

F=0.24 (1996=55% reduction in F). See Table 2 for a list of recreational tautog regulations by state.

Table 2: 2001 Recreational Tautog Regulations

STATE	SIZE LIMIT	POSSESSION LIMITS	OPEN SEASONS	IMPLEMENTATION DATE
MA	16"	6	-	➤ February 1994 (size limit) ➤ April 1997 (possession limit)
RI	16" 16"	3 10	May 1-October 14 October 15-December 31	➤ July 1994 (size limit) ➤ May 2000 (possession limits/open seasons)
CT	14"	4 (daily)	Jan 1-Apr 30, June 15- Dec 31	➤ May 1995 (size limit) ➤ June 1996 (possession limits/seasons/gear restrictions)
NY	14" 14"	1 10	June 1 – October 6 October 7- May 31	➤ April 1998 (size limit/possession limits/seasons)
NJ	14" 14"	1 10	June 1 – October 9 October 10 – May 31	➤ April 1998 (possession limits/open season)
DE	14" 15"	10 ^c 3	Jul 1 - Mar 31 Apr 1 - Jun 30	➤ 1999 (size limit) ➤ 1992 (size limit/possession limits/open season)
MD	14"	5	-	➤ June 1998
VA	14"	7	Open	➤ April 1998 (size limit) ➤ January 1999 (possession limit/seasons)

c Delaware has an 11 day closure from September 8 through September 18.

1.3 DESCRIPTION OF THE FISHERY

The tautog fishery is primarily recreational, extending from Maine to Virginia. Recreational landings have accounted for approximately 90% of total landings over the past six years. Most landings occur in state waters between Cape Cod and Chesapeake Bay. Tautog have historically ranked seventh in recreational species sought in both the North Atlantic and Mid-Atlantic sub-regions. Tautog are most frequently caught in the spring and fall months, although some Mid-Atlantic Region fishermen pursue them year-round and there is an active fishery from December through March between New Jersey and North Carolina.

1.3.1 Recreational

1.3.1.1 Annual Harvest

Recreational catches fluctuated without trend from 1981 to 1985. Harvest peaked at approximately 17 million pounds in 1986 and declined steadily, reaching the 1.7 million pound mark in 1998. The most recreationally landed tautog were previously caught in Massachusetts, New York, and New Jersey during the 1981 to 1995 time period (pre-plan), with those states accounting for 58 % of the recreational harvest by weight. Since plan implementation New Jersey, Virginia and New York are now the top three recreational landing states, accounting for approximately 58% of the catch (table 3 and figure A).