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Maine Coast Sport Fishing

Maine Development Commission

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**MAINE COAST
SPORT FISHING**

T. BUNKER

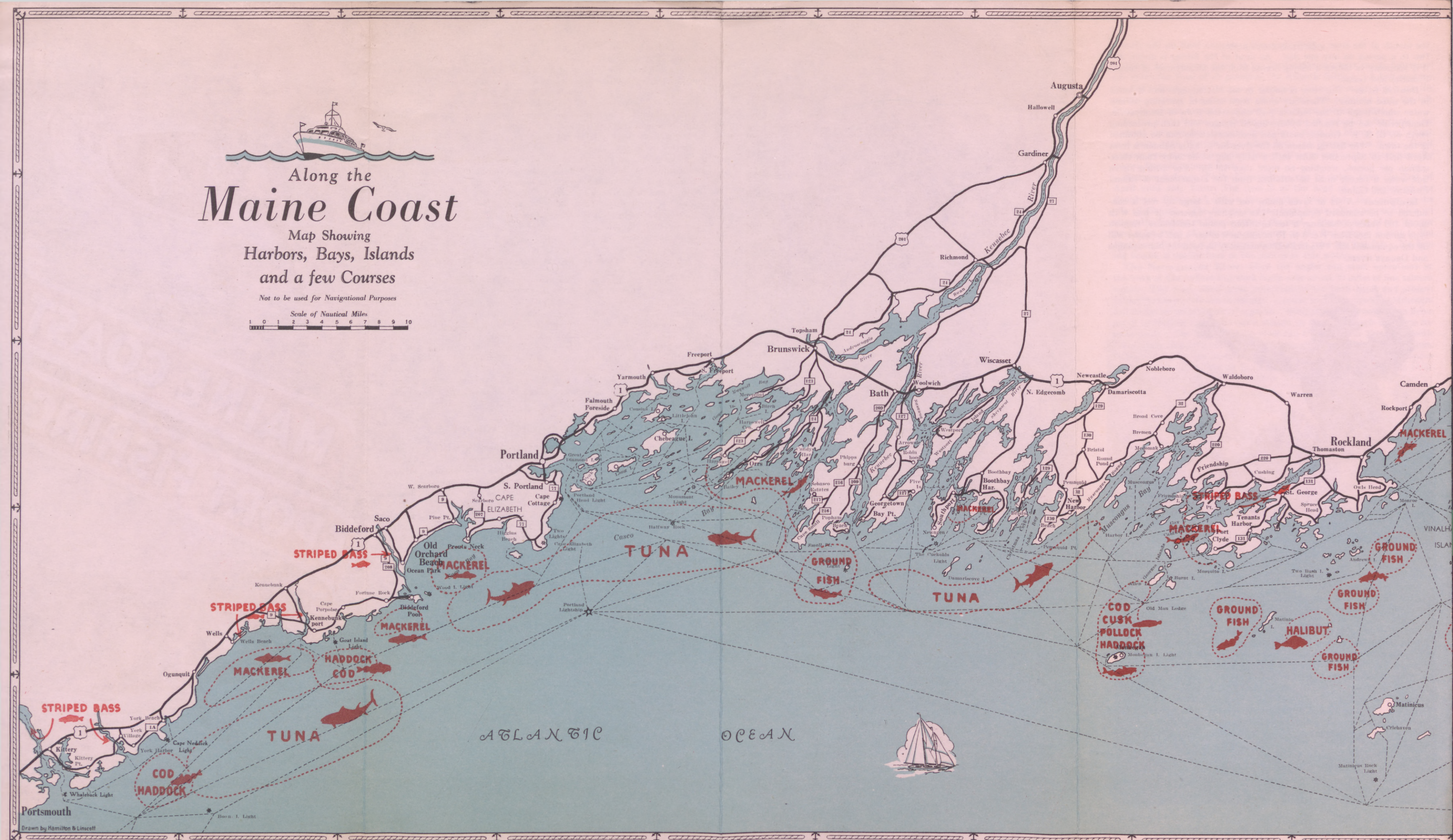


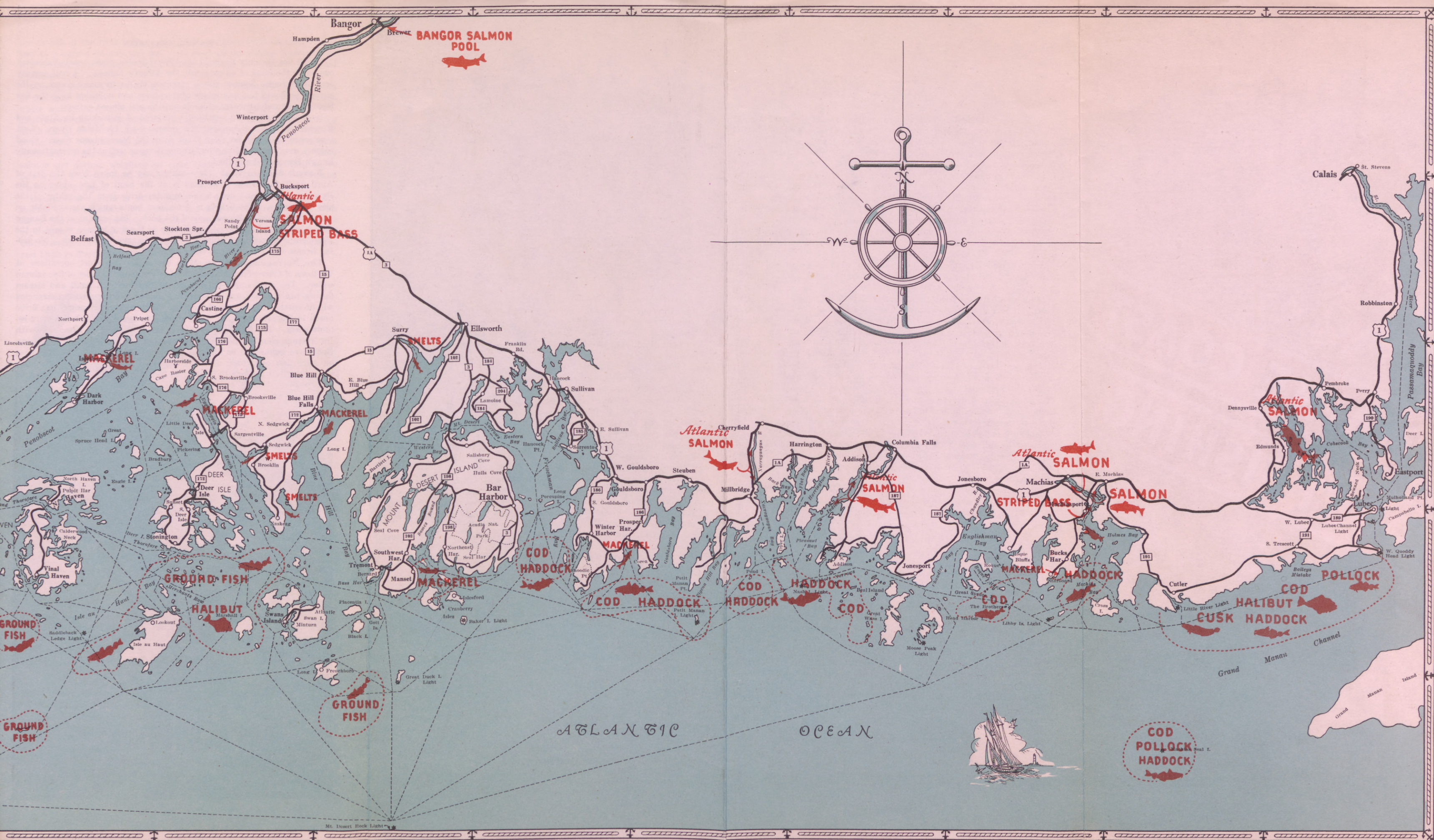
Along the Maine Coast

Map Showing
Harbors, Bays, Islands
and a few Courses

Not to be used for Navigational Purposes

Scale of Nautical Miles
1 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10





MAINE

SALT WATER FISHING

Since before the first settlers arrived on these shores the coastal area that is now known as Maine has been recognized as one of the finest fishing grounds in the world. As early as 1550 Portugese and French fishing fleets crossed the Atlantic to fill their holds with fish taken from the cool crystal clear waters of the Gulf of Maine.

In recent years sports fishermen from all parts of the country are finding that the Maine coast offers something unusual in the way of angling. Unusual, because the 2500 mile spruce and pine studded coastline provides such a magnificent setting for the sport. Hundreds of bays, inlets, and islands offer an ever-changing scene for the angler.

From early spring to late fall this vast area is virtually alive with fish of all shapes and sizes, ceaselessly on the move; ever ready to take the angler's lure.

And what an assortment of finny denizens of the sea wait the fisherman—giant tuna, Atlantic salmon, striped bass, mackerel, halibut, swordfish, cod, haddock, pollack, flounders!

It matters not how much the angler can afford for his equipment, the sport can be enjoyed with either a fifteen hundred dollar tuna rod and reel or a ten cent flounder line. Salt water fishing is a sport that can be enjoyed by every one who comes to Maine.

A great deal of Maine's heritage comes from the sea. Fishing and seafaring has been, and still is the livelihood of hundreds of its coastal folk. Hence their knowledge of the sea and its creatures will be of constant interest to the angler who comes to Maine for a fishing trip.

The Maine skipper knows the waters like an open book and the handling of a boat is second nature to him. You will enjoy his quiet, down east humor and the tales he has to tell of Maine men of long ago who went down to the sea in ships.

When the angler has finished fishing for the day, he will find the picturesque towns and villages of the Maine coast pleasant places to tarry and explore. Each settlement has its own background of history and folklore which has inspired so many books and stories by the prominent writers of the nation.

Salt water fishing in Maine pays fine dividends in health, sport and peace of mind. Being near the sea brings a feeling of freedom and well being. This, then, is the reward for a Maine salt water fishing trip.

MAINE'S GIANT TUNA

During the last few years sportsmen have become aware that the Maine coast furnished unequalled fishing for that streamlined fighter of the deep, the tuna. And many freely predict that within a few years all tuna records will be broken by fish taken in Maine waters.

About the first of July vast schools of tuna, many weighing as much as 1200 pounds, begin moving up the Maine coast, and by the 15th of the month these fish provide terrific action as they feed voraciously on schooling mackerel, hake, pollack and whiting. From the middle of July until September commercial and sport fishermen will take more than 1000 of the bluefins from an area which extends from York Harbor on the west as far east as Muscongus Bay.

To date the record for fish taken with rod and reel is 709 pounds; with harpoon 900 pounds. While these fish are large enough to satisfy the most exacting angler, it is unquestioned that much larger tuna inhabit Maine waters.

In Maine the angler does not have to go far afield to get his fish. Many tuna have been taken within a mile of shore and three miles out one will find school after school of the big fighters.

The fact that one has never caught a tuna is no indication that he cannot do so. Maine tuna boat skippers are expert in teaching the beginner the fine art of handling these big fish.



Maine tuna boat skippers keep their boats in excellent condition and have them equipped with every convenience for the comfort and enjoyment of their patrons. Many ports have charter boats equipped with fishing tackle and chairs. Some of the better known ones are at Bailey Island, Boothbay Harbor, Portland, Ogunquit, York Harbor, and Kennebunkport.

Four of the most popular types of tuna fishing off the Maine coast are by harpoon, trolling with a rod and reel, still fishing with a rod and reel and ordinary handlining.

Harpoon—It consists of a wooden pole with an iron rod inserted in the end. Affixed to the rod is a bronze barb. To the barb, which slips off the rod when it is inserted in the fish, is tied several hundred feet of strong line which in turn is secured to a small barrel or keg. The harpooner stands on a platform on the bow of the boat and throws the harpoon at the fish he has selected from the school. The fish are hard to hit but that is what makes harpooning real sport.

Handlining—Several hundred feet of lobster pot warp attached to a piano wire leader and a 12-0 or 14-0 hook is the standard equipment for this method of tuna fishing. The line is weighted with any heavy object which will take the hook near the bottom. Thread on a silver hake, drop the hook overboard and wait for results.

Rod and Reel—A heavy duty rod with at least a 36 ounce tip is suggested. It should be wood and no metal in the core and is usually split bamboo or laminated bamboo and hickory. Those equipped with a roller first guide and a roller tip guide are the best. These rollers eliminate considerable friction on the line. For the experienced angler a 23 ounce tip might offer more sport.

Veteran anglers suggest a 12-0 or 14-0 reel equipped with an adjustable drag, either star or lever type. Reel should be geared at least 3 to 1.

Line—For the 36 ounce rod use either 39 or 54 thread line and for the 36 ounce rod nothing heavier than 36 thread line. Reel should carry from 600 to 1000 yards.

Leader—Fifteen feet of piano wire or wire cable leader is advisable, with an equal amount of double line.

Other Equipment—The angler should have a harness (vest type), leader materials, silk thread, wire cutters, heavy cotton gloves and a supply of hooks.

Still Fishing—With the rod and reel follow the same procedure as with regular handlining and once the fish is on there is just as much sport as though the fish had been hooked by trolling. In trolling, whether chumming or not, the lure is dragged at from three to five miles an hour and from 30 to 60 yards from the boat.

Charter Boats—A complete list of charter boats and charter prices can be obtained by writing either the Sea and Shore Fisheries Department, or the Maine Development Commission, Augusta, Maine.

ATLANTIC SALMON

Maine has the only rivers in the United States where sports fishermen can catch the King of all gamefish, the Atlantic Salmon. A half century ago the Atlantic Salmon was a common visitor to many rivers on the eastern seaboard but man-made obstructions and pollution kept the fish from its natural spawning grounds until it was almost extinct.

In the past decade a systematic program of restocking by State and Federal agencies has brought the salmon back to Maine rivers. Last year more than 500 fish were taken from the Narraguagus river. Good catches were reported from the Dennys River as well as the internationally known Bangor Salmon Pool.

Bangor Salmon Pool—Here salmon can be taken from the first of April until July 15th. The pool is at the head of tide water on the Penobscot River and only a few minutes drive from the center of the city of Bangor. The fishing is done from boats which are available on either the Bangor or Brewer side of the pool. The opening of the Bangor pool is an event of national significance as the first salmon is sent to the President, hence it is considered an honor to take the first fish. No fishing license is needed here as the pool is in tide water.

The Narraguagus River—Here the angler can start operations at the town of Cherryfield and work north over about 20 miles of fine salmon water. The river offers great potentialities for both bank and stream fishing, hence waders are necessary. A guide is not required but strangers will do better with the aid of a guide. With a guide the angler can drive north to Deblois and come down stream by canoe to reach the more remote pools. The salmon in this river run from eight to 25 pounds with the average about 15 pounds. Best fishing is late in May through June. Boats and guides can be hired at Cherryfield. The fishing season opens on April first and closes on September 15 for the area above the Still-water dam but extends to September 30th in the area from the dam to



the mouth of the river. Daily bag and possession limit on this river is two to a person on any one day. As most of the fishing is above tide it is necessary to obtain a fishing license from the Department of Inland Fisheries and Game.

Dennys River—This river is similar to the Narraguagus and is fished in the same manner. There are about eight miles of sparkling salmon water which reach to the Salmon pool above the town of Dennysville. Dennysville can be reached by driving to Bangor and then proceeding north on U. S. 1. Guides, boats and accommodations can be obtained in the town. The fishing season on the river for Atlantic Salmon is from April first to September 30th with a daily bag of no more than three salmon per person, weighing no more than 15 lbs. For fishing above tide water a license must be obtained from the Department of Inland Fisheries and Game.

Equipment—A six or seven ounce rod with a large fly reel is considered to be standard equipment. An ordinary tapered fly line with about 100 yards of backing; a ten to fifteen pound test leader; English type salmon flies from No. 6 to 10 in size; and either a gaff or taylor will fill the equipment bill. Waders will be necessary on both the Narraguagus and Dennys rivers.



DEEP SEA PARTIES

Deep sea fishing with handlines is just plain "fishin'" that requires no angling skill but provides a lot of real entertainment. Handlining for cod, haddock, cusk, hake and other ground fish is probably the oldest form of fishing on the Maine coast.

It is an every day occurrence for visitors at Maine coastal resorts to band together, hire a boat and boatman, and spend a day on the fishing grounds.

One need bring no tackle along. The skipper of the boat will furnish all the equipment as well as the bait. He will even bait the hooks and lower them to the bottom. And come noon, he will dish up a tasty fish chowder for all hands if they so desire.

While handlining the angler never knows what to expect when he drops his hook overboard. He may take a cod, haddock, halibut or even a dog fish. When the fish are running there is never a dull moment.

It would be hard to find a Maine coastal town that does not have at least one fisherman that caters to fishing parties. These men have stout boats and know the fishing grounds as well as they know their own back yards.

By splitting up the cost, individual members of a handlining party will find the day's entertainment surprisingly inexpensive. And in some cases, if the catch is large, it can be sold on return to port.

Inquiry at any town on the Maine coast will reveal the whereabouts of boats available for charter.



STRIPED BASS

The increasing popularity of striped bass fishing in Maine is primarily due to the fact that sports fishermen are finding the down east beaches and inlets new and fertile fields to conquer. For a period of years the stripers were absent from Maine waters but recent surveys of catches show that these fish are on the increase in local waters especially in the western section of the coast line.

Anglers began taking them in several streams in 1937 and since that year bass have been reported as far east as the St. Croix river at Calais. Stripers have been taken from the Saco, Mousam, Kennebunk, Royal, Kennebec, Penobscot, Union, Machias, Dennys, Narraguagus, St. Croix rivers as well as from other small streams.

Although surf casting is comparatively new in Maine sports fishermen have found the beaches of the western part of the state productive of good results, hence the interest in this method of taking the stripers is on the increase.

Striped bass fishing has great possibilities in Maine. Fish twenty pounds and over have been taken off shore and those caught in the Kennebec and Saco rivers have averaged from two to ten pounds.

The most popular type of fishing is by trolling from a row boat equipped with oars or an outboard motor. The fish seem to like the lure best in swift water. They are savage strikers and at times will take thirty or forty yards of line at a rush. Stripers will take many types of bait; small eels, sand and muck worms, shrimp, shedder crabs, squid and herring.

Equipment—An eight foot rod weighing 10 or 12 ounces, a level winding reel and a 12 to 15 thread line will be satisfactory for boat fishing. Use either a fine piano wire or twisted gut leader from 18 inches to two feet long. For lures and hooks, equipment should include 4-0, 5-0 and 6-0 hooks, several large artificial bass baits, Japanese feathers with heads of various weights ranging from one to three ounces; three or four spoons and flies could be added.

Regulations—Striped bass can be taken only on rod and reel. The bag limit is six fish per day.

SALT WATER BATTLERS

For slam bang action on the rod and reel, the salt water angler should not overlook the vast schools of mackerel and pollock that range the Maine coast, during the summer season. Both the pollock and the mackerel are fighting fish and travel in such numbers that once they begin to take the lure it's a case of taking them off the hook as fast as the line can be thrown overboard.

Pollock reach a maximum length of 3½ feet and a weight of thirty-five pounds. The average fish however won't exceed ten pounds. Most anything bright—even a piece of cloth tied to the hook attracts them. Large herring chopped into pieces attached to a hook with a bright spinner makes an excellent lure. Pollock strike hard and once the angler has a big one on his light gear he will realize what a game fish it is.

The method of taking them is simple. Obtain a 6 or 8 ounce boat rod with a regulation 2-0 reel and a 12 thread line.

Mackerel run much smaller but what they lack in size they make up in fighting qualities. They, too, can be found in schools most anywhere along the coast and will take the hook almost as fast as it is dropped overboard. Your boatman will take you to schools of fish acres in extent.

Use light gear, a leaded mackerel jig with a clam for bait—or a spinner or a fly—and troll through the schools. Put on three hooks, if you wish, and get the thrill of landing as many fish at once.

Fishing parties have been known to take 400 of these fighting fish in one hour. Fly fishermen have also made splendid catches standing on a wharf and casting into deeper water.

POLE FISHING FROM WHARVES AND DOCKS

Most any cove, inlet or wharf along the Maine coast is a potential fishing spot. The children, even the whole family, can enjoy many pleasant hours of recreation catching cunners, flounders, harbor pollock and tom cod from the wharves and ledges.

The equipment is inexpensive and the bait to be found on almost any shore. Just rig up a simple hook line and sinker outfit; attach to any kind of a stick or pole, get a few clams or periwinkles for bait and the angler is ready for business. If you strike the tide right—it should be coming in—you will have all the action you want. Fish either on the bottom or half way down and something will be sure to strike the bait. It takes no experience or skill but it is a lot of fun. The entire outfit will cost but a few cents.

ACCOMMODATIONS, BOATS FOR HIRE

The list of accommodations awaiting the angler is a large one and ranges from deluxe hotels to inns, tourist homes and cabins. The list, "Hotels, Camps and Tourist Homes in Maine" can be obtained by writing the Maine Development Commission, State House, Augusta.

At most ports there are commercial fishermen who take out fishing parties. Many spots such as Bailey Island, Rockland, Portland, Orr's Island, Ogunquit, Kennebunkport, York Harbor, Boothbay Harbor, Bar Harbor, Southwest Harbor, Camden, and others have regular charter boats equipped for this purpose. A list of available charter boats can be obtained by writing the Sea and Shore Fisheries Department, Augusta, Maine.

Fishing Regulations—The salt water angler in Maine has little to worry about so far as laws are concerned. Except in rare cases the season is always open and no licenses or permits of any kind are required for sports fishing.

A general state law prohibits the taking of tuna except by rod and reel, handlining or harpooning. Striped bass and sea salmon can be taken on rod and reel only. The bag limit on striped bass is six fish per day.

Specific information on Maine salt water fishing can be obtained by writing Commissioner Richard E. Reed, Sea and Shore Fisheries Department, Augusta, Maine.

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