



SALTWATER FISHING ON LONG ISLAND

JANUARY AND FEBRUARY

Few party boats, open or charter, operate. Those that do usually sail on weekends and holidays only at this time of the year. Tautog (blackfish) and Atlantic cod are the main species sought, although whiting (silver hake), Atlantic herring and red hake (ling) also will be caught. Likely ports are Sheepshead Bay (Brooklyn), Freeport, Point Lookout, Captree State Park and Montauk. In some years, herring may be caught in numbers at such areas as the Jones Beach Piers, Captree Piers, Shinnecock Canal, Mount Sinai Harbor, Centerport, and other places where there is access. Some white perch may be caught at Sunken Meadow State Park and some of the south shore rivers. In years of hard winter and thick ice, however, this is the time to maintain and repair your fishing tackle.

MARCH, APRIL AND MAY

Tautog, cod, pollock and large winter flounder are caught these months by anglers aboard Montauk-based open and charter boats. Please remember, the winter flounder season does not open until the third Saturday in March. Once they start in, flounder will attract anglers to ports all around Long Island. Good catches may be made through May (and well into June in some years). Popular ports for open and charter boat anglers include: Babylon, Bayshore, Center Moriches, Sheepshead Bay, Island Park, Freeport, Captree State Park, Greenport, Port Jefferson, Mattituck, Montauk and Huntington. Rental boat stations may be found at Island Park, Seaford, East Moriches, Hampton Bays, Montauk, Mattituck Inlet, New Suffolk, Mt. Sinai Harbor, Port Jefferson, Bayville and other villages and hamlets along Long Island Sound and the South Shore bays. Among the more popular bank and pier spots are the West Shore of Little Neck Bay, the banks of the Shinnecock Canal and the fishing piers in Brooklyn, Captree, Robert Moses and Jones Beach State Parks, and Ponquogue Bridge (Hampton Bays).

The striped bass season starts in mid-April. The western south shore beaches and Little Neck Bay are often early "hot spots." Some Freeport and Sheepshead Bay open boat anglers may seek tautog (along with cod, whiting and ling) through mid-April. These boats, along with some of those berthed at Captree State Park, often switch to mackerel in mid or late April and early May. Some of the other Captree berthed boats may switch to weakfish in Great South Bay about the same time. The summer flounder (fluke) season usually starts in May, but the best fishing for this flatfish doesn't really start until a few weeks later, mid to late May also sees the beginning of scup (porgy) and weakfish in the Peconics and northern puffer (blowfish) in the south shore bays.



JUNE

Early in the month, anglers fishing from open boats at Montauk will continue to catch cod, pollock and winter flounder. About mid-month, black sea bass, scup (porgy) and summer flounder (fluke) will become important at Montauk. The charter boat fleet there will begin to work on bluefish and striped bass. Some charter boats from Montauk will concentrate on sharks from June through October. The open and charter boats from Greenport will fish for porgies and weakfish, some large blackfish may also be taken, along with a few summer flounder. There may be a few bluefish caught out of Port Jefferson late in the month, otherwise the boats from that port will concentrate on porgies, blackfish, winter flounder and fluke. Anglers fishing from Captree State Park open and charter boats and from rental boats throughout the South Shore bays will be after summer flounder (fluke) and (in some years) weakfish. Porgies and weakfish should make up the bulk of the catches for boat anglers in the Peconics. Most anglers fishing from open boats berthed at Freeport and Sheepshead Bay will usually fish offshore and take mixed bags of porgies, black sea bass, blackfish and fluke. Occasional spurts of bluefish fishing will begin from these ports. Bank

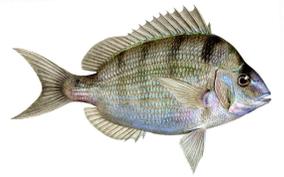




and pier fishing along the South Shore is for summer flounder, weakfish, blowfish, northern kingfish, winter flounder and blackfish. Dunk a sand worm and you might get anything (or nothing on a “bad day”). Bluefish, northern kingfish and blowfish will join striped bass and weakfish in the surf fishermen’s catches. North shore bank fishermen will be taking a mixed bag of flounder, blackfish, weakfish, striped bass and bluefish. Some may call it surf fishing, but there really is not that much surf on the North Shore. Shark fishing out of several South Shore ports starts this month and lasts until October. Blue shark, shortfin mako and dusky shark will be the most frequently taken sharks. The winter flounder season closes on June 30th.

JULY AND AUGUST

Most anglers aboard Montauk open boats will take home fluke, porgies and sea bass. A few boats from this port will take their fishermen to Cox’s Ledge or Block Island (and one boat even makes trips to Georges Bank) for cod and related species all summer long. Although bluefish will be the main support for the charter boat fleets from all ports, some tuna will be taken by anglers chartering boats from Hampton Bays, Montauk, Freeport, Sheepshead Bay and sometimes Captree State Park. Fluke fishing continues as the prime objective throughout the south shore bays. Some weakfish may be caught off Hecksher State Park and West Sayville (try the West Avenue Dock before sunrise). Porgies, northern kingfish and weakfish, and a few fluke, dominate fishing in the Peconics. Those fishing aboard open boats from Sheepshead Bay, Freeport and some from Captree will be after bluefish. Some of the night trips from Captree, Freeport and Sheepshead Bay for striped bass are fun. Anglers on the Port Jefferson boats will hit good schools of bluefish from time to time from now through late September. On days when bluefish are not found, fluke, porgies and blackfish will substitute. “Snappers” (young bluefish) will support the bank and pier fishery in August. Blue crabs will be willing to take baits along the south shore from now through October. Remember 50 crabs a day is the limit. Surf fishing on the South Shore and bank fishing on the North Shore will be similar to June. Charter boats from Greenport will concentrate on large bluefish and striped bass from now through November. Open boats based there will be after fluke, porgies and weakfish.



SEPTEMBER

Porgy fishing aboard Montauk based open boats is usually at its best this month. Striped bass begin to be more frequent in the catches from charter and open boats from all ports. Troll a “bunker spoon” off Gilgo Beach. From now through mid-November big blackfish near Orient Point and Plum Island will be sought by anglers aboard Greenport and Orient based boats. Blackfish and bluefish will be targeted out of other north shore ports. Anglers fishing out of Captree State Park will be taking mixed bags of a variety of species, even a few triggerfish may be found in the creel. Winter flounder season reopens in mid-September.

Blackfish and black sea bass angling becomes good late in the month through November on all the artificial reefs off the south shore. However, the tautog migrate offshore from Kismet reef by mid-October. Freeport and Sheepshead Bay anglers are often after tuna (school bluefins, some yellowfins and a few albacore) on their charters, but bluefish and striped bass still remain the most frequent catch. “Snapper” fishing is at its best for the bank and pier fishermen in the first half of the month. Striped bass become more frequent in the surf fishermen’s catches.

OCTOBER

Open boat anglers at Montauk may take some porgies, but by the end of the month, cod should become the prime objective there. Some open boats there and in some of the south shore ports may join the charter boat fleets after striped bass. Oh, that full moon, get those bass. Anglers aboard Captree open boats and aboard rental boats along the south shore of Long Island will begin to catch winter flounder, as will bank and pier fishermen and some will take you to Fire Island artificial reef for black sea bass. A few bluefish and occasionally large schools of tuna may offer some good action this month at Montauk and along the south shore ports. North shore bank fishermen should do well this month for striped bass. Surf fishing along the south





shore is often at it best this month for both bluefish and striped bass. Try the Ponquogue Bridge Pier in the evening for striped bass (clams are good bait along with bunker chunks).

NOVEMBER

The best fishing should be for cod out of Montauk, winter flounder along the south shore of Long Island (all ports), and big blackfish (and sometimes a stray cod) near Orient Point. Striped bass will be taken by charter and open boat anglers from all ports. Bank and pier fishing all around the Island will be for winter flounder. Surf fishing will taper off about mid-month, though both bluefish and striped bass may surprise with some "blitzes" near Thanksgiving. Freeport and Sheepshead Bay open boats fishing offshore will concentrate on blackfish and black sea bass until the cod and whiting come in. The winter flounder season in all waters closes on November 30th.

DECEMBER

Tautog and cod will be the prime objective of most boat fishermen from all ports. Nearly all fishing will be done just on weekends. Some blackfish may stay active all winter. Herring may return in abundance in some years. Look for white perch at Sunken Meadow State Park and in some of the larger south shore rivers.



SPECIAL NOTES

One boat from Montauk is now scheduled for at least one trip a month from April through November to fish Georges Bank and wrecks off Nantucket for large cod, pollock white hake and even a halibut or two (on Georges Bank). Another boat from the same fleet may fish Nantucket Shoals for big scup. This outfit even schedules open boat trips for tuna (as do a few sheepshead Bay Boats).

Big game fishing for swordfish and giant tuna is usually conducted by charter boats from Hampton Bays and Montauk from July through September. Captree and Freeport charter boats may also go after tuna at this time. Sharks (shortfin mako is preferred), bluefin tuna, yellowfin tuna and a few marlin (mostly white marlin) will support the offshore canyon fishery from mid-summer through mid-fall. Note that Montauk open boat with its overnight trips.

For the latest information, seasons, bag and size limits and other laws and regulations concerning marine recreational fishing, call (631) 444-0435.

For more information, write:

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Original Date: March 7, 1969
Revised: March 18, 1971; April 9, 1973; January 27, 1977; March 20, 1978; June 3, 1983; July 10, 1984; January 23, 1986; July 15, 1987; January 15, 1991; April 28, 1992; April 27, 1995; February 17, 2004.





Inshore Saltwater Fish Calendar for New York

Species	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Striped Bass												
Bluefish												
Snapper blues												
Winter Flounder												
Fluke												
Weakfish												
Porgy												
Blackfish												
Black sea bass												

Good	
Excellent	

NOTE: It is every angler's responsibility to check the rules and regulations that apply to the fish you want to catch. Even though a fish species may be available at a certain time of year, you cannot fish for it if the season is closed! Call DEC at (631) 444-0435 for the latest on rules and regulations, or check out our web site at <http://www.dec.state.ny.us>

