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North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources


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### 2007 NC Recreational Coastal Waters Guide for Sports Fishermen - April version

Note: Proclamation [FF-42-2007](#) changed size limit on Black Sea Bass south of HatterasFor inland water limits contact Wildlife Resources Commission 919-707-0220 or visit their website [www.ncwildlife.org](http://www.ncwildlife.org).Download a [Printer-Friendly PDF](#) of this Rec. GuideA [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)		(F) 54" FL	1/Vessel/Day
Sharks, Atlantic Sharpnose(J,F)	(L)		(F)	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)	14" TL	8/Day		
Flounder (Ocean)	14 1/2" TL	8/Day	14 1/2" 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
Mullet (Striped and White)		200/Day (species combined)		
Tarpon		1/Day		1/Day
Striped Bass	(A)	(A)	Unlawful To Possess	
American & Hickory Shad (M)		10/Day		10/Day

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<b>(North of Cape Hatteras)</b>				
<b>Black Sea Bass</b> (North of Cape Hatteras) (C)	12" TL	25/Day	12" TL	25/Day
<b>Black Sea Bass</b> (South of Cape Hatteras) (N)	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

<b>Coastal Waters</b> (Internal waters and Atlantic Ocean out to 3 miles)	<b>EEZ</b> (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

<b>Species</b> (note symbols)	<b>Minimum Length</b>	<b>Bag Limits</b> (Per Person)
<b>Blue Crab</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
<b>Bay Scallops</b>		No Harvest
<b>Conchs &amp; Whelks</b>		10/day not to exceed 20/vessel/day
<b>Mussels</b>		100/day not to exceed 200/vessel/day
<b>Shrimp</b> 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 (I)Reef complex species: whitebone porgy, jolthead porgy, knobbed porgy,

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(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) 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) 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.

[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) Effective June 1, 2007, the minimum size limit for black sea bass south of Cape Hatteras will be 12" TL. ([See proclamation](#))

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

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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