




















Delaware's Recreational Season, Size and Creel Limits


2017 Quick Reference

		Species	Open Season	Minimum Size	Daily Limit
Non - tidal Waters		Largemouth bass	All year	12 inches; except 15 inches in Becks Pond	6; except 2 from Becks Pond
		Smallmouth bass	All year	None between 12 - 17 inches	6 (no more than 1 > 17 inches)
		Striped bass hybrid <i>(Only occur in Lums Pond)</i>	All year	15 inches	2
		Panfish <i>(bluegill, pumpkinseed, redear, crappie, yellow & white perch)</i>	All year	None	50 (no more than 25 of one species)
		Trout <i>(special rules apply)</i>	Opens first Saturday in April	None	6 (4 in fly-fishing only waters)
Tidal Waters		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	All year	8 inches	None
		Atlantic sturgeon	Closed - no harvest permitted		
		Black drum	All year	16"	3
		Black sea bass	May 15 - Sep. 21 Oct. 22 - Dec. 31	12.5"	15 15
		Bluefish	All year	None	10
		Catfish (any species)	All year	None	None
		Red drum	All year	20 - 27 inches may be retained	5
		River herring <i>(alewife & blueback)</i>	Closed - no harvest permitted		
		Scup	All year	8 inches	50
		Spanish mackerel	All year	14 inches	15
		Spotted seatrout	All year	12 inches	None
		Striped bass	All year	28 - 37" or 44" and greater, except only 20 - 25" fish may be retained from July 1 - Aug. 31 in DE River, DE Bay & their tribs.	2, except catch & release only on spawning grounds April 1 - May 31
		Summer flounder	All year	17"	4
		Tautog	Jan 1 - Mar 31	15"	5
			April 1 - May 11	15"	3
			July 17 - Aug. 31	15"	5
			Sept. 29 - Dec 31	15"	5
		Tilefish (Blueline & Golden)	All year	None	7 In any combination
		Weakfish	All year	13 inches	1
		White perch	All year	8 inches	None
		Winter flounder	Feb. 11 - Apr. 10	12 inches	2
		Shark, tuna & billfish	Refer to back		

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.).

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



Atlantic tunas,
swordfish and billfish

***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 www.hmspermits.gov or call toll free (888) 872-8862 for specific information and permits.

Sandbar and sand tiger shark images adapted from Compagno, L.J.V. 1984. FAO species catalogue. Vol. 4. Sharks of the World. Parts 1 & 2 available courtesy of www.fishbase.org . Lineart of other shark species from Bigelow, H.B. and W.C. Schroeder (1953) available courtesy of www.nefsc.noaa.gov/lineart/.

