

Tropical Fish on Long Island with Todd Gardner



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Off the coast of Cape Hatteras, North Carolina, the Gulf Stream transports approximately 100 million cubic meters of seawater northward per second. Dwelling within this, the world's most powerful ocean current, is a diverse ecosystem of resident, transient, and planktonic marine life. Among the plankton community of the Gulf Stream are eggs and larvae of marine animals that were spawned on distant coral reefs and continental shelf waters from the Caribbean Islands to the Carolinas. Many of these animals are destined to never encounter a suitable habitat. For most, that means starving or being eaten as a larva; for others it means reaching the point of metamorphosis in the open ocean over the abyssal plains; but for one poorly-studied group of fishes, it means being deposited along a temperate shoreline during the summer, where water temperatures are high enough to support them for only a few months of each year. One such area is Long Island, where Todd Gardner has been collecting and cataloging tropical fish species in our waters around for over thirty years and in that time he has recorded more than 100 species of tropical marine fish.

Join Todd as he discusses collection and husbandry techniques as well as the fate and ecology of these tropical drifters.

Todd Gardner is a professor of biology and marine biology at Suffolk County Community College in Riverhead, NY. His life and his career have both been shaped by his passion for marine life and he has written numerous scientific and popular articles about his research and experiences collecting, keeping, and culturing marine organisms. Todd's professional background includes work on a National Geographic documentary, commercial aquaculture at C-quest Hatchery in Puerto Rico, and an 11-year term at the Long Island Aquarium where he spent much of his time developing techniques for rearing marine fish larvae. To date he has raised more than 50 species. In 2013 Todd received the prestigious Aquarist of the Year Award from the Marine Aquarium Society of North America (MASNA). In his spare time, Todd dives, photographs marine life, runs marathons, and plays in a blues band.

All meetings are free and open to the public
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