



My GPS Broke - Oh Jeez... (1 OF 3)

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We've written a number of times about the quiet wonder of the 20th century - your GPS. (see SSP, "Gee, GPS!", 1/02/08, and "Is There a Hole in the GPS Sky?", 4/22/09.) But what can happen to the private boater when it fails? Plenty - but there is plenty to do and this starts a 3-part series of varying complexity regarding what you can do to find where you are - and get home safely.

It Has Happened - to Me

Yes, I have had GPS fail on me. When the weather is really foul, the signal can get blocked, in so many words, by the ever-thickening skies between you and the satellites. Since this is when you need it the most, you need a back-up plan. When I teach seamanship classes, I constantly stress that the skipper needs to periodically (every 15 minutes? 30 minutes?) manually update a log - this is where I am, here is my heading and this is my speed-made-good. As you've read here many times, if you can give that information to the USCG, it increases your odds of being found many times over. (See SSP, "Skippering In Heavy Weather", 7/30/08 and 10/11/06, and "Help is Coming -

How Hard Will You Be to Find?", 10/08/08.) So when the GPS went "out", what did I do? It was back to the future. I knew pretty much where I was because I made a point of knowing it. I gave the helm to an experienced crewman and said, "Point the boat where I tell you. We're in heavy weather so I want you sounding the whistle no less than every 2 minutes for no less than 4 seconds each time - and any other time you think you need to." Then I took out my parallel rulers and a paper chart and started calculating course headings and distances to the closest port of call. We made it into Sayville on the south shore of Long Island. Took the train home and came back the next day to continue our passage.

What "Tricks" Did I Use?

First, I verified what I thought was our position. There are just a handful of ways. First, if you can see land and can draw lines of position back from preferably 3 or more points on your paper charts, you have to be where they intersect. If you don't have a handheld compass which you can use to get bearings to the marks, look over the top of your "desk-mounted" compass and read

the bearing. It isn't going to be as accurate but you'll be inside the little "triangle", sometimes called a "cocked hat", where the lines intersect.

What if you can't see 3 or more landmarks? If you can see one, you can calculate a "running fix." Get a bearing from your handheld (or "desk-top") compass to the one point you can see. Draw the line of position from you to it - and write down the time. While maintaining course and speed, give yourself some time before taking another bearing to that landmark and draw the new line of position and mark the time. To make the example easy to follow, let's say we made way for 10 minutes at 6 knots on a heading of 270 degrees. As you no doubt know, if you were making 6 knots for 10 minutes, you have traveled 1 nautical mile from your first way-point. So, you are 1 nm west (270 degrees) of where you were before. Take your dividers, measure 1nm from your latitude marks (the ones that run up and down the edge of your chart - NOT along the top or bottom (those are longitude marks)) and draw a line at 270 degrees from first way point - plus some extra room. Now take a bearing back to

your landmark and draw that line of position back to your course line. You are where the second LOP intersects the course line.

Don't fail to use as many sources of confirmation as possible. If the paper chart says you are in 10' of water but the boat's fathometer says you are in 50' of water, you probably aren't where you think you are. Start again. Remember that no matter what you think your course over the water is, you will be affected by the tides and the wind. Check your Eldridge (don't have one? Get one. See SSP, "The Rule of the Road - Set to Poetry", 8/12/09)

What if you can't see anything? That is for the weeks ahead. Of course, if you are within radio range of the USCG, their Rescue-21 system can pinpoint you. Don't be bashful. (See SSP, "Rescue-21 - 21st Century Salvor", 4/23/08). Start the "rescue starts now" clock asap...

BTW, if you are interested in being part of USCG Forces, email me at JoinUSCGAux2009@aol.com or go direct to Lisa Etter, who is in charge of new members matters, at FSO-PS@emcg.us and we will help you "get in this thing..." If you'd like a copy of any of the columns cited, email me and I will send it to you.



FISHING WITH TONY

FISHING IN "FALL" SWING AROUND THE ISLAND

by TONY SALERNO

While most folks will be spending the next several weekends enjoying the myriad of events and festivities celebrating the fall season and its associated holidays, anglers will be enjoying a harvest of their own among the shores as porgies, sea bass, bluefish and striped bass will keep things interesting to say the least.

Captain Desmond O'Sullivan of the Port Jeff open boat the Celtic Quest, reports fares have been enjoying quite a scup fest along the rails of the boat with plenty of limits to go around. In addition, bluefish and an occasional keeper bass have been finding their way into coolers. Not to be forgotten, a scattering of tasty sea bass also mixes it up as well.

Just a shade down the road along Main Street, Candy Carafitis of Carafitis Fishing Station reports rental boats and shop regulars are coming back to the shop brimming with smiles and coolers filled with medium to large porgies and some impressive scores of bluefish. The scup are still inside the harbor and just west off Old Field Point. Any moving tide is now producing equally as well and the fishing will only get better in the weeks ahead as the scup begin to congregate towards the deeper water wrecks and rock piles. Bluefish are in and out of the harbor chasing schools of bunker which returned into the area this week. There are a few bass under the blues; but, expect the stripers to really start binging once the water cools a few more degrees.

Along the south shore, the sea bass and porgy action has been very steady despite wind and rough seas. When anglers are able to get past the breakers in front of the inlets, there are plenty of sea biscuits and scuppies waiting for clam and squid baits at all the artificial reefs. While a good percentage as of late consists of many short sea bass, there are quite a few keepers to go around. On the other hand, the porgies are not quite settled into the reefs in mass numbers as of yet; however, those that are sprinkling with the sea bass are true pork chops in the 1 to 2 pound range.

Bluefish are beginning their typical fall pattern and it is usually feast or famine. The key is to find the gulls and the terns and you found the choppers. The likely water depths to find the choppers range from 40 to 90 feet. There are a few bass under the blues, however the best bite on the linesiders continue to be at the inlets on the night tides.



THIELE: DEC FAILS TO ADEQUATELY PLAN FOR RECREATIONAL FISHING LICENSE

With less than two weeks before the October 1st effective date, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) admits this week, its licensing programs are not equipped to handle the issuing of a new Recreational Saltwater License. According to a media advisory, there is a "slight delay" in implementing a computer system to supply the physical licenses.



Assemblyman Fred W. Thiele, Jr.

"This is just one more example of why this was a poorly conceived, ill-advised plan to begin with," said Assemblyman Fred W. Thiele, Jr. (R, C, I, WF-Sag Harbor). "Not only does this new license unfairly target Long Island residents and come into effect after the striped bass season has started, the DEC can't even get their own computer system to issue the licenses in a timely fashion. Now, residents will be forced to apply right before the effective date, only to have to reapply come January 1, 2010."

Thiele, who voted against the creation of the license, sponsors legislation to rescind the fees associated with the licenses. Further, he called on the State Senate to enact a bill to delay the implementation date to January 1, 2010. They failed to act during a Special Session last week.

"The DEC has clearly demonstrated they are unprepared to implement their own policies. I will continue to oppose this license and work with local officials to address their concerns over the legality of the license itself," concluded Thiele.