

MY FIRST STRIPED BASS OF THE NEW YEAR

By Frank "Jake" Jakob



*This was the
absolute best
surf fishing
I ever had in
over 35 years.*



I was cruising the beach while surf fishing Corolla on the northern Outer Banks Jan. 3, 2006. It was afternoon and I was looking for signs of fish when I came upon a bunker slick about a quarter-mile off the beach that was over 10 miles long with the birds picking above but no sign of fish. It was a cold, windy, gloomy winter afternoon, and I was alone on the beach.

So I sat in my truck watching the bait for about three hours when all of sudden the blues started bursting

all over. I had to wade the slough and make long casts over the bar with my 11-foot Lamiglass conventional and Ambassador 6500c3 with a 3-ounce Hopkins.

After walking through the slough and catching and releasing several big blues in the 15-pound range, I saw the bass swimming around me. Well that made my day, so I switched outfits. (I carry a dozen or so with me all the time.) I picked a 9-foot Lamiglass with a 150 Van Stahl spinning reel loaded with 15-pound test Stren. Since the fish were in close chasing bunker I used a 5-inch Neils Master plug tied directly to my fluorocarbon leader with a loop knot.

Much to my surprise a striper hit it immediately on a short cast. I was in no hurry, so I fought the bass lightly. I knew it was a big fish because it shook its head several times with its mouth open on top of the water trying to spit the plug.

When I beached the bass, it still had its mouth wide open and the Neils Master plug was stuck side ways like a stick propping the fish's mouth wide open. I called my buddy Neil, who had come by later, and he took the picture.

The bass was not even hooked. It opened its mouth to swallow the bait (plug) and jammed it between its top and bottom mouth (see photo, left). Both the belly and tail hook were free swinging. Now that's the honest-to-God truth.

We caught fish well into the night and came back the next day to do the same. You had to have patience and wait the fish out both days in the afternoon. On plugs, I caught and released over 55 bass to 35 pounds. What a way to start a New Year. 🍷

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