



New Jersey

Fish & Wildlife

DIGEST

2007 Marine Issue

A Summary of Rules and
Management Information
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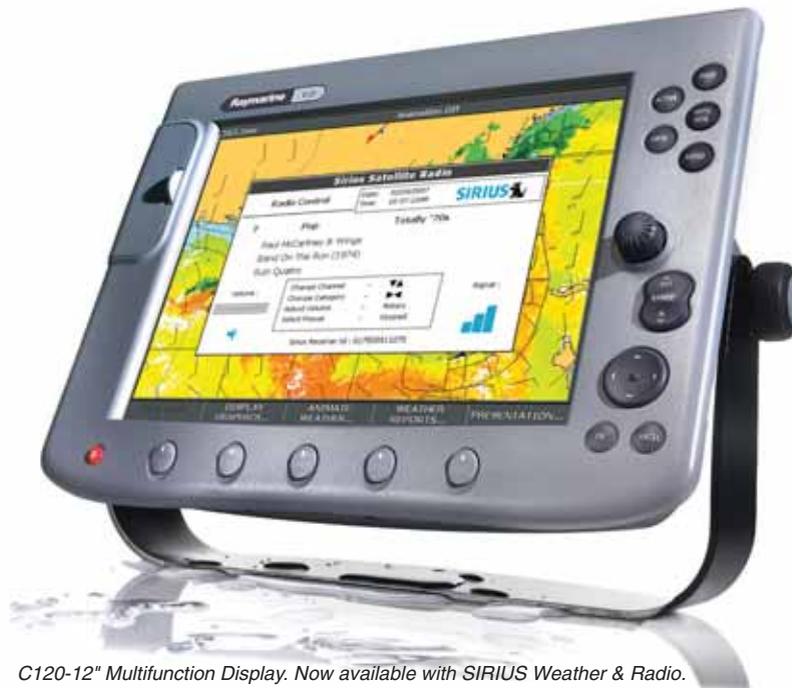
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*Size and
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Profile:
Black Drum

Delaware Bay
Dangerfields





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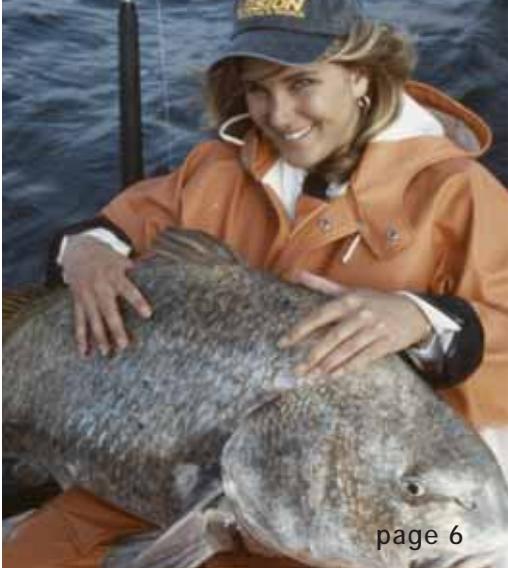
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New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife
Large Format Marine Digest
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Commissioner's Message



BY LISA P. JACKSON

With 127 miles of Atlantic coastline and 83 miles of bayshores, opportunities to enjoy New Jersey's marine resources are abundant. Our bays, rivers, marine estuaries and ocean habitat contribute to a commercial fishing industry which harvests over 50 different species of finfish and shellfish annually, and boasts world-class recreational fishing, clamming and crabbing. Our fishery resources are both plentiful and diverse with northern species in the winter, southern species in the summer and resident species available year round. Fishing and angling are an important part of our state's culture, economy and character and proper management of these important resources is essential.

Protecting and enhancing our fisheries is challenging and complex work. Most species migrate over a wide geographic range, which requires coordination among many regulatory agencies to appropriately manage species. This coordination can be difficult. Each agency has its own set of goals and priorities. New Jersey must comply with

federal fishery management plans developed by interstate management agencies or risk federally imposed moratoriums. Between the interstate management agencies, there are 21 fishery management plans covering 28 species of importance to New Jersey fishermen. In addition, there is a broad array of groups using our marine resources. Meeting the needs of all these constituencies can be a challenge.

Appropriate management is a balancing act that often requires compromises between goals of different constituencies, such as commercial vs. recreational interests. Despite all the challenges we face in managing New Jersey's fisheries, we work hard to ensure healthy stocks to serve all our users. Regardless of disagreements over short term goals and priorities, all regulatory agencies, stake holders and interest groups share one common goal – long term sustainability of the resource for continued use and enjoyment. In the mean time, I encourage everyone to comply with regulations, and continue to promote a conservation ethic and New Jersey will maintain its status as a top recreational angling and commercial fishing state and be a positive example for other states to follow. 

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

Director's Message



BY DAVE CHANDA

Throughout the course of my career I have had the opportunity to travel to a variety of states and locations. In those travels if I were to ask people for their impressions of New Jersey, invariably I would hear — it is an urban state, nothing but cities and highways, the New Jersey Turnpike, oil refineries, and the Sopranos. Although most people recognize New Jersey for being the most densely populated state in the nation, few recognize New Jersey for its incredible wildlife diversity. There are more than 800 species of wildlife found in New Jersey. These species present many wonderful recreational opportunities, and probably just as many management challenges.

In this issue of the *Digest* I will focus on the immense marine fisheries resource that this Division protects and manages. I will also discuss the economic and recreational importance of this resource. Other states — and our own residents as well — are surprised to learn that New Jersey ranks in the highest status of all of the nation's coastal states in both recreational and commercial fisheries landed. Although this may seem to be an unbelievable statement, proudly thanks to the hard work and efforts of our marine fisheries professionals, it is true.

As documented by landings compiled by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) for the year 2005, New Jersey marine resources support some of the largest recreational and commercial fisheries, not

only along the Atlantic coast, but also on a national level.

When considering recreational fishing effort for 2005, New Jersey ranks third in the nation with 6,718,000 recreational fishing trips, following Florida and slightly trailing North Carolina, while surpassing such noteworthy competitors as New York, Massachusetts, California, Louisiana and Virginia (Table 1, below). As far as recreational landings — the total number of all recreational fish brought to the dock — New Jersey ranks sixth in the nation (Table 1). I am confident that most citizens throughout the country would agree this is an admirable position our small state holds in terms of fisheries effort and landings.

Table 1

New Jersey Recreation Fisheries, a National Perspective in 2005			
Recreational Fishing Trips (x 1,000)		Recreational Landings, All Species, Number of Fish, (x 1,000)	
FL	27,697	FL	74,382
NC	6,823	LA	13,462
NJ	6,718	NC	13,381
NY	6,195	VA	13,031
MA	4,543	CA	10,764
CA	4,341	NJ	7,905
LA	3,936	MD	6,605
VA	3,791	NY	5,600

In the nation's realm of commercial fishing, the port of Cape May-Wildwood ranks fifth of the ninety-seven major ports in the United States, with a dockside landings value of \$68,400,000 from 74,600,000 pounds of seafood products (Table 2, page 4). Fifth is very impres-

S

(Continued on page 4)

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Table 2

Commercial Fishery Landings at Major Ports (97) in the USA in 2005

Ranked by Dollar Value	Ranked by Millions of Pounds
1. New Bedford, MA	1. Dutch Harbor-Unalaska, AK
2. Dutch Harbor-Unalaska, AK	2. Intracoastal City, LA
3. Kodiak, AK	3. Reedville, VA
4. Hampton Roads Area, VA	4. Kodiak, AK
5. Cape May -Wildwood, NJ \$68,400,000 dockside value	8. New Bedford, MA
11. Gloucester, MA	10. Gloucester, MA
15. Point Judith, RI	17. Cape May-Wildwood, NJ 74,600,000 pounds
32. Long Beach-Barnegat, NJ	22. Point Judith, RI
38. Point Pleasant, NJ	26. Atlantic City, NJ
43. Atlantic City, NJ	30. Pt. Pleasant, NJ
	59. Long Beach-Barnegat, NJ

sive considering the competition from Massachusetts, Alaska and Virginia. Other New Jersey commercial fishing ports of Long Beach-Barnegat, Point Pleasant and Atlantic City all place in the top half of the ninety-seven U. S. fishing ports. Total commercial landings, all New Jersey ports combined, account for 156,961,000 pounds. New Jersey hauls in a value of \$159 million in commercial landings, eighth among all 20 U.S. coastal states.

It is clear that the NMFS landings data support the fact that New Jersey occupies a prestigious position in the nation's hierarchy of states supporting major recreational and commercial fisheries, not only for 2005 but for many previous years. We are proud of the fact that New Jersey has remarkable marine fisheries resources.

It is easy to account for our small state's significant — though undoubtedly underestimated — importance in the national perspective on marine resources. For one thing, the state's location along the mid-Atlantic coast is a key factor. Let's take a look.

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) formed in 1942 with 15 member states, has 23 species-specific interstate fishery management plans covering the most important fisheries resources within each states' near-shore marine waters from Maine through Florida. New Jersey participates in the interstate fishery management programs for 20 of these species, enjoying the highest landings (number of fish) in the recreational fisheries for summer flounder, bluefish striped bass, black sea bass, tautog, weakfish and winter flounder. (Rankings based on five year average of 2000 through 2004).

Additionally, New Jersey ranks in the top five states for commercial landings (pounds) under ASMFC-managed species for black sea bass, scup, summer flounder, tautog, weakfish, American shad, Atlantic croaker, Atlantic menhaden, winter flounder and Atlantic herring as averaged over the same period. For species not covered by ASMFC interstate fishery management plans such as surf clams, ocean quahogs, hard clams, scallops, and oysters, New Jersey also ranks in the top three positions and there are several other commercial fisheries such as mackerel, squid and butterfish landed in huge quantities in New Jersey ports.

However, location alone cannot account for such excellent fishing opportunities. Accessibility and port development are essential for recreational anglers and commercial fishermen to enjoy the offshore resources. Excellent marinas, an extensive state-developed artificial reef program and well-maintained inlets are vital factors in supporting New Jersey's fisheries. New Jersey residents and non-residents from many adjacent states readily take advantage of the marine fisheries bounty available to them year 'round.

Take every opportunity to show your pride for New Jersey's high-ranking status of marine fishery landings. I feel proud knowing our marine and shellfisheries staff have a key role in the state's top billing. 

State of New Jersey

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Department of Environmental Protection

Lisa P. Jackson, Commissioner

Office of Natural and Historic Resources

John S. Watson, Jr., Deputy Commissioner

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Cover image: Striped Bass, Courtesy of Captain Blaine Anderson

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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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Delaware Bay **Dangerfields**

By Tom Pagliaroli

The late, great blue-collar comedic artist's signature statement instantly came to mind that early May afternoon while engaged in a conversation with a pair of obviously ecstatic anglers at Fin-Atics Marine Supply in Ocean City.

Seems that the duo just weighed in a couple of stripers that tipped the scale at a combined 50 pounds. Both were caught in the Great Egg Harbor Inlet. Nice bass, these, and the fishermen were justifiably proud. I mentioned that the day before I'd decked a 76-pound black drum aboard Captain Bob Cope's Full-Ahead Sportfishing over on Delaware Bay.

The bass were fooled by clam baits, as was the drum.

"But," as one of the guys emphasized, "*it was only a drum.*"

Never mind that the one fish that nearly tore my arms from the shoulder sockets and was so expeditiously lip-gaffed by Captain Cope 20 minutes later counted for one more, plus a pound, of their nearly-identical linesiders. What was startlingly apparent was the disdain for the inner tube thick-lipped bottom feeder that, with weights in excess of the century mark, is a true inshore big game quarry. Thankfully, this attitude is fading rapidly, being replaced by a refreshing appreciation for the size, sheer pulling power and fine eating afforded by what is called among Delaware Bay principals, disciples and growing legions of converts as "drumfish."

Drum Dining:

Drum scales are too tough to cut through, so slice just under the skin and peel each side. Now fillet and discard the dark meat. If the drum is over 40 pounds, carefully remove the rack of ribs. Basted in a lemon butter melt over a grill, the strips of meat between the bones is surprisingly close to lobster tail in texture and taste. The main meat is like *seafood veal*: a bit chewy but bursting with a rich flavor that lends itself to myriad methods of preparation, including grilling, pan frying, broiling and baking. (A personal favorite is Drum Parmesan.) Try smoked drum; it will make your tongue want to slap your brains out!

The "yuck" side of a potential drum feast? The appearance of cysts in the meat, especially in the bigger fish. Merely cut, remove and you're good to go.

**"I tell ya, I get no respect.
No respect at all!"**

Rodney Dangerfield

never caught one or never caught one over 35 pounds. This game fish is magnificent in its brutal simplicity and strength. Yeah, hook and hold on to a horse or two, get it to the boat, and preconceived notions do a 180 real quick."

How big are the drum pounding through Delaware Bay? The decent fish are 35 to 50 pounds, the good fish 50 to 80 pounds and the great fish over 80 pounds. Last year, a new Garden State record was established by William Kinzy with a 107 pound behemoth caught from the Sandi Pearl charter boat.

"But there are bigger drum out there," says Captain Cope, whose client best in '06 was a biceps-withering 95½ pounds. One that pulled the hook at the stern was visually estimated to be 20 pounds heavier. "A monster," claimed the captain, shaking his head.

With a countenance even a mother would have trouble tolerating, the yellow-eyed, subsurface noisemaker is nonetheless a study in physical functional perfection. It cannot be mistaken for any other fish prowling the bay. Broad of shoulder with a highly arched back to plow through the rip-snorting tidal currents, the brass and gold-colored ivory-bellied drum sports long pectoral and ventral fins and a broad tail fin that aid in maneuverability. The bottom of the lower jaw is festooned with barbels that act as taste sensors (much in the same way as those on a catfish) to assist in locating and pre-tasting clam, oyster, mussel and crab sustenance. The namesake thrum-broom-boom sound resonates as a muscle is smacked against the air bladder. Oftentimes it's heard while in the boat and can trigger your rod-grabbing reflexes. However, actively drumming fish are not on the feed, merely moving through the water column looking for love. Hooked and in the boat, though, the booming can certainly be disconcerting.

Quips the skipper, "In my experience, and talking to other captains, those who 'diss' drumfish have either

Drum begin appearing in Delaware Bay as the water temperature approaches the 57-degree mark. This usually occurs between the second and third week in April. The fish will be in small schools of mixed-size fish ranging from 25 to 50 pounds. By the last week in April, the main migration is in full swing, with boomers of all sizes – including the hundred-pounders – pushing up the bay on their mating runs. By the last week in June when water temperatures exceed 68° F, drum are rolling out to the open Atlantic.

The feeding activity of this light-sensitive over-eater is most influenced by moon phases and the subsequent tidal pulls. The new and full moon, with their strong impact on tidal energy, are the single most powerful influence on drum feeding activity. A week prior to the full moon, the incoming tide running into the sunset/evening period is prime time for fishing. On the new moon, either the incoming or outgoing tide running in to the dark will put the bait in front of foraging fish. On the average, it's a 5 to 10 p.m. deal, with the wildest bay bottom vacuuming activity occurring



photo: Tom Pagliaroli

Mary Inman of Manahawkin decked her first black drum, a 76 pounder, aboard Captain Bob Cope's Full Ahead Sportfishing on Delaware Bay last May.



photo: Tom Pagliaroli

It was almost dusk on the Friday before Father's Day near the Mia Mull Light on Delaware Bay when Joe Kennedy of Flemington nailed this 48-pound black drum aboard Captain Bob Cope's Full Ahead Sportfishing.

corresponding medium-heavy or heavy action 7-foot rod. Do not skimp on the bank sinker ballast, as the bait must be totally stationary. Always attach more weight than you think you'll need. You're in the mix with 4-8 ounces attached. On the fish-finder rig, the drum will not feel any resistance when sucking the bait and moving off.

Spinning does have its place on the drum scene. A heavy action 5 1/2 - 7-foot boat rod armed with a high capacity reel equipped with a smooth, wide range front drag, strong gears and power handle to control the drum's plowing bursts, blasts and bottom 'n broadside maneuvers will beat most any drum.

Landing is done either by net or gaff. The former is all about fish to 30 pounds, the latter an underneath lip grip with the hook for bigger, badder blackies. With either method, keep the deck clear, as the muscular drum, even worn from the fight, can thrash 'n crash enough to wreak havoc on ankles, shins and untended tackle.

Fresh surf clam is the one and only bait. Not frozen clam; *Fresh* clam! Figure on a bushel per trip. Unfortunately, fresh surf clams are sometimes not so easy to procure during the height of the drum run, so ordering in advance is highly advised. Two of the most reliable shops when it comes to the bivalve bait bounty are Captain Tate's Bait & Tackle in Dennisville, and Jim's Bait & Tackle in Cape May. **S**

between 6 and 8:30 p.m. There can be an intense dark-to-daylight bite (5 - 7:30 a.m.) on a tide running into the early morning for those who like to get started in the dark.

The boat must be perfectly still, with a rare double anchoring sometimes required. This can be tricky in the pulsing, rolling springtime currents.

The initial take is a reverberating "bump, bump" as the drum goes headfirst into a smash-the-shell exercise. To strike now means a miss. The solid "whump" of the take and a tightening of the line indicates the fish has made the commitment.

Black drum do not suffer sissy tackle easily. Forget the "sporting" light tackle outfits, as these fish mean business and are perfectly capable of incapacitating the inadequate rod and/or reel, not to mention snapping the line.

Drum hunters should spool with 30-50 lb. test monofilament or 50-65 lb. test braid for a main line. While many prefer clear line, the "hi-vis" lines in chartreuse, gold or orange are easier to see as afternoon fades to dusk and then into twilight. Go with a 36-inch, 50-pound hard mono leader via a fish-finder rig (fluorocarbon is not necessary in Delaware Bay's mocha precincts) gripped to either a star drag or lever drag reel and a

Great Bay has been experiencing a wild renaissance in its black drum fishery. During the past three years, drum up to 65 pounds have been landed in the Grassy Channel stretch, with more than a few dragged onto the sedge from the bank at Graveling Point and Ohio Avenue. "The drum bite is a bonus...a double shot a week or two after the first recorded striper," says Scott Albertson of Scott's Bait & Tackle on Mystic Island. Again, fresh surf clams are the key to drum attentions. The fish vacate between the second and third week in May, about the same time the bluefish roar in, although they have been taken in Great Bay as late as the first week in June.

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(Continued on page 10)

A Cast of Thousands

By Lynette Lurig, Research Scientist, Division of Science, Research and Technology



Okay, so Carteret or Elizabeth may not come to mind when you think about places to go fishing. However, those two towns – among several others – are where New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection is taking kids fishing during the spring and summer. The Urban Watershed Education and Fishing Program (Urban Fishing Program) brings children to their local waterways to fish. Not only have most of these children never before fished, but many have never been to their local waterfront.

The goal of the Urban Fishing Program is to build awareness of the complexity and interrelated nature of an urban estuary. The Urban Fishing Program is an extension of a wider, community-based public information effort to inform citizens about the dangers of consuming recreationally caught fish and crabs from the Newark Bay Complex. (For information about New Jersey's fish consumption advisories, see page 22 or go to www.FishSmartEatSmartNJ.org.) The four-day program, offered in urban areas around the state, culminates with a fun day of fishing.

The fishing day begins with learning what it means to be an ethical angler, as well as promoting the concept of catch-and-release fishing. Young people learn about equipment, proper baiting techniques and the type of fish they are likely to catch. Not long after we start fishing, most of the youngsters are baiting their own hooks and asking about other places to fish. The day concludes with a fascinating fish dissection and anatomy lesson.

"One thing I will always cherish," says Joyce Pinkava, a long-time volunteer with the Division of Fish and Wildlife, "is the wide-eyed looks of excitement when the children, who have never before held a fishing rod, catch their first fish. It may be a bluefish off the bulkhead in Bayonne, a huge bass in Linden or a teeny bluegill in Branch Brook Park."

Research proves that teaching youth about fishing can be a great way to teach about the environment. Participation in fishing leads to more positive attitude toward the outdoors. Environmental education programs that provide a hands-on experience help create a greater awareness of one's place

in the environment. Studies also show that a child's knowledge of – and attitude toward – nature is typically gained through direct contact, not by reading a book in a classroom.

The Urban Fishing Program is important to New Jersey. A child's exposure to fishing is crucial to their participation as adults and anglers can be thoughtful environmental stewards. A recent national study shows that of the youth who had experienced fishing, a majority reported that it was a person or a group which had a positive influence on their participation. Yet only a fraction of those youths responded that they had ever heard a teacher or guest speaker at school talk about fishing. Those youngsters who had been positively influenced were significantly more likely to fish more often and to have a greater interest in fishing.

Fishing, which knows no cultural or ethnic boundaries, brings participants one step closer to personally accepting responsibility for conserving our natural world. It is essential that young people are aware of – and feel they are an integral part of – the natural world. Clearly, the best way to achieve this is by creating opportunities which bring them in contact with nature. The Urban Fishing Program provides children with a greater sense of connection to the environment, helping to establish an aware, responsible citizenry who recognize we are all stewards of the land. Each of us leaves our footprints.

The Urban Fishing Program provides the foundation on which to develop a positive interaction and a sense of stewardship with natural resources in the state. In order to sustain this learning outcome, we encourage schools and communities to integrate into their programs water resource management and fishing clubs.

Now entering its 11th year, the Urban Fishing Program is funded by the Division of Watershed Management, the City of Bayonne and the Bayonne Municipal Utilities Authority. The program originally focused only in the northeastern part of the state, but has expanded to include such places as Newark, Camden, Trenton, Bayonne, Jersey City, Elizabeth, Linden and Carteret. 

For more information about the Urban Fishing Program, visit us at <http://www.nj.gov/dep/dsr/urbanfishing/index.htm>. If you are interested in working with the Urban Fishing Program and sharing your angling skills with children, please contact: Lynette Lurig at Lynette.Lurig@dep.state.nj.us call (609) 633-1314.

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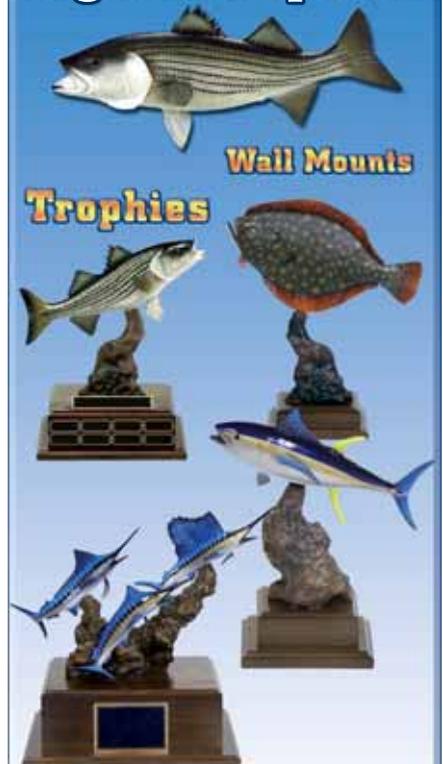
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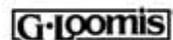
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It's a good idea to crack a few clams overboard as an attractant, but only if the tide is not running too hard, to allow the "chum" to get to the bottom as close to the boat as possible. Should the tide be smoking, the clam will be swept away too quickly and may serve to attract drum to a boat anchored below, or above, your position. Bury the business end of the meat in to a 6/0-8/0 full circle hook, or, for those who prefer the actual eye crossing hook-set, a 10/0 J-hook. The advantage of the former is that it allows you to fish with the rod in a holder (a "Rodney" in D-Bay parlance) and results in about a 95-out-of-100 grab securely in the corner of the jaw as the fish pretty much hooks itself.

All that is required is to remove the rod, point it in the direction

of the departing drum and crank the reel handle when the line pulls tight. A J-hooked wad of quahog requires the standard upward set to bury the barb. Unfortunately, unless perfectly timed, there will be a fairly high percentage of swallowed metal. When releasing a gut-hooked fish, cut the line as close to the mouth as possible. The hook will eventually rust or get passed through its system. For these reasons, always utilize bronze instead of stainless steel hooks.

The best spots to beat the drum include, on the New Jersey side, the Pin Top, Tussey's Slough, the Punk Ground and the area around the Mia Mull Light. On the Delaware side, it's Slaughter Beach and, for some unique shallow water (10-12 foot) drumming, the Coral Beds on the west side of the Broad Kill Slough is the locus.



Clean Vessel Act Helps Improve Water Quality in New Jersey's Coastal Bays and Estuaries

By Michael J. Danko – Marine Fisheries Agent, New Jersey Sea Grant Extension Program Chair, New Jersey Clean Vessel Act Steering Committee
Al Ivany – Principal Biologist, New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife



Sewage waste discharged from recreational and commercial vessels can be a substantial contributor to water quality degradation in localized areas of New Jersey by adding additional pathogens and nutrients. Waters that experience poor tidal flushing and have a high concentration of boating activity, such as in many back bays and estuaries, are the most vulnerable.

Raw or poorly treated sewage can spread disease, result in bathing beach closures, contaminate shellfish beds and lower water oxygen levels. Many of New Jersey's back bays and estuaries already suffer from harmful algal blooms and lower-than-normal oxygen levels caused by an overload of nutrients from various nonpoint sources of pollution.

Prior to implementing the Clean Vessel Act (CVA) Program in New Jersey, only 50 pumpout facilities were available to service boats with installed toilets, an inadequate supply to meet the needs of boaters. The negative impacts from improper disposal of vessel-generated sewage had to be curtailed.

In 1996, the first CVA-funded pumpout facility was installed at Green Cove Marina in Brick, New Jersey. Since then, 178 land-side pumpout stations and four pumpout boats have been established statewide.

Capable and convenient pumpout facilities operate throughout the coastal zone, enabling boaters to properly dispose of vessel-generated sewage. During the 2006 boating season alone, approximately 600,000 gallons of sewage was collected at marina and pumpout boat facilities.

It's easy to see how the Clean Vessel Act

Program, in conjunction with other programs to reduce non-point source pollution, is helping to improve water quality in New Jersey's fragile coastal area waters. However, the program will only be effective if boaters remember to *Keep Our Waters Clean - Use Pumpouts!*

Boaters can learn more about the New Jersey Clean Vessel Act Program by visiting www.NJFishandWildlife.com/cvahome.htm or by calling (609) 748-2056. Pumpout station directories are available free upon request.

When you use too much fertilizer on your lawn, you might as well fertilize the ocean.



www.cleanwaterNJ.org



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

- Change in Rules for Recreational Harvest of Summer Flounder.
- Weakfish Rules to Change in October 2007.
- Notice to Watch for Potential Tautog Regulation Changes Later in 2007.
- Striped Bass Bonus Program Streamlines Process.

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 26 through September 10**. The recreational minimum size is **17 inches** and the possession limit remains at eight fish.

Anglers should note that the rules for the recreational harvest of weakfish will change sometime in October 2007. The minimum size limit will remain at 13 inches with no closed season. The possession limit will change from eight fish to six fish. Anglers should also note the potential for changes to tautog regulations which may occur after this Digest goes to press. Updates will be provided on Fish and Wildlife's Web site at www.NJFishandWildlife.com and through local newspapers.

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

Changes to secure a striped bass bonus permit and for harvest reporting are now simplified. See the bonus program details on page 13.

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.

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 below.) 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.

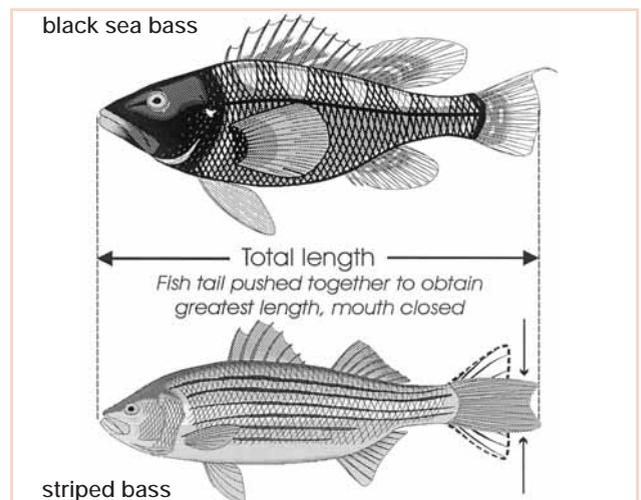
Red Drum

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.

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 0-3 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 2007, 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 overshoot this quota in 2007, any average would be subtracted from the 2008 quota.

Application Process

Select from **two** methods to apply for the 2007 Striped Bass Bonus Program:

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 2007 calendar year. Only one permit can be used per day. If purchased online, harvest reporting also must be online.

Mail-In: Applications are available through Fish and Wildlife's Web site (www.NJfishandWildlife.com) and at authorized striped bass bonus check stations. Mail to Fish and Wildlife your completed application including a self-addressed, stamped #10 envelope to receive one Bonus Permit. Hand-carried applications will not be accepted at Fish and Wildlife offices; only those received via mail. Applications will be processed in the order received. Processing time varies but may take several weeks.

The party/charter boat segment of the program remains the same as 2006, with the applications available only by contacting Fish and Wildlife at (609) 748-2020. The party/charter boat bonus program is not online.

Harvest Reporting

Online: 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 for all permits issued via the Internet.** Internet participants will not receive a new permit by going to a striped bass bonus check station or by mailing your permit with harvest information to Fish and Wildlife.

Mail-In: Punch out month and day on the permit immediately after harvest and prior to transportation. Complete all required information on the Bonus Permit and affix to it a stamp; mail to Fish and Wildlife. Or bring your fish and permit to an authorized striped bass bonus check station where length, weight and scale samples will be taken. A new

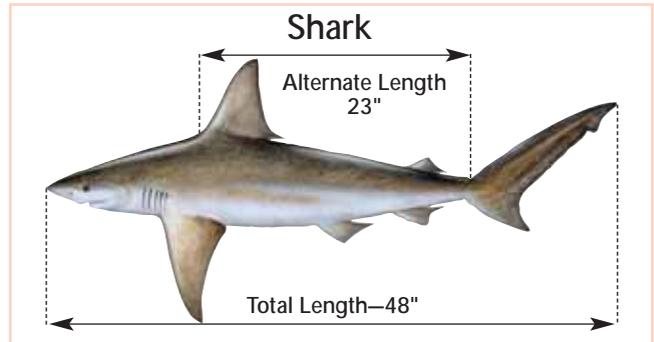
Bonus Permit will be issued. **Fish and Wildlife still encourages anglers to take their bonus fish to a check station for weigh-in and removal of scales for aging purposes. Mail-in permits cannot be replaced online.**

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 2007 calendar year.

Shark

The minimum size limit for any species of shark, except dogfish (see note below) is 48 inches total length.



Sharks — Prohibited Species

basking shark	sand tiger shark
whale shark	bigeye sand tiger shark
white 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 17 inches with an open season from **May 26 to Sept. 10**.

Tautog (Blackfish)

Note **tautog regulations may change** after this *Digest* goes to press. Anglers can check our Web site at www.NJfishandWildlife.com, call the 24-hour marine hotline (609) 292-2083 or read the outdoor column of your newspaper for regulatory updates. (Sign up on our marine e-mail list for prompt notice of regulation changes and other interesting marine information.) Currently, the minimum size limit for tautog is 14 inches; there is a four fish possession limit from Jan. 1 through May 31, and a one fish possession limit from June 1 through Nov. 14 plus an eight fish possession limit from Nov. 15 to Dec. 31.

Weakfish (Gray & Spotted Seatrout)

The current possession and minimum size limit for **weakfish** is eight fish at least 13 inches in length. While the minimum size limit will remain unchanged in 2007, the daily possession limit will decrease to **six** fish in **October. (Date to be set.)**

Winter Flounder

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

Additional Marine Fishing Regulations

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

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 ³/₈ inches. Lobster parts may not be possessed at sea or landed.

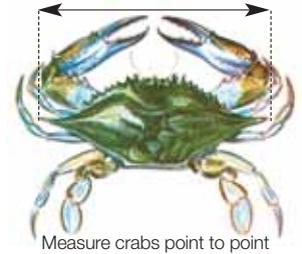
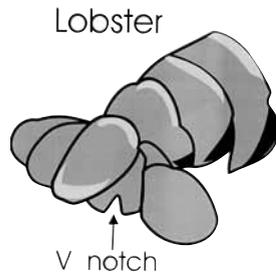
The possession limit is six lobsters per person. No person shall possess any lobster with eggs attached or from which eggs have been removed or any female lobster with a v-notched tail, as illustrated above.

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

1. 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 18 for the non-commercial crab pot license information.
2. 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.
3. Minimum size for crabs that may be harvested (measured from point to point of shell) are as follows:
 - a. Peeler or shedder crab—3 inches
 - b. Soft crab—3 ¹/₂ inch
 - c. Hard crab—4 ³/₄ inches (for sale)
 - d. Hard crab—4 ¹/₂ inches (possession)
4. All female crabs with eggs attached and all undersized crabs shall be returned to the water immediately.



5. Recreational trot lines shall not exceed 150 feet in length with a maximum of 25 baits.
6. All pots and trot lines shall be marked with the identification number of the owner.
7. All crab pots must be tended at least once every 72 hours.
8. No floating line may be used on any crab pot or crab pot buoy.
9. No crab pot shall be placed in any area that would obstruct or impede navigation or in any creek less than 50 feet wide.
10. Only the owner, his agent or a law enforcement officer may raise or remove contents of a legally set fishing device.
11. 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.
12. No crabs may be harvested from the Newark Bay Complex. For more information, see Health Advisory on page 22.
13. 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.

14. 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 18 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 without a permit.

Mollusks

1. All persons must be licensed to harvest any hard clams, soft clams, surf clams and oysters.
2. It is illegal to harvest clams, oysters and mussels from condemned waters, even for bait purposes. It is also illegal to harvest surf clams from beaches adjacent to water classified as condemned. 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.
3. Shellfish harvesting is prohibited before sunrise, after sunset and on Sunday.
4. Harvesting clams, oysters, bay scallops and mussels on public grounds is restricted to the use of hand implements.
5. It is illegal to harvest shellfish from leased grounds. These grounds are

Warning: Wildlife Hazard!

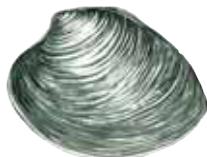
Properly dispose of your fishing line. Plastic debris can endanger marine life and snare propellers.

Size and Possession Limits Chart

MARINE REGULATIONS

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 Bivalve Shellfish offices during regular business hours.

Hard Clams



1. No person shall harvest more than 150 clams per day unless such person is a holder of a commercial clam license. Only certified shellfish dealers may purchase clams from commercial harvesters. All persons selling clams commercially must tag each container listing date of harvest, name and address of the harvester and the waters from which the shellfish were harvested.
2. A non-resident recreational license is valid only during the months of June, July, August and September.
3. Anyone engaged in any clamming activity with someone holding a commercial clam license must also possess their own commercial clam license.
4. It is illegal to dredge hard clams. Hand implements are the only legal harvest methods.
5. The minimum size of hard clams that may be harvested is 1½ inches in length. Clams less than 1½ inches in length must be returned immediately to the bottom from which they were taken.
6. 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.



Oysters

1. Oysters may be sold only to certified dealers.
2. It is illegal to dredge oysters on public grounds. All harvesting on public grounds is restricted to the use of hand implements.
3. 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.
4. Specific seasons and regulations exist for oyster beds in Great Bay, Delaware Bay, the Mullica, Great Egg Harbor and Tuckahoe rivers. Check with the appropriate shellfish office for detailed regulations.
5. One license covers recreational and commercial oystering.

2007 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 26– September 10	17"	8
Tautog*	Jan. 1–May 31	14"	4
	June 1–Nov. 14	14"	1
	Nov. 15–Dec. 31	14"	8
Weakfish	No Closed Season	13"	8 (through Sept. '07) 6 (effective Oct. '07)
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 ½"	
— hard	No Closed Season ^d	4 ½"	
Lobster (carapace length)	No Closed Season	3 ⅜"	6
Hard Clam — license required	No Closed Season	1 ½"	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.

* Potential regulation change during the season. See *Tautog*, page 13.

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

Marine Species Identification

SEASONS, SIZE AND POSSESSION LIMITS

ATTENTION ANGLERS

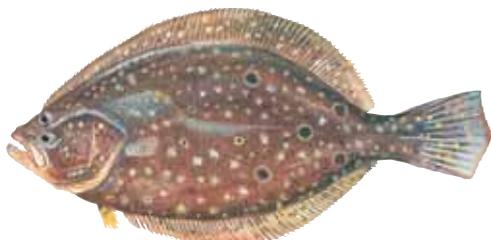
2007 New Jersey Minimum Size, Possession Limits & Seasons

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.



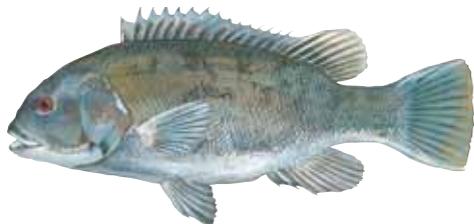
Weakfish

8 Fish at 13" through **Sept. '07**
Effective **Oct. '07**: 6 fish at 13"



Summer Flounder (Fluke)

8 Fish at **17"**
Open Season: **5/26-9/10**



Tautog*
14"

4 Fish, 1/1-5/31 • 1 Fish, 6/1-11/14
8 Fish, 11/15-12/31



25 Fish at 12"

Open Season: 1/1-12/31

Black Sea Bass



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

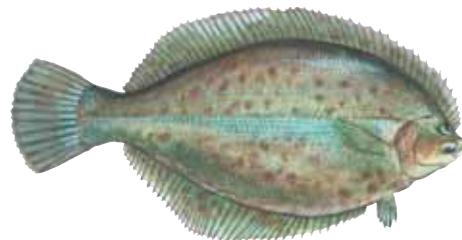
	Possession Limit	Total Length
American Eel	50	6"
Cobia	2	37"
Cod	No Limit	21"
Haddock	No Limit	21"
King Mackerel	3	23"
Pollock	No Limit	19"
River Herring	35	No Limit
Lobster	6	3 ³ / ₈ " (Carapace Length)



Striped Bass or Hybrid Striped Bass
2 fish at 28"

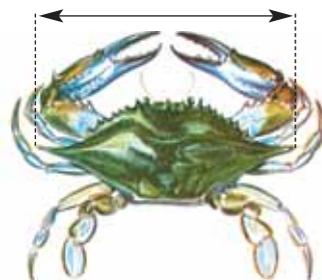
Del. River & tribs. (Calhoun St. bridge); Trenton, to Salem River & tribs. Open 3/1-3/31 & 6/1-12/31
Atlantic Ocean: (0-3 miles from shore), no closed season; (greater than 3 miles from shore) closed year round

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



Winter Flounder

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



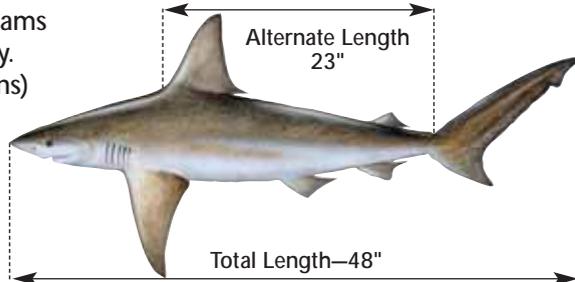
Blue Crab (point to point)

Peeler or Shedder-3"
Soft-3 1/2" • Hard-4 1/2"
recreational limit-one bushel



Hard Clam

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



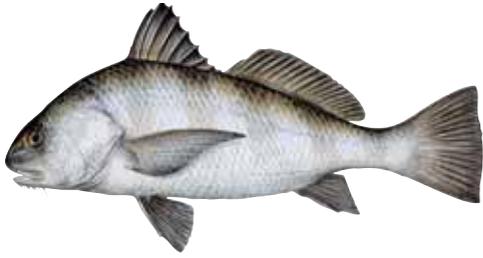
Shark

2 Fish per vessel

***Regulations may change during the season.
See Tautog, page 13.**

Marine Species Identification

SEASONS, SIZE AND POSSESSION LIMITS



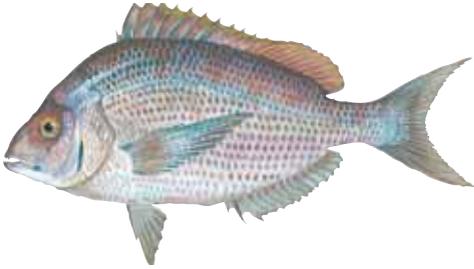
Black Drum
3 Fish at 16"



Northern Kingfish



Atlantic Bonito



Scup (Porgy)

50 Fish at 9"

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



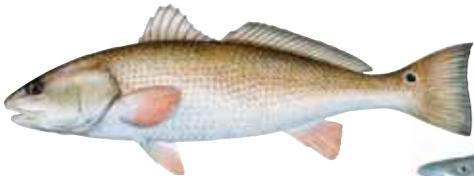
Northern Sea Robin



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

2007 Federal Recreational Regulations for Minimum Size, Possession Limits and Seasons

Species	Season	Minimum Size	Possession Limit (number per angler per day unless otherwise specified)	Notes
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	This is a compilation of federal regulations for dolphin (mahi mahi) prepared in the Southeast Regional Office of the National Marine Fisheries Service. It does not include changes that may have occurred after December 18, 2006
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 with natural bait or natural/artificial bait combos. NOAA Fisheries encourages recreational anglers to release all billfish alive. Refer to www.hmspermits.gov or call (888) 872-8862
Marlin, Blue	Year round	99 inches lower jaw-fork length	None	
Sailfish	Year round	63 inches lower jaw-fork length	None	
Longbill spearfish	Possession in Federal Waters Prohibited	Possession in Federal Waters Prohibited	Possession in Federal Waters Prohibited	Possession in Federal Waters Prohibited
Striped Bass	Possession in Federal Waters Prohibited	Possession in Federal Waters Prohibited	Possession in Federal Waters Prohibited	
Swordfish	Year round	47 inches lower jaw to fork length	1 per person, no more than 3 per vessel per trip	Refer to www.hmspermits.gov or call (888) 872-8862
Golden Tilefish	Year round	None	None	
Tuna, Albacore (Longfin)	Year round	None	None	
Tuna, Bigeye	Year round	27 inches curved fork length	None	
Tuna, Bluefin	Refer to www.hmspermits.gov or call (888) 872-8862			Tuna Regulations change often. Refer to www.hmspermits.gov or call (888) 872-8862 for the most current regulations
Tuna, Skipjack	Year round	None	None	
Tuna, Yellowfin	Year round	27 inches curved fork length	3 per person per trip	

Shellfish and Non-Commercial Crab Pot License Information

Prior to harvesting any shellfish, be certain to consult the Shellfish Growing Water Classification Charts published by DEP's Water Monitoring and Standards, available at any shellfish license agent, state shellfish office, Marine Police Station, <http://www.nj.gov/dep/bmw/waterclass.htm> or call the Bureau of Marine Water Monitoring at (609) 748-2000.

- **Residential recreational clam:** \$10.
- Harvest limit of 150 hard, soft, surf clams (in aggregate) per day. Sale of catch prohibited.
- **Non-resident recreational clam:** \$20. Harvest limit of 150 hard, soft, surf clams per day. Sale of catch prohibited. License valid only during the months of June, July, August and September.
- **Juvenile recreational clam:** \$2. For persons under 14 years of age. Subject to same restrictions as resident or nonresident adult recreational license holders.
- **Commercial clam:** \$50. Unlimited harvest. Clams may be sold to certified dealers only.
- **Oyster, commercial or recreational:** \$10. Unlimited oyster harvest. Oysters may be sold to certified dealers only.
- **Senior Citizen recreational:** FREE (\$2 application fee) recreational clam/oyster license—NJ residents age 62 years or older. Harvest limit, 150 clams per day. Unlimited oyster harvest. Sale of clams or oysters prohibited.
- **Disabled veterans:** May apply for free recreational clamming or crab pot licenses at the following Fish and Wildlife office:
Pequest Hatchery & Ed. Ctr.
Nacote Creek Research Station
- **Bay Scallops:** No license required. Scallops may be harvested only from approved waters.
- **Mussels:** No license required. Mussels may only be harvested from approved waters.
- **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

Crab Licenses Now Available at All Locations

Recreational Crab Pot/Trot Line Licenses and Non-Commercial Crab Dredge Licenses are now available for purchase over the Internet at: www.WildlifeLicense.com/nj.

These licenses also may be purchased at **any** Fish and Wildlife-certified license agent *including* those shellfish license agents listed below. For a current list of Fish and Wildlife-certified license agents, look in future hunting or freshwater fishing issues of the *New Jersey Fish & Wildlife Digest* or visit the following site: <http://NJFishandWildlife.com/agentlst.htm>.

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 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
 Capt. Tate's Tackle Box, 450 No. Route 47, Cape May CH (609) 861-4001
 City Hall, 9th & Asbury Ave., Ocean City (609) 399-6111
 Just Sports, 21 W. Mechanic St., Cape May CH (609) 465-6171

CUMBERLAND COUNTY

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

MERCER COUNTY

NJ Div. of Fish and Wildlife, 501 E. State St., 3rd Fl., Trenton (609) 292-2965

MIDDLESEX

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 State Route 35, Wall (732) 282-1812
 T & A Tackle and Bait, 369 State Route 36, Port Monmouth (732) 787-3853

OCEAN COUNTY

American Sportsman, 857 Mill Creek Rd., Manahawkin (609) 597-4104
 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 Route 9, Waretown (609) 242-1812
 Maritime Marina, 470 S. Green St., Tuckahoe (609) 294-9090
 Pell's Fish & Sport Shop, 335 Mantoloking Rd., Bricktown (732) 477-2121

SOMERSET COUNTY

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

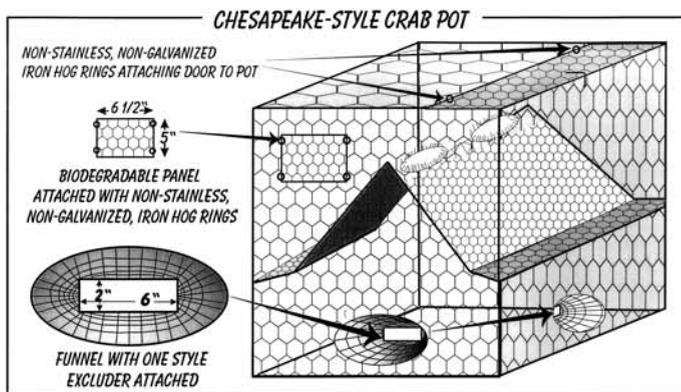
WARREN COUNTY

NJ Div. of Fish and Wildlife
 605 Pequest Rd., Oxford, Main Entrance - Rt. 46 (908) 637-4125

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
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 Fishing
 Days

June 9 and 10, 2007



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.

Black Drum

By Jason Hearon, Senior Biologist

Black drum (*Pogonias cromis*) are a valuable marine fish of sport, commercial and ecological importance throughout their range. This species can be found in U.S. waters primarily from Massachusetts to Florida along the East Coast and in the Gulf of Mexico, from the west coast of Florida along the northern Gulf of Texas. Their entire geographic range encompasses near-shore waters and estuaries from Argentina northward along the Gulf and Atlantic Coast to New England and as far north as the Bay of Fundy along the coast of Maine then extending into Canada between New Brunswick and Nova Scotia.

Black drum is the largest member of the family Sciaenidae, which also includes weakfish, spot, Atlantic croaker and red drum. A distinguishing characteristic of this family of fish is the ability to produce croaking and drumming sounds by rapping a muscle against the air bladder – the reason for the common name drum. This ability is most developed in the black drum and is associated with spawn-

ing behavior. Drumming is used to locate and attract members of the opposite sex and can often be heard by anglers as schools pass near boats.

The black drum is a chunky, high backed fish with 10-14 chin barbles or whiskers under its lower jaw. Barbles are sensory structures used to detect prey such as clams, oysters, mussels and crabs that drum crush using powerful tooth plates in their throat, called pharyngeal teeth. The dorsal fins have 11 spines, 20 to 22 dorsal rays and 41 to 45 scales along the lateral line, which extends to the end of the tail. There are 14 to 16 gill rakers on the lower limb of the first arch. Young fish have four to five dark vertical bars on their sides (see photo) that gradually disappear with age. The bellies of

older fish are white, but coloration along the back and sides varies greatly. Fish from the gulf waters tend to be light gray or silver, while those living in bay waters have dark gray or bronze-colored back and sides. Black drum are long-lived fish capable of reaching 60 years, with the largest documented fish measuring 5 1/2 feet and weighing 146 pounds.

Sexual maturity can be reached as early as the end of the second year of life at a length of 11 to 14 inches. Males mature at a somewhat younger age and smaller size than females. There is no evidence of sex-specific differences in growth rates of black drum.

Black drum spawn in the Delaware Bay and coastal inlets of New Jersey between April and early June when water temperatures are ideal (57-68° F). Drum are free spawners – fish that release gametes into the water, where fertilization may occur, with out parental care – and are capable of spawning every three days (multiple spawns). Mature females can produce more than 30 million eggs.

Eggs of black drum are pelagic (free floating); eggs hatch less than 24 hours after fertilization. Larvae measure approximately 1.9 – 2.4 millimeters at hatching. After hatching, larvae rely upon tidal currents for transportation into estuaries and can be found in the surf and along bay shorelines. Juvenile drum prefer shallow, nutrient-rich and relatively muddy waters where they feed on marine worms, shrimp, crabs and small fish.

Adult black drum are predominately an estuarine species that are usually found over sand and mud bottoms in coastal waters with salinities ranging from 9 to 26 parts per thousand. For comparison, ocean water is typically 35 parts per thousand. The coastal stocks of black drum can undertake long-range migrations with a general pattern of movement to the north and inshore in the spring then south and offshore in the fall. These migrations are age-specific and influence fishing exploitation differently along the East Coast. Along the Atlantic Coast, fisheries for black drum tend to target small fish in the south and larger older fish in the north. A greater proportion of older fish



The black drum is a chunky, high backed fish with 10-14 chin barbles or whiskers under its lower jaw.



Heavy boat rods with plenty of backbone are needed.

are found north of Cape Hatteras, North Carolina. Chesapeake and Delaware Bay fisheries target black drum that are primarily old (typically 26 years of age and older) and large (over 43 inches and greater than 48 pounds).

The Delaware Bay is a black drum hot spot for International Game Fish Association records as is Cape Charles, Virginia. The "all tackle" category record of 113 pounds, 1 ounce was reported from Lewes, Delaware. The New Jersey state record black drum is 107 pounds, documented in 2006.

The prime fishing season to catch black drum is typically a six- to eight-week fishery from mid- to late-April on through early to mid-June and is usually concentrated on the lower Delaware Bay spawning grounds around the Pin Top and Tussy's Slough. The recreational fishery begins and ends a few weeks later than the commercial fishery. Recreational landings of black drum are significantly larger than commercial landings in all states within their range.

Black drum are typically caught on fresh surf clam in the Delaware Bay with a fish finder rig and a 9/0 hook attached to a 50-pound leader. Heavy boat rods with plenty of backbone are needed. Drum are powerful and will fight all the way to the boat, contrary to analogies that they are like catching a boot. Many lines and leaders have been broken trying to bring in these fish. Drum often "mouth" the bait for some time before swallowing it, so anglers must wait until they are sure the fish has the bait before setting the hook. If you wait too long, the fish may get a free meal. If you act too fast and strike too soon, the fish probably will not have taken the hook.

Instead of putting your fish on a stringer, kill it promptly and put it on ice in your cooler. The scales of drum are tough and not easily removed, so rather than scaling your fish, skin it. The flesh is solid white and full of flavor. A Cestode parasite known as the "spaghetti worm" is frequently found in the flesh of larger drum, sometimes making it appear unappetizing, though it presents no health hazard to humans.

Remember, a key difference between excellent or poor quality fish for the table is the way it was handled and prepared. Numerous coastal restaurants well-known for their fresh seafood frequently serve drum. Many people prefer properly cleaned and prepared drum to some fish considered "choice." For exciting tips on recreational fishing techniques for black drum, see *Delaware Bay Dangerfields* on page 6. 

Motor Boat Title & Registration Requirement

All titled boats must be registered. Any boat, mechanically propelled, regardless of length, must be registered. Boats greater than 12 feet in length, regardless of propulsion means, must be titled and registered at a NJ Motor Vehicle Commission office.

Exceptions: 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 go to the Motor Vehicle Commission link or stop by an MVC office or call (609) 292-6500.

Motor Boat and Jet Ski Operator Requirements

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. See the MVC Web site at www.nj.gov and go to the Motor Vehicle Commission link or call (888) 486-3339.

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

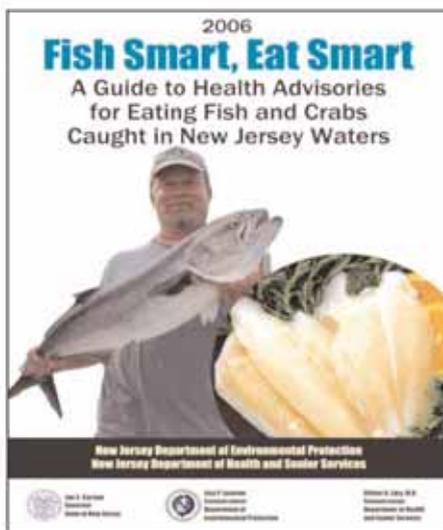
New Jersey State Police, Boating laws clarification (609) 882-2000, or visit their Marine Services Bureau online at: www.nj.gov/lps/njsp/maritime/index.html

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

Health Advisories 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 statewide, regional and water body-specific warnings for a variety of fish species and fish consumers. The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the Department of Health and Senior Services have prepared 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 www.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 waterbody 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 and advice 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 on 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:

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

Division of Science,
Research and Technology
(609) 984-6070 or www.nj.gov/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.nj.gov/health/eoh/foodweb/fishguid.htm



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JOHNSON
OUTDOORS

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** _____

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
Skillful Angler Awards Program
P.O. Box 400
Trenton, NJ 08625-0400

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. 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 September 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 dock-side 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.



Keith Karl with his 55 pound, 4 oz. New Jersey state record golden tilefish.

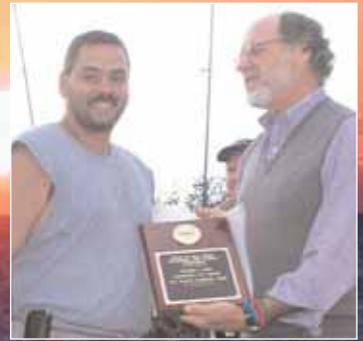
Species	Lbs.	Oz.	Year	Angler	Where Caught
Amberjack, greater	85	0	1993	Edwin Metzner	Off Cape May
Bass, black sea	8	2	1992	Tony Cunha	Inshore Wreck
	8	2	1994	John Geddes	Off Pt. Pleasant
Bluefish	27	1	1997	Roger Kastorsky	5 Fathom Bank
Bonito, Atlantic	13	8	1945	Frank Lykes, Jr.	Off Sandy Hook
Cobia	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	10	9	2001	Jim Zigarelli	Sea Girl Reef
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.)		

* 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

A Favorite for Families and Friends

By Karen Leskie, Wildlife Technician



More than 1,000 anglers are expected to turn out for the 16th annual Governor's Surf Fishing Tournament, Sunday, Oct. 7, along the beaches of Island Beach State Park in Berkeley Township, Ocean County. Popular with families from New Jersey and neighboring states, the tournament aims to encourage youngsters and adults to learn more about surf fishing and raise much-needed funds for marine resource conservation and education.

Every year, eager anglers set out to net the coveted Governor's Cup by reel-

ing in the largest catch of the day. In 2006, South Amboy resident David Salvagno earned top honors with a 33 3/4-inch striped bass. As grand-prize winner, Salvagno had his name engraved on the Governor's Cup, which is on permanent display at Island Beach State Park. He also received a plaque and two rod-and-reel combinations.

Prizes also are awarded in other categories for children, teens and adults.

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 wheelchairs that provide beach access to the disabled and elderly, among other purposes.

For more information about the Governor's Surf Fishing Tournament and a registration form, visit www.NJFishandWildlife.com/gsf.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 Beach Buggy Association, NJ State Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs, Jersey Coast Anglers Association and Ocean County Tourism) would like to thank the following organizations for contributing to the success of the 15th Annual Governor's Surf Fishing Tournament in 2006:

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The members of the Federation have an official say in all policies, recommendations and proposals that the Federation advances.

The members of the Federation have a direct impact on fish and wildlife policies of New Jersey. By LAW the Federation fills six of the 11 seats on the Fish and Game Council.

Visit us at www.NJSFSC.org

The Division of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) in the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is the state agency charged with managing all fish, game and wildlife programs in the state. The NJ Fish and Game Council was created by law and empowered to adopt the Fish and Game Code and advise the DEP Commissioner and the DFW on the management of fish, wildlife and habitat. Sportsmen appointees enact wildlife-related law and influence wildlife policy. Each of the Fish and Game Council members selected by the Federation maintains close contact with us to keep us informed and to understand our positions on various issues.

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- Preservation of our traditional outdoor sports



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Maryellen Gordon, NJ Div. Fish and Wildlife

How to Catch a Whopper

By Greg Kucharewski, JCAA Junior Anglers

Kids and Fishing Clubs

Numerous fishing clubs have programs to help kids get started fishing. This is great for the sport, the future of fishing and the parents, but it's most important for the kids. Large and small fishing organizations share the gift of sportfishing with the next generation. Good information about fishing programs offered in your local area plus family-oriented outdoor events sponsored by New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife is available on the Internet. Some of the following Web sites will help you research family fishing events:

"Hooked On Fishing Not On Drugs"
www.futurefisherman.org

"Take Me Fishing"
www.takemefishing.org

Absecon Saltwater Sportsmen
www.abseconsaltwatersportsmen.com

Berkley Striper Club
www.berkeleystriperclub.org

Hi-Mar Striper Club
www.hi-mar.com

Hudson River Fishermen's Association
www.hrfa.org/

Jersey Coast Anglers Association
www.jcaa.org

Kids All-American Fishing Program
www.kids-fishing.com

National Fishing and Boating Week
www.asafishing.org

New Jersey Beach Buggy Association www.njbba.org

New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife
www.NJFishandWildlife.com

New Jersey State Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs
www.njsfsc.org

Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation
www.rbff.org

Shark River Surf Anglers
www.sharkriversurfanglers.com

Many young anglers begin their fishing experience at a freshwater pond or lake close to home. Often a family member or friend gets them started sharing their collection of tips and tricks from outdoor excursions experienced over the years. When I was a child, my brother, sister and I would get up early on Saturday mornings and my dad would bring us to a local lake to fish for bluegills. My dad was the one that taught us how to fish and I can't thank him enough for giving me a lifelong hobby that I share with my family and others.

If you haven't yet tried saltwater fishing, read on for some great suggestions to help you catch a "whopper." No, not the big hamburger, but that fish of a lifetime. The fish you will never forget, and the story you'll share with others about the day you reeled in a whopper.

My definition of a whopper is a fish that tops the current state record or even one which meets the New Jersey Skillful Angler minimum size requirements. (See page 24 for details.) Saltwater fish can grow quite large. A 40-pound striped bass certainly could be considered a whopper.

Once you decide what type of saltwater fishing to pursue, you'll need to match the equipment to the fishing style. Will you be fishing from a jetty or miles off shore in a boat? One way to choose the type of fishing gear needed for hooking a huge fish is to see how already successful anglers got the job done. Scan through fishing magazines looking for clues in the photos or tips in the text. Find out the "who, what, when, where and how" information about others' success. Photos of anglers with their trophy fish may offer clues on the rod, reel type and lure, bait and/or sinker used to land that whopper. Remember to look at the size of the rod and reel. These will indicate if the fish was caught from a boat, surf, dock, pier or jetty. Most surf, jetty and pier rods are 8 to 12 feet long and have spinning reels. Boat rods are 5 to 7 feet in length and are used with bait-casting reels that have a revolving spool.

Local tackle dealers are experienced with recommending the proper equipment needed to get started. When purchasing a rod and reel, choose an outfit that is comfortable to hold. Saltwater tackle becomes weathered quickly; local tackle dealers can help keep your equipment in good working order. Be careful not to rest your reel in the sand; sand is an enemy that can destroy your fishing gear. Remember to rinse off your equipment with freshwater after every saltwater fishing trip. **S**

Most tackle dealers are willing to help children and novice anglers learn the basics of fishing and where to catch fish. Don't be shy; ask for help. Let them guide you on the proper line weight and hook size for the fish you plan to catch. It's important to match the hook size to your target species.

Since 1991, New Jersey has one protected game fish, the striped bass (*Morone saxatilis*). The Jersey Coast Anglers Association (JCAA) was instrumental in having legislation signed into law which effects striped bass conservation measures for future generations of saltwater anglers. In 2007, New Jersey anglers may keep two striped bass over twenty-eight inches. Those who apply to receive a special Striped Bass Bonus Program Permit may keep a third striped bass over 28 inches; be sure to attach and sign the bonus permit. (See Bonus Program information, page 13.)

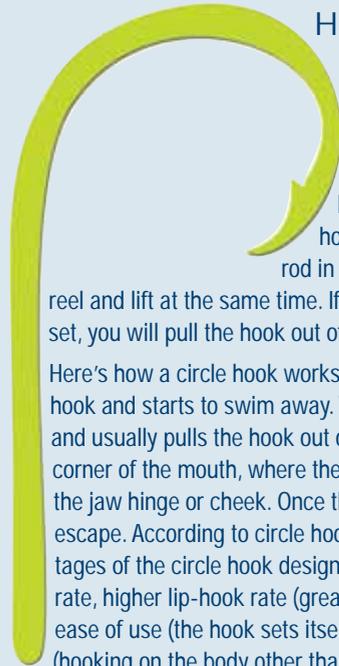
Striped bass is one of the most prized game fish in New Jersey. Currently, the New Jersey state record striped bass is 78 pounds, 8 ounces. Let's review some tips for how to catch a whopper striped bass. The months of May through June and September through November are the best times to target trophy striped bass. During the spring and fall migration, big bass feed most voraciously. The key is to use large baits. Large artificial plugs, 6 to 10 inches long, or fresh cut bait such as cut bunker and whole surf clams, are effective for catching whoppers. For early spring bait it's best to use fresh – not frozen – clams. Starting in September, it is best to match the bait in the surf, but fresh bunker heads are my favorite. Here, a fish-finder rig works the best with an 8/0 circle hook. (See sidebar.)

When using artificial lures, try using large wooden swimming plugs and a very slow retrieve. The longer your bait remains in the water, the better your chances for catching fish. Swimming plugs float on the surface of the water; it doesn't matter what color you use as long as the belly of the lure is white. Keeping your hooks sharp will increase your chances of hooking a fish on the slightest strike.

Striped bass may swirl on live or artificial bait by swimming fast in a circle to disorient their prey. Because of this trait, with very sharp hooks you might snag a striped bass by its tail. You're in luck if this happens; just hold on for the fight of your life. My arms ached for days after fighting a thirty-six inch tail-snagged striped bass. I release snagged fish; they deserved to fight another day.

It's good to practice catch and release fishing, keeping only what you can use. For those times, bring with you a disposable camera to document the fish you release. Some fishing publications will accept photographs of youngsters with their catch. If you plan to submit a photograph to a publication, follow these tips: submit your photograph as soon as possible, use a higher resolution camera setting which can produce a 300 dpi (dots per inch) photograph, and try look excited and happy while posing with your fish and gear. Big smiles increase the chance of having your photograph published. 

How Does A Circle Hook Work?



The most effective way to hook a fish with a circle hook is to avoid raising the rod in a quick motion. Instead, reel and lift at the same time. If you do the typical hook set, you will pull the hook out of the fish's mouth.

Here's how a circle hook works. The fish grabs the baited hook and starts to swim away. The line tightens slowly and usually pulls the hook out of the throat and to the corner of the mouth, where the point rotates and pierces the jaw hinge or cheek. Once the fish is hooked, it cannot escape. According to circle hook manufacturers, advantages of the circle hook design include increased catch rate, higher lip-hook rate (greatly reducing mortality), ease of use (the hook sets itself) and less snagging (hooking on the body other than in the mouth) in certain bottom fishing applications.

Remember to avoid the usual hook-setting practice when fishing with a circle hook.

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Listening to our Readers - Results from the 2006 Marine Digest Readers' Survey

By Lindy Barry, Marine Fisheries Technician

The 2006 marine issue of this *New Jersey Fish & Wildlife Digest* included a readers' survey which generated 288 responses providing valuable insights on the interests of our readers. You told us what you like about the Digest and what you want to see in future issues. Most respondents (93%) identified themselves as recreational anglers. As expected, the majority were New Jersey residents, but respondents also hailed from states as far away as Alaska, Arizona, Utah, Ohio, Florida, South Carolina and Virginia, as well as our neighboring states of Pennsylvania and New York. All 21 counties in New Jersey were represented with Burlington, Monmouth and Ocean counties bringing in the highest numbers. Most respondents (86%) had visited the saltwater pages on our Fish and Wildlife Web site at least two to five times in the past year, while over half (51%) visited the site even more frequently.

Fish and Wildlife asked our readers to rank the major articles from the 2006 *Digest* based on how useful, interesting and enjoyable these features were to them. Garnering the highest scores were articles about (first) a research survey on striped bass in the Delaware River, (second) a report on recreational crabbing studies and (third) the addition of the Townsends Inlet Reef to New Jersey's Artificial Reef Program. These features were followed in descending order by an article on progressive enforcement techniques utilized by New Jersey's conservation officers, a species profile on American eel, an updated guide to boaters' pumpout locations and information about a research study on the American eel.

Our readers' survey also encouraged feedback on 14 topics for future consideration as well as a solicitation for open comments. Regulation changes and fishing techniques topped the list of responses, followed closely by species profiles and places to and how to Fish. Artificial reefs, stock assessment/status, habitat protection or restoration, New Jersey research



surveys and enforcement elicited the next highest group of responses. The other topics, in descending order, included shellfisheries, volunteer opportunities, management process, youth fishing and aquaculture.

Nearly 55% of respondents elaborated on their interests and concerns. Fish and shellfish species most often referenced were striped bass, summer flounder, weakfish, winter flounder, tautog, black sea bass, bluefish, black drum and blue crab. Artificial reefs were the next most cited topic, with readers requesting information on reef sites, upcoming deployments and types of fish found in these areas. Other comments included topics such as family fishing activities, boat access, fishing gear, recreational/commercial fishing interactions, charter and party boat fleets, and requests for environmental information on New Jersey's water bodies and surrounding habitats.

This *Digest* issue reflects your survey responses. For example, to enhance our regulations coverage, information on federal regulations covering fish caught off our shores is found on page 18. Also, don't miss the two features on black drum (*Species Profile: Black Drum*, page 20 and *Delaware Bay Dangerfields*, page 6) which address readers' expressed interest for coverage on species not previously highlighted in these pages.

The success of last year's questionnaire prompted us to include on our Web site (www.NJfishandWildlife.com) a new readers' survey for this year's marine *Digest*. We hope you will participate so we may continue to improve future issues and meet the interests of those who enjoy New Jersey's valuable marine resources. 

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 \$2.6 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>.

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 – 2006.**

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

- **New Jersey Boater 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

These 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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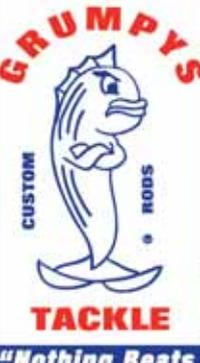
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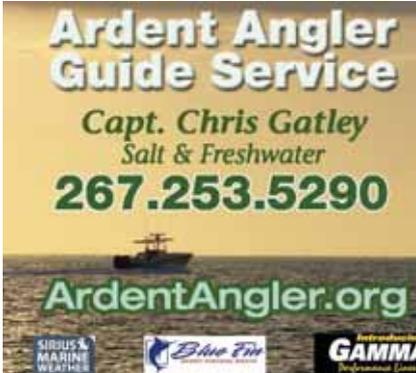
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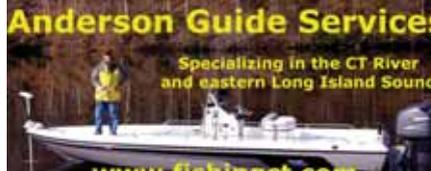


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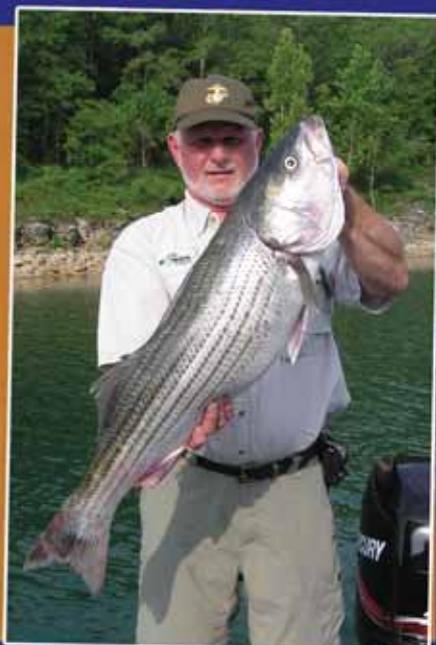
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