

New Jersey Marine Digest

May 2023

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A Profile**

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A Summary of Recreational Regulations and
Marine Fish and Shellfish Management Information

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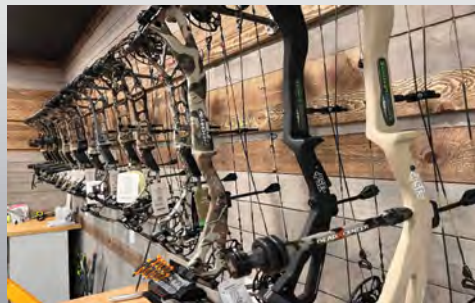


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Hotlines

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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

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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: Cover photo © Photographer Tim Brennan. Emma Brennan, holding a blue crab.



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Assistant Commissioner's Message

DAVE GOLDEN




New Jersey's marine waters and coastal estuaries are teeming with life and attract eager anglers from around the world. Each year, as millions of visitors flock to our coast, some are naturally drawn to these waters to pursue outdoor recreation in the form of fishing, crabbing and clamming. Experienced anglers, parents fishing with children, and newcomers to the sport all find their way to the water with the same goal — to have fun and enjoy the outdoors. Two primary things make all this possible — access and stable fisheries.

Decades of land preservation across the New Jersey Atlantic Coast and Delaware Bayshore, now offers the shore-based and back bay angler almost limitless opportunities to fish, clam, and crab. While many anglers venture offshore in their boats, New Jersey's enthusiastic shore-based and small-boat anglers find a world of fun and adventure in the coastal bays and back bay areas. Much of the public is not aware that many of the bay back islands and much of Delaware Bayshore bay front properties are managed by NJDEP Fish & Wildlife. These properties offer free open access and were purchased to protect habitat and provide public hunting and fishing opportunities. Similarly, many rock jetties along the coast are also open to the public and offer excellent fishing access along inlets of the state. Public boat ramps also speckle the coast, providing boat launch opportunities.

If you are in the Point Pleasant area, please visit our recently renovated boat ramp at the Point Pleasant Fishing Access Wildlife Management Area. It's now bigger and better, but still free to the public. If you're still looking for access to fishing, boat launching, or even a marina and a seasonal boat slip, use NJDEP Fish & Wildlife's new Saltwater Fishing Opportunities app as your guide to find what you need along the coast: NJFishandWildlife.com/primessaltwaterfishing. This app also provides information on offshore and nearshore fishing locations and details on NJ's 17 artificial reefs.

Properly managing the state's fish and wildlife populations is at the foundation of what we do at NJDEP Fish & Wildlife. This work is complex, especially in a marine setting, and depends on the cooperation of Federal and State agencies, regional and state councils/commissions, and input from the public. The staff within our Marine Resources Administration contribute to this process by serving on numerous boards, committees, and commissions and by bringing valuable data to these discussions. Fishery management plans help guide this work and help influence the regulations of many of our most targeted species. Details of this complex management process, including key laws leading to significant recovery in many fish populations, are described in the "Fisheries Management 101" article on page 6.

Enforcement is another critical component of fisheries management. NJDEP Fish & Wildlife Conservation Police Officers patrol the state and federal waters along the coast, playing a key role in resource protection through the enforcement of marine regulations. Recognizing the importance of this work comes from an understanding that enforcing our regulations today results in a more sustainable fishery for tomorrow.

When done right, fisheries management and public access come together as a wonderful combination of wildlife and wildlife-related recreation. New Jersey does it right! Opportunities await. Now get outside and go catch something! 

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



Williamstown, MA | Birmingham, AL

About This Guide

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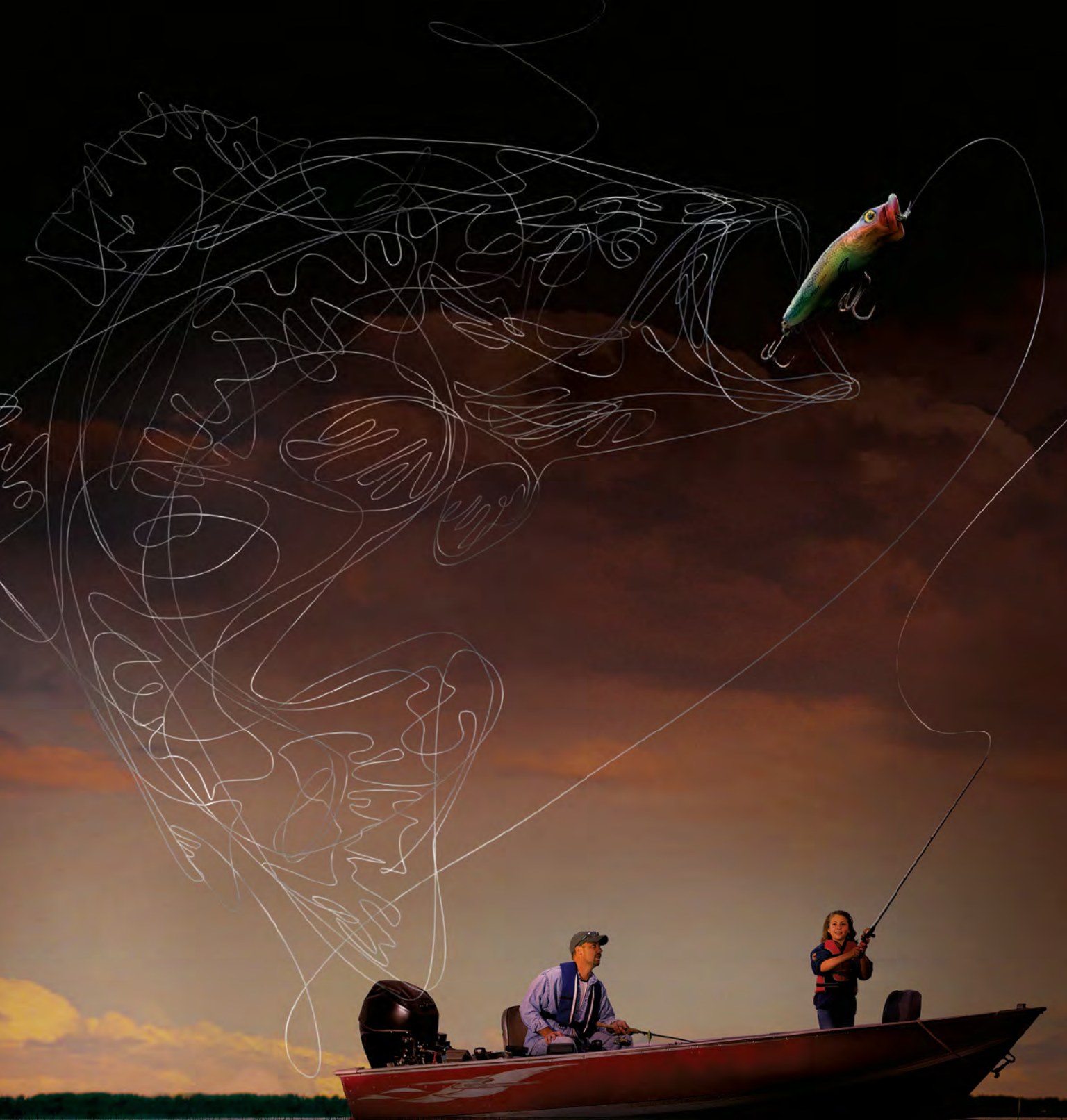
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Mark Your Calendar for the Governor's Surf Fishing Tournament!

May 21, 2023

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 & Wildlife and Division of Parks, Forestry and Historic Places, New Jersey State Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs, Jersey Coast Anglers Association and New Jersey Beach Buggy Association.

For more information visit: dep.nj.gov/njfw/fishing/marine/governors-surf-fishing-tournament/ or email Karen.Byrne@dep.nj.gov.



Jonathan Carlucci/NJDEP Fish & Wildlife

Congratulations to Pam McGee, the 2022 Governor's Cup Winner with a 37 3/8" Striped Bass!

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New Jersey Marine Digest

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Cover photo: Six-year-old Emma Brennan, showing her passion for crabbing on Beaver Dam Creek in Brick, NJ. Photographer Tim Brennan, Brick School District HOFNOD Team Leader.

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New Jersey DEP Fish & Wildlife Our Mission

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

Our Goals

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

Striped Bass Bonus Program

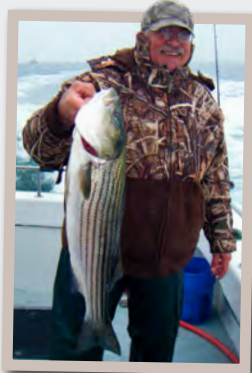
The Striped Bass Bonus Program will continue in 2023, where anglers possessing a Bonus permit may keep a striper at 24 inches to less than 28 inches. The open season for this program is May 15 through December 31. Check website for updates at dep.nj.gov/njfw/fishing/marine/striped-bass-bonus-program/

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 dep.nj.gov/njfw/fishing/marine/striped-bass-bonus-program/ 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, 2024 in order to remain eligible for 2024.



Striper caught from the Susan Hudson off Barnegat Light.

Striped Bass Bonus Program Harvest 1996–2022

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
2022	5,742	36,807	25.8	6.4	17.0

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

Using Circle Hooks

When Fishing with Bait for Striped Bass

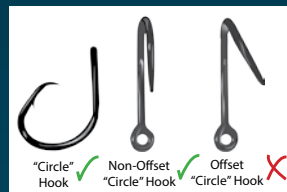
Striped bass caught on the Susan Hudson of Barnegat Light, NJ.

Regulations require 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 17.)

Using non-offset circle hooks significantly increases survival of released fish. In 2021, more striped bass were estimated to have died from catch and release than were harvested — 2.6 million fish and 1.82 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.

- 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.
- Return the fish to the water as soon as possible.
- When reviving fish, hold fish headfirst into the current so water flows through the mouth and over the gills.

Fish Handling Best Practices

- Keep the fish in the water when de-hooking.

Fishery Management

Until the 1970s, there were no guiding federal fishery management plans, and fishing outside of state waters was often described as a free-for-all. Foreign fishing fleets regularly and aggressively exploited US fish stocks threatening to deplete them.

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Marine Resources' Tim Daniels, Pat Barker and Ricky DiVaccaro show off striped bass caught during the Delaware Bay Tagging Survey.

Introduction to Marine Fisheries Management: Federal/Coastwide Level

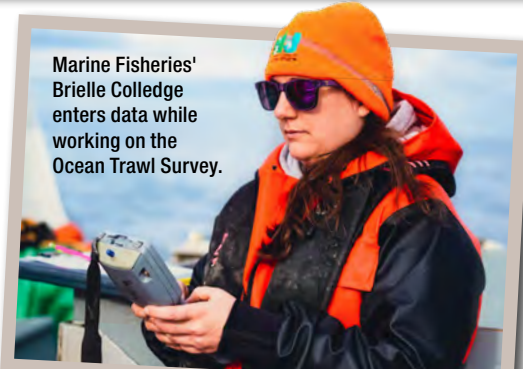
To stop overfishing, the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA) was signed in 1976, where the US established an exclusive economic zone (US EEZ). The MSA limited foreign access to US fish stocks within the US EEZ which extended 200 nautical miles off the coast. The goal of the MSA was the prevention of overfishing and to enable the recovery of overfished stocks. The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) implements these goals through conservation and management of fishery resources. Eight regional fishery management councils were also established to monitor and implement fishery management plans (FMPs) designed to restore depleted fish stocks. These councils would manage the fisheries within their respective region's federal waters, which extended from the 3 nautical mile boundary of state waters to the 200 nautical mile border of the US EEZ. Each of the FMPs were required to comply with 10 national standards:

1. Prevention of overfishing while still producing sustainable optimum yields
2. Basis on the best available scientific information
3. Management of stocks as distinctive units, when practicable
4. No discrimination between residents of different states or individual anglers
5. Efficient use of fishery resources
6. Consideration of variations in fisheries, resources and catches
7. Economic efficiency to minimize cost and duplication
8. Use of economic and social data to sustain participation in the fishing industry & minimize adverse effects on coastal communities

9. Minimization of bycatch
10. Measures that promote safety of human life at sea

Though the MSA eliminated foreign participation in the US EEZ, limiting access to only American fishing fleets still resulted in the overfishing of many fish stocks, so an amendment, the Sustainable Fisheries Act, was passed in 1996. It established 3 key requirements designed to stop overfishing and bring recovery to vulnerable stocks by 1) defining "overfishing" and "overfished" with species-specific criteria for their determination in stock status; 2) identifying essential fish habitat; and 3) assessing the amount of bycatch within the fishery. Additional safeguards against overfishing were established in 2006 with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Reauthorization Act (MSRA) with the implementation of Annual Catch Limits (ACL) for stocks under each regional council which could not exceed scientific recommendations or allow overfishing; and accountability measures established by each regional council to enforce the ACLs such as fishery closures, electronic monitoring, and observer coverage.

Federally managed species commonly found off New Jersey's coast mainly fall under the auspices of two Regional Councils: the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC) and the New England Fishery Management Council (NEFMC) (see graphic on right). Some of the species managed by these Councils also have state waters fishery components which are overseen by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC).



Marine Fisheries' Brielle Colledge enters data while working on the Ocean Trawl Survey.

MAFMC regulates:

Atlantic Mackerel
Black Sea Bass
Bluefish
Butterfish
Chub Mackerel
Golden and Blueline Tilefish
Illex Squid
Longfin Squid
Ocean Quahog
Scup
Summer Flounder
Surf Clam

MAFMC & NEFMC jointly regulates:

Monkfish
Spiny Dogfish

NEFMC regulates:

Atlantic Cod
Haddock
Pollock
Yellowtail Flounder
Windowpane Flounder
Winter Flounder
Ocean Pout
Sea Scallop
Atlantic Herring
Winter Skate
Little Skate
Clearnose Skate
Silver Hake
Red Hake

Marine Fisheries Management: State and Local Level

While the federal fisheries management system handles species and fisheries that operate in federal waters (greater than 3 miles from shore–200 miles offshore), the state systems have jurisdiction within 3 miles from shore. New Jersey manages species that pass through our state waters with cooperation from other states — the ASMFC facilitates this cooperation among the states. A typical management scenario begins with staff reporting results after conducting coastwide stock assessments and analyzing data which is presented to a Management Board (Board). The Board determines, based on the peer reviewed stock assessments, whether any management action is necessary, and if so, will develop those proposed actions (for example, an "Amendment" or an "Addendum" to an FMP) that will then get reviewed through public hearings. After public hearings have taken place, the Board reviews all input on the various management options and votes to select the most appropriate option for all involved parties.

Once a management option is selected, it must be implemented by the state. This occurs through the

New Jersey Marine Fisheries Council (NJMFC) which assists in final decision making and implementation. If NJ does not implement the action, that specific fishery could be closed by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). For example, we might be instructed by ASMFC to ensure our harvest is reduced or increased by 10% in the coming year. NJ staff will develop specific alternative size, season, and possession limit options that are presented to NJMFC advisors; that input is then brought to the full NJMFC, and the NJMFC makes a final decision. As long as that decision is consistent with ASMFC mandates, NJDEP Fish & Wildlife will implement the Council's decision as a regulation.

Management authority for species that generally do not wander across state boundaries (non-migratory species such as blue crabs and hard clams) rests with NJ only. We work with our Marine and Shellfisheries Councils to establish priorities and develop management plans (see page 4 for a list of Council members).



Marine Fisheries' Samantha MacQuesten with an American Lobster caught on the Artificial Reef Survey.

State-Level Fishery Management Plans in New Jersey

NJDEP Fish & Wildlife's Bureau of Marine Fisheries (Bureau) has been involved in joint management, either on a coastwide or regional basis, of many important commercial and recreational fish species. Most of these species have wide ranging seasonal and spawning migrations crossing multiple state borders, being encountered in different fisheries at different times of the year. While this joint management system works for long ranging species, the Bureau decided to take a closer look at species that don't fall under the umbrella of any regional and/or coastwide management agencies. Our goal is to develop Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs) for local species to monitor the health of their populations and/or implement management strategies that allow for the sustainable harvest of these local favorites.

How does the Bureau plan on developing these FMPs? Staff use other interstate management agencies stock assessment and FMP development processes as a model for our own in-house procedures. The first step is choosing a species that the Bureau feels is popular and harvested in great enough quantities that population monitoring would benefit both the fish and the angler. Species will be chosen based on data from the Bureau's commercial and recreational fishery monitoring



Marine Fisheries Biologists Brendan Harrison and Greg Hinks collect data from the Yellow Eel Pot Survey.

programs, Bureau surveys, and input from the public received at New Jersey Marine Fisheries Council (NJMFC) meetings.

Once a species is selected for evaluation, staff biologists and stock assessment scientists hold a "data workshop" where the quantity and quality of data available from surveys that routinely encounter the selected species is evaluated. The data analyzed falls into two groups: fishery-dependent and fishery-independent. Fishery-dependent data is collected from recreational and commercial fisheries and includes commercial harvest reports, biological samples collected from the commercial fishery, recreational data from the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP), and volunteer angler surveys. Fishery-independent data comes from sources not directly associated with recreational or commercial fisheries and includes information collected from the multitude of in-house surveys including gill net, trawl, pot, fyke, and seine net surveys conducted throughout the state.

Bureau staff then analyze the data and look for trends in population size, distribution, biological characteristics, and commercial and recreational harvest characteristics. The analysis is then summarized and presented to the NJMFC for further guidance in the development of statewide management strategies that are protective of both the resources and the fisheries.

The first species chosen for the Bureau's statewide FMP program was blue crab. The lessons learned from developing a statewide FMP for this commercially, recreationally, and ecologically important species will serve as a template for future statewide FMPs. If there is a species you feel should be a candidate for a future FMP, please do not hesitate to contact the Bureau or attend a NJMFC meeting to voice your opinion!



Marine Resources' Matt Heyl and Lloyd Lomelino collect and record data on the River Herring Survey.

A catch is sorted and fish are counted during the Delaware River Seine Survey.



Development of New Jersey's Blue Crab Management Plan

The Bureau of Marine Fisheries is currently developing a statewide FMP for blue crab. Data was gathered and analyzed from historical state collections, as well as reliable commercial, recreational, and fishery-independent data sources. Fishery-independent data came from long term ichthyoplankton and otter trawl surveys conducted by Rutgers University, a seine survey from the Barnegat Bay Partnership, in addition to New Jersey's long term Ocean Trawl Survey, Delaware Bay Trawl Survey, Delaware River Seine Survey and the River Herring Seine Survey. Commercial data was gathered from New Jersey's mandatory blue crab harvest reporting survey dating back to 1977. Recreational data was gathered from historical volunteer surveys conducted by New Jersey staff and Marine Academy of Technology and Environmental Science (MATES) students, in addition to New Jersey's Voluntary Recreational Crab Pot Report. Other information was also gathered, including economic impacts to stakeholders, current regulations, and life history. Once everything was consolidated, it was reviewed as a whole for a better understanding of the blue crab fishery in New Jersey.

Through this process, it was discovered that certain areas lacked specific information, offering opportunities for future surveys and studies. New Jersey has already developed and produced another volunteer survey to gather additional data about female blue crabs bearing eggs, called the New Jersey Sponge Crab Sighting Survey. This input will help staff better understand the spawning behavior of blue crabs and over time, monitor trends and track changes.

Development of the New Jersey Blue Crab Fishery Management Plan provided insight into species interactions that could be addressed in the process. For example, current regulations mandating terrapin excluders on all traps (within waters less than 150' wide or man-made lagoons) reduce the mortality of terrapins in the blue crab fishery. The fishery management process allows New Jersey to discover how our blue crab fisheries impacts other species and allows staff to develop ways to reduce those impacts.

Blue Crab: A Profile

Scientific Name: Callinectes sapidus — Meaning: "beautiful savory swimmer"

Color: olive-green and vivid blue (mature females have red tips on their claws)

Size: Up to 9 inches in length (point to point of the shell)

Age: 3 to 4 years

Diet: clams, oysters, mussels, smaller crustaceans, dead fish, and animal debris

Blue crabs mature by molting, where a crab's hard shell is shed, and a new soft shell is grown. They are known by an assortment of names which often classifies a stage in their life cycle and/or gender when caught.

Hard-shell crab = non-molting with a shell that is hard to the touch

Peelers = hard-shell crabs showing signs of molting with the new soft shell starting to show beneath the hard outer shell

Busters = crabs that have started to molt, and a transition can be seen where the soft and hard shell meet up

Soft shell crabs = recently molted and have a shell that is soft to the touch

Jimmies = adult males

Sooks = adult females

She-crabs or Sallies = immature females

Sponge crabs = females carrying eggs



Female blue crab bearing eggs, also called a sponge crab



Blue Crab

FISHING-CRABBING-BOAT RIDES



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Have input? Be heard!

With almost everything available in a digital format in today's society, information is at your fingertips. However, fisheries management still requires a hands-on, boots on the ground approach; and being able to share information in a timely fashion has invaluable benefits. It is difficult for fisheries staff to be in enough places to assess what is happening across the state and this is where you can make the most impact! While there are many ways to get involved, we encourage anglers to participate in a variety of fishery surveys to help provide important information that can be used to manage our fisheries. Let your voice be heard. Submit comments/concerns when topics are open to public comment or attend a New Jersey Marine Fisheries Council (NJMFC) meeting to be involved in the conversation.

NJDEP Fish & Wildlife conducts several surveys, both fishery-dependent and -independent of our commercial and recreational fisheries. The fishery-dependent fishery surveys are where you can get involved. A few of these surveys include the following:

- The Access Point Angler Intercept Survey (AP AIS) collects catch-per-trip data from shore, private boat, and for-hire anglers. Data are collected via survey interviews in the field and are used to estimate total recreational catch.
- The For-Hire Telephone Survey (FHTS) is conducted with a sample of state and federally

permitted for-hire vessel representatives. Each phone interview requires state samplers to ask vessel operators to report vessel-fishing activity for one-week reference periods and to document details from each trip. Collected data are used to estimate for-hire fishing effort, which is the number of angler trips taken on charter vessels and headboats.

- The NJ Saltwater Recreational Registry Program (NJSRRP) is an active contact book of the state's recreational saltwater anglers, as well as for-hire vessels. Registrations must be renewed annually. While the registry itself is mandatory, the addresses are used to help compile a recipient list for the voluntary For-Hire Effort Survey (FES). The FES is sent to a sample of coastal residential households. Resulting data are used to estimate private angler effort from both shore and private boats.
- The Volunteer Angler Survey (VAS) is a voluntary survey focused on collecting information on catch and effort from recreational fishing trips in marine and estuarine waters of NJ and surrounding areas, supplementing MRIP survey data. Information collected provides data which may support alternative management strategies that increase fishing opportunities for the public.

- The Striped Bass Bonus Program's (SBBP) goal is to allow anglers to participate in the management process while enjoying their favorite recreational pastime. It provides valuable data for assessing stock status and fishing trends, making it an integral part of New Jersey's striped bass management. Participating in the program is voluntary for both individual recreational anglers and for-hire vessels; however, there are mandatory reporting components.

The NJMFC is one of several councils and committees involved in managing our fish and wildlife resources. They advise the New Jersey Commissioner of the Department of Environmental Protection on various issues and management programs related to marine fishery resources. NJMFC Advisory Committees were assembled to discuss issues for a particular species, group of species, gear type, or other fishery management topic. Each committee advises the NJMFC on matters pertaining to its area of expertise. There are many ways to be involved in the decision-making process: be present at meetings (in person or virtually), and make sure to comment before decisions are finalized, or by being an advisor to the NJMFC! You can always email the NJMFC at MarineFisheriesCouncil@dep.nj.gov.

Fishery Management 101 Contributors: Peter Clarke (Principal Biologist), Linda Barry (Research Scientist), Michael Celestino (Research Scientist), Brian Neilan (Principal Biologist), Jamie Darrow (Senior Biologist), Shana Fehring (Senior Wildlife Worker) and Maryellen Gordon (Principal Biologist).

Marine Fisheries'
Jonathan Klotz conducts
an APAIS interview.



Marine Fisheries Management 101 Common Terms & Acronyms

Managing marine fish that move freely in and out of political boundaries is no small task, which is why there are so many cooperative organizations that are involved in the management of this shared resource. Use the table below as a summary of the many different organizations that are involved with marine fisheries management. Below and on the next page are tables of common terms that are often used and abbreviated when discussing marine fisheries management.

Organizations

Acronym	What Does It Stand For?	Relationship to Fisheries Management
ACCSP	Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program	Principal source of fisheries-dependent information on the Atlantic coast. Produces dependable and timely statistics for fisheries that are collected, processed and disseminated according to common standards agreed upon by all partners, including the ASMFC.
ASMFC	Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission	Consists of the 15 Atlantic coastal states plus 2 districts and 2 federal agencies. Coordinates conservation and management in state waters of 27 nearshore fish species from 0–3 nautical miles offshore. Each state is represented by three Commissioners. Receives species specific input for fisheries management from public comment, advisory panels, a technical committee, and a species management board.
MAFMC	Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council	One of 8 regional fishery management councils established by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act in 1976 to manage fisheries within US federal waters. Authority extends from three to 200 miles off the coasts of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina. Receives species specific information from public comment, advisory panel, monitoring committee, and species committee. All decisions approved by the MAMFC must be approved by NMFS.
NJMFC	New Jersey Marine Fisheries Council	NJ specific management body consisting of 11 members including recreational, commercial, public, and shellfish representatives which establish rules and regulations for NJ fisheries. Recommends management actions and strategies requiring a vote for approval. Guidelines for management are provided through the ASMFC, MAFMC, and NMFS. NJMFC decisions are implemented by NJDEP as new regulations.
NMFS	National Marine Fisheries Service	Federal agency within the US Department of Commerce's NOAA. Responsible for the stewardship of US national marine resources in the Federal EEZ. Uses the Magnuson-Stevens Act as its guide while assessing and predicting the status of fish stocks, setting catch limits, ensuring compliance with fisheries regulations, and reducing bycatch.
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration	Scientific and regulatory agency within the US Department of Commerce. Serves many functions including managing fishing and protection of marine mammals and endangered species in the US EEZ.
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service	Federal agency whose primary responsibility is to manage fish and wildlife resources in the public trust for current and future generations. Partners with NJ and other agencies to protect marine/estuarine species. Provides funding to State agencies for use in the management of marine species related to recreational fisheries.

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BOAT SALE
& EXPO**

Returns each September to
ShoreTown Ballpark, Lakewood

**New Jersey
BOAT SALE
& EXPO**

Returns each February to
NJ Convention & Expo Center, Edison

Support recreational boating in
our state by shopping for boats
and products at these shows
produced by the **Marine Trades
Association of NJ (MTA/NJ)**.

Visit **JerseyBoatExpo.com** for
upcoming dates and the latest
details!



Fishery Management Terms

Acronym	What Does It Stand For?	How Is It Involved in Fisheries Management?
CPUE	Catch Per Unit Effort	An index which measures the relative abundance of a species. Fluctuations signify changes to the species' true abundance.
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone	The Federal (US) EEZ extends from 3–200 nautical miles offshore.
eTRIPS	Electronic Trip Reporting	Computer system that allows fisheries harvesters to report their catch in a timely and accurate format. Data are used directly for fisheries management.
FMP	Fishery Management Plan	A plan developed by a state or regional fishery management council to manage a fishery resource.
GIS	Geographical Information System	Computer system that analyzes and displays geographically referenced information.
ISFMP	Interstate Fisheries Management Program	ASMFC and MAFMC fisheries decision-making occurs through Interstate Management Programs, where species management boards determine strategies that develop into plans. Multiple states implement the ISFMPs through fishing regulations.
MRIP	Marine Recreational Fisheries Information Program	The state-regional-federal partnership that develops and implements a national network of recreational fishing surveys to estimate total recreational catch.



Saltwater Fishing Regulations:
dep.nj.gov/njfw/fishing/marine/seasons-and-regulations/



Access Point Angler Intercept Survey (APAIS):
fisheries.noaa.gov/recreational-fishing-data/recreational-fishing-surveys#access-point-angler-intercept-survey



NOAA Fisheries' Marine Recreational Information Program Surveys:
fisheries.noaa.gov/recreational-fishing-data/recreational-fishing-surveys#for-hire-survey



NJ Sponge Crab Information:
dep.nj.gov/njfw/fishing/marine/assist-marine-fisheries-biologist-by-reporting-your-sponge-blue-crab-sightings/



NJ Saltwater Recreational Registry Program:
saltwaterregistry.nj.gov



NJ Recreational Saltwater Volunteer Angler Survey:
dep.nj.gov/njfw/fishing/marine/volunteer-angler-survey/



Striped Bass Bonus Program:
dep.nj.gov/njfw/fishing/marine/striped-bass-bonus-program/



Marine Fisheries Council:
dep.nj.gov/njfw/fishing/marine/marine-fisheries-council/



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission:
asmfc.org/



ASMFC Public Input:
asmfc.org/about-us/public-input



Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council:
mafmc.org/



New England Fishery Management Council:
nefmc.org/



Magnuson-Stevens Act:
fisheries.noaa.gov/topic/laws-policies



Flipping the Switch on Ecosystem Management:
nj.gov/dep/fgw/artmarine_ebfm20.htm

HOW WILDLIFE IS THRIVING BECAUSE OF GUNS & HUNTING

HOW IT WORKS

- 1 Hunters and target shooters purchase guns and ammunition.
- 2 Manufacturers pay federal excise taxes on guns and ammunition.
- 3 Revenue from these excise taxes is distributed to state wildlife agencies.
- 4 State wildlife agencies use these funds to purchase land for wildlife habitat and to manage wildlife populations.
- 5 In turn, millions of acres of important habitat have been set aside to help ensure future wildlife abundance.

This System Has Provided

MORE THAN \$12.5 Billion

For Conservation So Far

Where the Money Goes

Buy, develop, maintain and operate wildlife management areas



Research projects focused on wildlife conservation

Hunter safety and education programs



Construction and maintenance of public target shooting ranges

Quick History

- Early 1900s
As many wildlife species are dwindling in numbers or disappearing, firearms industry steps forward and asks Congress to redirect excise tax on sale of guns and ammo to help fund wildlife conservation.
- 1937
Congress passes and President Franklin D. Roosevelt signs the Pittman-Robertson Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act into law.
- 1938 to today:
Revenue from this act has purchased millions of acres of prime habitat that is maintained by state wildlife agencies. These lands, where game and non-game species flourish, are purchased with sportsmen's dollars but used by all Americans.

Since the late 1930s, hunters, target shooters and the firearms industry have been the nation's **LARGEST** contributors to **conservation**, paying for programs that benefit America's wildlife and all who love the outdoors.

THEN & NOW

White Tailed Deer Population		
1900	500,000	32,000,000 TODAY
Ducks / Waterfowl Population		
1901	FEW	44,000,000 TODAY
Rocky Mountain Elk		
1907	41,000	1,000,000 TODAY
Wild Turkeys		
1900	100,000	7,000,000 TODAY
Pronghorn Antelope		
50 YEARS AGO	12,000	1,100,000 TODAY

OTHER WAYS SPORTSMEN CONTRIBUTE

Excise taxes combined with revenue from hunting and fishing license sales fund the majority of state wildlife agency budgets.



\$81 Million
CONTRIBUTED ANNUALLY

Duck stamp proceeds are used by the government to buy or lease wetland habitat for ducks, geese and hundreds of non-game birds and animals.



SOME HEROES OF THE MOST SUCCESSFUL CONSERVATION MODEL IN THE WORLD ARE:



Theodore Roosevelt



Aldo Leopold



Key Pittman



Willis Robertson



THE FIREARMS INDUSTRY TRADE ASSOCIATION

NSSF.ORG



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

Regulations remain in effect until changed. For the most current regulations, go to dep.nj.gov/njfw/fishing/marine/seasons-and-regulations/.

Highlights of Regulation Changes:

- A new regulation makes it unlawful for any person to gaff or attempt to gaff any striped bass at any time.
- 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 one fish possession limit; an open season Oct. 1–Oct. 31 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 12.5 inches.
- The recreational American shad possession limit within the Delaware River and its tributaries has been reduced from three fish down to two. The combined possession limit of shad remains at 6 fish total.
- It is required to use non-offset, corrodible, non-stainless steel circle hooks, except when fishing with flies or artificial lures, when fishing for sharks recreationally.
- The recreational scup regulations have been modified to include an open season Aug. 1–Dec. 31 with a thirty-fish possession limit. The minimum size limit remains 10 inches.

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 22.

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 NJ Fish & Wildlife's Volunteer Angler Survey at dep.nj.gov/njfw/fishing/marine/volunteer-angler-survey/.

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.

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 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 Takanassee 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.

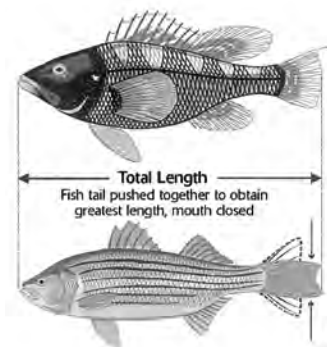
Filleting

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 18. 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.

Be the First to Know! Get on the List

The Marine Fisheries and Shellfish e-mail list, that is. Get the latest information on NJ Fish & 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:
dep.nj.gov/njfw/education/email-lists/

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 15)
- Various shark species (See Sharks on page 19)

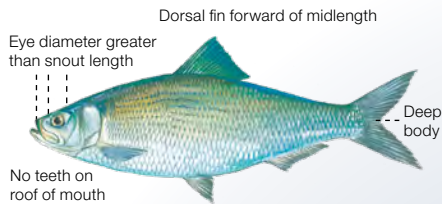
Horseshoe Crabs

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.

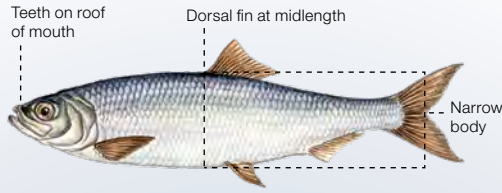
Sea Turtles & Marine Mammals

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

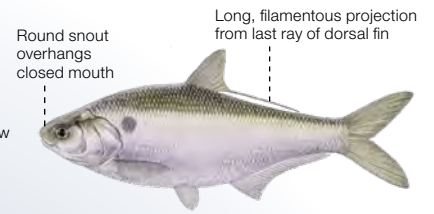
Herring



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.



Atlantic Bonito



Atlantic Croaker



Atlantic Mackerel



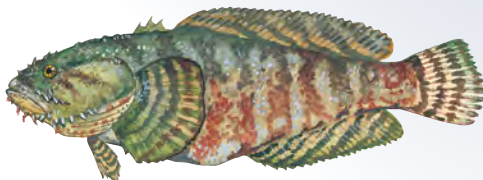
Northern Kingfish



Northern Puffer



Northern Seabroin



Oyster Toadfish



Spot



White Perch

State Size and Possession Limits

FINFISH

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

2023 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](https://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 18.

		Open Season	Minimum Length (total length except sharks)	Harvest & Possession Limit (per person unless noted)	Remarks
AMERICAN EEL					
		No Closed Season	9"	25 ^a	a: Except 50 fish harvest/possession limit for party/ charter boat employees.
BLACK DRUM					
		No Closed Season	16"	3	
BLACK SEA BASS					
		May 17–June 19	12.5"	10	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 filament.
		July 1–Aug 31	12.5"	1	
		Oct 1–Oct 31	12.5"	10	
		Nov 1–Dec 31	12.5"	15	
BLUEFISH					
		No Closed Season	None	5 fish per person while fishing from a party/charter vessel ^b 3 fish per person for all other anglers	b: vessel must have a valid federal party/charter permit and be captained by a properly credentialed operator with a valid US Coast Guard endorsement. More information at dep.nj.gov/wp-content/uploads/njfw/bluefish4hire.pdf
COBIA					
		No Closed Season	37"	1 fish per vessel	
COD, ATLANTIC					
		January 1–May 31 and September 1– December 31	23"	5	
HADDOCK					
		No Closed Season	18"	No Limit	
POLLOCK					
		No Closed Season	19"	No Limit	

	Open Season	Minimum Length (total length except sharks)	Harvest & Possession Limit (per person unless noted)	Remarks
--	-------------	---	---	---------

RED DRUM



No Closed Season

18" to less than 27"

1

RIVER HERRING



Blueback Herring



Alewife

No Open Season

None

0

The taking or possession of any river herring in New Jersey is prohibited.

SCUP (PORGY)



Aug 1–Dec 31

10"

30

SHAD



American Shad



Hickory Shad

Delaware River &
tributaries

No Closed Season

None

6 (maximum of 2
American shad)

All other marine
waters

No Closed Season

None

6 (no American
shad may be
harvested or pos-
sessed)

SPANISH MACKEREL



No Closed Season

14"

10

STRIPED BASS OR HYBRID STRIPED BASS



Delaware River &
tributaries
(Calhoun St. Bridge
to Salem River &
tributaries)

March 1–March 31
and June 1–Dec 31

28" - 31"

1

Delaware River &
tributaries
(upstream of Calhoun
St. Bridge)

March 1–Dec 31

28" - 31"

1

Atlantic Ocean
(0–3 nautical miles
from shore)

No Closed Season

28" - 31"

1

All other marine
waters

March 1–Dec 31

28" - 31"

1

3–200 nautical
miles
(Federal waters)

Prohibited

X

0

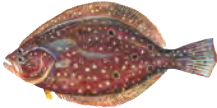



No person may take, attempt to take, or have in possession any striped bass from closed waters. Anglers participating in the Striped Bass Bonus Program may harvest one striped bass per permit at 24" to less than 28" in length from May 15 to December 31. It is illegal to take, attempt to take, catch or 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. Sale of striped bass in New Jersey is prohibited.

Note: It is illegal to gaff or attempt to gaff, any striped bass at any time. Non-offset circle hooks are required when fishing with bait. See page 5 for more information.

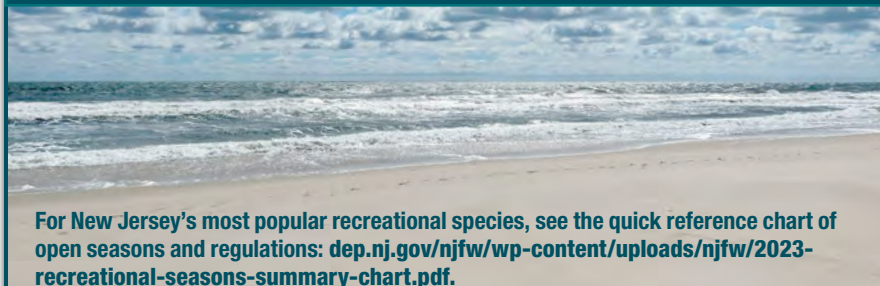
State Size and Possession Limits

FINFISH

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

		Open Season	Minimum Length (total length except sharks)	Harvest & Possession Limit (per person unless noted)	Remarks
SUMMER FLOUNDER (FLUKE)					
	Delaware Bay & tributaries ^c	May 2–Sept 27	17"	3	c: 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" but less than 18", may occur in waters east of Cape May Ferry Terminal to George Redding Bridge (Route 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. d: Shore-based fishing is defined as fishing from a pier, jetty, beach, bank or marsh. Note: 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.
	Island Beach State Park, shore fishing ^d	May 2–Sept 27	16"	2	
	All waters except as above	May 2–Sept 27	2 @ 17" to less than 18" and 1 @ 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	

Quick Reference for Popular Fish!



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

SHARKS



Fork Length

Shark image courtesy of Dr. William Driggers, III/NMFS

	Open Season	Minimum Length (fork length)	Harvest & Possession Limit (per person unless noted)	Remarks
Aggregated large coastal group Hammerhead group	Jan 1–May 14 and July 16–Dec 31	Atlantic sharpnose, bonnethead, and smoothhound: None Hammerheads 78"	Prohibited sharks: zero allowed possession Shortfin mako: zero allowed possession Smoothhound: No limit All others: one per person per trip	Use of non-offset, corrodible, non-stainless steel circle hooks is required, except when fishing with flies or artificial lures. Does not include dogfish. See below for a list of prohibited species.
Non-blacknose small coastal group	No Closed Season			
Blacknose group	No Closed Season	All other retainable sharks: 54"		
Pelagic group	No Closed Season			

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, [fisheries.noaa.gov/resources/outreach-materials](https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resources/outreach-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. Refer to the illustration, above, for the proper measurement of fork length.

Shark Species That May Be Kept (Authorized Species): Aggregated Large Coastal Shark—blacktip, bull, lemon, nurse, tiger, spinner; Hammerhead Shark—scalped hammerhead, smooth hammerhead, great hammerhead; Non-Blacknose Small Coastal Shark—Atlantic sharpnose, bonnethead, finetooth; Blacknose Shark—blacknose; Pelagic Shark—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.

The 2023 shark regulations complement existing federal shark regulations. 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.

It is required to use non-offset, corrodible, non-stainless steel circle hooks, except when fishing with flies or artificial lures, when fishing for sharks recreationally.

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.

Federal Recreational Fishing Regulations

For current federal waters regulations (3–200 nautical miles), refer to the following agencies:

- NOAA Atlantic Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Information: [fisheries.noaa.gov/topic/atlantic-highly-migratory-species](https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/topic/atlantic-highly-migratory-species)
- NOAA Atlantic Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Permit Shop: hmspermits.noaa.gov/
- Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council: mafmcc.org/regulations
- South Atlantic Fishery Management Council: safmc.net/regulations/

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State Size and Possession Limits

CRUSTACEANS & MOLLUSKS

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

		Open Season	Minimum Length (total length except sharks)	Harvest & Possession Limit (per person unless noted)	Remarks
LOBSTER, AMERICAN					
		See below for closed seasons	3 3/8"	6	A person shall not use any spear, gig, gaff or other penetrating device as a method of capture of lobsters.
BLUE CRAB					
	peeler or shedder	No Closed Season ^e	3"	1 Bushel	Unless using non-collapsible, Cheasapeake-style crab pots, trot lines or crab dredges — see below.
	soft	No Closed Season ^e	3 1/2"		
	hard	No Closed Season ^e	4 1/2"		
HARD CLAM					
		No Closed Season ^f	1 1/2"	150 clams	Non-resident license valid only June–Sept. See water classification chart information at https://www.state.nj.us/dep/wms/bmw/nss-phome.html

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 3/8 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 dep.nj.gov/wp-content/uploads/njfw/marine-letter-lobster.pdf

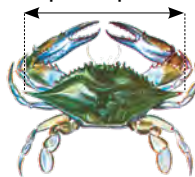
The use of spears, gigs, gaffs or other penetrating devices as a method of capture for lobsters is prohibited. A recreational lobster pot license is required to use pots or traps to capture lobsters. For details call (609) 748-2020. Lobsters taken recreationally may not be sold or offered for sale.



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 21) or two trot lines to harvest crabs. See page 21 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 9-digit identification number (CID) 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.

Measure crabs point to point.



- 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.: Cohansey 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 21 for details on purchasing a non-commercial crab dredge license.

Notice: All non-collapsible Chesapeake-style crab pots (see illustration on page 21) 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.

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> or at any NJ Fish & Wildlife-certified license agent including those license agents listed below. For the most current list of NJ Fish & Wildlife-certified license agents, go to dep.nj.gov/njfw/licenses-and-permits/license-agents/

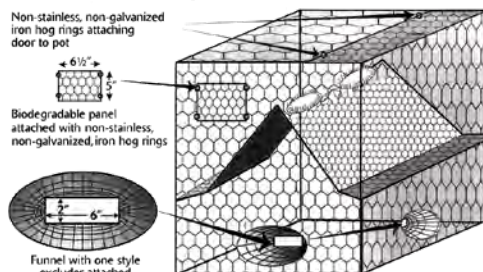
- **Recreational crab pot/trot line license:** \$2
Harvest limit: one bushel per day. Refer to the shellfish regulations on page 20 for all recreational crabbing regulations.
- **Non-commercial crab dredge license:** \$15
Harvest limit: one bushel per day during the crab dredge season. See page 20 for 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 ⅝" diameter, or non-stainless steel, uncoated ferrous metal not greater than ⅝" 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 9-digit identification number (CID) of the owner.

Chesapeake-Style Crab Pot

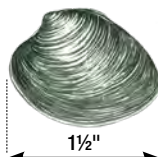


Mollusks

1. All persons must be licensed to harvest any shellfish. See *Shellfish License Information*. Shellfish means any species of benthic mollusks (except conch) including hard and soft clams, oysters, surf clams, bay scallops and mussels.
2. 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. Charts are updated annually.
3. 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.
4. Harvesting shellfish on public grounds is restricted to the use of hand implements.
5. It is illegal to harvest shellfish from leased grounds. These grounds are delineated by stakes or buoys set by the lease holder. Charts of the leases may be examined at NJ Fish & 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

1. No holder of any recreational shellfish license may take more than a total of 150 shellfish (in aggregate) per day. See *Shellfish License Information*.
2. It is illegal to dredge shellfish on public grounds. Use of hand implements are the only legal harvest methods.
3. The minimum size of hard clams that may be harvested is 1½ inches in length. Clams less than 1½ inches in length must immediately be returned to the bottom from which they were taken. Specific seasons, regulations and size limits exist for oyster beds in Great Bay, Delaware Bay, plus the Mullica, Great Egg Harbor and Tuckahoe rivers. Check with the nearest shellfish office (Nacote Creek or Delaware Bay) for these detailed regulations.
4. Shells taken in the process of harvesting oysters must be culled from the live oysters and returned immediately to the area from where they were taken.




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/nssphome.html#charts or call Marine Water Monitoring at (609) 748-2000. Purchase shellfish licenses online at 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. 

Shellfish and Non-Commercial Crab Pot License Agents

Current listing now available online at dep.nj.gov/njfw/licenses-and-permits/license-agents/

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

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: 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 (non-offset) for species that bite and flee, such as striped bass, weakfish or sea bass. Consider pinching hook barbs with pliers.

New Jersey Saltwater Recreational Registry Program (NJSRRP)

ATTENTION: Recreational Saltwater Anglers

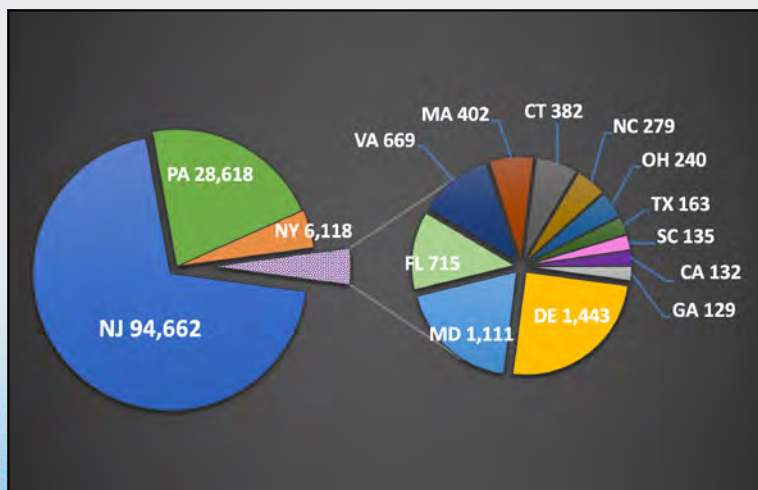
Register because you make a difference! FREE. EASY. REQUIRED.

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 2022, the NJSRRP had 138,607 individual registrants, with just over 68% (94,662) being NJ residents. Individuals registered from all 50 US states, 2 US territories and 42 other countries. The pie chart shows the 15 states with the greatest number of participants (totaling 135,198 individuals) in the NJSRRP.

* 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 saltwaterregistry.nj.gov.



Marine Fisheries: Recreational Surveys

Be Counted...

You may see NJDEP Fish & 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. 2022 marked the first full year to include a 40% increase in our total individual assignments.

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. We look forward to meeting you!

NJ Fish & 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 2022, 2,211 vessels were contacted averaging approximately 50 vessels per week with just over a 53% 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 dep.nj.gov/njfw/fishing/marine/volunteer-angler-survey/. Your reports have a real impact on how our oceans are managed.

APAIS Totals 2022

Month	Site Assignments	Charter Intercepts	Private/Rental Intercepts	Shore Intercepts	Total Intercepts
March	60	0	5	19	24
April	91	20	157	52	229
May	177	87	300	294	681
June	176	151	470	194	815
July	182	184	512	310	1,006
August	182	150	535	270	955
September	167	64	345	197	606
October	166	15	307	215	537
November	152	64	339	216	619
December	141	18	72	122	212
	1,494	753	3,042	1,889	5,684

New Jersey: Stock Status & Management Updates

Species	Status	Recent/Next Action
American Lobster	SNE stock depleted; Not overfishing	Peer review assessment 2025
American Shad	Depleted coastwide; Overfishing status unknown	Peer review assessment 2020
Atlantic Croaker	Overfished and overfishing status unknown	Peer review assessment 2024
Atlantic Striped Bass	Overfished; Not overfishing	Update stock assessment 2024
Black Drum	Not overfished; Not overfishing	Peer review assessment 2022
Black Sea Bass	Not overfished; Not overfishing	Research track assessment 2023
Bluefish	Overfished; Not overfishing	Management track assessment 2023
Coastal Sharks	Varies by species	asmfc.org/species/coastal-sharks
Cobia	Not overfished; Not overfishing	Research track assessment 2025
Horseshoe Crab	Status unknown; Moratorium since 2008	Update stock assessment 2024
Scup	Not overfished; Not overfishing	Update stock assessment 2023
Spanish Mackerel	Not overfished; Not overfishing	Update stock assessment 2022
Spiny Dogfish	Not overfished; Not overfishing	Management track assessment 2023
Summer Flounder	Not overfished; Not overfishing	Management track assessment 2023
Tautog	NJ-NY Bight stock overfished; Not overfishing	Potential update stock assessment 2024
Weakfish	Depleted; Not overfishing	Potential update stock assessment 2025
Winter Flounder	Not overfished; Not overfishing	Update stock assessment 2022

For updates or more information, please visit asmfc.org.



APAIS interviewer Ryan Alianell waits for anglers to return from their fishing trips in Cape May.

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
nj.gov/mvc/vehicles/boating.htm

New Jersey State Police (NJSP)
(609) 882-2000
njsp.org/marine-services

NEW NJDEP Fish & Wildlife Website

Visit the NJ Fish & Wildlife Website to access saltwater fishing regulations, management updates, public hearing information, data collected from field surveys and more:

dep.nj.gov/njfw/fishing/marine



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State and Federal partnership improves NJ's fishing opportunities



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- 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



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!**

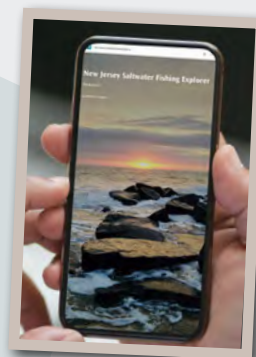


Interactive Map Tools

NJDEP Fish & 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 online interactive mapping tools that allow access to spatial information, and in some cases, the ability to submit data or observations directly to NJDEP Fish & Wildlife.

Saltwater Fishing Explorer Application

Provides interactive maps and more information on artificial reef sites and other saltwater fishing opportunities in New Jersey:
njfishandwildlife.com/saltwaterfishing



Artificial Reef Deployments Application

Allows users to identify artificial reefs and individual deployments present on reef sites providing excellent fishing and diving opportunities. This application includes nearly 4,000 publicly accessible artificial reef deployments ranging from ships, barges and military vehicles to concrete habitats and dredge rock. These deployments provide areas for the public to engage in reef fishing and diving. Information includes type of deployment, the material it was made from, who sponsored the deployment, the date it was deployed, along with the location and volume of the deployment.
NJFishandWildlife.com/reefdeployments

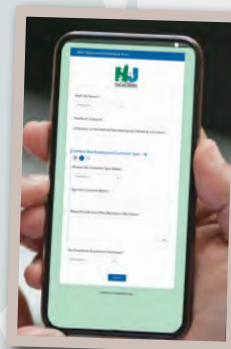


Reef Deployment Feedback Form

Allows users to submit single or multiple corrections to deployments. Each advised correction will be reviewed by staff and included in the next revision.



Reef Deployment Feedback Form
NJFishandWildlife.com/reefeedback



Saltwater Fishing Opportunities Application

Provides the public with key information of areas to fish throughout New Jersey for saltwater species like striped bass, bluefish, and summer flounder. Includes both ocean prime fishing grounds and shore-based fishing access sites.

NJFishandWildlife.com/primesaltwaterfishing




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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 dep.nj.gov/njfw/fishing/freshwater/skillful-angler-program/. 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.

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 dep.nj.gov/njfw/fishing/freshwater/new-jersey-state-record-fish-program/ for a complete list of current state records.

Qualified anglers will receive a First Fish certificate. 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

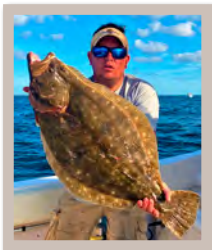
Each month, the leaders of each category and species will be posted on our Skillful Angler Leader Board webpage — dep.nj.gov/njfw/fishing/freshwater/skillful-angler-leaderboards/. At the end of the year, special recognition is given to anglers who catch the largest fish in each species category. The 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 NJ Fish & Wildlife and may be used for promotional purposes.

To apply, go to: dep.nj.gov/njfw/fishing/freshwater/skillful-angler-program/ 



Skillful angler
Ed Braunsdorf hooked this 10 lbs., 14 oz. 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!

NJSkillfulAngler@dep.nj.gov

Operation Game Thief — Undersized Blue Crabs

In August 2022, the Operation Game Thief tip line received a report of a person keeping undersized blue crabs on the Fair Haven Municipal Dock. Conservation Police Officer Dane Bahrle located the crabber, who matched the description, given by the caller. An inspection of their cooler found 42 blue crabs under the 4 ½ inch legal size limit. The infraction cost the violator \$30 per crab plus court fees.

Calls to (855) OGT-TIPS can be about any violation of NJ's laws protecting wildlife. Through the Operation Game Thief program, you can help NJ's Conservation Police Officers defend our living natural resources, and if the information you provide results in a conviction, you may earn a reward too.

Operation Game Thief: (855) OGT-TIPS



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!

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Accessible Fishing Sites



For people with disabilities, visit: dep.nj.gov/njfw/wp-content/uploads/njfw/wcaccesslist.pdf

An Accessible Fishing Sites list is available to assist anglers whose mobility is impaired.

All sites are wheelchair-accessible except for the Musconetcong River in Morris County, where vehicle access is to the shoreline.



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State Record Marine Sport Fish

RECOGNITION PROGRAMS



Matthew Florio broke a New Jersey State Saltwater Fish Record by landing a 78 lb., 2.4 oz. Albacore Tuna in October 2022, breaking the previous 1984 record by 3.4 ounces. Matthew was chunking off the *Luna Sea* at the east elbow of Hudson Canyon when he reeled in the record fish. This new state record measured 48 3/8 inches in length and had a girth of 37 inches.

NJDEP Fish & 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 NJ Fish & 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 NJ Fish & 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 dep.nj.gov/njfw/fishing/freshwater/new-jersey-state-record-fish-program/ 

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: NJFishandWildlife.com/recfish-salt.htm				
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, shortfin 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, blueline (gray)	23	8	2021	George Hanakis	Wilmington Canyon
Triggerfish, gray	6	11	2016	James Massimino	Sea Girt Reef
Tuna, albacore	78	2.4	2022	Matthew Florio	Hudson 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.

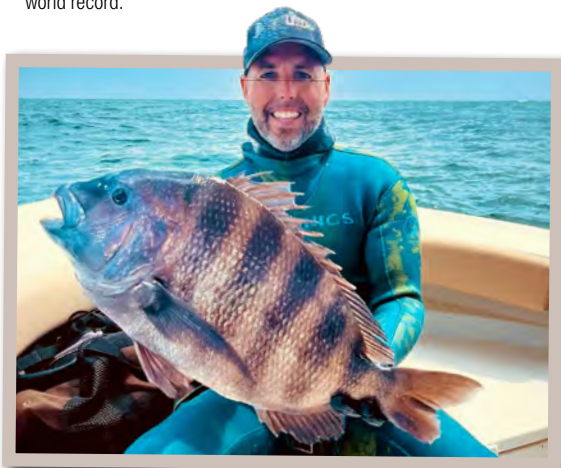
New Jersey State Record Marine Fish — Spearfishing Category

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.

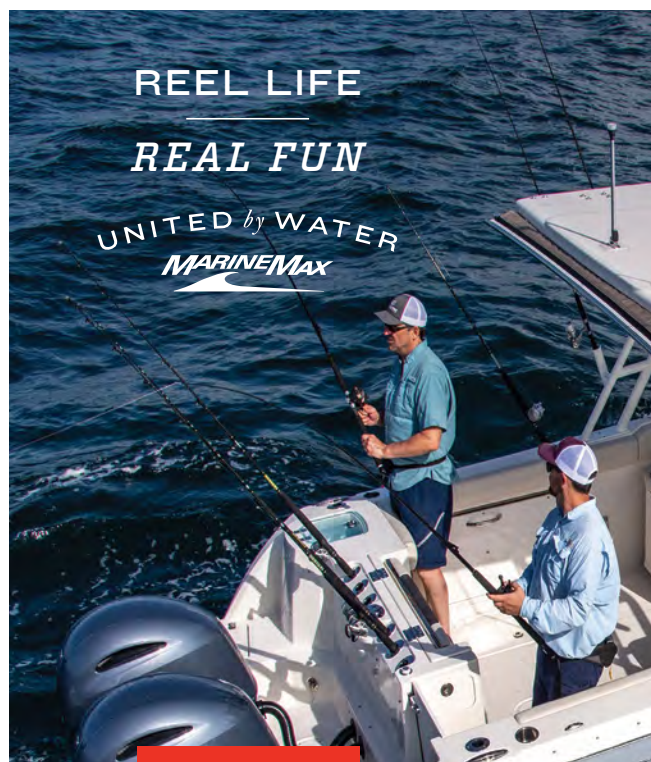
New records shown in **red**.

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	13 pounds	3 oz.	2022	Dan Street	Atlantic Ocean
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.



Dan Street of Hainesport made his way to the top of the state spearfishing record list by landing a new state record Sheepshead on July 15, while free diving in the Atlantic Ocean. The fish weighed 13 pounds, 3 ounces, beating the old record by 11 ounces. It measured 26 inches in length and had a girth of 23 7/8 inches.



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Scout

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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 FishSmartEatSmartNJ.org for making decisions about eating recreationally caught fish and crabs. 



Try the Interactive Map!

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

FishSmartEatSmartNJ.org



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.

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



Bev's Striper Cakes

Ingredients

- | | |
|--|---|
| 2 pounds striped bass, cut into ½" square pieces | 1 cup coarsely chopped onions |
| 2 heaping tablespoons mayonnaise | 1 cup coarsely chopped green pepper |
| 2 tablespoons Dijon mustard | 1 cup chopped celery |
| 1 teaspoon Old Bay seasoning | 2 cups Italian breadcrumbs |
| 2 eggs | 2 tablespoons hot red pepper flakes (more or less to taste) |

Directions

1. Mix all ingredients in a large bowl.
2. Form into patties about an inch thick.
3. Add olive oil to a large skillet over medium heat.
4. Place patties into skillet and cook 4 minutes per side or until golden brown.

*Enjoy hot or cold. Makes around 10 cakes.

2023 Sedge Island Summer Programs

Sedge Island Natural Resource Education Center is offering a variety of programs in the summer of 2023 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 dep.nj.gov/njfw/education/sedge-island-natural-resource-education-center for details, date and cost or contact Karen Byrne at Karen.Byrne@dep.nj.gov.



Conservation Police and Regulation Information



Contact a NJDEP Fish & 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!

Did you know that NJ Fish & Wildlife manages more than 360,000 acres in 122 wildlife management areas throughout the state?

These spaces protect and conserve fish and wildlife habitat while providing opportunities for outdoor recreation such as fishing, hunting, birding, wildlife viewing, hiking and more! You can help to ensure the conservation of these natural treasures for the enjoyment of generations to come by becoming a Wildlife Habitat Supporter and making a donation. Donations will be used to:

- Manage and restore fish and wildlife habitat.
- Enforce fish and wildlife regulations.
- Restore and protect endangered and nongame species.
- Fund fish and wildlife educational programs and more.
- Improve public access to recreational facilities on WMAs.



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Visit dep.nj.gov/njfw/conservation/wildlife-habitat-supporter-program

New Jersey Marine Digest

Internet Address	NJFishandWildlife.com
General Information	(609) 292-2965
DEP ACTION LINE—24 HOURS	(877) 927-6337 — (877) WARN-DEP
Marine Fisheries Regulations “Listen Only” information line	(609) 292-2083
Marine Conservation Police	(609) 748-2050
Automated Harvest Report System	(855) 448-6865 — (855) I-HUNT-NJ
Commercial Preserves and Semi-Wild Preserves	(609) 984-6213
Exotic & Nongame Captivity Permits	(609) 984-6213
Falconry Permits	(908) 735-8793
Field Trial Permits	(609) 259-2132
Freshwater Fisheries	
Lebanon Field Office (North)	
P.O. Box 394, 1255 County Rt. 629, Lebanon, NJ 08833	(908) 236-2118
Central Region Office	
1 Eldridge Rd., Robbinsville, NJ 08691	(609) 223-6076
Southern Region Office	
220 Blue Anchor Rd., Sicklerville, NJ 08081	(856) 629-4950
Horseback Riding Group Permits	(609) 259-2132
Hunter Education	(856) 629-0552
Hunting, Fishing and Duplicate Licenses	(609) 292-2965
Hunting and Trapping Permit Hotline	(609) 292-9192
License Sales	(888) 773-8450
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Pheasant and Quail Stocking	(609) 984-0547
Trout Stocking Hotline	(609) 322-9524
Wildlife Conservation Corps	(908) 735-7040
Wildlife Control	(908) 735-4513
Wildlife Education	(908) 637-4125
Wildlife Management Areas	(609) 984-0547
Trenton Office	
Mail Code 501-03, P.O. Box 420, Trenton, NJ 08625-0420	
Endangered and Nongame Species	(609) 292-9400
Land Management	(609) 984-0547
Marine Fisheries	(609) 748-2020
Marine Habitat and Shellfisheries	(609) 748-2040
Wildlife Management	(609) 292-6685
Northern Region Office	
26 Route 173 W., Hampton, NJ 08827	
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Land Management	(973) 383-0918
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Pequest Trout Hatchery	(908) 637-4173
605 Pequest Rd., Oxford, NJ 07863	
For questions concerning state stocking programs or comments call (908) 236-2118	
Nacote Creek Research Station	
P.O. Box 418, 360 Rt. 9 N. (Milepost 51) Port Republic, NJ 08241	
Marine Fisheries	(609) 748-2020
Marine Habitat and Shellfisheries	(609) 748-2040
Marine Education	(609) 748-4347
Delaware Bay Office (Marine Habitat and Shellfisheries)	
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FREE Freshwater Fishing Days

— June 3 and Oct. 21, 2023 —

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

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Details of services provided can be found online at BoatUS.com/Agree. TowBoatU.S. is not a rescue service. In an emergency situation, you must contact the Coast Guard or a government agency immediately.