

# New Jersey Marine Digest

May 2020

## Artificial Reefs of New Jersey

page 6

## Size and Possession Limits

page 17



A Summary of Recreational Regulations and  
Marine Fish and Shellfish Management Information

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## Hotlines

### New Jersey Fish and Wildlife

#### Report Marine, Shellfish and Finfish Violations

(609) 748-2050 or call the 24-hour DEP Hotline: 877-WARNDEP

Violators of the Marine Fisheries laws are subject to a \$30 per fish or \$300 to \$3,000 fine.

### Federal Marine Fisheries Contacts

#### NOAA Fisheries

##### Enforcement Hotline

24-hour non-emergency tipline  
(800) 853-1964

#### NOAA Fisheries Office of Law

##### Enforcement — Northeast

Enforcement Division HQ  
(978) 281-9249

#### Federal Fisheries Law

##### Enforcement Field Offices

Wall: (732) 280-6490  
Northfield: (609) 415-2941

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Write to: New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife,  
Large Format Marine Digest, MC501-03,  
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## Feature Articles



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# Director's Message

DAVE GOLDEN



The primary mission of the New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife is to maintain stable populations of fish and wildlife throughout the state.


Good species management always begins with good habitat management. Our hardworking staff knows this better than anyone, taking an integrated approach to species management, one that includes protecting and enhancing habitat. Packed with important information on species identification and fishing regulations, this issue of the New Jersey Marine Digest also highlights the importance of enhancing habitats in the state's marine ecosystem.

Improving habitat for marine species has many benefits. Those who have fished over any of the 17 artificial reef sites established by Fish and Wildlife knows that great fishing is one of a reef's main benefits. The

article on page 6 describes the history and objectives of the Artificial Reef Program which has been creating hard-substrate habitat off the coast of New Jersey for more than 30 years. This program is a great example of how strong partnerships between state agencies, industry and non-profit organizations can benefit natural resources. Anglers in New Jersey can expect the Artificial Reef Program to remain strong, with more reef fishing opportunities in the years to come.

New Jersey's coastal ecosystems are energetic and dynamic, with changes that sometimes result in habitat loss. Such has been the trend with many tidal marsh habitats in New Jersey. Wave energy from storm surge, boat wake and sea-level rise has accelerated the rate at which marsh edges are eroding along the Delaware Bayshore and within the back bays. Working with conservation partners, Fish and Wildlife staff are working to reverse this trend along an important marsh edge at our Sedge Island Natural Resource Center (page 24). This novel form of marsh edge stabilization uses natural materials to absorb wave energy while creating habitat for fish and other marine species. The Horseshoe Crab profile (page 12) also illustrates how a species can be impacted by habitat loss and reinforces the need for management agencies to stay involved in protecting species and the habitats upon which they depend.

Some actions taken this year to reduce size limits, bag limits and seasons are in direct response to reductions in certain fish populations. Working with other Atlantic states and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, recreational harvest limits are set to regulate harvest and maintain robust marine fish populations. Managing species in the complex marine environment becomes even more challenging when multiple states must coordinate their marine fishing regulations. Reductions in coastwide recreational harvest limits have led to significant changes in both striped bass and blue fish regulations. The new size limits, bag limits, and season dates can be found for these and other species beginning on page 16.

Whether you agree with the new recreational harvest and size limits or you think they are too conservative, one thing we can all agree on is that great fishing in New Jersey begins with getting outside and dropping a line in the water. Anglers fishing offshore, inshore, back bays, or from the beach, a jetty or pier all share a common bond of loving the outdoors and the excitement of fishing. The therapeutic value of being outside was reinforced for many New Jerseyans this spring as the state came together in its response to the threat of COVID-19. Remember how nature helped us through a challenging period. Respect nature by obeying all published fishing regulations along with managing your trash and waste while on the water and in our marshes. Wildlife — and our access to it — is not something we should take for granted. Wildlife is something for which we must work together to maintain. Enjoy your time outdoors in this great state! 

Dave Golden is the Director of the Division of Fish and Wildlife.

Fish and Wildlife shares an obligation with the rest of the state to protect our public health against COVID-19. I encourage you to check the state's COVID-19 information hub at [covid19.nj.gov](https://covid19.nj.gov) for the most up to date guidance on social distancing and other measures necessary to stop the spread of the virus in New Jersey.

After all, the sooner we can get back to normal, the sooner we can go out in larger groups to enjoy New Jersey's wildlife and fishing.

Island Beach State Park, Patty Teixeira/NJ Div. Fish and Wildlife



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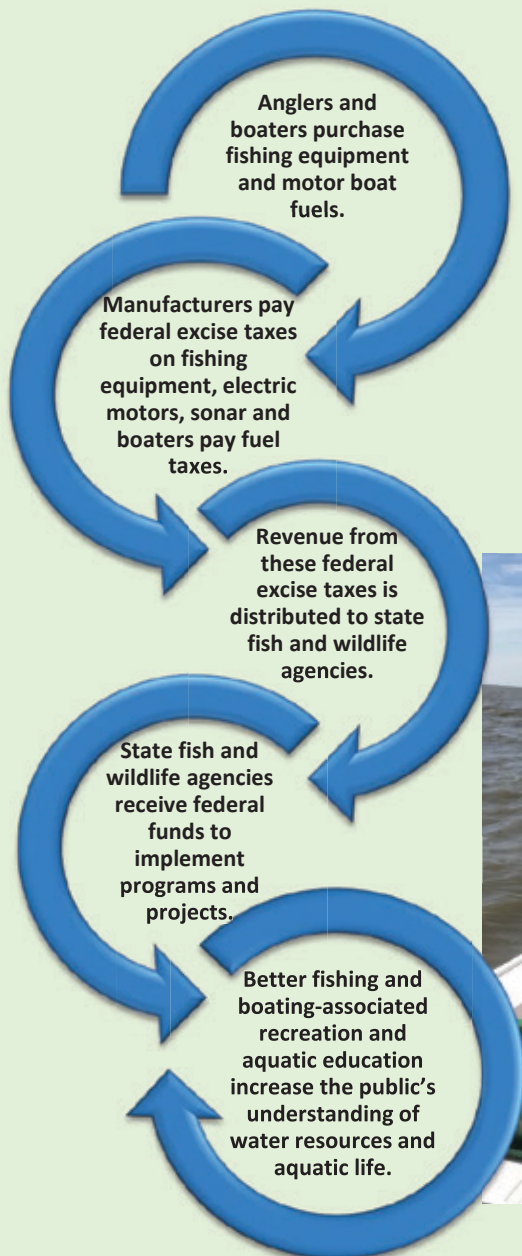


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- Management of public waters
- Artificial reef development
- Marine sport fish research
- Development and management of public fishing areas
- Creation of aquatic education programs
- Development and maintenance of boating-associated access facilities throughout the state



## Join us for the 29th Annual Governor's Surf Fishing Tournament!

**October 25, 2020**

### Island Beach State Park, Seaside Park, NJ

Spend a day of family fishing fun on the beaches at Island Beach State Park. Prizes are awarded in different species and age categories. For more information and to register, visit [www.state.nj.us/dep/fgw/gsf.htm](http://www.state.nj.us/dep/fgw/gsf.htm)

Congratulations John Kolacy of Flanders, NJ who took the grand prize and NJ Governor's Cup by catching a 37 1/2-inch striped bass at the 28th Annual Tournament. Also, congratulations to Toms River High School South for winning first place in the High School Team Category with a 26 1/4-inch bluefish.



# New Jersey Marine Digest

#### State of New Jersey

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Sheila Y. Oliver, Lieutenant Governor

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Catherine R. McCabe, Commissioner

#### Division of Fish and Wildlife

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**Cover photo:** Tug brings a caisson door to the reef location. Photo: Paul Bechtel/NJ Fish and Wildlife.

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#### New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife

##### Our Mission

To protect and manage the state's fish and wildlife to maximize their long-term biological, recreational and economic value for all New Jerseyans.

##### Our Goals

- To maintain New Jersey's rich variety of fish and wildlife species at stable, healthy levels and to protect and enhance the many habitats on which they depend.
- To educate New Jerseyans on the values and needs of our fish and wildlife and to foster a positive human/wildlife co-existence.
- To maximize the recreational and commercial use of New Jersey's fish and wildlife for both present and future generations.

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Traditionally, structures such as bulkheads and revetments are used to protect coastlines from erosion. Living shorelines are an innovative alternative for stabilizing eroding shorelines in lower-energy environments while also improving natural habitats. A living shoreline was recently installed at the Sedge Island Natural Resource Education Center just west of Island Beach State Park. Catch the full story at [www.NJFishandWildlife.com/artsedge\\_shoreline20.htm](http://www.NJFishandWildlife.com/artsedge_shoreline20.htm)

# Sedge Island Living Shoreline

By **Kira Dacanay**, Principal Fisheries Biologist and **Scott Stueber**, Assistant Fisheries Biologist

## Marine Fisheries: Recreational Surveys

### Be Counted

The Access Point Angler Intercept Survey (APAIS) has been conducted by New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife's Marine Fisheries staff since 2016. You may see our interviewers at marine public access fishing sites throughout New Jersey. The survey targets marine recreational anglers to obtain information about fishing effort, catch and participation. The more interviews conducted, the more successful this survey becomes for estimating overall catch, which is an integral factor for managing fisheries.



Charles Karr

Along with increased outreach at public events, our Marine Fisheries staff are interested in talking with fishing clubs/groups about the importance of the APAIS. We rely heavily on our valued anglers, creating a joint venture to preserve New Jersey's natural resources. Contact Maryellen Gordon at (609) 748-2020 for us to come to your meeting or event. We look forward to meeting you!

If you're not "intercepted" for an interview while fishing or contacted through the Saltwater Registry, you can still participate by submitting a fishing report after each saltwater trip to the New Jersey Volunteer Angler Survey. Your reports have a *real* impact on how New Jersey's ocean resources are managed. Submit online reports at [www.NJFishandWildlife.com/marinesurvey.htm](http://www.NJFishandWildlife.com/marinesurvey.htm).

## New Jersey: Stock Status & Management Updates

Species	Status	Next Action
American Lobster	Depleted; Not overfishing	Research stock assessment 2020
American Shad	Depleted; Moratorium since 2013	Research stock assessment to be completed 2020
Atlantic Menhaden	Not overfished; Not overfishing	Research stock assessment completed 2019
Atlantic Sea Herring	Not overfished; Not overfishing	Management stock assessment 2020
Atlantic Striped Bass	Overfished; Overfishing	Management action for ASMFC; Mandated 18% reduction in removals effective April 1, 2020
Black Sea Bass	Not overfished; Not overfishing	Operational stock assessment completed 2019; use of conservation equivalency for recreational management starting 2020
Bluefish	Overfished; Not overfishing	Operational stock assessment completed 2019; mandated 29% reduction in harvest effective April 1, 2020
Coastal Sharks	Varies by species	Assessments: blacktip shark and scalloped hammerhead 2020 blue shark 2021
Cobia	Not overfished; Not overfishing	SEDAR 58 stock assessment completed 2020
Horseshoe Crab	Status unknown; Moratorium since 2008	Research stock assessment completed 2019
Weakfish	Depleted; Not overfishing	Operational stock assessment completed 2019
Winter Flounder	Overfished; Not overfishing	Management stock assessment 2020

For updates or more information, please visit [www.asmfc.org](http://www.asmfc.org)