

## **Distance and Fishing: How to make it work. Know When To Go!**

By DJ Muller

A lot of surf fisherman reside a good distance from the beach. I have several very good friends that don't have the advantage that I do of living very close to the beach and seeing it or fishing it everyday. They live a good distance from the surf yet I am often amazed by the way they consistently catch fish. Although they do not ply the skinny waters daily, they have their finger on the pulse via long distance connections. My fishing buddies and I connect quite a bit, through phone calls, text messaging, and Instant Messaging, as normal friends would, but the gathering process goes a lot deeper than that. The ability to gather information and to make a good decision that could result in a productive outing, is very important, especially in these days of exurban gas prices. Who wants to drive for an hour or two and get ye old skunkeroozy? I sure wouldn't! As a matter of fact, I do drive long distances to fish different areas and the same rules apply to me.

I want to share with you the way my buddy Geoff Turner does it as he is very proficient in his catch per trip ratio. I know him well as we have become very good friends over the last couple years through surfcasting. Besides becoming a very good surfcaster which includes being able to read water, find fish, and create your own action (not depending on anyone else), he also has created sources for himself that he checks several times a day to see what is developing. By gathering a lot of information, he can then go on the make a decision on whether to travel or not. I am only one of his sources mind you I am not his only source by any means. Several times a year he lets me know that he went down to Sandy Hook or some where and banged a bunch of fish all of it being news to me. His sources gave him some information and he responded to it and had a good outing. Only if it was that easy all the time, right?

### **Here are some of his information gathering systems:**

**1. The Internet.** You can go onto one of the many striper sites, like Bass Barn, SOL, or StriperSurf, throughout the day and see what has been going on. Some guys have loose lips and give good spots away, but most just give general areas which most of the time is enough information for a good surfcaster. Even if you don't go to that specifically mentioned area, at least you can deduce that the bass or blues are at least active and in the area. Some online newspapers also give reports that are a day or two old and may tip off a hot area.

**2. Friends in the "Know."** A great way to know what is going on in the wash is to have friends that fish hard too. Turner is a very personable guy. Being friendly and a good guy gets him in with lots of different people and people like to help their friends. He checks in with his friends periodically to see what is happening on the surf scene. They check in with him as well because they know he fishes hard.

Build some friendships with guys that fish hard, they don't have to be guys that live by the beach they could be guys that also live away from the beach, but when you have surfcasting buddies that also work hard at the fishing, and networking, and information gathering, you can pool your information to make deductions. Whenever one of the guys

goes fishing, he reports back to the group, and so it goes. By having a network of friends you can increase your production.

**3. Join a surfcasting striped bass club.** What better way to network than to make friends with a bunch of striper freaks. A club is a group of freaks that meld together and fish together. No not in one large group (as a rule) but as a network. The networking possibilities are endless. I am a member of the Spring Lake Live Liners Fishing Club, so is Turner and a bunch of other good striper fishermen. We all network all the time. There are also other very good bass clubs on the shore: Berkley Striper Club from Seaside, Shark River Surf Anglers from the Belmar area, Asbury Park Fishing Club from Asbury, Bradley Beach Fishing Club from Bradley Beach, and there are more...these guys all work together with in their club, exchanging information. By finding a club to join, you then usually have the right of the network and information that usually stays with in the group.

**4. Sharing information.** As simple as it sounds, sharing information is a vital tool to use when trying to gather information. New information that you have, becomes a tradable commodity, like wampum in the trading days. You can't get something for nothing (as a rule). If you give some thing, you usually get something back, and visa versa, and don't give nothing away if you are not getting anything in return! Use this to your advantage. Many times I have met up with guys while checking the beach and both of you have nothing to say until one guy spills a little information. For example one guy might say, "I had three bass last night in Lavallette at dusk," the other might say. "Oh yeah? I had 6 this morning in the Point Pleasant pocket." Suddenly valuable information has been exchanged and a help to both guys involved. Anything along these lines is a critical source. This is first hand information that provides you with so much info that it valuable. Now you know that the fish are in good, they are spread out, they are feeding day and night, and the list goes on.

**5. Weather and wind.** A big key when deciding if you will be fishing or not, if you live a half mile or 60 miles from the beach, is to know the wind forecast, the weather, and conditions of the ocean. You can always check the wind and weather online 24-7. It is not a happy time when you get up at 3:30 a.m. travels to your honey hole only to find the wind howling and the water unfishable. This gets your day off to a very bad start. Some guys, if going fishing in the daytime, will check the conditions using one of the beach cam's that are available online. Sometimes Turner will call me after checking the wind and ask me if it is fishable. For example if the wind went northeast in the morning and Turner was planning a late afternoon outing. This is a case where combining your sources works together. He knows that I am a lot closer to the beach than he is and you can never tell from a distance. I will then tell him come or stay home.

Good information greatly improves your chances of catching fish when you make the decision and put forth the effort to fish. Be smart and build a resource library that you can go to gather valuable information. I like to surround myself with good fishermen and very reliable sources when I need to decide on where and when to fish. I would suggest you do the same. See you on the beach.