

## **Hurricane Bass: Don't Let the White Storm Waters Dissuade You.**

**DJ Muller**

Every year we are hammered by hurricanes and Nor'easters, it is a common happening along the shore. Many surfcasters are disappointed whenever a big storm pounds our local beaches and honey holes, thinking that they will not be able to fish for a week, or at least until the water calms down and clears up. Last September we had a succession of hurricanes and storms that kept the beaches big and white for almost the entire month. While I heard a lot of "grumblings" about the conditions, I took full advantage of the situation, and had a great September. In case no one has let you know, let me be the first to tell you...bass love big, white, water.

Now if you feel so inclined to run out and hit the beach while the eye of a hurricane is over head, please feel free to do so, it was good knowing you! This is not the condition I am referring to when I speak of "Hurricane Bass." The conditions I am referring to are the conditions of the ocean before, and primarily after a hurricane or northeaster. The ocean is still usually big and ferocious, or calming down, for days after a blow. These are the waters you want to target.

### **Two Approaches.**

The first day or two of a northeaster, depending on how hard the wind is blowing, gives the surfcaster some great opportunities to catch a lot of fish and some nice fish. The days following a northeaster or hurricane can also provide some very productive results. A lot of the fishing has to do with the pull of the water or the riptide. After storms these currents pull very, very hard, making some fishing virtually impossible and down right dangerous. But as the storms roll through, two age-old approaches remain: bait and artificials.

**Bait.** Early in the storm season, before the influx of migrating bait rolls through, I like to fish clams, both during a big blow, or definitely right after it. This kind of fishing is hard work but it is also very productive. I usually try to find a good, long, jetty or deep pocket some where, where the rockpile can slow the hard rip of the water and give me a shot at some bass. The pockets also work as a barrier or termination point where the bait can not get pushed backwards by the wind any further so they get trapped. The strong wind and strong current working together benefits both the catser and the bass. The poor baitfish again falls victim, much to our delite. It is good for the timing of the hungry surfcaster who can now take full advantage of the bass on the beach, if, he or she is tough enough. Heavy tackle needs to be used at this time, as you will need to cast heavy sinkers in the 8 ounce range, and clams or chunks, into a head-on wind. A 10' plus rod and a big reel, similar to a Penn 704Z will get you into the game. Leave your little stuff at home. You may also find it advantageous to tie your clam on with elastic thread, to keep it on the hook longer while in the strike zone. I also find it important to hold your rod at this time, as opposed to spiking it, as to feel the hard strike of a striper.

**Artificials.** During the rough and unsettled weather of a storm, don't be too quick to rule out artificials. One morning in a howling northeaster, I was fishing the pocket at Island