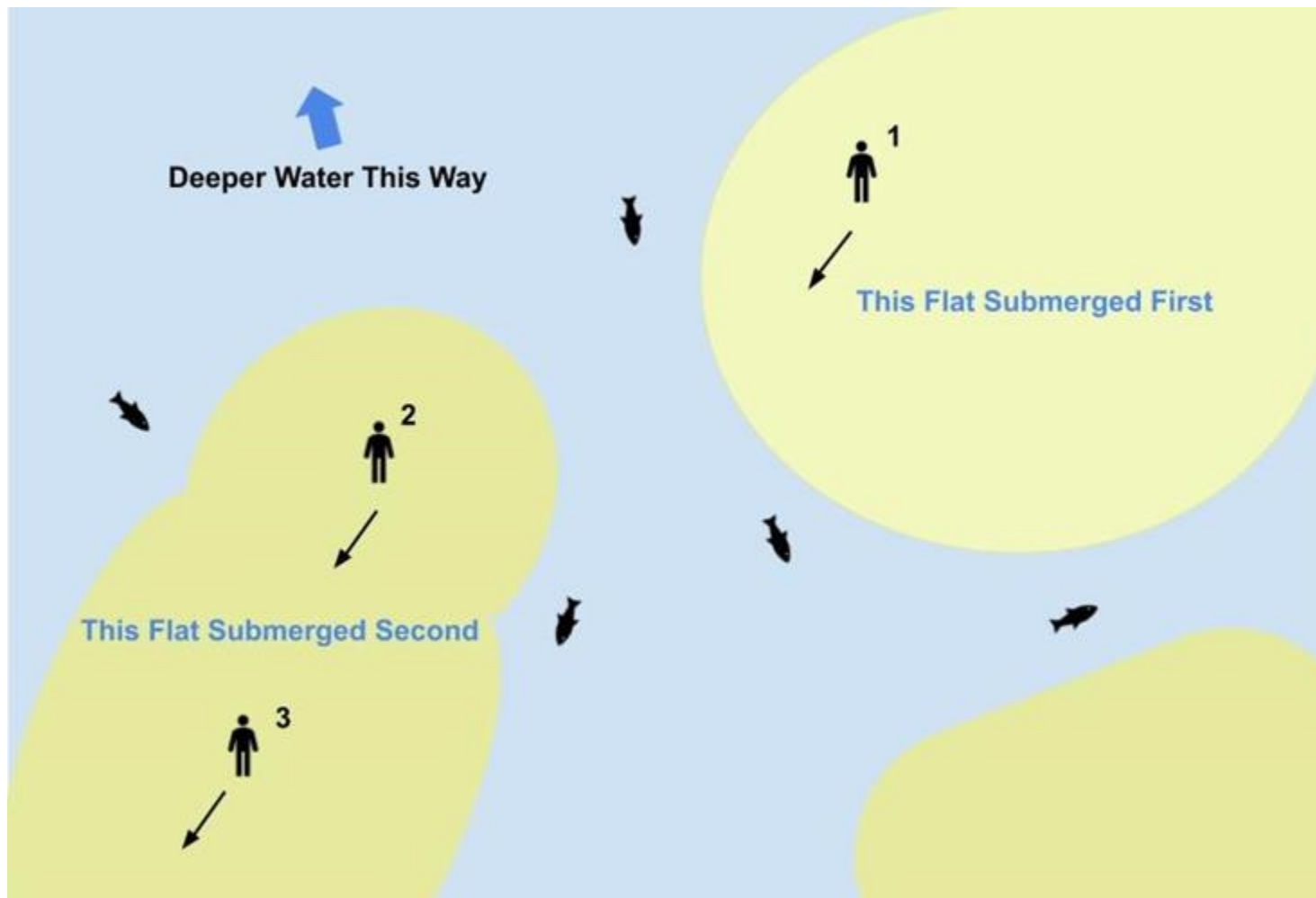
This Jetty stretches more than half a mile into the water providing access to increased water depth.

Fish will often cruise up and down structure along this red line pushing Bait Fish to a place they cannot escape

Open Water like this can have major wave activity! **Be sure to check the forecast before fishing to ensure your safety!**



Fishing Flats



- Know Your Tide!
- Set an Alarm
- Find Natural Pinch Points
- Pick Your Target
- Incoming Tides Fish Best





This channel forms a “pinch point” where bass entering and exiting the flat must pass at low tide

These flats look great but depending on the tide you may not be able to reach them! Be sure before you wade!

This low spot on the flat will make it difficult to access and depart at different points in the tide cycle. Aerial Images can help us plan a route to access and depart a new spot

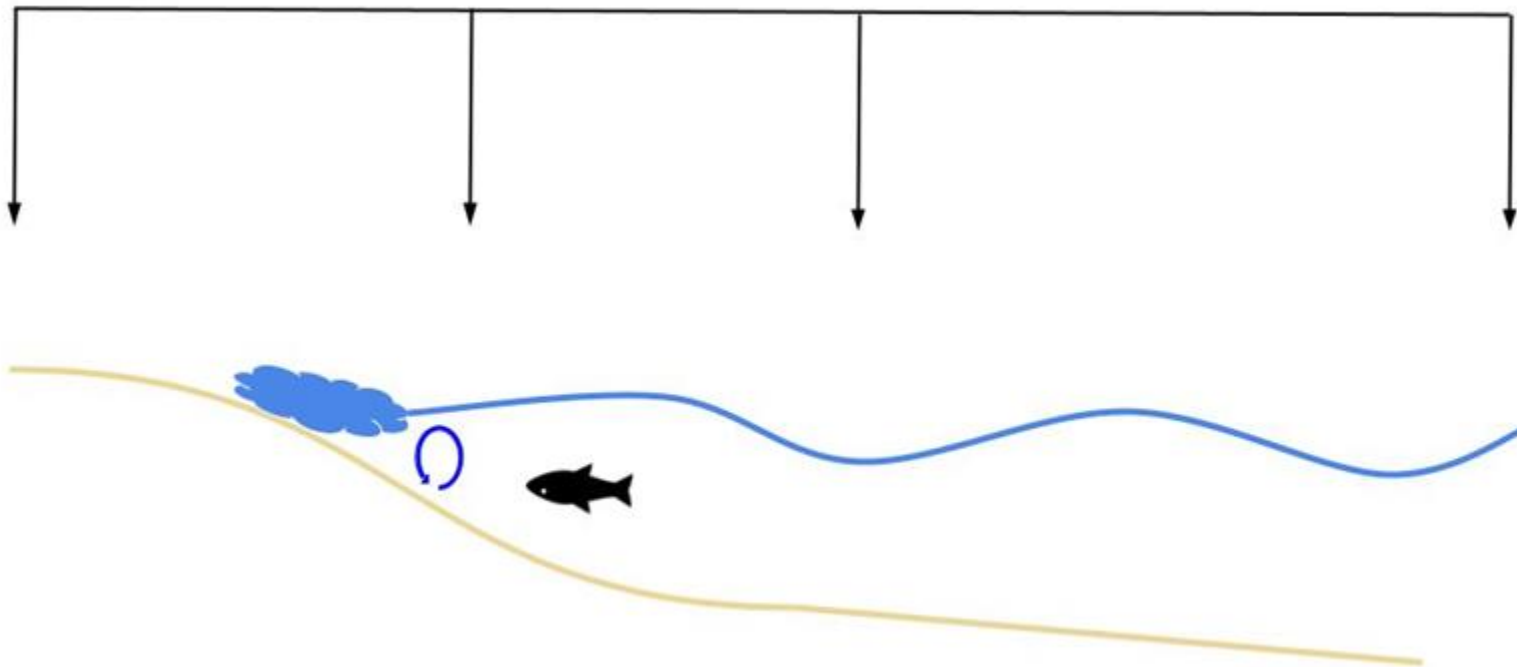


Fishing Beaches

**Water here is
chaotic as waves
break - No Fish
HERE!**

**Water here calm
and shallow
enough to see
fish!**

**Water here is
deep making it
difficult to spot
fish!**



- Look for fish just outside the “Wash”
- Cruising Fish and be spotted by their shadow
- Look for structure or bowls that funnel fish as they travel





This point creates a bowl that fish may congregate in while feeding on bait.

This darker area in the water indicates a depth change fish may use to hide their presence as they cruise the beach.

Channels and draws behind sand bars are like highways for fish as they work up and down the beach.



Wading/Walking Safety

Appropriate footwear is imperative for fishing safely!



Tips to fish and wade safely

- Use polarized sunglasses to see obstacles in the water
- Wading studs increase traction on slick rocks
- Plant each foot before taking another step
- No striper is worth your life!



Helpful Hints

- Don't grow roots! Be sure to move and cover water!
- No Strikes? Change Flies often!
- Make note of tides and wind when you fish to use in the future
- Be sure of access and do not trespass
- Get your Fishing License! MA saltwater covers several other states in coastal water!

