

TOP FISHING SECRETS

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Tides:

Flood, Ebb, and Slack

Tides dictate when the bite is on or off.

Timothy Kuserets



Tides are the result of influences from the moon and the sun that cause gravitational movement of the earth's seas and oceans to undulate in a fashion which divide them into three forms of tide: they are the ebb (low tide); flood (high tide); and slack (dead calm).

Ordinarily the ebb tide occurs two times within a twenty-four hour period. The ebb is water that recedes backward exposing the shoreline for a period of about six and a half hours. It is the opposite of the flood tide.

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Flood Tide



Fly Fishing the Flood Tide. The shoreline disappears beneath the incoming water of a flood tide. There are many anglers who don't like to fish high tides like this, what I dub "big water". They erroneously assume that if there is more water fish move around easier making them harder to locate...it's a rookie mistake. The big water of a flood tide takes the pressure off fish making them receptive to baits and lures. While I can understand the attraction of fishing low water, ebb tides, it's pressure fish undergo that prevent them from biting created by predators or from nature.

Gathering masses of birds at the surface is an excellent sign that predator fish are forcing baitfish upward and an ideal location to start fishing the perimeter.

The flood tide diminishes shoreline beaches by slowly advancing forward from the sea, bay, or ocean. The flood ordinarily occurs twice within a twenty-four hour period. The time period between the ebb and the flood is called the slack tide.

The slack tide is that portion of the tide where there is a lull in water current activity. It is the prelude of a changing tide, this can happen four times a day or two times per outgoing and incoming tides.

In an estuary the slack tide plays a key role of when the bite will be off or on. Fish by nature are lazy. They have two functions that they focus on until it is time to spawn, that is, to propagate and to eat in an efficient manner that expends as little energy as possible. As a consequence of their behavior, fish would rather go with the flow of the current rather than fighting it directly.

As fish migrate they are going with the current and not against it; it is the most effective way for them to travel without having a deleterious effect on their ability to swim and to look for food. All migratory fish use this method of transporting themselves from one place to the other.

During the slack tide there is no current to inhibit the movements of fish. Fish are free to move about alone or in groups. The smaller the fish is, the more they will stay in groups of schools; however, that changes with the size of the fish and ultimately makes catching game fish a guess. The freedom to move about disperses the schooling salmon and makes catching them a guessing game as to where they will be for the duration of slack tide.

If you suddenly stop hooking into fish you can be sure of three things: the tide has gone slack; the fish have moved on; or there is pressure from man, seal, or weather. When the tide completes its transition from slack to either the incoming or outgoing tide, and you are sure that fish are still in the area, it might be worth your time to wait for current to pick back up. Ordinarily, slack tide lasts for half an hour.

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