Shore to Please: Marine Fisheries Outreach and Education Efforts
By: Jennifer Pyle, Senior Biologist, Marine Fisheries and Karen Byrne, Senior Biologist, Education

Community Outreach on Marine Resources

Biologists have reached out to local schools, environmental groups, boat shows, outdoor sporting events, fishing clubs, youth organizations and other audiences that enjoy the marine waters of the Jersey shore. Since 2012, Marine Fisheries staff has attended more than 20 events, most of which are held annually.

At an Earth Day event for an elementary school, our Marine Fisheries staff captured the students’ attention about the importance of protecting wildlife in local waterways through smart recycling practices. School activities are adjusted to the age and curriculum of the students. Students had fun participating in a role-playing activity of saltmarsh species interactions as part of a food chain and learned about coastal predator-prey relationships.

Following a discussion about different marine resource-related education and career options with a group of high school marine science students, staff led four, laboratory-like activities: measuring water quality samples, counting horseshoe crabs, collecting biological data from American eels and aging fish by assessing their scales and otoliths, a structure in the inner ear of vertebrates.

Regional boat shows and fishing clubs are great venues for biologists to highlight their research and connect to the public about hot topics in the fishing industry. These are also great forums to teach people how fisheries research influences commercial and recreational fishing regulations. With audiences primarily made up of active anglers, staff teach about the effects of barotrauma and the different tools that can be used to minimize damage to live fish. Safe fish handling techniques are just one part of reducing the mortality rates of fish populations.

Green Eggs and Sand in Delaware Bay

In Cape May County, New Jersey, a program is offered for educators interested in teaching their students about the importance of horseshoe crabs. The Green Eggs and Sand workshop takes place on the Delaware Bay, pairing participants with experts in the field as well as getting to the beach to witness the ancient ritual of the horseshoe crabs spawning.

Green Eggs and Sand is a tri-state (Delaware, Maryland and New Jersey) curriculum with activities about the horseshoe crab, its relationship to shorebirds and humans plus how the species is managed. While the workshop is offered only once a year during horseshoe crab spawning season, teachers who attend the workshop can teach about horseshoe crabs all year long.

In 2016, the marine education program partnered with The Wetlands Institute to launch the pilot program of Horseshoe Crabs in the Classroom. Teachers set up a classroom aquarium keeping juvenile horseshoe crabs for an entire school year. Students were involved by learning about water quality importance for horseshoe crabs, while teachers incorporated activities from the Green Eggs and Sand curriculum throughout the school year. This popular and successful program continues to be offered.

Barnegat Bay’s Sedge Island

Marine education takes center-stage at New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife’s Sedge Island Natural Resource Education Center. Located off Island Beach State Park in Barnegat Bay, the converted duck hunting lodge offers residential programs for school groups, summer camps, educators and other users of the resource. The Center is completely off-grid, creating the perfect backdrop for teaching the importance of conservation.

Participants learn about the wise use of natural resources through something as simple as turning a light off when you’re not in the room (the facility is solar-powered) to deciding how many clams to keep for today’s dinner. Living on an island, participants are completely immersed in the salt marsh environment, allowing them to connect with nature by fishing at sunrise or watching the magic of bioluminescent comb jellies at night from the dock.

Fish and Wildlife’s marine resource education programs demonstrate the full circle of a food web starting with the importance of submerged aquatic vegetation as habitat—by exploring eelgrass beds with a seine net—then ending with the importance of fishing regulations and an explanation of why certain fish are kept for dinner but not others. The program has participants learn about water quality through shellfish biology, as well as traditional water quality tests.

Marsh walks give participants a chance to understand the salt tolerance of plants and relate this to the impact of sea level rise on New Jersey’s marshes.

Participants departing Sedge Island leave with a deeper understanding of New Jersey’s marine environment, with real-life changes they can make in their life to help conserve the natural resources they explored in the program at Sedge Island.

See page 31 for more details about Sedge Island Natural Resource Education Center programs.

A WILD Expo

Did you visit with us at New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife’s WILD Outdoor Expo? There—and at a growing number of special events—the Marine Fisheries Administration (Marine Fisheries) offers an educational and interactive marine resources display including live specimens of local fish, touchable beach finds, useful promotional giveaways and handouts. In addition, a variety of other marine-related treasures are provided along with videos and posters promoting the real value of fisheries surveys and data collection. Based on the popularity and success at select events, Marine Fisheries is expanding our outreach to a greater variety of events statewide.
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Getting Involved

Do you have an upcoming special event or a classroom full of students interested in learning about New Jersey’s marine resources? Are you part of a fishing club looking to learn more about resource management strategies behind marine fish regulations? Are you a curious youth who would love to experience a guided exploration of salt marsh life in our coastal bays? Are you an educator whose students would be intrigued to learn about the fascinating, primitive and highly important horseshoe crab? New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife’s biologists are ready to present our programs for your group.

To invite the Marine Fisheries staff to visit your school, group or outreach event, contact Jen Pyle at (Marine Fisheries, Jennifer.Pyle@dep.nj.gov) or Jenny Tomko (Shellfisheries, Jenny.Tomko@dep.nj.gov) or call at (609) 748-2020.

For more information about Sedge Island programs or the Green Eggs and Sand Workshop, contact Karen Byrne at Karen.Byrne@dep.nj.gov or (609) 748-4347.

Marine Fisheries: Recreational Surveys

Make Each Fishing Trip Count

Have you been intercepted yet? The Access Point Angler Intercept Survey (APAIS) is in its 3rd year of being conducted by New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife’s Marine Fisheries personnel. You may see our interviewers at marine public access fishing sites throughout New Jersey. The survey targets marine recreational anglers to obtain information about fishing effort, catch and participation. The more fishing catch data collected, the more successful this survey becomes for estimating overall catch, a crucial data component on which fisheries managers depend.

Along with increased outreach at public events, our Marine Fisheries staff are offering to talk with fishing clubs/groups about the importance of the APAIS. We rely heavily on our valued anglers, creating a joint venture to preserve New Jersey’s natural resources. Contact Maryellen Gordon at (609) 748-2020 for us to come to your meeting or event. We look forward to meeting you!

If you’re not “intercepted” for an interview while fishing or contacted through the Saltwater Registry, you can still participate by submitting a fishing report after each saltwater trip to the New Jersey Volunteer Angler Survey. Your reports do have a real impact on how New Jersey’s ocean resources are managed. Submit online reports at www.NJFishandWildlife.com/marinesurvey.htm.

To catch more information about the value to managing your fisheries resources, be sure to see the featured article from a recent Marine Digest at http://www.NJFishandWildlife.com/pdf/2016/digmar6-13.pdf.
The Skillful Angler Program is designed both to supplement the New Jersey Record Fish Program and to acknowledge that many anglers catch freshwater and marine fish that are not record size but are still worthy of recognition because the size and weight of the fish sufficiently tested the angler's skill. Open to resident and non-resident anglers. All fish must be caught in New Jersey waters using a hook and line during legally open seasons.

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

New in 2018, anglers can submit their application and photo(s) electronically! Program rules and steps to enter are found here http://njfishandwildlife.com/skflang.htm. Anglers qualifying for a Skillful Angler Minimum Entry Requirements:

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

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 website at NJFishandWildlife.com for a complete list of current state records. See also page 28.

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

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

Anglers must submit a photograph of the fish caught, alongside a ruler for clear identification and measurement verification. Be sure the rule markings are legible. All photos become the property of the NJDFW and may be used for promotional purposes.

To apply, go to:
New Jersey State Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs

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

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

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

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

The entry deadline is now no later than one month after the date of catch.

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 website at NJFishandWildlife.com/fishing.htm.
New Jersey State Record Marine Fish — Spearfishing Category

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Lbs.</th>
<th>Oz.</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Angler</th>
<th>Where Caught</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amberjack, greater</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>VACANT</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bass, black sea</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>VACANT</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bluefish</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>Igor Kotov</td>
<td>Shark River Reef, USS Algol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cobia</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>William Maier</td>
<td>Off Cape May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cod</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>VACANT</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dolphin</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>VACANT</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Fluke</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Robert A. Davis</td>
<td>Off Barnegat Lighthouse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flounder, winter</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Chris Kahler</td>
<td>Manasquan Inlet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hake, red (ling)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>VACANT</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pollock</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>VACANT</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Porgy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>VACANT</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheepshead</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>VACANT</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spadefish</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>VACANT</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Striped bass</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>VACANT</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Tautog</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Luke Dylan Hickey</td>
<td>Off Cape May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Triggerfish, gray</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>VACANT</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weakfish</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Tai Menz</td>
<td>Off Cape May</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

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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, for a complete list of state and federal marine fish consumption advisories visit www.FishSmartEatSmartNJ.org for making decisions about eating recreationally caught fish and crabs.

New Electronic Reporting Required of For-hire Fisheries Vessels

Starting March 12, 2018, electronic vessel trip reporting will be required for all vessels issued a GARFO charter/party permit for any of the following species when carrying passengers for hire:

- Summer Flounder
- Black Sea Bass
- Squid
- Butterfish
- Tilefish, golden & blueline
- Bluefish
- Scup
- Atlantic Mackerel
- Bluefish
- Scup
- Atlantic Mackerel

Electronic reports must be completed prior to entering port and submitted within 48 hours through a NOAA-approved software application following the completion of a fishing trip. For more information, contact Daniel Luers (978-282-8457) or Daniel.Luers@noaa.gov or visit GARFOs recreational fishing web page: https://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/sustainable/recfishing/

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Sedge Island Natural Resource Education Center Programs — Summer 2018

- **Sedge Island Fishing Experience:** A 4-day 3-night marine fishing intensive program. Open to students going into grades 8 and 9 in the fall of 2018.
- **Sedge Island Field and Research Experience:** A 6-day 5-night program focused on conducting field research. Open to high school students.
- **Sedge Island Field Experience:** A 4-day 3-night program that has students work alongside biologist in the salt marsh field. Open to students going into grades 7, 8 and 9 in the fall of 2018.
- **Bay to Bowl:** A 3-day 2-night program open to adults interested in harvesting food from the bay and learning how to prepare and cook it.

For more details, dates and cost visit [NJFishandWildlife.com/sedge.htm](http://NJFishandWildlife.com/sedge.htm) or contact Karen Byrne at Karen.Byrne@dep.nj.gov.

Law Enforcement and Regulation Information

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

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

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- Always use sufficient water when flushing
- Use toilet paper designed for use in marine/RV systems
- Have your marina inspect your onboard toilet system to make sure it is operating properly

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- Commercial exploitation of fish and wildlife
- Pollution of habitat, dumping on state land
- Destruction of signs and state property
- Illegal killing, taking or possession of any wildlife

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