

**VIRGINIA MARINE RESOURCES COMMISSION  
2020 RECREATIONAL FISHING REGULATIONS FOR  
VIRGINIA'S MARINE WATERS SIZE and POSSESSION LIMITS  
May 2020**

**AMBERJACK**

Minimum Size Limit.....32 inches  
Possession Limit.....2 per person

**AMERICAN EEL**

Minimum Size Limit..... 9 inches  
Possession Limit.....25 per person (50 for hire captain & mate)

**BLACK DRUM (DRUM, DRUMFISH)**

Minimum Size Limit.....16 inches  
Possession Limit.....1 per person

**BLACK SEA BASS**

Season.....May 29 – Dec 31  
Minimum Size Limit.....12 1/2 inches  
Possession Limit.....15 per person

**BLUEFISH**

Minimum Size Limit.....None  
Possession Limit.....3 per person (5 per person on for-hire trips)

**COBIA (Cobia permit and reporting required)**

Season.....June 1 – Sept 30  
Minimum Size Limit.....40" but only 1 fish over 50" aboard vessel  
Possession Limit.....1 per person, 3 per vessel,  
whichever is more restrictive

**GREY TROUT (WEAKFISH)**

Minimum Size Limit.....12 inches  
Possession Limit.....1 per person

**GROUPE**

Minimum Size Limit.....None  
Possession Limit.....1 per person

**KING MACKEREL**

Minimum Size Limit.....27 inches  
Possession Limit.....3 per person

**RED DRUM (CHANNEL BASS, REDFISH)**

Minimum Size Limit.....18 inches  
Maximum Size Limit.....26 inches  
Possession Limit.....3 per person

**RIVER HERRING (ALEWIFE; BLUEBACK)**.....Illegal to Possess

**SCUP (PORGY)**

Minimum Size Limit.....8 inches in state waters; 9 inches in Federal  
Possession Limit.....30 per person

**SHAD (AMERICAN SHAD)**.....Illegal to Possess

**SHEEPSHEAD**

Minimum Size Limit.....None  
Possession Limit.....4 per person

**SPADEFISH**

Minimum Size Limit.....None  
Possession Limit.....4 per person

**Dates are inclusive where a season is specified**

All regulations are subject to change. It is the angler's responsibility to know and abide by all current regulations and laws. Check for new regulations before you go fishing. [www.mrc.virginia.gov](http://www.mrc.virginia.gov)



**SPANISH MACKEREL**

Minimum Size Limit.....14 inches  
Possession Limit.....15 per person

**SPECKLED TROUT (SPOTTED SEATROUT)**

Minimum Size Limit.....14 inches  
Possession Limit.....5 per person

Only one speckled trout of the 5-fish limit may be 24 inches or greater

**STRIPED BASS (ROCKFISH, STRIPER)**

Regulations on seasons, size limits, possession limits, available on separate regulation card or use the contact information below.

**STURGEON**.....Illegal to Possess

**SUMMER FLOUNDER (FLUKE)**

Minimum Size Limit.....16 1/2 inches  
Possession Limit.....4 per person

**TAUTOG**

Minimum Size Limit.....16 inches  
Possession Limit.....4 per person

Season.....Jan 1-May 15 and July1-December 31

**TILEFISH**

**Bluefin Tilefish**—Season.....May 1-October 31

Possession Limit.....3 fish per person on a recreational vessel; 5 fish per person on an uninspected for-hire vessel; 7 fish per person on an inspected for-hire vessel

**Golden Tilefish**.....Open all year; Possession limit 8 fish per person

**SHARKS (Anglers shall use non-offset, non-stainless steel circle hooks when fishing for sharks)**

Recreationally Prohibited Species – It is illegal to take or possess any shark from the "Recreationally Prohibited Species" list, as defined in Regulation 4VAC20-490-20, including but not limited to the following species commonly encountered in Virginia: Atlantic Angel, Dusky, Sand Tiger, Sandbar, White, and Bigeye Thresher Sharks. No size or possession limits apply to Dogfish Sharks, but all fins and head must remain attached.

Minimum Size Limit (exceptions below).....54 inches fork length (FL)  
All sharks must be landed with head and fins attached; hammerhead sharks must be 78 inches FL or greater, female mako must be 83 inches FL or greater, male mako must be 71 inches FL or greater; no minimum size applies to Atlantic Sharpnose, Bonnethead, Blacknose, Finetooth Sharks.

Possession Limit.....1 per vessel  
Possession limit for Atlantic Sharpnose and Bonnethead Sharks is 1 per person. A non-boat assisted shore angler is entitled to a vessel possession limit

Season Closed (Large Coastal Group).....May 15-July 15  
(Includes Blacktip, Bull, Great Hammerhead, Lemon, Nurse, Scalloped Hammerhead, Smooth Hammerhead, Spinner, and Tiger Shark)

Federal waters, beyond the Three Mile Limit governed by different regulations set by the Mid-Atlantic Fisheries Management Council.

Sharks may only be taken by handline or rod and reel; No spearing or bow fishing.

**ADDITIONAL REGULATIONS**

**Saltwater Fishing License** – Individual license required in the Chesapeake Bay and its tributary rivers and in all seaside and coastal ocean waters out to the Three Mile Limit Line, unless fishing on a licensed pier, licensed charter or headboat, or licensed private boat; or unless specifically exempted. **For an FIP number, register at: [www.mrc.virginia.gov/FIP](http://www.mrc.virginia.gov/FIP).**

**Measurements** – Size limits are in total length; fish must be measured from the most forward projection of the snout, with the mouth closed, to the tip of the longer lobe of the tail fin, with the tail compressed along the midline, using a straight-line measure, not over the curve of the body.

**Snagging** – Illegal to snag, or attempt to snag, any finfish.

**VMRC website: [www.mrc.virginia.gov](http://www.mrc.virginia.gov)**

Information may also be obtained from the Virginia Marine Resources Commission (757) 247-2200 or the Virginia Saltwater Fishing Tournament (757) 491-5160, located at 380 Fenwick Road, Bldg. 96, Fort Monroe, VA 23651