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Go

JUN AUG OCT

15

2007 2008 2009



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5 Feb 2005 - 31 Dec 2019

North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources


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**2008 NC Recreational Coastal Waters Guide for Sports Fishermen - April version**
For inland water limits contact [www.ncwildlife.org](http://www.ncwildlife.org).Striped bass season closed July 1, 2008 in all coastal waters except Atlantic Ocean [See News Release](#)Flounder Size Limit changed effective March 1, 2008 ([See Proclamation](#)) Download a [PDF guide to Flounder Size Limits](#)A [Coastal Recreational Fishing License](#) went into effect Jan. 1, 2007 for all of the state's coastal and ocean waters.

	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) <a href="#">Species Identification</a>	24" FL	3/Day	24" FL	3/Day
Spanish Mackerel(J) <a href="#">Species Identification</a>	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)	(L)	1/Vessel/Day	54" FL (F, H)	1/Vessel/Day
Sharks, Atlantic Sharpnose & Bonnethead (J,F)	(L)		(F, H)	1/Day
Blue Marlin (H)	99" LJFL	1/vessel/trip either Blue or White Marlin	99" LJFL	
White Marlin (H)	66" LJFL	1/vessel/trip either Blue or White Marlin	66" LJFL	
Sailfish (H)	63" LJFL	1/Day	63" LJFL	
Red Drum (Channel Bass, Puppy Drum)	18-27" TL (D)	1/Day	Unlawful to Possess	
Flounder (Internal) ( <a href="#">See Proclamation for area descriptions</a> )  Download a <a href="#">PDF guide to Flounder Size Limits</a>	14" TL Western Albemarle and Pamlico sounds and rivers and south of Brown's Inlet 15 1/2" TL Eastern Albemarle, Croatan, Roanoke, Pamlico, Core and Bogue sounds (P)	8/Day		
Flounder (Ocean) ( <a href="#">See Proclamation for area descriptions</a> )	15 1/2" TL north of Brown's Inlet 14" TL south of Brown's Inlet(P)	8/Day	15 1/2" TL north of Brown's Inlet 14" TL south of Brown's Inlet(P)	8/Day
Spotted Seatrout (Speckled)	12" TL	10/Day	12" TL	10/Day
Weakfish (Gray Trout)	12" TL	6/Day	12" TL	6/Day

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**2007**
**2008**
**2009**

[350 captures](#)  
5 Feb 2005 - 31 Dec 2019

▼ About this capture

<a href="#">Please see Details</a>				
<b>American &amp; Hickory Shad (M)</b>		10/Day		10/Day
<b>Alewife and Blueback Herring (M)</b>		No Harvest		No Harvest
<b>American Eel</b>	6" TL	50/Day	6" TL	50/Day
<b>Scup (North of Cape Hatteras)</b>	8" TL	50/Day	10" TL	50/Day (E)
<b>Black Sea Bass (North of Cape Hatteras) (C)</b>	12" TL	25/Day	12" TL	25/Day
<b>Black Sea Bass (South of Cape Hatteras)</b>	12" TL	15/Day	12" TL	15/Day
<b>Groupers (K&amp;J)</b>		(See Below)		(See Below)
<b>Red, Scamp, Yellowfin &amp; Yellowmouth Groupers</b>	20" TL	5/Day (all groupers combined; includes only 1 speckled hind, 1 warsaw, 1 golden tilefish, 1 snowy, 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, 1 golden tilefish, 1 snowy, and no more than 2 black or gag grouper, individual or combined) (K)
<b>Black and Gag Groupers</b>	24" TL	2/Day (See above)	24" TL	2/Day (See above)
<b>Speckled Hind (Kitty Mitchell)</b>		1/Vessel/Trip (See above)		1/Vessel/Trip (See above)
<b>Warsaw Grouper</b>		1/Vessel/Trip (See above)		1/Vessel/Trip (See above)
<b>Red Porgy (Silver Snapper, Pinky)</b>	14" TL	3/Day	14" TL	3/Day
<b>Dog, Gray, Cubera, Mahogany, Queen, Schoolmaster, &amp; Yellowtail Snappers</b>		10/Day (Species combined; includes up to 2 Red Snapper)	12" TL	10/Day (Species combined; includes up to 2 Red Snapper)
<b>Mutton Snapper</b>		See Above	16" TL	See Above
<b>Silk and Blackfin Snappers</b>	12" TL	See Above	12" TL	See Above
<b>Red Snapper</b>	20" TL	2/Day - See Above	20" TL	2/Day - See Above
<b>Vermillion Snapper</b>	12" TL	10/Day	12" TL	10/Day
<b>Reef Complex Species</b> Includes sheepshead, spadefish, gray triggerfish, white grunt, knobbed porgy and more (see below) (I) (J)		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)
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), sturgeon, Nassau grouper, goliath grouper (jewfish), and spearfish	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)
<b>Blue Crab (N)</b> <a href="#">Identification Help</a>	5" Carapace Width (Minimum) 6 3/4" Carapace Width (Maximum) (G)	50 crabs/day not to exceed 100 crabs/vessel/day
<b>Hard Clam</b>	1" Thick	100 clams/day not to exceed 200 clams/vessel/day
<b>Oyster (O)</b>	3" Shell Length	1 bushel/day not to exceed 2 bushels/vessel/day

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<a href="#">350 captures</a>				
5 Feb 2005 - 31 Dec 2019		2007 2008 2009  About this capture		
<b>Shrimp</b>		Closed Shrimping Area - 100 shrimp/person/day		
Cast Net Only		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 Wildlife Resources Commission) year-round: 3 per person per day at 18" TL minimum. 2 per person per day at 18" TL minimum and unlawful to possess between 22" – 27" TL in Joint waters effective July 1, 2008. Moratorium in Cape Fear River system effective July 1, 2008. ([More information about striped bass areas.](#))

(B) Limit of 10/person/day or 60/trip, whichever is less.

(C) Open season through December 31, 2007.

(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 September 18 – November 30 in the EEZ.

(F) Seeprohibited 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 day may be landed in addition to allowable bag limits for other sharks.

(G) Mature female crabs are exempt from minimum size. Maximum size is effective September through April and applies to mature females only.

(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 [hmspermits.noaa.gov](http://hmspermits.noaa.gov). Prior to removal from vessel, all billfishes, swordfish and bluefin tuna must be reported at NC HMS reporting stations. DMF website for more details.

(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, white grunt, margates, spadefish, scup, and hogfish, 20 per person per day in combination.

(J) For seasons, bag limits, size limits or closures for tunas, billfishes, and sharks contact NMFS Highly Migratory Species Division (1-800-894-5528 or [hmspermits.noaa.gov](http://hmspermits.noaa.gov) or [www.nmfs.noaa.gov](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov)). For snapper, grouper, and mackerels contact the South Atlantic Council (1-843-571-4366 or [www.safmc.net](http://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) It is unlawful to possess Large Coastal sharks less than 54 inches (Fork Length).

(M) Season, areas, or other limits may be set by DMF.

(N) One crab pot may be used from private property or private pier, without a license - Reference 15A NCAC 3J.0302.

(O) Contact DMF for seasons, areas, or other restrictions.

(P) The line dividing Pamlico Sound runs from Pt. of Marsh in Carteret County northeasterly to Bluff Pt. in Hyde County. The line dividing Albemarle Sound runs from the western shore of the mouth of the Alligator River northeasterly to the western shore of the mouth of North River at Camden Pt. Browns Inlet is located in Onslow County and the line runs through the northeast side of the Inlet. These descriptions are general and Proclamation FF-25-2008, dated February 26, 2008, has the specific coordinates of the line locations.

Total length (TL) is measured from tip of snout with mouth closed to top 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. Anglers cannot catch both a federal and state bag limit for the same species on the same trip.

Ocean boundary is defined as water seaward of the [COLREGS Demarcation Lines](#) as indicated on National Ocean Service navigation charts

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

**IMPORTANT** Check with Division of Marine Fisheries for most current minimum lengths and catch limits. 252-726-7021 or 800-682-2632. For inland water limits contact Wildlife Resources Commission 919-733-3633 or visit their website [www.ncwildlife.org](http://www.ncwildlife.org).

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