

Captain Dave Peros - 2009 Summary

As with every new season, I think back to the previous years and attempt to make some predictions, fully expecting that there will be surprises and the unexpected – but that's the nature of fishing.

I thought that 2009 got off to a slower than usual start, with many early season locales holding fewer bass and for a shorter interval. I always find May the beginning of consistent fishing in many different types of water, from the rivers in Wareham to the estuaries on the southside, but late April is also a good bet. That was not the case last year, however, as Joe Marcus and I were skunked a couple of times in late April and David Kuhns and his dad Bert worked hard to scare up a few fish around the southside the first weekend in May. Tom, Karen, and Braden Tierney played host to Tom's niece Michelle with little to show for their efforts except for some friendly banter. There was little doubt in my mind that the colder and incredibly wet weather last year in May had slowed things a bit, but I can't imagine another one where we had rain almost every day and some mornings the temperatures were in the mid-30's. Stripers are pretty resilient and tolerate a wide range of conditions, but even that cold made them sluggish.

Still, the first really good fishing hit later that week when Mike Hogan worked his magic with his super soft plastics, appropriately named Hogy's, as bass both big and small were feeding on everything from silversides to adult pogies in Waquoit Bay and I was fully confident that we were turning the corner. A couple of days later, Kevin Cole hosted his brother Peter and friend Tony Finneran from England and they hoisted their first stripers on the fly.

Although the craziness of the previous year around the west entrance to the Canal failed to materialize in 2009, with big bass crushing schools of mackerel everywhere you looked, early May was still solid, with Joe Marcus and I enjoying a day to remember on May 8, with schoolies up to the high 20-inch range fish on every cast for a full tide. Later in the month, Sasha Boriakoff had to search a bit more for fish, finding Buttermilk Bay and the Mashnee Flats surprisingly quiet, although as dusk settled, there were some decent sized bass on the grass beds near the Maritime Academy.

As is often the case in May, the weather keeps many boat anglers off the water in the sounds and along the Elizabeths, with Memorial Day traditionally the time when many folks finally dunk their boats. That's unfortunate, the rips in the Hole and the sounds are often alive with bass early in May and they are just looking to crush flies, plugs, and my buddy Mike Hogan's super creations, the Hogy soft plastic. Perhaps it was water temperature, but things got off to a slower start in Woods Hole last year; Mike and I are often the only crazies on the water in early May, but having big bass to ourselves is often the reward for some cold mornings – as is hot cup of coffee and a fresh, homemade pastry at The Pie in the Sky. By mid-month, the Hole was starting to happen and regulars like Jeff Leiden and Gerry Fine began to work their magic with the fly rod.

Middle Ground and other rips also really started to roar around mid-May, with Mike and I running out into the fog outside of Green Pond and finding a big school of bass working down the sound. Mark Tenerowicz showed his mettle by braving the cold and made his first trip of the season a good one. Thanks to Paul Dallalis, I able to introduce Ben Schneider to flyrodding for stripers at MG as May began to run into June. It wasn't even unusual to time a trip with the afternoon tide and return to the dock in the dark, with tired arms and big smiles, as was the case with Matt Hoberman.

Mid-May is usually a good time to start targeting Barnstable Harbor and other northside locales, since throwing topwater offerings, both on spin and fly tackle, can be dynamite in B-Harbor and the sight fishing on the flats is outstanding, something that the Colford brothers, Tom and Ed, found out. Barney Keezell and Dana Wilson also found BH to their liking. Memorial Day was outstanding for Tom and Braden Tierney as we worked the flats and creeks on the Katie G II and had big fish chasing all types of offerings. But being May, the weather can show its ugly side, as Sandy Reid and Laurie Thwaites, two of my favorite people and accomplished flyrodders and light tackle anglers, found Barnstable an ugly scene with wind, rain, and cold on the last day of the month. Logical folks that we are, we cut things short and settled for breakfast at Marshland.

On another note, Mike Hogan was also kind enough to let me use his skiff and keep me afloat in May and June while the Katie G was still being refurbished and the Katie G II, my flats skiff, wasn't the boat for the conditions.

A logical and common question from many folks is "What's the best month for fishing on the upper Cape?" My answer is that it's hard to quibble with June. The weather usually is settling down around these parts and you can generally count on sunshine and warmer temperatures by June. Of course, the off-the-chart fishing in May can be counted on to continue in June from the northside through Buzzards Bay and down into the sounds, with the Elizabeths really coming into their own.

The first week in June sees a number of folks from the Connecticut Saltwater Anglers group visit Falmouth and the upper Cape. I have had the good fortune over the years to host Steve Sawczuk and Ray Riley on the first Thursday and Friday of the month. These guys just flat out catch fish, and after taking a year away from Barnstable to fish the serendipity around the Canal in 2008, they were back at it, with schoolies sipping sand eels all over. They also hit some fish at Middle Ground and around the Elizabeths. Ray stayed an extra day and hosted Arnold Cosgrove, who took advantage of Ray's mojo, with a huge schools of bass just outside the mouth of Falmouth Harbor, as well action at MG and Naushon later in the day.

Alan Moulton and Mike Davis also hooked up with me in early June. Although the wind drove us off the water one day and what is usually a very good tide the next day didn't produce a repeat of their previous year's experience with surface feeding fish for four hours in Barnstable, we did have some good success on the flats with big bass milling all around and willing to eat well placed Clousers. Walter Nelson and Dave Johnson also

made their annual visit to Barnstable and did their usual fine job flyrodding on scattered schools of bass on the flats, albeit with far less surface activity than we are used to.

Middle Ground was good to Steve Roman and his brother Joe, as they managed stripers both on the fly and on Hogy's, with squid driving the fish wild. Later in the week, Gerry Fine and I battled the fog, but found the rip well formed and teeming with fish. There is nothing quite like the visual aspect of seeing a school of bass pursuing big squid flies, surface plugs, and soft plastics, something that Davis and Robert Yetman, along with Paul Mort, found worth checking out, as well as our usual poke down the Elizabeths. I joined Bill Laberis, son Perry, and fishing buddy Dave Holbrook on Bill's boat for an interesting trip that was delayed by fog before we made the run to MG, where we worked on how to cast and fish a rip with Perry scoring a nice bass, followed by a run to Quick's for some plugging around structure.

June also saw the return of Peter Secor and his sons, Hunter and Max, along with their buddy Tim Cotter who was staying with them on the Vineyard. MG was off tidewise, but still produced some good bluefish deep in the water column, as well a bass or two and even a nice fluke for Hunter, which had to be released as the recreational season wasn't yet open.

Although I do the vast majority of my trips on one of my boats, I did get the chance to do a shore trip in mid-June with Mike McCarthy and Tony Broccoli, a couple of devoted flyrodders who wanted to learn about shore spots in the Falmouth and Bourne areas. Although the tides were not optimal for a mid-morning start, we did manage to scratch up a small fish or two and I got the opportunity to revisit some of my favorite locales with Mike and Tony, explaining along the way how they fish at other stages of the tide and times of the year.

Woods Hole is always a fishy spot in June and it proved no less so this year, with bass banging squid all over. Dave Kuhns returned with a couple of buddies for an evening trip and they had little trouble convincing plenty of bass and blues to respond. One truth that never fails is that a good morning tide doesn't always translate into the same kind of action on the same stage later in the day, as Paul Valint slammed fish in the morning on the fly in the Hole mid-June, but an evening trip with Linda and Don Miller saw us empty handed. After calling it a day with Linda and Don due to the unusual cold and lack of fish, I invited them to join me two days later and they both scored as dusk settled in, with the fish and conditions much more cooperative.

The aforementioned Paul Valint is a dedicated and highly skilled flyrodder who followed up his first trip with another solid day both in the Hole and at Middle Ground. Although we had reasonable success with the usual squid patterns, Paul had created his own fly that the fish literally jumped all over. Smaller than the usual flies I use, his creation included a mono extension and sparse applications of EP Fibers, thereby making it easy to dub it the "PV-EP", in honor of its creator. The fishing was so good this year that Paul went for a third trip, and after a great morning fishing in the Hole with Gentleman Joe Marcus, I picked Paul up at Shucker's where he was enjoying a mid-day repast with his family.

Another double day found Frank Casey and father-in-law John O'Connor battling for top spot in the family fishing competition as the Hole was alive with bass in the morning, while later in the day MG was the happening place for Gary and Ted Reid. I got the chance to share Montauk stories with the dedicated father-son surfcasting tandem and we made tentative plans to hook up there in the fall.

Last June also provided a very special treat as Kate's brother Mike and his bride, Mary (who just happens to be Kate's college roommate from B.C.) played host to Mary's family for what was supposed to be a week of sun and fun on balmy Cape Cod. Alas, the week provided a nor'easter and plenty of rain, but we managed to get out on the boat a couple of times. Colin Steele proving to be top rod, although mom-and-dad, Will and Liz, and aunts-and-uncles, Shari and Lee Riggs and Jeannine and Jim Leffel, admittedly had to share one rod with the other firmly in Colin's control. Even Mike, a landlubber of the finest kind who prefers golf (?!?) to fishing, joined us and proved to be a worthy chronicler of all the adventures, including a later afternoon gathering at Shucker's.

One of the common laments that those of us who make a living fishing along the Elizabeths have been echoing recently is the lack of consistent daytime fishing around the islands, even with the deadly live eel. Good, solid surface feeds have been tough to come by and it really pays to have a nice cloudy, rainy day if you want to score on larger bass from dawn-to-dusk. One exception proved to be the beautiful bass that Paul Mort scored in the bright sunshine using his unique eel fishing technique, after which he made sure to keep encouraging Davis Yetman to get into the game.

A solid if not spectacular trip with Sandy Reid proved to be a good segue into the final two days of June as I hosted Ellen Silbergeld, a lover of all things fly fishing, as well as plovers and other little birds. Ellen, in turn, was hosting three other members of the Chesapeake Women's Anglers, including Deby Blum, Georgia Townsend, and Iva Engler, at her home in Falmouth. A trip to Barnstable that started out rainy turned sunny in a short while and we got a lot of practice in casting the heavier rods and lines required in the saltwater game, which is always something new and challenging for folks used to trout fishing. Our second day included a visit to Woods Hole and around the islands and by the end, everyone was casting admirably, even with a full sink line, although I wish the fish had been more agreeable.

July saw many folks record their biggest stripers on both day and night trips along the islands, although the general pattern continued to see the best fishing during the daylight hours when it was dark and/or rainy, mimicking nighttime conditions.

That proved to be the case on the first day of the month as Luke and Jake Trevino were once again on board during their annual visit to their grandmother, Marianne White of Falmouth, who has been good enough to make arrangements for them over the last several years. With a front moving in, we ran in relative calm down the Elizabeths and on their first casts, both Luke and Jake hooked up to big bass. As is often the case when foul weather is approaching, the fish were super aggressive, but when a lightning bolt hit

down around Nashawena, it was time to beat feet back to Falmouth Harbor. Although rain and spray soaked, we were glad we weren't on the sailboat that we passed that was carrying an aluminum mast, a perfect lightning rod.

Over the next couple of weeks, their uncle, Chris White, and his three boys, Connor, Sebby, and Aidan, joined Luke and Jake. Aidan was new to the Trevino-White fishing games and barb throwing, but he fit right in; in fact, I would say he gave even better than he received. From bluefish casting trips off of Popponesset to more daytime adventures around the Elizabeths, fishing with this gang has become a highlight of my season, ending last season with a picture perfect night trip for Connor and Sebby.

Mark Tenerowicz also took advantage of some good fishing around the islands in early July, showing off his plugging skills, and Paul Dallalis was joined by son Will and Ben Schneider for the tail end of the big fish on top in Woods Hole. As I mentioned earlier, as the season progressed, the Hole just wasn't its usual self. I have come to count on both bass and blues settling in and gorging on the array of bait that is swept around the rocks by the currents.

One day when it did go off I was fishing with Don White and his friend, Mike, in Buzzards Bay, which didn't pan out due to winds and a lack of fish.

Even the schools of bluefish that normally roam everywhere in Nantucket Sound weren't as prevalent, although Howard Grosser once again brought his brother Larry and Larry's son, Matthew, and they managed some perfect sized choppers for the smoker.

The annual Davis Yetman and kids' trip came off without a hitch, as Hailey Yetman once again brought along Vineyard natives and neighbors Jimmy and Andy DiMattia for a go at the islands bass and blues. This gang has proven to be adept at all things casting, and after Jimmy hauled in a big blue off of Wasque, we left the rips to the big boats and checked out a number of spots before settling into Middle Ground. Despite my cautions, Hailey elected to go with her ultralight UglyStick and summarily hooked up with a nice bass, which ultimately parted the line. On the way back to Chappy, we found blues on the flats outside of Edgartown and had a good time with topwaters.

Jon Kolb also proved once again to be a great host, bringing his grandchildren, Jake and Lexi, along with their parents, Sam and Karin, for some casting and bottom fishing. MG was quiet, so I opted to run over to Cotuit where Jake cast to, hooked, and landed his first bluefish by himself. The scup were biting really well inside of Cotuit bay and both Jake and Lexi proved to be more than a match for these famous bait stealers. July often sees some interesting late day thunderstorms and one drove Jon and Sam off the water just as they were enjoying a great evening bluefish blitz, but graphite rods also make great lightning rods!

One of the advantages of trailering a boat is the opportunity to follow good fishing and action in the rips off Monomoy when the area begins to mimic what we have around the sounds earlier in the season. Last year was no exception, as Chenson Chen and son

Nicholas went toe-to-toe with bass that just crushed Hogy soft plastics and were joined by George Turner for a repeat trip.

Sandy Reid and Laurie Thwaites proved to be more than a match for the fish around Chatham, using their fly rods, along with fast sink lines and big squid patterns. The high sunshine that day was absolutely perfect for seeing the fish milling over the sand and you could almost pick out the fish you wanted to cast to.

Gerry Fine and Kirk Klingensmith had a roaring good time off of Monomoy as well, with at least one, and often both, hooked up on the fly as the bite was as good as you could want. Unfortunately, the wind blew on our last day together and you know it's honking out of any southerly quadrant when even Barnstable, which I hoped would save us, proved to be a tough go.

It's very tough to compete with live bait, and although Greg Maheras is committed to the fly rod as a weapon of choice and managed the first and only fish during a night visit to Cuttyhunk, when Michael Shea and Dave Driscoll began to haul big bass in at another island spot, Greg gave Mr. Wiggly a go and proved to be adept at snake charming as well.

As July began to drift away, fishing around Woods Hole was still off, with Ted, Fiona, and Silas Farrell hoping for a repeat of the year before, but it was not to be. Naushon was a little better, but not much, and the same story held for Kevin Diffendaffer and his teenagers, Hayden and Margot, who showed great patience to at least sneak out a couple of bass, both on fly and spin.

With his extended family on Cape for vacation, Ben Schneider was host to dad, Chuck; brother, Brian; and brother-in-law Ashay Patel for a couple of days fishing around Barnstable. While Day One saw some solid fishing on the flats, both on the fly and light spinning gear with very small soft plastics, Trip Two was definitely slower in the skinny water. But, early August is famous for the return of fish to the waters from outside of Barnstable down to the structure off of Sandwich and we ran into a nice school of mixed bass and blues as the afternoon drifted into night.

The contrast between night and day fishing along the Elizabeths couldn't have been displayed more clearly than what the Tierney's and the Shaughnessy's experienced. Tom and Braden Tierney enjoyed working a small stretch of the Elizabeths, catching several big bass, including a 40+-pounder for Braden and the longest fish of the season for his dad, taping out at 52-inches but weighing just shy of Braden's cow. The next morning, I visited the same stretch with Rick and Matthew Shaughnessy on the same tide, but it was a ghost town; in fact, finding life of any kind that day was tough.

It was a similar story a couple of day's later as Ellen Silbergeld managed a well-deserved bass on the fly during the day, only to have Tom and Braden clean up once again at night. Jim Jones worked hard the following morning with the fly rod along the Elizabeths, and it

seemed pretty clear to me that if the night fishing was far better than day around the islands last season, then that would be true even more in August.

Winds proved to be the problem for John Hrebenyar and I as we tried to get out to the fish in Barnstable Harbor, but we did get some casting instruction in and I hope to hook up with John this summer to show him what the northside flats are all about.

As good as Chatham was in July, it petered out very quickly, with Sandy Reid and Joe Marcus finding tons of bait in the rips, but far more bluefish than bass, with Joe's handmade plugs providing all kinds of fun on the flats with the small choppers.

After their nighttime success, Tom and Braden had hoped to show wife-and-mom Karen how good it was, but it was not to be and even a daytime trip down the islands on their boat dragging tubes proved fruitless.

A couple of days later, a bit of cloud cover helped stir the action for Mark Tenerowicz around the Elizabeths, followed by a decent day for Michael Beebe and Ruth Anderson as we were able to tuck out of the wind and scare up some bass on the fly around Naushon.

Mark also directed a trip with daughter, Gates, and brother-in-law, Griff Mann, and his two youngsters, Charlie and Alex, as well as the patriarch of the gang, Charles Mann. Fishing was kind of typical for daytime along the Elizabeths, but everyone stuck with it and had a great time, with a few fish mixed in.

High sunshine did little to improve the fishing for Sandy Reid and Laurie Thwaites on the Saturday of the middle weekend of August, although we did find a few fish in some out of the way nooks and crannies. The next day, Sandy was alone on the Katie G II as she was on top of her game sight casting on the flats of Barnstable – and I had the best seat in the house from the poling platform. One advantage of the northside is that the generally cooler water there will find fish moving into the shallows on the incoming tide even when things are sweltering in the sounds.

Dave Hom and his children, Marisa and Mitchell, had combined both good early morning incoming action inside on the flats and then both fish on top and deep as the tide rose just west of the harbor mouth, making for an exciting trip, but I couldn't pull off the same action for Jeff Leiden the next day in either locale – although I managed to entertain Jeff by stepping off the flats skiff!

Word of albies off of State Beach had Michael Beebe and I heading to the Vineyard, where sure enough there were enough of them to get our shots - one of which paid off for him with his first little tunny on the fly, which turned out to be a Bonito Bandit. I constantly get pulled into tying all kinds of new funny fish flies, but typically have success with the old stand-bys, including this one that is basically a small, sparse Deceiver created by Bonito Eddie Lepore. Things weren't as fired up at SB on our next visit a couple of days later, so we cut across to Hedge Fence, a rip well-known for its

bonito action, although most of them are taken trolling. After a brief flirtation with a blitz of bass and blues, we happened upon albies feeding just off the rip line, although they were giving their presence away with an occasional bubbling or rippling on the surface rather than their usual smashing and crashing. Michael managed another albie on the fly on that trip, and before he and Ruth left, we tried to sneak out into Cape Cod Bay to locate some bluefin, but the wind had chopped things up enough to convince us to return inshore where there was nothing to be had.

Many folks swear by the full moon as a great time to fish, and I share that sentiment, but I am even fonder of the new moon, which was on tap for Mark Roberts and Roger Summons. But when a heavy fog settled in, we elected to meet again in a couple of days, a decision that proved to be a good one as the bass were feeding well on the backside of the moon.

I couldn't coax any bass to take eels for Mike Dalrymple on his trip with brother-in-law Jon Kolb, but the sunshine didn't keep some smaller fish from taking flies along the islands. You would think that any striper worth its stripes would prefer live bait, even in the daytime, but apparently the feathers mimicked the bait in the area.

Big swells and white water can often help when the daytime fishing is tough and Mark Tenerowicz was the beneficiary of those conditions as the tail end of a storm based out to sea, putting the fish on the feed. Mark and I have shared some interesting trips both day and night, and it was during the latter on the final day of August that he brought Eric Rappaport along, who got to experience what big stripers feel like.

Overall, August was good for albies, but September was off the charts. Evie Frost has hoped to pick up some bluefish for the table and introduce her grandson, Sam, to a few genuine blitzes. That was not the case on our first day, but the following morning saw Sam score a slam. After picking up a bass and blue along the Elizabeths, we scooted up Buzzards Bay; big schools of albies were everywhere and the number of boats was small, always a good thing when funny fish are around. Sam put an albie on the board with the magic seven-inch amber Hogy before noon, but despite my best efforts to put Joe Marcus and Capt. Norm Hyett in the mix in the afternoon, it was not to be despite plenty of casts into breaking fish and numerous lure changes.

If you have never fished Scorton Ledge during the height of the season, it is a sight you soon won't forget, with all types of crafts zigging and zagging as they drag tubes of every size and color around. It is possible to cast this area, as I did with Jason and Joe Brooks, but you have to stay on the fringes and hope to avoid the mayhem. Our efforts only produced a couple of small sea bass, so it was back to Barnstable where the brothers hooked up a number of schoolies working the smallest seam along a bar.

The next couple of weeks had albies the primary target for most of the anglers hosted, with Mark Roberts the first to put one on the fly and in the boat along the southside. The seas were heavy and the wind tough, but Mark was up to the task and was more than impressed with the speed and power of a false albacore.

Then it was back to Buzzards Bay where Harlan Plumley hosted part of his fishing crew on his boat and I served as boat number two. The fishing for albies was nothing less than phenomenal from West Falmouth to the west entrance to the Canal. It was rainy and a bit breezy, but on Day One, Paul Bakstran and Mike Jones stuck with the fly rod and were both rewarded. The following day saw Paul once again in the money with fish both on the fly and on spinning tackle, but I could not coax a fish into taking Eric Plumley's offerings. The day before, Eric had been high hook on Harlan's boat, which clearly had more mojo than the Katie G.

Next up were three days of hard-core albie fishing with Sandy Reid, who scheduled vacation time around the first week of the Derby, as the Martha's Vineyard Striped Bass and Bluefish Derby is known. Albies are not easy on the fly, no matter how hard they are feeding. It took a couple of days to work out the casting kinks and the wind was no friend, but Sandy is nothing if not determined. We found pods of fish from Nobska down to Centerville, with Waquoit and the Falmouth southside salt ponds discharging all manner of small bait. Fortunately, I went back to the vise and created some equally small, sparse flies that worked just fine for Sandy, who soon enough found herself in albie heaven.

Mark Tenerowicz worked the spinning rod masterfully with some small metal lures that I had rediscovered and proved to be dynamite on the funny fish. Sand eels, small butterfish, peanut bunker and silversides are generally thought to be the primary food source in the sounds for albies, but what they were spitting up appeared to be very small bay anchovies, a bait fish that I associate far more with Long Island Sound and Montauk.

Davis and Robert Yetman had their day with the little tuna along the Elizabeths, and they also worked their magic on some bass during their annual Derby trip. Robert has been accused of having some sixth sense regarding fish, causing them to jump on his offering, but Davis proved to be more than a match on this trip.

For several years, Tom Mendelsohn and I have been trying to get together on a flyrodding trip for quite a while, and wouldn't you know it, but when it came together along with his friend, Bill Coughlin, fish were hard to come by. But that is going to change this May when I invited them back for a shakedown cruise.

Pete Brown and his buddy, Jeff Peters, made the trip down from Maine to tackle albies on the fly and there were a good number of schools around throughout the southside and down the islands. Jeff was first on the board, but Pete kept on believing and connected on what could be called a last cast scenario, making for a fine finish to a good day on the water.

Hooking up with Phil Griffin had also proven to be a challenge in 2008, but last year was another story. We started out with a couple of schoolies up inside Popponeset, where I had launched, hoping to shorten the run to where the albies had been given the possibility of increasing winds. The funny fish weren't as thick, but we had our shots without

success. Some small blues inside Poppy closed the day and I hope that Phil is next in line for a fix of funny fish fever.

Paul Dallalis and Ben Schneider participated in what I would say was the first real surface blitz involving bass I saw along the Elizabeths all year; these were nice fish and not necessarily oriented towards structure. Given the time of the year, they were most likely moving along to somewhere south of us and it didn't take long for a number of boats to break the schools up with some overly aggressive boating.

With September drawing to a close, I had a couple of so-so trips, one with Mark Tenerowicz on the final day of the month and another with Joe Marcus on the opening of October. That changed the next day, however, as Davis Yetman invited Ryan Simmons along and after casting at some isolated pods of albies from Nobska to Naushon, we happened on a gold mine: bass and albies fully on the feed around Cuttyhunk. The stripers were mainly healthy schoolies, but Ryan brought home a really nice bass for dinner. Davis had a great day with the fly rod and it was really interesting to watch the albies on the edges of the boiling stripers.

Fall is often, and rightfully so, regarded as an optimum time to fish, with tales of big blitzes filling the pages of books new and old. Anglers often talk about the fall run with high hopes, but the last couple of years haven't measured up. In last October's Insider column that I wrote for On The Water Magazine, I did some number crunching about the 2008 Derby and found the numbers distressing, given the almost 3,000 anglers who fish this event. A quick glance at 2009 will show that trend continued.

It was for that reason and the potential for great fishing around Montauk early in October that I opted last season to take the ferry from New London with the Katie G in tow. That call proved to be a fortuitous one.

Unlike 2008, which saw legendary bass blitzes that locals said matched anything they had seen, it was albie heaven around the Mecca when I arrived. The one thing about Montauk that must be remembered is that it juts out into the open Atlantic and rough conditions are the norm. It wasn't terrible the day that Tom and Ed Colford caught up with me, but after some decent albie fishing, Ed was pretty beat up by noon and only Tom ventured out in the afternoon. Sure enough, as we headed out of the harbor, there were albies crashing all around, but they were finicky and there were a lot of boats on them.

A couple of open days had me calling Capt. Warren Marshall to see if he wanted to experience Montauk and I could tell I didn't have to convince him too much. The albie fishing continued to be first rate and we took the opportunity to scope out a couple of ramps that would allow us to fish the northside when the Point wasn't an option. On our second day of fishing, Warren and I enjoyed four hours of casting to breaking albies with nary a boat in sight, quite a contrast to the fleet that haunts Montauk proper.

Sasha Boriakoff brought his brother, Andrei, along for a shot at a Montauk moment and still the bass remained hard to come by. There were plenty of bluefish, but we turned our

attention to albies soon enough, with Sasha finding out for himself what these speedsters are all about.

Right on the heels of the Boriakoff's departure was the arrival of Joe Marcus, an angler who is just a hoot to fish with. Joe is truly someone who understands what fishing is about and Montauk put on her best side for him. Albies and blues dominated our first trip, but on our second morning, the bass went off. It was rough and Joe worked hard to stay upright, but if you closed your eyes, you could hear the slurping and rolling of the stripers. There was not one single moment for four hours where there weren't schools of bass within casting range. It was just awesome!

My final day in Montauk had Mark Tenerowicz in town, and although the bass didn't really go off at the point, Mark managed a slam, with the schools of stripers having moved west. There were plenty of blues and the albies were more than willing to accommodate.

When I got back to the Cape, it was pretty clear that I hadn't missed much, as the Elizabeths were moribund and the funny fish had moved on. With hopes that the west end of the Canal would have fish moving through, Greg Maheras and I gave it a shot to no avail. No problem; I ran through the Canal and sure enough there was a full on bass blitz going off and after we left a charge of bluefin moved in.

The season closed with Joe Marcus fighting the cold for a really nice flurry of bass off the Sandwich creeks on one day, with the next giving up only one fish that Joe saw swirl, cast to, and hooked up with.