

MODERN STANDUP PADDLEBOARDS
GO NEW PLACES.
PHOTO: TONYA FERRARA



DSUP

DAWG S

TOP STANDUP PADDLEBOARD ANGLERS SHARE TIPS FOR BETTER FISHING

STANDUP PADDLEBOARDING is the fastest growing watersport in the country. There aren't statistics on the number of paddleboard anglers, but head to the local waterhole and you'll see the population is growing. For good reason—paddleboards are light, tough and stable offering easy access to the backwaters and offshore. But, most of all, the sporty, trendy and handy boards are fun to paddle and easy to use. Waterbabies

from coast to coast can jump onboard the surfer lifestyle miles from the nearest ocean waves. With more boards designed for fishing, a new generation of anglers are taking the sport to the limits right in their own backyards. *Kayak Angler* editors caught up with six big names for tips to get in on the fun.

"HAWAIIAN" DAN DEJKUNCHORN

SEA EAGLE PRODUCT MANAGER | LONG ISLAND, NEW YORK
STRIPED BASS, BLUEFISH, FLUKE, BLACKFISH AND PORGIES

I'M HAWAIIAN but I grew up in Florida and now live in New York. My whole life I've been a waterman—fishing, surfing and paddling. I started at Sea Eagle sweeping floors and, through my passion for the water, worked my way to product manager. Standup paddleboard fishing is the best kept secret; easy to go anywhere and fish for anything.

Fish in the Northeast are migratory; each season brings a change in the species. Striped bass, fluke, porgie, blackfish, bluefish and weakfish each require different tactics. Look for bottlenecks where current is funneled. Structure like docks, bridges, boulders sandbars and oyster bars. Fish in the now, don't use what worked last week. Match the hatch, if you see small menhaden popping, use a lure that looks like the baitfish. Remember, learning what doesn't work is just as important as learning what works.

To cover a variety of species and techniques, choose a medium-heavy, six-foot, parabolic rod. Less backbone means I can bring the fish closer to the board without high sticking and breaking the rod. I use a conventional reel spooled with 30-pound braid and four feet of 30-pound monofilament leader. When I'm targeting bluefish, I'll switch to 100-pound wire leader.

Vertical jigs allow me to cover the water column from the bottom to the surface. I can work the jig straight up and down or cast it to breaking fish. This lure works year-round. A one- to two-ounce bullet-head jig with three-inch Zoom Bubblegum Fluke is a great choice for bouncing off the bottom. My topwater choice is a Gibbs Polaris Popper.

My standup paddleboard is designed to be quiet on the water allowing me to get close to fish. There is so much deck space, I can take a second angler with me. A SUP is lighter than a kayak making it easier to maneuver.

Modern SUPs are versatile. I can rig my board with a seat and electric motor for a super-shallow

skiff I don't have to paddle. For quick trips, I leave the board rigged up on the roof racks.

When purchasing an inflatable SUP, look for a company with a good warranty and customer service. Problems are always possible, so make sure the company stands behind its products.

The best thing about an inflatable SUP is it is almost indestructible. I beat the heck out of mine.

Drop and drag it, run the board over with your car, kick it or paddle across an oyster bed: put an inflatable SUP to the test. If it doesn't hold up—it's the wrong SUP for you.

A lightweight electric motor turns a SUP into a mini skiff with tons of deck space and plenty of stability for standup fishing. Lift the motor and paddle in the shallows. I use an Accent Transformer Pro Slider paddle capable of turning into a SUP paddle, kayak paddle or push pole.

To maintain stability when fighting a fish, keep the rod tip pointed towards the nose and the fish will pull the board straight. Land fish with a net so they don't jump overboard.

HARRY MADISON

BOTE BOARDS PRO STAFF | FLORIDA PANHANDLE
REDFISH AND TARPON

THE PADDLEBOARD IS
PERFECT FOR SIGHT
FISHING GRASS FLATS
REDFISH PREFER. I'M
CONSTANTLY LOOKING
FOR MOVEMENT OR A
CHANGE IN WATER COLOR.

MOST OF MY life, I've been fishing and surfing along Florida's panhandle. I'm into anything on the water, so I bought a standup paddleboard when they first came out. I wasn't planning to fish from the SUP until my brother, Mike, asked me to go kayak fishing. I didn't have a kayak, so I strapped a cooler and rod holders on the SUP and the rest is history. Fishing on a SUP makes hard-to-reach spots easily accessible. The board is light enough to carry to the water. I like the peace and quiet—I can paddle close to redfish without spooking them.

All year, I patrol the grass flats sight casting to redfish. In early summer, I fish for tarpon in the Gulf of Mexico.

For redfish, I use a Dan James Custom Rods seven-foot medium-light rod paired with a Shimano Stradic CI4 3000 spooled with 15-pound Berkley braid and 20-pound Berkley Vanish. Tarpon fishing calls for a Dan James seven-foot, six-inch rod paired with Penn Clash 5000 spooled with 30-pound Berkley braid. Add a 10-foot shock leader of 30-pound monofilament and three feet of 50-pound mono. Use an FG knot to attach braid to monofilament. An Albright knot connects mono to mono.

My go-to redfish lure is a Berkley PowerBait four-inch pearl shad swimbait. For tarpon, I use a Hogy six-and-a-half-inch, bone-colored, Pro Tail swimbait. On the Hogy, I pull out the black eyes and glue in red eyes.

The paddleboard is perfect for sight fishing grass flats and shallows redfish prefer. I'm constantly look-

ing for movement or a change in water color. I find fish by listening for bait breaking. To find tarpon, I paddle along the beach in 10 to 15 feet of water, looking for fish moving along the sandbar. I'll listen for them to roll or free jump. When I see tarpon, I move ahead of the fish so I have time to set down my paddle and make a cast.

I fish from a BOTE 14-foot Gatorshell Rackham. A longer board cuts through the water faster and straighter with more capacity for fishing gear. The board is designed for fishing and capable of carrying loads of gear. The Rackham is pre-rigged with attachment points making it easy to add rodholders and other accessories.

I add the Tackle Rac with rod holders and Kula round cooler as a seat and dry storage. I use a stake-out pole on the flats and a 10-pound anchor and 50 feet of line when I'm in the Gulf.

Choose a board with a V-nose that cuts through the wind chop. Hardboards are the most efficient to paddle, but the fiberglass shell is delicate. BOTE's Gatorshell is an almost-indestructible alternative.

Store the board inside. Sunlight and temperature changes can affect the foam and fiberglass.

In our area, paddleboarders are required to carry a whistle and life vest.

I highly recommend a carbon fiber paddle. A long SUP paddle creates a lot of swing weight. Reducing weight with a stiff and light carbon fiber paddle will improve efficiency.

BOWED UP AND HANGING TEN.
PHOTO: SEAN MURPHY





MATTHEW CHARETTE

VIBE KAYAKS PRO STAFF | SANFORD, MAINE
SMALLMOUTH BASS

AFTER VIBE introduced the Maverick 120 SUP, I jumped at the opportunity to paddle one. I've been kayak fishing since I was a kid. Moving from a sit-on-top kayak to a SUP hybrid was eye opening. The primary stability allows me to move around on the deck like a big kayak, but I can throw and go easier than loading a full-size boat. I can even stand on the cooler for a higher vantage point making it easier to spot fish below the water.

I'm a power fisherman, fast and furious. In Maine, we have aggressive smallmouth bass that will chase down a crankbait like a lion pursues a gazelle. Standing on the SUP makes it easier to accurately cast big diving plugs and ChatterBaits.

I use a seven-foot, medium-heavy Savur rod paired with an Okuma Helios TCS reel spooled with 30-pound Suffix 832 with a 30-inch leader of 15-pound Seaguar Invizx fluorocarbon. Sure, differ-

ent tactics require different outfits, but this combo is my Swiss Army knife.

I'm a big fan of the Z-Man Elite ChatterBait in natural colors with a Super Fluke trailer. I can use the lure to cover water at different levels of the water column. I can fish a ledge and the drop off without switching lures.

A standup paddleboard draws almost no water, I can go anywhere. It tracks as well as a kayak and turns on a dime. I can turn 180 degrees to fish in any direction.

I added a Larry Chair travel chair to my Vibe Element 20-quart cooler. Using the gear tracks, I attach a YakAttack Omega rod holder in the front and rear of the board. I installed a Lowrance Hook-4 fish finder on a center gear track. The transducer dangles over the side on a RAM transducer arm.

I use a leash to keep my fish grip onboard. Savur

Fishing rods have a retrieval system. If the rod goes overboard, the rod butt, connected with a teather, pops off and floats.

Before choosing a SUP, test drive several models. SUP designs are wildly different from fiberglass boards to rotomolded plastic and inflatable. Vibe's Maverick 120 is constructed of rotomolded plastic around a foam core. This makes the board as tough as a plastic kayak giving me confidence to take it anywhere.

I use a kayak paddle because I sit on the cooler while paddling. Bending Branches' Angler Ace is light with a large blade to push the SUP. An adjustable ferrule allows me to make the shaft longer when I switch to standup fishing.

Standup paddleboards are light with a shallow draft making them susceptible to wind. Consider how the wind will blow the SUP when setting up to make a cast.

FISH A SUP LONG ENOUGH AND YOU WILL GO OVER. I USE AN INFLATABLE PFD BELT PACK DESIGNED TO STAY OUT OF THE WAY WHEN I'M PADDLING BUT IT WILL QUICKLY INFLATE IF I GO OVERBOARD.



A CUSTOM BUILT BOARD OFFERS FREEDOM TO RIG RIGHT.
PHOTO: DANNY HAYS QUILLEM

“PALM BEACH” PETE HINCK

DRAGONFLY PADDLEBOARDS | WEST PALM BEACH, FLORIDA
BLACKFIN TUNA

I STARTED kayak fishing more than 30 years ago. About 10 years ago, I saw a guy fishing for king mackerel from a SUP. I decided to paddle to him but, despite the wind and choppy waves, I had a hard time catching him. Soon after, I had a paddleboard and never looked back.

As seasons change, offshore fishing changes. We target king mackerel, sailfish, wahoo and other pelagics, but my favorite is blackfin tuna. I paddle offshore two or three miles in 100 to 300 feet of water and look for schools of tuna on my fishfinder. Then, I drop a vertical jig 20 to 60 feet and work it back quickly. I also catch amberjack, mahi, king mackerel and bonita with this method.

The ideal reel is a high-speed, 7000-series spinning reel spooled with 30-pound braided fishing line on a six-foot, six-inch jigging rod. Tie on six feet of 40-pound fluorocarbon leader and attach a three-ounce Williamson Vortex speed jig in pink and glow. I like to carry two jigging rods and one pitch rod. The pitch rod is a 5000-series spinning rod with 20-pound braid on a seven-foot rod. Attach a 40-pound fluorocarbon leader to a DOA TerrorEyz. The TerrorEyz is an inshore lure for speckled trout and redfish. If mahi-mahi swim close, I cast the lure to them.

I paddle a custom-made board from Dragonfly Paddleboards. The advantage of having a designer build a board to my specifications is I can set it up specifically for the fishing I do. I had tracks molded into the board so I could outfit it with Scotty accessories. Gear tracks on the front deck hold a bungee cord to secure my fish bag and camera mounts. Additional gear tracks in the tail hold rod holders, cup holder, camera mounts and paddle clip. There is a box built into the deck to store my wallet and keys. On the lid to the box is a Scotty flush-mount base for my fishfinder and battery. A cooler is bolted to the deck for dry storage and a seat. A lock ring in the tail connects to my leg leash or a drift sock.

Stability and speed are the most important considerations when choosing a SUP for offshore fishing. The board must be stable to counter a fish weighing as much as the angler. To paddle three miles offshore, the board has to be fast and seaworthy. The Dragonfly has a V-hull like a skiff, not flat like a surfboard, to cut through the water and stay stable in the waves. The hull also increases capacity to carry a fish bag and cooler offshore.

A fishing SUP is heavier than a traditional SUP but lighter than a kayak making it easy to transport over soft sand with a cart and balloon tires.

The most important accessory on a SUP is a life vest. SUPs are stable, but a lot less so than fishing kayaks. Standing raises my center of gravity, further increasing the chances of a fall. Fish a SUP long enough and you will go over. I use an inflatable PFD belt pack designed to stay out of the way when I'm paddling but it will quickly inflate if I go overboard. I also use a leg leash to stay connected if I fall into the water.

A paddleboard is affected more by wind, current and waves; use these forces to your advantage when paddling offshore. In southeast Florida, the day may start calm, but the wind usually picks up early afternoon. By late afternoon, the wind will often blow over 10 knots. I use a GPS to plot the direction and speed I am drifting. Launch and paddle out early, then drift with the current past wrecks and reefs. At the end of the day, ride the wind back to the beach.

Launching through the surf on a paddleboard can be dicey. If the surf is big in the morning, expect it to get bigger during the day.

BRI ANDRASSY

BIC PADDLEBOARDS AND SALT LIFE AMBASSADOR | JUPITER, FLORIDA
LOBSTER DIVING AND SNOOK FISHING

I STARTED paddleboarding to spearfish on the South Florida reefs. Before I bought a paddleboard, I would swim out to the reef and tread water for hours. When I first saw a SUP, I knew I could use it to rest between dives and hold fish and lobster. Once I got a paddleboard, I started exploring new ways to use it. I have been fishing since I was three, so naturally I would try to paddle to the best fishing spots. I realized I could use my paddleboard to get over deep holes out of range when I was wade fishing. I also used the board in no-motor zones and around boat docks. The board is quiet so I can surprise the fish. I still use the board to dive for lobster in the Keys, I've paddled for miles and found great lobster holes. Now I have a fishing SUP; I can stand and fish, anchor, throw a cast net and sight cast. I even camp on my board, sleeping on the water.

I start the day checking tides and winds. I'm always looking for new spots to fish on Google Maps. I try to fish a new place each trip. To start the day, I catch live bait with a cast net. If I can't get bait, I go with artificial lures. I use the SUP to cast to dock pilings

and mangroves. When I'm diving for lobsters, I either swim or paddle my board to holes in the reef. I put up a dive flag

on an old fishing rod. Lobster I capture go in a lobster hotel hanging off the back of the board. I move from spot to spot by pulling the anchor and swimming the board to the next hole.

Light tackle fishing is best with a light, super-sensitive fishing rod and reel combo. I choose a seven-foot St. Croix Inshore Xtreme rod and Florida Fishing Products 4000-series reel spooled with 15-pound test braided line with a short leader of 20-pound fluorocarbon to the lure. Snook will fall for live bait on a 3/0 circle hook. My favorite artificial lures are a Live Target or Vudu mullet. The best topwater lures are a five-inch, bronze Yozuri Hydro Pencil popper or MirroLure Top Dog.

Werner's Zen 95 Hooked paddle with LeverLock shaft is light and stiff with an adjustable staff that goes from one board to the next. To stop, I use a 3.5-pound grapple anchor. A Ram Rod Revolution rod holder on a YakAttack screwball keeps my rod. Tackle is stored in a YakAttack BlackPak. I may carry a cooler or cast net to catch bait.

I have several boards: Bic 11 Crossover, Bic 12 Crossover, Bic Slide and Performer inflatable. I use the 11-footer for inshore fishing. The Air 12-foot board has a 350-pound capacity making it great for diving. The Slide is easy to grab and go fishing. I keep the inflatable in my truck or use it for travel. The boards are light and the ACE-TEC construction on the Cross is tougher than a fiberglass board. The deck has attachment points making it easy to connect accessories.

The SUP is lighter and easier to set up than a kayak. I don't carry a lot of gear, so I can travel light and simple. Fishing is more natural from a standing position, it's easier to cast and land fish. I can paddle standing or sitting down. Choose a board that meets the weight capacity of you and your gear. Don't get a surfing paddleboard and expect to fish off of it. Fishing boards are longer and wider for more stability and better tracking.

Paddleboard fishing is a unique way to catch fish. I also have a skiff, but SUP fishing is more fun. I can fish destinations I'd never reach in the boat. Moving at a slower pace, open to the world, I can enjoy the scenery. Fighting a fish is unreal. When I hook up, the board moves towards the fish and then the drag takes over. Trying to balance and fight the fish is a unique challenge.

BOARD. NEVER BORED.
PHOTO: BRI ANDRASSY





KEN HOEVE

YETI COOLERS, SURFTECH USA | COLORADO
BROWN AND RAINBOW TROUT

I CAN'T SAY I WAS THE FIRST, BUT MORE PEOPLE ARE SEEING THE POSSIBILITIES WITH SUP FISHING THE RIVER.

I grew up surfing in Florida and then became a professional whitewater kayaker. The first time I saw an inflatable SUP, a lightbulb went off. After my experience with river rafts, I knew I could bounce the board down the river. I worked with Surftec to develop a big, wide board for the river. Then it dawned on me the board would be perfect for fishing. I can't say I was the first, but more people are seeing the possibilities with SUP fishing the river. I can launch and recover on sections of the river not accessible to a kayak. There's one place where I only have to paddle 25 yards to hit a section of river no one fishes. I drift through private land and the guy doesn't say anything, he just looks at me and grimaces.

I keep rigging to a minimum, like a 4-weight fly rod with floating line and six feet of 80-pound fluorocarbon. Flies include caddis in spring and summer, and green and black streamers in fall and winter or low sections of the river. Choose flies that match local forage. Lift up rocks and observe local baitfish, then use a little luck.

Look for a big, wide inflatable board to bounce through the rocks and down rapids. The ideal board

is 11 feet, six inches long and 36 inches wide and six inches thick. Anything longer is difficult to move through the rapids and a shorter board is a real pig. I don't have to take on serious whitewater because I can target areas between the rapids.

I take a beater rod because I don't need the high-dollar rod to fish the river. To turn the board, I can sweep the rod in the water.

Choose a drop-stitched inflatable. I run into rocks and over gravel and the board hardly shows signs of wear.

I bungee a Yeti Flip cooler to the deck. It's waterproof and holds my gear. If it goes in the water, it floats and my gear stays dry. A long-handled net makes it easier to land the fish without kneeling down.

My life vest is my most important piece of gear. River fishing requires a reliable Type V PFD. An inflatable or hybrid won't cut it. Expect to swim when river fishing from a SUP.

When I'm drifting through shallow water, where I know there is no danger my foot could get entangled, I'll sit sideways on the board and crabwalk while casting.