



Seaduction Fishing

Chesapeake Bay and Offshore Fishing

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When

- All Year
- Most bottom fish do not migrate
- Dog sharks migrate in winter months Dec-Apr
- Fishing Dec-Apr still possible but dog sharks can be thick.
- Trick is to find areas where bottom fish are thicker than dogs.
- Not much success deep dropping at night.
- Best is when sun is high more visibility.
- Best when current is light. Full moon usually = fast current.
- Light south wind is best to push against Labrador current.
- Best is when drift is 1 knot or less. 0.5 knot drift is ideal.

Tackle

- Any reel with the line capacity will work.
- Best reel is fast retrieve ratio.
- My Torium 30 are 6:2:1
- Medium action rod 20-40 lb at least 6 foot.
- Braid is best 65-100 lb. Mine are all 80.
- I like Jerry Brown solid 80 but there are many good braids out now.
- Add windon leader of fluorocarbon or mono 80 lbs.
- Connect with Sebile Knot (or bimini in braid to Improved Bristol).
- End with bead and snap swivel.
- Electric reels are good for prospecting. (No citations or records can be claimed).

Blueline Tiles and Black Sea Bass

- Like croaker fishing just deeper.
- Hardest part is simply finding them. Once found easy to catch.
- Hard bottom 250-350 feet, average is 300 feet.
- Rocky, gravel like area that holds small crab.
- Find new areas while trolling. Drop WPT and come back later.
- Always do at least one blind drop every time offshore to find new numbers.
- Don't share or trade numbers. You will get burned.
- Zoom FF to 4x to see jagged structure and fish.
- Not much success deep dropping at night.
- Best is when sun is high more visibility.

Blueline Tiles and Black Sea Bass

- Simple double bottom rig.
- 80 lb mono with 4 loops. 2 for hooks, 1 sinker, 1 swivel.
- I prefer J hooks, 6/0 gamakatsu is best.
- Circle hooks work too but it's more fun to set the hook.
- Rocky, gravel like area that holds small crab.
- Any meat or squid will work, just have to be over them.
- Fresh is always better.
- Jigs work on BSB and bluelines. Tip with meat for better success.
- Don't jig real fast. Just a slow lift and drop is all that is needed.
- I have not found adding light makes any difference.
- Once you feel the bite set the hook hard, keep line tight.

Blueline Tiles and Black Sea Bass

- BSB are often mixed in bluelines.
- Current regs are 7 tile (golden or blueline) per person any size.
- Blueline citation is 10 lbs. No release citation.
- Current blueline state record is 23 lbs, 5 ounces.
- BSB are 12 1/2 inches, 15 per person May 19-September 21 and October 18-December 31.
- Grouper/Tile permit from VMRC is need to retain with mandatory reporting to VRMC on all fish retained.
- OI and south are completely different regs so check before fishing.
- Highly recommend no culling of blueline, golden tile, or grouper/wreckfish. Keep even small ones.
- BSB if undersized have to be released.

Golden Tile

- Golden Tile is my favorite to catch and eat.
- Soft muddy, clay-like bottom in 500-700 feet.
- Burrow holes and rest head first in hole.
- South wall of Norfolk is great place to try.
- Lobster buoys are great place to start.
- If your sinker sticks in the mud, you are in the right area.
- Keep baits on bottom.
- Slow drift up the wall is best.



Golden Tile

- I upsize my leader to 150-200 lb mono and put them on 3 way swivels.
- Longer leader on the bottom hook and shorter above it.
- You can dress things up with glow tube, beads, squid skirt, anything to make things more visible as it is dark that deep.
- Add an LED light.
- I like larger (8/0 to 11/0 or bigger) circle hooks for the deep water as it's harder to set a hook with that much line out. Let them eat, count to 3 to 5 seconds, then just reel and keep tight.
- Fresh meat is best, nice long strips. False Albacore, skippies, or even mahi strips from bailing off the balls is good fresh bait. Frozen squid works but not near as good as fresh meat strips.
- May also catch flounder, barrel fish, black belly rose fish, hake, sharks, conger eels, or sometimes something just plain weird looking.
- Jigs work too but usually need at least 750 gram jig. Tip with meat, and lift/drop slowly.
- Current regs are 7 per person (blueline or golden tiles or mix of 2 species).
- No citation program (yet). Current state record is 56 lbs, 8 oz.

Grouper

- Same rig and baits as Golden Tile.
- Hard bottom. Big boulder like rocks.
- North Wall of Norfolk is good place to try.
- Any place where deeper water meets shallow water
- Wreckfish and grouper same structure.
- Bite will be hard and will go back into hole.
- Current regs are 1 grouper or wreckfish per person (any grouper species).
- Grouper / tile permit is needed to retain.
- No state citation program (yet).
- Current state and world record is 70 lbs, 7 ounces.

Conclusion

- Deep dropping is great Plan B (or even plan A)
- Can be exciting as you never know what is coming up
- Very large bottom fish out there. A true challenge at times.
- Can be caught all year.
- Most bottom fish don't migrate so good spots can produce on multiple trips.
- Great eating fish.

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