



Spring Lines - Happiness at the Dock!

by VINCENT T. PICA, II

Chief of Staff, First District, Southern Region (D1SR) United States Coast Guard Auxiliary

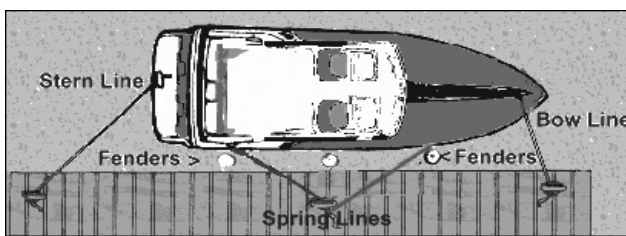


One of the two great mysteries of boating is docking while under the baleful gaze of (pick all that apply: your slip mates, restaurant patrons looking down at you, the dock master). The other is "What Side Of This Buoy Do I Go On?". (See SSP 1/26/11.) This is about mastering the first.

Spring lines are a little understood and little appreciated aid in proper docking. It is also little understood that there are two forms of spring lines that have opposite functions. One form is the line or lines tied from your boat to the dock that keep it from moving fore or aft while docked. The second form is the line (only one) that is tied from your boat to the dock that allows you to spring into or out of a slip. We'll discuss both.

The Springing Spring Line

If you've ever been confronted with a wind that is blowing you against a dock that you are trying to get away from, you know how difficult (and expensive) that can be. As you power ahead, your stern is being pushed against the dock by the wind. Bump, bump, scratch, scratch, scrape, scrape. Painful, lubberly and potentially expensive. But try this. While at the dock, release all your lines except the bow line. Unclear it but leave one round turn under the horn so that you have both some purchase plus a way to pull the line free towards you while aboard the boat when you are ready. While keeping that purchase, power ahead slightly. When the boat gets to the end of the still-secure bow line, your stern will spring outwards as the bow is pulled closer to the dock by the momentum of the boat itself. Now, put your engine in reverse, pull the bow spring line back



to you as you now easily back away from the dock! This process can be reversed if you can't power ahead (say there is another boat tied up just ahead of you) by using a spring line off your stern, backing down on it, having your bow spring out and away you go!

What if you have to dock in a tight place and the wind is pushing you off the dock now? The concept is the same. First, cleat a line to the stern cleat closest to the dock and throw the bitter end to the dock head. Ask him to cleat it to his dock cleat. Now turn your wheel towards the dock and power ahead slowly. Lo and behold, your boat will move sideways to the dock. This can also be reversed if there is no room ahead. Just tie it to your bow cleat, throw the line to the dock hand for his securing it at his end, and turn the wheel once again towards the dock and then power astern. In both cases, if the wind is too strong at dead-slow on the throttle, you can apply more thrust - as long as those cleat knots are well made. You don't want to spring free!

The Docking Spring Line

When using a spring line at the dock to secure your boat so that it doesn't move forward or aft while tied to that dock, the only thing to remember

is that the lines are named for the direction that they go in when they leave your boat. An aft spring line goes aft and a forward spring line goes forward. So, if the skipper says "hand over the 'bow aft' spring line to the deck hand!" he means - go to the bow, put a line on the cleat and hand it to the deck hand who will walk aft and probably cleat it to the dock just past the mid-point of the boat. The skipper will likely then say, "OK, hand him over the 'stern forward' spring line." You will then tie a line to your stern cleat, hand it to the dock hand who will walk it forward and cleat it to the dock, also just past the mid-point of the boat. You now have an "X" formed by the two spring lines criss-crossing each other. The aft spring line keeps the boat from moving forward and the forward spring line keeps the boat from moving aft. In that they are crossed like that, you don't need to leave any slack in them for the tide changes because they will act like scissors as the boat goes up and down with the tide! BTW, the dock hand could have tied them both to the same mid-cleat on the dock as that does not put double pressure on one cleat. When the wind is on the bow, the stern forward spring line is the only one tensioning the cleat. When the wind is astern, it is the bow aft spring line that is keeping the boat from moving ahead.

Spring ahead - to better seamanship!

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..."

DEC Announces Changes to Recreational Fishing Regulations for Summer Flounder (Fluke) for 2011

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) announced the new 2011 recreational fishing regulations for summer flounder (fluke). The new regulations, which are effective immediately, specify a 3-fish possession limit, 20.5-inch minimum size and an open season of May 1 through September 30.

These new limits replace the 2010 regulations which included a 2-fish possession limit, a 21-inch minimum size and an open season from May 15 through September 6.

New York State participates in the cooperative management of migratory marine fisheries as a member of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC). ASMFC adopts Interstate Fisheries Management Plans (FMP's) for the prudent management and conservation of quota managed species along the Atlantic Coast. Each member state of ASMFC must implement the provisions of the FMPs for the quota managed species within its state waters. As required by the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act (ACFCMA), ASMFC determines if states have implemented provisions of FMP's in a timely manner. If ASMFC determines a state to be in non-compliance with an FMP for a specific species, the Commission notifies the U.S. Secretary of Commerce. If the Secretary concurs in the non-compliance determination, the Secretary promulgates and enforces a complete prohibition on all fishing for the species in the waters of the non-compliant state until the state complies with the FMP.

The current stock assessment for summer flounder (fluke) shows that the population is nearly rebuilt, not overfished and not subject to overfishing. Recent changes to the fluke FMP allow states to liberalize their harvest of fluke in order to achieve optimum use of the fishery resource. New York State has chosen to adopt new regulations that meet the requirements of the FMP while providing greater fishing opportunities for fluke this year.

The text of the new regulation will be published in the State Register on May 18, 2011 and is available online at www.dec.ny.gov. DEC will be accepting public comments on the new fluke regulation through July 5, 2011.

Recreational marine fishing regulations can be viewed on the DEC website at: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/7894.html>. For additional information, contact DEC Marine Resources Division at 631-444-0435.



by TONY SALERNO

FISHING WITH TONY

SALTWATER ANGLERS MUST REGISTER

In case you weren't aware, the New York State Saltwater Fishing License that became established in October of 2009 has become instituted into a no-fee recreational marine fishing registry this past March. What this means is that for at least the end of 2012, anglers over the age of 16 do not have to dish out the \$10 license fee that our friends in Albany squeezed out of us during 2009/10. However anglers over the age of 16 planning on hitting salty and brackish waters bordering New York are required to register with New York Department of Environmental Conservation each year. Failure to do so can result in fines up to \$250. Exceptions to the rule are anglers who fish only on open and charter boats do not need to register since these vessels carry a special license. In addition, anglers who purchased 2011 or lifetime saltwater licenses have been automatically entered into the registry and will receive a state refund sometime in the near future. Anglers who need to register can do so where fishing license are sold, by contacting (866) 933-2257, or online at www.dec.ny.gov/permits/54950.html.

On the fishing front this week, anglers have found as many bluefish as they cared to deal with roaming the bay and ocean waters of Shinnecock and Moriches Bays. Poppers and tins are getting the job done on the choppers and can be found just about anywhere you see a mass of birds wheeling overhead a piece of water. Two of the hottest spots have been in Narrows Bay west of Moriches Bay and Tiana Bay inside Shinnecock Bay. As for fluke, the going has been a bit slow inside Moriches Bay, however just outside of the inlet in 45 feet of water is seeing a ton of squid with a solid showing of summer flaties under them. The key is to find the proper window of opportunity with weather to get to the fluke. To the east off Shinnecock, a good body of fluke has settled just outside the inlet in 50 feet of water and there again weather plays a factor to getting to the fish.

Along the north side of the island, the waters from Smithtown Bay east to Mt. Misery Shoal off Mount Sinai are showing signs that the area's annual May fluke run is only days away from exploding into fluke mayhem. Countless hoards of sand eels have moved into the area and, as soon as the water temps crank up another degree or two, all hell should break loose as anglers are already seeing good catches on bucktails from 15 to 30 feet of water.



Deena Lipman with a nice fluke taken aboard the open boat Shinnecock Star.