

SaltWater

S P O R T S M A N

Norwalk's Bruiser Blues

For fast-paced action with bluefish up to 20 pounds, grab some jigs and head for the western end of Long Island Sound.

George Poveromo

Fall can be a wild time in western Long Island Sound. When schools of peanut bunker amass in the rips on their southward migration, jigging for striped bass and medium-sized bluefish can be sensational. That is, until the monster bluefish take over. When that happens, like it did on my most recent journey to Norwalk, Connecticut, the action can go off the charts.



The author shipped his 28-foot Mako up from Florida to sample - and film - the great bluefishing off Norwalk, Connecticut.

I was in Norwalk last November, shooting an episode for my ESPN2 television series. Having visited the area before, I knew how good the fishing could get when water temperatures in the Sound dipped below 60 degrees. This trip proved even more special, however, as I had the luxury of fishing aboard my own Mako 282, *MARC VI*, which had been shipped from Florida to The Bait Shop, the local Mako dealership in nearby Rowayton. Equipped with a state-of-the-art Lowrance electronics package, including a highly detailed Navionics electronic chart of the Sound, the *MARC VI* proved to be a perfect platform for jigging the rips and drop-offs for huge blues. However, my biggest asset was Rick Mola, owner of Fisherman's World Tackle Center in East Norwalk.

Few people know the waters off Norwalk like Mola. His wealth of knowledge comes from working as a mate aboard his father's charter boat and at the family tackle shop since he was very young. In fact, he and his dad pioneered many of the tactics now being used in the western portion of the Sound. A noted authority on catching trophy stripers, Mola is equally skilled at tautog, fluke and canyon fishing. On this trip, he and I teamed up to fish diamond jigs for the monster bluefish that had been on a tear in the Sound.

Bluefishing off Norwalk heats up in mid-May, with the best action taking place in the middle of the Sound. As surface temperatures warm, the fish linger in the upper 20 feet of the water column, where they can be caught on topwater plugs and by trolling.



Tackle-shop owner Ricky Mola jigged up this hefty blue from a deep reef in Long Island Sound on 12-pound line.