



## Saltwater Fishing: GENERAL INFORMATION

### **Marine Recreational Fisheries**

New York State now requires a recreational marine fishing license (RMFL) for its marine and coastal district and for migratory marine species. In addition to the RMFL New York implements Environmental Conservation Laws, Rules and Regulations to manage its marine fisheries and the sport of saltwater fishing. These are developed in coordination with other states and federal fishery management agencies. Our goal is to ensure that there will be fish to catch in the years to come, for this generation and the ones following it. You need to find out what these laws, rules and regulations are and be prepared to comply with them at all times while fishing. In addition, you should find out as much as you can about the fish you catch, about their biology and their role in the ecology of our coastal ocean. In doing so, we hope that you gain a respect for these animals and their environment, and that you come to understand that our fishery resources are finite and fragile and in need of conservation.

For information about the latest marine recreational laws, rules and regulations, contact the DEC at (631) 444-0435, or write us at: NYSDEC Marine Resources, Finfish and Crustaceans Section, 205 North Belle Meade Road, Suite 1, East Setauket, New York 11733-3400.

### **Environmental Conservation Law Enforcement**

New York State Environmental Conservation Officers (ECOs) are the primary police authority responsible for enforcing the State Environmental Conservation Law, including the rules and regulations regulating saltwater recreational fishing; they also enforce the State Navigation Law. An ECO may, without a warrant, search your boat or vehicle, inspect your coolers, buckets, or any other container if he or she suspects that marine fish, crustaceans or other regulated marine resources were taken illegally and possessed. If you are approached by an ECO and requested to stop, it is illegal for you to throw any marine organism in to the water, or dump the contents of a cooler, bucket or any container into the water (when ordered not to do so), before the officer has had a chance to inspect it.

ECOs have been specially trained in marine organism identification and biology and are experts in the laws, rules and regulations that govern your sport. They are the friend of the conservationist and angler who plays by the rules. They are the bane of scofflaws and those who disrespect the environment. If you suspect that someone is violating the marine resource laws, rules and regulations, you may contact an ECO using the following telephone numbers:

- Marine Enforcement Unit: Region 1, Lt. Billotto (516) 204-6237; Region 2, Lt. Lopez (646) 294-7166
- DEC Region 1 Law Enforcement general number: (631) 444-0250 (during business hours)
- DEC Law Enforcement: 1 (877) 457-5680 (non-business hours)
- 1 (800) TIPP DEC

### **Health Advisories**

There are a wide variety of fish species that can be caught while angling, and most of them are delicious to eat. Wild-caught fish is a healthy source of omega-3 fatty acid, a substance with well documented health benefits. Some species of fish, however, may contain chemicals which may be harmful to your health, even though the fish looks healthy and the water appears clean. In order to help you in making decisions about whether or not you want to eat your catch, the N.Y.S. Department of Health has issued health advisories for the consumption of sport

fish from marine waters. Those advisories can change from time-to-time as a result of the continuous monitoring of the levels of certain chemicals in the flesh of wild-caught fish. For the latest information regarding health advisories in marine sport fish, contact the Department of Health through one of the following ways:

- Call toll free: 1 (800) 458-1158, ext. 27815
- Contaminant levels in marine fish species: (518) 402-8920
- On-line at <http://www.health.state.ny.us/environmental/outdoors/fish/fish.htm>
- Email at [BTSA@health.state.ny.us](mailto:BTSA@health.state.ny.us)

### **Highly Migratory Species**

Atlantic tunas, swordfish, sharks and billfish are classified as Highly Migratory Species and the recreational fishery for them in federal waters (outside of the 3-mile state limit) is regulated by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Marine Fishery Service (NOAA Fisheries). Anyone fishing for these species needs to comply with the federal laws, rules and regulations, including obtaining a permit. For more information, contact:

- NOAA Fisheries General Information Line: (301) 713-2334, ext. 173 or 174
- On-line at <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov>
- Email at [Cyber.Fish@noaa.gov](mailto:Cyber.Fish@noaa.gov)

For Permits:

- 1 (888) 872-8862
- On-line at <http://www.nmfspermits.com/>

### **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON MARINE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT:**

ATLANTIC STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION – [www.ASMFC.org](http://www.ASMFC.org)

MID-ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL – [www.mafmc.org](http://www.mafmc.org)

NEW ENGLAND FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL – [www.nefmc.org](http://www.nefmc.org)

NOAA HOMEPAGE – [www.noaa.gov](http://www.noaa.gov)

NOAA FISHERIES – [www.noaa.gov/fisheries.html](http://www.noaa.gov/fisheries.html)

NOAA FISHERIES – NORTHEAST REGIONAL OFFICE – [www.nero.noaa.gov/nero](http://www.nero.noaa.gov/nero)

NORTHEAST FISHERIES SCIENCE CENTER – [www.nefsc.noaa.gov](http://www.nefsc.noaa.gov)

ATLANTIC COASTAL COOPERATIVE STATISTICS PROGRAM – [www.accsp.org](http://www.accsp.org)

COMMERCIAL STATISTICS – [www.st.nmfs.gov/st1/commercial/](http://www.st.nmfs.gov/st1/commercial/)

RECREATIONAL STATISTICS – [www.st.nmfs.gov/st1/recreational/index.html](http://www.st.nmfs.gov/st1/recreational/index.html)

