

New Jersey Marine Digest

May 2014

FISHERIES SURVEYS

Signals from Our Research
page 6

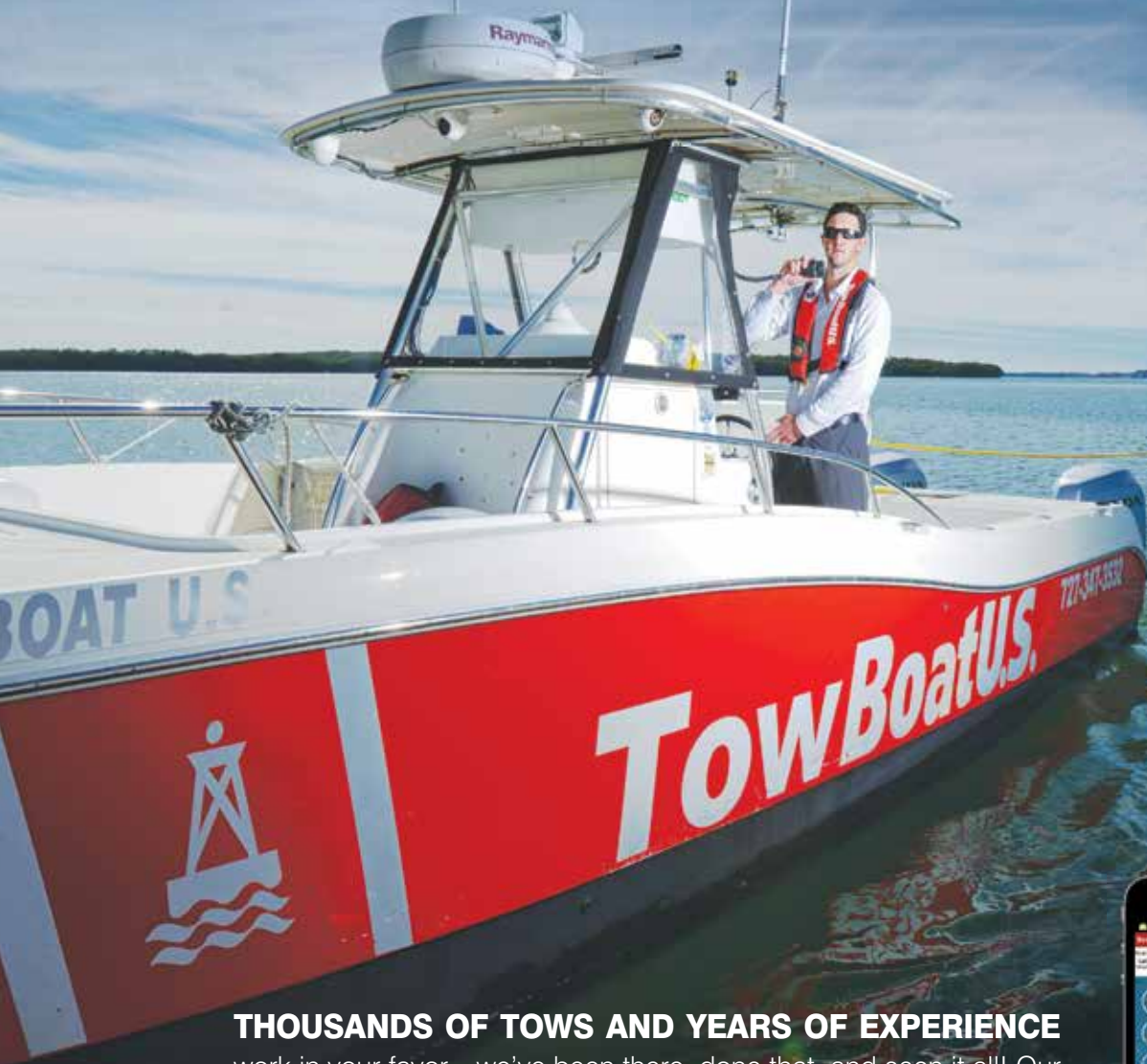
Plugging for
Stripers
page 26

Size and
Possession Limits
page 19

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

- 10 Governor's Surf Fishing Tournament
- 12 Marine Fish Regulations — Finfish
- 16 Marine Species Identification
- 18 Marine Regulations — Mollusks and Crustaceans
- 19 State Seasons, Minimum Size and Possession Limits Chart
- 20 Federal Recreational Regulations
- 21 Shellfish and Non-Commercial Crab Pot License Information
- 24 Skillful Angler Recognition Program
- 25 New Jersey State Record Marine Sport Fish
- 30 Health Advisories

hotlines

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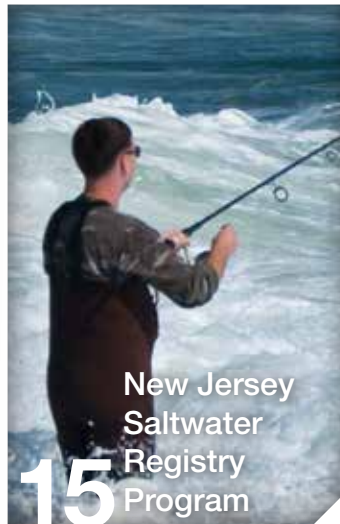
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Visit Fish and Wildlife's Web site: NJFishandWildlife.com/lstsub.htm

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6 Fisheries Surveys: Signals from our Research



15 New Jersey Saltwater Registry Program



22 Effective Deepwater Catch and Release



26 Surf Fishing Basics: Plugging for Stripers

Director's Message

DAVE CHANDA



Governor's Surf Fishing Tournament Moved to Springtime

This year New Jersey's Governor's Surf Fishing Tournament will receive a date change, with the 2014 tournament now scheduled for Sunday, May 18. For more than two decades, thousands of anglers have participated in the Governor's Surf Fishing Tournament held annually at Island Beach State Park. This popular family event routinely draws anglers from throughout New Jersey and surrounding states and, since its inception, has raised more than \$130,000 for marine conservation efforts and fishing education programs.

The fall format of this family event conflicted with a host of autumn outdoor festivals and weekend school sporting events. As a result, all of the tournament sponsors, which include the New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife, the Division of Parks and Forestry, the New Jersey State Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs, the Jersey Coast Anglers Association, and the New Jersey Beach Buggy Association, proposed a change to the springtime. The proposal was supported by the Governor's Office as they felt it would be a perfect jumpstart for the summer tourism season.


Increased surf fishing opportunities—a generous variety of eligible fish species, larger fish, and greater abundance—should make this event even more successful. We are confident that this new spring tournament will lure in even more enthusiastic anglers, including many families and youths who will now be able to participate in this exciting event.

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

As a reminder, all funds raised by the tournament have gone towards a variety of good causes, including the purchase of specialized wheelchairs that provide the disabled and elderly with beach access, construction of access ramps for disabled saltwater anglers, surf fishing instruction programs and equipment plus marine education and restoration projects. (See page 10 for more details).

Information about the Governor's Surf Fishing Tournament, including registration forms, are available on New Jersey Fish and Wildlife's website (www.NJFishandWildlife.com). I would like to remind everyone interested in participating that they may be asked to verify compliance with the free New Jersey Saltwater Recreational Registry Program (see page 15). If you're not already registered for 2014, please do so before hitting the beach the day of the tournament.

Whether you casually cast your line in the ocean, battle it out for the biggest fish seeking to win the Governor's Cup, or come to the Park supporting family members or friends competing in the tournament, there's really no better way to kick off the summer season at the Jersey shore.

We look forward to seeing you on May 18! 

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



About this Guide

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

J.F. Griffin is an award-winning publishing house that specializes in producing state fish and wildlife regulation guides. J.F. Griffin supports the Fish and Wildlife staff in the design, layout and editing of the *New Jersey Marine Digest*. We also manage the marketing and sales of *Digest* advertising to appropriate businesses.

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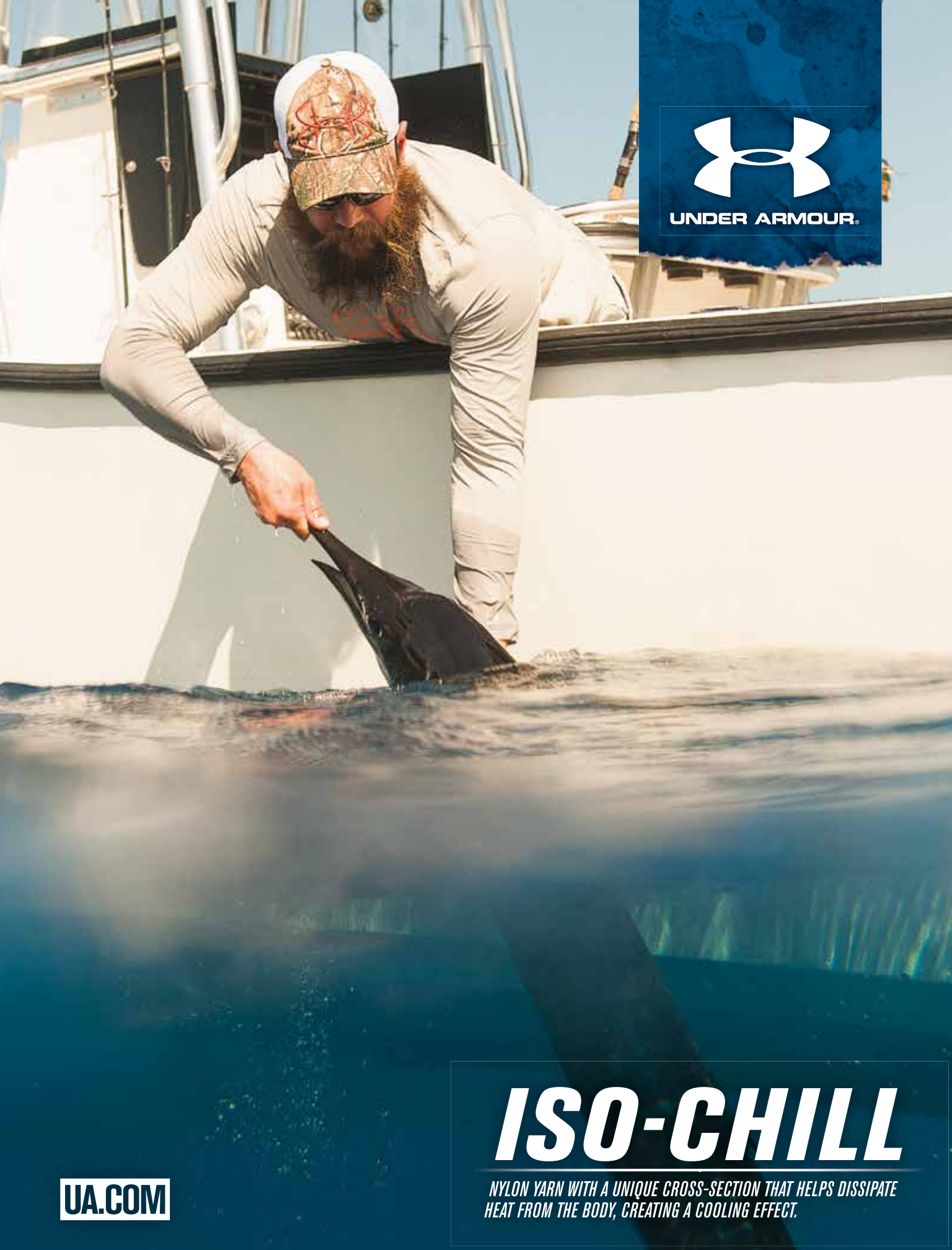


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To protect and manage the state's fish and wildlife to maximize their long-term biological, recreational and economic value for all New Jerseyans.

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- 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.
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Ron Essig

Fish and Wildlife staff and volunteers sort fish during the ocean trawl survey.

NJ Fisheries Surveys: Signals from our Research

By Michael Celestino, Research Scientist | Jennifer Pyle, Senior Fisheries Biologist
 Lindsey Barry, Senior Fisheries Biologist | Greg Hinks, Assistant Fisheries Biologist

Introduction

New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife’s Marine Fisheries Administration has surveyed fishes in the Atlantic Ocean annually since 1988 and in the Delaware River since 1980. Surveys conducted continuously over such a time period offer a rich view of the natural environment and are indispensable tools with which to assess fish populations. We analyzed these two fishery-independent surveys to see what story they might tell.

The Surveys

The Ocean Stock Assessment Survey departs five times a year on the 81-foot research vessel *Seawolf*. Nearly 200 randomly selected sites, from Sandy Hook to Cape May, are sampled over the course of the year. Each survey takes about a week to complete. Sampling is conducted using a 30-meter otter trawl net deployed in depths ranging from 18–90 feet, out to about 20 nautical miles from the shore. Catches are sorted by species, counted, weighed and most lengths are measured.

The Delaware River Seine Survey is divided into three regions. The survey consists of 32 fixed stations within an area extending from the Salem River to Trenton. Each station is sampled bi-monthly from mid-June to mid-November. The net used is 100 feet long and 6 feet deep with ¼-inch mesh. It is pulled onto the beach from both ends. The catch is funneled into the bag in the center of the net. All fish are identified, counted and sub-samples are measured.

Water quality variables including dissolved oxygen, temperature and salinity are collected from both surveys at each sampling location.

Materials and Methods

There are several approaches that could have been utilized. For example, the analysis could have concentrated on a single species in a single survey, all species encountered in all surveys or some combination thereof. In the end, our approach focused on a subset of species common to both surveys that are also familiar to most anglers and outdoor enthusiasts. Those species are:

Alewife	American Shad
Atlantic Croaker	Atlantic Menhaden
Bay Anchovy	Black Drum
Blueback Herring	Blue Crab
Bluefish	Spot
Striped Anchovy	Striped Bass
Weakfish	

With about three decades of data, the results could fill volumes. Here, we concentrate on specific areas of the two surveys and a specific time of year. Both surveys occur in August (as well as October), providing a useful starting place. (A future article will examine October surveys.)

For the ocean trawl survey analysis, our attention narrowed to the Atlantic Ocean waters between northern Long Beach Island and Shark River that are between 30 and 65 feet deep. For the Delaware River seine survey analysis, we assessed data from the southern-most region of eight stations from the Hope Creek Nuclear Generating Station to the Delaware Memorial Bridges. Using a class of



Jennifer Pyle/NJ Div. Fish and Wildlife

Typical catch from the Delaware River seine survey.



The Delaware River seine survey net is hauled in by (l to r) staff Jennifer Pyle, Maryellen Gordon, Heather Corbett and Tiffany Hewitt.

exploratory statistical techniques suited nicely for our dataset of multiple species, we examined changes in community composition as well as changes in select environmental variables.

Results

Ocean trawl: Stratum 16 (August)

The first result is that not all species we set out to describe occur in the selected time window. Recall, however, that for this discussion we pared down the results from the complete time series to address the 13 selected species.

For the ocean trawl survey analysis, trends in the abundance of several species have moved in tandem over time. For example, bay anchovies, blue crabs and weakfish have generally become less abundant in our survey (in this area and month). Atlantic croaker, blueback herring, and striped anchovies have more complicated abundance trends peaking at different times.

Since Fish and Wildlife collects a number of environmental variables while conducting the surveys, it is appropriate to examine trends in those variables as well as the relationship with species abundance.

Revealed was a rather dramatic drop in water temperature during the first decade of the time series after which the rate of decline moderates. Salinity has undulated with an upward trend over the last five years. Finally, and surprisingly, dissolved oxygen follows a pattern very similar to water temperature. (Ordinarily, dissolved oxygen and water temperature trend in opposite directions since warmer water holds less oxygen than cold water). Interestingly, the trend in dissolved oxygen levels recorded since around the mid- to late-1990s hovers around hypoxic (dangerously low) conditions.

Examination of trends in species abundance and environmental data suggests that there is a relationship between the two—though not necessarily one that's causative. Weakfish, bay anchovies and striped anchovies all appear to be more

abundant with warmer temperatures. Bay and striped anchovies also appear sensitive to dissolved oxygen, with a very low abundance of these species below hypoxic levels.

Finally, with respect to relationships among species, one of the more interesting observations is the positive association between weakfish and bay anchovies; when one is abundant, so is the other. Bay anchovies are a dominant part of weakfish diets (Figure 1). What might be occurring here is weakfish congregating on bay anchovies when they are abundant.

Delaware River Seine Survey: Region I (August)

As with the ocean trawl survey data above, trends in the abundance of several species have moved in tandem over time. For example, in this region and survey month, Atlantic croaker (prey) and striped bass (predator) have generally increased in abundance. Interestingly, several species have a complementary abundance (Figure 2). Blueback herring and blue crabs are forage species, and what this figure might be showing is the effects of predator switching based on which forage species is more abundant. Some of our constituents have suggested that when striped bass are abundant bluefish are not. Figure 3 offers support for this idea but note that these are young of the year data.

With respect to environmental data, August

water temperatures show a cooling trend for the first several years of the time series, but since about 1995, water temperatures have steadily risen. This rise in temperature was not accompanied by a change in salinity, but was—not surprisingly—accompanied by a decline in dissolved oxygen. While dissolved oxygen is low, it has generally remained above dangerously low conditions unlike with the ocean trawl survey data above.

Some of the species examined appear sensitive to dissolved oxygen. For example, Atlantic menhaden and bluefish appear to be more abundant with increasing dissolved oxygen, whereas the opposite is true for juvenile striped bass and American shad. It is uncertain if dissolved oxygen is driving the abundance patterns, but the existence of the pattern suggests that there may be environmental changes.



Discussion and Conclusions

Long term, continuous fishery surveys provide unique insights into the environment and are indispensable tools to sustainably manage fish populations. Two surveys that occur during the same period of time each year (August) were examined. Species community composition showed either similar trends in abundance (a decline for bay anchovy, blue crab and weakfish in the ocean trawl survey; an increase for striped bass and Atlantic croaker in the seine survey), or complementary but reverse trends (increasing for striped bass while decreasing for bluefish in the seine survey.)

Analyses of water quality measurements brought a somewhat surprising result of decreasing water temperature trends along with a concurrent decline in dissolved oxygen to near hypoxic levels for the ocean trawl survey. Weakfish and bay anchovy abundance may be affected adversely by the cooler temperature. Low dissolved oxygen can also have a negative effect on bay anchovies, yet no consistent trend was found correlating the anchovies' distribution with dissolved oxygen content. The periodic shifts seen in their distribution over the years may have been influenced by changes in habitat suitability (for example when salinities vary due to meteorological events) or by greater predation in areas containing higher dissolved oxygen.

The Delaware River seine survey saw an increase in water temperature over time accompanied by a decline in dissolved oxygen but not down to the levels seen in the ocean trawl survey. The abundance of bluefish may have been negatively affected by the decline in dissolved oxygen, a condition which may have the opposite effect on juvenile striped bass.

Further studies on the trends in environmental parameters, species abundance, community composition and predator-prey relationships should be conducted. Data collected from these long-running projects and analyses such as these are necessary components in our efforts to sustainably manage New Jersey's valuable fisheries resources.

Figure 1. Percent of average weakfish diet by age that consists of bay anchovies. Estimates are from the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's Multi-Species Technical Committee.

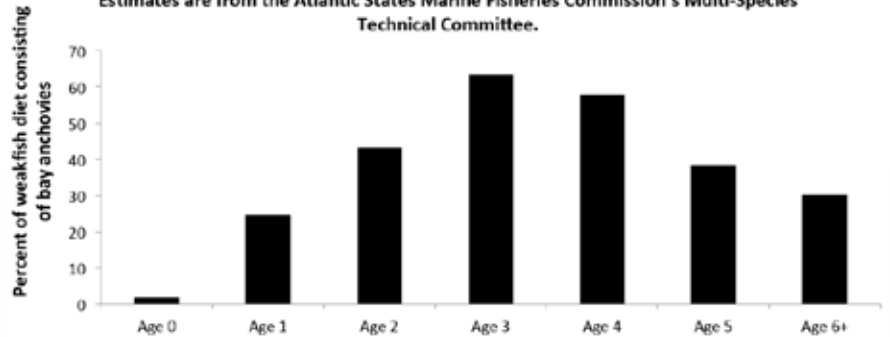


Figure 2. Abundance of two forage species collected in the Delaware River seine survey.

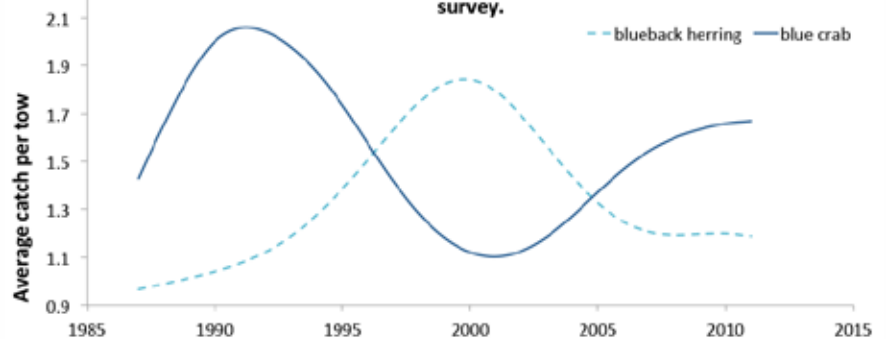
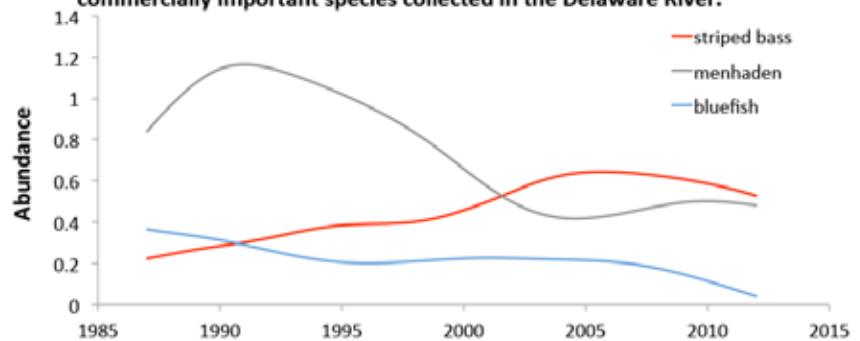


Figure 3. Trends in abundance for three recreationally and commercially important species collected in the Delaware River.





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- A Yes, I am a 1,200-pound brown bear, and these are my friends.
- B Yes, I stand at the edge of the falls and catch fish with my mouth.
- C No



2

Are you your own boat?

- A Yes, and please stop staring at my stern.
- B No, I'm my own airplane.
- C No



3

Do you want this in your favorite lake?

- A Yes. Landfills are soooo cliché.
- B Sure, who doesn't love dipping their toes into a pool of swirling sewage?
- C No



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QUESTION

QUESTION

QUESTION

Governor's Surf Fishing Tournament

GET OUTSIDE & ENJOY A DAY OF FISHING WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS


By Karen Byrne, Senior Biologist

The Annual Governor's Surf Fishing Tournament date has changed from the fall to the spring! This year the 23rd Annual Tournament will be held Sunday, May 18, 2014. The new date for the tournament was proposed in an effort to increase participation in the event. Moving the date to the spring will hopefully allow for better fishing, less competition from competing interests in October such as Fall festivals, sports and bow hunting season, and provide a great way to kick off New Jersey's summer shore season. Once again anglers from New Jersey and neighboring states will descend upon the beaches of Island Beach State Park in hopes of catching the longest fish of the day. The tournament aims to encourage youngsters and adults to learn more about surf fishing while taking advantage of a great family activity. Funds raised by the tournament go toward marine resource conservation and education.

It was a foggy start to the day of fishing for 560 anglers who were hoping to catch the overall largest fish in the 22nd Annual Tournament. Eventually the sun burned through the fog and twenty-one fish were entered in the bluefish, kingfish and blackfish categories. NJ DEP Assistant Commissioner of Natural and Historic Resources Richard Boornazian was on site to greet tournament participants and to take part in the awards ceremony. A total of

thirteen prizes were awarded in categories for children, teen and adults. However, the grand prize went to Barry South of Morrisville, Pennsylvania, for catching an 18 1/2" bluefish. Mr. South received two rod-and-reel combinations, a plaque, and will have his name engraved on the Governor's Cup, which is permanently on display at Island Beach State Park.

Since its inception in 1991, the tournament has generated more than \$130,000 for various marine education and restoration efforts, construction of access ramps for disabled saltwater anglers, surf fishing instruction programs and equipment, specialized wheel chairs that provide beach access for the disabled and elderly, plus the purchase of the first mobile automatic heart defibrillator for use at Island Beach State Park.

For more information about the Governor's Surf Fishing Tournament or to receive a registration form, visit NJFishandWildlife.com/gsf.htm or call (609) 748-4347. 

New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife (along with our co-sponsors: New Jersey Division of Parks and Forestry, New Jersey State Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs, Jersey Coast Anglers Association and New Jersey Beach Buggy Association) would like to thank the following organizations for contributing to the success of the 22nd Annual



In the Governor's Surf Fishing Tournament winner's circle: (left to right) — Paul Harris (N.J. Beach Buggy Association), Mark Taylor (Jersey Coast Anglers Association), Barry South (Tournament Winner), DEP Assistant Commissioner Rich Boornazian, Frank Dara (Governor's Surf Fishing Tournament President and NJ State Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs member).

Governor's Surf Fishing Tournament in 2013:

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Regulations in red are new this year.

Regulations remain in effect until changed. For the most current regulations, go to NJFishandWildlife.com/njregs.htm#marine or call the marine fish "listen-only" line at (609) 292-2083. 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, winter flounder, American eel and coastal sharks** have changed.

- The summer flounder recreational minimum size limit is now 18 inches and the possession limit remains five fish. The 2014 summer flounder recreational season will be open from May 23 to September 23.
- The black sea bass recreational minimum size remains at 12.5 inches. However, the recreational seasons and possession limits have changed. There is a 15 fish possession limit for May 19 to June 30, Sept. 1 to Sept. 6 and Oct. 18 to Dec. 31. Note: there is a three fish possession limit during the open season of July 1 to Aug. 31.
- The recreational winter flounder season is now Mar. 1–Dec. 31. The minimum size remains at 12 inches and the possession limit remains at two fish.
- Due to concerns regarding the decline of American eel stocks, changes were enacted including an increase in the minimum size limit from six inches to nine inches and a decrease in the recreational possession limit from 50 eels to 25 eels with an exemption for party and charter boat employees who may possess 50 eels.
- For coastal sharks, note changes to shark species groupings and the implementation of a 78-inch recreational minimum size limit for the newly formed Hammerhead Group.

These changes were implemented for New Jersey to remain in compliance with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's management plans for summer flounder, black sea bass, winter flounder, American eel and coastal sharks. 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. Saltwater anglers must comply with the requirements of the New Jersey Saltwater Recreational Registry Program. See page 15.

Resource Information

Anyone who takes fisheries resources may be required to provide information on the species, number, weight or other information pertinent to management of resources. Anglers are encouraged to report all fishing activity after each trip. Visit Fish and Wildlife's Volunteer Angler Survey at NJFishandWildlife.com/marinesurvey.htm.

Methods of Recreational Fishing

No person shall take, catch, kill or attempt to take, catch or kill any fish within the marine waters of the state by any means except in the manner commonly known as angling with hand line or rod and line unless specifically provided for by statute or regulation.

Delaware Fishing License Requirement

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

New York Fishing 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 — alewife and blueback 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.

Wanton Waste Prohibited

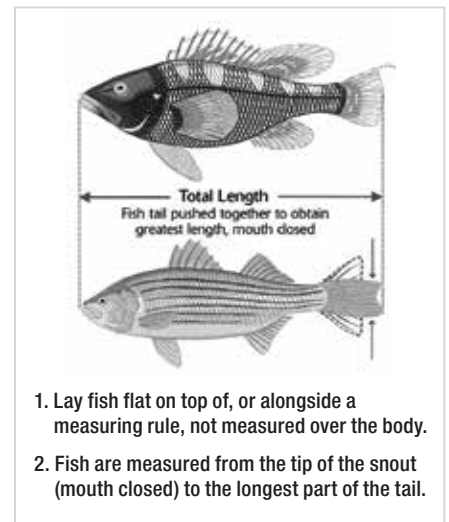
Fish of any species which are purposely killed shall become part of the angler's daily possession limit and shall not be returned to the water from which they were taken. This does not apply to fish which are released alive and subsequently die, but does apply even to species without size/possession 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



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
- sandbar shark
- shortnose sturgeon
- whale shark
- white shark
- river herring (alewife and blueback herring; see herring illustrations, page 16)
- See *Sharks* (page 13) 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.

Accessible Fishing Sites



For people with disabilities, visit: www.NJFishandWildlife.com/sites.htm

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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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, or any species of flatfish, is prohibited except for summer flounder; see *Summer Flounder*, page 14. 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.

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.

Black Sea Bass

Black sea bass are measured along the midline from the snout to the end of the central portion of the tail, not to include the tail filaments. (See fish measuring example on page 12.) The black sea bass recreational minimum size remains at 12.5 inches. **The 2014 recreational seasons and possession limits have changed. See details on the Marine Regulations chart, page 19.** 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.

Red Drum

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

River Herring

The taking or possession of any river herring (alewife and blueback herring) in New Jersey's marine, tidal and freshwaters is prohibited. This prohibition does not include Atlantic herring which may be retained and used as bait. See the fish ID illustrations on page 16 for herring species identification.

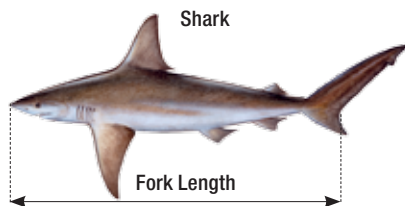
Sharks

As a result of recent findings that scalloped hammerhead and blacknose sharks are overfished and/or experiencing overfishing, the **National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) modified the coastal shark species groupings, established a new recreational size limit and modified seasons to respond to the findings as required under the Magnuson-Stevens Fisheries Conservation and**

Regulations in red are new this year.

Management Act. To conform to these changes, New Jersey has removed all three hammerhead sharks (great, scalloped, and smooth) from the current Large Coastal Group of shark species and placed them in a separate Hammerhead Group. The remaining shark species in the Large Coastal Group are being re-grouped into a new Aggregate Large Coastal Group to include the Atlantic blacktip, bull, lemon, nurse, silky, spinner, and tiger sharks. Additionally, the blacknose shark is being removed from the current Small Coastal Group of shark species and placed in the new Blacknose Group. The remaining shark species in the Small Coastal Group are being re-grouped into a new Non-Blacknose Small Coastal Shark Group to include the bonnethead, finetooth, and Atlantic sharpnose sharks. A Smoothhound Shark Group is being formed to include the smooth dogfish and the Florida smoothhound shark, which are not currently included in any shark grouping. Only the current Pelagic Group of shark species remains unchanged.

The NMFS also changed the hammerhead shark recreational size limit to 78 inches fork length (FL). The minimum size limit for authorized shark species of the Aggregate Large Coastal and Pelagic groups remains at 54 inches fork length while all others do not have a size limit. See dogfish Note and measuring illustration for fork length.



The 2014 shark regulations complement existing federal shark regulations (see 2014 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 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 Aggregate Large Coastal and Hammerhead groups* will have a closed season within state waters from May 15 through July 15 to protect spawning female sharks during the pupping season.

* See page 20 footnote for species list defining the new shark groupings.

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

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 shark species 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.

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.

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.

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.NJ.WildlifeLicense.com to 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.NJ.WildlifeLicense.com, anglers are then eligible to receive another bonus permit for the \$2 application fee. **Note: Harvest information must be reported online.**

Summer Flounder (Fluke)

The summer flounder recreational minimum size limit is now 18 inches and the possession limit remains five fish. The 2014 summer flounder recreational season will be open from May 23 to September 27.

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 closed season from March 1–March 31, a four fish possession limit from April 1–April 30, a closed season from May 1–July 16, a one fish possession limit from July 17–Nov. 15 and a six fish possession limit from Nov. 16–Dec. 31.

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 possession minimum and size limit for winter flounder is two fish at 12 inches. For winter flounder the open season is March 1–Dec 31.

Additional Marine Fishing Regulations

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



Ray Szczykowski, TideRun@aol.com

New Jersey Saltwater Recreational Registry Program (NJSRRP)

ATTENTION:

New Jersey Saltwater Anglers

REGISTER.

**You make a difference!
It's free, easy and required.**

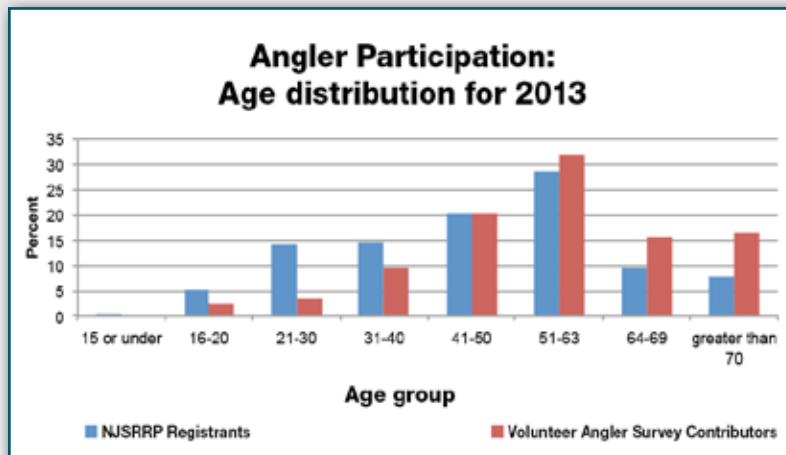
Before you head out to catch your favorite marine fish this year, be sure to join the hundreds of thousands of other anglers who have already registered with the New Jersey Saltwater Recreational Registry Program (NJSRRP).

For more information on the New Jersey Saltwater Recreational Registry Program and to register, visit www.saltwaterregistry.nj.gov

After registering, become part of the fishery management process!

Submit a fishing report to the New Jersey Volunteer Angler Survey after each saltwater trip. Your fishing reports—whether you caught zero or 50 fish—can help improve saltwater fishing opportunities in New Jersey. Scientists, stakeholders, public officials and many others all contribute toward making recreational fishing regulations. But if you're an angler, the process ultimately revolves around *you*. What is learned from anglers is critical to understanding the health of fisheries. *You* can have a real impact on our ocean resources and how they are managed. Submit online reports at www.njfishandwildlife.com/marinesurvey.htm

Is your generation represented?



The percentage of individuals, grouped by age, who registered with the NJSRRP is compared with those who submitted data through New Jersey's online Volunteer Angler Survey.

If your generation is not yet participating, log on to report your fishing effort at www.njfishandwildlife.com/marinesurvey.htm. Spread the word!

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 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/

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).


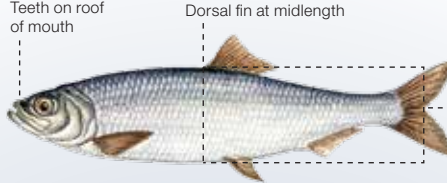

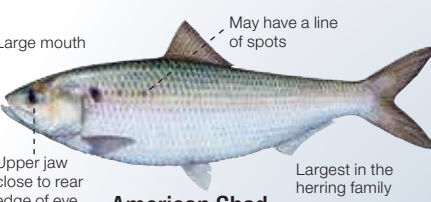
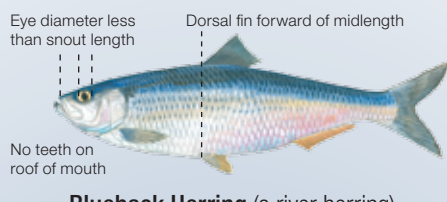

New Jersey State Police (NJSP)

(609) 882-2000
www.njsp.org/maritime

Marine Species Identification

MARINE REGULATIONS

Herring

<p>Dorsal fin forward of midlength</p> <p>Eye diameter greater than snout length</p>  <p>Deep body</p> <p>No teeth on roof of mouth</p>	<p>Teeth on roof of mouth</p> <p>Dorsal fin at midlength</p>  <p>Narrow body</p>	<p>Round snout overhangs closed mouth</p> <p>Long, filamentous projection from last ray of dorsal fin</p> 
<p>Alewife (a river herring)</p>	<p>Atlantic Herring</p>	<p>Gizzard Shad</p>
<p>Large mouth</p> <p>May have a line of spots</p>  <p>Upper jaw close to rear edge of eye</p> <p>Largest in the herring family</p>	<p>Eye diameter less than snout length</p> <p>Dorsal fin forward of midlength</p>  <p>No teeth on roof of mouth</p>	<p>Lower jaw projects well beyond upper jaw when mouth closed</p> 
<p>American Shad</p>	<p>Blueback Herring (a river herring)</p>	<p>Hickory Shad</p>

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



Striped Bass



Weakfish



Bluefish (Snapper)



Black Sea Bass



Atlantic Croaker



Winter Flounder



Tautog (Blackfish)



Black Drum



Summer Flounder (Fluke)



Red Drum



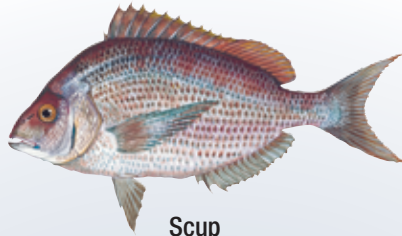
Blue Crab



Hard Clam



Spot



**Scup
(Porgy)**



White Perch



Northern Searobin



Northern Kingfish



Atlantic Bonito



Northern Puffer



**Spanish
Mackerel**



Oyster Toadfish



Atlantic Mackerel



Atlantic Cod



Smooth Dogfish



Spiny Dogfish



Sand Tiger Shark



Sandbar Shark

Mollusks & Crustaceans

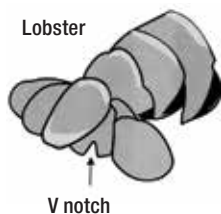
MARINE REGULATIONS

Regulations in red are new this year.

Crustaceans

American Lobster

The legal possession size limit of whole lobsters, measured from the rear of the eye socket along a line parallel to the center line of the body shell to the rear of the body shell, shall be not less than 3 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches nor greater than 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches. Lobster parts may not be possessed at sea or landed. There is no harvest or possession of lobster from Feb. 1– March 31.



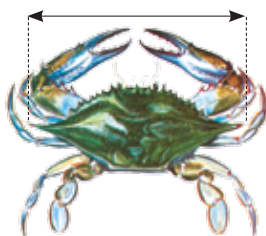
The possession limit is six lobsters per person. No person shall possess any lobster with eggs attached or from which eggs have been removed or any female lobster with a v-notched tail, as illustrated above.

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.

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 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches
 - Hard crab: 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches

Measure crabs point to point.



- 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 30.
- Crab Pot/Trot Line seasons:** Delaware Bay and tributaries: April 6–Dec. 4. All other waters: March 15–Nov. 30. The following waters, **and their tributaries**, are closed to the use of crab pots and trot lines: Cumberland Co.: Cohansy River and creeks named Back, Cedar, Nantuxent, Fortescue, Oranoken and Dividing; Cape May Co.: West and Bidwell Creeks and the Cape May Canal; Atlantic Co.: Hammock Cove (Dry Bay); Ocean Co.: on east shore of Barnegat Bay, that area of Sedge Islands Wildlife Management Area enclosed by a line drawn from the northern bank of Fishing Creek on Island Beach State Park to the northern tip of the Sedge Islands (Hensler Island), then south from point to point along the western side of the Sedge Islands WMA and terminating on the most southwestern point of Island Beach State Park.
- 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 and after sunset. Shellfish harvest is also prohibited on Sundays except in the seasonally approved areas of the Navesink and Shrewsbury rivers, when harvesting is permitted between Nov. 1 and April 30.
- Harvesting shellfish on public grounds is restricted to the use of hand implements.
- It is illegal to harvest shellfish from leased grounds. These grounds are delineated by stakes or buoys set by the lease holder. Charts of the leases may be examined at Fish and Wildlife's Nacote Creek or Delaware Bay shellfish offices during regular business hours. Invasion onto leased grounds is punishable by penalties up to \$3,000 and loss of all equipment.

Recreational Shellfishing


- No holder of any recreational shellfish license may take more than a total of 150 shellfish (in aggregate) per day. See *Shellfish License Information*, page 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 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches in length. Clams less than 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches in length must immediately be returned to the



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

- Shells taken in the process of harvesting oysters must be culled from the live oysters and returned immediately to the area from where they were taken.

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 1½ 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. 

2014 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 or call the marine fish "listen-only" line at (609) 292-2083. 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^a	No Closed Season	9"	25
Black Drum	No Closed Season	16"	3
Black Sea Bass	May 19–June 30	12.5"	15
	July 1–Aug. 31	12.5"	3
	Sept. 1–Sept. 6	12.5"	15
	Oct. 18–Dec. 31	12.5"	15
Bluefish (Snapper)	No Closed Season	None	15
Cod	No Closed Season	21"	No Limit
Haddock	No Closed Season	21"	No Limit
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			
Delaware River & tributaries	No Closed Season	None	6 (maximum of 3 American shad)
All Other Marine Waters	No Closed Season	None	6 (no American shad may be harvested or possessed)
Shark^{b, c, †}			
Aggregate large coastal group[†]	Jan. 1–May 14 and 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).
Hammerhead group[†]		78"	
Non-blacknose small coastal group[†]	No closed season	None	
Blacknose group[†]			
Pelagic group[†]	No closed season	54" fork length	
Smooth Dogfish	No Closed Season	None	No Limit
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		
Delaware River & tributaries** (upstream of Calhoun St. bridge)	March 1–Dec. 31	28"	2
Atlantic Ocean^d (0–3 nautical miles from shore)	No Closed Season		
Rivers, bay and estuaries 3–200 nautical miles (federal waters)	March 1–Dec. 31 Prohibited	–	0
Summer Flounder (Fluke)	May 23–Sept. 27	18"	5
Tautog (Blackfish)	Jan. 1–Feb. 28	15"	4
	April 1–April 30	15"	4
	July 17–Nov. 15	15"	1
	Nov. 16–Dec. 31	15"	6
Weakfish	No Closed Season	13"	1
Winter Flounder	March 1–Dec. 31	12"	2
Note: 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 Summer Flounder , page 14.			
Blue Crab			
peeler or shedder	No Closed Season ^e	3"	1 bushel
soft	No Closed Season ^e	3½"	
hard	No Closed Season ^e	4½"	
Lobster (carapace length)	Jan. 1–Jan. 31; April 1–Dec. 31	3½"	6
Hard Clam (license required)	No Closed Season	1½"	150 clams

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

b Not including dogfish; see description on page 13 under **Sharks**.

c See page 12 for a list of **Prohibited Species**.

d Atlantic Ocean greater than three miles from shore: harvest and possession prohibited.

e 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 14) for specifics of springtime non-offset circle hook requirements.

† See page 20 for **Federal Recreational Regulations**.

Law Enforcement and Regulation Information



Contact a New Jersey Division of Fish & Wildlife Law Enforcement 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**

Regulations in *red* are new this year.

2014 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.

Species	Season	Minimum Size	Possession Limit (number per angler per day unless otherwise specified)	Notes
Cod	Year round	22"	10 per person per day	
Striped Bass	NA	NA	No possession allowed in EEZ	Possession prohibited in federal waters (3–200 nm). See pages 14 and 19 for NJ waters.
Dolphin (Mahi mahi)	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 www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/ or call (727) 824-5326.
Marlin, White	Year round	66" lower jaw–fork length	None	Billfish require Highly Migratory Species (HMS) permit when fishing in federal waters (3–200 nm). For permits refer to https://hmspermits.noaa.gov or call (888) 872-8862.
Marlin, Blue	Year round	99" lower jaw–fork length	None	During any sanctioned billfish tournaments offering prize money, non-offset circle hooks are required for lures with natural bait or natural/artificial bait combos.
Roundscale Spearfish	Year round	66" lower jaw–fork length	None	All non-tournament billfish landings must be reported to NMFS within 24 hours, either online at https://hmspermits.noaa.gov or by calling (800) 894-5528.
Sailfish	Year round	63" lower jaw–fork length	None	
Spearfish, Longbill	None	None	Prohibited	For current regulations refer to www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/ or call (727) 824-5399.
Golden Tilefish	Year round	None	8 per angler per day	In effect from the Virginia/North Carolina border north.
Swordfish	Year round	47" lower jaw–fork length if the head is naturally attached or 25" cleithrum to caudal keel if the head has been removed.	For anglers: 1 per person, no more than 4 per vessel per trip. For charter vessels: 1 per paying passenger, no more than 6 per vessel per trip. For headboat vessels: 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 https://hmspermits.noaa.gov or call (888) 872-8862. All non-tournament swordfish landings must be reported to NMFS within 24 hours either online at https://hmspermits.noaa.gov or by calling (800) 894-5528.
Tuna, Albacore (Longfin)	Year round	None	None	† Bluefin tuna are managed in two regions; Northern, extending north from the Great Egg Inlet and Southern extending south from Great Egg Inlet. Bluefin tuna retention limits may change throughout the season. Visit https://hmspermits.noaa.gov or call (888) 872-8862 or (978) 281-9260 for current information.
Tuna, Bigeye	Year round	27" curved fork length	None	All recreational bluefin tuna landings must be reported to NMFS within 24 hours either online at https://hmspermits.noaa.gov or by calling (888) 872-8862.
Tuna, Bluefin†	Jan. 1–Dec. 31 or until season is closed.	>27" to <73" curved fork length	Limits can change during the season. Prior to departure, check https://hmspermits.noaa.gov or 888-USA-TUNA for up-to-date limits.	
Tuna, Skipjack	Year round	None	None	
Tuna, Yellowfin	Year round	27" curved fork length	3 per person per trip	For current federal waters regulations (3–200nm), refer to www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/ or call (301) 713-2347 for swordfish/sharks or (978) 281-9260 for tunas.
Sharks*				
Aggregate Large Coastal Group Hammerhead Group Non-blacknose Small Coastal Group Blacknose Group Pelagic Group	Year round	Aggregate Large Coastal and Pelagic: 54" Hammerheads: 78" Other listed sharks: None	For non prohibited species: 1 authorized* shark/vessel/trip plus 1 Atlantic sharpnose and 1 bonnethead shark/person/trip	See below for list of shark groups which MAY be kept or MUST be released. Swordfish, tuna and sharks require an HMS permit when fishing in federal waters (3–200 nm). For permits, refer to https://hmspermits.noaa.gov or call (888) 872-8862. Recreational fishermen (those that do not have a limited access commercial shark permit) can not sell, barter or trade any Atlantic shark or shark pieces.
Wahoo	Year round	None	2 per person per day	For more information, contact the South Atlantic Fisheries Management Council at (727) 824-5326.
Wreckfish	None	None	Prohibited	

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

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/ 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.

Shellfish License Information

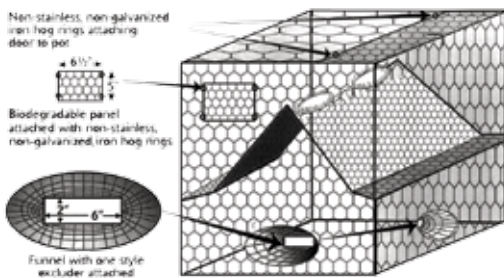
A shellfish license (formerly called clamming) is required for harvesting all species of benthic mollusks (except conchs, addressed in the commercial marine fisheries regulations), including, but not limited to, hard and soft clams, surf clams, oysters, bay scallops and mussels. Other specific commercial 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.

The resident senior citizen 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 shellfish license agents, 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.

Chesapeake-Style Crab Pot




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.
- **Resident 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. To become certified, call (609) 984-6213.

- **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. See page 18 for all recreational crab regulations.

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

Users of non-collapsible, Chesapeake-style crab pots should know 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 diamond-back 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. 

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 or at any Fish and Wildlife-certified license agent including those of the license agents listed below. For the most current list of Fish and Wildlife-certified license agents, go to NJFishandWildlife.com/agentlst.htm.

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
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
Belleplain Supply, 346 Handmill Rd., Belleplain(609) 861-2345
Budd's Bait & Tackle, 109 Fulling Mill Rd., Villas.....(609) 886-6935
City of Ocean City, 861 Asbury Ave., Ocean City(609) 525-9328
Just Sports, 21 Mechanic St., Cape May Court House.....(609) 465-6171
Sea Isle Bait & Tackle, 4200 Park Rd., Sea Isle City(609) 263-6540
Smuggler's Cove, 370 83rd St., Stone Harbor.....(609) 368-1700
Sterling Harbor Bait & Tackle, 1020 W. Rio Grande Ave., Wildwood(609) 729-1425
Two Chums Bait, Tackle and Boat, 375 – 43rd Pl., Sea Isle City(609) 263-2486
Upper Township, 2100 Tuckahoe Rd., Tuckahoe.....(609) 628-2805
Wal*Mart, 3159 Rt. 9S, Rio Grande(609) 465-7760

CUMBERLAND COUNTY

Beaver Dam Boat Rentals, 514 Old Beaver Dam Rd, Newport(856) 447-3633
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 Bait & Tackle, 800 Ashley Ave., Brielle.....(732) 528-5720
L & H Woods and Water, 2045 Rt. 35, Wall(732) 282-1812
The Bait Shop, 57 Main St., Bradley Beach(732) 361-8500

OCEAN COUNTY

American Sportsman, 857 Mill Creek Rd., Manahawkin(609) 597-4104
Bob Kislin's, 1214 Rt. 37 East, Toms River(732) 929-9300
Creekside Outfitters, 403 Rt. 9, Waretown(609) 242-1812
Downes Marina, 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
Pell's Fish & Sport Shop, 335 Mantoloking Rd., Bricktown.....(732) 477-2121
Pineland Sporting Goods, 959 W. Veterans Hwy., Jackson(732) 961-7248
Surf City Bait & Tackle, 317 Long Beach Blvd., Surf City.....(609) 494-2333
Tip's Hardware, 218 Main St., West Creek(609) 296-3192
West Creek Bait & Tackle, 387 Rt. 9, West Creek(609) 857-3516

PASSAIC COUNTY

Fins & Furs Bait Shop, 2727 Rt. 23, Newfoundland(973) 545-2336

SOMERSET COUNTY

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

Down We Go

EFFECTIVE DEEP WATER CATCH AND RELEASE

By **Maryellen Gordon**, Senior Fisheries Biologist | **Paul Perra**, NOAA Recreational Fishery Coordinator, NOAA Fisheries North East Region
Earl Meredith, NOAA Recreational Fishery Coordinator, NOAA Northeast Fisheries Science Center

MARINE ANGLERS who fish deeper water may often see their released fish bobbing on the water's surface, floating like a balloon. This leaves an impression of wastefulness but much worse, causes mortality of these released fish, tarnishing an otherwise successful fishing trip.

Barotrauma!

When fish are rapidly brought up from deep water, they will likely suffer from barotrauma, a damaging condition similar to the bends experienced by scuba divers if they ascend to the water's surface too fast. Barotrauma is the injurious effect resulting from gases expanding faster than they can diffuse out of body tissues due to the decreasing pressure during ascent through the water column.

Fish with barotrauma effects may look stiff, dead, have extended eyes (pop-eyes), and/or an enlarged air bladder which results in the stomach being forced out through the esophagus. Yes, that's the stomach, not the air bladder. Anglers often mistake the protruding stomach for the air bladder and puncture the stomach, an extremely injurious error.

When released, barotrauma effects prevent a fish from swimming back to deep water leaving them floating helplessly, subjecting them to predation by birds, other fish or dangerous surface conditions such as water temperatures much warmer than they normally inhabit. Unfortunately, most bloated surface floaters will *not* survive.

Venting to Relieve Barotrauma

One approach to assist floaters is to "vent" the fish. Venting is performed by carefully inserting a needle into the fish's side to puncture its body cavity, releasing the expanded gases. A more detailed description on venting can be found at the Florida Sea Grant Web Site, <https://www.flseagrant.org/fisheries/venting>. In many cases, venting will allow the fish to descend and is a fast way to reduce floaters when catching many fish that must be released quickly. However, venting can cause serious internal injuries, infections and leave fish vulnerable to predators. Many discourage the practice of venting for these reasons.

Descenders Are Safer

In most cases, the use of a descending device is a preferred method to venting. A descending device is a conservation tool used to return fish to deep water, alleviating the "balloon" trail behind your vessel. These devices not only move the fish off of the water's surface but greatly increase the survival rate of released fish. Descending devices return the fish to the depth where it was caught without puncturing the body or causing potentially serious injury. The process of descending a fish allows the higher water pressure at greater depths to recompress gases that had expanded in body tissues at the water's surface. Many fish resume normal activities soon after their underwater release.

First, Proper Handling

Of key importance, anglers must always perform proper fish handling techniques at the surface prior to descending a fish. Remove hooks promptly when hooked in the lip or mouth; cut the line close to the hook if it's been swallowed too deeply to remove; handle the fish as gently as possible, returning it to the water quickly. (For more on proper fish handling techniques, see also page 13, *How to Release Hooked Fish*.) Each step will greatly enhance the survivability of released fish, especially those that also must contend with barotrauma effects. Any effort to reduce mortality by descending fish will be less effective after poor surface handling.

A common observation among experienced anglers about the general fishing community is that the majority of anglers are not releasing fish correctly. If more anglers employed proper fish handling techniques and releasing methods, the improved conservation ethic would benefit all recreational fish stocks. A National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) report from 2011 states that 60 percent of the fish caught by marine anglers are released back to the water. That's 207 million fish!

East Coast Deep Water Fish Will Benefit

Descenders are more commonly used on the West, Gulf of Mexico and south Atlantic coasts. Such devices could prove beneficial for select East Coast fisheries, particularly in the Mid-Atlantic for species such as black sea bass, tautog and tilefish, all typically caught in water depths of more than 60 feet.

Studies on West Coast rockfish have demonstrated high survival rates for descended fish. Some fish have survived the barotrauma effects of being caught from hundreds of feet below the surface. An entertaining and very informative video on this subject can be found on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EiZFghwVOyI>.



A West Coast canary rockfish with barotrauma effects (pop-eyes and protruding stomach)

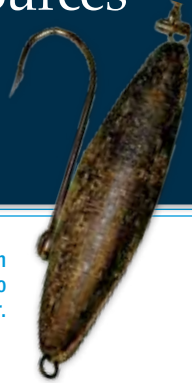
Fish Descending Device Sources

The Seaqualizer — www.seaqualizer.com

Shelton Descending Device — www.sheltonproducts.com

BLACKTIP Fish Recompression Device — www.westmarine.com

RokLees, The Fish Descending Device — www.ecoleeser.com



This fish descending device is constructed from an inverted barbless hook with a weight used to "escort" a bloated fish back to deeper water.

Types of Descending Devices

A descending device can be a simple tool made at home with inexpensive materials. One such device is a weight with an inverted (downward pointing) barbless hook which allows the device to be jerked upwards out of the fish when the desired water depth is reached.

Another easily constructed device to descend fish is a weighted utility or milk crate with a long rope. Weights or a chain can be fastened around the open rim which now becomes the bottom of the device when the crate is inverted, containing the buoyant fish as it is descended. Gases in the fish normalize as it reaches the depth at which it was caught and the fish recovers, swimming out of the crate's open bottom. Devices like these are available at some tackle shops, marine supply stores or online. (See above.)

For more details on descending devices, see the Florida Sea Grant website page at <http://flseagrants.ifas.ufl.edu/newsletter/2012/07/what-are-fish-descending-devices-2/#.UX6Hy7WW9GY>, or the California Sea Grant brochure titled *Bring That Rockfish Down* at <http://www.usc.edu/org/seagrant/research/Barotrauma.html>.

Scant Research

On the East Coast, the use of descending devices to mitigate barotrauma is in its infancy. Since 2011, four important and informative fish barotrauma workshops were conducted with participants such as scientists and fisheries managers, fish industry representatives, for-hire vessel operators and recreational anglers. The workshops addressed barotrauma issues, prevention and remediation in addition to recent works in this area, research needs and opportunities for collaborative studies. Details on the workshops can be found at the American Sport Fishing Association's FishSmart website <http://www.fishsmart.org/>.

No comprehensive scientific studies exist on the use of descending devices for recreationally caught species found in New England and Mid-Atlantic regions. While New Jersey Division of Fish and



A utility crate, when inverted and weighted around the rim, can function as a fish descending device.

Wildlife is encouraging anglers to pioneer the use of various barotrauma devices, more defensible scientific evidence must be gathered as to their effectiveness for our East Coast fish species. A partnership among the recreational angling community, fisheries managers and scientific fisheries organizations would be beneficial for conducting much-needed research on barotrauma and the efficacy of fish descending devices.

Become a Forerunner

Find an old utility crate, affix a long rope and weight the rim to make a descender. Rig up an inverted, barbless hook-and-weight release device. Flip through a catalog or search online for fish descending devices. Add a variety of these life-saving devices to your fishing gear. Try several on your next deep water fishing trip, comparing their effectiveness and ease of use. Be sure to inform New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife's Marine Fisheries staff, researchers and fellow anglers on the benefits of these practical devices. Consider yourself to be a pioneer in the prevention of barotrauma for East Coast, deep water fish. Your conservation efforts will improve their rate of survival.

Photo Credits:

Fish: California Dept. of Fish and Wildlife
Lure: California Dept. of Fish and Wildlife
Utility Crate: Paul Perra NOAA

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Skillful Angler Recognition Program

2014 REGULATIONS



Barnegat Reef was the location where James Parula hooked this 8lb., 8 oz. fluke measuring 28 inches.

The Skillful Angler Recognition 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. It is comprised of three categories: Adult (for anglers age 16 and older), Junior (under age 16) and Catch and Release (based on length). **New entry requirements:** Anglers must submit two clear, side-view photos that allows accurate species identification, one taken alongside a ruler, the other of the angler holding the fish at the catch location.

Take time to compose a good quality (and high resolution) photo to submit with your application. The best photo may be selected for publication in this *Digest* next year! Include your e-mail address on back of the photo so we may contact you for a digital copy of your print.

Anglers qualifying for a Skillful Angler award receive a certificate as a testament to their achievement. Anglers may submit applications for larger fish caught even after receiving a certificate.

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 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 alongside a ruler. For Adult/Junior categories, fish must be weighed and measured by fishing license agents, tackle shops or authorized Fish and Wildlife fisheries biologists. A new Skillful Angler Program is being planned; watch for changes next year.

Apply online at:
NJFishandWildlife.com/pdf/sklflang-appform.pdf

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 requires a separate application and is based on weight alone. Scale certification documentation and a weighmaster's signature are necessary. Other rules apply. Visit Fish and Wildlife's Web site at NJFishandWildlife.com for a complete list of current state records. See also page 25.

Ocean Fun Day

Never surf fished before?

Join New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife educators at Ocean Fun Days to learn how!

May 17, 2014 from 11:30 a.m.–1:30 p.m. at Island Beach State Park.

- Learn proper surf fishing techniques and tricks.
- All equipment and supplies will be provided. Ages 12 and up.

Participants may join in the Governor's Surf Fishing Tournament (see page 10 for Tournament details) the next day using provided equipment. Tournament registration fees will apply.



Heather Corbett/NJ Div. Fish and Wildlife



Michael J. LaTorre, Jr. caught this smooth dogfish on May 24 at Sculls Bay while casting bait from a boat. It weighed 19 lbs., 11.2 oz. (beating the former record by 2.2 oz.) and was 49 inches long with a 23-inch girth.

New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife's Record Fish Program honors anglers who catch the largest of select species of freshwater and saltwater fish. Record size is based on weight alone; there are no line classes. Currently there are 59 marine species eligible for entry into the program.

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. The original list of 72 species was pared down with that objective in mind.

Twelve species are now retired from the list of program-eligible fish, but remain on a separate list posted on Fish and Wildlife's Web site. One historical catch is also retired and posted on the list.

Anglers should be aware of the procedure in effect for entering the Record Fish Program. First, separate applications are required for freshwater and saltwater species. Second, for saltwater entries, it is now mandatory that a marine biologist inspect

any potential record fish, as identification solely by photo is not always accurate. Anglers must call Fish and Wildlife's Nacote Creek Research Station at (609) 748-2020 to make arrangements for inspection. In most instances, the fish must be transported to this office in Port Republic. However, in the case of extremely large fish (i.e., shark and tuna), a biologist should be available to travel for dockside inspection. Note that all scale certification requirements still apply, including a valid Certificate of Inspection/Test Report and current Registration Certificate issued by the County Office of Weights and Measures.

The entry deadline is now no later than one month after the date of catch. Note that the triggerfish category is now defined as gray triggerfish.

For a complete list of state record fish or to print an application with complete program rules, visit the Division of Fish and Wildlife's Web site at NJFishandWildlife.com/fishing.htm.

New Jersey State Record Marine Fish

Species	Lbs.	Oz.	Year	Angler	Where Caught
Amberjack, greater	85	0	1993	Edwin Metzner	Off Cape May
Bass, black sea	8	4.5	2010	Andrew A. Merendino	Off Cape May
Bluefish	27	1	1997	Roger Kastorsky	5 Fathom Bank
Bonito, Atlantic	13	8	1945	Frank Lykes, Jr.	Off Sandy Hook
Cobia	87	0	1999	John Shanchuk	Off Sea Bright
Cod	81	0	1967	Joseph Chesla	Off Brielle
Crab, blue	8¾" pt. to pt.		2009	Raymond Ponik	Bayonne
Croaker, Atlantic	5	8	1981	Frederick Brown	Delaware Bay
*Cunner	3	0.5	2012	Raul de la Prida	Off Pt. Pleasant
Dogfish, smooth	19	9	2010	Richard A. Proot, III	Mantoloking
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, white	41	7	1989	Wayne Eble	Off Barnegat Light
Kingfish, Northern	2	8	2004	Chester Urbanski	Barnegat Bay
Ling (red hake)	12	13	2010	Billy Watson	Off Manasquan
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
Shad, American	7	0	1967	Rodger West	Great Bay
Shad, hickory	2	13	2011	Robert Macejka	Mantoloking

Species	Lbs.	Oz.	Year	Angler	Where Caught
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 Thacara	Mud Hole
Shark, porbeagle	Vacant (Minimum Weight 100 lbs.)				
Shark, s-fin mako	856	0	1994	Christopher Palmer	Wilmington Canyon
Shark, thresher	683	0	2009	Bennett Fogelberg	Fingers
Shark, tiger	880	0	1988	Billy DeJohn	Off Cape May
Sheepshead	17	3	2003	Paul Lowe	Manahawkin Bay
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
*Striped Bass	78	8	1982	Al McReynolds	Atlantic City
Swordfish	530	0	1964	Edmund Levitt	Wilmington Canyon
*Tautog	25	0	1998	Anthony Monica	Off Ocean City
Tilefish, golden	63	8	2009	Dennis Muhlenforth	Linden Kohl Canyon
Tilefish, gray	18	14	2013	Richard Englesbe	Off Tom's Canyon
Triggerfish, gray	5	12	2008	Ronald Pires	High Bar Harbor
Tuna, albacore	77	15	1984	Dr. S. Scannapiego	Spencer Canyon
Tuna, big-eye	364	14	1984	George Krenick	Hudson Canyon
Tuna, bluefin	1,030	6	1981	Royal Parsons	Off Pt. Pleasant
Tuna, skipjack	13	4	1999	Craig Eberbach	Wilmington Canyon
Tuna, yellowfin	290	0	1980	Wayne Brinkerhoff	Hudson Canyon
Tunny, little	24	15	1977	Mark Niemczyk	Off Sea Bright
Wahoo	123	12	1992	Robert Carr	28-Mile Wreck
Weakfish	18	8	1986	Karl Jones	Delaware Bay
Whiting (silver hake)	Vacant (Minimum Weight 2.5 lbs.)				

* Fish was previously certified by the IGFA as a world record.

For information concerning the New Jersey State Record Fish or Skillful Angler programs, visit the New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife's Web site at NJFishandWildlife.com.

Plugging for Stripers

By Jeffrey C. Normant, Principal Fisheries Biologist

Anticipation increased as I stepped off the beach access and made my way towards the water. The surf conditions were near-perfect; a slight, cool, northeast wind was quartering on shore giving a nice churn to the water. Sand eels and peanut bunker were in the wash. This is prime time to throw plugs to the hungry, migrating striped bass that were fattening up before heading south to winter.

Rummaging through plugs in my surf bag, I found what I wanted and attached it to the leader. Casting with one quick snap of the wrist, the plug landed perfectly between two incoming rollers. After a gaining the slack line to initiate contact with the floating plug, I began working the lure with a slight twitch and slow retrieve. Two cranks of the reel handle and the plug was hammered. It was *game on!* Five minutes later a nice, plump 31-inch bass was slid up the beach.

The Garden State's hundreds of miles of coastline and bay shores offer prime fishing for Jersey shore-bound anglers. Among the multitude of techniques for "surf fishing" along these waters, fishing plugs is an effective technique ranking near the top for catching striped bass as well as other predatory species.

Plugs come in a wide variety of sizes, profiles, colors and actions but the one thing they all have in common is the ability to imitate almost any forage found along New Jersey's tidal waters. A plug's swimming action conveys an appeal of vulnerability that draw in predators. Like most lures, plugs are cast and retrieved, creating lifelike movement to attract more active fish rather than soaking dead bait at one location and hoping that a target fish happens by.

With the large variety of plugs available and countless techniques for using them, it can be intimidating for novice anglers to master the art of "plugging." Like any specialty, understanding the basics builds

the foundation for success. With practice comes skill which leads to developing your personalized style. Below are some of those important basics and key points necessary for success when utilizing plugs to catch striped bass.

Types of Plugs

Although there seems to be an endless variety of plug makes and models from which to choose, most fall into several distinct categories:

Swimming Plugs

These plugs are constructed either of plastic or wood in a variety of profiles and sizes. Swimming plugs have a "lip" below the head which causes the plug to wobble or roll when retrieved. Thinner plastic plugs typically have a tighter wobble, or roll, than the thicker-bodied wood plugs with the metal lips. These are the most common plugs on the market and have proven to be quite effective in a wide range of conditions.

Darters

Darters are another type of swimming plug that has a downward angled flat slope on the top front of the plug rather than a lip to create action. This design imparts more of a gliding action that will erratically dart to the side when twitched. A great plug for fast currents or rough water, it is also very effective in calmer conditions.

Needlefish

These plugs resemble a pencil with hooks. Little or no action occurs while reeling and they typically sink slowly to the bottom when retrieved. These plugs are

very effective when sand eels are present and can be worked under any condition. They cast very well.

Twitch Baits

These lures usually have the profile of a baitfish with no lip. They can either sink or suspend in the water column. The lure is twitched by the angler when being retrieved to create an erratic action. They are most effective in calmer conditions and are often used in the back bays.

Popping Plugs

The fronts of these lures have a concaved or flat front that when worked stay along the top. They retrieve with a popping action, creating a surface disturbance. Pencil poppers, which have a long thinner profile, are shaped somewhat like a baseball bat. This lure is worked with a rhythmic shaking action that allows the lure to remain on top, thrashing on the surface. This plug is quite effective when adult bunker or mullet are present.

Plug Pointers

Teasers

Many anglers using plugs don't attach a teaser ahead of the plugs. Teasers can be nothing more than a simple saltwater fly made of bucktail or a soft plastic bait threaded on the hook. Teasers are attached with a separate leader, typically two to three feet ahead of the plug. While the teasers will hamper distance when casting, more often than not, striped bass and other gamefish will hit the teaser rather than the larger plug behind it. Using a teaser is very effective when small bait fish are present, however, there have been numerous times when large baits such as bunker and herring are in the wash and the teaser will still out-fish the plug.

Attaching a teaser is easy when using a shock leader attached to the main line. When using a barrel swivel to attach your plug's shock leader, just tie another leader about six to eight inches in length from the same barrel swivel, then attach the teaser. I prefer to use 30-pound leader material for the teaser as this allows enough strength for larger fish and yet remains supple enough for the teaser to work enticingly during the retrieve. I have had great success with this method but there are some drawbacks as the teaser sometimes will wrap around the barrel swivel. Nonetheless, this is the strongest way to attach the teaser.

Another popular method is to tie a large dropper loop up high near the top of the leader. Next, secure



Jeff Normant/NJDFW

Steve George



◀ Swimming Plug (Bomber Long A)

▼ Darter (Super Strike ZigZag)



▲ **Needlefish Plug**
(Choozy Lures Needlefish)

the teaser to the dropper directly or with a perfection knot tied on a short length of leader material with the teaser tied to the tag end of the short leader.

S-I-o-w Down!

One of the biggest mistakes seen with anglers using plugs for striped bass is retrieving the plug too fast. Reel in just fast enough to keep contact with your lure. Occasionally allowing the lure to lie still for a few moments while keeping contact is even better. With plugs that sink such as needlefish, the retrieve should be just fast enough that the lure is running near—or periodically ticking—the bottom. Slowing down your retrieve brings out the true fish-catching abilities of the plug as it causes a seductive roll-wobble that imitates a weak or disoriented prey. Popping plugs are probably the only exception to the rule as reeling at a faster pace or imparting a thrashing action simulates a fleeing or frantic baitfish, drawing exciting top water strikes.

Color

Plugs are manufactured in a wide variety of colors and color combinations, including patterns that imitate live bait. Choosing which color plug to fish can be frustrating, even to the seasoned anglers. Color should be viewed as an enhancement to the plug, like the seasoning of a well-made dish. The fish-catching ability of a plug mostly lies in its built-in action; the color provides extra eye-catching appeal. For those starting out, keep it simple by selecting

proven, natural colors like white-pearl, yellows and other realistic combinations. For night fishing, black and purple work well. There really is no right or wrong color. It's a matter of personal preference gained through experience.

Structure

Learning to find and to fish underwater structure is probably one of the most important aspects in catching fish. Structure is a loose term referring to any natural or man-made physical feature that predatory gamefish, such as striped bass, use to gain an advantage when foraging on prey. Structure causes a physical or illusionary disruption in the "normal" pattern of water flow that makes it easier for predatory gamefish to capture prey.


Classic beaches contain a variety of structure as the tides, waves and winds constantly shift sand creating prominent features like sandbars, points, coves, depressions and cuts that run along the beach. Man-made structure such as rock groins, piling and areas of dark shadow lines created from a permanent light source enhance fishing areas by adding to existing natural features. It is advantageous to observe the layout of the area you intend to fish, identify the structure that is present and fish your plug around these fish-holding features. A good way to observe natural structure is to scout the area that you plan to fish at low tide when these natural features are more obvious.

Another key point to increase your fishing success:

during your retrieve with any lure, be sure to follow through *all the way to the beach*. One of the best structures is the drop-off at the edge of the shore break.

Consistent Success

To have more consistent fishing success, make note of what lure and technique has worked well along with the conditions present during each outing. Fish are creatures of habit and will relate to a particular area when a specific set of conditions are present during a particular time of year. I highly recommend keeping a detailed log to document successes or failures during each fishing trip and the conditions that were present at the time. Your log will prove to be an invaluable reference when planning future trips to the beach.

While technology has made fishing reports and information more accessible, even instantaneous, with the use of cell phones and online fishing sites, these technological "short cuts" are no substitute for experience gained first hand. Planning to fish based on yesterday's Internet fishing report will often result in a fishless outing as conditions will have changed from the previous day. Instead, put in the time, make the effort, keep a fishing log, try different lures, read the structure and you may be among the 10 percent of anglers catching 90 percent of the fish. *Tight lines.* 

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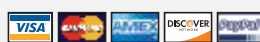


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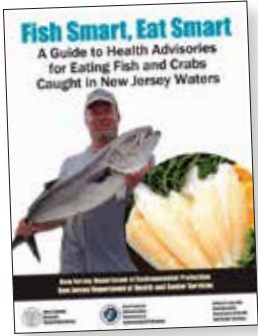
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To reduce exposure to harmful chemical contaminants when preparing and eating the fish species taken from the identified waters, it is essential to follow the guidelines provided. The DEP encourages you to consult the Fish Smart-Eat Smart Fish Advisory Guide or www.FishSmartEatSmartNJ.org when making decisions about eating recreationally caught fish and crabs.

The current list of fish consumption advisories consists of statewide, regional and water body-specific warnings for a variety of fish species and fish consumers. The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the Department of Health and Senior Services have prepared new "how to" electronic pamphlets on cleaning and cooking your catch to reduce your exposure to these harmful chemicals. These e-pamphlets are downloadable in multiple languages.

For a complete list of state and federal marine fish consumption advisories visit: www.FishSmartEatSmartNJ.org.

The fish consumption advisories and Fish Smart-Eat Smart website are updated periodically and are available online or from the Office of Science at (609) 984-6070 and through the Division of Health and Senior Services at (609) 826-4935.

Check online for fish consumption advisories on the local water body in which you fish! Go to www.FishSmartEatSmartNJ.org



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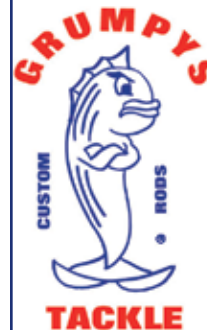
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Shellfish Water Classification	
DEP, Water Monitoring and Standards	
P.O. Box 405, Stoney Hill Road, Leeds Point, NJ 08220.....	(609) 748-2000
Lebanon Field Office	
P.O. Box 394, 1255 County Rt. 629, Lebanon, NJ 08833.....	(908) 236-2118
Northern Region Office	
26 Route 173 W., Hampton, NJ 08827	
Wildlife Management.....	(908) 735-7040
Endangered and Nongame Species (1 Van Syckel's Rd.).....	(908) 638-4127
Hunter Education.....	(877) 2HUNTNJ
Wildlife Control.....	(908) 735-8793
Land Management.....	(973) 383-0918
Law Enforcement (<i>Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Hunterdon, Morris, Passaic, Somerset, Sussex, Union, and Warren counties</i>).....	(908) 735-8240
Pequest Trout Hatchery	(908) 637-4173
Pequest Natural Resource Education Center	
605 Pequest Rd., Oxford, NJ 07863.....	(908) 637-4125
Hackettstown Fish Hatchery	
23 Reese Ave, Hackettstown, NJ 07840.....	(908) 852-3676
Central Region Office	
1 Eldridge Rd., Robbinsville, NJ 08691	
Land Management.....	(609) 259-2132
Hunter Education.....	(877) 2HUNTNJ
Wildlife Control.....	(609) 259-7955
Law Enforcement (<i>Burlington, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth, and Ocean counties</i>).....	(609) 259-2120
Southern Region Office	
220 Blue Anchor Rd., Sicklerville, NJ 08081	
Information.....	(856) 629-0090
Freshwater Fisheries.....	(856) 629-4950
Hunter Education.....	(877) 2HUNTNJ
Land Management.....	(856) 629-5006
Wildlife Control.....	(856) 629-7224
Law Enforcement (<i>Atlantic, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester, and Salem counties</i>).....	(856) 629-0555

Publications Available

The following publications are available by writing:

Nacote Creek Research Station Publications
P.O. Box 418
Port Republic, NJ 08241

Shellfish Growing Waters Classification Charts

This publication is available free at any shellfish license agent and online at <http://www.nj.gov/dep/bmw/waterclass.htm>.

New Jersey Boaters Guide

Send a self-addressed stamped, #10 envelope (2 oz. postage).

The following publications are also available online at NJFishandWildlife.com:

- **Guide to New Jersey Saltwater Fishing** (available online only)
- **Party and Charter Boat Directory** (available online only)


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