

# DELAWARE

## FISHING GUIDE

(<https://web.archive.org/web/20190214061130/http://www.eregulations.com/delaware/fish>)

**MENU**




### Tidal Seasons, Size & Creel Limits



Delaware  
Fishing

All seasons & limits subject to change. Please stay current by consulting: [www.fw.delaware.gov](http://www.fw.delaware.gov)  
(<https://web.archive.org/web/20190214061130/http://www.fw.delaware.gov/>) or (302) 739-9914.

Tidal Waters (Changes expected for species listed in red)

Species		Open Season	Minimum Size	Daily Limit
	American eel	All year	9 inches	25
	American & hickory shad	Closed Nanticoke R. & its tribs.; Open all year elsewhere	None	10 in any combination
	Atlantic croaker	All year	8 inches	None
	Atlantic sturgeon	Endangered – no harvest permitted (see also <a href="https://web.archive.org/web/20190214061130/http://www.eregulations.com/delaware/fishing/sport-fishing-tournament/">Sport Fishing Tournament</a> ( <a href="https://web.archive.org/web/20190214061130/http://www.eregulations.com/delaware/fishing/sport-fishing-tournament/">https://web.archive.org/web/20190214061130/http://www.eregulations.com/delaware/fishing/sport-fishing-tournament/</a> ))		
	Black drum	All year	16 inches	3
	Black sea bass	May 15 – Dec. 31	12.5 inches (excluding caudal filament)	15
	Bluefish	All year	None	10
	Catfish (any species)	All year	None	None
	Cobia	TBD		
	Red drum	All year	20 – 27 inches may be retained	5
	River herring (alewife & blueback)	Closed – no harvest permitted		

	Scup	All year	8 inches	50
	Spanish mackerel	All year	14 inches	15
	Spotted seatrout	All year	12 inches	None
	Striped bass	All year, except catch & release only on spawning grounds Apr 1 – May 31	28 – 37 inches or 44 inches or greater; except, 20 – 25 inches only – Jul 1 – Aug 31 in DE Bay, River and their tributaries	2, except catch & release only on spawning grounds April 1 – May 31
	Summer flounder	All year	16.5 inches	4
	Tautog	Jan. 1 – May 15	16 inches	4
		July 1 – Dec. 31		4
	Tilefish (Blueline & Golden)	All year	None	7 in any combination
	Weakfish	All year	13 inches	1
	White perch	All year	8 inches	None
	Winter flounder	Feb. 11 – Apr. 10	12 inches	2
Species		Open Season	Minimum Size	Daily Limit
Blue crab		Pots: Mar. 1 – Nov. 30; other gears year around	Peeler – 3 inches	1 bushel
			Soft-shell – 3.5 inches	
			Hard-shell – 5 inches	
Hard clams		All year	15 inches	100/resident
				50/non-resident
Lobster		All year	3 3/8 – 5 1/4 inches (slot)	2; V-notched prohibited
Conch	Knobbed whelk	All year	5 inches / 3 inch whorl	5 bushels
	Channeled whelk	All year	6 inches / 3.125 inch whorl	5 bushels
Sharks, TILEFISH and Highly Migratory Species (HMS) – Special permit required for federal waters				
Species		Open Season	Minimum Size	Daily Limit
	Smoothhound and spiny dogfish	All year	None	None
	Blacktip shark, bull shark, lemon shark, nurse shark, silky shark, spinner shark, tiger shark	Jan. 1 -May 14  July 16 – Dec. 31	54 inches FORK LENGTH	Boat anglers- only 1 shark of any species per vessel, except 1 additional bonnethead and 1 additional Atlantic sharpnose per angler onboard vessel. Shore anglers – only 1 shark of any species per angler, except 1 additional bonnethead and one additional Atlantic sharpnose per shore angler.
	Great hammerhead, scalloped hammerhead, smooth hammerhead	Jan. 1 -May 14 July 16 – Dec. 31	78 inches FORK LENGTH	

	Blue shark, oceanic white-tip shark, porbeagle, shortfin mako, thresher shark	All year	54 inches FORK LENGTH, except shortfin mako which is 83 inches FORK LENGTH
	Atlantic sharpnose shark, blacknose shark, bonnethead, finetooth shark	All year	None
Prohibited Species			
	Sandbar shark, sand tiger, Atlantic angel shark, basking shark, bigeye sand tiger, bigeye sixgill shark, bigeye thresher, bignose shark, Caribbean reef shark, Caribbean sharpnose shark, dusky shark, Galapagos shark, longfin mako, narrowtooth shark, night shark, sevengill shark, sixgill shark, smalltail shark, whale shark, white shark	The sandbar & sand tiger are toothed sharks commonly taken in the nearshore waters of the state and are prohibited species. Like all prohibited species, they must be immediately released to ensure the maximum probability of survival.	
Special Restrictions for Shark			
It is unlawful to fillet a shark prior to landing. A shark may be eviscerated prior to landing, but head, tail and fins must remain attached to the carcass.			
It is unlawful to release a shark in a manner that will not ensure the sharks maximum probability of survival (i.e. no gaffs, no clubbing, careful hook removal, etc.).			
It is unlawful to possess the fins from any shark prior to landing unless they are naturally attached to the body of the shark.			
Tunas and HMS – Special permit required			
	Atlantic tunas, swordfish and billfish	*Special permit required – All private vessel owners/operators recreationally fishing for and/or retaining regulated Atlantic Highly Migratory Species (Atlantic tunas, sharks, swordfish and billfish) for personal use in the Atlantic Ocean must obtain an Atlantic Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Angling Permit. Further limits and restrictions apply. Consult <a href="https://web.archive.org/web/20190214061130/http://hmspermits.noaa.gov/">hmspermits.noaa.gov</a> ( <a href="https://web.archive.org/web/20190214061130/http://hmspermits.noaa.gov/">https://web.archive.org/web/20190214061130/http://hmspermits.noaa.gov/</a> ) or call toll free (888) 872-8862 for specific information and permits.	

« **Tidal Fishing Regulations**

(<https://web.archive.org/web/20190214061130/http://www.eregulations.com/delaware/fishing-regulations/>)

**Blue Crabs, Clams, Conchs & Oysters »**

(<https://web.archive.org/web/20190214061130/http://www.eregulations.com/delaware/crabs-clams-conchs-oysters/>)





