MARINE FISH

NTIFICATION GUIDE

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1993

A Field Guide to the Identification of Marine Species Regulated in South Carolina Coastal Waters

Charles J. Moore

Finfish Management Program
Office of Fisheries Management
Marine Resources Division
South Carolina Wildlife and Marine Resources Department

May 1, 1993

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Illustrations by Duane Raver, Jr.
Some illustrations excerpted from
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by Charles S. Manooch, III, illustrated by Duane Raver, Jr.,
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Acknowledgements

Most of the species descriptions and line drawings appearing in this guide have been taken from the AFO SPECIES IDENTIFICATION SHEETS FOR FISHERIES PURPOSES, edited by W. Fischer (1978, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations). Color plates have been reproduced with the permission of Mr. Duane Raver, Jr. The following individuals provided information concerning; state and federal laws, Mel Bell; telephone numbers for key coastal fisheries contacts, Wayne Hall; measurements of marine species, Kay VanSant. Ed Joseph, Henry Garbade, Don Hammond, Ginnie Martin and Bryan Stone (SCWMRD) and Greg Waugh and Carrie Knight of the South Atlantic Fisheries Management Council provided much input concerning the contents and review of this guide. Special thanks is extended to these individuals and to Charles Bearden and David Cupka for their guidance and critical review. Karen Swanson prepared the manuscript in camera ready format.

Dedication

This guide is dedicated to the memory of Dr. Edwin B. Joseph (1929-1993) a leader in marine fisheries policy, research, management and conservation in the southeastern United States for more than thirty-five years.

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Introduction

(HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE)

Many species occurring in South Carolina's coastal waters, or which are landed at South Carolina ports, are protected by either State and/or Federal laws. Law enforcement officers, resource users and others need a means of quickly identifying marine fish, shellfish and other marine animals which are regulated. This guide provides a quick reference, through color panels, line drawings and written descriptions, to the identification of these animals and to the laws and regulations which protect them.

Currently there are 108 marine species, not including marine mammals or sharks, occurring in the South Atlantic region which are regulated by either South Carolina or Federal laws. Individual treatments for 66 species commonly encountered and/or landed by recreational and commercial fishermen in South Carolina marine waters have been included in this guide.

Species's identification sheets contained in this guide provide only the most important identifying characters of that species. Those appearing in bold print are keyed by arrows to the line drawing of that species. Information concerning fish and shellfish identification techniques, common fishery terms and descriptions and drawings utilized in species identification are also provided.

Current fishery regulations pertaining to South Carolina marine resources are provided in outline form by species, providing a quick reference to pertinent federal statues, regional fishery management plans and State codes. A list of telephone numbers of key contacts within State and Federal agencies dealing with coastal and marine fisheries issues is also provided.

To remain useful, this guide will continually require updating. As new South Carolina and Federal fishery laws are enacted and existing regulations modified new identification sheets will be required and existing ones updated. To felicitate these additions and modification this guide is being provided in a loose-leaf binder.

Suggestions and comments concerning how this guide could be made more useful to the user would be most appreciated. Mail these to:

Charles J. Moore
Finfish Management Program
S.C. Wildlife and Marine Resources Department
P.O. Box 12559
Charleston, South Carolina 29422-2559

Telephone Numbers of Agencies and Key Contacts for South Carolina Coastal Fisheries and Environmental Matters

SCWMRD
- General
  - Exec. Director, James A. Timmerman 734-4007
    - Asst. Director, Larry Cartee 734-4008
  - Marine Resources Division Director, Dr. Paul A. Sandifer 762-5042
    - Asst. Director, John Miglarese 762-5058
  - Office of Fisheries Management
    - Director, Charlie Bearden 762-5061
    - Asst. Director, David Cupka 762-5010
      - Finfish ..... Charles Moore 762-5037
      - Shellfish ..... Skipper Keith 762-5029
      - Shrimp and Crabs ..... David Whitaker 762-5052
      - Statistics ..... Bob Low 762-5095
      - Environmental Concerns ..... Rob Dunlap 762-5067
      - Permits ..... Dale Theiling 762-5079
      - Licenses ..... Joe Carson 762-5049
  - Regional Biologists
    - Horry/Georgetown Co. ..... Dean Cain 546-8523
    - Beaufort Co. ..... Charlie Zemp 524-9041
  - Law Enforcement Offices
    - Georgetown Co. 546-8523
    - Charleston Co. 762-5013
    - Beaufort Co. 524-9190
  - Boat Titling Office ..... Gail Jennings 762-5056
  - Endangered Species ..... Sally Murphy 762-5015
    - ..... Pris Massenburg 762-5030
    - Strandings ..... 1(800)922-5431

South Atlantic Fisheries Management Council
- Exec. Director, Bob Mahood, Charleston, SC 571-4366

Department of Health and Environmental Control
- Fish kills, oil spills, etc., Charleston , SC 544-5533
- Hotline (Columbia, SC 24 hours) 253-6488

National Marine Fisheries Service
- Southeast Fisheries Center, Charleston, SC 762-1200
- Southeast Regional Office, St. Petersburg, Fla. ..... (813)893-3141
  - Fisheries Agent, Susan Montero, St. Petersburg, Fla. ..... (813)536-5610

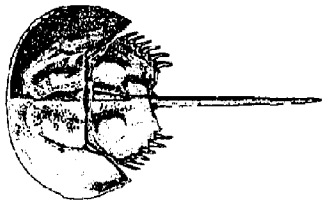
U.S. Coast Guard
- General (navigation buoys, spills, etc.), Charleston, SC 724-7616
- Marine Safety Office, Charleston, SC 724-7690
  - Savannah, Ga. ..... (912)944-4347
  - Georgetown, SC 546-2742
- Ocean Aids to Navigation, Miami, Fla. ..... (305)536-5621
- Legal Office, Miami, Fla. ..... (305)536-5610

Army Corps of Engineers
- Regulatory Branch, Charleston, SC 724-4302
- Obstructions to Navigation 724-4330
- Permits 724-4330

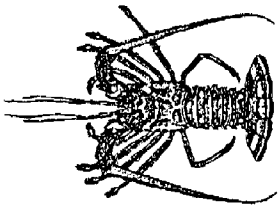
Identifying and Measuring Marine Species

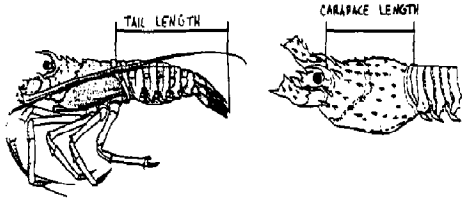
The following is a pictorial guide to identifying the major groups of marine animals contained in this guide. Primary body parts used in separating the species within these groups and measurements utilized in setting size limits by fishery regulations are depicted.

Horseshoe crabs (one species)

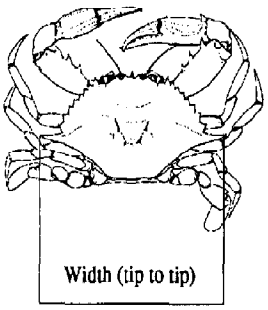


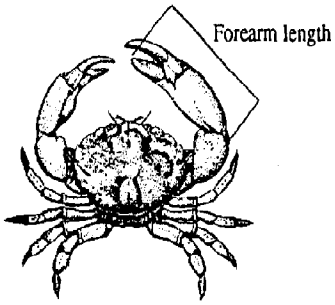
Lobsters (one species)

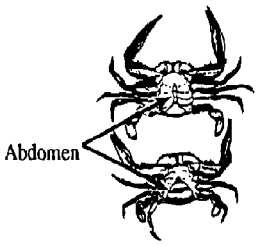




Crabs (two species)

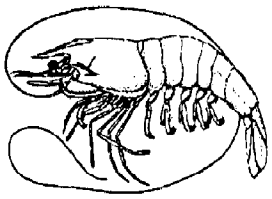


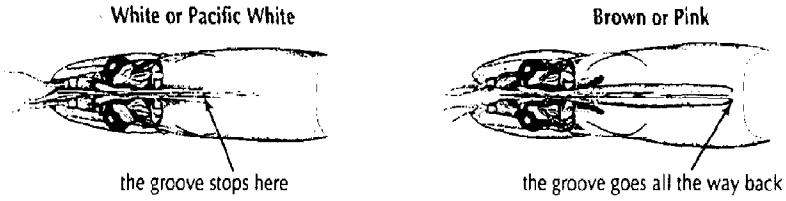




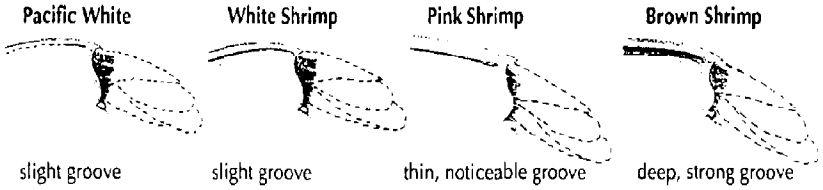
Mature male (top) can be distinguished from female (bottom) by the shape of the abdomen.

Shrimp (four species)

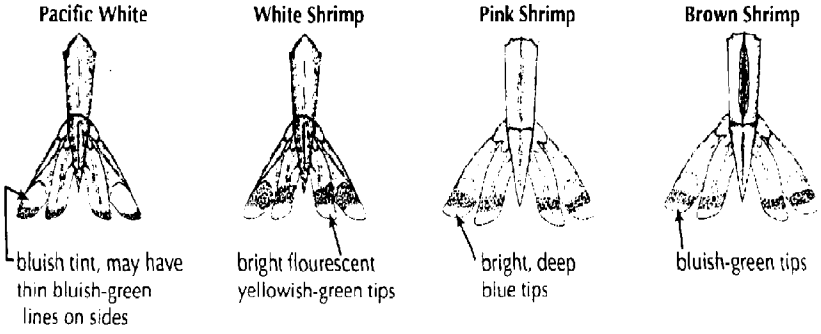




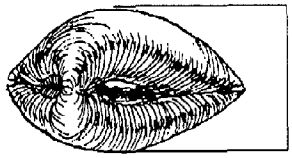
If shrimp is headed, look for a groove near top of the section just before end of tail:



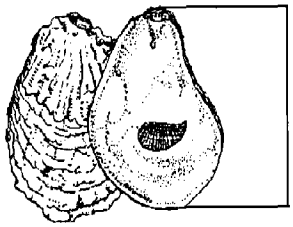
The color of the tail will also help:



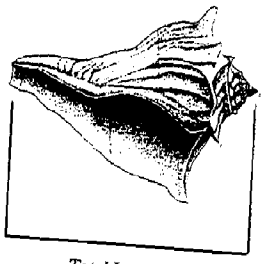
Clams (one species)



Oysters (one species)

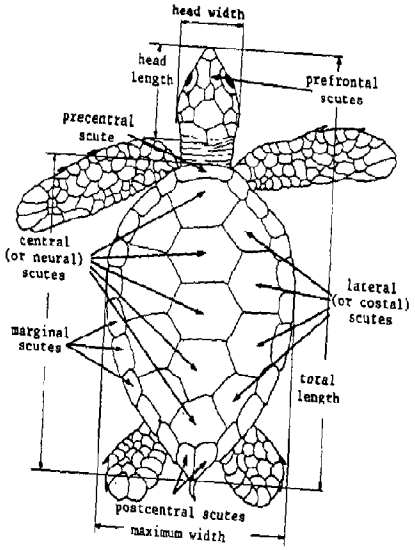


Whelks (two species)

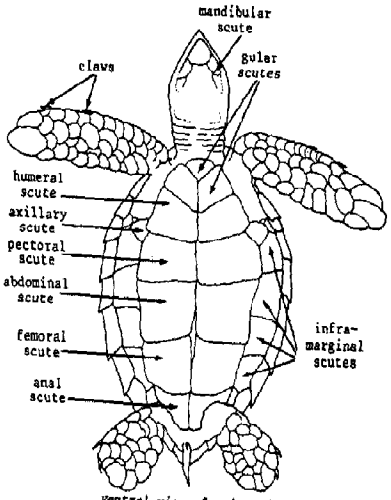


Total Length

Sea turtles (five species)

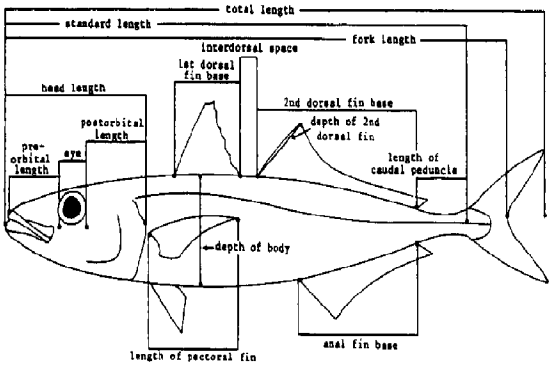


dorsal view of a juvenile sea turtle (Family Chelonidae)

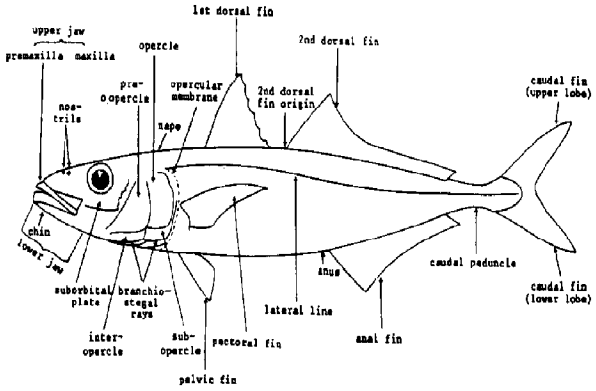


ventral view of a juvenile sea turtle (Family Chelonidae)

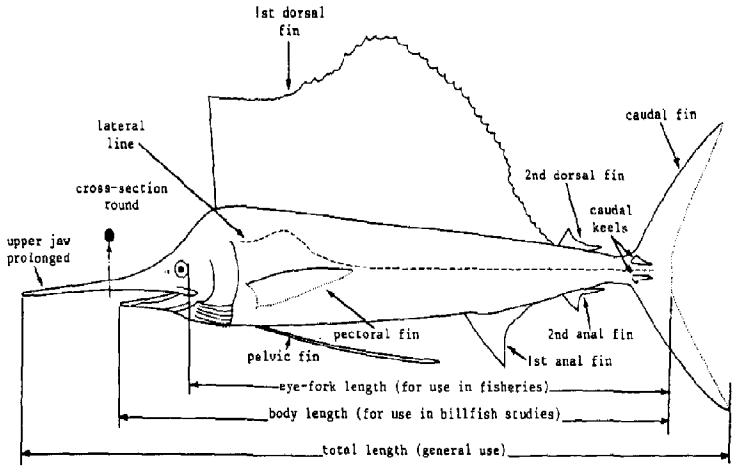
Fish (forty-six species)



General Nomenclature of the External Morphology

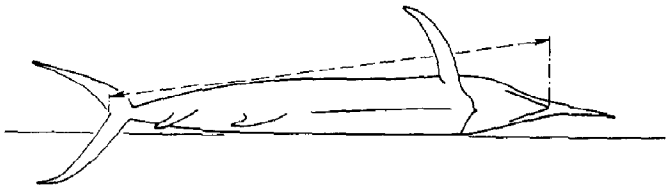


How To Measure Billfish



Blue Marlin, White Marlin, Sailfish

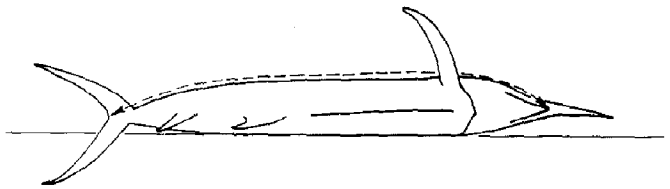
Minimum sizes are based on the straight line body length from tip of lower jaw to the fork in the tail. The fish should be placed on its side on a flat surface sufficiently large enough to allow it to lie straight and flat. The tail and head should be raised off the deck in a position so as to maintain the fish's backbone in a straight line. The tape measure should be hooked over the center of the fork in the tail, stretched in a straight line up the center of the flank of the fish out to a position beyond the tip of the lower jaw. A vertical line is drawn from the lower jaw tip up to the tape measure (a builder's square is useful in establishing this line) to determine the fish's length.



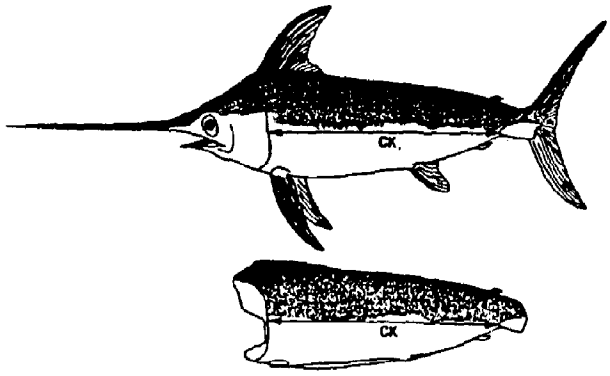
RIGHT

DO NOT press the bill and tail down to the deck when measuring.

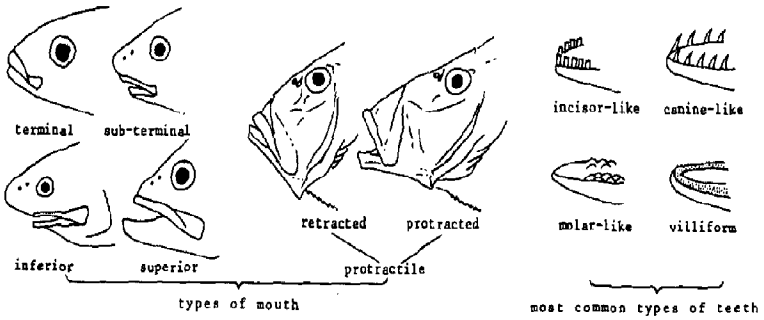
DO NOT wrap the tape measure around the contour of the fish when measuring.

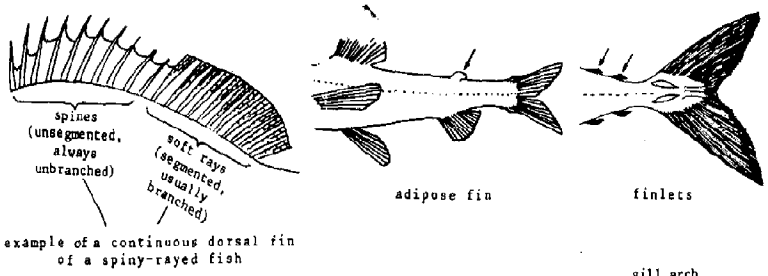


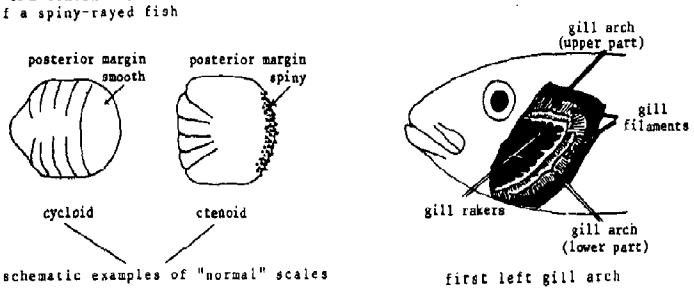
WRONG

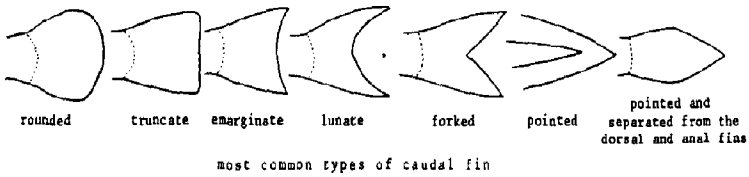


Cleithrum to keel (CK) measurement (i.e. dressed carcass length) of swordfish.









Marine Species Currently With South Carolina, Regional and/or Federal Management Restrictions

(*Species identification sheets included in this guide.)

Group	Common Name	Species	Type of regulations: State	Federal
Horseshoe crabs				
	* Horseshoe crab	*Limulus polyphemus*	x	
Corals				
	Fire corals	Class Hydrozoa		x
	Stony corals	Class Anthoza		x
	Soft corals	Class Anthoza		x
Lobsters				
	* Spiny lobster	*Panulirus argus*	x	x
	Spotted spiny lobster	*Panulirus guttatus*		x
	Smooth tail lobster	*Panulirus laevicauda*		x
	Spanish lobster	*Scyllarides aequinoctilis*		x
Shrimps				
	* White shrimp	*Penaeus setiferus*	x	
	* Brown shrimp	*Penaeus aztecus*	x	
	* Pink shrimp	*Penaeus duorarum*	x	
	* Pacific white shrimp	*Penaeus vannamei*	x	
	Tiger prawn	*Penaeus monodon*	x	
Crabs				
	* Blue crab	*Callinectes sapidus*	x	
	* Stone crab	*Menippe mercenaria*	x	
Clams				
	* Hard clam	*Mercenaria mercenaria*	x	
Oysters				
	* American oyster	*Crassostrea virginica*	x	
Whelks				
	* Knobbed whelk	*Busycon carica*	x	
	* Channeled whelk	*Busycon canaliculatum*	x	
Sea Turtles				
	* Atlantic loggerhead	*Caretta caretta*	x	x
	* Atlantic green sea turtle	*Chelonia mydasa*	x	x
	* Atlantic hawksbill turtle	*Eretmochelys imbricata*	x	x
	* Atlantic ridley turtle	*Lepidochelys kempii*	x	x
	* Atlantic leatherback	*Dermochelys coriacea*	x	x

Group	Common Name	Species	Type of regulations State	Federal
Terrapins				
	* Diamondback terrapin	*Malaclemys terrapin*	x	x
Sharks				
Management Plan currently being prepared by South Atlantic Fisheries Mangement Council may require identification of several species.				
Fish				
	Sturgeons - Acipenceridae			
	* Shortnose sturgeon	*Acipenser brevirostrum*	x	x
	* Atlantic sturgeon	*Aciperser oxyrhynchus*	x	
	Tarpons - Elopidae			
	* Tarpon	*Megalops atlanticus*	x	
	Herrings- Clupeidae			
	* Hickory shad	*Alosa mediocris*	x	
	* American shad	*Alosa sapidissima*	x	
	* Blueback herring	*Alosa aestivalis*	x	
	Temperate basses- Percichthyidae			
	* Wreckfish	*Polyprion americanus*		x
	* Striped bass	*Morone saxatilis*	x	
	Sea basses - Serranidae			
	* Bank sea bass	*Centropristis ocyurus*		x
	* Rock sea bass	*Centropristis philadelphia*		x
	* Black sea bass	*Centropristis striata*	x	x
	Rock hind	*Epinephelus adscensionis*		x
	Graysby	*Epinephelus cruentatus*		x
	* Speckled hind	*Epinephelus drummondhayi*		x
	* Yellowedge grouper	*Epinephelus flavolimbatus*		x
	Coney	*Epinephelus fulvus*		x
	Red hind	*Epinephelus guttatus*		x
	* Jewfish	*Epinephelus itajara*	x	x
	* Red grouper	*Epinephelus morio*	x	x
	Misty grouper	*Epinephelus mystacinus*		x
	* Warsaw grouper	*Epinephelus nigritus*		x
	* Snowy grouper	*Epinephelus niveatus*		x
	* Nassau grouper	*Epinephelus striatus*	x	x
	Black grouper	*Mycteroperca bonaci*	x	x
	Yellowmouth grouper	*Mycteroperca interstitialis*	x	x
	* Gag	*Mycteroperca microlepis*	x	x
	* Scamp	*Mycteroperca phenax*	x	x
	Tiger grouper	*Mycteroperca tigis*		x
	Yellowfin grouper	*Mycteroperca venenosa*	x	x

Group	Common Name	Species	Type of regulations State	Federal
Tilefishes - Malacanthidae				
	* Blueline tilefish	*Caulolatilus microps*		x
	* Tilefish	*Lopholatilus chamaeleonticeps*		x
	Sand tilefish	*Malacanthus plumieri*		x
Bluefishes - Pomatomidae				
	* Bluefish	*Pomatomus saltatrix*		x
Cobias - Rachycentridae				
	* Cobia	*Rachycentron canadum*	x	x
Jacks - Carngidae				
	Yellow jack	*Caranx bartholomaei*		x
	Blue runner	*Caranx crysos*		x
	Crevalle jack	*Caranx hippos*		x
	Bar jack	*Caranx ruber*		x
	* Greater amberjack	*Seriola dumerili*	x	x
	Lesser amberjack	*Seriola fasciata*		x
	Almaco jack	*Seriola rivoliana*		x
	Banded rudderfish	*Seriola zonata*		x
Snappers - Lutjanidae				
	Black snapper	*Apsilus dentatus*	x	x
	Queen snapper	*Etelis oculatus*	x	x
	Mutton snapper	*Lutjanus analis*	x	x
	Schoolmaster	*Lutjanus apodus*	x	x
	Blackfin snapper	*Lutjanus buccanella*	x	x
	* Red snapper	*Lutjanus campechanus*	x	x
	* Cubera snapper	*Lutjanus cyanopterus*	x	x
	* Gray snapper	*Lutjanus griseus*	x	x
	Dog snapper	*Lutjanus jocu*	x	x
	Mahogany snapper	*Lutjanus mahogoni*	x	x
	Lane snapper	*Lutjanus synagis*	x	x
	* Silk snapper	*Lutjanus vivanus*	x	x
	Yellowtail snapper	*Ocyrus chrysurus*	x	x
	* Vermilion snapper	*Rhomboplites aurorubens*	x	x
Grunts - Haemulidae				
	Black margate	*Anisotremus surinamensis*		x
	Porkfish	*Anisotremus virginicus*		x
Porgies - Sparidae				
	* Sheepshead	*Archosargus probatocephalus*		x
	Grass porgy	*Calamus arcifrons*		x
	Jolthead porgy	*Calamus bajonado*		x
	Saucereye porgy	*Calamus calamus*		x
	Whitebone porgy	*Calamus leueosteus*		x

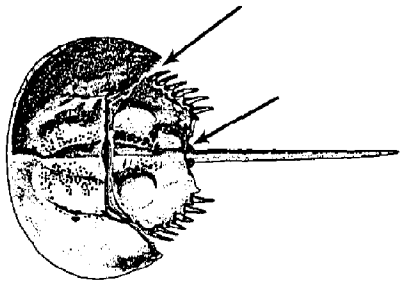
Group	Common Name	Species	Type of regulations State	Federal
	* Knobbed porgy	*Calamus nodosus*		x
	* Red porgy	*Pagrus pagrus*	x	x
	Longspine porgy	*Stenotomus caprinus*		x
	* Scup	*Stenotomus chrysops*		x
Drums - Sciaenidae				
	* Spotted seatrout	*Cynoscion nebulosus*	x	
	* Red drum	*Sciaenops ocellatus*	x	x
Spadefishes - Ephippidae				
	Atlantic spadefish	*Chaetodipterus faber*		x
Wrasses - Labridae				
	Puddingwife	*Halichoeres radiatus*		x
	* Hogfish	*Lachnolaimus maximus*		x
Mackerels - Scombridae				
	* King mackerel	*Scormberomorus cavalla*	x	x
	* Spanish mackerel	*Scomberomorus maculatus*	x	x
	* Bluefin tuna	*Thunnus thynnus*		x
Swordfishes - Xiphiidae				
	* Swordfish	*Xiphias gladius*		x
Billfishes - Istiophoridae				
	* Sailfish	*Istiophorus platypterus*	x	x
	* Blue marlin	*Makaira nigrican*	x	x
	* White marlin	*Tetrapturus albidus*	x	x
	* Longbill spearfish	*Tetrapturus pfluegeri*	x	
Lefteyed flounders - Bothidae				
	* Summer flounder	*Paralichthys dentatus*	x	x
	* Southern flounder	*Paralichthys lethostigma*	x	
Leatherjackets - Balistidae				
	Gray triggerfish	*Balistes capriscus*		x
	* Queen triggerfish	*Balistes vetula*		x
	Ocean triggerfish	*Canthidermis sufflamen*		x

Marine Mammals

Major groups (dolphins, manatees, seals, and whales) identified which are protected and indication of those on endangered list.

HORSESHOE CRAB
Limulus polyphemus

Other common name(s): King crab



Identifying key characters: The shell (carapace) is dark brown, horseshoe shaped, convex above and concave below. **The posterior third of the shell (the abdomen) hinged anteriorly to the shell and posteriorly to a long triangular spike-like tail.** The underside of the shell bears five sets of walking legs which are anterior to four left-like processes (gills).

Distinguishing characters of similar species:

There is only one species of horseshoe crab and there are no other similar marine animals.

REGULATIONS

Possession limit: Federal waters - No restrictions.
State waters - Lawful only with special permit.

Size limit: Federal waters - No restrictions.
State waters - No restrictions.

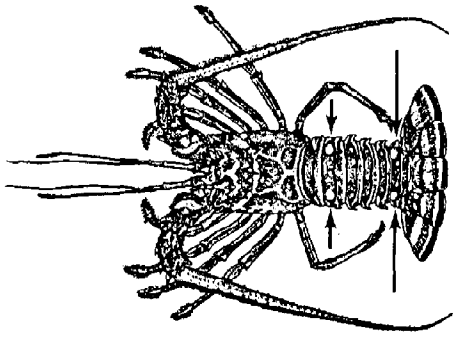
State seasonal restrictions: none

Other restrictions: Horseshoe crabs may be taken only with a special permit. Those taken incidentally to legal fishing operations for other marine organisms must be returned immediately unharmed to the water.

Notes:

SPINY LOBSTER

Panulirus argus



Identifying key characters: Color variable: mottled greenish-purple, tan, brownish, greenish, reddish, or bluish. **Tail with 4 conspicuous yellow spots, one on each side of second and last abdominal segments;** legs with light longitudinal stripes. Bases of antennular plate bearing 2 pairs of strong spines; each abdominal segment with a complete transverse groove.

Distinguishing characters of similar species:

Other spiny lobsters - None typically occur in area, all others may be distinguished by the lack of the 4 large conspicuous spots on tail.

American lobster - Presence of massive, smooth, ridgeless, and spinless pinchers.

REGULATIONS

Possession limit: Federal waters - Six lobsters per person per day (Recreational harvest).
State waters - Same as in federal waters.

Size limit: Federal waters - Carapace length must be more than 3 inches with a tail length more than 5.5 inches.
State waters - Same as in federal waters.

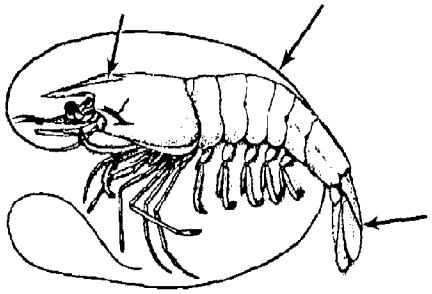
State seasonal restrictions:

Recreational harvest - Fishery closed 1 April through 5 August in state and federal waters.
Commercial harvest - Fishery closed 1 April through 5 August in state and federal waters.
Nontrap Special Season - First weekend preceding 1 August.

Other restrictions: Berried lobsters may not be taken. Tails may not be separated from body at sea. Spears, hooks, poisons or explosives or similar devices may not be used to take lobsters.

Notes:

WHITE SHRIMP
Penaeus setiferus



Identifying key characters: Pale to whitish in color with **tail edged in bright florescent yellow-green. No groove present along the base of either side of rostrum along head.** Rostrum with 7 to 9 teeth on dorsal margin and two teeth on ventral margin, tip long and slender. **Antennae twice to three times as long as the body.**

Distinguishing characters of similar species:

Brown shrimp - Brownish in color. Groove present along base of both sides of rostrum, along the length of the head and last tail segment. Tail segments edged in red or blue. Antennae less than twice body length.

Pink shrimp - Brownish in color with a prominent dark spot on each side of the tail. Grooves on the head along the rostrum and the last segment of the tail. Tail iridescent blue.

Pacific white shrimp - Locally called "Vanna-whites". Very slight groove not exceeding anterior half of carapace. Tail has a bluish tint and sides of body may have thin bluish green lines.

REGULATIONS

Possession limit: Federal waters - No restrictions.
State waters - 48 quarts whole or 29 quarts headed (all shrimp species) per seine (if seine used) or per set of poles (if bait is used) or per boat (if boat is used without using bait) or per person (if no boat, bait or seine is used).

Size limit: Federal waters - No restrictions.
State waters - No restrictions.

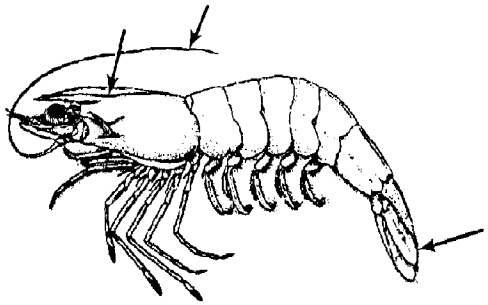
State seasonal restrictions:
Recreational harvest - None, except if bait is used. There is a 60-day season, set during the 75-day period between September 1 and November 15, and a special permit is required to harvest shrimp if bait is utilized.
Commercial harvest - Shrimp trawling seasons set annually.

Other restrictions: Shrimp taken over bait may not be sold.

Notes:

BROWN SHRIMP

Penaeus aztecus



Identifying key characters: Brownish in color, may have a yellowish to reddish tinge. **Groove present along the base of both sides of rostrum along the length of the head and last tail segment. Tail edged in red, dark green or blue. Antennae less than twice as long as the body.**

Distinguishing characters of similar species:

White shrimp - Pale to whitish, tail edged in bright florescent yellow-green. No groove present along base of rostrum. Antennae twice to three times as long as the body.

Pink shrimp - Darker brown, usually with a prominent dark red or brown spot on each side of tail. Grooves on head along the rostrum and on the last segment of the tail.

Pacific white shrimp - Very slight groove, on either side of rostrum not exceeding anterior half of carapace. Tail has a bluish tint and sides of body may have thin blue lines.

REGULATIONS

Possession limit: Federal waters - No restrictions.
State waters - 48 quarts whole or 29 quarts headed (all shrimp species) per seine (if seine used) per set of poles (if bait is used) per boat (if boat is used without bait) or per person (if no boat, bait, or seine used) (Recreational harvest).

Size limit: Federal waters - No restrictions.
State waters - No restrictions.

State seasonal restrictions:
Recreational harvest - None, except if bait is used. There is a 60-day season, set during the 75-day period between September 1 and November 15, and a special permit is required to harvest shrimp if bait is utilized.
Commercial harvest - Shrimp trawling seasons set annually

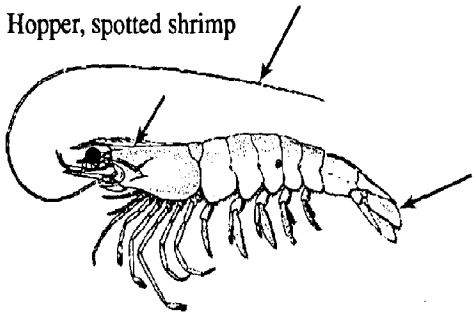
Other restrictions: Shrimp taken over bait may not be sold.

Notes:

PINK SHRIMP

Penaeus duorarum

Other common name(s): Hopper, spotted shrimp



Identifying key characters: Brownish, usually a prominent dark red or brown spot on each side on the 3rd and 4th segment of abdomen. Grooves on the head along the rostrum and along the dorsal center line of the last segment of the tail. Tail outline in bright iridescent blue color. Antennae less than twice body length.

Distinguishing characters of similar species:

White shrimp - Pale to whitish, tail fan edged in bright florescent yellow-green. No groove along the base of either side of rostrum, last tail segment keeled. Antennae twice to three times as long as the body.

Brown shrimp - No dark spot on either side of abdomen. Tail fan with bluish-green tips.

Pacific white shrimp - Shallow groove not exceeding anterior half of carapace. Tail with a bluish tint and sides of body may have thin blue lines.

REGULATIONS

Possession limit: Federal waters - No restrictions.
State waters - 48 quarts whole or 29 quarts headed (all shrimp species) per seine (if seine used) or per set of poles (if bait is used) or per boat (if boat is used without using bait) or per person (if no boat, bait or seine is used) (Recreational harvest).

Size limit: Federal waters - No restrictions.
State waters - No restrictions.

State seasonal restrictions:
Recreational harvest - None, except if bait is used. There is a 60-day season set during the 75-day period between September 1 and November 1 and a special permit required to harvest shrimp if bait is utilized.
Commercial harvest - Trawling seasons set annually.

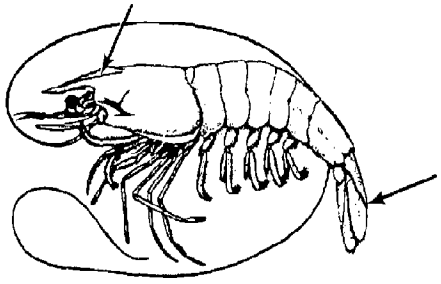
Other restrictions: Shrimp taken over bait may not be sold.

Notes:

PACIFIC WHITE SHRIMP

Penaeus vannamei

Other common name(s): Vanna-white



Identifying key characters: Shallow grove present along base of either side of rostrum but not exceeding anterior half of carapace. Tail has a bluish tint and sides of body may have bluish green lines.

Distinguishing characters of similar species:

White shrimp - Pale to whitish with tail edged in bright florescent yellow-green. No grove present along the base of either side of rostrum. Antennae twice to three times as long as the body. Last tail segment keeled.

Brown shrimp - Brownish. Groove present along base on both sides of rostrum entire length of head and last tail segment. Tail segments edged in red, green and blue. Antennae less than twice body length.

Pink shrimp - Brownish with a prominent dark spot on each side of abdomen between 3rd and 4th segments. Groove present along base on both sides of rostrum entire length of head and on dorsal midline of last tail segment. Antennae less than twice body length.

REGULATIONS

Possession limit: Federal waters - No restrictions.
State waters - See white, brown or pink shrimp.

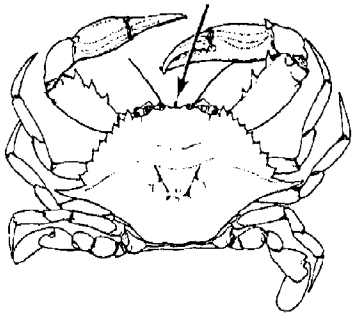
Size limit: Federal waters - No restrictions.
State waters - No restrictions.

State seasonal restrictions:
Recreational harvest - See white, brown or pink shrimp.
Commercial harvest - See white, brown or pink shrimp.

Other restrictions:

Notes: This is a non-native species which may be encountered as an escapee from shrimp aquaculture operations.

BLUE CRAB
Callinectes sapidus



Identifying key characters: Upper carapace (body shell) bluish or brownish-green, males with fingers of pinchers blue, mature females fingers orange, legs varyingly white and blue, spines tinged with red, underparts off-white. **Carapace margin between eyes with two teeth.**

Distinguishing characters of similar species:

Lesser blue crab - Upper shell green to tannish, pincers of male crabs with white and blue to fuschia, pinchers of females and legs varying shades of fuschia, underparts of shell white and blue. Carapace margin between eyes with four teeth, inner pair smaller than outer pair. Usually less than 3 inches in width.

REGULATIONS

Possession limit: Federal waters - N/A.
State waters - N/A.

Size limit: Federal waters - N/A.
State waters - Carapace width (point to point) must be 5 inches or more.

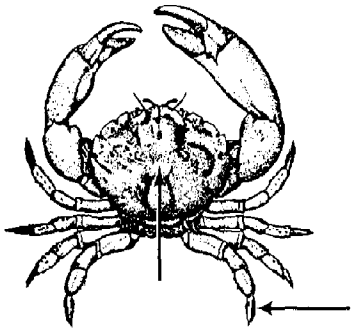
State seasonal restrictions:
Recreational harvest - None.
Commercial harvest - None.

Other restrictions: Female crabs with egg mass (sponge) must be returned to water unharmed. Commercial fishermen must be licensed. Recreational crabbers limited to two marked crab traps.

Notes:

STONE CRAB

Menippe mercenaria



Identifying key characters: Young crabs purplish-blue, older crabs become dark brownish-red to black, more or less mottled with dusk gray, fingers dark. **Carapace oval in shape,** about 2.5 times as long as wide. Pinchers large, unequal and nearly smooth, legs stout and ends hairy. No **paddle legs for swimming.**

Distinguishing characters of similar species:

Similar species in area seldom exceed one inch (carapace width).

REGULATIONS

Possession limit: Federal waters -N/A.
State waters - It is unlawful to possess any stone crab body, live or dead. Only the larger of the two claws of any stone crab may be removed.

Size limit: Federal waters - N/A.
State waters - The forearm (propodus) of any claw removed must be or exceed 2 3/4 inches in length.

State seasonal restrictions:
Recreational harvest - None.
Commercial harvest - None.

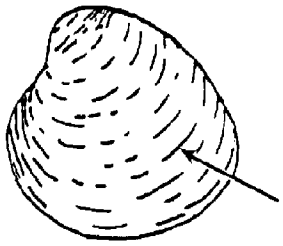
Other restrictions: Female stone crabs with egg mass (sponge) must be returned to water unharmed.

Notes:

HARD CLAMS

Mercenaria mercenaria

Other common name(s): Quahog, little neck, cherry stone, chowder



Identifying key characters: Shell smooth, exterior gray to whitish, interior white with purple stains.

Distinguishing characters of similar species: Southern hardshell clam, *M. campechiensis,* is rounded in shape, exterior of shell with small, coarse concentric rings. Interior china-white without purple stains.

REGULATIONS

Possession limit: Federal waters - N/A.
State waters - One-half of one U.S. bushel of clams may be harvested recreationally from public or state shellfish grounds per person per day.

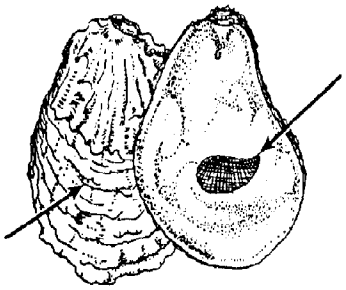
Size limit: Federal waters - N/A.
State waters - All clams must have a minimum thickness of one inch.

State seasonal restrictions:
Recreational harvest - Clams may be harvested from 15 September through 15 May. The opening and closing of clam season or specific areas may vary from these dates and is set by the Marine Resources Division. A marine recreational fisheries stamp is required for recreational harvest.
Commercial harvest - Commercial shellfish license and permits are required.

Other restrictions: Maricultured clams may be harvested, transported and sold throughout the year under a permit. Individual areas may be closed by the Department of Health and Environmental Control at any time because of pollution. These areas are marked during closures by yellow and red signs.

Notes:

AMERICAN OYSTER
Crassostrea virginica



Identifying key characters: Exterior sculptured and variable, grayish, sometimes with purplish rays. **Interior chalk-white with a purple muscle scar.**

Distinguishing characters of similar species:

No other species of similar size and shape in area.

REGULATIONS

Possession limit: Federal waters - N/A.
State waters - Two U.S. bushels of oysters may be harvested recreationally from public or state shellfish grounds per person per day (recreational harvest).

Size limit: Federal waters - N/A.
State waters - No restrictions.

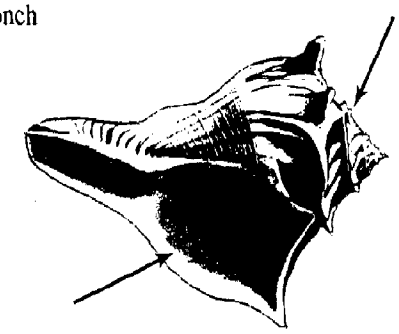
State seasonal restrictions:
Recreational harvest - Oysters may be harvested from 15 September until 15 May. The opening and closing of oyster season or specific areas may vary from these dates and is set by the Marine Resources Division. A marine recreational fisheries stamp is required for recreational harvest.
Commercial harvest - Commercial shellfish license and permits required.

Other restrictions: Maricultured oysters may be harvested, transported and sold throughout the year under a permit. Individual areas may be closed to oystering by the Department of Health and Environmental Control at any time because of pollution. These areas are marked during closures by yellow and red signs.

Notes:

KNOBBED WHELK
Busycon carica

Other common name(s): Conch



Identifying key characters: Spiral-shaped shell with many well developed knobs extending along edge of each whorl of shell. Shell aperture (opening) on right side. Color of shell varies greatly, aperture colors vary from reddish-brown and dark orange to cream color.

Distinguishing characters of similar species:

Channeled whelk - Spiral-shaped shell with whorles forming a deep channel with small bead-like projections along edge of each whorl. Aperture of right side. Shell covered with fine hairy projections.

Lightning whelk - Shell aperture on left side of shell.

Pear whelk - Shell distinctly pear shaped and lacks knobs, beads and hairy projections, aperture on right side. This whelk rarely exceeds six inches in length.

REGULATIONS

Possession limit: Federal waters - N/A.
State waters - No restrictions.

Size limit: Federal waters - N/A.
State waters - 4 1/2 inches in total length.

State seasonal restrictions:
Recreational harvest - None.
Commercial harvest - Commercial whelk trawling requires a special permit. Trawl nets must have a minimum stretched mesh size of 4 inches.

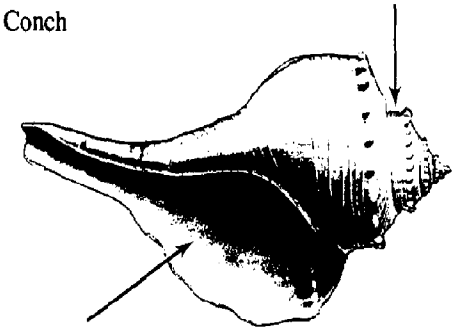
Other restrictions:

Notes:

CHANNELED WHELK

Busycon canaliculatum

Other common name(s): Conch



Identifying key characters: Spiral-shaped shell with whorles forming a deep channel with small bead-like projections along the edge of each whorl. Aperture (opening) on right side of shell. Shell covered with fine hairy projections.

Distinguishing characters of similar species:

Knobbed whelk - Spiral-shaped shell with many well developed knobs extending along each shell whorl. Shell aperture on right side; color ranging from reddish-brown to cream color.

Lightning whelk - Shell aperture on left side.

Pear whelk - Shell distinctly pear-shaped and lacks, knobs, beads, and hairy projections, aperture on right side. This whelk rarely exceeds six inches.

REGULATIONS

Possession limit: Federal waters - N/A.
State waters - No restrictions.

Size limit: Federal waters - N/A.
State waters - 4 1/2 inches in total length.

State seasonal restrictions:

Recreational harvest - None.

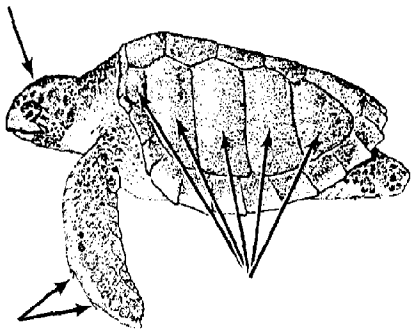
Commercial harvest - Commercial whelk trawling requires a special permit. Trawl nets must have a minimum stretched mesh size of 4 inches. Usually Territorial Sea closed to trawling several weeks prior to opening of shrimp season.

Other restrictions:

Notes:

ATLANTIC LOGGERHEAD TURTLE

Caretta caretta



Identifying key characters: Dorsal shell (carapace) heart-shaped, brownish-red with light spots and with five pairs of lateral scutes. Head very broad with two pairs of prefrontal scutes and a strong horny beak. Lower shell pale yellow with diffuse orange spots and three pairs of large inframarginal scutes. **Two claws on each flipper.**

Distinguishing characters of similar species:

Other sea turtles - Shell with bony scutes and usually not reddish-brown, and four inframarginal plates on dorsal shell.

REGULATIONS

Possession limit: Federal waters - Unlawful to harm, kill, possess or interfere with the well being or normal activity of any sea turtle or their eggs. All sea turtles are protected under the Federal Endangered Species Act.
State waters - Same as in federal waters.

Size limit: Federal waters - N/A.
State waters - N/A.

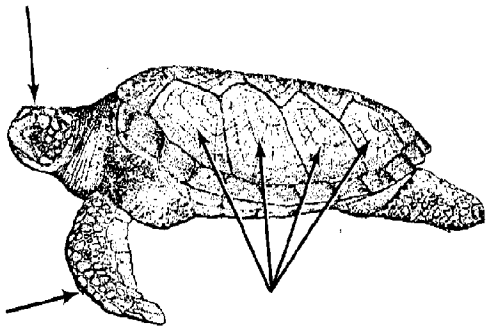
State seasonal restrictions: N/A.

Other restrictions:

Notes:

ATLANTIC GREEN SEA TURTLE

Chelonia mydasa



Identifying key characters: Dorsal (upper) shell oval, olive-brown with shiny radiating yellow, green and back spots and **four pairs of lateral scutes**, anterior pair not touching the precentral scutes. **Head small with a single pair of prefrontal scutes**, edge of lower jaw coarsely toothed. **A single claw on each flipper.**

Distinguishing characters of similar species:

Other sea turtles - Edges of jaws smooth, more than one pair of perfonatal scutes, and all but Atlantic hawksbill turtle which has overlapping scutes on its shell, have five or more lateral scutes.

REGULATIONS

Possession limit: Federal waters - It is unlawful to harm, kill, possess or interfere with the well being or normal activity of any sea turtle or their eggs. All sea turtles are protected under the Federal Endangered Species Act.
State waters - Same as in federal waters.

Size limit: Federal waters - N/A.
State waters - N/A.

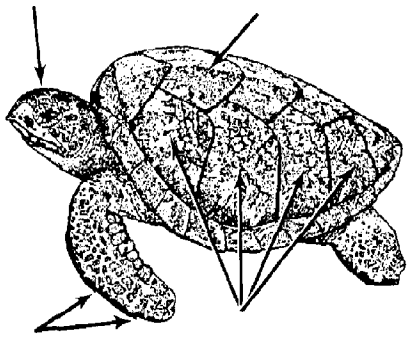
State seasonal restrictions: N/A.

Other restrictions:

Notes:

ATLANTIC HAWKSBILL TURTLE

Eretmochelys imbricata



Identifying key characters: Dorsal shell (carapace) oval, **scutes are overlapping, four pairs of lateral scutes with anterior pair not touching the precentral scute,** upper shell dark brown, with yellow and reddish streaks on scutes. **Head with two pairs of prefrontal scutes and a strong horny beak. Two claws on each flipper.**

Distinguishing characters of similar species:

Other sea turtles - No other adult sea turtle from this area has overlapping scutes on carapace or plastron. Only the green turtle also has 4 lateral scutes on carapace but its carapace is much broader and it has only one claw on each flipper.

REGULATIONS

Possession limit: Federal waters - It is unlawful to harm, kill, possess or interfere with the well being or normal activity of any sea turtle or their eggs. All sea turtles are protected under the Federal Endangered Species Act.
State waters - Same as in federal waters.

Size limit: Federal waters - N/A.
State waters - N/A.

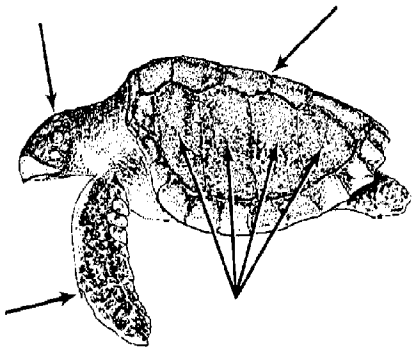
State seasonal restrictions: N/A.

Other restrictions:

Notes:

ATLANTIC RIDLEY TURTLE

Lepidochelys kempii



Identifying key characters: Dorsal shell (carapace) circular in outline, grayish in color, and with five pairs of lateral scutes, anterior pair touching the precentral scute. **Head small with two pairs of prefrontal scutes and a horny beak which may be finely serrated.** Four pairs of inframarginal scutes, each with a hole near the bottom margin. Underside pale yellow.

Distinguishing characters of similar species:

Other sea turtles - Do not have nearly circular carapace or holes on the inframarginal scutes.

REGULATIONS

Possession limit: Federal waters - It is unlawful to harm, kill, possess or interfere with the well being or normal activity of any sea turtle or their eggs. All sea turtles are protected under the Federal Endangered Species Act.
State waters - Same as in federal waters.

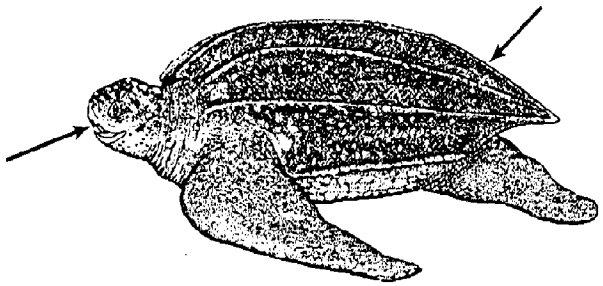
Size limit: Federal waters - N/A.
State waters - N/A.

State seasonal restrictions: N/A.

Other restrictions:

Notes:

ATLANTIC LEATHERBACK TURTLE
Dermochelys coriacea



Identifying key characters: Body depressed and covered by a smooth horny skin lacking lamellae or scutes, **seven longitudinal ridges on back (carapace) and five ridges on plaston.** Carapace dark brown with whitish spots. **Head small, ending in a horny beak with a well defined cusp at each side of upper jaw and a central cusp on the lower jaw.**

Distinguishing characters of similar species:

Other Sea Turtles - All have horny lamella or scutes over their body and none have longitudinal ridges on carapace or plaston.

REGULATIONS

Possession limit: Federal waters - It is unlawful to harm, kill, possess or interfere with the well being or normal activity of any sea turtle or their eggs. All sea turtles are protected under the Endangered Species Act.
State waters - Same as in federal waters.

Size limit: Federal waters - N/A.
State waters - N/A.

State seasonal restrictions: N/A.

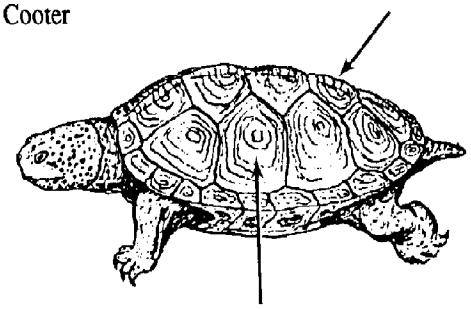
Other restrictions:

Notes:

DIAMONDBACK TERRAPIN

Malaclemys terrapin

Other common name(s): Cooter



Identifying key characters: Salt-marsh or brackish water habitat is a good field characteristic. **Large scutes on shell (carapace) with concentric rings or ridges and concentric light and dark areas. Shell 6 to 9 inches with a central keel**, color very variable. Head and limbs spotted.

Distinguishing characters of similar species:

Snapping turtles - Has a long saw-tooth tail.

Mud turtles - Plastron (lower shell) hinged.

Wood turtles - Rarely enter salt water, have orange on neck and limbs.

REGULATIONS

Possession limit: Federal waters - N/A.
State waters - Unlawful to take, purchase, possess, terrapins between 1 April and 15 July.

Size limit: Federal waters - N/A.
State waters - Must be 5 inches or more in length measured on the median line of the bottom of the shell

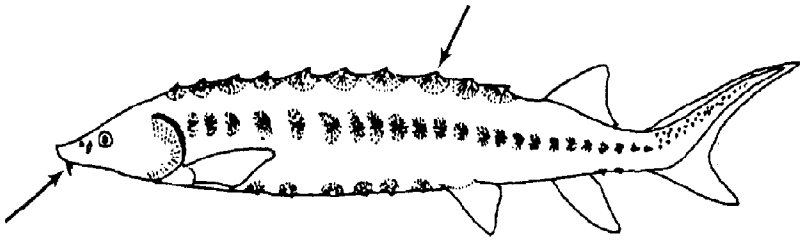
State seasonal restrictions:
Recreational harvest - Unlawful to take, purchase or possessed terrapin between April 1 and July 15.
Commercial harvest - Unlawful to take, purchase or possessed terrapin between April 1 and July 15.

Other restrictions:

Notes:

SHORTNOSE STURGEON **Color Plate I**

Acipenser brevirostrum



Identifying key characters: Head and body covered with bony plates or shields, five rows on body, one row along midline of back and two rows on each side. Head has an extended snout; **no plates posterior to dorsal fin** and usually none or a single row posterior to anal fin, spiracle (small opening behind eyes) present, **inferior protrusible mouth preceded by four conspicuous barbels.** Tail fin asymmetrical with upper half fleshy and much larger than lower. Anal fin with 19 to 22 rays. Membranes around internal organs blackish.

Distinguishing characters of similar species:

Atlantic sturgeon - Dorsal plates or shields crowded, plates present posterior to dorsal and anal fins and in pairs, anal fin with 23 to 30 rays, snout long and pointed. Membranes surrounding internal organs pale.

REGULATIONS

Possession limit: Federal waters - Fishery closed; endangered species.
State waters - Fishery closed; endangered species.

Size limit: Federal waters - Fishery closed.
State waters - Fishery closed.

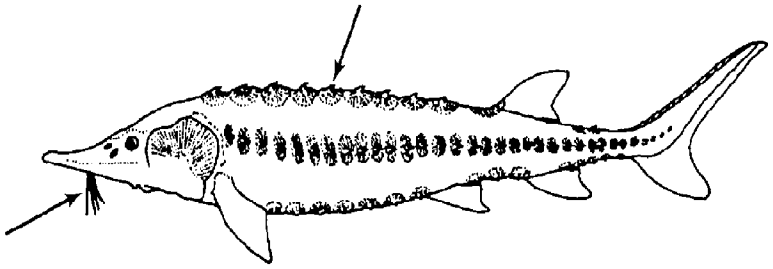
State seasonal restrictions:
Recreational harvest - Fishery closed.
Commercial harvest - Fishery closed.

Other restrictions: It is unlawful for anyone to catch, buy, sell or ship shortnose sturgeon at any time.

Notes:

ATLANTIC STURGEON **Color Plate I**

Acipenser oxyrhynchus



Identifying key characters: Head and body crowded with bony plates or shields, five rows on body, one row along midline of back and two rows on each side, **two rows of plates posterior to dorsal and anal fins**. Head has an extended snout; a spiracle (small opening behind eyes), **inferior protrusible mouth preceded by four conspicuous barbels**. Tail fin asymmetrical with upper half fleshy and much larger than lower. Anal fin with 23 to 30 rays. Membranes surrounding internal organs pale.

Distinguishing characters of similar species:

Shortnose sturgeon - Dorsal plates widely spaced, no plates usually occur posterior to dorsal fin and only a single row or none occur posterior to anal fin, anal fin with 19 to 22 rays, snout is short and rounded. Membranes surrounding internal organs are blackish.

REGULATIONS

Possession limit: Federal waters - No restrictions.
State waters - Fishery closed.

Size limit: Federal waters - No restrictions.
State waters - Fishery closed.

State seasonal restrictions:
Recreational harvest - Fishery closed.
Commercial harvest - Fishery closed.

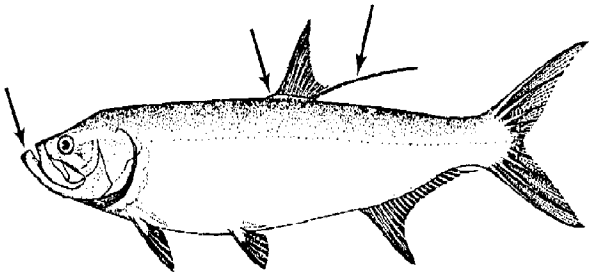
Other restrictions:

Notes:

TARPON **Color Plate III**

Megalops atlanticus

Other common name(s): silver king



Identifying key characters: Body moderately deep, scales large, eye large, and **lower jaw projecting. Dorsal fin origin near mid point of body with last dorsal fin ray filamentous and very long.**

Distinguishing characters of similar species:

Ladyfish - Similar in appearance but much smaller, reaching only 4 to 6 pounds. Last dorsal ray is not filamentous or longer than anterior rays, body scales small, 100 to 120 along lateral line instead of the 40 to 48 for tarpon.

REGULATIONS

Possession limit: Federal waters - N/A.
State waters - One fish per person per day.

Size limit: Federal waters - N/A.
State waters - No restrictions.

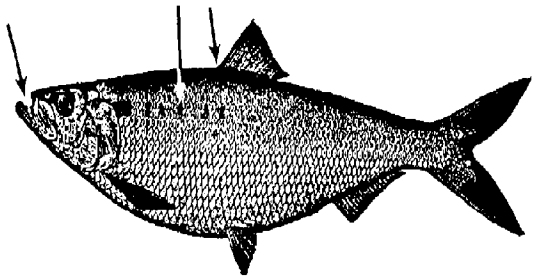
State seasonal restrictions:
Recreational harvest - None.
Commercial harvest - None.

Other restrictions: Tarpon are game fish and may be taken only by rod and reel and may not be sold.

Notes:

HICKORY SHAD **Color Plate II**

Alosa mediocris



Identifying key characters: Obscure spots on sides behind shoulder spot, usually with narrow dark lines on upper part of body, belly very deep, **point of origin of dorsal fin is considerably in front of the mid-point of its body**, the **lower jaw projects farther beyond the upper when its mouth is closed**, the upper jaw extends to opposite the center of the eye. Membranes surrounding internal organs pale, gill rakers on lower limb of gill arch 18 to 23.

Distinguishing characters of similar species:

Blueback herring - Back dark blue, fins slightly yellow to green. Gill rakers slender, 41 to 51 on lower limb of anterior arch. Membranes surrounding internal organs black.

American shad - Back bluish green with metallic luster shading to silver on sides, dark shoulder spot followed by several more spots, fins pale green. Gill rakers on lower limb 59 to 73. Membranes surrounding internal organs pale.

REGULATIONS

Possession limit: Federal waters - No restrictions.
State waters - No restrictions.

Size limit: Federal waters - No restrictions.
State waters - No restrictions.

State seasonal restrictions:

Recreational harvest - Hickory shad may be taken lawfully by hook and line (rod and reel) for non-commercial purposes year round.

Commercial harvest - 1 February through 1 May - season varies in different areas and rivers.

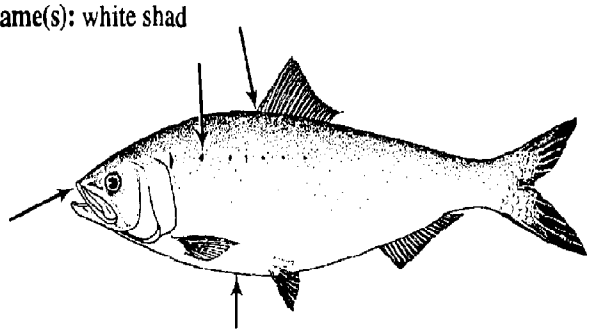
Other restrictions: Individuals taking hickory shad for non-commercial purposes must obtain a South Carolina freshwater fishing license.

Notes:

AMERICAN SHAD **Color Plate II**

Alosa sapidissima

Other common name(s): white shad



Identifying key characters: Body compressed, depth variable, increasing with size. Back bluish-green with metallic luster shading to silver on sides, **dark shoulder spot followed by several more spots**, fins pale green. **Dorsal fin slightly anterior to center point of body. Belly with scutes forming a distinct keel. Upper jaw with a distinct median notch**, teeth present in jaws. Gill rakers on lower limb of anterior arch 59 to 73. Membranes surrounding internal organs pale.

Distinguishing characters of similar species:

Blueback herring - Back dark blue, fins slightly yellow to greenish. Gill rakers slender, 45 to 51 on lower limb of anterior arch. Membrane surrounding internal organs black.

Hickory shad - Obscure spots on sides behind shoulder spot, usually with narrow dark lines on upper part of body. Gill rakers on lower limb of anterior arch 18 to 23. Membranes surrounding internal organs pale.

REGULATIONS

Possession limit: Federal waters - No restrictions.
State waters - No restrictions.

Size limit: Federal waters - No restrictions.
State waters - No restrictions.

State seasonal restrictions:

Recreational harvest - American shad may be taken lawfully by hook and line (rod and reel) for non-commercial purposes year round.

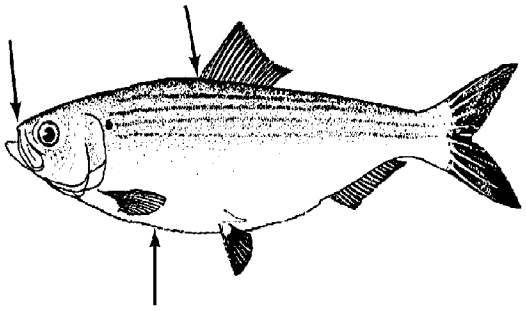
Commercial harvest - 1 February through 1 May - season varies in different areas and rivers.

Other restrictions: Individuals taking American Shad for non-commercial purposes must obtain a South Carolina freshwater fishing license.

Notes:

BLUEBACK HERRING **Color Plate II**

Alosa aestivallis



Identifying key characters: Body moderately compressed, **belly with scutes forming a distinct keel.** Back dark blue, fins slightly yellow to greenish. **Dorsal fin near center point of body. Upper jaw with a distinct median notch and minute teeth.** Gill rakers slender, 41 to 51 on lower limb of anterior arch. Membranes surrounding internal organs black.

Distinguishing characters of similar species:

American shad - Gill rakers on lower limb of anterior arch 59 to 73. Membranes surrounding internal organs pale.

Hickory shad - Gill rakers on lower limb of anterior arch 18 to 23. Membranes surrounding internal organs pale.

REGULATIONS

Possession limit: Federal waters - N/A.
State waters - No restrictions in marine waters.

Size limit: Federal waters - N/A.
State waters - No restrictions.

State seasonal restrictions:

Recreational harvest - Blueback herring may be taken lawfully with hook and line year round.

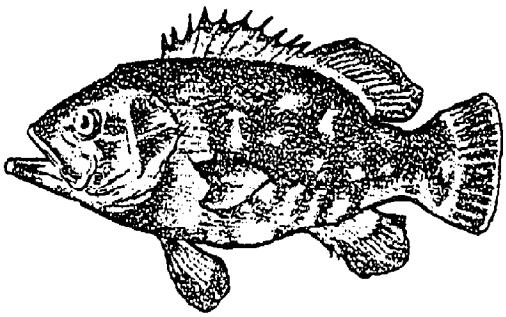
Commercial harvest - 15 February through 15 April - days of week and gear is restricted for different areas and rivers.

Other restrictions: None.

Notes:

WRECKFISH **Color Plate XIII**

Polyprion americanus



Identifying key characters: Color grayish to blackish-brown, young are mottled. Body strongly flattened sidewise, about 2 1/2 to 3 times as long as deep. Head very rough having a prominent ridge and strong spines on the gill cover, area between eyes with scales, bony protuberance over eyes and nape, mouth large and lower jaw strongly projecting. Scales small and rough, extending over bases of soft fin rays. Dorsal fin continuous, first part has 11 strong spines, the second part has 11 or 12 soft rays, anal fin has 3 spines and 8 or 9 rays. Tail fin is rounded, not forked. Reaches 4 to 5 feet long and more than 100 pounds.

Distinguishing characters of similar species:

Gag and other groupers - Has 3 spines at edge of opercle, middle one the largest; tail fin margin nearly straight not rounded; anal fin has 3 spines and 11 soft rays. Head smooth without bony proliberances over eyes and nape.

REGULATIONS

Possession limit: Federal waters - See "other restrictions" below.
State waters - N/A.

Size limit: Federal waters - No restrictions.
State waters - N/A.

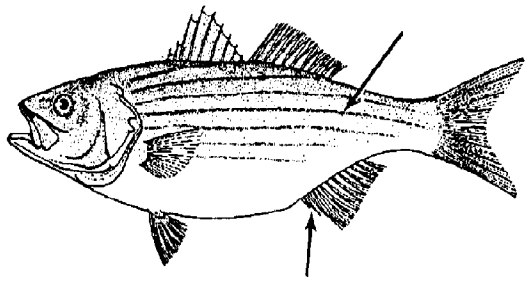
State seasonal restrictions:
Recreational harvest - Fishery closed 15 January through 15 April.
Commercial harvest - Fishery closed 15 January through 15 April.

Other restrictions: An individual transferable quota system has been established and is set annually for commercial fishermen.

STRIPED BASS **Color Plate I**

Morone saxatlis

Other common name(s): rockfish, striper



Identifying key characters: 7 or 8 dark horizontal stripes marking scale rows on upper sides. Two dorsal fins, the first spiny and the second soft-rayed. Caudal fin moderately forked, **anal fin with 3 strong spines and 7 to 13 soft rays.** Body moderately elongate in young becoming stouter in adults, mouth terminal, teeth small and lower jaw projecting slightly. Area between eyes not scaled.

Distinguishing characters of similar species:

Hybrid bass (Striped bass/white bass) - Horizontal stripes marking scale rows on upper sides are broken into irregular bars. Body deeper and more robust.

REGULATIONS

Possession limit: Federal waters - N/A.
State waters - Ten fish per person per day, except in Wando and Cooper Rivers, and the Santee River seaward to Intracoastal Waterway, the limit is 5 fish per person per day. Possession limits may vary - check local laws.

Size limit: Federal waters - N/A.
State waters - No restrictions in marine waters. Size limits may vary - check local laws.

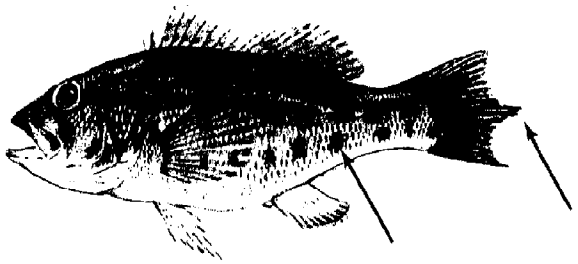
State seasonal restrictions:
Recreational harvest - None in marine waters.
Commercial harvest - None in marine waters.

Other restrictions: Striped bass are gamefish and may be taken only by rod and reel and may not be sold. Unlawful to take striped bass or striped bass/white bass hybrids from Savannah River upstream to New Savannah Bluff Lock Dam in South Carolina waters until July 1, 1996.

Notes:

BANK SEA BASS
Centropristis ocyurus

Color Plate VI



Identifying key characters: Body color light, **sides with three horizontal rows of black blotches,** numerous blue and yellow stripes and spots on head, fins and forward part of body, **middle tail ray and dorsal spines with jet black spots.**

Distinguishing characters of similar species:

Rock seabass - Body light, seven brownish bars on upper sides, yellowish band across anal fin, dorsal spines with long fleshly filaments, distinct black spot at base of last three dorsal spines.

Black seabass - Body dark, nearly black, blue between eyes, median fins uniform color, tail fin with a single upper ray elongated in adults.

REGULATIONS

Possession limit: Federal waters - No restrictions.
State waters - No restrictions.

Size limit: Federal waters - No restrictions.
State waters - No restrictions.

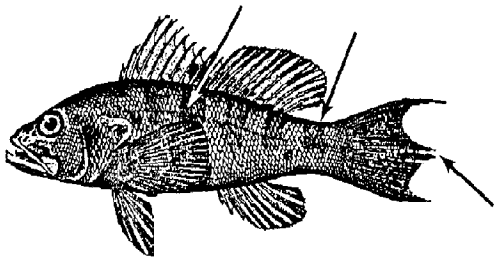
State seasonal restrictions:
Recreational harvest - None.
Commercial harvest - None.

Other restrictions: Must be landed with head and tail intact.

Notes:

ROCK SEA BASS
Centropristis philadelphia

Color Plate VI



Identifying key characters: Body light, **seven brownish bars on upper sides, yellowish band across anal fin,** dorsal spines with long fleshy filaments, **distinct black spot at base of last three dorsal spines.**

Distinguishing characters of similar species:

Black seabass - Body dark, nearly black, blue color between eyes (breeding males), median fins uniform color, caudal fin with a single upper ray much elongated in adults.

Bank seabass - Body light, sides with three horizontal rows of black blotches, numerous blue and yellow stripes and spots on head, fins and forward part of body, middle caudal ray and dorsal spins with jet black spots.

REGULATIONS

Possession limit: Federal waters - No restrictions.
State waters - No restrictions.

Size limit: Federal waters - No restrictions.
State waters - No restrictions.

State seasonal restrictions:
Recreational harvest - None.
Commercial harvest - None.

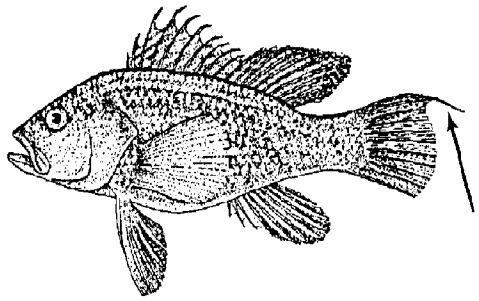
Other restrictions: Must be landed with head and tail intact.

Notes:

BLACK SEA BASS **Color Plate VI**

Centropristis striata

Other common name(s): blackfish



Identifying key characters: Body color very dark, preopercle finely serrate, without a strong spine or spiny lobe; opercle with three flat spines. Dorsal fin single, notched with 10 spines and 11 soft rays, **caudal fin rounded to trilobate, often with a single upper ray elongated in adults**. Weighs up to 6 pounds, most 1 to 3 pounds.

Distinguishing characters of similar species:

Bank seabass - Body light, sides with three horizontal rows of black blotches, numerous blue and yellow stripes and spots on head, fins and forward part of body, middle caudal ray and dorsal spins with jet black spots.

Rock seabass - Body light, seven brownish bars on upper sides, yellowish band across anal fin, dorsal spines with long fleshy filaments, distinct black spot at base of last three dorsal spines

REGULATIONS

Possession limit: Federal waters - No restrictions.
State waters - No restrictions.

Size limit: Federal waters - Eight inches total length.
State waters - Eight inches total length.

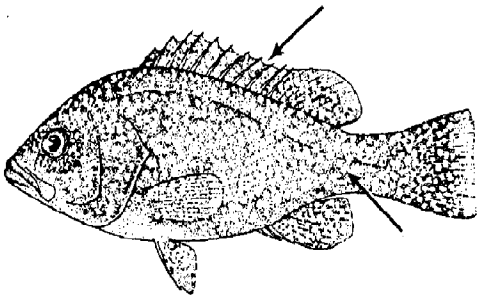
State seasonal restrictions:
Recreational harvest - None.
Commercial harvest - None.

Other restrictions: Must be landed with head and tail intact.

Notes:

SPECKLED HIND **Color Plate X**

Epinephelus drummondhayi



Identifying key characters: Body reddish-brown, shading to bluish-purple on underside. Fins, head and body covered with small, creamy white spots. Scales very rough to the touch. **Dorsal fin single, with 11 spines, its spiny and soft parts separated by a shallow notch,** the interspinous membrane notched. Anal fin with 3 spines and 9 soft rays. Maximum size less that 30 pounds.

Distinguishing characters of similar species:

Yellowedge grouper - Young individuals have only a few white spots arranged in regular rows, there is a dark saddle (spot) anterior to the caudal (tail) fin. Adults do not have light spots on body or fins.

Warsaw grouper - Young have a few white spots, adults have no white spots, dorsal has 10 spines.

Jewfish, red grouper and nassau grouper - Have pattern of vertical bars on side of body and no white spots.

Gag and Scamp - Body is more elongate, both have 11 or 12 soft anal spines.

REGULATIONS

Possession limit: Federal waters - There is an aggregate recreational bag limit of five grouper per person per day not to include Nassau grouper or jewfish for which there is no retention.
State waters - Same as in federal waters.

Size limit: Federal waters - No restrictions.
State waters - No restrictions.

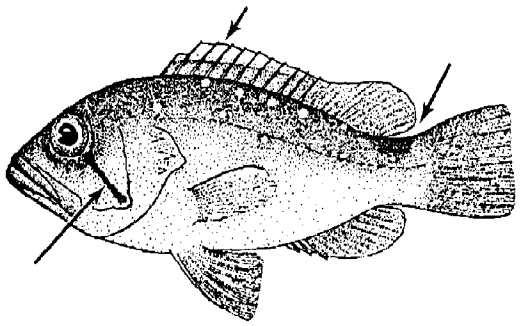
State seasonal restrictions:
Recreational harvest - None.
Commercial harvest - None.

Other restrictions: Must be landed with head and tail intact. Federal permit required to exceed bag limit.

Notes:

YELLOWEDGE GROUPER **Color Plate XII**

Epinephelus flavolimbatus



Identifying key characters: Body reddish-brown, **front part of dorsal fin with a broad yellow margin; a distinct pearly-blue line runs from the eye to the angle of the preopercle.** Juveniles with pearly spots arranged in regular rows and a **saddle-shaped blotch at top of caudal peduncle** (area in front of tail fin) **not reaching below the lateral line.** Anal fin with 3 spines and 9 soft rays, pelvic fins longer than pectorals and inserted anterior to ventral end of pectoral fin base.

Distinguishing characters of similar species:

Snowy grouper - Spiny part of dorsal fin with black margin, no stripe running from eye to angle of preopercle, young individuals with a dark saddle on caudal peduncle reaching below latter line.

Warsaw grouper - Only 10 dorsal spines, no yellow margin to spiny dorsal fin and no stripe on cheek, young individuals without dark saddle on caudal peduncle.

Nassau grouper and red grouper - Have vertical dark bars on body.

Speckled hind - Is densely spotted and pelvic fins are inserted behind pectoral fin base.

Gag and Scamp - Body more elongate and 11 or 12 soft anal fin rays.

REGULATIONS

Possession limit: Federal waters - There is an aggregate recreational bag limit of five grouper per person per day not to include Nassau grouper or jewfish for which there is no retention.
State waters - Same as in federal waters.

Size limit: Federal waters - No restrictions.
State waters - No restrictions.

State seasonal restrictions:
Recreational harvest - None.
Commercial harvest - None.

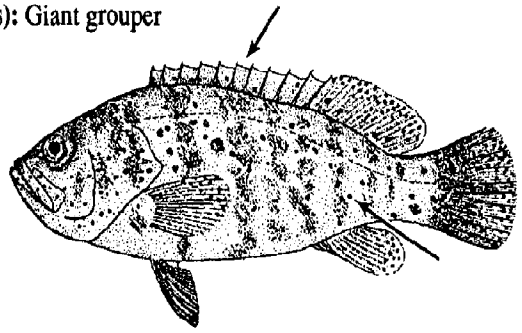
Other restrictions: Must be landed with head and tail intact. Federal permit required to exceed bag limit.

Notes:

JEWFISH **Color Plate XIII**

Epinephelus itajara

Other common name(s): Giant grouper



Identifying key characters: Body generally greenish or gray with small black spots and very robust, nearly round in cross-section. Head long, extremely broad and flat. **Dorsal fin single, unnotched, its anterior part with 11 spines increasing in size posteriorly but all shorter than the anterior dorsal soft rays.** Individuals over 100 pounds frequently taken. May exceed over 500 pounds.

Distinguishing characters of similar species:

Other groupers: Speckled hind, yellowedge grouper, red grouper, warsaw grouper, snowy grouper and Nassau grouper all have dorsal fin-spines equal to or longer than anterior soft rays, none has a similar color pattern.

Gag and Scamp - Body more elongate and both have 11 or 12 soft anal fin rays.

REGULATIONS

Possession limit: Federal waters - Fishery closed.
State waters - Same as in federal waters.

Size limit: Federal waters - Fishery closed.
State waters - Same as in federal waters.

State seasonal restrictions:
Recreational harvest - Fishery closed.
Commercial harvest - Fishery closed.

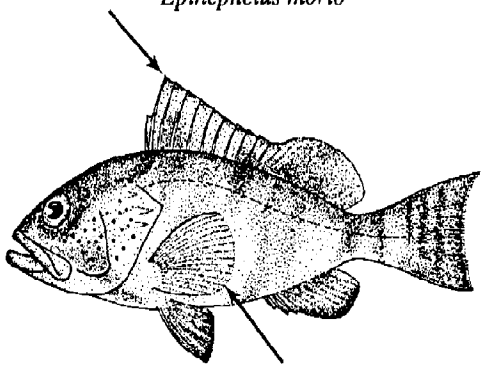
Other restrictions:

Notes:

RED GROUPER

Epinephelus morio

Color Plate XI



Identifying key characters: Body generally brownish-red, lighter below with a transient pattern of whitish spots and occasionally a suggestion of irregular bars. Body robust, not strongly compressed. Vertical fins angulate in large fish, **single dorsal fin with spiny and soft parts separated by a shallow notch, second of 11 anterior dorsal spines the longest and interspinous membrane not notched.** Anal fin with 3 spines and 9 soft rays, pelvic fins shorter than pectorals and inserted slightly behind ventral end of pectoral fin base. Maximum size around 90 pounds.

Distinguishing characters of similar species:

Warsaw grouper, yellowedge grouper and snowy grouper - All have pelvic fins which are longer than the pectoral fins and are inserted anterior to the pectoral fin base.

Warsaw grouper - Vertical fins are rounded instead of angulate.

Nassau grouper - Bold dark bars present.

Speckled hind - Conspicuous spots on body.

REGULATIONS

Possession limit: Federal waters - There is an aggregate recreational bag limit of five grouper per person per day not to include Nassau grouper or jewfish for which there is no retention.
State waters - Same as in federal waters.

Size limit: Federal waters - 20 inches total length.
State waters - Same as in federal waters.

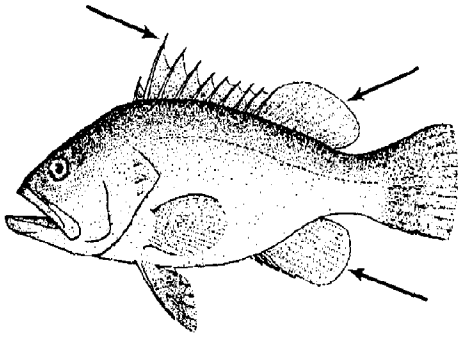
State seasonal restrictions:
Recreational harvest - None.
Commercial harvest - None.

Other restrictions: Must be landed with head and tail intact. Federal permit required to exceed bag limit.

Notes:

WARSAW GROUPER **Color Plate XII**

Epinephelus nigritus



Identifying key characters: Body dark reddish-brown to almost black, counter shaded to dull reddish-gray below. **Dorsal and anal fins rounded, dorsal with 10 spines, the second spine much longer than third; interspinous membrane deeply notched,** anal fin with 3 spines and 9 soft rays. Pelvic fins slightly longer than pectorals and inserted anterior to ventral end of pectoral fin base.

Distinguishing characters of similar species:

Other groupers - All have 9 or 11 spines in the dorsal fin (not 10) and all, except the red grouper, have the third dorsal spine longer than the second.

Red grouper - Has angulate fins (not rounded), the interspinous membrane is not notched and the pelvic fins are shorter and are inserted below or behind the pectoral fin base.

Yellowedge grouper - Has a distinct pearly-blue line running from eye to angle of preopercle, a yellow margin to spiny part of dorsal fin, young have a dark saddle on caudal peduncle.

Snowy grouper - A black margin to spiny part of dorsal fin, young with a dark saddle on caudal peduncle.

Gag and scamp - Body more elongate, both have 11 or 12 soft anal fin rays.

REGULATIONS

Possession limit: Federal waters - There is an aggregate recreational bag limit of five grouper per person per day not to include Nassau grouper or jewfish for which there is no retention.
State waters - Same as in federal waters.

Size limit: Federal waters - No restrictions.
State waters - No restrictions.

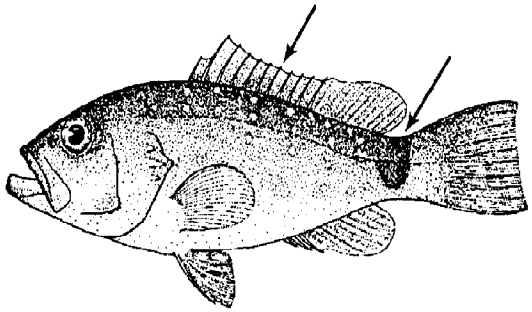
State seasonal restrictions:
Recreational harvest - None.
Commercial harvest - None.

Other restrictions: Must be landed with head and tail intact. Federal permit required to exceed bag limit.

Notes:

SNOWY GROUPER **Color Plate XII**

Epinephelus niveatus



Identifying key characters: Body generally dark reddish, a little lighter below. Spiny part of dorsal fin with a black margin. **Young have regular rows of pearly spots and a dark saddle-shaped blotch anterior to the tail fin which reaches below the lateral line. Dorsal fin has 11 spines, the interspinous membrane is notched, anterior soft dorsal rays shorter than longest dorsal spine.** Anal fin with 3 spines and 9 soft rays. Pelvic fins longer than pectorals and inserted well anterior to ventral end of pectoral fin base.

Distinguishing characters of similar species:

Yellowedge grouper - Spiny part of dorsal fin with a yellow margin, a distinct pearly-blue line running from eye to angle of preopercle. Young have a dark saddle anterior to tail fin with does not reach below lateral line.

Warsaw grouper - Only 10 dorsal fin spines, no black margin on spiny dorsal fin, young do not have dark saddle anterior to tail fin.

Nassau grouper and red grouper - Have vertical bars on body and pelvic fins inserted below or behind pectoral fin base.

Speckled hind - Is densely spotted.

Gag and Scamp - Body more elongated, 11 or 12 soft anal fin rays, both have distinctive color patterns.

REGULATIONS

Possession limit: Federal waters - There is an aggregate recreational bag limit of five grouper per person per day not to include Nassau grouper or jewfish for which there is no retention.
State waters - Same as in federal waters.

Size limit: Federal waters - None.
State waters - None.

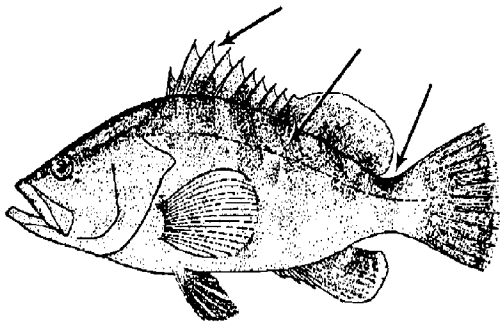
State seasonal restrictions:
Recreational harvest - None.
Commercial harvest - None.

Other restrictions: Must be landed with head and tail intact. Federal permit required to exceed bag limit.

Notes:

NASSAU GROUPER **Color Plate XI**

Epinephelus striatus



Identifying key characters: Body color ranges from tawny to pinkish or red and may have a orange cast, **five dark vertical bars on body join to form W-shaped marks, there is a distinct black saddle anterior to tail fin** and several distinct black spots below and behind eye. **The third spine of the dorsal fin is longer than the second spine and the interspinous membrane is slightly indented.** Anal fin with 3 spines and 8 soft rays. Pelvic fins shorter than pectorals and inserted below ventral end of pectoral fin base.

Distinguishing characters of similar species:

Red grouper - May have light vertical bars but they do not form W-shaped marks, no dark saddle anterior to tail fin, second dorsal fin spine longer than third, interspinous membrane notched.

Yellowedge grouper, warsaw grouper, and snowy grouper - Do not have vertical bars, the pelvic fins are longer than the pectorals and are inserted anterior to ventral end of pectoral fin base.

Gag and scamp - Body more elongate, 11 or 12 soft anal rays, both species have distinct color patterns.

REGULATIONS

Possession limit: Federal waters - Fishery closed.
State waters - Fishery closed.

Size limit: Federal waters - Fishery closed.
State waters - Fishery closed.

State seasonal restrictions: Fishery closed

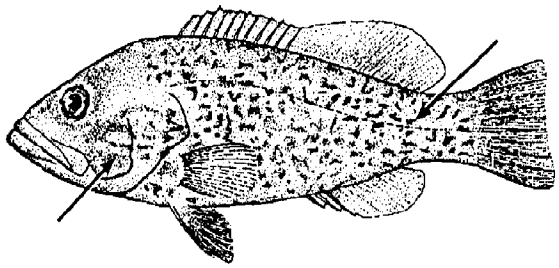
Other restrictions:

Notes:

GAG

Mycteroperca microlepis

Color Plate XI



Identifying key characters: Body gray with darker gray vermiculations grouped into squarish blotches. Preopercle angulate, slightly notched and with a distinct lobe at the angle, opercle with 3 flat spines, middle one the largest, rays of vertical fins not prolonged.

Distinguishing characters of similar species:

Scamp - Well separated spots on sides of head and body, rays of vertical fins greatly prolonged.

Speckled hind, yellowedge grouper, red grouper, warsaw grouper, snowy grouper and nassau grouper - Have 7 to 9 soft anal fin rays and body more robust being deepest at origin of dorsal fin.

REGULATIONS

Possession limit: Federal waters - There is an aggregate recreational bag limit of five grouper per person per day not to include Nassau grouper or jewfish for which there is no retention.
State waters - Same as in federal waters.

Size limit: Federal waters - 20 inches total length.
State waters - Same as in federal waters.

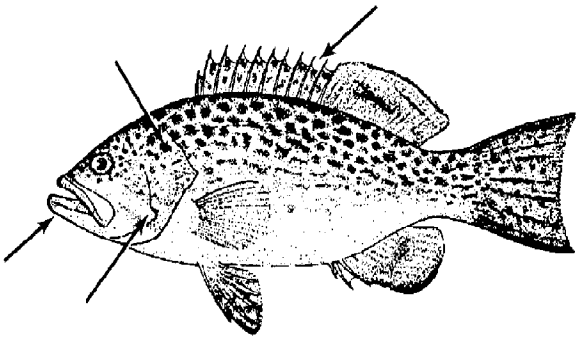
State seasonal restrictions:
Recreational harvest - None.
Commercial harvest - None.

Other restrictions: Must be landed with head and tail intact. Federal commercial permit required to exceed bag limit.

Notes:

SCAMP **Color Plate XIII**

Mycteroperca phenax



Identifying key characters: Body light brownish-gray with small, well separated spots, a yellow coloration on jaws. Preopercle angulate, with a marked notch above the angle followed below by a prominent serrated lobe, opercle with 3 flat spines with middle one the largest. **Rays of vertical fins greatly prolonged.** Anal fin with 3 spines and 11 soft rays.

Distinguishing characters of similar species:

Gag - Rays of vertical fins not prolonged, no well separated distinct spots on body.

Speckled hind, yellowedge grouper, red grouper, warsaw grouper, snowy grouper, nassau grouper - 7 to 9 soft anal fin rays, body more robust being deepest at origin of dorsal fin.

Yellowmouth grouper - Spots on side of head and body closer together. Fin rays in larger adults shorter and more regularly spaced.

REGULATIONS

Possession limit: Federal waters - There is an aggregate recreational bag limit of five grouper per person per day not to include Nassau grouper or jewfish for which there is no retention.
State waters - Same as in federal waters.

Size limit: Federal waters - 20 inches total length.
State waters - Same as in federal waters.

State seasonal restrictions:
Recreational harvest - No restrictions.
Commercial harvest - No restrictions.

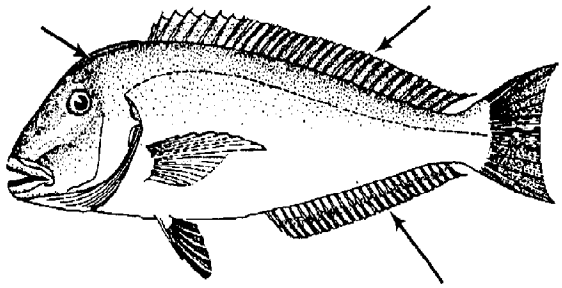
Other restrictions: Must be landed with head and tail intact. Federal commercial permit required to exceed bag limit.

Notes:

BLUELINE TILEFISH
Caulolatilus microps

Color Plate X

Other common name(s): Gray tilefish



Identifying key characters: Body bluish-green, darker above, sides, under eyes and dorsal fin with yellow pigment. **Dorsal fin is long and continuous, 7 spines and 25 rays, anal fin also long,** 1 spine and 23 rays. Eye small, about one-fifth of head length. **Predorsal ridge present and preoperculum serrated.**

Distinguishing characters of similar species:

Tilefish - Predorsal ridge present and developed into a fleshy flap anterior to dorsal fin. Dorsal fin with 7 spines and 14 to 15 rays, anal fin with 2 spine and 14 to 15 rays.

Sand tilefish - No mid-dorsal ridge or fleshy flap in front of dorsal fin, preopercle margin smooth. Dorsal fin with 4 or 5 spines and 54 to 60 rays, anal fin with 1 spine and 48 to 55 rays.

Blackline tilefish - Always 8 dorsal fin spines; dorsal fin membrane patterned; yellow-golden area under eye much broader, at least 3/4 diameter of pupil.

REGULATIONS

Possession limit: Federal waters - No restrictions.
State waters - No restrictions.

Size limit: Federal waters - No restrictions.
State waters -No restrictions.

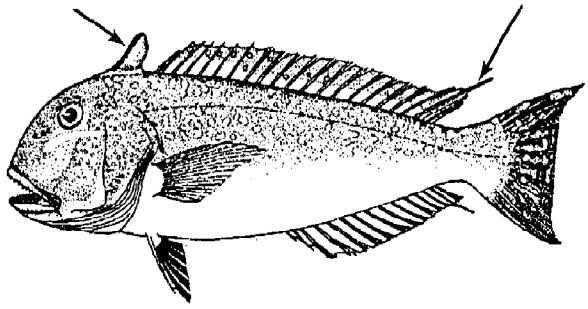
State seasonal restrictions:
Recreational harvest - No restrictions.
Commercial harvest - No restrictions.

Other restrictions: Federal permit required to engage in a directed fishery. Must be landed with head and tail intact.

Notes:

TILEFISH **Color Plate X**

Lopholatilus chamaeleonticeps



Identifying key characters: Body elongate, back and upper sides bluish-green changing to yellow or rose of lower sides, head tinged in red, numerous irregular yellow and white spots over body and fins. **Predorsal ridge developed into an fleshy flap in front of dorsal fin. Dorsal fin with 7 spines and 14 or 15 rays**, anal fin with 2 spines and 14 or 15 rays.

Distinguishing characters of similar species:

Blueline tilefish - Predorsal ridge present but no fleshy flap in front of dorsal fin. Dorsal fin with 7 spines and 25 rays, anal fin with 1 spine and 23 rays. Preoperculum serrated.

Blackline tilefish - Always 8 dorsal fin spines; dorsal fin membrane patterned; yellow-golden area under eye much broader, at least 3/4 diameter of pupil.

Sand tilefish - No mid-dorsal ridge, no fleshy flap in front of dorsal fin. Preopercle margin smooth. Dorsal fin with 4 or 5 spines and 54 to 60 rays, anal fin with 1 spine and 48 to 55 rays.

REGULATIONS

Possession limit: Federal waters - No limit.
State waters - Same as in federal waters.

Size limit: Federal waters - None.
State waters - Same as in federal waters.

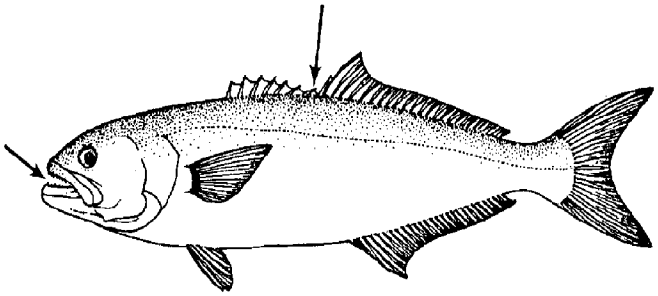
State seasonal restrictions:
Recreational harvest - None.
Commercial harvest - None.

Other restrictions: Federal permit required to engage in a directed fishery. Must be landed with head and tail intact.

Notes:

BLUEFISH **Color Plate III**

Pomatomus saltatrix



Identifying key characters: Back greenish-blue, sides and belly silvery. Body compressed and head large. Mouth terminal, **jaw teeth prominent and in a single row. Two dorsal fins, first short and low with 7 or 8 spines, the second long with 1 spine and 23 to 28 rays.** Tail fin forked.

Distinguishing characters of similar species:

No other species of similar appearance.

REGULATIONS

Possession limit: Federal waters - Ten fish per person per day (Recreational harvest).
State waters - Same as in federal waters.

Size limit: Federal waters - No restrictions.
State waters - No restrictions.

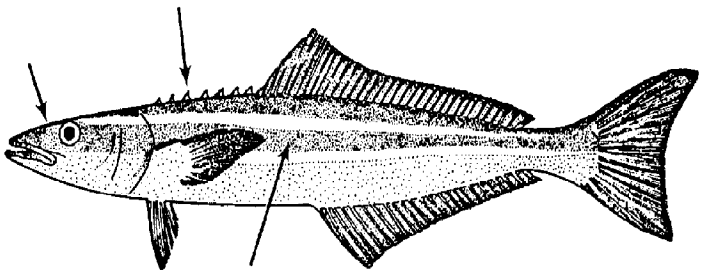
State seasonal restrictions:
Recreational harvest - None.
Commercial harvest - None.

Other restrictions:

Notes:

COBIA **Color Plate III**

Rachycentron canadum



Identifying key characters: Back and sides dark brown, with 2 sharply defined silvery bands, belly yellowish. Body elongate, **head broad and depressed**. Mouth large and terminal. **First dorsal fin with 7 to 9 short and strong isolated spines**, not connected by a membrane, second dorsal long with 27 to 33 rays. Upper lobe of tail fin longer than lower.

Distinguishing characters of similar species:

Sharksuckers (Remora) - Very similar, particularly to young cobia. Sharksuckers may be distinguished by the presence of a laminating adhesive disc on the top of their head.

REGULATIONS

Possession limit: Federal waters - Two fish per person per day (Commercial and Recreational).
State waters - Two fish per person per day (Commercial and Recreational).

Size limit: Federal waters - 37 inches total length.
State waters - 37 inches total length.

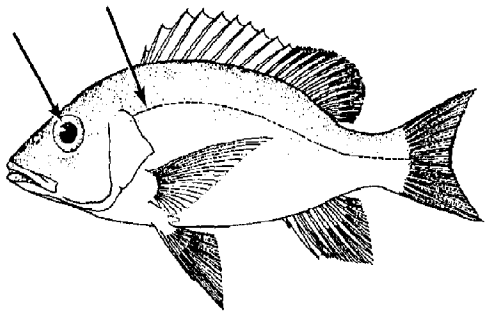
State seasonal restrictions:
Recreational harvest - None.
Commercial harvest - None.

Other restrictions: Must be landed with head and tail intact. Federal commercial mackerel permit required to exceed bag limit.

Notes:

SILK SNAPPER **Color Plate VIII**

Lutjanus vivanus



Identifying key characters: Back and upper sides pink to red, lower sides and belly lighter, with silver reflections. Body covered with very fine undulating yellow lines. Fins mostly reddish, except pectorals are pale yellow. **Iris of eye yellow.** Tooth parch on roof of mouth anchor-shaped. Dorsal fin with 10 spines and 13 or 14 rays, anal fin angulate with 8 rays, tail fin moderately forked.

Distinguishing characters of similar species:

Red snapper - Back and upper sides deep red, iris of eye red, anal rays 9.

Mutton snapper - Back, upper sides and upper tail fin lobe olive-green, 2 blue oblique stripes on snout and cheek, iris of eye red, tooth patch on roof of mouth chevron-shaped.

Vermilion snapper - Back and upper sides vermilion, tooth patch on roof of mouth rhomboid-shaped, dorsal fin with 12 or 13 spines and 10 or 11 rays.

REGULATIONS

Possession limit: Federal waters - There is an aggregate daily bag limit of 10 snappers (excluding vermilion snapper and allowing no more than 2 red snappers) per day.
State waters - Same as in federal waters.

Size limit: Federal waters - 12 inches total length.
State waters - 12 inches total length.

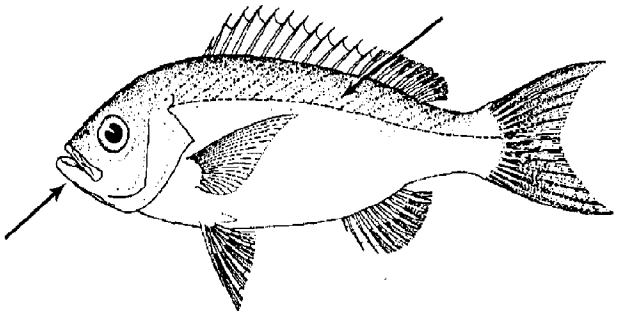
State seasonal restrictions:
Recreational harvest - None.
Commercial harvest - None.

Other restrictions: Must be landed with head and tail intact. Federal commercial permit required to exceed bag limit.

Notes:

VERMILION SNAPPER **Color Plate VIII**

Rhomboplites aurorubens



Identifying key characters: Back and upper sides vermilion, lower sides and belly silvery with a reddish tinge. Faint dark lines running forward and down from dorsal fin base, narrow horizontal golden streaks below lateral line. Lower jaw slightly projecting beyond the upper posterior extension of anchor-shaped tooth patch on roof of mouth very broad. Dorsal fin with 12 weak spines and 10 or 11 rays, tail fin forked.

Distinguishing characters of similar species:

All other snappers - None have similar color pattern, tooth patch on roof of mouth chevron-shaped or triangular and all have less than 12 dorsal spines.

REGULATIONS

Possession limit: Federal waters - 10 fish per person per day recreational bag limit.
State waters - Same as in federal waters.

Size limit: Federal waters - 10 inches total length for recreational caught fish.
12 inches total length for commercially caught fish.
State waters - Same as in federal waters.

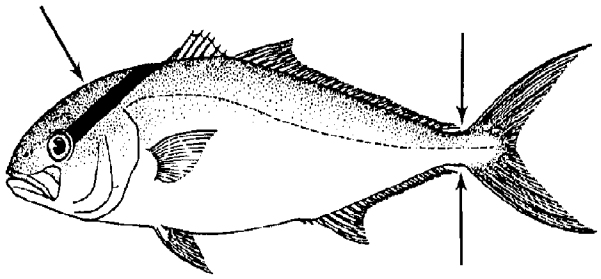
State seasonal restrictions:
Recreational harvest - None.
Commercial harvest - None.

Other restrictions: Must be landed with head and tail intact. Federal commercial permit required to exceed bag limit.

Notes:

GREATER AMBERJACK Color Plate XVI

Seriola dumerili



Identifying key characters: Back and upper sides usually bluish-brown to olive, sides and belly lighter, **usually a dark stripe runs through the eye to the dorsal fin origin**, often an amber stripe runs from the eye along the middle of the body. Individuals over 12 inches have 11 to 19 gill rakers on the lower limb of anterior arch. Dorsal fin with 7 spines followed by 1 spine and 29 to 35 soft rays. Second dorsal fin base about 1 1/2 times anal fin base. **Deep grooves present (top and bottom) in front of tail fin.**

Distinguishing characters of similar species:

Almaco jack - Second dorsal fin lobe much higher. Height 4 to 5 times in fork length where as greater amberjack height is 7 or more times in fork length.

Lesser amberjack - Has a greater number of gill rakers, 23 to 26 on first arch.

Rainbow runner - Has two rayed dorsal and anal finlets posterior to dorsal and anal fins.

Pilotfish - Has 6 or 7 black bars against a silvery background, first dorsal fin with 3 to 5 spines, anal fin with only 15 to 17 soft rays.

REGULATIONS

Possession limit: Federal waters - Three fish recreational bag limit per person per day.
State waters - Same as in federal waters.

Size limit: Federal waters - 28 inches fork length (Recreational harvest).
36 inches fork length (Commercial harvest).
State waters - Same as in federal waters.

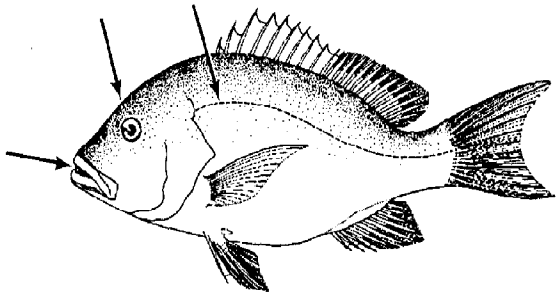
State seasonal restrictions:
Recreational harvest - None.
Commercial harvest - None.

Other restrictions: Must be landed with head and tail intact.

Notes:

RED SNAPPER **Color Plate VIII**

Lutjanus campechanus



Identifying key characters: Back and upper sides scarlet to brick red. Iris of eye red. Body deep, head comparatively large. **Tooth patch on roof of mouth anchor-shaped and well developed**. Dorsal fin with 10 spines and 14 rays, anal fin angulate with 3 spines and 9 rays.

Distinguishing characters of similar species:

Silk snapper - Body pink to red, iris of eye yellow, 8 anal fin rays.

Mutton snapper - Back, upper sides and upper tail fin olive-green. Two blue stripes on snout and cheek and dark spot below soft portion of dorsal fin. Tooth patch on roof of mouth chevron-shaped.

Wenchman snapper - Back and upper sides pink to rose, head region between eyes flat, tooth patch on roof of mouth chevron-shaped, dorsal fin with 10 or 11 rays.

Vermilion snapper - Back and upper sides vermilion, posterior extension of anchor-shaped tooth patch on roof of mouth very broad, 12 or 13 spines and 10 or 11 soft rays in dorsal fin.

REGULATIONS

Possession limit: Federal waters - Two per angler per day (Recreational harvest).
State waters - Two per angler per day (Recreational harvest).

Size limit: Federal waters - 20 inches total length.
State waters - 20 inches total length.

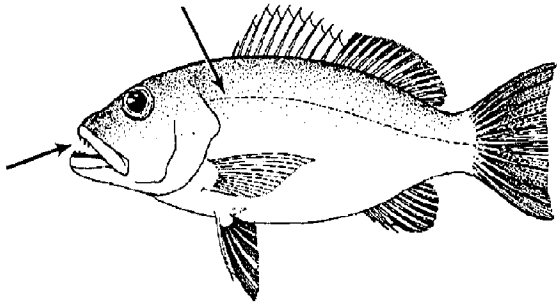
State seasonal restrictions:
Recreational harvest - None.
Commercial harvest - None.

Other restrictions: Must be landed with head and tail intact. Federal commercial permit required to exceed bag limit.

Notes:

CUBERA SNAPPER **Color Plate IX**

Lutjanus cyanopterus



Identifying key characters: Back and upper sides pale to dark gray with reddish tinges, especially anteriorly, pectoral fins almost colorless, anal and pelvic fins reddish and dorsal and tail fins grayish. **Mouth large with large thick lips, the maxilla extending beyond center of pupil. Canine teeth in both jaws very strong and equally developed. Tooth patch on roof of mouth triangular.** Dorsal fin with 10 spines and 14 rays, anal fin rounded, tail fin nearly truncate.

Distinguishing characters of similar species:

Gray snapper - Very similar in appearance. Tooth patch on roof of mouth anchor-shaped. Mouth small, canine teeth in upper jaw much larger than lower canines.

Schoolmaster snapper - Tooth patch on roof of mouth anchor-shaped, blue line below eye and all fins yellow to pale orange.

Dog snapper - Tooth patch on roof of mouth anchor-shaped, a whitish bar between eye and corner of mouth.

Mutton snapper - A conspicuous dark spot on sides below dorsal fin.

Mahogany and Lane snapper - Tooth patch on roof of mouth anchor-shaped, a conspicuous spot on sides below dorsal.

REGULATIONS

Possession limit: Federal waters - There is an aggregate daily bag limit of 10 snappers (excluding vermilion snapper and allowing no more than 2 red snappers) per day.
State waters - Same as in federal waters.

Size limit: Federal waters - 12 inches total length.
State water - Same as in federal waters.

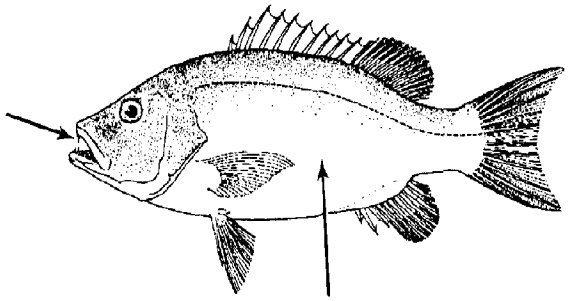
State seasonal restrictions:
Recreational harvest - None.
Commercial harvest - None.

Other restrictions: Must be landed with head and tail intact. Federal commercial permit required to exceed bag limit.

Notes:

GRAY SNAPPER **Color Plate IX**

Lutjanus griseus



Identifying key characters: Highly changeable, back and upper sides dark gray to gray-green, sometimes dark olive with a reddish tinge, may be blotched. **No dark spots on body, often orange to rusty dots on centers of scales on sides. Outer pair of canine teeth in upper jaw much larger than lower canines, tooth patch on roof of mouth anchor-shaped.** Dorsal fin has 10 spines and 14 rays no scales on upper side of head, or snout or jaw.

Distinguishing characters of similar species:

Cubera snapper - Tooth patch on roof of mouth triangular, canine teeth in both jaws very strong and equally well developed.

Schoolmaster - Pectoral reaching to anal opening when pressed against body, blue line under eye and all fins are yellow.

Dog snapper - Pectoral reaching to anal opening when pressed against body, whitish bar between eye and area immediately behind maxilla and blue line under eye.

Mutton, mahogany and lane snapper - A conspicuous dark spot present on sides below dorsal fin.

REGULATIONS

Possession limit: Federal waters - There is an aggregate daily bag limit of 10 snappers (excluding vermilion snapper and allowing no more than 2 red snappers) per angler.
State waters - Same as in federal waters.

Size limit: Federal waters - 12 inches total length.
State waters - 12 inches total length.

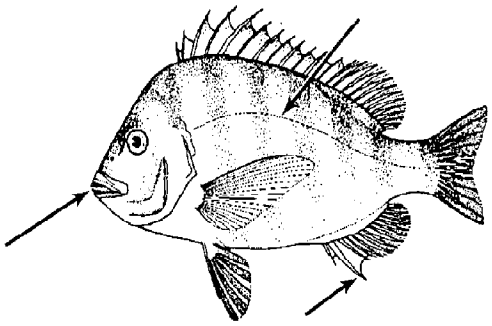
State seasonal restrictions:
Recreational harvest - None.
Commercial harvest - None.

Other restrictions: Federal commercial permit required to exceed bag limit.

Notes:

SHEEPSHEAD **Color Plate VII**

Archosargus probatocephalus



Identifying key characters: Gray with 5 or 6 dark vertical bars on body and one on nape (no dark spot near origin of latter line). Body nearly oval in shape. **Jaws anteriorly with a series of 8 (4 on each side) broad, incisor-like teeth, their edges straight or only slightly notched, laterally several series of molar-like teeth present.** Dorsal fin with 12 spines and 11 soft rays, **second anal spine very strong.**

Distinguishing characters of similar species:

Nothing similar in inshore waters.

REGULATIONS

Possession limit: Federal waters - No restrictions.
State waters - No restrictions.

Size limit: Federal waters - No restrictions.
State waters - No restrictions.

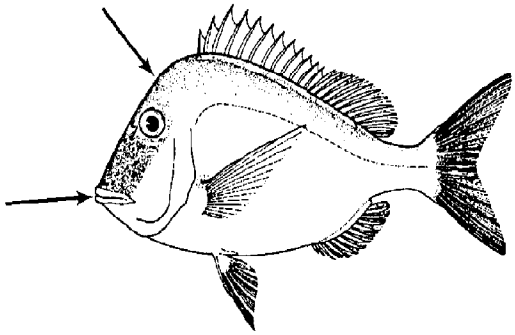
State seasonal restrictions:
Recreational harvest - None.
Commercial harvest - None.

Other restrictions: Must be landed with head and tail intact.

Notes:

KNOBBED PORGY
Calamus nodosus

Color Plate VII



Identifying key characters: Body rosy-silver, center of each scale light iridescent bluish, snout purplish with bronze spots, and an iridescent blue stripe below eye. Body oval in shape, **upper head profile very steep, bony tubercle (knob) over eye well developed. Both jaws anteriorly with canine-like teeth of about equal size, laterally with 2 rows of molar-like teeth in lower jaw and 3 rows in upper jaw, with an irregular inner series of teeth.**

Distinguishing characters of similar species:

Whitebone porgy - Does not have an irregular inner series of teeth in addition to principal rows of molars.

Jolthead porgy - Cheeks brassy with no blue markings, head profile not steep.

REGULATIONS

Possession limit: Federal waters - No restrictions.
State waters - No restrictions.

Size limit: Federal waters - No restrictions.
State waters - No restrictions.

State seasonal restrictions:
Recreational harvest - None.
Commercial harvest - None.

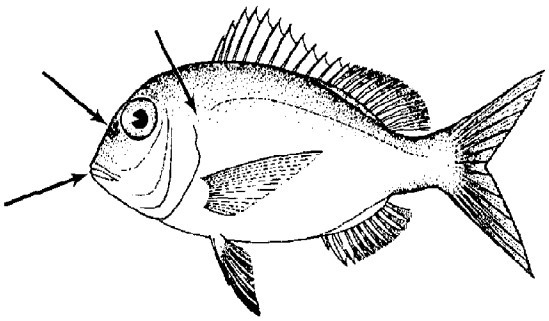
Other restrictions: Must be landed with head and tail intact.

Notes:

RED PORGY **Color Plate IX**

Pagrus pagrus

Other common name(s): common seabream, silver snapper, pink porgy, Charleston snapper



Identifying key characters: Back and upper sides pinkish-silver with an indistinct yellow spot on each scale of the upper half of the body, lower sides and belly with reddish tints, a wedge of yellow across inter-orbital space and some yellow on snout and upper lip, pectoral pink and tail fin pink with bright red margin. **Posterior nostril oblong and larger than the anterior. Both jaws anteriorly with canine-like teeth, 4 in upper and 6 in lower, laterally with two rows of molar-like teeth.** Dorsal fin with 12 spines and 10 soft rays, anal fin with 8 soft rays.

Distinguishing characters of similar species:

Knobbed porgy - Posterior nostril slit-like and 10 to 11 anal fin rays.

Scup - Body not pink, anterior teeth narrow, in several close-set bands.

Sheepshead - Body not pink, anterior jaw teeth broad and flattened.

REGULATIONS

Possession limit: Federal waters - No restrictions.
State waters - No restrictions.

Size limit: Federal waters - 12 inches total length.
State waters - 12 inches total length.

State seasonal restrictions:
Recreational harvest - None.
Commercial Harvest - None.

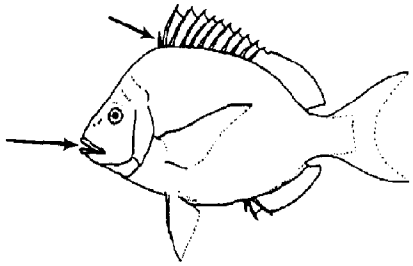
Other restrictions: Must be landed with head and tail intact.

Notes:

SCUP **Color Plate VII**

Stenotomus chrysops

Other common name(s): southern porgy, porgy



Identifying key characters: Body deep, color silvery with no dark markings, **dorsal fin with 12 spines, preceded by one forward-directed spine**, and 12 soft rays. **Front teeth strongly flattened, narrow, in close-set bands, teeth in outer band a little enlarged, compressed and narrower at base, laterally two rows of molar-like teeth in upper and lower jaws.**

Distinguishing characters of similar species:

Red porgy - Body pink, anterior teeth in both jaws canine-like, laterally two rows of molar-like teeth.

Knobbed porgy - Posterior nostril slit-like, anterior teeth in both jaws canine-like, laterally upper jaw with three rows of molar-like teeth.

REGULATIONS

Possession limit: Federal waters - No restrictions.
State waters - No restrictions.

Size limit: Federal waters - No restrictions.
State waters - No restrictions.

State seasonal restrictions:
Recreational harvest - None.
Commercial harvest - None.

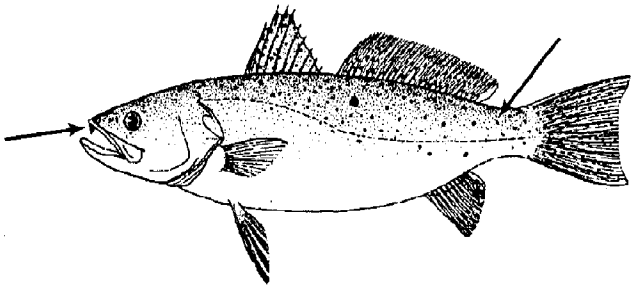
Other restrictions: Must be landed with head and tail intact.

Notes:

SPOTTED SEATROUT **Color Plate V**

Cynoscion nebulosus

Other common name(s): winter trout, Speckled trout



Identifying key characters: Dark gray above with bluish refections and **numerous round black spots irregularly scattered on back and sides**, also extending to soft part of dorsal and tail fins. **A pair of large canine-like teeth at tip of upper jaw**, remaining teeth small and in lower jaw gradually increasing posteriorly. Chin without barbels or pores, snout with only 2 marginal pores. Anterior dorsal fin with 9 or 10 spines and second dorsal with 1 spine and 25 to 28 rays, soft portion of dorsal unscaled.

Distinguishing characters of similar species:

Weakfish - Dark spots on back and sides small, forming faint irregular, oblique streaks along scale rows, soft portion of dorsal fin covered with small scales up to one-third of fin.

REGULATIONS

Possession limit: Federal waters - No restrictions.
State waters - Fifteen fish per angler per day.

Size limit: Federal waters - No restrictions.
State waters - 12 inches total length.

State seasonal restrictions:
Recreational harvest - None.
Commercial harvest - None.

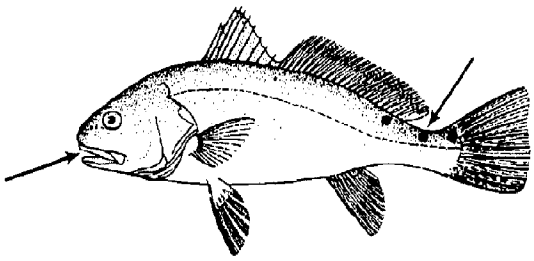
Other restrictions: Game fish - May be taken only by rod and reel year round or by gigging from March through November. S.C. native fish may not be sold.

Notes:

RED DRUM **Color Plate IV**

Sciaenops ocellatus

Other common name(s): channel bass, puppy drum, spottail bass, redfish



Identifying key characters: Iridescent silvery-gray with a cooper cast, darker above, **one or more ocellate blotches present on upper sides from below soft portion of the dorsal fin to the base of the tail fin. Mouth inferior, horizontal, teeth set in bands in both jaws.** Chin with barbels, pre-opercular margin smooth.

Distinguishing characters of similar species:

Other croakers and drums - None have large black spots on posterior halves of upper sides.

Black drum - Has many barbels on chin.

Atlantic croaker - Has small barbels and pre-opercular margin serrate with 3 to 5 strong spines at its angle.

REGULATIONS

Possession limit: Federal waters - Fishery closed, no possession.
State waters - Five fish per angler per day.

Size limit: Federal waters - Fishery closed
State waters - 14 inches total length minimum, 27 inches total length maximum.

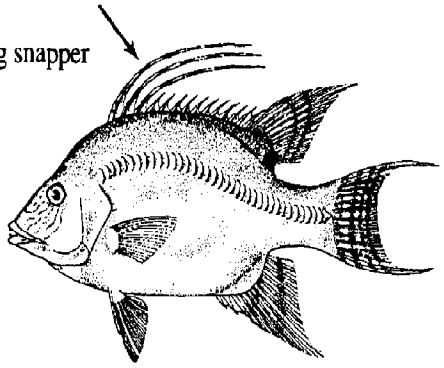
'e seasonal restrictions:
Recreational harvest - Gigging legal only from March through November.
Commercial harvest - Fishery closed.

'trictions: Game fish - May be only taken by rod and reel year round or by gigging from March through November. Fish taken in S.C. may not be sold.

HOGFISH **Color Plate XVI**

Lachnolaimus maximus

Other common name(s): hog snapper



Identifying key characters: Generally pink, reddish-brown or wine color with scales on back edged in yellow and a black spot at rear of dorsal fin. Dorsal profile of head rather deep, **dorsal fin continuous, with 14 spines of which the first three are extended into long filaments.**

Distinguishing characters of similar species:

Nothing occurs in area which is of similar appearance.

REGULATIONS

Possession limit: Federal waters - No restrictions.
State waters - No restrictions.

Size limit: Federal waters - No restrictions.
State waters - No restrictions.

State seasonal restrictions:
Recreational harvest - None.
Commercial harvest - None.

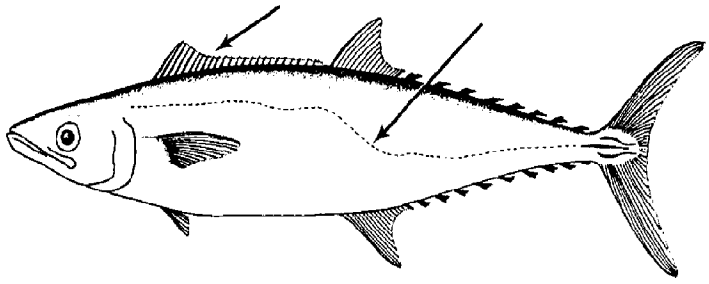
Other restrictions: Must be landed with head and tail intact.

Notes:

KING MACKEREL **Color Plate V**

Scomberomorus cavalla

Other common name(s): silver king, king fish



Identifying key characters: Back iridescent bluish-green, sides silvery; **first dorsal fin lightly and uniformly pigmented, lateral line abruptly curving downward below second dorsal fin,** snout much shorter than rest of head, posterior part of maxilla exposed, reaching posterior margin of eye.

Distinguishing characters of similar species:

Spanish mackerel - Lateral line not abruptly curving downward under second dorsal fin, first dorsal fin with 17 to 19 spines and anterior third of first dorsal fin black.

Wahoo - 24 to 26 spines in first dorsal fin, snout about as long as rest of head, numerous vertical stripes on sides of body.

REGULATIONS

Possession limit: Federal waters - Five fish per angler per day recreationally.
State waters - Same as in federal waters.

Size limit: Federal waters - 20 inches fork length.
State waters - Same as in federal waters.

State seasonal restrictions:

Recreational harvest - Fishery closed when quota reached. If overfished. Currently not overfished.

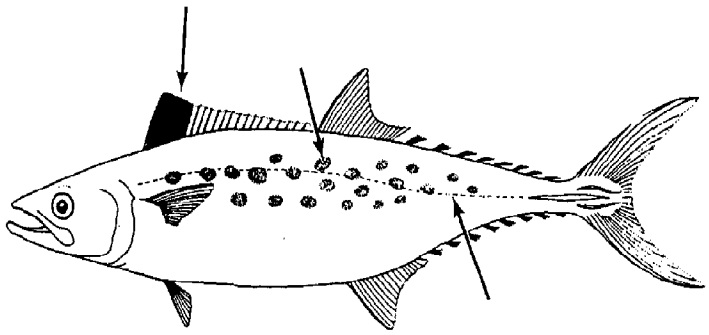
Commercial harvest - Fishery closed when quota reached. If overfished. Currently not overfished.

Other restrictions: Commercial fishermen must obtain a federal permit to fish for king mackerel in federal waters.

Notes:

SPANISH MACKEREL **Color Plate V**

Scomberomorus maculatus



Identifying key characters: Back bluish-green, **sides silvery with numerous yellow to bronze spots and no streaks, anterior third of first dorsal is black.** Two scarcely separated dorsal fins, first with 17 to 19 spines, **lateral line gradually curving down toward tail region.**

Distinguishing characters of similar species:

King mackerel - Lateral line abruptly curving downward under second dorsal fin, first dorsal fin with 14 to 16 spines and uniformly dusky in color. Young king mackerel may have yellowish-bronze spots similar to adult Spanish mackerel.

Cero mackerel - Sides of body with spots and 1 or 2 longitudinal stripes, pectoral fins covered with scales.

Wahoo - 24 to 26 spines in first dorsal fin, snout as long as rest of head, numerous vertical stripes on sides of body.

REGULATIONS

Possession limit: Federal waters - 10 fish per angler per day recreationally.
State waters - Same as in federal waters.

Size limit: Federal waters - 14 inches total length.
State waters - Same as in federal waters.

State seasonal restrictions:

Recreational harvest - Season closed when quota reached. If overfished. Currently no overfished.

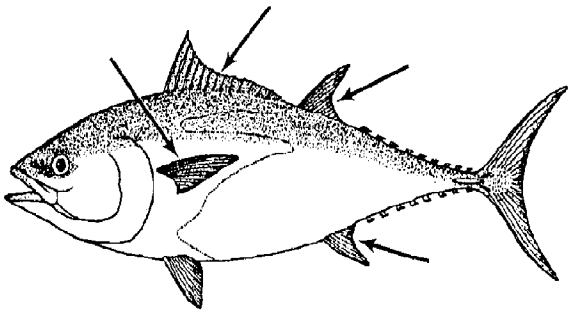
Commercial harvest - Season closed when quota reached. If overfished. Currently no overfished.

Other restrictions: Commercial fishermen must obtain a federal permit to fish for Spanish mackerel in federal waters. Must be landed with head and tail intact.

Notes:

BLUEFIN TUNA
Thunnus thynnus

Color Plate XIV



Identifying key characters: Back dark blue or black, lower sides silvery; **first dorsal fin yellow or bluish, the second reddish-brown, anal fin and finlets dusky-yellow edged in black. Pectoral fins very short, less than 80 percent of head length,** not reaching posterior margin of first dorsal fin.

Distinguishing characters of similar species:

Albacore - Pectoral fin usually reaching nearly to second dorsal finlet, tail fin with a white margin.

Yellowfin tuna - Dorsal and anal fins bright yellow, dorsal and anal finlets bright yellow with black margins. Body usually with 20 broken, nearly vertical lines.

Blackfin tuna - Second dorsal and anal fins dusky with silvery lusters. Pectoral fins longer about 30 percent of fork length.

REGULATIONS

Possession limit: Federal waters - A special federal permit for each fish retained must be obtained prior to harvest.
State waters - Same as in federal waters.

Size limit: Federal waters - No restrictions.
State waters - No restrictions.

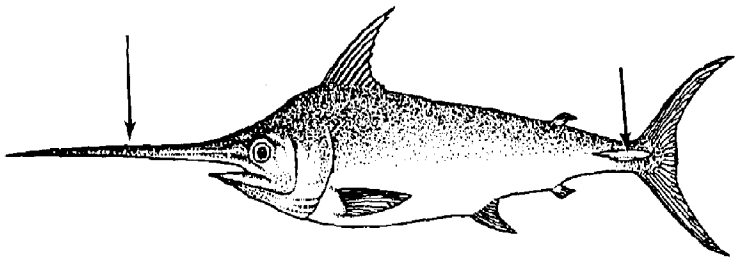
State seasonal restrictions:
Recreational harvest - None.
Commercial harvest - None.

Other restrictions: Special permit and tags required to harvest and sell bluefin tuna.

Notes:

SWORDFISH
Xiphias gladius

Color Plate XIV



Identifying key characters: Body rounded, back and upper sides brownish-black, lower sides and belly light brown. Pelvic fins absent and scales absent in adult. **Snout ending in long, flattened sword. A single, strong, lateral keel on each side of caudal peduncle** (area just in front of tail).

Distinguishing characters of similar species:

Other billfish - Bill rounded in cross section, not flattened; pelvic fins present, long, narrow and rigid, and there are two keels on each side of caudal peduncle.

REGULATIONS

Possession limit: Federal waters - No restrictions.
State waters - No restrictions.

Size limit: Federal waters - No more than 15 % of the total number of swordfish landed (commercial and recreational) during each trip can be less than 31 inches dressed carcass length or less than 41 pounds.
State waters - Same as in federal waters.

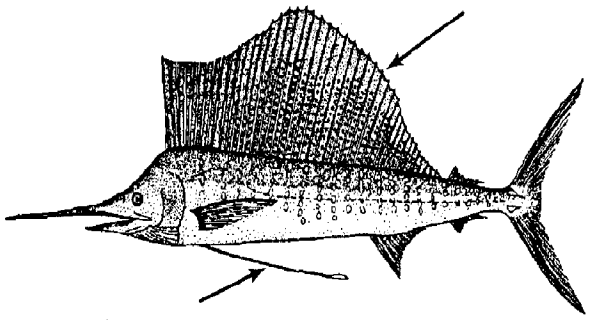
State seasonal restrictions:
Recreational harvest - None.
Commercial harvest - None.

Other restrictions: Seasonal quotas for commercial harvest.

Notes:

SAILFISH **Color Plate XIV**

Istiophorus platypterus



Identifying key characters: First dorsal fin sail-like, considerably higher than body depth throughout most of its length, membrane blue-black, covered with many small black spots, **pelvic fins very long, almost reaching to anus and consisting of one spine and two soft rays.** Body covered with rather sparsely imbedded scales with a blunt point. Anus close to origin of first anal fin.

Distinguishing characters of similar species:

White marlin - Dorsal fin not sail-like, pelvic fins much shorter, far from reaching anus.

Blue marlin - Dorsal fin not sail-like, lateral line branched over body, and not in a straight line.

Longbill spearfish - Dorsal fin not sail-like, anus placed well in front of first anal fin.

REGULATIONS

Possession limit: Federal waters - No restrictions (Recreational harvest).
State waters - No restrictions (Recreational harvest).

Size limit: Federal waters - 57 inches-lower jaw to fork length.
State water - Same as in federal waters.

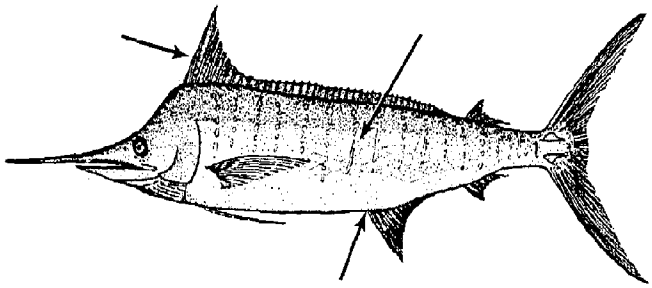
State seasonal restrictions:
Recreational harvest - None.
Commercial harvest - None.

Other restrictions: May be taken by rod and reel only and may not be purchased, bartered, traded or sold.

Notes: There is no retention on commercial long-line boats.

BLUE MARLIN
Makaira nigricans

Color Plate XV



Identifying key characters: Height of anterior part of first dorsal fin smaller than body depth, lateral line reticulated, hard to see in large specimens, anus close to origin of first anal fin, body covered with densely imbedded scales ending in 1 or 2 long acute spines.

Distinguishing characters of similar species:

Sailfish - First dorsal fin sail-like, its height much greater than body depth, covered with numerous black spots; pelvic fins very long, reaching almost to anus; lateral line single, not reticulated.

White marlin - Height of anterior part of first dorsal fin nearly equal to body depth. Tip of first dorsal, first anal and pectoral fins rounded, lateral line single, not reticulated.

Longbill spearfish - Height of anterior part of first dorsal fin slightly greater than body depth, the posterior part of fin high throughout length, anus placed well in front of origin of first anal fin; lateral line single, not reticulated; scales ending in several points.

REGULATIONS

Possession limit: Federal waters - No restrictions (Recreational harvest).
State waters - No restrictions (Recreational harvest).

Size limit: Federal waters - 86 inches - lower jaw to fork of tail.
State waters - Same as in federal waters.

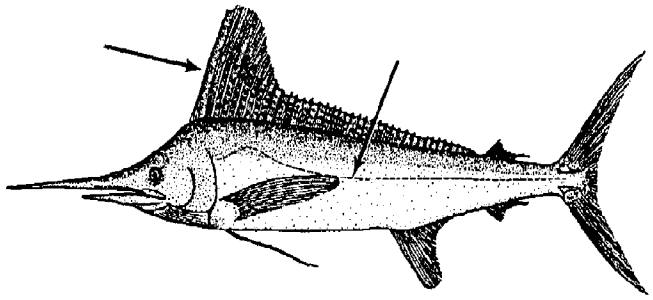
State seasonal restrictions:
Recreational harvest - None.
Commercial harvest - None.

Other restrictions: May be taken by rod and reel only and may not be purchased, bartered, traded or sold.

Notes: There is no retention on commercial long-line boats.

WHITE MARLIN **Color Plate XV**

Tetrapturus albidus



Identifying key characters: Height of anterior part of first dorsal fin nearly equal to body depth, posteriorly fin long and low, tips of first dorsal, first anal and pectoral fins rounded, **lateral line single and visible,** body covered with densely imbedded scales each ending in a single acute point.

Distinguishing characters of similar species:

Sailfish - First dorsal fin sail-like, its height much greater than body depth; pelvic fins very long, reaching almost to anus.

Blue marlin - Height of anterior part of dorsal fin smaller than body depth; lateral line system branched over body, not in a straight line.

Longbill spearfish - First dorsal fin not as low posteriorly; anus placed well in front of origin of first anal fin, scales ending in several points.

REGULATIONS

Possession limit: Federal waters - No restrictions (Recreational harvest).
State waters - No restrictions (Recreational harvest).

Size limit: Federal waters - 62 inches - lower jaw to fork of tail.
State waters - Same as in federal waters.

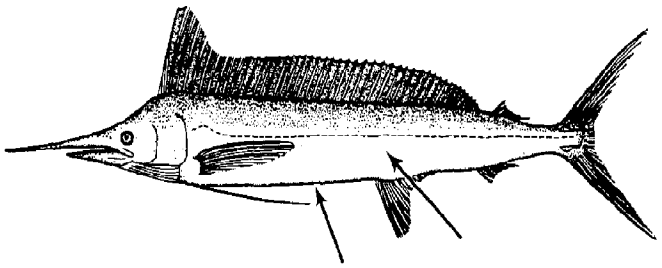
State seasonal restrictions:
Recreational harvest - None.
Commercial harvest - None.

Other restrictions: May be taken by rod and reel only and may not be purchased, bartered, traded or sold.

Notes: There is no retention on commercial long-line boats.

LONGBILL SPEARFISH
Tetrapturus pfluegeri

Color Plate XV



Identifying key characters: Anus well in front of origin of first anal fin, body covered with densely imbedded scales ending in several points, bill slender and round in cross section, first dorsal long and rather high throughout its length, pelvic fins slightly longer than pectoral fins.

Distinguishing characters of similar species:

Sailfish - First dorsal sail-like, its height much greater than body depth; pelvic fins very long, reaching almost to anus.

Blue marlin - Height of anterior part of dorsal fin smaller than body depth; lateral line system branched over body, not in a straight line.

White marlin - First dorsal fin much lower posteriorly; anus placed close to origin of first anal fin; scales ending in a single point.

REGULATIONS

Possession limit: Federal waters - No restrictions (Recreational harvest).
State waters - No restrictions (Recreational harvest).

Size limit: Federal waters - No restrictions.
State waters - No restrictions.

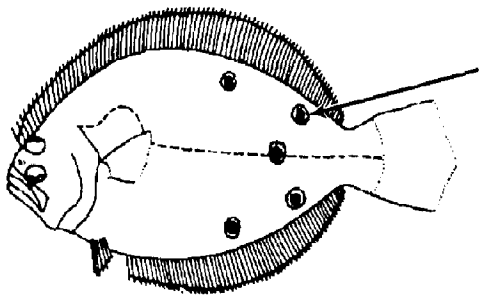
State seasonal restrictions:
Recreational harvest - None.
Commercial harvest - None.

Other restrictions: May not be purchased, bartered, traded or sold in State.

Notes:

SUMMER FLOUNDER **Color Plate IV**

Paralichthys dentatus



Identifying key characters: Color variable ,upper side assumes color of surroundings, ranges from nearly white to hues of gray, greenish, brownish to almost black. **Five prominent ocellated dark spots on posterior potion of body in a double triangular pattern**. Dorsal fin with 85 to 94 rays and originates opposite the forward margin of the eye, anal fin has 60 to 73 rays, tail fin rounded.

Distinguishing characters of similar species:

Southern flounder - No ocellated spots, only diffuse spots and blotches.

REGULATIONS

Possession limit: Federal waters - No restrictions.
State waters - Twenty fish (all flounder species) per angler per day if taken by rod and reel, gig or spear.

Size limit: Federal waters - No restrictions (South of North Carolina).
State waters - Twelve inches total length.

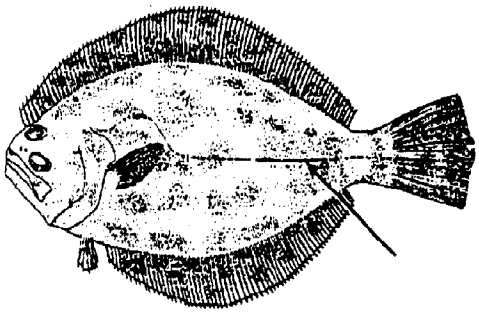
State seasonal restrictions:
Recreational harvest - None.
Commercial harvest - None.

Other restrictions:

Notes:

SOUTHERN FLOUNDER **Color Plate IV**

Paralichthys lethostigma



Identifying key characters: Body olive-brown with diffuse dark spots and blotches, **no distinct ocellated spots.** Space between eyes about as wide as eye diameter, dorsal fin originating slightly in front of upper eye and containing 80 to 95 rays, pectoral fin with 11 to 13 rays, and anal fin with 63 to 74 rays.

Distinguishing characters of similar species:

Summer flounder - Five prominent ocellated dark spots on body in a double triangle pattern.

REGULATIONS

Possession limit: Federal waters - No restrictions.
State waters - Twenty fish (all flounder species) per angler per day, if taken by hook and line, gig or spear.

Size limit: Federal waters - No restrictions.
State waters - Twelve inches total length.

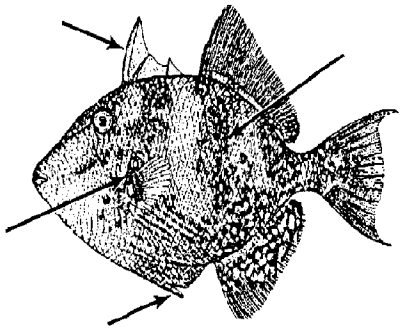
State seasonal restrictions:
Recreational harvest - None.
Commercial harvest - None.

Other restrictions:

Notes:

GRAY TRIGGERFISH **Color Plate XVI**

Balistes capriscus



Identifying key characters: Body generally grayish with green overtones and **about 3 dark blotches or irregular bars across the back,** small bluish to purplish spots on the upper body, soft dorsal and anal fins with spots tending to form rows. **Scales enlarged above the pectoral fin base and just behind the gill slit to form a flexible structure** (a tympanum). Scales of body without prominent keels, not forming longitudinal ridges. Mouth terminal, teeth notched. Tail fin slightly prolonged above and below.

Distinguishing characters of similar species:

Queen triggerfish - Two broad blue lines on cheek from above mouth to below the region in front of pectoral-fin base, tail fin greatly prolonged both above and below.

REGULATIONS

Possession limit: Federal waters - No restrictions.
State waters - No restrictions.

Size limit: Federal waters - No restrictions.
State waters - No restrictions.

State seasonal restrictions:
Recreational harvest - None.
Commercial harvest - None.

Other restrictions:

Notes:

FEDERAL AND STATE FISHERIES REGULATIONS

The following is a synopsis of current State and Federal regulations which manage, regulate and protect the marine species common to South Carolina waters. Pertinent regulations (State codes, Federal Acts and Regional Fisheries Management Plans) have been referenced and appear beneath each species. For a detailed description of these regulations the following source documents must be consulted:

State

Code of Laws of South Carolina (COLOSC).

Federal

Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act (PL 94-265)
Atlantic Swordfish Fishery Management Plan (50 CFR Part 630)
Spiny Lobster Fishery Management Plan (50 CFR Part 640)
Coastal Migratory Pelagic Resources Management Plan (50 CFR Part 642)
Atlantic Billfish Fishery Management Plan (50 CFR Part 644)
South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Fishery Management Plan (50 CFR Part 646)
Atlantic Coast Red Drum Fishery Management Plan (50 CFR Part 647)
Federal Endangered Species Act of 1973
Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972

SYNOPSIS OF CURRENT REGULATIONS

Horseshoe crabs

Horseshoe crab (*Limulus polyphemus*) - **may be harvested only by special State permit.**

- Section 50-17-165 COLOSC. Unlawful to take or possess horseshoe crabs except by permit.

Lobsters

Spiny Lobster (*Panulirus argus*) - **6 lobsters per person per day. Carapace length must be more than 3 inches with a tail length more than 5.5 inches. Fishery closed 1 April through 24 July in State waters and 1 April through 5 August in Federal waters.**

- Spiny Lobster Fishery Management Plan (50 CFR Part 640)
- Section 50-17-510 COLOSC. Season and size limit.

Shrimp

White shrimp (*Penaeus setiferus*) - **48 quarts whole or 29 quarts headed (all shrimp species) per seine (if seine used) or per set of poles (if bait is used) or per boat (if boat is used) or per person (if no boat, bait or seine is used). A 60 day season, between September 1 and November 15, requires a special permit to use bait. Shrimp taken over bait may not be sold. Commercial shrimping requires licenses and seasons are set annually.**

- Section 50-17-610 COLOSC. Lawful area to trawl for shrimp during period from May 15 through December 1.
- Section 50-17-615 COLOSC. Lawful area to trawl for shrimp during period from August 15 to December 15 and from September 1 to November 1.
- Section 50-17-616 COLOSC. Unlawful to trawl for shrimp during closed season.
- Section 50-17-617 COLOSC. Charts referred to for descriptions in lawful areas.
- Section 50-17-618 COLOSC. Certain sounds and bays closed to trawling at all times.
- Section 50-17-620 COLOSC. Unlawful to trawl for shrimp near fishing piers.
- Section 50-17-625 COLOSC. Unlawful to trawl for shrimp during closed season near certain

beaches of Hunting Island, Hilton Head Island, and Fripp Island.

- Section 50-17-630 COLOSC. Shortening, extending, opening or closing seasons for trawling in lawful areas.
- Section 50-17-640 COLOSC. Hours for trawling for shrimp.
- Section 50-17-645 COLOSC. Unlawful to trawl for shrimp except in areas and for purposes and at times as provided by law.
- Section 50-17-650 COLOSC. Penalties for violation of shrimp trawling provisions.
- Section 50-17-660 COLOSC. Use of cast nets for taking shrimp in baited areas; baiting season; permit requirements; penalties.
- Section 50-17-665 COLOSC. Shrimp catch limits; penalties.
- Section 50-17-670 COLOSC. Registration numbers on licensed shrimp trawlers; display of numbers.
- Section 50-17-675 COLOSC. Certain conduct constitutes illegal trawling.
- Section 50-17-681 COLOSC. Dumping of refuse from nets near shore in Game Zones No. 7 and 9.
- Section 50-17-685 COLOSC. Use of turtle excluder devices.

Brown shrimp (*Penaeus aztecus*) - **Same as those for white shrimp.**

Pink shrimp (*Penaeus duorarum*) - **Same as those for white shrimp.**

Crabs

Blue crab (*Callinectes sapidus*) - **Carapace width (point to point) must be 5 inches or more, female crabs with egg mass (sponge) must be returned to the water unharmed. Commercial crabbing license required and recreational crabbers limited to two marked traps.**

- Section 50-17-710 COLOSC. Protection of certain female crabs; importation of sponge crabs.
- Section 50-17-716 COLOSC. Crab pots and crab pot floats.
- Section 50-17-720 COLOSC. Minimum size of blue crabs which may be caught or possessed.
- Section 50-17-721 COLOSC. Importation of undersized crabs.
- Section 50-17-730 COLOSC. Peeler and soft shell crabs; permit requirements.
- Section 50-17-740 COLOSC. Crab trawling season; permits; net mesh; penalty.
- Section 50-17-745 COLOSC. Shrimp trawlers may retain and market crabs caught between June 1 and November 30.
- Section 50-17-750 COLOSC. Size of mesh in nets or bags; chafing gear on tail bag.
- Section 50-17-760 COLOSC. Closed season for using crab pots for commercial purposes in certain areas.
- Section 50-17-770 COLOSC. Registration numbers on licensed crab trawler; display of numbers.
- Section 50-17-780 COLOSC. Crab license reciprocity.
- Section 50-17-790 COLOSC. Penalties.

Stone crab (*Menippe mercenaria*) - **Unlawful to possess any stone crab body, live or dead, only the larger of the two claws of any stone crab may be removed and the forearm must be or exceed 2 3/4 inches in length.**

- Section 50-17-725 COLOSC. Protection of stone crabs.

Clams

Hard clam (*Mercenaria mercenaria*) - **one-half U.S. bushel may be harvested recreationally from public oyster or state shellfish grounds per person per day. Commercial license and permits required. All clams must have a minimum thickness of 1 inch. Season - 15 September through 15 May, usually but may vary.**

- Section 50-17-350 COLOSC. Requirements on harvesting shellfish for personal use.
- Section 50-17-360 COLOSC. Commercial shellfish harvesting permit requirements; night time harvesting prohibited.
- Section 50-17-365 COLOSC. Shellfish harvesting season.
- Section 50-17-366 COLOSC. Size limit on clams.

Oysters

American Oyster (*Crassostrea virginica*) - **Two bushels may be harvested recreationally from public oyster grounds or State shellfish grounds per person per day. Commercial license and permits required. Season - 15 September through 15 April, usually but may vary.**

- Section 50-17-350 COLOSC. Requirements on harvesting shellfish for personal use.
- Section 50-17-360 COLOSC. Commercial shellfish harvesting permit requirements; night time harvesting prohibited.
- Section 50-17-365 COLOSC. Shellfish harvesting season.

Whelks

Knobbed whelk (*Busycon carica*) - **Commercial harvest requires state permit. Minimum size is 4 1/2 inches.**

- Section 50-17-160 COLOSC. License and permit requirements for harvesting whelks (conchs) by trawling.

Channeled whelk (*Busycon canaliculatum*) - **Commercial harvest requires State permit. Minimum size is 4 1/2 inches.**

- Same as those for knobbed whelk.

Sea Turtles

Atlantic loggerhead (*Caretta caretta*) -**Unlawful to harm, kill, possess or interfere with the well being of any turtle or turtle eggs.**

- Federal Endangered Species Act of 1973.

Atlantic green sea turtle (*Chelonia mydasa*) - **Same as for loggerhead.**

Atlantic hawksbill turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) - **Same as for loggerhead.**

Atlantic ridley turtle (*Lepidochelys kempii*) - **Same as for loggerhead.**

Atlantic leatherback turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*) - **Same as for loggerhead.**

Terrapins

Diamondback terrapin (*Malaclemys terrapin*) - **unlawful to take, purchase, possess terrapins between 1 April and 15 July, median line of bottom shell must be 5 inches or more.**

- Section 50-17-910 COLOSC. Closed season for terrapin; reports of left-over terrapin.
- Section 50-17-920 COLOSC. Minimum size of terrapin.
- Section 50-17-940 COLOSC. Terrapin illegally taken constitutes contraband and must be returned to water.
- Section 50-17-950 COLOSC. Penalties.

Sharks

Management Plan currently being prepared by the Secretary of Commerce which may set several possession and size limits and require identification of many species.

Sturgeons (*Acipenseridae*)

Shortnose sturgeon (*Acipenser brevirostrum*) - **Fishery closed**

- Federal Endangered Species Act of 1973.
- Section 50-17-805 COLOSC. Fishing license required for sturgeon fishing.
- Section 50-17-830 COLOSC. Sturgeon seasons, size limits and areas.
- Section 50-17-835 COLOSC. Unlawful to catch, buy, sell or ship shortnose sturgeon at any time.
- Section 50-17-840 COLOSC. Fishing with nets near Winyah Bay jetties.
- Section 50-17-880 COLOSC. Size of mesh in sturgeon nets.
- Section 50-17-886 COLOSC. Sturgeon nets must be removed at close of season.
- Section 50-17-887 COLOSC. Confiscation of net or seine found with decomposed sturgeon therein.
- Section 50-17-895 COLOSC. Penalties.
- Section 123-150 COLOSC. Non-game and endangered species.

Atlantic sturgeon (*Acipenser oxyrhynchus*) - **Fishery closed in State waters.**

- Same as those for shortnose sturgeon.

Tarpons (*Elopidae*)

Tarpon (*Megalops atlanticus*) **-One fish per person per day, game fish -may be taken in State waters only by rod and reel and may not be sold.**

- Section 50-17-540 COLOSC. Tarpon are gamefish; limits; penalties.

Herrings (*Clupeidae*)

Hickory shad (*Alosa mediocris*) - **May be taken recreationally by hook and line year round and a South Carolina freshwater fishing license required.**

- Section 50-17-805 COLOSC. Fishing license required for shad and herring fishing.
- Section 50-17-810 COLOSC. Closed and open seasons on shad.
- Section 50-17-811 COLOSC. Open season for shad in Game Zone 7.
- Section 50-17-812 COLOSC. Catching or setting nets or similar devices for shad on certain days.
- Section 50-17-813 COLOSC. Setting nets for catching shad in Game Zones 5 and 8.
- Section 50-17-814 COLOSC. Using nets to catch shad in the Savannah River.
- Section 50-17-815 COLOSC. Setting nets to catch shad in Game Zones 7 and 9.
- Section 50-17-816 COLOSC. Setting nets to catch shad in Game Zone 10.
- Section 50-17-817 COLOSC. Using nets to catch shad on Santee River.
- Section 50-17-820 COLOSC. Using drift nets for shad in Georgetown County between mouth of Waccamaw River and Butler's Island.
- Section 50-17-840 COLOSC. Fishing with nets near Winyah Bay jetties.
- Section 50-17-850 COLOSC. Issuance of "sets" to catch shad on Savannah River; terms and conditions.
- Section 50-17-855 COLOSC. Issuance of "sets" to catch shad on certain portions of Edisto River.
- Section 50-17-860 COLOSC. Restrictions on use of nets for catching shad.
- Section 50-17-865 COLOSC. Special provisions for catching shad in certain waters.
- Section 50-17-867 COLOSC. Unlawful to fish for shad with a net measuring more than 200 yards in certain waters.
- Section 50-17-870 COLOSC. Mesh size on herring gill nets.
- Section 50-17-886. Shad nets must be removed at close of season.
- Section 50-17-887 COLOSC. Confiscation of net or seine found with decomposed shad therein.
- Section 50-17- 890 COLOSC. Records and reports of persons dealing in shad.
- Section 50-17-895 COLOSC. Penalties.

American shad (*Alosa sapidissma*)-**May be taken recreationally by hook and line only year round and a South Carolina freshwater license is required.**

- Same as those for hickory shad.

Blueback herring (*Alosa aestivalis*) - **no restrictions in marine waters.**

- Same as those for hickory shad.

Temperate basses (*Percichthyidae*)

Wreckfish (*Polyprion americanus*) - **Commercial quota established annually and there is an individual transferable quota system.**

- South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Fishery Management Plan.

Striped bass (*Morone saxatilis*) - **10 fish per person per day except in Wando and Cooper Rivers and Santee River seaward to the Intracoastal Waterway, the limit is 5 fish per person per day. Gamefish - may be taken only with rod and reel and may not be sold. No sale provision dose not include aquaculture reared fish. Unlawful to take striped bass or striped bass/ white bass hybrids from the Savannah River upstream to New Savannah Bluff Lock Dam in South Carolina waters until July 1, 1996.**

- Section 50-13-220 COLOSC. Daily creel limit for striped bass on certain waters.

Sea basses (*Serranidae*)

Bank sea bass (*Centropristis ocyurus*) - **no restrictions.**

- South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Fishery Management Plan.

Rock sea bass (*Centropristis philadelphia*) - **no restrictions.**

- South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Fishery Management Plan.- Same as for bank sea bass.

Black sea bass (*Centropristis striata*) - **8 inches total length, must be landed head and tail in tact.**

- South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Fishery Management Plan.
- Section 50-17-510 COLOSC. Seasons and size limits on fish.

Rock hind (*Epinephelus adscensionis*) - **grouper aggregate bag limit of five grouper per person per day, excluding Nassau grouper and jewfish. Must be landed with head and tail intact.**

- South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Fishery Management Plan

Graysby (*Epinephelus cruentatus*) - **grouper aggregate bag limit of five grouper per person per day, excluding Nassau grouper and jewfish. Must be landed with head and tail intact.**

- South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Fishery Management Plan.

Speckled hind (*Epinephelus drummondhayi*) - **grouper aggregate bag limit of five grouper per person per day, excluding Nassau grouper and jewfish. Must be landed with head and tail intact.**

- South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Fishery Management Plan.

Yellowedge grouper (*Epinephelus flavolimbatus*) - **grouper aggregate bag limit of five grouper per person per day, excluding Nassau grouper and jewfish. Must be landed with head and tail intact.**

- South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Fishery Management Plan.

Coney (*Epinephelus fulvus*) - **grouper aggregate bag limit of five grouper per person per day, excluding Nassau grouper and jewfish. Must be landed with head and tail intact.**

- South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Fishery Management Plan.

Red hind (*Epinephelus guttatus*) - **grouper aggregate bag limit of five grouper per person per day, excluding Nassau grouper and jewfish. Must be landed with head and tail in tact.**

- South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Fishery Management Plan.

Jewfish (*Epinephelus mystacinus*) - **Fishery closed.**

- South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Fishery Management Plan.

Red grouper (*Epinephelus morio*) - **20 inches total length, grouper aggregate bag limit of five grouper per person per day, excluding Nassau grouper and jewfish. Must be landed with head and tail intact.**

- South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Fishery Management Plan.

Misty grouper (*Epinephelus mystacinus*) - **grouper aggregate bag limit of five grouper per person per day, excluding Nassau grouper and jewfish. Must be landed with head and tail intact.**

- South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Fishery Management Plan.

Warsaw grouper (*Epinephelus nigritus*) - **grouper aggregate bag limit of five grouper per person per day, excluding Nassau grouper and jewfish. Must be landed with head and tail intact.**

- South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Fishery Management Plan.

Snowy grouper (*Epinephelus niveatus*) - **grouper aggregate bag limit of five grouper per person per day, excluding Nassau grouper and jewfish. Must be landed with head and tail intact.**

- South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Fishery Management Plan.

Nassau grouper (*Epinephelus striatus*) - **Fishery closed.**

- South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Fishery Management Plan.

Black grouper (*Mycteroperca bonaci*) - **20 inches total length, grouper aggregate bag limit of five grouper per person per day, excluding Nassau grouper and jewfish. Must be landed with head and tail intact.**

- South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Fishery Management Plan.

Yellowmouth grouper (*Mycteroperca interstitialis*) - **20 inches total length, grouper aggregate bag limit of five grouper per person per day, excluding Nassau grouper and jewfish. Must be landed with head and tail intact.**

- South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Fishery Management Plan.

Gag grouper (*Mycteroperca microlepis*) - **20 inches total length, grouper aggregate bag limit of five grouper per person per day, excluding Nassau grouper and jewfish. Must be landed with head and tail intact.**

- South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Fishery Management Plan.

Scamp grouper (*Mycteroperca phenax*) - **20 inches total length, grouper aggregate bag limit of five grouper per person per day, excluding Nassau grouper and jewfish. Must be landed with head and tail intact.**

- South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Fishery Management Plan.

Tiger grouper (*Mycteroperca tigis*) - **grouper aggregate bag limit of five grouper per person per day, excluding Nassau grouper and jewfish. Must be landed with head and tail intact.**

- South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Fishery Management Plan.

Yellowfin grouper (*Mycteroperca venenosa*) - **20 inches total length, grouper aggregate bag limit of five grouper per person per day, excluding nassau grouper and jewfish. Mustbe landed with head and tail intact.**

- South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Fishery Management Plan.

Tilefishes (*Malacanthidae*)

Blueline tilefish (*Caulolatilus microps*) - **no restrictions.**

- South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Fishery Management Plan.

Tilefish (*Lopholatilus chamaeleonticeps*) - **no restrictions.**

- South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Fishery Management Plan.

Bluefishes (*Pomatomidae*)

Bluefish (*Pomatomus saltatrix*) - **10 fish per person per day.**

- Mid-Atlantic Bluefish Management Plan.

Cobias (*Rachycentridae*)

Cobia (*Rachycentron canadum*) - **2 fish per person per day, 37 inches total length. Must be landed with head and tail intact.**

- Coastal Migratory Pelagic Resources Plan.

Jacks (*Carangidae*)

Yellow jack (*Caranx bartholomaei*) - **no restrictions.**

- South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Fishery Management Plan.

Blue runner (*Caranx crysos*) - **no restrictions.**

- South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Fishery Management Plan.

Crevalle jack (*Caranx hippos*) - **no restrictions.**

- South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Fishery Management Plan.

Bar jack (*Caranx ruber*) - **no restrictions.**

- South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Fishery Management Plan.

Greater amberjack (*Seriola dumerili*) - **28 inches fork length for recreational fishermen and 36 inches fork length (coring is allowed with a 28 inch core minimum) for commercial fishermen, recreational bag limit is 3 fish per person per day.**

- South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Fishery Management Plan.

Lesser amberjack (*Seriola fasciata*) - **no restrictions.**

- South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Fishery Management Plan.

Almaco jack (*Seriola rivoliana*) - **no restrictions.**

- South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Fishery Management Plan.

Banded rudderfish (*Seriola zonata*) - **no restrictions.**

- South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Fishery Management Plan.

Snappers (*Lutjanidae*)

Black snapper (*Apsilus dentatus*) - **aggregate bag limit of 10 snapper per person per day, excluding vermilion snapper and allowing no more than two red snapper. Must be landed with head and tail intact.**

- South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Fishery Management Plan.

Queen snapper (*Etelis oculatus*) - **12 inches total length, aggregate bag limit of 10 snapper per person per day, excluding vermilion snapper and allowing no more than two red snapper. Must be landed with head and tail intact.**

- South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Fishery Management Plan.

Mutton snapper - (*Lutjanus analis*) - **12 inches total length, aggregate bag limit of 10 snapper per person per day, excluding vermilion snapper and allowing no more than two red snapper. Must be landed with head and tail intact.**

- South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Fishery Management Plan.

Schoolmaster (*Lutjanus apodus*) - **12 inches total length, aggregate bag limit of 10 snapper per person per day, excluding vermilion snapper and allowing no more than two red snapper. Must be landed with head and tail intact.**

- South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Fishery Management Plan.

Blackfin snapper (*Lutjanus buccanella*) - **12 inches total length, aggregate bag limit of 10 snapper per person per day, excluding vermilion snapper and allowing no more than two red snapper. Must be landed with head and tail intact.**

- South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Fishery Management Plan.

Red snapper (*Lutjanus campechanus*) - **20 inches total length and a recreational bag limit of 2 per person per day. Must be landed with head and tail intact.**

- South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Fishery Management Plan.

Cubera snapper (*Lutjanus cyanopterus*) - **12 inches total length, aggregate bag limit of 10 snapper per person per day, excluding vermilion snapper and allowing no more than two red snapper. Must be landed with head and tail intact.**

- South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Fishery Management Plan.

Gray snapper (*Lutjanus griseus*) - **12 inches total length, aggregate bag limit of 10 snapper per person per day, excluding vermilion snapper and allowing no more than two red snapper. Must be landed with head and tail intact.**

- South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Fishery Management Plan.

Dog snapper - (*Lutjanus jocu*) - **12 inches total length, aggregate bag limit of 10 snapper per person per day, excluding vermilion snapper and allowing no more than two red snapper. Must be landed with head and tail intact.**

- South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Fishery Management Plan.

Mahogany snapper (*Lutjanus mahogni*) - **12 inches total length, aggregate bag limit of 10 snapper per person per day, excluding vermilion snapper and allowing no more than two red snapper. Must be landed with head and tail intact.**

- South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Fishery Management Plan.

Lane snapper (*Lutjanus synagis*) - **8 inches total length, aggregate bag limit of 10 snapper per person per day, excluding vermilion snapper and allowing no more than two red snapper. Must be landed with head and tail intact.**

- South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Fishery Management Plan.

Silk snapper (*Lutjanus vivanus*) - **12 inches total length, aggregate bag limit of 10 snapper per person per day, excluding vermilion snapper and allowing no more than two red snapper. Must be landed with head and tail intact.**

- South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Fishery Management Plan.

Yellowtail snapper (*Ocyrus chrysurus*) - **12 inches total length, aggregate bag limit of 10 snapper per person per day, excluding vermilion snapper and allowing no more than two red snapper.Must be landed with head and tail intact.**

- South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Fishery Management Plan.
- Section 50-17-510 COLOSC. Seasons and size limits on fish.

Vermillion snapper (*Rhomboplites aurorubens*) - **10 inches total length for recreational fishermen and 12 inches for commercial fishermen, a recreational bag limit of 10 fish per person per day. Must be landed with head and tail intact.**

- South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Fishery Management Plan.

Grunts (*Haemulidae*)

Black margate (*Anisotremus davidsoni*) - **no restrictions.**

- South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Fishery Management Plan.

Porkfish (*Anisotremus virginicus*) - **no restrictions.**

- South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Fishery Management Plan.

Porgies (*Sparidae*)

Sheepshead (*Archosargus probatocephalus*) - **no restrictions.**

- South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Fishery Management Plan.

Grass porgy (*Calamus arcifrons*) - **no restrictions.**

- South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Fishery Management Plan.

Jolthead porgy (*Calamus banjondo*) - **no restrictions.**

- South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Fishery Management Plan.

Saucereye porgy (*Calamus calamus*) - **no restrictions.**

- South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Fishery Management Plan.

Whitebone porgy (*Calamus leuosteus*) - **no restrictions.**

- South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Fishery Management Plan.

Knobbed porgy (*Calamus nodosus*) - **no restrictions.**

- South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Fishery Management Plan.

Red porgy (*Pagrus pagrus*) - **no restrictions.**

- South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Fishery Management Plan

Longspine porgy - (*Stenotomus caprinus*) - **no restrictions.**

- South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Fishery Management Plan.

Scup (*Stenotomus chrysops*) - **no restrictions.**

- South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Fishery Management Plan.

Drums (*Sciaenidae*)

Spotted seatrout (*Cynoscion nebulosus*) - **15 fish per person per day, 12 inches total length. Game fish - may be taken only by rod and reel or by gigging from March through November. S.C. native fish may not be sold.**

- Section 50-17-510 COLOSC. Seasons and size limits on fish.
- Section 50-17-520 COLOSC. Spotted seatrout declared gamefish.

Red drum (*Scianops ocellatus*) - **Fishery closed in Federal waters, 5 fish per person per day with no fish over 27 inches, in State waters. Minimum size limit 14 inches total length. Game fish - may be only taken by rod and reel or by gigging from March through November. S.C. native fish may not be sold.**

- Atlantic Coast Red Drum Fishery Management Plan.
- Section 50-17-510 COLOSC. Seasons and size limits on fish.
- Section 50-17-520 COLOSC. Red drum declared gamefish.

Wrasses (*Labridae*)

Hogfish (*Lachnolaimus maximus*) - **no restrictions.**

- South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Fishery Management Plan.

Mackerals (*Scombridae*)

King mackeral (*Scomberomorus cavalla*) - **5 fish per person per day and 20 inches fork length. Commercial fishermen must obtain a special mackerel permit and a commercial quota is set annually.**

- Coastal Migratory Pelagic Resources Management Plan.
- Section 50-17-510. Seasons and size limits on fish.

Spanish mackeral (*Scomberomorus maculatus*) - **10 fish per person per day and 14 inches total length. Commercial fishermen must obtain a special mackerel fishing permit and a commercial quota is set annually.**

- Coastal Migratory Pelagic Resources Management Plan.
- Section 50-17-510. Seasons and size limits on fish.

Bluefin tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*) - **A special federal permit is required to harvest these fish.**

- Coastal Migratory Pelagic Resources Management Plan.

Swordfishes (*Xiphiidae*)

Swordfish (*Xiphias gladius*) - **No more than 15% of the total number of swordfish landed (commercial or recreational) during each trip can be less than 31 inches dressed carcass length or less than 41 pounds.**

- Atlantic Swordfish Fishery Management Plan (Depatrment of Commerce Secretarial Plan).

Billfishes (*Istiophoridae*)

Sailfish (*Istiophorus platypterus*) - **57 inches measured from lower jaw to fork of tail, may be taken only by rod and reel and may not be purchased, bartered, traded or sold.**

- Atlantic Billfish Fishery Management Plan.
- Section 50-17-530 COLOSC. Prohibits the purchase, barter, trade or sale of certain species of billfish and provides penalties.

Blue marlin (*Makaira nigricans*) - **86 inches measured from lower jaw to fork of tail, may be taken only by rod and reel and may not be and may not be purchased, bartered, traded or sold.**

- Atlantic Billfish Fishery Management Plan (Department of Commerce Secretarial Plan).
- Section 50-17-530 COLOSC. Prohibits the purchase, barter, trade or sale of certain species of billfish and provides penalties.

White marlin (*Tetrapturus albidus*) - **62 inches measured from lower jaw to fork of tail, may be taken only by rod and reel and may not be and may not be purchased, bartered, traded or sold.**

- Atlantic Billfish Fishery Management Plan(Department of Commerce Secretarial Plan).
- Section 50-17-530 COLOSC. Prohibits the purchase, barter, trade or sale of certain species of billfish and provides penalties.

Longbill spearfish (*Tetrapturus pfluegeri*) - **May not be purchased, bartered, traded or sold.**

- Section 50-17-530 COLOSC. Prohibits the purchase, barter, trade or sale of certain species of billfish and provides penalties.

Lefteyed flounders (*Bothidae*)

Summer flounder (*Paralichthys dentatus*) - **20 fish (all flounder species) per person per day if taken by rod and reel, gig or spear and must be 12 inches total length.**

- Section 50-17-510 COLOSC. Seasons and size limits of fish.
- Section 50-17-520 COLOSC. Possession limit on flounder.

Southern flounder (*Paralichthys lethostigma*) - **20 fish (all flounder species) per person per day if taken by rod and reel, gig or spear and must be 12 inches total length.**

- Same as for summer flounder.

Leatherjackets (*Balistidae*)

Gray triggerfish (*Balistes capriscus*) - **No restrictions.**

- South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Fishery Management Plan.

Queen triggerfish (*Balistes polylachner*) - **no restrictions.**

- South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Fishery Management Plan.

Ocean triggerfish (*Canthidermis sufflamen*) - **no restrictions.**

- South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Fishery Management Plan.

Marine Mammals

It is unlawful (state and federal law) for any person to net, trap, harpoon, molest, feed or otherwise interfere with the well-being or normal activity of all marine mammals including: bottle-nose dolphin, spotted dolphin, common dolphin, manatee, porpoise, harbor seal and all species of whales.

- Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972.

Regulations pertaining to the size and daily catch limits for saltwater fish and shellfish taken in South Carolina and federal waters off South Carolina: Note: Fishery Regulations are subject to change (TL=Total Length, FL=Fork Length) (Abundance in South Carolina waters = a/abundant, c/common, o/occasional, r/rare). All finfish must be landed with head and tail intact, except for greater amberjack aboard vessels with valid permits and swordfish. State waters extend from the fresh/saltwater dividing line to 3 miles offshore. Federal waters extend from 3 miles to 200 miles offshore. Rev: August 26, 1993

SPECIES/Abundance	RECREATIONAL SIZE LIMIT	RECREATIONAL CATCH LIMIT	OTHER
SHELLFISH AND CRUSTACEANS			
Blue crabs/a	Carapace width (point to point) must be no less than 5 inches (state waters)	No catch limit - No more than two pots or traps per person, with owner's name attached to the float, for recreational purposes.	Female blue crabs with egg mass (sponge)must be returned to water unharmed (state waters).
Stone crabs/c	Stone crab claws must have a forearm (propodus) = > 2 3/4 inches (state waters).	No catch limit on the number of claws, however only the larger of the two claws of any stone crab may be removed.	It is unlawful to possess any stone crab body, live or dead. Claws may not be removed from a female with egg mass (sponge) (state waters).
Shrimp/a	No size limit currently in effect.	48 quarts whole or 29 quarts headed shrimp per seine (if used), or per set of marked poles (if bait is used), or per boat (if boat is used without using bait) or per person (if no boat, bait or seine is used), (state waters).	There is a 60 day season and a special permit required to harvest shrimp if bait is utilized and shrimp taken over bait may not be sold (state waters).
Spiny lobster/r	Carapace length must be more than 3 inches with a tail length more than 5.5 inches (state and federal waters).	6 lobsters per person per day (federal waters).	Season closed 1 April through 5 August in federal waters and 1 April through 24 July in state waters.
Oysters/a	No size limit currently in effect.	Two U.S. bushels of oysters may be harvested from public or state shellfish grounds per person per day (state waters).	Season typically Sept. 16 through May 14; may be shortened or extended by Department following notification.
Clams/a	One inch in thickness (minimum).	One half of one U.S. bushel of clams may be harvested from public or state shellfish grounds per person per day (state waters).	Season typically Sept. 16 through May 14; may be shortened or extended by Department following notification.

Regulations pertaining to the size and daily catch limits for saltwater fish and shellfish taken in South Carolina and federal waters off South Carolina: Note: Fishery Regulations are subject to change (TL=Total Length, FL=Fork Length) (Abundance in South Carolina waters = a/abundant, c/common, o/occasional, r/rare). All finfish must be landed with head and tail intact, except for greater amberjack aboard vessels with valid permits and swordfish. State waters extend from the fresh/saltwater dividing line to 3 miles offshore. Federal waters extend from 3 miles to 200 miles offshore. Rev: August 26, 1993

SPECIES/Abundance	RECREATIONAL SIZE LIMIT	RECREATIONAL CATCH LIMIT	OTHER
PORGIES AND SNAPPERS			
Red Porgy/c	12 inches (TL) (state and federal waters).	No catch limit currently in effect.	12" TL commercial size limit (state and federal waters).
Vermilion Snapper/c	10 inches (TL) (state and federal waters).	10 fish per person per day (state and federal waters).	12" TL commercial size limit (state and federal waters)
Red Snapper*/c	20 inches (TL) (state and federal waters).	2 fish per person per day. (state and federal waters)	20" TL commercial size limit (state and federal waters).
Lane Snapper*/r	8 inches (TL) (state and ferderal waters).	*Aggregate of 10 snappers per person per day. No more than 2 red snappers (state and federal waters).	8" TL commercial size limit (state and federal waters).
Black Snapper*/r	No size limit currently in effect.	*Aggregate of 10 snappers per person per day. No more than 2 red snappers (state and federal waters).	
Other Snappers:* Blackfin/r, Cubera/r, Dog/r, Gray/r, Mahogany/r, Mutton/o, Queen/r, Schoolmaster/r, Silk/o, Yellowtail/r	12 inches (TL) (state and federal waters).	*Aggregate of 10 snappers per person per day. No more than 2 red snappers (state and federal waters).	12" TL commercial size limit (state and federal waters).

Regulations pertaining to the size and daily catch limits for saltwater fish and shellfish taken in South Carolina and federal waters off South Carolina: Note: Fishery Regulations are subject to change (TL=Total Length, FL=Fork Length) (Abundance in South Carolina waters = a/abundant, c/common, o/occasional, r/rare). All finfish must be landed with head and tail intact, except for greater amberjack aboard vessels with valid permits and swordfish. State waters extend from the fresh/saltwater dividing line to 3 miles offshore. Federal waters extend from 3 miles to 200 miles offshore. Rev: August 26, 1993

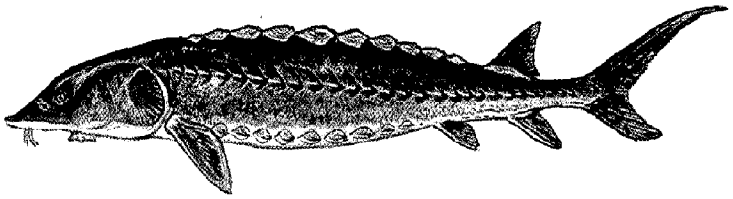
SPECIES/Abundance	RECREATIONAL SIZE LIMIT	RECREATIONAL CATCH LIMIT	OTHER
SEA BASS AND GROUPERS			
Black Seabass/a	8 inches (TL) (state and federal waters).	No catch limit currently in effect.	8" TL commercial size limit (state and federal waters).
Nassau Grouper/r	All sizes prohibited.	Possession is prohibited (state and federal waters).	
Jewfish/r	All sizes prohibited.	Possession is prohibited (state and federal waters).	
Other Groupers: + Gag/c, Scamp/c, Black/r, Red/r, Yellowfin/o, Yellowmouth/o	20 inches (TL) (state and federal waters).	Aggregate of 5 fish per person per day (state and federal waters).	20" TL commercial size limit (state and federal waters).
BILLFISH			
Blue Marlin/c	86 inches (FL) (state and federal waters).	No catch limit currently in effect.	Game fish may be taken only by rod and reel and may not be purchased, bartered, traded or sold (state and federal waters).
White Marlin/c	62 inches (FL) (state and federal waters).	No catch limit currently in effect.	Game fish may be taken only by rod and reel and may not be purchased, bartered, traded or sold (state and federal waters).
Sailfish/c	57 inches (FL) (state and federal waters).	No catch limit currently in effect.	Game fish may be taken only by rod and reel and may not be purchased, bartered, traded or sold (state and federal waters).
Swordfish/c	31 inches carcass length (55 lbs. whole wt., 41 lbs. dressed) (state and federal waters).	No catch limit currently in effect.	No more than 15% of the total number of swordfish landed (commercial and recreational) during a trip can be less than 31 inches dressed carcass length or less than 41 lbs. dressed.
Longbill Spearfish/r	No size limit currently in effect.	No catch limit currently in effect.	May not be purchased, bartered, traded or sold (State)

Regulations pertaining to the size and daily catch limits for saltwater fish and shellfish taken in South Carolina and federal waters off South Carolina: Note: Fishery Regulations are subject to change (TL=Total Length, FL=Fork Length) (Abundance in South Carolina waters = a/abundant, c/common, o/occasional, r/rare). All finfish must be landed with head and tail intact, except for greater amberjack aboard vessels with valid permits and swordfish. State waters extend from the fresh/saltwater dividing line to 3 miles offshore. Federal waters extend from 3 miles to 200 miles offshore. Rev: August 26, 1993

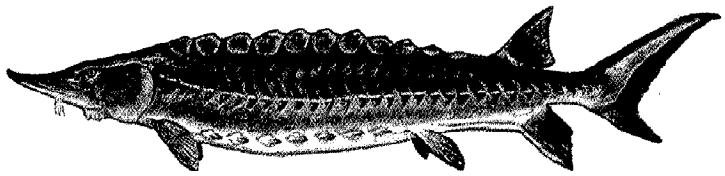
SPECIES/Abundance	RECREATIONAL SIZE LIMIT	RECREATIONAL CATCH LIMIT	OTHER
STURGEON			
Shortnose sturgeon/o	All sizes prohibited.	It is unlawful to catch, or buy, sell or ship shortnose sturgeon at any time (state and federal waters).	Classified as endangered by state and federal law.
Atlantic sturgeon/o	All sizes prohibited.	It unlawful to catch, buy, sell or ship Atlantic sturgeon at any time (state waters).	All state waters closed to fishing for Atlantic Sturgeon until further notice.
SHARKS			
Dogfish (Spiny and Smooth)/c	No size limit currently in effect.	No catch limit currently in effect.	
Small Coastal Species: Atlantic Sharpnose/a, Bonnethead/c, Finetooth/r, Blacknose/r, Atlantic Angle/r	No size limit currently in effect.	5 from this group per person per day. (federal waters)	
Large Coastal Species: Sandbar/c, Blacktip/c, Dusky/c, Spinner/c, Silky/c, Tiger/c, Lemmon/c, Sand Tiger/c, Nurse/c, Scalloped Hammerhead/c, Smooth Hammerhead/c, Night/r, Bull/o, Great Hammerhread/o Whale/r, Basking/r, White/r	No size limit currently in effect.	4 from this group and/or Pelagic group combined per boat per day.(federal waters)	Permits required for commercial fishing vessels. Commercial quotas in effect.
Pelagic Offshore Species: Blue/c, Shortfin/r, Porbeagle/r, Threaher/r, Bigeye Tresher/r, Oceanic Whitetip/r	No size limit currently in effect.	4 from this group and/or Large Coastal group combined per boat per day.(federal waters)	Permits required for commercail fishing vessels. Commercial quotas in effect.

Regulations pertaining to the size and daily catch limits for saltwater fish and shellfish taken in South Carolina and federal waters off South Carolina: Note: Fishery Regulations are subject to change (TL=Total Length, FL=Fork Length) (Abundance in South Carolina waters = a/abundant, c/common, o/occasional, r/rare). All finfish must be landed with head and tail intact, except for greater amberjack aboard vessels with valid permits and swordfish. State waters extend from the fresh/saltwater dividing line to 3 miles offshore. Federal waters extend from 3 miles to 200 miles offshore. Rev: August 26, 1993

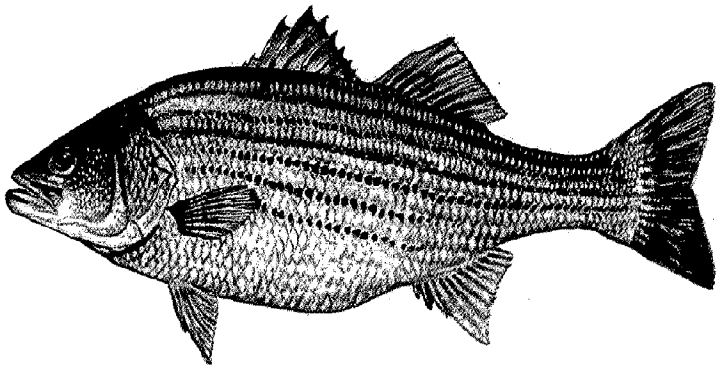
SPECIES/Abundance	RECREATIONAL SIZE LIMIT	RECREATIONAL CATCH LIMIT	OTHER
SPORT FISH			
Channel Bass/a	Unlawful to possess any channel bass less than 14 inches(TL) or greater than 27 inches (TL)(state waters)	5 fish per person per day (state waters). No channel bass may be harvested from federal waters.	Game fish can be taken only by rod and reel or by gigging during March through November. South Carolina native caught fish may not be sold (state waters).
Spotted Seatrout/a	12 inches (TL) (state waters)	15 fish per person per day (state waters).	Game fish can be taken only by rod and reel or by gigging during March through November. South Carolina native caught fish may not be sold (state waters).
Flounders: Southern and Summer/a	12 inches (TL) (state waters).	20 fish per person per day (rod and reel and gigging only), (state waters).	Size limits apply to both recreational and commercial fishing. Catch limit applies only to rod and reel or gigging. Special gigging permit required in Jasper, Colleton and Beaufort Counties.
Striped bass/c	No size limits currently in effect in saltwater.	10 fish per person per day. In Wando and Cooper Rivers and Santee River seaward to the ICW, 5 fish per person per day. (state waters).	Game fish may be taken only by rod and reel and may not be sold (state waters). Unlawful to take in saltwaters of the Savannah River.
King Mackerel/a	20 inches (FL) (state and federal waters)	5 fish per person per day (state and federal waters). Federal commercial mackerel permit needed to exceed bag limit.	Fishing year 1 January to 31 December, fishery may be closed to all harvest if total allowable catch exceeded (state and federal waters)
Spanish Mackerel/a	14 inches (TL) 12 inches (FL) (state and federal waters).	10 fish per person per day (state and federal waters). Federal commercial mackerel permit needed to exceed bag limit.	Fishing year 1 January to 31 December, fishery may be closed to all harvest if total allowable catch exceeded (state and federal waters).
Bluefish/c	No size limit currently in effect.	10 fish per person per day (state and federal waters).	
Cobia/c	37 inches (TL) 33 inches (FL) (state and federal waters).	2 fish per person per day (state and federal waters). Federal commercial mackerel permit needed to exceed limit.	
Tarpon/c	No size limit currently in effect.	1 fish per person per day (state waters).	Game fish may be taken only by rod and reel and may not be sold (state waters).
Greater Amberjack/c	28 inches (FL) (state and federal waters).	3 fish per person per day (state and federal waters).	Federally permitted vessels - commercial harvest is 36 inches (FL), 28 inches if head removed.



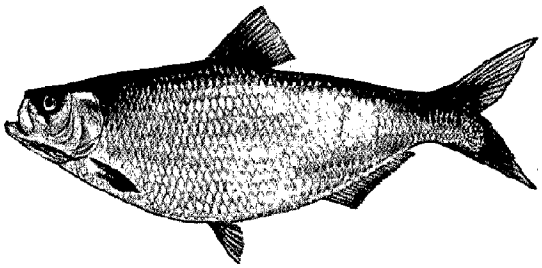
SHORTNOSE STURGEON - head and body covered with bony plates or shields; no plates posterior to dorsal fin; inferior mouth receded by four barbels. p. 33



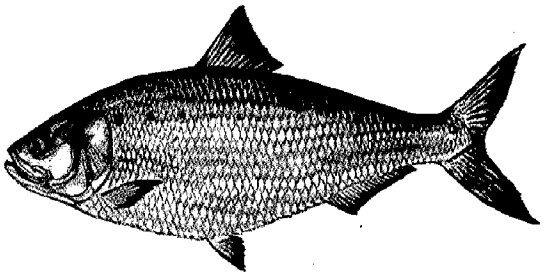
ATLANTIC STURGEON - head and body crowded with bony plates or shields, two rows of plates posterior to dorsal and anal fins; mouth preceded by four barbels. p. 34



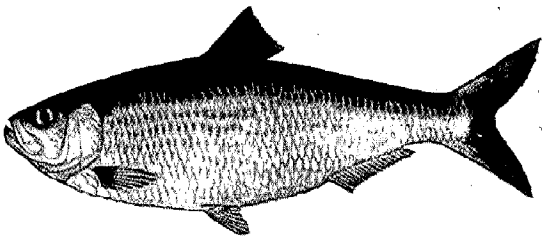
STRIPED BASS - 7 or 8 dark horizontal stripes marking scale rows on upper sides; anal fin with 3 strong spines and 7 to 13 soft rays; area between eyes not scaled. p. 40



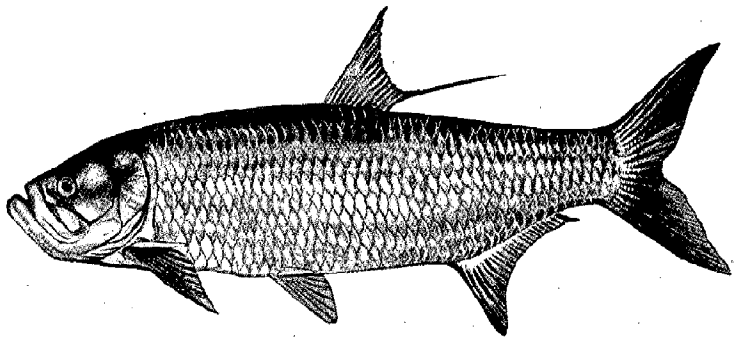
HICKORY SHAD - point of origin of dorsal fin is considerably in front of the mid-point of its body; lower jaw projects farther beyond the upper when its mouth is closed. p. 36



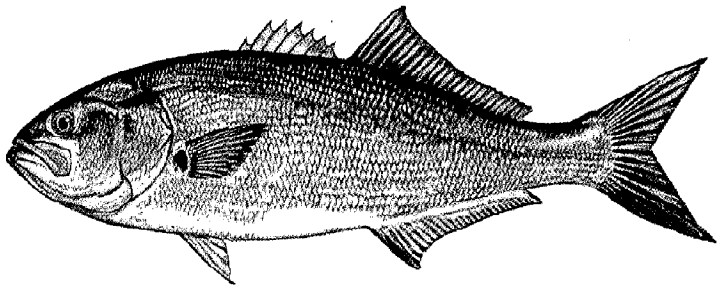
AMERICAN SHAD - dark shoulder spot followed by several more spots; dorsal fin slightly anterior to center point of body; belly with scutes forming a keel. p. 37



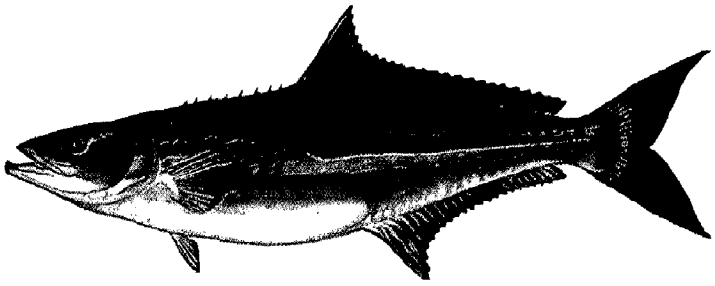
BLUEBACK HERRING - dorsal fin origin near center point of body; upper jaw with a distinct median notch and minute teeth; belly with scutes forming a distinct keel. p. 38



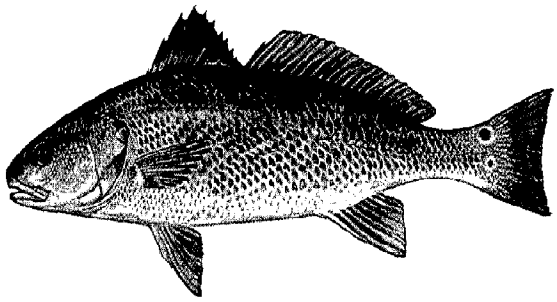
TARPON - lower jaw projecting; dorsal fin origin near mid point of body with last dorsal fin ray filamentous and very long. p. 35



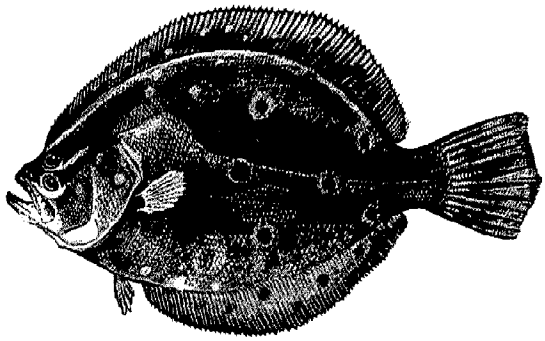
BLUEFISH - head large; mouth terminal, teeth prominent and in single row; two dorsal fins, first short with 7 or 8 spines, second long with 23 to 28 rays. p. 55



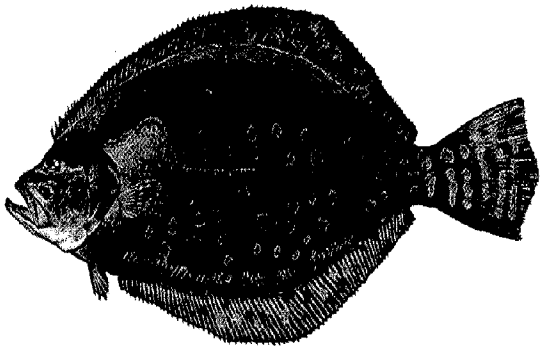
COBIA - back and sides dark brown, with two sharply defined silvery bands, head broad and depressed; first dorsal with 7 to 9 short strong isolated spines. p. 56



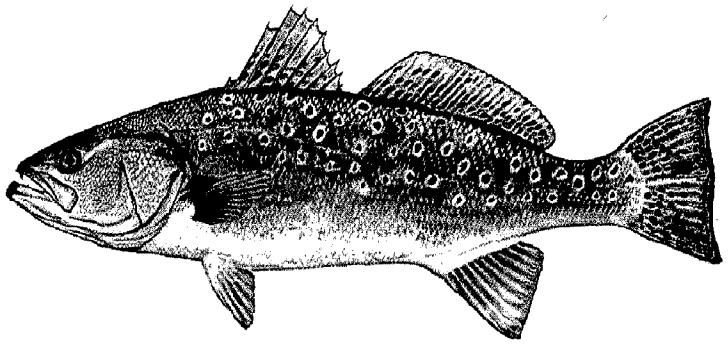
RED DRUM - one or more ocellated dark spots present on upper sides from below soft portion of dorsal fin to base of tail; mouth inferior, horizonal, teeth set in bands in both jaws. p. 68



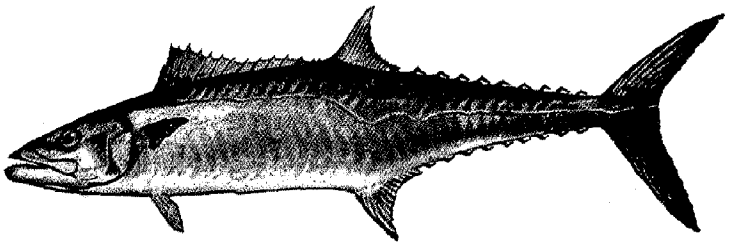
SUMMER FLOUNDER - five prominent ocellated dark spots on posterior portion of body in a double triangular pattern. p. 78



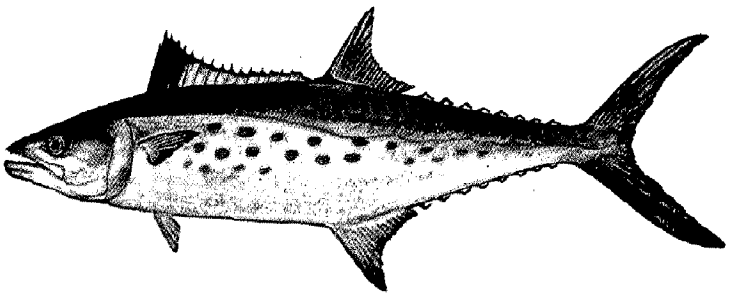
SOUTHERN FLOUNDER - no distinct ocellated spots, dorsal fin originating slightly in front of upper eye. p. 79



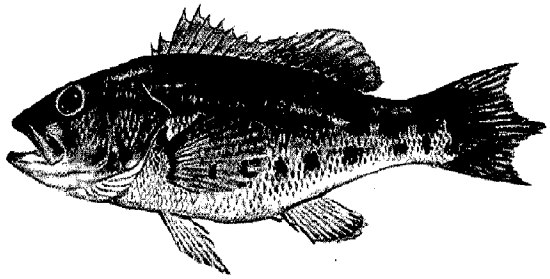
SPOTTED SEATROUT - numerous round black spots irregularly scattered on back and sides; a pair of large canine-like teeth at tip of upper jaw. p. 67



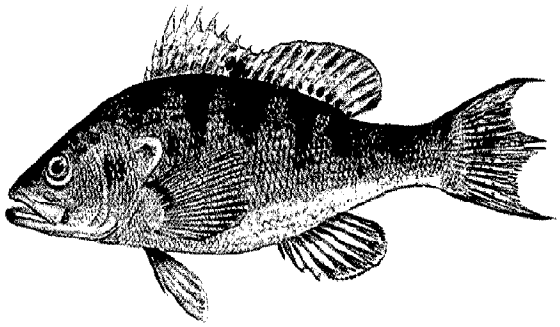
KING MACKEREL - back iridescent bluish green; first dorsal fin lightly and uniformly pigmented; lateral line abruptly curving downward below second dorsal fin. p. 70



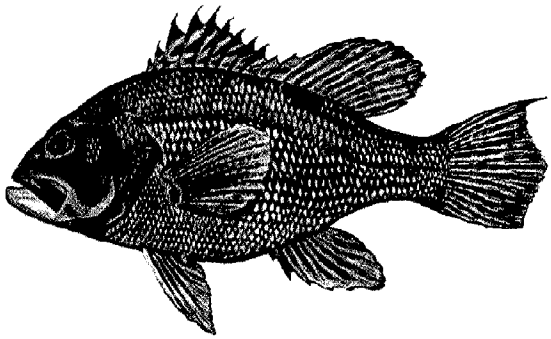
SPANISH MACKEREL - anterior third of dorsal fin is black; sides with numerous yellow to bronze spots and no streaks; lateral line gradually curving. p. 71



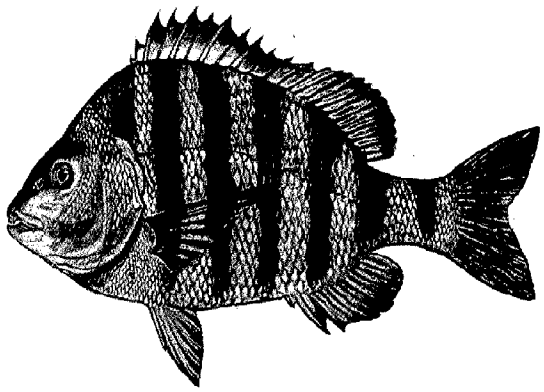
BANK SEA BASS - sides with three rows of black blotches and numerous blue and yellow stripes; middle tail ray and dorsal spines with jet black spots. p. 41



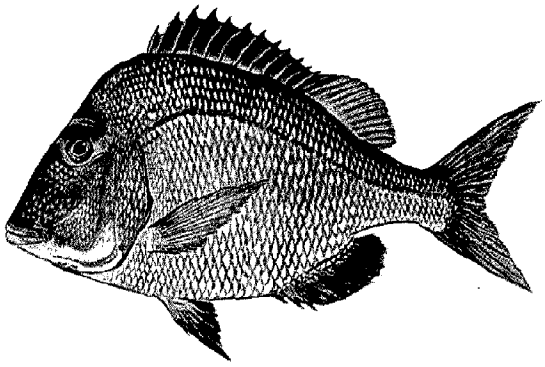
ROCK SEA BASS - sides with seven brownish bars; yellowish band across anal fin; distinct black spot at base of last three dorsal spines. p. 42



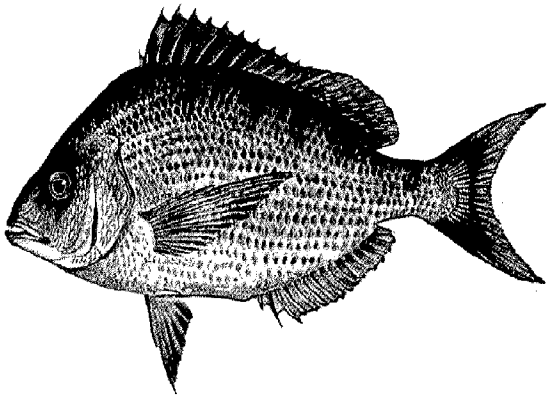
BLACK SEA BASS - tail fin rounded with a single upper ray very elongated; body color very dark; preopercle finely serrate. p. 43



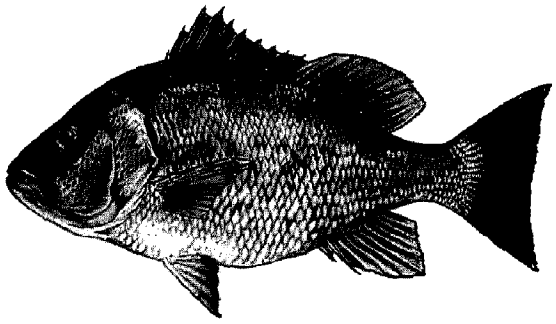
SHEEPSHEAD - gray with 5 or 6 dark vertical bars on body and one on nape; jaws with a series of 8 broad, incisor-like teeth, several series of lateral molar-like teeth. p. 63



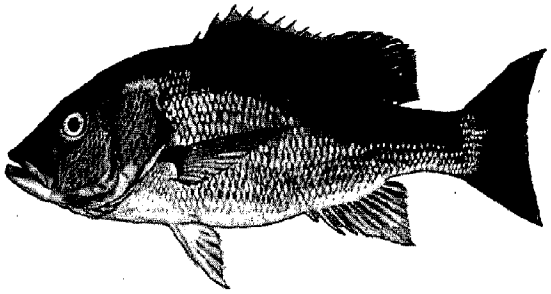
KNOBBED PORGY - upper head profile very steep; bony tubercle over eyes; jaws with canine-like teeth of about equal size; 2 rows molar-like teeth in lower jaw and 3 rows in upper. p. 64



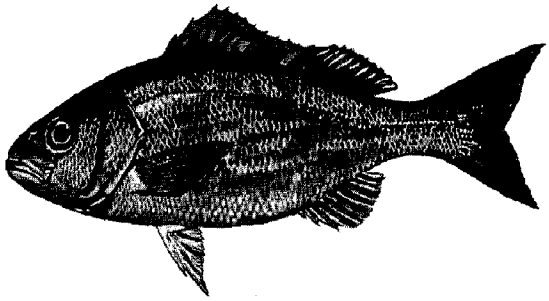
SCUP - dorsal fin with 12 spines preceded by one forward-directed spine; front teeth strongly flattened, in close-set bands; two rows of molar-like teeth in both jaws. p. 66



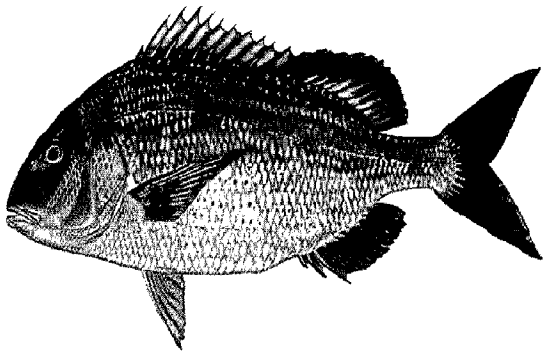
RED SNAPPER - back and upper sides scarlet to brick red; iris of eye red; tooth patch on roof of mouth anchor-shaped and well developed. p. 58



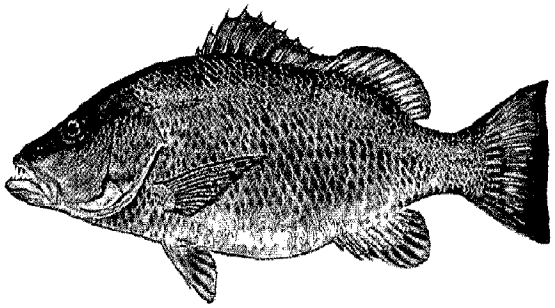
SILK SNAPPER - back and upper sides pink to red with fine yellow undulating lines; iris of eye yellow; tooth patch on roof of mouth anchor-shaped. p. 61



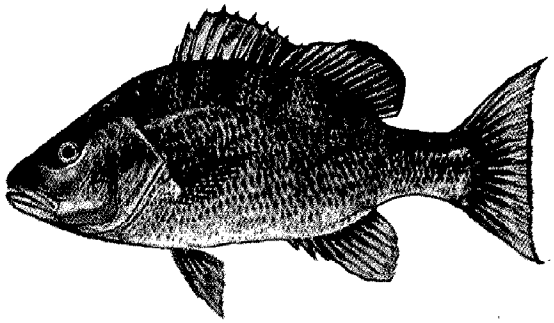
VERMILION SNAPPER - back and upper sides vermilion, faint dark lines running forward and down from dorsal fin base; tooth patch on roof of mouth very broad. p. 62



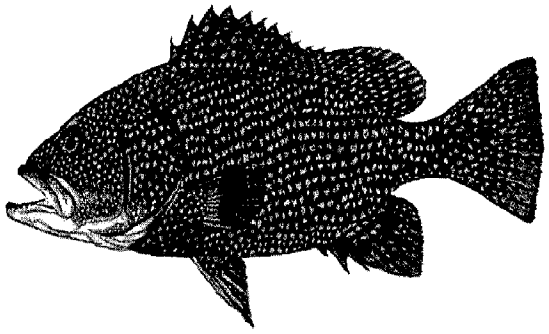
RED PORGY - back and upper sides pinkish silver with an yellow spot on each scale of the upper half of the body; jaws with canine teeth 4 in upper 6 in lower jaw. p. 65.



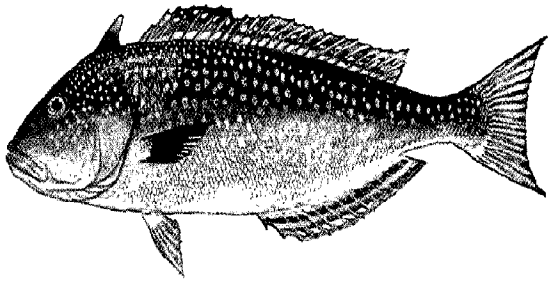
CUBERA SNAPPER - back and upper sides pale to dark gray with reddish tinges; mouth large with thick lips; canine teeth both jaws and strongly developed. p. 59



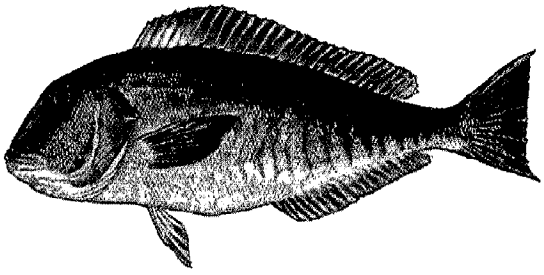
GRAY SNAPPER - rusty dots on centers of scales; outer pair of canine teeth in upper jaw much larger than lower canines; tooth patch on roof of mouth anchor-shaped. p. 60



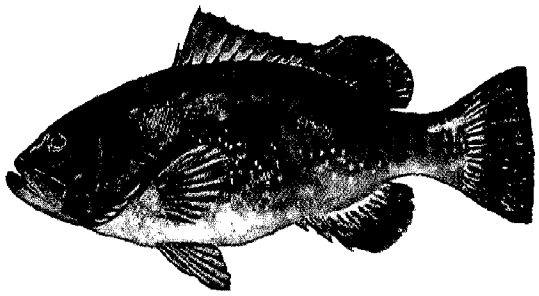
SPECKLED HIND - red body; fins, head and body with creamy white spots. p. 44



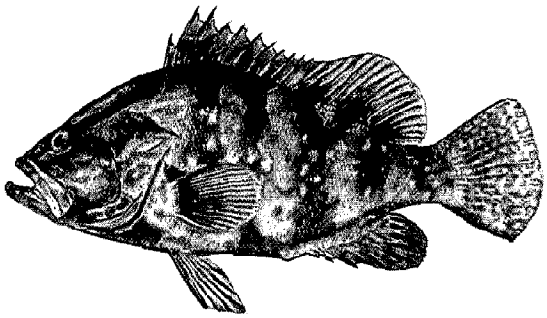
TILEFISH - predorsal ridge developed into a fleshy flap in front of dorsal fin; dorsal fin with 7 spines and 14-15 rays. p. 54



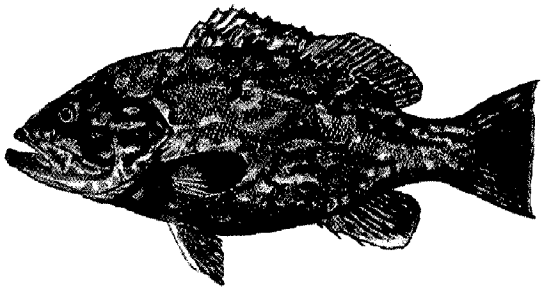
BLUELINE TILEFISH - dorsal and anal fins are long and continuous; eye small, one fifth of head length; predorsal ridge present; preoperculum serrated. p. 53



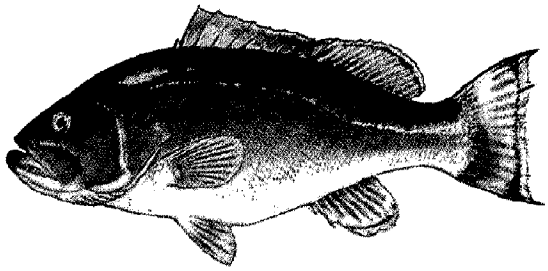
RED GROUPER - body brownish red, lighter below, pattern of whitish spots and irregular bars. p. 47



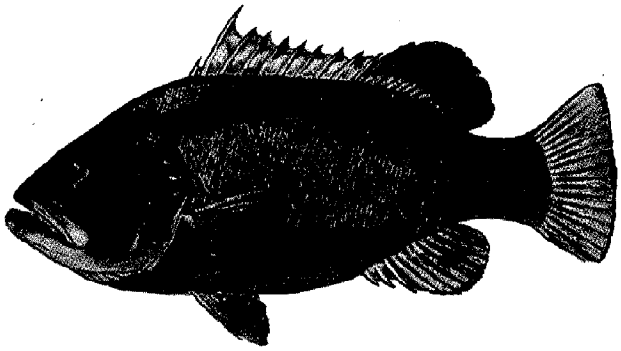
NASSAU GROUPER - five vertical bars on body join to form w-shaped marks; distinct black saddle anterior to tail fin. p. 50



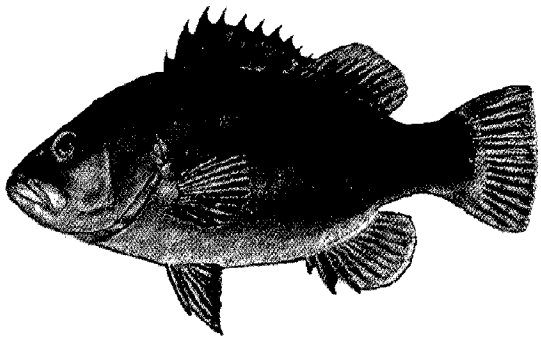
GAG - body gray with dark vermiculations grouped into square blotches; preopercle angulate with a distinct lobe at the angle. p. 51



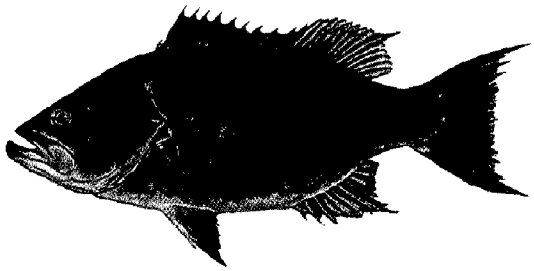
YELLOWEDGE GROUPER - front part of dorsal fin with a broad yellow margin; pearly blue line on preopercle. p. 45



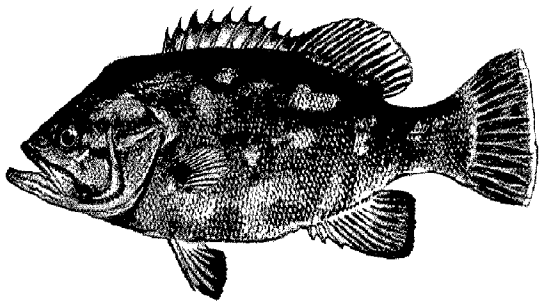
WARSAW GROUPER - body reddish brown to black, dull reddish brown below; dorsal and anal fins rounded. p. 48



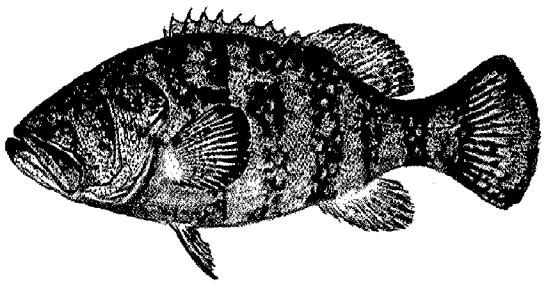
SNOWY GROUPER - spiny part of dorsal fin with a black margin; young with dark saddle shaped blotch anterior to the tail which reaches below lateral line. p. 49



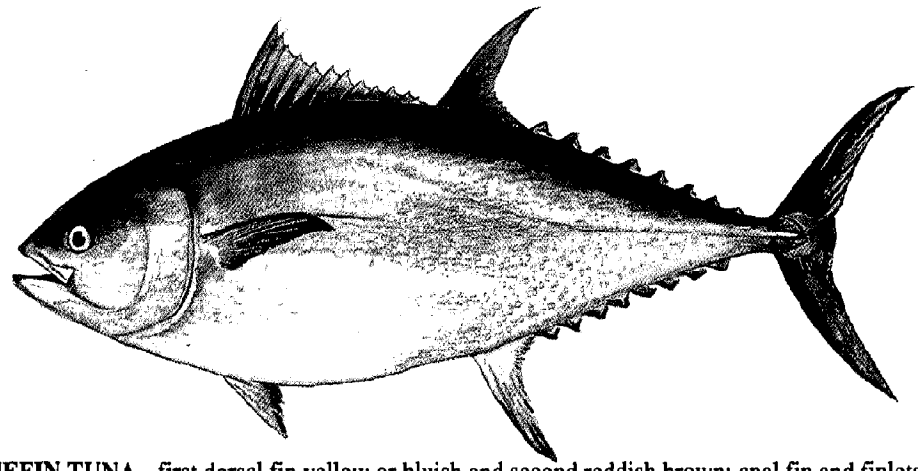
SCAMP - body light brownish gray with well separated spots; yellow coloration on jaw; preopercle with prominent serrated lobe; vertical fins greatly prolonged. p. 52



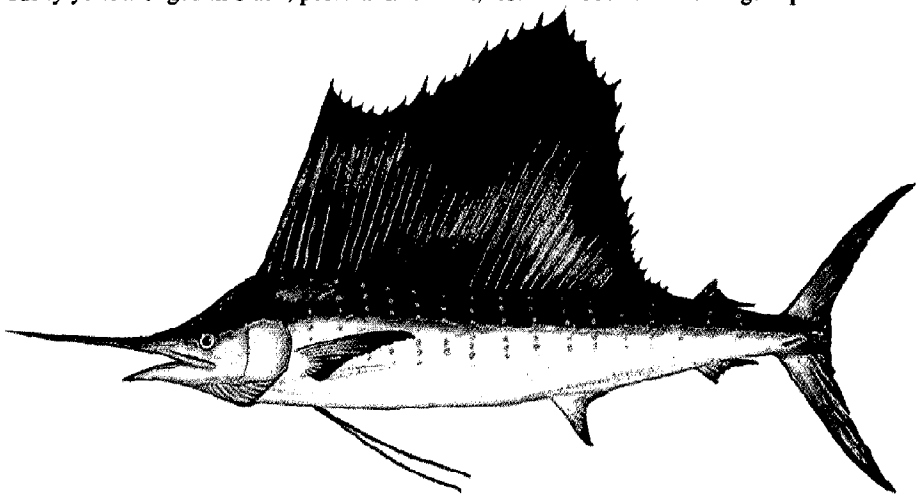
WRECKFISH - body strongly flattened sideways, about 2 1/2 to 3 times as long as deep; body protuberances over eyes and nape; mouth large and lower jaw projecting. p. 39



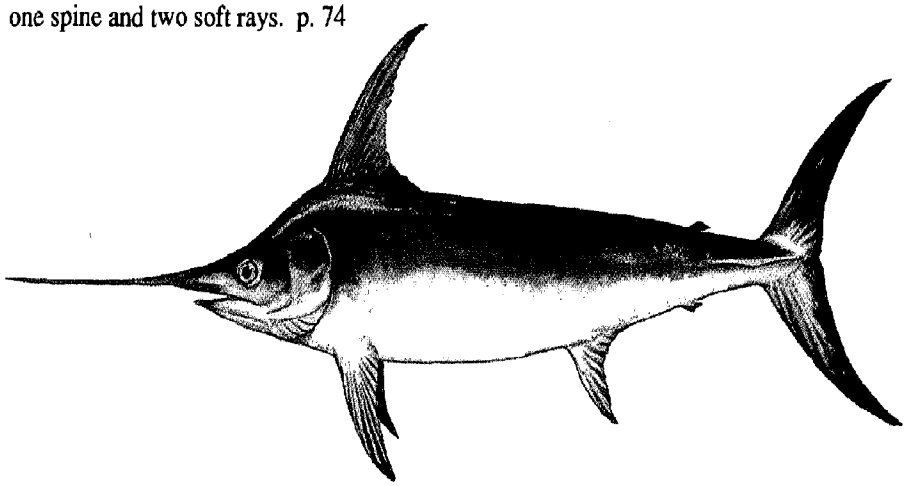
JEWFISH - greenish or grey body with black spots; very robust body nearly round in cross section; may exceed 500 lbs. p. 46



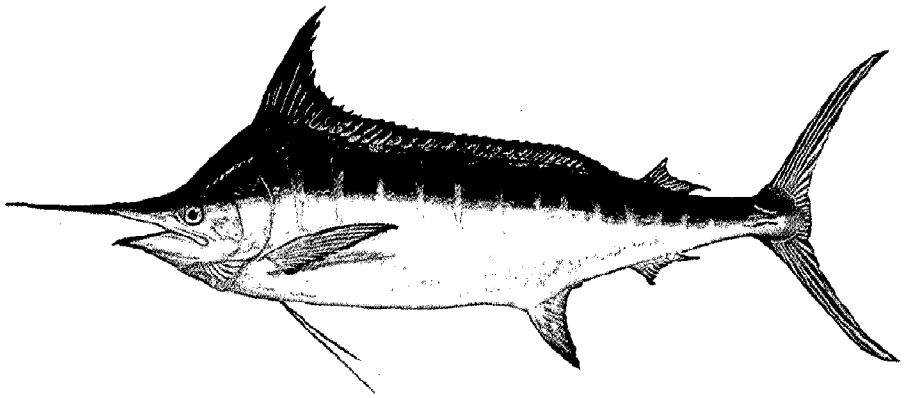
BLUEFIN TUNA - first dorsal fin yellow or bluish and second reddish brown; anal fin and finlets dusky yellow edged in black; pectoral fins short, less than 80% of head length. p. 72



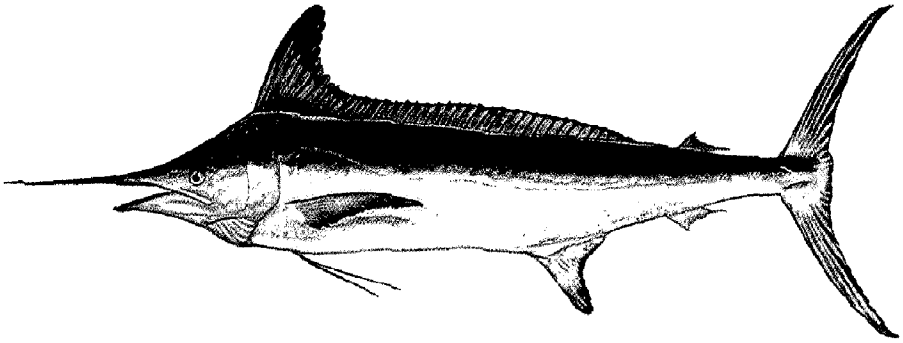
SAILFISH - first dorsal fin sail-like; pelvic fins very long almost reaching to anus and consisting of one spine and two soft rays. p. 74



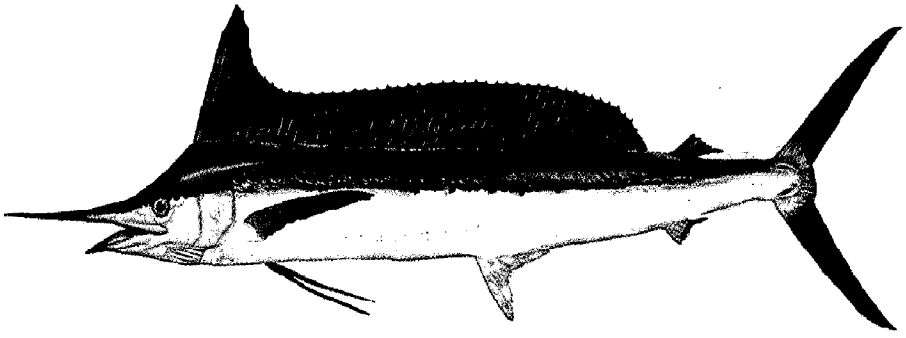
SWORDFISH - snout ending in long, flattened sword; single, strong, lateral keel on each side of caudal peduncle in front of tail. p. 73



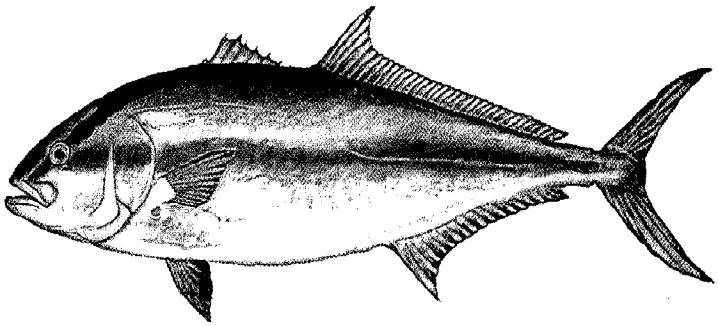
BLUE MARLIN - height of anterior part of first dorsal fin smaller than body depth, lateral line reticulated, anus close to origin of first anal fin. p. 75



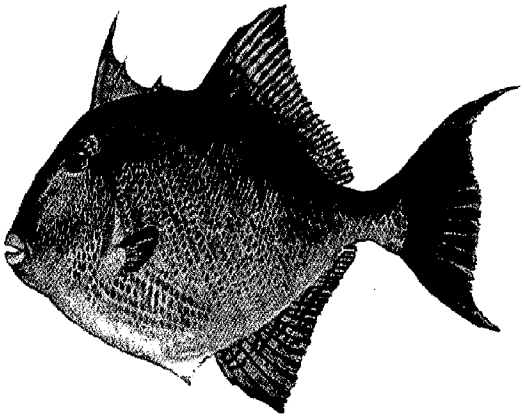
WHITE MARLIN - height of first dorsal fin nearly equal to body depth, lateral line single and easy to see; tips of first dorsal, first anal & pectoral fins rounded. p. 76



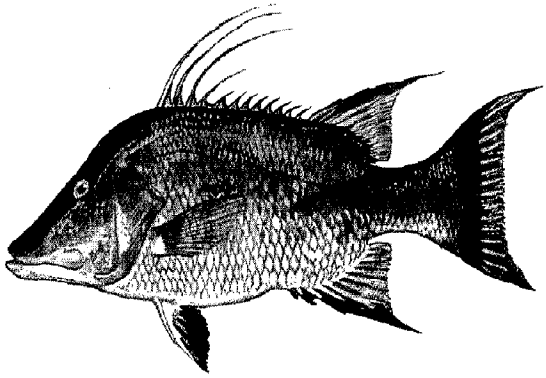
LONGBILL SPEARFISH - anus well in front of orgin of first anal fin, body covered with.densly imbedded scales ending in several points. p. 77



GREATER AMBERJACK - usually a dark stripe runs through the eye to the dorsal fin origin; deep grooves present (top and bottom) in front of tail fin. p. 57



GRAY TRIGGERFISH - grayish/green with three dark blotches or irregular bars,scales enlarged above pectoral fin base forming a flexible structure. p. 80



HOGFISH - dorsal fin with 14 spines of which the first three are extended into long filaments; body general pink to reddish brown with scales edged in yellow; dorsal spot. p. 69

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