

This is not the full law. Consult the Division of Fish and Wildlife for further details. All persons are reminded that the statutes, code and regulations are the legal authorities.

**Red text** in regulations indicates a change for this year.

**Green text** denotes proposed regulation changes anticipated to be in effect later in 2012.

**Purple text** indicates an important note.

The Department of Environmental Protection's Division of Fish and Wildlife informs anglers that rules for the recreational harvest of **summer flounder (fluke)**, **black sea bass**, **tautog** and **river herring** have changed.

- The **summer flounder** recreational season is now **May 5–Sept. 28**. The recreational possession limit has decreased to **five** fish while the minimum size was reduced to **17.5 inches**.
- Also, the **black sea bass** recreational season has changed and is now **May 19–Oct. 14; Nov. 1–Dec. 31**. **Note:** The black sea bass season will likely change again during 2012. Visit our Web site at NJFishandWildlife.com or call the 24-hour marine fish “listen-only” line at (609) 292-2083 for the latest regulation updates.
- In an effort to encourage stock rebuilding of the coastwide tautog resource, new **tautog** regulations were put into place for 2012. The new minimum size for tautog is now **15 inches** with the following possession limits and open seasons: **four** fish possession from **Jan. 1–Feb. 28**; **four** fish possession from **Apr. 1–Apr. 30**; **one** fish possession from **July 27–Aug 31**; **one** fish possession from **Oct. 18–Nov. 15**; **four** fish possession from **Nov. 16–Dec. 31**. **Note:** The tautog season will likely change again during 2012.
- Due to concern regarding the decline of river herring (alewife and blueback herring) stocks, **the taking or possession of any river herring in New Jersey's marine, tidal and freshwaters is prohibited.** (See *Last Call for River Herring* in the 2011 *Marine Digest* for more information)
- At the time of publication, new recreational measures for **black drum** had not been adopted but could become effective during 2012. For the latest information on black drum visit our Web site at NJFishandWildlife.com or call the 24-hour marine fish “listen-only” line at (609) 292-2083.

These changes were implemented for New Jersey to remain in compliance with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's management plans for summer flounder and black sea bass. The new rules are aimed at providing adequate protection to these fish stocks while allowing New Jersey's saltwater recreational anglers to participate to the fullest extent possible in these various fisheries.

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.

### 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.

### 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.

### 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.

### Spear Fishing

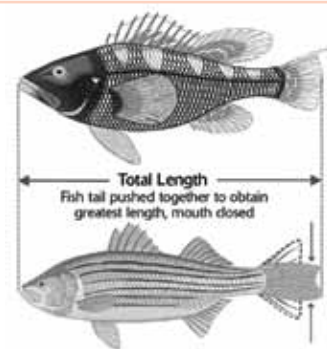
Spear fishing may be conducted by means of a spear, harpoon or other missile while completely submerged in the marine waters of the state for any species, except lobster.

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.

### Fish Measurement

1. Lay fish flat on top of, or alongside a measuring rule, not measured over the body.

2. Fish are measured from the tip of the snout (mouth closed) to the longest part of the tail.



### Prohibited Species

It is illegal to take, possess, land, purchase, or sell any of the following species:

- Atlantic sturgeon
- basking shark
- big eye sand tiger shark
- sand tiger shark
- shortnose sturgeon
- whale shark
- white shark
- **river herring (alewife and blueback herring; see herring illustrations, page 16)**
- See *Sharks* (page 14) for the full list of prohibited shark species

### Sea Turtles & Marine Mammals

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

### Finfish

#### How to Release Hooked Fish

Proper handling and releasing techniques reduce fish mortality.

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

#### Filleting

The filleting at sea of all fish with a size limit is prohibited. No parts of any fish caught on a previous fishing trip shall be in possession. Party boats may fillet fish at sea if they obtain a Special Fillet Permit. Applications may be obtained from Fish and Wildlife's Bureau of Marine Fisheries. See *Summer Flounder*, page 14.

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#### Black Sea Bass

The minimum size limit for black sea bass is 12.5 inches measured along the midline from the snout to the end of the central portion of the tail, not to include the tail filaments. (See fish measuring example above.) The possession limit is 25 fish with an open season of **May 19–Oct. 14 and Nov. 1–Dec. 31**. The black sea bass season will likely change during 2012. Visit our Web site at NJFishandWildlife.com or call the 24-hour marine fish “listen-only” line at (609) 292-2083 for the latest regulation updates.

#### Bluefish

The possession limit for bluefish is 15 fish.

#### Black Drum

The minimum size limit for black drum is 16 inches in total length and the daily possession limit is three fish. There is no closed season for black drum.

Proposed changes for black drum include a minimum size limit of 32 inches (total length) with a daily possession limit of two fish. The “no closed season” for black drum would continue. Visit our Web site at NJFishandWildlife.com or call the 24-hour marine fish “listen-only” line at (609) 292-2083 for the latest regulation updates.

#### Red Drum

The red drum possession and size limits are one fish no less than 18 inches and not greater than 27 inches.

#### Striped Bass (includes Hybrid Striped Bass)

The possession limit for striped bass/hybrid striped bass is two fish with a minimum size limit of 28 inches for each fish. Anglers participating in the

Striped Bass Bonus Program may possess an additional striped bass at least 28 inches in length.

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

It is illegal to possess any striped bass which is less than the legal minimum size of 28 inches. A person shall not fillet, or remove the head or tail, or parts thereof, of any striped bass at sea.

Harvest and possession of striped bass from federal waters (outside three miles) is prohibited.

Sale of striped bass in New Jersey is prohibited.

#### Striped Bass Closed Seasons

No person may take, attempt to take, or have in possession any striped bass from the following closed waters:

**Jan. 1–Feb. 28:** All waters closed except the Atlantic Ocean from zero to three miles offshore. All inlets and bays are delineated from ocean waters by a Colregs Demarcation line.

**April 1–May 31:** Delaware River and Bay and their tributaries closed from the upstream side of the Calhoun St. bridge downstream to and including the Salem River and its tributaries.

**Note:** Non-offset circle hooks are required to reduce striped bass bycatch mortality while fishing with natural bait during the striped bass springtime spawning area closure within the Delaware River and its tributaries. This restriction does not apply to hook sizes smaller than size 2. >

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### Striped Bass Bonus Program

The Striped Bass Bonus Program will continue this year, where anglers possessing a bonus permit may keep a third striper at 28 inches or greater.

The current allocation from the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission is 321,750 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 only available online. Go to [www.NJWildlifeLicense.com](http://www.NJWildlifeLicense.com) complete the application and immediately print one Bonus Permit (application fee, \$2). The permit is non-transferable and valid for the current calendar year. Only one permit can be used per day. Harvest reporting also must be online.

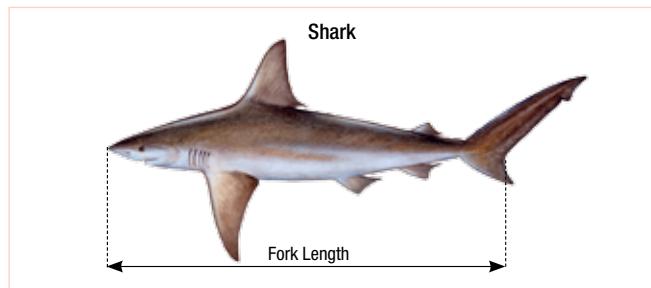
**Striped Bass Bonus Permit Harvest Reporting:** All information on the Bonus Permit must be completed immediately after harvest and prior to transportation. After reporting harvest information at [www.NJWildlifeLicense.com](http://www.NJWildlifeLicense.com) anglers are then eligible to receive another bonus permit for the \$2 application fee.

**Note:** Harvest information must be reported online.

Striped bass anglers are encouraged to report *all* fishing activity after each trip. Visit Fish and Wildlife's Volunteer Angler Survey at [NJFishandWildlife.com/marinesurvey.htm](http://NJFishandWildlife.com/marinesurvey.htm).

### Sharks

The minimum size limit for any species of shark, except small coastal group and dogfish is 54 inches fork length. See dogfish *Note* and measuring illustration for fork length below.



The 2012 shark regulations complement existing federal shark regulations (see 2012 *Federal Recreational Regulations* table, page 20). However, the following additional measures are required for state waters:

- In state waters, there is no minimum size limit for small coastal 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 large coastal group\* will have a closed season within state waters from May 15 through July 15 to protect spawning female sharks during the pupping season.

\* See page 20 footnote for species list defining small coastal, large coastal and pelagic sharks.

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

Recreational anglers should access the following National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Web site, [http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/sharks/2008/Rec\\_shark\\_ID\\_placard.pdf](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/sharks/2008/Rec_shark_ID_placard.pdf) to view the publication *Sharks That Can Be Legally Retained By Recreational Anglers In The Atlantic Ocean, Caribbean Sea And Gulf Of Mexico*, an excellent pictorial guide to identifying sharks that are legal to harvest.

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

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

### Summer Flounder (Fluke)

The possession and minimum size limit for summer flounder is **five** fish at **17.5 inches** with an open season from **May 5–Sept. 28**.

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. No parts of any summer flounder caught on a previous fishing trip shall be in possession; only fish just caught on this outing.

### Tautog (Blackfish)

The minimum size limit for tautog is **15 inches**. There is a four fish possession limit from **Jan. 1–Feb. 28**, a **zero** fish possession limit from **March 1–March 31**, a **four** fish possession limit from **April 1–April 30**, a **zero** fish possession limit from **May 1–July 26 (season closed)**, a **one** fish possession limit from **July 27–Aug. 31**, a **zero** fish possession limit from **Sept. 1–Oct. 17 (season closed)**, a **one** fish possession limit from **Oct. 18–Nov. 15** and a **four** fish possession limit from **Nov. 16–Dec. 31**.

**Note:** The tautog season will likely change again during 2012.

### Weakfish (Gray & Spotted Seatrout)

The current possession and minimum size limit for weakfish is one fish at least 13 inches in length.

### Winter Flounder

The minimum possession and size limit for winter flounder is two fish at 12 inches. For winter flounder the open season is March 23–May 21.

### Additional Marine Fishing Regulations

See pages 16–17 for the fish ID pages and pages 19–20 for the regulation charts.

#### Delaware Fishing License Requirement

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

#### New York License Requirement

New York's marine fishing license requirement has been suspended. New York is offering a free registry to all marine anglers. Visit <http://www.dec.ny.gov/permits/54950.html>.

#### Bait Fish

No license is required for the taking of baitfish for personal use with the following gear:

1. Dip nets 24 inches diameter or less for the taking of herring (excluding river herring) for live bait.
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.

**The taking or possession of river herring is prohibited.**

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

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



## ▶▶ NEW JERSEY SALTWATER RECREATIONAL REGISTRY PROGRAM

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) established the New Jersey Saltwater Recreational Registry Program (NJSRRP), effective May 4, 2011, to exempt saltwater recreational anglers fishing in New Jersey's marine and tidal waters from the federal registry and the \$15 federal registration fee imposed in 2011.

The goal of the registry is to provide the National Marine Fisheries Service with the most accurate information possible that can be used to determine the health of fish stocks. Reliable, universally trusted data will aid anglers, fisheries managers and other stakeholders in their combined efforts so that rules are set to effectively and fairly ensure the long-term sustainability of recreational fishing.

**Registering with the NJSRRP is quick, easy and FREE.**

**Who needs to register?** NOTE: Anglers with either a valid registration from the National Saltwater Angler Registry, a valid fishing license from another exempted state or a New Jersey freshwater fishing license are required to register (for free) with the NJSRRP. *Registration with New Jersey will exempt you from having to register with the National Saltwater Angler Registry. New Jersey registered anglers must still comply with saltwater license requirements in other states.*

**Individual saltwater anglers age 16 and older MUST register if ANY of the following criteria are met:**

- Recreational fishing with a hand line or rod and line, spearfish or fish by hand
- Recreational fishing in the marine and fresh tidal waters of the State of New Jersey
- Recreational fishing in marine waters outside the State of New Jersey but landing the catch in New Jersey

**The only means to register is online at [SaltwaterRegistry.nj.gov](http://SaltwaterRegistry.nj.gov)**

**Individual saltwater anglers are EXEMPT from registering if either of the following apply:**

- Under the age of 16
- Solely fish on for-hire (party and charter) vessels that are registered with the NJSRRP

**For-hire vessel owners/operators MUST register if they:**

- Carry individuals who engage in recreational fishing in the marine and fresh tidal waters of the State of New Jersey **OR**
- Carry individuals who engage in recreational fishing in the marine waters outside the State of New Jersey but land their catch in New Jersey

Anglers who registered in 2011 are reminded that registrations expire at the end of each calendar year and must be renewed annually.

For more information on New Jersey's registry program, visit the New Jersey Saltwater Recreational Registry Program website at [SaltwaterRegistry.nj.gov](http://SaltwaterRegistry.nj.gov).

For more information about the national overhaul of the recreational data collection survey, and how registry database information will be used, visit the website [CountMyFish.noaa.gov](http://CountMyFish.noaa.gov).



Ray Ringen

### MOTOR BOAT REGISTRATION & TITLE REQUIREMENTS

## Motor Boat Registration and Title Requirements NJ Motor Vehicle Commission (MVC)

### Registration

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

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

Boats and marine equipment which **need not be** registered:

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

### Title

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

### Boat Operator License (MVC)

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

### For More Information:

**New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission**  
(888) 486-3339 toll free in NJ or  
(609) 292-6500 from out-of-state  
[www.nj.gov/mvc/](http://www.nj.gov/mvc/)

### Boat Safety Certificate (NJSP)

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

### New Jersey State Police (NJSP)

(609) 882-2000  
[www.njsp.org/maritime](http://www.njsp.org/maritime)

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### Crustaceans

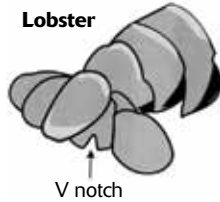
#### American Lobster

The legal possession size 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.

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 above.

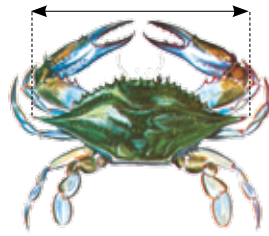
**Note:** The lobster season will likely change again during 2012.

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



#### Crabs

- 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 (possession)
- All female crabs with eggs attached and all undersized crabs shall be returned to the water immediately.
- Recreational trot lines shall not exceed 150 feet in length with a maximum of 25 baits.
- All pots and trot lines shall be marked with the identification number of the owner.
- All crab pots must be tended at least once every 72 hours.
- No floating line may be used on any crab pot or crab pot buoy.
- No crab pot shall be placed in any area that would obstruct or impede navigation or in any creek less than 50 feet wide.
- Only the owner, his agent or a law enforcement officer may raise or remove contents of a legally set fishing device.
- Crabs taken with a bait seine may be retained for personal use only if the fisherman 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 28.



Measure crabs point to point.

- Crab Pot/Trot Line seasons:  
 Delaware Bay and tributaries: April 6–Dec. 4  
 All other waters: March 15–Nov. 30  
 The following waters, and their tributaries, are closed to the use of crab pots and trot lines: Cumberland Co.: Cohansy River and creeks named Back, Cedar, Nantuxent, Fortescue, Oranoken and Dividing; Cape May Co.: West and Bidwell Creeks and the Cape May Canal; Atlantic Co.: Hammock Cove (Dry Bay); Ocean Co.: on east shore of Barnegat Bay, that area of Sedge Islands Wildlife Management Area enclosed by a line drawn from the northern bank of Fishing Creek on Island Beach State Park to the northern tip of the Sedge Islands (Hensler Island), then south from point to point along the western side of the Sedge Islands WMA and terminating on the most southwestern point of Island Beach State Park.
- 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.

#### Horseshoe Crabs

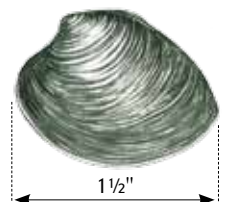
The harvest of horseshoe crabs is prohibited. Possession of horseshoe crabs is also prohibited except for those individuals holding a scientific collecting permit for research and education and those fishermen that can provide suitable documentation that the horseshoe crabs in their possession were harvested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

#### Mollusks

- All persons must be licensed to harvest any shellfish. See license information, page 21. Shellfish means any species of benthic mollusks (except conch) including hard and soft clams, oysters, surf clams, bay scallops and mussels.
- It is illegal to harvest shellfish from condemned waters, even for bait purposes. It is also illegal to harvest shellfish including surf clams from beaches adjacent to water classified as condemned. Shellfish water classification charts are available from license agents or any state shellfish office. See page 21 for shellfish license information. Charts are updated annually.
- Shellfish harvesting is prohibited before sunrise, after sunset and on Sunday, except in the seasonally approved areas of the Navesink and Shrewsbury rivers.
- Harvesting shellfish on public grounds is restricted to the use of hand implements.
- It is illegal to harvest shellfish from leased grounds. These grounds are delineated by stakes or buoys set by the lease holder. Charts of the leases may be examined at Fish and Wildlife's Nacote Creek or Delaware Bay shellfish offices during regular business hours. Invasion onto leased grounds is punishable by penalties up to \$3,000 and loss of all equipment.

#### Recreational Shellfishing

- No holder of any recreational shellfish license may take more than a total of 150 shellfish (in aggregate) per day. See *Shellfish License Information*, page 21.
- It is illegal to dredge shellfish on public grounds. Here, hand implements are the only legal harvest methods.
- The minimum size of hard clams that may be harvested is 1 1/2 inches in length. Clams less than 1 1/2 inches in length must immediately be returned to the bottom from which they were taken. >



Specific seasons, regulations and size limits exist for oyster beds in Great Bay, Delaware Bay, plus the Mullica, Great Egg Harbor and Tuckahoe rivers. Check with the nearest shellfish office (Nacote Creek or Delaware Bay) for these detailed regulations.

- It is illegal to harvest shellfish on Sunday except in the seasonal waters of the Navesink and Shrewsbury rivers between Nov. 1 and April 30.
- 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.



### Commercial Shellfishing

- Shellfish may be sold only to certified dealers. All persons selling shellfish commercially must tag each container listing date of harvest, name and address of the harvester and the waters from which the shellfish were harvested.
- It is illegal to dredge shellfish on public grounds. All harvesting on public grounds is restricted to the use of hand implements.
- Shells taken in the process of harvesting oysters must be culled from the live oysters and immediately returned to the area from where they were taken.
- The minimum size of hard clams that may be harvested is 1½ inches in length. Clams less than ½ inches 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.
- It is illegal to harvest shellfish on Sunday except in the seasonal waters of the Navesink and Shrewsbury rivers between Nov. 1 and April 30 when it is legal.



## 2012 New Jersey Recreational Fishing Seasons, Minimum Size and Possession Limits

Regulations in red are new this year. See page 12 for how to measure fish.

Species	Open Season	Minimum Length	Harvest & Possession Limit (per person unless noted)
American Eel	No Closed Season	6"	50
Black Drum <sup>a</sup>	No Closed Season	16"	3
Black Sea Bass <sup>a</sup>	May 19–Oct. 14 Nov. 1–Dec. 31	12.5"*	25
Bluefish	No Closed Season	None	15
Cobia	No Closed Season	37"	2
Cod	No Closed Season	21"	No Limit
Haddock	No Closed Season	21"	No Limit
King Mackerel	No Closed Season	23"	3
Pollock	No Closed Season	19"	No Limit
Red Drum	No Closed Season	18"	1 not greater than 27"
River Herring	No Open Season	None	0
Scup (Porgy)	Jan. 1–Feb. 28 July 1–Dec. 31	9"	50
Shad	No Closed Season	None	6
Shark <sup>b,c</sup>			
Large coastal group <sup>†</sup>	Jan. 1–May 14 July 16–Dec. 31	54" fork length	One Shark (of any species, except prohibited species) per vessel per trip; plus one Atlantic sharpnose shark per person per trip (no minimum size); plus one bonnethead shark per person per trip (no minimum size).
Small coastal group <sup>†</sup>	No closed season	None	
Pelagic group <sup>†</sup>	No closed season	54" fork length	
Smooth Dogfish	No Closed Season	None	No Limit
Spanish Mackerel	No Closed Season	14"	10
<b>Striped Bass or Hybrid Striped Bass</b>			
Delaware River & tributaries <sup>**</sup> (Calhoun St. bridge to Salem River & tributaries)	March 1–March 31 and June 1–Dec. 31	28"	2
Delaware River & tributaries <sup>**</sup> (upstream of Calhoun St. bridge)	March 1–Dec. 31		
Atlantic Ocean <sup>d</sup> (0–3 nautical miles from shore)	No Closed Season		
Rivers, bay and estuaries	March 1–Dec. 31		
3–200 nautical miles (federal waters)	Prohibited	–	0
Summer Flounder	May 5–Sept. 28	17.5"	5
Tautog <sup>a</sup>	Jan. 1–Feb. 28	15"	4
	March 1–March 30	–	0
	April 1–April 30	15"	4
	May 1–July 26	–	0
	July 27–Aug. 31	15"	1
	Sept. 1–Oct. 17	–	0
	Oct. 18–Nov. 15	15"	1
	Nov. 16–Dec. 31	15"	4
Weakfish	No Closed Season	13"	1
Winter Flounder	March 23–May 21	12"	2
<b>Note:</b> No species of fish with a minimum size limit listed above may be filleted or cleaned at sea. Party boats licensed to carry 15 or more passengers may apply for a permit to fillet the above species. See <i>Summer Flounder</i> , page 14.			
<b>Blue Crab</b>			
peeler or shedder	No Closed Season <sup>e</sup>	3"	1 bushel
soft	No Closed Season <sup>e</sup>	3½"	
hard	No Closed Season <sup>e</sup>	4½"	
Lobster <sup>a</sup> (carapace length)	No Closed Season	3 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub> "	6
Hard Clam (license required)	No Closed Season	1½"	150 clams

<sup>a</sup> Regulation changes possible during 2012.

<sup>b</sup> Not including dogfish; see description on page 14 under *Sharks*.

<sup>c</sup> See page 12 for a list of *Prohibited Species*.

<sup>d</sup> Atlantic Ocean greater than three miles from shore: harvest and possession prohibited.

<sup>e</sup> Unless using non-collapsible, Chesapeake-style crab pots. See sections on crab pots, pages 18 and 21.

\* Excluding tail filaments. (See illustration, page 12.)

\*\* See *Closed Seasons* (page 13) for specifics of springtime non-offset circle hook requirements.

† See page 20 for *Federal Recreational Regulations*.

**Low Cost Insurance—Boat & Equipment**

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Policies subject to limits and exclusions.

**Red text** in regulations indicates a change for this year.  
**Green text** denotes proposed regulation changes anticipated to be in effect later in 2012.  
**Purple text** indicates an important note.

### 2012 Federal Recreational Regulations for Minimum Size, Possession Limits and Seasons

See page 12 for how to measure fish. See *Recreational Minimum Size, Possession Limits and Seasons* (page 19) for state waters listings of species not included in these federal waters regulations (from 3–200nm). For federal regulation questions, please contact the National Marine Fisheries Service at (978) 281-9260, or go to [www.nmfs.noaa.gov](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov).

Species	Season	Minimum Size	Possession Limit (number per angler per day unless otherwise specified)	Notes
<b>Cod</b>	Year round	22"	10 per person per day	For more information go to <a href="http://www.nero.noaa.gov/nero/regs/">www.nero.noaa.gov/nero/regs/</a>
<b>Striped Bass</b>	NA	28" total length	2, plus bonus fish with card, no possession allowed in EEZ	Possession prohibited in federal waters (3–200 nm). See pages 13 and 19 for NJ waters.
<b>Dolphin (Mahi mahi)</b>	Year round	None	10 per day, not to exceed 60 per vessel, which ever is less — except on a charter or headboat, then 10 per paying passenger.	For current federal waters regulations (3–200nm), refer to <a href="http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/">www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/</a> or call (727) 824-5399.
<b>Marlin, White</b>	Year round	66" lower jaw–fork length	None	Billfish require Highly Migratory Species (HMS) permit when fishing in federal waters (3–200 nm). For permits refer to <a href="http://www.hmspermits.gov">www.hmspermits.gov</a> or call (888) 872-8862.
<b>Marlin, Blue</b>	Year round	99" lower jaw–fork length	None	During any sanctioned billfish tournaments offering prize money, non-offset circle hooks are required for lures with natural bait or natural/artificial bait combos.
<b>Roundscale Spearfish</b>	Year round	66" lower jaw–fork length	None	All non-tournament billfish landings must be reported to NMFS within 24 hours, either online at <a href="http://www.hmspermits.gov">www.hmspermits.gov</a> or by calling (800) 894-5528.
<b>Sailfish</b>	Year round	63" lower jaw–fork length	None	
<b>Spearfish, Longbill</b>	None	None	Prohibited	For current regulations refer to <a href="http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/">www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/</a> or call (727) 824-5399.
<b>Golden Tilefish</b>	Year round	None	None	For current federal waters regulations (3–200nm), refer to <a href="http://www.safmc.net">www.safmc.net</a> or call toll free (866) SAFMC-10.
<b>Swordfish</b>	Year round	47" lower jaw–fork length if the head is naturally attached or 29" cleithrum to caudal keel if the head has been removed.	<b>For anglers:</b> 1 per person, no more than 4 per vessel per trip. <b>For charter vessels:</b> 1 per paying passenger, no more than 6 per vessel per trip. <b>For headboat vessels:</b> 1 per paying passenger, no more than 15 per vessel per trip.	Swordfish, tuna and sharks require an HMS permit when fishing in federal waters (3–200 nm). For permits, refer to <a href="http://www.hmspermits.gov">www.hmspermits.gov</a> or call (888) 872-8862. All non-tournament swordfish landings must be reported to NMFS within 24 hours either online at <a href="http://www.hmspermits.gov">www.hmspermits.gov</a> or by calling (800) 894-5528.
<b>Tuna, Albacore (Longfin)</b>	Year round	None	None	† Bluefin tuna are managed in two regions; Northern, extending north from the Great Egg Inlet and Southern extending south from Great Egg Inlet. Fishing for bluefin tuna in the Gulf of Mexico is prohibited. Bluefin tuna retention limits may change throughout the season. Visit <a href="http://www.hmspermits.gov">www.hmspermits.gov</a> or call (888) 872-8862 or (978) 281-9260 for current information.
<b>Tuna, Bigeye</b>	Year round	27" curved fork length	None	
<b>Tuna, Bluefin†</b>	January 1, 2012 to December 31, 2012 or until season is closed.	<27" curved fork length  >27" to <73" curved fork length	Prohibited  BFT limits can change during the season. Charter/headboat regs changed in April 2012. Prior to departure, check <a href="http://www.hmspermits.gov">www.hmspermits.gov</a> or 888-USA-TUNA for up-to-date limits.	All recreational bluefin tuna landings must be reported to NMFS within 24 hours either online at <a href="http://www.hmspermits.gov">www.hmspermits.gov</a> or by calling (888) 872-8862.
<b>Tuna, Skipjack</b>	Year round	None	None	For current federal waters regulations (3–200nm), refer to <a href="http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/">www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/</a> or call (301) 713-2347 for swordfish/sharks or (978) 281-9260 for tunas.
<b>Tuna, Yellowfin</b>	Year round	27" curved fork length	3 per person per trip	
<b>Sharks*, other than spiny or smooth dogfish</b>	Year round	54" fork length for authorized species* except no minimum size for Atlantic sharpnose or bonnethead sharks	1 authorized* shark/vessel/trip plus 1 Atlantic sharpnose and 1 bonnethead shark/person/trip	See below for list of shark groups which MAY be kept or MUST be released. Swordfish, tuna and sharks require an HMS permit when fishing in federal waters (3–200 nm). For permits, refer to <a href="http://www.hmspermits.gov">www.hmspermits.gov</a> or call (888) 872-8862. Recreational fishermen (those that do not have a limited access commercial shark permit) can not sell, barter or trade any Atlantic shark or shark pieces.
<b>Wahoo</b>	Year round	None	2 per person per day	For more information, contact the South Atlantic Fisheries Management Council at (727) 824-5326.
<b>Wreckfish</b>	None	None	Prohibited	

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

Regulations concerning highly migratory species (HMS) such as tuna, swordfish, shark and billfish, are subject to change. Refer to [www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/) for a list of complete federal regulations for highly migratory species. For questions/clarification of the federal highly migratory species regulations, contact the National Marine Fisheries Service at (301) 713-2347 or go to [www.nmfs.noaa.gov](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov).



### SHELLFISH LICENSE INFORMATION

A clamming license is now called a shellfish license and is required for harvesting of all species of benthic mollusks (with the exception of 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.

The senior shellfish license is a lifetime license.

For shellfishing regulations, see pages 18–19. Prior to harvesting any shellfish, be certain to consult the Shellfish Growing Water Classification Charts published by DEP's Bureau of Marine Water Monitoring, available at any shellfish license agent, state shellfish offices, online at <http://www.nj.gov/dep/bmw/waterclass.htm> or call the Bureau of Marine Water Monitoring at (609) 748-2000. Shellfish licenses are available for purchase online at [www.NJ.WildlifeLicense.com](http://www.NJ.WildlifeLicense.com).

### Shellfish License Fees

- **Resident recreational shellfish:** \$10  
Harvest limit of 150 shellfish (in aggregate) per day. Sale of catch prohibited.
- **Non-resident recreational shellfish:** \$20  
Harvest limit of 150 shellfish (in aggregate) per day. Sale of catch prohibited. License valid only during the months of 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 to certified dealers only.
- **Senior citizen recreational shellfish license:** FREE (\$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. For more information on how to become certified, call (908) 637-4125.

### Crab Pot License Information

**Crab Pot licenses are available at all agent locations:**

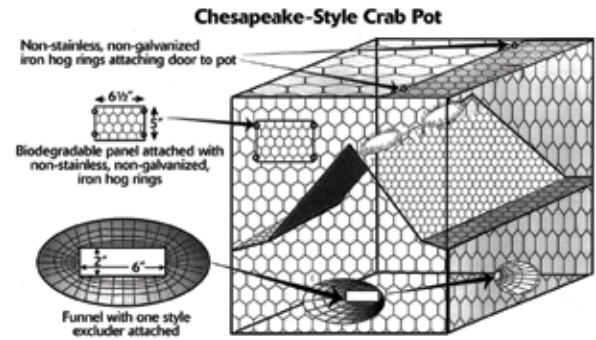
Recreational Crab Pot/Trot Line Licenses and Non-Commercial Crab Dredge Licenses are available for purchase online at: [www.NJ.WildlifeLicense.com](http://www.NJ.WildlifeLicense.com) or at any Fish and Wildlife-certified license agent including those license agents listed at right. For the most current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


- **Recreational crab pot/trot line license:** \$2  
Harvest limit of one bushel per day. Refer to the shellfish regulations on page 18 for all recreational crabbing regulations.
- **Non-commercial crab dredge license:** \$15  
Harvest limit of one bushel per day during the crab dredge season. Refer to the crab regulations on page 18 for all recreational crabbing regulations.

### TERRAPIN EXCLUDERS AND BIODEGRADABLE PANELS ARE REQUIRED ON CHESAPEAKE-STYLE CRAB POTS

Users of non-collapsible, Chesapeake-style crab pots should be aware that 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. In addition, all 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 and allow for escapement of these and other species in the event that pots are lost or abandoned. Terrapin excluder devices must be no larger than 2-inch high by 6-inch wide and securely fastened inside each funnel



entrance. Biodegradable panels must measure at least 6½-inch wide by 5-inch high and be located in the upper section of the crab pot. The panel must be constructed of, or fastened to the pot with wood lath, cotton, hemp, sisal or jute twine not greater than 3/16" diameter, or non-stainless steel, uncoated ferrous metal not greater than 3/32" diameter. The door or a side of the pot may serve as the biodegradable panel ONLY if it is fastened to the pot with any of the material specified above. Crabbers should be aware that ALL non-collapsible, Chesapeake-style crab pots MUST be licensed and marked with the gear identification number of the owner. For crab pot license information and regulations, see the regulations on page 18 and license agents below. 

### SHELLFISH AND NON-COMMERCIAL CRAB POT LICENSE AGENTS (For over-the-counter sales only)

#### ATLANTIC COUNTY

Egg Harbor True Value, 208 N. Philadelphia Ave., Egg Harbor City.. (609) 965-0815  
Fish Finder Marina, 3645 Atlantic-Brigantine Blvd., Brigantine ..... (609) 457-5384  
Main Street Hardware, 6016 Main St., Mays Landing..... (609) 625-4941  
NJ Div. Fish and Wildlife, 360 Rt. 9 N (milepost 51), Port Republic.. (609) 748-2021  
Zeus Sporting Goods, 6679 Black Horse Pike, Egg Harbor Twp..... (609) 646-1668

#### CAMDEN COUNTY

Towne News, 81 So. Whitehorse Pike, Berlin ..... (856) 768-9132

#### CAPE MAY COUNTY

Avalon Hodge Podge, 2389 Ocean Dr., Avalon ..... (609) 967-3274  
Belleplaine Supply, 346 Handsmill Rd., Belleplaine ..... (609) 861-2345  
Budd's Bait & Tackle, 109 Fullingmill Rd., Villas ..... (609) 886-6935  
Capt. Tate's Tackle Box, 450 No. Route 47, Cape May CH..... (609) 861-4001  
City of Ocean City, 861 Asbury Ave., Ocean City..... (609) 525-9328  
Just Sports, 21 Mechanic St., Cape May Court House..... (609) 465-6171  
Smuggler's Cove, 370 83rd St., Stone Harbor ..... (609) 368-1700  
Upper Township, 2100 Tuckahoe Rd., Tuckahoe ..... (609) 628-2805  
Wal\*Mart, 3159 Rt. 9S, Rio Grande ..... (609) 465-7760

#### CUMBERLAND COUNTY

AlR Bait & Tackle, 222 Bridgeton Fairton Rd., Bridgeton..... (856) 451-1800  
Beaver Dam Boat Rentals, 514 Old Beaver Dam Rd., Newport ..... (856) 447-3633  
Big Daddy's Sport Haven, 595 Sherman Ave., Millville ..... (856) 453-9009  
Delaware Bay Office, 1672 E. Buckshutem Rd., Millville ..... (856) 785-0730  
Shire Products, 389 S. Lincoln Ave., Vineland ..... (856) 692-3646

#### GLOUCESTER COUNTY

Sportsman's Outpost, 2517 Fries Mill Rd., Williamstown ..... (856) 881-3244

#### HUDSON COUNTY

Caso's Gun-A-Rama, 176 Danforth Ave., Jersey City ..... (201) 435-5099

#### MIDDLESEX COUNTY

Auto Parts of Woodbridge, 108 Main St., Woodbridge..... (732) 634-6264  
Sayreville Sportsman Shop, 52 Washington Ave., Sayreville..... (732) 238-2060

#### MONMOUTH COUNTY

Brielle Tackle, 800 Ashley Ave., Brielle ..... (732) 528-5720  
L & H Woods and Water, 2045 Rt. 35, Wall ..... (732) 282-1812

#### OCEAN COUNTY

American Sportsman, 857 Mill Creek Rd., Manahawkin ..... (609) 597-4104  
The Bait Shop, 57 Main St., Bradley Beach ..... (732) 361-8500  
Bob Kislín's, 1214 Rt. 37 East, Toms River ..... (732) 929-9300  
Chumbucket, 381 Rt. 9, West Creek ..... (609) 294-2500  
Downes Bait & Tackle, 287 Brennan Concourse, Bayville..... (732) 269-0137  
Fish Bonz Bait & Tackle, 103 Lacey Rd., Forked River ..... (609) 971-2928  
Grizz's Forked River B & T, 232 N. Main St., Forked River..... (609) 693-9298  
Lacey Marine, 308 Rt. 9, So., Forked River ..... (609) 693-0151  
L & H Woods and Water, 403 Rt. 9, Waretown ..... (609) 242-1812  
Pell's Fish & Sport Shop, 335 Mantoloking Rd., Bricktown ..... (732) 477-2121  
Surf City Bait & Tackle, 317 Long Beach Blvd., Surf City..... (609) 494-2333  
Tip's Hardware, 218 Main St., West Creek ..... (609) 296-3192

#### SOMERSET COUNTY

Efinger Sporting Goods, 513 W. Union Ave., Bound Brook..... (732) 356-0604