2012 NORTH CAROLINA RECREATIONAL COASTAL WATERS GUIDE FOR SPORTS FISHERMEN April version

****IMPORTANT** CHECK WITH DIVISION OF MARINE FISHERIES FOR MOST CURRENT MINIMUM LENGTHS AND CREEL LIMITS.
252-726-7021 OR 800-682-2632. FOR INLAND WATER FISHING REGULATIONS, CALL WILDLIFE RESOURCES COMMISSION (919) 707-0220 OR WWW.NCWILDLIFE.ORG**

	STATE COASTAL WATERS (Internal & 0-3 miles)		**EXCLUSIVE ECONOMIC ZONE-EEZ (3-200 miles) EEZ restrictions noted in italics are Federal Rules**	
FINFISH SPECIES (note symbols)	**Minimum Length**	**Bag Limits (per person)**	**Minimum Length**	**Bag Limits (per person)**
Greater Amberjack	28" FL	1/Day	*28" FL*	*1/Day*
Bluefish	None	15/Day, only 5 greater than 24" TL	None	*15/Day*
Cobia	33" FL	2/Day	*33" FL*	*2/Day*
Wahoo	None	2/Day	None	*2/Day*
Dolphin (B)	None	10/Day	None	*10/Day*
King Mackerel (I)	24" FL	3/Day	*24" FL*	*3/Day*
Spanish Mackerel (I)	12" FL	15/Day	*12" FL*	*15/Day*
Tuna (I): Bluefin (G), Yellowfin and Bigeye	Bigeye and Yellowfin tuna 27" Curved FL	Yellowfin tuna 3 per day	*Bigeye and Yellowfin tuna 27" Curved FL*	*Yellowfin tuna 3 per day*
Sharks (excluding spiny & smooth dogfish)(I)	(E & L)	1/Vessel/Day	*54" FL (E & L)*	*1/Vessel/Day*
Sharks, Atlantic Sharpnose & Bonnethead (E)	None	(E)	*(E & L)*	*1/Day*
Blue Marlin (G)	99" LJFL	1 per vessel per trip, either blue marlin or white marlin	*99" LJFL*	*None but State rules apply when landing*
White Marlin (G)	66" LJFL		*66" LJFL*	
Sailfish (G)	63" LJFL	1/Day	*63" LJFL*	
Red Drum (channel bass, puppy drum)▲	18" – 27" TL (C)	1/Day	***UNLAWFUL TO POSSESS***	
Flounder ▲	15" TL	6/Day	*15" TL*	*6/Day*
Spotted Seatrout (Speckled Trout) ▲	14" TL	4/Day		
Weakfish (Gray Trout) ▲	12" TL	1/Day	*12" TL*	*N/A*
Tarpon	None	1/Day	*None*	*1/Day*
Striped Bass	(A)	(A)	***UNLAWFUL TO POSSESS***	
American Shad (O)	None	10/Day, **NO POSSESSION IN OCEAN WATERS**	***UNLAWFUL TO POSSESS***	
Hickory Shad (O)	None	10/Day	*None*	*10/Day*
Alewife and Blueback Herring	**UNLAWFUL TO POSSESS**		***UNLAWFUL TO POSSESS***	
American Eel	6" TL	50/Day	*6" TL*	*50/Day*
Scup (North of Cape Hatteras) (D)	(D)	(D)	*(D)*	*(D)*
Black Sea Bass (North of Cape Hatteras) (D)	(D)	(D)	*(D)*	*(D)*
Black Sea Bass (South of Cape Hatteras) (D)	(D)	(D)	*(D)*	*(D)*
Groupers (H, I, J & K)		3/Day (all groupers combined; includes, 1 golden tilefish, and no more than 1 black or gag grouper, individual or combined) (J) & (K)		*3/Day (all groupers combined; includes tilefish, 1 golden tilefish, and no more than 1 black or gag grouper, individual or combined) (J) & (K)*
Red, Scamp, Yellowfin & Yellowmouth Groupers and Tilefish (no size limit on Tilefish)	20" TL		*20" TL*	
Black and Gag Groupers	24" TL		*24" TL*	
Snowy Grouper	N/A	1/vessel/day	*N/A*	*1/vessel/day*
Red Porgy (Silver Snapper, pinky)	14" TL	3/Day	*14" TL*	*3/Day*
Dog, Gray, Cubera, Mahogany, Queen, Schoolmaster & Yellowtail Snappers	N/A	10/Day (species combined)	*12" TL*	*10/Day (species combined)*
Mutton Snapper	N/A		*16" TL*	
Silk & Blackfin Snappers	12" TL		*12" TL*	
Red Snapper	**UNLAWFUL TO POSSESS**		***UNLAWFUL TO POSSESS***	
Hogfish (Hog Snapper)	12" FL	5/Day		
Vermilion Snapper (J)	12" TL	5/Day	*12" TL*	*5/Day*
Wreckfish (P)	None	1/Vessel/Day	None	1/Vessel/Day

	STATE COASTAL WATERS (Internal & 0-3 miles)		EXCLUSIVE ECONOMIC ZONE-EEZ (3-200) EEZ restrictions noted in italic are Federal Rules	
FINFISH SPECIES (note symbols)	Minimum Length	Bag Limits (per person)	Minimum Length	Bag Limits (per person)
REEF COMPLEX SPECIES Includes spadefish, gray triggerfish, white grunt, knobbed porgy and more (see note H & I)	N/A	20/Day	N/A	*20/Day*
Mullet, striped and white		200/Day (species combined)		

PROHIBITED FINFISH SPECIES

COASTAL WATERS (Internal waters and Atlantic Ocean out to 3 miles)	**FEDERAL WATERS (Atlantic Ocean more than 3 miles)**
Sharks; (whale, basking, white, sand tiger, bigeye sand tiger, Atlantic angel shark, bigeye sixgill, bigeye thresher, bignose, Caribbean reef, Caribbean sharpnose, dusky, Galapogos, longfin mako, narrowtooth, night, sandbar, silky, sevengill, sixgill, and smalltail), sturgeon, Nassau grouper, Goliath grouper (jewfish), Warsaw grouper, speckled hind and red snapper.	Sharks; (whale, basking, white, sand tiger, bigeye sand tiger, Atlantic angel shark, bigeye sixgill, bigeye thresher, bignose, Caribbean reef, Caribbean sharpnose, dusky, Galapogos, longfin mako, narrowtooth, night, sandbar, silky, sevengill, sixgill, and smalltail), red drum, striped bass, sturgeon, Nassau grouper, Goliath grouper (jewfish), red snapper, speckled hind, Warsaw grouper and longbill spearfish.

SHELLFISH & CRUSTACEANS		STATE COASTAL AND EEZ WATERS (Internal & 0-200 miles)	
		Minimum Size	**Bag Limits (per person)**
BLUE CRAB (M)		5" Carapace Width (minimum) 6 ¾" Carapace Width (maximum) (F)	50 crabs/day not to exceed 100 crabs/vessel/day
HARD CLAM		1 " Thick	100 clams/day not to exceed 200 clams/vessel/day
OYSTER (N)		3" Shell Length	1 bushel/day not to exceed 2 bushels/vessel/day
BAY SCALLOP (N)		None	½ bushel/day, not to exceed one bushel per vessel
CONCHS & WHELKS		None	10/day not to exceed 20/vessel/day
MUSSELS		None	100/day not to exceed 200/vessel/day
SHRIMP	**Closed Shrimping Area**	None	100 shrimp/day **(Cast Net Only)**
	Open Shrimping Area	None	**48 qts. heads on, 30 qts. heads off (per person or vessel except RCGL max. 2 limits/vessel)**

SYMBOLS TO LOOK FOR

(A) Albemarle Sound Management Area: contact DMF for seasons, areas or other limits; Atlantic Ocean year-round: 2 per person per day at 28" TL minimum; Other coastal areas (excluding Inland Waters-regulations set by Wildlife Resources Commission), 2 per person per day at 18" TL minimum and unlawful to possess between 22" – 27" TL in Joint waters. Moratorium in Cape Fear River system. Season October through April, statewide by proclamation (except Cape FearRiver). Includes hybrid bass.

(B) Limit of 10/person/day or 60/trip, whichever is less. On headboats, limit is 10/person/day. No sale of recreational bag limit on vessels operating as charter or headboats.

(C) Unlawful to possess red drum greater than 27 inches total length. Unlawful to gig, spear, or gaff red drum.

(D) **North of Cape Hatteras** scup recreational season is July 6 through September 26. In state coastal waters the minimum size is 8" TL and the bag limit is 50/day. In the EEZ, the minimum size limit is 10.5" TL and the bag limit is 10/day. For black sea bass NORTH of Hatteras, the size limit in state coastal waters and the EEZ is 12.5" TL with a bag limit of 25/day. Open seasons are July 1 through September 25 and November 1 through December 31. For Black sea bass SOUTH of Hatteras, the season is CLOSED through May 31. **Effective June 1, the minimum size limit will be 13" TL.**

(E) See prohibited species list above; Legal sharks include: tiger, blacktip, spinner, lemon, bull, nurse, smooth and scalloped and great hammerhead, blacknose, finetooth, bonnethead, shortfin mako, blue, thresher, porbeagle, and oceanic whitetip. One (1) Atlantic sharpnose (no minimum size) and one bonnethead (no minimum size) per person per day may be landed in addition to allowable bag limits for other sharks.

(F) Mature female crabs are exempt from minimum size. Maximum size is effective September through April and applies to mature females only.

(G) In state or federal waters, federal permit required for Highly Migratory Species, excluding Atlantic bonito, little tunny (albacore), and blackfin tuna: 978-281-9370. Prior to removal from vessel, all billfishes, swordfish and bluefin tuna must be reported at NC HMS reporting stations. DMF website for more details.

(H) Reef complex species: whitebone porgy, jolthead porgy, knobbed porgy, longspine porgy, gray triggerfish, yellow jack, bar jack, almaco jack, lesser amberjack, banded rudderfish, white grunt, margates, spadefish and scup (south of Hatteras). 20 per person per day in combination.

(I) For seasons, bag limits, size limits or closures for tunas, billfishes, and sharks contact NMFS Highly Migratory Species Division 800-894-5528. For snapper, grouper, and mackerels contact the South Atlantic Council (843-571-4366 or www.safmc.net) and see **Proclamation FF-26-2012.**

(J) Vermilion snapper season is closed November 1-March 31. Shallow water grouper species (gag, black grouper, red grouper, scamp, rock hind, red hind, coney, grasby, yellowfin grouper and yellowmouth grouper) harvest is prohibited January 1–April 30. **Possession of red snapper is currently prohibited.**

(K) Groupers in the management unit include: red, yellowfin, yellowmouth, black, warsaw, snowy, yellowedge, and misty grouper; gag, scamp, speckled hind, red hind, rock hind, graysby, and coney. The three (3) grouper bag limit also includes blueline, golden, and sand tilefish. No possession of Nassau and Goliath grouper.

(L) It is unlawful to possess Large Coastal and Pelagic sharks less than 54 inches (Fork Length).

(M) One crab pot may be used from private property or private pier, without a license – Reference 15A NCAC 3J .0302.

(N) Contact DMF or visit http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/mf/proclamations for seasons, areas, or other restrictions.

(O) It is unlawful to possess more than 10 American shad or hickory shad **in the aggregate** per person per day.

(P) Season open July 1 – August 31.

▲ Size and creel limits for spotted seatrout, flounder, red drum and gray trout taken in joint and coastal waters are the same as the recreational limits for those species in adjacent inland waters.

Total length (TL) is measured from tip of snout with mouth closed to top of compressed tail. Fork length (FL) is measured from tip of snout to middle of fork in tail. Lower jaw fork length (LJFL) is measured from lower jaw to middle of fork in tail. Curved fork length (CFL) is the measurement of the length taken in a line tracing the contour of the body from the tip of the upper jaw to the fork of the tail. Anglers cannot catch both a federal and state bag limit for the same species on the same trip.

Ocean boundary is defined as water seaward of the COLREGS Demarcation Lines as indicated on National Ocean Service navigation charts.

No one may possess aboard a vessel or while engaged in fishing any fish subject to limits without head and tail attached, except for alewife and blueback herring used for bait provided not more than two fish per boat/operation may be cut at any one time – Reference 15A NCAC 3M .0101

Morehead City Office (24 hours)	Elizabeth City Office	Manteo Office	Washington Office	Wilmington Office	NMFS (Fed. Reg.)
800-682-2632 or 252-726-7021	800-338-7805 or 252-264-3911	252-473-5734	800-338-7804 or 252-946-6481	800-248-4536 or 910-796-7215	813-893-3722

THIS FLYER IS EFFECTIVE April 16, 2012 AND IS FOR GENERAL INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES AND HAS NO LEGAL FORCE OR EFFECT. FISHERY RULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE. THESE RESTRICTIONS APPLY TO FISH TAKEN FOR RECREATIONAL PURPOSE AND INCLUDE HOOK AND LINE. Updated State regulations can be found at http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/mf/recreational-fishing-size-and-bag-limits and updated Recreational Commercial Gear License information can be found at http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/mf/recreational-commercial-gear-license.
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