

UK BlueFin Tuna Catch and Release Championships 2025 FAQs

Why is this event happening in Falmouth?

Falmouth is geographically well placed at the heart of the UK's bluefin tuna fishery so the fishing vessels can easily reach the fishery offshore.

Why is Falmouth Harbour involved?

The event is not actually organised by Falmouth Harbour but by private individuals. The event is legal activity, and the fishing occurs in waters entirely outside of our jurisdiction as a Harbour. The management of the tuna fishery is under the overall jurisdiction of DEFRA and licensed by the Marine Management Organisation.

As a trust port, Falmouth Harbour (FH) looks to support sustainable marine use. The fishery is tightly controlled, with a limited number of licences and reporting requirements. The harbour provides a base for licensed vessels and supports this and other events through the year. FH does not take a view on whether the fishery should expand or contract as that is a matter for others to determine.

However, debate remains and we fully accept the varying views of stakeholders. We will constantly review our position on event support, based on sound evidence.

Do Falmouth Harbour benefit from allowing the tuna catch and release competition?

This is the second year the Tuna tournament event has been held in Falmouth. Some of the vessels visit and stay in our marina, whilst others are permanently berthed in our and other local marinas.

The team at Falmouth Harbour is committed to ensuring that all our events and activities are conducted in a responsible and sustainable manner.

The event organisers have also rented space on North Quay to erect a marquee to hold pre and post fishing activities, including opportunities for conversations with organisers and event partners.

We receive revenue from provision of berths and space on North Quay. In return we expect the event to be run in line with best practice and applicable legislation.

If Falmouth Harbour did not provide facilities for this event it is highly likely that the event would be held elsewhere. When it is held at Falmouth we can work with the event organisers to encourage sustainable practices such as use of an electric rib as a support vessel, litter picking, installation of a fishing line bin and consideration of disturbance impacts during the event.

What is catch and release fishing for bluefin tuna?

It is a licensed, strictly regulated fishery where anglers are permitted to catch Atlantic bluefin tuna using rod and line, which are then measured, tagged, and released. The fish are not landed for sale or consumption. Supporters say this helps science; others question whether any fishing pressure is justified.

Why are bluefin tuna in Cornish waters?

In recent years, Atlantic bluefin tuna (BFT) have returned to UK waters in increasing numbers. They migrate here seasonally to feed, particularly off Cornwall and the South West. Atlantic bluefin are highly migratory.

Is Tuna fishing legal?

The MMO, working with DEFRA and scientific partners, licenses and monitors the fishery. All catch data is reported and contributes to international science and stock assessments.

The Sea Fisheries (International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2024 makes it a criminal offence for any recreational fishing vessel to target BFT in the UK without a permit.

In 2024 the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) started to licence boats for a catch and release recreational fishery.

This year they opened applications for up to 140 vessels. All vessels involved with the UK BlueFin Tuna Catch and Release Championships 2025 are licenced under this scheme. More information on the process is available here [bluefin-tuna-bft-catch-and-release-recreational-fisheries](#)

Fishing is only permitted by licensed vessels and anglers.

The event organisers state that all skippers will need to have taken part in an accredited training course before the event. To ensure this high standard is met the organisers have arranged for a skippers' training day to take place prior to the tournament. This training covers all aspects of the recommended fishing techniques including tackle, handling and recovering the fish for safe release.

What is the mortality rate of tuna after being caught?

The Marine Management Organisation (MMO) have released the following statistics based on the 2024 BlueFin Tuna fishery¹.

- The 2024 Blue Fin Tuna Catch and Release Recreational Fishery ran from 3 August 2024 to 31 December 2024. The 2024 season lasted for 21 weeks and 4 days.
- Of the 93 permitted vessels, 81 were active at least once during the 2024 season
- These vessels made 1,014 trips in total. Of those, there were 838 trips (83.0%) where at least one Blue Fin Tuna was caught successfully.
- In total, 3,359 Blue Fin Tuna were caught throughout the 2024 season, with an average of 3.3 Blue Fin Tuna per trip.
- The average length of the Blue Fin Tuna caught was 167.7cm, and the average estimated weight was 95.5kg.
- The majority (98.7%) of Blue Fin Tuna were released in a good to excellent condition. The reported mortality rate before release was 0.21% of all Blue Fin Tuna caught.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/bluefin-tuna-catch-and-release-recreational-fishery-crrf-statistics-published>

How can you be sure that the competitors comply with the event guidance?

To receive and maintain their permit, vessel owners are obligated to submit data on their trips and associated catch, which the MMO collects for operational purposes including monitoring and managing the fishery throughout the season. The MMO is also required to submit data to the International Council for the Conservation of Atlantic Tuna (ICCAT) to fulfil the UK's reporting obligations as a contracting party.

Methodology relating to the monitoring of this fishery are available here².

Can members of the public watch?

The event will include opportunities to see boats, talk to skippers and scientists, and learn more about tuna. Actual fishing takes place a long way offshore, so it isn't visible from land.

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/bluefin-tuna-catch-and-release-recreational-fishery-crrf-2024/bluefin-tuna-catch-and-release-recreational-fishery-crrf-methodology>