



Recreational Fishery - 2015 Regulations

Following considerable public comment received via survey cards during the Northeast Hunting and Fishing Show February 13-15, at Public Hearing February 25, and via email, the following regulations have been adopted to comply with Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission fishery management plans for black sea bass, scup, striped bass and summer flounder.

Black sea bass: 14 inch minimum length, 3 fish creel limit June 1 through August 31, 5 fish creel limit September 1 through December 31. Note: for paying passengers on party or charter fishing vessels the measures are: 14" min length, 8 fish creel limit, open June 21-December 31. Minimum lengths exclude the dorsal tail filament or tendrils. For reference in 2014, the general angling measures were 13 inch minimum length, 3 fish June 21-August 31 and 8 fish September 1 through Dec 31. The changes above are expected to achieve the required 32.5% reduction in harvest in 2015 versus 2014.

Scup: 10 inch minimum length, 30 fish creel limit, open May 1 through October 31. Note: the party or charter fishing vessel "bonus" season of 45 fish from September 1 through October 31 for paying passengers remains in place. In 2014, the general angling minimum length was 10.5 inches and the creel limit was 20 fish. The party or charter fishing minimum length was 11 inches and the creel limit outside the bonus season was also 20 fish. This adjustment brings Connecticut measures directly in line with our neighboring states (NY, RI, MA). Collectively, our four states account for 97% of the coast wide recreational scup harvest. These changes are expected to increase Connecticut scup harvest by 56% in 2015. Despite liberal conservation measures, the coast wide recreational harvest remains some 2 million fish below the harvest limit (4 million fish harvested from a 6 million fish limit).

Striped bass: 28 inch minimum length, 1 fish creel limit, open year round. Note: these limits apply to all fishing modes. The bonus striped bass program will continue in 2015 with a 25% reduction in the number of fish allowed for harvest (3,018 versus 4,024 in previous years). Strippers harvested under the bonus program are required to be tagged in 2015. Tags and accompanying catch report cards will be available at agency offices beginning in late April. The bonus program season runs from May 1 through December 31. The changes above are expected to reduce striped bass harvest by approximately 25% in accordance with ASMFC Striped Bass Addendum IV.

Summer flounder: 18 inch minimum length, 5 fish creel limit, open May 17 through September 21. There is no change in measures from 2014 as the ASMFC Summer flounder Management Board approved regional management again for this year and the recreational harvest limit (RHL) is essentially unchanged. In 2014, approximately 99.4% of the RHL was harvested coast wide.

Enhanced Shore Fishing Program: This program continues in 2015, allowing shore anglers fishing from any of 46 designated public shore fishing sites to retain scup at 9 inches instead of 10 inches and summer flounder at 16 inches instead of 18 inches. The creel limits and open seasons are as provided above.

We anticipate the 2015 Angler's Guide will be available at licensing outlets, including town halls, tackle shops and agency offices on March 26. Refer to the guide or our web site: www.ct.gov/deep/fishing in the coming days for a complete list of regulations and information on the Enhance Shore Fishing and Bonus Striped Bass Programs. You may also contact the DEEP Marine Fisheries Division by email at deep.marine.fisheries@ct.gov, by mail at PO Box 719, Old Lyme, CT 06371 or by telephone at 860.434.6043 between the hours of 8:30 AM and 4:30 PM, Monday through Friday.

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