

Neighborhood Bait and Tackle Stores — More Than Just Bait

Tom Schlichter, Guest Author



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Ken Morse

*Tight Lines Bait and Tackle,
Sag Harbor*



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Bait and tackle stores provide invaluable services to anglers, and more than 70 independent stores around Long Island contain a wealth of local fishing knowledge. Anglers shop at bait and tackle stores to stock up on fresh and frozen bait before heading out to their favorite fishing hole. Sand eel, spearing, squid, bunker, and clam can make your fishing trips more productive, and a few stores specialize in offering live bait throughout the entire season. Anglers planning an extended fishing camp trip can organize a bulk supply of bait through their dealers. A wide variety of artificial lures can be sourced through these stores, and the dealers are happy to teach you how to work them, which can be helpful if you are a beginner.

Bait and Some...

In addition to supplying bait, tackle stores are good sources for obtaining first hand knowledge about every aspect related to fishing local waters. “New anglers think of tackle shops as a place to buy bait,” says Ken Morse, proprietor of *Tight Lines Bait and Tackle*, in Sag Harbor, “but these ‘mom and pop’ style shops have a lot more to offer. Sure, you can buy bait and tackle, but our dealers have a pulse on the local fishing scene and they turn anglers onto some of the hottest fishing action.” Dealers can tell you about the tide, good choices for bait and lures, and the best places to fish on any given day.

Anglers can look to their neighborhood tackle store for basic information to get started. “Come into my shop”, offers Ken Morse, “and I’ll get you out the door with a rod and reel that’s affordable, easy to work with, and up to the challenge so that you can catch fish on the first trip”.

John Mantione of *J & J Sports* in Patchogue, shares details about the additional services that local shops offer. “Many look like small operations — but step inside and you’ll find ‘big-time’ choices, great service and a reservoir of local knowledge. Bait and tackle stores are bridges with the regulatory agencies, and anglers often learn about new fishing regulations through these dealers. Dealers are tuned-in to the views and perceptions of anglers, and regulators use us as a source for determining the collective views that prevail in the angling community”.

If an angler forgets to purchase a freshwater fishing license, several bait and tackle stores offer a convenient option to purchase a license at the last minute, which saves the hassle of postponing a planned fishing trip.

Custom Equipment and Accessories

Sportfishing is a hobby for many anglers and individuals that are committed to the sport for the long run will invest in equipment, like any other outdoor pastime. Custom rods constructed to suit an angler’s physical build can be commissioned through many bait and tackle stores, and these dedicated individuals are available to make repairs to your favorite rods, when necessary. Wet suits, waders, and vests are necessary gear to face the elements under unfavorable conditions, and bait and tackle stores keep anglers up-to-date on the latest equipment.

Getting Out to Fish

If you would prefer to travel away from the shore to try your luck, there are a few bait and tackle stores that operate boat livery services on Long Island. Anglers can rent a boat to go after bass or to venture out for bay fluke. Boat liveries are convenient options to try different water bodies in the marine district if you aren’t ready to invest in a boat. If your neighborhood tackle dealer doesn’t operate a boat livery, they can tell you where to find one.

Competitive anglers appreciate the convenience of having access to official weighing stations at these locations, where they can register their catch in a tournament, or place an entry in the State fishing record.

The services offered at bait and tackle stores are particularly valuable to beginners, and dealers often organize fishing seminars where beginners can learn fishing tips from master anglers. A fishing guide is an excellent resource person to learn about local waters and fishing techniques, and your bait and tackle dealer can tell you where to locate the right skipper or guide to match your skill level and interest.

Never underestimate the services being offered by bait and tackle stores, and you’ll soon discover that they offer ‘more than just bait’.

