

Blue Monday Shad Fry, East Arcadia ^[1]

State Blue Monday Shad Fry: East Arcadia Blue Monday Shad Fry

by Amy Kemp, State Government and Heritage Library, 2017; Revised by SLNC Government and Heritage Library, January 2023

See also: [North Carolina State Symbols and Official Adoptions main page](#) ^[2], [Fried Shad on Blue Monday](#) ^[3], [Shad](#) ^[4], [Shad Boats](#) ^[5], [State Shad Festival](#) ^[6]



A lock, dam, and fish ladder on the Cape Fear River. Photo by Flickr user Wilmington District.

^[7]In 2013, the General Assembly designated the Blue Monday Shad Fry in East Arcadia the Official State Blue Monday Shad Fry ([Session Laws, 2013-282](#) ^[8]).

Selection as State Blue Monday Shad Fry

The bill to name the East Arcadia Blue Monday Shad Fry the official Blue Monday Shad Fry of North Carolina was proposed by Reps. Bill Brisson and Ken Waddell of Bladen County. It encountered little opposition, and was passed by the house with a vote of 117 to 0.

About the East Arcadia Blue Monday Shad Fry

The East Arcadia Blue Monday Shad Fry festival celebrates the shad's spawning in the Cape Fear river and the beginning of spring.

Blue Monday an Eastern North Carolina term for the day after Easter. According to legend, enslaved people on Eastern Carolina plantations had to work on Easter Sunday, but they were given Easter Monday off. As this was prime shad season, these enslaved people would go down to the Cape Fear river banks on Blue Monday and have a fish fry feast.

The modern iteration of the Blue Monday celebrations began around 1950 when Chester Graham, Archie Graham, and Bernard Carter started an annual Easter Monday fish fry on the riverbank for their family. Though it started with just immediate family, it wasn't long before it was a neighborhood event, and eventually a community event. The celebration became a time when those who had moved out of town would come back to visit family. Today, over 1,000 individuals attend the celebration from more than six different states.

North Carolina Session Laws

Excerpt from SESSION LAW 2013-282

HOUSE BILL 241

AN ACT TO MAKE THE BLUE MONDAY SHAD FRY IN EAST ARCADIA LOCATED ON THE CAPE FEAR RIVER LOCK AND DAM #1 IN BLADEN COUNTY AND SOUTHEAST COLUMBUS COUNTY THE OFFICIAL STATE BLUE MONDAY SHAD FRY.

Whereas, the community of East Arcadia has been holding an Annual Shad Fry on the Monday following Easter Sunday for more than 60 years; and

Whereas, this Annual Shad Fry was founded and financed by Bernard Carter, Chester Graham, and Archie Graham around 1950; and

Whereas, Jesse Blanks, Wendell Brown, and Jerry Graham have assumed this position since the 1988 death of Mr. Carter; and

Whereas, this event has been supported by local men such as Teddy Hall, John Leslie Carter, Harry Blanks, Curtis Bowen, Cleo Spaulding, Odell Graham, George Graham, Sr., and Thurman Blanks, who catch, clean, and donate the shad; and

Whereas, this event garners support from the Town of East Arcadia and surrounding communities and hosts visitors from across North Carolina and other states such as Maryland, New Jersey, Connecticut, Texas, and Washington; and

Whereas, this is a day of reunion, remembering, and fellowship for all comers with upward of 1,000 individuals attending during the day; and

Whereas, it is the desire of the community to continue this tradition; Now, therefore,

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. G.S. 145-33 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

"§ 145-33. State Shad festival. Festival; Blue Monday Shad Fry.

(a) The Grifton Shad Festival is adopted as the official Shad Festival of the State of North Carolina.

(b) The East Arcadia Blue Monday Shad Fry is adopted as the official Blue Monday Shad Fry of the State of North Carolina."

SECTION 2. This act is effective when it becomes law.

In the General Assembly read three times and ratified this the 9th day of July, 2013.

s/ Pat McCrory

Governor

Approved 6:14 p.m. this 18th day of July, 2013

References:

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McElwee, John. "Blue Monday." Oxford American. Accessed July 19, 2017.
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Miller, Hannah. "No longer a 'shad' story." Carolina Country. Accessed July 19, 2017.
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