

Fishing for Cobia



**Tips, Tricks and
Techniques**

Updated 6/24/2024

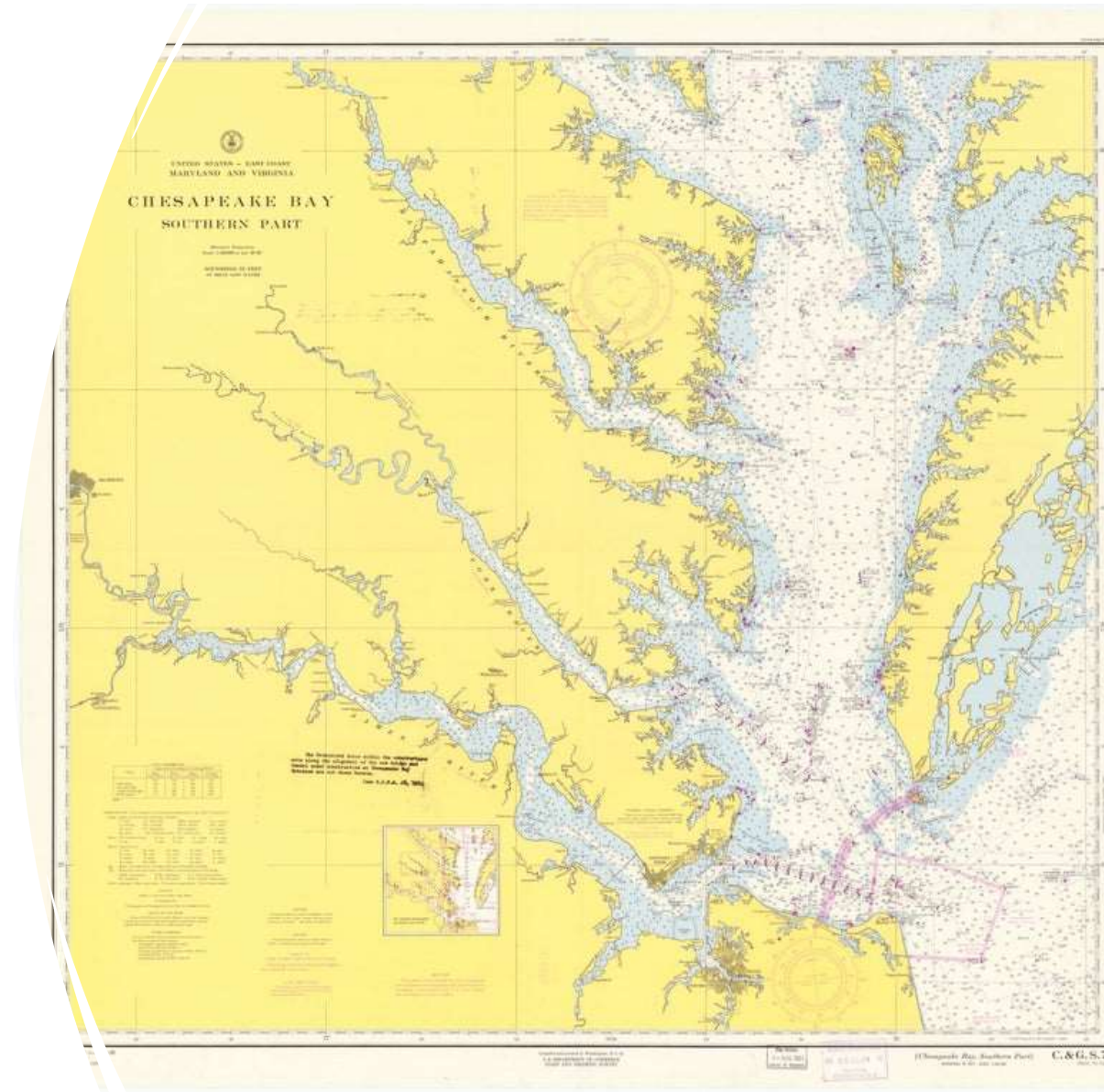
A large stingray is the central focus, swimming towards the left. It has a broad, flat body with a mottled brown and tan pattern. Its long, thin tail extends behind it. In the background, several sharks are visible, swimming in the same direction. The water is a clear, vibrant blue, and the overall scene is underwater.

Know Your Target Species

- Strong fighting species that require heavy duty tackle
- Be prepared for a long fight
- Travel in schools sometime mixed in with Rays
- General rule, where there is one there is more near by
- **Patience** is a must
- Rewarded with a memorable angling experience
- Tastes great; Less filling

Where to Find Cobia

- Smith Point flats near GC#1
- Windmill Point Bar
- Dameron Marsh flats
- Chesapeake Beach Area
- SW Middle Grounds
- Tangier Lumps
- Northern Neck Reef



Methods

- **Chumming**
 - Menhaden chum
 - The fresher the chum the better
 - Requires good current
 - Anchor in 12 – 25 ft. on a flat close to a drop off or structure
 - Live Bait (spot, croaker, eels)
 - Cut Bait (Menhaden)
 - Birds are bad usually means Bluefish or Mackerel are in the area will ruin your bait
- **Trolling**
 - Use small planer boards such as Trophy Stalker boards
 - Troll live eels as slow as possible
 - Also sometimes caught by accident while trolling artificials for other species like Mackerel using Clarkspoons or drone spoons
- **Site Fishing**
 - Look around channel markers or similar structure
 - You will see them
 - Large jigs with a good tail or live bait (Eels/Spot)



Weapons for Chumming

Bait – Live vs. Dead

- Live (Eels rule) = No Rays; bait can last multiple trips; expensive. Spot & croaker are subject to Bluefish attacks
- Cut Chunks (Bunker) = More Rays; requires checking/changing bait often; less expensive

Spinning Setup

- Be consistent with your equipment
- 30-50 lb. class heavy 7' spinning boat rod
- Penn 6000 class live liner reel or equivalent
- 50-80 lb. braid minimum
- Leader is pre-packaged with mono, circle hook and barrel swivel if you can find them or you can tie your own rigs
- Basic fish finder rig using a 6 or 8 oz bell sinker depending on the current or egg sinker equivalent

Conventional Setup

- Penn Squall 30 or equivalent class as spinning setup



The Eel Rig shown here can be used with cut bait as well

DO NOT use the Cut Bait Rig shown here with eels. You will end up tangled all day and go home frustrated

Eel Rig for Cobia

Main line:
50-80lb braid
Terminate with barrel swivel or snap swivel

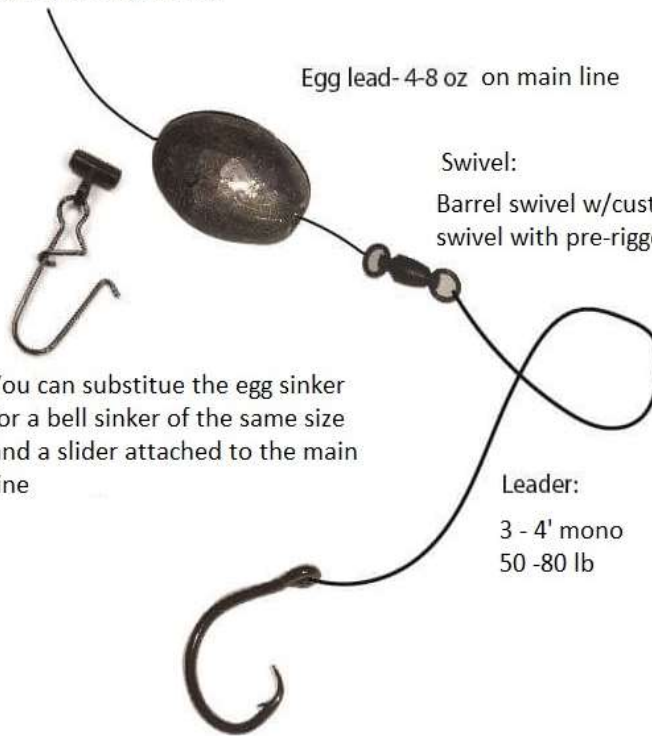
Egg lead- 4-8 oz on main line

Swivel:
Barrel swivel w/custom leader or snap swivel with pre-rigged leader and hook

You can substitute the egg sinker for a bell sinker of the same size and a slider attached to the main line

Leader:
3 - 4' mono
50 -80 lb

Hook size:
5/0 - 8/0 inline circle



Cut Bait Rig for Cobia

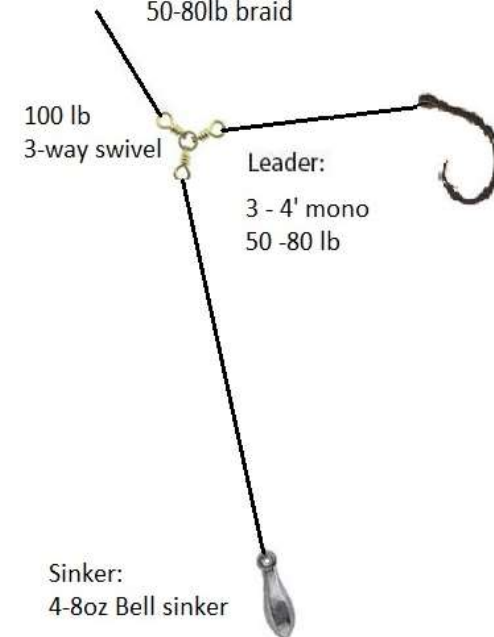
Main line:
50-80lb braid

100 lb
3-way swivel

Leader:
3 - 4' mono
50 -80 lb

Hook size:
5/0 - 8/0 inline circle

Sinker:
4-8oz Bell sinker



Cobia Casting Jig Samples

Cobia are not
picky about
whose jig you use

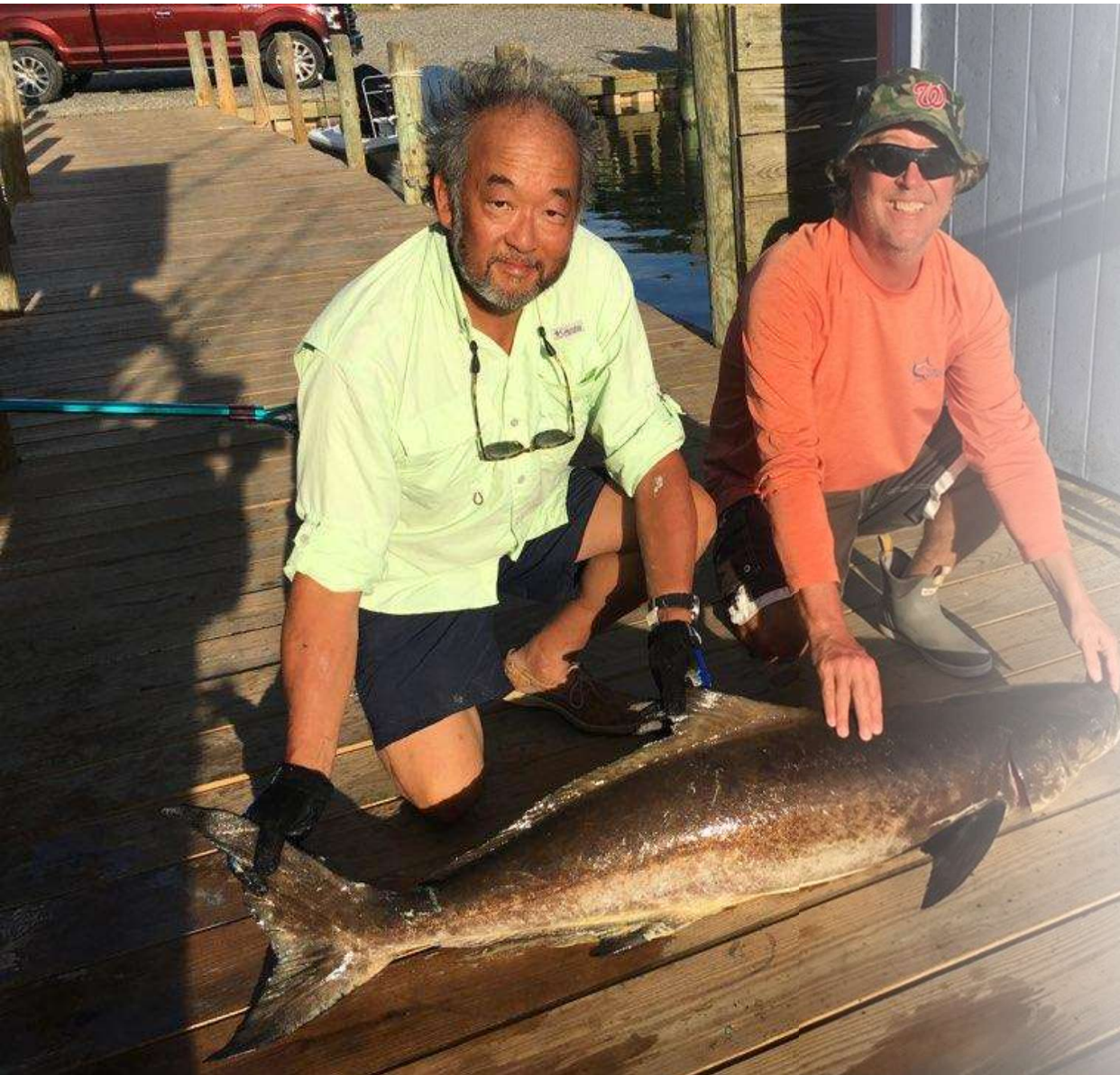
Jigs with some
type of tail seem
to work best



Accessories/Equipment

- Fighting Belt
- Largest net you can find
- A club or bat
- Couple extra 5 gal buckets
- Boga Grip or equivalent
- Surface chum Bag/Pot/Cage
- Bottom chum Bag/Pot/Cage
- Menhaden Oil (Tournament Master)
- Rags or Scotch pads makes handling eels easier
- Good pair of fishing gloves for handling fish
- Bait knives for cutting chunks
- Fishing pliers
- Cutting Board
- Measuring device with a minimum of 40"
- Live Bait Cooler (optional)
- Large ladle for spooning chum





Chumming Setup

- (1-2) 5 gal buckets of chum or at least 2 cases of chum blocks for a weekend
- (1) 5 gal. bucket of bunker chunks
- 1 chum/cage bag on the surface
- 1 weighted chum bag/cage on the bottom
- Menhaden oil (mix with the chum & chunks)
- Cut lots of bunker chunks ahead of time and throw spoonful overboard occasionally
- Periodically shake both bags/cages and monitor the flow of chum
- Check bags every hour; refill as necessary
- Need current for your chum to be effective

Spread

- **5 rod setup**

- (1) with eel float back in the chum slick
- (2) back in the chum slick on the bottom
- (2) near the boat on the bottom near the chum bag
- Have a heavy-duty spinning rod rigged with a large cobia jig

- **Bait**

- Live eel hooked through the tail or through the lower jaw and one eye
- Use a dry rag or Scotch pad for handling the eels
- Putting eels on ice before using them will calm them down for a few minutes while you hook them and get them in the water





What to do while you wait?

Put together a plan

- Clear the deck (Get everything off the deck)
- Organize your accessories around the boat
- Toss Bunker chunks occasionally
- Check and shake the chum bags
- Check bait about every 20 minutes. Crabs, bluefish and other bait fish help themselves to your cut bait and eels like to tangle up in the lines.
- Plan where you are going to do with the store the rods when hooked up
- Protect yourself from the sun
- Pay attention to any activity from the boats around (Yelling, holding a net, etc.)

Fish On! Now What?

- Time for your fishing crew to shine
- Get everything out of the way
 - Pull in chum bags (Put bags in bucket)
 - Pull in Rods (putting hooked eels in empty bucket)
 - Make sure motor is raised
 - Try to keep the cobia away from your anchor
- Get the accessories you need to land the fish
 - Get landing accessories ready (net, gloves, club, measuring stick/tape, etc.)
- Have your buddy cast a Cobia jig while waiting for the hooked fish to tire



Final Thoughts

- **Remember:** Where there is 1, more than likely there are others close behind
- If you see rays it a good thing
- Chum can be purchased at most area tackle shops or Pride of Virginia In Reedville and Callao
- Always check weather conditions before you leave
- Check tides before leaving. You need current for chumming
- Fully charge your batteries
- Treat any laceration with **Peroxide** immediately
- Cobia Season June 15 – September 15
- Ensure you are aware of minimum size and bag limit
- Absolutely no gaffing
- Preferred hooks (6/0 - 8/0)

Enjoy your catch. Good Luck!

