The Blue Crab: Beautiful Swimmer and Coastal Wolf
North Carolina’s Most Valuable Fishery

with Dr. Martin Posey and Mr. Troy Alphin
University of North Carolina Wilmington

The blue crab (Callinectes sapidus) is one of the most iconic coastal creatures. Nearly every visitor to our coast has observed blue crabs foraging in the shallows or tried his hand at catching them with crab pots, nets or lines. Blue crabs have long been an integral part of the coastal economy along the Atlantic coast of the United States, supporting coastal communities and being an essential part of regional seafood cuisine from pre-colonial times to the present. With some recent exceptions, the blue crab has consistently been the most valuable fishery in North Carolina (based on dockside value) and a staple of recreational fishers who throw the occasional crab pot or chicken neck off a dock. The blue crab is also a critical component of local ecosystems. It is among the most abundant larger predators in our estuaries and sounds and has been suggested to have tremendous impacts on our nearshore bottom habitats. We will explore the importance of the blue crab ecologically and the past and current state of this critical fishery. We will look at its life history, role as a key predator in coastal habitats, and importance in shaping the aquatic communities we know. We will also look at the history of the fishery, regionally and especially along the North Carolina coast, how this fishery has been conducted, and recent concerns about the sustainability of the fishery. Ongoing work by UNCW researchers is addressing many of these questions and is enhancing our understanding of the blue crab in many aspects.

Dr. Martin Posey is the former chair of the UNCW Department of Biology and Marine Biology, former associate vice chancellor and dean of undergraduate studies, and current director of the UNCW Center for Marine Science. He holds a bachelor’s degree in zoology from UNC Chapel Hill and a Ph.D. in biology from the University of Oregon. Dr. Posey has served on the North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries Crustacean Fisheries Advisory Committee, the Shellfish/Crustacean Fisheries Advisory Committee, was Chair of NC Division of Marine Fisheries Blue Crab Scientific Technical Advisory Committee; and was co-Chair of NC Division of Marine Fisheries Blue Crab Fisheries Management Plan Advisory Committee.

Troy Alphin is a research associate for the Benthic Ecology Laboratory at CMS and adjunct faculty member in the UNCW Department of Biology and Marine Biology. He holds both bachelor’s and master’s degrees in marine biology from UNCW and is currently working toward his Ph.D., also in marine biology. He has served on fishery and aquaculture advisory committees for the state since 1998, including oyster and shellfish advisory committee and the coastal habitats advisory committee. He also serves on the executive board of the Cape Fear River Assembly and Technical committee for the Lower Cape Fear Monitoring Program.

April 10, 2018
UNCW Center for Marine Science Auditorium
Seminar 6:30 p.m. / Refreshments 7:30 p.m.

The Planet Ocean Seminar Series
is free and open to the public.
The seminar is held in the Hodder Hall of Mentors, the main auditorium at the UNCW Center for Marine Science, 5600 Marvin K. Moss Lane. The seminar will begin promptly at 6:30 p.m. Refreshments will immediately follow.

Due to limited seating, reservations are required. Advance registration for Bluefish Society members will end March 27. The general public may begin registration on March 28.

To help us plan refreshments, please RSVP by April 3.

To reserve seats, call the Center for Marine Science at 910-962-2301.

For driving directions and more information about CMS: www.uncw.edu/cms

Accommodations for disabilities may be requested by contacting CMS three days prior to the event.

Bluefish Society membership entitles you to preferred seating at Planet Ocean seminars and much more. Please join our school of Bluefish Society members and help us keep the outreach tradition at CMS afloat. For details, call us at 910-962-2408.