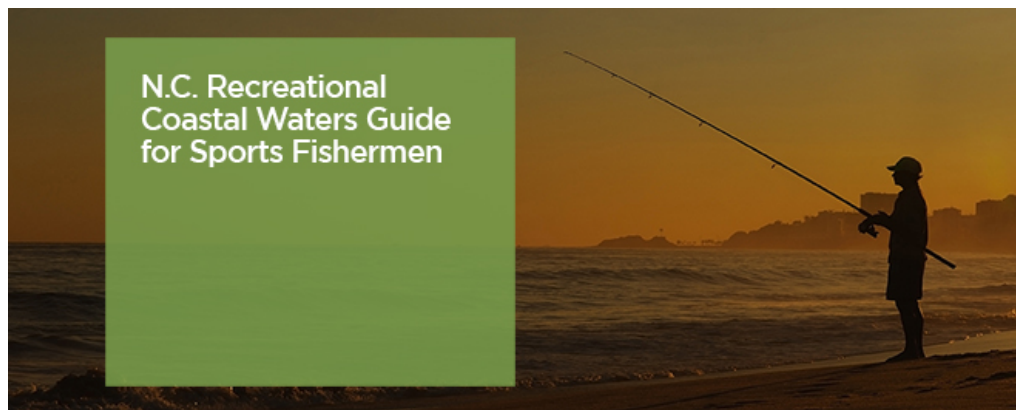


NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources

Marine Fisheries - Recreational Fishing Size and Bag Limits

DMF - Homepage

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Current Version Effective: October 15, 2019

(Website chart reflects the most recent changes to size and bag limits)

Download the Fish Rules mobile app 

Download and Print PDF version



Recreational Size and Creel Limits — mobile device format

Coastal Recreational Fishing License: Persons engaged in recreational fishing in North Carolina coastal waters are required to possess a Coastal Recreational Fishing License in accordance with G.S. 113-174.2




See also: [Fish Identification](#) | [Recreational Fishing Reports](#) | [Why do we have fishing regulations?](#)

For inland fishing regulations, contact Wildlife Resources Commission 919-707-0220 or visit their website

www.ncwildlife.org 

	STATE of N.C. COASTAL WATERS (Internal and 0-3 miles)		FEDERAL MANAGEMENT INFORMATION
FINFISH SPECIES (note symbols)	N.C. Minimum Length	N.C. Bag Limits (per person)	
Bluefish	None	15/Day, only 5 greater than 24" TL	Federal Management Information: https://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/sustainable/species/bluefish/index.html 
Cobia	See the most recent Cobia DMF proclamation at http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/mf/proclamations-current		Federal Management Information: http://www.asmfcr.org/species/cobia 
Wahoo	None	2/Day	

NCDEQ - Recreational Fishing Size and Bag Limits

Dolphin (B)	None	10/Day	
King Mackerel (H)	24" FL	3/Day	
Spanish Mackerel (H)	12" FL	15/Day	
Tuna: Bluefin, Bigeye and Yellowfin (G)	Bigeye and Yellowfin tuna 27" Curved FL	Yellowfin tuna 3/Day	Federal Management Information: https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/topic/atlantic-highly-migratory-species 
Smoothhounds, Smooth Dogfish and Spiny Dogfish	None	None	Federal Management Information: https://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/sustainable/species/sdogfish/index.html 
Sharks (G)	See most recent DMF proclamation at http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/mf/proclamations-current		Federal Management Information: https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/topic/atlantic-highly-migratory-species 
Blue Marlin (G)	99" LJFL	1 per vessel per trip, either blue marlin or white marlin	
White Marlin (G)	66" LJFL		
Sailfish (G)	63" LJFL	1/Day	
Red Drum (Channel Bass, Puppy Drum) ▲ (C)	18" - 27" TL	1/Day	Federal Management Information: https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2017-title50-vol13/pdf/CFR-2017-title50-vol13-sec697-7.pdf
Flounder ▲	SEASON CLOSED UNLAWFUL TO POSSESS		Federal Management Information: https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/fish-sharks 
Spotted Seatrout (Speckled Trout) ▲	14" TL	4/Day	No Federal Regulations
Weakfish ▲ (Gray Trout)	12" TL	1/Day	Federal Management Information: https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2017-title50-vol13/pdf/CFR-2017-title50-vol13-sec697-7.pdf
Sheepshead	10" FL	10/Day	No Federal Regulations
Black Drum (C)	14" - 25" TL	10/Day	No Federal Regulations
Tarpon	None	1/Day	No Federal Regulations
Striped Bass	(A)	(A)	Federal Management Information: https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2017-title50-vol13/pdf/CFR-2017-title50-vol13-sec697-7.pdf
American Shad (D)	None	(D)	No Federal Regulations
Hickory Shad (D)	None	(D)	No Federal Regulations

Alewife and Blueback Herring	UNLAWFUL TO POSSESS		No Federal Regulations
American Eel (E)	9" TL	25/Day	No Federal Regulations
Scup (North of Cape Hatteras only)	8" TL	50/Day	Federal Management Information: https://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/sustainable/recfishing/regs/index.html 
Black Sea Bass (North of Cape Hatteras)	12 ½" TL	15/Day	Federal Management Information: https://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/sustainable/recfishing/regs/index.html 
Black Sea Bass (South of Cape Hatteras)	13" TL	7/Day	Federal Management Information: http://safmc.net/regulations/ 
Snappers, Groupers, Porgys, Triggerfish, Jacks, Tilefish, Grunts, Spadefishes, Wrasses and Sea Basses (H)	See the most recent Snapper/Grouper Complex recreational DMF proclamation at http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/mf/proclamations-current		Federal Management Information: http://safmc.net/regulations/ 
Mullet (striped and white)	200/Day (species combined)		No Federal Regulations
PROHIBITED FINFISH SPECIES			
COASTAL WATERS (Internal waters and Atlantic Ocean out to 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, sandbar, silky, sevengill, sixgill, and smalltail. Other finfish: river herring, Atlantic sturgeon, shortnose sturgeon, Nassau grouper, Goliath grouper, Warsaw grouper, speckled hind and red snapper.			
SHELLFISH and CRUSTACEANS	STATE COASTAL AND EEZ WATERS (Internal and 0-200 miles)		
	Minimum Size	Bag Limits (per person)	
BLUE CRAB (F) Recreational crabbing Blue crab info	5" Carapace Width	50 Crabs/Day not to exceed 100 Crabs/Vessel/Day	
STONE CRAB CLAWS (J)	2 ¾ Propodus Length	UNLAWFUL TO POSSESS from June 15 - August 15 (no possession limit during open season)	
SPINY LOBSTER (K)	3" Carapace Length (L)	2/day not to exceed 2/Vessel/Day	
HARD CLAM	1" Thick	100 Clams/Day not to exceed 200 Clams/Vessel/Day	
OYSTER (I)	3" Shell Length	1 Bushel Oysters/Day not to exceed 2 Bushels Oysters/Vessel/Day	
BAY SCALLOP	SEASON CLOSED - UNLAWFUL TO POSSESS		
CONCHS and	None	10/Day not to exceed 20/Vessel/Day	

NCDEQ - Recreational Fishing Size and Bag Limits

WHELKS			
MUSSELS		None	100/Day not to exceed 200/Vessel/Day
SHRIMP	Closed Shrimping Area	None	4 quarts (heads on) or 2 ½ quarts (heads off) of shrimp per person per day (Cast Net Only)
	Open Shrimping Area	None	48 quarts (heads on) or 30 quarts (heads off) of shrimp per person per day or if vessel is used, per vessel per day (RCGL max. limit of 2/Vessel)

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