

New Jersey Marine Digest

May 2015

**Size and
Possession
Limits**

page 17



**A Clear
Revival**

**for New Jersey's
Artificial Reef Program**

page 6



A Summary of Recreational Regulations and
Marine Fish and Shellfish Management Information

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Contents

- 9 Governor's Surf Fishing Tournament
- 10 Marine Fish Regulations — Finfish
- 14 Marine Species Identification
- 16 Marine Regulations — Mollusks and Crustaceans
- 17 State Seasons, Minimum Size and Possession Limits Chart
- 18 Federal Recreational Fishing Regulations
- 19 Shellfish and Non-Commercial Crab Pot License Information
- 22 Skillful Angler Recognition Program
- 24 New Jersey State Record Marine Sport Fish
- 26 Health Advisories

hotlines

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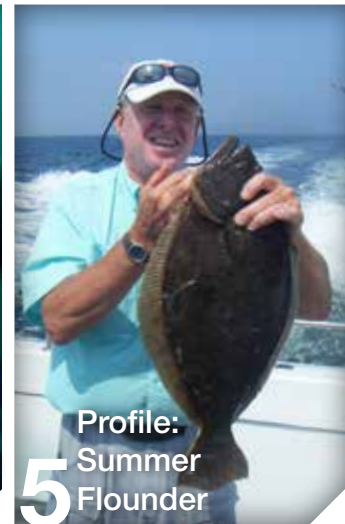
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6 A Clear Revival for New Jersey's Artificial Reef Program



20 Whoosh! A Spearfishing Primer



5 Profile: Summer Flounder



27 Unique Fishing Regs at Island Beach State Park

Director's Message

DAVE CHANDA



Since its inception in 1984, Fish and Wildlife's Reef Program has been very proactive in reef construction efforts. As New Jersey's artificial reef network grew and the volume of materials deployed to create them increased, reefs quickly became popular locations for recreational anglers and commercial fishermen utilizing potting gear. However, as early as 1989, charter and individual boat owners indicated that the presence of fish pots and lobster pots on reefs was beginning to preclude access.


As reef building efforts continued into the 2000s, conflicts between recreational and commercial users continued to rise. Federal officials representing the Sport Fish Restoration Program stated that this situation must be resolved because anglers had paid for these reefs through excise taxes on marine gas and fishing tackle; one user group should not be allowed to dominate access. Following this admonishment, on April 11th, 2011, more than \$250,000 in Sport Fish Restoration funding for New Jersey's Program was discontinued for use in reef construction and monitoring activities. These funds were not lost, just redistributed to other Fish and Wildlife projects. It was further explained that once access to reefs was restored to recreational users, funding could once again be utilized for the Reef Program.

To alleviate these conflicts and ultimately restore access to recreational anglers, in March 2013, New Jersey DEP Commissioner Bob Martin worked with representatives from the recreational and commercial fishing sectors to develop a plan for balancing access on reefs located in state waters. Since that time, Fish and Wildlife staff has been working diligently towards implementing this plan. A component of the plan also includes the construction of a new reef where potting gear will be prohibited. In essence, the plan sets the stage for the future and will translate into more benefits for all reef users.

This edition of the *Marine Digest* has an article (see page 6) focusing on the specifics of Commissioner Martin's compromise as well as other beneficial proposed changes to the Reef Program.

Also directly related to our Reef Program and artificial reefs, readers will find an informative "how to" article on spearfishing in New Jersey. (See page 20.) Spearfishing is growing in popularity; we offer insights and techniques for this exciting form of recreation. Recently, Fish and Wildlife added a new category to our Record Fish Program for "speargun hunters" to recognize their outstanding achievements.

New Jersey's Reef Program is recognized as being the best in the nation; our reefs are second to none for spearfishing, scuba diving and fishing. In the Program's 31 year history, more than 7 million cubic yards of materials have been deployed to create artificial reefs. These materials consist primarily of rock, vessels, designed habitats (reef balls) and other materials of opportunity.

In a study conducted by the DEP, it was determined that reefs accounted for 18 percent of all of the fish caught in marine waters. In other words, roughly two out of every 11 fish caught along the Jersey shore were caught on a reef — an amazing statistic! The future of Fish and Wildlife's Reef Program is bright. We will continue to be dynamic in adjusting our goals and objectives to meet the needs of resource users wisely. 

Dave Chanda is the Director of the Division of Fish and Wildlife.



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This high-quality regulation guide is offered to you by the New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife through its unique partnership with J.F. Griffin Publishing, LLC.

J.F. Griffin is an award-winning publishing house that specializes in producing state fish and wildlife regulation guides. J.F. Griffin supports the Fish and Wildlife staff in the design, layout and editing of the *New Jersey Marine Digest*. We also manage the marketing and sales of *Digest* advertising to appropriate businesses.

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New Jersey Marine Digest

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New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife

Our Mission

To protect and manage the state's fish and wildlife to maximize their long-term biological, recreational and economic value for all New Jerseyans.

Our Goals

- To maintain New Jersey's rich variety of fish and wildlife species at stable, healthy levels and to protect and enhance the many habitats on which they depend.
- To educate New Jerseyans on the values and needs of our fish and wildlife and to foster a positive human/wildlife co-existence.
- To maximize the recreational and commercial use of New Jersey's fish and wildlife for both present and future generations.

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Summer Flounder

A PROFILE

By **Maryellen Gordon**, Senior Fisheries Biologist | **Lauren "Maggie" Sager**, Seasonal Fisheries Technician | **Bryan Carter**, Seasonal Fisheries Technician
Jonathan Klotz, Seasonal Fisheries Technician | **Erin Mulvenna**, Seasonal Fisheries Technician

Common Names: summer flounder, fluke

Scientific Name: *Paralichthys dentatus*

Range: Nova Scotia south to eastern Florida, but most common in the Mid-Atlantic region.

Size: Males can grow to over 2 feet, with larger females reaching lengths up to 3 feet.

Biological Characteristics: Like all flounder, adult summer flounder are flat-bodied. They are white below and range from shades of brown to grey drab above, with a scattering of distinct, dark identifying spots. Summer flounder have the ability to change their coloring in order to blend with their environment. Summer flounder are considered "left-eyed;" when viewed from above, both eyes are typically on the left side of the body, although rarely a right-eyed variation may occur.

Habitat: Hard, sandy bottoms and salt marsh creeks or seagrass beds with muddy or silty substrate.

Food and Feeding: Larval summer flounder feed primarily on zooplankton, juveniles mainly on crustaceans and adults are opportunistic predators. Their ability to camouflage themselves with the substrate where they spend most of their lives makes them highly efficient ambush predators. Numerous, well-developed teeth allow adult summer flounder to feed on a range of prey, including crustaceans, small fish, squid and sea worms. Summer flounder most actively feed during daylight hours.

Spawning: Summer flounder typically begin spawning around age two to three, with males averaging 10 inches and females averaging 12.5 inches in length. Spawning occurs in the fall and winter (peaking in October and November) when summer flounder migrate from coastal to offshore waters to depths between 120 and 600 feet. Spawning is directly linked to sexual maturity, with older, larger fish migrating first. Since flounder spawn several times per season, a large female may release up to 4 million eggs in a single year. Larval flounder, or fry, begin life in the water column and migrate inshore to shallow coastal nurseries. Here they settle into the sediment and develop their adult form, with the body flattening and the right eye migrating over the top of the head to the left side.

Migration: Their migration patterns are strongly tied to water temperature, with adults spending the warm summer months on the sea floor in shallow coastal waters before migrating to the outer edge of the continental shelf as fall temperatures drop.

Commercial/Recreational Importance: Summer flounder are considered one of the most important and sought-after fish in New Jersey, primarily for their great tasting meat. Restaurants, bait and tackle shops, charter and head boats plus beach townships all benefit economically from the influx of both local and visiting anglers that target summer flounder along the New Jersey coastline each summer. The New Jersey commercial summer flounder fishery accounts for a large portion of the summer flounder sold in restaurants and super markets. However, the recreational fishery is equally important in New Jersey. Recreational anglers support the local businesses, enjoy the activity of fishing for summer flounder and can then take part in a fresh, home-cooked meal.

Fishing Methods: Summer flounder can be caught using a variety of methods, one of which is by using a bucktail teaser rig. The bucktail acts as the weight on the bottom of a leader, and a second hook is placed 12–24 inches above on a dropper loop. Both hooks can be tipped with an artificially scented soft plastic lure that summer flounder can't resist. Using light tackle such as 5- to 7-foot medium-action rods and 10 lb. mono/20 lb. braided line is necessary to feel the sensitive bite of a summer flounder.

Applying a small, but rapid vertical jigging action to the rod will present the bucktail and lure like an

injured baitfish, often resulting in a strike from a summer flounder. Since these fish are visual predators, the presented bait should be moving constantly to attract their attention. This usually requires shore-based anglers to continually cast and retrieve; boat anglers drift rather than anchor in one spot.

Summer flounder do not produce drag-ripping fights such as bluefish and striped bass, but can still be sporty on light tackle, especially from boats where their flat profile creates a lot of water resistance. Making up for their lack of fighting skills, summer flounder can often be caught in large quantities in one fishing trip.

If a summer flounder is caught along a certain stretch of beach or near a certain underwater feature, continue fishing that same area and you will often catch more fish. When fishing from shore, it is important to work the bucktail right up to the beach. Summer flounder often settle close against the beach lip, feeding on baitfish and crabs washed seaward off the beach face. Typically, most summer flounder caught from the surf are hooked less than 20 yards from shore.

Sources:

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (2014)
NOAA Fish Watch (2014)
K. Hill, Smithsonian Marine Station at Fort Pierce (2014)
New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife, Bureau of Marine Fisheries



Surf Fishing at Long Beach Island — Shane Evert and his dad Steve share in the delight of catching this summer flounder.

A Clear Revival for New Jersey's Artificial Reef Program



By Hugh Carberry, Reef Coordinator

The federal Sport Fish Restoration Program funding for New Jersey's Artificial Reef Program was discontinued on April 12, 2011 by federal officials due to spatial conflicts between anglers and recreational plus commercial fishers using potting gear. Federal officials stated that the Sport Fish Restoration funding source is a "user pays—user benefits" program and that the presence of potting gear precludes access to reefs for which anglers have paid for through excise taxes. These officials further explained that funding would be restored when appropriate action was taken.

Since that time, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has worked diligently with representatives from the recreational and commercial sectors in developing a fair plan to balance access on reefs located in marine state waters. The plan includes designating specific locations within these reefs where potting gear can be set and the creation of a new reef in marine state waters where potting gear will be prohibited. The DEP also vowed to petition the Mid-Atlantic Fisheries Management Council for Special Management Zone regulations for the 13 reefs located in Exclusive Economic Zone once regulations are in place for reefs in marine state waters. It is anticipated that these changes will satisfy federal officials and that Sport Fish Restoration funding will then be restored.

These changes, as well as a separate proposal to potentially construct a new reef in Delaware Bay—and a legal agreement to work jointly with nonprofit organizations (501C3s) for future reef construction

efforts—have set the stage for New Jersey's Artificial Reef Program to make an epic comeback. Fish and Wildlife's Artificial Reef Program has been inactive for more than three years but these proposals will breathe new life into a Program that has been recognized as being the best in the nation. Ultimately, it will be recreational users who will benefit from all of these changes.

Under the DEP's plan to balance access, regulations will set aside a portion of the Sandy Hook Reef and two sections of the Axel Carlson Reef to be designated as Full Access Zones. These will be areas where potting gear can be set. Anglers will not be prohibited from utilizing the Full Access Zones but run the risk of losing terminal fishing tackle on submerged potting gear and the associated ground lines between pots. All other forms of commercial fishing will be allowed on these reefs in their entirety, including the Full Access Zones.

Once the Full Access Zone regulations are in place, the DEP has vowed to petition the Mid-Atlantic Fisheries Management Council for Special Management Zone regulations for the 13 reefs located in the Exclusive Economic Zone. The purpose of the Special Management Zone designation is to establish management authority that would allow for options that prohibit or restrain the use of specific types of fishing gear that are not compatible with the intent of the artificial reef.

The Mid-Atlantic Fisheries Management Council's Special Management Zone Monitoring Team will evaluate New Jersey's request and prepare a

written report for the Council's chairman. The Monitoring Team bases recommendations on fairness and equity; promotion of conservation; avoidance of excessive shares; consistency with the summer flounder, scup and black sea bass Fisheries Management Plan; the natural bottom within the reef and surrounding it; and impacts to historical uses. Following a full review by the Council a recommendation will be made to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Regional Administrator. Ultimately it is the NOAA's Regional Administrator that makes the final decision on the Monitoring Team's recommendations.

Another component of the DEP's plan to balance access includes the creation of a new reef north of Barnegat Inlet where potting gear will be prohibited. The reef will be located in marine state waters and its size will equate to the total area of the three Full Access Zones contained within the Sandy Hook and Axel Carlson Reefs (0.95 mi²). Through exclusionary mapping, Fish and Wildlife's marine biologists will select a location having adequate depth and substrate that will not adversely impact commercial fishing operations and will not be near productive areas such as rock outcroppings and other live bottom, shipping lanes, anchorages and telecommunication cables. If all the components of the DEP's proposals to balance access reach fruition, the new reef will be ready for construction during the spring of 2016.



A separate DEP proposal outside the plan to balance access is the creation of a new reef in Delaware Bay. For the past ten years Fish and Wildlife has received hundreds of requests from anglers from the ports of Fortescue, Cape May, Matt's Landing, Bidwell Creek and Dennis Creek to construct reefs in the bay. Anglers from these ports contended that the State of Delaware's reefs within the bay are extremely productive and that New Jersey's Reef Program should move forward with reefs in Delaware Bay to increase recreational opportunities.

After much consideration, Fish and Wildlife elected to move forward with obtaining necessary approvals to construct a new reef in Delaware Bay. Our main concern with reef construction in this area is that juvenile game fishes such as weakfish, striped bass, black sea bass and tautog use the upper Delaware Bay estuary as a nursery area. Reefs will concentrate juvenile and sublegal fishes making

them vulnerable to catch by hook and line, potentially resulting in hooking mortality.

To avoid this possible outcome, the DEP chose to consider only one location in the lower Bay where the likelihood of hooking juveniles and sublegal fishes would be significantly reduced. For the past two years, Fish and Wildlife, has been working diligently towards this goal. The first hurdle was

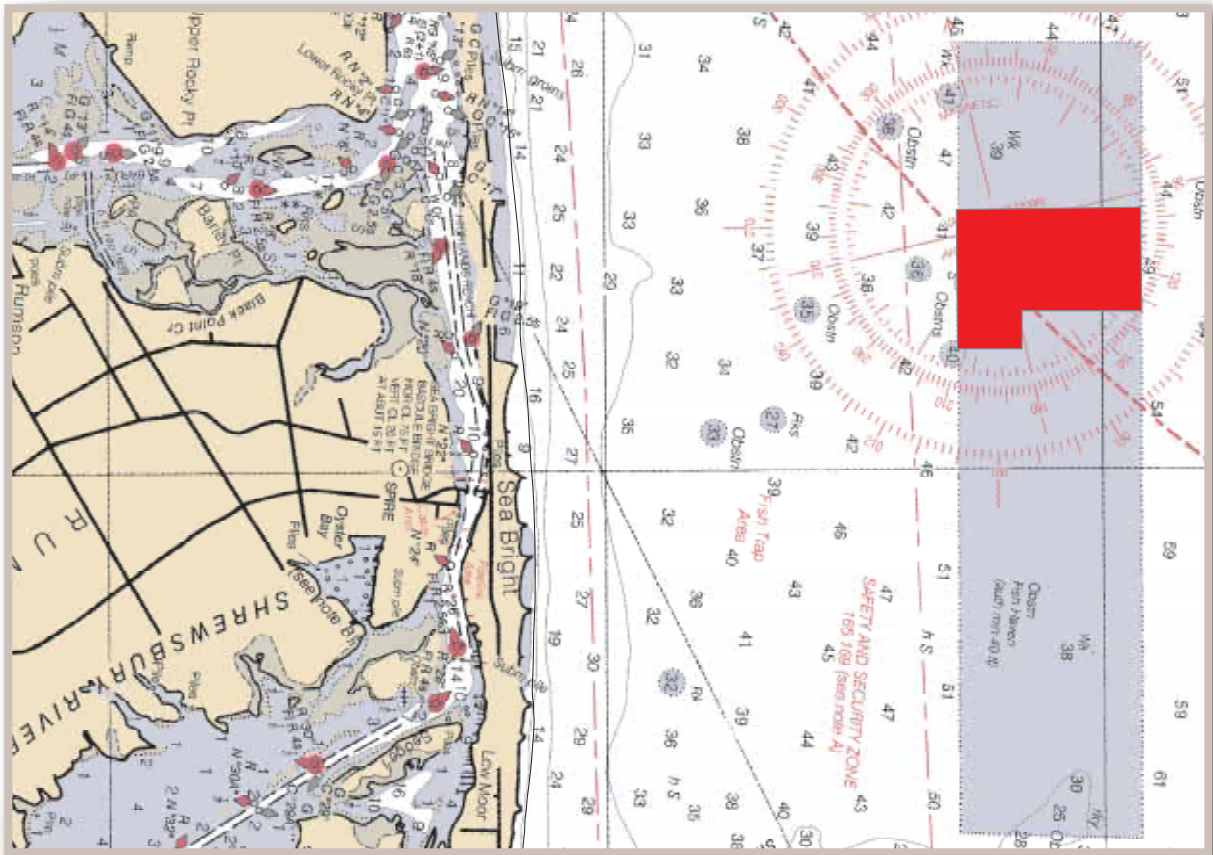
proposing a change in the Coastal Zone Management rules.

Working with DEP officials from Coastal Management, a change in the Coastal Zone Management rules was proposed which would allow for the construction of an artificial reef in lower Delaware Bay. Since the inception of New Jersey's Reef Program in 1984, the Coastal Zone Management rules stated unequivocally that reefs were only to be constructed in the ocean. The proposed rule change appeared in the June 2014 New Jersey Register for a 30 day public comment period. Although the proposed rule change has not yet been officially adopted, it is anticipated that this change will be in effect by June 2, 2015.

This change is the first initial step towards constructing a reef in the lower Delaware Bay. However, other crucial steps include meeting with representatives from the commercial fishing industries from the Delaware Bay area to receive their input. Our main focus on selecting a potential location will be to choose an area that is equidistant from all ports that has adequate depth and substrate composition that will not interfere with established shipping lanes.

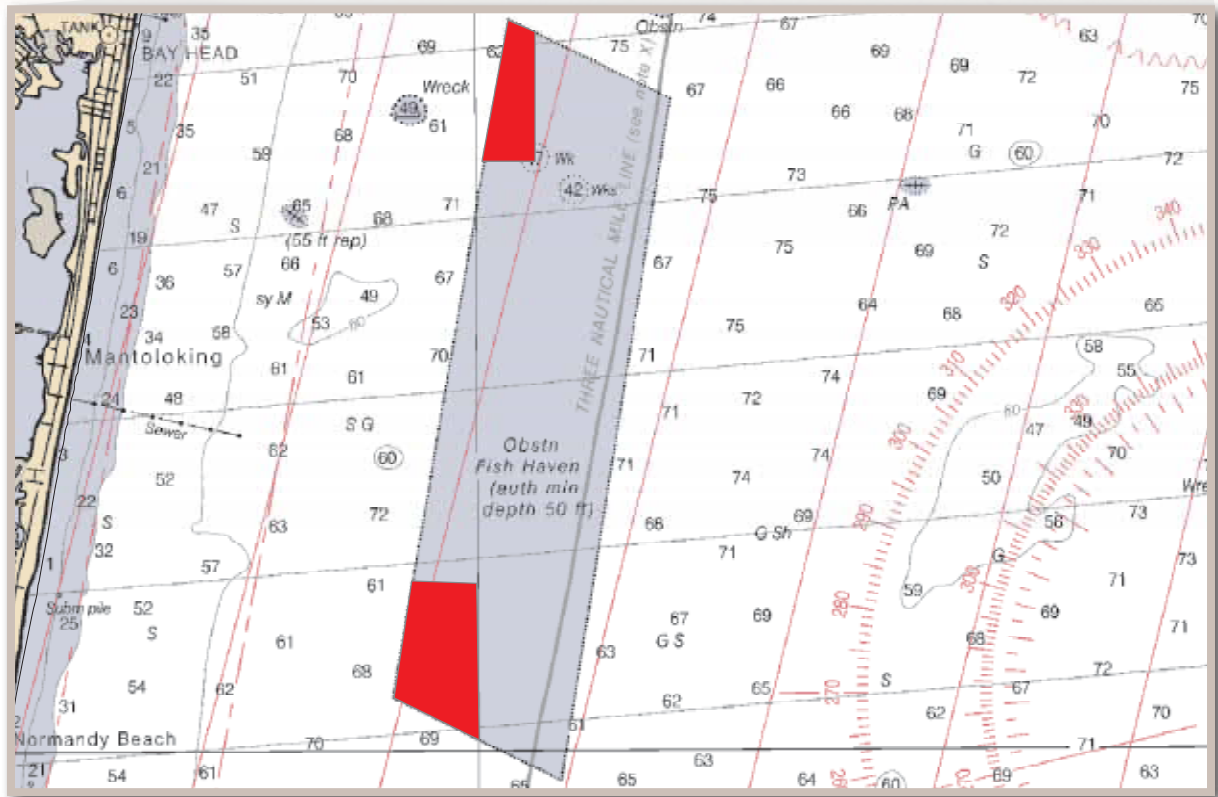
Sandy Hook Reef

Location of "Full Access Zone" highlighted in red. (Charts not for navigational use.)



Axel Carlson Reef

Locations of "Full Access Zones" highlighted in red.
(Charts not for navigational use.)



If our efforts are successful, the proposed reef will be one mile in area and be comprised of low profile structures such as reef balls, dredge rock and demolition concrete and low vertical relief deck barges. The final outcome will be an outstanding location for anglers to catch tautog, summer flounder, black sea bass, striped bass and transient species such as sheepshead, spadefish and cobia. Similar to the new reef being proposed further north as part of the DEP's plan to balance access, potting type gear will be prohibited at the proposed lower Delaware Bay reef.

The last exciting change regarding the Reef Program is a Memorandum of Understanding that was

developed by the DEP for any interested nonprofit organizations and reef material providers that want to participate with New Jersey's Artificial Reef Program in building reefs. This agreement, when finalized, will serve as a catalyst for reefing more vessels and other acceptable materials within New Jersey's Reef Network in a quick and timely manner.

The agreement is very specific in that it identifies responsibilities of the DEP, nonprofit organizations, reef material providers and contractors for preparing and towing of vessels to reefs for deployment. Perhaps the greatest benefit though will be a system set in place that will allow interested nonprofit organizations to serve as a repository

for donations from fishing clubs, scuba clubs and the Reef Program's very popular adopt-a-reef and memorial reef programs.

New Jersey's Reef Program is recognized nationally as being the most progressive and served as the model for other states now active in constructing artificial reefs. Our Program has reefed more vessels and deployed a greater volume of materials than any other state in the nation, an amazing statistic given the size of New Jersey compared with other states having an active reef program such as Florida, California and North Carolina.



In the shadow of Old Barney—Captured from atop the lighthouse as it passed by, landing craft *Benjamin Maybe* transports 50 reef balls to the Barnegat Light Reef.

Although the conflicts that arose between recreational and commercial fishers using potting gear were an unfortunate outcome, the measures proposed by the DEP to ameliorate access issues should satisfy federal officials from the Sport Fish Restoration Program. It is anticipated that our federal funding will be restored by the spring of 2016 and that New Jersey's Reef Program will once again set the gold standard for other states to follow.

Governor's Surf Fishing Tournament

GET OUTSIDE & ENJOY A DAY OF FISHING WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS

By Karen Byrne, Senior Biologist

Mark your calendar for May 17, 2015 when Island Beach State Park will host the 24th annual Governor's Surf Fishing Tournament! Hundreds of anglers from New Jersey and neighboring states are expected to hit the beach that day in hopes of catching the longest fish and to enjoy a great day of fishing with family and friends at the Jersey Shore.

The tournament aims to encourage youngsters and adults to learn more about surf fishing while taking advantage of a great family activity. Since its inception in 1991, the tournament has generated more than \$130,000 for various marine education and restoration efforts, construction of access ramps for disabled saltwater anglers, surf fishing

instruction programs and equipment and the purchase of the first mobile automatic heart defibrillator for use at Island Beach State Park. In 2014, funds from the tournament and partnering organizations provided Island Beach State Park with more than eight new specialized wheelchairs that provide beach access for the disabled and elderly.

Last year was the first time in tournament history that the event was not held in the fall. The change to May was beneficial with a significant increase in the number of participants over recent years. More than 600 anglers participated this year. A bluefish blitz kept tournament judges on the move with nearly 200 fish being measured. However, it was Chris Follmer of Hasbrouck Heights, NJ, who took the grand prize and New Jersey Governor's Cup with a 36-inch bluefish. Follmer received two rod-and-reel combinations plus a plaque; his name will be engraved on the Governor's Cup on permanent display at the park. New Jersey Lieutenant Governor Kim Guadagno was on hand to greet tournament participants and help present the awards after spending a day on the beach fishing with family and friends.

In addition to the Governor's Cup winner, twenty anglers received rod and reel combinations for their prize-winning fish in the striped bass and bluefish categories. Overall fish length determined the grand prize winner, as well as first, second or third place in each of the species categories. There were categories for children, teen and adult anglers, including sub-categories for male and female anglers.

The Governor's Surf Fishing Tournament is a great

Thank you!

New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife, along with our co-sponsors—the NJ State Park Service, NJ State Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs, Jersey Coast Anglers Association and NJ Beach Buggy Association—would like to thank the following organizations for contributing to the success of the 23rd Annual Governor's Surf Fishing Tournament in 2014:

- Sportsman's Center
- Chestnut Neck Boat Yard
- Eagle Claw Fishing Tackle
- L&H Wood and Water
- Legal Limits Company
- Manns Bait Company
- Silver Horde
- Skunkbunker
- Stanley Jigs
- Canyon Gear
- Tica USA

In memoriam: We remember and thank Ken Jelnicki, Jr. who, for the past five years, donated a Surf Rocket, one of his custom-designed surf casters, as an early registration prize. Mr. Jelnicki passed away in January 2014 but will be remembered as being passionate about surf fishing and as someone always willing to help other anglers.

way for anglers of all ages and experience to enjoy a great day of fishing, and help kick off the start of the summer season at the Jersey shore. For more information about the Tournament, or to receive a registration form, visit NJFishandWildlife.com/gsft.htm or call (609) 748-4347.



Jon Cantucci/NJ DFW

Tournament winner Chris Follmer of Hasbrouck Heights landed the top position with a 36-inch bluefish. L-R: John Toth (Jersey Coast Angler Assoc.), Chris Follmer (Governor's Cup winner), John Rogalo (NJ State Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs), Lt. Governor Guadagno, Tim Burden (NJ Beach Buggy Assoc.) and Dave Chanda (Director, NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife).

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ORVIS • PENN • POWER PRO • BOMBER • SCI ANGLER • HOPKINS • VAN STAAL

Regulations in *red* are new this year.

Regulations remain in effect until changed. For the most current regulations, go to NJFishandWildlife.com/njregs.htm#marine or call the marine fish "listen-only" information line at (609) 292-2083. The Department of Environmental Protection's Division of Fish and Wildlife informs anglers that rules for the recreational harvest of **summer flounder (fluke)**, **black sea bass**, **striped bass** and **lobster** have changed.

- ♦ The recreational summer flounder open season has been modified to include May 22 to September 26.
- ♦ The black sea bass recreational minimum size remains at 12.5 inches. However, the recreational seasons and possession limits have changed. There is a 15 fish possession limit for May 27 to June 30, a two fish possession limit for July 1 to July 31, and a 15 fish possession limit for Oct. 22 to Dec. 31.
- ♦ The recreational striped bass size limit has changed to one fish at 28 inches to less than 43 inches and one fish at greater than or equal to 43 inches. The Striped Bass Bonus Program has been modified to one fish at 24 inches to less than 28 inches with a season of September 1 to December 31. See page 12 for additional program information.
- ♦ The lobster season has changed; there is no harvest or possession allowed from April 30 to May 31.
- ♦ Notice: New Federal regulations for the taking of blueline tilefish will likely be implemented in 2015. Visit our website at NJFishandWildlife.com or call the 24-hour marine fish "listen-only" information line at (609) 292-2083 for the latest regulation updates.

These changes were implemented for New Jersey to remain in compliance with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's management plans for summer flounder, black sea bass, striped bass and coastal sharks. The new rules are aimed at providing adequate protection to these fish stocks while allowing New Jersey's saltwater recreational anglers to participate to the fullest extent possible in these various fisheries.

New Jersey recreational marine regulations apply to all fish species when they are possessed in state waters or landed in New Jersey regardless of where they are caught. Saltwater anglers must comply with the requirements of the New Jersey Saltwater Recreational Registry Program. See page 13.

Resource Information

Anyone who takes fisheries resources may be required to provide information on the species, number, weight or other information pertinent to management of resources. **Anglers are encouraged**

to report all fishing activity after each trip. Visit **Fish and Wildlife's Volunteer Angler Survey** at NJFishandWildlife.com/marinesurvey.htm.

Methods of Recreational Fishing

No person shall take, catch, kill or attempt to take, catch or kill any fish within the marine waters of the state by any means except in the manner commonly known as angling with hand line or rod and line unless specifically provided for by statute or regulation.

Delaware Fishing License Requirement

A Delaware fishing license is required for all non-resident anglers aged 16 and over fishing either fresh or tidal waters. Delaware fishing license information can be found at <http://www.fw.delaware.gov/Fisheries/Pages/NewFishingLicense.aspx>.

New York Fishing Registry Requirement

New York offers a free registry to all marine anglers. Visit <http://www.dec.ny.gov/permits/54950.html>.

Bait Fish

No license is required for the taking of baitfish for personal use with the following gear:

1. Dip nets 24 inches diameter or less for the taking of Atlantic herring only (does not include river herring — alewife and blueback herring) for live bait. **The taking or possession of river herring is prohibited.**
2. Bait seines 50 feet long or less.
3. Cast nets 20 feet in diameter or less.
4. Lift or umbrella nets four feet square or less.
5. Not more than five killipots.
6. Not more than two miniature fykes or pots for the taking of eels for bait.

Fish taken in this manner may not be sold or used for barter unless a commercial bait net license is in possession.

No person shall take or attempt to take fish by any means from the Deal Lake flume, Lake Takanasse spillway or Wreck Pond spillway on any Monday, Wednesday or Friday during the months of April and May.

Wanton Waste Prohibited

Fish of any species which are purposely killed shall become part of the angler's daily possession limit and shall not be returned to the water from which they were taken. This does not apply to fish which are released alive and subsequently die, but does apply even to species without size/possession limits.

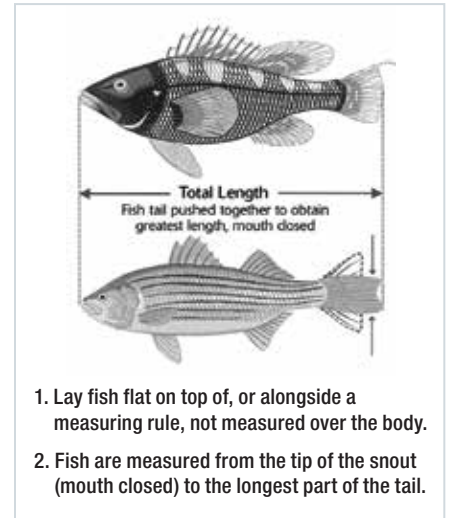
Spearfishing

Spearfishing may be conducted by means of a spear, harpoon or other missile while completely

submerged in the marine waters of the state for any species, except lobster.

Persons who fish with a spear for species with size limits are reminded that it is their responsibility to ensure the fish meets the minimum size limits before being killed or injured. (See article, *A Spearfishing Primer*, on page 20.)

Fish Measurement



Prohibited Species

It is illegal to take, possess, land, purchase, or sell any of the following species:

- ♦ Atlantic sturgeon
- ♦ basking shark
- ♦ big eye sand tiger shark
- ♦ sand tiger shark
- ♦ sandbar shark
- ♦ shortnose sturgeon
- ♦ whale shark
- ♦ white shark
- ♦ river herring (alewife and blueback herring; see herring illustrations, page 14)
- ♦ See *Sharks* (page 11) for the full list of prohibited shark species

Sea Turtles & Marine Mammals

It is illegal to intentionally molest, kill or possess sea turtles or marine mammals, or to possess any part thereof.

Finfish

How to Release Hooked Fish

Proper handling and releasing techniques reduce fish mortality.

- ♦ Land fish as quickly as possible, except not when retrieving from depths of 40-feet or more. Fighting a fish to exhaustion increases mortality as does rapidly bringing up a fish through the changing water pressure and temperature gradients.

Accessible Fishing Sites



For people with disabilities, visit: www.NJFishandWildlife.com/sites.htm

An Accessible Fishing Sites list is available to assist anglers whose mobility is impaired. All sites are wheelchair-accessible except for the Musconetcong River in Morris County, where vehicle access is to the shoreline.

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- Keep fish to be released in the water as much as possible. Plan ahead with tools and camera.
- Minimize physical injury. Do not touch gills or allow fish to flop around on deck.
- Carefully remove hooks using a dehooker or needle-nose pliers.
- Use plain hooks, not stainless, to rust away quickly if one must be left in a gut-hooked fish. Be prepared with long-handled dykes. Cut this line close to the hook's eyelet.
- To bring a fish out of the water momentarily, use a neoprene net or one of knotless nylon. Handle the fish carefully using wet hands, wet cotton gloves or similar material to minimize loss of the fish's protective slime layer.
- To revive lethargic fish, hold in a normal, upright position. Move the fish forward in an "S" or figure-8 pattern so that water flows over the gills only from front to back.
- Use circle hooks (not offset) for species that bite and flee, such as striped bass, weakfish or sea bass. Consider pinching hook barbs.

Filleting

The filleting at sea of all fish with a size limit, or any species of flatfish, is prohibited except for summer flounder; see *Summer Flounder*, page 12. No parts of any fish caught on a previous fishing trip shall be in possession. Party boats may fillet fish at sea

if they obtain a Special Fillet Permit. Applications may be obtained from Fish and Wildlife's Bureau of Marine Fisheries.

Black Drum

The minimum size limit for black drum is 16 inches in total length and the daily possession limit is three fish. There is no closed season for black drum.

Black Sea Bass

Black sea bass are measured along the midline from the snout to the end of the central portion of the tail, not to include the tail filaments. (See fish measuring example on page 10.) The black sea bass recreational minimum size remains at 12.5 inches. **The 2015 recreational seasons and possession limits have changed. See details on the Marine Regulations chart, page 17.** Visit our Web site at NJFishandWildlife.com or call the 24-hour marine fish "listen-only" information line at (609) 292-2083 for the latest regulation updates.

Bluefish

The possession limit for bluefish is 15 fish.

Red Drum

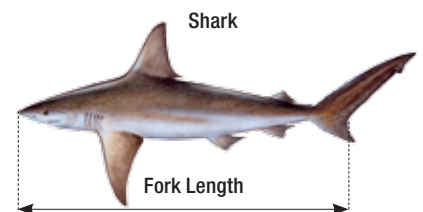
The red drum possession and size limits are one fish no less than 18 inches and not greater than 27 inches.

River Herring

The taking or possession of any river herring (alewife and blueback herring) in New Jersey's marine, tidal and freshwaters is prohibited. This prohibition does not include Atlantic herring which may be retained and used as bait. See the fish ID illustrations on page 14 for herring species identification.

Sharks

The hammerhead shark recreational size limit is 78 inches fork length (FL). The minimum size limit for authorized shark species of the Aggregate Large Coastal and Pelagic groups remains at 54 inches fork length while all others do not have a size limit. See dogfish Note and measuring illustration for fork length.



Regulations in **red** are new this year.

The 2015 shark regulations complement existing federal shark regulations (see 2015 Federal Recreational Regulations table, page 18). However, the following additional measures are required for state waters:

- In state waters, there is no minimum size limit for non-blacknose small coastal sharks and blacknose sharks* in the recreational fishery, but federal regulations include a 54-inch minimum size limit for blacknose and finetooth small coastal sharks.
- All sharks within the Aggregate Large Coastal and Hammerhead groups* will have a closed season within state waters from May 15 through July 15 to protect spawning female sharks during the pupping season.

* See page 18 footnote for species list defining shark groupings.

All sharks harvested by recreational fishermen must have heads, tails and fins attached naturally to the carcass until landed. Anglers may still gut and bleed the carcass as long as the tail is not removed. Filleting sharks at sea is prohibited.

Recreational anglers should access the following National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration website, http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/stories/2012/08/docs/rec_shark_id_placard_2010.pdf to view the

publication *Sharks That Can Be Legally Retained By Recreational Anglers In The Atlantic Ocean, Caribbean Sea And Gulf Of Mexico*, an excellent pictorial guide to identifying sharks that are legal to harvest.

These shark species are prohibited from possession: Atlantic angel, basking, bigeye sixgill, bigeye thresher, bigeye tiger, bignose, Caribbean reef, Caribbean sharpnose, dusky, Galapagos, longfin mako, narrowtooth, night, sandbar, sandtiger, sevengill, silky, sixgill, smalltail, whale and white sharks.

Note: To differentiate sharks from dogfish—the smooth dogfish has flat, tiny teeth; the spiny dogfish has strong, dorsal spines, shorter than, and in front of, the dorsal fins. Neither are present in sharks.

Striped Bass (includes Hybrid Striped Bass)

The possession limit for striped bass/hybrid striped bass is two fish. **The size limits are one fish at 28 inches to less than 43 inches and one fish equal to or greater than 43 inches.** Anglers participating in the Striped Bass Bonus Program may possess a striped bass at 24 inches to less than 28 inches in length.

It is illegal to take, catch or kill any striped bass from or in any marine waters of this state, by means of a net of any description, or by any methods other than angling with a hook and line or by spear fishing.

It is illegal to possess any striped bass which is less than the legal minimum size of 28 inches **unless in possession of a Striped Bass Bonus Permit which allows the possession of one fish at 24 inches to less than 28 inches.**

Harvest and possession of striped bass from federal waters (outside three miles) is prohibited. Sale of striped bass in New Jersey is prohibited.

Striped Bass Closed Seasons

No person may take, attempt to take, or have in possession any striped bass from the following closed waters:

Jan. 1–Feb. 28: All waters closed except the Atlantic Ocean from zero to three miles offshore. All inlets and bays are delineated from ocean waters by a Colregs Demarcation line.

April 1–May 31: Delaware River and Bay and their tributaries closed from the upstream side of the Calhoun St. bridge downstream to and including the Salem River and its tributaries.

Note: Non-offset circle hooks are required to reduce striped bass bycatch mortality while fishing with natural bait during the striped bass springtime spawning area closure within the Delaware River and its tributaries. This restriction does not apply to hook sizes smaller than size 2.

Striped Bass Bonus Program

The Striped Bass Bonus Program will continue this year, where anglers possessing a bonus permit may keep a striper at **24 inches to less than 28 inches.** **For 2015, the open season for this program will be September 1 through December 31.**

The current allocation from the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission is **215,912 pounds.** Should New Jersey exceed this quota, any average would be subtracted from the following year's quota.

Application Process: Striped Bass Bonus Program permits are only available online. Go to www.NJ.WildlifeLicense.com to complete the application and immediately print one Bonus Permit (application fee, \$2). The permit is non-transferable and valid for the current calendar year. Only one permit can be used per day. Harvest reporting also must be online. **Note that the Striped Bass Bonus Program application process may change later in 2015.** For regulation or program updates, visit us at www.NJFishandWildlife.com/bonusbas.htm or check the marine fish "listen only" information line (609) 292-2083.

Striped Bass Bonus Permit Harvest Reporting: All information on the Bonus Permit must be completed immediately after harvest and prior to transportation. After reporting harvest information at www.NJ.WildlifeLicense.com, anglers are then eligible to receive another bonus permit for the \$2 application fee. **Note: Harvest information must be reported online.**

Summer Flounder (Fluke)

The summer flounder recreational minimum size limit remains at 18 inches and the possession limit remains five fish. **The 2015 summer flounder recreational season will be open from May 22 to September 26.**

Anglers may fillet one legal-sized summer flounder from their daily possession limit catch for use as bait. This carcass, commonly known as the rack, shall be kept intact so it can be measured for compliance with the minimum size limit. No parts of any summer flounder caught on a previous fishing trip shall be in possession; only fish just caught on this outing.

Shore-based anglers fishing at Island Beach State Park (IBSP) may retain 2 fish greater than or equal to 16 inches (total length) only at IBSP during the current open summer flounder fishing season. Shore-based fishing is defined as fishing from a pier, jetty, beach, bank, or marsh. See the article on page 27.

Tautog (Blackfish)

The minimum size limit for tautog is 15 inches. There is a four fish possession limit from Jan. 1–Feb. 28, a closed season from March 1–March 31, a four fish possession limit from April 1–April 30, a closed season from May 1–July 16, a one fish possession limit from July 17–Nov. 15 and a six fish possession limit from Nov. 16–Dec. 31.


Weakfish (Gray & Spotted Seatrout)

The current possession and minimum size limit for weakfish is one fish at least 13 inches in length.

Winter Flounder

The possession minimum and size limit for winter flounder is two fish at 12 inches. For winter flounder the open season is March 1–Dec 31.

Additional Marine Fishing Regulations

See pages 14–15 for the fish ID pages and pages 17–18 for the regulation charts. 

Be the First to Know! Get on the List

The Marine Fisheries and Shellfish e-mail list, that is. This free service provides the latest information about Fish and Wildlife events, public hearings and other matters related to marine resources. And there are six other lists to help you get the most out of New Jersey's fish and wildlife resources. **Sign up today.**

Visit Fish and Wildlife's Web site:
NJFishandWildlife.com/1stsub.htm



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New Jersey Saltwater Recreational Registry Program (NJSRRP)

ATTENTION: New Jersey Saltwater Anglers

REGISTER. You make a difference! It's free, easy and required.

Intercept Surveys (AP AIS) are conducted at public marine fishing access points (boat ramps, piers, beaches, jetties, bridges, marinas and more) to collect individual angler catch data, including species identification, total number of each species, length and weight measurements of individual fishes as well as some angler-specific information about the fishing trip and the angler's fishing behavior.

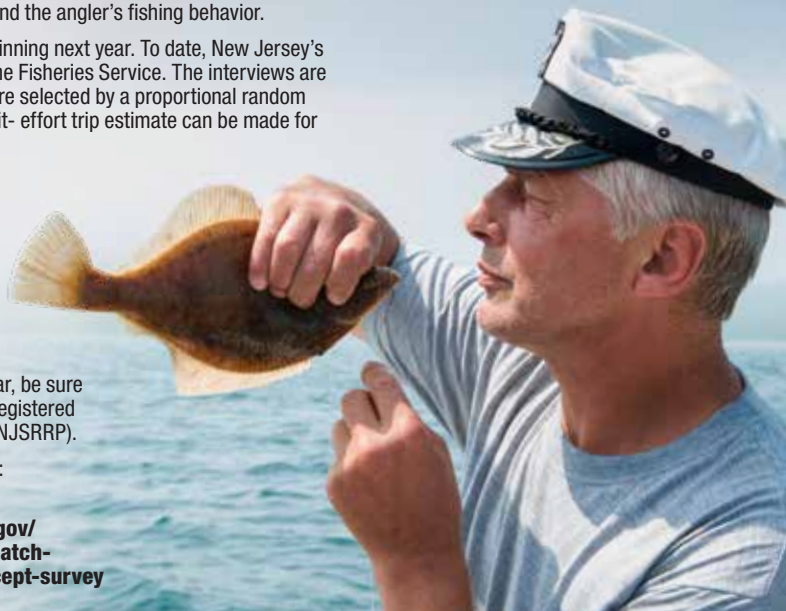
These angler surveys will be conducted by individual states beginning next year. To date, New Jersey's AP AIS has been conducted by a contractor of the National Marine Fisheries Service. The interviews are conducted in person by trained field staff. The sites and dates are selected by a proportional random selection process. From these angler interviews a catch-per-unit- effort trip estimate can be made for each type of fish encountered, either observed or reported. These estimates are combined with the effort estimates— such as those collected through telephone interviews— to produce the catch and harvest estimates.

Each state's saltwater registry serves as the contact list for these telephone interviews. Complete participation in the New Jersey Saltwater Recreational Registry Program is crucial to achieve accurate recreational fishing estimates which help to ensure healthy fisheries for the future.

Before you head out to catch your favorite saltwater fish this year, be sure to join the hundreds of thousands of anglers who have already registered with the New Jersey Saltwater Recreational Registry Program (NJSRRP).

Register at the NJ Saltwater Recreational Registry Program site:
www.saltwaterregistry.nj.gov

For more information on the AP AIS, visit www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/recreational-fisheries/in-depth/our-surveys-counting-catch-and-effort/survey-materials/access-point-angler-intercept-survey



Motor Boat Registration & Title Requirements NJ Motor Vehicle Commission (MVC)

Registration

Most boats must be registered to operate on New Jersey waterways.

- All titled boats must be registered also.
- **Any boat (including jet skis and non-titled watercraft), mechanically propelled (incl. electric motors), regardless of length, must be registered.**
- Boats greater than 12 feet in length, regardless of propulsion means, must be titled and registered at an MVC office.

Boats and marine equipment which need not be registered:

- Those not based in New Jersey or operating here less than 180 consecutive days that are operating under a federally approved numbering system from another state
- Ship's lifeboats
- Non-motorized vessels used exclusively on small lakes and ponds on private property
- Racing vessels with New Jersey State Marine Police permit
- Non-motorized inflatable device, surfboard, racing shell, dinghy, canoe or kayak
- Non-motorized vessel less than 12 feet in length

Title

For use on New Jersey waterways, all boats more than 12 feet in length must be titled, with the exception of ship's lifeboat, canoe, kayak, inflatable, surfboard, rowing scull, racing shell, tender/dinghy used for direct transportation between a vessel and shore for no other purposes.

Boat Operator License (MVC)

An operator license is required to operate power vessels on fresh, non-tidal waters such as lakes, creeks and rivers. (Minimum age 16 years; with certain exceptions.)

For More Information:

New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission

(888) 486-3339 toll free in NJ or (609) 292-6500 from out-of-state
www.nj.gov/mvc/

Boat Safety Certificate (NJSP)

A boat safety certificate (from an **approved** boat safety course; see NJSP Web site, below) is required to operate a personal watercraft or power vessel, including electric motors, in NJ waters (tidal and non-tidal).

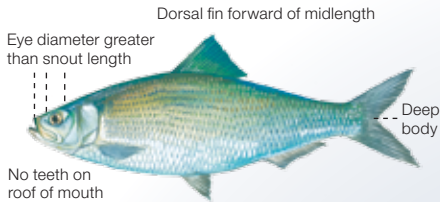
New Jersey State Police (NJSP)

(609) 882-2000
www.njsp.org/maritime

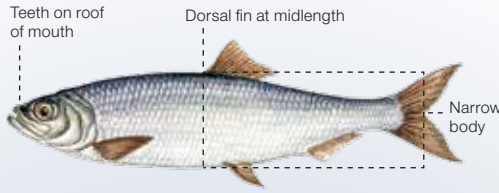
Marine Species Identification

MARINE REGULATIONS

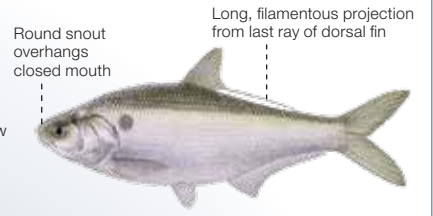
Herring



Alewife (a river herring)



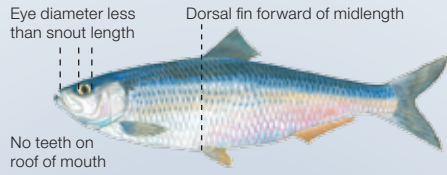
Atlantic Herring



Gizzard Shad



American Shad



Blueback Herring (a river herring)



Hickory Shad

Alewife, American Shad, Blueback Herring and Hickory Shad illustrations ©Duane Raver; Atlantic Herring illustration ©Victor Young/NH, Fish and Game Department; Gizzard Shad illustration courtesy of Texas Parks and Wildlife Department ©2012.



Striped Bass



Weakfish



Bluefish (Snapper)



Black Sea Bass



Atlantic Croaker



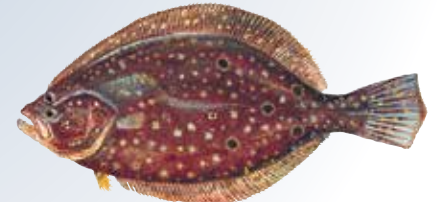
Winter Flounder



Tautog (Blackfish)



Black Drum



Summer Flounder (Fluke)



Red Drum



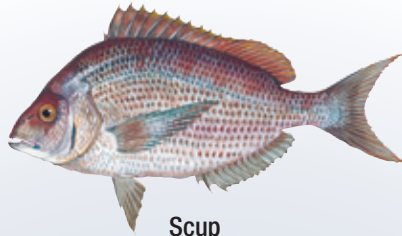
Blue Crab



Hard Clam



Spot



**Scup
(Porgy)**



White Perch



Northern Searobin



Northern Kingfish



Atlantic Bonito



Northern Puffer



**Spanish
Mackerel**



Oyster Toadfish



Atlantic Mackerel



Atlantic Cod



Smooth Dogfish



Spiny Dogfish



Sand Tiger Shark



Sandbar Shark

Mollusks & Crustaceans

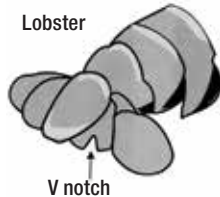
MARINE REGULATIONS

Regulations in **red** are new this year.

Crustaceans

American Lobster

The legal possession size limit of whole lobsters, measured from the rear of the eye socket along a line parallel to the center line of the body shell to the rear of the body shell, shall be not less than 3 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches nor greater than 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches. Lobster parts may not be possessed at sea or landed. There is no harvest or possession of lobster from **April 30–May 31**.



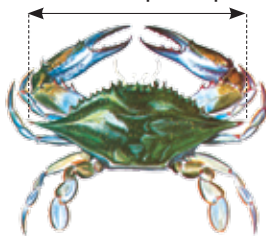
The possession limit is six lobsters per person. No person shall possess any lobster with eggs attached or from which eggs have been removed or any female lobster with a v-notched tail, as illustrated above.

The use of spears, gigs, gaffs or other penetrating devices as a method of capture for lobsters is prohibited. A recreational lobster pot license is required to use pots or traps to capture lobsters. For details call (609) 748-2020. Lobsters taken recreationally may not be sold or offered for sale.

Crabs

1. Crabs may be taken recreationally with hand lines, manually operated collapsible traps or scoop nets without a license. A non-commercial crab pot license is required for the use of not more than two non-collapsible Chesapeake-style crab pots (see illustration on page 19) or two trot lines to harvest crabs. See page 19 for the non-commercial crab pot license information.
2. It is illegal to harvest or possess more than one bushel of crabs per day per person or offer for sale any crabs without having in your possession a valid commercial crabbing license.
3. Minimum size for crabs that may be harvested (measured from point to point of shell) are as follows:
 - a) Peeler or shedder crab: 3 inches
 - b) Soft crab: 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches
 - c) Hard crab: 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches

Measure crabs point to point.



4. All female crabs with eggs attached and all undersized crabs shall be returned to the water immediately.



Horseshoe Crabs

The harvest of horseshoe crabs is prohibited. Possession of horseshoe crabs is also prohibited except for those individuals holding a scientific collecting permit for research and education and those fishermen that can provide suitable documentation that the horseshoe crabs in their possession were harvested outside of New Jersey.

Mollusks

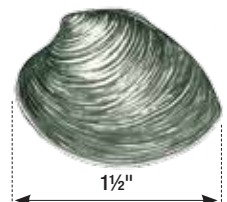
5. Recreational trot lines shall not exceed 150 feet in length with a maximum of 25 baits.
6. All pots and trot lines shall be marked with the identification number of the owner.
7. All crab pots must be tended at least once every 72 hours.
8. No floating line may be used on any crab pot or crab pot buoy.
9. No crab pot shall be placed in any area that would obstruct or impede navigation or in any creek less than 50 feet wide.
10. Only the owner, his agent or a law enforcement officer may raise or remove contents of a legally set fishing device.
11. Crabs taken with a bait seine may be retained for personal use only if the fisherman possesses a bait net license, and may not be bartered or sold unless the fisherman possesses a commercial crab license.
12. No crabs may be harvested from the Newark Bay Complex. For more information, see *Health Advisory* on page 26.
13. **Crab Pot/Trot Line seasons:** Delaware Bay and tributaries: April 6–Dec. 4. All other waters: March 15–Nov. 30. The following waters, **and their tributaries**, are closed to the use of crab pots and trot lines: Cumberland Co.: Cohansey River and creeks named Back, Cedar, Nantuxent, Fortescue, Oranoken and Dividing; Cape May Co.: West and Bidwell Creeks and the Cape May Canal; Atlantic Co.: Hammock Cove (Dry Bay); Ocean Co.: on east shore of Barnegat Bay, that area of Sedge Islands Wildlife Management Area enclosed by a line drawn from the northern bank of Fishing Creek on Island Beach State Park to the northern tip of the Sedge Islands (Hensler Island), then south from point to point along the western side of the Sedge Islands WMA and terminating on the most southwestern point of Island Beach State Park.
14. **Crab Dredge Seasons:** Delaware Bay and tributaries: Jan. 1 through April 15 and Nov. 15 through Dec. 31. All other waters: Jan. 1 through March 31, Dec. 1 through Dec. 31. Fish and Wildlife will issue a non-commercial crab dredge license for the harvest of not more than one bushel of crabs per day during the crab dredge season. Crabs so taken may not be sold or offered for barter. There is a fee of \$15 for this non-commercial crab dredge license. See page 19 for details on purchasing a non-commercial crab dredge license.

Notice: All non-collapsible Chesapeake-style crab pots (see illustration on page 19) must be constructed to include a biodegradable panel designed to create an opening to allow crabs and other organisms to escape if the pot is lost or abandoned. All non-collapsible Chesapeake-style crab pots set in any manmade lagoon or any water body less than 150 feet wide must also include a turtle excluder device inside all pot entrance funnels.

1. All persons must be licensed to harvest any shellfish. See license information, page 19. Shellfish means any species of benthic mollusks (except conch) including hard and soft clams, oysters, surf clams, bay scallops and mussels.
2. It is illegal to harvest shellfish from condemned waters, even for bait purposes. It is also illegal to harvest shellfish including surf clams from beaches adjacent to water classified as condemned. Shellfish water classification charts are available from license agents or any state shellfish office. See page 19 for shellfish license information. Charts are updated annually.
3. Shellfish harvesting is prohibited before sunrise and after sunset. Shellfish harvest is also prohibited on Sundays except in the seasonally approved areas of the Navesink and Shrewsbury rivers, when harvesting is permitted between Nov. 1 and April 30.
4. Harvesting shellfish on public grounds is restricted to the use of hand implements.
5. It is illegal to harvest shellfish from leased grounds. These grounds are delineated by stakes or buoys set by the lease holder. Charts of the leases may be examined at Fish and Wildlife's Nacote Creek or Delaware Bay shellfish offices during regular business hours. Invasion onto leased grounds is punishable by penalties up to \$3,000 and loss of all equipment.

Recreational Shellfishing


1. No holder of any recreational shellfish license may take more than a total of 150 shellfish (in aggregate) per day. See *Shellfish License Information*, page 19.
2. It is illegal to dredge shellfish on public grounds. Use of hand implements are the only legal harvest methods.
3. The minimum size of hard clams that may be harvested is 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches in length. Clams less than 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches in length must immediately be returned to the bottom from which they were taken. Specific seasons, regulations and size limits exist



for oyster beds in Great Bay, Delaware Bay, plus the Mullica, Great Egg Harbor and Tuckahoe rivers. Check with the nearest shellfish office (Nacote Creek or Delaware Bay) for these detailed regulations.

- Shells taken in the process of harvesting oysters must be culled from the live oysters and returned immediately to the area from where they were taken.

Commercial Shellfishing

- Shellfish may be sold only to certified dealers. All persons selling shellfish commercially must tag each container listing date of harvest, name and address of the harvester and the waters from which the shellfish were harvested.
- It is illegal to dredge shellfish on public grounds. All harvesting on public grounds is restricted to the use of hand implements.
- Shells taken in the process of harvesting oysters must be culled from the live oysters and immediately returned to the area from where they were taken.
- The minimum size of hard clams that may be harvested is 1½ inches in length. Clams less than 1½ inches must immediately be returned to the bottom from which they were taken. Specific seasons, regulations and size limits exist for oyster beds in Great Bay, Delaware Bay, plus the Mullica, Great Egg Harbor, and Tuckahoe rivers. Check with the nearest shellfish office (Nacote Creek or Delaware Bay) for these detailed regulations.
- It is illegal to harvest shellfish on Sunday except in the seasonal waters of the Navesink and Shrewsbury rivers between Nov. 1 and April 30. 

2015 New Jersey Recreational Fishing Seasons, Minimum Size and Possession Limits

Regulations remain in effect until changed. For the most current regulations, go to NJFishandWildlife.com or call the marine fish "listen-only" information line at (609) 292-2083. Regulations in red are new this year. See page 10 for how to measure fish.

Species	Open Season	Minimum Length	Harvest & Possession Limit (per person unless noted)
American Eel ^a	No Closed Season	9"	25
Black Drum	No Closed Season	16"	3
Black Sea Bass	May 27–June 30	12.5"	15
	July 1–July 31	12.5"	2
	Oct. 22–Dec. 31	12.5"	15
Bluefish (Snapper)	No Closed Season	None	15
Cod	No Closed Season	21"	No Limit
Haddock	No Closed Season	21"	No Limit
Pollock	No Closed Season	19"	No Limit
Red Drum	No Closed Season	18"	1 not greater than 27"
River Herring	No Open Season	None	0
Scup (Pogy)	Jan. 1–Feb. 28 July 1–Dec. 31	9"	50
Shad			
Delaware River & tributaries	No Closed Season	None	6 (maximum of 3 American shad)
All Other Marine Waters	No Closed Season	None	6 (no American shad may be harvested or possessed)
Shark^{b, c, †}			
Aggregate large coastal group [†]	Jan. 1–May 14 and July 16–Dec. 31	54" fork length	One Shark (of any species, except prohibited species) per vessel per trip; plus one Atlantic sharpnose shark per person per trip (no minimum size); plus one bonnethead shark per person per trip (no minimum size).
Hammerhead group [†]		78" fork length	
Non-blacknose small coastal group [†]	No Closed Season	None	
Blacknose group [†]			
Pelagic group [†]	No Closed Season	54" fork length	
Smooth Dogfish	No Closed Season	None	No Limit
Spanish Mackerel	No Closed Season	14"	10
Striped Bass or Hybrid Striped Bass			
Delaware River & tributaries** (Calhoun St. bridge to Salem River & tributaries)	March 1–March 31 and June 1–Dec. 31	one @ 28" to < 43" and one ≥ 43"	2
Delaware River & tributaries** (upstream of Calhoun St. bridge)	March 1–Dec. 31		
Atlantic Ocean ^d (0–3 nautical miles from shore)	No Closed Season		
Rivers, bay and estuaries	March 1–Dec. 31		
3–200 nautical miles (federal waters)	Prohibited	–	0
Summer Flounder (Fluke)	May 22–Sept. 26	18"	5
	Jan. 1–Feb. 28	15"	4
	April 1–April 30	15"	4
	July 17–Nov. 15	15"	1
Tautog (Blackfish)	Nov. 16–Dec. 31	15"	6
	No Closed Season	13"	1
Winter Flounder	March 1–Dec. 31	12"	2

Note: No species of fish with a minimum size limit listed above may be filleted or cleaned at sea. Party boats licensed to carry 15 or more passengers may apply for a permit to fillet the above species. See **Summer Flounder**, page 12.

Blue Crab

peeler or shedder	No Closed Season ^e	3"	1 bushel
soft	No Closed Season ^e	3½"	
hard	No Closed Season ^e	4½"	
Lobster (carapace length)	Jan. 1–April 29; June 1–Dec 31	3¾"	6
Hard Clam (license required)	No Closed Season [‡]	1½"	150 clams

a Except 50 fish harvest/possession limit for party/charter boat employees.

b Not including dogfish; see description on page 11 under **Sharks**.

c See page 10 for a list of **Prohibited Species**.

d Atlantic Ocean greater than three miles from shore: harvest and possession prohibited.

e Unless using non-collapsible, Chesapeake-style crab pots, trot lines or crab dredges. See pages 16 and 19.

* Excluding tail filaments. (See illustration, page 10.)

** See **Closed Seasons** (page 12) for specifics of springtime non-offset circle hook requirements.

† See page 18 for **Federal Recreational Regulations**.

‡ See water classification chart information on page 19.

Law Enforcement and Regulation Information



Contact a New Jersey Division of Fish & Wildlife Law Enforcement office that serves the county where you hunt or fish.

- Northern Region — (908) 735-8240**
(Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Hunterdon, Morris, Passaic, Somerset, Sussex, Union and Warren counties)
- Central Region — (609) 259-2120**
(Burlington, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth and Ocean counties)
- Southern Region — (856) 629-0555**
(Atlantic, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester and Salem counties)
- Marine Region — (609) 748-2050**
(coastal and bay areas)
- To report violations anonymously call Operation Game Thief — (855) OGT-TIPS**

Regulations in *red* are new this year.

2015 Federal Recreational Fishing Regulations for Minimum Size, Possession Limits and Seasons

See page 10 for how to measure fish. See *Recreational Minimum Size, Possession Limits and Seasons* (page 17) for state waters listings of species not included in these federal waters regulations (from 3–200nm). For federal regulation questions, please contact the National Marine Fisheries Service at (978) 281-9260, or go to www.nmfs.noaa.gov.

Species	Season	Minimum Size	Possession Limit (number per angler per day unless otherwise specified)	Notes
Cod	Year round	22"	10 per person per day	
Striped Bass	NA	NA	No possession allowed in EEZ	Possession prohibited in federal waters (3–200 nm). See pages 12 and 17 for NJ waters.
Dolphin (Mahi mahi)	Year round	None	10 per day, not to exceed 60 per vessel, which ever is less — except on a charter or headboat, then 10 per paying passenger.	For current federal waters regulations (3–200nm), refer to www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/ or call (727) 824-5326.
Marlin, White	Year round	66" lower jaw–fork length	None	Billfish require Highly Migratory Species (HMS) permit when fishing in federal waters (3–200 nm). For permits refer to https://hmspermits.noaa.gov or call (888) 872-8862.
Marlin, Blue	Year round	99" lower jaw–fork length	None	During any sanctioned billfish tournaments offering prize money, non-offset circle hooks are required for lures with natural bait or natural/artificial bait combos.
Roundscale Spearfish	Year round	66" lower jaw–fork length	None	All non-tournament billfish landings must be reported to NMFS within 24 hours, either online at https://hmspermits.noaa.gov or by calling (800) 894-5528.
Sailfish	Year round	63" lower jaw–fork length	None	
Spearfish, Longbill	None	None	Prohibited	For current regulations refer to www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/ or call (727) 824-5399.
Tilefish, Blueline	Year round	None	7 per angler per trip	
Tilefish, Golden	Year round	None	8 per angler per trip	In effect from the Virginia/North Carolina border north.
Swordfish	Year round	47" lower jaw–fork length if the head is naturally attached or 25" cleithrum to caudal keel if the head has been removed.	For anglers: 1 per person, no more than 4 per vessel per trip. For charter vessels: 1 per paying passenger, no more than 6 per vessel per trip. For headboat vessels: 1 per paying passenger, no more than 15 per vessel per trip.	Swordfish, tuna and sharks require an HMS permit when fishing in federal waters (3–200 nm). For permits, refer to https://hmspermits.noaa.gov or call (888) 872-8862. All non-tournament swordfish landings must be reported to NMFS within 24 hours either online at https://hmspermits.noaa.gov or by calling (800) 894-5528.
Tuna, Albacore (Longfin)	Year round	None	None	† Bluefin tuna are managed in two regions; Northern, extending north from the Great Egg Inlet and Southern extending south from Great Egg Inlet. Bluefin tuna retention limits may change throughout the season. Visit https://hmspermits.noaa.gov or call (888) 872-8862 or (978) 281-9260 for current information.
Tuna, Bigeye	Year round	27" curved fork length	None	
Tuna, Bluefin†	Jan. 1–Dec. 31 or until season is closed.	27" to <73" curved fork length and one trophy fish ≥ 73" curved fork length per vessel per year	Limits can change during the season. Prior to departure, check https://hmspermits.noaa.gov or 888-USA-TUNA for up-to-date limits.	All recreational bluefin tuna landings must be reported to NMFS within 24 hours either online at https://hmspermits.noaa.gov or by calling (888) 872-8862.
Tuna, Skipjack	Year round	None	None	
Tuna, Yellowfin	Year round	27" curved fork length	3 per person per trip	For current federal waters regulations (3–200nm), refer to www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/ or call (301) 713-2347 for swordfish/sharks or (978) 281-9260 for tunas.
Sharks*				
Aggregate Large Coastal Group	The Aggregate Large Coastal and Hammerhead group seasons are July 1 to Dec. 31. All others are year round.	Aggregate Large Coastal and Pelagic: 54" fork length	For non prohibited species: 1 authorized* shark/vessel/trip plus 1 Atlantic sharpnose and 1 bonnethead shark/person/trip	See below for list of shark groups which MAY be kept or MUST be released. Swordfish, tuna and sharks require an HMS permit when fishing in federal waters (3–200 nm). For permits, refer to https://hmspermits.noaa.gov or call (888) 872-8862. Recreational fishermen (those that do not have a limited access commercial shark permit) can not sell, barter or trade any Atlantic shark or shark pieces.
Hammerhead Group		Hammerheads: 78" fork length		
Non-blacknose Small Coastal Group		Other listed sharks: None		
Blacknose Group Pelagic Group		None		
Wahoo	Year round	None	2 per person per day	For more information, contact the South Atlantic Fisheries Management Council at (727) 824-5326.
Wreckfish	None	None	Prohibited	

***Shark Species That May Be Kept** (Authorized Species): **Aggregate Large Coastal Shark**—blacktip, bull, lemon, nurse, tiger, spinner; **Hammerhead Shark**—scalloped hammerhead, smooth hammerhead, great hammerhead; **Non-Blacknose Small Coastal Shark**—Atlantic sharpnose, bonnethead, finetooth; **Blacknose Shark**—blacknose; **Pelagic Shark**—Shortfin mako, blue, porbeagle, oceanic whitetip and common thresher. **Shark Species That MUST Be Released (Prohibited Species):** Atlantic angel, basking, bigeye sand tiger, bigeye sixgill, bigeye thresher, bignose, Caribbean reef, Caribbean sharpnose, dusky, Galapagos, longfin mako, narrowtooth, night, sandbar, sand tiger, sevengill, silky, sixgill, smalltail, whale and white.

Regulations concerning highly migratory species (HMS) such as tuna, swordfish, shark and billfish, are subject to change. Refer to www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/ for a list of complete federal regulations for highly migratory species. For questions/clarification of the federal highly migratory species regulations, contact the National Marine Fisheries Service at (301) 713-2347 or go to www.nmfs.noaa.gov.

Shellfish License Information

A shellfish license (formerly called clamming) is required for harvesting all species of benthic mollusks (except conchs, addressed in the commercial marine fisheries regulations), including, but not limited to, hard and soft clams, surf clams, oysters, bay scallops and mussels. Other specific commercial shellfish licenses exist such as surf clam dredge, Delaware Bay oyster dredge boat and Delaware Bay licenses to harvest in Areas 1, 2 and 3.

Anyone engaged in any shellfish harvesting activity with someone holding a commercial shellfish license must also possess their own commercial shellfish license.

The resident senior citizen shellfish license is a lifetime license.

For shellfishing regulations, see pages 16–17. **Prior to harvesting any shellfish, you must consult the Shellfish Growing Water Classification Charts** published by DEP's Bureau of Marine Water Monitoring, available at shellfish license agents, state shellfish offices, online at <http://www.nj.gov/dep/bmw/water-class.htm> or call the Bureau of Marine Water Monitoring at (609) 748-2000. Shellfish licenses are available for purchase online at www.NJ.WildlifeLicense.com.


Shellfish License Fees

- **Resident recreational shellfish:** \$10
Harvest limit of 150 shellfish (in aggregate) per day. Sale of catch prohibited.
- **Non-resident recreational shellfish:** \$20
Harvest limit of 150 shellfish (in aggregate) per day. Sale of catch prohibited. License valid only during the months of June, July, August and September.
- **Juvenile recreational shellfish:** \$2
For persons under 14 years of age. Subject to same restrictions as resident or nonresident adult recreational license holders.
- **Resident commercial shellfish:** \$50
Unlimited harvest. Shellfish may be sold only to certified dealers.
- **Non-resident Commercial Shellfish:** \$250
Unlimited harvest. Shellfish may be sold to certified dealers only.
- **Resident senior citizen recreational shellfish license:** FREE (\$2 application fee). NJ residents age 62 years or older. Harvest limit, 150 shellfish (in aggregate) per day. Sale of shellfish prohibited.
- **Disabled veterans:** Fish and Wildlife-certified disabled veterans are eligible for free shellfish license at any shellfish license agent location. To become certified, call (609) 984-6213.

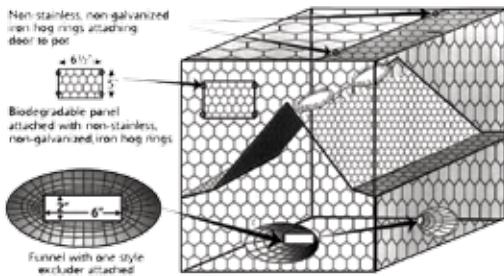
- **Recreational crab pot/trot line license:** \$2
Harvest limit of one bushel per day. Refer to the shellfish regulations on page 16 for all recreational crabbing regulations.
- **Non-commercial crab dredge license:** \$15
Harvest limit of one bushel per day during the crab dredge season. See page 16 for all recreational crab regulations.

Terrapin Excluders and Biodegradable Panels Are Required on Chesapeake-Style Crab Pots

Users of non-collapsible, Chesapeake-style crab pots should know that all pots set in any body of water less than 150-feet wide at mean low tide or in any manmade lagoon **MUST** include diamond-back terrapin excluder devices. In addition, all non-collapsible, Chesapeake-style crab pots set in any body of water **MUST** include biodegradable panels.

These crab pot modifications will help reduce the unintentional drowning of terrapins and allow for escapement of these and other species in the event that pots are lost or abandoned. Terrapin excluder devices must be no larger than 2-inch high by 6-inch wide and securely fastened inside each funnel entrance. Biodegradable panels must measure at least 6½-inch wide by 5-inch high and be located in the upper section of the crab pot. The panel must be constructed of, or fastened to the pot with wood lath, cotton, hemp, sisal or jute twine not greater than 3/16" diameter, or non-stainless steel, uncoated ferrous metal not greater than 3/32" diameter. The door or a side of the pot may serve as the biodegradable panel **ONLY** if it is fastened to the pot with any of the material specified above. Crabbers should be aware that **ALL** non-collapsible, Chesapeake-style crab pots **MUST** be licensed and marked with the gear identification number of the owner. For crab pot license information and regulations, see the regulations on page 16 and license agents below. 

Chesapeake-Style Crab Pot



Crab Pot License Information

Crab Pot licenses are available at all agent locations: Recreational Crab Pot/Trot Line Licenses and Non-Commercial Crab Dredge Licenses are available for purchase online at: www.NJ.WildlifeLicense.com or at any Fish and Wildlife-certified license agent including those license agents listed below. For the most current list of Fish and Wildlife-certified license agents, go to NJFishandWildlife.com/agentlst.htm.

Shellfish and Non-Commercial Crab Pot License Agents (For over-the-counter sales only.)

ATLANTIC COUNTY

Egg Harbor True Value, 208 N. Philadelphia Ave., Egg Harbor City(609) 965-0815
Fish Finder Marina, 3645 Atlantic-Brigantine Blvd., Brigantine(609) 457-5384
NJ Div. Fish and Wildlife, 360 Rt. 9 N (milepost 51), Port Republic.....(609) 748-2021
Zeus Sporting Goods, 6679 Black Horse Pike, Egg Harbor Twp.(609) 646-1668

CAMDEN COUNTY

Towne News, 81 So. Whitehorse Pike, Berlin.....(856) 768-9132

CAPE MAY COUNTY

Avalon Hodge Podge, 2389 Ocean Dr., Avalon(609) 967-3274
Belleplain Supply, 346 Handmill Rd., Belleplain(609) 861-2345
Budd's Bait & Tackle, 109 Fulling Mill Rd., Villas.....(609) 886-6935
City of Ocean City, 861 Asbury Ave., Ocean City(609) 525-9328
Just Sports, 21 Mechanic St., Cape May Court House.....(609) 465-6171
Sea Isle Bait & Tackle, 4200 Park Rd., Sea Isle City(609) 263-6540
Smuggler's Cove, 370 83rd St., Stone Harbor.....(609) 368-1700
Sterling Harbor Bait & Tackle, 1020 W. Rio Grande Ave., Wildwood(609) 729-1425
Two Chums Bait, Tackle and Boat, 375 - 43rd Pl., Sea Isle City(609) 263-2486
Upper Township, 2100 Tuckahoe Rd., Tuckahoe.....(609) 628-2805
Wal-Mart, 3159 Rt. 9S, Rio Grande(609) 465-7760

CUMBERLAND COUNTY

Beaver Dam Boat Rentals, 514 Old Beaver Dam Rd, Newport(856) 447-3633
NJ Div. Fish and Wildlife, 1672 E. Buckshutem Rd., Millville.....(856) 785-0730
Shire Products, 389 S. Lincoln Ave., Vineland(856) 692-3646

GLOUCESTER COUNTY

Sportsman's Outpost, 2517 Fries Mill Rd., Williamstown(856) 881-3244

HUDSON COUNTY

Caso's Gun-A-Rama, 176 Danforth Ave., Jersey City.....(201) 435-5099

MIDDLESEX COUNTY

Auto Parts of Woodbridge, 108 Main St., Woodbridge(732) 634-6264
Sayreville Sportsman Shop, 52 Washington Ave., Sayreville.....(732) 238-2060

MONMOUTH COUNTY

Brielle Bait & Tackle, 800 Ashley Ave., Brielle.....(732) 528-5720
L & H Woods and Water, 2045 Rt. 35, Wall.....(732) 282-1812
The Bait Shop, 57 Main St., Bradley Beach(732) 361-8500

OCEAN COUNTY

American Sportsman, 857 Mill Creek Rd., Manahawkin(609) 597-4104
Bob Kislín's, 1214 Rt. 37 East, Toms River(732) 929-9300
Creekside Outfitters, 403 Rt. 9, Waretown(609) 242-1812
Downes Marina, 287 Brennan Concourse, Bayville.....(732) 269-0137
Fish Bonz Bait & Tackle, 103 Lacey Rd., Forked River.....(609) 971-2928
Grizz's Forked River B & T, 232 N. Main St., Forked River.....(609) 693-9298
Pell's Fish & Sport Shop, 335 Mantoloking Rd., Bricktown.....(732) 477-2121
Pineland Sporting Goods, 959 W. Veterans Hwy., Jackson(732) 961-7248
Surf City Bait & Tackle, 317 Long Beach Blvd., Surf City.....(609) 494-2333
Tip's Hardware, 218 Main St., West Creek(609) 296-3192
West Creek Bait & Tackle, 387 Rt. 9, West Creek(609) 857-3516

PASSAIC COUNTY

Fins & Furs Bait Shop, 2727 Rt. 23, Newfoundland(973) 545-2336

SOMERSET COUNTY

Efinger Sporting Goods, 513 W. Union Ave., Bound Brook.....(732) 356-0604



Whoosh!

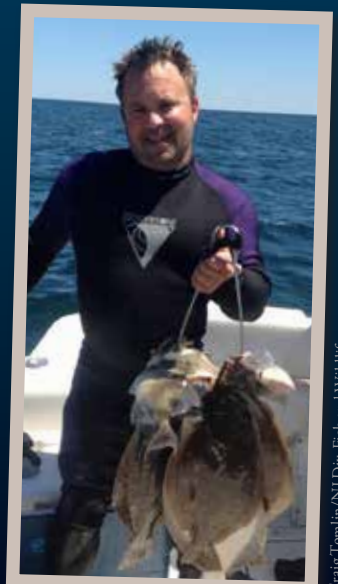
A Spearfishing Primer

By Craig Tomlin, Fisheries Biologist

The weather is perfect for early June with a slight land breeze, high 70s air temp, mid 60s water temp, rising tide and no swell. You and your buddy double-check the gear while planning for the day's adventures. Your heart begins racing as time draws near but you tell yourself to calm down, breath slow, relax.

When you gently slide into the water, your instincts and training take over. You have entered the beautiful and alien ocean world. Your eyes take a moment to adjust as your ears hear the rhythmic clicks and pops of sealife. Descending into the nutrient-rich green abyss, you begin to see soft coral, sea stars, mussels and crabs. It's hard to believe there is so much life! Tautog, seabass and lobster come into view. Out of the corner of your mask you catch movement, then a puff of mud and it's gone! A huge flounder, the biggest you have ever seen, has disappeared. That's the way it goes when spearfishing in New Jersey. You don't always get dinner, but you always make a memory.

The New Jersey coastline, along with its many wrecks and reefs, is a diver's paradise. Yes, New Jersey. While we do not have the tropical blue water of the Bahamas, the Garden State offers many great opportunities in your back yard.



A nice stringer of flounder and triggerfish were speared by Jason Hearon on the Wildwood Reef.

Craig Tomlin/NJ Div. Fish and Wildlife

New Jersey's vast artificial reef system (see reef article, page 6), the many natural undersea formations plus the large number of shipwrecks all create terrific habitat for fish as well as for diving. The best part: to access these fish meccas there is no need to hop on a plane bound for the tropics. Numerous exciting dive spots are accessible either from shore, private boat or by chartering a dive boat. In many cases the dive opportunities are close enough to go after work and be home in time for a late dinner. Hopefully, dinner will include fresh seafood.

This spearfishing overview can put you well on your way to bringing home great memories and tasty table fare from New Jersey's marine domain.

Training

There are two approaches for exploring the underwater world: freediving and scuba diving. Whichever you choose, training is paramount and cultivates safe and responsible spearfishing practices. Freediving classes are now readily available. These not only increase your level of safety, they increase the amount of time you can safely stay underwater. A freedive class is taught by a certified instructor in a controlled environment.

Scuba classes are available at any local dive shop. Also taught by certified instructors in a controlled environment, a scuba course will teach you how to safely use the equipment and certify you to become a scuba diver. No matter which path you choose make sure you get trained by a reputable agency.

Basic Diving Gear

Acquiring equipment follows training. Diving with a dive charter or through your dive shop allows you to rent most of the equipment, a great way to decide what equipment works best prior to buying your own. Whether you decide to free dive or scuba dive the first piece of essential equipment is a well-fitted mask to keep out water so you can see the underwater world. A snorkel (yes, it's also needed for scuba diving) and fins are additional essential pieces of gear. A snorkel allows you to breathe on the surface while the mask is still under water. Fins are needed for mobility with their wide surface area propelling a diver through the water.

Additional gear includes a wetsuit for warmth and protection and either a dive knife or dive scissors. Last but not least, get a "diver down" flag. All dive vessels must fly a diver down flag alpha when divers are in the water to alert other boats to go slow and stay clear of the area. Even when diving from shore you must use a dive flag.



Diver Down Flag



Alpha Flag

Spearfishing Gear

When it comes to spearfishing equipment, it's best to keep it simple. The less complicated your equipment the less likely to fail and the easier to use. A pole spear is a great way to start; they are inexpensive and can last a long time. While not as flashy-looking as a wood gun, the pole spear is probably the ideal weapon for hunting summer flounder and around rocks.

For those wanting to start with a speargun, several companies make relatively inexpensive, higher-quality models. The main advantage of a speargun over a pole spear is the shooting distance. Remember this advantage is lost when the water gets cloudy and when the gun is not agile enough to make the quick shot on that huge flounder buried in the sand.

Once you've chosen your speargun you will need a way to store your catch until you return to the boat or shore. A hoop stringer works well as would a catch bag or a line stringer. Again keep it simple; whatever works for you is your best choice. Also recommended is a spike or a pointed dive knife to quickly dispatch the harvested fish. Practice with your equipment and become proficient before you begin diving.

Know Before You Go

As with most sports there are regulations. Recreational fishing regulations and size limits always apply but there are several special regulations that relate only to spearfishing. These special regulations preclude certain fish from harvest with a spear and set forth the manner in which you may spearfish.

Spearfishing Ethics

Even those new to the sport are responsible to maintain the standards practiced by spearfishing enthusiasts worldwide. Unlike anglers using rod and reel, there is no catch and release. You must only shoot what you can eat—no more. This allows our sport to be one of the most environmentally friendly forms of fishing by creating no bycatch. Take only clean ethical shots and follow all season, size and limit regulations. As visitors to the underwater world, we must respect the habitat and the creatures that live there by leaving behind only bubbles.

Safety! Safety! Safety!

Safety is everybody's responsibility. Whether on—or in—the water, be cautious of people around you. Diver down and alpha flags must be respected by everyone.

Remember to check your gear—and your buddy's gear—thoroughly. When scuba diving, always monitor your air and bottom time as well as that of your dive buddy. When free diving, strictly adhere to the one diver up-one diver down approach. Remember all safety tips from your diver training and always dive within your limits.

Remember, a dive buddy is essential for safety and can add to the fun. By working together, both will be safer, more efficient hunters and have someone with whom to share stories at the day's end.

Be Aware: Spearfishing Requires Extra Precautions!

- ♦ Never load a speargun out of the water.
- ♦ Never point a spear at anything unless you intend to harvest it.
- ♦ Treat every gun as if it were loaded
- ♦ Know your target and what's beyond.

Being a safe and responsible spearfisher can bring years of enjoyment. New Jersey offers many opportunities for spearfishing along our coast. Get out and enjoy this great marine resource close to home.

Be sure to check out Fish and Wildlife's Record Fish Program (<http://NJFishandWildlife.com/reefish-salt.htm>) with a new spearfishing category which includes many species that frequent New Jersey wrecks and reefs!



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Skillful Angler Recognition Program

2015 REGULATIONS

The Skillful Angler Program is designed both to supplement the New Jersey Record Fish Program and to acknowledge that many anglers catch freshwater and marine fish that are not record size but are still worthy of recognition because the size and weight of the fish sufficiently tested the angler's skill. Open to resident and non-resident anglers. All fish must be caught in New Jersey waters using a hook and line during legally open seasons.



Cody Griglak, 10, of Great Meadows, caught this nice fluke from the Mi-Jo party boat during a fundraising trip with the Warren County Federation of Sportsmen. The boat had launched from the Atlantic Highlands.

Saltwater species taken from a boat must have been caught from a boat that left from, and returned to, a New Jersey port during the same trip.

The Program has three main divisions: Adult (for anglers age 16 and older), Junior (under age 16) and Catch and Release (based on length). A clear, side-view photo that allows accurate species identification must be included with each application. Anglers qualifying for a Skillful Angler award receive a certificate with an artistic rendering of the fish species they caught as a testament to their achievement.


The new Skillful Angler Program now recognizes different levels of fishing expertise. An angler who submits five applications of qualifying size for the same species will receive a Specialist Certificate. An angler who submits five applications of qualifying fish of different species will receive a Master Certificate. Catch 10 or more qualifying species of fish within the year, and the angler will earn an Elite Angler Certificate. The Program also now recognizes the first fish caught no matter the age of the angler. Qualified anglers will receive a First Fish certificate.

Also new this year, the program is introducing four marine "Slam" categories — an Inshore Slam 1, Inshore Slam 2, Offshore Pelagics Slam and Marlin Slam. For the Inshore Slam 1, an angler must submit qualifying applications for a Striped Bass, Bluefish and Fluke. For the Inshore Slam 2, an angler must submit qualifying applications for Black Sea Bass, Tautog, and Weakfish. The Offshore Pelagics Slam will be obtained if an angler

submits qualifying applications for Bluefin Tuna, Bigeye Tuna, Yellowfin Tuna and Dolphin. For the Marlin Slam, an angler must submit qualifying applications for a White Marlin and a Blue Marlin.

Each month, the leaders of each category and species will be posted on our Skillful Angler Leader Board web page. At the end of the year, special recognition is given to anglers who catch the largest fish in each species category. The winner of each category is sent a special certificate recognizing his/her accomplishment as the best of New Jersey's Skillful Anglers.

Fish must be measured from the tip of the nose (with mouth closed) to the tip of the tail. For catch and release categories, the fish must be measured and photographed alongside a ruler. For Adult/Junior division, fish must be weighed and measured by fishing license agents, tackle shops or authorized Fish and Wildlife fisheries biologists.

Anglers must submit two photographs of the fish caught, one at the site of the catch and one with the fish alongside a ruler for clear identification and measurement verification. Take time to compose good quality (and high resolution) photos to submit with your application. The best photo may be selected for publication in this Digest next year! Include your e-mail address on back of the photo so we may contact you for a digital copy of your print. 

Apply online at:

NJFishandWildlife.com/pdf/sklflang-appform.pdf

Ocean Fun Day

Never surf fished before?

Join New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife educators at Ocean Fun Days to learn how!

May 16, 2015 from 11:30 a.m.–1:30 p.m. at Island Beach State Park.

- Learn proper surf fishing techniques and tricks.
- All equipment and supplies will be provided. Ages 12 and up.

Participants may join in the Governor's Surf Fishing Tournament (see page 9 for Tournament details) the next day using provided equipment. Tournament registration fees will apply.



Minimum Entry Requirements:

Species	Adult Weight (lbs., oz.)	Junior Weight (lbs., oz.)	Catch & Release (inches)
Black Sea Bass	4	3	20
Striped Bass	40	36	42
Black Drum	70	63	46
Bluefish	18	16	33
Cod	30	27	42
Dolphin	30	27	n/a
Winter Flounder	2	1 lb., 8 oz.	16
Fluke	8	7	27
Kingfish	1	8 oz.	13
Mako Shark	250	225	n/a
Blue Marlin	400	360	n/a
White Marlin	60	54	n/a
Pollock	25	22 lbs., 8 oz.	41
Tautog	8	7	22
Albacore Tuna	50	45	n/a
Big Eye Tuna	200	180	n/a
Bluefin Tuna	500	450	n/a
Yellowfin Tuna	120	108	n/a
Tuna (other)	250	225	n/a
Weakfish	10	9	30

The New Jersey State Record Fish Program requires a separate application and is based on weight alone. Scale certification documentation and a weighmaster's signature are necessary. Other rules apply. Visit Fish and Wildlife's Web site at NJFishandWildlife.com for a complete list of current state records. See also page 24.

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State Record Marine Sport Fish

2015 REGULATIONS



On an October fishing trip, this sheephead was caught by William Catino. The fish weighed 19 pounds, 3 ounces and measured 29 inches long with a 27 inch girth. Catino caught this monster while casting from a dock in Longport.

New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife's Record Fish Program honors anglers who catch the largest of select species of freshwater and saltwater fish. Record size is based on weight alone; there are no line classes. Currently there are 76 marine species eligible for entry into the program which includes a new spearfishing category with 17 additional species. See *A Spearfishing Primer*, page 20.


Anglers are reminded that the objective of the Record Fish Program is to increase awareness of fishing opportunities for species that are regularly sought and routinely found on or off the coast of New Jersey. The original list of 72 species was pared down with that objective in mind.

Twelve species are now retired from the list of program-eligible fish, but remain on a separate list posted on Fish and Wildlife's Web site. One historical catch is also retired and posted on the list.

Anglers should be aware of the procedure in effect for entering the Record Fish Program. First, separate applications are required for freshwater and

saltwater species. Second, for saltwater entries, it is now mandatory that a marine biologist inspect any potential record fish, as identification solely by photo is not always accurate. Anglers must call Fish and Wildlife's Nacote Creek Research Station at (609) 748-2020 to make arrangements for inspection. In most instances, the fish must be transported to this office in Port Republic. However, in the case of extremely large fish (i.e., shark and tuna), a biologist should be available to travel for dockside inspection. Note that all scale certification requirements still apply, including a valid Certificate of Inspection/Test Report and current Registration Certificate issued by the County Office of Weights and Measures.

The entry deadline is now no later than one month after the date of catch. Note that the triggerfish category is now defined as gray triggerfish.

For a complete list of state record fish or to print an application with complete program rules, visit the Division of Fish and Wildlife's Web site at NJFishandWildlife.com/fishing.htm. 

New Jersey State Record Marine Fish

Species	Lbs.	Oz.	Year	Angler	Where Caught
Amberjack, greater	85	0	1993	Edwin Metzner	Off Cape May
Bass, black sea	8	4.5	2010	Andrew A. Merendino	Off Cape May
Bluefish	27	1	1997	Roger Kastorsky	5 Fathom Bank
Bonito, Atlantic	13	8	1945	Frank Lykes, Jr.	Off Sandy Hook
Cobia	87	0	1999	John Shanchuk	Off Sea Bright
Cod	81	0	1967	Joseph Chesla	Off Brielle
Crab, blue	8¾ pt. to pt.		2009	Raymond Ponik	Bayonne
Croaker, Atlantic	5	8	1981	Frederick Brown	Delaware Bay
*Cunner	3	0.5	2012	Raul de la Prida	Off Pt. Pleasant
Dogfish, smooth	19	11.2	2013	Michael J. LaTorre, Jr.	Sculls Bay
Dogfish, spiny	15	12	1990	Jeff Pennick	Off Cape May
Dolphin	63	3	1974	Scott Smith, Jr.	Baltimore Canyon
Drum, black	109	0	2008	Nick Henry	Delaware Bay
Drum, red	55	0	1985	Daniel Yanino	Great Bay
Eel, American	9	13	1988	Warren Campbell	Atlantic City
Fluke	19	12	1953	Walter Lubin	Off Cape May
Flounder, winter	5	11	1993	Jimmy Swanson	Off Barnegat Light
Hake, white	41	7	1989	Wayne Eble	Off Barnegat Light
Kingfish, Northern	2	8	2004	Chester Urbanski	Barnegat Bay
Ling (red hake)	12	13	2010	Billy Watson	Off Manasquan
Mackerel, Atlantic	4	1	1983	Abe Elkin	Manasquan Ridge
Mackerel, king	54	0	1998	Fernando Alfaiate	Off Cape May
*Mackerel, Spanish	9	12	1990	Donald Kohler	Off Cape May
Marlin, blue	1,046	0	1986	Phil Infantolino	Hudson Canyon
Marlin, white	137	8	1980	Mike Marchell	Hudson Canyon
Perch, white	2	12	1998	Michael King	Little Beach Creek
*Pollock	46	7	1975	John Holton	Off Brielle
Porgy	5	14	1976	Victor Rone	Delaware Bay
Sailfish	43	4	2006	Dr. John Tallia	Linden Kohl Canyon
Seatrout, spotted	11	2	1974	Bert Harper	Holgate Surf
Shad, American	7	0	1967	Rodger West	Great Bay

Species	Lbs.	Oz.	Year	Angler	Where Caught
Shad, hickory	2	13	2011	Robert Macejka	Mantoloking
Shark, blue	366	0	1996	William Young, Jr.	Mud Hole
Shark, bull			Vacant (Minimum Weight 150 lbs.)		
Shark, dusky	530	0	1987	Brian Dunlevy	Off Great Egg Inlet
Shark, hammerhead	365	0	1985	Walter Thacara	Mud Hole
Shark, porbeagle			Vacant (Minimum Weight 100 lbs.)		
Shark, s-fin mako	856	0	1994	Christopher Palmer	Wilmington Canyon
Shark, thresher	683	0	2009	Bennett Fogelberg	Fingers
Shark, tiger	880	0	1988	Billy DeJohn	Off Cape May
Sheepshead	19	1	2014	William Catino	Longport
Spadefish	11	6	1998	Cliff Low	Delaware Bay
Spearfish, longbill	42	0	1989	George Algard	Poor Man's Canyon
	42	0	1997	Joseph Natoli	Hudson Canyon
Spot	0	13	2003	Robert Belsky, Jr.	Little Sheepshead Creek
*Striped bass	78	8	1982	Al McReynolds	Atlantic City
Swordfish	530	0	1964	Edmund Levitt	Wilmington Canyon
*Tautog	25	0	1998	Anthony Monica	Off Ocean City
Tilefish, golden	63	8	2009	Dennis Muhlenforth	Linden Kohl Canyon
Tilefish, gray	23	14	2013	Cheol Min Park	Wilmington Canyon
Triggerfish, gray	5	12	2008	Ronald Pires	High Bar Harbor
Tuna, albacore	77	15	1984	Dr. S. Scannapiego	Spencer Canyon
Tuna, big-eye	364	14	1984	George Krenick	Hudson Canyon
Tuna, bluefin	1,030	6	1981	Royal Parsons	Off Pt. Pleasant
Tuna, skipjack	13	4	1999	Craig Eberbach	Wilmington Canyon
Tuna, yellowfin	290	0	1980	Wayne Brinkerhoff	Hudson Canyon
Tunny, little	24	15	1977	Mark Niemczyk	Off Sea Bright
Wahoo	123	12	1992	Robert Carr	28-Mile Wreck
Weakfish	18	8	1986	Karl Jones	Delaware Bay
Whiting (silver hake)			Vacant (Minimum Weight 2.5 lbs.)		

* Fish was previously certified by the IGFA as a world record.

For information concerning the New Jersey State Record Fish or Skillful Angler programs, visit the New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife's Web site at NJFishandWildlife.com.

Spearfishing Category

In 2014, the NJ Record Fish Program expanded with the addition of a Spearfishing category for saltwater. Seventeen (17) species commonly sought after by spearfishers are part of the Program. Spearfishers now have a unique opportunity to be recognized in New Jersey's Record Fish Program. Anglers are reminded that the objective of the Record Fish Program is to increase the awareness of fishing opportunities for species that are regularly sought after and routinely found in or off the coast of New Jersey.

Species	Lbs.	Oz.	Year	Angler	Where Caught
Amberjack, greater	Min. Wt. 60 pounds			VACANT	
Bass, black sea	Min. Wt. 5 pounds			VACANT	
Bluefish	Min. Wt. 18 pounds			VACANT	
Cobia	Min. Wt. 60 pounds			VACANT	
Cod	Min. Wt. 50 pounds			VACANT	
Dolphin	Min. Wt. 40 pounds			VACANT	
*Fluke	15	5	2014	Robert A. Davis	Off Barnegat Lighthouse
Flounder, winter	Min. Wt. 3 pounds			VACANT	
Hake, red (ling)	Min. Wt. 9 pounds			VACANT	
Pollock	Min. Wt. 30 pounds			VACANT	
Porgy	Min. Wt. 4 pounds			VACANT	
Sheepshead	Min. Wt. 12 pounds			VACANT	
Spadefish	Min. Wt. 9 pounds			VACANT	
Striped bass	Min. Wt. 55 pounds			VACANT	
*Tautog	23	14	2007	Luke Dylan Hickey	Off Cape May
Triggerfish, gray	Min. Wt. 3.5 pounds			VACANT	
Weakfish	Min. Wt. 14 pounds			VACANT	

* Fish was recognized by the International Underwater Spearfishing Association as a world record.

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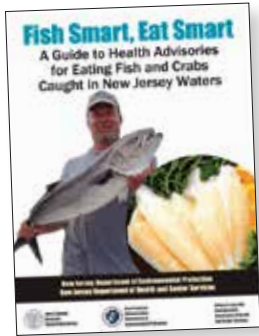


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biphenyls (PCBs), pesticides and mercury have been found in certain fish and crabs in some New Jersey waters. Fish consumption advisories have been adopted to guide citizens on safe consumption practices.

To reduce exposure to harmful chemical contaminants when preparing and eating the fish species taken from the identified waters, it is essential to follow the guidelines provided. The DEP encourages you to consult the Fish Smart-Eat Smart Fish Advisory Guide or www.FishSmartEatSmartNJ.org when making decisions about eating recreationally caught fish and crabs.

The current list of fish consumption advisories consists of statewide, regional and water body-specific warnings for a variety of fish species and fish consumers. The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the Department of Health and Senior Services have prepared new "how to" electronic pamphlets on cleaning and cooking your catch to reduce your exposure to these harmful chemicals. These e-pamphlets are downloadable in multiple languages.

For a complete list of state and federal marine fish consumption advisories visit: www.FishSmartEatSmartNJ.org.

The fish consumption advisories and Fish Smart-Eat Smart website are updated periodically and are available online or from the Office of Science at (609) 984-6070 and through the Division of Health and Senior Services at (609) 826-4935.

Check online for fish consumption advisories on the local water body in which you fish! Go to www.FishSmartEatSmartNJ.org 



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Shore-based Fishing Opportunity at Island Beach State Park Boasted Unique Regulations Last Year

By **Maryellen Gordon**, Senior Fisheries Biologist | **Lauren "Maggie" Sager**, Seasonal Fisheries Technician
Bryan Carter, Seasonal Fisheries Technician | **Jonathan Klotz**, Seasonal Fisheries Technician
Erin Mulvenna, Seasonal Fisheries Technician



Program Overview

Marine Fisheries Angler Program: Shore-based Enhanced Fishing Opportunity Program

Species: Summer flounder

Where: Island Beach State Park

When: June 14, 2014 through September 27, 2014

Regulations: A two fish bag limit; ≥ 16 inches; shore fishing only

Goal: To estimate the additional landings of the reduced size limit to determine if it affects NJ's overall recreational harvest target.

Last year's Shore-based Enhanced Fishing Opportunity Program at Island Beach State Park (IBSP) allowed anglers to keep smaller fish while collecting recreational harvest data. The bag limit was reduced to two fish from IBSP shorelines, but the size limit was also reduced to a 16-inch minimum total length. Summer flounder caught between 16 and less than 18 inches were required to be brought to a check station to receive a tag, confirming that the fish was legally taken from IBSP waters. Anglers that caught two 16-inch or greater summer flounder at IBSP could still attempt to fill a New Jersey daily bag limit of five fish, but the other three summer flounder had to be taken outside of IBSP at 18 inches or greater.

At the check station, fish were measured, weighed then tagged to confirm legal harvest within the park. A creel survey ran concurrently with the Program, with agency staff interviewing anglers providing valuable demographic information, catch and effort data as well as biological data for all species caught at the park during the Program season. Data collection included species name, length, weight, disposition and number of fish caught.

During this Program, 176 summer flounder between 16 and less than 18 inches were tagged and 271 creel surveys were conducted. A total of 337 fish were caught amongst those anglers, 155 of which were summer flounder; 48 were available catch with the other 289 fish released.

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Wildlife Management.....	(609) 292-6685
Nacote Creek Research Station	
P.O. Box 418, 360 Rt. 9 N. (Milepost 51) Port Republic, NJ 08241	
Marine Fisheries.....	(609) 748-2020
Marine Fisheries "Listen Only" regulation information line.....	(609) 292-2083
Shellfisheries.....	(609) 748-2040
Marine Education.....	(609) 748-2031
Marine Law Enforcement	(609) 748-2050
Delaware Bay Office	
1672 E. Buckshtem Rd., Millville, NJ 08332.....	(856) 785-0730
Certified Shellfish Dealer Information	
NJ Consumer Health Service, Dept. of Health	
P.O. Box 369, Trenton, NJ 08625.....	(609) 588-3123
Shellfish Water Classification	
DEP, Water Monitoring and Standards	
P.O. Box 405, Stoney Hill Road, Leeds Point, NJ 08220.....	(609) 748-2000
Lebanon Field Office	
P.O. Box 394, 1255 County Rt. 629, Lebanon, NJ 08833.....	(908) 236-2118
Northern Region Office	
26 Route 173 W., Hampton, NJ 08827	
Wildlife Management.....	(908) 735-7040
Endangered and Nongame Species (1 Van Syckel's Rd.).....	(908) 638-4127
Hunter Education.....	(877) 2HUNTJN
Wildlife Control.....	(908) 735-8793
Land Management.....	(973) 383-0918
Law Enforcement (Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Hunterdon, Morris, Passaic, Somerset, Sussex, Union, and Warren counties).....	(908) 735-8240
Pequest Trout Hatchery	(908) 637-4173
Pequest Natural Resource Education Center	
605 Pequest Rd., Oxford, NJ 07863.....	(908) 637-4125
Hackettstown Fish Hatchery	
23 Reese Ave, Hackettstown, NJ 07840.....	(908) 852-3676
Central Region Office	
1 Eldridge Rd., Robbinsville, NJ 08691	
Land Management.....	(609) 259-2132
Hunter Education.....	(877) 2HUNTJN
Wildlife Control.....	(609) 259-7955
Law Enforcement	
(Burlington, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth, and Ocean counties).....	(609) 259-2120
Southern Region Office	
220 Blue Anchor Rd., Sicklerville, NJ 08081	
Information.....	(856) 629-0090
Freshwater Fisheries.....	(856) 629-4950
Hunter Education.....	(877) 2HUNTJN
Land Management.....	(856) 629-5006
Wildlife Control.....	(856) 629-7224
Law Enforcement	
(Atlantic, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester, and Salem counties).....	(856) 629-0555

Publications Available

The following publications are available by writing:

Nacote Creek Research Station Publications
P.O. Box 418
Port Republic, NJ 08241

Shellfish Growing Waters Classification Charts

This publication is available free at any shellfish license agent and online at <http://www.nj.gov/dep/bmw/waterclass.htm>.

New Jersey Boaters Guide

Send a self-addressed stamped, #10 envelope (2 oz. postage).

The following publications are also available online at NJFishandWildlife.com:

- **Guide to New Jersey Saltwater Fishing** (available online only)
- **Party and Charter Boat Directory** (available online only)

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