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2005 2006 2007



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North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources

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2006 NC Recreational Coastal Waters Guide for Sports Fishermen - January VersionA [Coastal Recreational Fishing License](#) goes into effect Jan. 1, 2007 for all of the state's coastal and ocean waters.[Download a Printable](#) (PDF) Version of the January 2006 Rec Guide.

| | State Coastal Waters (Internal & 0-3 Miles) | | Exclusive Economic Zone EEZ (3-200 miles) | |
|---|--|---|--|--|
| Finfish Species (note symbols) | Minimum Length | Bag Limits (Per Person) | Minimum Length | Bag Limits (Per Person) |
| Greater Amberjack | 28" FL | 1/Day | 28" FL | 1/Day |
| Bluefish | | 15/Day Only 5 greater than 24" TL | | 15/Day |
| Cobia | 33" FL | 2/Day | 33" FL | 2/Day |
| Wahoo | | 2/Day | | 2/Day |
| Dolphin (B) | | 10/Day | | 10/Day |
| King Mackerel(J) Species Identification | 24" FL | 3/Day | 24" FL | 3/Day |
| Spanish Mackerel(J) Species Identification | 12" FL | 15/Day | 12" FL | 15/Day |
| Tuna;Yellowfin, Bluefin, Bigeye (J) (H) | | | 27" CFL | Yellowfin Tuna bag limit 3 per person per day |
| Sharks(J) (excluding spiny and smooth dogfish) | 54-84" FL (L) | 1/Vessel/Day (private boat) 1/Day (shore,charter, headboat) (L) | (F) 54" FL | 1/Vessel/Day |
| Sharks, Atlantic Sharpnose(J) | (L) | Included in Limit Above | (F) | 1/Day |
| Blue Marlin(H) | 99" LJFL | 1/vessel/trip either Blue or White Marlin | 99" LJFL | 1/vessel/trip either Blue or White Marlin |
| White Marlin (H) | 66" LJFL | 1/vessel/trip either Blue or White Marlin | 66" LJFL | 1/vessel/trip either Blue or White Marlin |
| Sailfish (H) | 63" LJFL | 1/Day | 63" LJFL | 1/Day |
| Red Drum (Channel Bass, Puppy Drum) | 18-27" TL (D) | 1/Day | Unlawful to Possess | |
| Flounder(G) | 14 TL | 8/Day | 14 TL | 8/Day |
| Spotted Seatrout (Speckled) | 12" TL | 10/Day | 12" TL | 10/Day |
| Weakfish (Gray Trout) | 12" TL | 7/Day | 12" TL | 7/Day |
| Tarpon | | 1/Day | | 1/Day |
| Striped Bass | (A) | (A) | Unlawful To Possess | |
| American & Hickory Shad (M) | | 10/Day | | 10/Day |
| Alewife and Blueback Herring (M) | | 12/Day | | 12/Day |
| American Eel | 6" TL | 50/Day | 6" TL | 50/Day |

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|--|--------|--|--------|--|
| Black Sea Bass (South of Cape Hatteras) | 10" TL | 20/Day | 10" TL | 20/Day |
| Groupers (K&J) | | (See Below) | | (See Below) |
| Red, Scamp, Yellowfin & Yellowmouth Groupers | 20" TL | 5/Day (all groupers combined; includes only 1 speckled hind, 1 warsaw, and no more than 2 black or gag grouper, individual or combined)(K) | 20" TL | 5/Day (all groupers combined; includes tilefish, only 1 speckled hind, 1 warsaw, and no more than 2 black or gag grouper, individual or combined)(K) |
| Black and Gag Groupers | 24" TL | 2/Day (See above) | 24" TL | 2/Day (See above) |
| Speckled Hind (Kitty Mitchell) | | 1/Vessel/Trip (See above) | | 1/Vessel/Trip (See above) |
| Warsaw Grouper | | 1/Vessel/Trip (See above) | | 1/Vessel/Trip (See above) |
| Red Porgy (Silver Snapper, Pinky) | 14" TL | 1/Day | 14" TL | 1/Day |
| Dog, Gray, Cubera, Mahogany, Queen, Schoolmaster, & Yellowtail Snappers | | 10/Day (Species combined; includes up to 2 Red Snapper) | 12" TL | 10/Day (Species combined; includes up to 2 Red Snapper) |
| Mutton Snapper | | See Above | 16" TL | See Above |
| Silk and Blackfin Snappers | 12" TL | See Above | 12" TL | See Above |
| Red Snapper | 20" TL | 2/Day - See Above | 20" TL | 2/Day - See Above |
| Vermillion Snapper | 11" TL | 10/Day | 11" TL | 10/Day |
| Reef Complex Species Includes sheepshead, spadefish, gray triggerfish, white grunt, knobbed porgy and more (see below) (I) | | 20/Day | | 20/Day |

Prohibited Finfish Species

| Coastal Waters (Internal waters and Atlantic Ocean out to 3 miles) | EEZ (Atlantic Ocean more than 3 miles) |
|--|---|
| Sturgeon, Nassau grouper, and Goliath grouper (jewfish). Prohibited sharks include: basking, white, sand tiger, and whale. | Sharks; (whale, basking, white, sand tiger, bigeye sand tiger, Atlantic angel shark, bigeye sixgill, bigeye thresher, bignose, Caribbean reef, Caribbean sharpnose, dusky, Galapagos, longfin mako, narrowtooth, night, sevengill, sixgill, and smalltail), red drum, striped bass, sturgeon, Nassau grouper, Goliath grouper (jewfish), and spearfish. |

Shellfish






State Coastal and EEZ Waters
Internal and 0-200 miles

| Species (note symbols) | Minimum Length | Bag Limits (Per Person) |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|---|
| Blue Crab | 5" Carapace Width | 50 crabs/day not to exceed 100 crabs/vessel/day |
| Hard Clam | 1" Thick | 100 clams/day not to exceed 200 clams/vessel/day |
| Oyster (N) | 3" Shell Length | 1 bushel/day not to exceed 2 bushels/vessel/day |
| Bay Scallops (N)(Q) | | 1/2 bushel/day not to exceed 1 bushel/vessel/day |
| Conchs & Whelks | | 10/day not to exceed 20/vessel/day |
| Mussels | | 100/day not to exceed 200/vessel/day |
| Shrimp Cast Net Only | | Closed Shrimping Area - 100 shrimp/day Open Shrimping Area - Unlimited |

Explanation of Symbols

(A) Albemarle Sound Management Area: contact DMF for seasons, areas or other limits; Atlantic Ocean year-round: 2 per person per day at 28" TL minimum; Other coastal areas (excluding Inland Waters-regulations set by

(I) Reef complex species: whitebone porgy, jolthead porgy, knobbed porgy, longspine porgy, sheepshead, gray triggerfish, queen triggerfish, yellow jack, crevalle jacks, bar jack, almaco jack, lesser amberjack, banded rudderfish,

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| <p>30. (D) Unlawful to possess red drum greater than 27 inches total length. Unlawful to gig, spear, or gaff red drum. (E) North of Cape Hatteras Scup recreational season is Jan. 1 - Feb. 29 and August 15 - Nov. 30 in the EEZ. (F) See prohibited species list above; Legal sharks include: sandbar, silky, tiger, blacktip, spinner, lemon, bull, nurse, smooth and scalloped and great hammerhead, blacknose, finetooth, bonnethead, shortfin mako, blue, thresher, porbeagle, and oceanic whitetip. One (1) Atlantic sharpnose (no minimum size) and one bonnethead (no minimum size) per person per trip may be landed in addition to allowable bag limits for other sharks. (G) Restrictions apply to gigging in all coastal waters. (H) In state or federal waters, federal permit required for Highly Migratory Species, excluding Atlantic bonito, little tunny (albacore), and blackfin tuna:(978) 281-9370 or www.nmfspermits.com. Prior to removal from vessel, all billfishes, swordfish and bluefin tuna must be reported at NC HMS reporting stations. DMF website for more details.</p> | | <p>mackerels contact the South Atlantic Council (1-843-571-4366 or www.safmc.net). (K) Groupers in the management unit include: red, yellowfin, yellowmouth, black, warsaw, snowy, yellowedge, and misty grouper; gag, scamp, speckled hind, red hind, rock hind, graysby, and coney. The five (5) grouper bag limit in the EEZ also includes blueline, golden, and sand tilefish. No possession of Nassau and Goliath grouper. (L) Minimum size does not apply to Atlantic sharpnose or dogfish. Creel does not apply to dogfish. Sharks greater than 84 inches are prohibited except for tiger, thresher, bigeye thresher, shortfin mako, and hammerhead sp. Headboat or charterboat Captain or crew are not allowed a creel limit. (M) Season, areas, or other limits may be set by DMF. Shad (hickory and American) may only be taken with recreational commercial gear such as drift gill nets from January 1 through April 14 or by hook and line year round. (N) Contact DMF for seasons, areas, or other restrictions. (P) Pending rule change (Q) During the open season, scallop harvest restricted to certain hours of the day, contact DMF for all restrictions.</p> | | | | | | |
| <p>Total length (TL) is measured from tip of snout with mouth closed to tip of compressed tail. Fork length (FL) is measured from tip of snout to middle of fork in tail. Lower jaw fork length (LJFL) is measured from lower jaw to middle of fork in tail. Curved fork length (CFL) is the measurement of the length taken in a line tracing the contour of the body from the tip of the upper jaw to the fork of the tail. Bag limits are not additive for state and federal waters.</p> <p>Ocean boundary is defined as water seaward of the COLREGS Demarcation Lines as indicated on National Ocean Service navigation charts</p> <p>No one may possess aboard a vessel or while engaged in fishing any fish subject to limits without head and tail attached, except for alewife and blueback herring used for bait provided not more than two fish per boat/operation may be cut at any one time. - Reference 15A NCAC 3M.0101</p> <p>IMPORTANT Check with Division of Marine Fisheries for most current minimum lengths and catch limits. 252-726-7021 or 800-682-2632 (North Carolina only). For inland water limits contact Wildlife Resources Commission 919-733-3633 or visit their website www.ncwildlife.org.</p> <p>This document is a public record under chapter 132 of the North Carolina General Statutes. Anyone who alters, defaces, mutilates or destroys it shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction subject to fines.</p> <p>Please NOTE! If you bookmark this page or place it in your "favorites" list, and then return later you may NOT be seeing the latest version of the page. Because of the way different browsers cache pages in memory you need to be sure to hit the "Refresh" or "Reload" button on your browser to be sure that you are getting the latest version.</p> | | | | | | | | |