



⚠ View the latest updates on DEM's response to COVID-19, including guidance for sports venues, farmers, commercial fishing, and information on State Parks.

Marine Fisheries Minimum Sizes & Possession Limits

Minimum sizes are measured for Total Length (TL) [TL is from tip of snout to tip of tail]

COMMERCIAL

RECREATIONAL

LOBSTERS, BLUE CRABS & HORSESHOE CRABS

SHELLFISH

COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

"Restricted finfish" indicated in Red

Possession limits and open fisheries are subject to change. To participate in commercial fisheries a Rhode Island commercial fishing license and appropriate endorsements are required.

For current COMMERCIAL POSSESSION LIMITS call 423-1920

SPECIES	MINIMUM SIZE	SEASON	CURRENT COMMERCIAL POSSESSION LIMIT
American Eel	9"	Closed 9/1 - 12/31 for any gear other than baited pots or spears	No limit
American Plaice (dab)	12"	1/1 - 12/31	No limit
American Shad	NA	1/1 - 12/31	Prohibited in state waters

Atlantic Salmon	NA	1/1 - 12/31	Prohibited in state waters
Atlantic Sturgeon	NA	1/1 - 12/31	Prohibited in state waters
Black Sea Bass	11"	Sub-Periods 1/1 - 4/30 5/1 - 6/30 7/1 - 7/31 CLOSED 8/1 - 9/14 9/15 - 10/31 11/1 - 12/31	1,500 lbs/vsl/week March 14 2,000 lbs/vsl/week
Bluefish	18"	1/1 - 4/30 5/1 - 11/14 11/15 - 12/31	1,000 lbs/vsl/bi-week
Cod	19"	5/1 - 4/30	1,000 lbs/vsl/day
Coastal Sharks-Smoothhound	No minimum	1/1 - 12/31	Unlimited
Coastal Sharks-Non-Blacknose Small Coastal Sharks	No Minimum	1/1 - 12/31	Unlimited
Coastal Sharks-Blacknose	No minimum	1/1 - 12/31	Closed
Coastal Sharks-Aggregated Large Coastal Sharks	No minimum	1/1 - 12/31	36 sharks/vsl/day
Coastal Sharks-Hammerhead	No minimum	1/1 - 12/31	36 sharks/vsl/day
Coastal Sharks-Shortfin Mako	No minimum	1/1 - 12/31	Closed
Coastal Sharks-Pelagic	No minimum	1/1 - 12/31	Unlimited

Spiny Dogfish	No Minimum	5/1 - 4/30	6,000 lbs/vsl/day
Summer Flounder (Fluke)	With Exemption Certificate 14"	Sub-Periods 1/1 - 4/30 5/1 - 9/15 9/16 -12/31	100 lbs/vsl/day Aggregate open at 4,000 lbs/vsl/bi-week for permitted vessels March 14 Open at 4,500 lbs/vsl/bi-week
	Without Exemption Certificate 14"	Sub-Periods 1/1 - 4/30 5/1 - 9/15 9/16 -12/31	100 lbs/vsl/day
Horseshoe Crab Bait Fishery	7"	1/1 - 4/30 6/1 - 12/31	60 crabs/person/day
Horseshoe Crab Biomedical Fishery	7"	1/1 - 12/31	Unlimited
Menhaden inside Management Area	No Minimum	1/1 - 12/31	Closed
Menhaden outside Management Area	No Minimum	1/1 - 12/31	120,000 lbs/vsl/day
Monkfish	17" whole/ 11" tail	5/1 - 4/30	4,900 lbs/vsl/wk tails or 14,259 lbs/vsl/week whole fish
Haddock	16"	1/1 - 12/31	No limit
Pollock	19"	1/1 - 12-31	No limit
Scup	General Category 9"	Sub-Periods 1/1 - 4/30 (fed quota) 5/1 - 9/30 10/1 - 12/31 (fed quota)	50,000 lbs/vsl/day

	Floating traps 9"	Sub-Periods 1/1 - 4/30 (fed quota) 5/1 - 9/30 10/1 - 12/31 (fed quota)	50,000 lbs/vsl/day
Striped bass	General Category 34"	Sub-Periods 5/20 - 6/30 7/1 - 12/31 CLOSED Fri/Sat/Sun thru-out	Closed
	Floating traps 26"	4/1 - 12/31	Closed
Skate	Wing Fishery No Minimum	1/1 - 12/31	35,000 lbs/vsl/wk wings or 79,450 lbs/vsl/wk whole skate
	Bait Fishery Max Size 23"	Sub Periods 5/1 - 7/31 8/1 - 10/31 11/1 - 4/30	25,000 lbs/vsl/day
Tautog	16"	Sub-Periods 4/1 - 5/31 8/1 - 9/15 10/15 - 12/31	Closed
Weakfish (Squeteague)	16"	Open Season 6/1 - 6/30 8/7 - 11/8 All other times call RIDFW for details	100 lbs/vsl/day
Winter Flounder	12"	1/1 - 12/31	50 lbs/vsl/day
The harvesting or possession of winter flounder is PROHIBITED in Narragansett Bay north of the Colregs Line of Demarcation as well as in Potter Pond, Point Judith Pond, and the Harbor of Refuge			
Yellowtail Flounder	12"	1/1 - 12/31	No limit

Atlantic Herring	No minimum size	Closed annually 10/1 - 10/21	Area 2: 2,000 lbs/vsl/trip
River Herring	NA	1/1- 12/31	Prohibited in state waters Call DFW for federal bycatch allowance

RECREATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES

Species	Minimum size	Season	Possession Limit
American eel	9"	1/1 - 12/31	25 eels/person/day 50 eels/vsl/day for licensed party/charter vessels
American plaice (dab)	14"	1/1 - 12/31	No limit
Black Sea Bass	15"	6/24 - 8/31 9/1 - 12/31	3 fish/person/day 7 fish/person/day
Bluefish	No minimum	1/1 - 12/31	3 fish/person/day
Bluefish Party and Charter	No minimum	1/1 - 12/31	5 fish/person/day
Cod	21"	1/1 - 12/31	10 fish/person/day
Summer Flounder (Fluke)	19"	5/3 - 12/31	6 fish/person/day

Special Area Provisions: While fishing from shore at India Point Park in Providence; Conimicut Park in Warwick; Rocky Point, Warwick; Stone Bridge in Tiverton; East and West Walls (Harbor of Refuge), Narragansett; Fort Wetherill, Jamestown; and Fort Adams, Newport; anglers may possess up to 2 summer flounder 17 inches or greater in length from May 3, through December 31 as part of their 6 fish possession limit. The remaining 4 fish must be 19 inches or larger.

Monkfish (Goosefish)	17" whole 11" tail	1/1 - 12/31	50 lbs tails/day or 166 lbs whole/day
Haddock	18"	1/1 - 12/31	No limit
Pollock	19"	1/1 - 12/31	No limit
Scup (Shore and Private)	9"	1/1 - 12/31	30 fish/person/day

Special Area Provisions: While fishing from shore at India Point Park in Providence; Conimicut Park in Warwick; Rocky Point, Warwick; Stone Bridge in Tiverton; East and West Walls (Harbor of Refuge), Narragansett; Fort Wetherill, Jamestown; and Fort Adams, Newport; anglers may possess up to 30 scup 8 inches or greater in length from May 1, through December 31

Scup (Party and Charter)	9"	1/1 - 8/31 9/1 - 10/31 11/1 - 12/31	30 fish/person/day 50 fish/person/day 30 fish/person/day
Skate	No minimum	1/1 - 12/31	10 fish/person/day
Striped Bass	28"-<35"	1/1 - 12/31	1 fish/person/day

Striped Bass Fin Clipping: All striped bass 34 inches or larger harvested recreationally must have the entire right pectoral fin removed at the time of harvest

Striped Bass Circle Hook Provision: Required when fishing recreationally for striped bass with bait.

Tautog	16"	4/1 - 5/31 6/1 - 7/31 8/1 - 10/14 10/15 - 12/31	3 fish/person/day CLOSED 3 fish/person/day 5 fish/person/day Max of 10 fish/vsl during all periods
Tautog (Party and Charter)	16"	4/1 - 5/31 6/1 - 7/31 8/1 - 10/14 10/15 - 12/31	3 fish/person/day CLOSED 3 fish/person/day 5 fish/person/day
Weakfish (Squeteague)	16"	1/1 - 12/31	1 fish/person/day

Winter Flounder (Blackback)	12"	3/1 - 12/31	2 fish/person/day
The harvesting or possession of winter flounder is PROHIBITED in Narragansett Bay north of the Colregs Line of Demarcation as well as in Potter Pond, Point Judith Pond, and the Harbor of Refuge			
Witch Flounder (Gray Sole)	14"	1/1 - 12/31	No limit
Yellowtail Flounder	13"	1/1 - 12/31	No limit

LOBSTERS, BLUE CRABS, and HORSESHOE CRABS

Minimum Sizes and Possession Limits

Lobsters

THE POSSESSION OF EGG-BEARING LOBSTERS IS PROHIBITED. ALL LEGAL SIZED EGG-BEARING LOBSTERS MUST BE V-NOTCHED.

Harvesting by licensed residents only, all lobsters must be measured IMMEDIATELY. All lobsters measuring less than the legal minimum size of 3-3/8" carapace length must be returned immediately to the water from which taken.

Measuring: The carapace length is measured from the rear of the eye socket along a line parallel to the centerline of the body shell to the rear end of the body shell.

Blue Crabs:

THE POSSESSION OF EGG-BEARING BLUE CRABS IS PROHIBITED.

Harvesting by residents only, by crab net, dip net, scoop net, handline and trot line only. It is illegal to harvest crabs from sunset to sunrise. All blue crabs measuring less than the legal minimum size of five inches (5") from spike-end to spike-end must be returned immediately to the water from which taken. No person shall possess, take, or attempt to take more than twenty-five (25) blue crabs from any of the waters of Rhode Island except when taken by a scoop or crab net, trot, or hand line.

Measuring: A direct line measured from the end of one spike across the body shell to the end of the opposite spike must be no less than five inches (5").

Horseshoe Crabs:

No person shall harvest horseshoe crabs from waters or shoreline of the state during the 48-hour period preceding and the 48-hour period following the new and full moons during the month of May annually. No person shall harvest horseshoe crabs for commercial or recreational purposes on or within 100 feet seaward of Patience and Prudence Islands in Narragansett Bay.

Commercial: It is illegal for any person to harvest horseshoe crabs in Rhode Island for commercial purposes without a Multi-Purpose Commercial License and a Horseshoe Crab Harvest Permit. There is an annual commercial harvest quota allocated to the State of Rhode Island by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC).

Recreational: It is illegal for any person to harvest horseshoe crabs in Rhode Island for recreational purposes

without a Horseshoe Crab Harvest Permit. Any resident with a Horseshoe Crab Harvest Permit may possess not more than five (5) horseshoe crabs in any calendar day. Horseshoe Crab Harvest Permits are obtainable at the Division of Fish and Wildlife, Marine Fisheries Section.

For more detailed lobster, blue crab, or horseshoe crab regulations click [here](#)

SHELLFISH Minimum Sizes

Shellfishing is prohibited statewide between sunset and sunrise

Shellfish Recreational Minimum Sizes and Possession Limits

Species	Minimum size	Non-Management Areas		Management Areas	
		Resident Limit	Non-Resident Limit	Resident Limit	Non-Resident Limit
Channeled and Knobbed Whelk (Conch) <i>Busycon sp.</i>	2 1/4" shell height	1/2 Bushel	Residents Only	1/2 Bushel Max 1 bushel/vsl	Residents Only
Bay Quahaug <i>Mercenaria mercenaria</i>	1" hinge width	1/2 Bushel	1 Peck	1Peck	1/2 Peck
Soft-shelled clam <i>Mya arenaria</i>	2" longest axis	1/2 Bushel	1 Peck	1 Peck	1/2 Peck
Oyster <i>Crassostrea virginica</i>	3" longest axis	1/2 Bushel	1 Peck	1 Peck	1/2 Peck
Scallop <i>Argopecten irradians</i>	No seed possession	1 Bushel	Residents Only	1 Bushel	Residents Only
Surf Clam <i>Spisula solidissima</i>	5" longest axis	1/2 Bushel	1 Peck	1 Peck	1/2 Peck

