



by
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TAUTOG FISHING Tips



Tautog Season Open... Experts share tips

Tautog season is open and anglers are hoping for a good season again this year. In Rhode Island, tautog has a split season. The spring season ends May 31 so now is the time to fish for them as they are illegal to fish June 1 to July 31 during spawning season.

Fish have to be sixteen inches. The catch limit for private recreational anglers from April 15 to May 31 and then August 1 to October 18 is three fish/person/day, which jumps to six fish/person/day on October 18 to December 15.



Gisele Golembeski with a tautog she landed while fishing with her husband Rich off Narragansett, RI

There is a *ten fish per boat limit* in all periods. The boat limit does not apply to charter and party boats.

Over the past couple of years, I have asked noted Rhode Island anglers, fishing guides, charter captains and bait & tackle shop owners in Rhode Island for tautog fishing tips. Here is what some of them had to say about tautog fishing tips.

Boat placement is important. Using electronics, find structure, estimate wind/drift direction and anchor up current from where you want to fish and drift back to the spot as the anchor is setting. Once in position, fish all sides of the boat. Fish all

sides of the boat casting a bit to cover as much area as you can. If still no bites, let some anchor line out a couple of times to change your position, if still no bites it is time to move the vessel.



Capt. Dave Monti with a nice tautog. The spring season started on April 15 and ends on May 30

TAUTOG BAITS

Favorite baits for tautog in the spring include clam worms as some say in the spring the tautog want something soft. However, green crabs cut in half (with legs cut off) or Asian crabs seem to work in both the spring and fall.



FEEL THE BITE

Tap, tap and then get ready for a tug of war.

Captain George Cioe said, "I believe with the first tap the tautog is positioning the bait for consumption." So at the second tap I quickly raise the rod to set the hook as tautog are fast, when I feel the weight of the fish I reel, reel, reel. Once the fish is hooked, keep the rod up and pressure on so the fish is not able to run for cover.

Captain Rich Hittinger, RISAA vice president and a long time angler out of Point Judith said, "If you get two bites with no hook-up your bait is gone. Reel in and re-bait."



Matt Medeiros with a fat tautog that he landed using a green crab for bait



Gil Barao with the days catch of tautog landed off Newport

FISH LODGED IN STRUCTURE

Here is a tip from **George Poveromo's** "Rock'em Sock'em" article that appeared in a back issue of *Saltwater Sportsman* magazine. When a fish is hooked and it has muscled its way back to structure, apply pressure forcing a respectable amount of bend in the rod.

If the fish is not moving, hold the rod vertically to the water, tighten the line and pull or pluck the fishing line like a banjo string. (to page 35)