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This paper examines gambling and affect by drawing on ethnography from Matsu (馬祖), a small archipelago in the Taiwan Strait. To begin with, I situate gambling within the contexts of island ecology and fishing economy, showing how gambling can on the one hand be a source of leisure and relaxation, and on the other hand be embedded within a maritime world as a way to train fishermen to dare to take risks, an essential attribute of their profession which requires ceaseless struggle in the ocean. When the army came to Matsu in 1949 and placed the island under military administration, although the fishing industry underwent a steep decline, gambling spread to all walks of life, continuing unabated despite every attempt of the military government to stamp it out. The second part of this paper considers the significance of gambling in periods of historical and social change. I argue that gambling during the warzone period became a new space of affect and resistance. I re-interpret the ethnography in Island Fantasia (Lin 2021) through the lens of affect to show that gambling released the smothering inhibitions and oppressions of military rule and offered new possibilities for, and imaginaries of, resistance. While writing about affect and emotion, I do not always strictly differentiate these terms, but interweave them to highlight the juxtaposition of conscious/unconscious intensity that energizes the island life and its transitions and transformations.