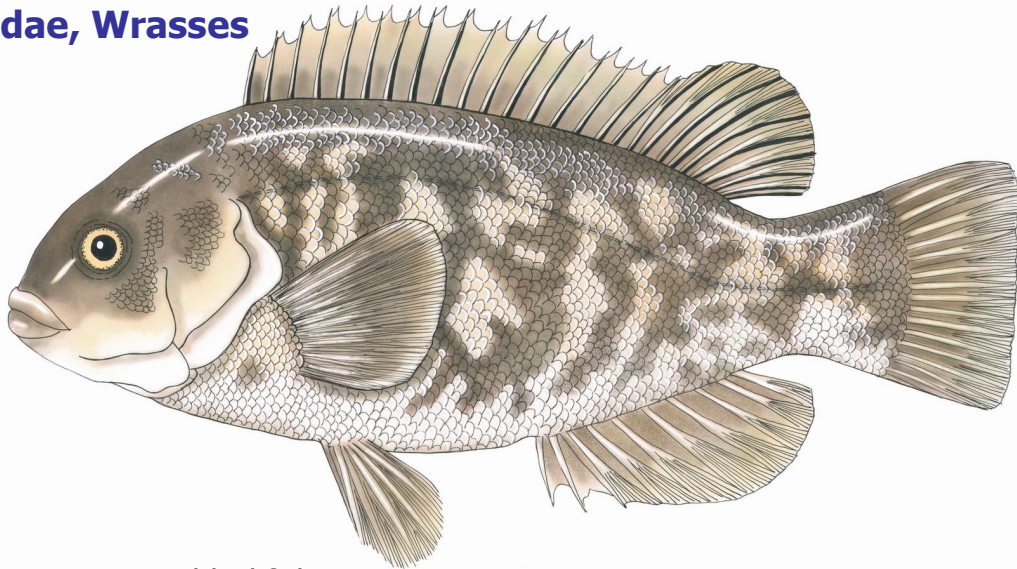


Tautog (Tautoga onitis)

Family Labridae, Wrasses



Common names: tautog, blackfish, tog

Description: Tautog are usually a mottled brown to black shade on top with a white or gray chin and underbelly. They are stout in shape and have a blunt snout, long dorsal fin and a broad caudal peduncle. These fish are three times as long as they are deep. Their lips are thick and they have 2 to 3 canine teeth located toward the front of their mouth. Found at the rear of their mouth are more rounded molar-like teeth that they use for grinding. Tautog can grow to 3 feet in length and to around 22 pounds in weight, but their average size is closer to 2 to 4 pounds in weight.

Where found: inshore

Similar Gulf of Maine species: cunner

Remarks: Tautog are occasionally caught along Maine's southwest coast. Common in the mid-Atlantic states, they are a popular inshore sportfish. These fish seldom frequent waters deeper than 60 feet and prefer a rocky bottom to set on. Areas around boulders, submerged wrecks, breakwaters and docks are all good places to fish for this species. Good baits include crabs, shrimp, clams, mussels and marine worms. Tautog are not an active fish, but when hooked put up a determined fight. Their firm white meat is considered to be of good quality, especially when used to make a chowder.

Records: MSSAR:

handline: vacant

rod and reel: vacant

fly rod: vacant

junior male: vacant

junior female: vacant

IGFA All-Tackle World Record: 25 lbs.

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

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