

**CASCO BAY
BLUEFIN
BONANZA**

Annual Report

2023

www.bluefinbonanza.org

Thank you



to everyone who
supported us in 2023

Jordan Caron
Kurt Christensen
Sue Frigon
Walt Golet
Jane Humphrey

Bob Humphrey
Helen Humphrey
Brian Jones
Sandy Jones
Kevin Lord

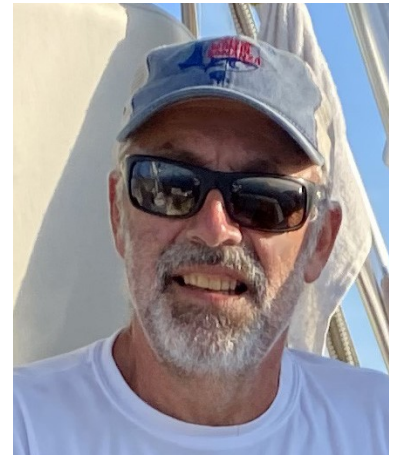
Jessica Metayer
Nick Metayer
Tom Pappas
William Ray
Shawn Tibbetts

Billy Tranter
Merri-Lee West

From the Helm

This year was especially rewarding for us. We increased our vessel registration and prize payout, met our existing financial goals and added 2 more scholarship programs to our portfolio so the people in our community will realize an even greater positive impact from our efforts. We're training tradesmen and women, and putting more qualified individuals into the local workforce. We're giving young, up and coming scientists a better opportunity to enter their workforce and we're funding critical research, both of which help us ensure the resource remains renewable and the fishery sustainable. We're creating new educational opportunities for kids, and now we're putting more medically-trained first responders into rural communities.

We stand alone among New England tuna tournaments, and are very proud of the fact that the Casco Bay Bluefin Bonanza is entirely a volunteer organization. That doesn't mean we're not rewarded. We're rewarded every time a fisherman tells us that ours is the best tournament they fish. It comes from the smiles we see on the faces of kids at our Youth Day, from the letters we receive from our scholarship recipients, and the parents in other special events. It comes from reasons why our sponsors support us. Our reward comes from living in a better, stronger and healthier community and knowing we played a small part in making it that way.



Capt. Bob

The CrewOur Mission

Board of Directors

President - Capt. Bob Humphrey

Vice President - Capt. Shawn Tibbetts

Director at Large - Capt. Tom Pappas

Director at Large - Capt. Billy Tranter

Secretary - Jane Humphrey

Treasurer - Capt. Jessica Metayer

Committee

Capt. Jordan Caron

Capt. Kurt Christensen

Sue Frigon

Dr. Walt Golet

Brian Jones

Sandy Jones

Kevin Lord

Nick Metayer

William Ray

Merri-Lee West

As a first-class tuna tournament, the Casco Bay Bluefin Bonanza combines highly-skilled anglers from all over the northeast in a contest of competition, comradery and fun. We also understand the importance and reward of giving back to our communities. As an independent, non-profit, 501(c)(3) charitable organization, the Casco Bay Bluefin Bonanza Tuna Tournament is committed to the purpose of raising and expending funds in support of educational scholarships to deserving individuals. To that end, all donations made by charity auction participants, raffle ticket buyers and our sponsors will go toward a scholarship fund to support students in Maine's community college and technical school system, the graduates of which will ultimately enter the work force and contribute meaningfully to our community. We're also dedicated to conserving the resource we value so much, and support internships and research at the Gulf of Maine Research Institute.

Education

Education remains our core mission. Now that our endowment with the Foundation for Maine's Community Colleges (FMCC) has been fulfilled we can devote more attention and resources toward annual scholarships to students enrolled in trades and marine science programs. This year we were able to give \$1,000 scholarships to 2 students at each of Maine's 7 community colleges, and to 2 more students, one each from SMCC and CMCC in recognition of their logistical support of our events. Our efforts and our sponsors' support is more important than ever. Many of our scholarship recipients are non-traditional students that don't qualify for free tuition. Even those that do must still cover 2/3 of the cost of their education.

Businesses that employ trade workers understand and appreciate the importance of these scholarships as they bring more qualified individuals to a workforce desperately in need of them. When they learned about our activities, representatives from Carhartt eagerly asked how they could get involved and offer support. To that end, we've created 2 additional \$2,500 scholarships from Carhartt and W.S. Emerson for students enrolled in specific trades programs.



Sadly, we lost one of our own last year when Capt. Lyndsay Withers lost her battle with cancer. Before she left us, she wanted to make sure she left behind her legacy of community support. At her request, we established a scholarship endowment with Southern Maine Community College's Emergency Medical Services/Paramedicine program. These scholarships will be awarded to eligible candidates from rural municipalities where funding sources are often lower, and the need for qualified first responders are greater. Once our endowment has been fulfilled these scholarships will be available in perpetuity.



"We are very grateful to the Casco Bay Bluefin Bonanza for your continued support of the students of Maine's community colleges," said Maine Community College Foundation President John Fitzsimmons. "Maine's community colleges are committed to creating a skilled and educated workforce and to building a more prosperous Maine. The impact of a gift like yours is significant and can be seen on the campuses of Maine's seven community colleges."



l. to r. Shawn Tibbetts, CBBB Vice President; John Fitzsimmons, FMCC President; Bob Humphrey, CBBB President; Jane Humphrey, CBBB Secretary.



l. to r. Julie Chase, SMCC Foundation, Tiffanie Bentley, SMCC President; Shawn Tibbetts, CBBB Vice President; Jane Humphrey, CBBB Secretary.

Education

Thanks to a successful season we can continue our current level of internships for Maine college students working at the University of Maine’s Pelagic Fisheries Lab at the Gulf of Maine Research Institute (GMRI), which serves as a training ground for students interested in the fields of fisheries biology, science and management. Internships, technicians, and graduate student positions give students the opportunity to acquire the hands-on skills needed to enter the professional field and become the next generation of leaders who will continue the wise stewardship of this resource.

In addition to collecting samples at our weigh-in, our interns, technicians and graduate students also participate in our Youth Day, providing a hands-on experience for kids who are often hesitant at first but soon become fascinated. They also participate in GMRI’s Lab Venture program, a free and unique marine biology experience for the state of Maine’s 5th and 6th graders. Samples collected from the fisheries are part of these demonstrations to illustrate what species live in the Gulf of Maine and how scientists go about ensuring their sustainability. Samples are also used in demonstrations to area schools and for students at the University of Maine.



<u>Beneficiary</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Scholarships	\$7,000	\$14,000	\$7,000	\$17,000	\$16,000	\$60,000
FMCC Endowment	—	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$26,000	0	\$46,000
GMRI Internships	—	—	\$1,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$11,000
Withers Scholarships	—	—	—	—	—	\$15,000
Carhartt Scholarships	—	—	—	—	\$5,000	\$5,000

Events

Last year was a busy one for us. Rather than waiting for people to come to us, we went out into the public to help spread the word of our work.

State of Maine Sportsman's Show

In March, part of our crew attended the State of Maine Sportsman's Show in Augusta where we had a chance to meet and greet the public, share our mission and sell raffle tickets for fishing charters from F/V Molly Jane Charters, Reel Addiction Sportfishing and Relentless Pursuits Charters, along with our annual rod & reel raffle supported by Penn Fishing and Saco Bay Tackle, and a kayak from Cabela's.



Saco Bay Tackle Fishing Seminar

Conflicting dates required us to split forces and send the other half of our crew to the Saco Bay Fishing Seminar in Old Orchard Beach, where we also had a chance to visit with some regular sponsors and meet some new ones.



Youth Day

Our annual Youth Day, co-sponsored by Bass Pro Shops and Cabela's was again well attended. We kicked off the day with hands-on demonstrations with staff and interns from the UMaine Pelagic Fisheries Lab at GMRI. Meanwhile, Nate Garrett of Big Fish Gyotaku demonstrated traditional Japanese fish printing and gave kids a chance to print their own. The day culminated with our annual crab fishing tournament and crab derby races.



Day on the Bay

A new event for us this year was a Day on the Bay, sponsored by The Hometown Foundation where we were able to take some very special folks on a tour of Casco Bay.



Bluefin Bonanza

Last but not least was our main event, the Fifth Annual Casco Bay Bluefin Bonanza, where we set new highs in terms of fish and fishermen. It was all capped off with our annual fundraising auction and dinner where a good time was had by all.



The Hometown Foundation, Inc.

Youth Education

The Casco Bay Bluefin Bonanza, Bass Pro Shops - Cabela's and the University of Maine's Pelagic Fisheries Lab at the Gulf of Maine Research Institute partner each year to provide a day of activities for youngsters and grown-ups alike.

Touch and Learn

The day kicks off with Dr. Walt Golet and his team of interns from the **University of Maine School of Marine Sciences** and the **Gulf of Maine Research Institute** providing hands-on demonstrations of some of the more fascinating fish found in local waters. Kids get a chance to stick hands, knives and saws into ocean sunfish, blue sharks and bluefin tuna while learning how scientists collect biological samples for research.



Crab Tournament/Derby

After a lunch prepared and served by Cabela's staff, we move down on the docks for a crab fishing tournament where kids compete to catch and learn about invasive green crabs.

The kids then pick their best crabs and enter them into a derby race. Prizes were awarded for the biggest crabs, the most crabs, the weirdest catch and the top five finishers in our crab race. All activities are free and open to the public.



Gyotaku Fish Printing

Meanwhile, local artist Nate Garrett volunteers his time and materials to provide demonstrations on the Japanese art of Gyotaku fish printing, and the kids get a chance to make their own fish prints.



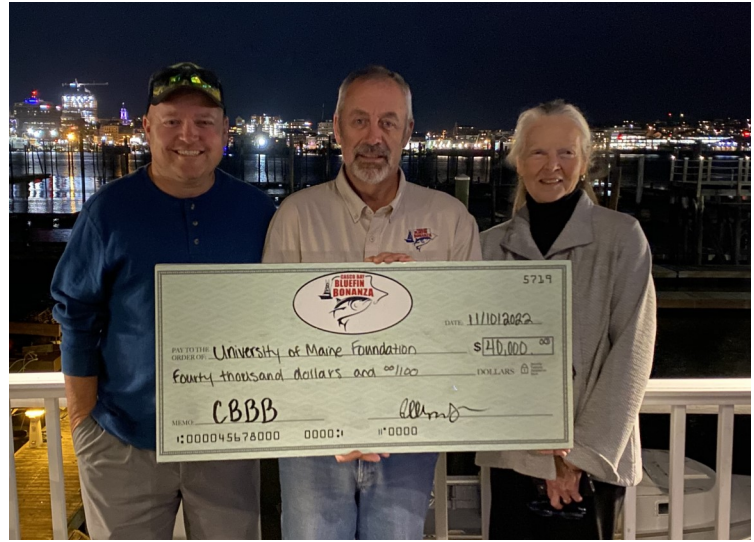
Gulf of Maine
Research Institute

Science. Education. Community.

Conservation

The captains and crews who participate in our annual tournament love to fish, but they also understand the importance of good stewardship and giving back. Through our endowment with the University of Maine Foundation's Highly Migratory Species Conservation Fund, we're supporting critical bluefin tuna research at the Gulf of Maine Research Institute's Pelagic Fisheries Lab, the results of which are already being used to shape future management of Atlantic bluefin tuna.

Highly migratory species, including the tuna, sharks and billfish represent a group of the world's most sought after commercial and recreational fish. Bluefin tuna fishing has evolved into a global commercial and recreational business supporting tens of thousands of jobs and injecting tens of millions of dollars into local economies around the Atlantic. As with any harvested species, our ability to manage it successfully depends solely on the information we have about its life history (e.g., growth, age, migration, foraging).



To learn more about these animals and provide the most robust stock assessment and management advice, research labs like GMRI are trying to improve our understanding of species like bluefin tuna to ensure the long-term sustainability of this fish harvested for commercial or recreational purposes. Specific aspects of biology they study include longevity, age structure, stock structure, foraging ecology, age of reproduction, migration/habitat use and more. These require annual monitoring because they can change from year to year.

As technology and the techniques to study these animals progress, so too does our ability to ask and answer more complex questions. The field of genetics is growing at an unprecedented rate as is the amount of information we can get from it. An exciting and new project at GMRI is utilizing this technology in order to provide the first ever absolute estimates of abundance for bluefin tuna in the Atlantic. This is a first of its kind study in the Atlantic and has the potential to be a game changer, answering fundamental questions about reproduction and mortality that have, to this point, eluded us.

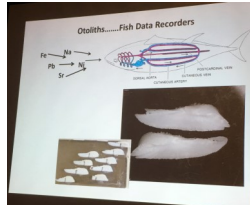
The Pelagic Fisheries Lab works with commercial and recreational partners, including tournaments like the Casco Bay Bluefin Bonanza to obtain critical samples from landed fish, samples that can be used to answer all the questions posed above, especially this cutting-edge genetic work. Samples include muscle, stomachs, liver, otoliths, eye lenses, and when possible the application of conventional and electronic tags. Tournaments like the Bluefin Bonanza are important as they provide a single source location for collecting samples from the part of the fish that would otherwise be discarded.

<u>Beneficiary</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
LPRI	\$1,000	—	—	—	—	\$1,000
GMRI	—	\$1,000	\$25,000	\$40,000	\$25,000	\$100,000

Research and Application

These are just some of the exciting and cutting edge research projects we're supporting

Age/Growth- Using otoliths (small crystals in the base of the skull), and similar approaches used for trees, researchers can count the rings in these structures and estimate age for every fish caught. This information can then be used as an index to age structure in the population and to estimate growth rate.



Foraging/Diet- By analyzing stomach contents or specific chemical signatures in the muscle, liver and blood, biologists can assess what these animals have been eating as far back as a year from when they were caught. This can then be used to determine which forage species are most important, and ensure those stocks remain sustainable as well.

Stock Structure- Understanding which individual fish belong to which population is one of the most important aspects of bluefin management. Scientists use three tools to do this including the chemistry of the otoliths, eye lenses and specific genetic markers from muscle tissue. From this they can determine if a fish landed off the coast of Maine was spawned in the Gulf of Mexico or the Mediterranean Sea.

Movement/Migration- They use several different types of tags to track these fish including traditional/conventional plastic and more sophisticated electronic tags. From this, they can determine where these fish travel and at what times of the year they enter

their spawning grounds or cross management zones.

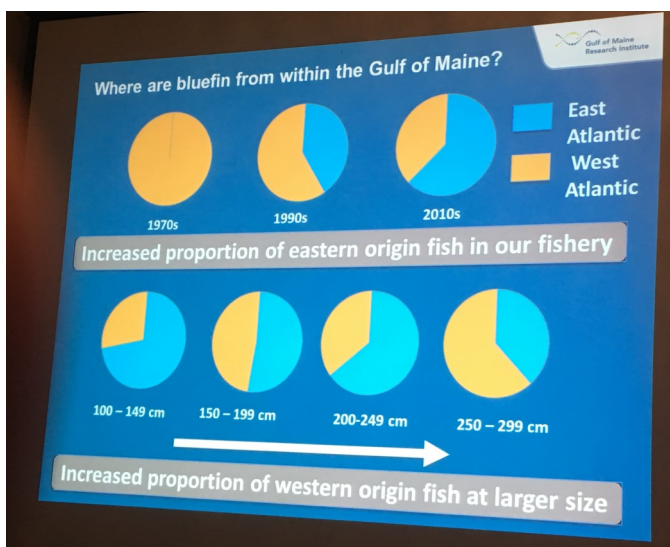
Reproduction/Abundance- Using reproductive tissues and genetic techniques, they can assess when these fish spawn for the first time. This information is used to set minimum sizes limits and estimate total population abundance (both novel discoveries).

As you can see, all this scientific information has direct management application to the fishery. Ages, diet analysis, stock composition and more are included in the assessment and management of this species or the species it preys on (e.g., Atlantic herring and Atlantic menhaden) submitted to the National Marine Fisheries Service and eventually the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas, the international governing body that manages all tunas, billfish and sharks throughout the Atlantic.



Case Study: DNA Paternity Testing

One of several research projects The Casco Bay Bluefin Bonanza supports through our endowment is a brand new initiative called "Genetics for Giants. It's a pilot program that aims to identify stock structure of the bluefin we land. Using gene tags, Walt Golet's team hopes to find tuna relatives (parent-sibling matches) in the ocean. This information can then be used to derive a more accurate estimate of the number of bluefin in the ocean, and ultimately ensure the resource and the fishery remain sustainable.



Science. Education. Community.

Community

This is where the big picture comes in, and how everything we do throughout the year benefits the local community.

On The Waterfront

In 2023, 64 boats registered for the Casco Bay Bluefin Bonanza. At \$800 each, that generated \$51,200. According to NOAA Fisheries, the average trip cost for bluefin tuna fishing is \$823 per boat, per day. This includes things like ice, food, bait, fuel and tackle, all of which comes from businesses in our community. With 64 boats competing in a 4-day tournament, that represents an infusion of \$210,688 into the local working waterfront.

Landings are also an important source of income for the fishermen who participate in our tournament. During the 2023 Casco Bay Bluefin Bonanza, anglers landed 66 fish for a total of over 31,000 pounds. At an average ex-boat price of \$6.00/pound, that equates to over \$186,000, and some fishermen got even better prices for their fish. These fish are purchased by local buyers, then brought to market, providing an economic benefit to wholesalers, retailers, fish markets and restaurants.



"The best day of my life." That's how one of the attendees described his experience at our Day on the Bay, sponsored by the Hometown Foundation. In addition to illustrating the importance of what we do, it also helps remind those of us who spend every day on the water not to take that for granted.



It seems like the parents are more squeamish than the kids during Pelagic Fisheries Lab demonstrations. Being able to put their hands on common fish species found in the Gulf of Maine and help researchers collect samples is far more valuable than any lessons they can get in the classroom.



"This internship has been an enriching and transformative experience, allowing me to gain hands-on experience that explicitly applies to my career and providing me with a deeper understanding of the industry. Your financial support has played a crucial role in making this opportunity possible, and I am truly grateful for the part you have played in allowing me to have had this experience." So said one of our 2023 interns, with similar sentiments coming from all. It's great to know we're making a difference.



The Bluefin Initiative

When the pandemic struck we launched an initiative to promote better local utilization of Bluefin tuna resource. That resulted in several workshops and more local sales by fish markets and restaurants, simultaneously reducing our dependency on out of state and overseas markets, keeping money in our local economy. In 2023, we developed a new partnership with a coalition of groups working to develop a certification program to promote this local, sustainable artisanal fishery.

Annual Benefit Dinner and Auction

Our big event under the tent provides chance for fishermen, friends and families to get together for an evening of libation, celebration and fun, all for a good cause.



Congratulations to



our 2023 Winners



First Place: Capt. Joe Pinkham My Three Blondes, 756 lbs., 107.5"



Second Place: Capt. Christian Yanarella, Sharpe Hooks, 739 lbs., 108.5"



Third Place: Capt. Cameron Thorp, Endorfin, 737 lbs., 107.75"



Fourth Place: Capt. Pete Speeches, Backstabber, 707 lbs., 109"



Fifth Place: Capt. Isaac Molt, Redemption, 704 lbs., 109.5"



Greatest Cumulative Weight: Capt. Cameron



First Fish: Capt. Cory LeDuc, Lucy Ella, 363 lbs., 89.5"

2023 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

Raffles

Special thanks go out to the captains who donated charters in 2023. We're already working on more great trips for 2024!



Relentless Pursuit
Fishing Charters & Scenic Tours



Molly Jane
PINE POINT, MAINE

LINDA GREENLAW

CHARTERS

Sponsorships

We try to go above and beyond in making sure our sponsors receive the recognition they deserve, and we work with them in finding creative ways to do so.



Casco Bay Bluefin Bonanza's Youth Day

Join us for a day of activities including fish science with Gulf of Maine Research Institute, Oyataku fish printing with Nate Garrett and our crab tournament and derby. Lunch will be served. All activities are free and open to the public.

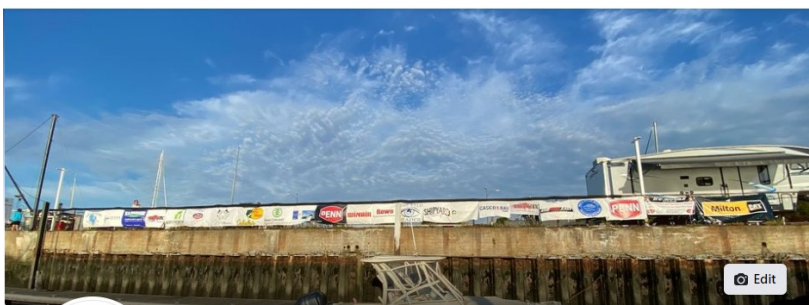
Date & Time July 29 at 10am

Location Spring Point Marina
1 Spring Point Drive
South Portland, ME 04106

Crab Derby Trapping materials will be supplied by the Casco Bay Bluefin Bonanza! Please bring your own life jacket.

Prizes • Activities • Demonstrations • FUN!

free!



Casco Bay Bluefin Bonanza
@bluefinbonanza · Nonprofit Organization

[Edit Learn More](#)

2023 Donors

None of what we do would be possible without the incredible support of our donors. Please take a moment to read through the list of individuals and businesses who contributed. When you get a chance, please thank them for us, and consider patronizing their businesses.

Diamond (\$10,000 minimum)

Eldredge Lumber

Platinum (\$5,000 minimum)

The Hometown Foundation

W.S. Emerson

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Gold (\$1,000 minimum)

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Vessel Services

Yankee Ford

Silver (\$500 minimum)

Atlantic Federal Credit Union

Bath Subaru

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Home Depot

Jim Merryman

John Tanguay

Kelblan Creations

Kittery Trading Post

Lake Parlin Lodge & Camps

Pat's Pizza - Yarmouth

Pineland Farms

Poland Spring

Port Harbor Marine

Saco Bay Tackle

Southern Maine Community College

Welch's Woodcraft

Wooden Alchemy

Thank you to all our generous donors for their support.

Honorable Mention

Antonia's
Balfour Farm
Fielder's Choice
Hannaford
Suzanne Frigon
Gorham Sand and Gravel
Hannaford Supermarkets
Luke's Lobster

Maine Mariner's Hockey
Napa
Nothing Bundt
Saltwater Grill
SeaTow Portland Midcoast
Shaw's
Skillin's
Slack Tide Maine
Yankee Marina



Supporting Our Future

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