

Cape Ann Fresh Catch

The Constancy of Cod

The prevalence of cod in CAFC shares, the abundance of cod in our local waters and the joys of eating Gadus Marhua

Cape Ann Fresh Catch (CAFC) participants have expressed surprise and some concern about the frequency of cod in their share. As someone who has watched the regulation of groundfish quite closely since at least 1993, I can assure you that the cod you are receiving is not only the freshest fish you are likely to

Now that time to fish is limited, cod is a desirable target since the Gloucester fishermen can catch them relatively quickly.

At the “Seafood Throwdown” held at the Gloucester’s Farmer’s Market last Thursday, a fisherman involved in CAFC commented that they go out only a few miles, set their



eat without catching it yourself, but is also a symbol of the benefits we are finally reaping from a whole host of strict regulations.

Biology plays a role in allocating our shares. Significantly, cod is a schooling fish, flounder is not. When fishermen were told that they could only go to sea a certain number of days (days-at-sea or DAS), they were forced to focus on species that they could catch quickly. Cod has historically had a strong local, national and international market, rarely suffering from a misfit of supply and demand. Even when plentiful, cod could almost always be sold for a better price than other finfish species. Consequently, since the 1600s when fishermen first established a colony in Gloucester, they have continued to learn about cod’s habits and haunts.

nets and trawl for twenty minutes, haul back with their limit of 800 pounds of cod and return to the dock. He noted that not only does this save fuel and limit the amount of time their gear is actually fishing (both conservation benefits) but perhaps a more important point for him is that he is not killing any extra fish. If he were not involved in CAFC, he might have to fish longer to be sure he could make a “day’s pay.”

To read a more about fishermen’s perspective on the Gulf of Maine cod, read this story in the Gloucester Daily Times: http://www.gloucestertimes.com/archivesearch/local_story_219224544.html

Fishermen of the Northeast are constrained by a wide variety of regulations. (See Cod p.2)

CAFC PROFILE: TED KENNEDY

Senator Kennedy was a true ally of the environment, immigrants, workers, women and children, to name just a few. He believed in this country and that it was possible to be a nation that served the people without leaving anyone behind for individual or corporate gain. He was a historic figure whose strength,



determination and inspiration will not be forgotten.

In memory of this great Senator, Angela Sanfilippo, Gloucester Fishermen’s Wives President and Massachusetts Fishermen’s Partnership Executive Director stated, “Today the commercial fishermen of Massachusetts and the nation have lost their best friend and advocate. For the last 40 years Senator Edward M. Kennedy worked tirelessly with the Gloucester Fishermen’s Wives Association for the protection and preservation of the commercial fishing industry and the sustainability of the oceans environment. We will miss him very much. Our thoughts and prayers are with his wife Vicky and all of his family.”

CAFC SURVEY RESULTS

We thank all of you who took the time to respond to the survey. We received nearly 200 pages of feedback which tells us you really do care about this project. Overall, you seemed happy with the project, which makes us happy! The issues you highlighted most include:

1. You want an explanation for the lack of variety or monotony in the seafood you’ve been receiving.
2. You want to be more engaged in the politics of this project by being reminded of the purpose for this CSF, made aware of the sustainability issues surrounding fisheries and clarifying fisheries management policies.
3. You want to know more about the fleet of boats supplying your seafood, the fishermen involved, the gear

they use and why they are choosing to be part of this project.

4. You want to meet the fishermen involved.
5. You want more a streamlined communication system.

We are working to include your suggestions in the program as we move forward.

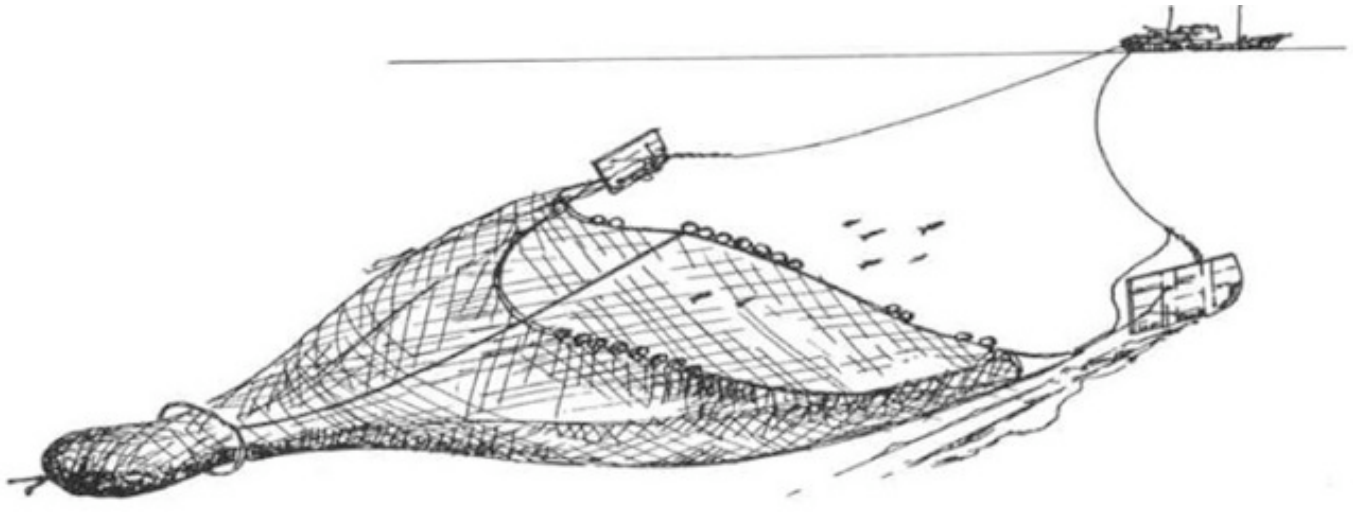
Although we are working on a more detailed explanation of the challenges surrounding the variety issue, the reality is that we made a decision to work with a particular group of day boats and decided that we would use whatever they were catching. (See Survey p.2)

(Survey cont'd) We wanted to fit the market into the ocean's patterns, not fit the ocean's patterns into the needs of the market. The latter is exactly what we wanted to change as we felt trying to fit the ocean into our tablespoons has caused undue stress on a number of species. None of us could have guessed that the Gulf of Maine cod would be running as late as they did this year. Whether it's the high ocean temperatures, or the exit of the industrial scale vessels fishing for cod's food, or the rebuilding

plans finally producing results... the cod have been more plentiful than they have been in recent years. Such signs of rebuilding are apparent in a number of species. As a result, fisheries managers have increased the amount of cod that can be fished for in the Gulf of Maine. Our goal is to ensure that the number considered to be sustainable - however small or large - is caught by small to medium scale community based boats who are choosing to fish differently and treat their fish differently.

We could change the principles of this project for the purposes of providing variety and get the seafood from the offshore boats, but that defeats the purpose of what we set out to do which was to support a scale of operation that we feel is most appropriate for the marine ecosystem.

We'll be communicating with you more on the topic of variety by email and look forward to hearing your feedback again soon on that topic.



(Cod cont'd) For example, unlike fishermen elsewhere in the world who fish for cod and other groundfish, US fishermen use a net with 6.5 inch mesh. This size helps juvenile codfish escape. A side effect for CAFC is that there is less variety in the catch—whiting, for example, may slip out with the juvenile cod.

Before they became known as “marine protected areas (MPAs),” large expanses of popular fishing grounds off the Northeast were closed to commercial groundfish fishing. These de facto MPAs have made it more difficult for small and medium-sized vessels to make a living from the port of Gloucester as some of their favorite grounds are off-limits. Nevertheless, fishermen note that there has clearly been a resurgence of cod and CAFC is helping them benefit from this positive development.

Cooking cod

Aside from a desire to understand the ecological benefits of being a shareholder, what some CAFC participants want to know is how they can avoid boredom in their meals of incredibly fresh cod. My favorite technique is to barbecue it whole. This, by the way, is also an ecologically beneficial choice. As Angela Sanfilippo, president of the Gloucester Fishermen’s Wives Association notes, filleting can result in the loss of 60 percent of the fish, requiring more fish to be caught to fulfill consumer demand!

To avoid the nuisance of having to clean the grill, I wrap it in aluminum foil after tucking some chives in the cavity with tomatoes and lemon slices sprinkled with pepper and thyme. At medium heat, flipping once, the cod is done in about 25 to 30 minutes. (Cook just until opaque, let sit for a few minutes to even the temperature throughout.) But, truly you can experiment. As a white fish with subtle flavor, you can use it as a canvas for whatever spices and combinations you love.

We generally eat just half at one dinner, then make fish tacos, chowder or salad in a day or two. This week I

plan to adapt a recipe that I’ve often used for tuna: Mix together ¼ cup mayonnaise, ½ teaspoon curry powder, ¼ teaspoon garlic salt, ¼ teaspoon mustard, dash of cayenne pepper, 1 tablespoon lemon juice. Stir in about a half pound of fish flakes, ¾ cup chopped apple, ½ cup finely chopped celery or cabbage, ¼ cup raisins and 2 tablespoons of green onions. This works well as a sandwich filling, but if you add cooked elbow macaroni and sprinkle with toasted almonds, it is an excellent salad!

Think of cod as your link to Massachusetts’ history and stop by the State House one day to see the wood sculpture of a cod hanging above our legislators. Enjoy your cod!

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(Profile cont'd)
Senator Kennedy was quick to come to the aid of New England fishing families. He recognized that healthy fishing communities depend on healthy marine ecosystems. To prevent families from selling their boats and permits during difficult times, he insisted that federal aid be distributed to keep the boats on the water and the New England waterfronts working by the communities, not a single corporation.
It is now our responsibility to continue his legacy in our daily lives and through our daily efforts to ensure this country protects the vitality of our coastal communities and



For more information about joining this community supported fishery please visit www.namanet.org/csf/cape-ann-fresh-catch or call 978-283-2504. And please support our sponsors (above!)