

Summary of Current **Commercial** Fish Regulations in Delaware for **2021**

THIS TABLE IS ONLY A SUMMARY, DEPARTMENT REGULATIONS AND LAWS PREVAIL
 Go to <https://de.gov/fishlaws> and <https://de.gov/fishregs> for comprehensive listing of laws and regulations

Species	Commercial Min. Size Limit	Commercial Season	Special Conditions / Comments
American Eel	9"	Open Year Round	½" x ½" Mesh size in eel pots
Atlantic Menhaden	None	Quota Based – Subject to closure once quota has been reached	6,000 pound daily bycatch allowance; daily & monthly reporting
Bass, Black Sea	11"	Open Year Round	Black Sea Bass Permits Required for Pots & Commercial Hook & Line
Bass, Striped	20" (Gill Net)	Gill Net: Delaware River & Bay - Feb. 15-May 31 Nanticoke River – Feb 15 - Mar 30	Drift-net only: Feb. 15 – Feb. 28 (Str mesh > 4") , May 1 - May 31 Registration & Tags Required Area & Gear Restrictions ††
	28" (Hook & Line)	All other areas and seasons including fall gill net H&L April 1-Dec. 31 Atlantic Ocean –Feb. 15 –May 31	
Bluefish	None	Open Year Round	
Cobia	37"	Open Year Round	2 per day or trip (up to 6 per day or trip if 3 or more licensed commercial fishermen onboard)
Croaker, Atlantic	8"	Open Year Round	
Drum, Black	16"	Open Year Round	Max 10,000 lb /day harvest limit
Drum, Red	20-27", none > 27"	Open Year Round	5/day
Flounder, Summer	14" gill nets 17" all other gears	Gill net open year round unless de minimis amount is landed Hook & Line Open Year Round	200 pounds daily limit Subject to closure if quota is exceeded
Flounder, Winter	12"	Open Year Round	50 pounds daily limit
Herring, River		CLOSED	River herring incl. alewife & blueback herring
Mackerel, Spanish	14"	Open Year Round	3,500 lbs. per day
Sharks	None	Quota Based, closed when federal waters are closed Prohibited species and Sandbar sharks closed year-round Aggregated Large Coastal Sharks closed May 15-Jul. 15†	Consult Tidal Finfish Regulation 3541
Spot	None	Open Year Round	
Spotted Seatrout	12"	Open Year Round	
Sturgeon, Atlantic		CLOSED	

Species	Commercial Min. Size Limit	Commercial Season	Special Conditions / Comments
Tautog	16"	Closed May 16 – June 30	4, Harvest tags required
Weakfish (Sea trout)	12" Gill Net 13" Hook & Line *	Closed May 1 – June 3 **	100 lb per day vessel limit Jan 1 – Apr 30, Jun 3-Dec 31 1 fish H&L limit on non-specified days May 1 – Oct 31 *
White Perch	8"	Open Year Round	
Scup	9"	Open Year Round	
Shad (American & Hickory)	None	Open Year Round	Closed Atlantic Ocean, Nanticoke River & Broad Creek
Smoothhound	None	Quota Based – Subject to closure once quota has been reached	Formerly known as Smooth dogfish
Spiny Dogfish	None	Quota based, closed when regional season closes	10,000-lb trip limit

* - Weakfish minimum size is 13" for all commercial hook and line fishermen. Between June 3 and October 31, Commercial H&L allowed only 4 days/week, 1 fish limit on non-specified days.

** - Up to 100 pounds of weakfish may be landed as bycatch, provided that the combined weight of all other finfish retained per day or trip (whichever is the longer period of time) is greater than weight of the weakfish.

† - From May 15 - Jul. 15, the following shark species may not be retained: tiger, nurse, lemon, blacktip, spinner, bull, great hammerhead, scalloped hammerhead, smooth hammerhead, and silky.

†† - No fixed gill nets may be fished in the Delaware estuary north of southern shore of the Appoquinimink River at latitude 39°26'51.00"N and longitude 75°34'46.00"W from Jan 1-May 31; no gill nets may be fished in the Nanticoke River and its tributaries or the C & D Canal and its tributaries having twine size larger than 0.28mm in diameter or with a stretch mesh > 5 1/2"

Summary of Current **Commercial** Shellfish Regulations in Delaware for **2021**

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Species	Commercial Min. Size Limit	Commercial Season	Special Conditions / Comments
Blue Crabs (Pot)	5" Hard; 3.5" Soft; 3" Peeler	March 1-Nov 30	Pot: DE River and Bay, Roy's Creek south of Fenwick Island Ditch
Blue Crabs (Dredge)	5" Hard; Mature Female-None	Dec 15-March 31	Dredge: DE Bay and Atlantic Ocean
Clams, Hard	1.5"	Closed Sundays from Memorial to Labor Day; Area closures ##	Tong: 2500 per day; Dredge: No limit (DE Bay only)
Conchs, Channeled	3 1/8" dia. at whorl or 6" long	Open Year Round	Dredge and/or Pot permit required
Conchs, Knobbed	3" dia. at whorl or 5" long	Open Year Round No dredge harvest allowed June 16 through January 14	Dredge and/or Pot permit required
Horseshoe Crabs	None	Closed Jan. 1- June 7 (No harvest Sat. and Sun. after June 7). If quota not filled, beach harvest allowed until July 31. No dredge harvest until July 1	Harvest quota 162,136 males, no females, daily reporting required, ††††
Jonah Crab	4 3/4" minimum carapace Claws: 2 3/4"***	Open Year Round	No more than 1,000 crabs/trip or more than 2,000 claws/trip without valid permit
Lobster	3 3/8" minimum carapace length*; Maximum length 5 1/4" either sex	Closed February 1-March 31 Closed Sundays (State waters)	50 pot limit, no more than 100 lobsters/day except in pots; No V-notched females may be possessed
Oysters (dredge)	2 3/4"	Open April 1 – May 30; September 1 – December 31 Excluding Sundays	Registration & Tags Required

* - Carapace length measured from rear of eye socket to posterior edge of body shell.

** - It is unlawful to possess detached Jonah Crab claws measuring less than 2 3/4" along the longest axis of the propodus (the immovable component of the pinching claw) in a volume greater than five gallons.

- See clamming closure map in Fishing Guide. Clams may not be harvested on Sundays between and including Labor Day and Memorial Day.

†††† - It is unlawful to possess or use as bait Asian horseshoe crabs or any parts thereof without permission from the Division of Fish & Wildlife.