



MARINE FISHERIES PROGRAM QUARTERLY REPORT

June 2018



➤ RETIREMENT

On April 1, 2018, after **more than 33 years of dedicated service to the CT DEEP Marine Fisheries Program, Assistant Director Mark Alexander retired.** Mark came to CT after receiving his Master of Science degree from Stony Brook University.

Those who knew Mark truly valued his technical expertise, attention to detail and master programming abilities. Mark appreciated the value of an elegantly formatted and error free SAS log and his nostalgia for the UNIX operating system was known far and wide. Mark was instrumental in many initiatives that became the foundation for the agency's recreational and commercial fisheries statistics and assessment



monitoring projects and was the program's in-house IT expert. Mark's enthusiasm and skill enhanced the diving program for American lobster in Long Island Sound until the project ended in 1995. He was integral in making CT a standout among the states by developing comprehensive databases that contain long term datasets. Among those is the database that houses CT's commercial fisheries effort and landings data as well as the databases for many of the projects within the Marine Fisheries Program. Most notably, Mark played a critical role in the development of the Standard Atlantic Fisheries Information System's Program Design and the

implementation of the Electronic Dealer Reporting module in 2004. Mark also developed and performed the complex analyses required to determine commercial licensing and species endorsement eligibilities based on historical participation, CT's commercial lobster trap tag allocations as well as the eligibility of commercial fishermen for fisheries disaster relief funding. Mark was also incredibly influential in the redesign and implementation of CT's online licensing system to accommodate marine water and commercial fishing licenses in 2010. Mark was a great boss and a dedicated professional whose wealth of knowledge and willingness and ability to solve problems will surely be missed.





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➤ FISHERIES MANAGEMENT, MONITORING & RESEARCH:

ASMFC / MAFMC Management.

◆ **Tautog:** At the spring ASMFC meeting, the **Tautog Management Board** voted to approve Connecticut's proposal to maintain status quo measures for Connecticut's tautog commercial fishery. In October 2017, the Tautog Management Board approved Amendment 1 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for tautog, which required a **20.3% reduction in annual recreational and commercial tautog harvest in Long Island Sound**. Connecticut implemented recreational measures for 2018 designed to achieve the required 20.3% reduction, but had yet to implement commercial measures for 2018. Upon formulating potential harvest measures that would achieve a 20.3% reduction in Connecticut commercial harvest, it became apparent to Marine Fisheries Program staff that such measures would require eliminating a substantial portion of the commercial season. Given that the small-scale Connecticut commercial fishery accounts for only 0.5% of total tautog harvest in Long Island Sound, **DEEP proposed maintaining status quo measures for Connecticut's commercial fishery, as substantially reducing the Connecticut commercial season would unduly impact commercial tautog fishers without achieving substantial conservation of the Long Island Sound tautog stock**. The management board approved Connecticut's proposal, with the caveat that Connecticut should review commercial tautog landings in coming years and re-evaluate measures if landings increase substantially.

◆ **Striped Bass:** The Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board tasked the stock assessment subcommittee to develop a range of reference points according to the Work Group's recommendations and explicitly include a biologically-based threshold for F and SSB. The Board also received a progress update on the 2018 benchmark stock assessment. The benchmark is schedule for peer-review in November 2018 at the 66th SAW/SARC.

◆ **Summer flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass:** The Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Management Board (Board) and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) met jointly to consider a number of issues. These include (1) approving a joint Summer Flounder Commercial Issues Amendment Public Hearing Document (PHD) for public comment; (2) a draft discussion document regarding a **strategic plan for reforming recreational black sea bass management**; (3) draft alternatives for the recreational management framework and addendum for all three species; and (4) preliminary harvest estimates from the February 2018 recreational black sea bass fishery.



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◆ **Black Sea Bass:** Upon the direction of the Commission's Interstate Fisheries Management Program (ISFMP) Policy Board, the Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Management Board **approved revised 2018 recreational measures for the Northern Region states of Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut and New York.** Further, the Board initiated new management action for the 2019 black sea bass recreational fishery and tasked the **Plan Development Team to develop a white paper to consider the impacts of changes in black sea bass abundance and distribution to the management of commercial and recreational fisheries.**

◆ **Atlantic Menhaden:** The Atlantic Menhaden Management Board approved the Terms of Reference for the 2019 Atlantic menhaden single-species and ecosystem-based benchmark stock assessments and peer-reviews, and approved Stock Assessment Subcommittee membership which will conduct the single-species benchmark.

◆ **Coastal Shark Management:** A recent International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) stock assessment of **Northern Atlantic shortfin mako (completed in 2017) found that Northern Atlantic shortfin mako were overfished and overfishing was occurring.** The stock assessment concluded that annual mako harvest needed to be reduced substantially – by 72-79% – to prevent further declines in the stock. Because the U.S. is obligated to follow ICCAT recommendations for shortfin mako management, NOAA implemented emergency rules in late 2017 for mako management in federal waters (where almost all shortfin mako fishing occurs) designed to achieve the required reductions. These emergency rules include a **recreational minimum length limit of 83 inches, and required release of all live makos captured in the commercial fishery** (commercial vessels are allowed to retain makos that are already dead when brought aboard, provided that they have electronic monitoring equipment in place that can verify the fish was dead when landed). **Many Atlantic coastal states also chose to voluntarily adopt the federal emergency measures in state waters.**

◆ This July, a **NOAA/NMFS Species Recovery Section 6 grant for \$500,000 will be awarded to the Sturgeon Project for the study of Shortnose and Atlantic Sturgeon in Connecticut and Long Island Sound.** The 3 year study includes 3 research projects that will build upon previous research conducted by Marine Fisheries as well as some newly proposed research. The Section 6 grant is a highly competitive national grant that can fund a wide variety of protected species, including more high profile species such as sea turtles and killer whales. This sturgeon study was selected as one of the award recipients out of 20 proposals submitted from around the country. To be eligible to receive a Section 6 award for endangered species, DEEP Fisheries Staff had to secure a Section 6 cooperative agreement with NMFS in addition to an Endangered Species Permit. Both



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processes require demonstration of expertise and competency when working with rare and protected species.

Part one of the Section 6 research will involve the location and documentation of spawning areas in the Connecticut River downstream of the Holyoke Dam through sampling for eggs and larvae and acoustically monitoring mature adult Shortnose Sturgeon. Part two will build on previous studies documenting Atlantic sturgeon movements and use of selected areas/habitats of Long Island Sound and the mouth of the Connecticut River through acoustic listening arrays. Part three of the project will be to study the habitat use of juvenile Atlantic Sturgeon in the Connecticut River. The proposed work for the Section 6 sturgeon studies will aid in identification of critical habitat and spawning areas and will provide management with information that will contribute to the Agency's habitat protection initiatives for these endangered species.





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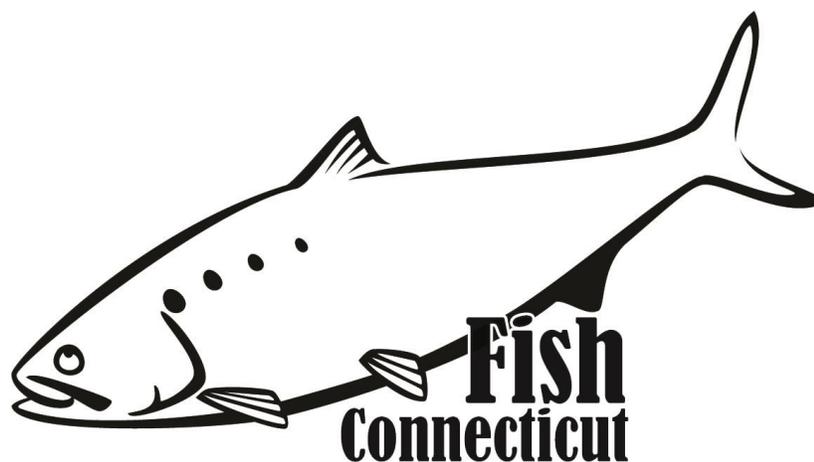
➤ MARINE RECREATIONAL FISHING:

Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP)

◆ 2018 WAVE 2 TOTAL CATCH & HARVEST ESTIMATES (numbers of fish)

Year	Wave	Species Group	Sub Group	Total Catch
2017	MARCH/APRIL	CATFISHES TEMPERATE	FRESHWATER CATFISHES	1929
2017	MARCH/APRIL	BASSES TEMPERATE	STRIPED BASS	27008
2017	MARCH/APRIL	BASSES	WHITE PERCH	3858

Year	Wave	Species Group	Sub Group	Total Harvest
2017	MARCH/APRIL	CATFISHES TEMPERATE	FRESHWATER CATFISHES	0
2017	MARCH/APRIL	BASSES TEMPERATE	STRIPED BASS	0
2017	MARCH/APRIL	BASSES	WHITE PERCH	3858





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◆ Marine Volunteer Angler Survey (VAS)

In 2018, a total of 28 anglers have signed up to participate in the program. The Connecticut Volunteer Angler Survey (VAS) began in 1979 with the primary purpose of supplementing the National Marine Fisheries Service, Marine Recreational Fishery Statistics Survey/Marine Recreational Information Program by providing additional length measurement data. The survey emphasizes measurements of fish that are released, which are under-reported in the federal surveys. The survey's initial objective was to collect marine recreational fishing information concerning finfish species with special emphasis on striped bass. In 1994, the collection of bluefish length measurements was added to the survey and in 1997, length data for other marine finfish were added.

The VAS is designed to **collect trip and catch information from marine recreational** (hook and line) **anglers who volunteer to record their fishing activities in a logbook** (Appendix 2.1). The logbook contains fields in which to record fishing effort, target species, fishing mode (boat and shore), area fished (subdivisions of Long Island Sound and adjacent waters), catch information concerning finfish kept (harvested) and released, and length measurements. Instructions for volunteers are provided on the inside cover of the postage paid logbook. Each participating angler is assigned a unique numeric code for confidentiality purposes.

TAPE
**CONNECTICUT MARINE
VOLUNTEER ANGLER SURVEY**
Rev.4/2017 - 12 Trip

Angler Code



TAPE

Checked	_____
Entered	_____
Logged	_____

This space for office use only.

Send Me More Logbooks



Connecticut Department of
Energy & Environmental Protection
Bureau of Natural Resources
Marine Fisheries Division

TAPE



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◆ Spring 2018 Long Island Sound Trawl Survey (LISTS)

- During the routine annual Coast Guard inspection in early spring 2018, it was discovered that *R/V John Dempsey's* fire suppression system needed repair. Due to the age of the halon system, it took more time than anticipated to get repairs completed and the system re-installed prior to the start of the April trawl survey. Therefore, the **April trawl survey did not begin until April 19, 2018**. After three days of sampling, the power take off (PTO) for the hydraulics needed to be rebuilt, which took a couple days. Only one more day of sampling was completed before the end of the month. In four days of sampling for the April trawl survey, 12 sites were sampled. In May, 40 sites were sampled during 11 days underway. The June trawl survey is scheduled to begin on Friday, 6/8/18.
- A new milestone for the LIS Trawl Survey has been reached with this year's Spring Survey. **All of the standard count, weight, and length data collected during LIS Trawl Survey sampling are now being acquired electronically on-deck**. Although there are some issues still being worked out for full implementation (such as the more complex protocols for species that require data in addition to counts, weights or lengths), performance so far has been quite good.
- There are a few aspects to full implementation that have been put on hold due to lack of staff resources to complete them. Some of the main items that remain to be done are manufacturing cradles to support the electronic measuring boards, devising a way to attach them to the sorting table, and creating a secure way to store them when not in use. In the meantime, sampling is less efficient since we are limited to two measuring stations (instead of four), temporary platforms have to be put at each measuring station, and storage of the components in between each tow is resulting in inefficient use of limited space in the wheelhouse. In addition, networking issues continue to complicate sampling operations onboard and result in frequent shut-downs of various hardware components.
- Future plans include creating data summary reports that staff can run onboard to verify data are being collected accurately, creating post-processing protocols (to standardize for 30-minute tows, for example) and generating SAS data sets to warehouse the data and make it accessible for comparison to the rest of the 34-year time-series for the LIS Trawl Survey data.
- Despite the remaining issues to be worked out, the Fisheries Environment for Electronic Data (or FEED) application developed for the LIS Trawl Survey has been used to collect count, weight and length data on 70 different species thus far in 2018. Although no error-



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checking or QA/QC have been done on the data collected in FEED, preliminary, raw data are available at this time. The **ten (10) most numerous species by weight in April and May** were scup (porgy), striped bass, black sea bass, butterfish, alewife, summer flounder (fluke), striped searobin, tautog (blackfish), squid, and Atlantic herring. Scup have accounted for the bulk of the catch so far this spring, accounting for more than 67% of the 5,293 kg (11,669 lbs) recorded and more than 66% of the 25,612 fish counted or measured.





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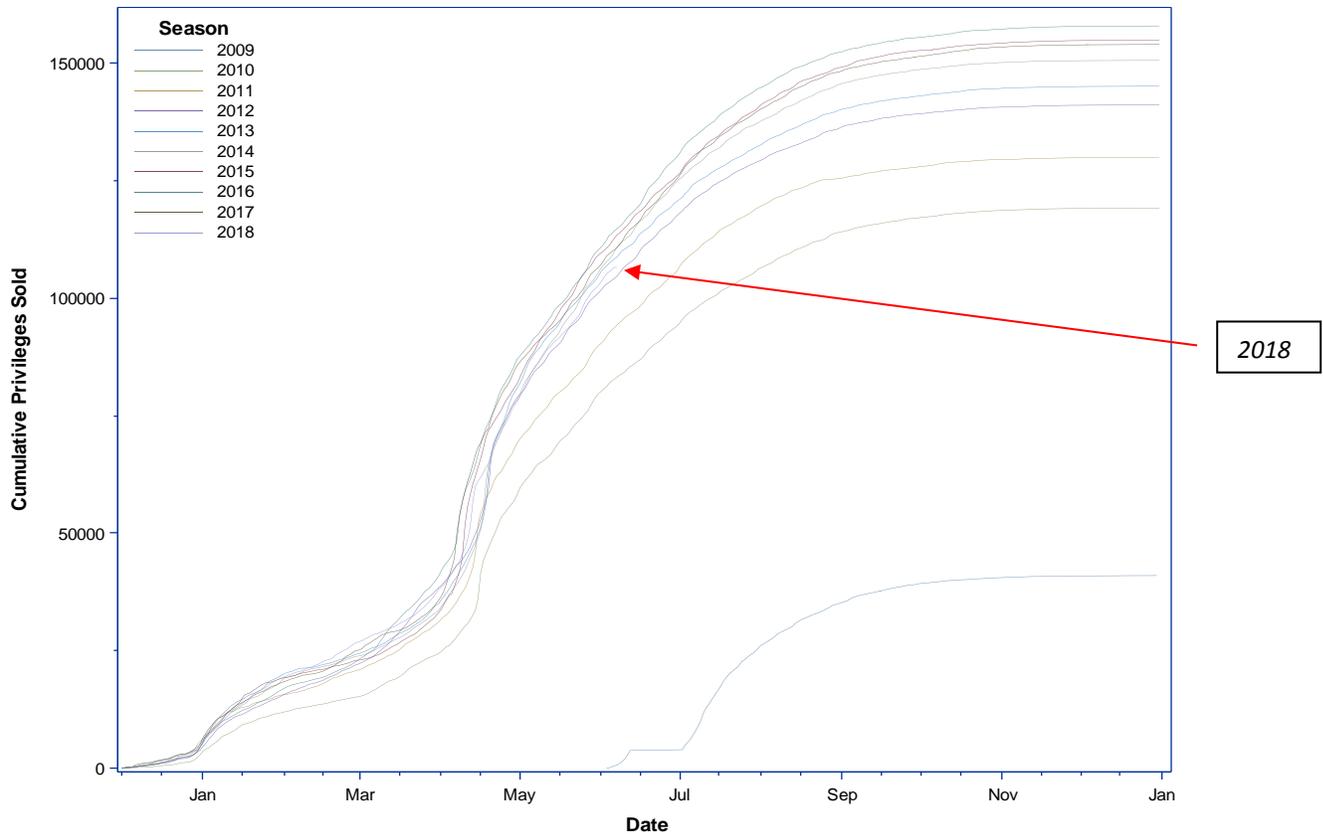
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➤ MARINE RECREATIONAL FISHING LICENSES:

◆ Marine fishing license sales in 2010 - 2018.

2018 Marine Licenses issued through June 7, 2018.





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Marine Waters Fishing Licenses, 2014 – 2018. Licenses by Type

Privilege Type	Season				
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
10195 - Marine Waters Fishing Lic, Free Annual - Code 9 (Intellect Disabled)	378	427	445	406	333
10196 - Marine Waters Fishing Lic, Free Annual - Code 5 (Blind)	80	83	82	80	59
10197 - Marine Waters Fishing Lic, Free Annual - Type 17 (Handicapped)	505	511	505	467	387
1296 - Marine Waters Fishing Lic	18,777	18,301	18,752	18,745	7,387
1297 - Marine Waters Fishing Lic (Non-Res)	2,692	2,870	2,996	3,008	867
1337 - Marine Waters Fishing Lic, Free Annual - Age 65 Plus	29,353	31,248	33,014	33,252	27,425
1345 - Marine Waters Fishing Lic, 1-day	690	802	733	805	97
1346 - All Waters Fishing Lic	66,304	65,988	67,254	64,909	46,572
1347 - Marine Waters Fishing Lic / Firearms Hunting Lic	459	448	440	507	286
1348 - All Waters Fishing Lic / Firearms Hunting Lic	21,072	17,185	16,043	18,048	14,504
1349 - All Waters Fishing Lic / Arch Deer / Small Game Lic	1,663	1,813	1,948	3,844	3,113
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)	1,080	1,001	1,050	.	.
1352 - Marine Waters Fishing Lic, 3-day (Non-Res)	1,367	1,377	1,491	1,460	208
1353 - All Waters Fishing Lic (Non-Res)	1,426	1,519	1,702	1,804	1,269
1354 - All Waters Fishing Lic / Firearms Hunting Lic (Non-Res)	137	138	142	133	132
1355 - Marine Waters Fishing Lic / Firearms Hunting Lic (Non-Res)	23	25	21	15	6
1475 - AW Fish Lic / Fa SS Lic (Fa Hunt; S/R/Mz PL Deer; PL Sp Trky)	2,700	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	1,903	1,927	2,214	2,229	1,716
1953 - All Waters Fishing Lic / Firearms Hunting Lic (16-17)	.	376	334	365	262
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	131
1958 - All Waters Fishing Lic (16-17)	.	2,778	2,783	2,585	1,678
1959 - Marine Waters Fishing Lic, 1-day (16-17)	.	20	24	21	2
1960 - Marine Waters Fishing Lic / Firearms Hunting Lic (16-17)	.	9	6	11	6
1962 - All Waters Fishing Lic / Arch Deer / Small Game Lic (16-17)	.	52	9	89	64
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	44
2024 - Free One-Day Sport Fishing License - 2nd	.	533	543	380	.
Total	150,609	154,944	157,923	153,982	106,548



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➤ NOTICES TO FISHERMEN:

- 6/1/2018 **[Reminder of ASMFC Public Hearing on American Eel](#)**
The DEEP Marine Fisheries Program is hosting a public hearing of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission to gather input on Draft Addendum V to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for American Eel. (N18-11)
Public Hearing to be held June 4, 2018
Comments due by June 15, 2018
- 5/23/2018 **[Notice to Commercial Atlantic Menhaden Fishermen](#)**
At its November 2017 meeting, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's Atlantic Menhaden Board passed Amendment 3 to the Menhaden Fisheries Management Plan. (N18-10)
- 5/7/2018 **[Notice to Recreational Fishermen](#)**
At the spring meeting the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission approved revised measures for the 2018 recreational black sea bass fishery. (N18-08)
- 4/24/2018 **[Notice to Lobster and Conch Pot Fishermen](#)**
Posted on the website are maps showing the locations of CT DEEP monthly trawl survey sites to be sampled during spring 2018 from the research vessel John Dempsey.
- 4/11/2018 **[2018 Commercial Fishery Possession Limits](#)**
A number of possession limits are in effect for Connecticut's commercial fisheries. (N18-07)
- 4/6/2018 **[Commercial Fishery Possession Limits](#)**
Effective 0001 hours, Sunday, April 15, 2018, the possession limit for the commercial harvest of summer flounder will be reduced to 50 pounds. (N18-06)

➤ PUBLIC OUTREACH:

- ◆ **2018
CONNECTICUT
MARINE
RECREATIONAL
FISHING
REGULATION
SIGNS AVAILABLE
IN COLOR**

The new design features English, Spanish and Chinese languages and an intuitive visual format more readily



understood regardless of English reading proficiency (see next page).



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2018 CONNECTICUT MARINE RECREATIONAL FISHING REGULATION SIGNS

2018 MARINE RECREATIONAL FISHING REGULATIONS

A Marine Waters Fishing License is required

	Minimum Length Longitud minimo 最小長度 inches/pulgadas / 英寸	Daily Limit Limite diario 每天魚獲限制 inches/pulgadas / 英寸	Open Season Temporada abierto 開放季節 mm/dd - 月/日
STRIPED BASS (No spearing)	28	1	1/1 – 12/31
BLUEFISH	—	10	1/1 – 12/31
TAUTOG (BLACKFISH)	16	2 2 3	4/1 – 4/30 7/1 – 8/31 10/10 – 11/28
SCUP (PORGY)*	9	30	5/1 – 12/31
SUMMER FLOUNDER (FLUKE)*	19	4	5/4 – 9/30
WINTER FLOUNDER	12	2	4/1 – 12/31
BLACK SEA BASS	15	5	5/19 – 12/31
WEAKFISH	16	1	1/1 – 12/31
HICKORY SHAD	—	6	1/1 – 12/31
WHITE PERCH	7	30	1/1 – 12/31
MENHADEN (BUNKER)	—	50 / 5 gal.	1/1 – 12/31

*Except at Enhanced Opportunity Shore Angler Program Designated Fishing Sites
Contact CTDEEP Marine Fisheries Division for more information

NOTE: SPEARFISHING IS SUBJECT TO ALL SPORT FISHING RESTRICTIONS.
ALL FISH ARE MEASURED FROM THE TIP OF THE SNOUT TO THE END OF THE TAIL (TOTAL LENGTH).

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
BUREAU OF NATURAL RESOURCES
MARINE FISHERIES PROGRAM
800-434-6643
deep.marine.fisheries@ct.gov

www.ct.gov/deep/saltwaterfishing

To Report Fishing Violations
1-800-842-4357

2018 MARINE RECREATIONAL FISHING REGULATIONS

At Enhanced Shore Fishing Sites*

	Minimum Length Longitud minimo 最小長度 inches/pulgadas / 英寸	Daily Limit Limite diario 每天魚獲限制 inches/pulgadas / 英寸	Open Season Temporada abierto 開放季節 mm/dd - 月/日
STRIPED BASS (No spearing)	28	1	1/1 – 12/31
BLUEFISH	—	10	1/1 – 12/31
TAUTOG (BLACKFISH)	16	2 2 3	4/1 – 4/30 7/1 – 8/31 10/10 – 11/28
SCUP (PORGY)*	9 8	30	5/1 – 12/31
SUMMER FLOUNDER (FLUKE)*	19 17	4	5/4 – 9/30
WINTER FLOUNDER	12	2	4/1 – 12/31
BLACK SEA BASS	15	5	5/19 – 12/31
WEAKFISH	16	1	1/1 – 12/31
HICKORY SHAD	—	6	1/1 – 12/31
WHITE PERCH	7	30	1/1 – 12/31
MENHADEN (BUNKER)	—	50 / 5 gal.	1/1 – 12/31

*Enhanced Opportunity Shore Fishing Site.
Reduced minimum length for Summer Flounder and Scup!

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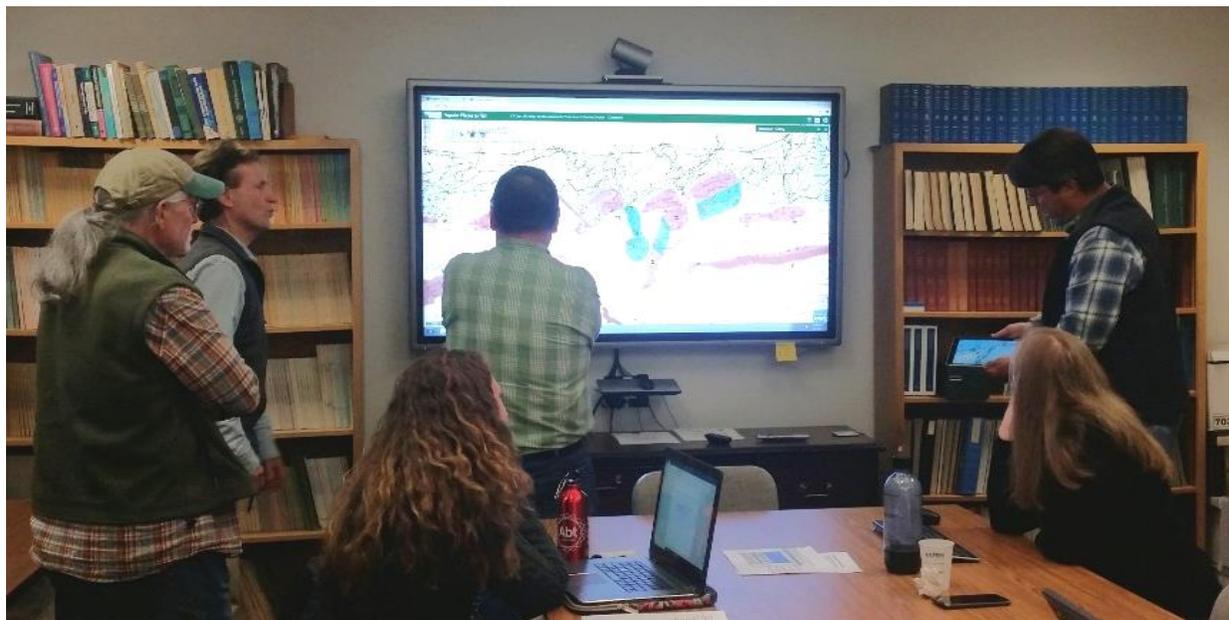
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◆ GIS

Update on Fisheries Division involvement with CT Blue Plan Team and Recreational Fishing Sector: **CT DEEP's *Popular Places to Fish* app was used at a "participatory mapping session" organized by CT Blue Plan Team for the recreational fishing sector.** Fisheries staff developed the app as a way for anglers to draw their fishing areas on a smartboard and to annotate each area with pertinent information (such as species they fish for in each area). The effort was **successful in capturing the input from three avid anglers identified by the Blue Plan Team as being prime sources of recreational fishing information for the eastern and central portions of Long Island Sound.** Information provided during this session will be included in the spatial data inventory being compiled for the CT Blue Plan effort. The approach worked so well that an additional meeting will be set up when anglers for the western Sound have been lined up. There may also be an effort to utilize the app (or a similar one) to capture areas important to the recreational sailing community for inclusion in the Blue Plan planning process.





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◆ FORT NATHAN HALE FISHING PIER – GRAND OPENING CEREMONY

Fort Hale Pier will become an Enhanced Opportunity Shore Fishing Site, which improves the quality of access and fishing to our Public Trust marine fisheries resources in CT, especially in this urban environment. This unique program relies on reduced size limit regulations to allow anglers' young and old alike the opportunity to experience the fun and relaxation of outdoor recreation and the satisfaction of catching their own dinner.

This site ranks as the number one shore fishing access area in terms of use and total catch based on the annual marine angler survey.

Ft. Hale Pier is a uniquely designed 333 ft. fishing pier with its T-shaped end cap, along with an octagon shape on the south side of the T, was designed to increase surface area to accommodate all user groups thus increasing its functionality. New pier is now 10ft longer than old pier (360ft) and 4 feet narrower (12ft).

The Slanted Cap Rail Design used at this site has the advantage of providing rod holders to the many CT Angler's (holes in the cap rail act as rod holders) who use this outstanding shore fishing location.

By increasing the number of 34 inch high sections (rail) along the main 333 ft. section of the pier, allows angler's better fishing experiences by providing a reasonable distance to net fish. Typically pier rail heights are 42 inches or higher.

Ft. Hale Pier was significantly damaged by the Two Storms 2011 and by Hurricane Gloria in 1985. The pier had been used for years by anglers as an urban access point to LIS and has been used as a landing place for small boats and public access point since 1886.

Sen. Marty Looney, who has long been a strong advocate in Ft. Hale Pier and the folks who use it, reached out to DEEP to offer his assistance to get DEEP to repair it.





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Ribbon cutting ceremony at Fort Nathan Hale Pier

