

# WADE FISHING

Wade fishing is effective for a number of reasons. First, the flats and oyster bars of the harbor hold a variety of species. Secondly, fish are used to having other things in the water with them, and wading allows the angler to approach fish without the sounds of water slapping the boat hull or motor noises to spook them. A fisherman moves along slowly when wading, thus areas are fished more thoroughly than from a boat.

Wade fishing is an inexpensive way to fish, and if proper clothing and equipment are used, it is physically pleasant and an angler can become involved with the environment. Birds and other wildlife are easily seen, and it is common to see fish swim past.

## CLOTHING AND RELATED EQUIPMENT

Proper shoes are important for comfort and safety. Anglers can buy neoprene soled shoes made for wading. Many fishermen use sneakers, preferring the old canvas high-top style, which stops sand from getting into shoes and also protects the ankle from oyster shell scratches if a slip is made.

Dive boots are also an excellent wading shoe. They zip up the side, protect the ankle, and keep sand and other debris out. Some wading shoes are constructed with a Kevlar inner sole to help protect against stingray barbs and other 'sharps' underwater.

Most people wear a swim suit or shorts during summer wading. When the water temperature drops, waist high waders held up by suspenders can be used. A multi-pocket fishing vest is necessary to carry the various fishing equipment and accessories needed. The angler should carry leader material, clippers, hooks, some light weight terminal tackle, pliers and knife.

If lures are used, they can be pre-rigged with leader and carried in their individual boxes or in plastic lure boxes available at most tackle shops and discount stores. Pre-rigging saves time when changing lures.

If live bait is used, a floating nylon web bait bag or bucket can be towed on a long line. A stringer should also be towed on a 10 to 12 foot line. These items are trailed behind the angler in case a predator fish takes a swipe at them.

When landing a fish, the angler can use a short handled net, or if the fish can be handled, the rod is placed in the fishing vest rod holding loops and the fish



is held against the angler's legs while it is put on the stringer or released.

Many first time wade fishermen forget to bring drinking water with them. The angler should tie a water bottle to a line and tow it. Drinking water is important because most fishermen stay in the water for a long period of time and get very thirsty.

Wading exposes the angler to the sun plus the reflected rays from the water. To be properly protected the angler needs a hat which at least covers the ears if not the neck, sun glasses, and sun screen.

## FISHING EQUIPMENT

A 7 to 8 foot rod of medium weight with 10 to 20 pound test line works well. If lures are being used, a baitcasting rig is usually the best while for live bait, spinning equipment is recommended.

In either case, thought should be given to the weight of the reel. A graphite reel is recommended.

When wading, the angler naturally holds the rod and reel high to protect against accidentally submerging the equipment. This unnatural position is fatiguing and the fisherman should periodically place his rod in the vest rod loops and stretch arms and chest to relieve tightness. If the reel is submerged in saltwater, it needs to be cleaned immediately after the fishing trip and properly greased and oiled.

Shallow running lures work well wade fishing, as do spoons. Suspended jigs are particularly effective for trout and redfish.

## WADING TECHNIQUES AND AREAS

When wading, the "Stingray Shuffle" is used. This entails slowly moving one foot forward while dragging it lightly across the bottom so surface characteristics can be felt and the wader doesn't step on a ray. Cautious and intentional movement is always recommended.