

Spring is Squid Time in New England

by TOM RICHARDSON



Spring is squid time in New England. When the water temperature reaches the 50-degree mark, the marine mollusks migrate inshore and gather in the sounds, bays, coves and harbors to breed and feed. Once their predators (namely bluefish, fluke, sea bass and striped bass) catch up and the water begins to warm, the squid schools move deeper, although the occasional pod can still be found inshore through the season.



silversides) tend to gather. Lighted docks, wharves, piers, bulkheads and bridges are all great spots to look for squid after dark, although some spots tend to hold more squid than others. You can generally recognize these places by the number of hardcore squid anglers they attract.

Finding Spring Squid

During the day, they typically gather near the bottom in water ranging from 15' to 302, often in depressions, along the edge of a shoal or drop-off, or over some kind of hard structure. In this situation, you can catch them from a boat by working a squid jig just above bottom.

Birds (especially diving gannets) and other squid fishermen will often give away the presence of the schools.

Once you find a concentration of squid (watch your depthsounder for haystack-like marks near the bottom), work the area by drifting along and vertical jigging with several squid jigs. When you hook a squid, mark the spot on your plotter so you can return to it.

Another way to tell if the squid have arrived is the presence of commercial squid trawlers. The trawlers generally work sand-bottomed areas in open sounds, such as Vineyard and Nantucket Sounds. Also, when you start to see signs for "Fresh Local Squid" in your neighborhood markets, you can bet the squid are in.

Squidding From Shore

While you can catch plenty of squid during the day if you have a boat, nighttime gives the shore fisherman a shot at success. After dark, squid gravitate toward any

source of light, because that's where baitfish (namely



Fishing for squid is easy, but a bright light is key. Many squid fishermen bring their own portable lights, which they run off a generator or from their vehicle. If the dock, pier or wharf has electrical outlets, you're really in business! Aim the light or lights toward the water and wait for some bait to gather.

Sometimes the squid will show up immediately; other times you'll have to wait until a school swims past. And sometimes they never show up. Keep a close eye on the water below. Often you'll see the squid lurking in the shadows around the edges of the light, waiting to pounce on a hapless baitfish—or your lure.

Jigs & Tackle

To catch squid, all you need is a light spinning or baitcasting outfit and a squid jig. These oblong lures feature a "skirt" of upturned spikes and come in a variety of colors, sizes, weights and styles. They are available in most saltwater tackle stores or through catalogs such as Bass Pro Shops and Cabelas. Jig color can make a big difference, so bring a wide selection. Weight can be important too, as sometimes the squid like to hold near the bottom. Other times they prefer a nearly weightless jig that just suspends in the water.



A good, basic rod-and-reel setup for jigging, day or night, is a light spinning outfit spooled with 8-pound line. Tie the squid jig to the end of the line and you're good to go. No need for a leader here. **(to page 39)**