



# MARINE FISHERIES PROGRAM

## QUARTERLY REPORT

December 2017



### ➤ FISHERIES MANAGEMENT, MONITORING & RESEARCH:

#### ASMFC / MAFMC Management.

◆ Amendment 3 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Atlantic Menhaden was approved at the November meeting of the **ASMFC Menhaden Management Board**. The Amendment **maintains the management program's current single-species biological reference points until the review and adoption of menhaden-specific ecological reference points as part of the 2019 benchmark stock assessment** process. It also addresses a suite of commercial management measures including allocation, quota transfers, quota rollovers, incidental catch, the episodic events set aside program, and the Chesapeake Bay reduction fishery cap. In addition the **Board set the total allowable catch for the 2018 and 2019 fishing seasons at 216,000 metric tons** with the expectation that the setting of the TAC for subsequent years will be guided by menhaden-specific ecological reference points. Amendment 3 also changed fishery allocations in order to strike an improved balance between gear types and jurisdictions. The Amendment allocated a baseline quota of 0.5% to each jurisdiction, and then allocated the rest of the TAC based on historic landings between 2009 and 2011. This measure provides fishing opportunities to states which currently have little quota while still recognizing historic landings in the fishery. The Board agreed to maintain the quota transfer process, prohibit the rollover of unused quota, maintain the 6,000 lb trip limit for non-directed and small-scale gears following the closure of a directed fishery, and set aside 1% of the TAC for episodic events in the states of New York through Maine.

◆ **Lobster:** The ASMFC American Lobster Management Board approved American Lobster Draft Addendum XXVI/Jonah Crab Draft Addendum III for public comment. Given the same data collection needs apply to both American lobster and Jonah crab fisheries, the Draft Addenda **seek to improve harvest reporting and biological data collection in the American lobster and Jonah crab fisheries**. Recent management action in the Northwest Atlantic, including the protection of deep sea corals, the declaration of a national monument, and the expansion of offshore wind projects, have highlighted deficiencies in current American lobster and Jonah crab reporting requirements. There are three questions posed for public comment: (1) what percentage of harvesters should be required to report in the American lobster and Jonah crab fisheries; (2) should current data elements be expanded to collect a greater amount of information in both fisheries; and (3) at what scale should spatial information be collected. Connecticut will host a public hearing at DEEP Marine Headquarters in Old Lyme on Thursday, January 18, 2018 at 7 pm.



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◆ **Tautog:** The ASMFC Tautog Management Board finalized and approved **Amendment 1 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Tautog**. This plan created a Long Island Sound management unit, delineated as the area north and west of a line drawn from Orient, NY to Watch Hill, RI (see Long Island Sound Option 6). The board also voted in October to approve the following recreational measures for the Long Island Sound fishery. After the board meeting, it was determined by staff that the "3(-1)" for the spring creel limit should have read 2(0). Because catches in the spring are very small, the difference is effectively inconsequential. However, in the spirit of the board granting LIS a 23% reduction instead of imposing the 47% reduction prescribed by the amendment, we will likely correct the spring creel limit to 2 fish.



Option 1 20.3% Reduction	Minimum Length	Creel Limit	CT Days Open	NY Days Open
Spring Season	16"	3 (-1)	30	30 (+30)
Summer Season		2	62	0
Fall Season		3 (-1)	50 (-8)	60 (-11)



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◆ **Striped Bass:** During its annual meeting, the ASMFC Striped Bass Management Board convened a working group to discuss the management of the species in the context of Amendment 6, the balance between preserving stock biomass and allowing fishing. This working group will report back to the Board and ultimately provide guidance to the Technical Committee and Stock Assessment Subcommittee as they continue the 2018 benchmark assessment.

◆ **Shad & River Herring:** During its annual meeting, the ASMFC Shad and River Herring Management Board considered a recommendation from the ASMFC Assessment Science Committee that the **upcoming American shad stock assessment be a new benchmark assessment rather than an update of the last benchmark assessment**. A benchmark assessment will allow incorporation of new data sets and assessment techniques not used in the last benchmark assessment, which is now 10 years old (completed in 2007). The Board also approved updated shad Sustainable Fishery Management Plans (SFMPs) from several states, including Connecticut. However, after some discussion of inconsistencies between SFMPs from different states, as well as between SFMPs and the language in Amendments 2 & 3 to the Shad and River Herring Interstate Fishery Management Plan, the Board tasked the Technical Committee with developing proposed improvements to Amendments 2 & 3 to address SFMP inconsistencies.

### ◆ Summary of Fall, 2017 Long Island Sound Trawl Survey (LISTS):

- The 40 tows for the September 2017 cruise were conducted Sept 7 – Oct 3 in 10 days underway. Four (4) days were lost to PTO repairs and five (5) days were lost to poor weather conditions.
- The 40 tows for the October 2017 cruise were completed Oct 13 – Nov 3 in 10 days underway. Five (5) days were lost to poor weather and one (1) day was lost to staff shortage.
- Data entry has already been finished and error checking has begun. The following items of interest are based on preliminary numbers.
- **Overall, catches this fall were light.** The weather was likely a factor, since the majority of sampling occurred after a series of hurricanes and tropical storms made their way up the east coast.
- **Almost 90% of the fall catch by number consisted of young-of-year fish from three species (butterfish, scup and weakfish).** These species commonly make up the majority of the fall catches by number. Butterfish and weakfish indices of abundance were below the fall time-series average; butterfish was approximately 30% below the average while



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weakfish was about 56% below average. The **scup (porgy) index was roughly average for the fall time-series.**

- **Smooth dogfish accounted for a third of the fall catch by weight;** more than two tons were recorded during the fall, resulting in a record high index of relative abundance (gm 8.29 kg/tow, prelim) which is more than four times larger than the time-series average.
- **Some important species were at record low levels of abundance this fall based on LISTS sampling: including bluefish, winter flounder, lobster and little skate.**

### ◆ Marine Fisheries GIS:

Staff are assisting with the development of the spatial data inventory being compiled for the **CT Blue Plan**. Legislation passed in 2015 established the CT Blue Plan ([Public Act 15-66](#)) with a requirement to develop a “Resource Use & Inventory” of Long Island Sound’s natural resources and existing human uses. The Inventory will guide future use of the Sound’s waters and submerged lands seaward of the 10-foot bathymetric contour. This means the Blue Plan will supplement the CT DEEP’s Coastal Management Program, which protects coastal resources and guides development along the immediate coast. The legislation also requires coordination with New York State to the maximum extent possible. Please see the Blue Plan website for more information at: [www.ct.gov/deep/lisblueplan](http://www.ct.gov/deep/lisblueplan).

Since the Blue Plan is intended to provide protection of the Sound’s marine life and habitats while also protecting its traditional human uses such as fishing, recreation, aquaculture, and navigation from future conflicting or incompatible activities, the inventory needs to have spatial representations of the existing resources and existing uses to the best of our ability to document these things. The **Blue Plan Team has put a lot of effort into compiling “map books” of all relevant spatial data that will serve as the Resource Use & Inventory called for in the legislation.** The goal is to have the Inventory completed by the end of 2017.

Staff participated in five (5) webinars the Blue Plan Team hosted to gather feedback on the content in the map books. The **map books cover benthic physical habitat, benthic biological habitat, fish, shellfish and zooplankton resources, and recreational SCUBA, fishing, and waterfowl hunting activities in Long Island Sound (LIS).** Staff have already supplied numerous data sources and spatial data layers to the Blue Plan map books and have identified additional data that would make good additions to the catalog. Work to compile the data and supply it to the Blue Plan Team will continue for the next few weeks.





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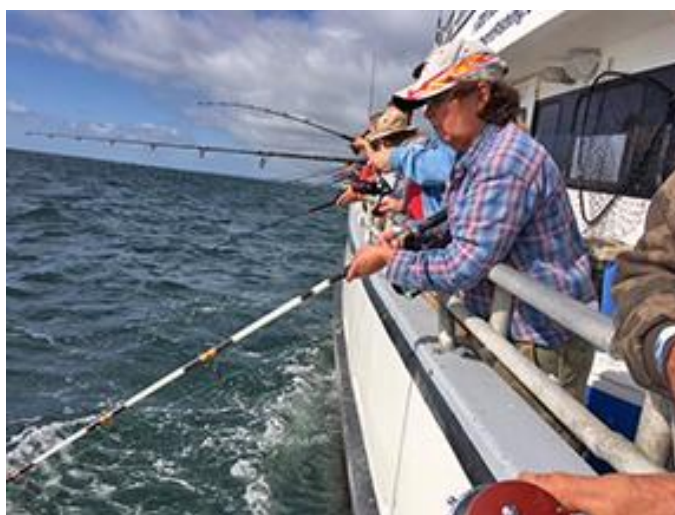
In the effort to depict the extent of recreational fishing in Long Island Sound, staff at Marine Fisheries have been developing a map of areas important to recreational fishing for CT anglers. **This “Popular Places to Fish” layer is already part of the on-line Saltwater Fishing Resource Maps (<http://www.ct.gov/deep/saltwaterfishingresourcemap>) and the Blue Plan spatial data Inventory.** Although this is the best map layer we currently have for this important recreational use of LIS, **we know it is not complete and would greatly benefit from angler input.**

During one of the recent webinars, a number of callers made good suggestions on how to improve the depiction of areas important to recreational fishing. In particular, some callers asked for a way to contribute their knowledge to the map. Although the Blue Plan Team does not



currently have a mechanism for participatory mapping with individuals, **Marine Fisheries staff would welcome the opportunity to work with any anglers interested in contributing their knowledge of recreational fishing in LIS.** Anglers are encouraged to contact us at the CT DEEP

Fisheries Division’s Marine Fisheries Office (860-434-6043 or [deep.marine.fisheries@ct.gov](mailto:deep.marine.fisheries@ct.gov)). More input into the map layers will not only help make the map more representative of recreational fishing activity in LIS but will, hopefully, also help the Blue Plan Team to develop recommendations to keep these areas accessible to recreational fishing activities when new projects request permits to be sited in LIS.





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## ➤ MARINE RECREATIONAL FISHING:

### Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP)

#### ◆ CONNECTICUT'S WAVE 4 ONLY (JULY/AUGUST) TOTAL CATCH ESTIMATES

2016	<i>Numbers of fish</i>		2017
<b>BLUEFISH</b>	<b>467,441</b>	<b>BLUEFISH</b>	<b>507,521</b>
DOGFISH SHARKS	50,168	DOGFISH SHARKS	85,334
SKATES/RAYS	47,212	SKATES/RAYS	17,005
ATLANTIC COD	32,181	ATLANTIC COD	238
POLLOCK	1,581	OTHER CODS/HAKES	2,551
DOLPHINS	247	DOLPHINS	592
KINGFISHES	3,692	KINGFISHES	208
WEAKFISH	1,140	WEAKFISH	551
<b>SUMMER FLOUNDER</b>	<b>805,316</b>	<b>SUMMER FLOUNDER</b>	<b>596,615</b>
HERRINGS	107,622	HERRINGS	157,848
<b>SCUP</b>	<b>1,294,167</b>	<b>SCUP</b>	<b>2,104,122</b>
PUFFERS	209	PUFFERS	28
TOADFISH	138	TOADFISH	3,425
<b>BLACK SEA BASS</b>	<b>845,168</b>	<b>BLACK SEA BASS</b>	<b>1,246,360</b>
SEAROBINS	792,365	SEAROBINS	793,343
<b>STRIPED BASS</b>	<b>193,029</b>	<b>STRIPED BASS</b>	<b>117,149</b>
WHITE PERCH	1,188	TRIGGERFISHES/FILEFISHES	3,141
SCULPINS	488	LITTLE TUNNY - ATLANTIC BONITO	416
TUNAS/MACKERELS	12,669	OTHER TUNAS/MACKERELS	1,121
CUNNER	10,254	CUNNER	3,537
<b>TAUTOG</b>	<b>12,543</b>	<b>TAUTOG</b>	<b>34,501</b>

#### ◆ NUMBER OF MRIP ANGLER INTERCEPTS (INTERVIEWS): 2016 / 2017

Year	Total Intercepts	Number Asn with Zero Int	Number Asn Cancelled	% Zero Intercepts	Productivity	# Assignments Drawn	# Assignments Completed
2016	2,736	155	0	36.9	6.51	420	420
2017	2,941	161	0	36.84	6.73	437	437



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### ◆ CT MRIP: SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS / INTERCEPTS - 2016 & 2017

Wave	CHARTER	PRIVATE BOAT	SHORE	Sum of All Intercepts	Total # of Assignments
<b>2016 / 2017</b>					
2 MARCH/APRIL	0 / 0	14 / 10	60 / 18	74 / 28	47 / 64
3 MAY/JUNE	26 / 71	454 / 513	135 / 96	615 / 680	97 / 97
4 JULY/AUGUST.	62 / 52	1,111 / 1,231	138 / 229	1,311 / 1,512	106 / 106
5 SEPT/OCTOBER	24 / 80	446 / 446	136 / 76	606 / 602	89 / 89
6 NOV/DECEMBER	9 / 0	75 / 75	34 / 44	118 / 119	81 / 81
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>121 / 203</b>	<b>2,100 / 2,275</b>	<b>503 / 463</b>	<b>2,724 / 2,941</b>	<b>420 / 437</b>
% of Total	5 / 7	77 / 77	18 / 16		

### CT MRIP NOAA ANGLER SITE REGISTRY

County	Number of Active Sites	
Fairfield	72	34%
New Haven	44	21%
Middlesex	29	13%
New London	69	32%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>214</b>	

Area	Number of Sites by Area	
West	116	55%
East	98	45%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>214</b>	





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### ◆ Marine Boat Catch Card Angler Survey

There were 226 catch cards from 181 marine recreational anglers who fish from boats and used a boat launch. 186 catch cards were from staff interviewing marine anglers at the associated boat launches and another 40 were returned from marine anglers. Staff surveyed east and west boat launches 29 times in 2017. There were 291 fish measurements from marine anglers. The catch card is designed to collect **fishing trip effort, catch by species and disposition, along with length measurement data on kept and released fish**. The boat launches are Barn Island, Bayberry Lane, Niantic River, Baldwin Bridge, Birdseye (Stratford), Norwalk (Veterans Park) and Saugatuck River State Boat launch.

2017 Summary of Fish Caught from 8 Boat Launches

Fish Species	Sum of Kept	%	Sum of Released	%	Total
American Eel	0	0.0	1	100.0	1
Atlantic mackerel	1	16.7	5	83.3	6
Atlantic menhaden	66	64.1	37	35.9	103
<b>Black sea bass</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>17.3</b>	<b>449</b>	<b>82.7</b>	<b>543</b>
<b>Bluefish</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>40.1</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>59.9</b>	<b>187</b>
Catfish	0	0.0	4	100.0	4
Dogfish	3	7.9	35	92.1	38
False albacore	0	0.0	29	100.0	29
<b>Scup</b>	<b>307</b>	<b>43.8</b>	<b>394</b>	<b>56.2</b>	<b>701</b>
Sea Robins	12	3.4	346	96.6	358
Skates	1	8.3	11	91.7	12
<b>Striped bass</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>5.2</b>	<b>307</b>	<b>94.8</b>	<b>324</b>
<b>Summer flounder</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>15.6</b>	<b>244</b>	<b>84.4</b>	<b>289</b>
<b>Tautog</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>11.7</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>88.3</b>	<b>248</b>
Total	650	22.9	2193	77.1	2843

**Connecticut Volunteer Marine Angler Catch Card Survey for the Private Boat Mode<sup>2014</sup>**

If you need assistance completing this form, please contact the DEEP Marine Fisheries Division (860.434.6043)

00001

Date of Trip \_\_\_\_\_

AM     PM

Trip Start Time \_\_\_\_\_

Area(s) Fished-See map below

Conservation ID/Fishing Lic. # \_\_\_\_\_  
(Enter # in order to qualify for Raffle Prize)

Primary Fish Targeted \_\_\_\_\_

Secondary Fish Targeted \_\_\_\_\_

Total fishing hours (to nearest 1/2 hr - lines wet) \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Anglers in Fishing Party \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Anglers that Caught Fish \_\_\_\_\_

Boat's Total Catch For Trip

Common Fish Name	# Kept	# Relsd

**Length of first 8 fish caught**  
(Rounded down to the nearest half inch)

Common Fish Name	Length	Kept? <small>(Circle one)</small>
		Y / N
		Y / N
		Y / N
		Y / N
		Y / N
		Y / N
		Y / N
		Y / N

Check Box, if NO fish were caught





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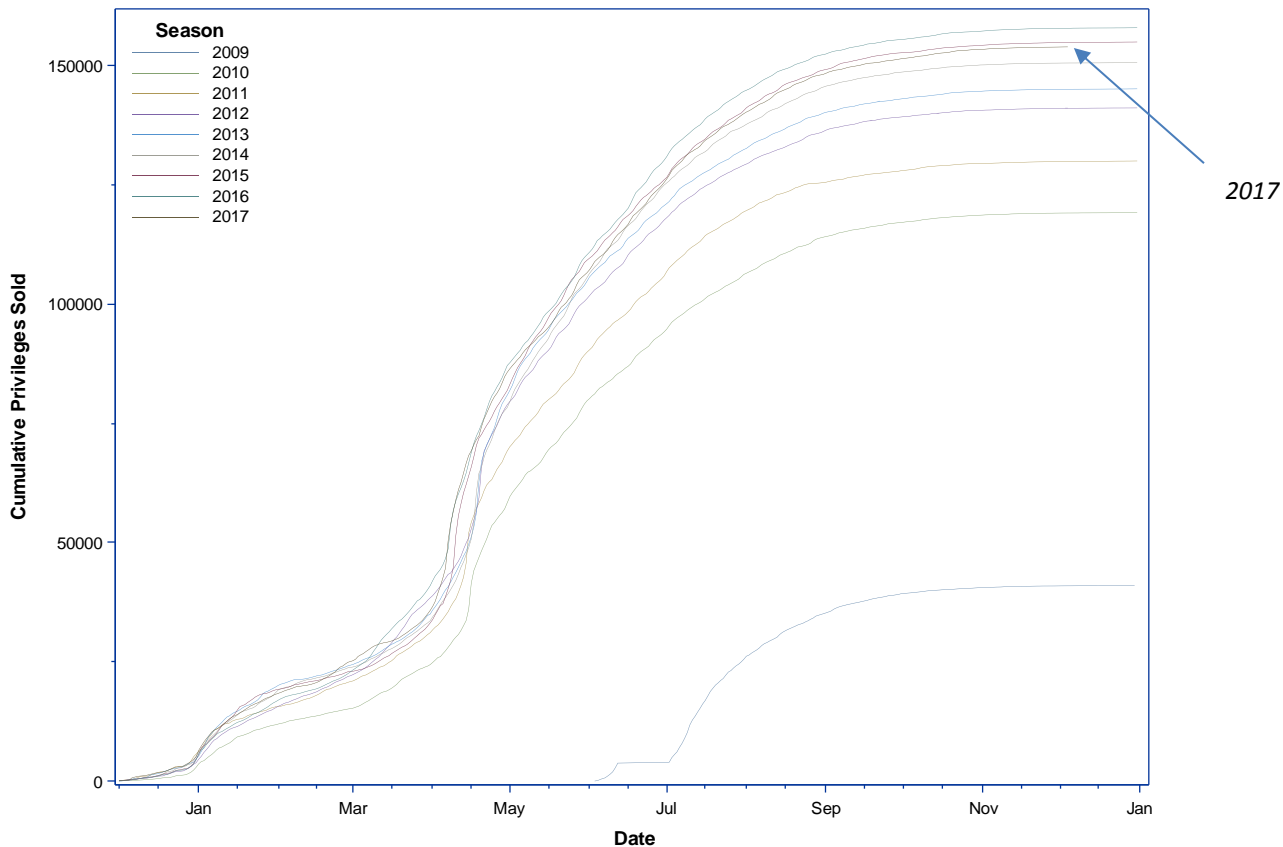


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## ➤ MARINE RECREATIONAL FISHING LICENSES:

◆ Marine fishing license sales in 2010 - 2017.

2017 Marine Licenses issued through December 7, 2017.





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### Marine Waters Fishing Licenses, 2015 – 2017. Licenses by Type

Privilege Type	Season		
	2015	2016	2017
10195 - Marine Waters Fishing Lic, Free Annual - Code 9 (Intellect Disabled)	427	445	406
10196 - Marine Waters Fishing Lic, Free Annual - Code 5 (Blind)	83	82	80
10197 - Marine Waters Fishing Lic, Free Annual - Type 17 (Handicapped)	511	505	467
1296 - Marine Waters Fishing Lic	<b>18,301</b>	<b>18,752</b>	<b>18,742</b>
1297 - Marine Waters Fishing Lic (Non-Res)	2,870	2,996	3,006
1337 - Marine Waters Fishing Lic, Free Annual - Age 65 Plus	<b>31,250</b>	<b>33,014</b>	<b>33,222</b>
1345 - Marine Waters Fishing Lic, 1-day	802	733	804
1346 - All Waters Fishing Lic	<b>65,988</b>	<b>67,254</b>	<b>64,898</b>
1347 - Marine Waters Fishing Lic / Firearms Hunting Lic	448	440	507
1348 - All Waters Fishing Lic / Firearms Hunting Lic	17,185	16,043	18,036
1349 - All Waters Fishing Lic / Arch Deer / Small Game Lic	1,813	1,948	3,843
1350 - AW Fish Lic / Fa SS (Fa Hunt; S/R PL Deer; PL Sp Trky)	1,114	1,243	.
1351 - AW Fish Lic / Archery SS (Arch Deer / Sm Gm; PL Sp Trky)	1,001	1,050	.
1352 - Marine Waters Fishing Lic, 3-day (Non-Res)	1,377	1,491	1,456
1353 - All Waters Fishing Lic (Non-Res)	1,519	1,702	1,803
1354 - All Waters Fishing Lic / Firearms Hunting Lic (Non-Res)	138	142	133
1355 - Marine Waters Fishing Lic / Firearms Hunting Lic (Non-Res)	25	21	15
1475 - AW Fish Lic / Fa SS Lic (Fa Hunt; S/R/Mz PL Deer; PL Sp Trky)	2,059	1,938	.
1476 - AW Fish Lic / Fs SS (Fa Hunt; Mig Duck Stmp; Hip Pmt)	1,288	1,095	.
1922 - Connecticut Bonus Striped Bass Voucher	1,927	2,214	2,229
1953 - All Waters Fishing Lic / Firearms Hunting Lic	376	334	365
1954 - AW Fish Lic / Fa SS (Fa Hunt; S/R PL Deer; PL Sp Trky, 16-17)	49	53	.
1955 - AW Fish Lic / Fa SS (Fa Hunt; Mig Duck Stmp; Hip Pmt, 16-17)	61	43	.
1957 - Marine Waters Fishing Lic (16-17)	368	355	368
1958 - All Waters Fishing Lic (16-17)	2,778	2,783	2,584
1959 - Marine Waters Fishing Lic, 1-day (16-17)	20	24	21
1960 - Marine Waters Fishing Lic / Firearms Hunting Lic (16-17)	9	6	11
1962 - All Waters Fishing Lic / Arch Deer / Small Game Lic (16-17)	52	9	89
1964 - AW Fish Lic / Archery SS (Arch Deer / Sm Gm; PL Sp Trky, 16-17)	28	48	.
1965 - AW Fish Lic / Fa SS Lic (Fa Hunt; S/R/Mz PL Deer; PL Sp Trky, 16-17))	46	39	.
2023 - Free One-Day Sport Fishing License - 1st	500	578	451
2024 - Free One-Day Sport Fishing License - 2nd	533	544	380
<b>Total</b>	<b>154,946</b>	<b>157,924</b>	<b>153,916</b>



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## ➤ NOTICES TO FISHERMEN:

- 11/28/2017 **2017 Commercial Fishery Possession Limits**  
Effective 0001 hours Friday, December 1, 2017, the summer flounder commercial fishery possession limit will be increased to 200 pounds. (N17-25)
- 11/27/2017 **Time Change Quota Managed Species Meeting**  
The meeting of seafood dealers and commercial fishermen that harvest quota managed species originally scheduled for 3:00 p.m., Monday, December 4 has been moved up to 2:00 p.m. (N17-23)
- 11/17/2017 **Quota Managed Species Meeting Notice**  
A meeting of seafood dealers and commercial fishermen that harvest quota-managed species has been scheduled. (N17-22)  
**Meeting to be held December 4, 2017**
- 10/25/2017 **2017 Commercial Fishery Possession Limits**  
Effective 0001 hours, Thursday, October 26, 2017, the scup commercial fishery possession limit will be increased. (N17-21)
- 10/20/2017 **Notice to Recreational Fishermen**  
Black Sea Bass: For paying passengers on party or charter fishing vessels there are new measures. (N17-20)
- 10/13/2017 **2017 Commercial Fishery Possession Limits**  
Effective 0001 hours Sunday, October 15, 2017, the smooth dogfish commercial fishery possession limit will be reduced to zero pounds. Effective 0001 hours Sunday, October 15, 2017, the scup commercial fishery possession limit will be increased. (N17-19)
- 9/29/2017 **2017 Commercial Fishery Possession Limits**  
Effective 0001 hours, Sunday, October 1, 2017, the scup commercial fishery possession limit will be increased to 200 pounds for holders of Scup License Endorsements. In addition, for Restricted Commercial Fishing License holders who do not hold a Scup License Endorsement the limit will be 20 fish. (N17-18)

## ➤ PUBLIC OUTREACH:

### ◆ 2017 Connecticut Marine Trophy Fish Award Program

- 120 Trophy Fish Awards
- 35 Male & 3 Female Participants
- 12 Youth Participants (Age 16 & under)
- 19 Different Marine Species
- 4 NEW State Records



### ◆ 2017 New State Record Marine Fish

Species	Length	Weight
Atlantic Bonito	29.5"	11 lb. 8 oz.
Clearnose Skate	37"	9 lb. 8 oz.
American Eel	39.5"	5 lb. 3 oz.
Smooth Dogfish	57"	18 lb 11 oz





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### ◆ 2017 Marine Trophy Fish Award Species Rank

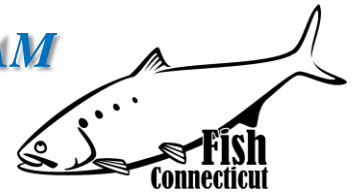
Species	Adult Male	Adult Female	Youth	Total
Black Sea Bass	12	2	3	17
Bluefish	9	5	1	15
Striped Bass	9	1	2	12
Blue Crab	3	3	6	12
Tautog	9	2	1	12
Summer Flounder	6	1	1	8
Scup	3	2	2	7
Weakfish	5	2	0	7
Striped Sea Robin	2	3	0	5
American Eel	2	1	2	5
Cleanose Skate	2	2	0	4
Northern Kingfish	3	1	0	4
Smooth Dogfish	0	2	1	3
Gray Triggerfish	1	1	0	2
Atlantic Bonito	2	0	0	2
Oyster Toadfish	2	0	0	2
Northern Puffer	0	0	1	1
Thresher Shark	1	0	0	1
Tiger Shark	1	0	0	1
<b>19 Species</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>120</b>







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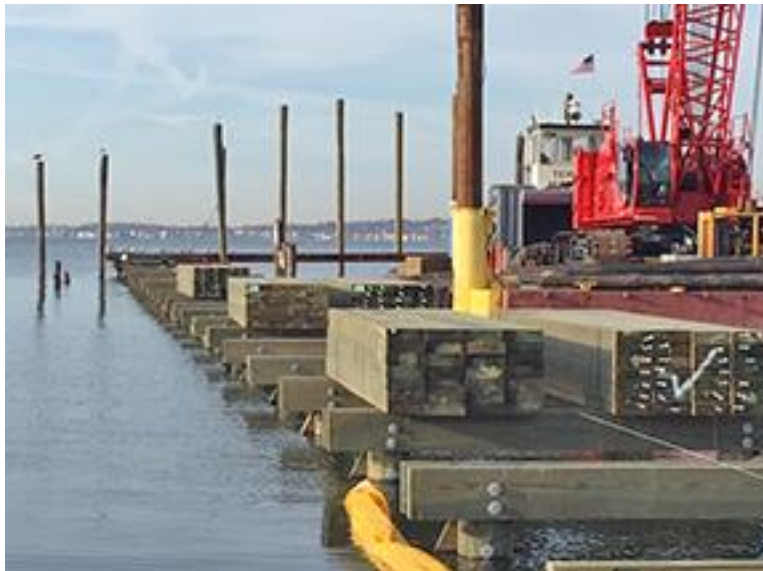


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## ➤ FISHING ACCESS:

### ◆ Fort Nathan Hale Fishing Pier-

Reconstruction of this popular fishing pier in West Haven began in September. CT DEEP Marine Fisheries Program staff provided technical guidance/suggestions and comments on the pier design. Anticipated completion is March of 2018. *See below for images.*



### ◆ Cromwell Landing and Glastonbury River Front-

Provided technical expertise and design guidelines for construction of a fishing pier and recreational fishing areas, including facilities.