



THE

# Fisherman

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April 13, 2000 - No. 15    New Jersey, Delaware Bay Edition    \$1.50

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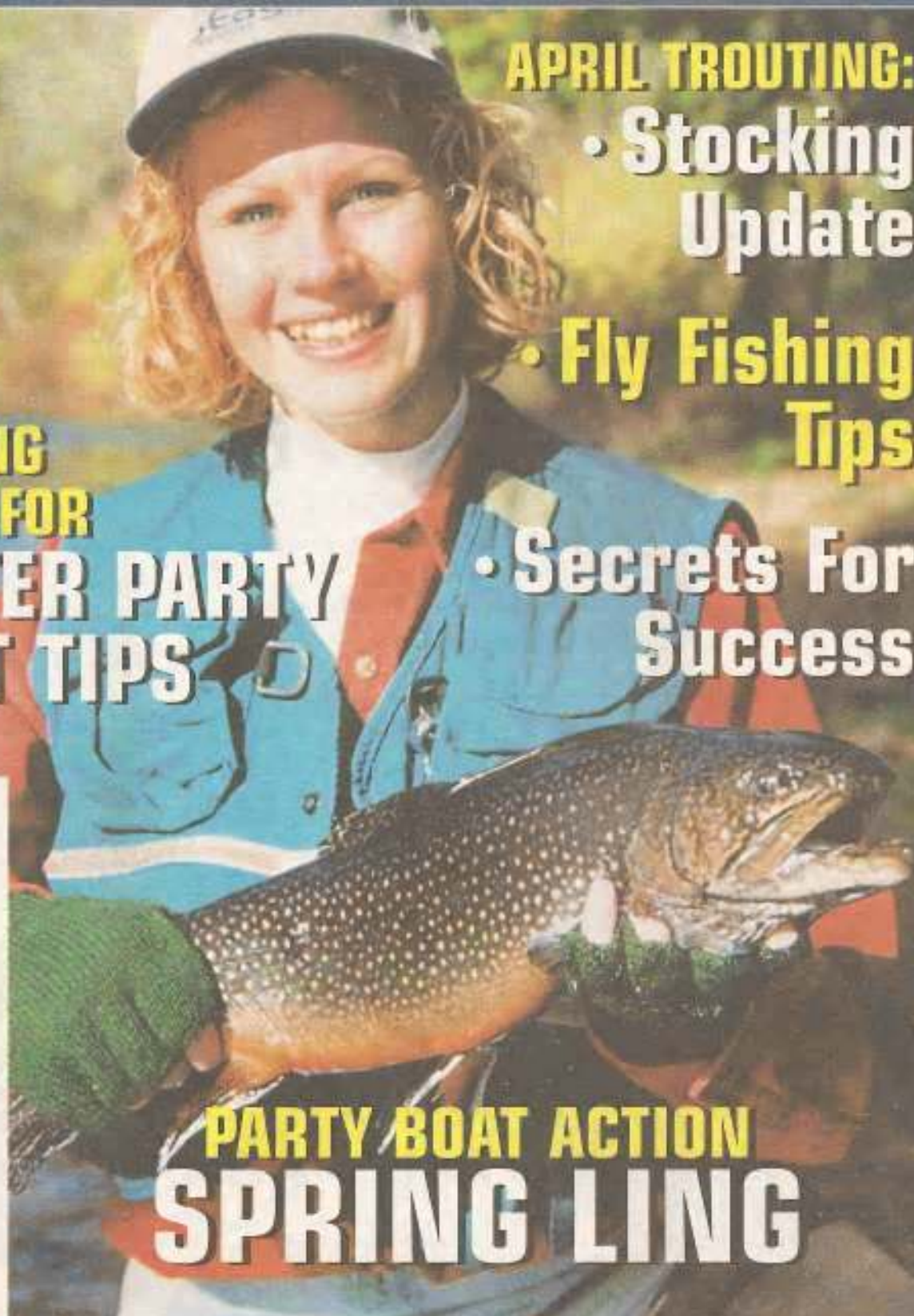
- Stocking Update

- Fly Fishing Tips

- Secrets For Success

**RIGGING  
RIGHT FOR  
BETTER PARTY  
BOAT TIPS**

**PARTY BOAT ACTION  
SPRING LING**





**L**ing, also known as red hake, are more of a back-up fish to some fishermen who will go out for them when there is nothing else biting. On occasion, I have a hard time getting guys to come out fishing with me because I am going after ling that day. Most of us fishermen know that ling do not put on any fight when being brought up from the bottom but the smart ones know that when properly iced, ling are one of the best eating fish that our waters have to offer.

What you miss in a tough, hard battle; you make up for in fine dining.

# LING in The SPRING

by Carlos Bastos Jr.

## WHERE TO FIND THEM

Since I fish primarily out of Sandy Hook, my two choices for ling during the spring would be the Scotland Grounds and the Sandy Hook reef with the latter really producing big catches the last two springs. Further south, I have caught them at all the reefs from Belmar to Barnegat. Before the commercial netters started throwing thousands of ling overboard just to pick out a few whiting, the Mantoloking pipe was a place that the fish would stack up

every spring and everyone would return to the dock with plenty of ling.

I don't think that I could pick which type of structure I prefer when I'm after ling. Instead, I think the water depth is more important than whether I am fishing a wreck or a rock pile. During the spring run, I will fish in 40 to 60 feet of water. Most of my days are spent fishing the rock piles and rocky ledges that I have found throughout the years. Take for instance the Sandy Hook reef. That area has an unbelievable amount of structure scattered around the actual site itself. I found hundreds of small piles of rubble just

by fishing that area extensively. The same thing applies to all of the artificial reefs in our state.

One thing that I have noticed about ling during the last couple of years is that they tend to favor a particular part of the wreck or rock pile that I am fishing. I will usually anchor on the same loran numbers that have produced for me in the past regardless of what I see on my color scope but sometimes they will school up on another section of that wreck or rocky hump so you need to pay close attention to the tides and the wind direction. It's not only important for anchoring but also it can help you locate more fish. If the current is coming from the north, I want to be on the south side of the piece. Usually the ling will be stacked up on that particular side.

## BEST TIME TO GO

Ling can be caught all year round. It basically depends on where you want to go to find them. I like to start fishing for ling sometime in May. If we are having a mild spring and the water temperature has risen to about 50 degrees then I might head out in April but I have found that May is more dependable. Once the water gets close to 70 degrees, ling will retreat back to deeper water. During the summer and winter, ling are caught in 150 - 220 feet of water. Those numbers alone make me like the spring run of ling even more. Another good thing to remember is to try to avoid fishing for ling right after a storm or after a couple of days of strong easterly winds. A large ground swell does not make for good bottom fishing of any kind.

## BAIT AND TACKLE

Ling are not picky about what they eat. I stick to using fresh skimmer clam because while I'm out fishing for ling I'll also catch some sea bass and once in a while I'll even come up with a cod or two. All bottom fish love a fresh piece of skimmer clam.

I like to salt my clams. After I buy a basket or two, I will then shuck the clams and put them in a bucket and mix it with a box of kosher salt. After letting it sit for an hour then I will cut it all up and divide them into Ziploc bags and place them in my freezer until the night before I head out. You will find that not only does it still look fresh when thawed but it will also be a lot tougher and stay on the hook longer.

If you can't get any clam, you can try using squid, herring, or mackerel strips. When the fish are on the feed, they'll devour all those baits. One thing to





remember is to try to use the freshest bait possible. Ling are attracted to your hooks mainly by smell so once your bait has been sent down a few times, it won't be too appealing.

I like to use a two-hook rig for ling. I will first cut a 36-inch piece of 30-pound leader and snell a 2/0 hook on one end. Then I will make a drop-per loop directly in the middle of the rig and put another 2/0 hook on that. Finally a small loop is made at the other end and then I run the entire rig through a small dropper loop directly above my sinker on my main line. The main thing to remember is to keep your hooks close to the bottom.

I have seen guys fishing with these rigs that have three hooks on them but none are near the bottom and in result they catch very few ling that

### SOME OF THE ADDITIONAL FAVORITE LOCATIONS

Scotland Grounds	26932/43690
Sandy Hook Reef	26943.2/43647.1
Sea Girl Reef:	
Rubble	26910.4/43495.1
Wreck	26911.1/43497.6
Wreck	26911.1/43502.7
Wreck	26917.2/43497.6

way. If I am fishing an area that could hold some cod, then I will put a hook about 30 inches above the sinker. Cod on the other hand, tend to swim a few feet above the bottom.

There is no need for anything fancy while fishing for ling. I use a 7-foot, heavy fresh water rod made by Quantum, matched with an Ambassador 7000 loaded with 20 pound test mono. I know a lot of people who bottom fish who like to use the braided lines, but I feel that when you are fishing in shallow water, there is no need for that.

If you are like my dad and prefer to use spinning gear for all of your fishing needs then go right ahead. He likes his spinning gear so much that he actually brought along his spinning outfit on a George's Bank cod trip once!

### PARTY BOATS

If you don't have your own boat, there are many good party boats that sail for ling during the spring run. You could fish the Scotland Grounds if you sail out of Atlantic Highlands or fish a 20-mile wreck out of Cape May. Where ever you choose to go, pick a nice day and go out and catch yourself some of the best eating fish around.

Tight Lines.





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