

Fishing Success? It's up to you.

by
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You can't catch fish where there are no fish.
Sounds simple, but this is a hard lesson for anglers to learn. No matter if planning a trip for a customer on my charter boat or fishing myself recreationally my formula for a successful fishing trip includes research, planning and implementation.

Research

No matter what species you are targeting successful fishing trips start with research. I gather as much intelligence as I can on fishing blogs, through reading fishing columns, checking social media and I talk to bait & tackle shops and fishing friends to identify what is biting and where. Once you know what's biting and where select what you will target and prepare a plan to catch them.

Plan

When planning a fishing trip I select the species I will be targeting and then prepare a variety of gear and tackle to catch those species. For example if targeting summer flounder (fluke) and black sea bass I will make sure we have a variety of tackle types for the task.

For summer flounder that includes a number of different types and colors of bait rigs that we will tip with squid, silver sides, minnows, fluke bellies (the white skin on the bottom of summer flounder). Even sea robin or bluefish strips. A number of jigs are ready to go too... different types and a variety of bucktail colors.

And for black sea bass a number of rigs... white if squid are in the water, red if the sea bass are eating baby lobsters or green if crabs seem to be on their diet. The idea is to be ready with a number of different bait and lure types depending on what the fish are eating on any given day.

The same would be true with other species too. Tautog bait rigs and jigs, striped bass swimming lures, surface lures and bait rigs as well as umbrella rigs or tube and worm to troll.

The next part of planning is select the places you plan to fish based on your research as to where the fish are, the tide/current and wind. Select the three, four or five places you will fish until you hit the fish.



FISHING PLAN LOCATIONS

Eleven fishing plan locations, selected to target fluke and black sea bass. First two locations off Newport yielded keeper fluke and sea bass for all on board.



FIRST KEEPER FLUKE
A fishing plan leads to first keeper summer flounder (fluke) for Logan McDermott (13 yrs), a 22" fish caught at the first place on the fishing plan, off Newport in 80 feet of water.

Implement The Plan

Once you have a plan then it is a matter of getting out on the water to implement the plan. Often we get side tracked, deviate from the plan based on an unwillingness to move the boat, travel to the next spot, or start fishing a species you did not plan for.

It's up to you to improvise based on conditions, but do it in an intentional way. For example, "We are going to cast to this school of mackerel and then get back to targeting tautog as planned."

It's easy to become complacent on the water, "We are having a good time, the bite is slow but who cares."

Believe me, move the boat to the next spot on your plan and you will have even a better time once the rods start to bend. Often times it's the last place on my list that lights up with fish or the first place we revisit at the end of the day as the water may have started to move, the wind shifted or the bait in the water may have changed.

So for your next fishing trip, prepare with research, develop a plan and then once on the water be persistent and execute your plan.

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