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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
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p. 20

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page 6



page 11



page 20

contents

- 12 Marine Fish Regulations – Fin Fish
- 14 Marine Regulations – Mollusks and Crustaceans
- 15 Seasons, Minimum Size and Possession Limits Chart
- 16 Marine Species Identification with Regulations
- 18 Federal Recreational Regulations
- 18 Shellfish and Non-Commercial Crab Pot License Information
- 22 Health Advisories
- 24 Skillful Angler Awards Program
- 25 New Jersey State Record Marine Sport Fish

This DIGEST is available in enlarged format for the visually impaired.

Write to:

New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife
Large Format Marine Digest
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features

- 6 New Jersey's Reefs: An Underwater Metropolis
- 11 Mitten Crab Update
- 20 Where has My Fish Traveled: New Jersey's Striped Bass Tagging Program
- 23 Clean Vessel Act, Program Continues to Expand
- 26 Governor's Surf Fishing Tournament
- 28 Species Profile: Tautog
- 30 Readers' Survey

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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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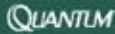
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continued from page 2

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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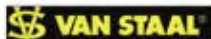
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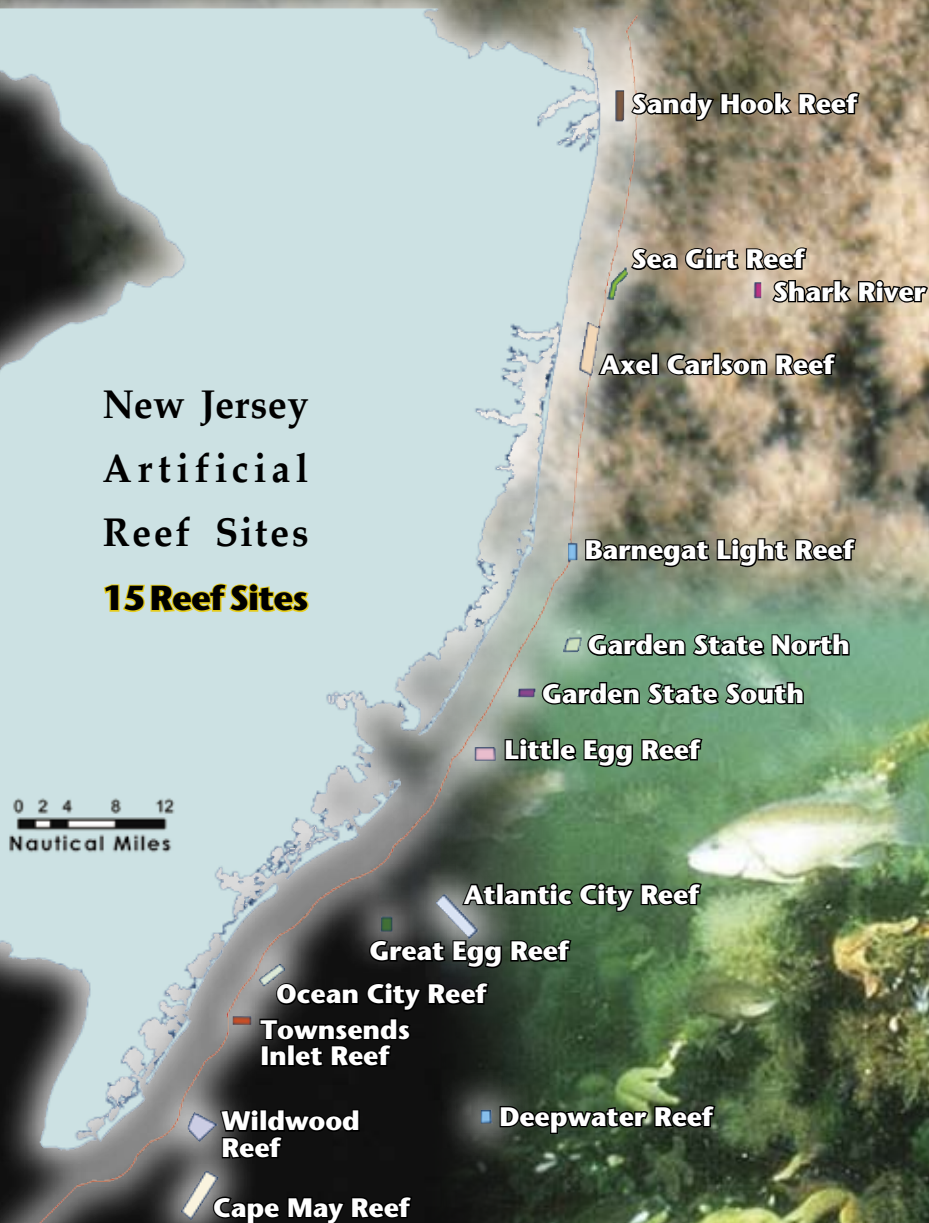
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New Jersey's Reefs: an UNDERWATER METROPOLIS

By Hugh Carberry; Artificial Reef Coordinator
Photos by Herb Segars, www.gotosnapshot.com

New Jersey Artificial Reef Sites 15 Reef Sites



New Jersey's seafloor consists of sandy plains with mud and clay interrupted by submarine ridges. Within this nearly featureless and barren seafloor are 15 reef sites encompassing more than 25 square miles. These reefs range in size from ½ to four square miles and are placed strategically along New Jersey's 120-mile coastline near navigable inlets. Contained within these reefs are more than 4,000 "patch reefs" which serve as premier underwater real estate for more than 150 species of fish and marine life. Recognized nationally as having some of the best artificial reefs in the nation, New Jersey's reef network is an experience unparalleled along the Atlantic coast.

How Reefs Work

New Jersey's reefs are only artificial in that hard structures are placed into the marine environment intentionally. Natural processes take place after structure deployment, leading to formation of a community of encrusting organisms.

These encrusting organisms attached permanently to hard surfaces using strong threads or cement. The bond is strong enough to remain firm during northeast storms, tropical depressions and hurricanes.

Ocean water contains a living "soup" of larval filter feeders such as mussels, barnacles, hydroids, sponges and corals that actively seek hard substrate on which to attach, grow and mature. These filter feeders sustain themselves by filtering from the waste – then consuming – plankton and detritus drifting by.

Some encrusters resemble plants, like the seaweed found on jetties and bulkheads, but these organisms are animals and do not photosynthesize. Sunlight must be able to penetrate through the water column to facilitate photosynthesis, but the average depth for a New Jersey reef is greater than

50 feet, effectively blocking the plant-nourishing rays of the sun.

Larval encrusting organisms cannot attach to loose sand grains as they quickly wash away or become covered by sediment. But deployed hard reef materials such as rock, concrete or steel quickly becomes encrusted and a living reef matrix soon envelops the structure. This matrix can be several layers thick as different types of encrusters compete for an available toehold, often growing atop one another. At this stage of reef development, a multitude of minute crustaceans, amphipods, isopods, crabs, shrimp and snails take up residence in this protective matrix and in turn form an important component of the food chain.

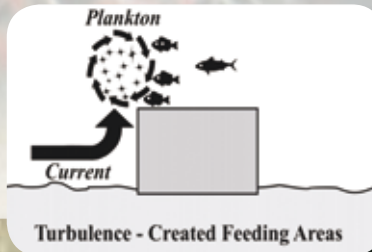
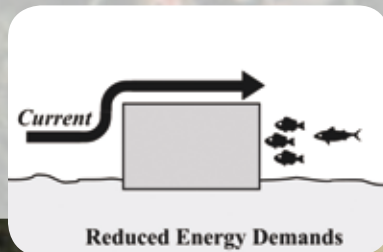
In terms of numbers and weights, fish represent a small portion of the marine life found on reefs. A nine-year study on marine life colonization conducted by New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife showed that fish only account for 4.5 percent of the reef's biomass. Young-of-the-year demersal

(bottom-dwelling) fish such as tautog and black sea bass represent 1.2 percent of the total biomass; adult fish represent 3.3 percent of the total.

In a healthy ecosystem, forage animals are much more abundant than the food chain's apex predator – fish, which feed on both mobile and attached invertebrates. The most abundant group forming the base of the food chain is the sessile invertebrates (those permanently attached to a substrate) such as the blue mussel, barnacle, anemone, bryozoan, hydroid, tube worm and coral. These organisms account for 84.5 percent of the total reef biomass. The multitude of minute crustaceans found on reefs form 11 percent of the total biomass. These findings demonstrate that New Jersey reefs provide a productive habitat for use by marine fish species.

Deployed reef structure dissipates underwater currents which may reduce the energy fish expend. The structure acts as a baffle, reducing current along the bottom, allowing fish to utilize

more energy for growth rather than exertion. Additionally, as water flows over and around reef structure, eddies form and carry food to waiting fish. ➤



(Continued from page 7.)

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Demersal (Bottom) Fish

Reef structure does not *directly* benefit all marine fish. Only a few species actually *depend* upon reef habitat for survival, although reefs also enrich non-dependent species.

Reef-associated fish are bottom dwellers such as black sea bass and tautog. The matrix formed within the reef structure provides refuge from larger predatory fish. Black sea bass and tautog typically cluster under an overhang, cavity or crevice found on the reef. These areas harbor a diverse menu of food including rock crabs and shrimp. Tautog and cunner graze here on these foods plus nip away at blue mussels and barnacles.

Although reefs are abundant with food, reef fish also make excursions to feed on infauna such as worms and clams found on the open sandy bottom. Soon after feeding, these fish return to the safety and refuge the reef affords.

Schooling Baitfish

For unknown reasons, certain schools of baitfish such as menhaden, round herring and anchovies, school around high-profile reef structure such as sunken ships. Some theorize these species use the high-profile structure as either a point of reference or find that the structure's shadow conceals them from roving predatory fish. Schooling baitfish stay near the reefs temporarily then eventually move on.



Pelagic Fish

Pelagic (open water) species such as bluefish, amberjack, cobia and sharks are at the top of the reef food chain and use the reef

as nothing more than a fast-food restaurant. These fish are attracted to the teeming bait and other swarming fish found around a reef. Pelagic predators are only transient here, as reefs are not essential for their life cycle.

Reef Materials:

Rocks

More than 90 percent of the reef material deployed by New Jersey's Reef Program is rock obtained from dredging operations. Rocks range in size from chips to cobbles to boulders as large as cars. The rock is dropped on predetermined locations via hopper scows.

Various type of rock – including sandstone, granite and igneous rock – are utilized to create rock piles, underwater rock mountains and ridges. Rock piles may be up to 300 feet long by 75 feet wide and rise four to six feet from the seafloor. Rock mountains are created by dropping dozens of hopper-scow loads of dredge rock in a single location resulting in a mountain rising 50 to 60 feet from the seafloor. Rock ridges are lower in profile than mountains and form an area of continuous relief along the bottom.

from boulder-sized pieces to monoliths as long as 10 feet. Concrete is deployed from a massive, 200-foot deck barge and is pushed off piece-by-piece using heavy machinery. Typically, a marker buoy is set at the deployment location. A tugboat pulling the deck barge circles the buoy, broadcasting the concrete over a wide area. Multiple loads are dropped atop each other to provide higher vertical relief.

Concrete Castings

Concrete castings include culverts, junction boxes and other types of pre-fabricated concrete structure. Usually this material has a slight defect, such as a crack or chip, rendering them unfit for sale by the manufacture. These hollow cavities offer much surface area for attachment of encrusting organisms, making concrete castings an effective reef material where fish, crabs and lobsters dwell.



Vessels

Various vessels have been sunk on New Jersey reefs including lightships, ferry boats, tugboats, trawlers, tankers and more. These vessels range from the 32-foot U.S. Coast Guard crew boats to the 460-foot attack cargo transport the USS Agol. To date, 164 vessels have been deployed on New Jersey reefs.



Demolition Concrete

The reef program routinely deploys concrete obtained from the demolition of bridges, sea walls and piers. This material can vary in size



Reef Balls

Reef balls are a hollow, designed habitat resembling small igloos with numerous holes. In 1998, Fish and Wildlife purchased seven fiberglass molds to fabricate these concrete habitats. The following year, reef ball construction was launched at Southern State Correctional Facility using inmate laborers. Annually, 500 habitats are fabri-

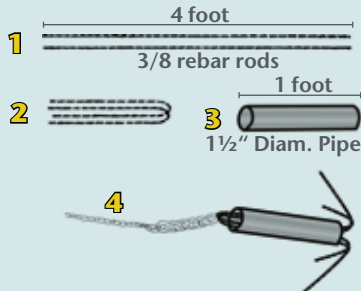
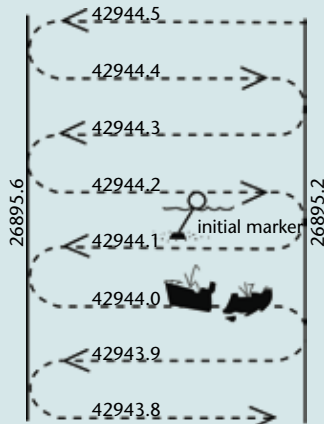


cated and transported to reef sites. Fish count studies performed by scuba divers have found an average of more than 19 fish near a reef ball habitat at a given time.

Locate and Anchor on a Sunken Ship

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1. Enter the lat/long or time differences into a GPS or LORAN unit, then hit "Go To."
2. Steer resulting course to the wreck; pay attention to the distance to go
3. When the GPS or LORAN unit "zeros out" watch your depth recorder for the wreck
4. When the wreck is not immediately below the boat, begin a slow-speed search pattern such as an east-west or north-south path. Once wreck is located, immediately drop a marker buoy
5. Determine set and drift, then position your boat to drift over the wreck with a grappling anchor deployed.



An inexpensive wreck anchor can be constructed of two, 4-foot sections of 3/8 rebar rods and a 1-foot length of PVC pipe.

Army Tanks

A 1994 joint military-civilian training program among the U.S. Navy, Coast Guard, Army and Navy Special Forces, Air Force and the New Jersey National Guard, donated obsolete military vehicles for reef construction activities. Obsolete army vehicles such as M-60 and M-551 tanks, M-331 armored personnel carriers and M-578 crane vehicles were cleaned and prepared at Fort Dix by the New Jersey Army National Guard. During the six-year program, a total of 397 obsolete army vehicles were placed on 11 reef sites.



Subway Cars

Subway cars are structurally complex and have proven to be a fully-functioning, safe habitat, offering a valuable food base for fish by supporting invertebrate communities.

All doors and windows are removed for good interior access, both for fish and circulating water currents. Donated by the New York City Transit Authority, more than 250 subway cars have been deployed on six reef sites. An additional 600 stainless steel subway cars are slated for deployment on New Jersey's reefs over the next four years. Fish count studies have determined that on average, 323 fish will utilize each subway car.



Acknowledgments and References:

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 Figley, B., Resciniti, J. 2005. Marine life colonization of experimental reef habitat in temperate ocean waters of New Jersey. NJ Div. Fish and Wildlife, Federal Aid to Sportfish Restoration. 96 pp.

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Press Transaction Store Coupon key (Triversity) or Trans Modify key (GSA) & follow prompts.



Citizen Network to Keep a Continued Lookout

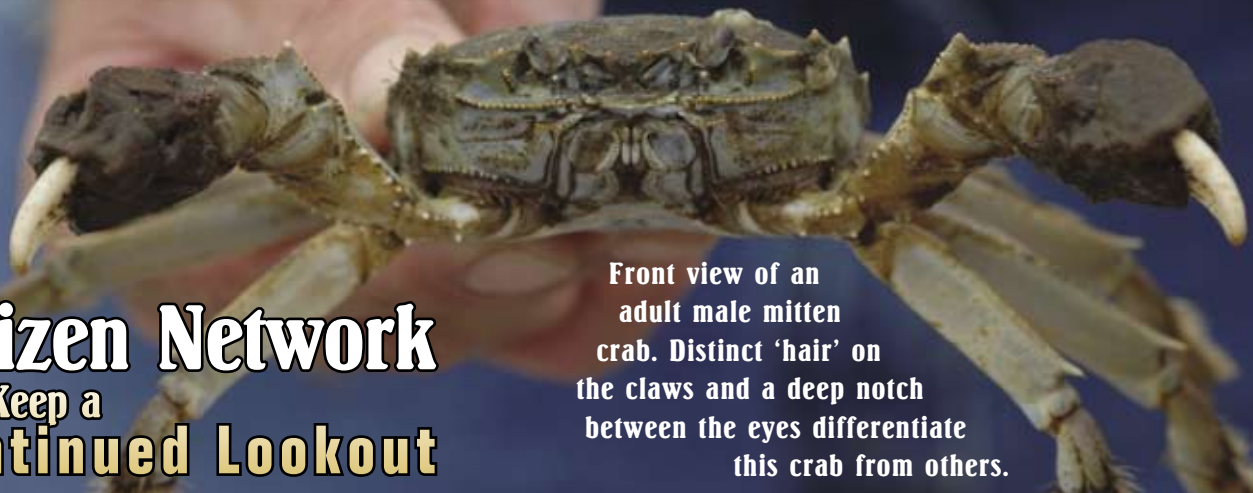
Sightings of the non-native and invasive Chinese mitten crab continue in waters surrounding New Jersey. The mitten crab has already invaded other areas of the United States causing significant ecological and economical losses in those areas, and has the potential to establish itself in New Jersey bays and estuaries. Both commercial and recreational crabbers plus the general public are asked to be watchful and assist scientists to document sightings of mitten crabs. Your support is important to effectively determine this invader's current distribution and possible establishment in our waters.

Mitten crabs are native to East Asia but have invaded portions of northern Europe and also California. The crabs have the potential to increase erosion along stream banks, compromise levees and impact aquatic vegetation and wildlife. Therefore, the crabs are listed as "Injurious Wildlife" under the Federal Lacey Act which makes it illegal to import or transport this species across state boundaries without a permit. Mitten crabs spend most of their life cycle in freshwater. Around age three or four years, they migrate to higher-salinity areas to mate.

To date, thirteen confirmed mitten crabs have been caught predominately by commercial crab pots in the mid-Atlantic region, ranging from the Chesapeake Bay to the Hudson River. These sightings first appeared in the Chesapeake Bay when one adult male crab was caught in the summer of 2005. Sightings have since expanded with confirmed specimens in the Chesapeake Bay (five), upper Delaware Bay (five) and the Hudson River (three). There have been no confirmed sightings in any New Jersey waters.

Nine of the thirteen mitten crabs captured were males, with four mitten crab sightings turning up females. It is unknown if a self-sustaining population of mitten crabs exists in the mid-Atlantic region, however, two of the female crabs had mated and eggs were present on the abdomen. Two mitten crabs, one female and one male, found in the Hudson River in October 2007 and January 2008, respectively, were juveniles. No larvae have been found. Scientists are also still unsure of the potential impact should the mitten crab become established in the mid-Atlantic.

New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife along with the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center (SERC), the lead investigator in documenting mitten crab sightings, are continuing to collect information to determine the current status, abundance and distribution of mitten crabs along the eastern United States. Recreational crabbers are asked to stay alert for mitten crabs you may catch in New Jersey's bays and coastal estuaries.



Front view of an adult male mitten crab. Distinct 'hair' on the claws and a deep notch between the eyes differentiate this crab from others.

If you catch a mitten crab:

- Note the date and specific location of capture
- Photograph and/or retain the crab – *do not throw it back alive!*
- Contact either: Nacote Creek Marine Fisheries Office at (609) 748-2020 or Mitten Crab Hotline (SERC) at (443) 482-2222

Mitten Crab Identification

Mitten crabs are easy to confuse with several other crabs. Look for these key characteristics:

- Claws: equal in size with white tips and covered in hair
- Color: light brown to olive green
- Carapace: up to four inches wide with notch between the eyes
- Legs: eight sharp-tipped walking legs – no swimming legs

Thank you for helping New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife by staying watchful for the Chinese mitten crab. For more information on mitten crab sightings, current research and life history, visit the SERC Marine Invasions Research Lab Web site at: http://www.serc.si.edu/labs/marine_invasions/index.jsp.



Photo: Smithsonian Environmental Research Center

An adult male mitten crab; notice the four key identification characteristics described in the text: claws, color, carapace and legs.

MARINE REGULATIONS

This is not the full law. Consult the Division of Fish and Wildlife for further details. All persons are reminded that the statutes, code and regulations are the legal authorities. **Red** text in regulations indicates a change for this year.

- **Change in Rules for Recreational Harvest of Summer Flounder and Tautog.**
- **Striped Bass Bonus Program Applications Only Online**

The Department of Environmental Protection's Division of Fish and Wildlife informs anglers that rules for the recreational harvest of **summer flounder (fluke)** have changed. The summer flounder recreational season is now **May 24 through September 7**. The recreational minimum size is **18 inches** and the possession limit remains at eight fish.

The new minimum size limit for tautog is 14 inches. The possession limit changes throughout the year. See *Tautog*, page 13.

These changes were implemented for New Jersey to remain in compliance with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's management plans for summer flounder and tautog. 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 the summer flounder and tautog fisheries.

Applications for the Striped Bass Bonus Program are now available only online.

New Jersey recreational marine regulations apply to all fish species when they are possessed in state waters or landed in New Jersey regardless of where they are caught.

Resource Information

Anyone who takes fisheries resources may be required to provide information on the species, number, weight or other information pertinent to management of resources.

Methods of Recreational Fishing

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

Wanton Waste Prohibited

Fish of any species which are purposely killed shall become part of the angler's daily possession limit and shall not be returned to the water from which they were taken. This does not apply to fish which are released alive and subsequently die.

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.

Prohibited Species

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

Atlantic Sturgeon	Sand Tiger Shark	White Shark
Basking Shark	Shortnose Sturgeon	
Bigeye Sand Tiger Shark	Whale Shark	

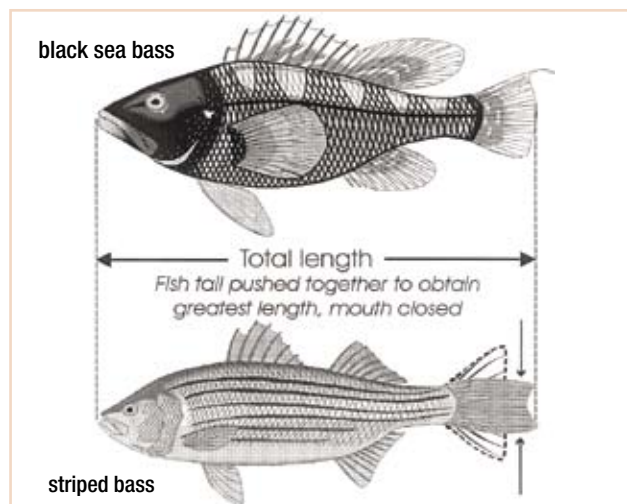
Sea Turtles & Marine Mammals

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

Finfish

Filleting

The filleting at sea of all fish with a size limit is prohibited. Party boats may fillet fish at sea if they obtain a Special Fillet Permit. Applications may be obtained from Fish and Wildlife's Bureau of Marine Fisheries. See *Summer Flounder*, page 13.



Black Sea Bass

The minimum size limit for black sea bass is 12 inches measured along the midline from the snout to the end of the central portion of the tail, not to include the tail filaments. (See illustration above.) The possession limit is 25 fish with an open season of Jan. 1 through Dec. 31.

Bluefish

The possession limit for bluefish is 15 fish. Bluefish taken with hook and line may be sold only from June 16 through Aug. 7 and only if the harvester is in possession of a valid commercial bluefish permit issued for his or her vessel by the National Marine Fisheries Service (978) 281-9370. Any harvester in possession of a valid commercial bluefish permit may possess more than 15 bluefish per day, but only during the commercial season of June 16 through Aug. 7.

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.

Red Drum

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

Striped Bass (includes Hybrid Striped Bass)

The possession limit for striped bass/hybrid striped bass is two fish with a minimum size limit of 28 inches for each fish. Anglers participating in the Striped Bass Bonus Program (see next page) may possess an additional striped bass at least 28 inches in length.

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

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

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

Sale of striped bass in New Jersey is prohibited.

Striped Bass Closed Seasons

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

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

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

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 in 2008, 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 to be distributed between individual anglers and party/charter boats. Should New Jersey exceed this quota in 2008, any overage would be subtracted from the 2009 quota.

Application Process

The 2008 Striped Bass Bonus Program permits are only available online. Go to www.WildlifeLicense.com/nj/, complete the application and immediately print one Bonus Permit; application fee, \$2. The permit is non-transferable and valid for the 2008 calendar year. Only one permit can be used per day. Harvest reporting also must be online.

The party/charter boat segment of the program remains the same as 2007, with the applications available only by contacting Fish and Wildlife at (609)748-2020. The party/charter boat bonus program is not online.

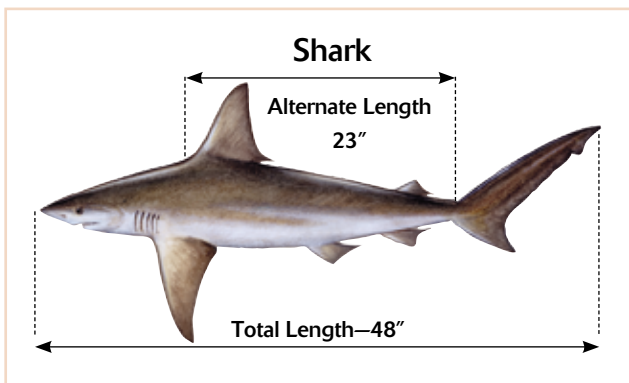
Striped Bass Bonus Permit Harvest Reporting

All information on the Bonus Permit must be completed immediately after harvest and prior to transportation. After reporting harvest information at www.WildlifeLicense.com/nj/, anglers are then eligible to receive another bonus permit for the \$2 application fee. Harvest information must be reported online.

Striped Bass Fishing Log

All participants receive a log with their Bonus Permit and are encouraged to report *all* striped bass fishing activity for the 2008 calendar year. Anglers now have the option to enter their striped bass fishing log online instead of mailing their paper fishing log. Go to www.NJFishandWildlife.com/bonusbas_log.htm.

Shark



The minimum size limit for any species of shark, except dogfish (see note below) is 48 inches total length. The minimum size and possession limit for shark is likely to change in 2008. For updates, visit our Web site at www.NJFishandWildlife.com/saltwater.htm or call the 24-hour marine fish information number at (609) 292-2083.

Sharks — Prohibited Species

- | | | |
|---------------|-------------------------|-------------|
| basking shark | sand tiger shark | white shark |
| whale shark | bigeye sand tiger shark | |

The fins may not be removed from a shark, except after fishing has ceased and such shark has been landed. A shark may be eviscerated and the head and tail removed prior to landing, provided that the alternate length as measured from the origin of the first dorsal fin to the pre-caudal pit (located just forward of the origin of the upper lobe of the tail fin) is not less than 23 inches in length. The possession limit is two shark per vessel.

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

Summer Flounder (Fluke)

The possession and minimum size limit for summer flounder is eight fish at 18 inches with an open season from May 24 to Sept. 7.

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)

Tautog regulations are new for 2008. The minimum size limit for Tautog is 14 inches. There is a four fish possession limit from Jan. 1 through April 30, a zero fish possession limit from May 1 through July 15 (the season is closed), a one fish possession limit from July 16 through Nov. 15 and a six fish possession limit from Nov. 16 through Dec. 31.

Weakfish (Gray & Spotted Seatrout)

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

Winter Flounder

The minimum possession and size limit for winter flounder is 10 fish at 12 inches. For winter flounder the open season is March 23–May 21.

Additional Marine Fishing Regulations

See pages 15 - 18 for the regulation charts and fish ID pages.

Delaware Fishing License Requirement

A Delaware fishing license is now required for anglers aged 16 and over fishing the Delaware River and Delaware Bay between the upstream tip of Artificial Island and the Delaware-Pennsylvania state line. In that section of the river, the Delaware state boundary extends to the New Jersey shoreline. When fishing from shore in New Jersey along that section of the river, a Delaware fishing license is not required. Delaware fishing license information can be found at <http://www.fw.delaware.gov/Fisheries/Pages/NewFishingLicense.aspx>

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 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.

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 more than 35 alewife or blueback herring in aggregate per day by hook and line or the above listed gear.

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.

Crustaceans

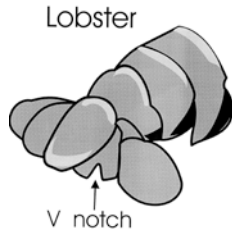
American Lobster

The legal possession size of whole lobsters, measured from the rear of the eye socket along a line parallel to the center line of the body shell to the rear of the body shell, shall be not less than $3\frac{3}{8}$ inches **nor greater than $5\frac{1}{4}$ inches**. Lobster parts may not be possessed at sea or landed.

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

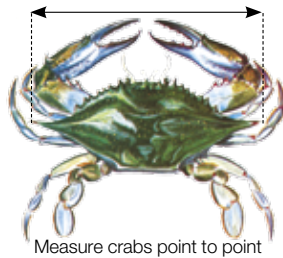
The use of spears, gigs, gaffs or other penetrating devices as a method of capture for lobsters is prohibited. A recreational lobster pot permit and fish pot license is required to use pots or traps to capture lobsters. For details call (609) 748-2020.

Lobsters taken recreationally may not be sold or offered for sale.



Crabs

- Crabs may be taken recreationally with hand lines, manually operated collapsible traps or scoop nets without a license. A non-commercial crab pot license is required for the use of not more than two non-collapsible Chesapeake-style crab pots (see illustration on page 19) or two trot lines to harvest crabs. See page 19 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— $3\frac{1}{2}$ inch
 - Hard crab— $4\frac{3}{4}$ inches (for sale)
 - Hard crab— $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches (possession)
- All female crabs with eggs attached and all undersized crabs shall be returned to the water immediately.
- Recreational trot lines shall not exceed 150 feet in length with a maximum of 25 baits.
- All pots and trot lines shall be marked with the identification number of the owner.
- All crab pots must be tended at least once every 72 hours.
- No floating line may be used on any crab pot or crab pot buoy.
- No crab pot shall be placed in any area that would obstruct or impede navigation or in any creek less than 50 feet wide.
- Only the owner, his agent or a law enforcement officer may raise or remove contents of a legally set fishing device.
- Crabs taken with a bait seine may be retained for personal use only if the fisherman possesses a bait net license, and may not be bartered or sold unless the fisherman possesses a commercial crab license.
- No crabs may be harvested from the Newark Bay Complex. For more information, see Health Advisory on page 22.
- Crab Pot/Trot Line seasons:
Delaware Bay and tributaries — April 6 to Dec. 4; all other waters — March 15 to Nov. 30. The following waters are closed to the use of crab



pots and trot lines: Cumberland Co.: Cohansey River and creeks named Back, Cedar, Nantuxent, Fortesque, 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 19 for details on purchasing a non-commercial crab dredge license.

Notice: All non-collapsible Chesapeake-style crab pots (see illustration on page 19) 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 the State of New Jersey.

Mollusks

- All persons must be licensed to harvest any shellfish. See page 18. 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, any state shellfish office or Marine Police Station. See page 18 for more information. Charts are updated annually.
- Shellfish harvesting is prohibited before sunrise, after sunset and on Sunday.
- 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.

Recreational Shellfish License

- No holder of any recreational shellfish license may take more than a total of 150 shellfish (in aggregate) per day. See page 18.
- A non-resident recreational shellfish license is valid only during the months of June, July, August and September.
- Anyone engaged in any shellfish harvesting activity with someone holding a commercial shellfish license must also possess their own commercial shellfish license.
- It is illegal to dredge shellfish. 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 1½ inches in length must immediately be returned to the bottom from which they were taken. Specific seasons, regulations and size limits exist for oyster beds in Great Bay, Delaware Bay, plus the Mullica, Great Egg Harbor and Tuckahoe rivers. Check with the nearest shellfish office (Nacote Creek or Delaware Bay) for these detailed regulations.

- It is illegal to harvest shellfish on Sunday except in the seasonal waters of the Navesink and Shrewsbury rivers between Nov. 1 and April 30.
- Shells taken in the process of harvesting oysters must be culled from the live oysters and returned immediately to the area from where they were taken.

Commercial Shellfish License

- 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.



2008 New Jersey Recreational Fishing Seasons, Minimum Size & Possession Limits

Regulations in red are new this year.

Species	Open Season	Minimum Length	Harvest & Possession Limit (per person unless noted)
American Eel	No Closed Season	6"	50
Black Drum	No Closed Season	16"	3
Black Sea Bass	Jan. 1–Dec. 31	12"	25 Excluding tail filaments
Bluefish	No Closed Season	No Minimum	15
Cobia	No Closed Season	37"	2
Cod	No Closed Season	21"	No Limit
Haddock	No Closed Season	21"	No Limit
King Mackerel	No Closed Season	23"	3
Pollock	No Closed Season	19"	No Limit
Porgy (Scup)	Jan. 1–Feb. 28 July 1–Dec. 31	9"	50
Red Drum	No Closed Season	18"	1 not greater than 27"
River Herring	No Closed Season	No Limit	35
Shad	No Closed Season	No minimum	6
Shark ^a except prohibited species ^b	No Closed Season	48"	2 per vessel
Spanish Mackerel	No Closed Season	14"	10
Striped bass or hybrid striped bass			
— Del. River & tributaries** (Calhoun St. bridge to Salem River & tributaries)	March 1–March 31 and June 1–Dec. 31		
— Del. River & tributaries** (upstream of Calhoun St. bridge)	March 1–Dec. 31	28"	2
— Atlantic Ocean ^c 0-3 miles from shore	No Closed Season		
— Rivers, bay and estuaries	March 1–Dec. 31		
— 3 - 200 miles (federal waters)	Prohibited	–	0
Summer Flounder	May 24– September 7	18"	8
Tautog ^a	Jan. 1–April 30 May 1– July 15 July 16–Nov. 15 Nov. 16–Dec. 31	14" – 14" 14"	4 0 1 6
Weakfish	No Closed Season	13"	6
Winter Flounder	March 23–May 21	12"	10
No species of fish with a minimum size limit listed above may be filleted or cleaned at sea (except striped bass if fillet is at least 28" long). Party boats licensed to carry 15 or more passengers may apply for a permit to fillet the above species, except striped bass, at sea.			
Blue Crab			
— peeler or shedder	No Closed Season ^d	3"	1 bushel
— soft	No Closed Season ^d	3 1/2"	
— hard	No Closed Season ^d	4 1/2"	
Lobster (carapace length)	No Closed Season	3 3/4"	6
Hard Clam — license required	No Closed Season	1 1/2"	150 clams

a Not including dogfish: see description on page 13 under Shark

b Prohibited shark species: basking shark, whale shark, white shark, sand tiger shark, bigeye tiger shark

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

d Unless using non-collapsible, Chesapeake-style crab pots. See sections on crab pots, pages 14, 18 and 19.

* Regulations change throughout the season. See Tautog, page 13.

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

ATTENTION ANGLERS

2008 New Jersey Minimum Size, Possession Limits & Seasons

Fish are measured from tip of snout to tip of tail (except Black Sea Bass; see p.12). Cleaning or filleting of fish with a minimum size limit while at sea is prohibited. **Red** text indicates a change this year.



Weakfish
6 fish at 13"



Summer Flounder (Fluke)
8 fish at 18"

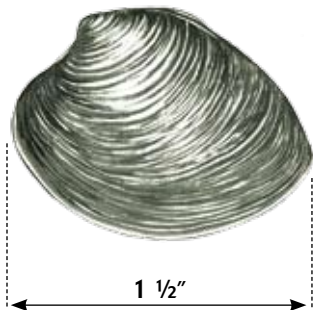
Open Season: 5/24-9/7

See Summer Flounder regulations for filleting to use as bait, page 13

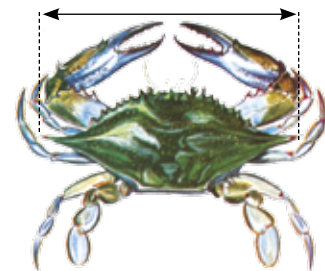


Tautog
14"

4 fish, 1/1-4/30 • 0 fish, 5/1-7/15
1 fish, 7/16-11/15 • 6 fish, 11/16-12/31



Hard Clam
recreational limit—150 clams
No harvest on Sunday.
(See p. 15 for exceptions)



Blue Crab (point to point)
Peeler or Shedder—3"
Soft—3 1/2" • Hard—4 1/2"
recreational limit—one bushel



Bluefish
15 fish – no minimum size

PROHIBITED SPECIES
It is illegal to take, possess or land any of the following species:
BIGEYE SAND TIGER SHARK
SHORTNOSE STURGEON
ATLANTIC STURGEON
SAND TIGER SHARK
BASKING SHARK
WHALE SHARK
WHITE SHARK

OTHER SPECIES		
	Possession Limit	Total Length
American Eel	50	6"
Cobia	2	37"
Cod	No Limit	21"
Haddock	No Limit	21"
King Mackerel	3	23"
Pollock	No Limit	19"
River Herring	35	No Limit
Lobster	6	3 ³ / ₈ " min—5 ¹ / ₄ " max (carapace length)



Striped Bass or Hybrid Striped Bass
2 fish at 28"

Del. River & tribs. (Calhoun St. bridge); Trenton, to Salem River & tribs. Open 3/1-3/31 & 6/1-12/31

Atlantic Ocean: (0-3 miles from shore), no closed season; (greater than 3 miles from shore) closed year round

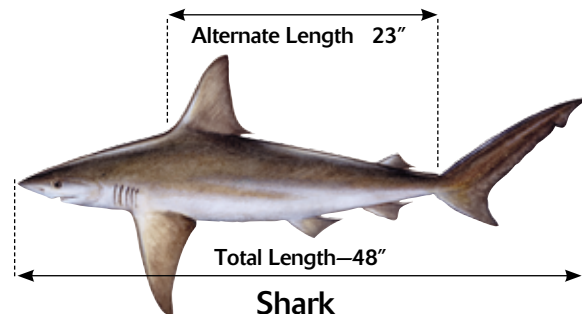
All other marine waters, open 3/1-12/31



Winter Flounder
10 fish at 12"
Open Season: 3/23-5/21



Black Sea Bass
25 Fish at 12"
Open Season: 1/1-12/31



Shark
2 fish per vessel

Possession and size limits likely to change in 2008; see page 13.

Marine Species Identification

You're viewing an archived copy from the New Jersey State Library.

SEASONS, SIZE AND POSSESSION LIMITS



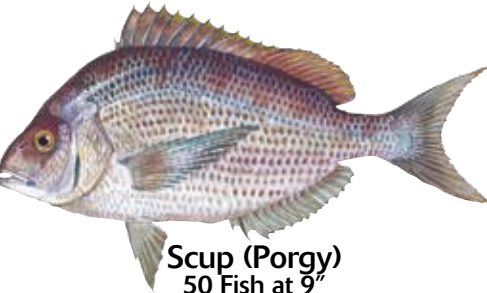
Black Drum
3 Fish at 16"



Northern Kingfish



Atlantic Bonito



Scup (Porgy)
50 Fish at 9"

Open Season: 1/1-2/28 and 7/1-12/31



Northern Searobin



White Perch



Northern Puffer



Red Drum

1 Fish at least 18" but not greater than 27"



Spiny Dogfish



Atlantic Mackerel



American Shad
6 Fish Limit



Smooth Dogfish



Oyster Toadfish



Spanish Mackerel
10 Fish at 14"



Sand Tiger Shark
possession prohibited



Atlantic Croaker



Atlantic Cod
21" Size Limit



Sandbar Shark

2008 Federal Recreational Regulations for Minimum Size, Possession Limits and Seasons

See *New Jersey Recreational Fishing Seasons Minimum Size and Possession Limits* chart for species not included in these federal regulations, page 15.

For federal regulation questions, 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
Striped Bass	Possession prohibited in federal waters (3-200 nm)	Possession prohibited in federal waters (3-200 nm)	Possession prohibited in federal waters (3-200 nm)	Possession prohibited in federal waters (3-200 nm). See pages 12 and 15 for NJ Waters
Dolphin (Mahi mahi)	year-round	none	10, not to exceed 60 per vessel, which ever is less, except on a charter or headboat, 10 per paying passenger	For current regulations refer to www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/ or call (978) 281-9260
Marlin, White	year round	66 inches 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. Refer to www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/ or call (978) 281-9260
Marlin, Blue	year round	99 inches lower jaw-fork length	none	
Sailfish	year-round	63 inches lower jaw-fork length	none, longbill spearfish prohibited	
Golden Tilefish	year round	none	none	For current regulations refer to www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/ or call (978) 281-9260
Swordfish	year round	47 inches lower jaw-fork length	1 per person, no more than 3 per vessel per trip	* Swordfish, tuna and sharks require a highly migratory species (HMS) permit when fishing in federal waters (3-200 nm). For permits refer to www.hmspermits.gov or call (888) 872-8862. For current regulations refer to www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/ or call (978) 281-9260
Tuna, Albacore (Longfin)	year round	none	none	
Tuna, Bigeye	year round	27 inches curved fork length	none	
Tuna, Bluefin	January 1, 2008 to December 31, 2008 or until season is closed.	See note at right		
Tuna, Skipjack	year round	none	none	
Tuna, Yellowfin	year round	27 inches curved fork length	3 per person per trip	

* Regulations concerning highly migratory species are subject to change, Refer to www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/ for a list of complete federal regulations for highly migratory species.

Shellfish License Information

A clamming license is now called a shellfish license and is required for harvesting of all species of benthic mollusks (with the exception of conchs, addressed in the commercial marine fisheries regulations), including, but not limited to, hard and soft clams, surf clams, oysters, bay scallops and mussels. Other specific commercial shellfish licenses exist such as surf clam dredge, Delaware Bay oyster dredge boat, and Delaware Bay licenses to harvest in Areas 1, 2 and 3.

Prior to harvesting any shellfish, be certain to consult the Shellfish Growing Water Classification Charts published by DEP's Bureau of Marine Water Monitoring, available at any shellfish license agent, state shellfish offices, marine police station, online at <http://www.nj.gov/dep/bmw/waterclass.htm> or call the Bureau of Marine Water Monitoring at (609) 748-2000. This summer, shellfish licenses will be available for purchase online at www.WildlifeLicense.com/NJ/.

A statutory update changed the name, fee and scope of several shellfish licenses.

- **Resident recreational shellfish:** \$10. Harvest limit of 150 shellfish (in aggregate) per day. Sale of catch prohibited.
- **Non-resident recreational shellfish:** \$20. Harvest limit of 150 shellfish (in aggregate) per day. Sale of catch prohibited. License valid only during the months of June, July, August and September.
- **Juvenile recreational shellfish:** \$2. For persons under 14 years of age. Subject to same restrictions as resident or nonresident adult recreational license holders.

- **Resident commercial shellfish:** \$50. Unlimited harvest. Shellfish may be sold *only* to certified dealers.
- **Non-resident Commercial Shellfish:** \$250 Unlimited harvest. Shellfish may be sold to certified dealers *only*.
- **Senior citizen recreational shellfish license:** FREE (\$2 application fee) NJ residents age 62 years or older. Harvest limit, 150 shellfish (in aggregate) per day. Sale of shellfish prohibited.
- **Disabled veterans:** Fish and Wildlife-certified disabled veterans are eligible for free shellfish license at any shellfish license agent location. For more information on how to become certified, call (908) 637-4125.

Shellfish and Non-Commercial Crab Pot License Agents

(For over-the-counter sales only)

ATLANTIC COUNTY

Fish Finder Marina, 3645 Atlantic-Brigantine Blvd., Brigantine(609) 457-5384
 NJ Div. Fish and Wildlife, 360 Rt. 9N (milepost 51)(609) 748-2021
 Zeus Sporting Goods, 6679 Black Horse Pike, Egg Harbor Twp.(609) 646-1668

CAPE MAY COUNTY

Avalon Hodge Podge, 2389 Ocean Dr., Avalon(609) 967-3274
 Budd's Bait & Tackle, 109 Fullingmill Rd., Villas(609) 886-6935
 Capt. Tate's Tackle Box, 450 No. Route 47, Cape May CH(609) 861-4001
 City of Ocean City, 861 Asbury Ave., Ocean City(609) 525-9328
 Just Sports, 21 W. Mechanic St., Cape May CH(609) 465-6171
 Upper Township, 2100 Tuckahoe Rd., Tuckahoe(609) 628-2805
 Wal*Mart, 3159 Rt. 9S, Rio Grande(609) 465-7760

CUMBERLAND COUNTY

Bivalve Shellfish Office, 6959 Miller Ave., Port Norris(856) 785-0730
 Shire Products, 389 S. Lincoln Ave., Vineland(856) 692-3646

CUMBERLAND COUNTY

Delaware Bay Office, 6959 Miller Ave., Port Norris(856) 785-0730
 Shire Products, 389 S. Lincoln Ave., Vineland(856) 692-3646

MIDDLESEX COUNTY

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

MONMOUTH COUNTY

Brielle Tackle, 800 Ashley Ave., Brielle(732) 528-5720
 L & H Woods and Water, 2045 Rt. 35, Wall(732) 282-1812
 T & A Tackle and Bait, 369 Rt. 36, Port Monmouth(732) 787-3853

OCEAN COUNTY

American Sportsman, 857 Mill Creek Rd., Manahawkin(609) 597-4104
 Bob Kislin's, 1214 Rt. 37 East, Toms River(732) 929-9300
 Downes Bait & Tackle, 287 Brennan Concourse, Bayville(732) 269-0137
 Grizz's Forked River B & T, 232 N. Main St., Forked River(609) 693-9298
 Lacey Marine, 308 Rt. 9, So., Forked River(609) 693-0151
 L & H Woods and Water, 403 Rt. 9, Waretown(609) 242-1812
 Pell's Fish & Sport Shop, 335 Mantoloking Rd., Bricktown(732) 477-2121
 Tip's Hardware, 218 Main St., West Creek(609) 296-3192

SOMERSET COUNTY

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

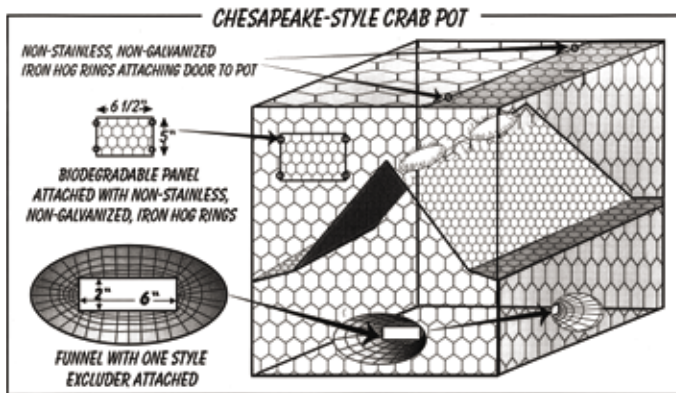
Crab Licenses Now Available at All Agent Locations

Recreational Crab Pot/Trot Line Licenses and Non-Commercial Crab Dredge Licenses are now available for purchase online at: www.WildlifeLicense.com/nj/ or at any Fish and Wildlife-certified license agent including those license agents listed above. For a current list of Fish and Wildlife-certified license agents, look in future hunting issues of the *New Jersey Fish & Wildlife Digest* or go to www.NJFishandWildlife.com/agentlst.htm.

- **Recreational crab pot/trot line license:** \$2 application fee. Harvest limit of one bushel per day. Refer to the shellfish regulations on page 14 for all recreational crabbing regulations.
- **Non-commercial crab dredge license:** \$15 harvest limit of one bushel per day during the crab dredge season. Refer to the crab regulations on page 14 for all recreational crabbing regulations.

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

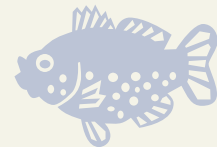
Users of non-collapsible, Chesapeake-style crab pots should be aware that all pots set in any body of water less than 150-feet wide at mean low tide or in any manmade lagoon MUST include diamondback terrapin excluder devices. In addition, all non-collapsible, Chesapeake-style crab pots set in any body of water MUST include biodegradable panels.



These crab pot modifications will help reduce the unintentional drowning of terrapins and allow for escapement of these and other species in the event that pots are lost or abandoned. Terrapin excluder devices must be no larger than 2 inches high by 6 inches wide and securely fastened inside each funnel entrance. Biodegradable panels must measure at least 6 1/2 inches wide by 5 inches 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 14 and license agents above.

New Jersey's
FREE
Freshwater
Fishing
Days

June 7 and 8, 2008



On these two days, residents and non-residents may fish New Jersey's public fresh waters without a license or trout stamp. All other regulations, including size and daily catch limits, remain in effect.

WHERE has my fish traveled?

NEW JERSEY'S
STRIPED BASS
TAGGING PROJECT

By Heather Corbett,
Assistant Fisheries Biologist



When discussing fish tagging programs, most people drift towards the same questions. How many fish have you tagged? Where do the fish go after tagging? How old are the fish? Many anglers may never have caught a tagged fish; some may think researchers are tagging too few. As you will see, that is definitely not the case with striped bass.

How many fish have you tagged?

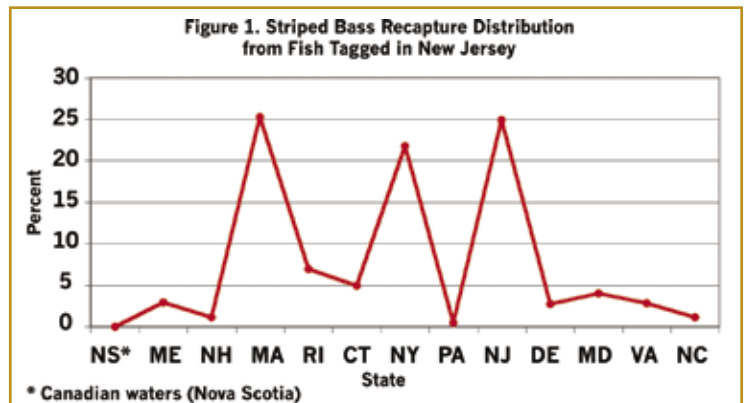
The Coastwide Cooperative Striped Bass Tagging Program is coordinated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and involves several state and federal agencies from North Carolina to Massachusetts. Each agency is responsible for submitting their tagging information annually to the USFWS, which handles tag distribution, recapture reporting and management of the coastwide database for all releases and recaptures. Since 1987, 473,942 striped bass were tagged and released coastwide with 84,964 recaptures reported to date.

Division of Fish and Wildlife personnel began tagging Delaware Bay striped bass in 1989, marking 34,689 fish from various New Jersey waters through 2007. Although the majority of these fish (26,809) were tagged during the spring on the Delaware Bay, striped bass were also tagged on the Navesink and Delaware rivers as well as along the coast during the Ocean Trawl Survey and coastal sampling of striped bass party boats.

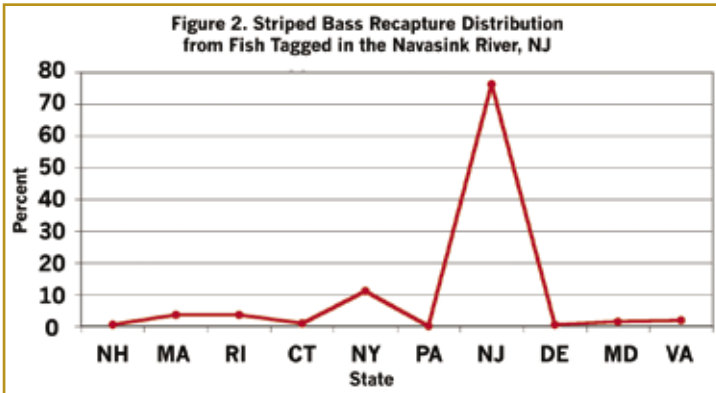
Where do the fish go after they are tagged?

Of the fish tagged in New Jersey, 7,877 recaptures have been reported. These recaptures range from North Carolina to as far north as Nova Scotia. Although only one New Jersey-tagged fish has been recaptured in Canadian waters, it does make an interesting footnote. The striped bass was tagged during January 1992 in Barnegat Bay and was recaptured in the Sissiboo River near Weymouth, Nova Scotia in September 1993.

The majority of fish tagged by Fish and Wildlife (64 percent) are recaptured north of New Jersey, while 26 percent are caught in New Jersey and Pennsylvania. Only 11 percent of recaptures are reported from the south (Figure 1). Striped bass recaptures from fish tagged in Delaware Bay and along the coast tend to follow similar movement patterns, with most of the recaptures occurring in Massachusetts, New Jersey and New York. The majority of these tagged fish are immature females or young adult males which travel as part of the mass migration up and down the coast.



Fish tagged in the Navesink River from 1989 to 2000 generally followed a different pattern with over 76 percent recaptured in New Jersey waters (Figure 2). Factors which may account for this difference could be the tagging location and the type of fish. Striped bass tagged in the Navesink River were stocked by Fish and Wildlife as part of a restoration project during the 1990s. These fish were progeny of a non-migratory stock of striped bass from North Carolina and may tend not to migrate like wild stocks from the Chesapeake Bay, Hudson River and Delaware River.

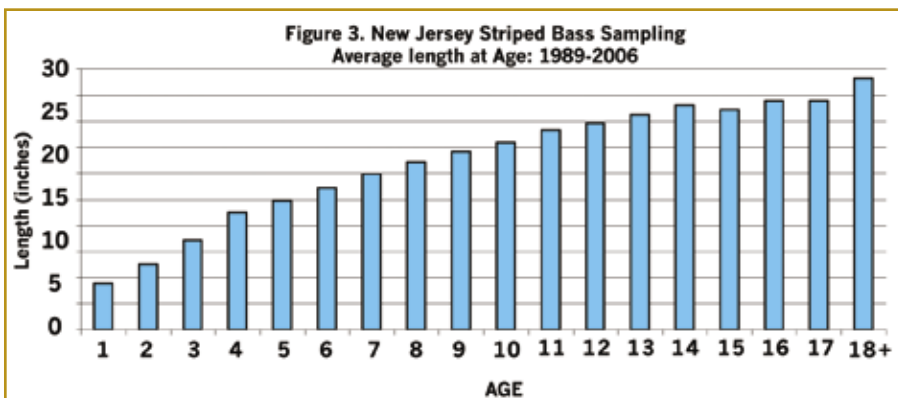


What ages are the tagged fish?

Scale samples collected during tagging provide invaluable information for the development of age-length keys. These keys help determine the general age range of a fish if a scale sample is not available, such as with those fish you catch. (Figure 3).


Each fish is measured prior to tagging, a subsample is weighed and scales are taken from all fish for age determination. (See sidebar on aging scales.) During the 2006 Delaware Bay tagging survey, fish ranged in total length from 16 to 40 inches, with a mean size of 25 inches. The majority of the fish collected were ages five through seven years old, with the 2000 year-class accounting for 36 percent of the fish sampled.

An example of using an age-length key to



estimate the age of a striped bass includes a striper dubbed "Morsax" tagged in the early days of our sampling. Morsax was 24 inches when tagged in the Delaware Bay during March 1989. It was quickly recaptured in November of the same year, in Barnegat Inlet, New Jersey then re-released. By January 2004, Morsax had grown to 43 inches when it was recaptured again off the coast of North Carolina. Morsax held the tag for nearly 15 years. A scale sample was not taken at the time of tagging, so biologists used the Delaware Bay age-length key to estimate the approximate age of the fish. When tagged, it was estimated to be five years old, so by the second recapture Morsax would be around 20 years old.

The travels of Morsax may not have occurred without proper hook and release techniques at the time of first recapture. Fish and Wildlife encourages catch and release when possible, so it is imperative to take good care of fish during handling. Approximately 54 percent of all recaptured coastal striped bass are re-released, while 66 percent of fish marked from the Delaware and Navesink rivers are re-released.

With the number of tagged striped bass swimming along our coast, anglers have a fair chance of catching one. The recapture rate coastwide is about 18 percent, while New Jersey's recapture rate is 23 percent. If you see a pink tag protruding from the belly of a striper, record the tag number, length, date, location and capture method. If you cannot record the data, cut the tag at its base, retain the tag, then call (800) 448-8322 to report the recapture. The USFWS will send information from when your fish was tagged and will reward you with a hat. Good luck and keep looking for the pink tags. 



Scale from five year old striped bass.



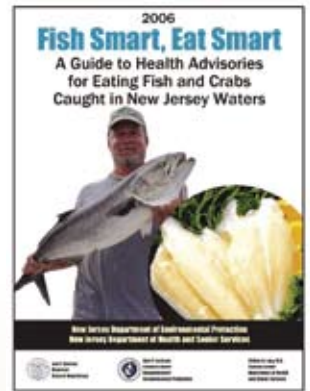
Fish scales are heated in this press to burn an impression onto an acetate slide.

Striped Bass Scale Aging

- Most commonly used aging structure
- Advantages: ease of collection and non lethal sampling technique
- Disadvantage: difficult to determine age with older fish
- Taken from midway between the head and tail in the upper half of the body
- Heated press used to burn impression onto acetate slide (above, bottom)
- Slide viewed with microfiche reader to count annuli (growth rings) like rings on a tree (above, top)
- One annuli per year
- In 2006, New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife aged over 1,500 striped bass scales

Fishing clubs or organizations interested in learning more about this topic may contact New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife's Bureau of Marine Fisheries at (609) 748-2020 to schedule a group presentation.

For Eating Fish And Crabs Caught In New Jersey Waters *Fish Smart – Eat Smart*



Fishing provides enjoyable and relaxing recreation. Fish are an excellent source of protein and other nutrients and play a role in maintaining a healthy, well-balanced diet. Many anglers enjoy cooking and eating their own catch. However, elevated levels of potentially harmful chemical contaminants, such as dioxin, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), pesticides and mercury have been found in certain fish and crabs in some New Jersey waters. Fish consumption advisories have been adopted to guide citizens on safe consumption practices.

The current list of fish consumption advisories consists of state-wide, 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 literature and a new Web site to help you make informed choices about which fish to eat and how to reduce your exposure to these harmful chemicals.

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

The new FishSmartEatSmartNJ.org is a user-friendly site designed to help you decide what fish are best for you to consume. The Fish Smart-Eat Smart Fish Advisory Web site includes a Geographic Information System (GIS) map linked to current fish consumption advisories statewide. For example, to see the latest mercury or PCB advisories for your area, just select the county by clicking on the map. The page shows the water body location, fish species and any advisories that apply. This feature makes it easy to find current fish consumption advisories for the specific waterbody in which you fish.

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 Fish Smart-Eat Smart Advisory Guide includes contaminant information, advisory charts, plus preparation and cooking methods to reduce contaminant levels, as well as specific guidelines, advice and prohibitions for people at high risk, such as children, pregnant women and women of child-bearing age. The Guide also includes Web site links to Pennsylvania, Delaware and New York for information about fish consumption advisories for shared waters.

The fish consumption advisories, Fish Smart-Eat Smart Web site and Advisory Guide are each updated periodically and are available in print or online through these agencies:

The Fish Advisory Guide is available by contacting the following:

New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection
Public Access Center (609) 777-DEP4 or www.state.nj.us/dep

Division of Science, Research and Technology
(609) 984-6070 or www.state.nj.us/dep/dsr

Division of Fish and Wildlife
(609) 748-2020 or www.NJFishandWildlife.com

New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services
Consumer and Environmental Health
(609) 588-3123 or (609) 777-3373
www.state.nj.us/health/eoh/foodweb/fishguid.htm

Get on the Lists

The Marine Fisheries and Shellfish e-mail lists that is. This free service will provide you with the latest information about Fish and Wildlife events, public hearings and other matters related to marine resources. And there are six other lists to help you get the most out of New Jersey's fish and wildlife resources. Sign up today. Visit Fish and Wildlife's Web site at: www.NJFishandWildlife.com/lstsub.htm

New Jersey's 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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www.regsurvey.com



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Clean Vessel Act Program Continues To Expand

By Al Ivany, Principal Biologist

Vessel-generated sewage discharges can degrade water quality, impact people and wildlife and cause the closure of shellfish beds and swimming beaches. To address this, Congress passed the Clean Vessel Act Program (CVA) in 1992 to help keep our waters clean by providing funds for the construction and operation of sewage pumpout stations and dump stations for recreational boats. Funds are also provided for information and education programs to make boaters aware of the program, and to encourage them to use pumpouts.

New Jersey began implemented the Clean Vessel Act Program in 1994, with ongoing success. In fact, applications are increasing to request funding for installation of pumpout stations, along with requests for additional pumpout boats. Pumpout projects have also grown in size as many marinas have expanded their facilities, as well as their need for additional pumpout systems. Although the

program is generating a positive response, the increased interest is forcing the Clean Vessel Act Steering Committee to make tough decisions on the allocation of the program's limited funding.

One hundred eighty pumpout stations are currently in operation at marinas, providing service to the recreational boating community. In addition, four pumpout boats patrol coastal waterways in the summer assisting boaters on the open water. Seventeen marinas currently have applications pending, plus two applications for pumpout boats.

Pumpout stations are easy to use and CVA-participating marinas may not charge more than a \$5 fee for their use. Boaters in New Jersey have responded overwhelmingly to the Clean Vessel Act Program. Millions of gallons of sewage from boats have been removed and safely treated since the inception of the program.

Marina owners and municipal governments are encouraged to continue applying to the CVA program for pumpout facilities, as well as pumpout boats. Owners must maintain the pumpout for five years. After that, owners may reapply for funding of a new pumpout should it become necessary.

Interested parties can request an application for pumpout installation through the CVA Program by contacting the New Jersey Marine Trades Association at (732) 292-1051.

Fish Scraps

Marinas located in sheltered areas protect boats from storms. These areas have reduced water exchange, or flushing, so waste discharged here may accumulate and decay. Fish cleaning scraps can be a problem when discarded in a poorly-flushed marina basin. Fish waste is smelly and unsightly. Life-sustaining oxygen becomes depleted from these waters as bacteria decompose any meat scraps.

But you can help.

Keep marinas clean by following these tips:

- Do not discard fish waste in poorly flushed waters.
- Ask about the marina's cleaning and disposal policy.
- Bag waste and discard at home or in a Dumpster.

From CleanMarina.org

New Jersey Skillful Angler Application

Name _____ Age _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Daytime Telephone Number (_____) _____

Entry Category (check only one):

- Adult Junior (16 years and under)
 Catch and Release (qualification based on length)

Fish Species (Angler must complete. Subject to verification by a state biologist.)

Weight _____ lb (s), _____ oz. Length _____ in.

Girth _____ in. Date Caught* _____ / _____ / _____

Time Caught: _____

Location: Caught from (check only one):

- Boat Shore Surf Jetty
 Other (specify) _____

Line Test Used _____ Reel Type _____

Rod Type _____ Lure/Bait _____

Certification for Adult and Junior Categories

Name of establishment where fish was measured and weighed

Telephone Number _____

Weighmaster's Name _____

Weighmaster's Signature _____

I certify:

- 1.) this fish was caught in New Jersey waters in accordance with state laws and regulations;
- 2.) the entry was weighed on a certified scale (for Adult and Junior categories only).

_____ Date _____

Applicant's Signature

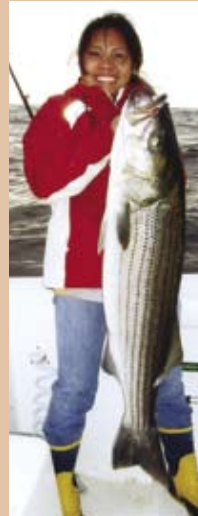
* Application and photo must be submitted within 30 days of catching the fish.

Applications for fish caught in December will be accepted only until January 31.

Mail to:

**NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife - Pequest
 Skillful Angler Award Program
 605 Pequest Rd.
 Oxford, NJ 07863**

Skillful Angler Awards Program



The Skillful Angler Awards Program is designed to supplement the New Jersey Record Fish Program. It comprises three categories: Adult (for anglers age 16 and older), Junior (under age 16) and Catch and Release (based on length). A clear, side-view photo that allows accurate species identification must be included with each application. All photo entries become property of the Division of Fish and Wildlife and will not be returned.

The Skillful Angler Awards Program acknowledges 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. The program is 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.

Anglers qualifying for a Skillful Angler award receive a certificate and a bronze pin to adorn their fishing hat or jacket. Only one pin and certificate per species—regardless of category—will be awarded annually to each participant, but an angler may submit applications for larger fish caught even after receiving a pin.

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 receives a special commemorative gift recognizing his or 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 Adult/Junior categories, fish must be weighed and measured by fishing license agents, tackle shops or an authorized Fish and Wildlife fisheries biologist.

See online at www.NJFishandWildlife.com/skflang.htm.

Minimum Entry Requirements

	Adult Weight (lbs., oz.)	Junior (lbs., oz.)	Catch and 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

Note: The New Jersey State Record Fish Program requires a separate application and is based on weight alone. See facing page. Scale certification documentation and a weighmaster's signature are necessary. Other rules apply. Visit Fish and Wildlife's Web site at www.NJFishandWildlife.com/recfish.htm for a complete list of current state records.

New Jersey State Record Marine Sport Fish

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.

In 2006, revisions were made to the New Jersey State Record Fish Program for both freshwater and saltwater species. Currently there are 61 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 in or off the coast of New Jersey. The original list of 72 species was pared down with that objective in mind.

Eleven 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. In addition, the historical record for northern kingfish was removed as the current entry surpassed it by 3 ounces.

Anglers should be aware that several procedural changes are now in effect for 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 will 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.

Other changes include a new entry deadline - applications must now be submitted no later than one month after the date of catch - and the triggerfish category is now defined as gray triggerfish. All other program rules still apply.

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 www.NJFishandWildlife.com/fishing.htm.

Species	Lbs.	Oz.	Year	Angler	Where Caught
Amberjack, greater	85	0	1993	Edwin Metzner	Off Cape May
Bass, black sea	8	2	1992	Tony Cunha	Inshore Wreck
	8	2	1994	John Geddes	Off Pt. Pleasant
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	8 1/2" pt. to pt.		1995	William Dool	Manahawkin
	8 1/2" pt. to pt.		2006	Martin Winnicki	Brick
Croaker, Atlantic	5	8	1981	Frederick Brown	Delaware Bay
*Cunner	2	9	2006	Nick Honachefsky	Mud Hole
Dogfish, smooth	19	8	2000	Michael LaTorre	Pleasantville
Dogfish, spiny	15	12	1990	Jeff Pennick	Off Cape May
Dolphin	63	3	1974	Scott Smith, Jr.	Baltimore Canyon
Drum, black	107	0	2006	William Kinzy	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)	11	1	2002	Natalie Jones	Off Brielle
Lobster, American	15	3	2003	William Sharp	Almirante Wreck
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				Vacant (Minimum Weight 2 lbs.)	
Shark, blue	366	0	1996	Albert Jewitt	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, sandbar	168	8	1987	John Norton	Little Egg Inlet
Shark, s-fin mako	856	0	1994	Christopher Palmer	Wilmington Canyon
Shark, thresher	617	0	2004	Chris Chalmers	Off Cape May
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	55	4	2006	Keith Karl	Tom's Canyon
Tilefish, gray	18	7	2007	Joseph Sanzone	Tom's Canyon
Triggerfish, gray	5	11	2005	Lois Schuda	Cape May Reef
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.)	

Warning:
Wildlife Hazard!

Properly dispose of your fishing line. Plastic debris can endanger marine life and snare propellers.

* 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 www.NJFishandWildlife.com

GOVERNOR'S SURF FISHING TOURNAMENT

By Karen Leskie, Wildlife Technician

A Favorite for Families and Friends

The 17th Annual Governor's Surf Fishing Tournament will be held Sunday, Oct. 5, 2008. Once again anglers will line the beaches of Island Beach State Park in hopes of catching the largest fish of the day. Popular with families from New Jersey and neighboring states, the tournament aims to encourage youngsters and adults to learn more about surf fishing and raises much-needed funds for marine resource conservation and education.

In 2007, the warm waters and summer-like weather made for an enjoyable Tournament day. Contestants caught

bluefish, kingfish, striped bass and blackfish, with a total of 21 prizes awarded in categories for children, teens and adults. However, the grand prize went to Martin Mosen of Collingswood, with a 37 3/8-inch striped bass. DEP Commissioner Lisa P. Jackson and Jersey Coast Anglers Association President, John Toth congratulated Mr. Mosen with a plaque and two rod-and-reel combinations. Mr. Mosen's name has been engraved on the Governor's Cup, which is on permanent display at Island Beach State Park.

Since its inception, the tournament has generated more than \$100,000 for various marine education and restoration efforts, construction of access ramps for disabled saltwater anglers, surf fishing instruction programs and equipment and specialized wheel chairs that provide beach access to the disabled and elderly, among other purposes.

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

New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife and the Division of Parks and Forestry

(along with our co-sponsors: NJ State Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs, Jersey Coast Anglers Association and NJ Beach Buggy Association) would like to thank the following organizations for contributing to the success of the 16th Annual Governor's Surf Fishing Tournament in 2007:

Zebco for donating 32 Quantum rods and reels	Fisherman Eyewear	Legal Limits Company	Stanley Jigs, Inc.
Cape May-Lewes Ferry	Grumpy's Bait and Tackle	Manns Bait Company	TTI-Blakemore Fishing Group
Eagle Claw Fishing Tackle Company	Jenkinson's Aquarium	O Mustad & Son, Inc.	Trenton Devil's
	L & H Woods And Water	Silver Horde	Wetlands Institute
		Sportsman's Center	



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- Protection and enhancement of natural lands and waters
- Preservation of traditional outdoor sports

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www.njsfsc.org

Angler, boater purchases fuel success of sport fish restoration projects



You probably don't have to be told what fishing means to you. You value time spent in the great outdoors, relaxing with family and friends on the water and savoring the thrill of battling a trophy.

But you may not realize how much you mean to fishing. Every time you fill your boat with gasoline, buy your child a new rod or stock up on lures, you are making an important contribution toward better fishing and boating in the Garden State. Simply by purchasing the things you need for fishing, you support the Sport Fish Restoration Program, which enables states to restore fisheries, improve habitats, create fishing and boating access, provide educational opportunities and accomplish other valuable work.

The Sport Fish Restoration Program is funded by excise taxes manufacturers pay on sales of rods, reels and other fishing equipment and a portion of tax on motorboat fuel. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service distributes these funds annually to the states through a federal aid grant program. New Jersey receives more than \$3.4 million each year in Sport Fish Restoration funds.

For more information on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration program, visit <http://federalasst.fws.gov>.

Griffin's Gear Guide is a special product section for essential gear & new product announcements.

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Okuma Fishing Tackle is pleased to announce the release of the ALL NEW Salina Bait Feeder line of spinning reels. Based on Okuma's top selling Salina saltwater spinning series, the Salina Bait Feeder incorporates our patented bait feeding system with our time tested and proven "ALC" AlumiLite construction, patented "EOS" Elliptical Oscillation system and our legendary Dual Force Drag System to make the ultimate bait feeding saltwater spinning reel. All of these features and more are now encompassed within the revolutionary Okuma Blade Body Design which narrows the reel's frame, reducing the weight and overall mass, thereby giving the reel a great look and more balanced "feel".

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For more information visit wildwaterflyfishing.com



Species Profile:

By Peter J. Himchak, Acting Chief, Bureau of Marine Fisheries
Jeff Brust, Research Scientist

Tautog

Common Name: Tautog. Also known as blackfish, white chin, chinner, chub, black porgy, slippery bass and tog.

Scientific Name: *Tautoga onitis*

Characteristics: Coloration varies by habitat and sex, but tautog are generally drab-colored, with light and dark irregularly-blotched sides with a slightly lighter belly. Large males have a characteristically white chin. During the spawning season, males are commonly grayish, often with a white midline saddle mark. Juveniles and female tautog show a mottled, brown-toned appearance. Besides these color variations, a mature tautog's gender can often be determined from external characteristics. Males have a pronounced lower jaw and more steeply-sloping forehead. The female's mouth position is more midline, and her body is an ovoid shape. Other distinguishing characteristics include large fleshy lips and large canine teeth that often protrude from the mouth. Like other members of the wrasse family, tautog possess a second set of jaws, called pharyngeal (far-IN-gee-all) jaws, located at the opening to the throat.

Range: Tautog are distributed along the northeast Atlantic coast of North American from the outer coast of Nova Scotia to Georgia. Greatest abundances are found from Cape Cod to Chesapeake Bay. North of Cape Cod, tautog are usually found close to shore (within four miles) in water less than 60 feet deep. South of Cape Cod, these fish can be found up to 40 miles offshore and at depths up to 120 feet.

Habitat: Throughout their lives, tautog are structure-dependant fish. Juvenile tautog occur in bays, in submerged aquatic vegetation beds and around pilings or other hard structures. Adults inhabit rough bottom which includes rock outcroppings, shipwrecks and reefs, in nearshore ocean waters. North of Long Island, New York, rocks and boulders can be found in abundance along the coastline as a result of glacial deposition, providing habitat for larger tautog. South of Long Island there are few natural rocky habitats in coastal waters, so tautog commonly inhabit shellfish beds, coastal jetties, pilings, shipwrecks, and reefs. Significant outcroppings along the New Jersey coast do occur along the mouth of Delaware Bay and

the area north of Manasquan Inlet. Reef locations occur along the entire New Jersey coastline.

Food and Feeding: Juvenile tautog feed primarily on small, bottom and water-column invertebrates. Their diet changes as juveniles mature and increase in size. Adults feed primarily on the blue mussel and other shellfish. Adult tautog grasp mussels using their large canine teeth, tearing mussels from their attachment surface by shaking them loose. Small mussels are swallowed whole, while large, hard-shelled ones are crushed by the pharyngeal teeth prior to swallowing. Adult tautog also consume barnacles, crabs, hermit crabs, sand dollars, scallops and other invertebrates.

Size: The tautog is a slow-growing, long-lived species with reports of individuals over 30 years of age. Larval growth rates are estimated at 0.01 to 0.03 inches per day. Young-of-the-year juveniles grow during the summer at a rate of 0.02 inches per day. Juvenile growth rates have been observed to be higher in vegetated than non-vegetated habitats. Average length after the first summer of growth is 2.9 inches; 6.1 inches after the second summer. Adult growth is relatively slow and varies with the season.

Adult male tautog grow faster in length than adult females. A reasonably accurate guide to tautog length at age is provided by the table at right.

Migration: Tautog are not highly migratory along the Atlantic coast but rather demonstrate an

Length	Age (years)
3.0	1
5.5	2
9.0	3
10.5	4
12.5	5
14.0	6
15.5	7
17.0	8
18.0	9
19.0	10
21.0	15
22.0	20

Motor Boat Title and Boating Operator Requirements

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 (motorized), 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
- 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.

For more information, visit the MVC Web site at www.nj.gov and click on the Motor Vehicle Commission link, or stop by an MVC office or call (609) 292-6500.

Motor Boat and Jet Ski Operator License

A motorboat/jet ski operator license is required to operate these on fresh, non-tidal waters such as lakes, creeks and rivers for those 16 years or older. Visit the Motor Vehicle Commission Web site or call to verify if you must take a boating safety course.

New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission
Boat Operators License
(888) 486-3339 toll free in NJ or
(609) 292-6500 from out-of-state
www.nj.gov/mvc/

Boating safety courses: (800) 336-2628
BoatUS Foundation
www.BoatUS.com/courseline

For New Jersey State Police, boating laws clarification, call (609) 882-2000, or visit their Marine Services Bureau online at: www.nj.gov/lps/njsp/maritime/index.html

State Police Marine Law Enforcement Stations

Bivalve	(856) 785-1330
North Wildwood	(609) 522-0393
Atlantic City	(609) 441-3586
Burlington	(609) 387-1221
Ocean	(609) 296-5807
Point Pleasant	(732) 899-5050
Monmouth Station	(732) 842-5171
Lake Hopatcong	(973) 663-3400
Newark Bay	(973) 578-8173

inshore-offshore migration pattern throughout the year. Adult tautog migrate inshore in the spring as water warms to around 48°F to spawn in the late spring through early summer. The fall offshore migration is triggered when water temperatures drop below 52°F in late fall. Most adult tautog form schools and migrate offshore to deep water locations (80-150 feet) with a rugged bottom, where they become inactive throughout the winter.

Spawning: Tautog normally reach sexual maturity at three to four years of age (7-12 inches). Spawning usually occurs within estuaries or in nearshore marine waters. Tagging studies show that adults return to the same spawning locations over a period of several years. Discrete spawning groups may exist in Narragansett Bay as evidence by tagging studies and fishing observations. Optimum size for female egg production has been estimated at 16 inches. Tautog between 8 and 27 inches long were observed to contain 5,000 to 637,000 mature eggs. Eggs are buoyant without oil globules, 0.9 -1.0 mm in diameter. Spawning occurs in heterosexual pairs or in groups of a single female with several males.

Recreational and Commercial Importance: The primary tautog fishing grounds extend from the beach out to about the 12-fathom contour. Recreational fishing modes include bottom fishing, particularly the directed trips of party and charter boats, jetty fishing and spearfishing.

The ideal boat rod for tautog is 7 feet long with a sturdy butt section and slow tapered tip. Live green crabs or fiddlers are the best bait to use. Conventional reels are preferable over spinning tackle for bottom fishing and a fishing rod with muscle will help keep those hooked tautog from getting back into reef structure where the line may get hung up or cut on sharp edges of blue mussels or barnacles.

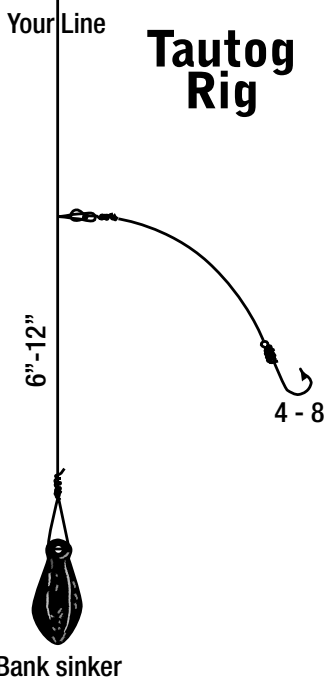
The mean weight of tautog harvested in New Jersey's recreational fishery ranges from 1.8 – 2.3 pounds. The New Jersey State Record tautog is 25 pounds and is recognized by the IGFA as the current world record.

The overwhelming majority of tautog harvested in New Jersey is from the recreational fishery, which averaged approximately 1.3 million pounds per year from 1981 to 1995. Because of fishery regulations, landings varied from 40,000 pounds to 1.8 million pounds per year during the 1996 to 2002 period. New regulations implemented in 2003 have stabilized landings at a much lower level, averaging about 167,000 pounds per year from 2003-2005.

From 1981 to 1995, the commercial tautog fishery in New Jersey averaged about 110,000 pounds per year. With the implementation of a fishery management plan in 1996, harvest has decreased substantially. Over the last five years (2002-2006), the commercial fishery has averaged approximately 55,000 pounds per year.



Photo by: Herb Segars, gotosnapshot.com



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Marine Wildlife Sighting Report Forms can be found on the ENSP website: www.NJFishandWildlife.com/ensp/rprtform.htm

Your sightings will provide valuable information on New Jersey's marine species of conservation concern.



Listening to our Readers - Results from the 2007 Marine Digest Readers' Survey

By *Lindy Barry, Marine Fisheries Technician*

Thank you! to all our readers who participated in the Readers' Survey for the 2007 Marine Issue of the New Jersey Fish & Wildlife Digest. Most respondents identified themselves as a recreational fisherman, predominantly from Burlington, Ocean or Camden counties. Among our articles, the species profile on black drum garnered the most favorable reactions.

Of most interest to our readers were topics on fishing techniques plus places to fish, as well as regulation changes and enforcement efforts. Over half of you contributed further comments requesting coverage of species such as striped bass, fluke, weakfish, winter flounder, black sea bass and tautog, as well as expressing interests ranging from artificial reefs, surf and offshore fishing techniques to the habitats within our bays and estuaries.

The results and the comments you submitted figured prominently in our discussions as we planned the content for this year's marine issue of the New Jersey Fish & Wildlife Digest. For complete results from the 2007 Readers' Survey or to contribute further comments, visit our Web site at www.NJFishandWildlife.com/artdelstudy08.htm.



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).

* * *

New Jersey Pumpout Directory – free waterproof map.

Write to:

CVA Program, New Jersey Division of Fish & Wildlife, Nacote Creek Research Station, Box 418, Port Republic, New Jersey, 08241

* * *

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

- Guide to New Jersey Saltwater Fishing, available online only
- NJ Reef News
- Party and Charter Boat Directory, available online only

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Falconry Permit Information	(908) 735-8793
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Horseback Riding Permits	(609) 259-2132
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Wildlife Education	(908) 637-4125
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Trenton Office	
P.O. Box 400, Trenton, NJ 08625-0400	
Endangered and Nongame Species	(609) 292-9400
Land Management	(609) 984-0547
Marine Fisheries	(609) 292-2083
Shellfisheries	(609) 984-5546
Wildlife Management	(609) 292-6685
Nacote Creek Research Station	
P.O. Box 418, 360 Rt. 9 N. (Milepost 51) Port Republic, NJ 08241	
Marine Fisheries	(609) 748-2020
Shellfisheries	(609) 748-2040
Marine Education	(609) 748-2031
Marine Law Enforcement	(609) 748-2050
Delaware Bay Office	
P.O. Box 432, Port Norris, NJ 08349	
Shellfish Dealership Information	
NJ Consumer Health Service, Dept. of Health	
P.O. Box 369, Trenton, NJ 08625	
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DEP, Water Monitoring and Standards	
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Freshwater Fisheries	
P.O. Box 394, 1255 County Rt. 629, Lebanon, NJ 08833	
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26 Route 173 W., Hampton, NJ 08827	
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P.O. Box 327, Hackettstown, NJ 07840	
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