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**MAY 2024**  
ISSUE 8, VOLUME 51



# THE Fisherman

New England Edition

TheFisherman.com

Picking  
**THE  
PERFECT  
KAYAK**

**PLUS:** The Coastal  
Kayak Clash Is Back!

Cash In On  
**QUABBIN  
SMALLIES**

Giant Flies For  
**MASSIVE  
LINESIDERS**

**PLUS**

- Top Weakfish Plastics
- Tactics for Spring Gators
- Fishing The Barrington River



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MAY 2024

NEW ENGLAND EDITION



Kayak fishing has blossomed into one of the fastest-growing segments of recreational fishing, and that trend is booming here in New England. The evolution of the fishing kayak has been fascinating to watch as innovative anglers pack as much tech and tackle onto these sophisticated little fishing machines. If you've been thinking about pulling the trigger on a new 'yak or if you want tips on fishing from them, or if you want to test your skills against your kayaking peers, we've got all those bases covered. *Photo by RI Kayak Fishing Adventures.*

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# CANAL LOG:

BY EAST END EDDIE DOHERTY

# LEARNING from last year

Last year's Canal season started early and stayed hot all summer, could that happen again in 2024?

*Air Force Staff Sergeant Josh Webster with the 54-inch Canal monster he landed over the summer in 2023.*





It's probably safe to say that most Canal rats would call the spring of 2023 a special one. After a mild winter and rapid warmup, the fish showed early and they weren't just those early spring

schoolies. Even a few fish north of the 20-pound mark found their way into the Big Ditch and ate jigs and plugs, often to the surprise and delight the angler throwing them. As momentous as this springtime return was, nobody could have predicted the massive schools of linesiders that entered the Canal during the first two weeks of May.

There were bent rods everywhere on many mornings as big fish rode the tides back and forth feasting on mackerel, herring, silversides, bunker and squid. Bob Dyer was fishing with octogenarian Larry Silvestri when they both got into hard fighting fish, each reeling in a 48-inch trophy and "New Hampshire" Bob Szwed muscled in a 45-incher that attacked his white Savage!

Tony McCann tied into one that registered over 30 pounds on the Boga. Bill "On the Grill" Prodouz landed a 35-pounder on a parrot-colored Super Strike Bullet, his fourth 30-pounder of the spring while Tim "Hollywood" Petracca reeled in eight 40-plus inch linesiders during May alone including a beautiful 46-incher on a white Guppy pencil. Some Personal Bests were reported including the 48-inch cow overpowered by Doug Freeman with his green Canal Attack Shad and the 48-pounder that fell for a white FishLab danced through the water column by Bill Harding who started fishing Bell Road with his father over 55 years ago during the Kennedy administration!

## JUNE JUMBOS

Kenny Nevens continued to catch dozens of fish on his Daiwa SP Minnow, but the day after the June full moon he bounced a Spro green bucktail off the bottom at slack tide that was swallowed by a 36-pounder, measuring out to 48 inches. Canal legend John Doble steered several nice fish to the rip rap including a formidable 35-pounder, "Sudden Sam" Lozeau deceived a 40-inch linesider with his bunker colored SP Minnow and Chuck Franks defeated two 46-inch bass with his white Super Strike Bullet on the same day that "Jumpin Joe" England bested two 35-pounders!

The new strawberry moon of the sixth month happened to fall on Father's Day so the stone banks were lined with happy dads with fish on the line. The sweet sound of Bill "Costy" Costello's screaming drag awakened me from my daydream as I watched him battle a 29-pounder to the edge, just one of many that he successfully fought that tide. I brought nine fish to the rocks that morning including a well-proportioned 38-inch beauty that chomped down hard on my fish oil infused Hurley white Canal Killer and I fooled a 20-pounder the next day with a Striper Gear white ghost Rocket.

The takeaways from the month of April through June are many, but one of the most striking is that Canal rats should not shy away from the urge to start early; especially after mild winters, and while the 2023/2024 winter was maybe not as mild as the previous one, no one would call it a classic New England winter. Another takeaway that you



*Vinny Marsico makes regular trips with his son Vito from their home in New York to cash in on the awesome fishing in the Big Ditch.*

may have picked up on is that the Super Strike Bullet is gaining some traction as a deadly plug when smaller baits are in the Canal. "The Bullet is more than just a needlefish," said *Fisherman* editor Dave Anderson, "when squid, butterfish, small bunker or any other small baitfish are running for their lives, the Bullet can be fished fast, on or just below, the surface mimicking their frantic attempts to escape. They also cast very well, making them a great option any time a long cast is needed to reach breaking fish."

## SUMMER HEAT

Good fishing continued into the summer, with lots of mackerel, sand eels, whiting and some squid, but not many bunker. There were some periodic lulls in the action, but the effects of the July 3 full moon set off major blitzes west of the Bourne Bridge on Independence Day afternoon, beginning an incredible week-long surfcasting adventure. Large breaking fish smashing the surface could be heard the next morning, but not seen through the blanket of thick fog covering the action. I couldn't see my white Guppy JoBo Jr. land, but I could sure feel the 43-inch striper that hit it!

Twenty-pound bass were chasing 7-inch macks around my boots in 14 inches of water where the bait seemed about as nervous as Jethro Bodine before a math test! A couple of weeks later, a Friday in mid-July became the most productive day of the season for many. A big school of large stripers entered at the west end and, with a sparse crowd following (thanks to a week of slow fishing) the 30 or so anglers in attendance followed the fish at least as far as the Sagamore Bridge before the bite began to break up.

## THREE MOONS

August featured three moons including two super moons which won't happen again in the same month until 2037. There wasn't always a pattern as Scott Ewell claimed victory over a 46-inch bruiser one morning with his wacky mack jig and a topwater 35-pounder on a PK Special during the east tide after dinner. Joe "The Reel" McCoy and Dr. Johan Frenje both fought many nice fish to fruition including hefty 41-inch stripers while Vinny Rosata forcefully guided a 45-inch to shore. "Mashpee Mike" LaRaia brought in several plus-slots including a 42-inch on a rainbow Savage, but lost an even bigger one to a huge seal.

"Breakin' Bob" Weir had his white FishLab working the bottom one morning to the tune of 19 fish including several between 20 and 25 pounds, then duped a 37-pounder on another day with his Magic Swimmer on a dropping west tide. "Paulie The Painter" Gravina almost got pulled off the rocks while outlasting a 44-inch warrior that fought to the end, then a couple of days later recorded 18 bass to his credit up to 38 inches on his green mack soft plastic jig. Reece "Peanut Butter Cup" Griffiths scored a 37-pounder, John "The Chef" Schmidt and Zak "Attack" Baker vanquished 48-inch monsters, then Zak reeled in so many plus-slots it was like they were trying to find the hook on his white FishLab!

Sing Sing Corrections Officer Vito Marsico makes numerous trips to our saltwater trench from Long Island with his father Vinnie. The family duo had many productive days with big fish including a 38-pounder for Vito and a 30 for his dad.

"Taunton Teddy" Menard, one of the nicest guys on the ditch, overcame the strength of a 45-inch striper earlier in the season and even landed a tagged fish during the summer. Experienced Canal rat Mark Beckford had a terrific day with several fish over 30 pounds including a 40-pounder that measured out to 47 inches. "Dancing Ben" Faulmino performed his famous "fish dance" to attract business resulting in a 40-pounder swallowing his parrot-colored Super Strike. We should all learn that dance!

It was nice to see the youth movement of polite young surfcasters wetting a line like 7-year-old Jaylynn Keegan

with a 37-inch striper on her second trip to the ditch, 14-year-old Matt Sadr in his rookie season on the channel landing 32- and 36-pound bass on consecutive days as well as 7-year-old Harry Skelton with a good-sized bluefish that slammed a Blitz King swimbait made by his dad Harold.

## THE BIGGEST ONES

More Personal Bests were achieved for anglers like Paul Srocinski who hooked a 47-inch and Dave Tworek with a 48! In addition to Bill Harding's colossal fish in the spring, the most memorable striped bass that I heard about were the monster brought to the rocks by famed surfcaster Bob "Bull" MacKinnon with a Wally's green mack pencil that registered 54 pounds on the Boga, the 50-inch conquered by George Leydic on a west tide just before dusk and the 54-inch maneuvered to the edge by Air Force Staff Sergeant Josh Webster jigging a 4.8-ounce wacky mack Striper Gear Rocket, produced by his uncle Mike, owner of Striper Gear.

The biggest takeaway from last summer's striper fishing at the Canal is that most of the largest fish of the season came during the heat of the summer. This is not a huge surprise to seasoned Canal veterans, but it might not be so obvious to the guy that doesn't have many years of Canal experience. The other big takeaway is that summer success really requires you to be ready for everything, with whiting, mackerel, squid, herring and smaller baits like silversides showing intermittently, there's a constant need to be versatile. And that versatility includes honing your ability to cover the entire

water column; on some days there can be an all-out blitz on jigs and rarely a fish caught or seen on the surface.

Now, as we progress into May, the month when everything begins, keep these takeaways from last season fresh in the forefront of your surfcasting mind. Before we all know it, the bass will be splashing along the banks of the mighty Canal and, who knows, maybe this is your year to notch that season-making monster. And if you see me down there fishing, stop by and say hello!

*Doherty is a retired Massachusetts District Court Clerk-Magistrate and the author of SEVEN MILES AFTER SUNDOWN and LAUGHS, LIES & AMERICAN JUSTICE. He had surf cast the east end of the Canal so often that other anglers started calling him East End Eddie, thus a nickname became a pen name. He can be reached at eastendeddie789@yahoo.com*

Take a look at our September edition, later this year, When East End Eddie will cover last year's fall fishing and how you can make the most of it in 2024. 🐟

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