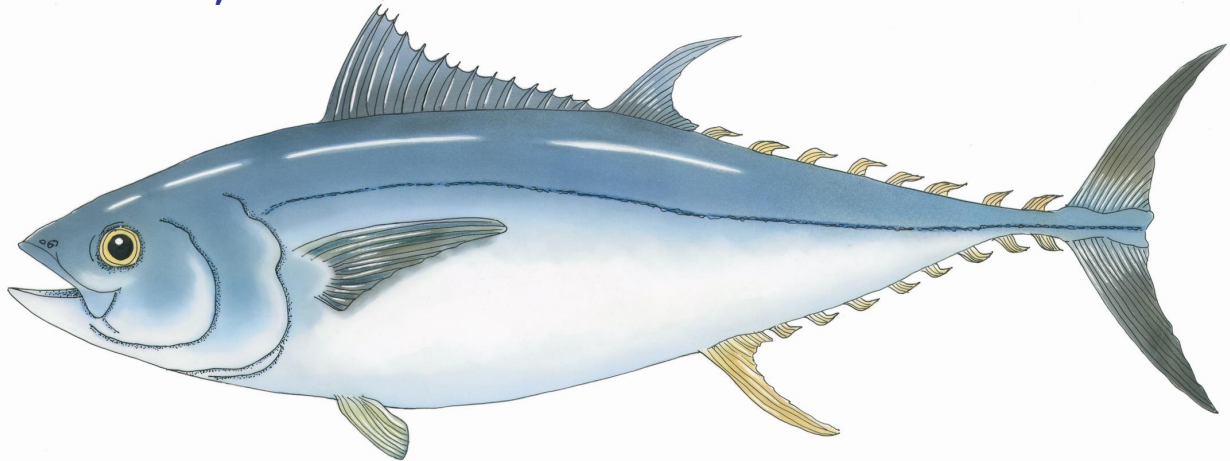


# Bluefin Tuna (Thunnus thynnus)

## Family Scombridae, Mackerels



**Common names:** giant, tuna, horse mackerel

**Description:** Bluefin tuna are deep blue on top, blending to silver along their sides and belly. Their lack of additional dark markings helps to differentiate them when young from bonito. As with other members of the mackerel family, bluefin tuna have two dorsal fins, one anal fin, plus numerous dorsal and anal finlets. These fish are built for speed, having an efficient torpedo shaped body coupled with a lunate shaped tail fin. Bluefin tuna can grow to an enormous size with the largest examples weighing above 1,500 pounds and measuring close to 12 feet in length.

**Where found:** offshore

**Similar Gulf of Maine species:** none

**Remarks:** Bluefin tuna are pelagic fish that often travel in large schools, especially when they are young. Older fish in the 350 to 500 pound range tend to journey in smaller schools numbering from a few to as many as 40 members. The very largest fish tend to be mostly solitary. Bluefin tuna are built for speed and endurance and may reach speeds of over fifty miles per hour. Being seasonal migrators, tuna generally appear off Maine's coast by early summer. Tackle in the 80 to 130 weight class offers an angler the best chance of successfully landing one of these hard-fighting fish. Both trolling and bait fishing are popular ways to catch tuna. Effective baits include herring, butterfish, mackerel and squid.

**Records:** MSSAR:

harpoon: Tim Tower/ Percy Stevens, Jr., 08/20/81, 1,155 lbs., Perkins Cove

handline: Ian Bexon, 09/07/98, 810.0 lbs., Portland

rod and reel: Jerry Jamison, 08/10/77, 819 lbs., Bath

fly rod: vacant

junior male: vacant

junior female: vacant

IGFA All-Tackle World Record: 1,496 lbs.

Fish Illustrations by: Roz Davis Designs, Damariscotta, ME (207) 563-2286

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