



New Jersey



Fish & Wildlife

D I G E S T

2006 Marine Issue

VOL. 19 NO. 3

MAY 2006

A Summary of Rules & Management Information
www.NJFishandWildlife.com

Free



**Reef
Network
Expands**

Profile: American Eel

Size & Possession Limits

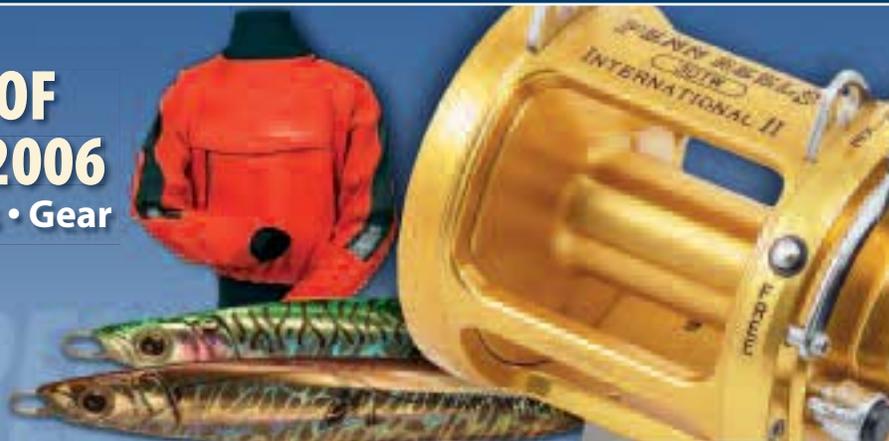
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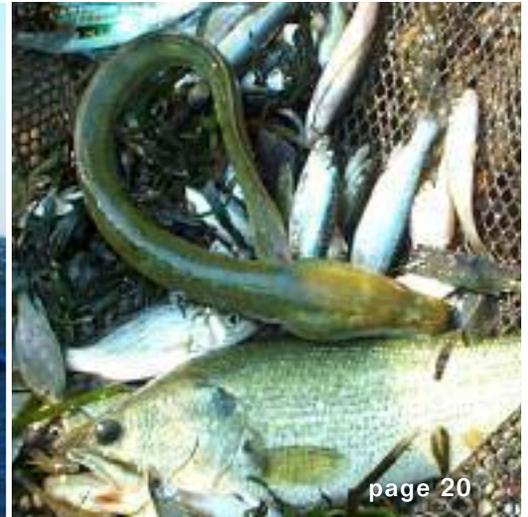
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New Jersey Fish & Wildlife Digest, 2006 Marine Issue



contents

Marine Fish Regulations12

Shellfish Regulations14

Seasons, Minimum Size and Possession Limits Chart15

Marine Fish Identification Chart with Regulations16

Shellfish and Non-Commercial
Crab Pot License Info and Agents18

Health Advisories22

Skillful Angler Awards Program24

New Jersey State Record Sport Fish25

features

Eel Young-of-Year Survey **4**

Reef Network Expands **7**

Boater's Pumpout Station
Guide Updated **10**

Crabbers Support Bay Research **19**

Profile: American Eel **20**

Progressive Law Enforcement **23**

Surf Fishing Tournament **27**

Striped Bass Survey
Worth the Cost **28**

Readers' Survey **30**

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**Fisheries Law Enforcement
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Commissioner's Message



BY LISA P. JACKSON

On February 28, I was honored to have Governor Jon S. Corzine swear me in as Commissioner of the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). For many of you this might be the first time hearing my name. Although I began my career at DEP in 2002, I haven't had much interaction with the

fish and wildlife community as my focus was primarily environmental regulation. Prior to my appointment at DEP, I spent 16 years at the Environmental Protection Agency. During my time at DEP, as Assistant Commissioner of Environmental Regulation and subsequently Land Use Management, I had the pleasure of working with many dedicated and skilled professionals. Luckily, many of those same people have decided to stay with us and continue their work in the Corzine administration.

One of these very talented people requires no introduction since many of you are familiar with him from his previous role as Assistant Commissioner of Natural and Historic Resources. I am proud to have Jay Watson advance to his new role as the Deputy Commissioner of Natural and Historic Resources. Jay brings many talents with him as he embarks on this new position. Prior to his tenure as Assistant Commissioner, Jay served as Administrator of New Jersey's Green Acres program where he helped expand the state's Wildlife Management Area system and fishing access points for the state's anglers. Not only is Jay a committed environmentalist, he is a trusted colleague and his advancement will bring natural and historic resource issues to the forefront.

Amy Cradic is filling Jay's former position as Assistant Commissioner of Natural and Historic Resources. Amy has more than 10 years of experience at DEP most recently serving as Deputy Director of the Division of Parks and Forestry where she helped manage the day-to-day operations of the division's 600 full-time and 700 part-time seasonal employees and a \$34 million annual operat-

ing budget. Amy is an incredible asset to our agency and will be an excellent Assistant Commissioner. We both gained a better understanding of an angler's life during Becoming an Outdoors-Woman training we attended together a few years ago. Amy and I had some great times kayaking, fishing, practicing archery and learning how to cook seafood.

Although fish and wildlife management is a new responsibility for me, the community is a constituency I have gained a lot of respect for in my time at DEP. Having your support for stronger water protections such as Category One (C1) waterbody designations and stormwater rules makes our job to protect the environment easier. I value this partnership and it is something I hope to build upon as we continue to take aggressive measures to protect our water. I am committed to expanding C1 protections and successfully implementing the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act. While the benefit from these programs mainly affects freshwater, the reduced non-point source pollution also helps prevent pollution in our coastal waters.

Governor Corzine strongly supports these and other environmental programs important to New Jersey's sportsmen and women. His commitment was demonstrated in his recent budget proposal. Despite troubling budget times, the Governor's proposal maintains the same state funding for the hunters and anglers license fund. Additionally, \$8.9 million in funding will be dedicated to watershed restoration projects to address ongoing pollution sources that degrade our ponds and streams. Even though this funding will give a much-needed boost to our watershed protection work, there are many challenges ahead. I look forward to working with the fishing and hunting community to meet these challenges. Together I'm confident we can continue the progress that has made New Jersey a leader in environmental policy and expand protection for our natural and wildlife resources. 

Lisa P. Jackson is Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection.

Director's Message



BY DAVE CHANDA

As the recently appointed Acting Director of the Division of Fish and Wildlife, I look forward to working with all of you to conserve our fish and wildlife resources and to preserve the outdoor traditions that mean so much to us all. I also look forward to facing the challenges that come with the ever-increasing complexity

of fish and wildlife management in the 21st century.

One challenge I do not look forward to however, is replacing six valued employees who have retired during the past year from the Division of Fish and Wildlife's Marine Fisheries Administration. These six employees represent 180 years of institutional knowledge and dedicated work for the marine resource and they leave a gap that will be difficult, if not impossible, to fill.

The short tributes I will provide here to each of those employees cannot do justice to their long and illustrious careers. Hopefully it will help you appreciate how fortunate we are to have the dedicated people who do the research, collect the data and perform the management necessary to restore and maintain a healthy and harvestable marine resource.

Russell Tilton started his career with Fish and Wildlife at age 17 and retired in May 2005 after 37 years of dedicated service. During his career, he worked on every field project conducted by the Bureau of Marine Fisheries. Russ tagged over 20,000 fish and collected data on many tens of thousands more. Along with his vast knowledge of marine fish and their eggs and larvae, Russ (a.k.a. Mr. Fix-it) will be missed for his ability to repair anything and everything that came his way.

Barry Preim retired January 1, 2006 with 33 years of service with the Division. Barry participated on essentially every program in which the Bureau of Marine Fisheries has been involved, including the estuarine inventory programs, ocean trawl program and most recently, the artificial reef program. Barry's expertise will be sorely missed.

Kurt Powers retired from the Division of Fish and Wildlife in December 2005 after 29 years. Kurt began his career at the Hackettstown Trout Hatchery and was heavily involved in the design and construction of the Pequest Trout Hatchery and the renovation of the Hackettstown Hatchery. In his last few years with the Division, Kurt was the Chief of the Bureau of Marine Fisheries and used his vast fisheries management knowledge to guide the Bureau through many difficult marine fisheries issues.

Nancy Loveland dedicated 27 years of her life to serving the Division's Bureau of Shellfisheries. Nancy coordinated all the shell-

(Continued on page 8)

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The Division of Fish and Wildlife is a professional, environmental organization dedicated to the protection, management and wise use of the state's fish and wildlife resources.

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Cover image: Couple with striped bass, Peter Morgan, Windigo Images

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New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Fish and Wildlife
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New Jersey Fish & 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.

Young

Eel

American Eel Young-of-Year Survey Part of Fisheries Management Plan

By Heather Corbett, Assistant Fisheries Biologist

Patcong Creek, a quiet tidal tributary of Great Egg Harbor Bay in Atlantic County, flows gently through salt-marsh and peat-bank habitats. The creek is home to a wide assortment of marine, estuarine and wildlife species. Local residents use it for fishing, crabbing, boating and other recreational activities. Patcong Creek is also the site of a very important survey New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's Division of Fish and Wildlife's Bureau of Marine Fisheries is conducting to collect information on American eels.

As a result of growing concerns about the status of American eel populations, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) implemented a fishery management plan for American eel in 1999. As part of that plan, ASMFC required that, beginning in 2000, states conduct a survey of glass eels to collect information on the number of eels (young-of-year) recruiting to the population each year. (See *Species Profile: American Eel*, page 20.) New Jersey already had been sampling for several years to identify a suitable sampling site and to determine the best method to capture glass eels. By 2000, after experimenting with various sampling techniques at several locations, Patcong Creek was selected as our permanent sampling location.

The gear used to collect glass eels is a modified Japanese elver fyke net set under a bridge, just downstream of a spillway at Bargaintown Pond. A fyke net is a funnel-shaped net with two "wings" extending forward from the opening of the net. The wings help to guide the eels into a series of funnels in the net to the codend (a bag at the end of the net with very small mesh), where they are retained until the net is tended. The net is set with the opening



Lacking pigmentation, very young eels are translucent and known as glass eels at this life stage. This subsample (right) of many 2-inch to 3-inch glass eels are ready to be individually measured and weighed.

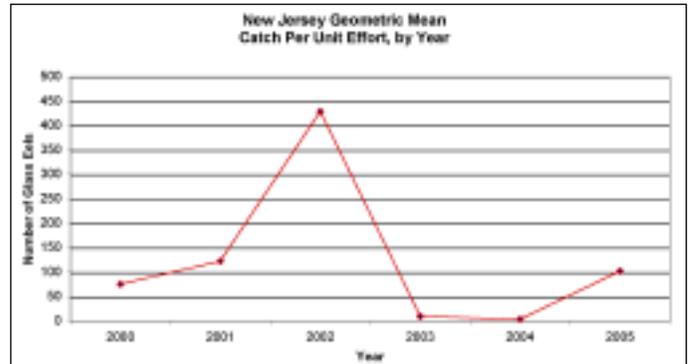
Photos: Heather Corbett, NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife

of Year Survey



Heather Corbett, NJ Fish and Wildlife

Fyke net placed under a bridge to catch glass eels.



Average number of eels caught per day by year.

facing downstream in order to catch eels swimming upstream towards the pond. See photo (above) for an upstream view of the net.

Sampling is conducted during a six-week period in the late winter/early spring, ideally during the peak run of glass eels. Every day during daylight low tide, marine fisheries biologists wade into the creek to empty the catch into a bucket, remove debris from inside and around the net, and reset the net for the next day's catch.

At the same time, environmental and climatological data are recorded such as water and air temperatures, water depth, gear condition and more. The day's catch is brought to the lab where biological data on the eels is collected.

Although the goal is to collect information from every eel caught, when the catch is large data is collected only on a subsample.

Processing includes individually

measuring, weighing and determining the pigmentation stage of each eel. Stages of pigmentation range from one to seven, with seven characterizing a fully pigmented eel. Green eels and other non-target species caught are separated from the glass eel catch then individually measured and weighed. These are not included in the total catch weight of the glass eels. All aquatic life caught is returned upstream of the net after processing to avoid recapture. Fish species caught incidentally include banded killifish and tessellated darters.

During the six years of the survey, a total of 41 pounds of glass eels have been captured on 225 days of sampling. The largest catch of 4.4 pounds, approximately 13,400 eels, was caught in February of 2002. In April 2005, there was a one-day catch of nearly 3 pounds, even though the codend broke and a large portion of the catch escaped. It is likely that this would have been our largest catch during the survey. The graph (above) shows the average number of eels caught per day for each year of the survey.

With current data showing that American eel populations are at an all-time low, more research like this survey must be conducted to monitor population fluctuations. The American Eel Young-of-Year Survey allows marine researchers to learn the status of eel recruitment so informed management decisions can be made. 



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Barry Preim, NJ Div. of Fish and Wildlife

New Jersey's Reef

By Hugh Carberry, Reef Coordinator

Network Expands

New Reef Site Under Way Off Townsends Inlet

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's Division of Fish and Wildlife last fall received the necessary permits and approvals to construct a new reef site 3.8 nautical miles southeast of Townsends Inlet, Cape May County. The site measures 0.52 square miles and has a depth range of 49 to 65 feet. It can be further identified as being approximately two nautical miles northwest of Avalon Shoal. The Townsends Inlet Reef will be a welcomed addition for anglers and divers from Sea Isle City, Avalon and Stone Harbor.

To best accommodate reef users, the site will be delineated into two areas. The shallower inshore portion will be reserved for drift fishing while the deeper offshore area will be utilized for vessel deployments to accommodate divers and



Hugh Carberry, NJ Div. of Fish and Wildlife

This vessel, the 82-foot Donna's Star along with a tugboat (next page), form the foundation of a new reef site off of Townsends Inlet, Cape May County. Donations are needed to grow this reef into prime underwater real estate for marine creatures.

Large Photo Above: Retired Reef Program coordinator Bill Figley supervises the sinking of an oil tanker barge on the Wildwood Reef site. Enjoy your retirement, Bill!

wreck fishing enthusiast.

Recent reef construction activities include the sinking of a 62-foot tugboat and an 82-foot trawling vessel. Although these vessels are a good beginning, much more is planned to create another reef site teeming with marine life.

Fish and Wildlife's Bureau of Marine Fisheries plans to deploy 800 reef ball habitats within the drift fishing portion this summer. Fishing and diving clubs throughout New Jersey provide financial assistance to make scheduled reef-material deployment a reality. Divers, anglers and other outdoor enthusiasts interested in helping to enhance fishing grounds in the Garden State are encouraged to learn about the DEP's Adopt-A-Reef Program.

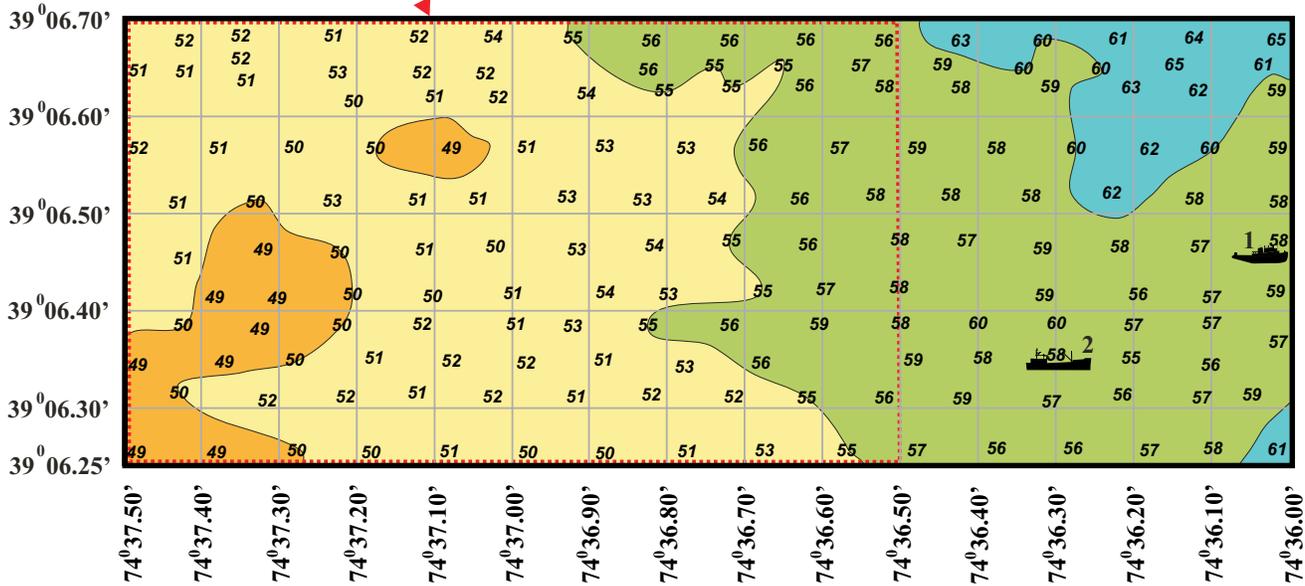
For more information on the Artificial Reef Program, visit www.njfishandwildlife.com/artreef.htm. Or call the ▶

Townsend's Inlet Reef

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Depth Contours



Water Depths in Feet

From →	Corson's Inlet	Townsend's Inlet	Hereford Inlet
Compass bearing	182°	110°	66°
Distance, (n.m.)	5.73	3.8	9.31

Distance offshore:--- 3.8 n.m.
Reef area: ----- 0.52 sq. Mi.
Depth range: ----- 45-70 ft.

(Director's Message, continued from page 2)

fish licensing in the State and eventually expanded her responsibility to include fiscal and revenue reporting for the entire Marine Fisheries Administration.

In his 24 years with Fish and Wildlife, Bruce Freeman became known and respected nationally through his work representing New Jersey anglers on the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council. His knowledge and his fervor for the conservation of our marine fish resources will be sorely missed.

And last but not least is Bill Figley. Bill's 30 years with Fish and Wildlife will be celebrated as the Artificial Reef Era. Since 1984, Bill has supervised the construction of 3,600 ocean reefs from 14 million tons of reef material, making our reef system the largest in the nation. His legacy is New Jersey's Artificial Reef Program and the fabulous proliferation of marine life now found where there was once bare ocean floor.

Good management of the State's marine fisheries resource requires dedicated professionals with a thorough knowledge of a species, baseline information, population dynamics, and habitat information. Without the professional staff to gather this necessary information, we would not be able to develop adequate management plans for many marine species. These six individuals represent the finest professionals with whom I have had the pleasure to work on a variety of initiatives. They will certainly be missed!

Please join me in wishing the best to this talented and dedicated group of people who are now celebrating their well-earned retirements. 

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

(Continued from page 7)

Artificial Reef Program at (609) 748-2020 or write to the Division of Fish and Wildlife at P.O. Box 418, Port Republic, NJ 08241, Attn: Reef Adoption Program.

For details on how you can adopt a reef, contact:
Reef Program

NJ Division of Fish & Wildlife

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Port Republic, NJ 08241

(609) 748-2020 or Fax: (609) 748-2032 



Hugh Canterbury, NJ Div. of Fish and Wildlife

This 62-foot tugboat joined Donna's Star in their second lives as part of the new reef site off of Townsend's Inlet, Cape May County.

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NEW JERSEY'S Clean Vessel Act Program



Boater's Pumpout Station Guide Updated, Available Now

by Al Ivany, Principal Biologist



The New Jersey Clean Vessel Act Program (CVA) has revised its popular Boater's Pumpout Station Guide, which features a current listing of operating marina pumpout stations and pumpout boat coverage areas along with updated background and contact information. Still printed on waterproof material, the guide also retains its map format.

Pumping out your boat's holding tank at a participating facility or into a pumpout boat will help keep New Jersey's water clean and protect the state's fish, shellfish and wildlife. It also will help safeguard the health of residents and visitors who enjoy New Jersey's beautiful coastal and freshwater resources.

The Clean Vessel Act, passed by Congress in 1992, provides funds for the construction, operation and maintenance of sewage pumpout stations and dump stations for recreational boats as well as for information and education programs that encourage boaters to use pumpouts. Since the CVA

program's inception in New Jersey more than a decade ago, millions of gallons of sewage have been removed from boats and treated safely.

For a free pumpout station guide, call Fish and Wildlife's CVA Office at (609) 748-2056. To access an interactive version of the pumpout station guide, along with additional information, visit <http://ims.rutgers.edu/pumpout/> or www.njfishand-wildlife.com. The guide can also be found at CVA program displays at several major boat shows every year.

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This is not the full law. Consult the Division of Fish and Wildlife for further details. All persons are reminded that the statutes, code and regulations are the legal authorities. Red text in regulations indicates a change for this year.

Change in Rules for Recreational Harvest of Both Winter and Summer Flounder plus Striped Bass. Notice to Watch for Potential Weakfish Regulation Changes Later.

The Department of Environmental Protection's Division of Fish and Wildlife informs anglers that rules for the recreational harvest of summer flounder (fluke), winter flounder and striped bass have changed.

The summer flounder recreational season is now May 6 through October 9, opening on a Saturday and ending on a holiday. The recreational minimum size is 16.5 inches and the possession limit remains at eight fish.

The winter flounder recreational season is now March 23 to May 21 with a 12-inch minimum size and a possession limit of 10 fish.

The striped bass minimum size is now 28 inches and a two-fish possession limit, with exceptions for the Striped Bass Bonus Program detailed on page 13.

Anglers should note the potential for changes to weakfish regulations which would occur after this Digest goes to press. See weakfish, page 13.

These changes were implemented for New Jersey to remain in compliance with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's management plans for summer flounder, winter flounder and striped bass. 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 the summer flounder, winter flounder and striped bass 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.

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.

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.

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.

Spear Fishing

Spear fishing 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.

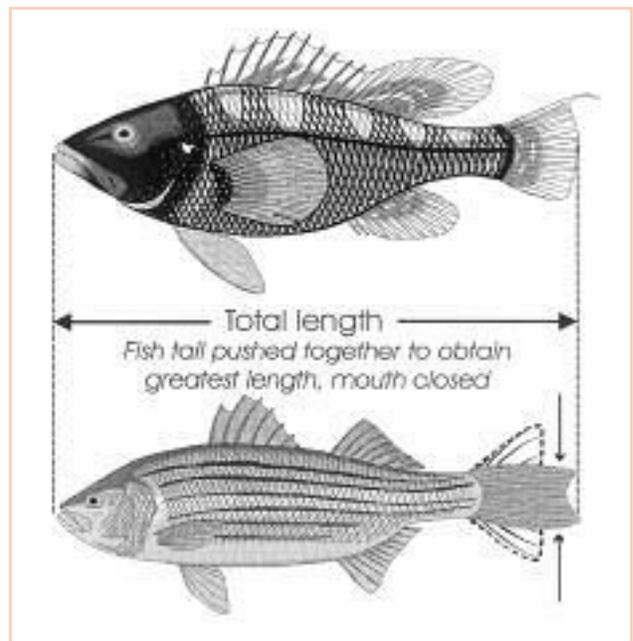
Finfish

Filleting

The filleting at sea of all fish with a size limit is prohibited. Party boats may fillet fish at sea if they obtain a Special Fillet Permit. Applications may be obtained from the Marine Fisheries Administration.

Black Sea Bass

The minimum size limit for black sea bass is 12 inches measured along the midline from the snout to the end of the central portion of the tail, **not to include the tail filaments**. The possession limit is 25 fish with an open season of Jan. 1 through Dec. 31.



Bluefish

The possession limit for bluefish is 15 fish. Bluefish taken with hook and line may be sold only from June 16 through Aug. 7 **and only** if the harvester is in possession of a valid commercial bluefish permit issued for his or her vessel by the National Marine Fisheries Service (978) 281-9370. Any harvester in possession of a valid commercial bluefish permit may possess more than 15 bluefish per day, but only during the commercial season of June 16 through Aug. 7.

Black drum

The minimum size limit for black drum is 16 inches in total length and the daily possession limit is 3 fish. There is no closed season for black drum.

Red Drum

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

Striped Bass (includes Hybrid Striped Bass)

The possession limit for striped bass/hybrid striped bass is two fish with a minimum size limit of 28 inches for each fish. Anglers participating in the Striped Bass Bonus Program (see next page) may possess an additional striped bass at least 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.

Prohibited Species

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

Atlantic Sturgeon	Shortnosed Sturgeon
Basking Shark	Whale Shark
Bigeye Sand Tiger Shark	White Shark
Sand Tiger Shark	

Sea Turtles & Marine Mammals

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

It is illegal to possess any striped bass which is less than the legal minimum size of 28 inches. A person shall not fillet, or remove the head or tail, or parts thereof, of any striped bass at sea.

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

Sale of striped bass in New Jersey is prohibited.

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 except the Atlantic Ocean from 0-3 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 from the upstream side of the Calhoun St. bridge downstream to and including the Salem River and its tributaries.

Non-offset circle hooks are required to reduce striped bass bycatch mortality while fishing with natural bait during the striped bass 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 popular Striped Bass Bonus Program (SBBP) will continue in 2006. The SBBP remains free to all participants. Applications for individual anglers are found on Fish and Wildlife's Web site (www.njfishandwildlife.com), participating check stations, and some Fish and Wildlife offices.

A self-addressed stamped #10 business-sized envelope must be included with each application. All applications must be mailed to the address on the application and will be processed in the order received. Hand-carried applications will not be accepted at Fish and Wildlife offices; only those received via mail.

Applications for party/charter boats are available by contacting Fish and Wildlife at (609) 748-2020. Anglers may possess one additional striped bass at 28 inches or greater subject to the following:

1. The angler must apply for and receive the fish possession cards in advance of attempting to take a bonus fish. Cards are only valid if signed by the applicant.
2. The anglers must comply with all aspects of the regulations. A guide to these regulations is provided with the fish possession cards.
3. Two SBBP cards will be issued per person. Bonus cards are non-transferable, only one card is good per day and the red cards are only valid for the 2006 calendar year.
4. The angler must punch out the month and day, as well as fill out all other required information on one card immediately after harvest and prior to transportation.
5. Replacement cards will be issued as long as there is available quota. Individuals who participated in the 2005 SBBP and returned their voluntary log information to Fish and Wildlife will automatically receive two bonus cards for 2006 and *need not apply*.

Shark

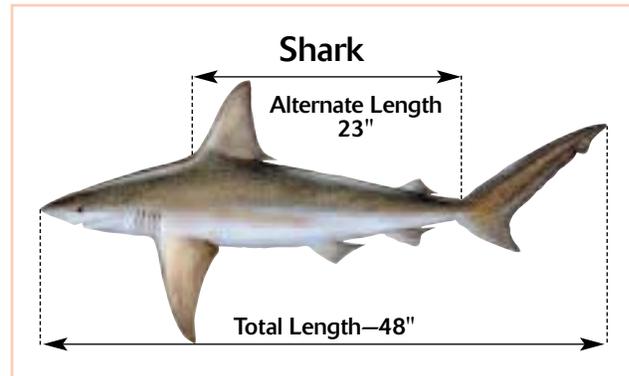
The minimum size limit for any species of shark, *except dogfish* (see note below) is 48 inches total length.

Sharks — Prohibited Species

basking shark	sand tiger shark
whale shark	bigeye sand tiger shark
white shark	

The fins may not be removed from a shark, except after fishing has ceased and such shark has been landed. A shark may be eviscerated and the head and tail removed prior to landing, provided that the alternate length as measured from the origin of the first dorsal fin to the pre-caudal pit (located just forward of the origin of the upper lobe of the tail fin) is not less than 23 inches in length. The possession limit is two shark per vessel.

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.



Summer Flounder (Fluke)

The possession and minimum size limit for summer flounder is eight fish at 16.5 inches and an open season from **May 6 to Oct. 9**.

Tautog (Blackfish)

The minimum size limit for tautog is 14 inches. There is a four fish possession limit from Jan. 1 through May 31, and a one fish possession limit from June 1 through Nov. 14 and an eight fish possession limit from Nov. 15 to Dec. 31.

Weakfish (Gray & Spotted Seatrout)

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission is currently working on an amendment for the weakfish plan which might cause regulations changes during the 2006 season. The current possession and minimum size limit is eight fish at least 13 inches in length. To stay informed, anglers can check our Web site at www.njfishandwildlife.com (sign up on our marine e-mail list for prompt notice of regulation changes and other interesting marine information), call the 24-hour marine hotline (609) 292-2083 or read the outdoor column of your newspaper for regulatory updates.

Winter Flounder

The minimum possession and size limit for winter flounder is 10 fish at 12 inches. For winter flounder the open seasons are **March 23–May 21**.

Additional Marine Fishing Regulations

See pages 15, 16 and 17 for the regulation reference pages.

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 herring for live bait.
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 more than 35 alewife or blueback herring in aggregate per day by hook and line or the above listed gear.

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.

Warning: Wildlife Hazard!

Properly dispose of your fishing line. Plastic debris can endanger marine life and snare propellers.

Crustaceans

American Lobster

The legal possession size 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 3-3/8 inches. Lobster parts may not be possessed at sea or landed.

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 permit and fish pot license is required to use pots or traps to capture lobsters. For details call (609) 748-2020.

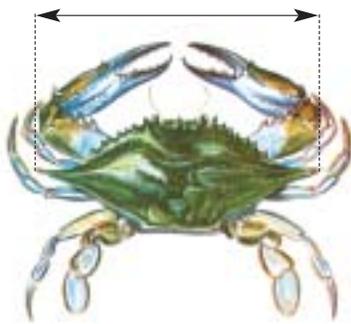
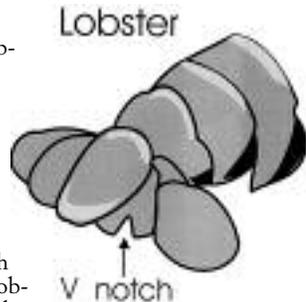
Lobsters taken recreationally may not be sold or offered for sale.

Crabs

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 18 for the non-commercial crab pot license information.

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 of 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 1/2 inch
 - c. Hard crab—4 3/4 inches (for sale)
 - d. Hard crab—4 1/2 inches (possession)
4. All female crabs with eggs attached and all undersized crabs shall be returned to the water immediately.
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 22.



Measure crabs point to point

13. Crab Pot/Trot Line seasons:

Delaware Bay and tributaries — April 6 to Dec. 4; all other waters — March 15 to Nov. 30. The following waters are closed to the use of crab pots and trot lines: Cumberland Co.: Cohansey River and creeks named Back, Cedar, Nantuxent, Fortesque, 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. Fish and Wildlife will issue a non-commercial crab dredge license for the harvest of not more than one bushel of crabs 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 18 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.

Horseshoe Crabs

The harvest of horseshoe crabs is prohibited without a permit.

Mollusks

1. All persons must be licensed to harvest any hard clams, soft clams, surf clams and oysters.
2. It is illegal to harvest clams, oysters and mussels from condemned waters, even for bait purposes. It is also illegal to harvest surf clams from beaches adjacent to water classified as condemned. Water classification charts are available from license agents, any state shellfish office or Marine Police Station. Charts are updated annually.
3. Shellfish harvesting is prohibited before sunrise, after sunset and on Sundays.
4. Harvesting of clams, oysters, bay scallops and mussels 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 the Nacote Creek or Bivalve Shellfish Offices during regular business hours.

Hard Clams

1. No person shall harvest more than 150 clams per day unless such person is a holder of a commercial clam license. Only certified shellfish dealers may purchase clams from commercial harvesters. All persons selling clams commercially must tag each container listing date of harvest, name and address of the harvester and the waters from which the shellfish were harvested.
2. A non-resident recreational license is valid only during the months of June, July, August and September.
3. Anyone engaged in any clamming activity with someone holding a commercial clam license must also possess their own commercial clam license.
4. It is illegal to dredge hard clams. Hand implements are the only



Size and Possession Limits Chart

MARINE REGULATIONS

- legal harvest methods.
- The minimum size of hard clams that may be harvested is 1½ inches in length. Clams less than 1½ inches in length must be immediately returned to the bottom from which they were taken.
 - 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.

Oysters

- Oysters may be sold only to certified dealers.
- It is illegal to dredge oysters 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 returned immediately to the area from where they were taken.



- Specific seasons and regulations exist for oyster beds in Great Bay, Delaware Bay, the Mullica, Great Egg Harbor and Tuckahoe rivers. Check with the appropriate shellfish office for detailed regulations.
- One license covers recreational and commercial oystering.

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2006 Recreational Fishing Seasons, Minimum Size & Possession Limits

Regulations in red are new this year.

Species	Open Season	Minimum Length	Harvest & Possession Limit (per person unless noted)
American Eel	No Closed Season	6"	50
Black Drum	No Closed Season	16"	3
Black Sea Bass	Jan. 1–Dec. 31	12" Excluding tail filaments	25
Bluefish	No Closed Season	No Minimum	15
Cobia	No Closed Season	37"	2
Cod	No Closed Season	21"	No Limit
Haddock	No Closed Season	21"	No Limit
King Mackerel	No Closed Season	23"	3
Pollock	No Closed Season	19"	No Limit
Porgy (Scup)	Jan. 1–Feb. 28 July 1–Dec. 31	9"	50
Red Drum	No Closed Season	18"	1 not greater than 27"
River Herring	No Closed Season	No Limit	35
Shad	No Closed Season	No minimum	6
Shark ^a except prohibited species ^b	No Closed Season	48"	2 per vessel
Spanish Mackerel	No Closed Season	14"	10
Striped bass or hybrid striped bass			
—Del. River & tributaries (Calhoun St. bridge to Salem River & tributaries)	March 1–March 31 and June 1–Dec. 31	28"	2
—Del. River & tributaries (upstream of Calhoun St. bridge)	March 1–Dec. 31		
—Atlantic Ocean ^c 0-3 miles from shore	No Closed Season		
—All other waters	March 1–Dec. 31		
Summer Flounder	May 6–October 9	16 1/2"	8
Tautog	Jan. 1–May 31 June 1–Nov. 14 Nov. 15–Dec. 31	14" 14" 14"	4 1 8
Weakfish*	No Closed Season	13"	8
Winter Flounder	March 23–May 21	12"	10
No species of fish with a minimum size limit listed above may be filleted or cleaned at sea (except striped bass if fillet is at least 28" long). Party boats licensed to carry 15 or more passengers may apply for a permit to fillet the above species, except striped bass, at sea.			
Blue Crab			
—peeler or shedder	No Closed Season ^d	3"	1 bushel
—soft	No Closed Season ^d	3 1/2"	
—hard	No Closed Season ^d	4 1/2"	
Lobster (carapace length)	No Closed Season	3 3/8"	6
Hard Clam — license required	No Closed Season	1 1/2"	150 clams

a Not including dogfish: see description on page 13.

b Prohibited shark species: basking shark, whale shark, white shark, sand tiger shark, bigeye tiger shark

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

d unless using non-collapsible, Chesapeake-style crab pots. See sections on crab pots, pages 14, 18 and 19.

* Potential regulation change during the season. See *Weakfish*, page 13.

Marine Species Identification

SEASONS, SIZE AND POSSESSION LIMITS

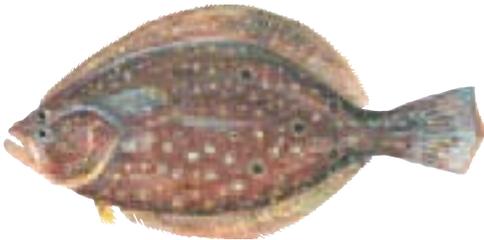
ATTENTION ANGLERS

2006 New Jersey Minimum Size, Possession Limits & Seasons

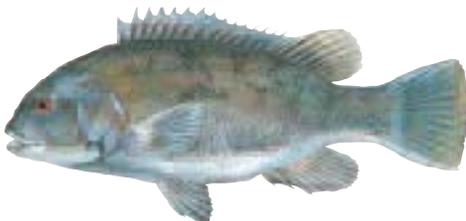
Fish are measured from tip of snout to tip of tail (except Black Sea Bass; see p.12). Cleaning or filleting of fish with a minimum size limit while at sea is prohibited. **Red** text indicates a change this year.



Weakfish*
8 Fish at 13"



Summer Flounder (Fluke)
8 Fish at 16 1/2"
Open Season: **5/6-10/9**



Tautog
14"
4 Fish, 1/1-5/31 • 1 Fish, 6/1-11/14
8 Fish, 11/15-12/31



25 Fish at 12"
Open Season: 1/1-12/31
Black Sea Bass



Bluefish
15 fish no minimum size

PROHIBITED SPECIES
It is illegal to take, possess or land any of the following species:

**BIGEYE SAND TIGER SHARK
SHORTNOSE STURGEON
ATLANTIC STURGEON
SAND TIGER SHARK
BASKING SHARK
WHALE SHARK
WHITE SHARK**

OTHER SPECIES

	Possession Limit	Total Length
American Eel	50	6"
Cobia	2	37"
Cod	No Limit	21"
Haddock	No Limit	21"
King Mackerel	3	23"
Pollock	No Limit	19"
River Herring	35	No Limit
Lobster	6	3 3/8" (Carapace Length)

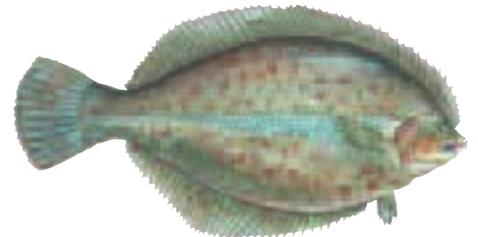


Striped Bass or Hybrid Striped Bass
2 fish at 28"

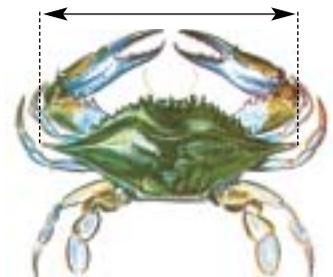
Del. River & tribs. (Calhoun St. bridge); Trenton, to Salem River & tribs. **Open 3/1-3/31 & 6/1-12/31**

Atlantic Ocean: (0-3 miles from shore), no closed season; (greater than 3 miles from shore) closed year round

All other marine waters, open 3/1-12/31



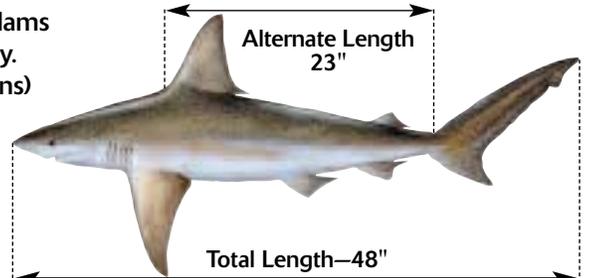
Winter Flounder
10 fish at 12"
Open Season: **3/23-5/21**



Blue Crab (point to point)
Peeler or Shedder-3"
Soft-3 1/2" • Hard-4 1/2"
recreational limit-one bushel



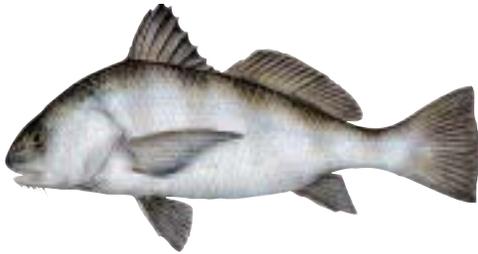
Hard Clam
recreational limit-150 clams
No harvest on Sunday.
(See p. 15 for exceptions)



Alternate Length 23"
Total Length-48"
Shark
2 Fish per vessel

Marine Species Identification

SEASONS, SIZE AND POSSESSION LIMITS



Black Drum
3 Fish at 16"



Northern Kingfish



Atlantic Bonito



Scup (Porgy)
50 Fish at 9"

Open Season: 1/1-2/28 and 7/1-12/31



Northern Seabrook



White Perch



Red Drum

1 Fish at least 18" but not greater than 27"



Spiny Dogfish



Northern Puffer



American Shad
6 Fish Limit



Smooth Dogfish



Atlantic Mackerel



Spanish Mackerel
10 Fish at 14"



Sand Tiger Shark
possession prohibited



Oyster Toadfish



Atlantic Cod
21" Size Limit



Sandbar Shark



Atlantic Croaker

Shellfish & Crab Pot Information

LICENSE AND AGENTS

Child Support Certification

The "Child Support Program Improvement Act" requires Fish and Wildlife to collect and maintain Social Security Numbers and a child support obligation certification from license applicants and to make the collection of this information part of the license application. To comply, Fish and Wildlife, working with the Division of Law in the Office of the Attorney General, created the Supplemental License Application available on the Fish and Wildlife Web site at www.njfishandwildlife.com or at license agents. The online child support application allows individuals to certify themselves in the privacy of their own home. Once completed—whether via the Internet or at a license agent equipped with the new electronic licensing system—the certification remains valid for the calendar year in which the certification was completed.

Shellfish and Non-Commercial Crab Pot License Information

Prior to harvesting any shellfish, be certain to consult the Shellfish Growing Water Classification Charts published by DEP's Water Monitoring and Standards, available at any shellfish license agent, state shellfish office or Marine Police Station, or call (609) 748-2000.

- **Residential recreational clam:** \$10.
- Harvest limit of 150 hard, soft, surf clams (in aggregate) per day. Sale of catch prohibited.
- **Non-resident recreational clam:** \$20. Harvest limit of 150 hard, soft, surf clams per day. Sale of catch prohibited. License valid only during the months of June, July, August and September.
- **Juvenile recreational clam:** \$2. For persons under 14 years of age. Subject to same restrictions as resident or nonresident adult recreational license holders.
- **Commercial clam:** \$50. Unlimited harvest. Clams may be sold to certified dealers only.
- **Oyster, commercial or recreational:** \$10. Unlimited oyster harvest. Oysters may be sold to certified dealers only.
- **Senior Citizen recreational:** FREE (\$2 application fee) recreational clam/oyster license—NJ residents age 62 years or older. Harvest limit, 150 clams per day. Unlimited oyster harvest. Sale of clams or oysters prohibited.
- **Disabled veterans:** May apply for free recreational clamming or crab pot licenses at the following Fish and Wildlife offices:
 - Trenton Office
 - Pequest Hatchery & Ed. Ctr.
 - Nacote Creek Research Station
 - Northern Region Office
 - Central Region Office
 - Southern Region Office
- **Bay Scallops:** No license required. Scallops may be harvested only from approved waters.
- **Mussels:** No license required. Mussels may only be harvested from approved waters.
- **Recreational crab pot/trot line license:** \$2 application fee. Harvest limit of one bushel per day. Refer to the Shellfish Regulations on page 14 for all recreational crabbing regulations.
- **Non-Commercial crab dredge license:** \$15 Harvest limit of one bushel per day during the crab dredge season. Refer to the crab Regulations on page 14 for all recreational crabbing regulations

Crab Licenses Now Available at More Locations

Recreational Crab Pot/Trot Line Licenses and Non-Commercial Crab Dredge Licenses are now available for purchase over the Internet at: www.NJFishandWildlife.com.

These licenses also may be purchased at any Fish and Wildlife-certified license agent including those shellfish license agents listed below. For a current list of Fish and Wildlife-certified license agents, look in future hunting or freshwater fishing issues of the *New Jersey Fish & Wildlife Digest* (beginning in August 2006) or visit the following site: <http://www.nj.gov/dep/fgw/agentlst.htm>.

Shellfish and Non-Commercial Crab Pot License Agents

(For over-the-counter sales only)

ATLANTIC COUNTY

Fish Finder Marina, 3645 Atlantic-Brigantine Blvd., Brigantine (609) 457-5384
Zeus Sporting Goods, 6679 Black Horse Pike, Egg Harbor Twp. (609) 646-1668

CAPE MAY COUNTY

Avalon Hodge Podge, 2389 Ocean Dr., Avalon (609) 967-3274
Capt. Tate's Tackle Box, 450 No. Route 47, Cape May CH (609) 861-4001
City Hall, 9th & Asbury Ave., Ocean City (609) 399-6111
Just Sports, 21 W. Mechanic St., Cape May CH (609) 465-6171
Red Dog B&T, 367 43rd St., Sea Isle City (609) 263-7914
Upper Twp. Municipal Bldg., 2100 Tuckahoe Rd., Petersburg (609) 628-2011

CUMBERLAND COUNTY

Bivalve Shellfish Office, 6959 Miller Ave., Port Norris (856) 785-0730
Shire Products, 389 S. Lincoln Ave., Vineland (856) 692-3646

MERCER COUNTY

NJ Div. of Fish and Wildlife, 501 E. State St., 3rd Fl., Trenton (609) 292-2965

MIDDLESEX

Sayreville Sportsman Shop, 52 Washington Ave., Sayreville (732) 238-2060

MONMOUTH COUNTY

Brielle Tackle, 800 Ashley Ave., Brielle (732) 528-5720

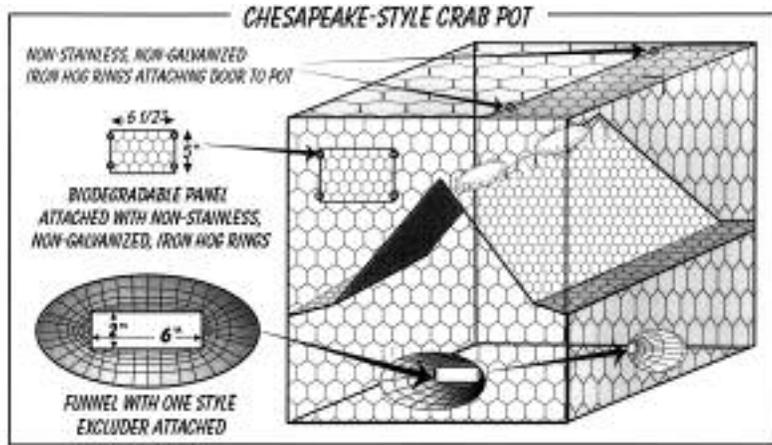
OCEAN COUNTY

American Sportsman, 857 Mill Creek Rd., Manahawkin (609) 597-4104
Barnegat Boat Basin, 491 E. Bay Ave., Barnegat (609) 698-8581
Downe's Bait & Tackle, 287 Brennan Concourse, Bayville (732) 269-0137
Grizz's Forked River B&T, 232 N. Main St., Forked River (609) 693-9298
Lacey Marine, 308 Rt. 9, So. (609) 693-0151
L & H Woods and Water, 403 Route 9, Waretown (609) 242-1812
Maritime Marina, 470 S. Green St. (609) 294-9090
Pell's Fish & Sport Shop, 335 Mantoloking Rd., Bricktown (732) 477-2121
South Harbor Marine, 116 Oregon Ave., Waretown (609) 693-3658

SOMERSET COUNTY

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

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



Users of non-collapsible, Chesapeake-style crab pots should be aware 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 diamondback 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 inches high by 6 inches wide and securely fastened inside each funnel entrance. Biodegradable panels must measure at least 6½ inches wide by 5 inches 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 14 and license agents on page 18.

New Jersey Crabbers Form Part of Research Team

By Brandon Muffley,
Research Scientist

If you are crabbing in the coastal bay areas between Cape May Point and Little Egg Harbor this summer, don't be surprised if someone approaches you and asks about your catches. Field researchers will be out collecting information on recreational blue crab activities for the DEP's Division of Fish and Wildlife's Marine Fisheries Administration.

The survey will take place from May through October, and the information gained from the survey will be used to help determine the status of the blue crab population in New Jersey's coastal bays.

In 2005, funding from the DEP's Division of Science, Research and Technology enabled Fish and Wildlife to begin the research to update recreational blue crab data that was more than 30 years old. Last year, researchers also conducted surveys from May through October. Using telephone and field interviews, they assessed the number, size and sex of crabs harvested according to the different gear types used



Jersey blue crab.

for the recreational blue crab fishery within the Delaware Bay areas of Cape May, Cumberland and Salem counties.

Researchers measured more than 4,000 individual crabs during 800 field interviews and conducted more than 2,250 telephone interviews. The information collected will be used by New Jersey and Delaware to assess blue crab stock in the Delaware Bay so informed management and research decisions can be made regarding the recreational and commercial fisheries.

In addition, Fish and Wildlife implemented a voluntary reporting system, based on their voluntary striped bass angler survey, for recreational crabbers possessing a non-commercial crab-pot license. For each trip they take, crab-pot license holders now are asked to maintain a log that includes, among other information, the fishing location, number of crabs caught and number of crabs kept. At the end of the season, crabbers send their logs to Fish and Wildlife's Nacote Creek Research Station. The information will provide insight on the annual changes in recreational crab-pot participation, effort and fishing locations. The survey will continue this year during the recreational blue crab season.

For more information about either survey, to download voluntary reporting forms, and to view survey results and updates, visit Fish and Wildlife's Web site at www.njfishandwildlife.com. To purchase a recreational crab-pot license online, visit www.njfishandwildlife.com/fishneed.htm. For information on purchasing a license at a retailer, visit the Web site or call the marine fisheries office at (609) 748-2020.

Species Profile: American Eel

By Jeff Brust, Research Scientist

American eels are an ecologically unique and important species that occur in fresh, brackish and marine waters from the southern tip of Greenland to northeastern South America. This species is closely related to the European eel. Eels support a valuable commercial food fishery, are used widely as bait for sport fish such as striped bass and cobia, and are an important food source for many fish and wildlife species.

Life Cycle

American eels are a catadromous species, which means they spend most of their life in fresh water or brackish water, but when they mature, they migrate to the ocean to spawn once and die. Spawning has never been directly observed, but spawning grounds have been identified based on collection of larval eels. Current scientific evidence indicates that adult eels spawn in the Sargasso Sea, an area of the Atlantic Ocean south of Bermuda and east of the Bahamas. Some eels may migrate thousands of miles to reach the spawning grounds.

Spawning is believed to occur around January or February. After hatching and a brief pre-larval phase, American eel enter a larval phase known as a leptocephalus, which resembles the leaf from a willow tree. Eels remain in the leptocephalus stage for approximately one year, during which ocean currents transport the larvae to coastal areas throughout their range.

Generally from February to April, the larvae reach coastal areas in New Jersey and begin transforming into the more recognizable eel body form about 2 to 2.5 inches long. At this stage, they are transparent and are called glass eels. They enter estuaries (where fresh water mixes with ocean water) such as bays and river mouths and begin to migrate upstream toward fresh water (see article on glass-eel survey, page 4). As they migrate, the glass eels begin to darken in color. By late spring, most are fully pigmented and referred to as green eels or yellow eels.

Yellow eels remain in fresh or brackish water until they reach maturity. Some will remain near the estuary, while others move several hundred miles upstream to live in streams, rivers, lakes and ponds. Most upstream movement occurs between March and October every year, and some eels will continue to move farther and farther

upstream every year until they reach sexual maturity. There is some evidence that eels remaining in brackish waters generally mature into males, while those that move farther upstream mature into females.

Eels are generally nocturnal, spending most of the day hidden among rocks and other structures or buried in mud bottoms. At night, eels will venture from their hiding places to feed on small fish, insects, snails, clams and worms, among other prey.

Females generally live longer and grow larger than males. Males reach maturity in five years to seven years at a size of about 11 inches or greater. Females, however, may take 15 years to 20 years to reach maturity at a size of 18 inches or greater. Very few males grow larger than 15.5 inches, but females may grow more than 39 inches. Plainfield resident David Payne learned firsthand just how large eels can grow. While trout fishing in Round Valley Reservoir last June, he landed the New Jersey freshwater state record American eel, which measured 41 inches and weighed 6 pounds, 13 ounces. Almost certainly a female, the eel was sent to Dr. Ken Oliveira at the University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth who determined that the eel was 16 years old when it was captured. According to Dr. Oliveira, the eel would have continued to live, and possibly grow, for several more years had it not been caught.

Following the yellow phase, which lasts 6 years to 16 years in the Chesapeake Bay region, eels begin to mature, and their appearance and body functions change. Externally, the eel's body fattens, its eyes enlarge and its skin thickens. The coloration on its back changes to dark bronze or black, and its belly is white. These eels typically have a silvery sheen and are aptly named silver eels.

Internally, the eel's digestive system shrinks; it stops feeding, and its swim bladder, gills and other organs change to enable its survival in sea water. These changes occur during the summer, when maturing eels begin migrating downstream. Silver eels leave rivers and coastal areas in late summer and early fall. Their migration occurs mostly at night, coinciding with rising water levels and the moon's new and full phases. Little is known about the distribution and timing of the spawning migration once the eels enter the ocean, but it is believed that they make their way to the Sargasso Sea to spawn and then die.

Environmental Tolerances and Concerns

Historically, eels were abundant on the Atlantic coast. Estimates suggest that eels could comprise up to 25 percent of the total fish biomass in a stream. In addition, eels are an extremely hardy species and can adapt readily to their environment. They can withstand temperatures ranging from below freezing to nearly 100°F for short periods. During the winter or in drought conditions, eels can bury themselves in mud to escape harsh conditions. They can absorb oxygen across the skin and can survive out of the water for longer periods than most fish. Young eels have been observed climbing dam walls and other obstructions or traveling on land around obstructions. One eel was known to have been held in captivity for 85 years.

Despite their adaptability, eels are susceptible to a wide range of impacts that can affect their survival. Fisheries exist for glass, yellow and silver eels, which are used for food and bait. Dams and other structures hamper upstream and downstream movements and have significantly decreased the amount of suitable habitat available to eels. In addition, the high fat content of the American eel and its bottom-dwelling lifestyle make it prone to accumulate contaminants that may increase mortality or reduce reproductive potential. Eels are susceptible to a parasite that can invade the swim bladder, affecting survival and reproduction. It is important to note that each of these mortality factors impacts eels before they can spawn which could result in decreased eel populations in the future.

Because of their unique lifestyle and ecological role, there are still large gaps in our knowledge of eel biology and how the population responds to different factors. Recent data from the Atlantic coast of the U.S. and Canada suggests that American eels are at or near historic low levels of abundance. These findings have sparked great interest and concern in eel biology and population management. The research results will guide fisheries managers to maintain healthy eel populations at levels permitting sustainable use by anglers and for the marine resources that depend on this distinctive species. 

Scientific name: *Anguilla rostrata*
Common names: American eel, common eel and freshwater eel; also glass eel, yellow eel or silver eel, depending on life stage



MOTOR BOAT REGISTRATION

Motor Boat Title & Registration Requirement

Boats greater than 12 feet in length, regardless of propulsion means, must be titled and registered at a NJ Motor Vehicle Commission office.

Exceptions: 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.

For more information, visit the MVC Web site at www.nj.gov and go to the Motor Vehicle Commission link or stop by an MVC office or call (609) 292-6500.

OPERATOR REQUIREMENTS

Boating Operator Requirements

Boating safety courses: (800) 336-2628
BoatUS Foundation
www.BoatUS.com/courseline

New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission
Boat Operators License
(888) 486-3339 toll free in NJ
or (609) 292-6500 from out-of-state
www.nj.gov/mvc/

New Jersey State Police, Boating laws clarification (609) 882-2000, or visit their Marine Services Bureau online at: <http://www.state.nj.us/lps/njsp/maritime/index.html>

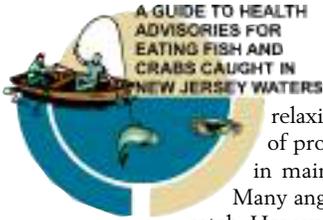
POLICE STATIONS

State Police Marine Law Enforcement Stations

- Bivalve (856) 785-1330
- North Wildwood (609) 522-0393
- Atlantic City (609) 441-3586
- Burlington (609) 387-1221
- Ocean (609) 296-5807
- Point Pleasant (732) 899-5050
- Monmouth Station (732) 842-5171
- Lake Hopatcong (973) 663-3400
- Newark Bay (973) 578-8173

Health Advisories For Eating Fish And Crabs Caught In New Jersey Waters

Fish Smart—Eat Smart



Fishing provides enjoyable and relaxing recreation. Fish are an excellent source of protein and other nutrients and play a role in maintaining a healthy, well-balanced diet. Many anglers enjoy cooking and eating their own catch. However, elevated levels of potentially harmful chemical contaminants, such as dioxin, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), pesticides and mercury have been found in certain fish and crabs in some New Jersey waters, and fish consumption advisories have been adopted to guide citizens on safe consumption practices.

The current list of fish consumption advisories consists of statewide, regional and waterbody-specific warnings for a variety of fish species and fish consumers. The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection and the Department of Health and Senior Services have prepared literature to help you make informed choices about which fish to eat and how to reduce your exposure to these harmful chemicals. The *Fish Smart-Eat Smart* Fish Advisory Guide includes contaminant information, advisory charts plus preparation and cooking methods to reduce contaminant levels, as well as specific guidelines, advice and prohibitions for people at

high risk, such as children, pregnant women and women of child-bearing age. The *Fish Smart-Eat Smart* Fish Advisory Guide also includes Web site links to Pennsylvania, Delaware and New York for information about fish consumption advisories for shared waters.

Check online for fish consumption advisories on the local water body in which you fish! Go to www.state.nj.us/dep/dsr

The *Fish Smart-Eat Smart* Fish Advisory Web site now includes a Geographic Information System (GIS) map linked to current fish consumption advisories statewide. For example, to see the latest mercury or PCB advisories for your area, just select the county by clicking on the map. The page will show the water body location, fish species and any advisories that apply. This new Web site feature makes it easy to find current fish consumption advisories for the specific water body in which you fish.

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 Web site www.FishSmartEatSmartNJ.org when making decisions about eating recreationally caught fish and crabs.

The fish consumption advisories, *Fish Smart-Eat Smart* Fish Advisory Guide and *Fish Smart-Eat Smart* Fish Advisory Web site are each updated periodically and are available in print or online through these agencies:

The Fish Advisory Guide is available by contacting the following:

New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection
Public Access Center (609) 777-DEP4
or www.state.nj.us/dep

Division of Science, Research and Technology
(609) 984-6070 or www.state.nj.us/dep/dsr
Division of Fish and Wildlife
(609) 748-2020
or www.njfishandwildlife.com

New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services
Consumer and Environmental Health
(609) 588-3123 or (609) 777-3373
www.state.nj.us/health/eoh/foodweb/fishguid.htm

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New Jersey's Marine Conservation Officers Using Progressive Techniques to Protect Wildlife

By Capt. Joe Meyer

There's a saying among long-time sportsmen: Just because you don't see the game wardens doesn't mean they aren't watching. That bit of wisdom is even truer today.

Undercover law enforcement is an integral part of managing New Jersey's natural resources, particularly along the state's ocean and bays. The guy clad in jeans and fishing gear aboard your party boat might look like just another angler, but he could be a state conservation officer in plainclothes. Now more than ever, members of Bureau of Law Enforcement's Marine Region with New Jersey's Division of Fish and Wildlife are using non-traditional surveillance methods to net serious offenders who often go to great lengths to break laws and regulations that protect the state's fish and wildlife.

Two landmark cases best illustrate lawmen's determination, skill and success in cracking down on the illegal harvest and unlawful sale of marine species.

In one case, the owner of a Middletown tavern was charged with selling large quantities of undersized lobsters. State marine lawmen learned from several reliable sources that the tavern was being used as a clearinghouse for undersized American lobsters. Acting on the information, officers went undercover, frequenting the establishment and gathering and documenting evidence during a 12-month investigation that included purchases of more than 1,400 undersized lobster tails.

Harvesting undersized lobsters removes them from the ocean before they have a chance to reproduce. The case represented the first time the Department of Environmental Protection's Division of Fish and Wildlife and the state Attorney General's Criminal Justice division prosecuted a New Jersey business owner for knowingly selling undersized lobsters.

The tavern owner, indicted on charges of unlawfully selling

wildlife, pleaded guilty and agreed to pay a \$50,000 penalty.

In the second case, officers issued more than 100 summonses in connection with a party-boat operation illegally harvesting and commercializing tautog, a variety of fish popular in sushi restaurants. In all, 22 defendants, including the vessel's captain and the corporation that owns the party boat, either pleaded guilty or were found guilty on charges stemming from the 18-month undercover investigation. The defendants faced penalties totaling more than \$40,000.

More recently, savvy conservation officers demonstrated their mastery of other innovative techniques to thwart some of the most deliberate violators.

To catch thieves intent on raiding lobster and crab pots, marine conservation officers strategically placed veterinary identification markers inside the crustacean. Lawmen later apprehended a lobsterman found in possession of the marked lobsters, and charged crabbers — caught holding marked blue crabs — with tending other crabbers' pot gear. One such case recently settled resulted in \$45,000 in penalties and the suspension of the crab thief's commercial license.

Marine conservation officers also regularly keep a close eye on established fish markets, where some dealers are only too anxious to give law-breaking anglers a place to peddle their illegal catch. Lawmen conducting inspections at fish markets in Jersey City and Newark, for example, have issued written warnings and summonses for illegal sales of blue crabs and striped bass, and other violations.

New Jersey's law-abiding anglers can assist conservation officers in their efforts to protect fish and wildlife resources by reporting marine fish and shellfish violations to (609) 748-2050. Or, call the 24-hour, DEP hotline at 877-WARNDEP.

Capt. Meyer is a member of Fish and Wildlife's Bureau of Law Enforcement, Marine Region.



New Jersey State Police are working to improve the security of our maritime regions

Empowering the local waterfront community to assist law enforcement by reporting suspicious behavior may lead to the identification of criminals or terrorists.

Boaters, anglers, hunters and marina operators can assist by watching for suspicious behavior such as:

- Loitering around a waterfront facility with no apparent purpose
- Obvious attempts to avoid contact with others
- Evasive response to common boating questions
- Repeatedly extending daily dockage
- Inappropriate, suspicious or non-typical equipment or lack of proper gear
- Photographing unusual locations or at odd times
- Placing unusual objects near a bridge or pipe
- Making large payments in cash

Take care to base your report solely on the behavior, not on race, ethnicity or national origin
Take good notes and photographs, if possible, without being noticed
Take no action except to report your suspicions; leave the rest to law enforcement

Report Suspicious Activity

Call **866-4-SAFE-NJ (866-472-3365)**

For an emergency, call 911 or your local police
Questions? Contact your regional
NJ State Police Maritime Station

www.njsp.org/maritime

New Jersey State Police Marine Services Bureau
PO Box 7068, West Trenton, NJ 08628-0068
(609) 882-2000, ext. 6164

New Jersey Skillful Angler Application

Name _____ Age _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Daytime Telephone Number (_____) _____

Entry Category (check only one):

Adult Junior (16 years and under)

Catch and Release (qualification based on length)

Fish Species (Angler must complete. Subject to verification by a state biologist.)

Weight _____ lb.(s), _____ oz. **Length** _____ in. **Girth** _____ in.

Date Caught* ____/____/____ **Time** _____

Location _____

Caught from (check only one):

Boat Shore Surf Jetty

Other (specify) _____

Line Test Used _____ **Reel Type** _____

Rod Type _____ **Lure/Bait** _____

Certification for Adult and Junior Categories

Name of establishment where fish was measured and weighed

Telephone Number _____

Weighmaster's Name _____

Weighmaster's Signature _____

I certify: 1.) this fish was caught in New Jersey waters in accordance with state laws and regulations; 2.) the entry was weighed on a certified scale (for Adult and Junior categories only).

_____ Date _____

Applicant's Signature

* Application and photo must be submitted **within 30 days** of catching the fish. Applications for fish caught in December will be accepted only until January 31.

Mail to:

NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife
Skillful Angler Awards Program
P.O. Box 400
Trenton, NJ 08625-0400

Skillful Angler Awards Program



The Skillful Angler Awards Program is designed to supplement the New Jersey Record Fish Program. It comprises three categories: 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. All photo entries become property of the Division of Fish and Wildlife and will not be returned.

The Skillful Angler Awards program acknowledges 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. The program is 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.

Anglers qualifying for a Skillful Angler award receive a certificate and a bronze pin to adorn their fishing hat or jacket. Only one pin and certificate per species—regardless of category—will be awarded annually to each participant, but an angler may submit applications for larger fish caught even after receiving a pin.

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 receives a special commemorative gift recognizing his or 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 Adult/Junior categories, fish must be weighed and measured by fishing license agents, tackle shops or an authorized Fish and Wildlife fisheries biologist.

Minimum Entry Requirements

	Adult Weight (lbs.)	Junior Weight (lbs., oz.)	Catch and 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

Note: 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 www.njfishandwildlife.com for a complete list of current state records.

New Jersey State Record Marine Sport Fish



Gary Caputi with his 55-pound New Jersey State Record golden tilefish.

The Record Fish Program honors the largest species of fish caught in New Jersey. Entries are based on weight alone; there are no line classes. To enter, eligible freshwater or saltwater fish must exceed the weight of any current record fish species listed or must meet the minimum if no entry has yet been submitted for that species. Documentation is required to verify a certified scale was used to weigh the record fish. This mandatory information includes the scale's Certificate of Inspection/Test Report and registration certificate issued by the New Jersey Office of Weights and Measures as well as a weigh-

master's signature. Other rules apply.

For more information or to request an application, call (609) 633-7768. Visit the New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife Web site at www.njfishandwildlife.com for a complete list of state record fish.

Species	Lbs.	Oz.	Year	Angler	Where Caught
Amberjack, greater	85	0	1993	Edwin Metzner	Off Cape May
Barracuda	27	8	1991	Gary Szilagyi	Off Cape May
Bass, black sea	8	2	1992	Tony Cunha	Inshore Wreck
	8	2	1994	John Geddes	Off Pt. Pleasant
Blowfish, N. puffer	1	14	1987	Virginia Patten	Delaware Bay
Blowfish (other)	9	10	1992	Kevin Steward	Delaware Bay
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		8 1/2" pt. to pt.	1995	William Dool	Manahawkin
*Crab, blue	9"		1980	Frank Springfield	Delaware Bay
Croaker, Atlantic	5	8	1981	Frederick Brown	Delaware Bay
Cunner	1	14	2002	Kevin Mathiasen	80 Mi. SE of Brielle
Cuttlass fish	6	11	2002	Mike Green	Mud Hole
Dogfish, smooth	19	8	2000	Michael LaTorre	Pleasantville
Dogfish, spiny	15	12	1990	Jeff Pennick	Off Cape May
Dolphin	63	3	1974	Scott Smith, Jr.	Baltimore Canyon
Drum, black	105	0	1995	George Newett	Slaughter's Beach
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
*Kingfish, Northern	2	5	1969	Robert Morton	Off Cape May
Ling (red hake)	11	1	2002	Natalie Jones	Off Brielle
Lobster, American	15	3	2003	William Sharp	Almirante Wreck
Mackerel, Atlantic	4	1	1983	Abe Elkin	Manasquan Ridge
Mackerel, chub	1	9	2002	Kathleen Leso	Off Spring Lake
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	41	0	1984	Stephen Fanelli	Wilmington Canyon
Seatrout, spotted	11	2	1974	Bert Harper	Holgate Surf
Shad, American	7	0	1967	Rodger West	Great Bay
Shad, hickory				**Vacant** (Minimum Weight 2 Lbs.)	
Shark, blue	366	0	1996	Albert Jewitt	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, sandbar	168	8	1987	John Norton	Little Egg Inlet
Shark, sand tiger	246	0	1989	Richard Brown	Delaware Bay
Shark, s-fin mako	856	0	1994	Christopher Palmer	Wilmington Canyon
Shark, thresher	617	0	2004	Chris Chalmers	Off Cape May
Shark, tiger	880	0	1988	Billy DeJohn	Off Cape May
Shark, white	759	0	1988	Jim Kneipp	Off Pt. Pleasant
Sheepshead	17	3	2003	Paul Lowe	Manahawkin Bay

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		13	2003	Robert Belsky, Jr.	Little Sheepshead Creek
Stargazer, Northern	13	0	2000	Jim Ludt	Off Cape May
**Striped Bass	78	8	1982	Al McReynolds	Atlantic City
Striped Bass, hybrid	13	2	2004	James Fowler	Off Brigantine
Sturgeon, Atlantic	82	0	1994	Glen Lasco	Sandy Hook
Swordfish	530	0	1964	Edmund Levitt	Wilmington Canyon
Tarpon	53	0	1982	Jim Klaczekwicz	Off Sea Bright
**Tautog	25	0	1998	Anthony Monica	Off Ocean City
**Tilefish, golden	55	0	2005	Gary Caputi	Washington Canyon
**Tilefish, gray	10	9	2001	Jim Zigarelli	Sea Girl Reef
Triggerfish	5	11	2005	Lois Schuda	Cape May Reef
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.)	

* Historical record

** Denotes fish has been 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 Web site at www.njfishandwildlife.com

New Jersey's FREE Freshwater Fishing Days

June 10 and 11, 2006



On these two days, residents and non-residents may fish New Jersey's public fresh waters without a license or trout stamp. All other regulations, including size and daily catch limits, remain in effect.

Sea Run Brown Trout

The New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife has stocked brown trout in the lower Manasquan



River. Anglers are asked to report

all catches of brown trout that exhibit characteristics of a sea run. These fish tend to develop a more silvery coloration, masking most of the body spots, after an extended time in salt water.

The future of this program depends on these fish being caught and reported.



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Field Office (908) 236-2118. WE NEED YOUR COOPERATION.

Get on the Lists

The Marine Fisheries and Shellfish e-mail lists that is. This free service will provide you with 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. The more, visit Fish and Wildlife's Web site at: www.njfishandwildlife.com/lstsub.htm

New Jersey's 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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- **PROMOTE CONSERVATION OF NEW JERSEY'S NATURAL RESOURCES**

WE ARE...

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It's a coalition of hunters, anglers, trappers, recreational shooters and others who have an interest in enjoying—and preserving—the great outdoor opportunities available in New Jersey.

It's an alliance that includes individual sportsmen, local fishing/hunting clubs, statewide groups and chapters of large, well-known sportsmen/conservation organizations.

The members of the Federation have an official say in all policies, recommendations and proposals that the Federation advances.

The members of the Federation have a direct impact on fish and wildlife policies of New Jersey. By LAW the Federation fills six of the 11 seats on the Fish and Game Council.

Visit us at www.NJSFSC.org

The Division of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) in the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is the state agency charged with managing all fish, game and wildlife programs in the state. The NJ Fish and Game Council was created by law and empowered to adopt the Fish and Game Code and advise the DEP Commissioner and the DFW on the management of fish, wildlife and habitat. Sportsmen appointees enact wildlife-related law and influence wildlife policy. Each of the Fish and Game Council members selected by the Federation maintains close contact with us to keep us informed and to understand our positions on various issues.

Involvement from interested sportsmen—JUST LIKE YOU—has made a real difference, and will continue to do so.

If you care about

- Wise management of fish and wildlife populations
- Protection and enhancement of our natural lands and water
- Preservation of our traditional outdoor sports

If you want to

- Meet others who share similar interests
- Keep informed on current issues affecting NJ sportsmen
- Have fun and participate in Federation-sponsored activities: dinners, conventions, clay target shoots, jamborees, tournaments, etc.



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GOVERNOR'S SURF FISHING TOURNAMENT

A Favorite for Families and Friends

By Karen Leskie, Wildlife Technician



fishing and raises much-needed funds for marine-resource conservation and education.

Every year, eager anglers set out to net the coveted Governor's Cup by reeling in the largest catch of the day. In 2005, Jackson resident Carl Kogel earned top honors with a 34½-inch bluefish. As grand-prize winner, Kogel had his name engraved on the

Governor's Cup, which is on permanent display at Island Beach State Park. He also received a plaque, a Penn rod-and-reel combo and a gear bag.

Prizes also are awarded in other categories for children, teens and adults.

More than 1,000 anglers are expected to turn out for the 15th annual Governor's Surf Fishing Tournament, Sunday, Oct. 1, along the beaches of Island Beach State Park in Berkeley Township, Ocean County. Popular with families from New Jersey and neighboring states, the tournament aims to encourage youngsters and adults to learn more about surf

Since its inception, the tournament has generated more than \$100,000 for various marine education and restoration efforts, construction of access ramps for disabled saltwater anglers, surf-fishing instruction programs and equipment, and specialized wheelchairs that provide beach access to the disabled and elderly, among other purposes.

For more information about the Governor's Surf Fishing Tournament and a registration form, visit www.njfishandwildlife.com or call (609) 748-4347.

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 – 2006.**
Send a self-addressed stamped, #10 envelope (2 oz. postage).

* * *

These publications are also available online at:
www.njfishandwildlife.com

• **Guide to New Jersey Saltwater Fishing,**
available online only
• **NJ Reef News**
• **Party and Charter Boat Directory,**
available online only

Fish and Wildlife thanks the following organizations for contributing to the success of the 14th annual Governor's Surf Fishing Tournament in 2005:

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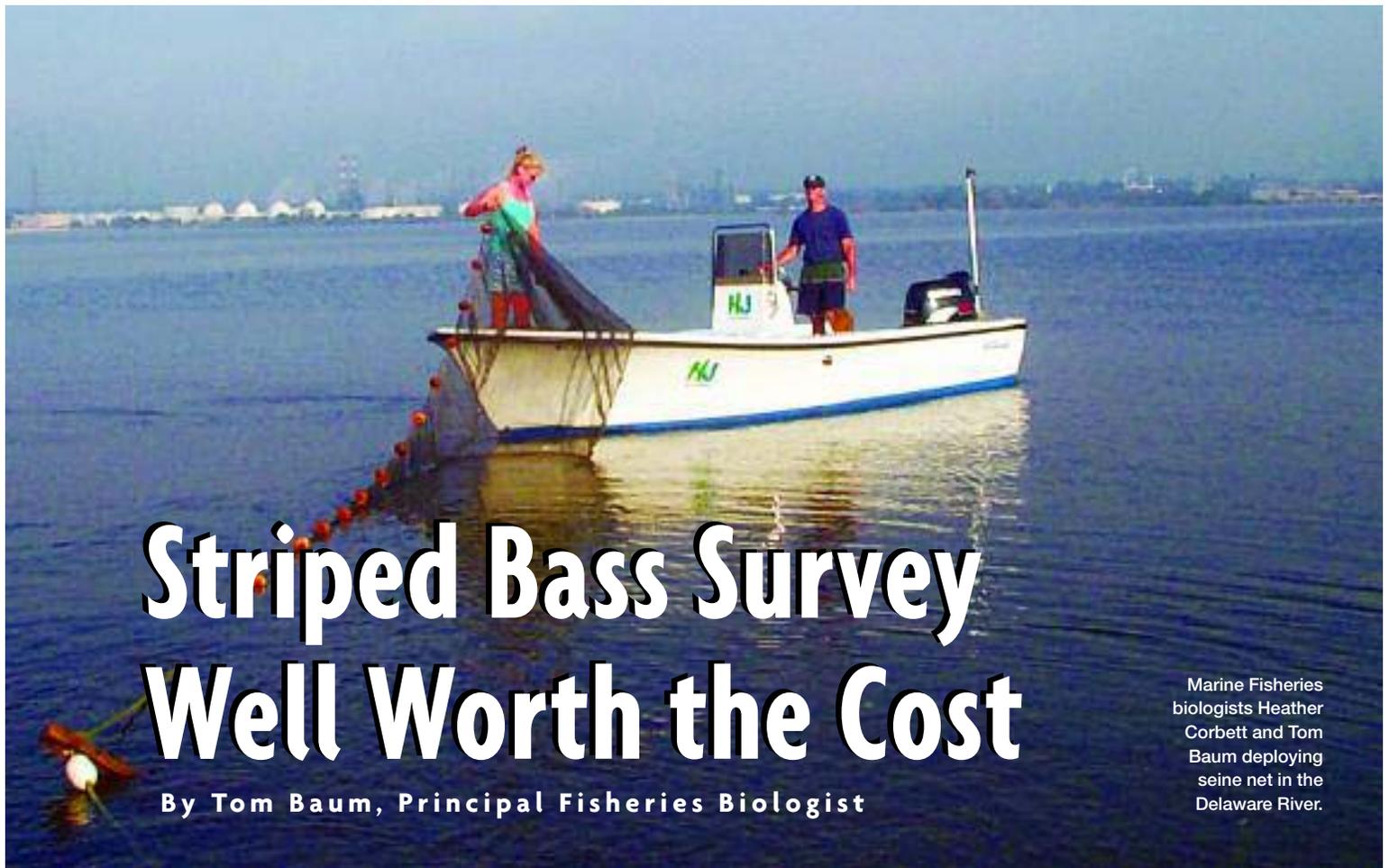
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Striped Bass Survey Well Worth the Cost

By Tom Baum, Principal Fisheries Biologist

Marine Fisheries
biologists Heather
Corbett and Tom
Baum deploying
seine net in the
Delaware River.

Maryellen Gordon, NJ Div. Fish and Wildlife

For the past 26 years, the NJDEP's Division of Fish & Wildlife has been sampling the lower Delaware River to collect information on the striped bass that are born in the river each year—the young of year or y-o-y. Sampling began in 1980 when striped bass stocks were severely depleted. Back then, the historic spawning grounds of the Delaware River produced an average of only seven y-o-y bass for every 100 hauls of the seine net. Responsible management of this valuable game fish has allowed stocks to rebound to where the seine hauls in 2003 averaged more than eight y-o-y bass each time the net was hauled. Since the project began Fish and Wildlife staff have set and retrieved seine nets 5,149 times, counted over 1 million fish from 82 different species and measured 142,807 of those fish.

More than \$3 million has been spent performing this survey over the years. This is indicative of the high cost associated with sound management needed to ensure New Jersey anglers can continue to fish for federally managed marine species and that they get their fair share of the coastwide harvest quota allocated for marine sport fish. Failure to comply with federal management plans that require ongoing monitoring, like the striped bass survey, could result in federal moratoriums on fishing for managed species in New Jersey. The striped bass is only one of 22 New Jersey marine fish that have federally mandated management requirements that must be met to avoid fishing moratoriums.

The Delaware River Seine Survey was originally intended to determine the extent of striped bass spawning in the historic spawning grounds of the Delaware River and how many young fish were entering the adult population (recruitment). Today the survey's main objective is to provide an annual index of the relative abundance of striped bass y-o-y in the Delaware River. This index documents annual variation and long-term trends in bass spawning success and y-o-y survival and provides a preliminary indicator of how many y-o-y bass may later enter the adult population.

Field sampling is done with a 1/4-inch mesh seine net that measures 100-foot long by 6-foot deep and has a collection bag in the middle of the net. One end of the seine net is held close to shore by a crewmember on the beach and the net pays off the bow of a boat as it backs away from the beach. The boat drags the net with the current and then pulls the boat end of the net into the beach forming a "U" shape. The net is pulled onto the beach from both ends and the catch is funneled into the center bag portion of the seine net. All fish caught in the net are identified, counted and many are measured. Besides striped bass, measurements are taken for target species such as white perch, herring, American shad and weakfish. The striped bass y-o-y index is reported as the number of striped bass y-o-y taken per seine haul (see Graph 1). Basic water quality parameters are also recorded including water temperature, salinity and dissolved oxygen.

A particularly interesting catch occurred on August 24, 2004 when a juvenile shortnose sturgeon was netted. This was the first time the Bureau of Marine Fisheries collected a sturgeon in the Delaware River while beach seining. The sturgeon, an endangered species, was caught at the Oldman's Point station, measured just over four inches and was released unharmed.

The five most abundant species caught during these annual surveys are mainly forage fish including blueback herring, Atlantic menhaden, bay anchovy, white perch and American shad. These species make up more than 70 percent of the 1.1 million fish sampled over the survey's history and provide valuable population and diversity information for the Delaware River.

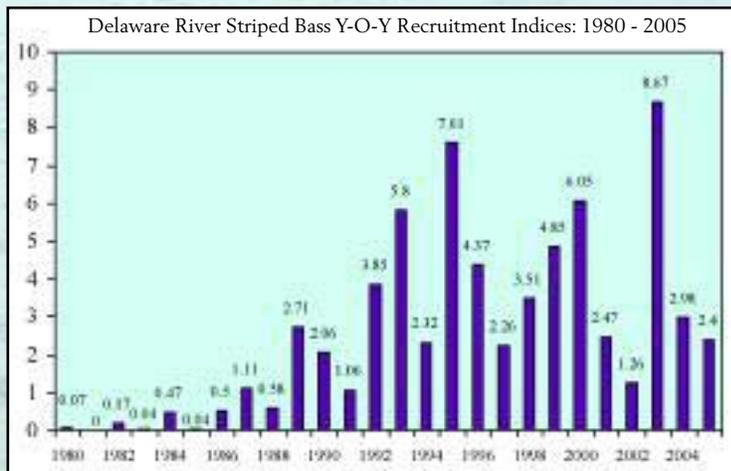
Today there are 32 sampling stations spread over 70 miles of the river from just above Artificial Island in Salem County to Newbold Island in Burlington County. The stations are all located in tidal areas but encompass estuarine, brackish and freshwater areas. Each station is sampled twice a month from mid-June through mid-November yielding 320 seine hauls per season. The sampling effort has grown

substantially from 25-76 seine hauls in the early 80's to 256 seine hauls in 1987 to the current effort of 320 seine hauls.

Typically, it takes four field days to complete one round of sampling at the 32 stations. Depending on the lunar phase, tidal ranges can be greater than seven feet. A field crew of up to four Marine Fisheries personnel will depart early in the morning from our Nacote Creek Research Station in Port Republic trailering a 20-foot boat to one of three boat ramp launch sites on the Delaware River (Pennsville, Bridgeport and Delran). Depending on weather and river conditions, a typical field day starts at 6 a.m. and ends at 5 p.m. The marine staff must endure challenges such as vessel and vehicle breakdowns, pollution, debris, rough river conditions and oil spills.

The seine haul sampling is only the beginning of the work associated with the survey. Fish that could not be identified in the field are later identified back at the lab. Also, scales taken from striped bass are analyzed to determine the ages of the fish in the sample. Numerous hours are spent maintaining equipment, entering and proofreading data, performing quality control checks and then processing data to synthesize research results. Over the survey's 26-year history, 3,378 man-days have been devoted to conducting the striped bass y-o-y surveys.

The New Jersey Delaware River Seine Survey is Marine Fisheries' longest-running fishery-independent survey. The survey design, quality control and quality assurance measures taken all contribute to ensure that the data collected are sound. Also, the survey results have been validated by other independent surveys, specifically the striped bass spawning stock survey conducted by the Delaware Division of Fish & Wildlife. Documenting the virtual absence of striped bass y-o-y in the Delaware River during the early and mid-1980s, the survey also witnessed the rebuilding years of the 1990s. The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission declared the Delaware River stock of striped bass restored in 1998 based on several studies including New Jersey's seine survey. All that work, money and effort has paid off in producing a recognized and respected survey that predicts the health of the Delaware River striped bass stock. 



Large photo: Marine Fisheries personnel sorting and processing catch. Left to right: Seasonal employees Maryellen Gordon, Peter Downham, Craig Tomlin

Inset: Fish eye view of Marine Fisheries personnel hauling in seine net. Left to right: Tiffany Colman, Heather Corbett, Maryellen Gordon, Jennifer Pyle

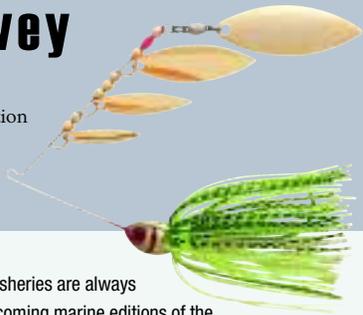
Graph 1. Striped Bass Young of Year Per Seine Haul, 1980 - 2005

Photos: Tom Baum, NJ Div. Fish and Wildlife.



Reader Survey

Mail completed form to:
NJ Marine Fisheries Administration
Marine Digest Reader Survey
P.O. Box 418
Port Republic, NJ 08241



The Bureau of Marine Fisheries and Shellfisheries are always considering relevant topics to include in upcoming marine editions of the New Jersey Fish & Wildlife Digest and on the Fish and Wildlife Web site. To keep the articles fresh and interesting, please take a few moments to tell us who you are and what you would like to see in future editions.

Are you a: Recreational angler Commercial fisherman
 Both Other (specify) _____

Where do you live? _____ State _____ County

What are the most useful/interesting articles in this year's *Digest*?

What are the least useful/interesting articles?

What topic(s) would you like featured in future *Digests*?
(check all that apply)

- Regulation changes
- Species profiles
- Management process
- NJ research surveys
- Stock assessment/status
- Artificial reefs

- Shellfisheries
- Enforcement
- Volunteer opportunities
- Youth fishing
- Fishing techniques
- Habitat protection or restoration
- Aquaculture
- Places to and 'how to' fish

From the topics you checked above, tell us what specific fish species, reef site, fishing technique, etc., you want to see featured in a future marine *Digest*. For example, if you checked artificial reefs, you might list the "Garden State North" reef. For a species profile, you could write black drum.

Have you visited the saltwater pages on the Fish and Wildlife Web site?

- Yes No

How often? Daily Weekly Monthly Other

Your suggestions for how to improve the saltwater pages of the Fish and Wildlife Web site (check all that apply):

- Keep articles now on Web site
- Existing articles are good but could be updated
- Add new articles on (suggested topic):
- Include fishing reports
- Make Web site more interactive
- Add fisheries research and survey results
- Use online surveys for reader feedback
- Include more fishery regulations and updates
- Other (specify):

This survey also may be completed online at Fish and Wildlife's Web site: www.njfishandwildlife.com Note: Information collected in this survey is confidential and will be used only to evaluate readership and identify key topics of interest for future *Digest* editions.

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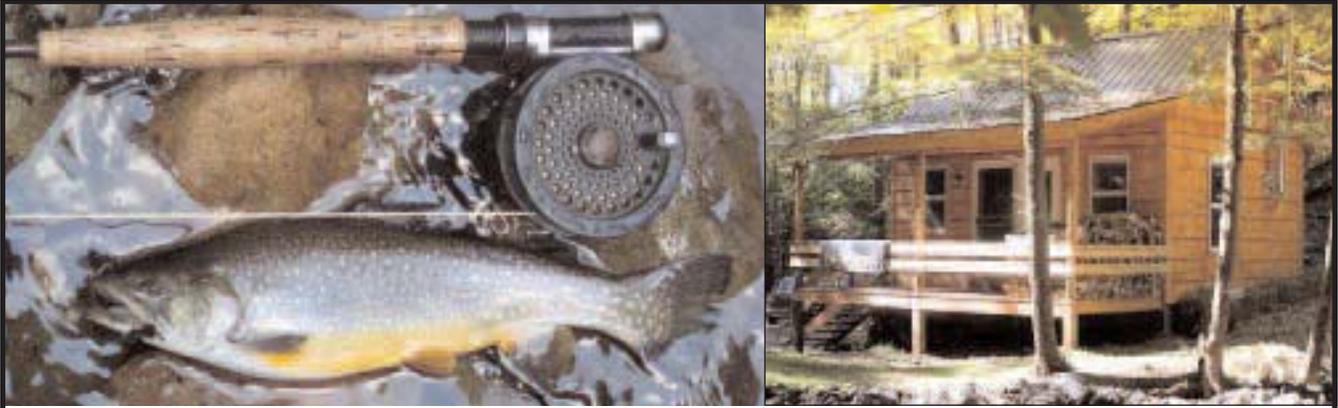
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Angler, boater purchases fuel success of sport fish restoration projects

You probably don't have to be told what fishing means to you. You value time spent in the great outdoors, relaxing with family and friends on the water and savoring the thrill of battling a trophy.

But you may not realize how much you mean to fishing. Every time you fill your boat with gasoline, buy your child a new rod or stock up on lures, you are making an important contribution toward better fishing and boating in the Garden State. Simply by purchasing the things you need for fishing, you support the Sport Fish Restoration Program, which enables states to restore fisheries, improve habitats, create fishing and boating access, provide educational opportunities and accomplish other valuable work.

The Sport Fish Restoration Program is funded by excise taxes manufacturers pay on sales of rods, reels and other fishing equipment and a portion of tax on motorboat fuel. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service distributes these funds annually to the states through a federal aid grant program. New Jersey receives more than \$2.6 million each year in Sport Fish Restoration funds.

For more information on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration program, visit <http://federalasst.fws.gov/>





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