

Basic Equipment Offshore

By Captain Dave Tilley

Offshore fishing is IMHO the finest fishing available. The fish are big, mean, toothy critters that pull like a freight train and believe it or not, they are not that hard to catch. You just need the right stuff. So let's start a list of equipment in the order of preference.

1. Saltwater Gamefishing, Offshore and Onshore by Peter Goadby \$40.00

Excellent choice of books. If you are going to spend the type of money involved in offshore fishing then you need to learn about the prey and how to take them. This \$40 book is a great place to start.

2. Depth Finder.....\$200 to \$1400

Depth finders are available in many different shapes and sizes. From the Hummingbird 100 to the top of the line Colorscope they all basically do the same thing. They sound out the depth and give you a visual representation of the under sea world. The more money you spend the more information you get. I personally have bottom fished on a sailboat with nothing more than a digital readout and caught fish and I have fished with the equipment that cost thousands of dollars and caught nothing. What you want to try to do here is balance the cost with the amount of information that you can use. There is the key. The amount of information that you can use. Just because the scope can bring you the information, that does not mean the you are able to understand what it is telling you. Cheap side.....200 bucks, Good one \$1000 to 1400. I personally use a JRC Colorscope. I think I paid \$700 for it in 1998.

3. A good set of knives.\$10 to \$100

That's right , the third thing I would buy is a good set of knives. In knives, you get what you pay for. A knife combo at the superstore will run you 10 bucks. If you have to that's fine but for the money I would rather have a set of knives that will last several seasons. I use commercial quality Dexter knives. If you want to find out who sells the best knives around your neck of the woods, then go to the local fish market and ask the fellow (or Lady) that cleans all the fish. They will be happy to tell you all about what they have learned about knives.

You will need a short heavy blade for use in cutting bait and as an all around deck knife. A long thin super sharp knife for filleting the catch at the dock and a semi long heavy knife for cutting through bones and other heavy parts of the fish. If you see it for sell in a glass box, don't even think about it. The best ones come in boxes by the dozen. While you are at it, go ahead and get yourself a good sharpener and learn how to use it.

4. Rods and Reels....\$50 to \$200 each

The best in entry level rods that can do double duty, trolling and bottom fishing are the Penn LongBeach combos. They are for sell about anywhere that sells offshore gear. I can assure you that the fish has no idea what type of pole you are holding. The Longbeach combo is a good place to start and as you develop, you can begin to add to your rod and reel collection to match your own personal style of fishing. I use Key Largo Live Bait 20-30 lb class rods and Shimino Speed master Reels for trolling and Key Largo 50-70 lb class sticks with 114 H Penn reels for bottom fishing. Both will run you about \$200 each.

5. Hook Puller.....\$15

The Humble Hook Puller. The fish that I fish for have LOTS of teeth. Sharp ones to boot. Hook pullers make easy work out of it. I like the ones made of stainless with the handles dipped in rubber and a single U. Get bright yellow if you can. Don't get one that is too long. They are a real pain to use. The shaft should be around 6 inches more or less. They are well worth the money.

6. GPS.....\$100-\$2300

A decent GPS costs next to nothing these days. Now that the Government has turned off SA they all will put you pretty close to where the numbers are. I think overall fisherman these days rely much too heavily on fishing the numbers than on fishing the scope. I very seldom fish where my numbers take me. Fish move, seasons change, storms come and go. I fish an area when I go out not a set of numbers. I use my GPS to take me to an area then I search with the scope. The scope will tell where the fish are (or are not). The GPS will only tell you what number you are at. I use a Garmin 220 presently, It's OK. Hopefully over the winter I will be upgrading to a Northstar 951. If you have the money, (\$1000+ used, \$2300 new), go for the Northstar. You will thank me later. I have used a lot of different GPSs in the years that I have been fishing and there is a difference. In MHO Northstar rules.

7. OutRiggers.....\$150 to \$3000

see "How to Setup and Use Outriggers"

8. Downriggers.....\$200-\$500

See "How to Setup and Use Downriggers"

9. Tackle Boxes..(2)...\$50 to \$100 each

You need 2 boxes. One that goes on the boat during the day of fishing and one to keep rigging supplies in. The one for boat I like shelved boxes with pull out plastic Tupperware looking things that slide in and out. You take out which ever box you need and leave the rest. The rigging box is best as a large open box with lots of room for all the wire and pliers and other rigging BS that you will acquire over time. This box I keep at home. The day before I go out I sit down with it and tie all the rigs needed for the next trip. Nothing I hate worse is people sucking up valuable fishing time making rigs. Putting the boat in the location to fish is very expensive. I do not wish to waste one moment of that time. I want hooks in the water ready to catch fish from the time I arrive on station to the time I leave. Rigs made on shore the night before should be matched to the baits available and will be much more consistence than rigs made on a moving boat.

10. Tackle....\$100 to \$500

According to your own taste and fishing habits.

Let's tally it up.

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- 2. Depthfinder.....\$200 to \$1400
- 3. A good set of knives.\$10 to \$100
- 4. Rods and Reels.....\$50 to \$200

- 5. Hook Puller.....\$15
- 6. GPS.....\$100-\$2300
- 7. Out Riggers.....\$150 to \$3000
- 8. Downriggers.....\$200-\$500
- 9. Tackle Boxes.....(2)...\$50 to \$100 each
- 10. Tackle.....\$100 to \$500

\$1115 to \$8855

Let's face it. Offshore fishing is not a cheap sport. Never has been. Never will be.

I can tell you that I started out with a old crappy boat that I had \$1500 bucks in, no GPS, compass only, a \$100 Hummingbird, 2 open face surf rods and my wife's tackle box. I caught enough fish to catch the bug for the real thing. I would recommend that when you buy gear for offshore fishing that you go ahead and buy the best that you can afford. The higher quality gear will last longer with fewer headaches in the long run.

Tight Lines and Slight Seas

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