

Regulations in *red* are new this year.

Regulations remain in effect until changed. For the most current regulations, go to NJFishandWildlife.com/njregs.htm#marine.

Highlights of Regulation Changes:

Rules for the recreational harvest of bluefish, striped bass and summer flounder have changed.

- ♦ **The possession limit for striped bass/hybrid striped bass is one fish with a size limit of 28 inches to less than 38 inches in total length. The Striped Bass Bonus Program open season is May 15 to December 31. However, opening of this program may be delayed due to the unprecedented circumstances regarding COVID-19.** There are no changes to the *Striped Bass Closed Season*. See striped bass regulations, page 12.
- ♦ **The recreational summer flounder open season is May 22 to Sept. 19. See *Summer Flounder (Fluke)*, page 12, for full regulations.**
- ♦ **Bluefish regulations are: 5 fish while fishing from a party/charter vessel with a valid federal party/charter vessel permit; 3 fish for all other anglers.** See *Bluefish*, page 11, for full regulations.

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

Resource Information

Anyone who takes fisheries resources may be required to provide information on the species, number, weight or other information pertinent to management of resources. **Anglers are encouraged to report all fishing activity after each trip. Visit Fish and Wildlife's Volunteer Angler Survey at NJFishandWildlife.com/marinesurvey.htm.**

Methods of Recreational Fishing

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

Delaware Fishing License Requirement

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

New York Fishing Registry Requirement

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

Bait Fish

No license is required to take baitfish for personal use with the following gear:

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

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

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

Wanton Waste Prohibited

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

Spearfishing

Spearfishing may be conducted by means of a spear, harpoon or other missile while completely submerged in the marine waters of the state for any species, except lobster.

Persons who fish with a spear for species with size limits are reminded that it is their responsibility to ensure the fish meets the minimum size limits before being killed or injured.

Sea Turtles & Marine Mammals

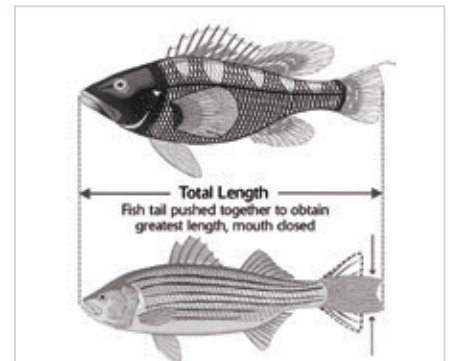
It is illegal to intentionally molest, kill or possess sea turtles, including terrapins, or marine mammals, or to possess any part thereof.

Be the First to Know! Get on the List

The Marine Fisheries and Shellfish e-mail list, that is. Get the latest information on Fish and Wildlife events, public hearings and other marine resource issues. Our six other lists help you get the most out of New Jersey's fish and wildlife resources. **Sign up today at:**

NJFishandWildlife.com/lstsub.htm

Fish Measurement



1. Lay fish flat on top of, or alongside a measuring rule, not measured over the body.
2. Fish are measured from the tip of the snout (mouth closed) to the longest part of the tail.

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
- ♦ Diamondback terrapin
- ♦ Sand tiger shark
- ♦ Sandbar shark
- ♦ Shortnose sturgeon
- ♦ Whale shark
- ♦ White shark
- ♦ River herring (alewife and blueback herring; see herring illustrations, page 14)
- ♦ See *Sharks* (page 12) for the full list of prohibited shark species

Accessible Fishing Sites



Enjoy more than 50 accessible New Jersey fishing sites for those with mobility disabilities. All sites are wheelchair-accessible except the Musconetcong River in Morris County, where vehicle access is to the shoreline. Visit www.NJFishandWildlife.com/sites.htm.

SHIMANO

Built to provide high end performance and dependability in a compact lightweight frame, the Shimano SpeedMaster II Lever Drag Reel is an absolute fish fighting machine. These two-speed lever drag reels feature the same sleek and functional design coupled with unrelenting power that blue water anglers have come to expect from Shimano conventional reels, but now at a price that everyone can appreciate.

Available in 4 sizes, 12II, 16II, 20II and 25II

Starting at **\$249⁹⁹**

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IGFA
Corporate Member



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Finfish

Regulations for most finfish are listed in the table on page 17.

Filleting

The filleting at sea of all fish with a size limit, or any species of flatfish, is prohibited except for summer flounder; see *Summer Flounder*, page 12. Anglers shall possess no parts of any fish caught on a previous fishing trip. Party boats may fillet fish at sea if they obtain a Special Fillet Permit available from Fish and Wildlife's Bureau of Marine Fisheries.

Black Sea Bass

Black sea bass are measured along the midline from the snout to the end of the central portion of the tail, not to include the tail filaments. (See image, page 10.) The recreational regulations for black sea bass are: open May 15–June 22 with limits of 10 fish possession and 12.5-inch minimum size; open July 1–Aug. 31 with limits of 2 fish possession and a 12.5-inch minimum size; open Oct. 8–Oct. 31 with limits of 10 fish possession and 12.5-inch minimum size; and open Nov. 1–Dec. 31 with limits of 15 fish possession and a 13-inch minimum size.

Bluefish

Bluefish recreational regulations: 5 fish (no size limit, open season all year) while fishing from a party/charter vessel with a valid federal party/charter vessel permit and captained by a properly credentialed operator with a valid U.S. Coast Guard endorsement (see important additional information regarding for-hire trips at: <https://www.NJFishandWildlife.com/pdf/marine/bluefish4hire.pdf>); 3 fish (no size limit, open season all year) for all other anglers.

bluefish4hire.pdf); 3 fish (no size limit, open season all year) for all other anglers.

River Herring

The taking or possession of any river herring (alewife and blueback herring) in New Jersey is prohibited. See the fish ID illustrations on page 14 for herring species identification.

Top 8 Tips for Releasing Fish Unharmd

Proper handling and releasing techniques reduce fish mortality.

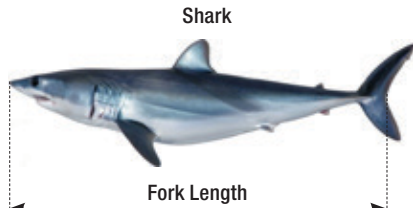
- Land fish quickly, except when retrieving from depths of 40-feet or more. Fighting a fish to exhaustion increases mortality as does rapidly bringing fish up through the changing water pressure and temperature gradients.
- Keep fish to be released in the water as much as possible. Plan ahead with tools and camera.
- Minimize physical injury. Do not touch gills or allow fish to flop around on deck.
- Carefully remove hooks using a dehooker or needle-nose pliers.
- Use plain hooks, not stainless, which rust away quickly if one must be left in a gut-hooked fish.
- Be prepared with a long-reach tool to cut the leader at the hook, close to the hook's eyelet.
- To bring a fish out of the water momentarily, use a neoprene net or one of knotless nylon. Handle the fish carefully using wet hands, wet cotton gloves or similar material to minimize loss of the fish's protective slime layer.
- To revive lethargic fish, hold in a normal, upright position. Move the fish forward in an "S" or figure-8 pattern so that water flows over the gills only from front to back.
- Use circle hooks (not offset) for species that bite and flee, such as striped bass, weakfish or sea bass. Consider pinching hook barbs with pliers.

MARINE REGULATIONS

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

Sharks

Recreational size limits for shark are specified in the state and federal regulation charts on pages 21 and 22. Refer to the illustration, below, for the fork length.



Dr. William Driggers, III/NMFS

The 2020 shark regulations complement existing federal shark regulations (see *2020 Federal Recreational Regulations* table, page 18). However, the following additional measures are required for state waters:

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

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

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

Recreational anglers should access the following National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration website, <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resource/outreach-and-education/shark-identification-placard> to download the NOAA Fisheries *Shark Identification Placard*, an excellent pictorial guide to identify sharks that are legal to harvest.

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

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

Striped Bass (includes Hybrid Striped Bass)

The possession limit for striped bass/hybrid striped bass is one fish with a size limit of 28 inches to less than 38 inches total length. Anglers participating in the Striped Bass Bonus Program may possess a

striped bass at 24 inches to less than 28 inches in length. Fish may be harvested in any order.

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

It is illegal to possess any striped bass which is less than the legal minimum size of 28 inches unless in possession of a Striped Bass Bonus Permit. **It is illegal to possess any striped bass 38 inches or greater.**

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 its 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 spring-time spawning area closure within the Delaware River and its tributaries. This restriction does not apply to hook sizes smaller than size 2.

Summer Flounder (Fluke)

The recreational summer flounder open season is **May 22 to September 19**. For Delaware Bay and tributaries, west of the COLREGS line, which delineates Delaware Bay from the Atlantic Ocean, the size limit is 17 inches and the possession limit is three fish. The 17 inch minimum size limit applicable to Delaware Bay does not include the waters of the Cape May Canal east of the Cape May Ferry Terminal. Transport of summer flounder caught in Delaware Bay, greater than or equal to 17 inches but less than the 18 inches may occur in waters east of the Cape May Ferry Terminal to the George Redding Bridge (Route 47) located at the entrance of Wildwood provided all fishing gear aboard the vessel is stowed with rigs removed and the vessel may not stop to fish for any species. Shore-based anglers fishing at Island Beach State Park (IBSP) may retain 2 fish greater than or equal to 16 inches (total length) only at IBSP during the current open summer flounder fishing season. Shore-based fishing is defined as fishing from a pier, jetty, beach, bank or marsh. **In all other waters, the size limit is 18 inches**, the possession limit is three fish and transportation of summer flounder less than 18 inches is prohibited.

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. Anglers shall not be in possession of any parts of any summer flounder caught on a previous fishing trip; only fish just caught on the current outing.

Additional Marine Fishing Regulations

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

Striped Bass Bonus Program

The Striped Bass Bonus Program will continue in 2020, where anglers possessing a bonus permit may keep a striper at 24 inches to less than 28 inches. The open season for this program is May 15 through December 31. **The program opening may be delayed due to the unprecedented circumstances regarding COVID-19.** Check website for updates at <https://www.NJFishandWildlife.com/bonusbas.htm>.

The current allocation from the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission is 215,912 pounds. 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 issued via mail only. Go to [NJFishandWildlife.com/bonusbas.htm](https://www.NJFishandWildlife.com/bonusbas.htm) to download the application and for regulation or program updates. The permit is non-transferable and valid for the current calendar year. Only one permit can be used per day. Fishing logs must be kept and harvest reporting is mandatory.

Striped Bass Bonus Permit Harvest Reporting:

The Striped Bass Bonus Permit must be securely attached to the fish through the mouth and gill immediately upon capture and prior to transportation. **Harvest reporting is mandatory and must be reported online or by leaving a message at (609) 748-2074.**



Striper caught from the Queen Mary off Point Pleasant.

New Jersey Saltwater Recreational Registry Program (NJSRRP)

ATTENTION: New Jersey Saltwater Anglers

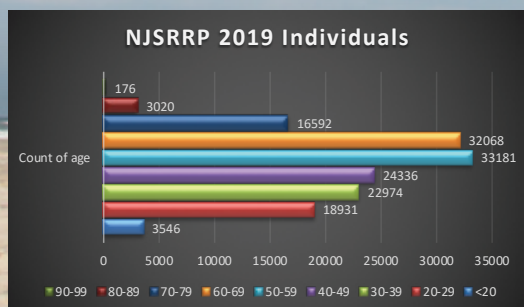
REGISTER. You make a difference! It's still free, still easy and still required.

The saltwater registry acts as a current contact list for mail and telephone surveys of anglers. Participation in the New Jersey Saltwater Recreational Registry Program (NJSRRP) is vital in achieving accurate recreational fishing estimates, helping to ensure healthy fisheries for future generations.

Do your part to help maintain sustainable fisheries and join the thousands of other anglers who have already registered with the New Jersey Saltwater Recreational Registry Program.

In 2019, the NJSRRP had 154,827 individual registrants and 728 for-hire vessels. The graph below shows the total number of individual registrants broken down by age range.

Anglers are reminded that registrations expire at the end of each calendar year and must be renewed annually. For more information on the **NJ Saltwater Recreational Registry Program** and to register, visit www.saltwaterregistry.nj.gov



All proceeds from the **Jersey Shore Boat Sale & Expo** and the **New Jersey Boat Sale & Expo** support efforts to *promote, advance* and *protect* the recreational boating industry in New Jersey.

Visit JerseyBoatExpo.com for future dates and to learn more.



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

Registration

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

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

Boats and marine equipment which need not be registered:

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

Title

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

Boat Safety Certificate (NJSP)

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

Boat Operator License (MVC)

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

For More Information:

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

New Jersey State Police (NJSP)
(609) 882-2000
<http://www.njsp.org/marine-services>

Regulations in red are new this year.

Crustaceans

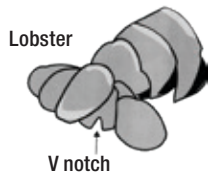
American Lobster

The legal possession size limit of whole lobsters, measured from the rear of the eye socket along a line parallel to the center line of the body shell to the rear of the body shell, shall be not less than 3¾ inches nor greater than 5¼ inches. Lobster parts may not be possessed at sea or landed. There is no harvest or possession of lobster in Lobster Management Area 4 from April 30 – May 31 and Lobster Management Area 5 from February 1 – March 31.

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

Special Lobster Restrictions: No person shall use, leave, deploy, or tend any lobster, fish or conch pot within an artificial reef located in state waters except in areas designated as a full access zones. Within these designated full access zones lobster, fish and conch pots shall be used, left, deployed or tended only between sunrise and sunset.

For information about lobster pot deployment and New Jersey Reef Full Access Zone Locations, go to NJFishandWildlife.com/pdf/2016/marlet-reefag02-11-16.pdf.



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

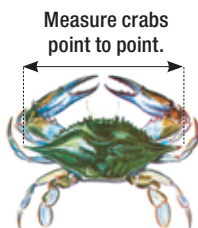
Crabs

1. Crabs may be taken recreationally with hand lines, manually operated collapsible traps or scoop nets without a license. A non-commercial crab pot license is required for the use of not more than two non-collapsible Chesapeake-style crab pots (see illustration on page 19) or two trot lines to harvest crabs. See page 19 for the non-commercial crab pot license information.

2. It is illegal to harvest or possess more than one bushel of crabs per day per person or offer for sale any crabs without having in your possession a valid commercial crabbing license.

3. Minimum size for crabs that may be harvested (measured from point to point of shell) are as follows:

- Peeler or shedder crab: 3 inches
- Soft crab: 3½ inches
- Hard crab: 4½ inches



- 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 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 angler 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 26.
- Crab Pot/Trot Line seasons:** Delaware Bay and tributaries: April 6 – Dec. 4. All other waters: March 15 – Nov. 30. The following waters, **and their tributaries**, are closed to the use of crab pots and trot lines: Cumberland Co.: Cohansy River and creeks named Back, Cedar, Nantuxent, Fortescue, Oranoken and Dividing; Cape May Co.: West and Bidwell Creeks and the Cape May Canal; Atlantic Co.: Hammock Cove (Dry Bay); Ocean Co.: on east shore of Barnegat Bay, that area of Sedge Islands Wildlife Management Area enclosed by a line drawn from the northern bank of Fishing Creek on Island Beach State Park to the northern tip of the Sedge Islands (Hensler Island), then south from point to point along the western side of the Sedge Islands WMA and terminating on the most southwestern point of Island Beach State Park.
- Crab Dredge Seasons:** Delaware Bay and tributaries: Jan. 1 through April 15 and Nov. 15 through Dec. 31. All other waters: Jan. 1 through March 31, Dec. 1 through Dec. 31. Fish and Wildlife will issue a non-commercial crab dredge license for the harvest of not more than one bushel of crabs per day during the crab dredge season. Crabs so taken may not be sold or offered for barter. There is a fee of \$15 for this non-commercial crab dredge license. See page 19 for details on purchasing a non-commercial crab dredge license.

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

Horseshoe Crabs

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

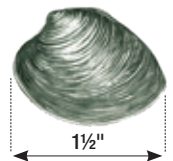
Mollusks

- All persons must be licensed to harvest any shellfish. See license information, page 19. Shellfish means any species of benthic mollusks (except conch) including hard and soft clams, oysters, surf clams, bay scallops and mussels.
- It is illegal to harvest shellfish from condemned waters, even for bait purposes. It is also illegal to harvest shellfish including surf clams from beaches adjacent to water classified as condemned. Shellfish water classification charts are available from license agents or any state shellfish office. See page 19 for shellfish license information. Charts are updated annually.
- Shellfish harvesting is prohibited before sunrise and after sunset. Shellfish harvest is also prohibited on Sundays except in the seasonally approved areas of the Navesink and Shrewsbury rivers, when harvesting is permitted between Nov. 1 and April 30.
- 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 Shellfishing

- No holder of any recreational shellfish license may take more than a total of 150 shellfish (in aggregate) per day. See *Shellfish License Information*, page 19.
- It is illegal to dredge shellfish on public grounds. Use of hand implements are the only legal harvest methods.

3. The minimum size of hard clams that may be harvested is 1½ inches in length. Clams less than 1½ 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.

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

2020 New Jersey Recreational Fishing Seasons, Minimum Size and Possession Limits

Regulations remain in effect until changed. For the most current regulations, go to NJFishandWildlife.com or call the marine fish "listen-only" information line at (609) 292-2083. Regulations in red are new this year. See page 10 for how to measure fish. Note: No species of fish with a minimum size limit listed below may be filleted or cleaned at sea. Party boats licensed to carry 15 or more passengers may apply for a permit to fillet the these species. See also **Summer Flounder**, page 12.

| Species | Open Season | Minimum Length (total length except sharks) | Harvest & Possession Limit (per person unless noted) |
|---|--|---|---|
| American Eel ^a | No Closed Season | 9" | 25 |
| Black Drum | No Closed Season | 16" | 3 |
| Black Sea Bass (Min. length excludes tail filament; see page 10.) | May 15 - June 22 | 12.5" | 10 |
| | July 1 - Aug. 31 | 12.5" | 2 |
| | Oct. 8 - Oct. 31 | 12.5" | 10 |
| | Nov. 1 - Dec. 31 | 13" | 15 |
| Bluefish (Snapper) | No Closed Season | None | 5 fish per person while fishing from a party/charter vessel ^f 3 fish per person for all other anglers |
| Cobia | June 1–Sept. 30 | 40" | 1 fish per person; no more than 3 fish per vessel |
| Cod | No Closed Season | 21" | No Limit |
| Haddock | No Closed Season | 18" | No Limit |
| Pollock | No Closed Season | 19" | No Limit |
| Red Drum | No Closed Season | 18"–27" | 1 |
| River Herring | No Open Season | None | 0 |
| Scup (Porgy) | No Closed Season | 9" | 50 |
| Shad | | | |
| Delaware River & tributaries | No Closed Season | None | 6 (maximum of 3 American shad) |
| All Other Marine Waters | No Closed Season | None | 6 (no American shad may be harvested or possessed) |
| Shark^{b, c, †} | | | |
| Aggregate large coastal group [†] | Jan. 1–May 14 and July 16–Dec. 31 | Aggregate Large Coastal and Pelagic: Shortfin Mako: Male: 71" fork length Female: 83" fork length All others 54" fork length Hammerheads: 78" fork length Other listed sharks: None | 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 bonnet-head shark per person per trip (no minimum size). |
| Hammerhead group [†] | | | |
| Non-blacknose small coastal group [†] | No Closed Season | | |
| Blacknose group [†] | | | |
| Pelagic group [†] | No Closed Season | | |
| Spanish Mackerel | No Closed Season | 14" | 10 |
| Striped Bass or Hybrid Striped Bass | | | |
| Delaware River & tributaries** (Calhoun St. bridge to Salem River & tributaries) | March 1–March 31 and June 1–Dec. 31 | one @ 28" to less than 38" | 1 |
| Delaware River & tributaries** (upstream of Calhoun St. bridge) | March 1–Dec. 31 | | |
| Atlantic Ocean (0–3 nautical miles from shore) | No Closed Season | | |
| Rivers, bay and estuaries | March 1–Dec. 31 | | |
| 3–200 nautical miles (federal waters) | Prohibited | – | 0 |
| Summer Flounder (Fluke) | | | |
| Delaware Bay and tributaries ^g | May 22–Sept. 19 | 17" | 3 |
| Island Beach State Park, shore fishing | May 22–Sept. 19 | 16" | 2 |
| All water except as above | May 22–Sept. 19 | 18" | 3 |
| Tautog (Blackfish) | Jan. 1–Feb. 28 | 15" | 4 |
| | April 1–April 30 | 15" | 4 |
| | Aug. 1–Nov. 15 | 15" | 1 |
| | Nov. 16–Dec. 31 | 15" | 5 |
| Weakfish | No Closed Season | 13" | 1 |
| Winter Flounder | March 1–Dec. 31 | 12" | 2 |
| Blue Crab | | | |
| peeler or shedder | No Closed Season ^d | 3" | 1 bushel |
| soft | No Closed Season ^d | 3½" | |
| hard | No Closed Season ^d | 4½" | |
| Lobster (carapace length) | See closed seasons on page 16 | 3¾" | 6 |
| Hard Clam (license required) | No Closed Season [‡] | 1½" | 150 clams |

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

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

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

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

e Applies to Delaware Bay and tributaries, west of COLREGS line delineating Delaware Bay from Atlantic Ocean but does not include waters of Cape May Canal east of Cape May Ferry Terminal. Transport of summer flounder caught in Delaware Bay, greater than or equal to 17 in. but less than 18 in., may occur in waters east of Cape May Ferry Terminal to George Redding Br. (Rt. 47) located at entrance of Wildwood provided all fishing gear aboard the vessel is stowed with rigs removed; vessel may not stop to fish for any species.

f See page 11 under **Bluefish** regarding **party/charter** definition and regulations.

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

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

‡ Non-resident license valid only June – Sept. See water classification chart information at <https://www.nj.gov/dep/bmw/nssphome.html#charts>.

Regulations in *red* are new this year.

2020 Federal Recreational Fishing Regulations for Minimum Size, Possession Limits and Seasons

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

| Species | Season | Minimum Size | Possession Limit (number per angler per day unless otherwise specified) | Notes |
|--|---|---|--|--|
| Cod | Year round | 21" | 10 per person per day | |
| Striped Bass | NA | NA | No possession allowed in EEZ | Possession prohibited in federal waters (3–200 nm). |
| Dolphin (Mahi mahi) | Year round | None | 10 per day, not to exceed 60 per vessel, which ever is less — except on a charter or headboat, then 10 per paying passenger. | For current federal waters regulations (3–200nm), refer to https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/topic/atlantic-highly-migratory-species or call (727) 824-5326. |
| Marlin, White | Year round | 66" lower jaw– fork length | None | Billfish require Highly Migratory Species (HMS) permit when fishing in federal waters (3–200 nm). For permits refer to https://hmspermits.noaa.gov or call (888) 872-8862. |
| Marlin, Blue | Year round | 99" lower jaw– fork length | None | During any sanctioned billfish tournaments offering prize money, non-offset circle hooks are required for lures with natural bait or natural/artificial bait combos. |
| Roundscale Spearfish | Year round | 66" lower jaw– fork length | None | All non-tournament billfish landings must be reported to NMFS within 24 hours, either online at https://hmspermits.noaa.gov or by calling (800) 894-5528. |
| Sailfish | Year round | 63" lower jaw– fork length | None | |
| Spearfish, Longbill | None | None | Prohibited | For current regulations refer to https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/topic/atlantic-highly-migratory-species or call (727) 824-5399. |
| Tilefish, Blue-line | May 1–Oct. 31 | None | Private boat: 3 fish per person, per trip USCG uninspected for-hire vessel: 5 fish per person, per trip USCG inspected for-hire vessel: 7 fish per person, per trip | In effect from the Virginia/North Carolina border north. |
| Tilefish, Golden | Year round | None | 8 per angler per trip | |
| Swordfish | Year round | 47" lower jaw– fork length if the head is naturally attached or 25" cleithrum to caudal keel if the head has been removed. | For anglers: 1 per person, no more than 4 per vessel per trip. For charter vessels: 1 per paying pas- senger, no more than 6 per vessel per trip. For headboat vessels: 1 per paying pas- senger, no more than 15 per vessel per trip. | Swordfish, tuna and sharks require an HMS permit when fishing in federal waters (3–200 nm). For permits, refer to https://hmspermits.noaa.gov or call (888) 872-8862. All non-tournament swordfish landings must be reported to NMFS within 24 hours either online at https://hmspermits.noaa.gov or by calling (800) 894-5528. |
| Tuna, Albacore (Longfin) | Year round | None | None | † Bluefin tuna are managed in two regions; Northern, extending north from the Great Egg Inlet and Southern extending south from Great Egg Inlet. Bluefin tuna retention limits may change throughout the season. Visit https://hmspermits.noaa.gov or call (888) 872-8862 or (978) 281-9260 for current information. |
| Tuna, Bigeye | Year round | 27" curved fork length | None | |
| Tuna, Bluefin† | Jan. 1–Dec. 31 or until season is closed. | 27" to <73" curved fork length and one trophy fish ≥ 73" curved fork length per vessel per year | Limits can change during the season. Prior to departure, check https://hmspermits.noaa.gov or 888-USA-TUNA for up-to-date limits. | All recreational bluefin tuna landings must be reported to NMFS within 24 hours either online at https://hmspermits.noaa.gov or by calling (888) 872-8862. |
| Tuna, Skipjack | Year round | None | None | For current federal waters regulations (3–200nm), refer to https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/topic/atlantic-highly-migratory-species or call (301) 713-2347 for swordfish/sharks or (978) 281-9260 for tunas. |
| Tuna, Yellowfin | Year round | 27" curved fork length | 3 per person per trip | |
| Sharks* | | | | |
| Aggregate Large Coastal Group | Year round | Aggregate Large Coastal and Pelagic: Shortfin Mako: Male: 71" fork length Female: 83" fork length All others 54" fork length | For non prohibited species: 1 authorized* shark/vessel/trip plus 1 Atlantic sharpnose and 1 bonnethead shark/person/trip | See below for list of shark groups which MAY be kept or MUST be released. Swordfish, tuna and sharks require an HMS permit when fishing in federal waters (3–200 nm). For permits, refer to https://hmspermits.noaa.gov or call (888) 872-8862. Recreational fishermen (those that do not have a limited access commercial shark permit) can not sell, barter or trade any Atlantic shark or shark pieces. |
| Pelagic Group | | | | |
| Non-blacknose Small Coastal Group | | | | |
| Hammerhead Group | | | | |
| Blacknose Group | | Other listed sharks: None | | |
| Wahoo | Year round | None | 2 per person per day | For more information, contact the South Atlantic Fisheries Management Council at (843) 571-4366. |
| Wreckfish | July 1–Aug. 31 | None | 1 per vessel per day | |

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

Shellfish License Information

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

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

For shellfishing regulations, see page 16. **Prior to harvesting any shellfish, you must consult the Shellfish Growing Water Classification Charts** published by DEP's Bureau of Marine Water Monitoring, available at shellfish license agents, state shellfish offices, online at <https://www.nj.gov/dep/bmw/nssp/home.html#charts> or call Marine Water Monitoring at (609) 748-2000. Purchase shellfish licenses online at www.NJ.WildlifeLicense.com.

Shellfish License Fees

- **Resident recreational shellfish:** \$10
Harvest limit: 150 shellfish (in aggregate) per day. Sale of catch prohibited.
- **Non-resident recreational shellfish:** \$20
Harvest limit: 150 shellfish (in aggregate) per day. Sale of catch prohibited. License valid only during 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 only to certified dealers.
- **Resident senior citizen recreational shellfish license:** FREE lifetime license (\$2 application fee). NJ residents age 62 years or older. Harvest limit: 150 shellfish (in aggregate) per day. Sale of shellfish prohibited.
- **Disabled veterans:** Fish and Wildlife-certified disabled veterans are eligible for free shellfish license at any shellfish license agent location. To become certified, call (609) 984-6213.

DEP Action Line, 24 Hrs.

The Department has a toll-free telephone hotline number you can use to report environmental incidents, abuses, and complaints in New Jersey or impacting it.

(877) WARN-DEP
(877) 927-6337

Quick Reference for Popular Fish!

For New Jersey's most popular recreational species, see the quick reference chart of open seasons and regulations: www.NJFishandWildlife.com/pdf/marine/recseasons.pdf.



Crab Pot License Information


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

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

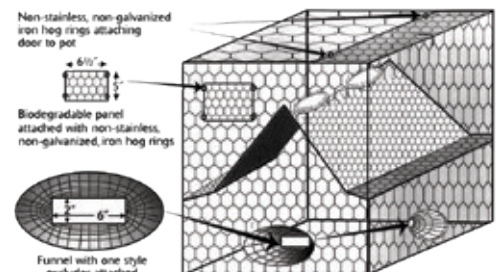
Terrapin Excluders and Biodegradable Panels Are Required on Chesapeake-Style Crab Pots

NOTE: It is illegal to catch or take diamondback terrapins in New Jersey. Users of non-collapsible, Chesapeake-style crab pots note: 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. 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 allowing these and other species to escape in the event that pots are

lost or abandoned. Terrapin excluder devices must be no larger than 2-inch high by 6-inch wide and securely fastened inside each funnel entrance. Biodegradable panels must measure at least 6½-inch wide by 5-inch high and be located in the upper section of the crab pot. The panel must be constructed of, or fastened to the pot with, wood lath, cotton, hemp, sisal or jute twine not greater than 3/16" diameter, or non-stainless steel, uncoated ferrous metal not greater than 3/32" diameter. The door or a side of the pot may serve as the biodegradable panel **ONLY** if it is fastened to the pot with any of the material specified above. Crabbers should note: **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 page 16. 

Chesapeake-Style Crab Pot



Shellfish and Non-Commercial Crab Pot License Agents

Current listing now available online at <https://www.nj.gov/dep/fgw/agentlst.htm>.

Note: All license agents statewide can now sell all license and permit privileges.