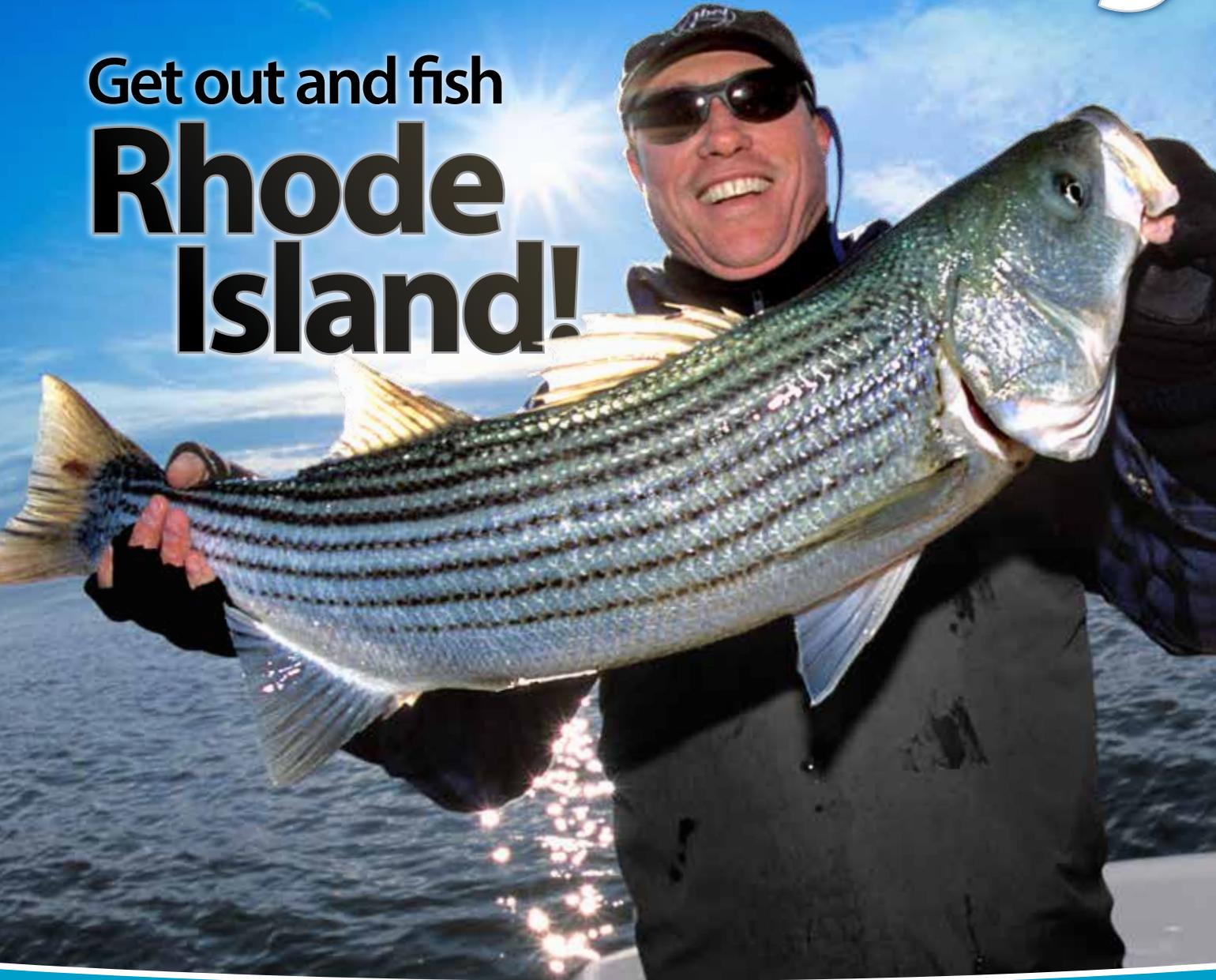


2013 RHODE ISLAND RECREATIONAL

Saltwater Fishing

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The official regulations provided by the
Rhode Island Division of Fish & Wildlife - Marine Fisheries Section
Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management



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Saltwater Fishing



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Principal Marine Biologist

Kevin Smith

RI Division of Fish and Wildlife

– Marine Fisheries Section

3 Fort Wetherill Rd.

Jamestown, RI 02835

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Welcome Letter



On behalf of Governor Chafee, I am delighted to introduce the first annual Rhode Island Saltwater Recreational Fishing Guide.

Rhode Island, the Ocean State, offers some of the best saltwater recreational fishing around. Whether you fish the waters of Narragansett Bay and the salt ponds, the coastal waters stretching from Westerly to Little Compton, the Block Island surf, or the deep Atlantic offshore waters, Rhode Island anglers have many fantastic fishing opportunities throughout the year. Striped bass, summer flounder, bluefish, scup, black sea bass, tautog, tuna, and sharks are just a few of the many species that Rhode Island saltwater recreational anglers target and enjoy.

This new guide is designed to help make the great experience of saltwater fishing in Rhode Island even better. It's a guide designed to serve the interests of all saltwater fishermen — newcomers as well as seasoned anglers. It provides information on a variety of fishing-related issues, including current recreational fishing regulations, some of which have been liberalized for 2013. It also includes information on local fishing and boating access sites, commonly caught species, and a variety of articles on recreational fishing issues. It features information on the many local businesses that provide fishing-related services and supplies, such as party and charter boats, and bait and tackle shops.

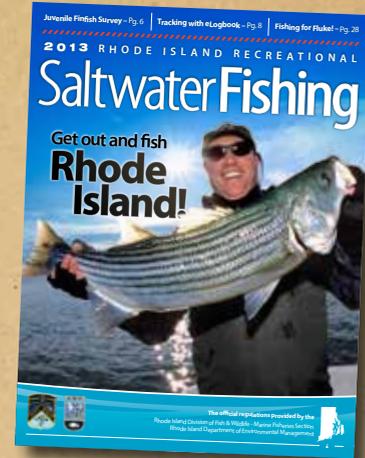
This new publication would not have been possible without the support of Rhode Island's saltwater fishing community. In fact, this is your publication, funded via your contributions to the federal Sportfish Restoration Program and the RI Recreational Saltwater License Program. Thanks to your support, the RI Department of Environmental Management, through the Department's Marine Fisheries Section, carries out a range of programs and activities that support the interests of recreational fishermen. We build, manage, and maintain our fishing and boating access sites; we monitor and conserve our local fish stocks; and we strive to improve the accuracy of recreational catch and effort data to ensure that our fishing regulations are fair and effective. We are proud to work shoulder-to-shoulder with RI's recreational fishing organizations on initiatives to promote fishing — such as last year's inaugural Galilee Fishing Tournament — and, we are engaged in a range of outreach and education programs, like this new guide!

We do these things because saltwater fishing is so important to the State. In addition to being fun for people of all ages, fishing is a great way to obtain fresh and healthy seafood. It is also an important economic driver. According to recent estimates from the federal government, expenditures by recreational saltwater fishermen in Rhode Island total about \$179 million annually. Those expenditures generate some \$157 million in sales and \$48 million in income, and support nearly 1,300 jobs. Governor Chafee and I are committed to doing all that we can to promote and support saltwater fishing in Rhode Island.

We hope this guide enhances your recreational fishing experiences and encourages you to use responsible angling practices. Please remember to be respectful of the environment and fellow anglers. Enjoy the magic of fishing in beautiful Rhode Island, and, most importantly, HAVE FUN.

Now, get out there and fish! Hope to see you on the water.

Janet Coit
Director



About this Guide

This high-quality guide is offered to you by the Rhode Island Division of Fish and Wildlife – Marine Fisheries Section, through its unique partnership with J.F. Griffin Publishing, LLC.

J.F. Griffin is an award winning publishing house that specializes in producing state fish & wildlife regulation books. J.F. Griffin supports RIDFW's staff in the design, layout and editing of the guides. They also manage the marketing and sales of advertising to appropriate businesses within the book.

The revenue generated through ad sales significantly lowers production costs and generates savings. These savings translate into additional funds for other important fisheries and habitat programs.

If you have any feedback or are interested in advertising, please contact us at 413.884.1001 or online at www.JFGriffin.com

Designers: Jon Gulley, Erin Murphy, Evelyn Haddad, Chris Sobolowski and Dane Fay

On the cover: Nice striper!
Photo by Sam Talarico



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General Information

Our Mission...

The Division of Fish and Wildlife's mission is to ensure that the freshwater, marine, and wildlife resources of the State of Rhode Island will be conserved and managed for equitable and sustainable use. The Division is divided into three separate sections: Marine Fisheries, Freshwater Fisheries, and Wildlife Management.

The Marine Fisheries section conducts research and monitoring of marine species to support the effective management of finfish, crustaceans, and shellfish of commercial and recreational importance. Some of the programs and projects that the Division is responsible for to support the proper management of marine species are resource assessment surveys including the Division of Fish and Wildlife trawl survey and the Narragansett Bay and Coastal Pond Seine Surveys, as well as shellfish relaying and transplants, sea and port sampling, stock assessment modeling work, and aquaculture and dredging project permit reviews.

The Division is also responsible for developing and maintaining a wide array of regulations on marine species including setting seasons, size limits, harvest methods and equipment, and daily possession limits.

The Division provides information and outreach materials, including press releases, brochures, website, fact sheets, and this fishing guide to convey regulations and marine related topics to the regulated community and general public.

The Division also works closely and collaboratively with the Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Council (RIMFC) to advise the DEM Director on a multitude of marine related matters.

If you have any questions about this guide or Rhode Island's marine recreational fisheries, please contact:

Kevin Smith
Principal Marine Biologist
3 Fort Wetherill Rd.
Jamestown, RI 02835
(401) 423-1941
RISaltwaterGuide@dem.ri.gov

Debris Decomposition Timeline

Glass bottle	1 million years
Monofilament fishing line	600 years
Plastic beverage bottle	450 years
Disposable diaper	450 years
Foamed plastic buoy	80 years
Aluminum can	80-100 years
Nylon fabric	50 years
Plastic bag	10-20 years
Cigarette filter	1-5 years
Untreated plywood	1-3 years
Cotton rope	1 year
Orange peel	2-5 weeks



Photo courtesy of Scott Olszewski

Rhode Island Environmental Police – Division of Law Enforcement

Steven H. Hall, Chief

The mission of the Environmental Police is to protect our natural resources and ensure compliance with all environmental conservation laws through law enforcement and education.

The history of the Environmental Police dates back to 1842 when the first game wardens were appointed to the Commission of Shellfisheries.

Today, Environmental Police Officers are sworn law enforcement officers who are responsible for patrolling and enforcing all laws, rules and regulations pertaining to the state's fish, wildlife, boating safety and marine resources as well as all criminal and motor vehicle laws within the state parks and management areas. Officers patrol over 60,000 acres of state land, 92 salt and freshwater boat launching and fishing areas, 300 miles of rivers and streams, and 417 miles of coastline. They are also cross-deputized with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service. During their patrols, they educate the public on the protection of our natural resources and provide safety for the public while enjoying Rhode Island's outdoors.

To report violations, please call: (401) 222-3070



Interested in trying out a new data collection system?

Log your catch on the Rhode Island Division of Fish and Wildlife **VOLUNTARY** recreational on-line angler logbook. Just follow the link on the www.saltwater.ri.gov page to sign up and get started. For more information, please refer to page 8.

Recreational Saltwater Fishing License

What Rhode Island Anglers Need to Know

In order to fish recreationally in Rhode Island marine waters, and in offshore federal waters, anglers and spearfishers must have a RI Recreational Saltwater Fishing License, OR a Federal Registration, OR a license from a reciprocal state.



Overview

The Marine Recreational Information Program, or MRIP, is a comprehensive new nationwide data collection and reporting system being implemented by NOAA Fisheries. All RI license information, as well as that collected by NMFS and other states, will be incorporated into a national “phone book” of recreational anglers, enabling the new MRIP program to readily survey current fishermen and more accurately assess recreational catch and effort data. That information will lead to improved state-based assessments and more fair, accurate, and effective management programs for Rhode Island’s marine recreational fisheries.

Reciprocal States

Rhode Island residents may use their RI Recreational Saltwater Fishing License to fish in New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Maine.

Saltwater Recreational Fishing License holders from New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Maine need not obtain a RI Saltwater Recreational Fishing License if they possess a valid license from one of the states listed above.

Please refer to pages 24 and 25 for information on lobster, shellfish, and other recreational licenses.

Recreational Saltwater Fishing License

License Type	Fee
RI residents (annually)	\$7.00
Non-residents (annually)	\$10.00
7-Day license	\$5.00

- Available online at: www.saltwater.ri.gov
- Also available from certain bait & tackle shops. A list of vendors can be found on the recreational license webpage.
- Applies in all RI waters, all offshore federal waters, and in all neighboring state waters for finfish and squid.
- Free for RI residents over 65 and for active military stationed in RI.
- No license needed for children under 16, nor for anglers on party & charter boats. See website for additional exemptions.

Aquatic Resource Education Program (ARE)

The ARE program is an outreach and education program dedicated to teaching Rhode Islanders of all ages about the immense marine and freshwater resources that we have in our state. Federally funded by the US Fish and Wildlife Services’s Sportfish Restoration fund and the Wallop-Breaux Act, this program provides a variety of educational opportunities including basic courses in saltwater recreational fishing, fly fishing and fly tying, family programs such as the *Family Fishing Day on Prudence Island*, as well as more advanced fishing opportunities such as the *Fly Fishing Express*. Additionally, the program educates school groups using traveling tide-pools, marine ecology field trips, and by training teachers state-wide in a variety of curricula including *Project WILD/WILD Aquatic*, *Growing Up WILD*, *Project WET* and *WOW! The Wonders of Wetlands*. The ARE program also facilitates aquaculture programs using anadromous fish in the popular Salmon in the Classroom and providing hatchery tours of our State hatcheries. Other programs include a fishing rod loan program and the First Fish Award. Educational materials such as the *Common Saltwater Fish of Rhode Island* poster, fishing pamphlets, and coloring books are provided to the public free of charge. All ARE programs are equipped for people with special needs. For more information, contact the ARE Program, RIDEM-Fish & Wildlife, Education Office (401) 539-0037 or kimberly.sullivan@dem.ri.gov.

First Fish Award Program

First Fish Awards are available for children catching their first fish. To receive an award, an angler must have caught a qualifying fish by rod and reel, tie-up or hand-line by legal means in Rhode Island. First Fish Awards can be processed with information on the child’s catch without official weigh-in station verification. If keeping a fish, legal sizes must be adhered to. Applications can be downloaded using this link: <http://www.dem.ri.gov/topics/fwtotpics.htm>. First Fish Awards are sent as soon as possible. Please send completed applications to:

ARE Program

RIDEM Division of Fish and Wildlife
1B Camp E-Hun-Tee Place
Exeter, RI 02882

For more information about the First Fish Award program, please contact Kimberly Sullivan at:

kimberly.sullivan@dem.ri.gov or (401) 539-0037



Photo courtesy of A. Valliere

NARRAGANSETT BAY

Juvenile Finfish Survey



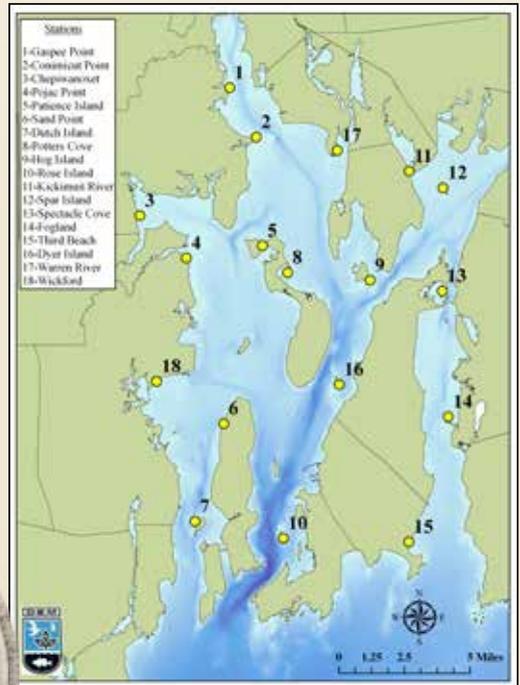
by Jason McNamee, Supervising Marine Biologist, RIDFW

The year 2012 marked the 26th year for the Narragansett Bay Juvenile Finfish survey. This survey is one of the major projects conducted annually by the RIDEM – Division of Fish and Wildlife Marine Section. The survey consists of sampling eighteen stations around Narragansett Bay (see Figure 1) once a month from June through October with a 61m X 3.05m beach seine deployed from a boat. Individuals of all finfish species are quantified for length and number. Species of invertebrates are also identified and estimated for abundance. Every effort is made to return all fish and invertebrates to the water alive.



Winter flounder, tautog, bluefish, scup, and members of the clupeid family (menhaden, river herring, sea herring), the target species for this study, are probably the most economically important finfish species in Narragansett Bay. Since the beginning of the Juvenile Finfish Survey in 1986 our understanding of the juvenile life stage of these species has increased substantially. Patterns of spatial and temporal abundance, growth rates, and habitat requirements are better understood today than they were in 1986. Associations with other species and correlations with water quality are emerging. Previous to this study

Figure 1
Narragansett Bay Juvenile Finfish Survey station locations

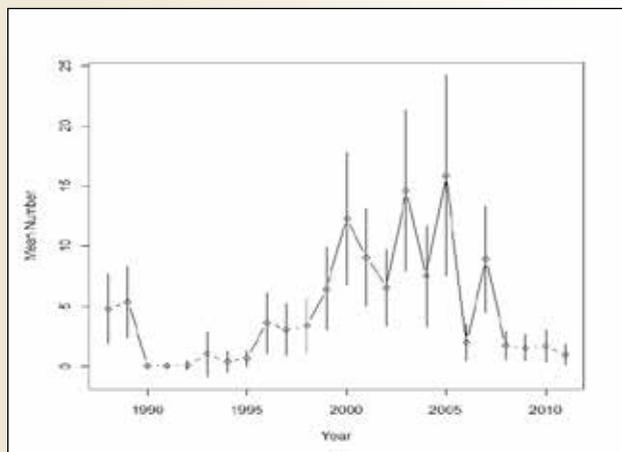


information on juveniles of many recreational and commercially important species in Narragansett Bay was extremely limited. Data collected from each year's survey provide information on the relative abundance, temporal, and spatial distribution of each species in Narragansett Bay during the survey period. Length frequency data characterizes the juvenile population structure for each species and is used to estimate annual growth rates. Composition of the fish community structure at each station and bay-wide is also characterized. Data analyzed for each year is compared with that from previous years to identify annual variations and population trends. An example of the data collected for tautog is provided in Figure 2. During the normal process of sampling, data on weather and tidal stage are also collected. Measurements of water temperature, salinity and dissolved oxygen are taken close to the bottom with a water quality meter.

The Narragansett Bay Seine survey represents the first comprehensive effort to gather data on juvenile finfish in Narragansett Bay and incorporates these data into species management plans. The data are kept in a large database at the Ft. Wetherill Marine Laboratory. In addition to their use by stock assessment biologists at the R. I. Division of Fish & Wildlife, these data are used by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) in developing coast-wide Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs), as well as by the RI Marine Fisheries Council (RIMFC) as they help to develop state specific management plans. The Juvenile Finfish Survey has also been identified as one of the monitoring studies incorporated into the Narragansett Bay Estuary Program's long term monitoring program. These data have also been used in developing dredging windows and sequencing for a variety of projects in Narragansett Bay. Juvenile finfish and their habitat data have been used for evaluating a myriad of coastal development proposals from outfalls to residential docks to large-scale marinas.

From a fisheries management perspective the importance of long term monitoring of juvenile finfish populations cannot be overemphasized. Juvenile abundance indices are valuable in developing and modifying species management plans. Changes in year class strengths can be monitored, changes in management strategy anticipated, and regulations can be promulgated in advance of a "crisis" situation. With the development of management plans for other species in progress or proposed, these kinds of data sets are becoming more important to fisheries managers, and it is imperative that monitoring studies like this be continued.

Figure 2 – Example of data collected. Annual abundance of Tautog.



Rhode Island Game Fish Award Program

Annually, RIDEM-Division of Fish & Wildlife recognizes anglers who have caught freshwater and saltwater game fish of notable size. Game Fish Awards are presented to anglers for each species of game fish caught that meet the minimum size requirements listed below. Only one award will be presented to an angler for each species per year. State Record Game Fish Awards are presented to the angler whose game fish catch is the largest to date of a species, as determined by Division records. To receive an award, an angler must catch a qualifying fish by rod and reel, tie-up or hand-line by legal means in Rhode Island waters. To apply for a Game Fish Award or State Record Game Fish Award, an angler must bring his or her legally-caught fish to an official weigh-in station, such as a bait and tackle shop, sporting goods store or grocery fish department. The fish must be identified, measured, and weighed on a digital scale. The station operator will fill out a Game Fish Award Application and sign it. If keeping a fish, legal sizes must be adhered to in all cases. Game Fish Awards and State Record Game Fish Awards are mailed out in the spring of the following year the fish are caught. Send completed applications for verification and processing to:

RIDEM - Fish & Wildlife
277 Great Neck Rd.
West Kingston, RI 02892

Applications can be obtained on the DEM website. For questions on the Game Fish Award Program, write to the address above or call (401) 789-0281.

Qualifying Weights/Lengths

(Except First Fish Awards)

Saltwater		Freshwater	
Species	Weight/Length	Species	Weight/Length
Striped Bass	50 lbs	Smallmouth Bass	4 lbs
Black Sea Bass	3 lbs	Largemouth Bass	6 lbs
Bluefish	18 lbs	Bluegill	9 in
Bonito	10 lbs	Pumpkinseed	8 in
Cod	20 lbs	Black Crappie	12 in
Winter Flounder	2 lbs	Yellow Perch	12 in
Summer Flounder	8 lbs	White Perch	15 in
King Mackerel	3 lbs	White Catfish	4 lbs
Mackerel	1 lb	Chain Pickerel	4 lbs
Yellowfin Tuna	125 lbs	Northern Pike	10 lbs
Pollack	15 lbs	Brook Trout	2 lbs
Scup	2½ lbs	Brown Trout	3 lbs
Hickory Shad	5 lbs	Rainbow Trout	3 lbs
Blue Shark	80 lbs	Brown Bullhead	13 in
Mako Shark	150 lbs		
Swordfish	200 lbs		
Squeteague	8 lbs		
Tautog	10 lbs		
Bluefin Tuna	450 lbs		
White Marlin	70 lbs		

eLOGBOOK:

An innovative way to track recreational catch and effort!

by Anna R. Webb, ACCSP Coordinator, RIDFW

Have you ever wanted a “one-stop shop” to keep track of recreational fishing trips and catches? The Rhode Island Division of Fish and Wildlife (RIDFW) in conjunction with the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) offer the voluntary eLOGBOOK application of the Standard Atlantic Fisheries Information System (SAFIS) for just that purpose! As of February 2013, 212 Rhode Island anglers are already registered for the program, but that number consists mainly of party and charter boat captains since reporting is required for any tautog-dedicated party/charter trips. Now, RIDFW would like to spread the word to all recreational anglers.

So, what exactly is eLOGBOOK? eLOGBOOK is an online tool available to Rhode Island anglers that can track trip level data as well as provide summary reports. This program offers a simple way to maintain trip level information all in one place; anglers can enter data on kept and released fish, catches used for bait and for consumption, and which gear types were used to catch individual species. Anglers are also able to view and download their trip reports and view graphical summaries of the average lengths of species, number of fish caught per month, and number of fish caught per species. Other programs and methods can be used to view and summarize the data once the trip reports are downloaded from the website.

The data submitted by anglers remain completely confidential, and only RIDFW staff are able to view the data. This program is a highly valuable tool for management and provides an opportunity to characterize Rhode Island’s recreational fisheries. Specifically, the data collected by this program provide a census for the tautog party/charter fishery, support for assessing minimum size limits and bag limits for scup and fluke, and the ability to characterize discards. The RIDFW encourages eLOGBOOK participation to help enhance the understanding of Rhode Island’s recreational landings.

Any angler who would like to use this program and provide data for recreational fisheries management can register for the system! A link to the website can be found on the RIDFW website (<http://www.dem.ri.gov/topics/mftopics.htm>) under the Saltwater Recreational Fishing License heading. From the log-in screen, new users will need to choose the “Click to Register” link. A username and password will be created after registration and emailed to you, and you can then start to enter data!

Be sure to check the RIDFW website periodically for updates, an upcoming video tutorial on using the program, and detailed instructions for entering recreational trip information. If you have any questions regarding the program or would like more information, please contact Anna Webb at 401-423-1926 or Anna.Webb@dem.ri.gov.

Brief Instructions for Entering Trips:

1. Create an account by clicking on the “Click to Register” link on the log-in page.
2. After signing in, click on the “Create new logbook entry” button.
3. Enter the trip date and fishing mode (e.g., from shore, private boat, etc.).
4. Add effort information. The program asks for general area, gear type, number of lines or pots, fishing time, number of anglers, etc.
5. Add Catch information. In this section you may enter quantity and lengths for both kept and released fish designated by the appropriate disposition.
6. Lastly, add any additional notes about the trip in the designated box. Some anglers include weather information, more specific location information, and anything else that might be useful looking back on the trip in this field.
7. Click Save!



Fishing Knots

These and more fishing knots are available on waterproof plastic cards at www.proknot.com

Illustrations c 2011 John E Sherry

Improved Clinch Knot

The improved clinch knot has become one of the most popular knots for tying terminal tackle connections. It is quick and easy to tie and is strong and reliable.

The knot can be difficult to tie in lines in excess of 30 lb test. Five+ turns around the standing line is generally recommended, four can be used in heavy line. This knot is not recommended with braided lines.



1. Thread end of the line through the eye of the hook, swivel or lure. Double back and make five or more turns around the standing line. Bring the end of the line through the first loop formed behind the eye, then through the big loop.



2. Wet knot and pull slightly on the tag end to draw up coils. Pull on the standing line to form knot with coils pressed neatly together.



3. Slide tight against eye and clip tag end.

Rapala Knot

The Rapala knot is a popular method to tie a lure or fly to a line such that it can move freely and unimpeded by the knot.

1. Tie a loose overhand knot and feed the tag end through the eye and back through the overhand knot.



2. Make 3 turns around the standing line and bring tag end back through overhand knot.



3. Pass tag end through loop that is formed.

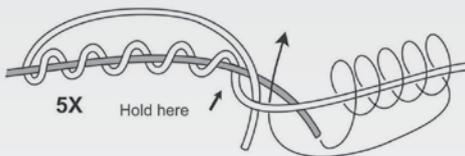


4. Moisten line. Pull on standing line while holding tag end to close knot. Pull on both tag and standing line to tighten knot down.



Blood Knot

Use this knot to join sections of leader or line together. It works best with line of approximately equal diameter.



1. Overlap ends of lines to be joined. Twist one around the other making 5 turns. Bring tag end back between the two lines. Repeat with other end, wrapping in opposite direction the same number of turns.



2. Slowly pull lines or leaders in opposite directions. Turns will wrap and gather.

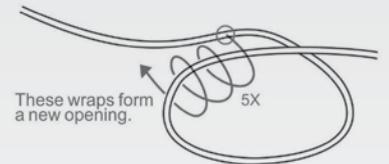


3. Pull tight and clip ends closely.

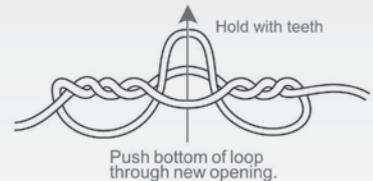
Dropper Loop Knot

This knot forms a loop anywhere on a line. Hooks or other tackle can then be attached to the loop.

1. Form a loop in the line at the desired location. Pull line from one side of loop down and pass it through and around that side of loop. Make 5+ wraps around the loop, keeping a thumb or forefinger in the new opening which is formed.



2. Press bottom of original loop up through new opening and hold with teeth. Wet knot with saliva and pull both ends in opposite directions.



3. Pull ends of line firmly until coils tighten and loop stands out from line.



Fishing The Ocean State's Waters

by Captain Bill Brown

Those who fish in Rhode Island's coastlines will find no better arena to engage in their pastime than that found in and around Narragansett Bay or off the southern coastline of the Ocean State.

Whether you favor inshore, the cold water species, or decide to head out to the deeper waters to search for the larger, big game species, the smallest state in the Union offers some of the best fishing to be found in the wide world of salt water angling. Private, party and charter boats (especially those who belong to the Rhode Island Party and Charter Boat Association) can provide you with the capability to sample some of the best salt water fishing in the Northeast.

During late springtime striped bass and bluefish will make their annual appearance along the regional coastline in large numbers, along with the bottom dwelling fluke (summer flounder), and the black seabass.

Bluefish can be picked up by almost any technique including trolling, live bait, jigs, or by employing surface plugs. The first few elements of the 'Blue Horde' show up during late Spring. The best areas to seek them out in June are Watch Hill Reef Complex, Narragansett Bay, Block Island's East Grounds, S.E. Light, and at various spots found upon Southwest and Shark's Ledges.

Striped bass action will be very productive during this time frame as well. Drifting eels on night trips has proved to be an almost guaranteed ticket to success on the linesiders that can run from 'schoolie sizes' right up to 'cows' that surpass the 50 lb benchmark.

The Watch Hill Reef Complex will give up their share of large bass as will the myriad humps and bumps of Narragansett Bay, the rocky shoreline off of Newport, and the ragged bottom structure and ledges found around Block Island. A wide variety of techniques have proven to be very effective on these gamefish, especially on early morning or evening tides or during the hours of darkness.

Fluke fishing will provide great fun for both novice and expert anglers alike. Relatively light tackle when employed to bottom bounce a squid/spearing or mummichog sweetened fluke rig or on a bucktail jig with a fresh squid strip can put some amazing numbers of these fantastic flatties in the fishwell. The good eating black sea bass will often inhabit structure in the form of wrecks or rocky bottom. They are a true favorite when it comes to good eating table fare.

Scup are a relatively small fish that are very often used for bait to capture striped bass, however, these small denizens of the near shore waters provide some good eating, too. Bag and size limitations once again differ in the various states' waters. Charter and party boat anglers have to abide by a separate set of rules and bag limits which can be found online.

Offshore action really heats up right around the time that the Summer Solstice occurs. Shark fishing usually takes hold around the second to third week of June as the regional water temperatures begin to warm up to their seasonal norms. The known migratory pathway of many of the most sought after Apex Predators has them moving progressively through the waters outside of Block Island as the month of June wanes. A good rule of



thumb, when pursuing the toothy critters, is to head out to the 20 or 30 fathom curves south and east of Block Island, after the second to third week of June and look ever more eastward as the month draws to a close. While there's never a time when you can't catch a shark in the waters near Block Island during the summer, there's are times when it's better to head a little more offshore as the regional water temperatures increase.

Anglers will have a good shot catching one of the most sought after member of the Mackerel Shark family, the mako, one of the members of the Requiem Shark family including the blue, dusky, and tiger, or even the long tailed thresher. Although 50- to 200- lb. blue sharks will be the predominant species and size caught, there will be enough larger sized makos and threshers around to definitely liven things up. As the summer progresses, a broad spectrum of various species of sharks will be found swimming in the chum slicks.

Sharking has become one of the most popular forms of big game fishing as evidenced by the number of sharking tournaments that are held including the Snug Harbor and Block Island Shark Tournaments. However, with the ever declining number of the toothy critters, anglers should consider tagging and releasing those fish that are not destined for the table or are not of a winning weight in a tournament. All endemic sharks in the region provide tremendous sport on light tackle running from 20-to- 50-lb. I would heartily recommend that any private boater who seeks to capture sharks consider booking a charter trip prior to setting out on their first sharking foray. Not only will you pick up the necessary basics in regards to techniques employed, but more importantly, you'll learn the safe way of catching, handling, and landing these toothy critters.

Tuna species ranging from the bonito families to Giant Bluefin Tuna can be caught in the coastal waters off of Rhode Island. Spinning and fly fishing aficionados will develop sore wrists from non-stop battles with False albacore during the later part of the summertime when huge schools of these fish 'blitz' on schools of baitfish. The dream of capturing fish on light tackle is actually much closer to an absolute fact, rather than fantasy.

Other species of tuna including school bluefin tuna albacore, yellowfin, and bigeye will be captured by those venturing to the blue water arenas found from just outside of Block Island all the way to the 'Canyons' found at the edge of the Continental Shelf. Other exotic species such as Mahi-mahi, wahoo, blue and white marlin, and swordfish can be found there as well.

Shore based anglers will catch their share of blues and bass, especially along the south coastal beaches and breachways of Rhode Island. As in all forms of fishing, it's a matter of putting in the time, using proper techniques, and having a great deal of patience.

Rhode Island, the Ocean State, offers anglers the opportunity to experience some of the best inshore and offshore fishing to be found in the wide world of salt water angling. There are any number of party and charter boats sailing from Rhode Island ports including Watch Hill, Point Judith, Narragansett Bay, Block Island, and Newport that can make your fishing fantasies come true.

Capt. Bill Brown has been a USCG Licensed 100 Ton Licensed Master for over four decades. He operates BILLFISH SPORTFISHING out of Watch Hill, RI, www.billfishcharter.com or 1-860-559-5726. Captain Bill Brown is also a member of the Rhode Island Party and Charter Boat Association as well as an award winning member of the New England Outdoor Writer's Association.



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2013 Recreational Regulations

2013 Size, Season and Possession Limits

Species	Minimum Size	Open Season	Possession Limit
American Eel	6"	Open year round	50 fish/person/day
Black Sea Bass	13"	June 15 – Aug. 31	3 fish/person/day
		Sept. 1 – Dec. 31	7 fish/person/day
Bluefish	No minimum	Open year round	15 fish/person/day
Monkfish (Goosefish)	17" whole fish 11" tail	Open year round	50 lbs. of tails or 166 lbs. whole/day
River Herring (Alewives and Blueback Herring) and American Shad	Not applicable	CLOSED	Not applicable
Scup (Shore and Private)	10"	May 1 – Dec. 31	30 fish/person/day
Special Area Provisions: While fishing from shore at India Point Park in Providence, RI, Conimicut Park in Warwick, RI, or at Stone Bridge in Tiverton, RI, anglers may possess up to 30 scup, 9 inches or greater in length, from May 1 through December 31.			
Scup (Party and Charter)	10"	May 1 – Aug. 31	30 fish/person/day
		Sept. 1 – Oct. 31	45 fish/person/day
		Nov. 1 – Dec. 31	30 fish/person/day
Striped Bass	28"	Open year round	2 fish/person/day
Summer Flounder (Fluke)	18"	May 1 – Dec. 31	8 fish/person/day
Tautog (Blackfish) Max of 10 fish / vessel / day during all periods, except licensed party / charter boats	16"	Apr. 15 – May 31	3 fish/person/day
		June 1 – July 31	CLOSED
		Aug 1 – Oct. 18	3 fish/person/day
		Oct. 19 – Dec. 15	6 fish/person/day
Weakfish (Squeteague)	16"	Open year round	1 fish/person/day
Winter Flounder* (Blackback)	12"	April 27 – May 26	2 fish/person/day
		Sept. 28 – Oct. 27	

Species with federal and state regulations: Cod, Haddock, Pollock, Witch Flounder (Gray Sole), Yellowtail Flounder, American Plaice (Dab)

Please contact RIDFW for details

* The harvesting or possession of winter flounder is prohibited in Narragansett Bay north of the Colregs line (lines from South Ferry Rd. in Narragansett to Fort Getty; Fort Wetherill to Fort Adams; and Sandy Pt. to High Hill Point), as well as in the Harbor of Refuge, Point Judith and Potter Pond.

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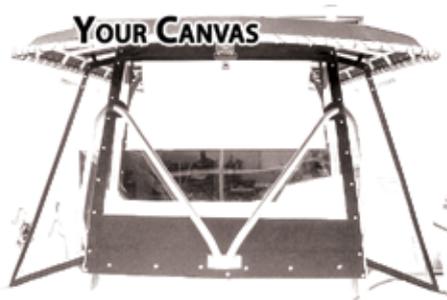


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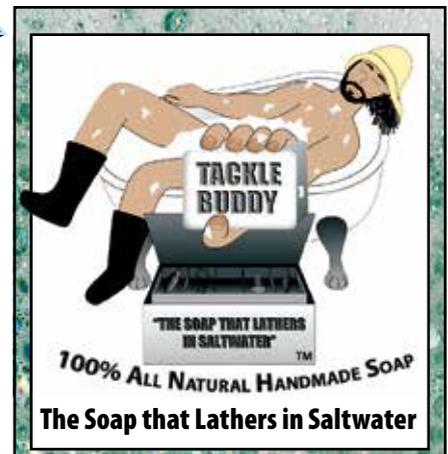
WARWICK, RI, 02889

State Records

Rhode Island State Records for Saltwater Species

Species	Weight	Length	Date	Location	Angler
Black Sea Bass	8 lbs., 7.25 oz.	26"	Oct. 1981	Block Island	K. McDuffie Pascoag, RI
Striped Bass	77 lbs. 6.4 oz.	52"	June 2011	Block Island	P. Vican East Greenwich, RI
Bluefish	26 lbs.	39"	Aug. 1981	---	D. Deziel Woonsocket, RI
Bonito	13 lbs.	---	Oct. 1995	Westerly	R. Gliottone Exeter, RI
Cod	71 lbs.	---	June 1965	---	M. Deciantis Warwick, RI
Summer Flounder	17 lbs., 8 oz.	---	1962	Narrow River	G. Farmer Warwick, RI
Winter Flounder	6 lbs., 7 oz.	23"	Aug. 1990	Galilee	A. Pearson Cranston, RI
King Mackerel	12 lbs., 3 oz.	40"	Aug. 2000	Pt. Judith Lighthouse	A. Camilleri Chester, CT
Atlantic Mackerel	OPEN	---	---	---	---
Pollock	28 lbs., 8 oz.	---	May 1995	---	A. Jacobs Lincoln, RI
Scup	5 lbs.	20 ¼"	Oct. 1990	Block Island	J. Yurwitz Block Island, RI
American Shad	6 lbs., 8 oz.	25"	Apr. 1985	Runnins River	W. Socha Warren, RI
Hickory Shad	2 lbs., 11 oz.	20"	Nov. 1989	Narrow River	M. Pickering Lincoln, RI
Blue Shark	431 lbs., 2 oz.	151"	Nov. 2006	Cox Ledge	G. Kross Fairfield, N.J
Mako Shark	718 lbs.	10' 6"	June 1993	S. Block Island	W. Alessi Boston, MA
Swordfish	314 lbs.	---	June 1964	---	W. Goodwin Warwick, RI
Squeteague	16 lbs. 8.72 oz.	36"	May 2007	Greenwich Bay	R. Moeller North Kingstown, RI
Tautog	21 lbs., 4 oz.	---	Nov. 1954	Jamestown	C.W. Sunquist
Bluefin Tuna	1142 lbs., 12 oz.	---	Sept. 1981	Block Island	J. Dempsey
Yellowfin Tuna	265 lbs.	6'	Oct. 1997	The Dip	R. Hughes Arlington, MA
Tiger Shark	597 lbs.	11' 6"	July 1990	S. of Block Island	M.P. Strout Auburn, MA
White Marlin	125 lbs.	8' ½"	Aug. 1987	S. of Block Island	J. Luty, Sr. Preston, CT

If you believe you've caught a new Rhode Island State Record, bring it to an official weigh-in station to be weighed and measured using a digital scale. State record catches are determined annually once all data are received for that year. A list of official weigh-in stations can be found on Fish & Wildlife's Webpage at <http://www.dem.ri.gov/programs/bnatres/fishwild/records.htm#stations>.



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SURVEY SPOTLIGHT

The Rhode Island South Shore Coastal and Adult Winter Flounder Survey.

by John Lake and Scott Olszewski, Principal Marine Biologists, RIDFW



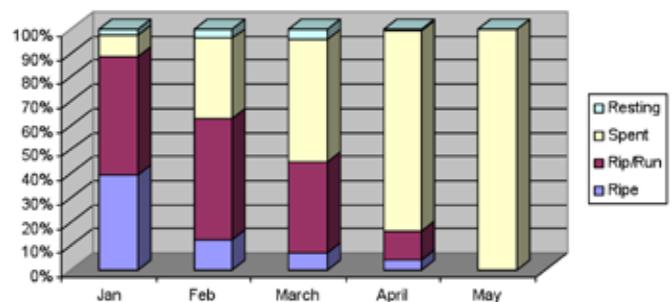
Since 1999 Rhode Island Division of Fish and Wildlife staff have been monitoring the population of spawning adult winter flounder in the coastal ponds of RI using a type of fixed gear called a fyke net. Fyke netting is a passive fishing method commonly used in commercial fishing but in this case an excellent tool for biological fishery sampling to assess fish populations utilizing shallow water habitats. Fyke nets have been used to catch fish for hundreds of years; originally used in Finland to harvest herring, whitefish and salmon. The net is set with a stake that is driven close to shore at low tide which is attached to a long leader, similar to the coastal fish traps encountered throughout the Rhode Island shoreline but on a smaller scale. The leader runs perpendicular to shore and is connected to the main body of the net which is comprised of a series of parlors terminating in a codend. A buoy tied to a weight is fastened to the codend for retrieval of the net, catch and to keep the net straight and on the bottom. Typically where the leader meets the opening of the net there are two smaller wings splayed out in a "V" and spread apart with either a bar or stakes. A fish swimming along the shore line will encounter the leader and be directed into the net with a small likelihood of escape. One benefit of using a fyke net to sample fish is that the gear does not result in high mortality, typically the fish are returned to the water unharmed after information is collected on size, sex and stage of maturity.

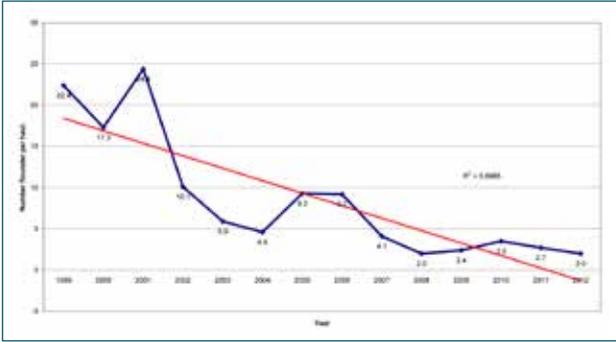
The focus of this study has been in Point Judith Pond, in Washington County, RI. Nets are tended from three to seven days depending on the size of the catch and weather conditions. Fish caught in the survey are counted, measured, sexed and their spawning stage determined. Spawning stage is defined as ripe (pre-spawn), ripe/running (active spawn), spent (post-spawn), resting (non-active spawn) and immature. When possible, healthy flounder are tagged with Peterson disc tags and returned to the water. There is a reward of a hat for fishermen who give information on location of catch and the size of the tagged fish. Water quality parameters such as temperature, salinity, and dissolved oxygen are also recorded. Abundance is measured using a relative index based on catch per unit effort, in this case net hauls.

The RIDFW fyke net survey monitors adult winter flounder returning to the coastal ponds to spawn in the winter months (December – April). Winter Flounder enter Narragansett Bay and the south shore coastal pond systems in Rhode Island to spawn in the early part of winter (November) and engage in spawning activity from January through May annually. Spawning and egg deposition takes place on sandy bottoms and algal accumulations. Winter Flounder eggs are non-buoyant and clump together on these substrates. Survey data indicate that peak-spawning activity takes place during the month of February, however this appears to vary annually in relation to average water temperatures.

Historically, winter flounder are a recreationally and commercially important species sought after in Rhode Island waters. Once abundant, locally their population has declined in recent years to all time lows. A 2011 assessment of the Southern New England stock revealed that the stock is overfished but overfishing is not occurring. What this means is that the number of adults is lower than needed to maintain a sustainable population. Fishing mortality is below a target threshold allowing the stock to rebuild. The life history of the winter flounder makes it more vulnerable to localized depletion, particularly as a result of spawning site

Spawning Stage Index 1999-2011





fidelity. Tagging study recapture data has shown that winter flounders display a strong tendency to return to natal areas to spawn. On multiple occasions, tagged fish have been caught in the same net the following year from where they were first captured, thus even if the stock as a whole is rebounding some areas may not due to the lack of returning reproductive adults. Winter flounder tagged in the coastal ponds and recaptured at sea display a migration pattern moving south and to the east as they return to the ocean which has been documented by other regional studies.

The results of the survey have shown that in Point Judith Pond the adult spawning winter flounder population has been in decline since 2001 from an average 24 to 2 fish per net haul in 2012. By way of comparison data collected by our partners at the US Environmental Protection Agency from Charlestown pond have remained steady in recent years with an average of 11 fish per net haul in 2012. These results are indicative of a localized depletion of winter flounder in Point Judith pond. A companion survey which examines juvenile fish population abundance mirrors these results, Point Judith Pond young of the year winter flounder are at an all time low while young of the year in Charlestown pond are at an average level for the time series. The low population levels found in Point Judith pond have prompted management action to close the pond to all winter flounder fishing to aid in the recovery. Other factors may be contributing to the low abundance in Point Judith besides fishing pressure. Predation of adult and juveniles by cormorants, egrets and seals contribute to a natural mortality that could be keeping the population at low levels. Observations of seals in Point Judith and Charlestown ponds indicate a resident population of seals in Point Judith pond during the winter which is not found in Charlestown pond. In fact, seals are often observed swimming around the survey nets set in Point Judith pond. On occasion, the flounder trapped inside these nets will have visible injuries or damaged fins, an almost sure sign that seals are present. Aside from predation, warming water temperatures resultant of climate change may also be holding the population in check. It has been documented that young of the year winter flounder experience higher mortality during warmer winters. It is possible that the population in Point Judith pond is no longer large enough to overcome these factors and will see little or no recovery.

The abundance and spawning index in concert with tag / recapture data collected in this survey is a tool to aid in estimation of population size and year class structure. Studies such as this one are especially useful when collected for a long period of time. A long-term approach to adult winter flounder assessments in Rhode Island south shore coastal ponds is paramount and will enable fisheries biologists to fine tune the management strategy for this species. This research project will continue to provide valuable information about flounder movement, population size, exploitation rates, growth rates, natural mortality and fishing mortality. RIDFW in partnership with US EPA will continue conduct this survey in the coastal ponds to better understand the connection between local populations and the Southern New England stock of winter flounder as a whole.

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Availability Chart

This chart shows the general availability of common finfish species in Rhode Island waters.
 * Please note that times of peak activity may vary due to water temperatures, prey availability, etc.

Important Recreational Species Availability Chart

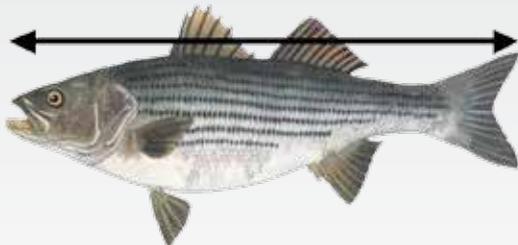
Species	Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Black Sea Bass	SEASON CLOSED	POOR	GOOD	GOOD	POOR	POOR	POOR					
Bluefish	POOR	POOR	POOR	POOR	POOR	POOR	GOOD	GOOD	GOOD	GOOD	POOR	POOR
Cod	POOR	GOOD	GOOD	GOOD	POOR	POOR	POOR	POOR	POOR	POOR	POOR	POOR
False Albacore / Bonito	POOR	GOOD	GOOD	POOR	POOR	POOR						
Hickory Shad	POOR	POOR	POOR	POOR	POOR	GOOD	GOOD	POOR	POOR	POOR	POOR	POOR
Mackerel	POOR	POOR	POOR	GOOD	GOOD	POOR	POOR	GOOD	GOOD	POOR	POOR	POOR
Scup	SEASON CLOSED	SEASON CLOSED	SEASON CLOSED	SEASON CLOSED	POOR	GOOD	GOOD	GOOD	GOOD	GOOD	POOR	POOR
Squid	POOR	POOR	POOR	POOR	POOR	GOOD	GOOD	POOR	POOR	POOR	POOR	POOR
Striped Bass	POOR	POOR	POOR	POOR	POOR	GOOD	GOOD	POOR	POOR	POOR	POOR	POOR
Summer Flounder (Fluke)	SEASON CLOSED	SEASON CLOSED	SEASON CLOSED	SEASON CLOSED	POOR	GOOD	GOOD	GOOD	POOR	POOR	POOR	POOR
Tautog (Blackfish)	SEASON CLOSED	SEASON CLOSED	SEASON CLOSED	SEASON CLOSED	GOOD	SEASON CLOSED	SEASON CLOSED	POOR	GOOD	GOOD	POOR	POOR
Winter Flounder	SEASON CLOSED	SEASON CLOSED	SEASON CLOSED	SEASON CLOSED	GOOD	GOOD	SEASON CLOSED	SEASON CLOSED	POOR	GOOD	SEASON CLOSED	SEASON CLOSED

POOR  GOOD  GREAT  SEASON CLOSED 

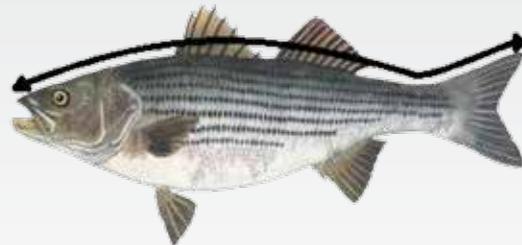
How to Properly Measure a Fish

Total Length Measurement

The **total length** is the maximum length of the fish, from the tip of the snout to the tip of the tail. The best way to obtain this length is to push the fish's snout up against a vertical surface with the mouth closed and the fish laying along or on top of a tape measure. Measure to the tip of the tail or pinch the tail fin closed to determine the total length. **Do NOT use a flexible tape measure along the curve of the fish**, as this is not an accurate total length measurement. When measuring the total length of black sea bass, do **NOT** include the tendril on the caudal fin.



The Correct Way to Determine Total Length Measurement



The Incorrect Way to Determine Total Length Measurement

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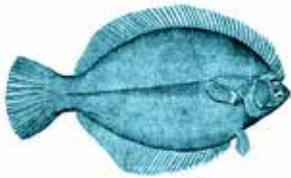


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Commonly Caught Species

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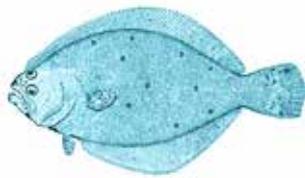
Common Fish



Winter flounder (Blackback)

Scientific Name: *Pseudopleuronectes americanus*

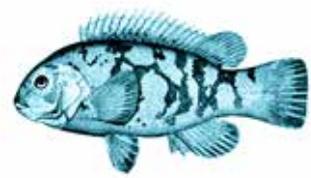
Identification: Nearly straight lateral line and blunt snout. Eyes on right side.



Summer flounder (Fluke)

Scientific Name: *Paralichthys dentatus*

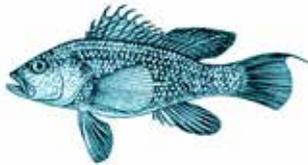
Identification: Eyes on left side. Large mouth with teeth.



Tautog (Blackfish)

Scientific Name: *Tautoga onitis*

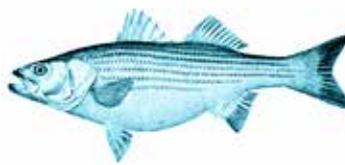
Identification: Highly arched head, blunt snout and thick lips.



Black Sea Bass

Scientific Name: *Centropristis striata*

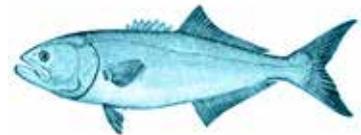
Identification: Gray, brown or blue-black. Rounded caudal fin.



Striped Bass

Scientific Name: *Morone saxatilis*

Identification: Grayish-green above, silvery on sides with distinct horizontal stripes.



Bluefish

Scientific Name: *Pomatomus saltatrix*

Identification: Series of stout conical teeth, and first dorsal fin is much lower than the second with 7-9 dorsal spines.



Weakfish (Squeteague)

Scientific Name: *Cynoscion regalis*

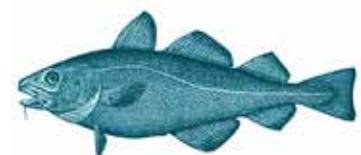
Identification: Long second dorsal fin, slender body and absent chin barbel.



Scup (Porgy)

Scientific Name: *Stenotomus chrysops*

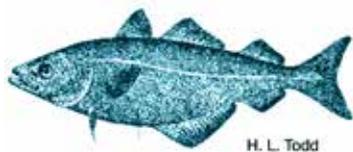
Identification: Silvery, iridescent. Concave dorsal profile, small teeth and lunate pointed tail.



Atlantic cod

Scientific Name: *Gadus morhua*

Identification: Pale lateral line, chin barbel, large eyes, square tipped tail and spotted color pattern.



Pollock

Scientific Name: *Pollachius virens*

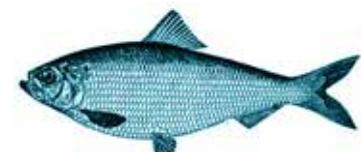
Identification: Forked tail, projecting lower jaw and greenish color without spots.



American eel

Scientific Name: *Anguilla rostrata*

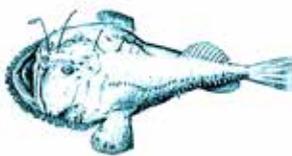
Identification: Dorsal fin begins far behind the pectoral fin, and the lower jaw projects beyond upper jaw.



Alewife and Blueback Herring (River Herring)

Scientific Name: *Alosa pseudoharengus* and *Alosa aestivalis*

Identification: Deep body and spot located just behind the gill cover.



Monkfish (Goosefish)

Scientific Name: *Lophius americanus*

Identification: Depressed body and huge mouth.



Spiny dogfish

Scientific Name: *Squalus acanthias*

Identification: Gray or brownish with large sharp dorsal spines.



Atlantic menhaden

Scientific Name: *Brevoortia tyrannus*

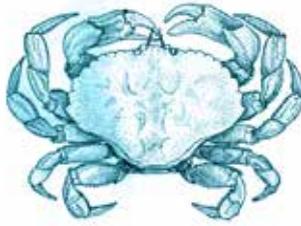
Identification: Large scaleless head nearly one third total body length.

Common Invertebrates



American Lobster

Scientific Name: *Homarus americanus*
Identification: Greenish brown with blue patches near joints of appendages.



Atlantic Rock Crab

Scientific Name: *Cancer irroratus*
Identification: Beige or yellowish shell with numerous closely spaced purple-brown spots. Very common.



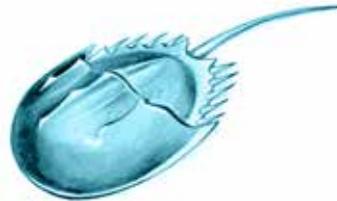
Green Crab

Scientific Name: *Carcinus maenas*
Identification: Usually dark green. Found under rocks and in intertidal zones. Very common.



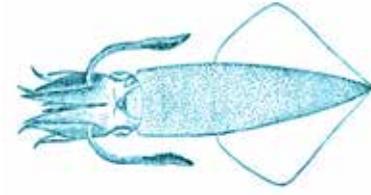
Blue Crab

Scientific Name: *Callinectes sapidus*
Identification: Blueish gray shell. Fingers of claws are bright blue in males and red in females.



Horseshoe Crab

Scientific Name: *Limulus polyphemus*
Identification: Olive green or brownish shell. Long spike-like tail.



Atlantic Longfin Squid

Scientific Name: *Loligo pealeii*
Identification: White or translucent gray with tiny red or purple spots with expand and contract.

Common Shellfish



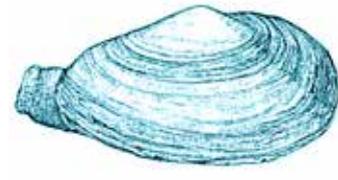
Eastern Oyster

Scientific Name: *Crassostrea virginica*
Identification: Grayish white, variable shape, found at or below low tide level.



Northern Quahaug (Hard Shell Clam)

Scientific Name: *Mercenaria mercenaria*
Identification: Shell ranges from light gray to black. Found in shallow water.



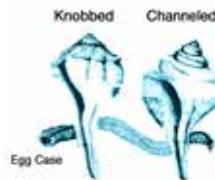
Soft Shell Clam (steamer)

Scientific Name: *Mya arenaria*
Identification: Chalky white shell. Lives deeply burrowed in sediment. Common in intertidal zone and shallow water.



Blue Mussel

Scientific Name: *Mytilus edulis*
Identification: Blue or blue-black. Common in beds near low tide and attaches to rocks and shells with fibers.



Channeled & Knobbed Whelk

Scientific Name: *Busycotypus canaliculatus* & *Busycon carica*.
Identification: Grooved or knobbed beige or yellowish gray shell. Often covered with a hairy outer shell layer. Distinctive egg case.



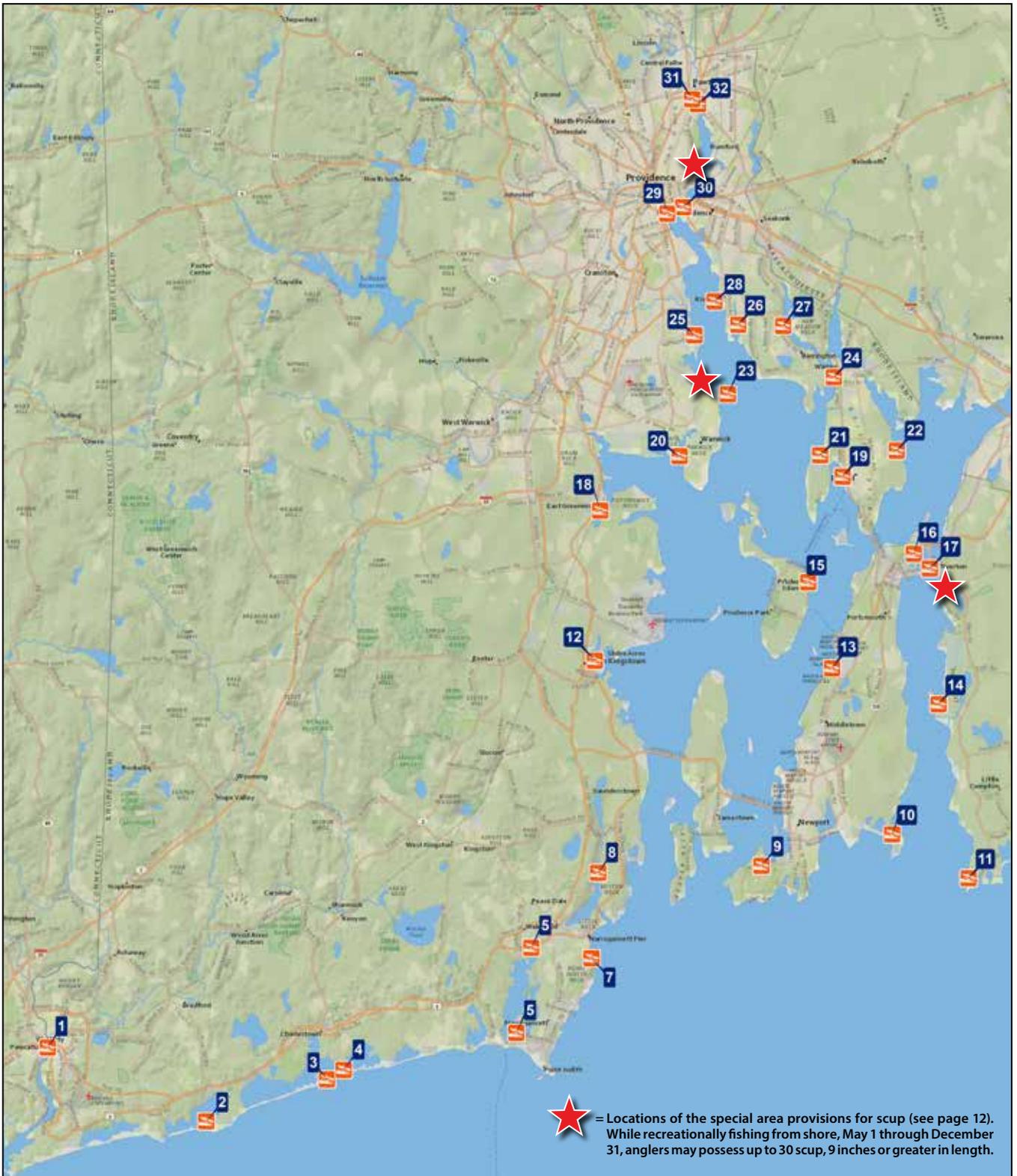
Common Periwinkle

Scientific Name: *Littorina littorea*
Identification: Usually brown, black or gray shell, sometimes will white spiral lines. Most common periwinkle in the rocky intertidal zone.

Access Sites

Please see below for a map of saltwater boating access sites throughout Rhode Island. The sites are State-owned and currently in usable condition. A list of these locations with brief descriptions is found on page 21. More boating access sites, such as town-owned ramps, and additional information can be found on the Marine Fisheries website at <http://www.dem.ri.gov/programs/bnatres/fishwild/boatInch.htm#salt>.

When utilizing these boating access sites, please be respectful of other users and properly dispose of all trash and waste.



Town	Site #	Name	Description	Depth at MLW
Westerly	1	Main Street	Main St., concrete slab ramp	4 ft.
Charlestown	2	Quonochontaug Breachway	Off West Beach Rd., concrete plank ramp	3 ft.
	3	Charlestown Breachway	West end of Charlestown Beach Rd., linked concrete slabs	3 ft.
	4	Charlestown	Off of Charlestown Beach Rd. Natural shoreline, gravel base	N/A
Narragansett	5	Galilee	Corner of Galilee Rd. and Great Island Rd., southeast side of Great Island Bridge. Linked concrete planks — double ramp	4 ft.
	7	Monahan's Dock	East side of Ocean Rd., at South Pier Rd., concrete — steep drop	3 - 4 ft.
South Kingstown	8	Narrow River	Off Pettaquamscutt Rd., between Middle Bridge Rd. and Bridgetown Rd., concrete planks.	3 ft.
	8	Marina Park	Route 1., concrete slabs	N/A
Newport	9	Fort Adams	Off Harriston Ave.	3 ft.
Middletown	10	Third Beach	Concrete ramp. Parking fee when beach is open	N/A
Little Compton	11	Sakonnet Point	Sakonnet Point Rd. (Rt. 77). North side of Town Landing Rd., linked concrete planks	2 ft.
North Kingstown	12	Wilson Park	East end of Intrepid Dr., off Post Rd., Rt. 1, near fire station. Linked concrete plank — moderately steep	3 ft.
Portsmouth	13	Weaver Cove	On Burma Road. South of Melville complex	4 ft.
	16	Gull Cove	Rte. 138. Linked concrete planks	2 ft.
	17	Stone Bridge	Off Rt. 138 at junction of Park Ave and Point Rd., at Teddy's Beach	3 ft.
Tiverton	14	Fogland	End of Fogland Rd., at High Hill Rd. Linked concrete planks	N/A
Prudence Island	15	Homestead	On Prudence Island, off Narragansett Ave., north of Prudence Variety	N/A
East Greenwich	18	Greenwich Cove	Pole #6, Crompton Ave.	N/A
Bristol	19	Independence Park	At the foot of Church St., off of Rt.114	N/A
	21	Colt State Park	Off of Hope St. (Rt. 114), concrete ramp	4 ft.
	22	Annawanscutt	Annawanscutt Dr., off Metacom Ave. (Rt. 136), past Veteran's Home. Linked concrete planks	>2 ft.
Warren	24	Warren	West side of Water St., at Wheaton St., cement slab	N/A
Warwick	20	Oakland Beach	Warwick Cove. Oakland Beach Ave. Take last left. East Side of Oakland Beach. Concrete ramp	<4 ft.
	23	Conimicut Point	Northeast end of Shawomet Ave., off Symonds Ave. Linked concrete ramp	<2 ft.
	25	Gaspee Point	Passeonkquis Cove. Southwest end of Gaspee Point Dr., off Narragansett Pkwy. Concrete and asphalt ramp	2 ft.
Barrington	26	Haines Park	On Bullock's Cove, off Metropolitan Park Dr. Concrete slab	4 ft.
	27	Barrington	Off of Rt. 114 North. Cement Slab	N/A
East Providence	27	Sabin Point Park	Off Bullock's Point Ave. Hard packed sand	N/A
	30	Bold Point	Off Veteran's Memorial Pkwy., via Mauran Ave. at the end of Pier Rd. Concrete slab	4 ft.
Providence	29	Collier Park	Concrete Slab	N/A
Pawtucket	31	Old State Pier	End of Tim Healey Way, off of School St. (Rt. 114). Concrete slab	N/A
	32	Pawtucket	East Side of Taft St., just south of Rt. 95 bridge. Linked concrete planks	N/A

* Please note that some boating access sites may require a permit or fee for parking and/or use.

N/A= Information not available

TIPS TO REDUCE CATCH-AND-RELEASE MORTALITY

Keep those fish alive!

by Kevin Smith, Principal Marine Biologist, RIDFW

Many Rhode Island recreational anglers engage in catch-and-release fishing practices with the goal of releasing healthy fish and watching them swim away to live another day. Mortality of caught-and-released fish is a large concern, thus, it is important for anglers to take care in how they catch, handle, and release fish to increase chances of survival. Here are a few tips to help those fish survive, grow, and produce future generations:

Modify Artificial Lures...

When using artificial lures, there are a variety of ways to reduce the risk of injury to both the fish and angler. For example, many artificial lures have multiple sets of treble hooks attached. These hooks can be dangerous when a hooked fish fights and thrashes to try to escape or remove the hooks. This thrashing of the fish can cause the other treble hooks to flail about and become embedded into the fish's sides or sensitive areas, such as the eyes.

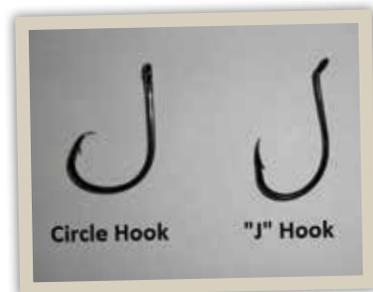
These additional hooks can result in unnecessary damage, which can reduce the fish's chances of survival. Furthermore, not only is the fish in danger, but the flailing treble hooks could also become embedded into clothing, skin, hair, or even a nearby angler and can be very difficult to remove.

To reduce these risks, anglers can remove additional hooks or replace them with single hooks.

Circle Hooks...

Using circle hooks instead of typical "J" hooks can increase the chances of survival for released fish. Circle hooks are designed to hook a fish in the corner of the mouth and dramatically reduce the chance of "gut hooking." "Gut hooking" refers to when a fish fully swallows the bait/lure,

which results in the hook becoming embedded in the stomach or other sensitive internal tissues. The circle hook design allows the hook to slide along the fish's inner mouth and then become embedded in the fish's lip, reducing the potential for life threatening damage. Using a circle hook eliminates the need to set the hook, but when using a "J" hook, pay close attention and set the hook immediately to prevent the fish from swallowing the hook.



Bend Hook Barbs Down...

The barbs found on many fishing hooks are designed to keep bait and caught fish on the hook. When engaged in catch-and-release fishing, it can be advantageous to either bend the hook barbs down with a pair of pliers or to file them off. While the barbs may help the fish stay hooked, they also can result in additional damage to the fish as they are removed. Also, accidents happen and if a hook gets embedded in a finger, removal of the hook will be much easier and less painful with the barbs bent down or absent.



Reduce Fight Time...

Reducing the fight time is important when engaged in catch-and-release fishing. When hooked fish fight and try to escape, they experience a great deal of stress and undergo metabolic changes. If the fight is for an extended period of time, the metabolic changes can result in a very slow recovery or even death. Since using gear that is too light for the situation often increases fight time and the related stress on the fish, using the proper size gear for the targeted species can reduce fight time and help get the fish to the boat or shore as soon as possible.



Hook Removal...

Hook removal is a very important aspect of releasing a healthy and lively fish. A variety of tools can be used to help reduce hook removal time as well as preventing additional injury to the fish. Hook removers, needle nose pliers, nail clippers, and wire cutters are all great tools to assist with this process. If the fish is "gut-hooked," the best solution is to cut the line as close to the hook as possible. Do not try to remove the hook as this could damage the fish's internal organs. Release the fish with the hook still inside as the hook will eventually corrode and naturally come out.

Handling, Reviving, and Release...

Proper handling and releasing of fish can decrease the chance of unintentional mortality. Be sure to leave the fish in the water as long as possible, even when removing the hook. Wet hands or use a wet rag when handling fish, as this will protect the fish's scales and protective mucous coating. If the fish must be removed from the water, make sure that the fish is properly supported. Do not lift fish by the gills or eyes, as this could cause a great deal of damage to these sensitive areas. When handling a larger fish, do not lift the fish by just the lips or mouth but make sure that the stomach area of the fish is supported. The use of nets to land fish can also help reduce the risk of injury, and only use gaffs if the intent is to keep the catch. When it is time to release the fish, gently place the fish back in to the water head-first in a swimming position. If the fish does not swim off right away, then revive it by gently pushing it back and forth in the water, allowing water to flow over the gills, to restore the fish's oxygen levels. Continue to revive the fish until it is able to swim off on its own.



Following these simple techniques and using proper gear can greatly minimize the occurrence of unintentional death and injury of released fish. Recreational anglers are stewards to the marine environment and should follow responsible angling practices to ensure that fish populations are properly conserved and enhanced. A little forethought and preparation can help ensure that Rhode Island's fishery resources are available to future generations of anglers. Now, go catch those fish... responsibly!

Lobster/Crab Regulations

Recreational Lobster License

- Available to Rhode Island residents only
- Allows for personal use only (not for sale)



Types of licenses available:

Lobster	
Non-Commercial Pot License	\$40.00 yr
Non-Commercial Diver License	\$40.00 yr

Licenses can be obtained through the Office of Boat Registration and Licensing located at 235 Promenade Street, Providence, RI 02908 or online at <http://www.dem.ri.gov/programs/bpoladm/manserv/hfb/boating/commfish.htm>

- All lobsters must be measured IMMEDIATELY.
- Those measuring less than 3-3/8" carapace length must be returned immediately to the water from which taken.
- The POSSESSION of egg-bearing or v-notched lobsters is prohibited.
- Mandatory v-notching of all egg-bearing females in LCMA 2 (includes all RI state waters).
- No person shall raise or unduly disturb any lobster pot or trap within the territorial waters of this State between the hours of one (1) hour after sundown and one (1) hour before sunrise.
- Recreational possession limit for licensed residents:
 - » Pots – 5 pots/recreational license
 - » Divers – 8 lobsters/day

Blue Crabs

- State Residents Only – no license needed



- All Blue Crabs measuring less than 5" spike to spike shall be returned to the water immediately.
- No person shall possess, take, or attempt to take more than 25 blue crabs from any of the waters in this state except when taking by crab net, dip net, scoop net, hand line or trot line.
- Harvesting of blue crabs is prohibited between sunset and sunrise.
- The POSSESSION of egg-bearing crabs is prohibited.

****This is only a brief summary of the RI Division of Fish and Wildlife's regulations. For more information or to view the actual regulations please visit RIDFW's website at: <http://www.dem.ri.gov/topics/mftopics.htm>****

Life Jackets; Wear Them!

- Always remember to wear a life jacket.
- Make sure your life jacket is U.S.C.G. approved.
- Take the time to ensure a proper fit.
- Life jackets meant for adults do not work for children.
- Children under 13 years old must wear a life jacket.



Shellfish Regulations

Shellfishing is prohibited statewide between sunset and sunrise.

Oysters – The season is open from September 15 to May 15 (inclusive).

Scallops – The season opens sunrise the first Saturday in November and closes at sunset on December 31.

Consult “Part IV Shellfish”, “Part V Bay Scallops”, “Part VIII Oysters” of the Marine Fisheries Statutes and Regulations for specific shellfishing regulations. <http://www.dem.ri.gov/pubs/regs/regs/fishwild/rimfoc.htm>

Resident Recreational Shellfishing – No License Required

Any resident of this State may, without a license, take quahogs, soft-shelled clams, mussels, surf clams, oysters (in season), and bay scallops (in season). Harvested shellfish shall not be sold or offered for sale. (See below for possession limits in Shellfish Management Areas and Non-Management Areas).

Non-Resident Recreational Shellfishing – Licensed Individuals Only

Holders of a non-resident shellfishing license may take quahogs, soft-shelled clams, mussels, surf clams, oysters (in season). (See below for possession limits in Shellfish Management Areas and Non-Management Areas). There is no taking of lobsters, blue crabs, or bay scallops by non-residents.

Non-Resident Property Owners

A nonresident landowner who owns residential real estate in Rhode Island assessed for taxation at a value of not less than thirty thousand dollars may, with proof of property ownership, obtain an annual, non-commercial, non-resident shellfish license for a fee of twenty-five dollars. This license holds the same restrictions and allowable daily catch limits as a licensed non-resident.

Shellfish Management Areas:

Potter, Point Judith, Ninigret (Charlestown), Quonochontaug, and Winnapaug (Brightman) Ponds, Greenwich Bay, Bristol Transplant Bed, Potowomut (Areas A, B and C), and Bissel Cove, Kickemuit River, High Banks, Mill Gut, Jenny’s Creek (closed until further notice). Additionally, certain Shellfish Management Areas, have limited fishing days and seasonal requirements for commercial harvest.

Area specific regulations may apply. Consult “Part IV Shellfish” of the Marine Fisheries Statutes and Regulations at <http://www.dem.ri.gov/pubs/regs/regs/fishwild/rimf4.pdf>

Shellfishing Areas with Harvest Restrictions Due to Water Quality:

Certain areas are subject to permanent, seasonal, and rainfall-induced shellfishing closures. Consult <http://www.dem.ri.gov/maps/mapfile/shellfish.pdf> for current maps and regulations or contact the Division of Water Resources at

(401) 222-3961. For current rainfall-induced closure restrictions call (401) 222-2900. Please be responsible; be aware of all harvesting restrictions.

Spawner Sanctuaries and Shellfishing Moratoria:

Certain waters of the state are permanently closed to shellfishing, allowing maintenance, restoration, and enhancement wild broodstock. Areas include portions of Winnapaug Pond, Quonochontaug Pond, Ninigret Pond, Potter Pond, Potowomut, and Jenny’s Creek in its entirety. Consult “Part IV Shellfish” of the Marine Fisheries Statutes and Regulations: <http://www.dem.ri.gov/pubs/regs/regs/fishwild/rimf4.pdf>

Minimum Sizes for Shellfish:

- Quahog = 1 inch hinge width
- Soft-Shell Clam* = 2 inches
- Oyster* = 3 inches
- Bay Scallop = No seed possession
- Surf Clam* = 5 inches
- Channeled or Knobbed Whelks = 2.75 inches width or 4.75 inches length

* Measured in a straight line parallel to the long axis of the animal.

Daily Possession Limits for Quahogs, Soft-Shell Clams, Surf Clams, Mussels, and Oysters (Bay Scallops Excluded) in:

Shellfish Management Areas

Resident (no sale) = 1 peck each per person
Licensed Non-Resident (no sale) = ½ peck each per person

Non-Management Areas

Resident (no sale) = 1/2 bushel each per person
Licensed Non-Resident (no sale) = 1 peck each per person

Dry Measure Equivalents

- 1 peck = 2 gallons
- ½ peck = 1 gallon
- 1 bushel = 8 gallons
- ½ bushel = 4 gallons



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Equipment Regulations

Bay Scallop Regulations:

Bay Scallops may only be harvested using dip nets from the second Saturday of November until sunrise the first day of December. Other appropriate methods, such as snorkeling, diving, or dredges, may be used from December 1st until December 31st. For additional information and restrictions, please visit <http://www.dem.ri.gov/pubs/regs/regs/fishwild/rimf5.pdf>.

Scuba

Shellfishing using SCUBA gear is prohibited in Point Judith, Ninigret, Green Hill Pond, Quonochontaug Pond, Charlestown Pond and Potter Pond.

Beach Seines, Recreational Bait Nets

Marine species may lawfully be taken for personal use provided that all existing minimum size and possession limit restrictions for the species possessed are adhered to. Also, a limit of 2 quarts per person is allowed for all unregulated marine species. Nets being used cannot exceed four (4) feet in depth and 20 feet in length.

Marking of Traps

The owner of every trap, pot, or other stationary contrivance used for the taking of marine fish, shellfish, crustaceans, or other invertebrates being fished in the waters of this state, and the owner of any trap or pot for catching, or cars or other contrivance for keeping lobsters shall mark each such trap, pot, or contrivance, together with the buoy which is attached thereto, with the name or names of the owners thereof or the person or persons using the same, and the license number or numbers of such person or persons. Each such lobster or crab pot buoy shall display that person's stated color scheme, and this color scheme shall also be displayed on the boat used by that person in tending that gear. The use of floating line within eight feet of the surface is prohibited.

Gill Nets, Otter Trawling, Seines, Etc.

Please contact RIDFW to request area specific regulations.

Escape Vents (Lobster, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Pots)

Minimum size	Lobster	Scup	Black Sea Bass
Rectangular	2" x 5-3/4"	2-1/4" x 5-3/4"	1-3/8" x 5-3/4"
Square	None	2-1/4" x 2-1/4"	2" X 2"
Two Circular	2-5/8" diameter	3.1" diameter	2.5" diameter

Diving Baskets

Bar Spacing	1" x 2-1/2" minimum
Bag	2" minimum

Spacing Requirements for Tongs and Bullrakes

Tooth Spacing	1" minimum
Head Construction	1" x 2-1/2" minimum

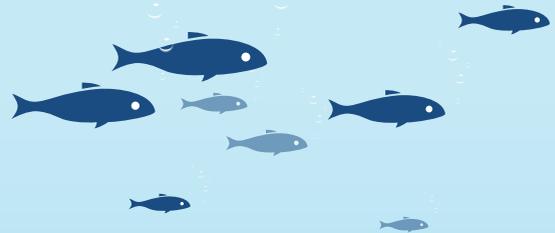


Pole Bait Lures

LICENSE?

Buy Your RI Saltwater Fishing License Online.

www.saltwater.ri.gov



Notable Catches

If you would like to share your notable catches with us and have the chance to see them in next year's fishing guide, please send pictures and information to RISaltwaterGuide@dem.ri.gov



April Valliere

with a nice fluke.



Kevin Smith

with a striped bass caught while trolling around Jamestown



Tom Angell

with a 42 pound striped bass — caught when he was just 14



Pat Brown

with some nice yellowfin tuna caught near Veatch Canyon



John Lake and his son, Jeremy

with a real nice fluke.



Dan Costa

with a northern puffer caught while fishing for tautog



Jason McNamee

with a nice striped bass he caught in 2012



Nicole Lengyel

with her first rod-and-reel fluke



Ashley Schipritt

with a large winter skate.



Scott Olszewski

landed these two nice tautog while spearfishing



Photo courtesy of April Valliere

Fishing for Fluke:

Expert tips and where to find them!

by Captain Dave Monti

Fluke (or summer flounder) is great in Rhode Island. Big fish can be caught all along and off our southern coastal shores and in the lower part of Narragansett Bay around and south of the Jamestown and Newport Bridges.

This year and next year should be good fluke fishing years because according to Jason McNamee of the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management's Marine Fisheries Division 2009 was an outstanding year for

new fluke and these fish have now likely grown to legal size.

Fluke is a species regulated by the Atlantic Marine Fisheries Commission and Rhode Island DEM. The minimum size limit is Rhode Island is 18 inches; this is a liberalization from last year when the minimum size was 18.5 inches. Anglers are allowed to take eight fish/person/day. The season runs from May 1 to December 31.

Power-drifting can yield big fluke

When wind and current are not in line it is difficult to fluke fish. Both of these are needed to establish a good drift for fluke fishing so you drag your bait over the front of the fish first. Fluke (or summer flounder) set-up looking into the current for prey that is drifting by. So if you drag your bait over their back first they will not have enough time to see your bait and go for it

Fluke or summer flounder is a great fish to target with children or inexperienced anglers as the fluke pretty much hooks itself. The hook set is a slow and firm movement upward rather than a quick jerk of the rod.

as it will drift by too quickly from behind.

For anglers still wanting to fish for fluke when wind and tide are not in the same direction, one possible solution is to power-drift your boat in the same direction as the current. This involves putting the vessel in and out of gear slowly trying to mimic the strength of the current.

Last year, Rhode Island Saltwater Angler Association members Dave Sweet and Craig Picard tried to fish for fluke. Dave said, "Wind and tide made the drift not so great, but we have gotten pretty good at the "power drifting" technique, and it paid off ... with my personal best eight pound fluke."

One day last June I attempted to fluke fish when the wind and current were not in line. So I power-drifted fishing the high/low edges at Austin Hollow an underwater valley off Jamestown and it paid off with a 23" fluke.

So when wind and current are not in line and you want to fish for fluke, consider power-drifting.

Additional fluke tips from the experts

Last year, I interviewed some of the top fluke experts in Rhode Island. I asked them for fluke fishing tips we could pass along to readers. The experts included charter fishing guides and Captains Rick Bellavance, Jim White, John Rainone, Robb Roach, Charlie Donilon, Rich Hittinger, George Cioe, several excellent fluke anglers, and bait and tackle shop owners. Here's what they had to say:

Fluke fishing tips

- Drifting with wind and tide going in the same direction is the key to catching fluke.
- Fluke set up looking into the current to feed which means you have to drag the bait over the fluke from boat or shore.
- Fish low/high or high/low breaks on the bottom. Fluke like most other fish like structure. The largest fish are often on channel banks, drop offs, etc. So you want to fish these breaks.
- Match the hatch tipping with squid, blue fish, bass, silversides, mummies, minnows.
- Jigs and trailer teasers 36" long placed a foot above the jig work well.



- Once you find the fish, repeat the same pattern... note location and depth you are catching them at and repeat this pattern as the fish are likely in the same spot.
- Power drift (putting the boat in and out of gear to move slowly) at slack tide.
- Troll perpendicular when wind and tide are not ideal, you will at least get your bait in front of some of the fish, some of the time.
- My personal favorite is a big bait... Capt. Monti's fluke cocktail... a rubber squid rig tipped with squid, fluke belly and horizontal minnow.

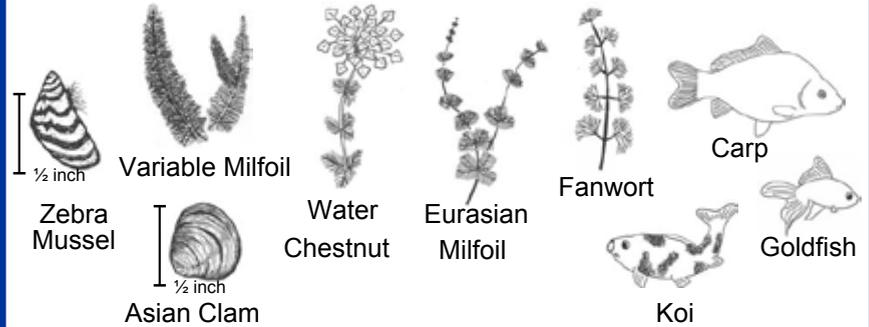
Favorite Places to catch fluke

Look for drop offs, structure, the banks of channels, and deep water particularly in the warm weather, in spring time they tend to be in lower depths. Favorite places to catch fluke include:

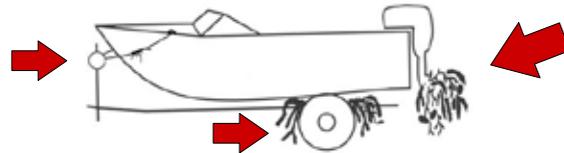
- Channel breaks in and around Warwick Neck light.
- Channel breaks on the northeast side of the Jamestown bridge.
- Areas off the north west corner of Dutch Island.
- Underwater valley off the southeast side of Dutch Island.
- Areas off URI's Bay Campus.
- Austin's Hollow (an underwater valley) off the west side of Jamestown.
- Beavertail in deep water off the west side.
- Off southern Rhode Island coastal beaches... Watch Hill, Charlestown, in front of the five cottages, etc.
- Off the center wall of the Harbor of Refuge.
- Off Newport at any number of deep water brakes.
- At the mouth of Hull and Mackerel Coves off Jamestown at the drop-offs.
- Off Block Island... the North Rip, Cow Cove on the north end, along the State beach on the east side, south side of the Island.



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BOATERS: INSPECT VESSEL CAREFULLY BEFORE & AFTER USE!



• Remove ALL weeds and plant fragments from watercraft & trailer before & after use

• Drain boat & motor far from water; allow to dry before next use

• Clean off all waders, boots and gear after use in any waterbody

• Do not release bait or aquarium fish, shellfish or plants



For more information contact:
RI DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT
Division of Fish and Wildlife
(401) 789-0281 or (401) 789-7481
www.dem.ri.gov



Captain Dave Monti has been fishing and shell fishing on Narragansett Bay for over 40 years. He holds a captain's master license, a charter fishing license, and is a member of RISAA and the Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Council. He writes a weekly fishing column called No Fluke that appears in ten weekly newspapers in RI and MA. Visit Captain Dave's No Fluke website at www.noflukefishing.com; his blog at www.noflukefishing.blogspot.com or e-mail him at dmontifish@verizon.net.

Power-dragging can yield big fluke. Captain Dave Monti with the 23" fluke caught while power-dragging, putting the vessel in and out of gear, when fishing the high/low edges at Austin Hollow (an underwater valley) off the west side of Jamestown, RI).



Party/Charter Boat Directory

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- BENT ROD CHARTERS**
CAPT. TODD(401) 524-2235
- BLOCK ISLAND FISHWORKS**
CAPT. CHRISTOPHER WILLI.....(401) 742-3992
- G WILLIE MAKIT**
CAPT. BILL GOULD.....(401) 466-5151 / (203) 245-7831
- HULA CHARTERS**
CAPT. MATT KING.....(401) 263-3474
- LINESLIDER FISHING CHARTERS**
CAPT. ERIC GUSTAFSON(401) 439-5386
- SNOWFLY BLOCK ISLAND FISHING CHARTERS**
CAPT. GREG SNOW(401) 439-0953

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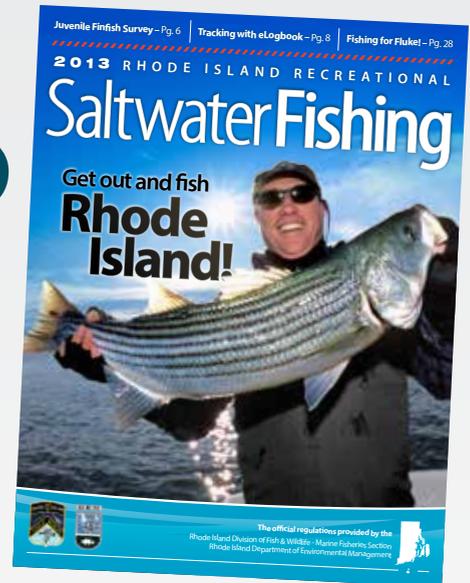
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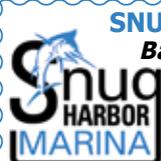


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