Reef Network Expands

Profile: American Eel

Size & Possession Limits
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**Commissioner’s Message**

*By Lisa P. Jackson*

On February 28, I was honored to have Governor Jon S. Corzine swear me in as Commissioner of the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). For many of you this might be the first time hearing my name. Although I began my career at DEP in 2002, I haven’t had much interaction with the fish and wildlife community as my focus was primarily environmental regulation. Prior to my appointment at DEP, I spent 16 years at the Environmental Protection Agency. During my time at DEP, as Assistant Commissioner of Environmental Regulation and subsequently Land Use Management, I had the pleasure of working with many dedicated and skilled professionals. Luckily, many of those same people have decided to stay with us and continue their work in the Corzine administration.

One of these very talented people requires no introduction since many of you are familiar with him from his previous role as Assistant Commissioner of Natural and Historic Resources. I am proud to have Jay Watson advance to his new role as the Deputy Commissioner of Natural and Historic Resources. Jay brings many talents with him as he embarks on this new position. Prior to his tenure as Assistant Commissioner, Jay served as Administrator of New Jersey’s Green Acres program where he helped expand the state’s Wildlife Management Area system and fishing access points for the state’s anglers. Not only is Jay a committed environmentalist, he is a trusted colleague and his advancement will bring natural and historic resource issues to the forefront.

Amy Cradic is filling Jay’s former position as Assistant Commissioner of Natural and Historic Resources. Amy has more than 10 years of experience at DEP most recently serving as Deputy Director of the Division of Parks and Forestry where she helped manage the day-to-day operations of the division’s 600 full-time and 700 part-time seasonal employees and a $34 million annual operating budget. Amy is an incredible asset to our agency and will be an excellent Assistant Commissioner. We both gained a better understanding of an angler’s life during Becoming an Outdoors-Woman training we attended together a few years ago. Amy and I had some great times kayaking, fishing, practicing archery and learning how to cook seafood.

Although fish and wildlife management is a new responsibility for me, the community is a constituency I have gained a lot of respect for in my time at DEP. Having your support for stronger water protections such as Category One (C1) waterbody designations and stormwater rules makes our job to protect the environment easier. I value this partnership and it is something I hope to build upon as we continue to take aggressive measures to protect our water. I am committed to expanding C1 protections and successfully implementing the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act. While the benefit from these programs mainly affects freshwater, the reduced non-point source pollution also helps prevent pollution in our coastal waters.

Governor Corzine strongly supports these and other environmental programs important to New Jersey’s sportsmen and women. His commitment was demonstrated in his recent budget proposal. Despite troubling budget times, the Governor’s proposal maintains the same state funding for the hunters and anglers license fund. Additionally, $8.9 million in funding will be dedicated to watershed restoration projects to address ongoing pollution sources that degrade our ponds and streams. Even though this funding will give a much-needed boost to our watershed protection work, there are many challenges ahead. I look forward to working with the fishing and hunting community to meet these challenges. Together I’m confident we can continue the progress that has made New Jersey a leader in environmental policy and expand protection for our natural and wildlife resources.

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

**Director’s Message**

*By Dave Chanda*

As the recently appointed Acting Director of the Division of Fish and Wildlife, I look forward to working with all of you to conserve our fish and wildlife resources and to preserve the outdoor traditions that mean so much to us all. I also look forward to facing the challenges that come with the ever-increasing complexity of fish and wildlife management in the 21st century.

One challenge I do not look forward to however, is replacing six valued employees who have retired during the past year from the Division of Fish and Wildlife’s Marine Fisheries Administration. These six employees represent 180 years of institutional knowledge and dedicated work for the marine resource and they leave a gap that will be difficult, if not impossible, to fill.

The short tributes I will provide here to each of those employees cannot do justice to their long and illustrious careers. Hopefully it will help you appreciate how fortunate we are to have the dedicated people who do the research, collect the data and perform the management necessary to restore and maintain a healthy and harvestable marine resource.

Russell Tilton started his career with Fish and Wildlife at age 17 and retired in May 2005 after 37 years of dedicated service. During his career, he worked on every field project conducted by the Bureau of Marine Fisheries. Russ tagged over 20,000 fish and collected data on many tens of thousands more. Along with his vast knowledge of marine fish and their eggs and larvae, Russ (a.k.a. Mr. Fix-it) will be missed for his ability to repair anything and everything that came his way.

Barry Preim retired January 1, 2006 with 33 years of service with the Division. Barry participated on essentially every program in which the Bureau of Marine Fisheries has been involved, including the estuarine inventory programs, ocean trawl program and most recently, the artificial reef program. Barry’s expertise will be sorely missed.

Kurt Powers retired from the Division of Fish and Wildlife in December 2005 after 29 years. Kurt began his career at the Hackettstown Trout Hatchery and was heavily involved in the design and construction of the Pequest Trout Hatchery and the renovation of the Hackettstown Hatchery. In his last few years with the Division, Kurt was the Chief of Bureau of Marine Fisheries and used his vast fisheries management knowledge to guide the Bureau through many difficult marine fisheries issues.

Nancy Loveland dedicated 27 years of her life to serving the Division’s Bureau of Shellfisheries. Nancy coordinated all the shell-
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American Eel Young-of-Year Survey Part of Fisheries Management Plan

By Heather Corbett, Assistant Fisheries Biologist

Patcong Creek, a quiet tidal tributary of Great Egg Harbor Bay in Atlantic County, flows gently through salt-marsh and peat-bank habitats. The creek is home to a wide assortment of marine, estuarine and wildlife species. Local residents use it for fishing, crabbing, boating and other recreational activities. Patcong Creek is also the site of a very important survey New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection’s Division of Fish and Wildlife’s Bureau of Marine Fisheries is conducting to collect information on American eel.

As a result of growing concerns about the status of American eel populations, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) implemented a fishery management plan for American eel in 1999. As part of that plan, ASMFC required that, beginning in 2000, states conduct a survey of glass eels to collect information on the number of eels (young-of-year) recruiting to the population each year. (See Species Profile: American Eel, page 20.) New Jersey already had been sampling for several years to identify a suitable sampling site and to determine the best method to capture glass eels. By 2000, after experimenting with various sampling techniques at several locations, Patcong Creek was selected as our permanent sampling location.

The gear used to collect glass eels is a modified Japanese elver fyke net. The gear is set under a bridge, just downstream of a spillway at Bargaintown Pond. A fyke net is a funnel-shaped net with two “wings” extending forward from the opening of the net. The wings help to guide the eels into a series of funnels in the net to the codend (a bag at the end of the net with very small mesh), where they are retained until the net is tended. The net is set with the opening...
facing downstream in order to catch eels swimming upstream towards the pond. See photo (above) for an upstream view of the net. Sampling is conducted during a six-week period in the late winter/early spring, ideally during the peak run of glass eels. Every day during daylight low tide, marine fisheries biologists wade into the creek to empty the catch into a bucket, remove debris from inside and around the net, and reset the net for the next day’s catch.

At the same time, environmental and climatological data are recorded such as water and air temperatures, water depth, gear condition and more. The day’s catch is brought to the lab where biological data on the eels is collected. Although the goal is to collect information from every eel caught, when the catch is large data is collected only on a subsample. Processing includes individually measuring, weighing and determining the pigmentation stage of each eel. Stages of pigmentation range from one to seven, with seven characterizing a fully pigmented eel. Green eels and other non-target species caught are separated from the glass eel catch then individually measured and weighed. These are not included in the total catch weight of the glass eels. All aquatic life caught is returned upstream of the net after processing to avoid recapture. Fish species caught incidentally include banded killifish and tessellated darters.

During the six years of the survey, a total of 41 pounds of glass eels have been captured on 225 days of sampling. The largest catch of 4.4 pounds, approximately 13,400 eels, was caught in February of 2002. In April 2005, there was a one-day catch of nearly 3 pounds, even though the codend broke and a large portion of the catch escaped. It is likely that this would have been our largest catch during the survey. The graph (above) shows the average number of eels caught per day for each year of the survey. With current data showing that American eel populations are at an all-time low, more research like this survey must be conducted to monitor population fluctuations. The American Eel Young-of-Year Survey allows marine researchers to learn the status of eel recruitment so informed management decisions can be made.
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The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection’s Division of Fish and Wildlife last fall received the necessary permits and approvals to construct a new reef site 3.8 nautical miles southeast of Townsends Inlet, Cape May County. The site measures 0.52 square miles and has a depth range of 49 to 65 feet. It can be further identified as being approximately two nautical miles northwest of Avalon Shoal. The Townsends Inlet Reef will be a welcomed addition for anglers and divers from Sea Isle City, Avalon and Stone Harbor.

To best accommodate reef users, the site will be delineated into two areas. The shallower inshore portion will be reserved for drift fishing while the deeper offshore area will be utilized for vessel deployments to accommodate divers and wreck fishing enthusiast.

Recent reef construction activities include the sinking of a 62-foot tugboat and an 82-foot trawling vessel. Although these vessels are a good beginning, much more is planned to create another reef site teeming with marine life.

Fish and Wildlife’s Bureau of Marine Fisheries plans to deploy 800 reef ball habitats within the drift fishing portion this summer. Fishing and diving clubs throughout New Jersey provide financial assistance to make scheduled reef-material deployment a reality. Divers, anglers and other outdoor enthusiasts interested in helping to enhance fishing grounds in the Garden State are encouraged to learn about the DEP’s Adopt-A-Reef Program.

For more information on the Artificial Reef Program, visit www.njfishandwildlife.com/artreef.htm. Or call...
Townsends Inlet Reef

### Depth Contours

- **45 - 50 ft**
- **50 - 55 ft**
- **55 - 60 ft**
- **60 - 65 ft**

### Water Depths in Feet

Distance offshore: 3.8 n.m.
Reef area: 0.52 sq. Mi.
Depth range: 45-70 ft.

### Table: Distance, Compass Bearing, and Nautical Miles

<table>
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<th>From</th>
<th>Corson’s Inlet</th>
<th>Townsends Inlet</th>
<th>Hereford Inlet</th>
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<td>110°</td>
<td>66°</td>
</tr>
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<td>Distance, (n.m.)</td>
<td>5.73</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>9.31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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(Continued from page 7)

Artificial Reef Program at (609) 748-2020 or write to the Division of Fish and Wildlife at P.O. Box 418, Port Republic, NJ 08241, Attn: Reef Adoption Program.

For details on how you can adopt a reef, contact:
Reef Program
NJ Division of Fish & Wildlife
P.O. Box 418
Port Republic, NJ 08241
(609) 748-2020 or Fax: (609) 748-2032

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This 62-foot tugboat joined Donna’s Star in their second lives as part of the new reef site off of Townsends Inlet, Cape May County.

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(Continued from page 2)

fish licensing in the State and eventually expanded her responsibility to include fiscal and revenue reporting for the entire Marine Fisheries Administration.

In his 24 years with Fish and Wildlife, Bruce Freeman became known and respected nationally through his work representing New Jersey anglers on the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council. His knowledge and his fervor for the conservation of our marine fish resources will be sorely missed.

And last but not least is Bill Figley. Bill’s 30 years with Fish and Wildlife will be celebrated as the Artificial Reef Era. Since 1984, Bill has supervised the construction of 3,600 ocean reefs from 14 million tons of reef material, making our reef system the largest in the nation. His legacy is New Jersey’s Artificial Reef Program and the fabulous proliferation of marine life now found where there was once bare ocean floor.

Good management of the State’s marine fisheries resource requires dedicated professionals with a thorough knowledge of a species, baseline information, population dynamics, and habitat information. Without the professional staff to gather this necessary information, we would not be able to develop adequate management plans for many marine species. These six individuals represent the finest professionals with whom I have had the pleasure to work on a variety of initiatives. They will certainly be missed!

Please join me in wishing the best to this talented and dedicated group of people who are now celebrating their well-earned retirements.

Dave Chanda is the Acting Director of the Division of Fish and Wildlife
Griffin’s Gear Guide is a special product section for essential gear & new product announcements. www.griffinsguide.com

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These pliers have replaceable, corrosion resistant, heat-treated stainless steel jaws that are sturdy and will cut monofilament line up to 400 lbs, braided line up to 250 lbs, and steel leader up to 105 lbs. When dehooking any fish, anglers will have the upper hand and no longer struggle to remove the hook. These floating metal pliers are manufactured with replaceable tungsten carbide blades and offset stainless steel jaws for better dehooking visibility and leverage. The lightweight, ergonomically designed, Floating Metal Pliers come with a custom fit sheath and safety lanyard. Visit www.xtools.us or call 1-877-4XTOOLS for more information.

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The CrossCurrent series includes seven four-piece 9-foot GLX models in 6–12 weights, each featuring G. Loomis’ proprietary graphite blanks and RECoil stripper and snake guides.
There’s also four ‘Pro 1’ one-piece 9 footers in 8–12 weights that are the talk among flats guides, a 15-weight with a gimbaled fighting butt for bluewater action and a short-range casting three piece 8-foot 9 weight for use around mangroves and shoreline cover.
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The polycarbonate polarized lenses are lightweight and impact resistant. They are treated with a scratch-resistant hard coating with additional silver flash mirror on the front side of the lens to enhance filtration. Additionally, the multi-layer anti-reflection lenses are treated on the backside of the lens to enhance contrast. This coating also absorbs bounce back glare to reduce eye strain and fatigue. These lenses are ideal for outdoor and sporting activities as well as general all-purpose wear.
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Boater’s Pumpout Station Guide Updated, Available Now

by Al Ivany, Principal Biologist

The New Jersey Clean Vessel Act Program (CVA) has revised its popular Boater’s Pumpout Station Guide, which features a current listing of operating marina pumpout stations and pumpout boat coverage areas along with updated background and contact information. Still printed on waterproof material, the guide also retains its map format.

Pumping out your boat’s holding tank at a participating facility or into a pumpout boat will help keep New Jersey’s water clean and protect the state’s fish, shellfish and wildlife. It also will help safeguard the health of residents and visitors who enjoy New Jersey’s beautiful coastal and freshwater resources.

The Clean Vessel Act, passed by Congress in 1992, provides funds for the construction, operation and maintenance of sewage pumpout stations and dump stations for recreational boats as well as for information and education programs that encourage boaters to use pumpouts. Since the CVA program’s inception in New Jersey more than a decade ago, millions of gallons of sewage have been removed from boats and treated safely.

For a free pumpout station guide, call Fish and Wildlife’s CVA Office at (609) 748-2056. To access an interactive version of the pumpout station guide, along with additional information, visit http://ims.rutgers.edu/pumpout/ or www.njfishandwildlife.com. The guide can also be found at CVA program displays at several major boat shows every year.

Please remember: Be a safe boater and keep our waters clean – use pumpouts!
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Sand Spike with purchase of any surf rod over $99 (a $10 value).
Change in Rules for Recreational Harvest of Both Winter and Summer Flounder plus Striped Bass. Notice to Watch for Potential Weakfish Regulation Changes Later.

The Department of Environmental Protection’s Division of Fish and Wildlife informs anglers that rules for the recreational harvest of summer flounder (fluke), winter flounder and striped bass have changed.

The sumer flounder recreational season is now May 6 through October 9, opening on a Saturday and ending on a holiday. The recreational minimum size is 16.5 inches and the possession limit remains at eight fish.

The winter flounder recreational season is now March 23 to May 21 with a 12-inch minimum size and a possession limit of 10 fish.

The striped bass minimum size is now 28 inches and a two-fish possession limit, with exceptions for the Striped Bass Bonus Program detailed on page 13.

Anglers should note the potential for changes to weakfish regulations which would occur after this Digest goes to press. See weakfish, page 13.

These changes were implemented for New Jersey to remain in compliance with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission’s management plans for summer flounder, winter flounder and striped bass. 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, winter flounder and striped bass fisheries.

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
- Shortnosed Sturgeon
- Basking Shark
- Whale Shark
- Bigeye Sand Tiger Shark
- White Shark
- Sand Tiger 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.

Basking Shark
- Bigeye Sand Tiger Shark
- White Shark
- Sand Tiger Shark

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 3 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 or 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 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 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 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 popular Striped Bass Bonus Program (SBBP) will continue in 2006. The SBBP remains free to all participants. Applications for individual anglers are found on Fish and Wildlife’s Web site (www.njfishandwildlife.com), participating check stations, and some Fish and Wildlife offices.

A self-addressed stamped #10 business-sized envelope must be included with each application. All applications must be mailed to the address on the application and will be processed in the order received. Hand-carried applications will not be accepted at Fish and Wildlife offices; only those received via mail.

Applications for party/charter boats are available by contacting Fish and Wildlife at (609) 748-2020. Anglers may possess one additional striped bass at 28 inches or greater subject to the following:

1. The angler must apply for and receive the fish possession cards in advance of attempting to take a bonus fish. Cards are only valid if signed by the applicant.
2. The anglers must comply with all aspects of the regulations. A guide to these regulations is provided with the fish possession cards.
3. Two SBBP cards will be issued per person. Bonus cards are non-transferable, only one card is good per day and the red cards are only valid for the 2006 calendar year.
4. The angler must punch out the month and day, as well as fill out all other required information on one card immediately after harvest and prior to transportation.
5. Replacement cards will be issued as long as there is available quota.

Individuals who participated in the 2005 SBBP and returned their voluntary log information to Fish and Wildlife will automatically receive two bonus cards for 2006 and need not apply.

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.

Warning: Wildlife Hazard!
Properly dispose of your fishing line. Plastic debris can endanger marine life and snare propellers.
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

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.

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 of 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.: Cohaseys 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 that one bushel of crabs 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. Charts are updated annually.

3. Shellfish harvesting is prohibited before sunrise, after sunset and on Sundays.

4. Harvesting of 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 delineated by stakes or buoys set by the lease holder. Charts of the leases may be examined at the 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 immediately returned 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.

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### 2006 Recreational Fishing Seasons, Minimum Size & Possession Limits

**Size and Possession Limits Chart**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Open Season</th>
<th>Minimum Length</th>
<th>Harvest &amp; Possession Limit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>American Eel</strong></td>
<td>No Closed Season</td>
<td>6&quot;</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Black Drum</strong></td>
<td>No Closed Season</td>
<td>16&quot;</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Black Sea Bass</strong></td>
<td>Jan. 1–Dec. 31</td>
<td>12&quot;</td>
<td>Excluding tail filaments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bluefish</strong></td>
<td>No Closed Season</td>
<td>No Minimum</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cobia</strong></td>
<td>No Closed Season</td>
<td>37&quot;</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cod</strong></td>
<td>No Closed Season</td>
<td>21&quot;</td>
<td>No Limit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Haddock</strong></td>
<td>No Closed Season</td>
<td>21&quot;</td>
<td>No Limit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>King Mackerel</strong></td>
<td>No Closed Season</td>
<td>23&quot;</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pollock</strong></td>
<td>No Closed Season</td>
<td>19&quot;</td>
<td>No Limit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Porgy (Scup)</strong></td>
<td>Jan. 1–Feb. 28</td>
<td>9&quot;</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>July 1–Dec. 31</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Red Drum</strong></td>
<td>No Closed Season</td>
<td>18&quot;</td>
<td>1 not greater than 27&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>River Herring</strong></td>
<td>No Closed Season</td>
<td>No Limit</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shad</strong></td>
<td>No Closed Season</td>
<td>No minimum</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shark</strong> a except prohibited species b</td>
<td>No Closed Season</td>
<td>48&quot;</td>
<td>2 per vessel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spanish Mackerel</strong></td>
<td>No Closed Season</td>
<td>14&quot;</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Striped bass or hybrid striped bass</strong></td>
<td>March 1–March 31 and June 1–Dec. 31</td>
<td>28&quot;</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Calhoun St. bridge to Salem River &amp; tributaries)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(upstream of Calhoun St. bridge)</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>—Atlantic Ocean²</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0–3 miles from shore</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>—All other waters</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Summer Flounder</strong></td>
<td>May 6–October 9</td>
<td>16 1/2&quot;</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tautog</strong></td>
<td>Jan. 1–May 31</td>
<td>14&quot;</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>June 1–Nov. 14</td>
<td>14&quot;</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nov. 15–Dec. 31</td>
<td>14&quot;</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Weakfish</strong> a</td>
<td>No Closed Season</td>
<td>13&quot;</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Winter Flounder</strong></td>
<td>March 23–May 21</td>
<td>12&quot;</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Blue Crab**

—peeler or shedder: No Closed Season² | 3" | 1 bushel |
—soft: No Closed Season³ | 3 1/2" |
—hard: No Closed Season³ | 4 1/2" |

**Lobster** (carapace length)

—No Closed Season | 3 3/8" | 6 |

**Hard Clam** — license required: No Closed Season | 1 1/2" | 150 clams |

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a. Not including dogfish; see description on page 13.
b. Prohibited shark species: basking shark, whale shark, white shark, sand tiger shark, bignose 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 Weakfish, page 13.
ATTENTION ANGLERS

2006 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.

Bluefish
15 fish no minimum size

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

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

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)

Total Length—48"

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

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

Alternate Length 23"

Weakfish*
8 Fish at 13"

OTHER SPECIES

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)

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

White Shark

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

*Potential regulation change during the season. See Weakfish, page 13.
**Marine Species Identification**

**SEASONS, SIZE AND POSSESSION LIMITS**

- **Black Drum**: 3 Fish at 16" long
- **Atlantic Bonito**: Not applicable
- **Northern Kingfish**: Not applicable
- **White Perch**: Not applicable
- **American Shad**: 6 Fish Limit
- **Northern Searobin**: Not applicable
- **Northern Puffer**: Not applicable
- **Scup (Porgy)**: 50 Fish at 9" long
  - Open Season: 1/1–2/28 and 7/1–12/31
- **Red Drum**: 1 Fish at least 18" but not greater than 27" long
- **Spiny Dogfish**: Not applicable
- **Atlantic Mackerel**: Not applicable
- **Southern Puffer**: Not applicable
- **Atlantic Cod**: 21" Size Limit
- **Northern Searobin**: Not applicable
- **Spiny Dogfish**: Not applicable
- **Sand Tiger Shark**: Not applicable
- **Sandbar Shark**: Possession prohibited
- **Spanish Mackerel**: 10 Fish at 14" long
- **Atlantic Croaker**: Not applicable
- **Red Drum**: 1 Fish at least 18" but not greater than 27" long
- **Oyster Toadfish**: Not applicable

**Open Season**: 1/1–2/28 and 7/1–12/31
Child Support Certification

The “Child Support Program Improvement Act” requires Fish and Wildlife to collect and maintain Social Security Numbers and a child support obligation certification from license applicants and to make the collection of this information part of the license application. To comply, Fish and Wildlife, working with the Division of Law in the Office of the Attorney General, created the Supplemental License Application available on the Fish and Wildlife Web site at www.njfishandwildlife.com or at license agents. The online child support application allows individuals to certify themselves in the privacy of their own home. Once completed—whether via the Internet or at a license agent equipped with the new electronic licensing system—the certification remains valid for the calendar year in which the certification was completed.

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 or Marine Police Station, or call (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 resident 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 offices:
  - Trenton Office
  - Pequest Hatchery & Ed. Ctr.
  - Nicote 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 More Locations

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

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 (beginning in August 2006) or visit the following site: http://www.nj.gov/dep/fgw/agentlst.htm.
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 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 on page 18.
Species Profile: American Eel
By Jeff Brust, Research Scientist

American eels are an ecologically unique and important species that occur in fresh, brackish and marine waters from the southern tip of Greenland to northeastern South America. This species is closely related to the European eel. Eels support a valuable commercial food fishery, are used widely as bait for sport fish such as striped bass and cobia, and are an important food source for many fish and wildlife species.

Life Cycle
American eels are a catadromous species, which means they spend most of their life in fresh water or brackish water, but when they mature, they migrate to the ocean to spawn once and die. Spawning has never been directly observed, but spawning grounds have been identified based on collection of larval eels. Current scientific evidence indicates that adult eels spawn in the Sargasso Sea, an area of the Atlantic Ocean south of Bermuda and east of the Bahamas. Some eels may migrate thousands of miles to reach the spawning grounds.

Spawning is believed to occur around January or February. After hatching and a brief pre-larval phase, American eel enter a larval phase known as a leptocephalus, which resembles the leaf from a willow tree. Eels remain in the leptocephalus stage for approximately one year, during which ocean currents transport the larvae to coastal areas throughout their range.

Generally from February to April, the larvae reach coastal areas in New Jersey and begin transforming into the more recognizable eel body form about 2 to 2.5 inches long. At this stage, they are transparent and are called glass eels. They enter estuaries (where fresh water mixes with ocean water) such as bays and river mouths and begin to migrate upstream toward fresh water (see article on glass-eel survey, page 4). As they mature, the glass eels begin to darken in color. By late spring, most are fully pigmented and referred to as green eels or yellow eels.

Yellow eels remain in fresh or brackish water until they reach maturity. Some will remain near the estuary, while others move several hundred miles upstream to live in streams, rivers, lakes and ponds. Most upstream movement occurs between March and October every year, and some eels will continue to move farther and farther upstream every year until they reach sexual maturity. There is some evidence that eels remaining in brackish waters generally mature into males, while those that move farther upstream mature into females.

Eels are generally nocturnal, spending most of the day hidden among rocks and other structures or buried in mud bottoms. At night, eels will venture from their hiding places to feed on small fish, insects, snails, clams and worms, among other prey.

Females generally live longer and grow larger than males. Males reach maturity in five years to seven years at a size of about 11 inches or greater. Females, however, may take 15 years to 20 years to reach maturity at a size of 16 inches or greater. Very few males grow larger than 15.5 inches, but females may grow more than 39 inches. Plainfield resident David Payne learned firsthand just how large eels can grow. While trout fishing in Round Valley Reservoir last June, he landed the New Jersey freshwater state record American eel, which measured 41 inches and weighed 6 pounds. Almost certainly a female, the eel was sent to Dr. Ken Oliveira at the University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth who determined that the eel was 16 years old when it was captured.

According to Dr. Oliveira, the eel would have continued to live, and possibly grow, for several more years had it not been caught. Following the yellow phase, which lasts 6 years to 16 years in the Chesapeake Bay region, eels begin to mature, and their appearance and body functions change. Externally, the eel’s body fattens, its eyes enlarge and its skin thickens. The coloration on its back changes to dark brown or black, and its belly is white. These eels typically have a silvery sheen and are aptly named silver eels.

Internally, the eel’s digestive system shrinks; it stops feeding, and its swim bladder, gills and other organs change to enable its survival in sea water. These changes occur during the summer, when maturing eels begin migrating downstream. Silver eels leave rivers and coastal areas in late summer and early fall. Their migration occurs mostly at night, coinciding with rising water levels and the moon’s new and full phases. Little is known about the distribution and timing of the spawning migration once the eels enter the ocean, but it is believed that they make their way to the Sargasso Sea to spawn and then die.

Environmental Tolerances and Concerns
Historically, eels were abundant on the Atlantic coast. Estimates suggest that eels could comprise up to 25 percent of the total fish biomass in a stream. In addition, eels are an extremely hardy species and can adapt readily to their environment. They can withstand temperatures ranging from below freezing to nearly 100°F for short periods. During the winter or in drought conditions, eels can bury themselves in mud to escape harsh conditions. They can absorb oxygen across the skin and can survive out of the water for longer periods than most fish. Young eels have been observed climbing dam walls and other obstructions or traveling on land around obstructions. One eel was known to have been held in captivity for 85 years.

Despite their adaptability, eels are susceptible to a wide range of impacts that can affect their survival. Fisheries exist for glass, yellow and silver eels, which are used for food and bait. Dams and other structures hamper upstream and downstream movements and have significantly decreased the amount of suitable habitat available to eels. In addition, the high fat content of the American eel and its bottom-dwelling lifestyle make it prone to accumulate contaminants that may increase mortality or reduce reproductive potential. Eels are susceptible to a parasite that can invade the swim bladder, affecting survival and reproduction. It is important to note that each of these mortality factors impacts eels before they can spawn which could result in decreased eel populations in the future.

Because of their unique lifestyle and ecological role, there are still large gaps in our knowledge of eel biology and how the population responds to different factors. Recent data from the Atlantic coast of the U.S. and Canada suggests that American eels are at or near historic low levels of abundance. These findings have sparked great interest and concern in eel biology and population management. The research results will guide fisheries managers to maintain healthy eel populations at levels permitting sustainable use by anglers and for the marine resources that depend on this distinctive species.
Motor Boat Title & Registration Requirement

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.

Boating Operator Requirements

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:
http://www.state.nj.us/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

Scientific name: Anguilla rostrata
Common names: American eel, common eel and freshwater eel; also glass eel, yellow eel or silver eel, depending on life stage
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, and 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 waterbody-specific warnings for a variety of fish species and fish consumers. The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection and the Department of Health and Senior Services have prepared literature to help you make informed choices about which fish to eat and how to reduce your exposure to these harmful chemicals. The Fish Smart-Eat Smart Fish Advisory Guide includes contaminant information, advisory charts plus preparation and cooking methods to reduce contaminant levels, as well as specific guidelines, advice and prohibitions for people at high risk, such as children, pregnant women and women of child-bearing age. The Fish Smart-Eat Smart Fish Advisory Guide also includes Web site links to Pennsylvania, Delaware and New York for information about fish consumption advisories for shared waters.

Check online for fish consumption advisories on the local water body in which you fish! Go to www.state.nj.us/dep/dsr

The Fish Smart-Eat Smart Fish Advisory Web site now 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 will show the water body location, fish species and any advisories that apply. This new Web site feature makes it easy to find current fish consumption advisories for the specific water body 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 Web site www.FishSmartEatSmartNJ.org when making decisions about eating recreationally caught fish and crabs.

The fish consumption advisories, Fish Smart-Eat Smart Fish Advisory Guide and Fish Smart-Eat Smart Fish Advisory Web site 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.state.nj.us/dep
- Division of Science, Research and Technology
  (609) 984-6070 or www.state.nj.us/dep/dsr
  Division of Fish and Wildlife (609) 748-2020 or www.njfishandwildlife.com

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

The Fish Advisory Guide is available by contacting the following:

- Ray’s Sport Shop
  559 Route 22, North Plainfield, NJ
  908-561-4400 • Fax 908-561-4956
  Serving The Sporting Public Since 1947
  Everything for the Outdoors Sportsman
  FISHING • HUNTING • ARCHERY
  Store Hours: Mon–Fri 9–10, Sat & Sun 9–6
  Indoor Firearms Range • Handgun Training Course
  Law Enforcement Equipment & Uniforms

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New Jersey’s Marine Conservation Officers
Using Progressive Techniques to Protect Wildlife

By Capt. Joe Meyer

There’s a saying among long-time sportsmen: Just because you don’t see the game wardens doesn’t mean they aren’t watching. That bit of wisdom is even truer today.

Undercover law enforcement is an integral part of managing New Jersey’s natural resources, particularly along the state’s ocean and bays. The guy clad in jeans and fishing gear aboard your party boat might look like just another angler, but he could be a state conservation officer in plainclothes. Now more than ever, members of Bureau of Law Enforcement’s Marine Region with New Jersey’s Division of Fish and Wildlife are using non-traditional surveillance methods to net serious offenders who often go to great lengths to break laws and regulations that protect the state’s fish and wildlife.

Two landmark cases best illustrate lawmen’s determination, skill and success in cracking down on the illegal harvest and unlawful sale of marine species.

In one case, the owner of a Middletown tavern was charged with selling large quantities of undersized lobsters. State marine lawmen learned from several reliable sources that the tavern was being used as a clearinghouse for undersized American lobsters. Acting on the information, officers went undercover, frequenting the establishment and gathering and documenting evidence during a 12-month investigation that included purchases of more than 1,400 undersized lobster tails.

Harvesting undersized lobsters removes them from the ocean before they have a chance to reproduce. The case represented the first time the Department of Environmental Protection’s Division of Fish and Wildlife and the state Attorney General’s Criminal Justice division prosecuted a New Jersey business owner for knowingly selling large quantities of undersized lobsters. State marine lawmen have employed a variety of innovative techniques to thwart the illegal sale of marine species.

The tavern owner, indicted on charges of unlawfully selling undersized lobsters, learned an important lesson. State marine officers have continued to use non-traditional methods to protect the state’s fish and wildlife, pleading guilty and agreeing to pay a $50,000 penalty.

In the second case, officers issued more than 100 summonses in connection with a party-boat operation illegally harvesting and commercializing tautog, a variety of fish popular in sushi restaurants. In all, 22 defendants, including the vessel’s captain and the corporation that owns the party boat, either pleaded guilty or were found guilty on charges stemming from the 18-month undercover investigation.

The defendants faced penalties totaling more than $40,000.

More recently, savvy conservation officers demonstrated their mastery of other innovative techniques to thwart some of the most deliberate violators.

To catch thieves intent on raiding lobster and crab pots, marine conservation officers strategically placed veterinary identification markers inside the crustacean. Lawmen later apprehended a lobsterman found in possession of the marked lobsters, and charged crabbers — caught holding marked blue crabs — with tending other crappers’ pot gear. One such case recently settled resulted in $45,000 in penalties and the suspension of the crab thief’s commercial license.

Marine conservation officers also regularly keep a close eye on established fish markets, where some dealers are only too anxious to give law-breaking anglers a place to peddle their illegal catch. Lawmen conducting inspections at fish markets in Jersey City and Newark, for example, have issued written warnings and summonses for illegal sales of blue crabs and striped bass, and other violations.

New Jersey’s law-abiding anglers can assist conservation officers in their efforts to protect fish and wildlife resources by reporting marine fish and shellfish violations to (609) 748-2050. Or, call the 24-hour, DEP hotline at 877-WARNDEP.

Capt. Meyer is a member of Fish and Wildlife’s Bureau of Law Enforcement, Marine Region.

New Jersey State Police are working to improve the security of our maritime regions

Empowering the local waterfront community to assist law enforcement by reporting suspicious behavior may lead to the identification of criminals or terrorists.

Boaters, anglers, hunters and marina operators can assist by watching for suspicious behavior such as:

- Loitering around a waterfront facility with no apparent purpose
- Obvious attempts to avoid contact with others
- Evasive response to common boating questions
- Repeatedly extending daily dockage
- Inappropriate, suspicious or non-typical equipment or lack of proper gear
- Photographing unusual locations or at odd times
- Placing unusual objects near a bridge or pipe
- Making large payments in cash

Take care to base your report solely on the behavior, not on race, ethnicity or national origin and photographs, if possible, without being noticed.

Take good notes to report your suspicions; leave the rest to law enforcement.

Take no action except to report Suspicious Activity

Call 866-4-SAFE-NJ (866-472-3365)
For an emergency, call 911 or your local police
Questions? Contact your regional NJ State Police Maritime Station
www.njsp.org/maritime

New Jersey State Police Marine Services Bureau
PO Box 7068, West Trenton, NJ 08628-0068
(609) 882-2000, ext. 6164
New Jersey Skillful Angler Application

Name ________________________ Age _____
Address __________________________________________________
City ___________________________ State ______ Zip_________
Daytime Telephone Number (______) __________________________

Entry Category (check only):
☑ 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.

Mail to:  
NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife  
Skillful Angler Awards Program  
P.O. Box 400  
Trenton, NJ 08625-0400

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.

Minimum Entry Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fish Species</th>
<th>Adult Weight (lbs.)</th>
<th>Junior Weight (lbs., oz.)</th>
<th>Catch and Release (inches)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black Sea Bass</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Striped Bass</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Drum</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bluefish</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cod</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dolphin</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter Flounder</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1 lb., 8 oz.</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fluke</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kingfish</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8 oz.</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mako Shark</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue Marlin</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Marlin</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pollock</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>22 lbs., 8 oz.</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tautog</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albacore Tuna</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Big Eye Tuna</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bluefin Tuna</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellowfin Tuna</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuna (other)</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weakfish</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 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.

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 for a complete list of current state records.
**New Jersey State Record Fish**

The Record Fish Program honors the largest species of fish caught in New Jersey. Entries are based on weight alone; there are no line classes. To enter eligible freshwater or saltwater fish must exceed the weight of any current record fish species listed or must meet the minimum if no entry has yet been submitted for that species. Documentation is required to verify a certified scale was used to weigh the record fish. This mandatory information includes the scale’s Certificate of Inspection/Test Report and registration certificate issued by the New Jersey Office of Weights and Measures as well as a weighmaster’s signature. Other rules apply.

For more information or to request an application, call (609) 633-7768. Visit the New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife Web site at www.njfishandwildlife.com for a complete list of state record fish.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Lbs</th>
<th>Oz</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Angler</th>
<th>Where Caught</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amberjack, greater</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Edwin Metzner</td>
<td>Off Cape May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barracuda</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Gary Sizagyi</td>
<td>Off Cape May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bass, black sea</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Tony Cunha</td>
<td>Inshore Wreck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blowfish, N. puffer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>Virginia Patten</td>
<td>Delaware Bay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blowfish, other</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Kevin Steward</td>
<td>Delaware Bay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bluefish</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Roger Kastorfsky</td>
<td>5 Foundum Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonito, Albacore</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>Frank Lyes, Jr.</td>
<td>Off Sandy Hook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cobia</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>John Shankuck</td>
<td>Off Sea Bright</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cod</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>Joseph Chessa</td>
<td>Off Brielle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crab, blue</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>William Dool</td>
<td>Manahawkin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croaker, Atlantic</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>Frederick Brown</td>
<td>Delaware Bay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cunner</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Kevin Mathisen</td>
<td>80 Mi. SE of Brielle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cutlass fish</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Mike Green</td>
<td>Mud Hole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dogfish, smooth</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Michael LaTorre</td>
<td>Pleasantville</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dogfish, spiny</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Jeff Pinnick</td>
<td>Off Cape May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dolphin</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Scott Smith, Jr.</td>
<td>Baltimore Canyon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drum, black night</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>George Newent</td>
<td>Off Fisherman’s Beach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drum, red</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>Daniel Yonico</td>
<td>Great Bay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eat, American</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Warren Campbell</td>
<td>Atlantic City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fluke</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1953</td>
<td>Walter Lubin</td>
<td>Off Cape May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flounder, winter</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Jimmy Swanson</td>
<td>Off Barnegat Light</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hake, white</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Wayne Eble</td>
<td>Off Barnegat Light</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kingfish, Northern</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Chester Urbanksi</td>
<td>Barnegat Bay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Kingfish, Northern</em></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1969</td>
<td>Robert Morton</td>
<td>Off Cape May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ling (red hake)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Natalie Jones</td>
<td>Off Brielle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lobster, American</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>William Sharp</td>
<td>Alimante Wreck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mackerel, Atlantic</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1983</td>
<td>Abe Elkin</td>
<td>Manasquan Ridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mackarel, chub</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Kathleen Lesb</td>
<td>Off Spring Lake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mackerel, king</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Fernando Alfaitto</td>
<td>Off Cape May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mackerel, Spanish</strong></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Donald Koehler</td>
<td>Off Cape May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marlin, blue</td>
<td>1,046</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Phil Infodotino</td>
<td>Hudson Canyon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marlin, white</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Mike Marchell</td>
<td>Hudson Canyon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perch, white</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Michael King</td>
<td>Little Beach Creek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pollack</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1975</td>
<td>John Holton</td>
<td>Off Brielle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Porgy</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1976</td>
<td>Victor Ronan</td>
<td>Delaware Bay</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sablefish</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>Stephen Fanelli</td>
<td>Wilmington Canyon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scad, spotted</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Bert Harper</td>
<td>Holgate Surf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shad, American</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>Rodger West</td>
<td>Great Bay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shad, history</td>
<td><strong>Vacant</strong></td>
<td><strong>Minimum Weight 2 Lbs.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shark, blue</td>
<td>366</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Albert Jewitt</td>
<td>Mud Hole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shark, bull</td>
<td><strong>Vacant</strong></td>
<td><strong>Minimum Weight 150 Lbs.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shark, dusky</td>
<td>530</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Brian Dulrey</td>
<td>Off Great Egg Inlet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shark, hammerhead</td>
<td>365</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>Walter Thacara</td>
<td>Mud Hole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shark, porbeagle</td>
<td><strong>Vacant</strong></td>
<td><strong>Minimum Weight 100 Lbs.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shark, sandbar</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>John Norton</td>
<td>Little Egg Inlet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shark, sand tiger</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1969</td>
<td>Richard Brown</td>
<td>Delaware Bay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shark, s-fins mako</td>
<td>856</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Christopher Palmer</td>
<td>Wilmington Canyon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shark, threshier</td>
<td>617</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Chris Chalmers</td>
<td>Off Cape May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shark, tiger</td>
<td>822</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>John DeJohn</td>
<td>Off Cape May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shark, white</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Jim Knepper</td>
<td>Off Pt. Pleasant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheepshead</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Paul Love</td>
<td>Manahawkin Bay</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Spadefish**                   | 11    | 6   | 1998  | Cliff Low                | Delaware Bay          |
**Spearfish, longbill**         | 42    | 0   | 1989  | George Algard            | Poor Man’s Canyon     |
**Swordfish**                   | 530   | 0   | 1964  | Edmund LeVitt            | Wilmington Canyon     |
**Tarpon**                      | 55    | 0   | 1986  | Jim Kaczekiewicz          | Off Sea Bright        |
**Tuna, big-eye**               | 364   | 14  | 1984  | George Krenick            | Hudson Canyon         |
**Tuna, bluefin**               | 1,030 | 6   | 1991  | Royal Parsons             | Off Pt. Pleasant      |
**Tuna, skiajck**               | 13    | 4   | 1988  | Craig Eberbach            | Off Cape May          |
**Tuna, yellowfin**             | 290   | 0   | 1980  | Wayne Brinkerhoff         | Hudson Canyon         |
**Tunny, little**               | 24    | 15  | 1977  | Mark Nemietsky            | Off Sea Bright        |
**Tuna, albacore**              | 77    | 15  | 1984  | Dr. S. Scannapiego        | Spencer Canyon        |
**Triggerfish**                 | 5     | 11  | 2004  | Lois Schudha              | Cape May Reef          |
**Tilefish, golden**            | 55    | 0   | 2005  | Gary Caputi               | Washington Canyon     |
**Tilefish, gray**              | 10    | 9   | 2001  | Jim Zappiere              | Sea Golf Reef          |
**Tilefish, hybrid**            | 3     | 2   | 2004  | James Fowler              | Off Brigantine        |
**Snapper**                     | 82    | 0   | 1994  | Glen Lasco                | Sandy Hook            |
**Sailfish**                    | 41    | 0   | 1984  | Virginia Patten           | Pleasant Point        |
**Swordfish**                   | 530   | 0   | 1964  | Edmund LeVitt            | Wilmington Canyon     |
**Striped Bass**                | 78    | 8   | 1982  | Al McReynolds             | Atlantic City         |
**Triggerfish**                 | 5     | 11  | 2005  | Lois Schudha              | Cape May Reef          |
**Triggerfish**                 | 5     | 11  | 2005  | Lois Schudha              | Cape May Reef          |
**Yellowfin**                   | 364   | 14  | 1984  | George Krenick            | Hudson Canyon         |
**Whiting (silver hake)**       | 83    | 5   | 1991  | Chris Chalmers            | Off Cape May          |
**Wahoo**                       | 123   | 12  | 1982  | Robert Carr               | 2-Mile Wreck          |
**If you can provide more context or clarify any parts of the image, please let me know!**
New Jersey State Federation of Sportsmen’s Clubs, Inc.

WE WORK TO...

• PROTECT YOUR INTEREST IN RESPONSIBLE MANAGEMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
• PROMOTE CONSERVATION OF NEW JERSEY’S NATURAL RESOURCES

WE ARE...

“THE FEDERATION”

It’s a coalition of hunters, anglers, trappers, recreational shooters and others who have an interest in enjoying—and preserving—the great outdoor opportunities available in New Jersey.

It’s an alliance that includes individual sportsmen, local fishing/hunting clubs, statewide groups and chapters of large, well-known sportsmen/conservation organizations.

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.

Involvement from interested sportsmen—JUST LIKE YOU—has made a real difference, and will continue to do so.

If you care about
• Wise management of fish and wildlife populations
• Protection and enhancement of our natural lands and waters
• Preservation of our traditional outdoor sports

If you want to
• Meet others who share similar interests
• Keep informed on current issues affecting NJ sportsmen
• Have fun and participate in Federation-sponsored activities: dinners, conventions, clay target shoots, jamborees, tournaments, etc.

Then get involved!

NJFSC Membership provides one million dollars of sportsmen liability insurance. Covers hunting, fishing, target shooting anywhere in the U.S or Canada.

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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 15th annual Governor’s Surf Fishing Tournament, Sunday, Oct. 1, 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 raises much-needed funds for marine-resource conservation and education.

Every year, eager anglers set out to net the coveted Governor’s Cup by reeling in the largest catch of the day. In 2005, Jackson resident Carl Kogel earned top honors with a 34 1⁄2-inch bluefish. As grand-prize winner, Kogel had his name engraved on the Governor’s Cup, which is on permanent display at Island Beach State Park. He also received a plaque, a Penn rod-and-reel combo and a gear bag.

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 or call (609) 748-4347.

Fish and Wildlife thanks the following organizations for contributing to the success of the 14th annual Governor’s Surf Fishing Tournament in 2005:

Artificial Reef Program, DEP’s Division of Fish and Wildlife
Cape May-Lewes Ferry
Coleman Company
Delorme Publishing
Fisherman Eyewear
Jenkinson’s Aquarium
Lamiglas Inc.
Leatherman Tool Group
Legal Limits
Manns Bait Company
Novalek Inc.
O Mustard & Son Inc.
Plano Molding
Shakespeare Fishing Tackle
Silver Horde
Smith’s Abrasives Inc.
Stanley Jigs Inc.
Wright & McGill Company

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


• Guide to New Jersey Saltwater Fishing, available online only
• NJ Reef News
• Party and Charter Boat Directory, available online only
For the past 26 years, the NJDEP’s Division of Fish & Wildlife has been sampling the lower Delaware River to collect information on the striped bass that are born in the river each year—the young of year or y-o-y. Sampling began in 1980 when striped bass stocks were severely depleted. Back then, the historic spawning grounds of the Delaware River produced an average of only seven y-o-y bass for every 100 hauls of the seine net. Responsible management of this valuable game fish has allowed stocks to rebound to where the seine hauls in 2003 averaged more than eight y-o-y bass each time the net was hauled. Since the project began Fish and Wildlife staff have set and retrieved seine nets 5,149 times, counted over 1 million fish from 82 different species and measured 142,807 of those fish.

More than $3 million has been spent performing this survey over the years. This is indicative of the high cost associated with sound management needed to ensure New Jersey anglers can continue to fish for federally managed marine species and that they get their fair share of the coastwide harvest quota allocated for marine sport fish. Failure to comply with federal management plans that require ongoing monitoring, like the striped bass survey, could result in federal moratoriums on fishing for managed species in New Jersey. The striped bass is only one of 22 New Jersey marine fish that have federally mandated management requirements that must be met to avoid fishing moratoriums.

The Delaware River Seine Survey was originally intended to determine the extent of striped bass spawning in the historic spawning grounds of the Delaware River and how many young fish were entering the adult population (recruitment). Today the survey’s main objective is to provide an annual index of the relative abundance of striped bass y-o-y in the Delaware River. This index documents annual variation and long-term trends in bass spawning success and y-o-y survival and provides a preliminary indicator of how many y-o-y bass may later enter the adult population.

Field sampling is done with a 1/4-inch mesh seine net that measures 100-foot long by 6-foot deep and has a collection bag in the middle of the net. One end of the seine net is held close to shore by a crewmember on the beach and the net pays off the bow of a boat as it backs away from the beach. The boat drags the net with the current and then pulls the boat end of the net into the beach forming a “U” shape. The net is pulled onto the beach from both ends and the catch is funneled into the center bag portion of the seine net. All fish caught in the net are identified, counted and many are measured. Besides striped bass, measurements are taken for target species such as white perch, herring, American shad and weakfish. The striped bass y-o-y index is reported as the number of striped bass y-o-y taken per seine haul (see Graph 1). Basic water quality parameters are also recorded including water temperature, salinity and dissolved oxygen.

A particularly interesting catch occurred on August 24, 2004 when a juvenile shortnose sturgeon was netted. This was the first time the Bureau of Marine Fisheries collected a sturgeon in the Delaware River while beach seining. The sturgeon, an endangered species, was caught at the Oldman’s Point station, measured just over four inches and was released unharmed.

The five most abundant species caught during these annual surveys are mainly forage fish including blueback herring, Atlantic menhaden, bay anchovy, white perch and American shad. These species make up more than 70 percent of the 1.1 million fish sampled over the survey’s history and provide valuable population and diversity information for the Delaware River.

Today there are 32 sampling stations spread over 70 miles of the river from just above Artificial Island in Salem County to Newbold Island in Burlington County. The stations are all located in tidal areas but encompass estuarine, brackish and freshwater areas. Each station is sampled twice a month from mid-June through mid-November yielding 320 seine hauls per season. The sampling effort has grown...
substantially from 25-76 seine hauls in the early 80’s to 256 seine hauls in 1987 to the current effort of 320 seine hauls.

Typically, it takes four field days to complete one round of sampling at the 32 stations. Depending on the lunar phase, tidal ranges can be greater than seven feet. A field crew of up to four Marine Fisheries personnel will depart early in the morning from our Nacote Creek Research Station in Port Republic trailering a 20-foot boat to one of three boat ramp launch sites on the Delaware River (Pennsville, Bridgeport and Delran). Depending on weather and river conditions, a typical field day starts at 6 a.m. and ends at 5 p.m. The marine staff must endure challenges such as vessel and vehicle breakdowns, pollution, debris, rough river conditions and oil spills.

The seine haul sampling is only the beginning of the work associated with the survey. Fish that could not be identified in the field are later identified back at the lab. Also, scales taken from striped bass are analyzed to determine the ages of the fish in the sample. Numerous hours are spent maintaining equipment, entering and proofreading data, performing quality control checks and then processing data to synthesize research results. Over the survey’s 26-year history, 3,378 man-days have been devoted to conducting the striped bass y-o-y surveys.

The New Jersey Delaware River Seine Survey is Marine Fisheries’ longest-running fishery-independent survey. The survey design, quality control and quality assurance measures taken all contribute to ensure that the data collected are sound. Also, the survey results have been validated by other independent surveys, specifically the striped bass spawning stock survey conducted by the Delaware Division of Fish & Wildlife. Documenting the virtual absence of striped bass y-o-y in the Delaware River during the early and mid-1980s, the survey also witnessed the rebuilding years of the 1990s. The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission declared the Delaware River stock of striped bass restored in 1998 based on several studies including New Jersey’s seine survey. All that work, money and effort has paid off in producing a recognized and respected survey that predicts the health of the Delaware River striped bass stock.
The Bureaus of Marine Fisheries and Shellfisheries are always considering relevant topics to include in upcoming marine editions of the New Jersey Fish & Wildlife Digest and on the Fish and Wildlife Web site. To keep the articles fresh and interesting, please take a few moments to tell us who you are and what you would like to see in future editions.

Are you a: ☐ Recreational angler ☐ Commercial fisherman ☐ Both ☐ Other (specify) _______________________

Where do you live? _____ State _____________ County

What are the most useful/interesting articles in this year's Digest?

What are the least useful/interesting articles?

What topic(s) would you like featured in future Digests? (check all that apply)

☐ Regulation changes ☐ Stock assessment/status
☐ NJ research surveys ☐ Artificial reefs
☐ Species profiles ☐ Management process

From the topics you checked above, tell us what specific fish species, reef site, fishing technique, etc., you want to see featured in a future marine Digest? For example, if you checked artificial reefs, you might list the “Garden State North” reef. For a species profile, you could write black drum.

Have you visited the saltwater pages on the Fish and Wildlife Web site? ☐ Yes ☐ No

How often? ☐ Daily ☐ Weekly ☐ Monthly ☐ Other

Your suggestions for how to improve the saltwater pages of the Fish and Wildlife Web site (check all that apply):

☐ Include fishing reports ☐ Make Web site more interactive
☐ Add fisheries research and survey results ☐ Use online surveys for reader feedback
☐ Add new articles on (suggested topic):

☐ Include more fishery regulations and updates ☐ Other (specify):

This survey also may be completed online at Fish and Wildlife's Web site: www.njfishandwildlife.com Note: Information collected in this survey is confidential and will be used only to evaluate readership and identify key topics of interest for future Digest editions.
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/
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