

2024 NJ Recreational Fishing Seasons, Size Limits & Possession Limits

Register Before Fishing - It's free, easy and required. Go to the NJ Fish & Wildlife website

Responsible Harvest & Fishing Practices Are Very Important: Land fish as quickly as possible to prevent exhaustion. Use net to land. Handle with care. Never touch gills. Be prepared with dehooker for quick hook removal. Always work with care to minimize injury. Sometime the situation calls for cutting the hook for best chance of survival. When releasing be sure to revive. Use circle hooks (non offset) when using live or dead baits and always consider pinching hook barbs. It's the angler's responsibility to reduce

Fish are measured flat (not over the body) from the tip of the snout (mouth closed) to the longest part of the tail. * Except Sea Bass, Shark, Swordfish, Tuna

Cleaning / filleting of fish with a minimum size limit while at sea is prohibited. Only Gut & Bleed. Anglers are encouraged to report all fishing activity after each trip at NJFishAndWildlife.com

New Jersey recreational fishing regulations summary for convenience below. For the full law go to NJFishAndWildlife.com or call 609.292.2083

TO REPORT VIOLATIONS ANONYMOUSLY CALL OPERATION GAME THIEF – 855.0GT.TIPS or 855.648.8477

Species	Open Season	Minimum Total Length	Possession Limit (per person)
Black Sea Bass	May 17-June 19	12.5" *	10
<i>* measured along midline from snout</i>	July 1-August 31	12.5" *	1
<i>to the end of the central portion of the</i>	Oct 1-Oct 31	12.5" *	10
<i>tail, excluding the tail filaments.</i>	Nov 1-Dec 31	12.5" *	15
Blowfish (Puffer)	No Closed Season	No Minimum	No Limit
Bluefish (Snapper)	No Closed Season	No Minimum	Private/Shore: 3 - For-Hire: 5
Clam, Hard <i>License Required</i>	No Harvest on Sunday	1 ½"	150 with Shellfish License
Cod (Federal Waters)	No Closed Season	21"	10
(NJ State Waters)	Jan 1-May 31, Sep 1-Dec 31	23"	5
Cobia	No Closed Season	37"	1/Boat
Crab, Blue Claw		<i>Measured Point to Point</i>	
Shedder/Peeler ^A	No Closed Season	3"	1 Bushel
Soft Shell ^A	No Closed Season	3 ½"	
Hard Shell ^A	No Closed Season	4 ½"	
^A Notice: All non-collapsible crab pots require a license. All female crabs with eggs attached must be returned to water immediately.			
Crab, Horseshoe	Prohibited	Prohibited	Prohibited
Crab, Jonah (carapace length)	No Closed Season	4 ¾"	50
Drum, Black	No Closed Season	16"	3
Drum, Red	No Closed Season	18"	1 not greater than 27"
Eel, American	No Closed Season	9"	25
Flounder, Summer (Fluke)	May 4-Sept 25	18"	3
Delaware Bay (exception)	May 4-Sept 25	17"	3
Island Beach State Park (exception)	May 4-Sept 25	16"	2
Flounder, Winter	Mar 1-Dec 31	12"	2
Herring, River (Blueback/Alewife)	No Open Season	None	<i>Prohibited</i>
Haddock	No Closed Season	18"	No Limit
Kingfish, Northern	No Closed Season	No Minimum	No Limit
Mackerel, King	No Closed Season	23"	3
Mackerel, Spanish	No Closed Season	14"	10
Mahi Mahi (Dolphin)	No Closed Season	No Minimum	Private:10, 60/Boat - For Hire: 10
Perch, White	No Closed Season	No Minimum	No Limit
Pollock	No Closed Season	19"	No Limit
Porgy (Scup)	Jan 1-Jun 30, Sep 1-Dec 31	10"	30
Shark <i>Sharks, Tuna and Swordfish require HMS permit in federal waters (3-200nm)</i>		<i>* Fork Length Measurement</i>	
+ Circle Hook (Inline Non Offset, Non Stainless Steel) Only *Federal Highly Migratory Species (HMS): HMS Permit With Shark Endorsement Required			
Shortfin Mako	Closed	Prohibited	Prohibited
Large Coastal Group <i>- Blacktip, bull, lemon, nurse, spinner, tiger sharks.</i>	Jan 1-May 14, Jul 16-Dec 31	54" *	One Shark (of any species, except prohibited species) per vessel per trip; plus one Atlantic sharpnose shark per person per trip (no minimum size); plus one bonnethead shark per person per trip (no minimum size).
Hammerhead Group	Jan 1-May 14, Jul 16-Dec 31	78" *	
Small Coastal Group <i>- Atlantic sharpnose sharks, blacknose, Bonnethead, finetooth</i>	No Closed Season	No Minimum	
Blacknose Group	No Closed Season	No Minimum	
Pelagic Group <i>- Blue, porbeagle, oceanic whitetip, common thresher</i>	No Closed Season	54" *	
Smoothhound Group (Dogfish)	No Closed Season	No Minimum	No Limit
Prohibited Sharks Species (illegal to take/possess/land/purchase/sell): Atlantic angel, basking, bigeye sixgill, bigeye thresher, bigeye tiger, big eye sand tiger, bignose, Caribbean reef and sharpnose, dusky, Galapagos, longfin MAKO, narrowtooth, night, SANDBAR aka BROWN SHARK, SANDTIGER, sevengill, shortfin MAKO, silky, sixgill, smalltail, whale and white sharks. Filleting shark at sea is prohibited! Anglers may gut and bleed; however, all sharks must have heads, tails and fins attached naturally.			
Shad <i>*See NJ Fish & Wildlife</i>	No Closed Season	No Minimum	*6 combined (*See NJ Fish & Wildlife)
Sheepshead	No Closed Season	No Minimum	No Limit
Striped Bass (including Hybrid)	<i>*Must Use Inline (non-offset) Circle Hook With Bait When Targeting Striped Bass & Gaff Are Prohibited</i>		
Bays, rivers, and estuaries	Mar 1-Dec 31	One fish at 28" to 31" See NJ Fish & Wildlife For Striped Bass Bonus Program	
Ocean, State Waters (0-3nm offshore)	No Closed Season		
Delaware River & tributaries (Calhoun St. bridge to Salem River & tributaries)	See NJ Fish & Wildlife		
Delaware River & tributaries (upstream of Calhoun St. bridge)	See NJ Fish & Wildlife		
Ocean Federal Waters (>3nm offshore)	Prohibited	Prohibited	Prohibited
Swordfish (*HMS Permit REQUIRED)	No Closed Season	47" Lower Jaw Fork	Private: 1, 4/Boat - For Hire: 1, 6/Boat
Tautog (Tog/Blackfish)	Jan 1-Feb 28, Apr 1-Apr 30	15"	4
	Aug 1-Nov 15	15"	1
	Nov 16-Dec 31	15"	5
Tilefish, Blueline (Permit & Reporting Required)	May 1-Oct31	No Minimum	Private: 3, USCG Un-Inspected: 5, USCG Inspected: 7
Tilefish, Golden (Permit & Reporting Required)	No Closed Season	No Minimum	8
Tuna - Big Eye, Bluefin, Yellowfin, Longfin, Etc	<i>*HMS Permit Required See NOAA Fisheries</i>	See NOAA Fisheries	See NOAA Fisheries
Triggerfish	No Closed Season	No Minimum	No Limit
Wahoo	No Closed Season	No Minimum	2
Weakfish (Gray & Spotted Seatrout)	No Closed Season	13"	1

PROHIBITED SPECIES (illegal to take/possess/land/purchase/sell): In addition to the sharks listed above, Atlantic & Shortnose Sturgeon, Marine Mammals, Diamondback Terrapin & Sea Turtles, River Herring (Alewife, Blueback Herring, does not include Atlantic Herring), Horseshoe Crab... See NJ Fish & Wildlife for more.

- Spear Fishing may be conducted while completely submerged in the marine waters of the state for any species, except lobster. Persons who fish with a spear for a species with size limits hold the responsibility to ensure the fish meets the law/limits before killed/injured.

- No species of fish with minimum size limit may be filleted/cleaned at sea. *Licensed party boats may apply for fillet at sea permit.