



MARINE FISHERIES PROGRAM QUARTERLY REPORT

September 2018



FISHERIES MANAGEMENT, MONITORING & RESEARCH:

ASMFC / MAFMC Management.

Commission and Council Updates

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Management Board (Board) and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) jointly manages summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass in state and federal waters. The Board and Council met jointly in August to receive data updates on and set 2019 harvest limits for these species.

◆ **Summer flounder**: based on projected increases in spawning stock biomass and low recreational harvest in recent years, the Board and Council approved a **coastwide commercial quota and recreational harvest limit (RHL) that were 16% higher than 2018**. These are interim measures. The results of a new stock assessment for summer flounder will be available in early 2019. The outcomes of the stock assessment could necessitate in-season changes to 2019 commercial and recreational summer flounder regulations.

◆ **Black sea bass**: data updates indicate that black sea bass biomass continues to be high and well above the target set by the fishery management plan. In addition, the 2015 year class appears to be above average, indicating that a large group of fish will reach harvestable size in the near future. However, annual harvest limits for this species are currently based on projections from a stock assessment that was completed in 2015 and only includes data through 2014. The projections from the 2015 stock assessment model (which arguably does not adequately capture the current status of the stock) coupled with high recreational seabass harvest in recent years, resulted in the **Board and Council approving 11% reductions in the coastwide commercial quota and recreational harvest limit (RHL) for 2019**. Depending on final estimates of 2018 recreational harvest (which won't be available until early 2019), the reduced 2019 RHL could require more conservative recreational regulations for black sea bass in 2019. However, results from a new black sea bass stock assessment are expected to be available sometime in spring 2019. The outcome of this stock assessment could provide an opportunity to make an in-season adjustment to the 2019 RHL and black sea bass regulations – but it is unclear whether the stock assessment results will be available early enough in 2019 to allow an in-season change to be made before a substantial portion of the sea bass fishing season has already occurred.

◆ **Scup**: similar to black sea bass, data updates indicate that scup biomass continues to be high and well above the target set by the fishery management plan, and the 2015 scup year class also appears to be above average. Based on this information, the **Board and Council approved a 2019 commercial quota and recreational harvest limit (RHL) that are the same as 2018 measures. It is therefore unlikely that scup regulations will change in 2019.**



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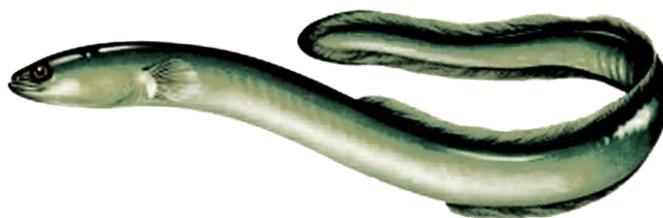


The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) held its Summer Meeting in August. Notable outcomes included:

◆ **Atlantic herring:** results of a 2018 stock assessment indicate that the stock has experienced poor recruitment (i.e. small year classes) in recent years and that spawning stock biomass has declined substantially. As a result, the Atlantic Herring Section voted to adopt in-season reductions in 2018 harvest limits, in an attempt to offset the severity of expected reductions in 2019-21 landings limits.

◆ **Atlantic menhaden:** the Commonwealth of Virginia failed to implement the 2018 Chesapeake Bay menhaden commercial harvest cap specified by the Atlantic menhaden fishery management plan (the Virginia General Assembly has regulatory authority for menhaden but failed to pass a bill to implement the harvest cap during the 2018 legislative session). Accordingly, a motion was introduced at the May 2018 ASMFC meeting to find Virginia out of compliance – but this motion was postponed until the August ASMFC meeting. Approval of this motion could result in a moratorium (i.e. shut-down) of menhaden fishing in Virginia until the Commonwealth comes into compliance. After extended discussion, the non-compliance motion was postponed again until the February 2019 ASMFC meeting. Information presented at the August meeting indicated that it was very unlikely that Virginia would exceed the Chesapeake Bay cap in 2018. The Virginia General Assembly will go back into session in January 2019 and will have another opportunity to legislatively implement the required Chesapeake Bay harvest cap.

◆ **American eel:** the management board approved Addendum V to the American Eel fishery management plan. This **Addendum set a status quo coastwide cap for American eel harvest, set new triggers for management changes that could result from the coastwide cap being exceeded, and did away with a previous requirement that state-by-state quotas be instituted if the coastwide cap is exceeded in consecutive years.** This eliminates the possibility that Connecticut would have to take on the administrative burden of quota monitoring for our very small eel fishery (Connecticut currently accounts for less than 0.5% of coastal yellow eel harvest).



◆ The **NOAA/NMFS Species Recovery Grants to State Programs, authorized under Section 6 of the Endangered Species Act**, is a competitive grant to States that can be used to support



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management, research, monitoring and/or outreach activities that have direct conservation benefits for listed species under the Endangered Species Act. **Connecticut was fortunate to have been awarded a 3 year grant totaling \$543,900 towards the study of Shortnose and Atlantic Sturgeon in the Connecticut River and Long Island Sound.** This three year study will include three research projects that will build upon previous research conducted by the Fisheries Division, as well as some newly proposed research. 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 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.

◆ 2018 Long Island Sound Trawl Survey (LISTS)

The survey team has been working with VIMS/Chris Bonzek, tweaking the electronic data collection system over the last two weeks.

- The September trawl survey began September 4, 2018 and is approximately half-done at this time. **Catches so far this fall have been light and comprised primarily of scup.**
- The **fisheries electronic data collection system being used, known as FEED,** has been working well so far this fall. During the Spring Survey, relying on wireless communications on the research vessel was resulting in slow performance while measuring fish at multiple measuring stations. Therefore, we decided to 'hardwire' more components of the system and this has resulted in improved performance (meaning we can collect electronic length measurements much faster now).



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➤ MARINE RECREATIONAL FISHING:

Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP)

◆ 2017-18 WAVE 3 (May – June) HARVEST ESTIMATES (numbers of fish)

2018

	Total Harvest
BLUEFISH	6,646
DOGFISH SHARKS	206
WEAKFISH	87
SUMMER FLOUNDER	102,789
WINTER FLOUNDER	0
HERRINGS	15,570
SCUP	876,298
PUFFERS	0
BLACK SEA BASS	73,247
SEAROBINS	12,043
STRIPED BASS	60,563
TOADFISHES	426
CUNNER	0
TAUTOG	0
	1,147,875

2017

	Total Harvest
BLUEFISH	14,533
DOGFISH SHARKS	33
SUMMER FLOUNDER	23,923
WINTER FLOUNDER	200
HERRINGS	105,060
SCUP	495,084
BLACK SEA BASS	28,269
SEAROBINS	26,382
STRIPED BASS	47,038
WHITE PERCH	2,041
TAUTOG	0
WHITE PERCH	2,041
CUNNER	0
TAUTOG	0
	744,604





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CT MRIP APAIS TOTALS 2016-2018

Year	Wave	Sum of <u>CH</u> Intercepts	Sum of <u>PR</u> Intercepts	Sum of <u>SH</u> Intercepts	Sum of <u>AI</u> Intercepts	Total # of Assignments	Num Asn with Zero Intercepts	% zero intercepts
2016	2	0	14	60	74	47	28	
2016	3	26	451	135	612	97	33	
2016	4	62	1,110	138	1,310	106	21	
2016	5	24	446	136	606	89	29	
2016	6	9	80	45	134	81	44	
Totals		121	2101	514	2736	420	155	37%
2017*	2	0	10	18	28	64	53	
2017*	3	71	513	96	680	97	43	
2017*	4	52	1,231	229	1,512	106	13	
2017*	5	80	446	76	602	89	30	
2017*	6	0	125	73	198	81	44	
Totals		203	2325	492	3020	437	183	42%
2018	2	3	177	128	308	61	28	
2018	3	36	436	307	779	95	33	
2018	4	99	953	179	1,231	117	27	
2018	5	21	205	28	254	110	4	
2018	6							
Totals		159	1771	642	2572	383	92	24%
		6%	69%		25%			

*2017 SEAS FORM as of 09112018

Wave 2 = March/April
 Wave3 = May/June
 Wave 4 = July/August
 Wave5 = September/October
 Wave6 = November/December





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CT MRIP HEADBOAT SUMMARY 2016-2018

Year	Wave	Month	Intercepts	Completed	Productivity	One Int.	Two Int.
2016	3	5	36	6	18	1	5
2016	3	6	114	6	19	0	6
2016	4	7	80	7	16	1	6
2016	4	8	63	7	12.6	1	6
2016	5	9	64	6	16	1	5
2016	5	10	31	6	10.33	2	4
2016	6	11	36	6	18	1	5
			424	44			

Year	Wave	Month	Intercepts	Completed	Productivity	One Int.	Two Int.
2017	3	5	55	5	11	0	5
2017	3	6	77	6	12.83	2	4
2017	4	7	124	7	17.71	5	2
2017	4	8	143	5	28.6	0	5
2017	5	9	65	6	16.25	0	6
2017	5	10	65	6	16.25	4	2
2017	6	11	61	4	15.25	1	3
			590	39			

Year	Wave	Month	Intercepts	Completed	Productivity	One Int.	Two Int.
2018	3	5	91	6	15.17	6	0
2018	3	6	126	6	21	2	4
2018	4	7	119	7	17	1	6
2018	4	8	144	7	20.57	4	3
2018	5	9	-	0	-	1	5
2018	5	10	-	0	-	0	0
			480	26			

9112018





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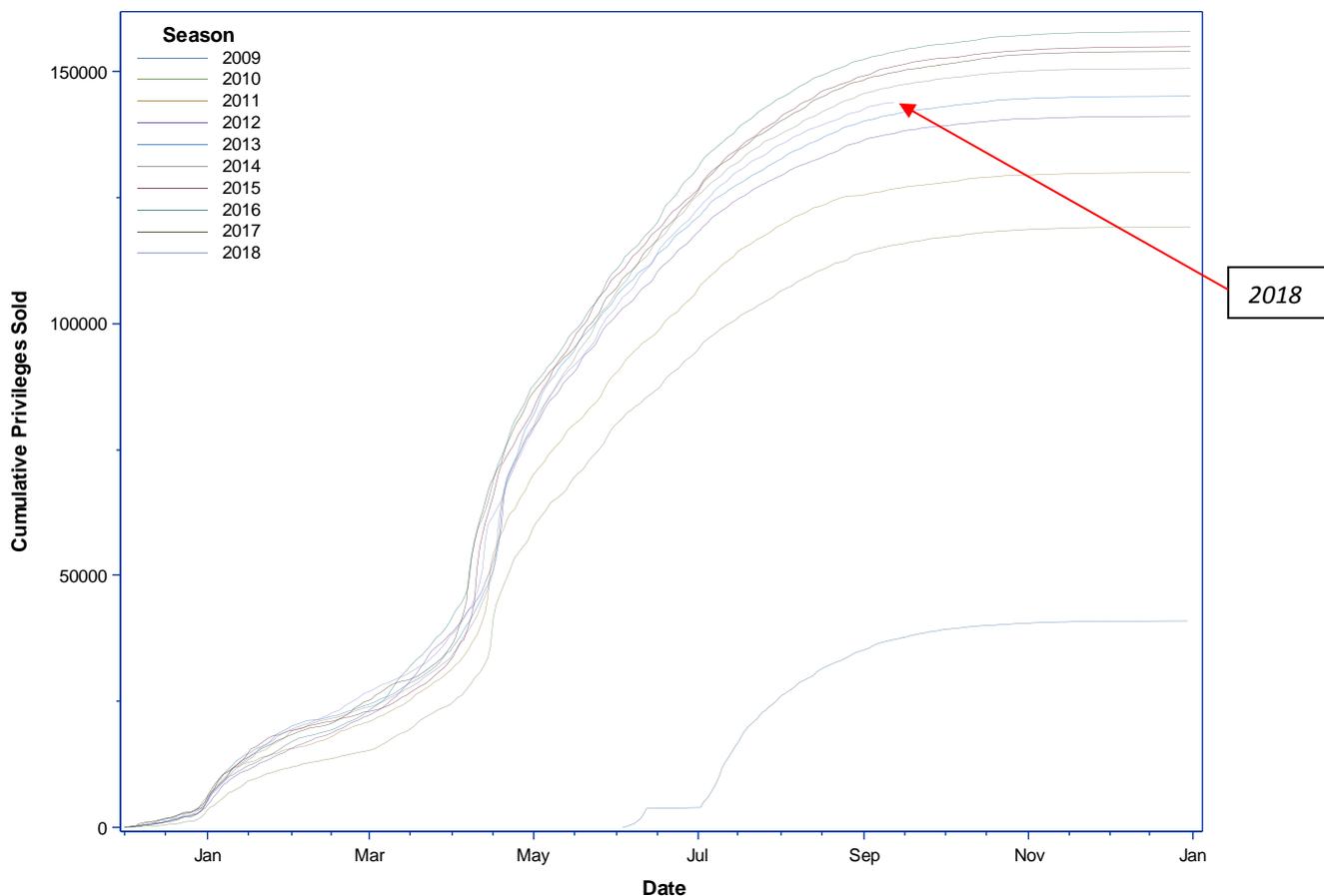
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➤ MARINE RECREATIONAL FISHING LICENSES:

◆ Marine fishing license sales in 2010 - 2018.

2018 Marine Licenses issued through September 13, 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	411
10196 - Marine Waters Fishing Lic, Free Annual - Code 5 (Blind)	80	83	82	80	73
10197 - Marine Waters Fishing Lic, Free Annual - Type 17 (Handicapped)	505	511	505	467	453
1296 - Marine Waters Fishing Lic	18,777	18,301	18,752	18,745	17,589
1297 - Marine Waters Fishing Lic (Non-Res)	2,692	2,870	2,996	3,008	2,747
1337 - Marine Waters Fishing Lic, Free Annual - Age 65 Plus	29,351	31,248	33,014	33,251	33,059
1345 - Marine Waters Fishing Lic, 1-day	690	802	733	805	464
1346 - All Waters Fishing Lic	66,304	65,988	67,254	64,909	60,292
1347 - Marine Waters Fishing Lic / Firearms Hunting Lic	459	448	440	507	465
1348 - All Waters Fishing Lic / Firearms Hunting Lic	21,072	17,185	16,043	18,048	16,280
1349 - All Waters Fishing Lic / Arch Deer / Small Game Lic	1,663	1,813	1,948	3,844	3,544
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	1,194
1353 - All Waters Fishing Lic (Non-Res)	1,426	1,519	1,702	1,804	1,710
1354 - All Waters Fishing Lic / Firearms Hunting Lic (Non-Res)	137	138	142	133	146
1355 - Marine Waters Fishing Lic / Firearms Hunting Lic (Non-Res)	23	25	21	15	8
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	1,896
1953 - All Waters Fishing Lic / Firearms Hunting Lic (16-17)	.	376	334	365	294
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	358
1958 - All Waters Fishing Lic (16-17)	.	2,778	2,783	2,585	2,272
1959 - Marine Waters Fishing Lic, 1-day (16-17)	.	20	24	21	12
1960 - Marine Waters Fishing Lic / Firearms Hunting Lic (16-17)	.	9	6	11	9
1962 - All Waters Fishing Lic / Arch Deer / Small Game Lic (16-17)	.	52	9	89	71
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	235
2024 - Free One-Day Sport Fishing License - 2nd	.	533	543	380	280
Total	150,607	154,944	157,923	153,981	143,862



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➤ NOTICES TO FISHERMEN:

- 9/12/2018 [**Notice to Lobster and Conch Pot Fishermen**](#)
Posted on the DEEP website are maps showing the locations of CT DEEP monthly trawl survey sites to be sampled during fall 2018 from the research vessel, John Dempsey.
- 9/5/2018 [**Notice of MAFMC/ASMFC Public Hearing for the Summer Flounder Commercial Issues Amendment**](#)
The DEEP Fisheries Division is hosting a Public Hearing of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission and the Mid-Atlantic Fisheries Management Council to gather input on a range of commercial summer flounder issues. (N18-18)
Hearing to be held September 10, 2018
- 8/27/2018 [**Notice to Lobster Fishermen**](#)
This notice serves as a reminder of the upcoming fall season closure required under Addendum XVII to the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's American Lobster Fishery Management Plan. (N18-16)
- 7/26/2018 [**Scup Commercial Fishery Possession Limit Adjustment**](#)
Effective 0001 hours Sunday, July 29, 2018, the scup commercial fishery possession limit will be reduced to 600 pounds. (N18-15)
- 7/5/2018 [**MAFMC and ASMFC Scoping Hearing on Bluefish**](#)
The DEEP Marine Fisheries Program is hosting a scoping hearing of the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council and Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission to gather input on a range of issued and information to be considered in the Bluefish Allocation Amendment. (N18-14)
Hearing to be held Tuesday, July 20, 2018
Comments due by July 30, 2018
- 6/20/2018 [**2018 Updated Commercial Fishery Possession Limits**](#)
A number of possession limits are in effect for Connecticut's commercial fisheries. (N18-13)





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➤ PUBLIC OUTREACH:

2018 Connecticut Marine Trophy Fish Award Summary

34 Total Trophy Fish Awards

10 Male & 4 Female Participants

8 Youth Participants (Age 16 & under)

11 Different Marine Species

1 NEW State Record

2018 New State Record Marine Fish

Species	Length	Weight
Spiny Dogfish	57.75"	22 lb. 11 oz.

2018 New Trophy Fish Records

Species	Length	Weight	
Smooth Dogfish	48"	13 lb. 13 oz.	Youth
Summer Flounder	30"	12 lb. 6 oz.	Youth
Summer Flounder	29"	10 lb. 11 oz.	Women, C&R
Longfin Squid	11.5"		Youth
Clearnose Skate	35"		Youth, C&R
Striped Bass	48"		Youth, C&R
Black Sea Bass	24"		Youth, C&R

2018 Marine Trophy Fish Award Species Rank

1. Summer Flounder	20
2. Black Sea Bass	5
3. Winter Flounder	1
3. Conger Eel	1
3. Cobia	1
3. Spiny Dogfish	1
3. Longfin Squid	1



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◆ MARINE FISHERIES 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 in Western Long Island Sound. As noted in the previous Quarterly Report, efforts had been more successful in reaching anglers who fish the eastern and central portions of the sound than in reaching anglers who fish the western portion of the sound. **Hoping to engage more anglers in the west, a meeting was held at The Nature Conservancy's office in New Haven, CT, in August, 2018.** Anglers identified additional popular fishing areas and suggested that meeting locations even further west, perhaps in Bridgeport, would be the way to reach more anglers. Efforts to set this up are continuing with the goal of improving the Popular Places to Fish layer for inclusion in the CT Blue Plan spatial data inventory, as well as, CT DEEP's Saltwater Fishing Resource maps.

Also in August, 2018, **GIS staff gave a presentation at the Annual Meeting of the American Fisheries Society detailing development and use of the Popular Places to Fish app and promoting the utility of this type of software to acquire fisheries data (areas/polygons) from the public.** Although there are apps generally available for collecting points from the public through an internet interface, there aren't comparable apps to collect polygons – which is why the Popular Places to Fish app developed by CT DEEP is so novel.



◆ FORT NATHAN HALE FISHING PIER –

Work has begun on Phase 2 at the Fort Nathan Hale Fishing Pier. This includes **lighting the entire pier, adding running water and construction of an informational kiosk at this popular Enhanced Opportunity Shore Fishing Site.** 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.