

The news of late has been bad, especially out of Pittsburgh where Jewish worshippers were mercilessly gunned down by a crazed and hateful man. Apparently, sectarian hatred and violence, an evil that afflicts so many parts of the world, has arrived in America. Since many are addressing this tragedy I'll take a pass for now. Besides, the subject is too big and sad for three ^{short} minutes; But, on Monday a local tragedy occurred that ~~was not malicious and~~ could have been prevented. A young man fishing on the north jetty with some friends was swept by a wave ~~to his death; it is this situation to which I want to speak, because I know something about the dangers of the north jetty.~~ If you fish or know someone who fishes on the ocean please listen. This information could be life saving.

I spend about 4-5 days a week at or around the jetties, ~~and since I surf on one side or the other, know a little about the waves.~~ ^{sight seers}
First off: I have seen fishermen ^{out there} standing on the jetty, ~~countless~~ times. Most of them make it back safely. But I've also seen a many people hurt on the jetties: fishermen and sight seers—and many close calls—^{occasional photographers,}
My advice: don't ~~fish~~ on the north or south jetty; ^{or} if you must, fish on the bay side not the ocean side. But, I know fishermen are as dedicated as surfers, and it's not realistic to think that no one is ever going to throw a line in the water from a jetty, ~~regardless of what I say!~~ ... So here is what you need to know if you insist on fishing from the ^{coast} jetties!

Monday was a particularly bad day to fish on any jetty because the waves were really big. ~~Since surfers often walk out the jetty to jump into the water and catch a wave, it's not unusual for us to be hit by a wave, that surprises. I've been knocked around by waves, swept off the jetty several times...~~ Surfers know how dangerous ~~the jetties and~~ waves can be, so we watch the buoy reports carefully—almost religiously. Fishermen and others who trek near the seashore should do likewise. You can google NOAA: that is N-O-A-A for national Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The buoy of relevance for the north and south jetties is Eel River Buoy: buoy ^{station} #46022.

Many have said that a rogue wave, or sneaker wave caught this unfortunate HSU student by surprise. That is partly true: often there will be one or more waves that are larger than most that day. But here is how waves work. They come in sets. Big set waves are more likely to occur if there is a large swell and more importantly, if there is a long *interval* between waves. So, generally, the first number on the surf report is the ^{swell} height. That is very important. Anything over 5 feet in height, I would not go near the jetty to fish or sight see anywhere close to breaking waves. But more important is the second number. The second number ^{is} the swell interval: and the longer the interval the bigger the waves. It is not unusual for waves around here to have a 12, 14, 16 even a 20 second interval. The longer interval means two things: first, bigger waves, and secondly, longer times *between* the sets of big waves. That is why simply making a visual check can be terribly dangerous and misleading. I have seen days where it can be up to 20 even 30 minutes between big sets. So, if you insist on walking or fishing from jetties around here, check the NOAA buoys; or if you don't have a computer call the Coast Guard; I'm sure they would be glad to advise you on how to be safe.

This has been Dan Price for Community Comment