

Cape Ann Fresh Catch

Here we go!

Cape Ann Fresh Catch launches inaugural season with overwhelming support and enthusiasm.



Wow! Welcome to the first season of Cape Ann Fresh Catch (CAFC)! From conception to execution the CAFC CFS has grown beyond anyone's expectations and we are just getting started. With over 700 prospective members CAFC is poised to make a huge impact on our local fisheries as well as introduce co-op members to seafood so fresh they are unlikely to encounter anything like it in a fish market. As one of our fishermen Paul Metevier (see Profile to the right) says, "[You're] tastebuds will never go back!"

The fact that this has already become such a huge success is due to the hard work and vision of many people on the CAFC team without whom none of this could have come

together. Let me introduce you to the CAFC team. First is the Gloucester Fisherman's Wives Association. Angela Sanfilippo the pres. of the group has been fighting to protect fishermen, fish and the environment for over 30 years. She led the charge in the 70's to prevent oil drilling on Georges Bank and just this past month was awarded a doctorate by Salem State College for her continuing efforts in the fight for fisher's rights.

Next on the list is Niaz Dorry. Niaz is the ED of the Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance. NAMA has help set up other csf's as well as playing a major role in getting this one off the ground. NAMA is engaged (see Team p.2)

Fisherman Profile:

Paul Metivier

Home Port: Salisbury

Boat Name/Length:
Debra Ann II, 45' John Williams (photo left)

How many years have you been fishing? Since 1975, 34 years.

What is your primary catch and gear? Ground fish, Cod, Flounder, Haddock, Dragging net.

What kind of fish will you be supplying to CAFC and how will you be catching them? The majority of the catch is as stated, a smaller amount of cat(wolf), red fish, monkfish, pollock, hake may grace the net. Dragging is the primary method, but our foot print is reduced by not using a rockhopper. Shorter tows help reduce the discard rate for unwanted bycatch and fast deck sorting gets the bycatch back into the ocean asap.

What is your favorite thing about being a fisherman? My wife loves fish and I like to make her happy.

How did you hear about Cape Ann Fresh Catch and why did you decide to participate? (see Profile p. 2)

SAFE FISH HANDLING AND STORAGE

Storing and Refrigerating Fresh Fish

Being a CAFC member means you are going to have exceptionally fresh, local seafood caught within a day or so of delivery. But being a CAFC member is also going to bring up some food safety and handling issues you may not have confronted as a consumer before. Not only will you be cutting your own steaks and fillets, but you may also have to store or freeze your fish. Though most of us are used to storing vegetables and meat, fish presents its own challenges. However, these are challenges that with a little practice you will find you can incorporate into your meal preparation without a second thought. Below are some common issues you may run into and suggestions on how best to tackle them.

First of all, before we get to storing fresh fish, the best thing you can do to ensure your fish will stay fresh for a long time is to make sure it stays cold from the time you pick it up until the time you cook it. Letting the fish get above 40° F for any length of time will shorten the fresh life of the fish. If you can, bring a cooler or freezer bag with you to pick up your fish especially if you are not heading right home. Most times the CAFC truck will be able to provide you with some ice for your trip home.

The basic rule of thumb is fresh fish is good for up to four days if properly handled and kept at or under 40° F. As you become more accustomed to handling fish you might find that your own experience (see Fish p.2)

(Fish cont'd) varies, or that you develop an eye/nose to tell when fish is no longer fresh enough. Keep in mind that many of the fish you buy at the store are already a week old by the time they get put into the display cooler, so really fresh fish can be stored for longer than four days. No matter how long you feel comfortable refrigerating your catch, there are things you can do to promote freshness.

Air is your main enemy when thinking about preserving fresh or freezing fish.

Whole fish tend to stay fresher longer than steaks and steaks stay fresh slightly longer than filets. Leaving the skin on will also prolong the storage life. Less oily fish stays fresh longer than oily fish.

Vacuum baggers are not too expensive and are a great investment if you plan to freeze your fish, and are also great for veggies and other meats. Being a cheapskate myself I use the vacuum sealer built into the human body and suck the air out of the corner of a mostly sealed ziplock bag. This does a pretty good job of removing air, but leaves you defenseless to charges that you have fish breath!

Once the fish is properly packaged in the coldest spot in your fridge, you can safely consume it for four days, and beyond that use your own judgment. I routinely consume fish I have caught up to a week after I catch them and properly store them. I sometimes find that certain fish are best a few days after being caught and filleted while others are best as fresh as possible.

The best way to tell if fish has gone bad is your nose, eyes and fingers. Any off-putting smell or ammonia smell is a sign that fish has turned. White fish such as cod and haddock tend to brown or look washed out, while deeper colored fish tend to darken. Run your finger along the flesh of the fish, does it seem sticky or mushy? Both are signs that the fish may have turned to the dark side.

Freezing Fish

Most of the fish you get from CAFC will freeze well. There are two main schools of thought to freezing fish and both involve preventing air from touching the fish: Plastic wrapping and block freezing. Fish that is properly frozen can last quite a

long time, but it is important to freeze properly and just as important to defrost properly to ensure your fish tastes great.

To plastic wrap your fish you can either vacuum bag or double wrap, both involve using plastic to seal the fish from air. Freezer air is notoriously dry, so while the concern with fresh fish and air is spoilage, the concern with frozen fish and air is that it will dry out the fish. As great as plastic seems it does let in some air, and as hard as you may suck on the ziplock

...the best thing you can do to ensure your fish will stay fresh for a long time is to make sure it stays cold from the time you pick it up...

there will still be some air in there. So here's a little trick you may see at a sushi restaurant. Take your filet or steak and wrap it as tightly as you can in commercial grade plastic wrap, then wrap it again doing your best to

get all the air out. The landfills might moan and groan a bit, but go ahead and throw the whole thing in a ziplock (and of course suck out the air!) if you think you want to store a piece of fish for more than a few weeks. Well stored fish can last an entire winter.

Block freezing is another method that tends to work better for choice cuts, smaller filets and small whole fish or for those who have large freezers. A decent set of plastic storage tubs helps keep order in the freezer, but plastic ziplocks will do as well. Put your fish in the bag/ container and fill it with water then freeze it. The block of ice will prevent air from reaching the fish. Some people like to salt the water in which the fish is frozen and I have also heard of freezing more oily cuts in milk but have yet to try that myself.

In any case, whether freezing or refrigerating make sure you label your containers with the kind of fish and the date!

Defrosting

The real key to having tasty frozen fish is thawing it. You want to make sure the fish does not lie in a puddle of thaw, nor should it warm above that magic number 40° F which leaves you a small 8° window. For optimal thawing, it is best to let the fish defrost slowly in the fridge removing any thaw water and taking care to keep the fish from air exposure. If you need to quickly defrost fish, place it under cold running water making sure to flip the fish often so it defrosts evenly.

Profile (Cont'd)

My wife had been researching ways to add value to the fish. The return wasn't matching the cost to get the fish and with restriction on days, pounds and areas the income was quickly becoming limited. By our understanding and what we heard about Port Clydes' CSF in Maine, the fishermen could fish with the restrictions to increase the number of fish in the ocean and still make it worthwhile to fish. A steady support from the community also took the pressure off certain species when prices fluctuated to the high end of their range. Local people infrequently enjoy a fresh fish, now the fish is coming home to CSF members possibly within 24 hours. Their tastebuds will never go back to store bought fish again and I like being a part of that. It puts a smile on my face.

(Team cont'd) in all kinds of issues affecting fishermen and the ocean environment. The list is long so I suggest you visit there web site www.namanet.org

On the wharf we have Vito Gigalone and his sons landing the fish, keeping track of the orders and putting together a group of fishermen whom want to work with the csf and follow our guidelines to ensure the freshest fish anyone can get. Vito has also been instrumental in working with the management councils on several rules and regulations effecting fishermen. He put forth two different proposals to help fishers stay off of the less abundant stocks and concentrate on the more abundant ones. Vito is on numerous boards of fishing groups.

Sarah Olivo rounds out our crew. She works for MIT Sea Grant and is currently working at the Gloucester Heritage Center. Sara's organizational skills helped us get this project off the ground and continues to support us even when she is traveling for work on other ocean adventures on the west coast and the Caribbean.

Steve Parkes is coordinator of the CAFC. His background includes owning his own seafood business that became part of the Wholefoods Company where he worked until 2006. He is also the one who will be driving the truck and spearheading the efforts to help people get up to speed filleting fish.

And last but certainly not least are all the people in the various towns who have worked incredibly hard to cross the T's and dot the I's without whom the CAFC depots would not be possible.