

Sun Tracker Fishin Barge 24 XP3 (2016-)

Brief Summary

Lots of multi-density foam seating, four swiveling fishing seats, hideaway Bimini top and loads of storage make the Sun Tracker Fishin' Barge 24 XP3 a good family boat as well as a comfortable fishing machine. A padded aft sundeck with pop-up changing room also makes the Sun Tracker family-friendly.

Price

Base Price \$33955.00

Prices, features, designs, and equipment are subject to change. Please see your local dealer or visit the builder's website for the latest information available on this boat model.

Key Features

- 3 high-performance 26" pontoon logs with lifting strakes and wave deflectors
- Console with wraparound sport shroud, removable tinted windscreen and built-in footrest
- Marine-grade, UV-resistant, top-coated upholstery
- Pull-down loops on Bimini top straps
- Fishing-friendly, easy-to-clean vinyl flooring throughout
- 4 heavy-duty fishing chairs
- Bow port 8-gal. and port 16-gal. aerated livewells
- 12-person capacity with wide 8'6" beam
- Box-beam all-aluminum transom and all-welded, all-aluminum extended motor pod
- Best in industry 10+ life warranty

Specifications

Length Overall	26' 2" / 7.98 m
BEAM	8' 6" 2.59 m
Dry Weight	2,960 lbs. 1,343 kg
Tested Weight	

Draft	N/A
Draft Up	
Draft Down	
Air Draft	
Deadrise/Transom	N/A
Max Headroom	open
Bridge Clearance	N/A
Weight Capacity	3,000 lbs. 1,361 kg
Person Capacity	12
Fuel Capacity	52 gal. 197 L
Water Capacity	N/A
Length on Trailer	
Height on Trailer	
Trailer Weight	
Total Weight	
Aft Deck	
Salon Inside Width	

Salon Fore & Aft	
Salon Height	
Salon Volume	
Galley Volume	
Master SR Width	
Master SR fore & Aft	
Master SR Overhead	
Master SR Volume	
Eng. Room Volume	

Acceleration Times & Conditions

Time to Plane	
0 to 20	
Ratio	
Props	
Load	
Climate	

Sun Tracker Fishin Barge 24 XP3 running shot

The Sun Tracker Fishin' Barge 24 XP3 has an LOA of 26'2" (7.98 m), a beam of 8'6" (2.59 m) and can carry a load of 12 people.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Sun Tracker Fishin' Barge 24 XP3 is to provide a large platform for family fishing while still being able to cross over into the realm of family fun and entertaining on the water. She has a proven hull, which we have previously tested, and with this new layout, she simply becomes a better crossover pontoon boat.

Sun Tracker Fishin' Barge 24 XP3 floor layout

The Sun Tracker Fishin' Barge has a roomy layout that well-serves her mission.

Sun Tracker Fishin' Barge 24 XP3 storage layout

Storage will be the least of the concerns as there's plenty of places to swallow up gear.

Distinguishing Features

Round Log Shape.

Sun Tracker makes all of its logs round as opposed to competing logs that go from either elliptical or U-shaped. This provides an inherently stronger structural geometry. Additionally, these logs are all multi-chambered with the seals welded all the way around the log. This provides each chamber with an airtight seal as well as adding to the structural integrity.

XP3 Performance Tubes.

Increasing the size of the standard tubes from 24" (61 cm) to 26" (66 cm) provides more buoyancy allowing the boat to handle up to 12 people, gear, coolers, a 200-hp engine, 35-gallons (133 L) of fuel and 24-gallons (91 L) of water in two livewells.

Sun Tracker Fishin' Barge 24 XP3 performance package

The XP3 performance package adds buoyancy and performance to the Sun Tracker Fishin' Barge. Additionally, the tube combination makes for an exciting performance realm, great for when it's time to get up and run or add water sports to the days itinerary. While we haven't tested this particular model, our tests of other boats with this XP3 package have shown that the combination provides exciting handling

characteristics, brisk turning performance, and quick acceleration. Part of this is due to the performance lifting strakes, six total, providing better tracking, stability, and control.

Major Features

- High-performance 26" pontoon logs with lifting strakes and wave deflectors
- Updated console with wraparound sport shroud, removable tinted windscreen, built-in foot rest and a cooler/storage tray below console
- Pull-down loops on Bimini top straps help keep fabric taut for best appearance and reduced vibration with Bimini top storage pockets
- Fishing-friendly, easy-to-clean vinyl flooring throughout
- 4 Fishing chairs with all-composite seat frames and heavy-duty seats/pedestals
- Bow port rotomolded 8-gallon (30.28 L) and port 16-gallon (60.56 L) aerated livewells
- 12-person capacity with wide 8.5' (2.59 m) beam for expanded floor space
- Box-beam all-aluminum transom and all-welded, all-aluminum extended motor pod with built-in EPA-compliant fuel system
- Marine-grade, UV-resistant, top-coated upholstery with 26-oz. base vinyl and multiple densities of foam
- Best in industry 10+ Life Warranty

Construction

We've validated it plenty of times, but it bears repeating, that these are among the best-built pontoon boats available. To withstand the forces of hitting chop at higher speeds (this same model in the Party Barge configuration topped out at over 40 mph in our tests) the pontoon logs are made from thicker .100 gauge aluminum alloy. Support for the deck is part of the structural integrity as well. Heavy-duty, M-shaped brackets are welded along the top of each pontoon and an exterior surface is added in one continuous piece. The interior brackets are staggered, providing access to cables, plumbing and wiring.

Sun Tracker Fishin' Barge 24 XP3 brackets

M-brackets are welded to each of the pontoon tubes and an exterior trim piece adds to the structural integrity.

Then, Z-bar cross members run over the three tubes providing support for the deck. These get bolted to the M-brackets resulting in no noticeable flexing when going over chop during our tests. Where floorboards meet each other, there's a Z-bar underneath and the joints are protected with silicone to prevent water intrusion.

Sun Tracker Fishin' Barge 24 XP3 cross sections

Z-bar cross sections are bolted to the M-brackets and are used to support the deck.

The deck also serves as an integral structural component of the boat and the team at Sun Tracker tells us that they use more than double the number of deck fasteners compared to the through bolts used by competitors. The fasteners themselves are coated TEK fasteners which friction weld to the Z-bars when tightened. This system has shown no failures or warranty claims, ever. The deck itself is $\frac{3}{4}$ " (2 cm) thick, 7-ply pressure treated plywood warrantied for the life of the boat.

Features Inspection

Bow

So let's now take a look onboard at how well the features of the new Sun Tracker Fishin' Barge 24 XP3 come together. We'll start at the bow where the port side has a modular workstation added in. It includes a rod holder, a drink holder, a cutting surface and an 8-gallon (30.2 L) livewell. The lid includes a measuring guide to ensure that only legal catches are kept.

Sun Tracker Fishin' Barge 24 XP3 livewell

A portside livewell at the bow means no long trips to the stern to keep the catch alive.

In the center is a forward boarding gate. To starboard is the same modular component but this time, the interior is used for either storage, or the battery for the optional trolling motor if that option is selected. Just behind are two pedestal seats and these, along with all the other seats onboard, are designed and built in-house to ensure quality control. All vinyl is marine grade, threads are UV resistant and a moisture barrier is laid over the foam to prevent water intrusion. Comfort is ensured by the use of multiple density foams, providing optimal support where needed such as in the lumbar and headrest areas.

Sun Tracker Fishin' Barge 24 XP3 pedestal seats

Two pedestal seats are at the bow, just behind the fishing stations where the livewell and trolling battery resides.

Couches

Aside from providing fishing comfort, the guests will be ensconced in deep-cushioned couches starting at the starboard side, just ahead of the helm. Storage is underneath, as expected, and the base also houses the first of several speakers connected to the sound system.

Sun Tracker Fishin' Barge 24 XP3 gate

No worries about having guests with special needs. Sun Tracker adds a wheelchair accessible gate to the side of every boat. Lockable storage is in the opening compartment just to the rear of the seats.

~~Sun Tracker Fishin' Barge 24~~ Sun Tracker Fishin' Barge 24 XP3 I-shaped couch

The center couch is L-shaped and a pedestal table turns the area into a wonderful place for snacks or cocktails.

Across from the helm, the couch is L-shaped and wraps around a pedestal table. Storage under this couch is two-fold. First is the usual storage under the seat accessible simply by lifting the hinged cushion. Under the aft seat cushion is lockable storage for more valuable items such as purses and wallets. This compartment is fabricated from aluminum, as opposed to the rotocast compartments elsewhere on the boat.

One change that we'd make to the storage accessibility is that the seat cushions are all hinged from the inboard positions. This means that the seat opens towards the occupants and getting into the storage means having to reach over the top of the cushions. Why not put the hinge to the back of the seat so it opens away from the user? Even with this small shortcoming, Sun Tracker takes the extra step to add cargo netting to the underside of the cushions to provide a bit more storage for smaller items. We like this as it can keep small items from getting lost in the bottom of the compartment with other stuff.

~~Sun Tracker Fishin' Barge 24~~ Sun Tracker Fishin' Barge 24 XP3 storage compartment

A typical storage compartment is lighted and accessed from hinged cushions. Notice the cargo netting under the cushion.

~~Sun Tracker Fishin' Barge 24~~ Sun Tracker Fishin' Barge 24 XP3 lockbox

Sun Tracker is the only company that we know of to add a metal lockbox into the storage choices onboard.

~~Sun Tracker Fishin' Barge 24~~ Sun Tracker Fishin' Barge 24 XP3 changing room

Behind the L-shaped couch is a sun pad over a changing room. This provides the much-needed privacy to allow the guests an opportunity to change from wet bathing suits into something more appropriate for the trip to the waterfront restaurant.

Further Aft is a More Attractive Dining Area.

There are pedestal bases just ahead of an aft-mounted couch. It is here that the most appealing dining option if presented as two pedestal seats, can be just ahead of a table with the couch behind.

~~Sun Tracker Fishin' Barge 24~~ Sun Tracker Fishin' Barge 24 XP3 stern

The stern of the Fishin' Barge 24 XP3 can be used for fishing or dining.

This also represents another fishing area. With the table removed more room is presented for fishing off the stern. Under the couch seat cushion to port is a second livewell, this time 16-gallons (60.6 L) with the engine start battery under the starboard cushion. Rod holders are to either side of the couch.

Sun Tracker Fishin Barge 24 XP3 couch

Drink and rod holders are to either side of the couch. Underneath is another livewell with a minnow bucket.

Sun Tracker Fishin Barge 24 XP3 rod storage

Rod storage is gained from vertical holders to the side rails and a lockable compartment along the fence.

Helm

Sun Tracker mounts the helm console in the usual position to the starboard center of the boat. We'd like to see it also in an elevated platform, providing a couple of inches of visibility over the heads of the occupants in the forward couch. That said, the helm is well laid out with a smoked windscreen above the panel. The wheel is mounted to a tilt base and the seat has flip-up armrests and the ability to swivel and slide. A storage pouch is at the back of the seat.

Sun Tracker Fishin Barge 24 XP3 helm console

The helm console gel coat is a soft tone to reduce glare to the operator. Storage is accessed from a door to the side.

Sun Tracker Fishin Barge 24 XP3 stereo player

A Jensen stereo to the port side has MP3 accessibility with a plug-in port just alongside. A drink holder just above can hold the player but we'd rather see the dedicated holder with a bungee to secure the player moved to this side so we don't have a long wire strung across the console.

At times we question the logic of having tinted windscreens since they hamper vision at night, and it's just as easy to throw on a pair of sunglasses, but Sun Tracker goes the extra step of making its windscreens easily removable.

Sun Tracker Fishin Barge 24 XP3 cargo netting

Here's an interesting feature that we rarely see: Cargo netting under the Bimini top.

Sun Tracker Fishin Barge 24 XP3 ladder

The four-step re-boarding ladder has wide treads that feel more comfortable on bare feet.

Power Choices and Pricing

Mercury is the chosen power supplier for Sun Tracker with the 115-hp Pro XS 4-stroke long shaft being the base package delivered with an MSRP of \$33,955

. Upgrading to a 150-hp model will add another \$2,040? to the bottom line. Moving up to the maximum 250-hp 4-stroke will add \$10,015 to the base price.

Warranty

The following items are part of the Sun Tracker Warranty --

- **Ten-Year Bow-to-Stern Warranty** -- that means factory-installed workmanship and materials are covered for ten years from the time of purchase, including electrical components, livewells and plumbing, carpet and vinyl, furniture, Bimini top and much more. Your engine is covered by the Mercury manufacturer's warranty.
- **Lifetime Limited Structural and Deck Warranty** -- provides coverage for pontoon logs, motor pod, other structural elements including deck supports, perimeter fence rails and gates, and more, for the life of the boat.
- **Transferability to Second Owner** -- the resale value of your boat can be enhanced by provisions to transfer warranty elements to a second owner. Your Sun Tracker dealer can help you put applicable elements into effect when you are ready.
- **One-stop Warranty Resolution** -- 10+LIFE coverage offers a one-stop solution, eliminating the need to pursue separate warranties with component manufacturers.
- **Full Coverage During Warranty Period** -- means there is no pro-rating, or reduction of your coverage over time. So the peace of mind you enjoy at the outset carries throughout your coverage period.

In addition, Sun Tracker even backs its optional trailers by warranting the Galvashield steel tubing against structural failure due to corrosion for three years!

Observations

We were quite impressed with both the layout and handling of the Sun Tracker Fishin' Barge 24 XP3, and while we would question the decision to attach the term "barge" to any boat a company is trying to make appealing, the simple fact is that this version seems to have as much going for it as her more entertainment based sister.