

The Power Pole hydraulic shallow-water anchor changed my fishing life in a most pleasant way. All wade-first anglers have experienced the problem created by the need to retrieve an anchored boat at the end of each session.

Many partners take turns going back for the boat. Fishing guides like me have no one with whom to share the duty. I remember making many tiring treks through mud and waves, almost always against the wind. Needless to say, it's much easier to shuffle slowly downwind over soft bottom than to try and make better time moving upwind over the same terrain.

At least when I got back to the boat, I had to do the job of loosing the anchor and heaving it over the gunwale too! Then, along came the Power Pole, and everything changed. Now, I rarely need to make those long, dreaded hikes, nor do I have to lift a heavy hook onto the deck.

With the remote I keep hanging around my neck at all times, I can raise the Power Pole's spike from over 100 yards away, allowing the boat to drift with the wind toward me. This saves fishing time. Instead of doing the "Jesus walk", with arms spread wide, draped over the rod held across my neck like a crucifix, I keep on fishing while the boat is on the way, sometimes finding the mother lode.

When this happens, I just hit the other button on the remote to secure the boat again and call my customers over to where I'm standing. For me, this is the single most important reason I consider the Power Pole a necessary tool in the twenty-first century; it helps me catch more fish.

It also saves me time and energy. The magnitude of all these advantages can be enhanced through the intelligent use of this sturdy and dependable tool.

First and foremost, I believe in setting up the unit so its remote control will work over the longest range possible. Doing so means not tucking the control box on the boat behind too much solid stuff, which can interfere with the remote's signal and reduce its range.

It also means extending the antennae (which is simply a wire) so it hangs freely, instead of coiling it up neatly and/or tying it up. I've met lots of people who complained about the short range of their Power Pole remote. Once we loosen the wire, the range always increases.

I know the people at Power Pole don't recommend using their product the way I do. And I don't really care what they say! I could not justify the price of such a tool if it didn't save me so much time and effort, and consequently allowed me to fish more productively.

I understand why the manufacturers of the thing want to limit their liability. Too often, in our litigious culture, people sue corporations for inappropriate reasons. Some guy lets the boat get away from him, swims after it and drowns. His family members then decide to sue Power Pole for allowing such a terrible thing to happen.

I don't believe in such nonsense. If I screw up and let the boat get away from me while the spike is up, I will take responsibility for my mistake. I would never sue Smith and Wesson if I shot myself in the foot with a pistol they made.

It's necessary to use caution and good judgment when lifting the spike to let the boat drift over. Always consider the layout of the bottom and watch for the

effects of wind and tide. The boat doesn't always drift straight downwind!

Thinking about the best place to start the wade, given the lay of the land and the direction of the wind, is wise too. Staying as close as possible to a line straight downwind of the boat while wading is another way to prevent disasters, either after the spike is intentionally lifted, or when it comes loose on its own.

From time to time, the spike will lose its ability to hold the boat in place. This happens most often when the bottom is either super soft or hard and sandy. Using a Power Pole in shell or rocks is a bad idea to start with. Setting one firmly in hard sand or soft mud can be aided by standing at the back of the boat and pressing down on the spike with the motor running in the downward direction.

Adding some elbow grease to the motor's effort sets the spike a little deeper. When winds are strong and the set seems tenuous, staying downwind of the boat and keeping watch over it is also advised. Setting the boat in soft or hard bottom close to a drop-off into a deep open basin when the wind direction will blow it off the edge in seconds is stupid.

Running around all over the place without a conventional anchor on board is too. All captains venturing onto the coastal bays should have a ready anchor on board, complete with adequate rope and a length of chain. A Power Pole will not work if the electrical system on the boat fails. It can be rendered useless in other ways too.

The most common failure I've witnessed on Power Poles is caused when the bottom bolt in the pivoting arm breaks. This bolt takes a lot of abuse; it's regularly placed under heavy torque. I carry a back up bolt, along with a nut and washers for it too. And I regularly inspect the bolts on the unit, tightening and/or replacing them as needed.

I've heard of people whose spikes have broken too. I'm continually amazed at the strength of the spikes and of the overall units, but they can break. If and when a Power Pole becomes useless, a captain will need some other way to stop and steady the boat in emergencies.

Some boats fill up with water and sink when strong winds send waves crashing into and over their transoms. Captains should be well aware if their boats fit this description and should avoid using a Power Pole in a situation which could result in their hulls winding up on the bottom.

Careful captains with ample amounts of common sense can use the Power Pole to make their lives and jobs easier. I'd never buy a boat today without equipping it with a hydraulic shallow-water anchor. The Power Pole is a tool that's simply too cool to fish without.