



Heavy Weather Skippering

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As the temperatures continue to drop, we need to focus now on skippering in heavy weather – because it is coming. This column is about that.

Heavy Weather

Why is heavy weather more dangerous as we move into the Fall? Well, putting hurricanes aside, which are in their own class, heavy weather in the colder months has its own set of challenges. First, hypothermia is but a small slip away (see SSP, "Cold Water Survival, Hypothermia, Rescue & Recovery", 10/27/10.). Second, as the water chills, it gets denser per cubic foot. Denser means more "oomph" behind those chops. Third, it gets darker sooner. What used to be an all daylight trip out to a favorite fishing spot is now a return under the cover of night. Believe me, once one thing goes wrong, the chances of something else going wrong before you can focus on and fix the first problem just went up. Now you have a spiraling and accelerating danger curve on your hands. So, what to do if caught in heavy weather...?

1. Put Your Life Jackets On – Right away, the skipper has to direct everyone to don their life jackets. On my vessel, I have a heavy weather/type-1 life jacket on the back of my helm seat. Across the back, where the crew can read it, it says, "If you see the captain put this on, try to find one for yourself."



2. Take Waves at an Angle – Those waves that you are trying to muscle through, pack tremendous power within them. Did you know that one out of every 20 boats that sink at sea does so when the hull comes apart under the force of pounding seas? If that statistic was adjusted for heavy weather sinkings, it would go up dramatically, I'm sure. Cross the waves at a 45-degree angle and "tack" across the storm like a sail boat moving to windward. And slow down! Your 20 knots and five knots of wave speed multiply the force of the pounding. Slow down and divide the forces.

3. Don't Be Bashful – If things start to get dicey, get on the radio and call the USCG. Tell them where you are, where you are heading and why you are concerned about the situation. Most likely, the watch stander will take that infor-

mation and ask you to check in with him or her every 15 minutes. Don't be late in checking in or you may find a red-and-white helicopter hovering over you. But if you are in trouble, the USCG will know where you were just 15 minutes prior. You started the "rescue starts now" clock the last time you communicated your position.

4. Any Port in a Storm – OK, you told your wife you'd be back by 4 p.m. and it is now 6 p.m. and you are struggling against the nor'easter that is keeping you from operating at speed to get in. Don't bet your life on a perceived deadline. Your wife would rather you survive. Head to the nearest harbor you can safely make, even if that means turning and putting the storm on your stern. Arriving safely in New Jersey is better than not arriving at all.

5. Surf – If you find the sea is going

where you are, consider getting on the back of one of those growlers and staying there, all the way home. It takes considerable seamanship and helmsmanship to ride the back of a wave, but consider this. If you have an outboard engine with a transom cut-out, your "free board" is only that little distance between the water line and the lowest part of that cut-out. Probably 6"-10". If you have a following sea and one of those growlers catches up with you, he will swamp you from astern. Stay ahead and he can't...

6. Create a Ditch Bag – If things really get dicey, don't leave the boat until it sinks out from under you. But have a "ditch bag" ready – cell phone, handheld radio, fresh water, dry clothes, medical kit, flashlight, flares, etc. come immediately to mind.

I spent five days at sea in Hurricane Alberta almost 30 years ago. I have a healthy respect for the sea and how fast things can go from bad to absolutely awful. Don't be a statistic. Be the skipper who can say, "I always bring my crew back."

BTW, if you are interested in being part of USCG Forces, email me at JoinUSCGAux@aol.com or go direct to the D1SR Human Resources department, who are in charge of new members matters, at DSO-HR and we will help you "get in this thing..."

Tides for Moriches Inlet starting with October 10, 2012

Day	High/Low	Tide Time	Height Feet	Sunrise/Sunset	Moon Time	% Moon Visible
Wed. 10	High	2:55 AM	2.6	6:58 AM	Rise 1:29 AM	35
10	Low	9:00 AM	0.7	6:18 PM	Set 3:20 PM	
10	High	3:02 PM	2.9			
10	Low	9:44 PM	0.4			
Thur. 11	High	3:50 AM	2.8	6:59 AM	Rise 2:32 AM	25
11	Low	9:56 AM	0.4	6:16 PM	Set 3:52 PM	
11	High	3:59 PM	3.0			
11	Low	10:29 PM	0.2			
Fri. 12	High	4:42 AM	3.1	7:00 AM	Rise 3:38 AM	16
12	Low	10:48 AM	0.2	6:15 PM	Set 4:24 PM	
12	High	4:54 PM	3.2			
12	Low	11:14 PM	0.0			
Sat. 13	High	5:31 AM	3.3	7:01 AM	Rise 4:47 AM	9
13	Low	11:38 AM	0.0	6:13 PM	Set 4:56 PM	
13	High	5:45 PM	3.3			
13	Low	11:58 PM	-0.1			
Sun. 14	High	6:17 AM	3.7	7:02 AM	Rise 5:57 AM	3
14	Low	12:29 PM	-0.2	6:12 PM	Set 5:30 PM	
14	High	6:33 PM	3.4			
Mon. 15	Low	12:44 AM	-0.2	7:03 AM	Rise 7:10 AM	0
15	High	7:02 AM	3.8	6:10 PM	Set 6:07 PM	
15	Low	1:19 PM	-0.3			
15	High	7:21 PM	3.5			
Tues. 16	Low	1:31 AM	-0.3	7:04 AM	Rise 8:24 AM	0
16	High	7:48 AM	4.0	6:09 PM	Set 6:50 PM	
16	Low	2:10 PM	-0.4			
16	High	8:09 PM	3.4			
Wed. 17	Low	2:19 AM	-0.3	7:05 AM	Rise 9:37 AM	2
17	High	8:36 AM	4.0	6:07 PM	Set 7:39 PM	
17	Low	3:00 PM	-0.4			
17	High	9:02 PM	3.3			
Thur. 18	Low	3:07 AM	-0.2	7:06 AM	Rise 10:46 AM	7
18	High	9:29 AM	3.8	6:06 PM	Set 8:36 PM	
18	Low	3:52 PM	-0.2			
18	High	9:59 PM	3.2			
Fri. 19	Low	3:58 AM	-0.1	7:07 AM	Rise 11:49 AM	15
19	High	10:27 AM	3.7	6:04 PM	Set 9:38 PM	
19	Low	4:46 PM	-0.1			
19	High	11:01 PM	3.0			
Sat. 20	Low	4:53 AM	0.1	7:08 AM	Rise 12:43 PM	25
20	High	11:28 AM	3.5	6:03 PM	Set 10:44 PM	
20	Low	5:45 PM	0.1			
Sun. 21	High	12:04 AM	2.9	7:10 AM	Rise 1:29 PM	35
21	Low	5:57 AM	0.3	6:01 PM	Set 11:52 PM	
21	High	12:29 PM	3.3			
21	Low	6:50 PM	0.2			



FISHING WITH TONY

US SENATE MOVES FORWARD ON SPORTSMAN'S LEGISLATION

by TONY SALERNO

Over the weekend, the U.S. Senate voted in favor of two measures important to the sport fishing industry that will, among other things, conserve recreationally-important fish stocks, restore fish habitat and support fishing access. The sport fishing industry applauds the Senate for prioritizing the concerns of the recreational fishing community amidst a variety of other important legislation actions that must take place prior to the end of the year.

"At a time when partisan politics rule the day, it's heartening to see that lawmakers can come together on important issues of interest to the nation's 60 million anglers," said Gordon Robertson, vice president of the American Sport fishing Association (ASA). "Issues like conserving billfish populations and facilitating fishing access on public lands are not partisan issues, and we are grateful that the Senate took action in support of these and other priority legislative issues to the recreational fishing community."

On its last day in session prior to the Presidential election, the Senate passed Senator David Vitter's (R-La.) Billfish Conservation Act, a measure strongly supported by ASA and its partners, led by the International Game Fish Association. This bill will ban the commercial harvest and sale of Pacific-caught billfish, a measure already in place for Atlantic-caught billfish, thus helping to restore these recreationally-important fish. Identical legislation passed the House of Representatives on September 10, and the bill now awaits the President's signature.

"The Billfish Conservation Act will help restore billfish populations and improve recreational fishing opportunities while concurrently creating jobs and other economic benefits," said Robertson. "Senators Vitter and Bill Nelson (D-Fla.), and Representative Jeff Miller (R-Fla.) played critical roles in seeing this bill through to passage, and the sport fishing industry thanks them for their leadership."

The Senate also voted 84 to 7 in favor of the motion to proceed on the Sportsmen's Act of 2012, introduced by John Tester (R-Mont.), which moves the legislative package one step closer to passage. The Sportsmen's Act of 2012 includes 19 bills that will benefit the sport fishing community, as well as recreational shooters and hunters.

"Many of ASA's top legislative priorities are included in the Sportsmen's Act of 2012, and the recent action taken by the Senate tees up this bill for a vote when the Senate returns in November," noted Robertson. "This historic legislation provides for increased access, habitat conservation, protection of traditional fishing equipment and improved fish and wildlife management. While the motion to proceed with this legislation is a positive step, we will continue to work to ensure that the Senate passes this monumental legislation before it adjourns later this year."