



New Jersey



Fish & Wildlife

D I G E S T

2008 Marine Fishing Issue

A summary of Rules & Management Information
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May 2008

Free

New Jersey

Reefs p. 6

Size and Possession Limits

p. 12

Striped Bass

Tagging Project

p. 20

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New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife
Large Format Marine Digest
P.O. Box 400
Trenton, NJ 08625-0400

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Federal Marine Fisheries Contacts

NOAA Fisheries Enforcement Hotline
24-hour non-emergency tipline
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NOAA Fisheries Office of Law Enforcement Northeast Enforcement Division HQ
(978) 281-9213

Fisheries Law Enforcement Field Offices
Wall: (732) 280-6490
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This is not the full law. Consult the Division of Fish and Wildlife for further details. All persons are reminded that the statutes, code and regulations are the legal authorities.

Commissioner's Message



BY LISA P. JACKSON

With this Marine Issue of the Fish & Wildlife Digest, New Jersey welcomes a special season of top-quality recreation close to home on our beautiful beaches and bountiful bays and waterways.

Whether you're alone on a beach or on the bay or joining with family and friends for a deep-sea excursion, fishing in New Jersey is time and money well spent. Just ask any one of the half-million saltwater anglers who every year collectively devote upward of 5.5 million days reeling in bluefish, weakfish, striped bass, flounder, tautog, tuna and much more. Along with the thrill of the catch and fresh seafood for the table, anglers prize the countless moments of relaxation and camaraderie that often linger in memories for a lifetime.

In addition to its recreational benefits, sport fishing plays a powerful role in the Garden State's economy. The economic impact of all sport fishing in New Jersey is \$1.45 billion, and more than \$1 billion comes from saltwater angling alone. What's more, saltwater angling in New Jersey generates about 10,000 jobs, according to the latest national sport fishing survey.

All of us at the Department of Environmental Protection, and especially the professionals in our Division of Fish and Wildlife's Marine Fisheries Administration, are dedicated to providing a healthy, diverse and abundant marine resource and the opportunity to enjoy it today and in the future.

Here on State Street, we care about the ways policies and programs affect you and the families on your street. As we're all aware, New Jersey is in the midst of some difficult fiscal times, and that reality calls upon us to embrace new ways of thinking and innovative solutions on a wide range of challenging issues – including the one Director Chanda discusses in his column in this edition. Most recently, we have been working to avert the need to close several state parks this year because of operating budget shortfalls. To avoid a similar scenario in the future, we must – and we will – explore funding alternatives that would enable us to continue offering the first-rate recreational opportunities that New Jerseyans so richly deserve.

On behalf of Governor Jon S. Corzine and all of us at the DEP, I offer my thanks to the sportsmen and sportswomen who choose to spend their valuable leisure time fishing in New Jersey. With your help and continued passion, we can build an even stronger foundation for sport fishing in New Jersey both for today's residents and visitors and for generations to come.



Lisa P. Jackson is Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection

Director's Message



BY DAVE CHANDA

The majority of anglers who follow marine fisheries management are familiar with the Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey (MRFSS). The National Marine Fisheries Service has conducted this survey

for more than twenty years. It has been used to estimate recreational catch, harvest and effort for most marine recreational fisheries. The information collected from MRFSS plays an integral role in the management plans and ultimately the regulations, for virtually every important recreational fishery in New Jersey.

There has been growing concern over the years that fishery managers are utilizing the information provided by this survey in ways never

intended. As a result, in 2006 the federal government commissioned a review of the survey by the National Research Council. This review confirmed the inappropriate use of MRFSS data.

In an effort to address this concern, the U.S. Congress mandated an improved marine recreational fishery data collection system as part of reauthorization of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson Act). The Magnuson Act, signed by President Bush in 2007, mandated revising the MRFSS survey, which requires a National Saltwater Angler Registry Program to be established by January 1, 2009. The purpose of the registry is to identify all saltwater anglers that can be contacted to obtain more accurate recreational fishery information to improve fisheries management. Although there will be no fee associated with this registry for 2009, it is our understanding that beginning in 2011 the federal government is planning to charge a fee of approximately \$25-\$30 per angler.

(Continued on page 4) ➤

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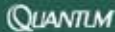
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continued from page 2

The National Saltwater Angler Registry will exempt anglers from the federal registry if their state has its own registration or licensing system. However, since New Jersey does not have a saltwater licensing or registration program, our anglers will be required to register with the federal government if there is no state program in place by 2009.

We do have some concerns with the National Registry Program and potential shortcomings, which may not provide better data for all of our recreational marine species. There is also concern about the impending fee our anglers may have to pay for the National Registry Program, the majority of which will not directly benefit New Jersey anglers or our state marine resource.

The realization that we face a potentially historic turning point in marine fisheries management will undoubtedly initiate a dialogue with our angling community on the best options to pursue for New Jersey anglers and our state marine resource.

Division of Fish and Wildlife staff are available to begin that dialogue with New Jersey recreational saltwater anglers. If your club/organization would like a staff member to provide additional information on the National Registry Program requirements and potential implications for New Jersey anglers, please contact the Marine Fisheries Administration at 609-292-7794.



Dave Chanda is Director of the New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife



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New Jersey 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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