



Want To Up Your Offshore Game? Try These Tips

By Capt. Freddy Gamboa

You don't need a massive yacht to fish offshore. Take your center console and rig it the right way, and you'll find success.





Capt. Fred runs a 31FA Contender with twin 250 4-Stroke Yamaha engines, which has logged over 150 offshore runs. The boat has been able to handle rough seas and get them home safely, yet fly to the canyons in just over two hours when conditions permit!

INSET: Whether you're fishing for dolphin or jigging or chunking tuna, you need the right rods and reels for the job.

This is a follow-up to the article I wrote in the September/October 2011 issue of the Big Game Fishing Journal. Since then, I have refined my techniques and adjusted to recent fishing trends. This has allowed me to increase my catch totals even as catches in the canyons on a whole

has either remained constant or diminished for most crews.

LEADING OFF: RIGGING UP REELS/RODS FOR SUCCESS

I have had numerous requests for pictures and in-depth details on model numbers for the rods and reels I use that have been able to

hold up to the rigors of offshore pelagics. Here is the list:

MAHI LIGHT-TACKLE FISHING

I use a Spheros 4000 OC bait runner paired with a 7-foot, 12- to 20-pound-rated Teramar spinning rod, spooled with 30-pound PowerPro Maxcuatro. The power of this combination has provided me the ability to handle mahi up to our boat record of 40 pounds, huge for New Jersey standards. The baitrunner mode works great when using small chunk baits and placing the rod in the holders unattended so we can cast lures. The lightweight and balance of this combo paired with PowerPro Maxcuatro line, which has 30 percent less diameter of previous braids, allows us to go with smaller finesse lures like the Shimano Waxwing 68 baby in Chartreuse and can cast them a country mile.

TUNA POPPING AND JIGGING

Saragosa SW 10000 paired with a 6-foot-9, 65- to 200-pound Terez Spinning Rod, spooled with 50-pound PowerPro Depth-hunter. This combo is light and sensitive enough for jigging lighter Shimano lures like the Whirligig, Centervortex, Slidend, and Coltsniper in the appropriate colors, i.e., sand eel patterns. Yet the rod has the backbone to handle the Shimano Butterfly Flat-side jigs up to 325 grams. This combo also has the backbone and length to cast the Shimano Orca lures a long distance, yet the light

weight of this combo will not fatigue the angler.

TUNA CHUNKING AND JIGGING

Tallica 12, 2-speed on a 6-foot-6, 80- to 200-pound Terez conventional rod, spooled with 65-pound PowerPro Depthhunter. This combo has been an absolute brute and the workhorse combo for us tackling fish of immense proportions! Countless yellowfin from 65 to 115 pounds, bluefin to 125 pounds while jigging and chunking, swordfish to 150 pounds, and sharks upwards up 300 pounds. This combo is powerful yet lightweight, which makes standing at the rail jigging and chunking all night long a task that even young juveniles can handle.

DEEPWATER WRECK FISHING AND TILEFISHING

Torsa 30/Trinidad TN 30 on a 6-foot-6, 80- to 200-pound Terez conventional rod, spooled with 65-pound PowerPro Depthhunter. I have had these reels for close to 10 years and they are still going strong! Each crank of the Torsa picks up nearly 50 inches of line due to its close to 6-1 retrieve, yet it has a max drag of 35 pounds, which makes short work of tiles in 600 feet.

SHARKING, SWORDFISHING, TROLLING FOR TUNA

TLD50LRSA 2-Speed, on 50- to 100-pound stand-up Tal-lus rods, spooled with 800 yards

of 80-pound PowerPro, with a 200-yard topshot of 60-pound Diamond monofilament. Another workhorse in our arsenal, this combo sees double duty on our canyon trips. During the day we deploy a nine-rod spread and at night the setups go into our night spread for swords and sharks.

RIGGING UP FOR BATTLE

I run a 31FA Contender with twin 250 4-Stroke Yamaha engines, which has logged over 150 offshore runs. The boat has been able to handle rough seas and get us home safely, yet fly to the canyons in just over two hours when conditions permit! There hasn't

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By adding an extra 10 rod holders to the T-top Capt. Fred can take setups that are not in play and get them out of the way, yet be able to reach them quickly if he needs them back in the game!

been much I have done to the motors to enhance performance, but have made some adjustments that have made the offshore trips that much more efficient.

OFFSHORE LED LIGHTS

When I first started doing over-night charters I used portable Lind-

gren Pitman LED lights, which were effective yet cumbersome and had to deal with storage without damaging them. Since then I was advised by my electronics partner, Jersey Shore Boat Yacht Services, that Ocean LED is the way to go. I have seen these lights in action and they have been a mainstay in

the offshore scene due to the light penetration they provide.

CLAMP ON T-TOP HOLDERS

This is probably one of the best after-market additions I have made which make my boat an efficient offshore machine! Most boats have a few gunnel rod holders. I have 20, but found that this was not enough, and did not deal with setups in the way while fishing. By adding an extra 10 rod holders to the T-top I can take setups that are not in play and get them out of the way, yet be able to reach them quickly if we need them back in the game!

CHUM-CHUNKER

This device has allowed me to literally reduce my crew by 1 person. The device is efficient, quiet, uses minimal power and insures a deliberate chum trail throughout my chunking sessions, especially at night when fatigue takes out most anglers out of the game.

An added benefit of using the Chum chucker that I have figured out over time is that I use fewer flats of cut butterfish. When using conventional methods it's hard to consistently dish out the same amount of chum hour after hour. Some crew members also tend to chum heavier than others. Now I can predictably get two hours out of every flat of chum, which makes it easier to prepare a trip beforehand.

Another added benefit of this device is a constant flow of chum

during a hot bite. We have all been there before fighting, collaring fish, cutting bait, but when there is mayhem in the cockpit no one is dishing out the chunks. Eventually the fish take off and everyone is wondering what happened. With this device that situation never presents itself.

RECENT TRENDS IN THE NORTHEAST CANYONS

Last season I had the opportunity to fish with one of the premier offshore fishing operations, the Canyon Runner crew. For the past few years I had been performing breakout sessions at the very popular winter Canyon Runner Seminar series, and Adam LaRo-

sa always had invited me to fish with them in tournaments and crew trips. Last year during the Manasquan River canyon tournament I suffered a blown lower unit and was left stranded at the dock. I saw Adam and took him up on an offer to fish the tourney, which he gladly obliged. I joined the crew of Adam, Capt. Phil, Jay, Chris, and seasoned angler Dr. Philip Infantolino, the current New Jersey blue marlin record holder. During the past few winters at the Canyon Runner seminar series I had been hearing of some tricks the Canyon Runner crew was using in the canyons but I got to see them up close and personal and began to use them for the rest of the season.

DAY CHUNKING

Last season there were many days that anglers were marking huge schools of tuna but they would not come into the trolling spread and eat. I experienced this myself in the Lindenkohl Canyon early in the season. I knew they were there because we had landed half a dozen to 30 pounds, but saw bigger ones in the 60-pound class completely going airborne, eating flying fish. However, we could not get them to bite.

After releasing some white marlin and landing a bunch of mahi we were content with our trip and left. Half an hour after leaving I heard of a boat that stopped trolling and began chunking and commenced

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A successful outing that puts a variety of fish in the boat depends on having a variety of tools to catch them.



to crush the larger-sized yellowfin, which was the first I had heard of day chunking last season; mental note taken!

Fast forward a week later and the weeds in the Hudson Canyon near the 100 Square were a complete nuisance, making trolling an absolute nightmare. Guys had caught some bigeyes few days prior and on that day and the number of pilot whales in the vicinity made it look like a scene from National Geographic; yet we could not get any bites, nor did the rest of the fleet.

My next trip to the canyon was

with Phil on the Canyon Runner during the tourney and we had the same conditions; this time Capt. Phil pulled back on the throttles and ordered the crew to begin chunking and we began to hook yellowfins in the 60-pound class! My next three trips to the edge were same weeds issues, but the day-evening chunk was on fire and averaged six fish per trip prior to nightfall.

USING DREDGES ON THE TROLL; NIGHT TROLLING FOR BIGEYES

Another trick I saw employed by the Canyon Runner crew was the

deployment of Canyon Runner dredges early in the trip during the troll. They have dedicated electric reels with an 8-pound swimming weight to get the dredge subsurface. It's set out on a supported outrigger pole and the presentation is 10 to 15 feet below the surface, 10 to 20 feet off the stern, which is truly an amazing site. We did not get any bites during the day but the crew deployed the dredges again at night with their typical 11-rod spread and we got hammered by two nice-sized bigeyes at 10 p.m. while guys were already chunking! One of those fish wound up placing us in third in the Manasquan River Marlin & Tuna Club tournament!

Hopefully this detailed list of the exact setups I use and recent trends from one of the most formidable fishing crews on the East Coast will help put more fish in the cooler on your upcoming trips! 🐟

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



CAPTAIN FREDDY GAMBOA is a U.S. Coast licensed captain who has fished the coast of New York and New Jersey south to the Florida Keys for 20 years.

He started his career as a writer and seminar speaker for The Fisherman magazine under his mentor, Pete Barrett.

He started his charter business, Andreas Toy Charters, as a result of audience members' requests to take them fishing. He fishes inshore waters to the Northeast canyons and guides clients to sailfish, tuna and mahi in South Florida and the Keys and has been running charters for more than 10 years.

He has been a pro staff member for Shimano and for Contender Boats, and is actively involved in the "Save the Bluefin" tagging project under John Logioco.

Capt. Freddy also has traveled to Peru to help promote catch and release for billfish, while also teaching the Peruvian crews techniques to maximize their fishing.

He can be reached at www.andreastoycharters.com.

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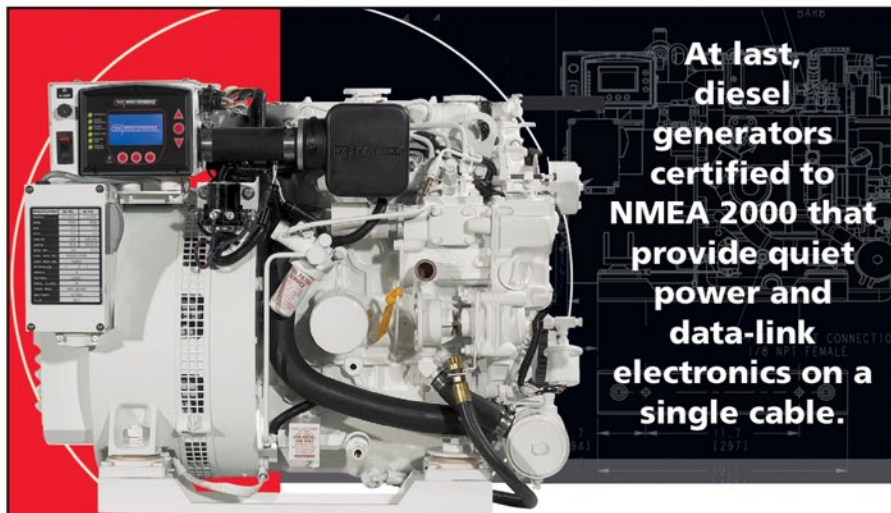
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