



New Jersey

Fish & Wildlife

D I G E S T

2009 Marine Issue

A summary of Rules & Management Information
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May 2009

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Coastal Sharks of New Jersey

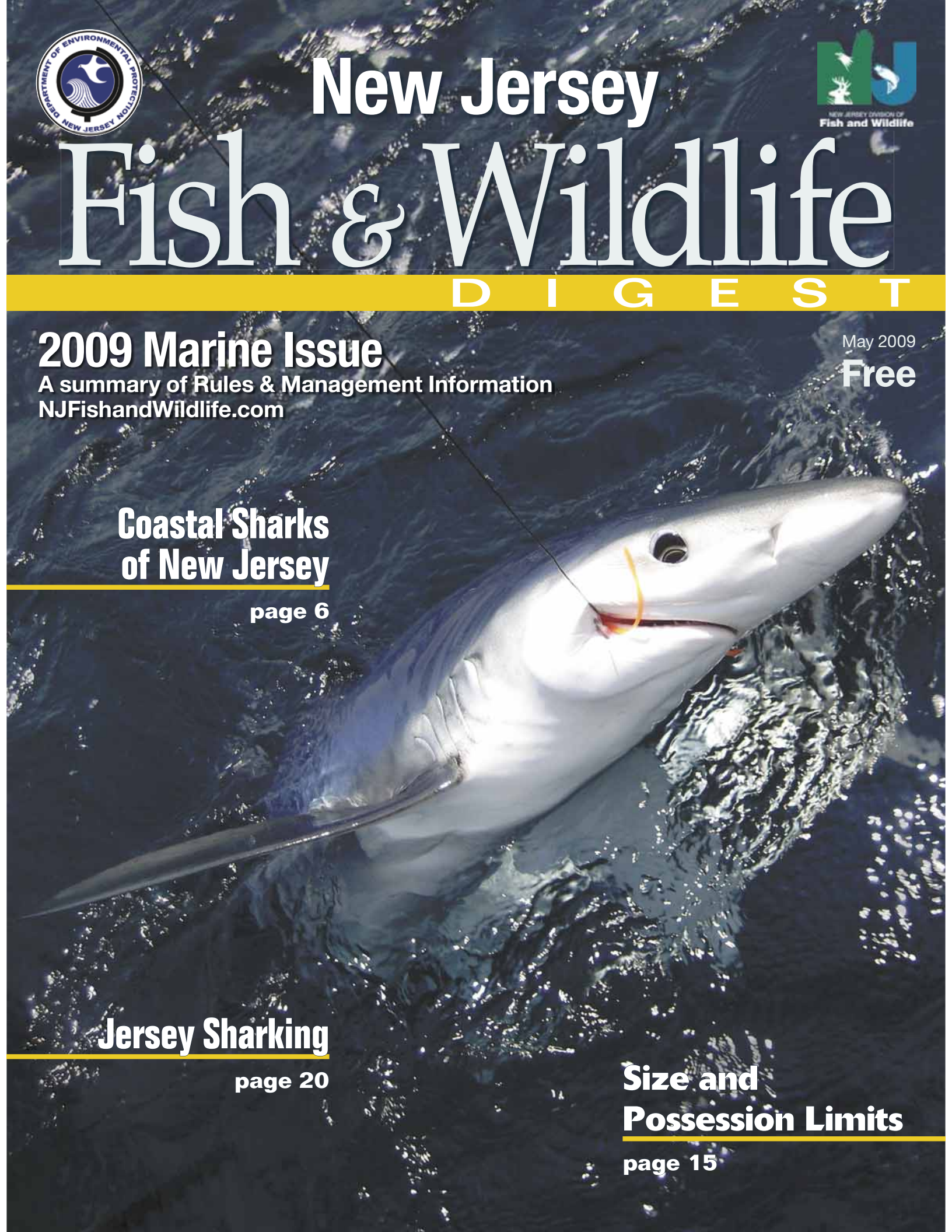
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Jersey Sharking

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Size and Possession Limits

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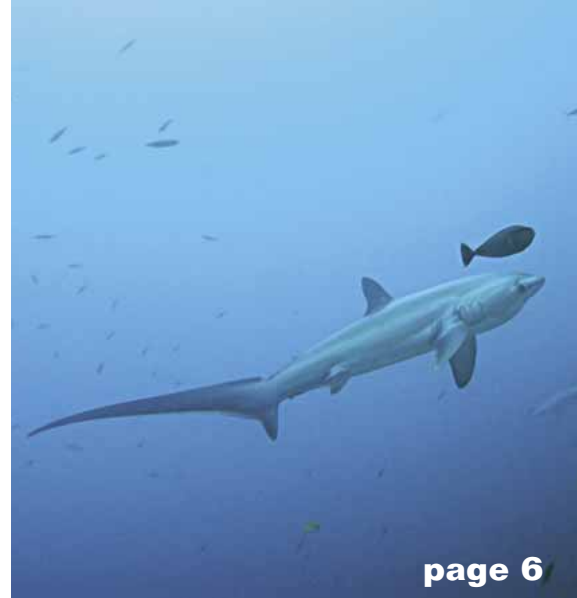
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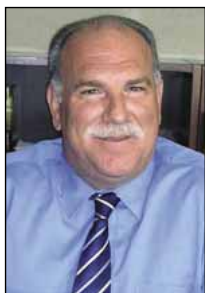
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Commissioner's Message



BY MARK N. MAURIELLO

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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


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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Director's Message



BY DAVE CHANDA

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

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


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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife

Our Mission

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

Our Goals

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

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