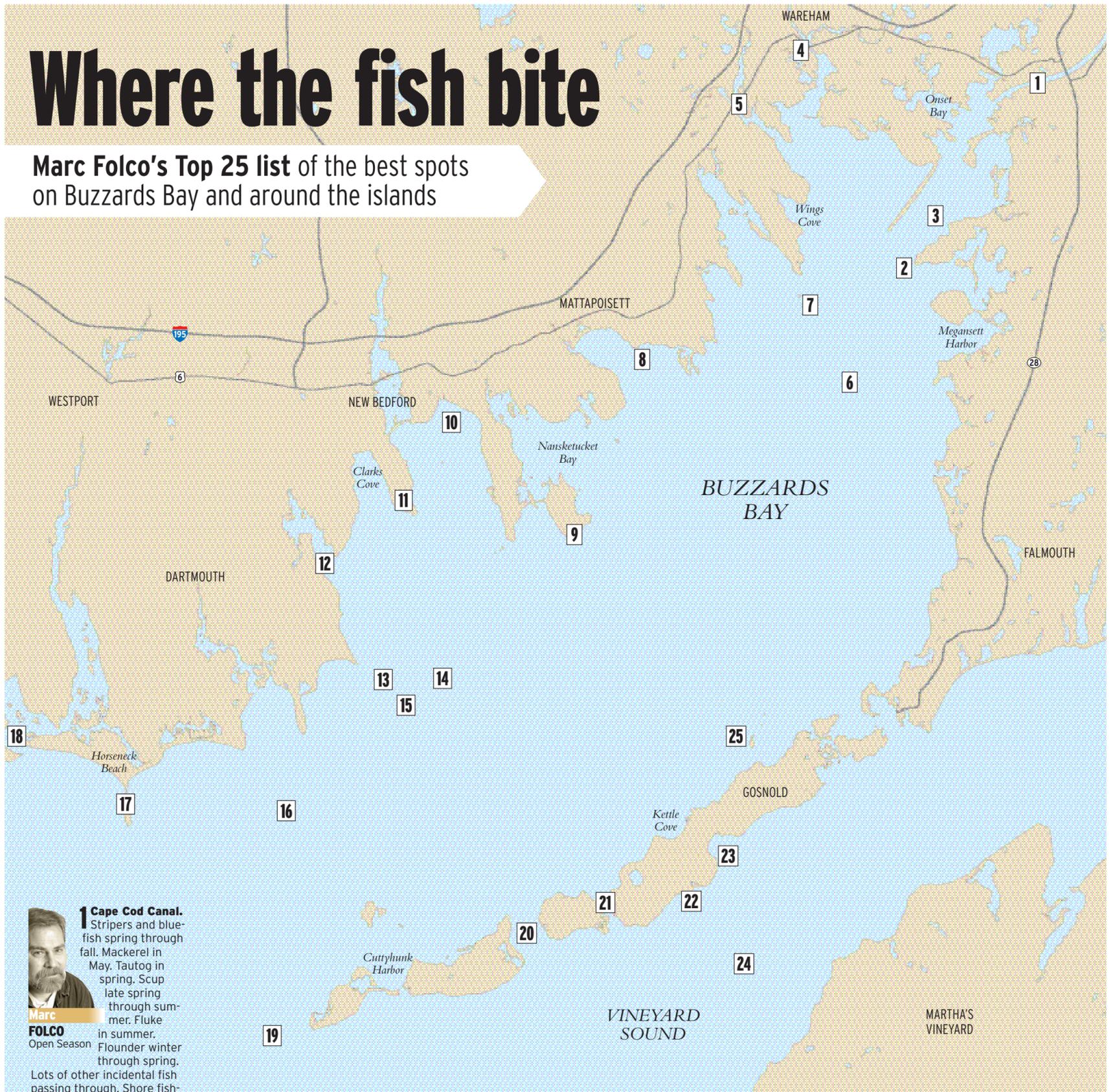


Where the fish bite

Marc Folco's Top 25 list of the best spots on Buzzards Bay and around the islands



Marc Folco
Open Season

Lots of other incidental fish passing through. Shore fishing only with lots of public access both sides of Canal. No boat fishing allowed.

2 Wing's Neck. Black sea bass and scup spring through mid-summer. Some stripers spring and fall as they migrate in and out of Canal.

3 Mashnee Flats. Fluke in summer. Also near entrance to Canal so stripers and other species possible.

4 The Narrows. Fishermen's public fishing pier on Route 6 in Wareham. Tautog and school stripers in spring. Scup and a few sea bass late spring into summer. A few bluefish and lots of snapper blues in late summer.

5 Wewantic River. Stripers, blues and scup spring through fall. Snapper blues in late summer. Bridge fishing on Route 6 in Wareham.

6 Cleveland's Ledge. Tautog, scup and black sea bass best through spring but good through fall. Some fluke in summer.

7 Bird Island. Best in spring for scup and black sea bass but good through summer. Some blues in spring and summer and a few stripers. An occasional weakfish.

8 Ned's Point. Stripers, blues and scup spring through fall. Tautog in spring. Shore fishing access. Nearby Anglica Point and Strawberry Point also good for stripers and blues. Mattapoisett Town Wharf to west offers additional shore access with scup spring through summer and snapper blues in late summer.

9 West Island. Best for tautog in spring but good scup fishing late spring through fall. Lots of beach area for casting for bluefish and the occasional striped. Little tunny/false albacore and bonito often just a mile or two off shore in late summer/early fall and sometimes within reach of a cast from shore.

10 Priest Cove. Best for bluefish and school stripers mid-May through early summer. Spotty thereafter but fishing lasts through fall. Waters off nearby Fort Phoenix good for stripers, blues, and scup spring through fall with a few tautog in spring.

11 Fort Rodman. Blues and a few stripers off shore from spring through fall. Some tautog in spring and good scup fishing late summer through early fall. Lots of shore access, jetties and piers on both east and west sides. Snapper blues in late summer.

12 Padanaram. Stripers and bluefish spring through fall inside and outside harbor. Good scup fishing late spring through early fall. Some tautog in spring and fall. A few fluke in summer. Snapper blues in late summer. Good bridge fishing. Occasional weakfish.

13 Dumpling Rocks. Some stripers and tautog in spring and fall. Scup from early summer through early fall. Fluke in summer. Bluefish from spring through fall.

14 Great Ledge. Some stripers and blues spring through fall. Good tautog in spring and fall. Fluke in summer.

15 The Sandspit. Some stripers and blues spring through fall. Fluke and scup in summer.

16 Mishaum Ledge. Good scup fishing with some bluefish spring through fall. Also good scup and fluke fishing in summer. Some stripers at Mishaum Point - in close to rocks.

17 Gooseberry Neck. Good stripers and bluefish in surf and rips from spring through late fall. Good tautog in spring and fall. Scup from late spring through fall. Surf casting from beach and from causeway. Little tunny and bonito late summer through early fall.

18 Westport River. Outside the mouth, inside river and harbor good for stripers and blues in spring and fall with a few fish in summer. Fluke in summer, both inside and outside river. Snapper blues in late summer.

19 Sow & Pigs Reef. "The Pigs" off Cuttyhunk is famous for striped fishing spring through fall. Dangerous rocks and rips. Tautog spring through fall.

20 Quicks Hole. Better known as "Quicks", currents are swift and the Hole is a major funnel for bait being swept between Buzzards Bay and Vineyard Sound with the tides, attracting many species of fish all season. Big stripers and blues spring through fall by fishing the rips or plugging the west shoreline. Tautog at North Rock and South Rock on either sides of Hole spring through fall. Scup and black sea bass early summer through fall. Fluke on south side of Hole in summer.

21 Robinson's Hole. Trickier navigating and much narrower than Quicks's, but also good for stripers and blues all season. Little tunny often schooling south of Hole in late summer. Big fluke south of Hole in deep water early summer through fall.

22 French Watering Hole. A sleeper, but often good for stripers along steep dropoff.

23 Tarpaulin Cove. Big scup and black sea bass summer through early fall.

24 Lucas Shoals. Good fluke fishing early summer through fall. Bigger ones in deeper water.

25 Weepecket Island. Good scup fishing with some black sea bass early summer through fall. Some stripers and tautog around rocks, holes and drop-offs spring through fall.

Common fish caught in Buzzards Bay and around The Islands

Striped Bass. Strong fighters and the state's most sought after species. Can be caught casting plugs, jigs, spoons or flies from shore or boat, using eels or baitfish on the bottom, or trolling. They prefer rocks, rips and surf with smaller fish called "schoolies" in estuaries. State record is 73 pounds set in 1913 in Quicks's Hole, tied in 1967 at Sow & Pigs and tied again in 1981 at Nauset Beach. Recreational season is open year-round with limit of two per day and a minimum size of 28 inches. Minimum Mass. Saltwater Fishing Derby weight is 35 pounds.



ties, piers and bridges. Recreational season is May 1 - Dec. 31 with a 30 fish daily limit and 10-inch minimum size. State record is 5 pounds, 14 ounces, set at Nomans in 1983. Minimum derby weight - 12 pounds.

Tautog. Also called blackfish, prefer rocky bottom and rocky ledges and "bulldog" for the bottom when hooked. Best method is still fishing with crabs or sea clams fished on the bottom, either at anchor or cast from shore, jetties, bridges or piers. State record is 22 pounds, 9 ounces set in 1978 at Gay Head. Season is open year-round with a three fish daily limit and minimum size of 16 inches. Minimum derby weight - 8 pounds.



Black sea bass. Fine and mild table fare but hard-fighting and often caught in same spots as scup. Big males sport a striking aquamarine head. Anchor or drift with sea clams, cut squid or use light spinning tackle with a jig and squid strip. Recreational season is May 11 - Oct. 31 with a four-fish daily limit and 14-inch minimum size. State record is 8 pounds, 15 ounces set in 2007 in Buzzards Bay. Minimum derby weight - 4 pounds.



Fluke. Also called summer flounder, they're good fighters and have sharp teeth. Prefer sandy or muddy bottoms and fast moving rips, where bigger ones are often caught as incidentals by

striper fishermen. Most common method is to drift with a spinner rig baited with squid strips or a live mumper, with enough sinker to keep bumping bottom. They'll also take jigs sweetened with a squid strip. State record is 21 pounds, 8 ounces set at Nomans in 1980. Recreational season is May 22 - Sept. 30 with a five-fish daily limit and minimum size of 16 inches. Minimum derby weight - 7 pounds.



Little tunny. Also called false albacore and similar to bonito, they travel in schools and are fast and fun to catch, if you can hook one. Usually more abundant south of The Islands, there is often a good run of them in Buzzards Bay in late summer with schools ranging along the coast from Westport to Wareham. Cast small jigs, spoons and flies to surfacing schools. Season is open all year with no daily or size limits. They average about eight pounds but state record is 19 pounds, 5 ounces set in 1990 off Edgartown. Minimum derby weight - 10 pounds. Bonito - 5 pounds.



To qualify for Marine Fisheries' Mass. Saltwater Fishing Derby, fish must be weighed at an official derby weigh station. Most coastal tackle shops are weigh stations. Fish that meet the minimum trophy weights listed receive a pin. The largest in each category is awarded a trophy in three divisions - men, women and juniors.

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