



BONANZA

Official newsletter of the Casco Bay Bluefin Bonanza

bluefinbonanza.org

Spring, 2025

Another Season is Upon Us

The shrink wrap is coming off and folks are looking forward to another season on the water. Meanwhile, we've already been very busy planning and preparing for this year's Bluefin Bonanza.

As usual, we'll be bringing you a full week of fun, beginning with our Youth Day and Captain's Meeting on Saturday, July 26. If you have kids, you'll definitely want to bring them to this free event. And please spread the word to friends and family; the more, the merrier.

At present, NOAA Fisheries is NOT planning to make Sunday an RFD. If that remains the case, we will have 4 fishing days this year: Sunday, Monday, Wednesday and Thursday. That is always subject to change so stay tuned to our social media outlets.

We'll wrap things up on Friday, August 1 with our annual Downeast lobster bake, auctions, raffles and awards. This event is also open to the public so bring friends and family. Tickets will be sold on a first-come, first-served basis until we run out.



2025 Registration

Registration will remain open until we meet our 80-boat maximum. However, the sooner you register the better so we can plan. After June 15 we cannot guarantee you will receive shirts and hats. You can register on our website or through our App.

Online Store

Speaking of stores, our online store stocked with great Bluefin Bonanza apparel is always open. Thanks to our fantastic sponsors at W.S. Emerson and Miller's Workshop, we continue to expand our line of performance fishing and lifestyle apparel, including some cool new stuff from Carhartt. Check out the latest items and order early if you want them in time for Christmas.

<https://cascobonanza.itemorder.com/>



SEARCHING FOR INFO?

Be sure to visit our website at www.bluefinbonanza.org and join our Facebook and Instagram pages to stay up to date and informed. You can always contact us at bluefinbonanza@gmail.com with questions.



YOUTH DAY



Cabela's

Saturday, July 26, 2025 10 - 2

Port Harbor Marine, South Portland, Maine

FISH SCIENCE!



Join scientists from the University of Maine Pelagic Fisheries Lab inspecting and dissecting sharks, tuna, sunfish and more while learning about fisheries science.



**Crab
Tournament**

With prizes for the most, the biggest and the most unusual catch.



**More
prizes!**

**Refreshments will
be available.**

GYOTAKU Fish printing



Learn about the traditional Japanese art form known as Gyotaku fish printing and print your own fish with Maine artist Nate Garrett of Big Fish Gyotaku.

All activities are free of charge and open to the public. Children must be accompanied by an adult parent or guardian.

**Free
Admission!**

CARE FOR YOUR CATCH

Before and especially during the Bluefin Bonanza, we strongly urge all anglers to take proper steps to ensure they're bringing the highest quality product to market.

Taking care of your fish will increase your income, but it can also influence the local market in general. The more quality fish that come into local markets, the higher the demand will be for them. Conversely, one bad fish, or even word of one puts a black mark on the entire market.

Sadly, there are even a few within the fishery that would like to see an end to bluefin tuna tournaments, which would mean a tragic end to this 80-plus-year tradition and all the benefits it provides to local communities.

For a full manual on Proper Handling of Bluefin Tuna at Sea, visit our website at:
www.bluefinbonanza.org

PLEASE TAKE CARE...

when handling your catch



Proper care and handling produces a better price while ensuring consumer health and safety

We all know that the Bluefin tuna market is volatile. We're trying to build a more robust domestic market but need to be mindful of food security - the public health concern. The news of just one fish that made people sick will spread quickly, and could have serious consequences on our market. We need to reduce the chances of this occurring any way we can.



What are the threats?

Tuna is often eaten raw, and improper handling can lead to outbreaks of E-coli, salmonella, staphylococcus and norovirus.

Scombrid Poisoning - Unlike many other fish, scombrids (tuna and mackerel) contain an amino acid called histadine. If the fish are not properly cared for, bacteria multiply and turn this histadine into scombrototoxin, which can cause a severe allergic reaction when it is consumed.

What you should do

- Swim the fish to reduce lactic acid and body heat;
- bleed the fish before or immediately after arrival in the cockpit;
- remove the gills and organs toward the head by removing a gill plate or the head;
- pack the fish in ice or an ice brine to begin the chilling process.

2025 SCHEDULE

Saturday, July 26 - Youth Day - 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. - Captain's Meeting - 4 - 6 p.m.

Sunday, July 27 - Fishing Begins at 12:01 a.m. and continues through Monday, July 28 1.

Scales open 8 a.m. - Noon 5 p.m. - 11 p.m.

Tuesday, July 29 - RFD - No fishing

Wednesday, July 30 - Fishing Resumes at 12:01 a.m. and continues through Thursday, August 1.

Scales open 8 a.m. - Noon 5 p.m. - 11 p.m.

Friday, August 1 - Dinner, Auction, Awards 4:00 - 8:00 p.m.

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Joining Forces

This year we will again be joining forces with 2 other tournaments, the Bailey Island Fishing Tournament and the Boothbay Harbor Tuna Challenge to bring you the Gulf of Maine Grand Slam - a unique award for anglers who participate in all 3 tournaments.

FMI: www.gulfofmainegrandslam.com



LINDSAY WITHERS MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

Thanks to donations from Ducks Unlimited, Larry Tibbetts and others, we were able to make a substantial contribution to our Lindsay Withers Memorial Scholarship. Capt. Lindsay left us too soon but she insisted on leaving a legacy that will ensure rural areas of Maine have better access to well-trained first responders. This is one of our year-round fundraising efforts and we hope you'll consider making a donation to honor Lindsay's memory and help out Maine families.

Awarded to eligible Maine Emergency Medical Services/Paramedicine trainees

ABOUT THIS SCHOLARSHIP

Upon Lindsay's passing in February, 2023, the **Casco Bay Bluefin Bonanza Lindsay Withers EMS/Paramedicine Scholarship** was established to continue her legacy of commitment to the training and education of first responders.

This scholarship is awarded to Southern Maine Community College students who:

- Are in good standing with a rural Maine Fire Department and hold the necessary prerequisites.
- Have demonstrated personal financial need.



Donate to this Scholarship

To donate to this scholarship, visit www.smccME.edu/donate

To apply for this scholarship, contact:

jgraves@smccME.edu

For More Information:

Contact the SMCC Foundation at foundation@smccME.edu or 207-741-5559

2025 Awards Banquet and Auction

Friday, August 1 4 - 8 pm Port Harbor Marine

This event is open to the public.

4 - 6 p.m. Social Hour

with refreshments from

Batson River Brewing and Distilling



Silent Auctions and Raffles



Downeast Lobster Bake

By Red Claw

Tickets \$25



Live Auction



Awards Ceremony



Plan Ahead

Future Tournament Dates

July 26 - August 1, 2025

July 25 - 31, 2026

July 24 - 30, 2027

2025 Tournament Awards

First Place - \$25,000

Second Place - \$12,500

Third Place - \$6,000

Fourth Place - \$3,000

Fifth Place - \$1,500

Cumulative weight - \$1,000

Largest Fish Daily - \$1,000

WHY WE DO IT

The Casco Bay Bluefin Bonanza is more than just a tuna tournament. As our motto - Community, Conservation, Education - suggests, we're continually seeking ways to improve...

Foundation for Maine's Community Colleges - Through our endowment and annual awards, we provide \$1,000 scholarships to at least 18 students enrolled in trades and marine science programs at Maine's 7 community colleges. Many of these students are non-traditional, working part or full time, raising families while trying to improve their ability to earn a better living. All of them might otherwise not have this opportunity were it not for these scholarships. Furthermore, we're putting more skilled tradesmen and women into a local work force that desperately needs them.



University of Maine Foundation to the Pelagic Fisheries Lab. The funds we give provide internships for 6 students working at the Lab, giving invaluable field experience to future fisheries biologists and managers. Meanwhile, our support of the lab ensures Dr. Walt Golet and his team can continue their cutting-edge bluefin tuna research. This research is already showing results through a better understanding of tuna ecology and increased quotas for fishermen.

Lyndsay Withers Memorial Scholarship - This endowment with the Southern Maine Community College Foundation provides training and credentials for medical first responders in Maine's rural communities that often lack the means to provide enough skilled EMTs and paramedics.



The Bluefin Initiative - Through our affiliated program, we working to promote greater domestic and local utilization of our local, sustainable, artisanal bluefin tuna fishery. We're working with local buyers, seafood wholesalers and retailers and restaurants to see that fishermen get a better price for their product and we're all less dependent on imported seafood.

Special Events - Education isn't just about college scholarships. It starts at a younger age and our Youth Day gives kids a fun, hands-on experience to learn about marine ecosystems and fish biology.

We thank all our sponsors on behalf of our beneficiaries.

Conservation and Education

Have you taken the time to learn more about what our interns are doing with your fish at the scales? In addition to providing an opportunity for future fisheries scientists and managers to learn practical skills in data collection, the research they conduct and we support provides an important source of data for fisheries managers in determining stock status and setting quotas.

It cannot be overstated what an important role this data collection plays in both the national and international management of bluefin tuna. It is an incredible amount of effort to collect these samples collaboratively with participants in the fishery.

Lisa Kerr, Ph.D. Associate Professor, UMaine School of Marine Sciences

