



CSF BAIT BOX:

A Fisherman's Guide to
Community Supported Fisheries

Local! Sustainable! Fresh!

Small, sweet Northern shrimp has a special place in the hearts of foodies and fishermen in the Northeast. Native to arctic and cold northern waters, *Pandalus borealis* is a seasonal delight, satisfying the palates of consumers and for many years providing a fine winter fishing opportunity.

***A CSF reconnects
people to the ocean
that sustains them
and builds a
rewarding
relationship between
the fishermen and
consumers.***

A few years ago, though, those fishing for shrimp were offered as little as \$.30 per pound for their catch, perhaps \$300 for a day's catch, less the cost of fuel, ice, boat and crew shares. Hardly enough to keep from going in the hole!

Consumers are often shocked when they learn how little fishermen take of the prices paid at the seafood counters. But as you in the industry know, processing, packaging, freezing, shipping, storage, advertising, and so on, add up quickly in the food chain of today's global market place.

There's a different approach afloat. You may have heard that Northern shrimp is helping Port Clyde and Portsmouth groundfish fishermen survive. By joining together to participate in Community Supported Fisheries, fishermen are making more money per pound and consumers have gained access to the incredibly fresh product caught locally.

Just as Community Supported Agriculture has helped small farmers develop a niche of specialty products for their local consumers, so too can Community Supported Fisheries help small-scale fishermen develop a niche for a variety of products that allows for maximum flexibility in their annual round, the traditional

approach to day boat or short trip fishing.

Furthermore, a CSF supplies seafood lovers in your community

with the freshest seafood available, at prices often less than those at the grocery store. It offers consumers a window into the fishing industry and a sense of how their food got from the boat to the plate, and who caught it.

...if we truly care about the health of our oceans it is important how, when and where we fish and how that fish gets to our dinner plates.

To help you get started, we've put together a primer, a bait box if you will, of what a CSF is and why it can work in your community. On our website, www.namanet.org, you'll find more tools that you'll need as you move forward. We can even set you up with your own web page so you can control the information about your CSF and so consumers can find you.

NAMA is available to help you get started, promote your CSF and work out the kinks as you go along. We believe that sustaining the health of our oceans goes hand in hand with protecting not only our fish populations, but also you, our fishermen and our shore side communities.

We are grateful to our Board of Trustees and the fishing communities we work with for weighing in on this Bait Box. The Bait Box would not have been possible without the support of the Andrus Family Fund, Jessie B. Cox Charitable Trust, Belvedere Fund for Natural Resource Preservation, MIT Sea Grant College Program and the Maine Community Foundation. *Thank you!*

- NAMA Staff

What is a CSF?

- Modeled after Community Supported Agriculture, a Community Supported Fishery is a community of consumers collaborating with local fishermen to buy fish directly for a predetermined length of time.
- CSF members (also called shareholders) give fishermen financial support in advance of the season, and in turn receive a weekly share of seafood caught during the season.
- A CSF reconnects people to the ocean and can help build rewarding relationships between fishermen and shareholders. This takes a little extra planning since, typically, CSF members do not come to the wharf to pick up their share.
- The fishermen benefit by receiving necessary resources early in the season, bridging the gap between pre-season expenses and fishing-season income.
- By direct sales to community members, fishermen reconnect with their broader community, receive better prices for their catch and gain financial security.
- As members of a CSF, consumers have the benefit of knowing their fish is caught locally and that their investment is strengthening the local community.

Benefits of CSFs

- **Less stress on the fish and you.** Receiving higher prices for your catch by participating in a CSF may allow you to survive even if you are fishing less. As part of the Northeast fisheries, you are strictly regulated to help fish populations swiftly rebuild, but since the costs of fishing constantly increase, only if prices for the catch go up will yours and other fishermen's businesses be able to continue.
- **Reinforce ties among your fellow fishermen.** Working collaboratively on a CSF provides an opportunity for both you and other local fishermen to renew friendships, support each other, and organize for market and policy benefits.
- **Provides hope for your youth that fishing is a career option.** Small businesses create jobs. The entrepreneurial aspect of participating in a CSF may help create a niche for your children or others in your community, thus ensuring a new generation of fishermen.
- **CSF success helps safeguard your working waterfront.** If CSFs help make more fishermen financially secure, the support infrastructure is more likely to be maintained.
- **Educates consumers about healthy eating.** While many consumers are interested in eating both

locally and healthily, they often are unfamiliar with their local seafood, the migration patterns of fish, the regulations, fishing as an occupation and way of life, and even the preparation of seafood for meals. A CSF provides an opportunity for your voices to be heard.

- **More money for less catch.** Consumers are always happy to get a deal. One way to do that is by selling to them directly. If you're getting \$0.50 a pound for shrimp at auction and the public is buying that same shrimp for \$1.50, wouldn't both of you be happy at \$1.00 a pound?

- **Create public awareness and support for good fishing policies.** When people know who catches their food, they are more sensitive to policies that affect fishermen. The more the public associates the seafood on their tables with the individuals who caught and delivered it, the more willing they are to consider how their buying habits and votes affect the well being of the fishermen and the oceans. This is why the extra effort to link with your CSF members is likely to be time well spent.

- **Increases foot traffic.** A farmers market or locally owned business is often willing to host a CFS pickup because the increase in foot traffic will benefit their sales or just because it's good for the community.

One boat, two boats, many boats?

- There are significant differences between a Community Supported Agriculture and a Community Supported Fishery. While CSA shareholders usually go to pick up their produce from a farm and then connect with the farmer, CSF shareholders generally pick up their fish from a distribution point, not the wharf or directly from the boat.
- The distributor should be someone who can knowledgeably talk about the fish, the fisheries, the fishermen and fishing communities. It is advisable to join with other boats to form a CSF, thus offering more variety and smoother deliveries to the shareowners as well as offering benefits of cooperation with fellow fishermen.
- You may even want to consider developing an association or cooperative to effectively market your fish, coordinate information and build a base of support for you and your fishing community.

What Kind and Cut of Seafood will your CSF offer?

- **Which seafood products?** Be specific: shrimp, mussels, fin fish, or a variety, depending on the season. What form will the seafood be in: shell on, head on, gutted or filleted? If you are planning to include shellfish in the mix, be sure to review health department regulations that may be more stringent. Potential allergies and religious dietary restrictions may also be considered in your decision.
- **Be careful not to overpromise.** The CSF members will not initially understand the constraints of weather, regulations, fish migrations, equipment failures and other factors that can change which species are available. Communication throughout the duration of the season is key.
- **Preparation:** If you're delivering whole fish or shell-on shrimp, you should plan to tell shareholders how to prepare it. During the first few pickups offer filleting or shelling demonstrations.
- **Providing information** on storing fresh or frozen seafood may help potential shareholder decide to join. Also send printed information on filleting and shelling. That way shareholders will have something to refer to when confronted with the whole fish on their own kitchen counter. You could include

instructions and recipes that use potentially underutilized parts of the fish, like the cheeks or racks. Chowders and fish stock recipes are also popular. Links to favorite recipes on websites is helpful.

- **You can download**, link to, or use most of these materials from NAMA's website at www.namanet.org or contact us at 978-281-6934 for more information. We will gladly edit any printed material to add your communities name or your CSF's logo to personalize it for your use.

Size Matters

- **Share size:** The share sizes are up to you. Usually, there are two options: one size for a family and one size for an individual or couple. The catch you're providing may determine the sizes offered. For example, shrimp or mussels can be weighed and bagged to any size but the weight of the share of whole fin fish must be described as "approximate" in the information you provide to potential shareholders.

Prices and Payments

- **Cost:** Consider what a consumer pays for the same product at the market and the boat price. A price somewhere in the middle may be the best deal for both of you. Regardless of the price you settle on, remember that your shareholders are making an investment in you and the local economy. Set a price that reflects your cost of operations. Participants in CSF's want to support local fishermen and if they can get a good deal too, that's even better.

- **When is payment due?** Modeled after Community Supported Agriculture, where the funds are used to prepare fields for sowing and even calculating how many seeds to buy, some CSFs require full payment for all deliveries before the first

delivery. However, not every shareholder in a CSF has a season's worth of funds available up front. You may increase your membership if you allow payments in halves or thirds. If you choose this model, be sure to clearly state when payments are due. You could offer a slightly lower price for participants who pay in full up front. Some boats offer a few shares at a lower cost for people who would otherwise not be able to afford a CSF. Remember, a CSF is about you, the fish and the community. The structure is designed to benefit both you and the shareholders.

- **How many shareholders?** It's good business to determine how many shareholders you need to make your CSF a success before you start. Consider who will be unloading, weighing and bagging the full and half-share portions. Will you be working with a dealer? How do you plan to deliver the shares? The potential costs of distribution to your shareholders may include leasing or renting a refrigerated truck and hiring a driver. In addition, bookkeeping is critical and time-consuming, so plan to pay the responsible party. Estimating these costs will help you determine how many shareholders you need.

- **Refund policy:** In the event that your signup hasn't gone as well as expected and a CSF doesn't seem feasible, you need a refund policy for those who signed up. That being said, some CSF's report

increasing their number of shareholders after deliveries began.

Deliveries

- **Frequency:** Consider the species you are delivering when deciding upon the frequency of deliveries. For example, a lobster CSF may work better with deliveries every two weeks, while a CSF that provides a mix of seafood is better suited for weekly deliveries. You may partner with other boats or even nearby communities to form your CSF and create an appealing mix of products.
- **Pickup times & locations:** Distribution can take place anywhere that's convenient for both you and your shareholders (consider parking and pedestrian safety, as well as health department issues) and deemed suitable by local officials. If you've structured your CSF around a group of people who have a location in common, such as a church group, employer, or food co-op, you could schedule the pickup there during an appropriate time, such as after work. Be sure to check with a building manager before publicizing the time and location.
- **Missed deliveries policy:** Bad weather and mechanical issues are real obstacles to meeting a delivery schedule. Clearly state in writing how and when the shareholders will be notified if you can't make the delivery. Be sure to ask for phone numbers and e-mail addresses on the sign-up form so you have

contact information if you need to reach them. Furthermore, don't forget to inform the shareholders of your missed delivery policy. A missed delivery could be replaced with an extra week or the following delivery could be doubled. This policy should be clear and included on the contract.

- **Abandoned seafood.** If a member can't make a pickup, decide if that week's share is forfeited or they get double the next week, providing you are informed ahead of time. If you are not informed, you could donate the missed share to a local food pantry. Talk with area food pantries ahead of time to determine which is open when your CSF drop off is complete and which can accept raw seafood.

Legal Requirements and Regulations

- **Federal and some state fisheries regulations require that you report all catch.** Your CSF's catch is not exempt from this law. So don't forget about state and federal reporting. Your CSF can apply for a dealer license or, to make it easier, some CSFs work out of wharfs with licensed dealers who are already reporting landings.

- **Permits, licenses and reporting:** Regulations governing seafood sales vary widely from state to state and even from species to species. Consult with both your local department of agriculture and the agency that issues your fishing or harvesting permit to ensure that you are following the law.

- **Sanitation and inspecting:** To distribute seafood directly to the public you'll need to meet food safety guidelines. Cleanliness and temperature will be closely monitored and some local health departments require oversight by someone who has been HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points) certified. Often you must have seafood shares individually packaged to distribute. In some cases, a mobile vendors license is sufficient for whole shellfish but not for filleted fish. Any alteration of the natural appearance of the seafood leads to additional sanitation inspections and licensing. For this reason

you might consider distributing only whole fish in your first season.

- **For more information,** contact your local Department of Public Health or other safe food handling and seafood sales licensing agencies. Also, go to www.namanet.org for state specific contact information.

How to Market Your CSF:

- **Sign up consumers:** Host signup times at central locations, such as a farmers' market, town center, or church. This is a good way for potential shareholders to meet you and ask questions. CSF's require members to invest in you, and getting to meet you is an important incentive in deciding to join. To attract interest, have samples available for tasting or do a filleting demo during the designated sign up time. Working with local chefs to create a "Seafood Throwdown" at farmer's markets is one fun way to generate excitement and interest.

- **Advertise** when shareholders can meet you to sign up. Some communities offer a combined CSA & CSF fair in late winter to allow potential shareholders meet farmers and fishermen and find the shares that fit them best. See NAMA's website at www.namanet.org for times and locations of such opportunities. You can also distribute flyers at farmers markets, local businesses and churches. Be sure to get permission to post your flyers first! Many churches actively support their local community and practice environmental stewardship. Ask about giving a short talk at a coffee hour or environmental group meeting. Talk to health food shops, local food stores or food co-ops. They may allow you to post information if your CSF won't compete with their sales. If there is a

company that employs a lot of people in your community, they may distribute information about your CSF and may host the drop off point if enough employees are interested. And don't forget: your shareholders are your best advertising tool!

- **Be accessible:** Be sure to include all of your CSF and contact information in your flyers. Include a web address if you have one. If you don't have a website where shareholders can go to print a sign up form or get general information about your CSF, NAMA can provide a webpage for you at no charge. To learn more, contact info@namanet.org or 978-281-6934.

- **Communicate with your shareholders during the season.** Keep in mind that you want your shareholders to enjoy the experience of having access to fresh fish and to feel that they have made a connection to the fishing community. Then they are more likely to be loyal and sign up for additional seasons. Answering questions, telling stories about fishing or your fellow fishermen, explaining when changes are made, help reinforce that bond.

Get Help!

- Your community might want to get involved. Encourage them to do so. Some of your shareholders might volunteer to help bag or deliver shares, find new distribution sites, promote the concept.
- NAMA is committed to helping fishermen connect with the public and the public to connect with the policies that let us have our fish and eat it, too. You can count us to:
 - ☞ Provide you with website space for your CSF, where you can offer information, allow shareholders to sign up and even pay online, and create your own email listserves.
 - ☞ Help you organize a Seafood Throwdown to generate interest in your CSF.
 - ☞ Update our CSF Bait-Box with new tools and ideas.
 - ☞ Be there to talk with you about ideas and issues as they come up.
 - ☞ Provide you with the political opportunities that can engage your shareholders in fishery policy decision-making.
 - ☞ Keep you updated on issues that affect fisheries and the livelihoods of community-based fishermen who care about what happens to the oceans.

Sample CSF Contract

Thanks to the Cape Cod Community Supported Fisheries for letting us use their contract in this document.

Catch A Share! CAPE COD COMMUNITY SUPPORTED FISHERY Cape Cod Weir Harvest Spring 2012 Season Contract

To become a member of the Cape Cod Community Supported Fishery, please read this contract carefully, fill in all the appropriate details, sign and date it, and mail it back to the Cape Cod CSF address on the second page.

1. Your Contact Information—(PLEASE PRINT)

Last Name		First Name	
Street Address			
Town		State	Zip
Email			
Phone			
Shellfish Allergies			Kosher

We will never sell or share your contact information. It is solely for administrative purposes regarding your share.

2. Daily Catch:

CAPE COD WEIR HARVEST

Your share will include, on a rotating basis based on species caught during the week, whole fin fish from Cape Cod fish weirs: mackerel, scup, squid, butterfish @ \$25/week for 5 weeks = \$125

Your membership gets you 4-6 pound of whole fish, web support through recipes on line, video demonstrations and email support on preparation.

STAGE HARBOR COMBO

Your share will include, on a rotating basis based on species caught during the week from the weirs PLUS day boat caught sea scallops @ \$35/week for 5 weeks = \$175

Your membership gets you a combination of 4-6 pound of whole fish and day boat sea scallop meats, web support through recipes on line, video demonstrations and email support on preparation.

3. Distribution (pick up) location & time:

Chatham Farmer's Market at the Ocean State Job Lot/ Local Color Art Gallery
Parking Lot 1652 Main St West Chatham –Tuesdays May 15-June 11 from 3-6:30 pm

4. PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING SECTIONS CAREFULLY. YOUR SIGNATURE BELOW MEANS YOU UNDERSTAND AND AGREE TO THESE TERMS.

- The Spring season begins Tuesdays May 15th, and runs until Tuesdays June 11th.
 - Please bring a cooler or insulated bag to carry home your seafood share. We will maintain your seafood shares at the proper temperature during distribution. We are not responsible for what happens to your share after you pick it up from the distribution site.
 - Your fish will be a head-on or head & tail off depending on species. Scallops will be meat only.
 - If you cannot make your scheduled pick up, please ask family, friends, or neighbors to pick up your share. Any unclaimed shares will be donated to local food pantries.
 - If someone else is picking up your share, please make sure they know your shareholder's primary name on the contract and that they have a cooler or insulated bag to transport the share. All share pick-ups will require a signature on our pick-up lists next to the shareholder name.
 - If you miss a pick up, we cannot make up that missed share.
 - Please note, all Cape Cod CSF purchases are non-refundable
- Our "daily catch" notification is a non-binding description of the seafood you receive that day. What gets distributed in a Cape Cod CSF share on any given day is up to Mother Nature.

5. Missed distributions on our part.

The safety of our fishermen is paramount. If a distribution is cancelled because of hazardous weather conditions or other extenuating circumstances, you will be notified by email. If we cancel a distribution, we will double-up to compensate the missed distribution on the next available week's scheduled pick up. We can only compensate you for a missed share if we make an error.

6. Agreement with this contract.

I have read the terms of the Cape Cod Community Supported Fishery, Cape Cod Weir Harvest Spring 2012 Season Contract and agree to these terms.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

I would like to receive e-newsletters from Cape Cod CSF _____

I am interested in the Summer Day Boat CSF _____

I am interested in the Indian Summer CSF _____

7. First reserve your membership by calling or emailing us, then mail this contract, along with your payment, to...

Make checks payable to: Cape Cod CSF and mail your contract and payment to:

**Cape Cod CSF
P.O. Box 1407
West Chatham, MA 02669**

Cape Cod Community Supported Fishery can be reached at:

Linda Kelley, PH# 508 776 7755

Shannon Eldredge

508-958-6580

fisherman@capodesf.com

OFFICE USE ONLY	RCVD:	AMOUNT:	CHECK #:	CHECK DATE:	BY:
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For more information contact NAMA:
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