

# New Jersey Marine Digest

May 2022

**The Big 5:  
Popular Species**  
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**Size and  
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A Summary of Recreational Regulations and  
Marine Fish and Shellfish Management Information

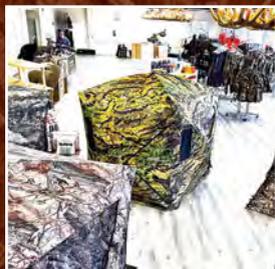
[NJFishandWildlife.com](http://NJFishandWildlife.com)



# GS Outdoors

Check out our new Hunting Department on the 2ND floor of the GARDEN STATE MARINE STORE!

We have all the equipment and clothing you'll need for the upcoming season. Come on upstairs and check us out!



## Garden State Yacht Sales

Garden State Yacht Sales is also your go-to resource for Boat Winterization and Storage in NJ. Our experts will make sure your boat is completely prepared for the fall and winter so it runs like new in the spring!

Visit NJ's Largest Independent Marine Store for all your boating supplies and parts. We have a large assortment of the latest fishing apparel, cool fishing gear, parts, and supplies. We stock a huge amount of Yamaha replacement parts.

In addition to selling vessels, we offer a relaxed and scenic atmosphere where anglers and recreational boaters alike can browse marine accessories, shop for beach day must-haves, store boats year-round in a secure setting, and receive expert boat maintenance. We are open 7 days a week!



AUTHORIZED DEALER OF THESE BRANDS



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## Hotlines

### New Jersey DEP Fish and Wildlife

#### Report Marine, Shellfish and Finfish Violations

(609) 748-2050 or call the 24-hour DEP Hotline: 877-WARNDEP

Violators of the Marine Fisheries laws are subject to a \$30-\$100 per fish or \$300 to \$3,000 fine.

### Federal Marine Fisheries Contacts

#### NOAA Fisheries

##### Enforcement Hotline

24-hour non-emergency tipline  
(800) 853-1964

#### NOAA Fisheries Office of Law

##### Enforcement — Northeast

Enforcement Division HQ  
(978) 281-9249

#### Federal Fisheries Law

##### Enforcement Field Offices

Wall: (732) 280-6490  
Northfield: (609) 415-2941

On the cover: photo by Tom SanFilippo



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# Assistant Commissioner's Message

DAVE GOLDEN



Great saltwater fishing opportunities always await anyone lucky enough to visit coastal New Jersey. Whether you fish the surf, back-bays or open ocean, the Garden State boasts one of the most active and productive recreational fisheries on the Atlantic Coast!

Of all the species in our marine waters, most anglers will fish for the "Big Five". These include bluefish, striped bass, summer flounder, black sea bass and tautog. If these are the species you're targeting, check out "The Big Five" article in this edition of the Marine Digest, where you will find details on current research, best fishing methods and some fun facts. For instance, did you know that in 1878, striped bass collected from the Navesink River were transported by rail and successfully introduced to the waters of California? *See page 6 for more.*

The fun fact shows that the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's Fish and Wildlife staff has been managing the State's wildlife resources for a long time. In fact, this year marks the 130th anniversary of our agency, when in 1892 the Board of Fish and Game Commissioners hired the first salaried "Fish and Game Protector" to enforce the fishing and game laws within the state. Since that time, our Law Enforcement bureau has expanded to include 56 highly trained Conservation Police Officers who patrol the marine and inland environments of New Jersey. They do their part to protect *your* natural resources and keep the public safe, so please do your part — understand and follow the marine regulations and properly handle fish being released.

As I'm writing this message, COVID cases are down, and life is slowly resembling pre-pandemic conditions. Fish and Wildlife's Marine Fisheries staff are back out in the field. They conduct surveys and collect information vital to sustainable management of our state's unique and important marine resources. All of this is very exciting! Our biologists like being on the water as much as you do, and prior to the pandemic I would have said there was nothing that would stop them from getting out there to carry out their sampling. When COVID hit, however, most of the agency's marine fisheries sampling programs came to a halt. The health and safety of the public and our employees always comes first, and during the pandemic the logistics of sampling in close quarters on small vessels resulted in many of our surveys being pared back or fully cancelled for two full sampling seasons in 2020 and 2021.

Successful fisheries management depends on up-to-date and reliable data on stock condition, removals and fishing effort. While the agency's Marine Fisheries staff were not able to get out on the water, New Jersey anglers remained active throughout the pandemic. Our staff's "pause" on sampling provided a chance for us to re-think data collection in a digital age and resulted in the expansion of opportunities for anglers and other stakeholders to participate in the fisheries management process. As such, we developed additional platforms to report recreational fishing through the volunteer angler survey: [www.nj.gov/dep/marineanglersurvey](http://www.nj.gov/dep/marineanglersurvey) and for reporting endangered and protected marine species: [www.nj.gov/dep/njmarinewildlife](http://www.nj.gov/dep/njmarinewildlife). The striped bass bonus program application process also went to a 100% online format: [www.njfishandwildlife.org/bonusbas.htm](http://www.njfishandwildlife.org/bonusbas.htm).

Meetings of the Marine Fisheries Council and Shellfisheries Councils were also shifted to virtual platforms to allow continued public participation. This ability to pivot quickly to a virtual platform allowed the public to stay engaged and participate in marine fisheries management.

I urge you all to continue to participate in the management process and to attend an upcoming Marine Fisheries Council meeting. Information about upcoming meetings is posted on our website at [NJFishandWildlife.com](http://NJFishandWildlife.com).

It's time to get out there — be safe on the water, enjoy your time outdoors, and catch some fish! 

Dave Golden is the Assistant Commissioner of New Jersey DEP Fish and Wildlife.



Williamstown, MA | Birmingham, AL

## About This Guide

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

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# Your Dollars Make a Difference!

## State and Federal partnership improves NJ's fishing opportunities



When you purchase fishing equipment, motors, sonar and motorboat fuel in New Jersey, excise tax dollars – paid by manufacturers of that equipment – come back to New Jersey to support marine fisheries! This is the federal **Sport Fish Restoration Program**.

Your fees and federal Sport Fish Restoration dollars produce the following benefits:

- Management of public waters
- Artificial reef development
- Marine sport fish research
- Development and management of public fishing areas
- Creation of aquatic education programs
- Development and maintenance of boating-associated access facilities throughout the state



Anglers and boaters purchase fishing equipment and motor boat fuels.

Manufacturers pay federal excise taxes on fishing equipment, electric motors, and sonar; and boaters pay fuel taxes.

Revenue from these federal excise taxes is distributed to state fish and wildlife agencies.

State fish and wildlife agencies receive federal funds to implement programs and projects.

Better fishing and boating-associated recreation and aquatic education increase the public's understanding of water resources and aquatic life.



## Mark Your Calendar for the Governor's Surf Fishing Tournament!

**May 15, 2022**

### Island Beach State Park, Seaside Park, NJ

Enjoy a great day of surf fishing with family and friends at the Governor's Surf Fishing Tournament.

The individual who catches the overall largest fish wins the "Governor's Award" and will have their name engraved on the Governor's Cup, which is permanently displayed at Island Beach State Park. Prizes are awarded to winners in a variety of age group and fish species categories.

All funds raised by the tournament go toward improving beach access, surf fishing instruction programs and equipment plus marine education and restoration projects.

The tournament is sponsored by NJDEP's Fish and Wildlife and Parks and Forestry, New Jersey State Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs, Jersey Coast Anglers Association and New Jersey Beach Buggy Association.

**For more information visit:**

[NJFishandWildlife.com/gsf.htm](http://NJFishandWildlife.com/gsf.htm) or call 609-748-4347.



Courtesy Venuti/NJ Fish and Wildlife

Tyler Bender of Milford won the 2021 tournament by catching a 21.5-inch bluefish at 6:39 a.m.!

## Operation Game Thief

### Report Abuse of our Outdoor Heritage!

**1-855-OGT-TIPS**

**24 Hours a Day, Seven Days a Week**

The person who poaches, pollutes habitat and abuses public land tarnishes the image of sportsmen and robs us of our fish and wildlife as well as tax and license dollars. You can make a difference.

#### Call OGT to report:

- Negligent use of firearms
- Over the limits for game and fish
- 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



**It's Free. It's Confidential.**

**You May Be Eligible for a Reward.**

Funded by the New Jersey State Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs.

Designed to encourage sportsmen to report poaching and wildlife crimes.

# New Jersey Marine Digest

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

The *Digest* is available at coastal license agents, bait and tackle shops and Fish and Wildlife offices. Information may be reprinted with permission. Subscriptions are not available.

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**Cover photo:** Ready to go fishing.

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New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, Fish and Wildlife  
MC 501-03 • P.O. Box 420 • Trenton, NJ 08625-0420 • [NJFishandWildlife.com](http://NJFishandWildlife.com)

## New Jersey DEP Fish and Wildlife Our Mission

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

### Our Goals

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

## Striped Bass Bonus Program

The Striped Bass Bonus Program will continue in 2022, where anglers possessing a Bonus permit may keep a striper at 24 inches or less than 28 inches. The open season for this program is May 15 through December 31. Check website for updates at [NJFishandWildlife.com/bonusbas.htm](http://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](http://NJFishandWildlife.com/bonusbas.htm) to apply and for regulation or program updates. The permit is non-transferable and valid for the current calendar year. Only one fish can be harvested per permit. 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.**

**Fishing Logs:** A log of striped bass fishing activity must be kept and submitted by January 15, 2023 in order to remain eligible for 2023.

### Striped Bass Bonus Program Harvest 1996–2021

Harvest Year	# Fish Harvested	Weight Harvested (lbs)	Mean Length (inches)	Mean Weight (lbs)	% of Quota
1996	233	4,050	35.7	17.4	1.8
1997	344	7,678	36.8	22.3	3.4
1998	473	11,149	37.2	23.6	5.0
1999	574	13,174	36.2	23.1	5.9
2000	2,488	42,794	33.7	17.2	19.0
2001	4,583	79,774	33.5	17.4	35.5
2002	4,855	82,050	33.0	16.9	36.5
2003	6,101	121,410	35.0	20.0	37.7
2004	4,602	81,870	32.8	17.8	25.4
2005	2,047	29,866	31.7	14.6	9.3
2006	1,127	23,656	34.9	21.0	7.4
2007*	708	13,615	34.0	19.2	4.2
2008	367	7,345	34.3	20.0	2.3
2009	526	10,330	34.2	19.3	3.2
2010	728	12,833	34.5	17.6	4.0
2011	916	16,332	34.0	17.8	5.1
2012*	325	6,285	34.3	19.3	2.0
2013	404	6,096	33.4	15.1	1.9
2014	178	3,653	35.0	20.5	1.1
2015*	3,301	21,479	25.8	6.5	9.9
2016	3,686	24,963	25.9	6.8	11.6
2017	2,161	14,602	25.9	6.8	6.8
2018	1,101	6,786	25.3	6.2	3.1
2019	5,558	32,000	26.0	5.8	14.9
2020*	5,746	36,865	25.5	6.4	17.1
2021	6,457	41,867	25.7	6.5	19.4

\* Significant administrative or regulatory changes to the SBBP took place.



Striper caught from the Susan Hudson off Barnegat Light.

# Using Circle Hooks

## When Fishing with Bait for Striped Bass

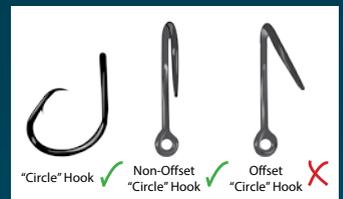
Striped bass caught on the Susan Hudson of Barnegat Light, NJ.

A new regulation requires using inline (non-offset) circle hooks when fishing for striped bass with bait. Bait is defined as any marine or aquatic organism live or dead, whole or parts thereof. This does not apply to artificial lures with bait attached. Striped bass caught using an unapproved method of take must be returned to the water immediately, without unnecessary injury. (See striped bass regulations, page 16.)

Using non-offset circle hooks significantly increases survival of released fish. In 2020, more striped bass were estimated to have died from catch and release than were harvested — 2.76 million fish and 1.71 million fish, respectively.

## What is a Circle Hook?

A circle hook is defined as a non-offset hook where the point curves back perpendicularly towards the shank. The term *non-offset* means the point and barb are in the same plane as the shank. When the hook is laying on a flat surface, the entire hook and barb should lay flat.



Non-offset (inline) circle hooks must be used when fishing for striped bass with bait.

## How Do Circle Hooks Increase Survival of Released Striped Bass?

Using circle hooks reduce occurrences of gut-hooking which can cause injuries to internal organs of the fish. If a striped bass swallows the bait, the circle hook is designed to slide out from its throat and catch on the corner of its jaw. When a fish is hooked in the corner of its jaw, this also leads to shorter de-hooking times and less overall stress on the fish.

## Tips for Using Circle Hooks

When a fish takes your bait, do not sweep the rod upward to set the hook. The circle hook sets itself when the fish tries to swim away. Simply let the line come tight, then fight the fish.

## Added Tips for the Survival of Released Fish

### Tackle Recommendations

- Use barbless hooks or bend barbs down.
- Use non-stainless steel hooks. If gut-hooked, leave the hook in the fish and cut the line as close to the hook as possible. The hook will rust away.
- Replace treble hooks on artificial lures with single hooks.
- Use appropriate tackle suited to the size of the fish; don't fight the fish to exhaustion.

### Fish Handling Best Practices

- Keep the fish in the water when de-hooking.
- If you must take the fish out of the water, use a rubber or soft-mesh landing net.
- Avoid handling fish with dry hands.
- Avoid dragging fish across dry sand or rocks.
- Hold fish horizontal with support.
- Avoid touching the fish's gills or eyes.

# The BIG Five

## New Jersey's Most Popular Recreational Species



**Contributors:** Jennifer Pyle, Senior Biologist; Brendan Harrison, Senior Biologist; Linda Barry, Research Scientist; Michael Celestino, Research Scientist and Peter Clarke, Principal Biologist

### Atlantic Striped Bass

*Morone saxatilis*

Atlantic striped bass stock status is assessed on a coastwide basis. The 2018 stock assessment indicated the stock is overfished and experiencing overfishing. Addendum VI to the Fishery Management Plan sought to end overfishing by reducing the bag and size limit to 1 fish at 28 inches to less than 38 inches. In August 2020, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's (ASMFC) Striped Bass Management Board initiated the development of Amendment 7 to update the management program to reflect current fishery priorities.

New Jersey's recreational striped bass harvest (number of fish) is typically one of the highest harvests by state coastwide.

#### Research

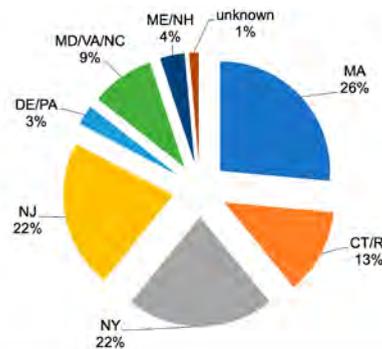
Atlantic striped bass is one of the most data-rich species along the coast. New Jersey Fish and Wildlife staff conduct multiple research projects to collect data on this important species.

New Jersey has participated in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) **Cooperative Coastal Striped Bass Tagging Program** since 1989. Fish are tagged with pink tags and biological data is collected prior to release. More than 35,000 striped bass have been tagged by Marine Fisheries staff. (Figure 1)

The **Ocean Trawl Survey** samples the nearshore ocean waters of New Jersey and collects biological

data from many species, including striped bass. An index of abundance for striped bass is calculated using data collected in April.

**Figure 1: Location of recaptured striped bass tagged by Marine Fisheries staff (1989–2020).**



The **Delaware River Seine Survey** samples sites along the tidal portion of the Delaware River. The survey targets young-of-year striped bass to provide an annual index of striped bass recruitment.

Biological samples are also collected during **party/charter boat and tournament sampling**. All data collected is used for coastwide stock assessments and to

help characterize the striped bass fishery in New Jersey.

Since New Jersey does not allow netting or sale of striped bass, the commercial quota was transferred in 1990 to the recreational fishing sector in the form of the **Striped Bass Bonus Program**. Anglers provide valuable data for assessing stock status and fishing trends, making it an integral part of striped bass management.

#### Best Fishing Methods

- **Surf fishing:** Using artificial lures, teasers, surf rigs, flies or baits
- **Boat or kayak:** Trolling, live-lining, fly fishing, casting artificial lures
- **Best baits\*:** Bunker, clams, eels and bloodworms

\* *Reminder: Non-offset circle hooks are required when fishing for striped bass with bait, which is defined as any marine or aquatic organism live or dead, whole or parts thereof. This does not apply to any artificial lure with bait attached.*

#### Did You Know?

- In 1878, striped bass collected from the Navesink River were transported by rail and successfully introduced to the waters of California.
- New Jersey sits in between two of the three most important spawning areas for striped bass: the Hudson River and Delaware River.



## Tautog (Blackfish)

*Tautoga onitis*

A 2021 stock assessment for tautog determined the stock in the New Jersey-New York Bight region had improved since the 2016 assessment. It remained overfished, but the region was no longer experiencing overfishing.

New Jersey's tautog fishery is predominantly recreational, accounting for more than 90% of the state's tautog landings in any year. NOAA tracks recreational fisheries landings and New Jersey's harvest has ranked within the top five states for 38 of the last 40 years in numbers of fish landed, and for 36 of those years in harvested pounds. Tautog were heavily harvested during the 1980s into the mid-1990s. With the implementation of a Fishery Management Plan in 1996, landings decreased as management measures went into effect. (Figure 2)

### Research

The relative abundance and biomass indices for tautog on the **Ocean Trawl Survey** have been variable since 1989, showing a period of high abundance early in the time series followed by interspersed periods of declines and moderate recoveries. (Figure 3)

### Best Fishing Methods

Tautog, also known as blackfish, are structure-oriented fish, often found in and around shipwrecks, artificial reefs and natural rock formations. The traditional rod and reel is the most common gear used, with a minimum 8-ounce sinker and 30-pound test line. Preferred bait is green crab, but they are also caught using other crab species, clam and conch. As mostly bottom-dwelling fish, they are vulnerable to barotrauma when being reeled up. More information on tog fishing can be found at <https://www.nj.gov/dep/fgw/arttautog08.htm>.

### Did You Know?

Tautog are known for occupying tight spaces within reef structures or rock piles, sometimes lying on their sides to fit. This habit can account for instances of snagged and lost gear when fishing for tog, especially if you miss the initial, gentle *tap-tap* as the fish tests the bait before it quickly grabs it and scurries into a snug, sheltering nook.

Tautog can live into their 20s with some surviving over 30 years. Yet for such a long-lived species, they reach sexual maturity early with about 80% considered mature at age 3, and 100% fully mature at age 4.

Figure 2

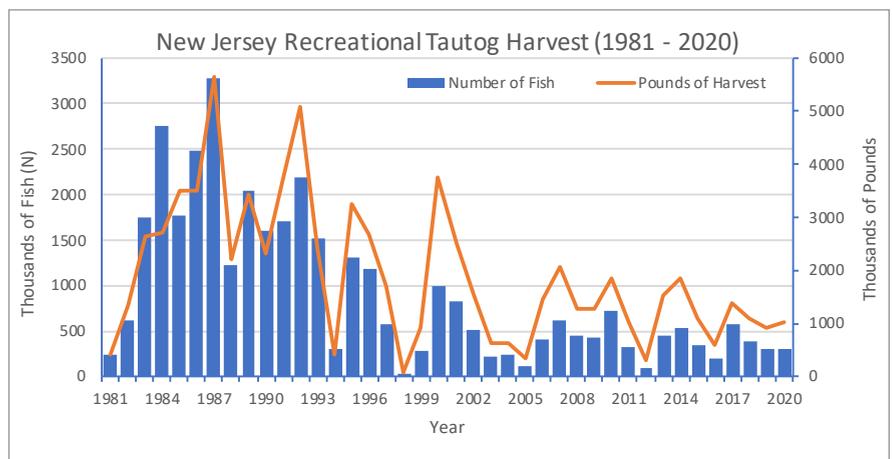
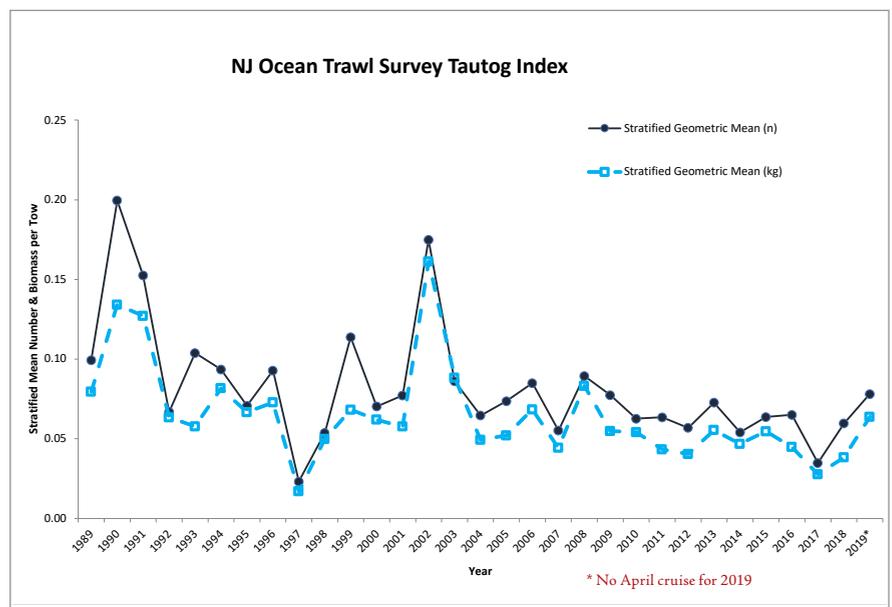


Figure 3





## Summer Flounder (Fluke)

*Paralichthys dentatus*

ASMFC's 2021 stock assessment indicates that summer flounder is neither overfished nor experiencing overfishing. The stock has rebounded considerably from record low numbers in the 1980s and 1990s but is not considered rebuilt.

New Jersey typically lands roughly 47% of the coastwide recreational harvest and has landed more fluke than any other state on the east coast for the last five years.

### Research

The **Ocean Trawl Survey** has collected over 40,000 summer flounder, annually averaging 1,300 fish. An annual index of abundance provides valuable data for the coastwide stock assessment. In recent years, the trawl has observed an increase in summer flounder abundance.

### Best Fishing Methods

Fluke represent the quintessential New Jersey fish, providing some of the highest regarded table fare at restaurants and generating an enormous amount of saltwater angling effort along the coast. They are caught from sod banks, ocean beaches or by boat allowing access to all that have the desire to catch them.

Fishing starts towards the middle of May in the back bays and estuaries and ramps up to true door-mat hunting in the ocean by mid-June. July and August are typically the best months for ocean fishermen, however in recent years, inshore waters have been producing well during summer months.

There are generally two fishing approaches: strip bait or artificial grubs on the back of jigs. Depending on conditions, both methods have their dominance over the other and should be considered to increase the odds of producing a keeper.

### Did You Know?

Found in both inshore and offshore waters from Canada to Florida, they are most abundant in the Mid-Atlantic region from Massachusetts to North Carolina.

Spawning begins at age two or three, at about 10 inches, in the fall while fish are moving offshore into deeper water. Larvae migrate to inshore coastal and estuarine areas from October to May.

Flounder lie in ambush and wait for their prey. They are quick and efficient predators with well-developed teeth allowing them to capture small fish, squid, sea worms, shrimp and other crustaceans.

Life starts as a laterally compressed fish with one eye on each side of the body. As they grow, their eyes migrate to a single side and the fish assume a dorso-ventrally compressed body type, meaning both of their eyes are found on the top of their head with a flat body. They are a left eyed flounder.

## Bluefish

*Pomatomus saltatrix*

In 2021, the coastwide stock assessment for bluefish was updated with data through 2019 and showed that while fishing mortality was at sustainable levels, spawning stock biomass was not. The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council and ASMFC recently approved a plan to rebuild biomass to target levels within 7 years. The assessment is currently undergoing a full review in a process called a *research track assessment* which will include data through 2021 and will form the basis of bluefish management in New Jersey.

New Jersey's recreational bluefish catch (harvest + live releases) is the second largest on the coast averaged over the last five years.

### Research

Nearly 3,500 bluefish have been collected in the **Delaware River Seine Survey**. An annual abundance index includes data from June through the end of September.

The **Ocean Trawl Survey** has consistently high catches (and often the plurality of catches) during October sampling and this data is used to calculate an annual index of abundance for bluefish. (Figure 4)

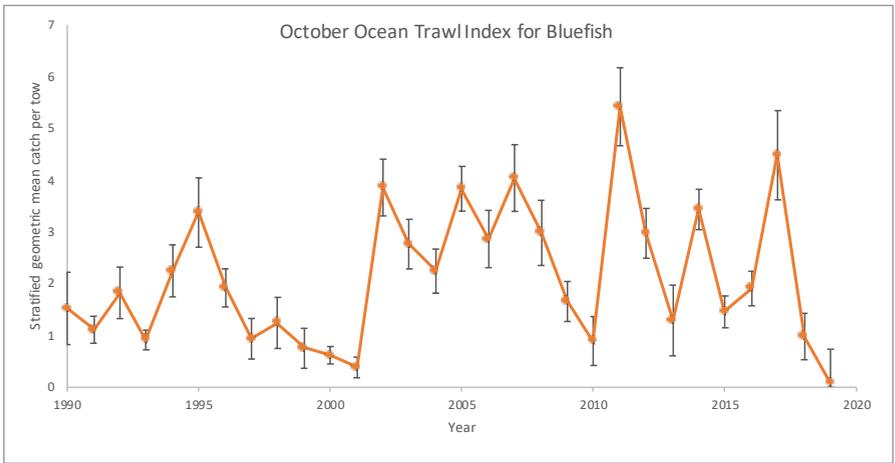
### Best Fishing Methods

- For excellent tips, readers can find a 2016 article on fishing methods here (scroll to end): <http://www.njfishandwildlife.com/pdf/2016/digmar6-13.pdf>.
- Bluefish are voracious; heavy tackle is helpful.
- Use a lure that mimics the bait the fish are feeding on. Trial and error or experimenting may be necessary.

### Did You Know?

- "...it is perhaps the most ferocious and blood-thirsty fish in the sea, leaving in its wake a trail of dead and mangled mackerel, menhaden, herring, alewives and other species on which it preys." From: [http://gma.org/fogm/Pomatomus\\_saltatrix.htm](http://gma.org/fogm/Pomatomus_saltatrix.htm).
- Bluefish are globally distributed.
- The largest bluefish caught was 31 pounds 12 ounces. From: <http://www.asmfc.org/uploads/file/5de573dfBluefishProfileOctNov2019.pdf>.
- Bluefish are considered mature at age two.

Figure 4





## Black Sea Bass

*Centropristis striata*

There are two stocks of black sea bass: Mid-Atlantic and South Atlantic. Based on most recent stock assessments, neither stock is overfished nor is overfishing occurring. Biological characteristics of this species are not fully understood and data are lacking, resulting in stock assessments that have a high degree of uncertainty.

New Jersey typically lands roughly 22% of the coastwide recreational harvest and has had the first or second highest landings compared to any other state on the east coast for the last five years.

### Research

Over 42,000 black sea bass have been collected in the **Ocean Trawl Survey**, annually collecting over 1,400 fish. Data is used for stock assessments. New Jersey's abundance index has been increasing steadily since 2015, corresponding with the latest coastwide assessment.

The **Ventless Trap Survey** samples three reefs off the coast using lobster traps to collect abundance data used to characterize fish populations inhabiting New Jersey reefs. In six years, over 1,500 sea bass have been collected.

### Best Fishing Methods

Black sea bass represent the kickoff to the ocean fishing season in the spring, providing some of the best fishing opportunities available for ocean going anglers. With a stock nearly 240% of the target biomass, there are plenty available to catch.

Fishing mostly occurs on boats in 30–120 feet of water. The preferred method is to use a two-hook, high-low rig with fresh clam or squid as an offering. Black sea bass sharpies looking for larger fish use a variety of metal jigs enticing a reaction bite from the most dominant fish in the school. Since sea bass are a structure-dependent species, fishing on one of New Jersey's 17 artificial reefs is a great place to hone your skills.

### Did You Know?

Inhabiting Atlantic coastal waters from the Gulf of Maine to the Florida Keys, they are concentrated in areas from Massachusetts to Virginia. They are typically found on rock bottoms around pilings, wrecks, jetties and artificial reefs. They summer in northern inshore water less than 120 feet deep and winter in southern offshore waters 240 to 540 feet deep.

Spawning occurs in coastal areas from January through July. Known as protogynous hermaphrodites, they start life as a female and change sex to become males around 9–13 inches at two to five years old. Following transition, a sea bass will either become a dominant male, characterized by a larger size and a bright blue nuchal hump during spawning season, or a subordinate male that has few distinguishing features.

Black sea bass rely on their large mouths to catch prey, eating whatever is available. They especially like crabs, shrimp, worms, small fish, clams and lobsters.



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# An Agency's Commitment to Recreational Fisheries

**Contributors:** Maryellen Gordon, Principal Biologist; Amber Johnson, Assistant Biologist; Jonathan Klotz, Senior Wildlife Worker; NJFW staff and NOAA Fisheries

New Jersey DEP Fish and Wildlife's Marine Fisheries works tirelessly toward managing, maintaining and constantly striving to strengthen our state's recreational saltwater fishery. We rely heavily on our stakeholders and constituents, making this a massive group effort.

While the output of our hard work—and the subsequent decisions—may not, at first, appear to be in the anglers' immediate favor, tough calls are made to ensure healthy future stocks. Marine Fisheries staff are an integral part of our cherished recreational community. Most of the staff work in this field due to their love of the outdoors and

fishing, as well as sharing a common goal to protect the resources of our beautiful state.

NJDEP Fish and Wildlife's Marine Fisheries, in partnership with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries, conducts surveys of marine recreational anglers along with for-hire owners and operators to obtain information about their fishing catch and effort (number of angler trips taken) in marine recreational fishing. Included in these surveys is information about the demographic, social and economic characteristics of those who participate in saltwater recreational fishing in United States waters.

NOAA Fisheries' Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) is the state-regional-federal partnership that develops, implements and continually improves a national network of recreational fishing surveys to estimate total recreational catch. The data collected help scientists and managers assess and maintain sustainable fish stocks. Quantities taken, fishing effort plus seasonal and geographical distribution of catch and effort are required for the development of rational management policies and plans. Continuous monitoring is needed to better observe recreational fishing trends, to evaluate the impacts of management regulations and to project what impacts various management scenarios will have on a fishery.

Recreational fisheries data are essential for NJDEP Fish and Wildlife, NOAA Fisheries, Regional Fishery Management Councils, Interstate Marine Fisheries Commissions, other state conservation agencies, recreational fishing industries and others involved in the management and productivity of marine fisheries.

In addition to a number of MRIP surveys, Marine Fisheries conducts a variety of other surveys and programs that help fulfill our dedication to the recreational fisheries community.

Marine Fisheries' Maryellen Gordon and Jen Pyle tagging striped bass in the Delaware Bay.

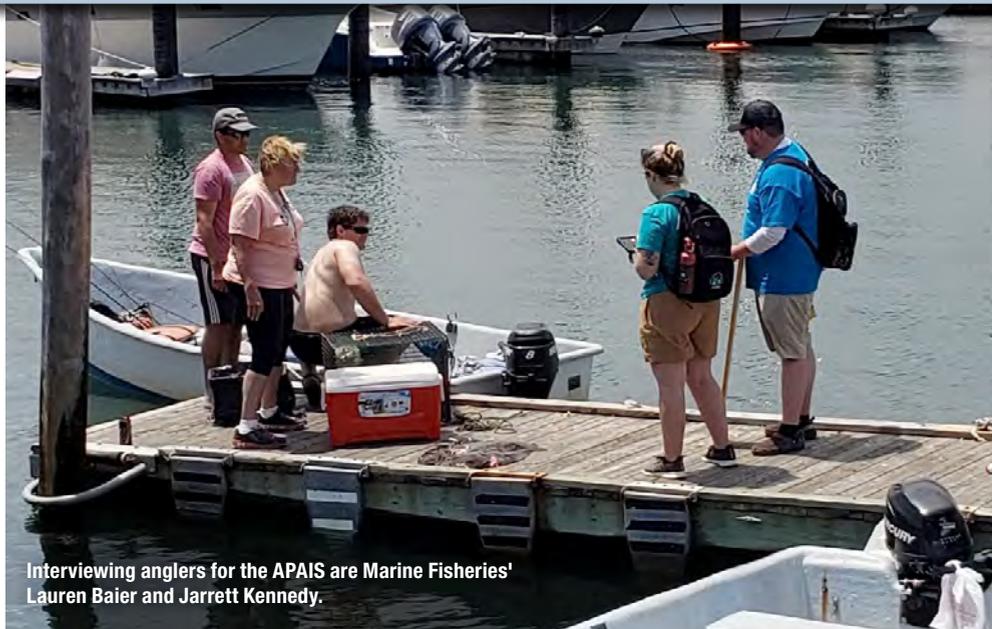


## Access Point Angler Intercept Survey

The Access Point Angler Intercept Survey (APAIS) is an in-person recreational fishing survey that collects individual catch data, including species identification, total number of each species, individual fish length and weight, as well as angler-specific information about the trip and anglers' fishing behavior. The data are collected by trained field technicians who sample New Jersey's public fishing access sites (i.e., boat ramps, piers, beaches, jetties, bridges, marinas, etc.) interviewing recreational saltwater anglers at the end of their fishing trips.

Field technicians are assigned to visit public fishing access sites during specific times of day. Standard statistical methods are used to select sites that will produce a representative sample of fishing trips using site-specific information found within the Public Fishing Access Site Register. There is also a headboat component of the survey. Field technicians ride along on assigned vessels, interview all anglers on board and take a sub-sample of those anglers to document and measure every single fish they catch and release.

The survey data are used to generate estimates that are used in stock assessments for recreational species and ultimately lead to regulation updates such as smaller or larger bag limits or changes to the open/closed seasons to ensure healthy sustainable stocks. These field intercept surveys are conducted by each of the 13 Atlantic states extending from Maine to Georgia, as well as the Gulf states and Hawaii.



Interviewing anglers for the APAIS are Marine Fisheries' Lauren Baier and Jarrett Kennedy.

Fish and Wildlife has committed to increasing total APAIS sampling by over 40% to strengthen the estimates used in recreational fisheries management.

Month	Headboat Assignments	Site Assignments				Current Total
		2020	2021 Add-Ons	2022 Add-Ons	% Increase	
March	5	36	0	0	0	36
April	5	80	18	33	41%	113
May	11	122	28	56	46%	178
June	12	122	28	56	46%	178
July	13	125	28	56	45%	181
August	13	146	28	56	38%	202
September	12	111	28	56	50%	167
October	11	108	28	56	52%	164
November	7	104	28	56	54%	160
December	5	98	18	32	33%	130

## For-Hire Telephone Survey

The For-Hire Telephone Survey (FHTS), or For-Hire Survey, is a telephone survey that collects trip information from for-hire operators to estimate fishing effort.

Every week from March through December, a call list is generated from the known fleet of charter and headboats that are presumed to be operating during that time period in New Jersey. Calls are made to the vessel representatives for each vessel drawn. Information collected includes number of fishing trips within a specific week, number of anglers fishing and the target species for the trip.

The Large Pelagic Telephone Survey (LPTS) is added on to the FHTS between the months of June and October. For-hire operators and anglers with charter/headboat category Highly Migratory Species permits are required to participate in the survey. Questions are specific to trips that targeted any large pelagic species, including but not limited to tuna, shark, billfish, dolphin and wahoo.

These data are paired with data collected through the APAIS charter and headboat intercepts to estimate total for-hire catch, which is used by fisheries scientists and managers.



Anglers enjoying the day aboard one of New Jersey's for-hire fishing vessels.

On average, over 50 for-hire vessels are contacted weekly. The table shows the % of surveys with responses as compared to those with no responses, as well as refusals.

New Jersey	Wave 1 (JAN/FEB)	Wave 2 (MAR/APR)	Wave 3 (MAY/JUN)	Wave 4 (JUL/AUG)	Wave 5 (SEP/OCT)	Wave 6 (NOV/DEC)
# Vessels Contacted Weekly	0	25	62	63	64	42
% Positive Surveys		69.33%	62.70%	58.02%	55.38%	41.01%
% Non-response		30.27%	36.70%	40.78%	43.42%	58.19%
% Refusal		0.40%	0.60%	1.20%	1.20%	0.80%



Sinking the Joan LaRie III on the Axel Carlson Reef.

## Striped Bass Bonus Program

Marine Fisheries initiated the Striped Bass Bonus Program (SBBP) in 1990 to allow the harvest of an additional striped bass for New Jersey recreational anglers. Since New Jersey does not allow netting or sale of striped bass, this commercial quota was transferred to the recreational fishing sector forming the basis of the SBBP. The main goal of the SBBP is to allow anglers to participate in the management process while enjoying their favorite recreational pastime. It is a popular program that provides valuable data for assessing stock status and fishing trends, making it an integral part of New Jersey's striped bass management.

## Artificial Reef Program

Since 1984, Fish and Wildlife's Marine Fisheries has been involved in an intensive Artificial Reef Program consisting of reef construction and biological monitoring. The purpose is to create a network of artificial reefs in the ocean waters along the

New Jersey coast to provide a hard substrate for fish, shellfish and crustaceans, fishing grounds for anglers and underwater structures for scuba divers. Currently, Marine Fisheries maintains 17 reef sites.

Various reefs are monitored through a Ventless Trap Survey that entails randomly placing traps throughout three reef sites off the coast of New Jersey onto different substrates. Biologists tend the traps and record data (such as length, weight, sex, etc.) on the different species that are captured before the animals are returned to the water. Once emptied, the traps are put back in the same location where they were pulled so data collection and sites remain consistent. The benefited species (like black sea bass, tautog, summer flounder, lobster and various crabs) are endemic to New Jersey but are limited in extent and abundance by the lack of hard substrate.

Through this survey, we can determine how species utilize different material types and how they use the reefs during different seasons. Using the data collected, scientists can perform different analyses to determine the success and productivity of current reef sites, as well as planning for future reef projects to enhance recreational enjoyment.

**Recreational Fishing Data:**  
[www.CountMyFish.noaa.gov](http://www.CountMyFish.noaa.gov)

**APAIS:**  
<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/recreational-fishing-data/access-point-angler-intercept-survey-glance>

**MRIP Surveys Overviews:**  
<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/recreational-fishing-data/types-recreational-fishing-surveys>

**Site Register Access:**  
<https://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/msd/html/siteRegister.jsp>

**About the Site Register:**  
<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/recreational-fishing-data/public-fishing-access-site-register>

**NJ Saltwater Recreational Registry Program:**  
<https://www.nj.gov/dep/saltwaterregistry/>

**Recreational Saltwater Volunteer Angler Survey:**  
[https://www.njfishandwildlife.org/marinesurvey\\_intro.htm](https://www.njfishandwildlife.org/marinesurvey_intro.htm)

**Striped Bass Bonus Program:**  
<https://www.njfishandwildlife.org/bonusbas.htm>

**Artificial Reef Program:**  
<https://www.nj.gov/dep/tgw/artreef.htm>

**Record Fish Program:**  
<https://www.njfishandwildlife.org/recfish.htm>

## New Jersey Saltwater Recreational Registry Program

The New Jersey Saltwater Recreational Registry Program (NJSRRP) is an important tool that helps anglers and policy makers work together to better account for the contributions and impacts of saltwater anglers on ocean ecosystems and coastal economies. In 2006, NOAA Fisheries was charged with creating a universal registry of all current saltwater anglers fishing in the United States. States were allowed to establish their own registry program for saltwater anglers that fished in their state.

New Jersey established a free registry program that became effective May 4, 2011 through Administrative Order No. 2011-05. The NJSRRP is only one part of the national overhaul of the way NOAA Fisheries collects and reports recreational fishing data. The goal of the Marine Recreational Information Program is to provide the most accurate information possible that can be used to determine the health of fish stocks.

Reliable, universally trusted data will, in turn, aid anglers, fisheries managers and other stakeholders in their combined effort to effectively and fairly set the rules that will ensure the long-term sustainability of recreational fishing.

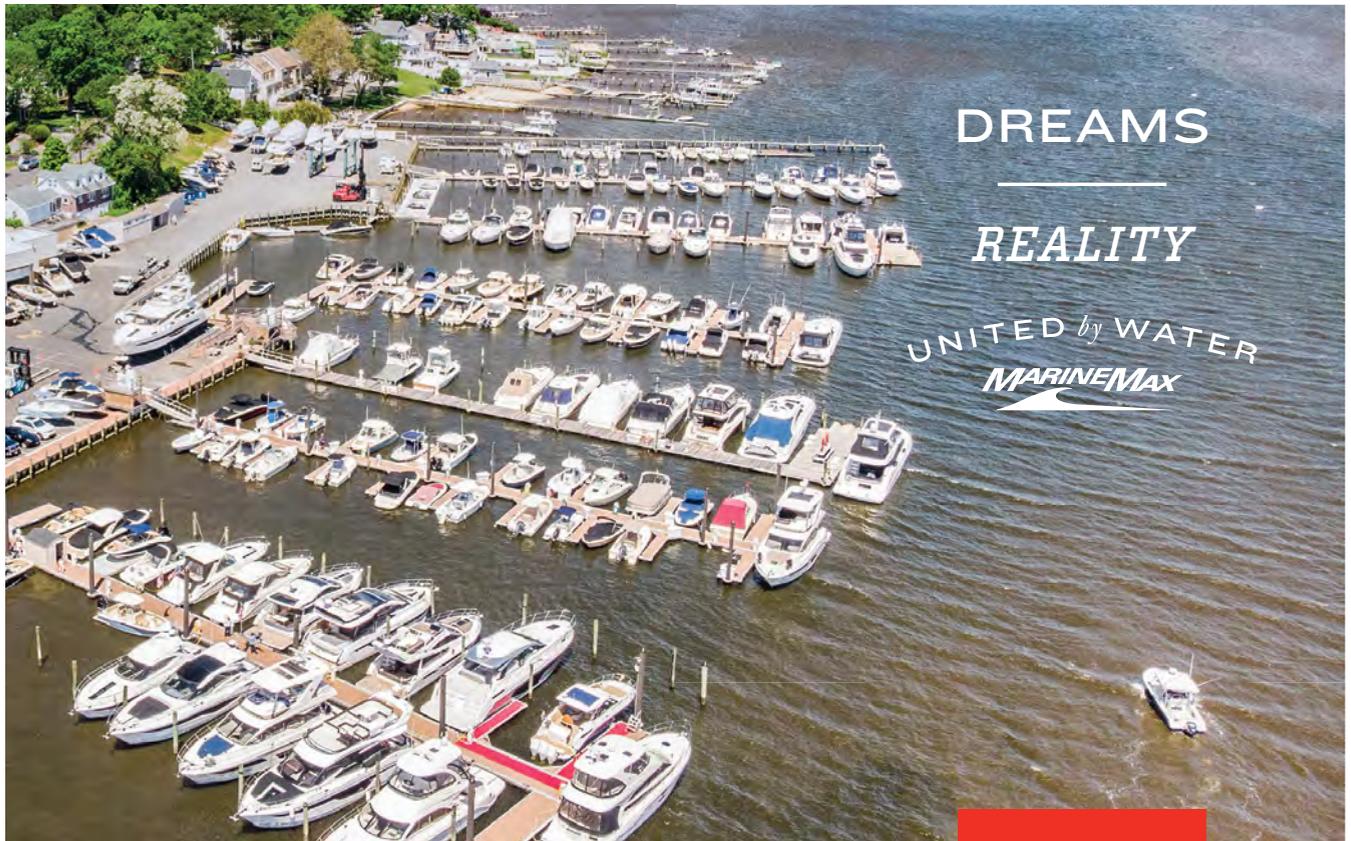
## Volunteer Angler Survey

The Recreational Saltwater Volunteer Angler Survey (VAS) was implemented by Marine Fisheries to collect information on recreationally important marine finfish species. Information collected through this voluntary survey will provide data that may support alternative management strategies that increase fishing opportunities for the public.

The focus of this voluntary survey is to collect information on catch and effort from recreational fishing trips in marine and estuarine waters of the state and surrounding areas. For catch information, Marine Fisheries staff are interested in collecting information on the number and size of both kept and released species and should not be used only for successful trips. *Trips with zero catch are important to report, also.* Documenting zero catch trips in recreational fishing data help to accurately estimate fishing effort and to make sure reported trips are representative of all trips taken. 



Tom Corbett landing a keeper striped bass.



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## MARINE REGULATIONS

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](http://NJFishandWildlife.com/njregs.htm#marine).

### Highlights of Regulation Changes:

Rules for the recreational harvest of striped bass have changed.

- A new regulation requires using inline (non-offset) circle hooks when fishing for striped bass with bait. See page 5 for more information.
- The recreational black sea bass regulations have been modified to include an open season May 17–June 19 with a ten fish possession limit; an open season July 1–Aug. 31 with a two fish possession limit; an open season Oct. 7–Oct. 26 with a ten fish possession limit; and an open season Nov. 1–Dec. 31 with a 15 fish possession limit. The minimum size limit for all seasons is 13 inches.
- The recreational summer flounder regulations for Delaware Bay and tributaries and Island Beach State Park remain unchanged. For all other waters, open season has been modified to May 2–Sept. 27 with a possession limit of two fish at 17 inches to less than 18 inches and one fish at 18 inches or greater.
- The recreational scup minimum size limit has increased to 10 inches. Season and possession limits remain unchanged.

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 16.

### 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](http://FishandWildlife.com/Volunteer-Angler-Survey) at [NJFishandWildlife.com/marinesurvey.htm](http://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 <https://dnrec.alpha.delaware.gov/fish-wildlife/licenses/>.

### New York Fishing Registry Requirement

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

### Bait Fish

No license is required to take bait fish 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

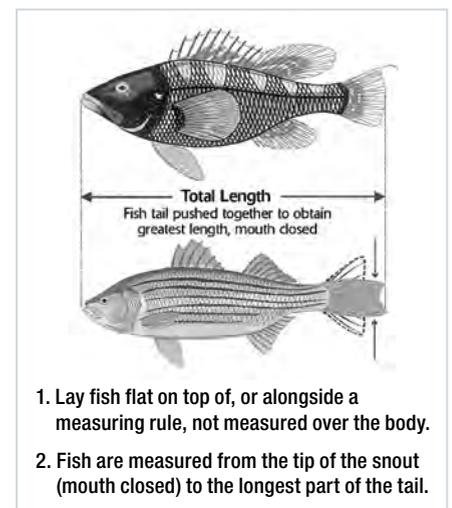
It is illegal to intentionally molest, kill or possess sea turtles, including terrapins, or marine mammals, or to possess any part thereof.

## 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](http://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
- Diamondback terrapin
- Shortnose sturgeon
- River herring (alewife and blueback herring; see herring illustrations, page 18)
- Various shark species (See page 22 footnote for the species list prohibited from harvest.)
- Horseshoe crabs

## Finfish

Regulations for most finfish are listed in the table on page 21.

### 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 17. 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 Marine Resources Administration.

## Interstate Wildlife Violator Compact

### Beware!

New Jersey participates in the Interstate Wildlife Violator Compact which means that a violator with repeat convictions of New Jersey marine fishing laws may face license suspensions in participating states.

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**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 14.) The recreational regulations for black sea bass are: **open season May 17–June 19 with a ten fish possession limit; an open season July 1–Aug. 31 with a two fish possession limit; an open season Oct. 7–Oct. 26 with a ten fish possession limit; and an open season Nov. 1–Dec. 31 with a 15 fish possession limit. The minimum size limit for all seasons is 13 inches.**

**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: [NJFishandWildlife.com/pdf/marine/bluefish4hire.pdf](https://NJFishandWildlife.com/pdf/marine/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 18 for herring species identification.

**Tips for Releasing Fish Unharmed**

**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.
- Minimize the effect of barotrauma, which occurs when gases expand faster than they can diffuse due to decreasing pressure during ascent through the water column. For more information about barotrauma and how to release fish safely visit: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/resources-fishing/catch-and-release-best-practices>.
- 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 eyes. Support the weight of the fish along the length of its body. Do not 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.

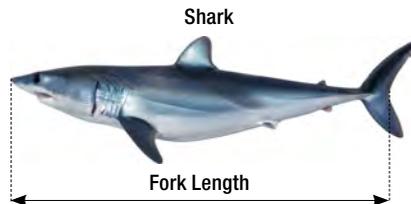
Regulations in red are new this year.

### Sharks

Some species of sharks may be harvested by recreational fishermen from the shore or from a boat only by hand line or rod and reel. If a shark is caught but not kept, it must be released immediately. Anglers should access the following National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration website, [www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resources/educational-materials](http://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resources/educational-materials), to download helpful materials such as the NOAA Fisheries *Shark Identification Placard* and the *Careful Catch and Release Brochure*, which provide a pictorial guide to identifying sharks and tips on handling and releasing large saltwater pelagic fish.

All sharks harvested must have heads, tails and fins attached naturally to the carcass until landed, although anglers may still gut and bleed the carcass. Filleting sharks at sea is prohibited. Recreational size limits for sharks are specified in the state and federal regulation charts on pages 21 and 22. Refer

to the illustration, below, for the proper measurement of fork length.



Dr. William Driggers, III/NMFS

The 2022 shark regulations complement existing federal shark regulations (see 2022 *Federal Recreational Regulations* table, page 22). 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 Aggregated 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 22 footnote for the species list defining shark groupings, including species prohibited from harvest.

**Note: To differentiate sharks from dogfish—dogfish have flat, tiny teeth; spiny dogfish have dorsal spines in front of the dorsal fins. Neither are present in other 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.

## New Jersey Saltwater Recreational Registry Program (NJSRRP)

### ATTENTION: Recreational Saltwater Anglers

Register because you make a difference! FREE. EASY. REQUIRED.

The saltwater registry acts as a current contact list for mail and telephone surveys. 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 2021, the NJSRRP had 143,704 individual registrants and 745 for-hire vessels. The total number of individuals registered was at an all time low.

\* 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](http://www.saltwaterregistry.nj.gov).

If you're not contacted through the Saltwater Registry or intercepted by an APAIS interviewer while fishing, you can still participate by submitting a fishing report after each saltwater trip to the NJ Volunteer Angler Survey. Your reports impact how our oceans are managed. Submit online reports at [NJFishandWildlife.com/marinesurvey.htm](http://NJFishandWildlife.com/marinesurvey.htm).

### Wanted: Increased Participation!



Since the NJSRRP was implemented in May of 2011, there has been a fairly steady decline in the annual number of individual participants. Total number of individuals ranges from 270,437 in 2012 to 143,704 in 2021.



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.

**Note: Non-offset circle hooks are required to reduce striped bass release mortality while fishing with bait. See page 5 for more information.**

### 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.

### Summer Flounder (Fluke)

The recreational summer flounder open season is **May 2 to September 27**. 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, open season is May 2 to September 27 and the size limit is two fish at 17 inches to less than 18 inches and one fish at 18 inches or greater. Fish can be caught in any order. Transportation of summer flounder less than 17 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 18–19 for the fish ID pages and pages 21–22 for the regulation charts. 



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## 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.
- **Any boat (including jet skis and non-titled watercraft), mechanically propelled (including 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](http://www.nj.gov/mvc/vehicles/boating.htm).

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

# Marine Species Identification

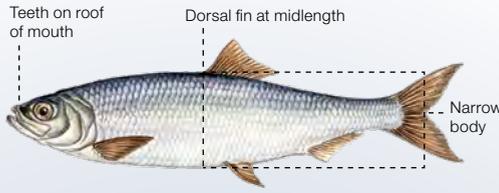
## MARINE REGULATIONS

### Herring

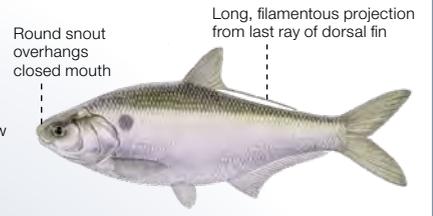


No teeth on roof of mouth

**Alewife (a river herring)**



**Atlantic Herring**



**Gizzard Shad**



**American Shad**



**Blueback Herring (a river herring)**



**Hickory Shad**

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



**Striped Bass**



**Weakfish**



**Bluefish (Snapper)**



**Black Sea Bass**



**Atlantic Croaker**



**Winter Flounder**



**Tautog (Blackfish)**



**Black Drum**



**Summer Flounder (Fluke)**



**Red Drum**



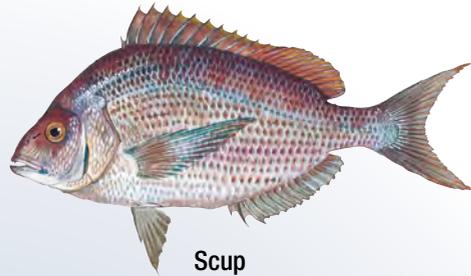
**Blue Crab**



**Hard Clam**



**Spot**



**Scup  
(Porgy)**



**White Perch**



**Northern Kingfish**



**Northern Searobin**



**Northern Puffer**



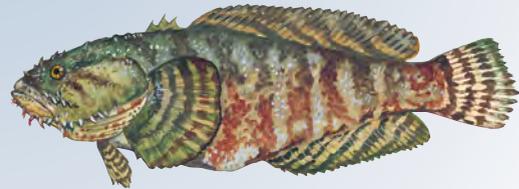
**Atlantic Bonito**



**Cobia**



**Spanish Mackerel**



**Oyster Toadfish**



**Atlantic Mackerel**



**Atlantic Cod**

For a complete list of shark species, visit NOAA's Shark Identification and Federal Regulations for the Recreational Fishery of the U.S. Atlantic Coast at: [www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resource/educational-materials/shark-identification-placard](http://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resource/educational-materials/shark-identification-placard).

Regulations in red are new this year.

### Crustaceans

#### American Lobster

The legal possession size limit of whole lobsters, measured from the rear of the eye socket along a line parallel to the center line of the body shell to the rear of the body shell, shall be not less than 3 3/4 inches nor greater than 5 1/4 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.



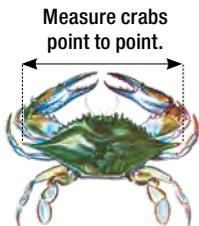
For information about lobster pot deployment and New Jersey Reef Full Access Zone Locations, go to [NJFishandWildlife.com/pdf/2016/marlet-reefgear02-11-16.pdf](http://NJFishandWildlife.com/pdf/2016/marlet-reefgear02-11-16.pdf).

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.

#### Blue 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 23) or two trot lines to harvest crabs. See page 23 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: 3 1/2 inches
- Hard crab: 4 1/2 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 30.
- 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 23 for details on purchasing a non-commercial crab dredge license.

**Notice:** All non-collapsible Chesapeake-style crab pots (see illustration on page 23) 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 23. 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 23 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 23.
- It is illegal to dredge shellfish on public grounds. Use of hand implements are the only legal harvest methods.



- The minimum size of hard clams that may be harvested is 1 1/2 inches in length. Clams less than 1 1/2 inches in length must immediately be returned to the bottom from which they were taken. Specific seasons, regulations and size limits exist for oyster beds in Great Bay, Delaware Bay, plus the Mullica, Great Egg Harbor and Tuckahoe rivers. Check with the nearest shellfish office (Nacote Creek or Delaware Bay) for these detailed regulations.
- Shells taken in the process of harvesting oysters must be culled from the live oysters and returned immediately to the area from where they were taken. 

### 2022 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](http://NJFishandWildlife.com) or call the marine fish "listen-only" information line at (609) 292-2083. Regulations in **red** are new this year. **See page 14 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 these species. See also **Summer Flounder**, page 17.

Species	Open Season	Minimum Length (total length except sharks)	Harvest & Possession Limit (per person unless noted)
American Eel <sup>a</sup>	No Closed Season	9"	25
Black Drum	No Closed Season	16"	3
Black Sea Bass (Min. length excludes tail filament; see page 14.)	May 17–June 19	13"	10
	July 1–Aug. 31	13"	2
	Oct. 7–Oct. 26	13"	10
	Nov. 1–Dec. 31	13"	15
Bluefish (Snapper)	No Closed Season	None	5 fish per person while fishing from a party/charter vessel <sup>f</sup> 3 fish per person for all other anglers
Cobia	No Closed Season	37"	1 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	10"	50
<b>Shad</b>			
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)
<b>Shark<sup>b, c, †</sup></b>			
Aggregated large coastal group <sup>†</sup>	Jan. 1–May 14 and July 16–Dec. 31	Aggregated Large Coastal and Pelagic: Shortfin Mako: Male: 71" fork length Female: 83" fork length All others 54" fork length	One shark (of any species, except prohibited species) per vessel per trip; plus one Atlantic sharpnose shark per person per trip (no minimum size); plus one bonnet- head shark per person per trip (no minimum size).
Hammerhead group <sup>†</sup>			
Non-blacknose small coastal group <sup>†</sup> Blacknose group <sup>†</sup>	No Closed Season		
Pelagic group <sup>†</sup>	No Closed Season	Hammerheads: 78" fork length Other listed sharks: None	
Spanish Mackerel	No Closed Season	14"	10
<b>Striped Bass or Hybrid Striped Bass**</b>			
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
<b>Summer Flounder (Fluke)</b>			
Delaware Bay and tributaries <sup>e</sup>	May 2–Sept. 27	17"	3
Island Beach State Park, shore fishing	May 2–Sept. 27	16"	2
All water except as above	May 2–Sept. 27	two @ 17" to less than 18" and one @ 18" or greater	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
<b>Blue Crab</b>			
peeler or shedder	No Closed Season <sup>d</sup>	3"	1 bushel
soft	No Closed Season <sup>d</sup>	3½"	
hard	No Closed Season <sup>d</sup>	4½"	
Lobster (carapace length)	See closed seasons on page 20	3⅝"	6
Hard Clam (license required)	No Closed Season <sup>‡</sup>	1½"	150 clams

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

b Not including dogfish; see description on page 16 under **Sharks**.

c See page 14 for a list of **Prohibited Species**.

d Unless using non-collapsible, Chesapeake-style crab pots, trot lines or crab dredges. See pages 20 and 23.

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 15 under **Bluefish** regarding **party/charter** definition and regulations.

\*\* See page 5 for specifics of non-offset circle hook requirements.

† See page 22 for **Federal Recreational Regulations**.

‡ Non-resident license valid only June – Sept. See water classification chart information at [nj.gov/dep/bmw/nssphome.html#charts](http://nj.gov/dep/bmw/nssphome.html#charts).

Regulations in *red* are new this year.

### 2022 Federal Recreational Fishing Regulations for Minimum Size, Possession Limits and Seasons

See page 14 for how to measure fish. See *Recreational Minimum Size, Possession Limits and Seasons* (page 21) 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](http://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, whichever is less — except on a charter or headboat, then 10 per paying passenger.	For current federal waters regulations (3–200nm), refer to <a href="http://fisheries.noaa.gov/topic/atlantic-highly-migratory-species">fisheries.noaa.gov/topic/atlantic-highly-migratory-species</a> 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 <a href="http://hmspermits.noaa.gov">hmspermits.noaa.gov</a> 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 <a href="http://hmspermits.noaa.gov">hmspermits.noaa.gov</a> 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 <a href="http://fisheries.noaa.gov/topic/atlantic-highly-migratory-species">fisheries.noaa.gov/topic/atlantic-highly-migratory-species</a> or call (727) 824-5399.
Tilefish, Blue-line	May 1–Oct. 31	None	<b>Private boat:</b> 3 fish per person, per trip <b>USCG uninspected for-hire vessel:</b> 5 fish per person, per trip <b>USCG inspected for-hire vessel:</b> 7 fish per person, per trip	In effect from the Virginia/North Carolina border north. Private vessels targeting or retaining tilefish (including for-hire vessels on private trips) must possess a federal Private Recreational Tilefish Permit and submit electronic trip reports within 24 hours of returning to port. For more information, visit <a href="http://mafmc.org/rec-tilefish-evtr">mafmc.org/rec-tilefish-evtr</a> .
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.	<b>For anglers:</b> 1 per person, no more than 4 per vessel per trip. <b>For charter vessels:</b> 1 per paying passenger, no more than 6 per vessel per trip. <b>For headboat vessels:</b> 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 <a href="http://hmspermits.noaa.gov">hmspermits.noaa.gov</a> or call (888) 872-8862. All non-tournament swordfish landings must be reported to NMFS within 24 hours either online at <a href="http://hmspermits.noaa.gov">hmspermits.noaa.gov</a> 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 <a href="http://hmspermits.noaa.gov">hmspermits.noaa.gov</a> 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 <a href="http://hmspermits.noaa.gov">hmspermits.noaa.gov</a> 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 <a href="http://hmspermits.noaa.gov">hmspermits.noaa.gov</a> or by calling (888) 872-8862.
Tuna, Skipjack	Year round	None	None	For current federal waters regulations (3–200nm), refer to <a href="http://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/topic/atlantic-highly-migratory-species">www.fisheries.noaa.gov/topic/atlantic-highly-migratory-species</a> 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*				
Aggregated Large Coastal Group Pelagic Group Non-blacknose Small Coastal Group Hammerhead Group Blacknose Group	Year round	Aggregated 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	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 <a href="http://hmspermits.noaa.gov">hmspermits.noaa.gov</a> 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.
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): **Aggregated 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 20. **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 [nj.gov/dep/bmw/nssp/home.html#charts](http://nj.gov/dep/bmw/nssp/home.html#charts) or call Marine Water Monitoring at (609) 748-2000. Purchase shellfish licenses online at [https://nj.aspirafocus.com/internetsales](http://nj.aspirafocus.com/internetsales).

#### 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.

**(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: [NJFishandWildlife.com/pdf/marine/recseasons.pdf](http://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: [https://nj.aspirafocus.com/internetsales](http://https://nj.aspirafocus.com/internetsales) 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](http://NJFishandWildlife.com/agentlst.htm).

- **Recreational crab pot/trot line license:** \$2  
Harvest limit: one bushel per day. Refer to the shellfish regulations on page 20 for all recreational crabbing regulations.
- **Non-commercial crab dredge license:** \$15  
Harvest limit: one bushel per day during the crab dredge season. See page 20 for recreational crab regulations.

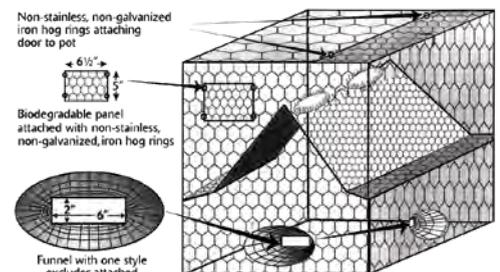
#### Terrapin Excluders and Biodegradable Panels Are Required on Chesapeake-Style Crab Pots

**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 ⅜" diameter, or non-stainless steel, uncoated ferrous metal not greater than ½" 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 20. 

Chesapeake-Style Crab Pot



### Shellfish and Non-Commercial Crab Pot License Agents

Current listing now available online at [NJFishandWildlife.com/agentlst.htm](http://NJFishandWildlife.com/agentlst.htm).

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

### Marine Fisheries: Recreational Surveys

#### Be Counted...

You may see New Jersey Fish and Wildlife interviewers at marine public access fishing sites conducting the Access Point Angler Intercept Survey (APAIS). The survey targets marine recreational anglers to obtain information about their fishing effort and catch. The more data collected, the more successful the survey becomes for estimating overall catch, which is an integral factor for managing fisheries. To strengthen our estimates by collecting even more data, we have increased our total individual assignments by more than 40% since 2020.

Marine Fisheries staff are eager to speak with fishing clubs/groups about the importance of the APAIS. We rely heavily on our valued anglers, creating a joint effort to preserve the state's natural resources. Invite us to a group meeting or event. Contact Maryellen Gordon at [Maryellen.Gordon@dep.nj.gov](mailto:Maryellen.Gordon@dep.nj.gov). We look forward to meeting you!

Fish and Wildlife staff continue to conduct the For-Hire Telephone Survey annually from March through December. Weekly calls are made to vessel operators regarding the previous week's trips. This data is used to estimate fishing effort in the for-hire sector and is combined with APAIS data. In 2021, 2242 vessels were contacted averaging approximately 51 vessels per week with a 57% response rate.

If you're not contacted directly, you can submit an easy, online fishing report after each saltwater trip to the New Jersey Volunteer Angler Survey at [NJFishandWildlife.com/marinesurvey.htm](http://NJFishandWildlife.com/marinesurvey.htm). Your reports have a real impact on how our oceans are managed.



### NEW Fish and Wildlife Website Arriving in 2022!

#### New Jersey Fish and Wildlife's website is undergoing a renovation!

Soon there will be easier access to saltwater fishing regulations, management updates, public hearing information, data collected from field surveys and more. Stay tuned!



### New Jersey: Stock Status & Management Updates

Species	Status	Recent/Next Action
American Lobster	Depleted; Not overfishing	Benchmark stock assessment 2020
American Shad	Depleted; Overfishing status unknown	Benchmark stock assessment 2020
Atlantic Croaker	Overfished and overfishing status unknown	Traffic Light Analysis management action triggered 2020
Atlantic Striped Bass	Overfished; Overfishing	Update stock assessment 2022
Black Sea Bass	Not overfished; Not overfishing	Update stock assessment 2021
Black Drum	Not overfished; Not overfishing	Benchmark stock assessment 2023
Bluefish	Overfished; Not overfishing	Research track assessment 2022
Coastal Sharks	Varies by species	<a href="http://www.asmfc.org/species/coastal-sharks">http://www.asmfc.org/species/coastal-sharks</a>
Cobia	Not overfished; Not overfishing	Benchmark stock assessment 2020
Horseshoe Crab	Status unknown; Moratorium since 2008	Adaptive Resource Management assessment 2021
Scup	Not overfished; Not overfishing	Update stock assessment 2021
Spanish Mackerel	Not overfished; Not overfishing	Operational stock assessment 2022
Spiny Dogfish	Not overfished; Not overfishing	Peer review assessment 2022
Summer Flounder	Not overfished; Not overfishing	Update stock assessment 2021
Tautog	Overfished; Not overfishing	Update stock assessment 2021
Weakfish	Depleted; Not overfishing	Update stock assessment 2019
Winter Flounder	Overfished; Not overfishing	Update stock assessment 2020

For updates or more information, please visit [www.asmfc.org](http://www.asmfc.org).

## Online Map Tools

New Jersey Fish and Wildlife's **Office of Fish and Wildlife Information Systems** develops and maintains geographic information systems (GIS) data, produces web mapping applications and provides GIS/IT assistance to support fish and wildlife management throughout New Jersey. Below is a listing of the public-facing online interactive mapping tools that allow access to spatial information, and in some cases, the ability to submit data or observations directly to Fish and Wildlife.

### License Agent Locator

Displays locations of NJDEP-authorized fishing and hunting license agents:  
[nj.gov/dep/dfwlicenseagents](http://nj.gov/dep/dfwlicenseagents)



### Marine Protected Wildlife Reporter

A citizen science application to submit observations of protected marine wildlife to Fish and Wildlife for various conservation projects:  
[nj.gov/dep/njmarinewildlife](http://nj.gov/dep/njmarinewildlife)



### NJ Hunting & Trapping Explorer

Helps users plan hunting outings and navigate in the field. Includes interactive maps of hunting and trapping zones for multiple wildlife species plus seasons, regulations and harvest statistics: [NJFishandWildlife.com/hunt](http://NJFishandWildlife.com/hunt)



### Recreational Saltwater Volunteer Angler Survey

A voluntary survey to collect information on catch and effort from recreational fishing trips in state marine and estuarine waters and surrounding areas. An update to the former web-based survey, this application is optimized for mobile and desktop use: [nj.gov/dep/marineanglersurvey](http://nj.gov/dep/marineanglersurvey)



### Sedge Island Living Shoreline

Overview of the Sedge Island Education Center, the need for a living shoreline at the island, and Fish and Wildlife's 2019 installation process: [nj.gov/dep/livingshoreline](http://nj.gov/dep/livingshoreline)



### New Jersey Seafood Finder

Displays seafood markets, wholesale distributors, delivery or pick-up businesses and restaurants selling seafood products that have been landed, grown or harvested in New Jersey and are available for sale to the public:  
[nj.gov/dep/njseafood](http://nj.gov/dep/njseafood)



### Artificial Reef Web Map Application (Application under development.)

Displays locations and background data on New Jersey's artificial reef sites.

With this innovative communications platform, New Jersey Fish and Wildlife shares information with its partners, educates the public and advances conservation in a new and engaging manner.



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# Skillful Angler Program

## RECOGNITION PROGRAMS

### New Jersey Skillful Angler Program

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. Anglers can now submit their application and photo(s) electronically! Program rules and steps to enter are found here [NJFishandWildlife.com/skflang.htm](http://NJFishandWildlife.com/skflang.htm). Anglers qualifying for a Skillful Angler award receive a certificate along with a **Skillful Angler patch** as a testament to their achievement.

The Program has three main divisions: **Adult** (for anglers age 16 and older), **Junior** (under age 16) and **Catch and Release** (based on length). **A clear, side-view photo that allows accurate species identification must be included with each application.** Additional good quality (and high resolution) photos with the angler are welcome and appreciated.

The Skillful Angler Program recognizes different levels of fishing expertise. An angler who submits five applications of qualifying size for the same species will receive a Specialist Certificate. An angler who submits five applications of qualifying fish of different species will receive a Master Certificate. Catch 10 or more qualifying fish within the year, and the angler will earn an Elite Angler Certificate.

For new anglers, the Program also recognizes your first fish caught no matter the age of the angler. Qualified anglers will receive a First Fish certificate.

### 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 (see page 28) requires a different application and is based on weight alone. Scale certification documentation and a weighmaster's signature are required for State Record Fish entries. Other rules apply. Visit Fish and Wildlife's website at [NJFishandWildlife.com/recfish.htm](http://NJFishandWildlife.com/recfish.htm) for a complete list of current state records.

Four additional categories may bring out your competitive nature. Personalized certificates are also awarded for the Slam Series which includes:

- **Inshore Slam I** — catch one each qualifying Striped Bass, Bluefish and Fluke
- **Inshore Slam II** — catch one each qualifying Black Sea Bass, Tautog and Weakfish
- **Offshore Pelagic Slam** — catch one each qualifying Bluefin Tuna, Bigeye Tuna, Yellowfin Tuna and Dolphin
- **Marlin Slam** — catch one each qualifying White and Blue Marlin

Each month, the leaders of each category and species will be posted on our Skillful Angler Leader Board webpage. 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 ruler markings are legible.** Please also include an attractive, well-composed, high-resolution (large file size) photo to be considered for printing in this Digest. **Smile!** All photos become the property of the NJDEP Fish and Wildlife and may be used for promotional purposes.

**To apply, go to:** <https://nj.gov/dep/fgw/pdf/fwfisheries/skflangapp-salt.pdf>



**Skillful angler Ed Braunsdorf hooked this 10lbs., 14oz. fluke measuring 29 inches with a 25-inch girth. He was using a Spro jig with Gulp and Spearing as bait while fishing the Sea Girt Reef.**

Trevor Sherwood

### Did You Know?

**Email your entry and photo from any device!**

[NJFishandWildlife.com/skflang.htm](http://NJFishandWildlife.com/skflang.htm)

## Operation Game Thief — Short Stripers Net Fines

On March 28th, 2021, shortly after 10 a.m., the Operation Game Thief tip line received an anonymous call concerning an individual keeping short striped bass from the Raritan Bay. The angler in a yellow raincoat was seen throwing three fish on the beach in the area of Ocean Blvd in Old Bridge Township.

Conservation Police Officer James Woerner responded to the call, taking up surveillance from a distance. Once he witnessed the man in the yellow coat and a companion catch and keep an undersized fish, Officer Woerner moved in to make an inspection. The men—both from Bound Brook, New Jersey—were found with ten, undersized striped bass. The smallest fish measured 18 inches. The limit at the time was one fish per person, measuring 28 inches to less than 38 inches.

Both men received summonses for the violations, later paying \$300 in penalties, plus court costs.

### Operation Game Thief: (855) OGT-TIPS



CPO James Woerner/NJ Fish and Wildlife

## New Jersey State Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs

### If you care about...

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



### Then get involved!

- Stay informed on issues affecting NJ sportsmen and sportswomen
- Make an impact on outdoor issues
- Meet others who share similar sporting interests
- Have fun and participate in Federation-sponsored activities: jamborees, clay target shoots, tournaments, dinners, conventions, and more!

### Membership

\_\_\_ \$40 Includes monthly newspaper and \$1 million excess liability insurance covering your sporting activities throughout the U.S. and Canada

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 County \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_  
 State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Send with your check or money order to:

NJSFSC  
 PO Box 10173  
 Trenton, NJ 08650



Join online at  
[www.njsfsc.org](http://www.njsfsc.org)

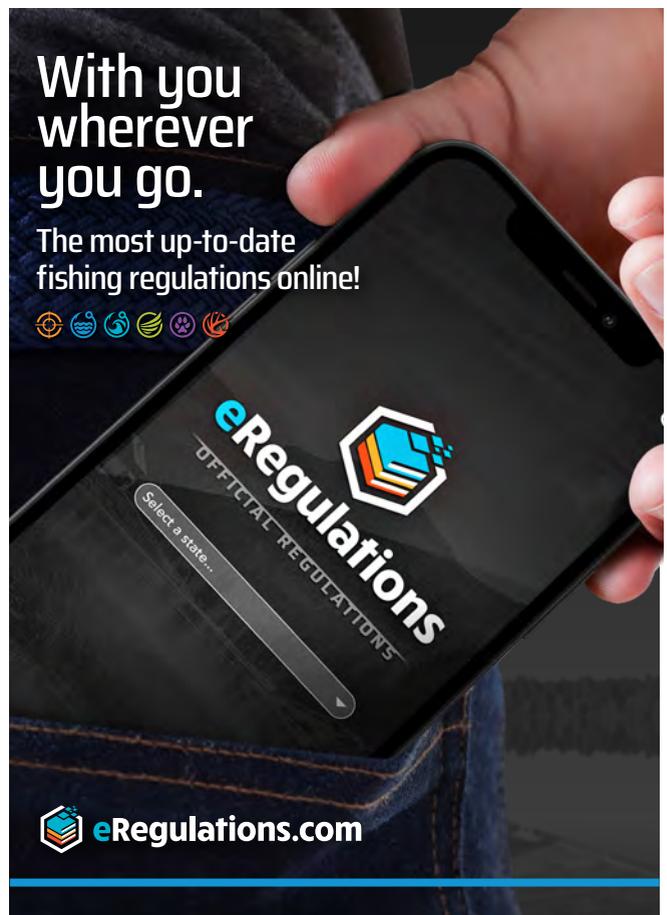
## Accessible Fishing Sites



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](http://www.NJFishandWildlife.com/sites.htm).

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# State Record Marine Sport Fish

## RECOGNITION PROGRAMS



George Hanakis of Perth Amboy reeled in the new state record Blue-line (Gray) Tilefish on September 1, 2021. He landed the 23 lbs, 8 oz. fish while bottom fishing Wilmington Canyon from the *Jamaica*.

New Jersey DEP 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 75 marine species eligible for entry into the program, which includes a new spearfishing category with 16 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.

Fourteen 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. Please include an attractive, well-composed, high-resolution (large file size) photo to be considered for printing in this *Digest*. **Smile!**

For a complete list of state record fish, including retired species, or to print an application with complete program rules, visit New Jersey Fish and Wildlife's website at [NJFishandWildlife.com/rec-fish.htm](http://NJFishandWildlife.com/rec-fish.htm). 

### New Jersey State Record Marine Fish

New records shown in red. \* Fish was certified by the IGFA as a world record.

Species	Lbs.	Oz.	Year	Angler	Where Caught
Amberjack, greater	85	0	1993	Edwin Metzner	Off Cape May
Bass, black sea	9	0	2015	Steve Singler	Atlantic Ocean
Bass, striped	See retired species list: <a href="http://NJFishandWildlife.com/recfish-salt.htm">NJFishandWildlife.com/recfish-salt.htm</a>				
Bluefish	27	1	1997	Roger Kastorsky	5 Fathom Bank
Bonito, Atlantic	13	8	1945	Frank Lykes, Jr.	Off Sandy Hook
Cobia	90	6	2019	Len Andalis	McCries Shoal
Cod	81	0	1967	Joseph Chesla	Off Brielle
Crab, blue	8¾" pt. to pt.		2008	Raymond Ponik	Bayonne
Croaker, Atlantic	5	8	1981	Frederick Brown	Delaware Bay
*Cunner	3	8.8	2019	John Zema	Atlantic Ocean
Dogfish, smooth	22	0	2020	Ed DiMarcantonio	Strathmere (Beach)
Dogfish, spiny	15	12	1990	Jeff Pennick	Off Cape May
Dolphin	63	3	1974	Scott Smith, Jr.	Baltimore Canyon
Drum, black	109	0	2008	Nick Henry	Delaware Bay
Drum, red	55	0	1985	Daniel Yanino	Great Bay
Eel, American	9	13	1988	Warren Campbell	Atlantic City
Fluke	19	12	1953	Walter Lubin	Off Cape May
Flounder, winter	5	11	1993	Jimmy Swanson	Off Barnegat Light
Hake, red (Ling)	12	13	2010	Billy Watson	Off Manasquan
Hake, white	41	7	1989	Wayne Eble	Off Barnegat Light
Kingfish, Northern	2	8	2004	Chester Urbanski	Barnegat Bay
Mackerel, Atlantic	4	1	1983	Abe Elkin	Manasquan Ridge
Mackerel, king	54	0	1998	Fernando Alfaiate	Off Cape May
*Mackerel, Spanish	9	12	1990	Donald Kohler	Off Cape May
Marlin, blue	1,046	0	1986	Phil Infantolino	Hudson Canyon
Marlin, white	137	8	1980	Mike Marchell	Hudson Canyon
Perch, white	2	12	1998	Michael King	Little Beach Creek
*Pollock	46	7	1975	John Holton	Off Brielle
Porgy	5	14	1976	Victor Rone	Delaware Bay
Sailfish	43	4	2006	Dr. John Tallia	Linden Kohl Canyon
Seatrout, spotted	11	2	1974	Bert Harper	Holgate Surf

Species	Lbs.	Oz.	Year	Angler	Where Caught
Shad, American	7	0	1967	Rodger West	Great Bay
Shad, hickory	2	13	2011	Robert Macejka	Mantoloking
Shark, blue	366	0	1996	William Young, Jr.	Mud Hole
Shark, bull	Vacant (Minimum Weight 150 lbs.)				
Shark, dusky	530	0	1987	Brian Dunlevy	Off Great Egg Inlet
Shark, hammerhead	365	0	1985	Walter Thackara	Mud Hole
Shark, porbeagle	Vacant (Minimum Weight 100 lbs.)				
Shark, s-fin mako	856	0	1994	Christopher Palmer	Wilmington Canyon
Shark, thresher	683	0	2009	Bennett Fogelberg	Fingers
Shark, tiger	880	0	1988	Billy DeJohn	Off Cape May
Sheepshead	19	3	2014	William Catino	Longport
Spadefish	11	6	1998	Cliff Low	Delaware Bay
Spearfish, longbill	42	0	1989	George Algard	Poor Man's Canyon
	42	0	1997	Joseph Natoli	Hudson Canyon
Spot	0	13	2003	Robert Belsky, Jr.	Little Sheepshead Creek
Swordfish	530	0	1964	Edmund Levitt	Wilmington Canyon
Tautog	25	13	2020	Chris Sullivan	Atlantic Ocean
Tilefish, golden	63	8	2009	Dennis Muhlenforth	Linden Kohl Canyon
Tilefish, blue-line (gray)	23	8	2021	George Hanakis	Wilmington Canyon
Triggerfish, gray	6	11	2016	James Massimino	Sea Girt Reef
Tuna, albacore	77	15	1984	Dr. S. Scannapiego	Spencer Canyon
Tuna, big-eye	364	14	1984	George Krenick	Hudson Canyon
Tuna, bluefin	1,030	6	1981	Royal Parsons	Off Pt. Pleasant
Tuna, skipjack	13	4	1999	Craig Eberbach	Wilmington Canyon
Tuna, yellowfin	290	0	1980	Wayne Brinkerhoff	Hudson Canyon
Tunny, little	24	15	1977	Mark Niemczyk	Off Sea Bright
Wahoo	123	12	1992	Robert Carr	28-Mile Wreck
Weakfish	18	8	1986	Karl Jones	Delaware Bay
Whiting (silver hake)	Vacant (Minimum Weight 2.5 lbs.)				

For information concerning the New Jersey State Record Fish or Skillful Angler programs, visit New Jersey Fish and Wildlife's website at [NJFishandWildlife.com](http://NJFishandWildlife.com).

## 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. Sixteen 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.

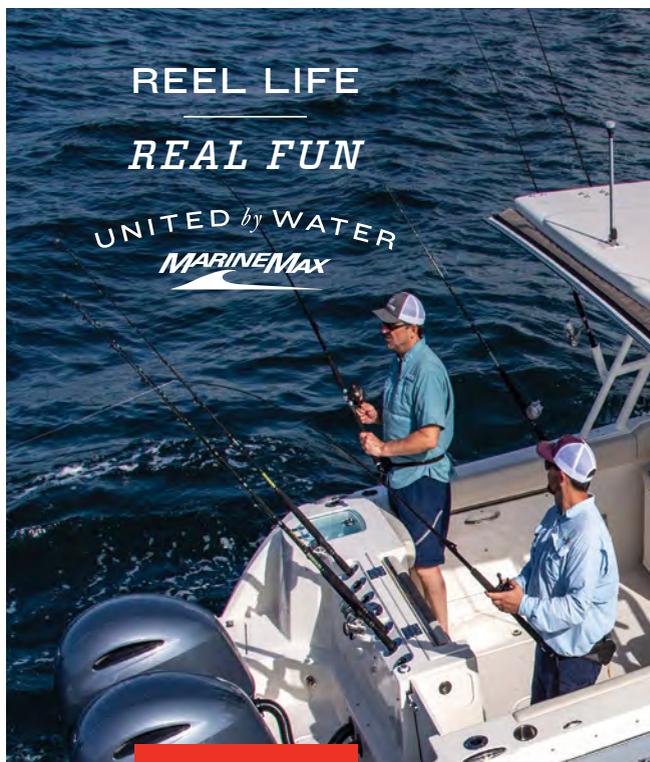
New records shown in red.

Species	Lbs.	Oz.	Year	Angler	Where Caught
Amberjack, greater	Min. Wt. 60 pounds			VACANT	
Bass, black sea	Min. Wt. 5 pounds			VACANT	
Bluefish	22	2	2017	Igor Kotov	Shark River Reef, USS Algol
Cobia	74	5	2019	Joe Cunningham	Off Sea Isle City
Cod	Min. Wt. 50 pounds			VACANT	
Dolphin	Min. Wt. 40 pounds			VACANT	
*Fluke	15	5	2014	Robert A. Davis	Off Barnegat Lighthouse
Flounder, winter	3 pounds	7	2018	Jim Oriscak	Shark River "back bay"
Hake, red (ling)	Min. Wt. 9 pounds			VACANT	
Pollock	Min. Wt. 30 pounds			VACANT	
Porgy	Min. Wt. 4 pounds			VACANT	
Sheepshead	12 pounds	8 oz.	2021	Russ Griffin	Off Long Beach Island
Spadefish	Min. Wt. 9 pounds			VACANT	
*Tautog	23	14	2007	Luke Dylan Hickey	Off Cape May
Triggerfish, gray	5	5	2019	Kevin Cavanagh	Off Monmouth Beach
Weakfish	11.8	n/a	2009	Tai Menz	Off Cape May

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



Russ Griffin of Manahawkin landed a new state record Sheepshead on September 20, 2021 while free diving off Long Beach Island. The fish weighed 12 lbs 8 oz. and measured 26 inches in length. It is the first record fish to be caught for this category.



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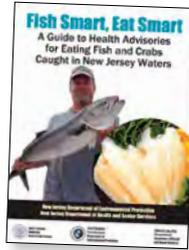
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### Eating Fish and Crabs Caught In New Jersey Waters

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.

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](http://www.FishSmartEatSmartNJ.org) for making decisions about eating recreationally caught fish and crabs. 



### Attention Boaters

#### Keep Our Water Clean—Use Pumpouts

**Ready To Serve Boaters! Visit marina pumpout facilities or contact one of the pumpout boats.** A complete listing of operational pumpout facilities at marinas and detailed information on the pumpout boats can be found at [NJBoating.org](http://NJBoating.org).

**Proper maintenance and operation of your on-board toilet and holding tank are critical to ensure they function properly.**

- 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



### Try the Interactive Map!

One click on the waterbody where you fish takes you to any current health advisories.

[www.FishSmartEatSmartNJ.org](http://www.FishSmartEatSmartNJ.org)



Kira Decaney

### Easy Fish Chowder

#### Ingredients

- Black sea bass, ling or fluke fillets, about 1–1.5 pounds
- 2 celery stalks, finely chopped
- ¼ cup sweet onion, finely chopped
- 3–4 tablespoons butter
- 4 medium fingerling potatoes, chopped
- 1–2 tablespoons cornstarch
- 2–3 cups milk



- Salt
- Pepper
- Smoked salt
- Garlic powder

#### Directions

1. In a large deep-dish skillet, dutch oven or stock pot, sauté onion and celery in 2–3 tablespoons of butter over medium heat. Add salt, pepper and garlic powder to taste. Cook until very soft. Add small amounts of water; cover and steam if needed.
2. Move onion and celery to one side of pan. Add remaining butter and fish fillets. Season fillets with smoked salt on one side. Sauté about 3 minutes, flip, then sauté another 3 minutes until fish is mostly cooked. (Meat will turn white.)
3. Add chopped potatoes and about ½ cup of water; cover and steam to cook potatoes, about 5 minutes. If needed, add small amounts of water to prevent sticking or burning. Water helps to steam the food, not to serve as broth, so use very little.
4. Thoroughly mix 1 tablespoon of cornstarch into 2 cups of cold milk. (For a thicker broth, use 2 tablespoons.) Slowly add to the pan; stir gently. Let simmer until potatoes are tender. Remove from heat and serve.

**NOTE:** Shrimp (shelled), scallops and littleneck clams work well if additional seafood is desired. Add at the same time as the fish fillets. Ensure the clam shells open from cooking.

## 2022 Sedge Island Summer Programs

Sedge Island Natural Resource Education Center is offering a variety of programs in the summer of 2022 for students, adults and families. Come connect with the beauty of Barnegat Bay while learning about salt marsh ecology through fishing, clamming, and discovering what's edible in the bay!

Visit [NJFishandWildlife.com/sedge\\_summer.htm](https://NJFishandWildlife.com/sedge_summer.htm) for details, date and cost or contact Karen Byrne at [Karen.Byrne@dep.nj.gov](mailto:Karen.Byrne@dep.nj.gov).



## Conservation Police and Regulation Information



Contact a New Jersey Fish and Wildlife Conservation Police 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**

# Become a Wildlife Habitat Supporter!

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- Restore and protect endangered and nongame species.
- Fund fish and wildlife educational programs and more.
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