

Island  **THE WEEKLY
Ad-Vantages PACKET**
THE VIEW FROM ATLANTIC AVENUE

By: Tom Duym

I Can't Hake it Any More, to Halibut

Ahhh, a few warmer days, some tulips peeking out of the ground, Canadian geese and robins increasing in number, it's time to get hooks in the water! So went the advice of some older fishermen when I first got the inspiration to set some trawls for the illustrious Atlantic Halibut. And indeed it did seem to coincide within the fish passing into near shore waters. Baiting up traditionally with herring, alewives, frozen mackerel or squid offered on the end of a good sized "J" hook, connected to 1/4" tarred trawl line with heading twine gangions spaced out at one or two fathoms apart. But, like most traditions in fishing, things have changed. We now have a limited season from May 18th to June 13th, a maximum catch of 25 fish for that time period and a minimum landing fish length of 41 inches nose to tail.

Hooks now must be of the circle type (most agree circles are a better hook) and are usually 15/0 or 16/0 in size, or roughly the size of a silver dollar. There are as many nuances to gear and how to set it out as there are fishermen who participate, and we all think we have the fishiest gear, but who tags out is really the true determination.

One might wonder, "Why fish for halibut if you're only allowed 25 fish. There can't be much money to be made with those limitations and such a short season?" But the money for landing the fish is not what motivates us to get the license and spend days baiting-setting-baiting-setting. It is really about the challenge and thrill of catching these magnificent flat fish. Like the folks who seek to catch the big tuna, it's as much about the physical connection to landing a big fish and feeling it through the line in your hand as it is about how much that fish is worth. It is a connection to past generations who fished out of dories in basically the same way and, it is just plain fun to be out there with your crew & friends trying to catch a fish. To share the experience and maybe a great meal, hopefully pay for some of the fuel you burned looking for the best piece of bottom to set out on, is just a bonus.

If you can, try to find a fisherman to buy a piece of these majestic fish from or patronize a local restaurant that buys locally during the season. Know that delicious meal was brought to you by people who love what they do and have immense respect for each individual fish we come to enjoy. To learn more about MCCF's work, visit www.coastalfisheries.org.

FISHERIES LOG

Prices to Harvesters (in Stonington on 4/15/2024)

Lobsters (select): \$10.50/lb.

Lobster (hard): \$9.50/lb.

Bait (herring): \$90/box

Fuel (diesel) : \$3.82/gal

Oceanographic Buoy I-01

44°6'10"N 68°6'44"W – Frenchboro

Sea Surface Temperature (1 meter): 4.61°C 40.3°F

Bottom Temperature (50 meters): 3.84°C 38.91°F

Source: www.neracoos.org (April 14, 2024)