



CAPE COD CERTIFIED

CAPE COD PURSUITS

Fishing on Cape Cod: Shore, Pier & Saltwater — A Complete Guide

A free field guide from the people who actually live here.



capecodcertified.com/guides/fishing-cape-cod-saltwater

Cape Cod's standing as one of the Atlantic coast's premier fishing destinations has a specific, measurable cause. The peninsula sits at the convergence of two major ocean currents: the cold Labrador Current pushing down from the north, and the warm Gulf Stream surging up from the south. Where they meet, they create a thermocline extraordinarily rich in bait fish.

What You Can Catch

Striped Bass

The iconic Cape Cod fish. Migrate north from Chesapeake and Hudson River spawning grounds, arriving in May and staying through November. The Canal and Nauset Beach are legendary striper venues. Season: May–November.

Bluefish

Ferocious fighters arriving in June, staying through September. Hit surface plugs, metal spoons, and cut bait with equal aggression. Season: June–September.

Fluke (Summer Flounder)

Flatfish worked on bucktail jigs just above the bottom. Inshore rips between Chatham and Monomoy are especially productive. Excellent eating. Season: May–September.

Scup (Porgy)

Abundant, easy to catch, good eating. Ideal beginner or family species. Sandwich and Bourne town piers are reliable spots. Season: June–October.

Tautog (Blackfish)

Structure fish — inhabit jetties, rocky piers, submerged boulders. Best September–November when water cools.

False Albacore

One of the most electrifying shore-fishing species on the Atlantic coast. Arrive in September and October off Monomoy. Season: September–October.

Bluefin Tuna

Giant bluefin (400–1,000+ lbs) work Stellwagen Bank and offshore canyons. Requires full-day offshore charter. Season: June–October.

Best Shore and Pier Spots

Cape Cod Canal — Bourne and Sandwich

The most famous shore-fishing location in New England. The US Army Corps maintains paved service roads on both banks giving free public access to the full 17-mile waterway. Striped bass peaks at night on a moving tide.

Race Point Beach — Provincetown

Access to the Cape Cod rip where bay and ocean currents collide. Big stripers and bluefish work both sides.

Nauset Beach and North Beach — Orleans and Chatham

Has produced some of the largest striped bass ever caught from shore in Massachusetts.

Sandwich Town Pier

Maintained public pier with reliable summer action for scup, tautog, and occasional stripers.

Bourne Town Pier

Buzzards Bay side of the Canal entrance. Scup in summer; tautog in September–October.

Licenses and Permits

A Massachusetts Recreational Saltwater Fishing Permit is required for anyone 16 or older. It is **free** and available at mass.gov.

Charter Boats

Operations concentrate in Provincetown, Chatham, Orleans, Hyannis, and Sandwich. Half-day bottom fishing (4–5 hrs), full-day inshore (6–8 hrs), and full-day offshore (10–12 hrs) for bluefin tuna. Book ahead for summer weekends.

◆ THINGS TO DO

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