

# DELAWARE

## FISHING GUIDE

(<http://www.eregulations.com/delaware/fishing/>)

MENU













### Tidal Seasons, Size & Creel Limits

















Delaware  
Fishing

#### 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	TBD		
	Atlantic sturgeon	Endangered – no harvest permitted		
	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	3 – fishing from a private vessel or shore  5 – fishing from a charter boat or headboat
	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
	Spot	TBD		
	Spotted seatrout	All year	12 inches	None

	Striped bass	All year, except catch & release only on spawning grounds Apr 1 – May 31	28 – 35 inches; except, 20 – 25 inches only from Jul 1 – Aug 31 in DE Bay, River and their tributaries	1, 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)	TBD		
	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
 <b>Blue crab</b> See <b><u><a href="http://www.eregulations.com/delaware/fishing/blue-crabs-clams-conchs-oysters/">Blue Crabs, Clams, Conchs &amp; Oysters</a></u></b> ( <b><u><a href="http://www.eregulations.com/delaware/fishing/blue-crabs-clams-conchs-oysters/">http://www.eregulations.com/delaware/fishing/blue-crabs-clams-conchs-oysters/</a></u></b> ) for more details		Pots: Mar. 1 – Nov. 30; other gears year around	Peeler – 3 inches	1 bushel
			Soft-shell – 3.5 inches	
			Hard-shell – 5 inches	
 <b>Jonah crab</b>		All year	4 3/4 inches	50

 <b>Hard clams</b>		All year	1.5 inches	100/resident 50/non-resident
 <b>Lobster</b>		All year	3 3/8 – 5 1/4 inches (slot)	2; V-notched prohibited
Conch See <a href="http://www.eregulations.com/delaware/fishing/blue-crabs-clams-conchs-oysters/">Blue Crabs, Clams, Conchs &amp; Oysters</a> ( <a href="http://www.eregulations.com/delaware/fishing/blue-crabs-clams-conchs-oysters/">http://www.eregulations.com/delaware/fishing/blue-crabs-clams-conchs-oysters/</a> ) for details	Knobbed whelk	All year	5 inches / 3 inch whorl	5 bushels
	Channeled whelk	All year	6 inches / 3.125 inch whorl	5 bushels
<b>Sharks, Tilefish and Highly Migratory Species (HMS) – Special permit required for federal waters</b>				
Species		Open Season	Minimum Size	Daily Limit
	Smoothhound and spiny dogfish	All year	None	None
	Blacktip shark, bull shark, <b>lemon shark, nurse shark, silky shark, spinner shark, tiger shark</b>	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
	Great hammerhead, scalloped <b>hammerhead, smooth hammerhead</b>	Jan. 1 – May 14 July 16 – Dec. 31	78 inches FORK LENGTH	

	Blue shark, oceanic white-tip shark, porbeagle, shortfin <b>mako,</b> <b>thresher</b> <b>shark</b>	All year	54 inches FORK LENGTH, except shortfin mako is 83 inches – female / 71 inches – male (FORK LENGTH)	additional Atlantic sharpnose per shore angler.
	Atlantic sharpnose shark, blacknose shark, bonnethead, <b>finetooth</b> <b>shark</b>	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.).

A non-offset, corrodible, non-stainless steel circle hook must be used when fishing for shark, except when fishing with flies or artificial lures.

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

	<p>Atlantic tunas, swordfish and billfish</p>	<p>*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="http://hmspermits.noaa.gov">hmspermits.noaa.gov</a> (<a href="http://hmspermits.noaa.gov">http://hmspermits.noaa.gov</a>) or call toll free (888) 872-8862 for specific information and permits.</p>
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