

## **ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

### **FISH AND WILDLIFE**

#### **Notice of Administrative Change**

##### **Marine Fisheries**

##### **Modification of Atlantic Striped Bass Size Limits**

##### **N.J.A.C. 7:25-18.1**

**Take Notice** that, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:25-18.1(p), the Commissioner of the Department of Environmental Protection (Commissioner), with the approval of the New Jersey Marine Fisheries Council (Council) at its June 20, 2023, meeting, has modified the recreational size limits for Atlantic striped bass. The actions for Atlantic striped bass have been taken to comply with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's (ASMFC) management plan, and for the optimal utilization of available Atlantic striped bass quota.

On May 2, 2023, the ASMFC's Atlantic Striped Bass Board approved an emergency action to implement a 31-inch maximum size limit for striped bass recreational fisheries, effective immediately. The emergency management measure implemented to reduce harvest was in response to unprecedented 2022 recreational harvest levels, which were nearly double those of 2021, and in response to reduced spawning stock rebuilding projections. Possession limits, seasons and gear restrictions will remain the same. As outlined in the Commission's Interstate Fisheries Management Program Charter, a management board can take emergency action to address circumstances under which public health or the conservation of coastal fishery resources or attainment of fishery management objectives has been placed substantially at risk by

unanticipated changes in the ecosystem, the stock, or the fishery

(<https://asmfc.org/uploads/file/6452949apr10AtlSripedBassEmergencyAction.pdf>).

In accordance with the ASMFC's actions, the Council approved changes to recreational Atlantic striped bass size limits consistent with the ASMFC's Atlantic Striped Bass Interstate Fishery Management Plan. Previously, the Atlantic striped bass size limits were a minimum of 28 inches with a maximum of less than 38 inches. The Council approved size limits with the minimum of 28 inches remaining unchanged and a maximum limit of 31 inches. In addition, the Council approved a complimentary maximum fillet size limit reduction to 22 inches from 28 inches for Atlantic striped bass and striped bass hybrids.

These changes will be reflected in the Fish and Wildlife rules at N.J.A.C. 7:25-18.1(c). As required in N.J.A.C. 7:25-18.1(p), changes to N.J.A.C. 7:25-18.1 will be published in the New Jersey Register, the New Jersey Fish and Wildlife Marine Digest, and on the New Jersey Fish and Wildlife website.

**Full text** of the changed rule follows (additions indicated in boldface **thus**, deletions indicated in brackets [thus]):

#### 7:25-18.1 Size, season, and possession limits

(a) – (e) (No change.)

(f) Special provisions applicable to a Special Fillet Permit are as follows:

1. – 2. (No change.)

3. The Special Fillet Permit shall be subject to the following conditions:

i. iv. (No change.)

v. No fish of any species less than the minimum size limit specified in (c) above shall be filleted and no fillet of any species listed below shall have the skin removed and no fillet shall be less than the minimum length in inches specified below.

Species	Minimum Fillet or Part Length
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Hybrid striped bass

(24 to less than 28 inches)

11 to 20 inches

(28 to [less than 38]**31** inches)

15 to [28]**22** inches

• • •

Striped bass

(24 to less than 28 inches)

11 to 20 inches

(28 to [less than 38]**31** inches)

15 to [28]**22** inches

• • •

vi. – x. (No change.)

(g) (No change.)

(h) The following provisions are applicable to the recreational harvest of striped bass and striped bass hybrids:

1. Except as permitted pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:25-18.13, a person shall not take from the marine waters or other waters of the State in any one day, or have in the person's possession at any time, more than one striped bass. The striped bass taken in accordance with this subsection shall be [at least] **a minimum of 28 inches** [but less than 38]**and a maximum of 31 inches** in total length.

2. – 5. (No change.)

(i) – (r) (No change.)

June 26, 2023

Date



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Shawn M. LaTourette, Commissioner  
Department of Environmental Protection