

# New Jersey Marine Digest

May 2015

**Size and  
Possession  
Limits**  
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**A Clear  
Revival**

**for New Jersey's  
Artificial Reef Program**  
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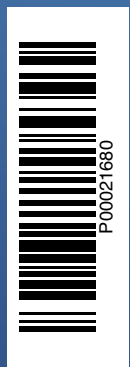
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## hotlines

### New Jersey Fish and Wildlife

#### Report Marine, Shellfish and Finfish Violations

(609) 748-2050 or call the 24-hour DEP Hotline: 877-WARNDEP

Violators of the Marine Fisheries laws are subject to a \$30 per fish or \$300 to \$3,000 fine.

### Federal Marine Fisheries Contacts

<b>NOAA Fisheries Enforcement Hotline</b> 24-hour non-emergency tipline (800) 853-1964	<b>NOAA Fisheries Office of Law Enforcement — Northeast Enforcement Division HQ</b> (978) 281-9213	<b>Federal Fisheries Law Enforcement Field Offices</b> Wall: (732) 280-6490 Marmora: (609) 390-8303
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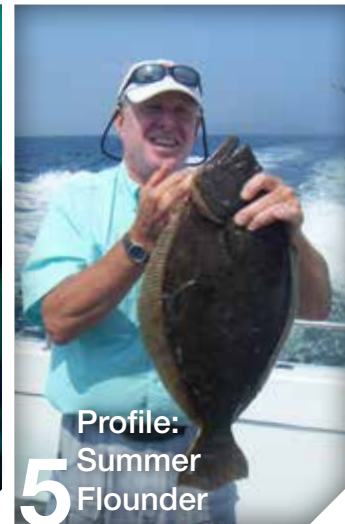
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## 6 A Clear Revival for New Jersey's Artificial Reef Program



## 20 Whoosh! A Spearfishing Primer



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# Director's Message

DAVE CHANDA



Since its inception in 1984, Fish and Wildlife's Reef Program has been very proactive in reef construction efforts. As New Jersey's artificial reef network grew and the volume of materials deployed to create them increased, reefs quickly became popular locations for recreational anglers and commercial fishermen utilizing potting gear. However, as early as 1989, charter and individual boat owners indicated that the presence of fish pots and lobster pots on reefs was beginning to preclude access.


As reef building efforts continued into the 2000s, conflicts between recreational and commercial users continued to rise. Federal officials representing the Sport Fish Restoration Program stated that this situation must be resolved because anglers had paid for these reefs through excise taxes on marine gas and fishing tackle; one user group should not be allowed to dominate access. Following this admonishment, on April 11th, 2011, more than \$250,000 in Sport Fish Restoration funding for New Jersey's Program was discontinued for use in reef construction and monitoring activities. These funds were not lost, just redistributed to other Fish and Wildlife projects. It was further explained that once access to reefs was restored to recreational users, funding could once again be utilized for the Reef Program.

To alleviate these conflicts and ultimately restore access to recreational anglers, in March 2013, New Jersey DEP Commissioner Bob Martin worked with representatives from the recreational and commercial fishing sectors to develop a plan for balancing access on reefs located in state waters. Since that time, Fish and Wildlife staff has been working diligently towards implementing this plan. A component of the plan also includes the construction of a new reef where potting gear will be prohibited. In essence, the plan sets the stage for the future and will translate into more benefits for all reef users.

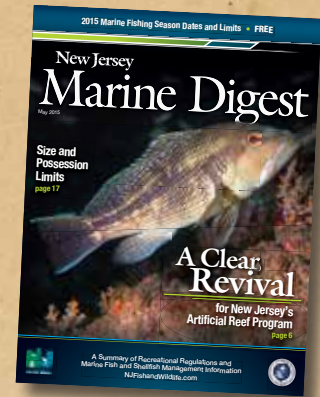
This edition of the *Marine Digest* has an article (see page 6) focusing on the specifics of Commissioner Martin's compromise as well as other beneficial proposed changes to the Reef Program.

Also directly related to our Reef Program and artificial reefs, readers will find an informative "how to" article on spearfishing in New Jersey. (See page 20.) Spearfishing is growing in popularity; we offer insights and techniques for this exciting form of recreation. Recently, Fish and Wildlife added a new category to our Record Fish Program for "speargun hunters" to recognize their outstanding achievements.

New Jersey's Reef Program is recognized as being the best in the nation; our reefs are second to none for spearfishing, scuba diving and fishing. In the Program's 31 year history, more than 7 million cubic yards of materials have been deployed to create artificial reefs. These materials consist primarily of rock, vessels, designed habitats (reef balls) and other materials of opportunity.

In a study conducted by the DEP, it was determined that reefs accounted for 18 percent of all of the fish caught in marine waters. In other words, roughly two out of every 11 fish caught along the Jersey shore were caught on a reef — an amazing statistic! The future of Fish and Wildlife's Reef Program is bright. We will continue to be dynamic in adjusting our goals and objectives to meet the needs of resource users wisely. 

Dave Chanda is the Director of the Division of Fish and 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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# New Jersey Marine Digest

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## New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife

### Our Mission

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

### Our Goals

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

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