



New Jersey

Fish & Wildlife

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2009 Marine Issue

A summary of Rules & Management Information
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May 2009

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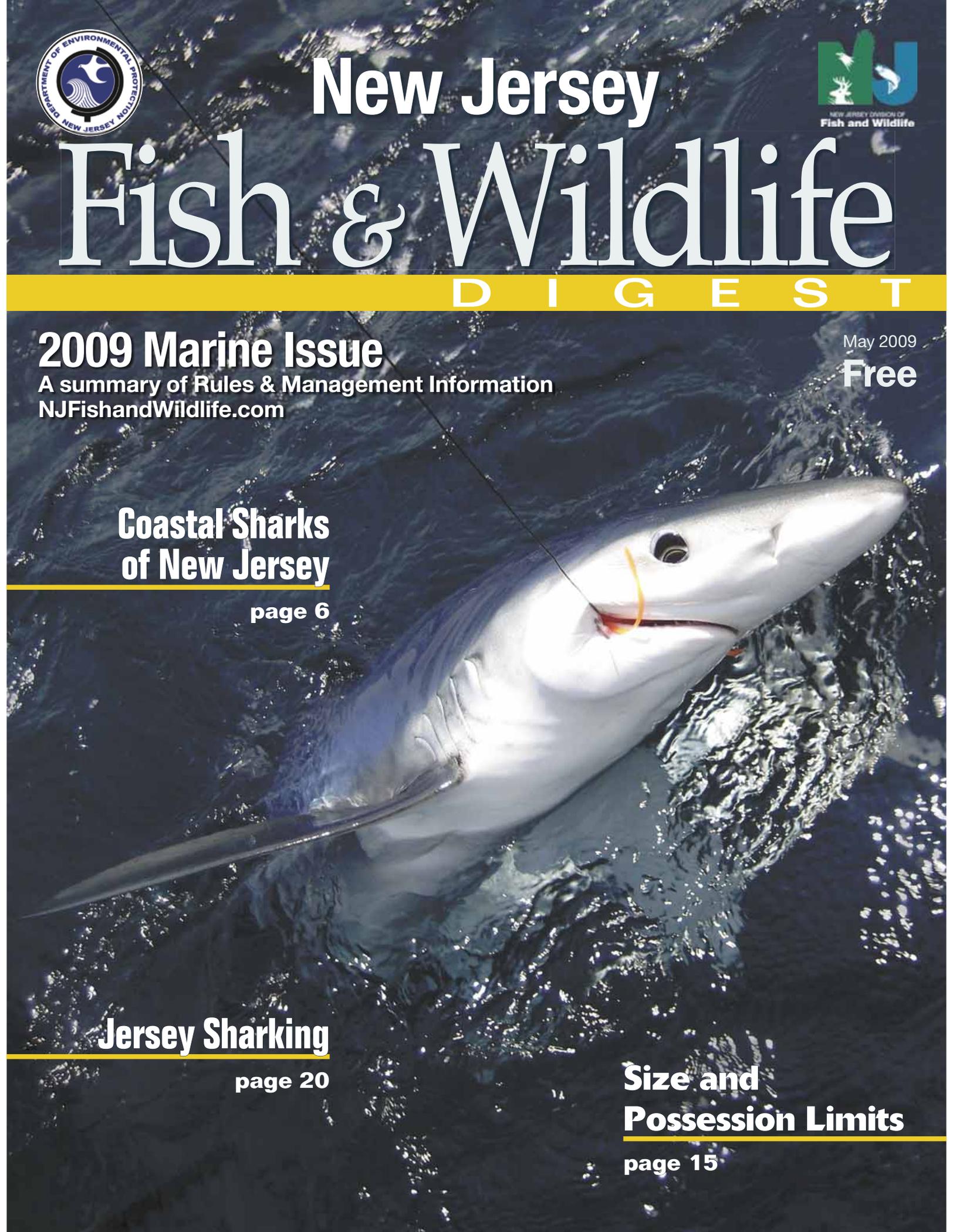
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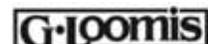
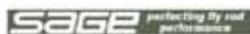
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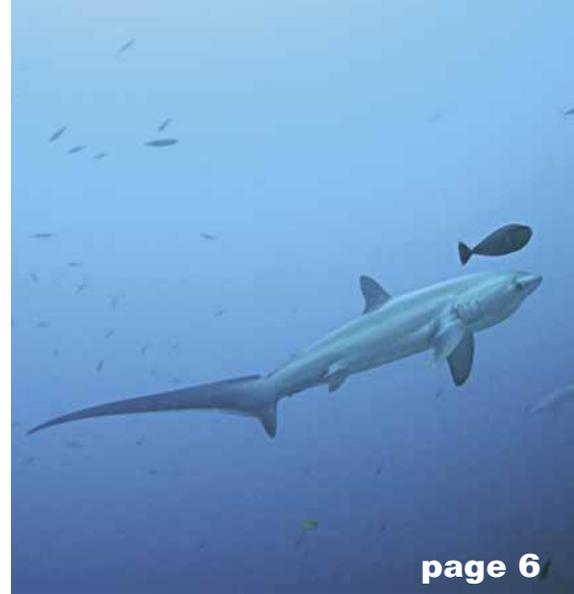
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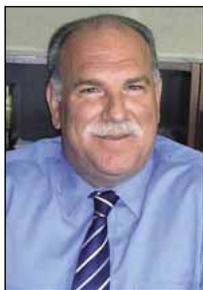
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Commissioner's Message



BY MARK N. MAURIELLO

I've long cherished spending summers at the Jersey shore. Some of my fondest memories are of vacations spent in Lavallette as a child. My wife Joanne and I have passed this tradition down to our sons Todd and Daniel. We vacation "down the shore" every summer.

These vacations have left me with memories that I will treasure forever, such as the excitement of catching a wave on my 10-foot surfboard or the joy Todd and Daniel experienced as they pulled up their first blue crabs from Barnegat Bay. As my family

uses this time to unwind and appreciate what is truly important in life, I am reminded of the special connection we in New Jersey have with our coast.

Stretching 127 miles from Sandy Hook to Cape May, New Jersey's coastline offers endless opportunities for recreation and relaxation—and it drives our multibillion-dollar tourism economy. Whether you enjoy strolling on the boardwalk, sunning and swimming on some of the best beaches in the country, or experiencing the thrill of the catch by casting your fishing line into our beautiful coastal waters, the Jersey shore is truly unrivaled.

Saltwater anglers appreciate this fact as much as anyone, perhaps more so. You are tuned to the rhythms of the tides, the movements of the fish, the cycles of the sea.

Between a half-million to a million people will fish our coastal waters this year. You may not be thinking directly about the state's many coastal-protection programs as you bait your hooks and cast your lines for stripers, fluke, bluefish, weakfish and other denizens of our coastline, but on some level you realize that your enjoyment of the sport relies on healthy and productive ecosystems.

It is crucial that we protect the shore's natural resources today so they can be enjoyed by many generations to come. We must tread lightly and use our resources carefully. By obeying catch and size limits and taking care to leave no

gear behind, you are doing important things to protect the shore and bolster the reputation of anglers as caretakers of this fragile ecosystem.

As the Department of Environmental Protection's Acting Commissioner, I am committed to protecting this treasure with every regulatory and scientific tool the state has, even in this difficult economic climate.

I have a special affinity and keen understanding for the shore and its ecosystems, having spent most of my 29-year DEP career working on coastal issues. I began my career as a coastal geologist and eventually became Assistant Commissioner of the Land Use Program, which oversees many of New Jersey's coastal-protection programs.

The DEP's initiatives to safeguard New Jersey's coastal resources are multifaceted and require careful coordination. Programs to monitor water quality, protect fish populations, reduce runoff pollution, restore beaches and dunes to protect lives and property, and clean litter off the beaches all start with the DEP. I understand how these programs work, how they complement each other, where they can be strengthened.

Through these and many more programs like them, the DEP carries out its commitment to the coast every day, working tirelessly to preserve and maintain clean and healthy coastal ecosystems that our fish need to thrive and that you need to have an enjoyable time.

We are so fortunate to have this wonderful asset so readily at hand. Besides providing us with opportunities for fun and recreation, the shore fills us with tranquility, gives us a better appreciation for life, and brings families closer together. It even rekindles childhood memories.

We must never take all this for granted, no matter what lures us to the shore. 

Mark N. Mauriello is Acting Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection.

Director's Message



BY DAVE CHANDA

The National Saltwater Angler Registry Program has sparked keen interest from coast to coast within the marine fisheries community. The Registry is slated to take effect on January 1, 2010 and New Jersey saltwater anglers should be concerned about its implications for them and the management of the state's marine resource.

The Registry Program was created by a Federal Rule required under the 2006 Magnuson-Stevens Reauthorization Act. This Act is the primary law governing marine fisheries management in United States federal waters. Improving the quality and accuracy of National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) surveys to estimate marine recreational harvest was the driving force behind the Registry. The potential benefit of the Registry and better surveys is that size, season and bag limits that affect New Jersey anglers will be based on more reliable harvest data.

Fifteen coastal states require a saltwater fishing license and can provide annual directories of their marine anglers to NMFS for the Registry. New Jersey is one of nine coastal states with nothing in place to register marine anglers. That means New Jersey marine anglers will be required to register with NMFS each year beginning in 2010. There will be no fee for anglers to register in 2010, but in 2011 anglers from states with no means to provide a directory will pay an estimated \$15 to \$25 annual fee to register with the federal government.

New Jersey angler registry fees to the federal government could be as much as \$25 million a year—six times the amount of our annual funding for New Jersey marine fisheries management. Registry fees paid to the federal treasury would not benefit New Jersey anglers or marine resource management in New Jersey.

This comes at a time of increasing requirements to comply with coast-wide fisheries management plans to avoid closures of fisheries in state waters. Today there are 22 coast-wide fisheries management plans for New Jersey species. In 1988, there were none. Yet marine fisheries management funding in our state, when adjusted for inflation, is essentially the same 20 years later.

Competition amongst Atlantic Coast states for shares of coast-wide fisheries resources is increasing at the same time. The winners are often the states with the best scientific data and competing states are spending two to seven times more per angler than New Jersey to collect fisheries data. The consequence of not being able to keep pace was evident in recent tautog harvest restrictions placed on New Jersey anglers because our data was not sufficient to argue against the restrictions. The same could soon be true for winter flounder. Competition for marine resources will continue to increase in the future as will research and monitoring requirements to responsibly manage the state's marine resources and keep recreational fisheries open to New Jersey anglers.

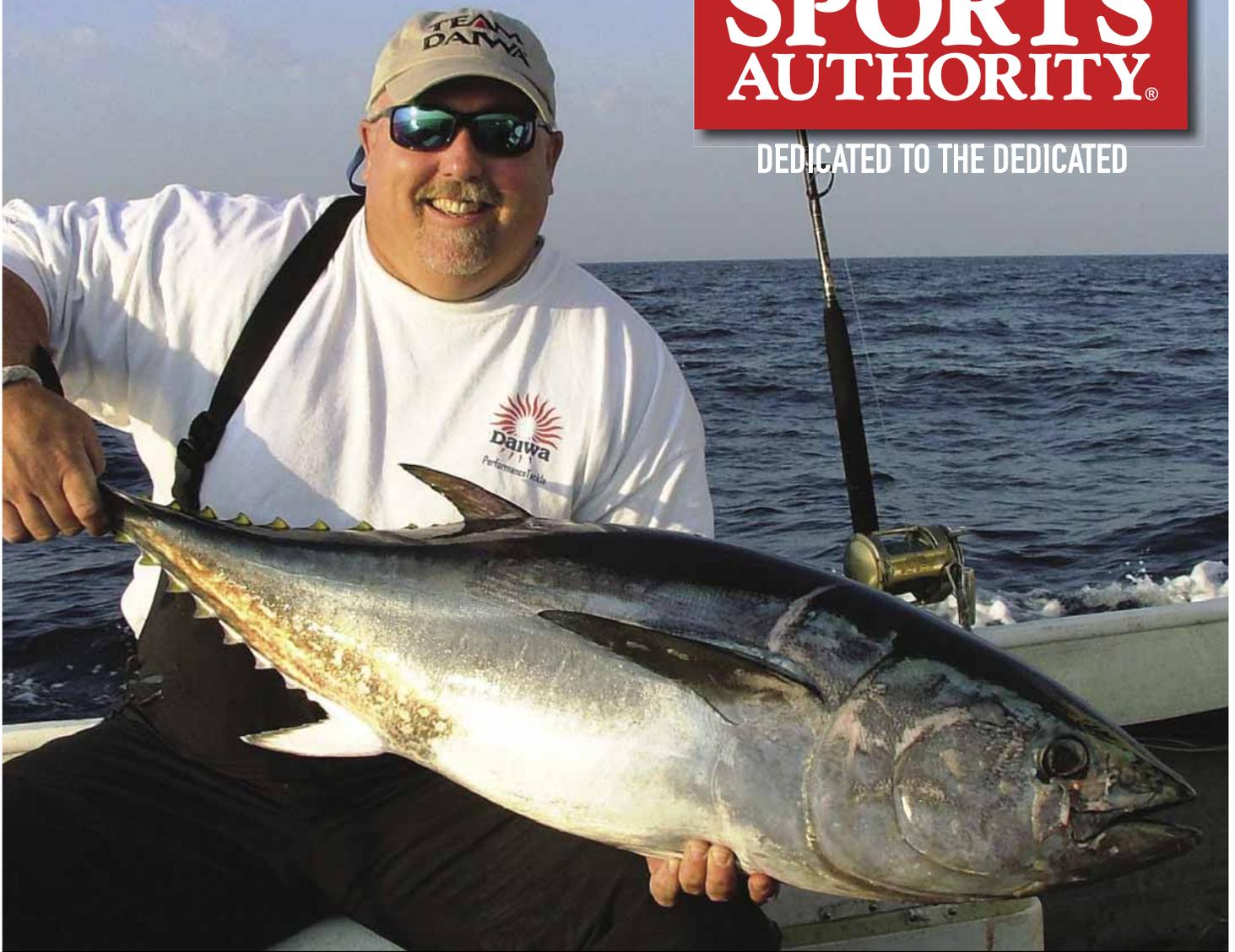
The National Saltwater Angler Registry poses both a challenge and an opportunity. The challenge is to create a state directory of marine anglers without sending angler fees to the federal government. The opportunity is to ensure that there are stable marine fisheries populations and fishing opportunities for our children and grandchildren to enjoy.

The Division of Fish and Wildlife is offering to present helpful information to angling groups on the national registry program and to discuss what it will mean for New Jersey anglers. Anyone interested in scheduling a presentation is invited to call (609) 292-7794. 

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

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New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife

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

Our Goals

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

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Coastal Sharks of New Jersey

By Russell Babb, Supervising Biologist

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) recently developed an Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Atlantic Coastal Sharks. Management authority for coastal sharks within 0-3 miles from shore falls under the authority of individual states, which develop regulations to meet the management objectives of the FMP. Shark management, like other highly migratory species, can be especially challenging. Sharks simply refuse to respect our state boundaries and authorities. They range up and down the coast, migrate inshore and offshore and mate and pup in areas that overlap both state and federal jurisdictions. Therefore, sound management is only possible through cooperation among federal and state governments in developing coordinated conservation measures. Furthermore, the brass tacks of shark biology (i.e., late maturity, low fecundity or potential reproductive capacity) make sharks especially susceptible to overfishing, which in turn make traditional fisheries management methods less effective. Today, populations of a number of large sharks are substantially reduced from what they were in the 1970s.

SHARK BIOLOGY AND BEHAVIOR

Sharks belong to the class Chondrichthyes (cartilaginous fishes), which also includes rays, skates, and ratfishes. Unlike the teleosts (bony fish), sharks have skeletons made of cartilage. The earliest known sharks swam our oceans over 400 million years ago.

There are approximately 350 species of sharks. The most commonly known sharks are the large apex predators like the white (*Carcharodon carcharias*), mako (*Isurus oxyrinchus*), tiger (*Galeocerdo cuvier*), bull (*Carcharhinus leucas*), and great hammerhead (*Sphyrna mokarran*). Some shark species reproduce by laying eggs (catshark, like the chain dogfish) while others deliver fully developed young or “pups” (blue shark, mako).

HABITAT

Shark habitat can be described in four basic categories: coastal, pelagic, coastal-pelagic, and deep-dwelling. Coastal species inhabit estuaries, the nearshore and waters of the continental shelves (e.g., bull shark). Pelagic species, on the other hand, range widely in the upper zones of the open ocean, often traveling over entire ocean basins (e.g., shortfin mako, blue sharks). Coastal-pelagic species are intermediate in that they occur both inshore and beyond the continental shelves. The sandbar shark is a local example of a coastal-pelagic species.

FEEDING HABITS

Sharks generally feed around dawn and dusk and often move into shallow waters following prey such as menhaden and other small forage fish. When schools of bait fish are observed near the shoreline,

sharks and other predators may also be near by. But fear not, as shark expert George Burgess (Director, Florida Program for Shark Research) once fittingly wrote, “Many more sutures are expended on sea shell lacerations of the feet than on shark bites!”

REPRODUCTION

Adults usually congregate in specific areas to mate; females travel to specific nursery areas to pup. Frequently, the nursery areas are in shallow, highly productive estuarine waters where abundant small fishes and crustaceans provide food for the growing pups. New Jersey’s coastal estuaries, particularly the mouth of Great Bay and the lower-middle portion of Delaware Bay, are heavily utilized as nursery or “pup” grounds. In our temperate zones, the young often leave the nurseries with the onset of winter.

LIFESPAN

The life span of many species is not fully known, but it is believed that many species may live 30 to 40 years or longer. When compared to the teleosts, sharks have very low reproductive potential. Several species, including the locally observed sandbar and bull sharks, do not reach maturity until 12 to 18 years of age. These combined biological factors leave many species of sharks at risk if not wisely managed.

MIGRATION

Along the Atlantic coast of the U.S., sharks generally move north in the spring with warming temperatures and south again in the fall as water temperatures become cooler.

Smooth Dogfish (*Mustelus canis*)

“I caught a sand shark!” Well, maybe not. It was probably a shark, but more likely you caught a smooth dogfish. This common bay and inshore inhabitant grows up to 60 inches, prefers shallow waters and is often caught by recreational anglers. It is a scavenger and opportunistic predator, feeding primarily on crustaceans, small fish and mollusks. The New Jersey state record “smoothie” was taken from Atlantic County waters weighing 19 pounds 8 ounces.



Kim Taggart

Spiny Dogfish (*Squalus acanthias*)

Many fishermen learn the difference between the two dogfish species the hard way—a cut to the palm of the hand. The species name (acanthias) translates to “a prickly thing,” which aptly describes the sharp spines found on the dorsal fins of this abundant and voracious predator. In the spring they begin their migration north, reaching New Jersey in March and April, continue northward to Canada, then return to the mid-Atlantic as water temperatures cool in the fall. They are voracious, opportunistic feeders, indulging on a number of commercially- and recreationally-important species such as Atlantic herring, Atlantic mackerel, squid—and to a lesser extent—cod and haddock. Interestingly, this predatory species is often a prey species itself—for larger predators such as goosefish, cod, red hake, larger sharks, whales, dolphins and other spiny dogfish. The state record, caught off Cape May, weighed nearly 16 pounds.



Andy Murch/easmodiver.com

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Shark Species Encountered by New Jersey Anglers



Andy Murch/elasmodiver.com

Sandbar shark (*Carcharhinus plumbeus*)

The sandbar shark, also known as the brown shark, is a regular inhabitant of our coastal waters growing to approximately 6 to 7 feet. It is a slow-growing species that reaches maturity between 15 and 30 years of age. In New Jersey, the sandbar shark has primary nurseries in the shallow waters of Great Bay and in Delaware Bay. It is a preferred commercial species because of the high quality of its flesh and large fins. However, scientists have documented severe declines in catch per effort in the Chesapeake Bay area. Fishermen are currently prohibited from catching or landing sandbar sharks in federal waters. The New Jersey State Record sandbar shark was caught at Little Egg Inlet in 1987. The shark weighed 168 lbs, 8 oz.

Dusky shark (*Carcharhinus obscurus*)

The dusky shark is a relatively common species. Fishing for dusky shark is currently prohibited in federal waters. The dusky shark is a slow-growing species that matures at about 17 years of age. The New Jersey State record was caught off Great Egg Inlet in 1987 and weighed in at an impressive 530 lbs. It was formerly important both as a commercial species and as a game fish prior to the fishing prohibition.



Andy Murch/elasmodiver.com

Common Thresher Shark (*Alopias vulpinus*)

With their enormously large caudal fins, the thresher shark certainly stands out in a crowd. Including the tail, threshers can range up to 18 to 20 feet in length. This is considered a pelagic species (living primarily in the open ocean), but may be encountered close to shore, particularly when they follow schools of menhaden. Thresher sharks commonly feed on mackerel, bluefish, squid and menhaden using its tail to group fish into tight circles or "balls" during feeding. The New Jersey record thresher (617 pounds) was caught off Cape May in 2004.



Kenny Lee

Shortfin Mako Shark (*Isurus oxyrinchus*)

One of the most impressive-looking, foreboding creatures swimming the planet's oceans, the mako shark is also known as one of the ultimate gamefish of the world. Makos have a reputation for great speed, overall aggressiveness and tremendous leaping ability. The shortfin mako is the fastest shark, with recorded speeds of up to 20 m.p.h. Off the northeast coast of the United States, diet studies have shown the preferred prey species to be bluefish, but makos often feed on other fast-moving species such as tuna, swordfish and other sharks. Average adult size is 10 feet and 150-300 pounds. Shortfin makos are believed to live about 20 years. The New Jersey record is a whopping 856-pound specimen taken from the Wilmington Canyon in 1994.



Andy Murch

Blue Shark (*Prionace glauca*)

This meandering, wide-ranging shark is a common visitor to offshore fishermen. It is slender in build with exceptionally long pectoral fins. They typically grow to 8-10 feet in length but have been collected up to 12 feet and are believed to grow larger. This shark owes its name to its intensely blue upper body. It is interesting to note that blue sharks have gill rakers (tough projections within the gill pointing forward and inward), a rarity in most sharks. It is thought that this adaptation may thwart small prey species (like squid, anchovies, etc.) from slipping through the blue shark's gills. The New Jersey record blue was taken in 1996 from the "Mud Hole" offshore of Manasquan and Shark rivers. The shark weighed 366 pounds.



Andy Murch/elasmodiver.com



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Attention Saltwater Anglers!

By Jeff Brust, Research Scientist

New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife has implemented an angler survey to collect information on certain recreationally important marine finfish species. This voluntary survey is available online at <http://NJFishandWildlife.com/marinesurvey.htm>.

Since 1981, the Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey (MRFSS), conducted by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has been the primary source of recreational fisheries data in New Jersey and other coastal states throughout the U.S. Unfortunately, the MRFSS is hindered by sampling only a small portion of the fishing public and by collecting only minimal data on released fish. Although NMFS is in the process of developing an improved sampling program (Marine Recreational Information Program or MRIP), details of the new sampling program are not yet available. It may be several years before fisheries scientists can determine the utility of the data collected through MRIP.

Information collected through Fish and Wildlife's new voluntary marine angler survey will provide much-needed data to increase our understanding of New Jersey's highly valued recreational fisheries. The focus of this voluntary survey is to learn *catch* and *effort* information from fishing trips in marine and estuarine waters of the state and surrounding areas. For catch information, Fish and Wildlife is interested in collecting statistics on the number and size of fish both kept and released.

The survey was implemented in June 2008 and by the end of the year had received more than 675 responses reporting catch and effort information on more than 1,850 angler trips. The majority of responses (521) identified summer flounder as either a primary or secondary target species, with striped bass (141), bluefish (130), weakfish (89) and black seabass (85) rounding out the top five most-targeted species.

One of the more valuable benefits of this survey is the collection of lengths from released fish. The MRFSS collected no length information from released fish until 2004 when it began measuring throwbacks from a limited number of party boat trips. New Jersey's online survey allows for collection of lengths of released fish from all fishing modes and species. This information is particularly useful in understanding the population size structure and for use in population models. The figure below shows the size distribution of recreationally caught summer flounder during the 2008 fishing season.

Your participation in the survey is both important and appreciated. Fish and Wildlife is confident that quality recreational fisheries data collected through the online survey will improve our ability to manage our important marine species for continued enjoyment by recreational anglers and all user groups. Go to NJFishandWildlife.com/marinesurvey.htm

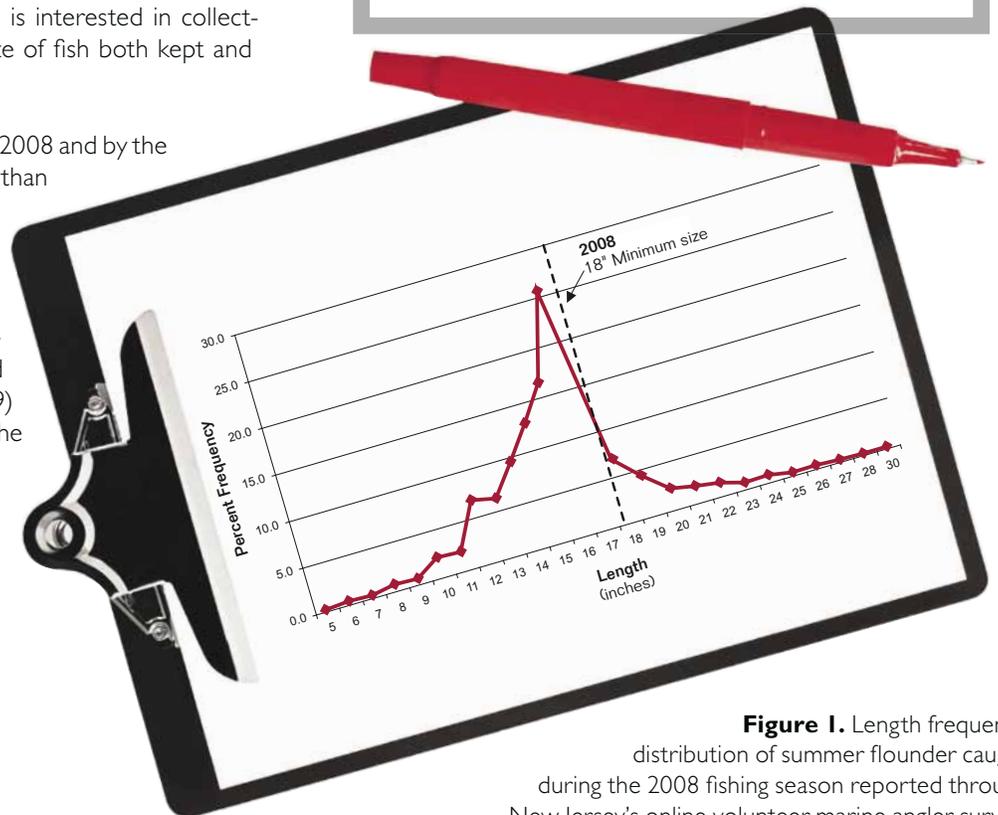


Figure 1. Length frequency distribution of summer flounder caught during the 2008 fishing season reported through New Jersey's online volunteer marine angler survey.

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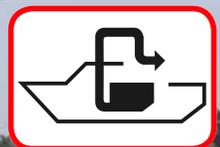
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This is not the full law. Consult the Division of Fish and Wildlife for further details. All persons are reminded that the statutes, code and regulations are the legal authorities.

Red text in regulations indicates a change for this year.

Purple text denotes proposed regulation changes anticipated to be in effect later in 2009.

The Department of Environmental Protection's Division of Fish and Wildlife informs anglers that rules for the recreational harvest of **summer flounder (fluke)** have changed. The summer flounder recreational season is now **May 23–Sept. 4**. The recreational minimum size remains 18 inches and the possession limit is now **six** fish. Also, the **black sea bass** minimum size limit is now **12.5 inches**. However, the recreational size limit may change again in 2009.

At the time of publication, recreational measures for black drum and coastal sharks had not been adopted but are expected to become effective during 2009. For the latest information on black drum, sharks and black sea bass visit our Web site at NJFishandWildlife.com or call the 24-hour marine fish "listen-only" line at (609) 292-2083.

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

New Jersey recreational marine regulations apply to all fish species when they are possessed in state waters or landed in New Jersey regardless of where they are caught.

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, but does apply even to species without size/possession limits.

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.

Prohibited Species

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

- Atlantic sturgeon
- basking shark
- big eye sand tiger shark
- sand tiger shark
- shortnose sturgeon
- whale shark
- white shark
- See *Sharks* (page 12) for a list of prohibited shark species proposed for later in 2009

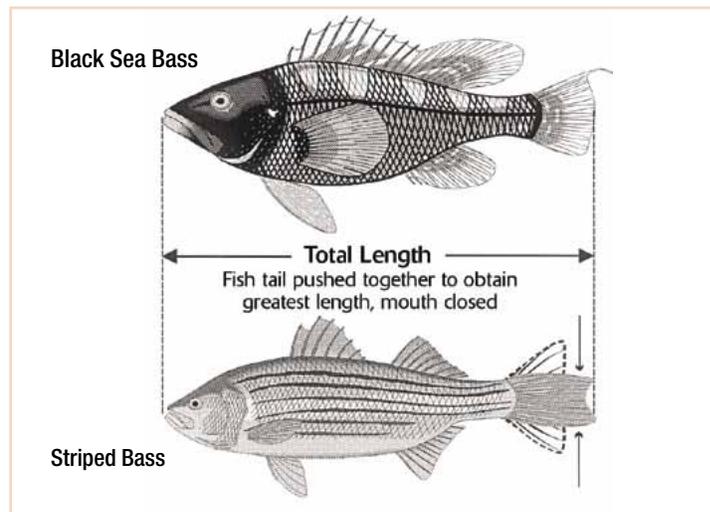
Sea Turtles & Marine Mammals

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

Finfish

Filleting

The filleting at sea of all fish with a size limit is prohibited. No parts of any fish caught on a previous fishing trip shall be in possession. Party boats may fillet fish



at sea if they obtain a Special Fillet Permit. Applications may be obtained from Fish and Wildlife's Bureau of Marine Fisheries. See *Summer Flounder*, page 12.

Black Sea Bass

The minimum size limit for black sea bass is **12.5 inches** measured along the midline from the snout to the end of the central portion of the tail, not to include the tail filaments. (See illustration above.) 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.

Black Drum

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

Proposed changes for black drum include a minimum size limit of 32 inches (total length) with a daily possession limit of two fish. The "no closed season" for black drum would continue. Go to Fish and Wildlife's Web site for the latest information or call the 24-hour "listen only" marine fish information line at (609) 292-2038.

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.

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. >

Striped Bass Closed Seasons

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

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

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

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

Striped Bass Bonus Program

The Striped Bass Bonus Program will continue this year, where anglers possessing a bonus permit may keep a third striper at 28 inches or greater.

The current allocation from the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission is 321,750 pounds to be distributed between individual anglers and party/charter boats. Should New Jersey exceed this quota, any overage would be subtracted from the following year's quota.

Application Process: Striped Bass Bonus Program permits are only available online. Go to WildlifeLicense.com/nj/, complete the application and immediately print one Bonus Permit (application fee, \$2). The permit is non-transferable and valid for the current calendar year. Only one permit can be used per day. Harvest reporting also must be online.

The party/charter boat segment of the program remains the same, with the applications available only by contacting Fish and Wildlife at (609) 748-2020. The party/charter boat bonus program is not online.

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

Note: Harvest information must be reported online.

Striped Bass Fishing Log: All participants receive a log with their Bonus Permit and are encouraged to report all striped bass fishing activity for the calendar year. Anglers now have the option to enter their striped bass fishing log online instead of mailing their paper fishing log. Go to NJFishandWildlife.com/bonusbas_log.htm.

Sharks

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

Under the proposed regulations changes, 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 sharks per vessel.

Proposed Atlantic Coastal Shark Changes: In response to the October 2008 adoption of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's (ASMFC) *Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Coastal Sharks*, New Jersey must implement new recreational and commercial management measures for Atlantic coastal sharks regarding prohibited species, size, season and possession limits plus commercial quotas. The ASMFC compliance requirements to be implemented in 2009 were developed to complement existing federal shark regulations (see 2009 *Federal Recreational Regulations table*, page 18). However, the following additional proposed measures are required:

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

* See page 18 footnote for species list defining small coastal, large coastal and pelagic sharks.

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

Recreational anglers should access the following National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Web site, http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/sharks/2008/Rec_shark_ID_placard_09_04_2008.pdf to view the publication *Sharks that can be legally retained by recreational anglers in the Atlantic Ocean, Caribbean Sea and Gulf of Mexico*, an excellent pictorial guide to identifying sharks that are legal to harvest.

Proposed prohibited Species to be adopted in 2009: Additional shark species proposed to be prohibited for possession upon regulation adoption later in 2009—Atlantic angel, bigeye sixgill, bigeye thresher, bignose, Caribbean reef, Caribbean sharpnose, dusky, Galapagos, longfin mako, narrowtooth, night, sandbar, sevengill, silky, sixgill and smalltail sharks.

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

Summer Flounder (Fluke)

The possession and minimum size limit for summer flounder is six fish at 18 inches with an open season from **May 23–Sept. 4**.

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

Tautog (Blackfish)

The minimum size limit for Tautog is 14 inches. There is a four fish possession limit from Jan. 1–April 30, a zero fish possession limit from May 1–July 15 (the season is closed), a one fish possession limit from July 16 through Nov. 15 and a six fish possession limit from Nov. 16–Dec. 31.

Weakfish (Gray & Spotted Seatrout)

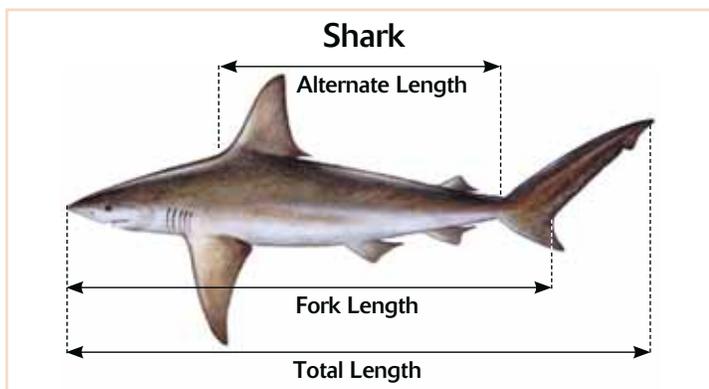
The current possession and minimum size limit for weakfish is six fish at least 13 inches in length.

Winter Flounder

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

Additional Marine Fishing Regulations

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



Federal Registry and State Marine Licensing Requirements

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) announced the adoption of the final rule to implement the national saltwater angler registry program. Anglers need not be registered until **Jan. 1, 2010**. For the latest information, visit CountMyFish.noaa.gov. See also the *Director's Message*, page 2.

Delaware Fishing License Requirement

A Delaware fishing license is now required for anglers aged 16 and over fishing the Delaware River and Delaware Bay between the upstream tip of Artificial Island and the Delaware-Pennsylvania state line. In that section of the river, the Delaware state boundary extends to the New Jersey shoreline. When fishing from shore in New Jersey along that section of the river, a Delaware fishing license is not required. Delaware fishing license information can be found at <http://www.fw.delaware.gov/Fisheries/Pages/NewFishingLicense.aspx>

New York License Requirement

Note: The governor of New York has proposed a saltwater fishing license for all recreational anglers fishing in New York state marine waters for the 2009 season. Check for updates on the status of this proposal.

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 with 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.



Take a friend fishing!
The memories will last a lifetime.

FREE Freshwater Fishing Days
— June 6 and 7, 2009 —

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.

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

MOTOR BOAT REGISTRATION

Motor Boat Title and Boating Operator Requirements

Registration

Most boats must be registered to operate on New Jersey waterways. All titled boats must be registered also. Any boat (including jet skis and non-titled watercraft), mechanically propelled (motorized), regardless of length, must be registered. Boats greater than 12 feet in length, regardless of propulsion means, must be titled and registered at an MVC office.

Boats and marine equipment which **need not** be registered:

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

Title

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

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

OPERATOR REQUIREMENTS

Motor Boat and Jet Ski Operator License

A motorboat/jet ski operator license is required to operate these on fresh, non-tidal waters such as lakes, creeks and rivers for those 16 years or older. All persons who wish to operate a power vessel must possess a Boating Safety Certificate by June 1, 2009. Visit the Motor Vehicle Commission Web site for more information.

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/about/site_index.htm

Boating safety courses

(800) 336-2628

BoatUS Foundation

www.BoatUS.com/courseline

For New Jersey State Police, boating laws clarification, call (609) 882-2000, or visit their Marine Services Bureau online at: www.nj.gov/lps/njsp/maritime/index.html

Crustaceans

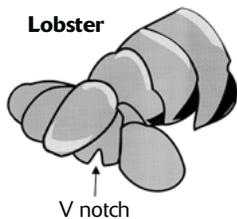
American Lobster

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 3³/₈ inches nor greater than 5¹/₄ 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.

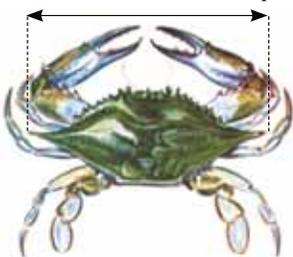
The use of spears, gigs, gaffs or other penetrating devices as a method of capture for lobsters is prohibited. A recreational lobster pot permit and fish pot license is required to use pots or traps to capture lobsters. For details call (609) 748-2020.

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 19 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.
- Minimum size for crabs that may be harvested (measured from point to point of shell) are as follows:
 - Peeler or shedder crab: 3 inches
 - Soft crab: 3¹/₂ inches
 - Hard crab: 4¹/₂ inches (possession)
- All female crabs with eggs attached and all undersized crabs shall be returned to the water immediately.
- Recreational trot lines shall not exceed 150 feet in length with a maximum of 25 baits.
- All pots and trot lines shall be marked with the identification number of the owner.
- All crab pots must be tended at least once every 72 hours.
- No floating line may be used on any crab pot or crab pot buoy.
- No crab pot shall be placed in any area that would obstruct or impede navigation or in any creek less than 50 feet wide.
- Only the owner, his agent or a law enforcement officer may raise or remove contents of a legally set fishing device.
- 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.
- No crabs may be harvested from the Newark Bay Complex. For more information, see Health Advisory on page 22.
- Crab Pot/Trot Line seasons:
 - Delaware Bay and tributaries: April 6–Dec. 4
 - All other waters: March 15–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.

- Fish and Wildlife will issue a non-commercial crab dredge license for the harvest of not more than one bushel of crabs per day during the crab dredge season. Crabs so taken may not be sold or offered for barter. There is a fee of \$15 for this non-commercial crab dredge license. See page 19 for details on purchasing a non-commercial crab dredge license.

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

Horseshoe Crabs

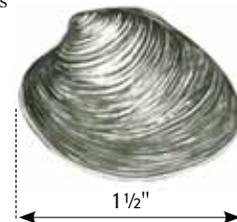
The harvest of horseshoe crabs is prohibited. Possession of horseshoe crabs is also prohibited except for those individuals holding a scientific collecting permit for research and education and those fishermen that can provide suitable documentation that the horseshoe crabs in their possession were harvested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

Mollusks

- All persons must be licensed to harvest any shellfish. See page 19. Shellfish means any species of benthic mollusks (except conch) including hard and soft clams, oysters, surf clams, bay scallops and mussels.
- It is illegal to harvest shellfish from condemned waters, even for bait purposes. It is also illegal to harvest shellfish including surf clams from beaches adjacent to water classified as condemned. Shellfish water classification charts are available from license agents, any state shellfish office or Marine Police (page 13) station. See page 19 for shellfish license information. Charts are updated annually.
- Shellfish harvesting is prohibited before sunrise, after sunset and on Sunday, except in the seasonally-approved areas of the Navesink and Shrewsbury rivers.
- Harvesting shellfish on public grounds is restricted to the use of hand implements.
- It is illegal to harvest shellfish from leased grounds. These grounds are delineated by stakes or buoys set by the lease holder. Charts of the leases may be examined at Fish and Wildlife's Nacote Creek or Delaware Bay shellfish offices during regular business hours. Invasion onto leased grounds is punishable by penalties up to \$3,000 and loss of all equipment.

Recreational Shellfish License

- No holder of any recreational shellfish license may take more than a total of 150 shellfish (in aggregate) per day. See page 19.
- A non-resident recreational shellfish license is valid only during the months of June, July, August and September.
- Anyone engaged in any shellfish harvesting activity with someone holding a commercial shellfish license must also possess their own commercial shellfish license.
- It is illegal to dredge shellfish. Hand implements are the only legal harvest methods.
- The minimum size of hard clams that may be harvested is 1¹/₂ inches in length. Clams less than 1¹/₂ inches in length must immediately be returned to the



bottom from which they were taken. Specific seasons, regulations and size limits exist for oyster beds in Great Bay, Delaware Bay, plus the Mullica, Great Egg Harbor and Tuckahoe rivers. Check with the nearest shellfish office (Nacote Creek or Delaware Bay) for these detailed regulations.

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



Commercial Shellfish License

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



2009 New Jersey 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 ^a	No Closed Season	16"	3
Black Sea Bass ^a	Jan. 1–Dec. 31	12.5"*	25
Bluefish	No Closed Season	None	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
Red Drum	No Closed Season	18"	1 not greater than 27"
River Herring	No Closed Season	None	35
Scup (Porgy)	Jan. 1–Feb. 28 July 1–Dec. 31	9"	50
Shad	No Closed Season	None	6
Shark ^{a,b} except prohibited species ^c	No Closed Season	48"	2 per vessel
Smooth Dogfish ^a	No Closed Season	None	No Limit
Spanish Mackerel	No Closed Season	14"	10
Striped Bass or Hybrid Striped Bass			
Delaware River & tributaries** (Calhoun St. bridge to Salem River & tributaries)	March 1–March 31 and June 1–Dec. 31	28"	2
Delaware River & tributaries** (upstream of Calhoun St. bridge)	March 1–Dec. 31		
Atlantic Ocean ^d (0–3 miles from shore)	No Closed Season		
Rivers, bay and estuaries	March 1–Dec. 31		
3–200 miles (federal waters)	Prohibited	–	0
Summer Flounder	May 23–Sept. 4	18"	6
Tautog	Jan. 1–April 30	14"	4
	May 1–July 15	–	0
	July 16–Nov. 15	14"	1
	Nov. 16–Dec. 31	14"	6
Weakfish	No Closed Season	13"	6
Winter Flounder	March 23–May 21	12"	10

Note: 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. See *Summer Flounder*, page 12.

Blue Crab			
peeler or shedder	No Closed Season ^e	3"	1 bushel
soft	No Closed Season ^e	3½"	
hard	No Closed Season ^e	4½"	
Lobster (carapace length)	No Closed Season	3¾"	6
Hard Clam (license required)	No Closed Season	1½"	150 clams

^a Regulation changes possible during 2009.

^b Not including dogfish; see description on page 12 under *Sharks*.

^c See page 11 for a list of *Prohibited Species*.

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

^e Unless using non-collapsible, Chesapeake-style crab pots. See sections on crab pots, pages 14 and 19.

* Excluding tail filaments. (See illustration, page 11.)

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

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Marine Species Identification



Striped Bass



Weakfish



Black Sea Bass



Bluefish



Northern Puffer



Tautog



Winter Flounder



**Summer Flounder
(Fluke)**



Atlantic Croaker



Black Drum



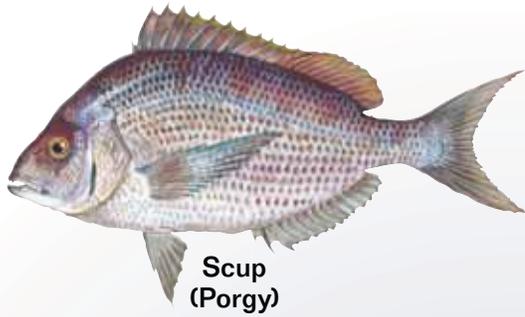
Hard Clam



Red Drum



Blue Crab



**Scup
(Porgy)**



Northern Searobin



White Perch



Northern Kingfish



Atlantic Bonito



Oyster Toadfish



Spanish Mackerel



American Shad



Atlantic Mackerel



Atlantic Cod



Smooth Dogfish



Spiny Dogfish



Sand Tiger Shark



Sandbar Shark

2009 Federal Recreational Regulations for Minimum Size, Possession Limits and Seasons

See *New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife Recreational Fishing Seasons Minimum Size and Possession Limits* (page 15) for species not included in these federal regulations. For federal regulation questions, please contact the National Marine Fisheries Service at (978) 281-9260, or go to www.nmfs.noaa.gov.

Species	Season	Minimum Size	Possession Limit (number per angler per day unless otherwise specified)	Notes
Striped Bass	Possession prohibited in federal waters (3–200 nm). See pages 11 and 15 for NJ waters.			
Dolphin (Mahi mahi)	Year round	None	10, not to exceed 60 per vessel, which ever is less — except on a charter or headboat, then 10 per paying passenger.	For current regulations refer to www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/ or call (978) 281-9260.
Marlin, White	Year round	66" lower jaw fork length	None	Billfish require Highly Migratory Species (HMS) permit when fishing in federal waters (3–200 nm). For permits refer to www.hmspermits.gov or call (888) 872-8862.
Marlin, Blue	Year round	99" lower jaw fork length	None	During any sanctioned billfish tournaments offering prize money, non-offset circle hooks are required for lures with natural bait or natural/artificial bait combos. Refer to www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/ or call (978) 281-9260.
Sailfish	Year round	63" lower jaw fork length	None	
Spearfish, Longbill	None	None	Prohibited	All non-tournament billfish landings must be reported to NMFS within 24 hours, either online at www.hmspermits.gov or by calling (800) 894-5528. For current regulations refer to www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/ or call (727) 824-5399.
Golden Tilefish	Year round	None	None	For current regulations, refer to www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/ or call (978) 281-9260.
Swordfish	Year round	47" lower jaw fork length	For anglers: 1 per person, no more than 4 per vessel per trip. For charter vessels: 1 per paying passenger, no more than 6 per vessel per trip. For headboat vessels: 1 per paying passenger, no more than 15 per vessel per trip.	Swordfish, Tuna and Sharks require an HMS permit when fishing in Federal Waters (3–200 nm). For permits, refer to www.hmspermits.gov or call (888) 872-8862.
Tuna, Albacore (Longfin)	Year round	None	None	
Tuna, Bigeye	Year round	27" curved fork length	None	All non-tournament swordfish landings must be reported to NMFS within 24 hours either online at www.hmspermits.gov or by calling (800) 894-5528.
Tuna, Bluefin	Jan 1–Dec 31, 2009 or until season is closed	27 to <47" curved fork length	1 per vessel per trip per day, but can vary through season	All recreational bluefin tuna landings must be reported to NMFS within 24 hours either online at www.hmspermits.gov or by calling (888) 872-8862. For current regulations refer to www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/ or call (301) 713-2347 for swordfish/sharks or (978) 281-9260 for tunas.
		47 to <73" curved fork length	1 per vessel per trip per day, but can vary through season	
		≥73 curved fork length	1 per vessel per year	
Tuna, Skipjack	Year round	None	None	
Tuna, Yellowfin	Year round	27" curved fork length	3 per person per trip	
Shark, Large Coastal*	Year round	>54", 4.5 ft, or 1.37m fork length	One Shark (of any species, except prohibited species) per vessel per trip; plus one Atlantic sharpnose shark per person per trip (no minimum size); plus one bonnethead shark per person per trip (no minimum size).	See below for list of shark groups which MAY be kept or MUST be released. Swordfish, tuna and sharks require an HMS permit when fishing in federal waters (3–200 nm). For permits, refer to www.hmspermits.gov or call (888) 872-8862. Recreational fishermen (those that do not have a limited access commercial shark permit) can not sell, barter or trade any Atlantic shark or shark pieces.
Shark, Small Coastal*				
Shark, Pelagic*				

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

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

SHELLFISH LICENSE INFORMATION

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

Prior to harvesting any shellfish, be certain to consult the Shellfish Growing Water Classification Charts published by DEP's Bureau of Marine Water Monitoring, available at any shellfish license agent, state shellfish offices, marine police station, online at <http://www.nj.gov/dep/bmw/waterclass.htm> or call the Bureau of Marine Water Monitoring at (609) 748-2000. This summer, shellfish licenses will be available for purchase online at WildlifeLicense.com/NJ/.

Shellfish License Fees

A statutory update changed the name, fee and scope of several shellfish licenses.

- **Resident recreational shellfish:** \$10
Harvest limit of 150 shellfish (in aggregate) per day. Sale of catch prohibited.
- **Non-resident recreational shellfish:** \$20
Harvest limit of 150 shellfish (in aggregate) per day. Sale of catch prohibited. License valid only during the months of June, July, August and September.
- **Juvenile recreational shellfish:** \$2
For persons under 14 years of age. Subject to same restrictions as resident or nonresident adult recreational license holders.
- **Resident commercial shellfish:** \$50
Unlimited harvest. Shellfish may be sold only to certified dealers.
- **Non-resident Commercial Shellfish:** \$250
Unlimited harvest. Shellfish may be sold to certified dealers only.
- **Senior citizen recreational shellfish license:** FREE (\$2 application fee)
NJ residents age 62 years or older. Harvest limit, 150 shellfish (in aggregate) per day. Sale of shellfish prohibited.
- **Disabled veterans:** Fish and Wildlife-certified disabled veterans are eligible for free shellfish license at any shellfish license agent location. For more information on how to become certified, call (908) 637-4125.

Crab licenses are now available at all agent locations:

Recreational Crab Pot/Trot Line Licenses and Non-Commercial Crab Dredge Licenses are now available for purchase online at: WildlifeLicense.com/nj/ or at any Fish and Wildlife-certified license agent including those license agents listed at right. For a current list of Fish and Wildlife-certified license agents, look in future hunting issues of the New Jersey Fish & Wildlife Digest or go to NJFishandWildlife.com/agentlst.htm.

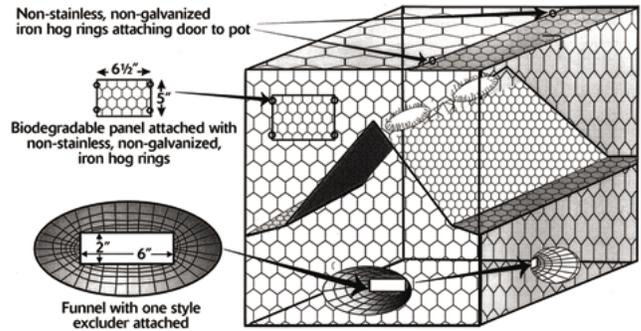
- **Recreational crab pot/trot line license:** \$2
Harvest limit of one bushel per day. Refer to the shellfish regulations on page 14 for all recreational crabbing regulations.
- **Non-commercial crab dredge license:** \$15
Harvest limit of one bushel per day during the crab dredge season. Refer to the crab regulations on page 14 for all recreational crabbing regulations.

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-inch high by 6-inch wide and securely fastened inside each funnel entrance. Biodegradable panels must measure at least 6½-inch wide by 5-inch high and be

Chesapeake-Style Crab Pot



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 below. 

SHELLFISH AND NON-COMMERCIAL CRAB POT LICENSE AGENTS (For over-the-counter sales only)

ATLANTIC COUNTY

Egg Harbor True Value, 208 N. Philadelphia Ave., Egg Harbor City .. (609) 965-0815
Fish Finder Marina, 3645 Atlantic-Brigantine Blvd., Brigantine (609) 457-5384
Main Street Hardware, 6016 Main St., Mays Landing (609) 625-4941
NJ Div. Fish and Wildlife, 360 Rt. 9 N (milepost 51) (609) 748-2021
Zeus Sporting Goods, 6679 Black Horse Pike, Egg Harbor Twp..... (609) 646-1668

CAMDEN COUNTY

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

CAPE MAY COUNTY

Avalon Hodge Podge, 2389 Ocean Dr., Avalon (609) 967-3274
Beaver Dam Boat Rentals, 514 Old Beaver Dam Rd., Newport (856) 447-3633
Belleplain Supply, 346 Handmill Rd., Belleplain (609) 861-2345
Budd's Bait & Tackle, 109 Fullingmill Rd., Villas (609) 886-6935
Capt. Tate's Tackle Box, 450 No. Route 47, Cape May CH (609) 861-4001
City of Ocean City, 861 Asbury Ave., Ocean City (609) 525-9328
Just Sports, 21 W. Mechanic St., Cape May CH (609) 465-6171
Upper Township, 2100 Tuckahoe Rd., Tuckahoe (609) 628-2805
Wal*Mart, 3159 Rt. 9S, Rio Grande (609) 465-7760

CUMBERLAND COUNTY

Big Daddy's Sport Haven, 595 Sherman Ave., Millville (856) 453-9009
Delaware Bay Office, 1672 E. Buckshutem Rd., Millville (856) 785-0730
Shire Products, 389 S. Lincoln Ave., Vineland (856) 692-3646

GLOUCESTER COUNTY

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

MERCER COUNTY

Brunswick Sports, 1177 Brunswick Ave., Trenton (609) 392-4444

MIDDLESEX COUNTY

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

MONMOUTH COUNTY

Brielle Tackle, 800 Ashley Ave., Brielle (732) 528-5720
L & H Woods and Water, 2045 Rt. 35, Wall (732) 282-1812
T & A Tackle and Bait, 369 Rt. 36, Port Monmouth (732) 787-3853

OCEAN COUNTY

American Sportsman, 857 Mill Creek Rd., Manahawkin (609) 597-4104
Bob Kislis's, 1214 Rt. 37 East, Toms River (732) 929-9300
Chumbucket, 381 Rt. 9, West Creek (609) 294-2500
Downes Bait & Tackle, 287 Brennan Concourse, Bayville (732) 269-0137
Fish Bonz Bait & Tackle, 103 Lacey Rd., Forked River (609) 971-2928
Grizz's Forked River B & T, 232 N. Main St., Forked River (609) 693-9298
Lacey Marine, 308 Rt. 9, So., Forked River (609) 693-0151
L & H Woods and Water, 403 Rt. 9, Waretown (609) 242-1812
Pell's Fish & Sport Shop, 335 Mantoloking Rd., Bricktown (732) 477-2121
Surf City Bait & Tackle, 317 Long Beach Blvd., Surf City (609) 494-2333
Tip's Hardware, 218 Main St., West Creek (609) 296-3192

SOMERSET COUNTY

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

JERSEY SHARKING

By Jason Hearon, Fisheries Biologist



Meb Hearon

(Above) **Boat Side Blue** Jason Hearon leads a blue shark and releases it to swim another day. (Below) **Fish On!** Dave Appenzeller from Goshen, shark fishing the Misty Blue Wreck in mid June. A blue shark took the bait and after a short battle was boat side.

The waters off New Jersey offer a variety of opportunities for shark fishing. Sharks can be found from the shallow coastal bays to the deep, 100-fathom line of the Continental Shelf. A surprising number of shark species stay well inshore, making them accessible to small boats and surf fishermen offering good action with big fish. The more popular offshore species are usually targeted along the 20-fathom line and beyond. Wherever you choose to play—offshore or inshore—the lure of big sharks and excitement of burning off line at lightning speed will surely get your blood pumping!

Prime shark season in New Jersey gets under way in late May or early June—usually on the heels of the bluefish arrival. Blue shark are the first species to appear when water temperatures hit the mid-60s. By late spring, many anglers are chomping at the bit for the makos to make their appearance. The mako is considered an “extreme” game fish because of its ability to display adrenalin-raising, high-flying leaps up to 15 feet out of the water! Tiger, thresher, bull, hammerhead and other sharks also begin to appear around the same time.

Typically, a shark hunter's game plan is to drift over rapidly changing bottom contours (e.g., drop offs, ridges, trenches) or structure. These types of habitat are known to draw baitfish and the predators that eat them. The plan starts to materialize before the boat leaves the dock; a weather report containing the wind direction is the key ingredient. The strategy is to start the drift on the upwind side of the structure or bottom to be fished so that the wind blows the boat and chum slick across the targeted area.

The most important technique to successfully attract these toothy predators is to create a good chum slick. Chum can be made at home from ground fish such as bunker or mackerel, or purchased frozen from your local bait shop. Use at least two, 4- to 5-gallon buckets of chum for a four- or five-hour drift. There are multiple ways to disperse frozen chum in the water, but the easiest is to cut holes in the bucket, tie it to a cleat and drop it overboard. As the chum defrosts it disperses into the water column. Chum is quite oily, leaving a slick on the water surface and a scent in the

water designed to entice an apex predator straight to your boat. There's an eerie feeling the first time a big shark swims up your slick.

Variable ocean and wind conditions may require more advanced techniques to establish an effective slick, such as power drifting, sea anchors or adding weights. The same technique works when anchoring instead of drifting. Anchor the vessel on the upwind side of the structure or bottom to be fished. The wind blows the chum slick across the target area. Whatever method you choose, always remember to chum heavily.

Most mid-Atlantic shark species can be taken on 30- to 50-pound tackle such as 3/0 to 6/0 reels. Either star or lever-drag style reels are adequate on a stiff stand-up style rod. Rods are fished in rod holders with the reel left in “free spool,” clickers on.

Serious sharkers agree that live bluefish—swimming and splashing—generate an irresistible attraction to a shark. Fresh or fresh frozen bluefish, bluefish fillets, mackerel, mackerel fillets, tuna filets, bunker or small bonito will serve well to entice a toothy monster to strike. Baits can be livened up with the addition of skirts of various colors and size to help create a more realistic, live appearance. It is extremely important to keep baits fresh, as fillet baits will get “washed out” quickly and lose their effectiveness.

Wire leaders are essential due to the abrasiveness of shark skin, not to mention the mouth full of machete-like teeth that can wreak havoc on terminal tackle. Use 10 to 15 feet of 300-pound test braided cable or 150 to 250-pound test single-strand wire. Attach an 8/0 to 12/0 razor-sharp hook to the end of the leader and you are ready for battle. The hook should be size-appropriate for the bait. Larger hooks are required on whole fish while smaller hooks are better suited for fillets.

The number of lines that can be fished effectively without tangles or other problems is determined by the boat size and weather conditions. Since it is important to present baits



Jason Hearon

throughout the water column, follow this example for a very effective technique. Let's assume three lines are put to work. Fish the first line approximately 200 feet behind the boat with a float. The float should be set to let the baitfish close to the bottom and may require weight to achieve this result. Fish the second line approximately 100 feet from the boat with a float set half the distance to the bottom. The third line should be fished about 50 feet from the boat without a float (free floating) and should be suspended 10 to 15 feet below the surface. Floats of various styles are available at any bait shop. All will work well, but some require the use of rubber bands to secure the line to the float. It's always good to have one rod rigged and ready to use as a pitch bait for the shark that swims undaunted right up the slick and latches on to the chum bucket.

A screaming clicker will announce a shark has taken a bait as line peels off of the reel. Don't be anxious to set the hook; give the fish time to take the bait fully. When a big shark makes its first run, hold on. Depending on the size of the shark, you may be in for a battle lasting several hours. While the battle ensues, other anglers should begin clearing lines and begin preparing to bring the shark aboard. Remember—safety first at this point in the battle.

Whether you practice "catch and release" or plan to deliver the coup de grace, it is dangerous to bring a "hot" fish to the boat, so make sure the shark is exhausted. If the shark will be hitching a ride home with you for a dinner date, other anglers should be standing by to gaff and tail rope the beast. The shark should be stretched out and hung from a cleat were you can make sure it is deceased. Never bring a shark aboard until you are certain it is dead.

A Highly Migratory Species (HMS) angling category permit is required to fish recreationally for any HMS-managed species including Atlantic tuna, shark, swordfish and billfish, available from the National Marine Fisheries Service at www.hmspermits.gov/. The recreational shark fishery is managed using bag limits, minimum size requirements and landing requirements (e.g., sharks must be landed with head and fins attached). Additionally, the possession of 19 species of sharks is prohibited. See regulations for *Sharks*, page 12. Then, get out and experience the excitement of shark fishing first-hand this spring! 



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CLEAN GREEN - Use phosphate-free, biodegradable and non-toxic cleansers.

DON'T TOP OFF YOUR TANK - Fill to only 90% of the tank's capacity.

TAKE CARE WITH SPRING COMMISSIONING - Place oil absorbent pads under exhausts and in bilge to prevent oily waste discharge.

CLEAN UP AT THE END OF THE DAY - Stash your trash and recycle used oil, antifreeze and batteries.

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Fish Smart, Eat Smart

Eating Fish And Crabs Caught In New Jersey Waters

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. Fish consumption advisories have been adopted to guide citizens on safe consumption practices.

The current list of fish consumption advisories consists of state-wide, regional and water body-specific warnings for a variety of fish species and fish consumers. The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the Department of Health and Senior Services have prepared literature and a new Web site to help you make informed choices about which fish to eat and how to reduce your exposure to these harmful chemicals.

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

The new FishSmartEatSmartNJ.org is a user-friendly site designed to help you decide what fish are best for you to consume. The Fish Smart-Eat Smart Fish Advisory Web site 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 shows the water body location, fish species and any advisories that apply. This feature makes it easy to find current fish consumption advisories for the specific waterbody in which you fish.

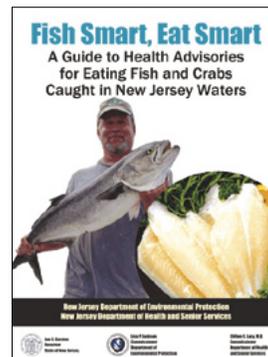
To reduce exposure to harmful chemical contaminants when preparing and eating the fish species taken from the identified waters, it is essential to follow the guidelines provided. The DEP encourages you to consult the Fish Smart-Eat Smart Fish Advisory Guide or www.FishSmartEatSmartNJ.org when making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

The *Fish Smart-Eat Smart 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 Guide* also includes Web site links to Pennsylvania, Delaware and New York for information about fish consumption advisories for shared waters.

The 2009 updates to the New Jersey Marine Fish Consumption Advisories includes waterway-specific advisories for summer flounder (fluke), white perch, white catfish, weakfish and blue crabs.

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

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



New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection
Public Access Center
(609) 777-DEP4

Division of Science, Research and Technology
(609) 984-6070
www.state.nj.us/dep/dsr/njmainfish.htm

New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services
Consumer and Environmental Health
(609) 588-3123 or (609) 777-3373

ACCESSIBILITY ■ **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.

EMAIL LISTS ■ **Get On The Lists!**

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

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

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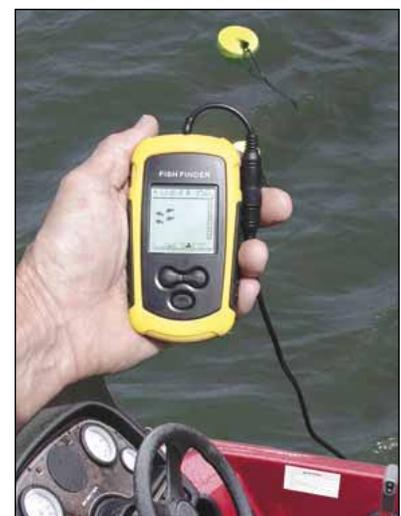
www.ngcsports.com/gear.

Or mail your name, address and check (or cc number and exp. date) to NGC Sports (Dept FS-37), 60 Church Street, Yalesville CT 06492. S/h \$9.00. CT add 6% sales tax.

Product has a battery-saving mode. Works from 2 to 328 feet (Web site has more scientific fishing equipment not in stores.)

FS-2

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Requires four AAA batteries (not included).

Skillful Angler Awards Program



The Skillful Angler Awards Program is designed to supplement the New Jersey Record Fish Program. It is comprised of 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. Well-composed, high resolution photos may be selected for printing in future *Digests*.

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 authorized Fish and Wildlife fisheries biologists.

Learn more online at NJFishandWildlife.com/skflang.htm.

Minimum Entry Requirements:

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

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

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).

I have enclosed a clear, side-view photo.

Applicant's Signature _____ Date _____

* 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
Pequest Natural Resource Education Center
605 Pequest Rd.
Oxford, NJ 07863

New Jersey State Record Marine Sport Fish

New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife's Record Fish Program honors anglers who catch the largest of select species of freshwater and saltwater fish. Record size is based on weight alone; there are no line classes.

In 2006, revisions were made to the New Jersey State Record Fish Program for both freshwater and saltwater species. Currently there are 61 marine species eligible for entry into the program.

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

Eleven species are now retired from the list of program-eligible fish, but remain on a separate list posted on Fish and Wildlife's Web site. One historical catch is also retired and posted on the list. In addition, the historical record for northern kingfish was removed as the current entry surpassed it by 3 ounces.

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

Other changes include a new entry deadline—applications must now be submitted no later than one month after the date of catch—and the triggerfish category is now defined as gray triggerfish. All other program rules still apply.

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

New Jersey State Marine 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
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	8½" pt. to pt.		1995	William Dool	Manahawkin
	8½" pt. to pt.		2006	Martin Winnicki	Brick
Croaker, Atlantic	5	8	1981	Frederick Brown	Delaware Bay
*Cunner	2	9	2006	Nick Honachefsky	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	109	0	2008	Nick Henry	Delaware Bay
Drum, red	55	0	1985	Daniel Yanino	Great Bay
Eel, American	9	13	1988	Warren Campbell	Atlantic City
Fluke	19	12	1953	Walter Lubin	Off Cape May
Flounder, winter	5	11	1993	Jimmy Swanson	Off Barnegat Light

Species	Lbs.	Oz.	Year	Angler	Where Caught
Hake, white	41	7	1989	Wayne Eble	Off Barnegat Light
Kingfish, Northern	2	8	2004	Chester Urbanski	Barnegat Bay
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, king	54	0	1998	Fernando Alfaiate	Off Cape May
*Mackerel, Spanish	9	12	1990	Donald Kohler	Off Cape May
Marlin, blue	1,046	0	1986	Phil Infantolino	Hudson Canyon
Marlin, white	137	8	1980	Mike Marchell	Hudson Canyon
Perch, white	2	12	1998	Michael King	Little Beach Creek
*Pollock	46	7	1975	John Holton	Off Brielle
Porgy	5	14	1976	Victor Rone	Delaware Bay
Sailfish	43	4	2006	Dr. John Tallia	Linden Kohl Canyon
Seatroun, 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, 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
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	0	13	2003	Robert Belsky, Jr.	Little Sheepshead Creek
*Striped Bass	78	8	1982	Al McReynolds	Atlantic City
Swordfish	530	0	1964	Edmund Levitt	Wilmington Canyon
*Tautog	25	0	1998	Anthony Monica	Off Ocean City
Tilefish, golden	55	4	2006	Keith Karl	Tom's Canyon
Tilefish, gray	18	7	2007	Joseph Sanzone	Tom's Canyon
Triggerfish, gray	5	12	2005	Ronald Pires	High Bar Harbor
Tuna, albacore	77	15	1984	Dr. S. Scannapiego	Spencer Canyon
Tuna, big-eye	364	14	1984	George Krenick	Hudson Canyon
Tuna, bluefin	1,030	6	1981	Royal Parsons	Off Pt. Pleasant
Tuna, skipjack	13	4	1999	Craig Eberbach	Wilmington Canyon
Tuna, yellowfin	290	0	1980	Wayne Brinkerhoff	Hudson Canyon
Tunny, little	24	15	1977	Mark Niemczyk	Off Sea Bright
Wahoo	123	12	1992	Robert Carr	28-Mile Wreck
Weakfish	18	8	1986	Karl Jones	Delaware Bay
Whiting (silver hake)				Vacant (Minimum Weight 2.5 lbs.)	

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

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

GOVERNOR'S SURF FISHING TOURNAMENT

By Karen Leskie, Wildlife Technician **Get Outside and Enjoy One of New Jersey's Natural Resources**

The 18th Annual Governor's Surf Fishing Tournament will be held Sunday, Oct. 4, 2009. Once again anglers from New Jersey and neighboring states will descend upon the beaches of Island Beach State Park in hopes of catching the longest fish of the day. The tournament aims to encourage youngsters and adults to learn more about surf fishing while taking advantage of a great family activity. Funds raised by the tournament go toward marine resource conservation and education.

Despite a slow day of fishing, 2008 participants enjoyed a sunny fall Tournament day. Contestants caught bluefish, blackfish and—with a special exemption from the New Jersey Marine Fish Council—fluke. A total of thirteen prizes were awarded in categories for children, teens and adults. However, the grand prize went to Richard Abdill of Delran, with a 21-inch fluke. This was the first year a fluke has ever won the Governor's Cup. New Jersey DEP's

Division of Fish and Wildlife Director Dave Chanda and Jersey Coast Anglers Association President John Toth congratulated Mr. Abdill with a plaque and two rod-and-reel combinations. Also, Mr. Abdill's name has been engraved on the Governor's Cup which is on permanent display at Island Beach State Park.

Since its inception, the tournament has generated more than \$120,000 for various marine education and restoration efforts, construction of access ramps for disabled saltwater anglers, surf fishing instruction programs and equipment, specialized wheel chairs that provide beach access to the disabled and elderly, plus the purchase of the first mobile automatic heart defibrillator for use at Island Beach State Park.

For more information about the Governor's Surf Fishing Tournament or to receive a registration form, visit NJFishandWildlife.com/gsft.htm or call (609) 748-4347.

New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife and the Division of Parks and Forestry (along with our co-sponsors: NJ State Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs, Jersey Coast Anglers Association and NJ Beach Buggy Association) would like to thank the following organizations for contributing to the success of the 17th Annual Governor's Surf Fishing Tournament in 2008:

- Cape May-Lewes Ferry
- Eagle Claw Fishing Tackle Company
- Legal Limits Company
- Trenton Devils
- COLEMAN—The Outdoor Company
- Grumpy's Bait and Tackle
- Manns Bait Company
- Tru-Turn, Inc.
- DeLorme Mapping
- Jenkinsons' Aquarium
- Sportsman's Center
- Wright & McGill Company
- Stanley Jigs, Inc.

A special thanks to Kathy Johnston of Kathy Johnston Custom Artwork for creating the annual tournament t-shirt design. Also thanks to Cannon Gear for printing the t-shirts.

Photo: Daniel E. Beards



If you care about:

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

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- Stay informed on issues affecting NJ sportsmen and sportswomen
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- ___ \$20 Monthly newspaper only

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 Join online at
www.njsfsc.org

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.

Angler, boater purchases fuel success of sport fish restoration projects

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 \$3.4 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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Importance of Forage Fish in the Delaware River

Jennifer Pyle, Fisheries Technician

Since 1980, New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's Division of Fish and Wildlife's Bureau of Marine Fisheries has conducted a beach seine survey for striped bass on the Delaware River. Data collected during this survey provides biologists with information on the population status of many species, not just stripers. For more details on this survey, read *New Jersey's Priceless Resource—Studying the Delaware River* on our Web site www.NJFishandWildlife.com/artdelstudy08.htm.

Many species captured during the survey are forage fish, commonly considered as bait fish. Their schooling behavior, size and abundance make them a significant food source for predator species including striped bass, bluefish, weakfish and white perch. These predators are important species recreationally, commercially as well as economically.

As a major food source for predator species, forage fish provide the sustenance necessary for predators to reach reproductive

maturity. Forage species produce abundant offspring, enough to sustain both recreational and commercial fishermen and the natural predators that inhabit the ocean. Without healthy forage fish populations, the resulting predator-prey imbalance could become critical to a particular species.

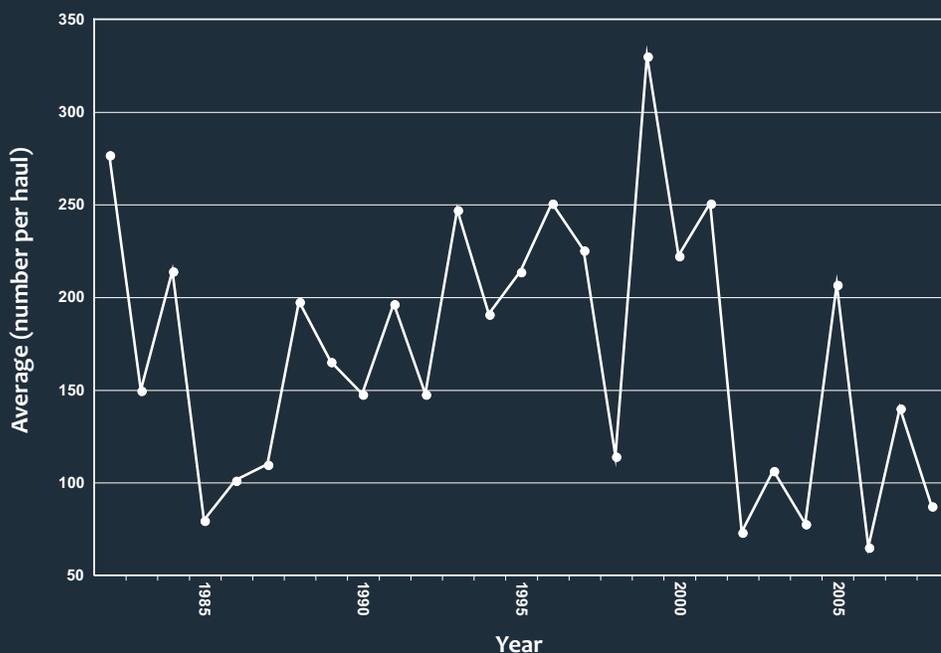
In contrast, predators have an impact on all forage species populations. Since every fish consumed by a predator reduces the population, collectively, predators can prevent a single forage fish species from becoming dominant by lowering both survival and reproductive rates of the prey. Predation assures a "survival of the fittest" scenario. Without predation, certain forage species could overrun other fish populations. The predator-prey relationship is vital to maintain a balance among species.

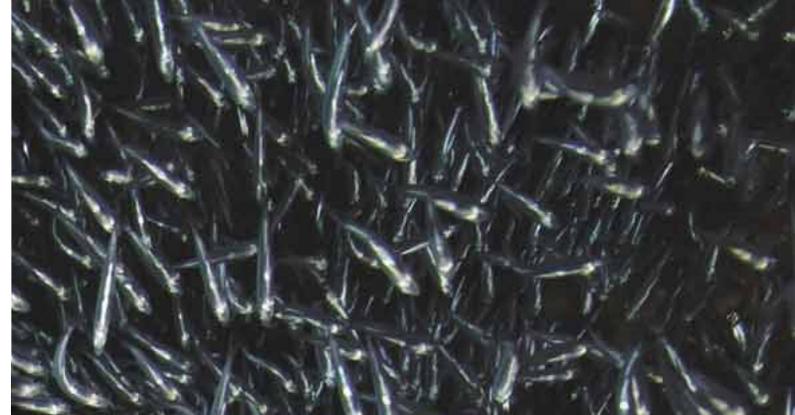
The Delaware River beach seine survey provides an inventory of fish while most are still juveniles. The methodology and equipment used are designed to catch smaller fish on their nursery grounds close to the shoreline. Individual fish

of each species are counted so biologists can assess the populations. Fish and Wildlife developed a forage fish index for the Delaware River which includes the following species: alewife, American shad, Atlantic silverside, Atlantic menhaden, banded killifish, bay anchovy, blueback herring, Eastern silvery minnow, gizzard shad, mummichog, spot and spottail shiners.

Over the years, past surveys showed that forage fish comprised more than 71 percent of the total catch. As with most surveys, the abundance of forage fish populations within the Delaware River can vary annually. Since 1985, the forage fish index increased steadily through 1999, peaking with an average of 330 fish per haul (see figure). Water quality improvements were most likely the driving force behind this increase, especially for anadromous

Delaware River Forage Fish — Averages by Year





species such as shad and river herring. Not all species increased however. For example, while the forage fish *index* increased through 1999, Atlantic silverside *catches* peaked in 1993 (25 fish per haul) and have been declining ever since.

During years of severe flooding (2006) and drought (1998, 2002), total catches were lower than normal. During a flood year, there is an influx of fresh water causing a drop both in salinity and water temperature. Species that prefer saltier water will move out of the sampling area which will lower the forage fish index. During drought years there is no fresh water influx; salinity and water temperature both rise. As salinity increases, fish retreat into streams and tributaries where salt concentrations are lower. Likewise, most fish caught during a beach seine survey for striped bass are avoiding areas where water is too warm. For these reasons, the forage fish index in 2006 was the lowest average ever—at only 71 fish per haul.

The index has declined in recent years; currently, forage fish numbers in the Delaware River are at a similar level to those of the mid to late 1980s. Biologists are concerned, because the lack of forage fish is a signal that something is out-of-balance in the Delaware River. Of particular concern in New Jersey is the decline of the bay anchovy.

Typically one of the most abundant species in the Delaware estuary, the bay anchovy is a primary food source for young weakfish, bluefish and striped bass. The average number of bay anchovy caught per seine haul has been declining since 1997. During that year, catches averaged 105 fish per haul. From 1998 to 2001, average bay anchovy catches ranged from 28 to 87 fish per haul. Since 2001, there have been no averages greater than 15 fish per haul. Future effects from this serious decrease are not yet fully understood, but the recent decline in some predatory species such as weakfish may be a result of this food chain imbalance.

The Delaware River seine survey demonstrates that forage species are the backbone of the survey's total catch. As an essential tool for biologists to monitor species trends, this survey provides vital information on which to base smart fisheries management decisions. 

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NJFishandWildlife.com/ensp/rprtform.htm

Your sightings will provide valuable information on New Jersey's marine species of conservation concern.



Throw Back That Short Fish—Unharmmed!

By Conservation Officer Dominick Fresco

**“Officer, that fish wasn’t going to live anyway.”
“The fish swallowed my \$5 lure. Darned thing died when I tried to get it back, so I just kept the fish.”**

All too common, these excuses are heard daily by New Jersey Conservation Officers from the Marine Enforcement Unit when inspecting anglers who possess illegal or “short” marine fish. But be advised that COs rely on sure-fire techniques when it comes to short fish: state-issued fish measuring board. Either the fish is of legal size, or it’s not.

To release sublegal fish, follow these tips for returning hooked fish back to the water unharmmed.

The main causes of hooking mortality in fish are stress and wounding. Fish fighting after they are hooked is a major stressor. More physiological stress results from the change in temperature or pressure as fish are reeled up from depths greater than 40 feet. An outward sign of the adverse effects of the rapidly decreasing water pressure surrounding the fish during retrieval is a distended air bladder protruding from the fishes’ mouth. Of course, there’s also wounding from the hook. The degree of wounding depends on the location of the hook; gill- or gut-hooked fish have a greater possibility of death.

Catch and Release Guidelines

Plan—in advance—your strategy for releasing hooked fish, especially species with season or size restrictions. On lures, replace treble hooks with single hooks and consider pinching barbs. Try using non-offset circle hooks when fishing with bait. Use properly-sized equipment for the targeted fish species to limit time and effort spent on fighting fish. Use a slower retrieve when fishing in depths greater than 40 feet, such as offshore wreck fishing.

Once the decision is made to release, attempt to keep the fish in the water while using needle-nose pliers or a de-hooking device to extract the hook. If the fish is gill- or gut-hooked, cut the line as close to the hook as possible. Studies show the hook will release within about 120 days. Avoid netting the fish. If a



net must be used, neoprene nets cause less damage to the protective slime layer covering the fish, a layer which guards against infection.

When leaving the fish in the water is not possible, keep your hands wet at all times (less damage to the slime layer) and minimize handling—particularly the gills and soft belly. Anglers often hold fish behind the gills while de-hooking. This can be problematic, especially for flounders whose internal organs (liver, heart and stomach) are located in this small region of the body and are particularly susceptible to injury. For these fish, pinch between your thumb and fingers on top and bottom sides just behind the eyes, flattening the dorsal fin to hold the body securely.

Avoid placing fish on hard surfaces. Use on an old piece of foam cushion and place a wet rag or gloved hand over the fish’s eye. This action can subdue even the most unruly bluefish or tuna.

Revive First

As quickly as possible return the fish to the water and gently rock it back and forth several times, making water flow through the gills. To assist reviving fish (saltwater ONLY) whose air bladder is distended and protruding from the mouth the best apparatus is a hypodermic syringe with the plunger removed.

(Or purchase the Florida SeaGrant-approved venting tool kit from major sporting goods retailers.) The instrument used must be hollow in order for gases to escape and is inserted at a 45 degree angle near the fourth or fifth spine at the base of the pectoral fin. If the bloated condition is severe, gentle pressure can be applied to the abdominal wall. The venting tool should be cleaned after each use (bleach or alcohol). As for all fish, be sure to release it—*always head-first*—into the water.

These catch-and-release techniques are the only resolve anglers have when sub-legal fish are caught. If you possess illegal fish and are inspected by a Conservation Officer, be truthful and cooperative. But don’t put yourself in that situation; the best approach is to immediately release hooked fish unharmmed.

PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE ■

The following publications are available by writing:

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

Shellfish Growing Waters Classification Charts

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

New Jersey Boaters Guide

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

New Jersey Pumpout Directory (free waterproof map)

Write to the Nacote Creek address above.

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

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

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