

A sunset over the ocean with fishing gear in the foreground. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a golden glow over the water. In the foreground, there are fishing rods and reels, including a large yellow reel with "JENN REELS" and "INTERNATIONAL" visible on it. The water is dark with some ripples, and the sky is a mix of orange and yellow.

Enjoy the experience of a lifetime with:

Sport-Ventures

SUMMER 2018

Holy Mackerel!

A look at one of New England's most underrated gamefish

The Stripers are Back

- * Record catch predicted in '18
- * Live Bait Strategies

Sure Cure for a Haddock

Offshore Adventure

Small Boat Sharkin'

Maybe you don't need a bigger boat

See Maine Lighthouses

...from the sea.

Downeast (speed) Demons

Maine's Lobsterboat Race Tradition

A Field Guide to

Maine Pelagics



Captain's Log

It is my sincere pleasure to bring you the inaugural issue of *Sport-Ventures* magazine. As I'm sure you'll soon discover, the purpose of this ship's journal is to provide enough inspiration to *wet* your appetite for an adventure on the waters of Casco Bay and the Gulf of Maine this summer.

It could be a relaxing trip jigging mackerel in the harbor, seeing lighthouses from the ocean side or watching seals frolic in surf. Maybe you want something a little more upbeat, like striped fishing around the islands, jigging cod and haddock offshore or scratching a rare pelagic seabird off your life list.. Or perhaps you prefer the adrenaline-charged thrill of battling predatory sharks or giant bluefin tuna. Whatever your preference or desire, read on, enjoy and if you feel inspired, give me a call and we'll start planning your adventure together.

Capt. Bob

What about Bob

Captain Bob Humphrey has literally spent his lifetime on the water. He was on boats before he could walk and, according to his parents was even conceived on a boat. Early childhood summers were spent on family trips boating up and down the New England coast from Maine to Rhode Island. Beginning in his early teens, Bob served as the mate on his father's charter boat, the Falcon III, a 38-foot custom-built sportfisherman that ran scuba and deep sea fishing charters out of Salem, Mass. He and his father, Capt. Hale Humphrey, also fished from Cape Cod to Maine on several different harpoon, handline and rod and reel boats during the seminal years of the New England sport and commercial tuna fishery.

After graduating from UMass, Amherst with a degree in wildlife biology, Bob spent two years in Alaska where he worked in the salmon fishery running a fish tender and gill netting salmon. He then returned to Massachusetts where he began working on his Master's thesis, while simultaneously serving as Manager of Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge in Chatham, Mass. For the next four years he spent nearly every day on the waters of Nantucket Sound and the outer Cape, fishing, hunting and working for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

In 1988, he moved to Maine where he first served as Acting Manager of the Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve before taking on a consulting position with Woodlot Alternatives. While there, he worked along the coast of Maine from New Hampshire to New Brunswick on a broad variety of projects including writing Maine's Oil Spill Response Plan for Wildlife and developing procedures for identifying and rating shorebird roosting and feeding areas.

In 1995 he launched his own consulting company, simultaneously becoming a U.S.C.G. licensed Captain and registered Maine Guide. He guided striped fishing on the waters of Casco Bay and the Kennebec River for a number of years, while also introducing his own children to the boating tradition. He also began a side career that eventually turned into a full time job as an outdoor writer and photographer, and has since published several books and thousands of magazine articles, and has won multiple awards for his work.

He now resides in Pownal with his wife, Jane and occasionally his grown children, Helen and Ben. He continues to write and do occasional consulting projects, mostly for the State of Maine, and has built up his fleet of charter boats to include a 21-foot PolarKraft and a 28-foot Albemarle.



3 Holy Mackerel

A venerable look at one of New England's most underrated gamefish.

7 Old Linesides is Back

Last year stripers returned to Maine in numbers not seen since the 90s, and the forecast for this year looks even better.

8 Live Lining

Live bait offers one of the most exciting and effective means for catching stripers.

13 Maine Lobster Boat Race Schedule

15 A Field Guide to Maine Pelagics

21 Small Boat Sharkin'

Maybe you're not gonna need a bigger boat.

27 Sure Cure for a Haddock

Check out our YouTube channel for a variety of video sport adventures

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCpNXkSAVIK4vsX15-941zFw>

The background of the entire page is an underwater photograph of several mackerel swimming in clear, greenish water. The fish are silvery with dark spots along their sides and are oriented in various directions, some swimming towards the camera and others away from it. The lighting is bright, creating a clear view of the fish and the water.

Holy Mackerel

by Capt. Bob Humphrey

There have been a lot of changes in the abundance and diversity of sport fish off the New England coast in the last several decades. Cod, haddock and flounder stocks have plummeted, due to commercial overfishing. Bluefish appeared, then dwindled. More recently, stripers returned to historical abundance then dwindled again, but seem to be on the rebound. Through it all, one species has stayed fairly consistent and as a result gained a faithful following.

Mackerel remain one of the most popular and available species in the region, though there have been some slight fluctuations. Traditionally, mackerel would arrive in the spring, and remain abundant through the summer. This trend changed slightly beginning in the mid 1970's, with the expansion of bluefish range north of Cape Cod. Often times once the blues came in, which was usually around late June or early July, mackerel would disappear - moving offshore to escape these ocean Huns. But since bluefish numbers have dropped off, mackerel now stay with us throughout most of the summer.

Much of their appeal is due to accessibility. Though pelagic by nature, meaning they travel in deeper, offshore waters, these fish can be easily caught from coastal piers, jetties and bridges. Smaller boats on inshore waters are also a viable option. Mackerel are also very social so where they occur, they generally do so in abundance. Finally, they have voracious appetites, which makes them easily catchable. In a way, they represent to salt water anglers what perch and bluegills provide for inland fishermen.



Natural History

There are actually two species of mackerel occurring in our waters. The larger Atlantic Mackerel (*Scomber scombrus*), which generally attains a length of 14-18 inches and weight of 1-2 pounds. They can get considerably larger and there is a record of a 7-1/2 pound fish. The smaller tinker mackerel (*Scomber colias*) are usually only 8-14 inches. They possess spots and blotches on the sides and have a swim bladder, both of which are lacking in the Atlantic Mackerel. Smaller Atlantics are sometimes referred to as "Tinkers", but if you want to be precise, look for the spots.

Mackerel feed on a wide variety of seafood victuals including fish, crustaceans, squid, worms and plankton, and in turn are fed upon by larger fish like blues, stripers, tuna and sharks. Like other predatory fish, they'll often attack schools of bait, driving them to the surface. This commotion attracts scavenging seabirds, who will betray the mackerel's presence to sharp-eyed anglers.

Fishing Methods

Mackerel can be caught in a variety of ways. The simplest and most popular method is casting from shore. Because of their relatively small size, heavy tackle is not required and lighter tackle actually affords a little more sport. You can use the same basic spinning outfit you use for trout or bass - a 6- or 7-foot rod with an open faced spinning reel and 6 - 10 lb. test. Just make sure to rinse it off well with fresh water after each outing. Mackerel aren't finicky either so terminal tackle can consist of a diamond jig, spoon, spinner, or almost any shiny bite-sized morsel.

Another terminal tackle, more popular among boaters, is the Christmas tree. This is basically a mobile-like rig consisting of a series of hooks, covered with brightly-colored plastic tubing, usually ahead of a larger diamond or Hopkins jig. As it is pulled through the water, it gives the impression of a school of small fish fleeing a larger predator. This rig is more often trolled, but can be cast as well. A similar, but often more effective option is the Sabiki rig.

Because of their pelagic nature, mackerel tend to be mobile. Thus, shoreline fishing is usually hot and cold. When a school moves through the action is fast and furious and everyone on shore will be hauling in fish in a frenzy. Then, just as quickly as it began, the action drops off and there is dead calm until the next school comes by. Boaters have an advantage because they can follow the school, provided they can locate it.

An alternative is to keep the school close at hand. This can be done by chumming. Simply toss out ground-up fish parts - heads, tails, innards - it really doesn't matter so long as it's oily. Some boaters will mount a food grinder right on the gunwale of their boat. Alternately, a frozen block of chum, suspended over the side works like an automatic chummer as it gradually thaws. In a pinch, even a perforated can of sardines will sometimes hold a school long enough for you to fill a pail.

Table Fare

Some consider mackerel a delicacy, while others find it too oily. Like many of the pelagic fish - blues and tuna to name a couple - mackerel does tend to be oily. But proper care and preparation can go along way to improving its palatability. Clean the fish you intend to keep as soon as you can (during those lulls between schools), and put them on ice as soon as possible. Cook them just as you would a trout, wrapped in foil and thrown on the grille, or baked in the oven. They also smoke up well and the brine tends to leech some of the oiliness out.

If you don't like it, nothing says you can't release the fish you catch. For far too long the catch-and-release ethic has been largely absent from saltwater fishing. The ocean's bounty seemed limitless and people simply kept everything they caught, whether they intended to use it or not. Today's more enlightened sportsmen have changed that, hopefully in time to preserve what fish stocks remain.



We unite all anglers through performance-engineered, technical gear designed to fuel your passion and pursuit no matter when, where or how you fish.

HUKGEAR.COM



Old Linesides is Back

It started as a trickle of 12-16-inch schoolies, perhaps just a tad earlier than their typical late May arrival time, but very quickly you could tell something was different. There were more of them, lots more than had been seen in recent years. On any given morning, if the tide was right, you could catch fish until you tired. About the time that lost its novelty the slot fish showed up, fish that would have been legal a couple years before, and that biologically made a lot more sense to catch and keep; but fishermen don't make the regulations. Then the keepers came, and came and came... and they stayed. Into early July, when the striper fishing typically starts to cool it was only getting hotter, and it stayed that way for another six weeks. All in all it was striper fishing the likes of which hadn't been witnessed in Casco Bay in well over a decade, and the abundance of small fish only heightened prospects for the following season. By all accounts, 2018 could be one for the record books, at least by recent standards. It's been a long time coming and you won't want to miss this one.



Live-Lining Mackerel

by Capt. Bob Humphrey



My father, a former charter boat captain of some renown used to tell me: “If it ain’t broke; don’t fix it.” He applied that old saw to any number of things about which he was set in his ways, but quite often it referred to his fishing techniques. Once he found something that worked, he seldom “messed” with it. I suppose part of that reluctance to experiment may have been attributable to the need to satisfy dozens of anglers on a daily basis and they’re near constant badgering of “Where’s the fish? Or “We need to move.”

Whether it was learned or inherited, I seem to have adopted his philosophy, particularly with regard to fishing, and most especially when it comes to striper fishing. It took a little tinkering (pun most definitely intended), but I've found a few techniques that have served me well in satisfying my own goals, and those of the occasional sport I guide. One in particular involves live-lining mackerel.

I have to give a good deal of credit to one of my old fishing partners, Jim Eshelman. Jim and I began fishing the waters of Casco Bay together around the time the last real bluefish and pogie boom petered out and striper populations began their exponential growth (the early 90s). Thus it took us a few seasons to make the transition. Eventually we perfected a technique that has garnered consistent success since.

The first step, obviously, involves obtaining bait, in this case mackerel. We tried just about everything, but trolling Christmas tree rigs ultimately proved the most effective (Sabikis hadn't been invented yet). We also learned the importance of keeping the bait alive and fresh - more on that in a bit. Obviously, a live-well is essential to provide cold, well-aerated water. Also, mackerel are a fast-swimming, pelagic species tend to last longer in round or oval livewells than square-sided tanks.



The next step involves deploying the aforementioned bait. We've tried various ways of hooking the mackerel, but found that hooking them through the nose works best for several reasons. First, and foremost, stripers attack their prey from the front. Also, it seems to allow the mackerel to swim in a more natural manner. Stripers have a legendary reputation for being finicky, and while they may hit fish that are swimming erratically, the freshest baits get the most action.

Our technique works in a variety of conditions, but we found it most effective drift fishing the rips around structure on a moving tide, especially outgoing. Most of the runs are short, so this is a fairly dynamic technique. We motor up to the head of the rip, drop our baits and drift with the tide. As soon as we're out of the run, we reel in, motor up and begin again.

Terminal Rigging

Terminal tackle for our technique begins with circle hooks, 4/0-6/0. You'll definitely drop more fish but it's the law, and they do reduce gut hooking. You can increase hook-ups by bridling bait on the hooks with a rubber band. We used to tie those on an 8-10-foot leader of 50-pound mono, until someone invented flourocarbon. On the other end either tie a loop or tie on a barrel swivel. Then tie a snap swivel on the end of your main line, mono or braid, and tie your balloon above that.



That's also why keeping bait alive and well is critical. In fact, it's one of the keys to our technique. On my first drift, I don't even hook the mackerel on until I've begun the drift. Then, I race to the live-well, hook on the fish and cast it immediately into the rip. When the stripers are in, we seldom do a drift without at least one hit, and more often, a hook-up. If we don't get bit in three or four drifts we move.

During the drift I watch the balloon very closely to observe the mackerel's progress. If the balloon is moving steadily, I know my bait is doing well. Sudden, erratic bursts of speed or changes in direction usually mean a submarine chase, and when the bait is taken, the line will pass through the knot in the balloon. I prefer a bait-runner reel as this allows the fish to run without further drag. Otherwise, they may drop the bait.

If I make several consecutive drifts without a hit, or the bait is not swimming aggressively, I change it immediately. This we learned by trial and error, but the difference is astounding. Drifting with sluggish bait may raise the occasional strike, but I like fast, consistent action, and have found that changing to a fresh mackerel often makes the difference.

How long you let the fish run is, to some extent a matter of preference. I used to let my fish run longer, to ensure they'd taken the bait. This sometimes led to swallowed hooks. In the interest of releasing fish unharmed, and with the switch to circle hooks, I now wait only long enough to ensure the striper has taken the bait, and is not just toying with it. Stripers will sometimes hit a mackerel to stun it, then return to gobble it up, much like a shark, and a hasty hook-set might pull the fish out of his mouth, or spook it.



It should be noted we developed this technique back when a legal striper had to be at least 36 inches, and you could usually tell within minutes of hooking up whether you had a keeper on or not. Big fish give a steady pull while smaller fish tug erratically. With a smaller minimum and fewer big fish you get a lot more chases and drops, which tends to burn up the fresh bait faster. This technique is most well suited for larger fish anyway so if you find yourself with a lot of missed or dropped fish, it's probably a good idea to try a different spot or switch tactics to something geared toward smaller fish.

If you are a recreational saltwater fisherman, a Maine law may require you to register with the **Maine Saltwater Recreational Fishing Registry**. To learn more or to register visit: www.maine.gov/saltwater or call 207-633-9505.

The following Maine saltwater recreational fishing regulations are current as of January 1, 2017. However, they are subject to change. Please contact our office or your local Marine Patrol Officer with questions. All minimum lengths are total length, NOT fork length. The sale of fish by recreational anglers is prohibited.

Maine's striped bass regulations cover all Maine coastal waters up to the head of tide in all rivers. In addition, there are special regulations in effect from December 1 through June 30 in the Kennebec, Sheepscot and Androscoggin Rivers and all related tributaries (see "SPECIAL KENNEBEC REGULATIONS" below).

FEDERAL REGULATION

It is unlawful to fish for, take or possess striped bass in Federal waters (waters greater than 3 miles from shore).

STATEWIDE REGULATIONS

OPEN SEASON January 1 through December 31, inclusive (except the Kennebec watershed, see below).

BAG & SIZE LIMITS A person may take and possess 1 fish per day. The fish must be 28 inches or greater in total length.

"TOTAL LENGTH" Total length is a straight line measurement from the lower jaw to the tip of the tail with the tail pinched together.

DISPOSITION Personal use only, sale is prohibited. Fish must remain whole and intact.

GENERAL GEAR RESTRICTIONS

- Hook and line only, no gaffing of striped bass.
- No bait allowed when using treble hooks.
- It is unlawful to use multiple (more than two) barbed or barbless treble hooks on any artificial lure or fly while fishing for striped bass in territorial waters.
- It is unlawful to use any hook other than a non-offset circle hook when using bait.
Exception: Rubber or latex tube lures may be used without a circle hook as long as they are a minimum of 8 inches long and have a single hook protruding from the end portion of the tubing where bait may be attached.



SPECIAL KENNEBEC** REGULATIONS

(including the Sheepscot and Androscoggin Rivers and all related bays and tributaries)

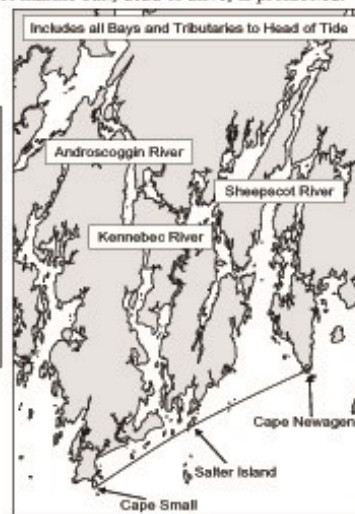
CATCH & RELEASE SEASON WITH SPECIAL GEAR RESTRICTIONS From May 1 through June 30, inclusive. Fishing in this area is restricted to single hooked* artificial lures only and use of or possession of marine bait, dead or alive, is prohibited.

OPEN SEASON July 1 through November 30, inclusive.

CLOSED SEASON Striped bass fishing is prohibited from December 1 through April 30, inclusive.

(* may be a single treble hook)

**** The Kennebec watershed is defined as all coastal waters inside and upstream of a line drawn from the outer extremity of Cape Small, in Phippsburg, to the outer extremity of Salter Island, thence to the outer extremity of Cape Newagen, in Southport. This area includes the coastal waters of Popham Beach and the adjoining State Park, Reid State Park, and all riverine waters of the Kennebec, Sheepscot, and Androscoggin Rivers including all bays and tributaries of those rivers to the head of tide. Due to the removal of Edwards dam, the "head of tide" in the Kennebec River is now at the downstream side of the power line located approximately 4,200 feet upstream of the Calumet Bridge at Old Fort Western in Augusta (formerly the Father Curran Bridge) for enforcement purposes.**



MAINE DEPARTMENT OF MARINE RESOURCES
Marine Resources Laboratory
PO Box 8, West Boothbay Harbor, ME 04575-0008
Telephone (207) 633-9500
Fax (207) 633-9579

Inshore Charters

Striped Bass or Mackerel Fishing



(4 person max)

FALCON IV

**4 hours \$ 350
6 hours \$ 500
8 hours \$ 650**

Weekday Mackerel Special

3 hours \$ 150

Green Machine

**4 hours \$ 300
6 hours \$ 450
8 hours \$ 600**

MAINE LOBSTER BOAT RACE SCHEDULE - 2018

June 16 Boothbay Harbor*

June 17 Rockland

June 24 Bass Harbor*

June 30 Moosabec Reach (Jonesport Beals)

July 8 Stonington*

July 22 Friendship*

July 29 Harpswell*

August 4 Kennebec Reach

August 11 Winter Harbor*

August 12 Pemaquid

August 18 Long Island

August 19 Portland

* best viewed via boat

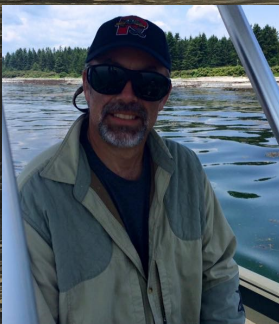
For a "front-row" seat to all the action, give us a call at :

Sport-Ventures

(207) 688-4066

Inshore Charters

**Harbor Cruises, Lighthouse Tours, Seal
and Natural History Trips
Aboard the FALCON IV**



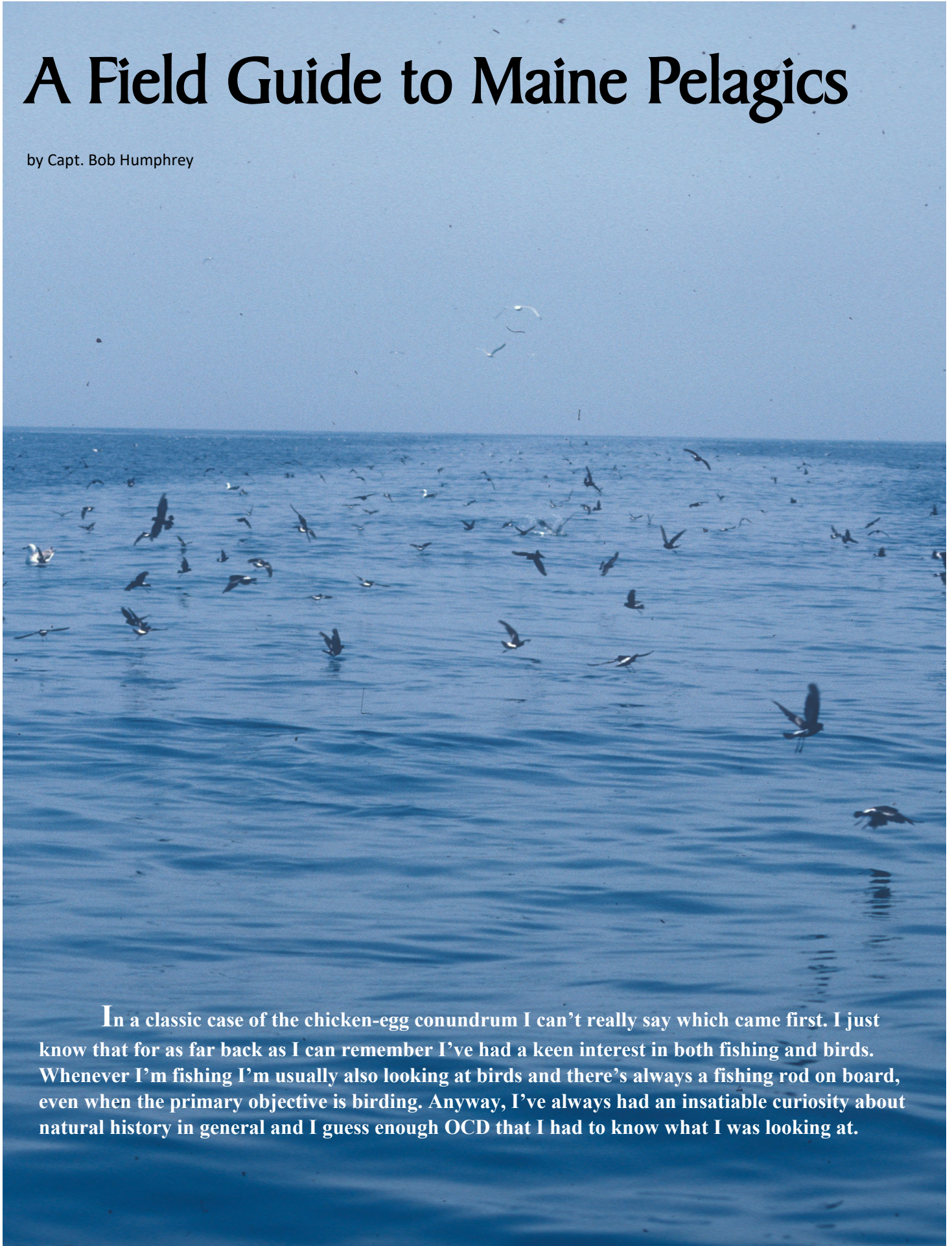
Capt. Bob Humphrey
is also certified wild-
life biologist with
over 30 years of ex-
perience working
with coastal seabirds.




Also available for Special Events

A Field Guide to Maine Pelagics

by Capt. Bob Humphrey



In a classic case of the chicken-egg conundrum I can't really say which came first. I just know that for as far back as I can remember I've had a keen interest in both fishing and birds. Whenever I'm fishing I'm usually also looking at birds and there's always a fishing rod on board, even when the primary objective is birding. Anyway, I've always had an insatiable curiosity about natural history in general and I guess enough OCD that I had to know what I was looking at.


A wide-angle photograph showing a vast number of birds, likely shearwaters, in flight over a calm blue ocean. The birds are scattered across the sky and just above the water's surface, appearing as dark silhouettes against the lighter blue background.

At first those curious little swallow-like black birds tip-toeing along the water's surface were Mother Carey's Chickens, because that's what my Dad and all the other New England tuna fishermen called them. They didn't know the proper name, because they didn't need to. They just knew the little birds were attracted to fish oil and scraps, the kind that float to the surface when tuna are feeding unseen beneath.

Their larger chum-stealing cousins that soared over the wave tops just like the albatrosses we saw on tv were called gooney birds. I knew that wasn't exactly right; so as soon as I was old enough to read my first copy of *Petersen's Field Guide to the Birds* I began a lifelong campaign to learn the proper names of the birds I saw at sea.

I started with the easy ones, those little black birds with the white band above their tails - Mother Carey's Chickens - turned out to be petrels, Wilson's storm-petrels to be more precise. And the gooney birds were actually shearwaters. So far, so good.

Through a turn of events I ended up on Cape Cod, as manager of Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge, and fell in with a group of naturalists who I can say without embellishment were and are among the top birders in North America. I was about to be seriously schooled in pelagic bird identification.

A close-up photograph of a small, dark bird with a white patch on its tail, skimming the surface of the water. The bird is captured in a low, graceful arc, just above the water, with its wings slightly spread. The water is a deep blue, and the bird's reflection is visible below it.

The diminutive Wilson's storm-petrel appears to dance on the water's surface as it picks for tiny bits of food.



Fortunately, I had a couple cards in my hand to play as well. My high-number card was the fact that I had decades of experience with these offshore birds that my largely land-bound friends held in such great esteem. My ace was a boat big enough to take us far enough offshore to see them. For the first time in my life I was the cool kid that everyone wanted to hang out with.

The petrels seemed easy enough, and I thought it pretty neat that, being largely a southern hemisphere nester, they migrate north to “winter” in New England waters from roughly June through September. All was good until I learned there was another petrel, the Leach’s storm-petrel, that unlike its southern cousin, nests in the northern hemisphere. And to make matters more complicated, it was rumored they might even nest on Monomoy. Suddenly, every petrel got a second look.

Shearwaters

Then came the shearwaters. I already knew the all-brown ones were sooty shearwaters and the brown and white ones were either greater and Cory’s shearwaters. I even knew how to tell them apart (greater’s being darker, with a dark bill). It was when I learned there were two more not all too uncommon shearwaters - Audubon’s and Manx - that things started figuratively going south. One way is size, as they’re noticeably smaller than the greater and Cory’s, though that’s harder to tell without something for scale. Differences between the two are subtle, and really only of concern to the serious birders. Suffice to say if you see a noticeably smaller shearwater in the Gulf of Maine it’s likely a Manx or an Audubon’s.



Sooty Shearwater



Greater Shearwater

Jaeger Bomb

Summer always seems too short for anyone in New England but that's especially true for a birder. Fall migration for shorebirds and seabirds typically kicks off around the end of July and really ramps up in August. That's when terns begin staging around Monomoy, first by the hundreds, then by the thousands. And just as migrations of bison once drew wolves, and the wildebeest herds attract lions and hyenas, the throngs of terns draw their own followers.

Up to that point my experience with anything called a jaeger was not even remotely related to birds (I'm sure many of you can relate). But these were cool birds. The raptors of the gull family, they follow tern migrations southward and rather fending for themselves employ a practice known as kleptoparasitism, robbing terns of their hard-won prizes, much like pirates robbed from the king's Spanish galleons, or the man-o-war (frigate bird) of the tropics pilfer from larger royal and Caspian terns.



Three species occur off our coast, the pomarine, parasitic and long-tailed. They're overall sleeker looking than gulls and adults of all three species have a distinct black face and cap and longer central tail feathers. Beyond that, things start to get confusing and complicated.

All three species occur in both dark and light phases. Light-phase adults have whitish undersides while the dark versions are sooty brown all over. Then there are the juveniles that from a distance, or even up close to the untrained eye, don't look all that different from the juvenile herring gulls that proliferate in late summer. And yes, there are differences between light and dark phase juveniles. If you happen to be really fortunate, you might even catch a glimpse of a skua, which basically looks like a jaeger on steroids. There are two species of those but don't worry about it because it won't be on the test.

If all that weren't enough, there was yet another species I needed to learn that can perhaps best be described as a seagull with little man syndrome. This pelagic bird that for all intents and purposes looks like a short seagull that lifted weights to compensate for its smaller stature is the northern fulmar. And though they're only very distantly related, like the jaegers they come in light and dark phases; and just to make things even more confusing, an intermediate phase.



Northern Fulmar

Vagrants

By now you should be feeling a little more confident in your ability to correctly identify pelagic seabirds. I was, until the first tropical storm glanced the New England coast. When that happens there's almost no limit to what might show up in our waters: tropicbirds, boobies, pelicans and a half dozen or so species of terns we don't typically see in our neck of the woods, just to name a few. But you won't see them if you're not out there.



What is a Pelagic?

The word *pelagic* means "of the sea." Similar to pelagic fish like tuna, sailfish and marlin, pelagic seabirds spend most of their time on the open ocean, except for a brief period when northern species nest in arctic and subarctic tundra or remote coastal islands. Otherwise they're rarely seen from shore, and a boat trip is often the only way for birders to get a glimpse of these ocean wanderers. The category includes a variety of seabirds including petrels and storm-petrels, shearwaters, jaegers, skuas and gannets.

Sport-Ventures conducts customized pelagic birding trips for groups of up to six. Call well in advance to arrange specific dates. All trips are subject to cancellation due to weather.

If You Go

You may be going as far as 15-25 miles offshore where weather and sea conditions can vary considerably.

Seasick Pills - Once the boat leaves the dock it will not return until the trip is over. Even on the best days, the slow, rolling swells can get to you, and on the worst

Sun Protection - On the open ocean you're exposed to direct rays of the sun as well as those reflected off the water. You should have sunscreen, hat, proper clothing and polarized sunglasses.

Optics - Binoculars are a must and those with motion stabilization are even better. Forget the spotting scopes as there is too much motion but bring your camera and a long lens as birds often come in close range.

Field Guide - The best way to identify and learn your pelagics is with a book.

Offshore Charters

Pelagic Seabird Tours



Whale — Dolphin Cruises



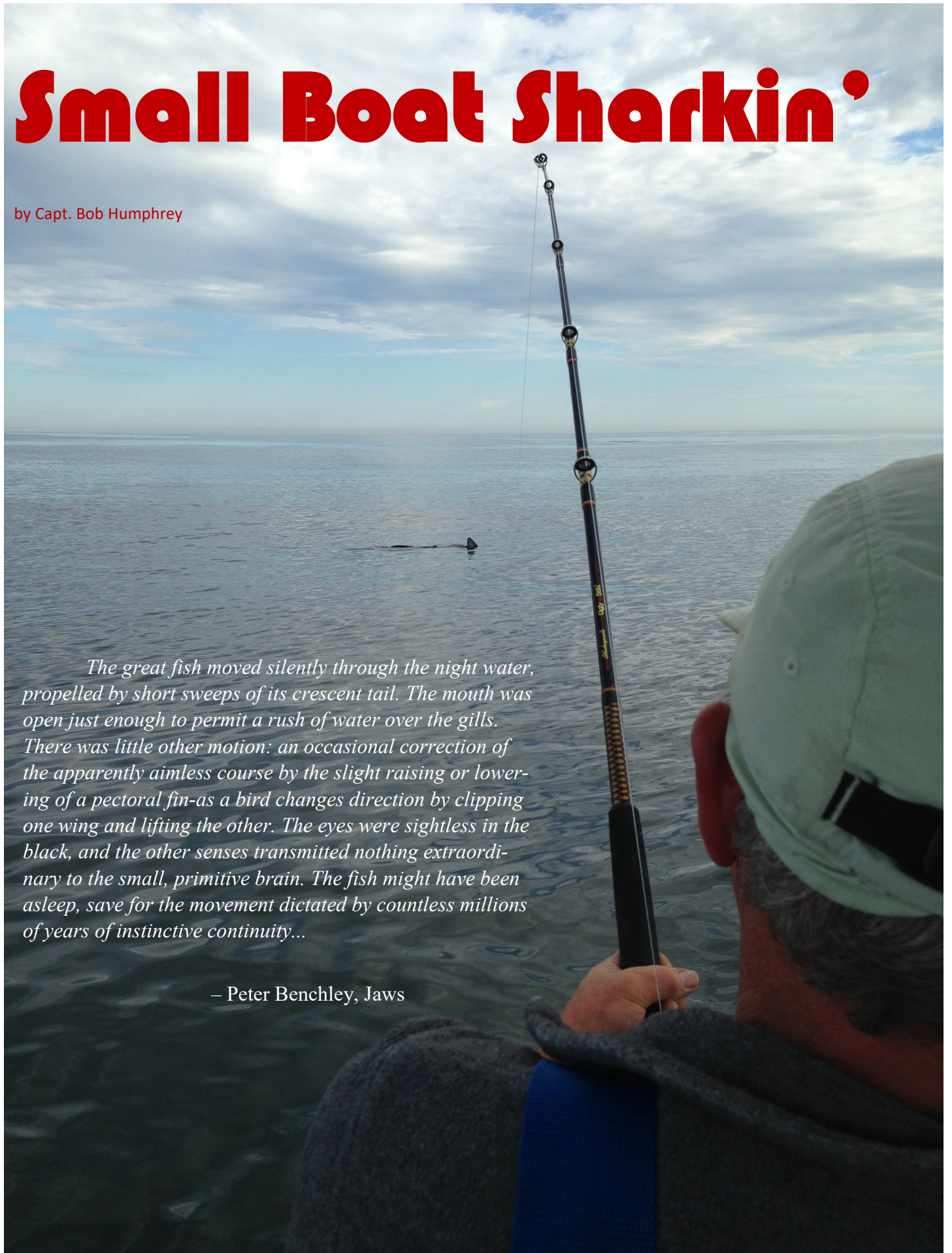
**Aboard the
FALCON IV
4-6 hours \$ 400**

Small Boat Sharkin'

by Capt. Bob Humphrey

The great fish moved silently through the night water, propelled by short sweeps of its crescent tail. The mouth was open just enough to permit a rush of water over the gills. There was little other motion: an occasional correction of the apparently aimless course by the slight raising or lowering of a pectoral fin-as a bird changes direction by clipping one wing and lifting the other. The eyes were sightless in the black, and the other senses transmitted nothing extraordinary to the small, primitive brain. The fish might have been asleep, save for the movement dictated by countless millions of years of instinctive continuity...

— Peter Benchley, *Jaws*



The aforementioned novel and the resulting movie became to fishing what Caddy Shack is to golf, a virtual treasure trove of instantly recognizable one liners, among the more memorable being, “We’re gonna need a bigger boat.” If you’re going after a leviathan as big as the movie shark you might. But if your objective is the mid-sized “squalids” more typical of New England’s coast you can get by with a surprisingly small craft.

Go Small or Don’t Go

I discovered the sport of small boat sharking largely out of frustration and necessity. I was enamored with the big, toothy fish but lacked what I considered the proper vessel. I also got tired of largely unsuccessful attempts at mooching a ride on someone else’s boat. The light went on one day while mackerel and striper fishing off Maine’s halfway rock in my “little” boat. We were trolling along when a shark breached behind us. That told me we were far enough offshore to catch a shark. “What the hell,” I thought. “You’ve got a boat. Why not give it a shot?”

Mine is hardly what you’d think of when envisioning an offshore big game fishing boat. The 20-foot Polarkraft Outlander CC is a sportsman’s boat for sure, designed cooperatively by Hamlin’s Marine and some of the hunting-fishing folks from L.L. Bean. But its low freeboard and open cockpit were intended more for duck hunting and freshwater or nearshore fishing. Clearly it would require a little customization.

The first step was a T-top, which I had custom built by Cumberland Iron Works. That provided some protection from the sun, and gave the boat a more “sporty” look. I also modified the helm seat, replacing the short, fixed post with a higher adjustable one, centering it behind the helm and replacing the fold-down seat with a smaller, “casting” seat. I spend far more time standing than sitting behind the console.

Next came tackle. I went with pretty much basic stuff, a pair of Penn Senator 114s with 80-pound mono mounted on Penn International stand-up rods. To my outfit I added a fighting belt and vest, wire leaders, hooks, swivels, a crimping kit and a liberal supply of party balloons. I fashioned my own chum basket out of a milk crate and float tube, threw in some chum and bait and we were set for the first outing.



Fair Weather Fishing

Small boat fishing certainly has its drawbacks, the biggest being, you have to be careful about picking your days. I watch the weather for forecasted winds of five knots or less. I could probably push that envelope a little, but why risk it? You want to be safe, and it’s supposed to be fun. Even on those flat days, the sea breeze usually picks up in the afternoon, which sometimes means a wet ride home. When the first favorable forecast came, we headed out.

Another minor drawback is range. Smaller boats may have sufficient cruising range to venture up to 20 miles offshore, but the farther from shore you go, the greater the risk. I prefer to stick within about 15 miles. Fortunately, good shark and tuna fishing exists within that range from most New England ports. There’s also usually enough other boats around that if something should go wrong help is close at hand.

Fishing technique is largely the same regardless of boat size. Once on location, we checked tide and wind, power-chummed for a mile or so then set up a drift and started chumming. The first hook-up came within an hour and we quickly learned one advantage of small boat fishing.

We started the engine, just in case, but with all the fish we caught, never once had to put the boat in gear. The center console design allowed anglers to move around the boat rather than moving the boat. Admittedly, we caught only blue sharks, most of which came in fairly quick. Had we hooked a mako or thresher it might have been a different story. Even then, I believe the maneuverability of a smaller boat would prove advantageous.



I also learned you go smaller on the tackle side. I could only afford two outfits, which proved limiting until one of my companions clipped a steel leader onto his cod rod and tossed a bait over the side. I was in the rotation when the first shark hit the light rod. It was certainly sporting. The rod held up fine but it was a strain on the light drag.

I should point out that we fought the fish adrift. Had we powered up and followed its runs we could have taken some strain off the outfit; but we saw no need. The five-foot blue was brought to the boat and released in roughly 15 minutes.



www.cironworks.com

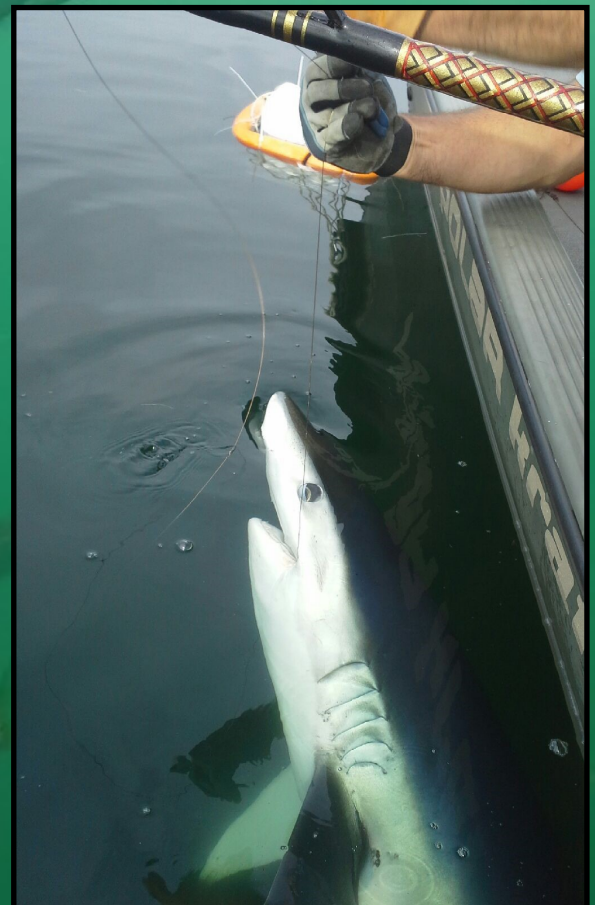


Another potential drawback to a smaller boat is space, but that's partly perception. We had plenty of space in my Polarkraft for two to three anglers plus all the miscellaneous tackle and gear. My partner later ventured out in his Lund Alaskan and found it similarly suited to small boat sharking. More room would be nice, but is certainly not essential.



All in all it was a pretty successful first season. I averaged about one trip a week as weather permitted and each produced positive results. I'll be making a few minor improvements for this season including the addition of a Yeti cooler, some sturdier rod holders and at least one more rod and reel combo, but I'll be back on the water for some small boat sharking as soon as the forecast allows.

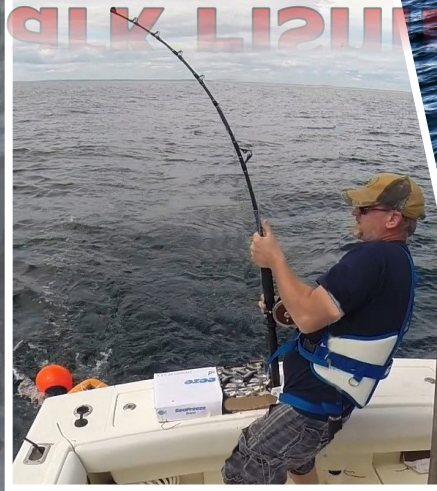
To watch some small boat sharkin' action check out our video at:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lxznZn3YO6U>



Offshore Sportfish Charters

(4 person max)

Shark Fishing



Tuna Fishing



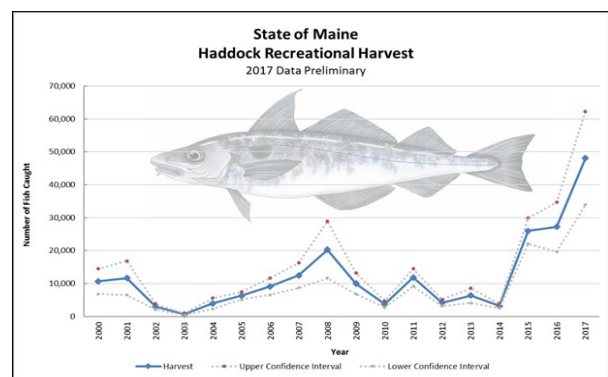
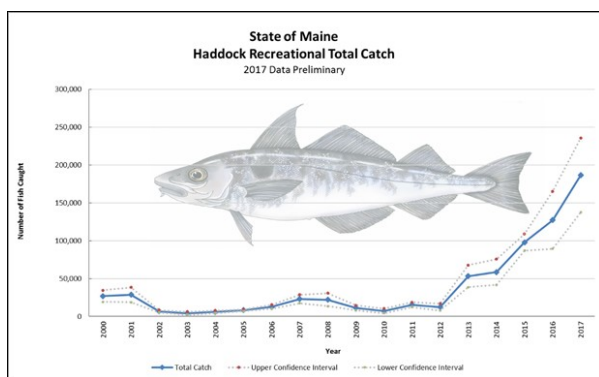
Full Day
8-12 hours
\$ 1,000



Also available for tournaments

Sure Cure for a Haddock

While cod numbers have plummeted to perilously low numbers, due largely to commercial over-fishing, there is one bright spot in New England groundfishing. A side effect of conservation measures directed primarily at cod, haddock stocks have soared in recent years, and recreational fishermen are reaping the benefits. Book your charter soon if you want to feast on some of the finest fish in the ocean.



Offshore Charters

(4 person max)
Groundfish

6 hours \$ 600

Outdoor Recreation Adventures with Sport-Ventures

Thank you for your interest in fishing with Sport-Ventures. My goal is to provide you with an enjoyable quality experience.

Time of Departure: Time of departure will vary according to the type of trip and we will be happy to try and arrange times that suit your schedule as much as possible.

Location of Departure: Boat typically departs from Royal River Boat Yard in Yarmouth, but arrangements can be made for pick-up elsewhere. Harasacket River trips - Freeport Town Landing; Kennebec River trips - Bath Public Landing; Saco Bay - Pine Point, Scarborough; Saco River - Saco Public Landing on Routes 9/208.

Licenses: Maine now requires anglers to register with the Saltwater Registry. All anglers must be properly licensed.

Lodging: Lodging is not provided. We will be happy to provide you with a listing of local motels and campgrounds.

Transportation: We do not provide local transportation but will be happy to assist you in finding some if needed.

What to Bring:

Clothing: Be prepared for anything. Temperatures on the water can be ten degrees or more cooler than on the mainland, particularly in rain and fog. Always bring at least a light jacket or sweatshirt. You could be spending six hours in the sun so bring plenty of sunscreen. You may also want a hat, long-sleeved shirt, and long pants. A good pair of polarized sunglasses will help in spotting fish and protecting your eyes. Waterproof footwear is not essential, but wear something you don't mind getting wet. Passengers are responsible for their own food, beverage, cooler and ice. You may also want to bring an extra cooler if you want to keep your catch.

Other Equipment: We will supply all the necessary bait & tackle unless you are flyfishing. However, you are welcome to bring your own. If you have a rod & reel combo you're comfortable with, or a favorite lure, bring them. We are currently not equipped with extra fly-fishing tackle, but will take fly-fishing-only charters or combo trips, provided you bring your own tackle. You should also bring a camera.

The Trip: There is no such thing as an average trip. Each charter is specifically customized to suit the particular wishes of the client, and modified according to fishing/sea/weather conditions on any given day. Let us know what you want, and we will try to arrange a trip for you.

About your guide: Bob Humphrey is a Certified Wildlife Biologist, Outdoor Writer, Registered Maine Guide, and USCG Licensed Operator with more than four decades of saltwater fishing experience. He has fished commercially and recreationally along the Atlantic Coast from Maine to Connecticut, and in Alaska; and written numerous articles on saltwater fishing for several publications including: *Northwoods Sporting Journal*, *New Hampshire Sportsman*, *Vermont Afield*, *Massachusetts Sportsman*, *New England Game & Fish*, *On the Water* and more.

Contact: Sport-Ventures, 727 Poland Range Road, Pownal, ME 04069 (207) 688-4966 or bob@bobhumphrey.com



Rates

Inshore Charters

Striped Bass or Mackerel Fishing

Falcon IV (28 ft.)

4 hours \$350.00

6 hours \$500.00

8 hours \$650.00

Green Machine (20 ft.)

4 hours \$300

6 hours \$450

8 hours \$600

(All other trips aboard the Falcon IV)

Harbor/Lighthouse Tours

Lobster Boat Races

4 hours \$350

6 hours \$500

Seal and Natural History Trips

2 Hours \$200

4 hours \$350

Offshore Charters

Whale/Dolphin Cruises

Pelagic Seabird Trips

4-6 Hours \$450

Shark/Tuna Fishing

Full Day (8-12 hours) \$1,000

Terms: A 30 percent deposit is required to confirm specific dates. Balance of payment for all days reserved, in cash or check is due prior to embarking. Any cancellations made by the party less than 14 days from the charter date will result in forfeiture of deposit. All trips are subject to cancellation due to weather/sea conditions. If the captain must cancel, a second date will be scheduled or deposit will be returned in full.

About Our Boats

The Falcon IV is a 28' Albemarle XF powered by twin Yanmar diesels. It features plenty of deck space in the cockpit, a full cabin with v-berth, microwave, refrigerator and fully enclosed head.

The Green Machine is a 20' Polarkraft Outlander CC powered by a Yamaha 115 four-stroke engine. It features ample deck space, a live well and side lockers for rod and tackle storage.