



New Jersey

Fish & Wildlife

D I G E S T

May 2010

Free

2010 Marine Issue

A summary of Rules &
Management Information
NJFishandWildlife.com



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Needs YOU!**

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**What Happened
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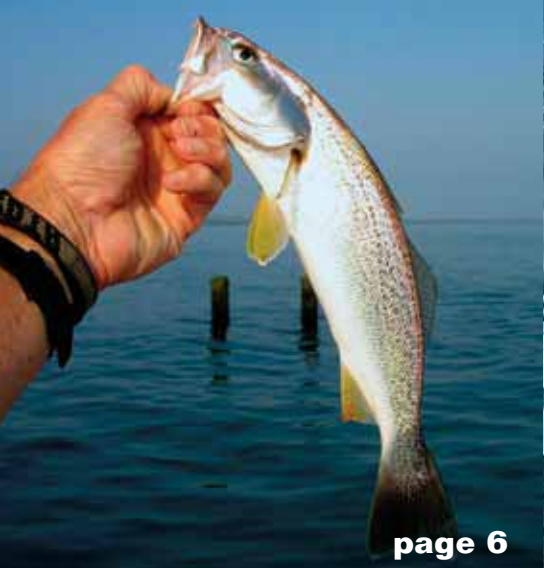
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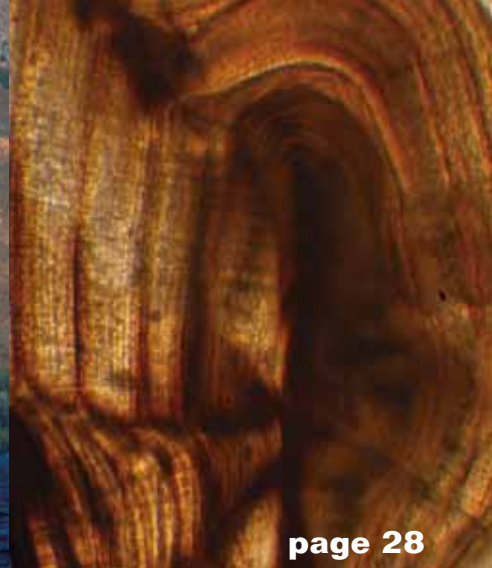
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enlarged format
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 New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife
 Large Format Marine Digest
 P.O. Box 400 • Trenton, NJ 08625-0400

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**NOAA Fisheries Office of Law
 Enforcement — Northeast
 Enforcement Division HQ**
 (978) 281-9213

**Fisheries Law Enforcement
 Field Offices**
 Wall: (732) 280-6490
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Director's Message



BY DAVE CHANDA


Twenty years ago we had the autonomy to set seasons, bag limits and minimum sizes for New Jersey marine fish species. We managed marine fish according to how they were doing in New Jersey waters and we managed them for New Jersey anglers. That's no longer the case for many marine fish highly sought by anglers. Today, our regulations for fish such as sea bass, fluke and 20 other species are more dependent on the condition of the entire Atlantic Coast population rather than New Jersey's portion of the population.

That's because the 14 Atlantic Coast states are now bound to management actions set by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission through federally mandated fisheries management plans. Since 1993, a growing number of marine fish are being managed on a coastwide basis through fisheries management plans that limit state control over season, size and bag limits. In 1988, there was only one fisheries management plan for New Jersey species. That plan was for striped bass and only mandated regulation requirements. Today, there are fisheries management plans with numerous requirements for 22 fish species sought by New Jersey anglers such as weakfish, fluke, striped bass, winter flounder and sea bass.

States must comply with each fisheries management plan's requirements for data collection, stock assessment, law enforcement and management regulations. Failure to comply with any requirement within a management plan could lead to a state fishing moratorium for the species covered by the fisheries management plan. A fisheries management plan effectively removes state management autonomy for a species and requires the 14 Atlantic Coast states to share in the coastwide management and set sustainable harvest limits for that species. Some fisheries are managed by strict quota limits; a state's quota allocation within a given year largely dictates state seasons, bag limits and minimum sizes. The amount and quality of an individual state's data for a management plan species plays a role in determining that state's access to a particular fisheries resource. Currently, the 13 other Atlantic Coast states have from two times to seven times more dollars to spend per angler on data collection than New Jersey.

The complexity of marine fisheries management has steadily increased during the last 20 years and there is no reason to expect that trend will not continue. The magnitude of modern marine fisheries management is portrayed by two articles in this issue, *What Happened to Weakfish?* (page 6) and *What Do Fish Tell Us?* (page 28). Another article, *Angler Survey Needs YOU!* (page 8), emphasizes the critical role of fisheries data and encourages anglers to submit their catch data for use in improving marine fishing opportunities in New Jersey.

The extreme paradigm shift that has occurred in marine fish management has far-reaching implications for us, New Jersey's marine fish managers, and you, the marine angler. For us, one challenge is to keep pace with fisheries management plan requirements necessary to keep New Jersey fisheries open for the 22 species under existing fisheries management plans, not to mention additional species and management plans currently being considered. Another challenge is to collect the data necessary for stock assessments that will keep New Jersey competitive with the other Atlantic Coast states vying for angler shares of coastwide harvests.

Our ability to meet the challenges necessary to improve the quality of your marine fishing opportunities depends largely on the investment we make in marine fisheries resource management. New Jersey's leading conservation organizations are currently working to find ways to secure the funding that will bring us in line with the investment other states are making in marine fisheries management. I encourage you to become engaged in the discussions and efforts to find the resources that we can invest to revitalize recreational marine fishing in New Jersey. 

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

REPORTING VIOLATORS ■ **Report Wildlife Violators**

Support the responsible use of New Jersey's marine resources. See *Tips for Tips*, page 10 to reach NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife's Marine Law Enforcement office.



NATIONAL SALTWATER ANGLER REGISTRY

The National Saltwater Angler Registry Program requires most New Jersey saltwater anglers to register prior to fishing in 2010. See page 13 for details.



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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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