



# Is Your Boat "Documented" - and Should She Be?

by VINCENT T. PICA, II

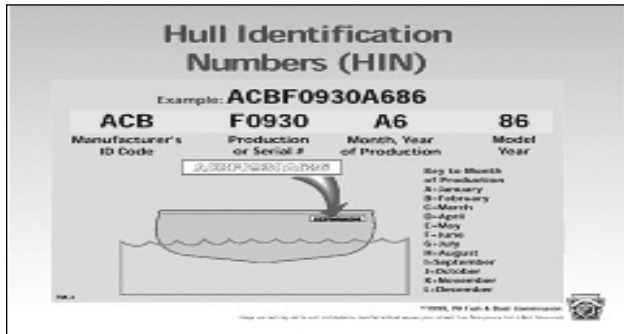
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All of us are familiar with registering our vessels with the State Department of Motor Vehicles. Like a car, DMV wants to know her horse-power, fuel type (gas or diesel) and the Hull Identification Number, or HIN#. This is the on-the-water equivalent of a car's VIN#. You are required to display on each side of the bow the state registration numbers, followed by the expiration sticker itself. But is your boat eligible for documenting with the USCG and, if so, should you? This is what this column is about.

### Whither the HIN?

The HIN is the unique 12-digit identification number of the vessel. It is emblazoned on the starboard side of the transom and it is, as you would expect, illegal to alter it, paint over it, obscure it or in any way make it seem like you're trying to make it look like a different HIN#! This number indicates the boat manufacturer, its serial number, and the month and year of production.



This one item is of critical importance during any vessel safety check or exam. If the HIN# on your State registration doesn't conform to the vessel's physical HIN#, you would be required to resolve that immediately.

### So Why "Document" the Vessel?

First, for the USCG to permit documenting the vessel, it must adhere to a certain formula for its "admeasure" - not what it weighs but really what it can carry in cargo. Its "admeasure" must be at least equal to 5 net tons by the USCG formula. As a rule of thumb, boats less than 25' in length are unlikely to measure up. But, there is a simplified formula that the USCG provides (Form CG-5937, Application for Simplified Measurement) that you can access online (or email me below and I will send you the e.form) that can determine if the boat qualifies. She must be less than 79' to fit into the simplified window, but I expect that this isn't a problem for most of us!

Documentation numbers need to be permanently attached to a structural portion of the hull, and the vessels' name and home port need to be listed on the hull--usually the transom. Recreational vessels must have the name and hailing port listed in 4 inch letters. Commercial vessels must do the same, but they must also have the name on both sides of the bow.

So, if the boat is already registered with the State, why do skippers have their vessel federally documented - or registered with the US Coast Guard? Documentation has several advantages, but its primary uses are to provide a "paper trail" that establishes ownership of a vessel, and documentation is often necessary to travel overseas. Remember that HIN# discrepancy I postulated above? What if someone sold you a stolen boat? Think about it...

### Tons, Tonnes, and Tuns

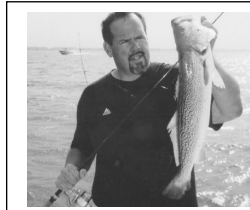
Tons come in many shapes and sizes - short tons, long tons, metric tonnes, gross tons, net tons, displacement tons, deadweight tons, register

tons, US and international regulatory tons - and tuns. A tun, going back in history, was a wooden cask full of wine. To be precise, it had to hold four "hogsheads" of wine - which is 252 gallons. Vessels were measured and taxed by how many tuns of wine that they could transport. Guess that a tun of wine weighs...? About 2,200 pounds - and this is where it starts to get interesting or complicated, depending on how your brain works!

The "ton" we all learned about in school is 2,000 pounds. In maritime parlance, this is a "short ton", with a "long ton" being, yup, about 2,200 pounds. It is 2,240 pounds to be precise or just about what a tun of wine weighs. Of course, most of the world is on the metric system so a metric ton - or a tonne - is 2,205 pounds but, as best as I can determine, this is coincidentally about what a tun of wine weighs. The reason that they are so close is because the metric ton, or tonne for short, is the weight of 1,000 liters of fresh water - and wine is mostly fresh water! Displacement tons and deadweight tons can come in all three flavors - short, long and metric. Suffice it to say that it is complicated.

One last tidbit... Above, I referenced that tuns were used to measure and tax vessels "back in the day" of sailing ships and bootleggers. The agency that Alexander Hamilton created to police these policies on US waters was the Revenue Cutter Service. This service became, over the centuries, what we now know as the United States Coast Guard.

BTW, if you are interested in being part of USCG Forces, email me at [JoinUSCGAux2009@aol.com](mailto:JoinUSCGAux2009@aol.com) or go direct to Lisa Etter, who is in charge of new members matters, at [FSO-PS@emcg.us](mailto:FSO-PS@emcg.us) and we will help you "get in this thing..."

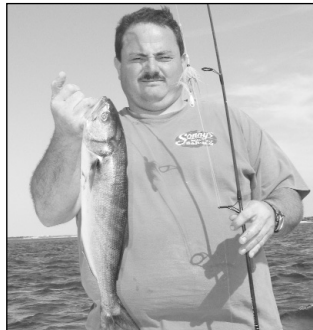


## FISHING WITH TONY

IT'S A BLUEFISH AND PORGY WORLD ON BOTH SHORES

by TONY SALERNO

With fluke season officially closed until the 3rd of July, anglers on both the north and south shores have been cropping for green pastures this week and have found no shortage on the current run of porgies and bluefish up north while bluefish and stripers dominate the south shore waters. Speaking with Bob over at Mr. B's Bait and Tackle at 580 Route 112 in Patchogue, porgies are cooperating along the shoals anywhere from Smithtown Bay, right through Rocky Point.



Mike Barone with a Moriches Bay caught bluefish.

The scup are still in shallow water and are responding to frozen blocks of clam chum stuffed in chum pots, while sandworms and fresh clams work their magic on the hooks. Once all is in place, it shouldn't be long before you put together a quality limit of tasty scup in the cooler. After you nail your limit of porgies, you may want to seek out one or two of the countless schools of cocktail blues that has been frenzied the same waters as the scup. Any typical bluefish lure will nail the choppers. Bob adds that there are a few keeper bass in the area sucking down bunker chunk baits.

Down along the south shore, Bob reports the local docks continue to give way to a few bass and blues; however, the real highlight this week is the start of the weakfish run along the docks. Fish to 10 pounds have been reported and are nailing mackerel and bunker chunks intended for the bass and blues. The hot area this week has been the docks and creeks over in Blue Point; however, the bite should spread east in the following days to come. I would suggest casting pink Bass Assassins on 1/2 ounce lead head jigs and retrieving it slowly at any of the Patchogue and Bellport docks for a chance at a real trophy.

Further east into Moriches Bay, bluefish can be found anywhere you see flocks of birds wheeling overhead picking up bits of baitfish left behind by the insatiable choppers. Stripers are at the inlet and buoy 26 gobbling down clam offerings with one in four a keeper to 20 pounds. Anglers heading outside to the reef are finding no shortage in the sea bass and porgy action on clams and squid.

### Tides for Moriches Inlet starting with June 24, 2009.

Day	High/Low	Tide Time	Height Feet	Sunrise/Sunset	Moon Time	% Moon Visible
Wed. 24	Low	2:45 AM	-0.4	5:21 AM	Rise 7:18 AM	1
24	High	8:49 AM	3.2	8:26 PM	Set 10:16 PM	
24	Low	2:45 PM	-0.2			
24	High	9:04 PM	3.8			
Thur. 25	Low	3:34 AM	-0.4	5:21 AM	Rise 8:37 AM	6
25	High	9:46 AM	3.2	8:26 PM	Set 10:49 PM	
25	Low	3:38 PM	-0.2			
25	High	9:59 PM	3.7			
Fri. 26	Low	4:23 AM	-0.4	5:21 AM	Rise 9:54 AM	13
26	High	10:44 AM	3.3	8:26 PM	Set 11:18 PM	
26	Low	4:32 PM	0.0			
26	High	10:56 PM	3.5			
Sat. 27	Low	5:12 AM	-0.2	5:22 AM	Rise 11:07 AM	22
27	High	11:40 AM	3.3	8:26 PM	Set 11:43 PM	
27	Low	5:28 PM	0.1			
27	High	11:51 PM	3.3			
Sun. 28	Low	6:04 AM	-0.1	5:22 AM	Rise 12:17 PM	33
28	High	12:35 PM	3.3	8:26 PM		
28	Low	6:30 PM	0.3			
Mon. 29	High	12:44 AM	3.1	5:23 AM	Set 12:08 AM	43
29	Low	6:59 AM	0.1	8:26 PM	Rise 1:25 PM	
29	High	1:27 PM	3.3			
29	Low	7:37 PM	0.4			
Tus. 30	High	1:37 AM	2.9	5:23 AM	Set 12:33 AM	54
30	Low	7:55 AM	0.2	8:26 PM	Rise 2:32 PM	
30	High	2:19 PM	3.3			
30	Low	8:41 PM	0.5			
Wed. 1	High	2:31 AM	2.7	5:23 AM	Set 12:59 AM	64
1	Low	8:50 AM	0.3	8:26 PM	Rise 3:38 PM	
1	High	3:12 PM	3.2			
1	Low	9:39 PM	0.4			
Thur. 2	High	3:29 AM	2.6	5:24 AM	Set 1:29 AM	74
2	Low	9:41 AM	0.4	8:26 PM	Rise 4:42 PM	
2	High	4:06 PM	3.2			
2	Low	10:31 PM	0.4			
Fri. 3	High	4:28 AM	2.5	5:25 AM	Set 2:04 AM	82
3	Low	10:29 AM	0.4	8:26 PM	Rise 5:43 PM	
3	High	4:59 PM	3.2			
3	Low	11:19 PM	0.3			
Sat. 4	High	5:24 AM	2.5	5:25 AM	Set 2:46 AM	89
4	Low	11:15 AM	0.4	8:26 PM	Rise 6:40 PM	
4	High	5:47 PM	3.3			
Sun. 5	Low	12:06 AM	0.2	5:26 AM	Set 3:34 AM	94
5	High	6:14 AM	2.6	8:25 PM	Rise 7:30 PM	
5	Low	12:01 PM	0.4			
5	High	6:32 PM	3.3			