



GULF WATER KAYAK FISHING

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BTB Tip #1: Tackle

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I'm often asked what is the best rod and reel to use for fishing BTB for bull reds and sharks. There are basically two considerations (1) the length of the yak you have and (2) the size of the fish you're catching.

One of the most important aspects of fighting a big fish from the yak is your ability to clear the rod tip around the bow or stern of the yak. If you can't get the tip around the bow of the boat, you are asking for trouble.

If the yak you're driving is on the long side, 14' or better, or the seat is set back a long ways from the bow of the boat, as in a Malibu 2 then you should consider using a rod of at least 7'. On the other hand if you're using a yak of less than 14' you can get away with a 6'6"-7' rod.

Fishing BTB you need a rod and reel that will take you to the fish quickly and get it released in the best possible condition. Note I said, take you to the fish. When you first hook a big fish from the yak, you will get towed around and the fish MAY take a bunch of line off the reel. Big sharks are more likely to really run off a bunch of line. But big reds are different. The biggest redfish I've ever caught only took maybe 70 yards of line off the reel. That's it. A really mad bull red could snatch 100 yards if it wanted to. But they never do because they're always changing directions.

In most cases, after the first run you are pulling yourself to the fish. Only when you get a fish straight up and down are you pulling the fish to you. In most cases out of the yak, you're fighting a big fish "hand to hand" meaning that the fish is almost always very close to the boat.



Because of this, I don't want a wimpy rod that won't control the fish when it is near the boat. Also, since the fish is almost always green, you need a rod that does have enough cushion to absorb sudden moves under or around the yak.

If your rod is too stiff you can get flipped. It has happened before. I like a medium/heavy action rod Okuma and Shimano make very good rods for BTB duty. They're not too expensive either, which is a good thing because there is the very real possibility of losing equipment.

Now if you have a good way to stow your rods so that you won't lose them, you may also want to look at other rods such as Calstar or Seeker, which are more expensive, but well worth it.

If you're just getting started, nothing beats the old tried and true Ugly Stick. They make two models that work really well for BTB duty, a black and yellow MH action rod that is 6'6" (rated for 20-40lb) and a 7 footer that is in the Tiger Stick series rated about the same.

Whatever rod you buy, it should have a soft tip and a good backbone.

Reels need not be expensive or complicated. But they should be fairly fast. You'd be surprised at how fast a big blacktip shark can get behind you with a 100 yard belly in your line.

I like fishing either 25lb mono or 50lb power pro. If you're starting out, fish only with mono. There are some serious safety considerations when fishing power pro or any braided line.

I like 25lb mono. Some guys like 30lb. But I'm big on 25lb because it has a smaller diameter than 30, is more supple (easier to cast), and usually breaks at about 27-29lbs, depending on line manufacturer. I've found that off-size line can work really well because it seems that the manufacturers don't seem to care as much about how high it breaks since there are no line-class records for it. I've even fished 17lb Berkley Big Game very effectively because I know it breaks at about 22lbs (certified by IGFA).

As far as reels go, I like the Okuma CT 20 & 25, Diawa Sealine SHV30, Penn 535, Shimano Charter Special and any of the Newells in the 200 series. They're all small with good line capacities and fast retrieves. The Okumas are probably the best buy since they are fairly inexpensive and built like tanks!

BTB Tip #2: baits and leaders

I'm going to start with bait. The reason is the size of the bait should generally determine the size of the hooks you will need. For BTB fishing there are basically a couple rules of thumb.

1. Use whatever bait occurs naturally in the surf at the time you are fishing.

Here's what I like, in the order I like them:

- A. Skipjacks - very oily, bull reds and sharks love em!
- B. Mullet - easy to come by most of the year. Normally the first bait I use. a mullet head is usually my first bait in the water. It is very hardy, lasts a long time and is difficult for gafftops to eat. Large chunks of mullet work very well, but don't last as long and tend to wash out if they soak for a long time.
- C. Whiting & Croaker - I lump these two baits together as my third favorite bait. They can usually be caught easily in the surf or in the same area you are fishing.



- D. Sand Trout - these are just as effective as Whiting and Croaker, but they don't come as easily.
- E. Pinfish - A live pinfish is almost a guaranteed bite. The problem is that they are not easy to keep alive when you're fishing BTB, since most kayakers don't have a livewell.
- F. Crabs - a half a crab fished October through March is deadly on bull reds. In fact it is a "go-to" bait. The problem is that you won't catch many sharks on them. The good thing is that you also won't catch any gafftops on them either. Most of your bites on crabs will be either a redfish or a black drum.

2. From March through October - bigger is better! -

Large and I do mean large quantities of gafftops and little sharpnose sharks can be a royal pain in the butt during these months. The bigger the bait the better! Generally speaking, a bait the size of a large mullet head or a softball will be enough to keep the gafftops off. They'll pick it up and run with it. But

they have a really tough time eating it. On that note, they'll drive you nuts because the bite can be really aggressive. And you'll think you have a bite from a bull red or a shark. But 9 times out of ten you'll merely pull the bait away from them.

Now if you fish smaller baits, you'll get covered up by these pests.

A really big bait demands the use of a really big hook. I use 15/0-18/0 circle hooks with 16/0 being the preferred size. Don't be afraid to use big baits and big hooks. You'll be surprised at how big a bait a bull red will eat.

If you're fishing 20lb and smaller baits, you can get away with a smaller circle hook such as an 11/0 - 14/0 hook. But I would try to stay away from this especially from March through October. The catfish will just tear you up.

The Jolly Roger Cocktail

If you've managed to use up all your big baits and you're left with smaller croakers, whiting or whatever, you have the perfect ingredients for a "Jolly Roger Cocktail." Just take a couple baits and put them on one hook and fire it out. That's it! You'd be surprised how well this works!

Leaders

Leaders need not be complicated. But there are some important considerations when building your leaders. If you're out for bull reds you can simply splice a piece of 80lb mono to your main line, tie on a hook and be done with it. But you'll lose most of your sharks you hook.

I use a modified version of a surf leader. Basically I crimp a black ball bearing swivel to a piece of 150-200lb mono. Then I crimp a 100lb-150lb black ball bearing snap swivel to the other end. This piece is normally about 3.5 feet long, at most. Then I'll crimp a loop or a welded ring eye in another 2' piece of 200lb mono or 135lb coated wire. Then I crimp the hook on to the end.

What you end up with is a leader extension and a short piece that you can replace after each fish. All you need is a few of these "shorties" to take out with you. Those who fish the Beyond the Breakers High Island event on Sept 24 will receive a leader pack that is rigged like that.

The reason for the very heavy mono is so that sharks won't rub through them if they wrap up in the leader or on the jumps. And you can control your fish much easier when they are boat-side.

BTB Tip#3: Accessories



This is a fairly short segment because there are few accessories you really need for this type of fishing. When we gear up for the bays and lakes, you'll see kayaks loaded to the gills with rods, reels, bait-wells and all kinds of accessories. If you fish BTB loaded with equipment, sooner or later you will lose a lot of money when you dump.

Note: I did not say if you dump. I said when you dump. The most experienced surf kayak fishermen won't often tell you that they've probably dumped coming back in more times than they care to remember. I've forgotten how many times I've gone over. TJ claims he's been over 200 times! And this is not because we don't know how to paddle through the surf zone. It's because we've done it so many times that the odds are we will dump. And on rare, but repeated occasions, we've gone out in conditions that wise men wouldn't.

People don't know this much but Babe Ruth once held one of the highest percentages of strike outs in MLB. But that's because he swung on the ball more times than most other guys. You see where I'm going here?

So you can expect to get dumped when fishing BTB. **As a result the first rule of accessories fishing this style is to take only what you need! And take only what you can afford to lose.**

This is why I encourage most people to buy inexpensive, but quality equipment. And take only what you need. So here's what you need:

1. An anchor with a minimum of 30' of anchor rope. 50' is better. The anchor must have a very bright and visible anchor ball that is tethered to the line. When going back to your ball from up to a mile away, you must be able to see it! Don't use little Styrofoam floats. White or blue colors are horrible. I use a small inflatable fender that is bright orange. You can pick one up at any marine supply store. Your anchor should be a little heavier than the one you use in the bay. Use a 3-5lb anchor. Either a claw or bruce style anchor will work. Do not buy a small danforth. You'll never get it out of the mud. I like to use a short length of chain in between my anchor rope and my anchor. It serves to help dig the anchor in.

2. Your anchor must have a quick release clip. You do not want to be fumbling with a knot as a big fish is tearing line off your reel. You need to be able to unclip your anchor from your boat and throw the whole thing overboard. This will give you room to fight the fish without the worry of getting hung up on the anchor (in most cases). Also, you may want to consider using a 2-3 foot section of bungee cord in between your anchor ball and your clip. This will absorb the wave action and make your day on the water alot more comfortable.

3. Coolers - You need a small cooler for cut bait and one for drinks

4. Tackle box or bag - I use a zip lock bag full of rigged leaders and extensions. That's it. I don't like to bring a bunch of tackle out with me. I'll sometimes carry a few extra lures, bait rigs and fish bites with me too. I keep these in an O hatch or in my seat back. No big tackle boxes. Some guys use one or two Plano tackle trays. That works too.

5. Two pairs of pliers - I've forgotten how many pairs of pliers I've lost trying to unhook sharks. Always have a back-up.

6. One bait knife.

Another thing I see a lot of is people rigging their kayaks with all kinds of bungee cords to tie things down. That is a disaster waiting to happen. The use of long cords or ropes is a mistake. When you get dumped, you can get hung up in them. If you're going to tie something down, use a very short bungee cord.

Keep it simple. If you can keep something in a hatch, do it. Hope this helps.

BTB Tip #4: Fishing & Fish Fighting Techniques



So now you're loaded up. You've got your rods and reels. Your leaders are rigged. You've got your yak and accessories and you're ready to hit the surf.

Once you get out through the surf zone (a topic that has been covered extensively on this site) you need to start looking. I've caught bull reds in the first gut all the way out to a couple of miles. So they can be anywhere.

What to look for:

As we paddle out, we're looking for bait, birds diving, slicks, mud lines, surface feeding activity, rips, basically anything that will look like something.

I especially like mudlines. Mudlines are redfish highways. They are streaks of mud that you can easily see from the beach. But if it is flat calm, it's a little harder to see on the water. But you can

usually see them one way or another. Bull reds will congregate in and on the edges of these mudlines. And that's where you want to be.

Often we paddle out and there is very little sign of anything. So in that case, I'm looking for even the slightest indication of presence of bait. On days like this just one little flip of a pogy will make me anchor right there. And when you don't even have that, we'll look at water color and distance from the beach.

If it looks totally barren we'll normally go out 400-600 yards and start there.

Anchoring

Deploy your anchor and clip it so that you are facing downwind or down-current. Make sure your anchor clip is close to you so that you can easily reach it. I'll leave the beach with my anchor attached to the eye I want it on. Make sure

there is no anchor rope or ball in the kayak. Everything must be overboard.

Make sure your anchor is holding too. You can normally tell if you are stuck if you see current flowing from the bow of the boat or you are swinging on the anchor. If neither is happening, take a bearing on the beach. If the bearing moves, you're drifting. Sometimes you can also reach down and feel the anchor dragging.

Deploying your bait.

I like to cut up a couple of baits that I intend to use first before leaving the beach. I lay a piece of plastic or silver foil over the top of my ice so my baits don't come in direct contact with the ice and wash out later.

If I have skipjack, that's the first bait I use. If not a mullet head is my first bait I put down.

I normally don't use weights since the current at High Island is not normally very strong. But you may need weight in other places.

You don't need to sling baits very far. Just a simple lob cast 30 or 50 feet away will get the job done.

Let the bait hit the bottom.

Leave the reel in free-spool

Engage the clicker

Set it in the rod holder (if you have one).

If you don't have a rod holder you can hold the rod and leave the clicker off but with the reel in free-spool. Make sure there is a little slack in the line to remain in contact with the bait but not so tight that you're pulling it around as you swing on the anchor.

Drag Setting

I keep my drags fairly tight. Remember you're pulling a big hook out of a big bait and setting it into the jaw of a big fish. If I'm fishing 25lb line I'll often set my drags initially at 10 lbs. Sometimes, even more. That's a lot of drag! You don't want a loose drag here.

The Bite!

Redfish and sharks both will normally take a bait in one of two ways. They'll take it and move away from you - sometimes really fast, and other times slower. Or they'll eat a bait and come right at you or in your general direction! When the latter happens - Always watch your line. You'll notice it will start swimming to one side or get really slack.

When the fish is coming at you, immediately engage the reel, turn the clicker off and wind like hell to catch up to the fish. You'll miss several fish when this happens.

When a fish eats and is going away from you, disengage the clicker and let him eat it a little. Remember, that is a big bait. I usually give a slow 5-10 count depending on the size of the bait.

Then lock up and wind. Point the rod right at the fish and just wind. Do not set the hook with the rod! Keep winding until the fish is taking line!

The Fight

Once the fish is taking line you can then bend the rod.

Reach back and unclip the anchor once you are sure you've hooked a good one and the fish is taking line. By the way, don't be surprised if you wind a redfish right to the boat! I've done it many times while setting the hook. These are fish that don't know they're hooked and they just keep coming at you until they see the boat and then all hell breaks loose within arm's reach of the freshly hooked 40lb bull red!

Bull reds will run away and change angles and direction a lot. You may get a big screaming run out of them or you may just get a steady slow run away. But big sharks are a different thing.



Big blacktips and spinners will scream line off the spool. Watch the angle of the line. If it starts coming up you'll get a few jumps. And they almost always head straight offshore, especially the big ones! This is as exciting as it gets BTB fishing!

Once you release your clip, if you've hooked a big mad fish, you'll shoot away from your anchor ball like you were shot out of a cannon! You'll be surprised (and a little humbled) at how fast you'll move. I caught a very big blacktip shark, estimated at around 180lbs that pulled me so fast there was a wake behind the boat! Certainly faster than I could paddle! This is the Texas Sleigh Ride at its finest!

If you've set your drag properly the fish should still be able to pull line off the reel as it is pulling your yak! If not, you can back off on the drag just a little at this point. The hook is set, so you don't need quite as much pressure. But don't back off too far.

Once the fish has stopped running, you'll start pumping and winding. Keep the rod tip pointed at the bow. This will keep you facing the fish. You'll also notice that you are still moving ahead. At this point you are pulling yourself to the fish.

After a short while, you'll get pretty close. Now you have to be careful. I'd say that about 80% of the fight is within 25' of the boat, and many times your leader is within mere feet of the rod tip. This is hand to hand combat. Watch the fish. IF his head is down and the motor is still going, anything can and will happen.

Back off on the drag just a little more here. You don't want a real tight drag when a big green fish is next to the boat. Bull reds will often dive under the yak. I've even had them come up and thump the bottom of the boat trying to rub the hook off! Sharks will make sudden and violent bursts away from the yak. Be ready. Often fish will go around the back of the yak. Follow the fish with the rod tip when that happens.

The most dangerous thing that can happen when a big fish is in close is that you have the rod at a 90 degree angle to the yak and the fish goes down or under the yak. If your rod is too stiff or your drag too tight (or both) you can get flipped! Always try to keep the fish in front of you away from the center of gravity. Drive that tip forward and pull yourself around.

The End Game.

Bull reds will lay over when they're done. Sharks will hang straight up and down. If neither is happening, that fish isn't done yet. Make sure they are played out.

With reds you can reach out, grab the leader and swing the fish aboard. Or you can try and tail a big red. If you have a Boga, you can use it. But be careful. If you drop it, it's gone. I've also used lip gaffs here too.

Sharks are different. Don't screw around with them. Get as close to them as you can and cut the leader and let them go. If you are adept at handling sharks, then do so with great care. My rule of thumb is if I can't hold the shark behind the gills with one hand, I don't screw with it.

Make sure your redfish are revived well enough to swim away. 90% of the fish we catch with circle hooks are hooked in the corner or bottom of the jaw. On occasion they are hooked deeper; but, rarely in the gills. You can usually get your hook out of a redfish.

Be careful. If you have to go into a redfish's mouth, they will tear up your hand with their sandpaper like mouths. I once caught 27 bull redfish in the course of two days and my hands would have made a plastic surgeon giddy! Some guys use a glove. It's not a bad idea.

Well now you're ready to get back on your anchor ball and go catch another one. Make sure you have an idea of where you were. A handheld GPS with your anchor spot saved as a waypoint can really help you out. Don't be surprised if you are 500 yards or more away from the anchor when you release your redfish. You could be up to a mile away on a big shark, tarpon, kingfish or ling.

BTB Tip #5: Kayaks

I'm often asked which brand or style of kayak is very good for fishing the surf and BTB. The real answer is that every kayak will work. However some are most definitely better than others. Before I get into brands there are some important features that you need in a good BTB kayak.

Features

1. **Rocker** - Of all the features I'd say that the rocker, which is basically the curve of the bottom of the boat from bow to stern is the most important feature in a surf kayak. Generally speaking, the more rocker, the better the boat will turn and lift on and over a wave.
2. **Drainage** - Even on a calm day you will take water over the bow on small waves. A good surf yak drains easily and quickly. I like a boat with large and numerous scupper drains. Although it is not necessary, I also like a boat that has scuppers in the seat.
3. **Stability** - Wider is better. When you are on the anchor, you need stability. When you are landing a big fish or you've got a big one boat side, you need to be confident and know the limitations of your boat's stability. Having said that, most guys eventually adapt fairly well to their specific kayak. So, to some degree, "stability" is relatively subjective.
4. **Storage** - This is not as important on a BTB yak as it is on a bay or lake boat. You carry very little equipment with you. However, I really like a boat that can store rods below deck. This is a personal thing for me. But I find it to be important. If you fish BTB style fishing often, it's really nice to have since you stand a very good chance at going over or getting dumped. Let's just say I've learned my lessons the hard way!
5. **Length** - Length is a consideration depending on where you fish. At High Island and other places in the northern part of Texas, where the surf stacks up high and close together, and breaks straight down over a shallow sand bar, we really like shorter (13' and under) kayaks. The shorter boats turn really well on a wave, but more importantly are not as prone to "telephone poling" which is where the water recedes from beneath you as you are on a wave and the yak noses down and plants itself in the sand! I'm not saying that this can't happen in a shorter kayak. But the longer yaks are more susceptible to it.

In other places where the waves are much further apart, longer kayaks work well. If you're at Matagorda or points south, the longer yaks are just fine. However, in the hands of an experienced paddler, the longer yaks will work almost anywhere. But it does take more skill.

You also can't talk about length without talking about skill. But for the sake of brevity, and because this subject has been talked to death, I'll refrain from getting into it here.

Which Kayak Brand & Model Is Best?

As I said, almost any kayak will work for surf fishing. However, there are some considerations before going out and buying any yak. Consider how often you fish the surf. If you only fish a few days a year and on days with only ice cream conditions, then you can buy whatever you want. However, if you fish regularly, in conditions that are good as well as "challenging," then there are some considerations as to brand and type of yak. Please keep the following recommendations next to a grain of salt. If you are highly skilled at navigating through the surf, you can probably get away with almost any yak. However, if you're not, consider the following list a guideline, instead of a recommendation. And whatever you do, try before you buy.

Cobra Kayaks < [Link](#)

1. **Cobra Fish-n-Dive** - at 12'6" and 36" wide, this boat is slow and heavy. But that works in your favor because it doesn't get pushed around too easily by waves. It has large and numerous scuppers,



including two in the seat. It has cavernous storage and a giant tank-well. You can put your rods below deck in the near-watertight hatches. This boat punches up and over waves with ease. But coming back in is very hard to turn, so make sure you line up on the waves correctly. Thigh straps might help you in this boat, but are not completely necessary. The XF package offered by Cobra makes this boat an increasingly popular boat on the Texas beaches.

2. Cobra Navigator - 12'6" and 31" wide, the Navigator is a favorite among BTB fishermen because of its rough water handling. It does not have the storage below decks that the FnD has. But there is a large forward hatch where you can store rods. Stability is decent. And it has a very good tank-well. The XF version makes this a good BTB boat.

3. Cobra Marauder - At 14' and 31" wide this is a big, stable BTB boat. I would suggest this boat for a somewhat more advanced surf paddler, since the length can represent some issues, depending on where you fish. This is probably the driest 14 footer on the market. It has large and numerous scuppers, including two in the seat and outstanding storage.

4. Cobra Explorer - This boat is 11'6" and 31" wide. This is a good boat for smaller paddlers. It does lack storage and is somewhat tipsy. However, its price point makes it very appealing. I would rate the Explorer as a good starter BTB yak.

Note: All Cobra Kayaks have giant rockers and nearly water-tight hatches.

Malibu Kayaks < Link

1. Malibu X-Factor - Take a Cobra Fish-n-Dive and put it on steroids and you've got a Malibu X-Factor. This boat is just over 14' long and 34" wide. It has a giant rocker and cavernous storage, including an ingenious design for a rear hatch in the tank-well, behind the seat, where you can easily access stored rods below decks. The X-Factor is long. But it has enormous buoyancy. This is one of the longer yaks I wouldn't be too concerned with planting the bow. In my opinion the only drawbacks to this boat as a surf boat is that it does not have molded footrests. You brace on the foot-peddles of the rudder. Over time, or with enough pressure, you can warp or break them. The other issue is that you need at least a 7' rod to fish with from this boat. The distance from the seat to the bow of the boat is somewhat long. But it's definitely manageable.



2. Malibu Pro-Explorer - I don't know why we don't see more of this boat in the surf. It has a big rocker and very good tank-well. It also has good drainage. This is definitely a boat to look at and try out for BTB fishing.

3. Malibu Mini-X - as of this writing, this boat hasn't hit the market yet. But it promises to be one of the hottest little BTB yaks to come along in years. It has a giant rocker, nice tank-well for a 9 footer and at 31" wide is very stable. It will turn on a wave easily. The only drawback to this boat is the lack of below deck storage. I can't wait for this boat to come out!

Ocean Kayak < Link

1. Ocean Kayak Drifter - At 13' and 34" this is a big slow boat. It has a good rocker and decent drains. We see a lot of these boats out past the breakers. They make pretty good surf boats.

2. Ocean Kayak Scrambler XT - This is one of the best BTB boats ever built. It is 12'6" and 29" wide. It tracks well, has a good tank-well, fast drains and turns well on a wave. It also has a very good rocker. This is one of the most popular BTB kayaks. Its main drawback is storage. It lacks below-deck storage.

3. Ocean Kayak Frenzy - This is currently one of the most popular small yak BTB boats around. It is easy to transport, has a big rocker, is fairly stable and can carry some cargo. It doesn't have a tremendous amount of fishing space however. It is only 9' long. The tank-well is open-ended.



So anything that goes in there has to be strapped down. The Frenzy is one of the mainstays of BTB fishing. You'll rarely see a day on the beach without seeing at least one Frenzy.

4. Ocean Kayak Scupper Pro TW - at slightly over 14' long and 28" wide. The SPTW can only distinguish itself as a surf suitable yak because of the good rocker it has. This is a good calm water boat. But I have seen experienced paddlers take this boat to the surf on rough days. It is a rocket ship of a kayak for sure. But this is one of those long boats to be careful of when returning through the surf facing the beach. Personally, I would come in backwards in this boat.

Note: The main drawback to Ocean Kayaks in my opinion is the thickness of the plastic. Hold up a core of a Malibu or Cobra with an Ocean Kayak and you'll notice a difference

Wilderness Systems < Link

1. Wilderness Systems "The Ride" - The Ride is a popular kayak for bigger guys. It has a good rocker and excellent stability. It is a slow boat, like most of the boats mentioned above. We see quite a few of these boats beyond the breakers.

2. Tarpon 140 & 160i - These are better bay boats than they are surf boats. However, in the hands of experienced paddlers, they can find their way offshore. We see more T140's than 160i's in the surf. Both boats however, lack below deck storage. Their hatches are not as tight as Malibu or Cobras, as they utilize the Tupperware style hatch. However, throw a pair of thigh straps and a good wide blade on these yaks and you'll shoot through the surf. They are very fast boats, which makes launching through the surf easier once you're on and going. But that length in the 160i is something to consider. While I'm not a fan of returning through the surf backwards, it is a technique that should be considered when using the 160i. These boats don't have big rockers either, so they will plow a little more. If you like to fish the calm days offshore, and run rig trips, these boats should be considered.



3. Tarpon 100 - A great boat for women and kids. It has a nice rocker and excellent drainage. This will probably be my own kid's first kayak.

Mainstream Kayaks < Link

1. Mainstream Kingfish - If you don't want to spend a pile of money on a yak and go fishing BTB go buy yourself a Mainstream Kingfish. This boat is almost 13' long and 31" wide. It has a good rocker and decent drains. It's a good starter kayak. But we see a lot of them on the beaches. Their main drawback is the hatches. They do tend to leak. So be prepared to pour some water out of the boat once on the beach. But it's not that big of a problem at all.

2. Mainstream Jazz - This boat is somewhat hard to come by. It has very little fishing room. It has no storage below decks. It has a small tank-well. But it has a very good rocker. A lot of surf fishermen like this boat for yakking baits out from the beach. But you could fish it. I only mention it here because it is very good in short choppy waves.

These are just a few of the models you should look at. I've laid out what I believe are important features to look for in a good BTB boat. Other manufacturers make good surf suitable boats. Other notable yaks to look at include the Heritage Redfish and Marqueasa and the Hobie Outback. So don't jump me because I haven't mentioned your favorite.

If I were to nail down my top 3 picks they would include:

1. Cobra Fish-n-Dive
2. Ocean Kayak Scrambler XT
3. Malibu X Factor