



MARINE FISHERIES OFFICE

QUARTERLY REPORT

December 2016



➤ FISHERIES MANAGEMENT, MONITORING & RESEARCH:

◆ Marine Fisheries staff met with about two dozen lobstermen on Tuesday, November 29th to talk about draft addendum XXV to the ASMFC American Lobster Fishery Management Plan. **This addendum is being developed to address the continued recruitment failure of lobster in the southern New England stock.** Options talked about during the meeting included changes to the minimum and/or maximum gauge size, closed seasons, trap reductions and v-notching. The summary of this meeting will be provided to the Lobster Management Board at their next meeting in February 2017.

◆ ASMFC Management.

The **summer flounder** quota for 2017 is expected to be 30% lower than 2016. In addition, there is a projected overage in recreational harvest coastwide that in combination with the quota reduction is estimated to require a 41% reduction in coastwide landings. A working group is currently developing options for the Management Board to consider at the February 2017 meeting. Decisions on summer flounder management are made jointly with the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council. The two bodies will meet later this month to decide whether to move ahead with a single set of measures for the entire coast or ask ASMFC to move ahead with some form of conservation equivalency such as the regional management that has been employed for the past three years.

A full “benchmark” stock assessment is being conducted this fall for **black sea bass**. The stock assessment workshop convened in Woods Hole last week to finalize the assessment. The expectation is that the assessment will be peer reviewed and made available for management use for the 2017 fishing season. Sea bass harvest in 2016 is projected to be considerably higher than the recreational harvest limit. Consequently, the results of this stock assessment will have significant impact of sea bass fishing regulations next year.

The 2017 **scup** quota is 10% lower than 2016’s. Another 5% quota reduction is expected in 2018. Final 2016 harvest estimates are needed before we can determine what management action may be necessary to constrain landings to the 2017 recreational harvest limit.

The **tautog** working group created by the Management Board is developing options for Board consideration to incorporate newly developed and updated regional stock assessments into management actions for the 2018 fishing year. The Long Island Sound regional assessment concluded that the stock is overfished and that overfishing is occurring. The NY Bight assessment (NY/NJ) reached the same conclusion for tautog in that area, while tautog assessments to the south suggest sustainable fishing rates and acceptable biomass levels.



MARINE FISHERIES OFFICE

QUARTERLY REPORT

December 2016



The RI/MA regional assessment concluded that overfishing is not occurring. Current biomass estimates are close to the overfished threshold. Stock status (overfished or not overfished) will depend on the Board's selection of management reference points (MSY vs. SPR based).

Public Hearings concerning **Atlantic menhaden and Jonah Crab** are scheduled for **December 14th** at Marine Headquarters in Old Lyme. The Atlantic Menhaden Public Information Document includes options for adjusting the current quota allocations by state or by the scale of fishery (purse seiners vs cast netters for example). The Jonah crab hearings will focus on consideration of claw only harvest and a definition of bycatch being a percentage of crabs to other species onboard.

◆ Staff **continue to monitor the status of horseshoe crabs in Long Island Sound, especially as they are the preferred bait species for the whelk fishery which now falls under the regulatory jurisdiction of the Department.** Horseshoe crab is also a pioneer species for 'ecosystem-based management', which was mandated by Congress in 1996 in the reauthorization of the Magnuson-Stevens Act. Of all the species managed by the 15 Atlantic coastal states through the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, horseshoe crab is the only one managed for three entirely separate uses –first for their own survival and the needs of migratory shorebirds feeding on their eggs; second, for biomedical use that has recently taken on global importance; and third, to meet the needs of a bait fishery which supplies two other fisheries (eels and whelk) which are growing in economic value.



Harvest in CT is limited by annual state quota (48,678 crabs) and has never exceeded 32,000 crabs, or about 3% of coast-wide bait harvest. Harvest in the Sound is concentrated west of CT River (29% east, 71% central & west), which makes the history of their abundance in the Sound a real mystery.

Staff monitor horseshoe abundance through four standardized surveys: CT DEEP Long Island Sound Trawl Survey, which reflects mostly the central and western basins of the Sound and shows variable abundance with recent indices near median levels. Paired with the CT Survey is the NY State DEC Western Long Island Seine Survey indices for Little Neck Bay and Manhasset Bay, which show a similar trend of recent indices near the median. In contrast to these two Survey results are two others that concentrate on eastern sites. The Millstone Power Station Trawl Monitoring Program, which is conducted bi-weekly all year at fixed stations in the vicinity of the Waterford power station, shows an increase in abundance in 1990s from low



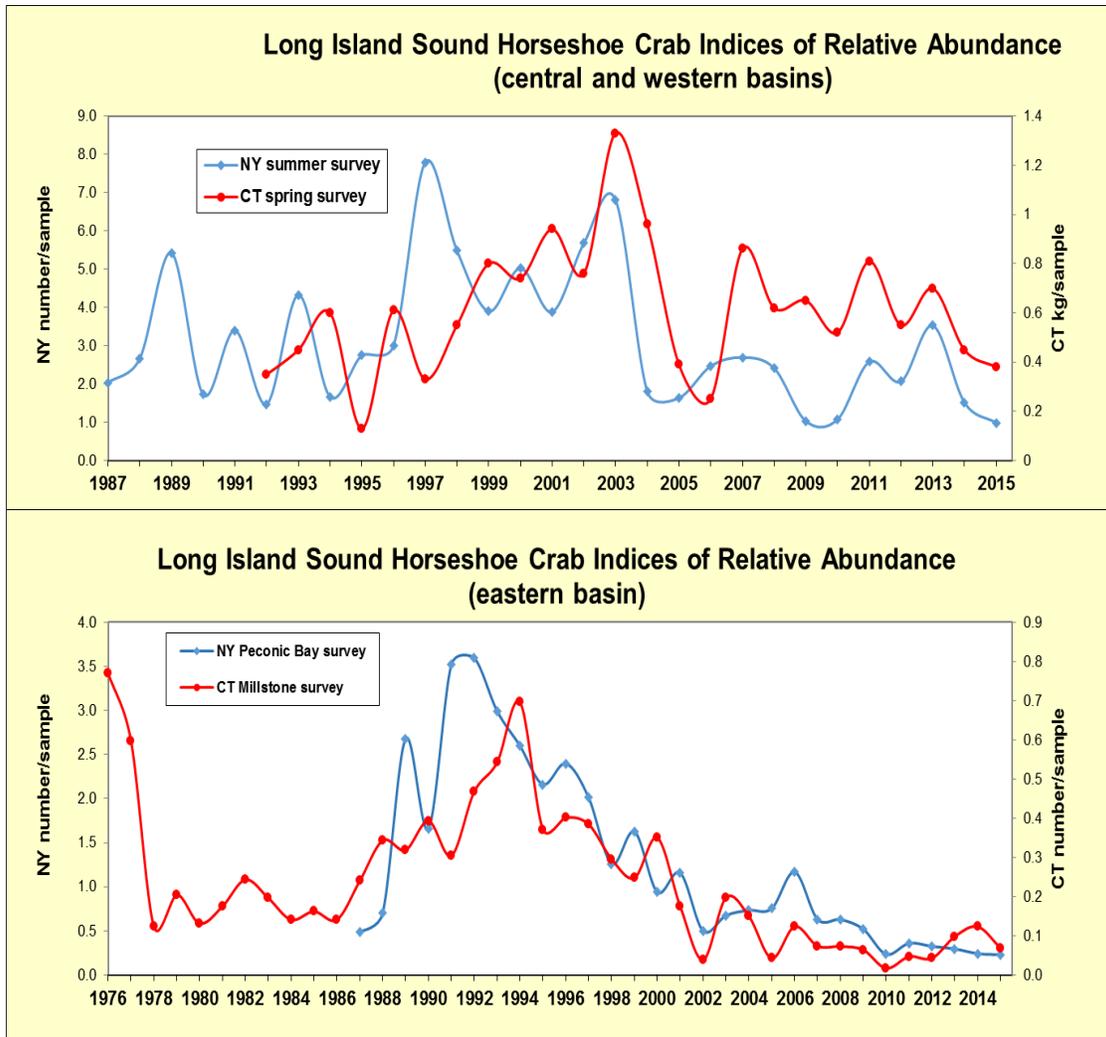
MARINE FISHERIES OFFICE QUARTERLY REPORT

December 2016



1970-1980s followed by a very steep decline since 2001. These Survey indices have been well below median values since 2006. Paired with this CT Survey is the NY State DEC Peconic Bay Trawl Survey, reflecting abundance in waters between the forks of eastern Long Island. These indices also declined steadily from 1991 to 2002 and then leveled off at very low values.

The Department has relied on the observations of citizens who have counted dozens of dead horseshoes on eastern spawning beaches for many years. These counts along with current survey trends paint a very mixed picture concerning the status of this long-lived animal for as yet unknown causes.



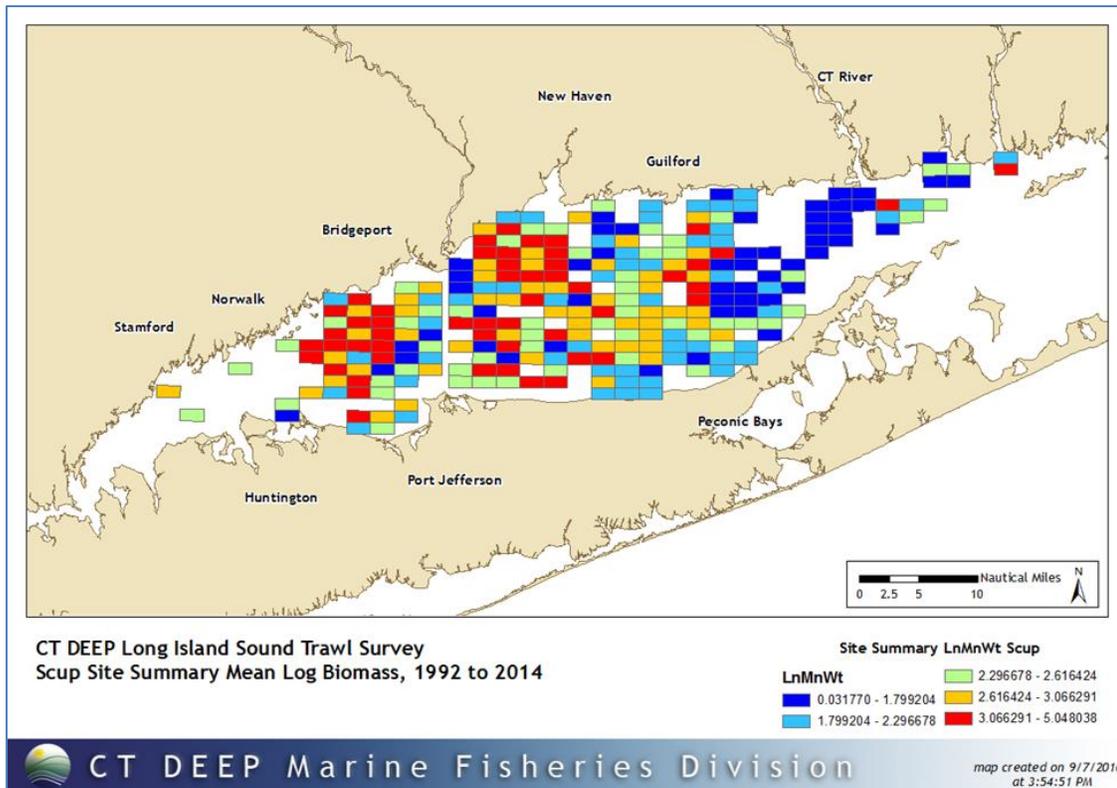


MARINE FISHERIES OFFICE QUARTERLY REPORT

December 2016



◆ **Marine Fisheries submitted over 200 layers of spatial data from the Long Island Sound Trawl Survey to the Northeast Regional Ocean Council (NROC) for inclusion in their online GIS data viewer.** Tow-level and site-level data for two time periods (fall 1992-2014 and fall 2005-2014), for 56 species, were used to create shapefiles to display the data in a similar format to other data currently available in the NROC viewer. Once CT DEEP Marine Fisheries Long Island Sound Trawl Survey data layers are posted to the online viewer, users will be able to display tow-by-tow catch data (including total count, total weight, natural log count, and natural log weight) or site-level catch summaries (including total count, total weight, natural log mean count, natural log mean weight, natural log standard error mean count and natural log standard error mean weight). The Python tool prepared for this data request can be used to respond to future requests (e.g. for different time periods). An example of site summary natural log mean weight data for scup during the period 1992-2014 (symbolized by quantile) is shown below. The online NROC fish data viewer is available at: <http://www.northeastoceandata.org/data-explorer/?fish>



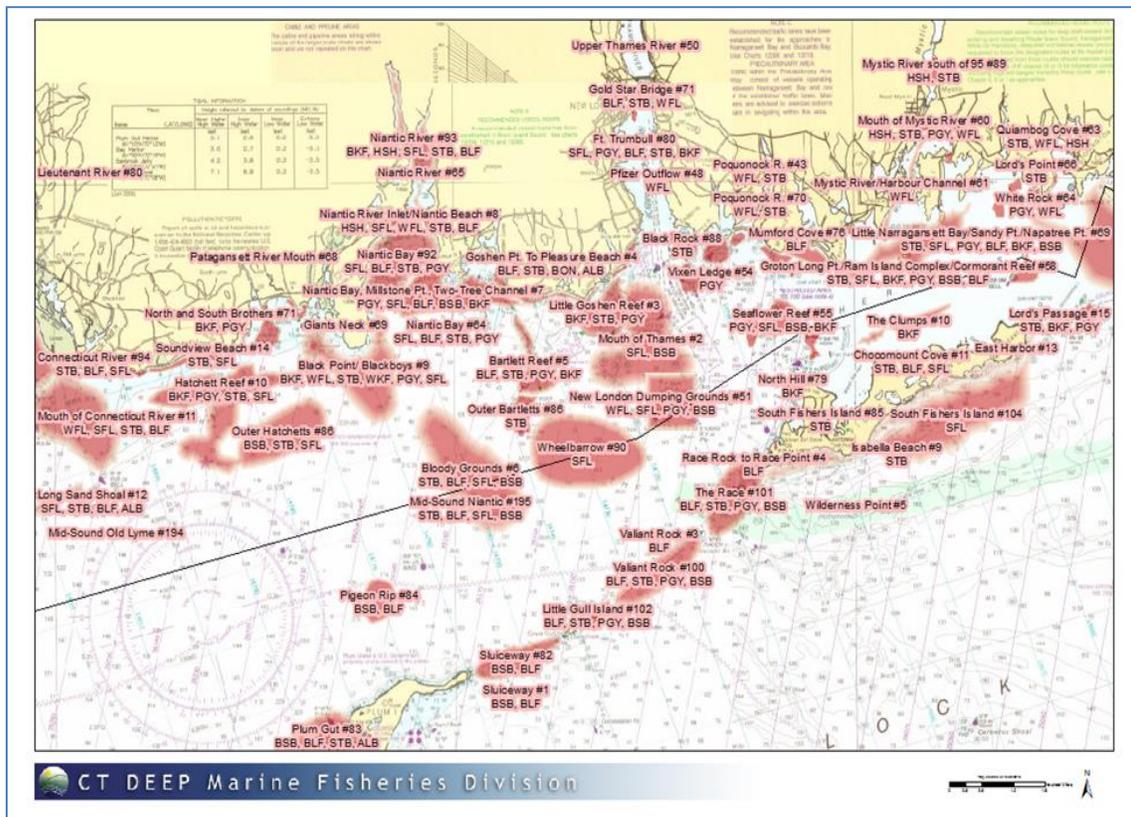


MARINE FISHERIES OFFICE QUARTERLY REPORT

December 2016



◆ The Recreational Fishing Activity Areas map is part of an ongoing Marine Fisheries Division (MFD) effort to document areas that are active for recreational fishing in principally CT waters of Long Island Sound. The map is intended to serve two purposes: (1) to inform the public about areas that are likely to be productive recreational fishing areas (including species-specific information for common LIS species) via inclusion in the online Saltwater Fishing Resources web app and (2) to assist in spatial planning efforts (e.g, CT Blue Plan). The map incorporates data from a survey of MFD staff in 2003, aerial surveys of recreational fishing vessels in 1986-1987, and more recent feedback from MFD staff in 2015-2016. ***MFD staff would like feedback from marine angler groups this winter to help us improve the information in this map. If you or your angler group would be interested in helping us, please contact us at CT DEEP Marine Fisheries 860-434-6043 or deep.marine.fisheries@ct.gov.*** The most recent version of the Recreational Fishing Activity Areas map for part of Long Island Sound is shown below.



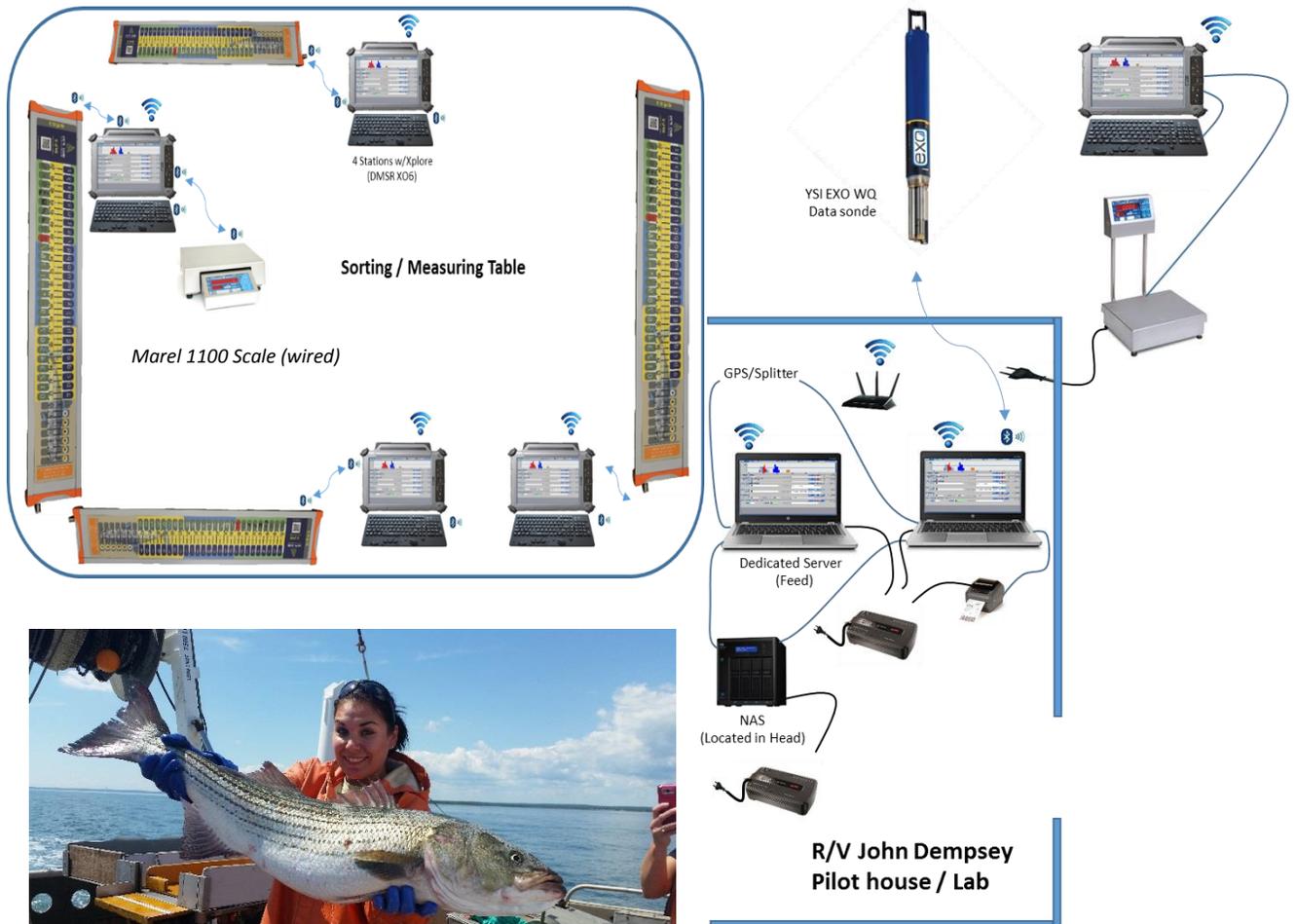


MARINE FISHERIES OFFICE QUARTERLY REPORT

December 2016



◆ About a year ago, **Long Island Sound Trawl Survey (LISTS)** staff began planning for an upgrade to the onboard data collection system (see December 2015 Quarterly Report). **We will be transitioning from paper & pencil to electronic data acquisition** and we've made a lot of progress in one year! Electronic measuring boards, ruggedized tablets and waterproof peripherals have been purchased, and a customized version of FEED (Fisheries Environment for Electronic Data) is being developed. We are hoping to begin implementation during the spring 2017 trawl survey so that beta testing can be done under standard sampling protocols. Final project implementation is expected during the Fall 2017 trawl survey. Below is a schematic of what the new system may look like from the view of looking down onto to the research vessel deck.





MARINE FISHERIES OFFICE

QUARTERLY REPORT

December 2016



➤ MARINE RECREATIONAL FISHING:

Boat Catch Card Survey: CT DEEP staff completed 424 interviews and distributed 249 catch cards to boat based anglers at eight launch sites along CT’s coastline. Four launch sites in the east and west were chosen along with a group of Fairfield County boat anglers (FCBA). 172 catch cards were distributed to Fairfield county boat anglers, 32 distributed at western boat launches, 20 distributed at eastern launches and another 25 to eastern boat anglers. Sixty-five cards were returned from western anglers (FCBA & western launches) and 27 cards from eastern anglers in 2016. A total of 92 cards were returned (37%) **with 291 anglers reporting their fishing trip activities in 2016.** Of the 291 anglers, 227 (78%) caught at least one fish. There was a total of 575 (40%) fish kept and 857 (60%) fish released, including 13 finfish species or species groups.

Volunteer anglers measured a total of 1,432 fish in 2016 (Table 1.2). The targeted species (black seabass, bluefish, scup, striped bass, summer flounder, and tautog) account for 80 % of the measured catch in 2016.

Boat Catch Card Survey Summary for 2016

Species	Kept	%	Released	%	Total
Black Sea Bass	77	60.2	51	39.8	128
Bluefish	61	35.3	112	64.7	173
Catfish	0	0	1	100	1
Dogfish	0	0	17	100	17
False Albacore	8	28.6	20	71.4	26
Menhaden	13	100	0	0	15
Scup	175	55.4	141	44.6	316
Sea Robin	0	0	31	100	31
Skate	0	0	4	100	4
Striped Bass	48	15.9	254	84.1	302
Summer Flounder	90	42.9	120	57.1	210
Tautog	97	49.2	100	50.8	197
Winter Flounder	6	50	6	50	12
Total	575	40.2	857	59.8	1432



MARINE FISHERIES OFFICE QUARTERLY REPORT

December 2016



Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP)

◆ CONNECTICUTS WAVE 4 (JULY/AUGUST) ANGLER TOTAL CATCH ESTIMATES

BLUEFISH	467,441
DOGFISH SHARKS	50,168
SKATES/RAYS	47,212
ATLANTIC COD	32,181
POLLOCK	1,581
DOLPHINS	247
KINGFISHES	3,692
WEAKFISH	1,140
SUMMER FLOUNDER	805,316
HERRINGS	107,622
SCUP	1,294,167
PUFFERS	209
SCULPINS	488
BLACK SEA BASS	845,168
SEAROBINS	792,365
STRIPED BASS	193,029
WHITE PERCH	1,188
TOADFISHES	138
TUNAS/MACKERELS	12,669
CUNNER	10,254
TAUTOG	12,543

◆ NUMBER OF MRIP ANGLER INTERCEPTS (INTERVIEWS):

<u>Wave</u>	<u>CHARTER</u>	<u>PRIVATE BOAT</u>	<u>SHORE</u>	<u>Sum of All Intercepts</u>	<u>Total # of Assignments</u>
2 MARCH/APRIL	0	14	60	74	47
3 MAY/JUNE	26	454	135	615	97
4 JULY/AUGUST.	62	1,111	138	1,311	106
5 SEPT/OCTOBER	24	446	136	606	89
6 NOV/DECEMBER	9	75	34	118	81
TOTALS	121	2100	503	2724	420



MARINE FISHERIES OFFICE QUARTERLY REPORT

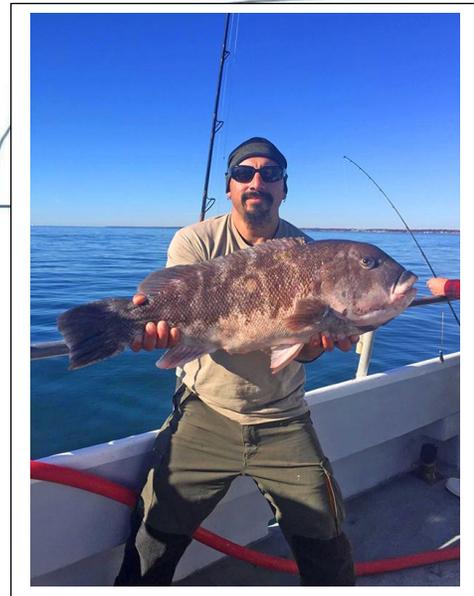
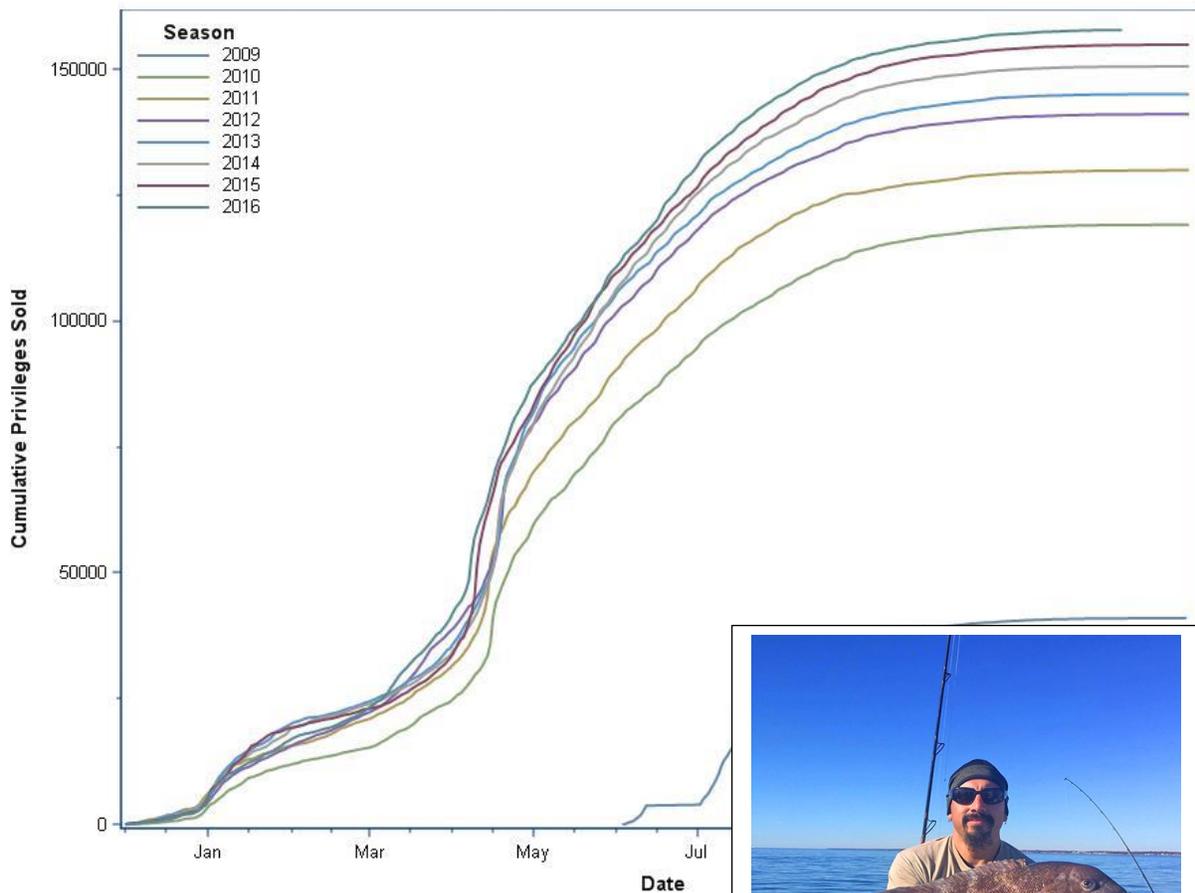
December 2016



➤ Marine Recreational Fisheries – Marine Fishing Licenses:

◆ Incremental growth in marine fishing license sales continued in 2016. **Marine license holders now make up 52% of all fishing licenses issued in our state.**

2016 Marine Licenses issued through December 8, 2016.





MARINE FISHERIES OFFICE

QUARTERLY REPORT

December 2016



Marine Waters Fishing Licenses, 2009 – December 8, 2016. Licenses by Type

Privilege Type	Season							
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
10195 - Marine Waters Fishing Lic, Free Annual - Code 9 (Intellect Disabled)	66	267	305	345	337	378	427	445
10196 - Marine Waters Fishing Lic, Free Annual - Code 5 (Blind)	98	91	93	98	94	80	83	82
10197 - Marine Waters Fishing Lic, Free Annual - Type 17 (Handicapped)	151	524	515	538	532	505	511	505
1296 - Marine Waters Fishing Lic	28,901	28,624	20,759	19,733	18,504	18,777	18,301	18,750
1297 - Marine Waters Fishing Lic (Non-Res)	3,101	4,135	3,702	3,364	2,878	2,692	2,870	2,996
1337 - Marine Waters Fishing Lic, Free Annual - Age 65 Plus	8,532	18,327	20,458	24,995	27,244	29,356	31,251	32,986
1345 - Marine Waters Fishing Lic, 1-day	7	346	450	556	604	690	802	730
1346 - All Waters Fishing Lic	28	44,454	55,252	61,143	64,182	66,304	65,988	67,240
1347 - Marine Waters Fishing Lic / Firearms Hunting Lic	3	166	308	391	448	459	448	440
1348 - All Waters Fishing Lic / Firearms Hunting Lic	62	17,625	22,324	22,128	22,392	21,072	17,185	16,029
1349 - All Waters Fishing Lic / Arch Deer / Small Game Lic	3	1,037	951	1,707	1,553	1,663	1,813	1,946
1350 - AW Fish Lic / Fa SS (Fa Hunt; S/R PL Deer; PL Sp Trky)	.	3	.	.	.	.	1,114	1,243
1351 - AW Fish Lic / Archery SS (Arch Deer / Sm Gm; PL Sp Trky)	.	741	631	886	956	1,080	1,001	1,050
1352 - Marine Waters Fishing Lic, 3-day (Non-Res)	64	1,277	1,131	1,285	1,299	1,367	1,377	1,484
1353 - All Waters Fishing Lic (Non-Res)	.	972	1,158	1,390	1,298	1,426	1,519	1,700
1354 - All Waters Fishing Lic / Firearms Hunting Lic (Non-Res)	1	82	122	146	159	137	138	142
1355 - Marine Waters Fishing Lic / Firearms Hunting Lic (Non-Res)	1	19	18	23	30	23	25	21
1475 - AW Fish Lic / Fa SS Lic (Fa Hunt; S/R/Mz PL Deer; PL Sp Trky)	.	470	1,823	2,394	2,609	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
1953 - All Waters Fishing Lic / Firearms Hunting Lic	.	.	.	.	.	.	376	334
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
1958 - All Waters Fishing Lic (16-17)	.	.	.	.	.	.	2,778	2,782
1959 - Marine Waters Fishing Lic, 1-day (16-17)	.	.	.	.	.	.	20	24
1960 - Marine Waters Fishing Lic / Firearms Hunting Lic (16-17)	.	.	.	.	.	.	9	6
1962 - All Waters Fishing Lic / Arch Deer / Small Game Lic (16-17)	.	.	.	.	.	.	52	9
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
2024 - Free One-Day Sport Fishing License - 2nd	.	.	.	.	.	.	533	544
Total	41,018	119,160	130,000	141,122	145,119	150,612	154,947	157,851



MARINE FISHERIES OFFICE

QUARTERLY REPORT

December 2016



➤ NOTICES TO FISHERMEN:

12/2/2016 [Quota Managed Species Meeting Notice](#)

A meeting of seafood dealers and commercial fishermen holding quota managed species endorsement letter has been scheduled at DEEP Marine Headquarters, Old Lyme. (N16-29)
Meeting to be held December 8, 2016

12/2/2016 [Commercial Fishery Possession Limits](#)

Effective 0001 hours, Sunday, December 4, 2016, there will be the following changes: the commercial landing limit for summer flounder will be 600 pounds per week, the commercial landing limit for black sea bass will be 300 pounds per week, and the commercial fishery for smooth dogfish reopens. (N16-28)

12/1/2016 [Notice of ASMFC Public Hearings on Menhaden and Jonah Crab](#)

The DEEP Marine Fisheries Division is hosting public hearings of the Atlantic State Marine Fisheries Commission to gather input on the PID for Draft Amendment 3 to the Atlantic Menhaden Fishery Management Plan and Draft Addendum II to the Jonah Crab Fishery Management Plan. (N16-27)
Public Hearing to be held December 14, 2016

11/17/2016 [Public Informational Meeting for Lobstermen](#)

The DEEP Marine Fisheries Division is holding an informational meeting to gather input from lobstermen and other interested members of the public on the development of Draft Addendum XXV to the American Lobster Fishery Management Plan. (N16-26)
Public Informational Meeting to be held November 29, 2016

11/10/2016 [Commercial Fishery Possession Limits](#)

Effective 0001 hours, Sunday, November 13, 2016, the black sea bass commercial fishery will reopen with a possession limit of 10 fish. (N16-25)

10/31/2016 [Commercial Fishery Possession Limits](#)

Effective 0001 hours, Tuesday, November 1, 2016, the scup commercial fishery will reopen at a possession limit of 18,000 pounds. Effective 0001 hours Sunday, November 6, 2016, the summer flounder commercial fishery will reopen at a possession limit of 100 pounds. (116-24)

10/21/2016 [Commercial Fishery Possession Limits](#)

Effective 0001 hours Sunday, October 30, 2016, the black sea bass commercial fishery will close. Effective 0001 hours Tuesday, November 1, 2016 the scup commercial fishery will reopen at a possession limit of 18,000 pounds. (N16-23)

10/14/2016 [Commercial Fishery](#)

Effective 0001 hours Sunday, October 16, 2016, the scup commercial fishery possession limit will be reduced to 0 pounds. (N16-22)

10/5/2016 [Notice to Spiny Dogfish Fishermen](#)

The Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Spiny Dogfish prohibits removing any fins from this fish at sea. (N16-20)





MARINE FISHERIES OFFICE QUARTERLY REPORT

December 2016



➤ PUBLIC OUTREACH:

◆ 2016 Connecticut Marine Trophy Fish Award Summary

202 Total Trophy Fish Awards – A RECORD FOR THE PROGRAM!

54 Male & 13 Female Participants

14 Youth Participants (Age 16 & under)

27 Different Marine Species

14 NEW State Records (two species broken twice in the same year)

◆ 2016 New State Record Marine Fish

Species	Length	Weight
Red Drum	38.5"	19 lb. 13 oz.
Grey Snapper	25"	5 lb. 15 oz.
Smooth Puffer	25.25"	9 lb. 6 oz.
Mahi Mahi	60"	47 lb 2 oz
Gray Triggerfish	19"	6 lb 1.5 oz
Atlantic Chub Mackerel	14"	1 lb 2 oz
Northern Kingfish	19.5"	2 lb. 10 oz.
Monkfish	40"	42 lb.
Clearnose Skate	51.75"	7 lb. 6 oz.
Hogchoker	10.25"	11 oz.
Blue Crab	8.8125"	-
Longfin Squid	22"	-



◆ 2016 Marine Trophy Fish Award Species Rank

2016 Species Rank	N
1. Black Sea Bass	45
2. Bluefish	28
3. Striped Bass	23
4. Blue Crab	22
5. Summer Flounder	20
6. Striped Sea Robin	13
7. Scup	10
8. American Eel	6
9. Tautog	9
10. Smooth Dogfish	3
11. Weakfish	3

