

Maine Department of Marine Resources

Recreational Saltwater Fishing Newsletter

Spring 2022



Letter to the Captains

Dear Captains,

As Maine for-hire recreational saltwater fishing industry members or Maine based federal CH/HB HMS Permit holders, you may have been approached in person or by phone/email by Maine Department of Marine Resources (ME DMR) staff requesting your or your anglers' participation in NOAA Fisheries' Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) national network of recreational fishing surveys. This newsletter provides insight – or a refresher – on the specific MRIP surveys conducted by ME DMR and shares a few summaries from the 2021 season. To those of you who participated during the last season, we extend our gratitude for your contribution to bettering the estimates of Maine's recreational catch and effort.

-ME DMR Recreational Fisheries Program staff

Recreational Fisheries Programs

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Large Pelagic Intercept Survey (LPIS)

Large Pelagic Telephone Survey (LPTS)



Photo credit: Barry Gibson

Data Collection Background

The National Marine Fisheries Service (referred to as NOAA Fisheries or NMFS), of NOAA in the US Department of Commerce, is responsible for managing the nation's marine resources and so carries the task of gathering information from U.S. recreational anglers pertinent to their marine fishing activities. To meet that mandate, NOAA Fisheries conducts a suite of surveys of marine recreational anglers & for-hire boats under a program currently named MRIP. To fulfill U.S. obligations to the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), NOAA Fisheries conducts a program called LPS.

The continuous monitoring of catch, effort, and participation along with demographic, social, and economic characteristics of those who participate in saltwater recreational fishing in U.S. waters allows for monitoring trends, evaluating impacts of management regulations, and projecting what impacts various management scenarios will have on marine fisheries. The recreational fisheries data collected are essential for the work of NOAA Fisheries, Regional Fishery Management Councils, Interstate Marine Fisheries Commissions, state conservation agencies, recreational fishing industries, and others involved in the management and productivity of marine fisheries.

ME DMR conducts portions of the suite of MRIP recreational fishing surveys and LPS for NOAA Fisheries within our state's boundaries: APAIS, FHTS, LPTS and LPIS. Data from these component surveys are combined by NOAA Fisheries to estimate total fishing effort, participation, catch by species, and other information. Your participation in these survey programs, along with participation of other captains and anglers, combines to provide the invaluable data upon which management of our fisheries depends.

Boat participation in the LPS is required and is a condition of obtaining a NOAA Fisheries HMS Permit.

MRIP Since 2008; MRFSS (1979-2008)	Access Point Angler Intercept Survey (APAIS)	A voluntary survey of marine recreational anglers at the end of their fishing trip, with a focus on gathering information about catch, participation and fishing effort. Interviewers are assigned to pre-selected coastal fishing access locations for various time blocks, seven days a week during the sampling season. Head boat anglers are surveyed during their trip by ride-along interviewers, allowing direct collection of discard data as well as harvest data. Conducted by ME DMR on behalf of NOAA Fisheries, May through October (in Maine).
	Fishing Effort Survey (FES)	Households are sampled from a national database of mailing addresses, which is supplemented with information from state-based recreational fishing license and registration programs. Because research indicates that both anglers and non-anglers are more likely to respond to a survey that includes questions about topics other than fishing, the FES is designed as a weather and outdoor activity survey. This helps us improve the number of responses we receive while reducing the risk of nonresponse bias. Conducted by an outside NOAA Fisheries contractor.
	For-Hire Telephone Survey (FHTS or FHS)	Begun in 2008 as part of the MRIP, the voluntary FHTS collects fishing effort data from the for-hire fishing fleet (charter and head/party boats). A randomly chosen 10% of for-hire vessels are surveyed weekly from a coast-wide directory of eligible vessels, and Captains are asked to report trip & fishing effort information for the previous week. FHTS effort data is combined with APAIS data of for-hire fishing anglers to produce estimates of catch per trip by area for the for-hire fleet. Conducted by ME DMR on behalf of NOAA Fisheries, May through October (in Maine).
LPS Since 1992	Large Pelagic Intercept Survey (LPIS)	A dockside survey of private and charter boats that have just completed fishing trips directed at large pelagic species. This survey is conducted at public fishing access sites that are likely to be used by offshore anglers and is primarily designed to collect detailed catch data. Conducted by ME DMR on behalf of NOAA Fisheries, July through October.
	Large Pelagic Telephone Survey (LPTS)	A telephone survey in which a randomly chosen 10% of the federally permitted HMS fleet is contacted weekly and captains are asked to report detailed trip, fishing effort, & catch information for the previous week. Conducted by ME DMR on behalf of NOAA Fisheries, June through October for boats with CH/HB HMS permit. ME boats holding other HMS category permits is conducted by an outside NOAA Fisheries contractor.
*Due to overlap of eligible vessels between LPTS and FHTS, the two surveys are conducted in tandem.		

For additional explanation of MRIP surveys and HMS management information, visit the NOAA Fisheries websites: MRIP www.countmyfish.noaa.gov , HMS www.fisheries.noaa.gov/topic/atlantic-highly-migratory-species

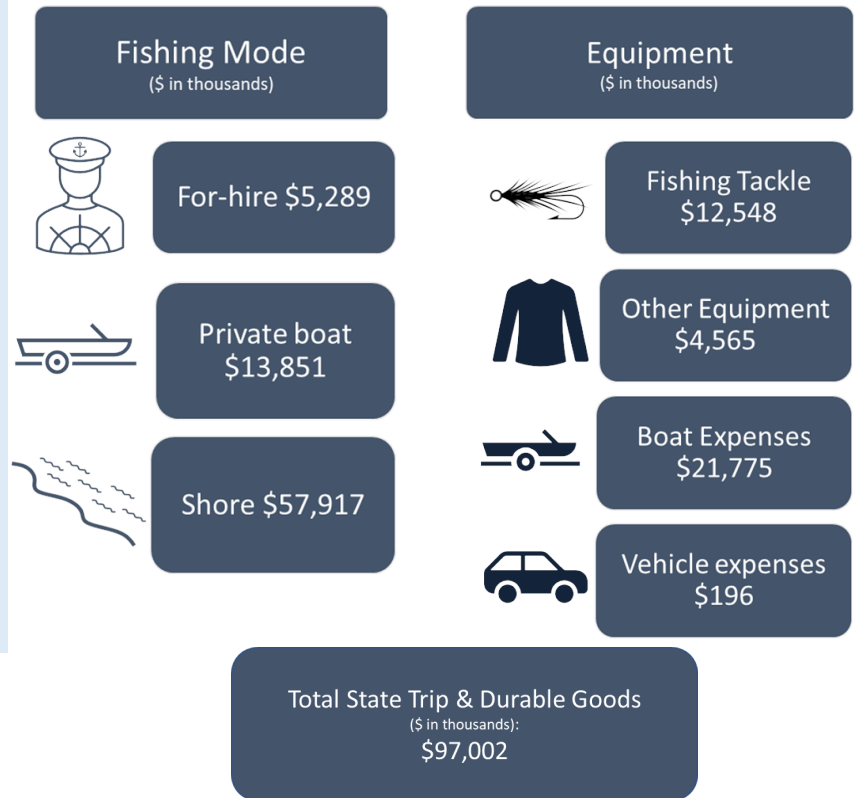
Socioeconomic Survey (SEAS)

To interpret the economic impacts of recreational fisheries and estimate the benefits of those fisheries, NOAA Fisheries collect economic data, develops economic models, and conducts analyses. This research helps us understand and predict the behavior of those that participate in recreational fisheries and the possible effects different management actions might have on recreational fisheries.

This summer SEAS will be conducted simultaneous with APAIS. To the right is information for Maine, which NOAA published in 2018 using SEAS data collected in 2017. Please encourage anglers to complete SEAS. The survey provides important information on the financial contribution recreational fishing provides to the state economy.

Estimates of ME Trip and Durable Goods Expenditures

Source: NOAA Fisheries Economics of the United States 2018



Data Collection Results

The following sections provides an overview of the 2021 field season for APAIS and LPS. Again DMR recreational fisheries program staff would like to thank all our participants from last year. As we look forward to the upcoming season we hope to increase our intercept numbers from last year.

APAIS

The table below indicates the number of anglers field staff were able to intercepted for APAIS throughout the 2021 season. Due to the pandemic, head boat ride alongs were postponed until July when cases were lower and procedures were put in place for the safety of DMR staff, head boat employees, and their clients. The graphs below show select for-hire fishing estimates created from the data contributed by you and your anglers. If you want to see the data from private and for-hire catch please visit our recreational fishing page and look under the “MRIP Landings Data”.

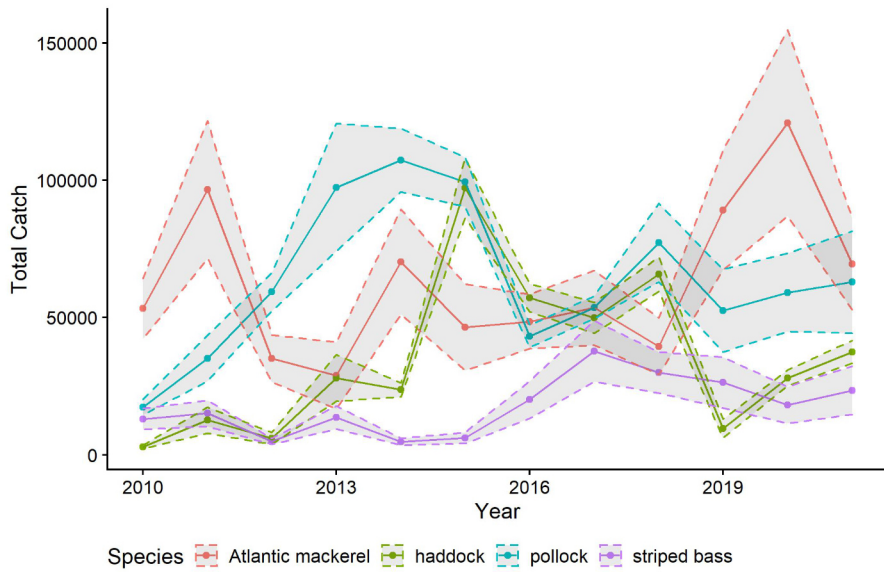
Table 1. Number of intercepted anglers from 2021 APAIS and LPS by month and mode.

	May	June	July	August	September	October	Total
Charter boat anglers	0	10	77	30	20	5	142
Head boat anglers	0	0	45	7	4	0	56
Private anglers	30	138	247	227	70	12	724
Shore anglers	22	74	147	90	29	15	377
LPS intercepts	-	-	8	2	3	1	14

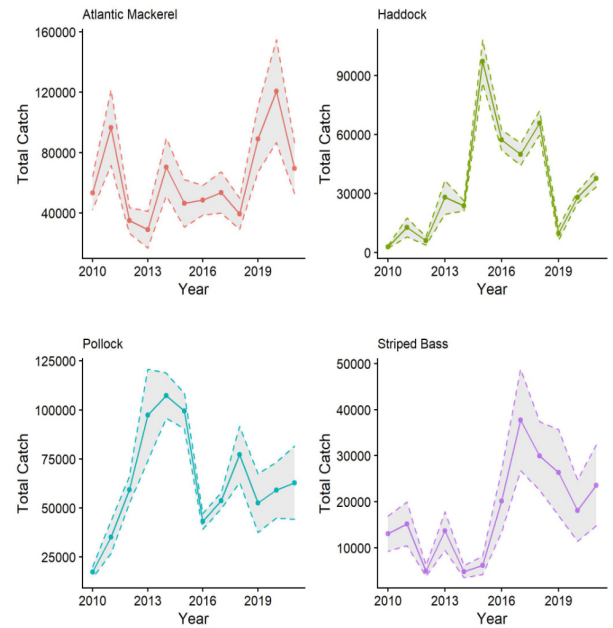
*Head boat ride alongs were canceled until July due to Covid-19.

LPS survey starts in July.

Maine's Total Catch Estimates from For-Hire Fleet (2010-2021)



Maine's Total Catch Estimates from For-Hire Fleet (2010-2021)



LPS

Table 1 indicates the number of intercepts field staff were able to obtain for LPS throughout the 2021 season. From the 14 intercepts obtained, 13 boats (93%) targeted bluefin tuna as their primary or secondary species. Only 1 boat (7%) reported any legal shark as their target species. Intercept boats report a total of 6 bluefin tuna and 14 sharks were caught (kept and release). From the 14 boats intercepted, 31 anglers were fishing 34 lines for a total of 180 hours.

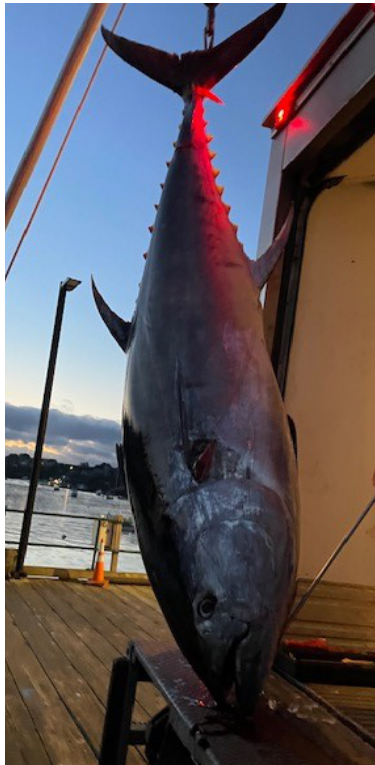


Photo courtesy of Greg Brown



Photo courtesy of Renee Allocca

Volunteer Angler Logbook

The Volunteer Angler Logbook (VAL) program is primarily geared towards striped bass fishermen as a means of collecting additional length, catch/effort data but is open to anglers who fish for any saltwater species. Although we conduct the MRIP APAIS, we still miss lengths and weights on sub-legal or released stripers because Maine's striped bass fishery has size and bag limits. This, coupled with the fact that many anglers opt for catch and release, field interviewers actually see limited numbers of fish. The VAL program is quite simple. An angler records information about fish harvested or released during each trip for themselves and any fishing companions, **even if no fish were caught!** Please email victoria.batter@maine.gov if you would like to sign up.

2021 preliminary data:

Effort data

The **52 logbook keepers** reported **1,232 fishing trips** which, resulted in **2,009 individual angler-trips** and **over 6,800 angler hours** over the course of the season. **96% (1,180)** targeted striped bass as the primary or secondary target.

Catch data - striped bass

1.37 striped bass was caught per angler-hour on all trips with complete catch information and striped bass as the primary or secondary target (941 trips). A total of **4,532 striped bass** were caught on 919 trips, **1% (47)** were kept and **99% (4,485)** were released.

Length data – striped bass

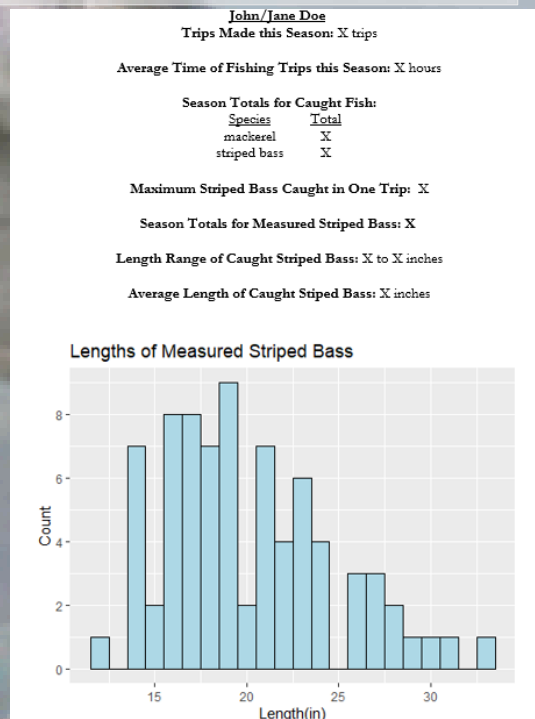
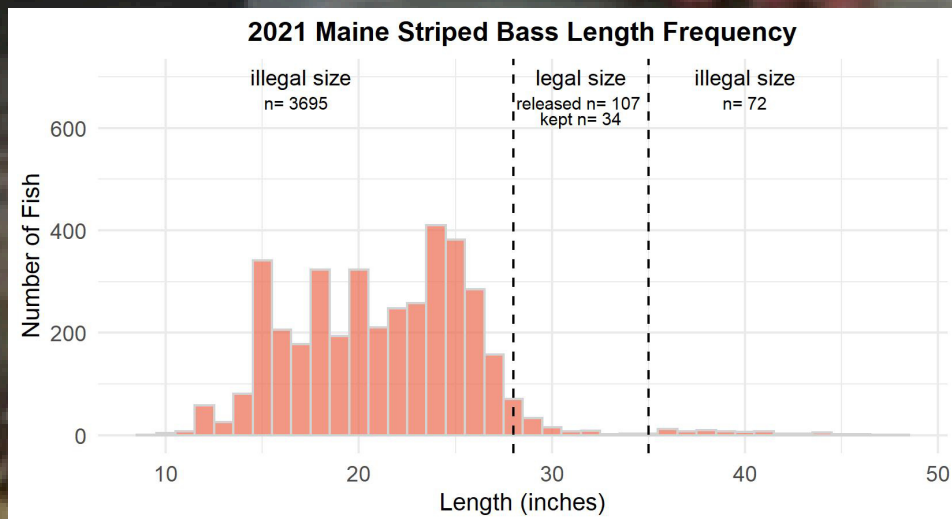
3,908 (86%) striped bass had their length measured. **3.61% (141)** of the stripers with estimated or measured lengths were $\geq 28"$ and $< 35"$ (legal size). Of these, **24% (34) were kept, 76% (107) were released.** The **average size** for measured striped bass was **21.5"**. The **largest was 48"** and the **smallest was 9"**. **96.39% (3,767)** of the striped bass with estimated or measured lengths **were not legal size.**

Individual summary: Every participant who returned their logbook receives an seasonal summary of their recorded fishing trips (see John/Jane Doe figure)



ME Department of Marine Resources

2021 VOLUNTEER ANGLER LOGBOOK





Tackle Busters Club

This "club" is an association of saltwater anglers who have landed a "BIG ONE" in Maine. Tackle Busters was established as a way to recognize saltwater anglers who have outstanding catches of particular fish, but do not qualify for state record. Fish listed must be taken on rod and reel, but line testing strength is not limited. Live and cut baits as well as artificial lures may be used. Fish entered must meet the minimum weight or length.

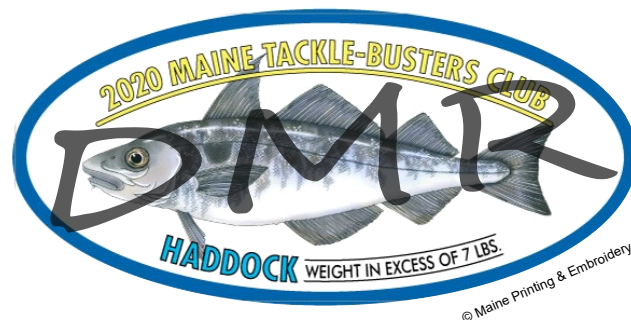
Anglers who wish to qualify for Tackle Busters in the striped bass or bluefish category but wish to release their fish unharmed may do so if the fish meets the minimum total length requirement. A photo of the fish beside a tape measure would provide the necessary verification of size. Those anglers catching a fish that meets the minimum weight or length requirement will be enrolled in Tackle Busters and will receive a window decal and membership card.

2021's Largest Fish in Each Category

Species	# Submitted	Weight	Length	Angler	Date
Acadian redfish	1	2.25 lbs	16 inches	Jo Pullis	8/3/2021
Atlantic cod	1	25.5 lbs	40.5 inches	James Taylor	9/28/2021
Atlantic halibut	2	134.5 lbs	64 inches	Jordan Evans	6/15/2021
bluefin tuna	3	614 lbs	106 inches	Bill Woodward	9/20/2021
cusk	15	32 lbs	40.5 inches	Scott Leavitt	7/20/2021
haddock	5	8.5 lbs	28.5 inches	Ray Charles	6/8/2021
pollock	2	26.5 lbs	42 inches	Todd Mallory	9/15/2021
striped bass	4		45 inches	Peter Cahill	7/9/2021
				John Brewer	7/21/2021
white hake	18	38 lbs	45 inches	Bryan Lewer	7/13/2021
whiting	1	4 lbs	26.5 inches	Carter Bogden	7/1/2021

2021's Minimum Qualification

black sea bass	2 lbs.	pollock	25 lbs.
bluefin tuna	300 lbs.	porbeagle shark	200 lbs.
bluefish	15 lbs. or 36 in.	redfish	2 lbs.
cod	25 lbs.	shad	21 in.
cusk	12 lbs.	striped bass	25 lbs. or 42 in.
haddock	7 lbs.	tautog	3 lbs.
halibut	50 lbs.	thresher shark	200 lbs.
mackerel	2 lbs.	white hake	25 lbs.
mako shark	250 lbs.	whiting (silver hake)	3 lbs.
monkfish	20 lbs.	winter flounder	2 lbs.



Jordan Evans
134.5 pounds, Atlantic halibut



Carter Bogden
4 pounds, whiting



Jo Pullis
2.25 pounds, Acadian redfish



James Micolo
413 pounds, bluefin tuna

Photos courtesy of Tim Tower

Photo courtesy of Greg Brown

Maine State Saltwater Game Fish Records

ME DMR Recreational Fisheries Program staff would like to congratulate **Justin Petelle** and **Nathan Superchi** on their state record catch last season! Justin Petelle is the new recorder holder for **cunner (2.92 lbs.)** in the rod and reel category. While Nathan Superchi now holds the record for **silver hake/whiting (5 lbs. 1.4 oz.)** in the rod and reel category.

In order to qualify for a Maine state saltwater game fish record, the fish has to be caught within Maine state waters or off the coast of Maine and landed within the state of Maine.



Photo courtesy of Justin Petelle

Justin Petelle
2.92 lbs. cunner



Photo courtesy of Greg Superchi

Nathan Superchi
5 lbs. 1.4 oz. silver hake

White Shark Sightings

There are two ways to report any white shark sightings!

DMR Form



An online [form](#) from DMR to report White Shark sightings within Maine waters.



Sharktivity App (Run by Atlantic White Shark Conservancy)



An app and [website](#) where you can submit and view shark sightings all around New England.

Acoustic tags and SPOT are also available to view on the app.



White Shark Logbook

A [website](#) (run by Atlantic White Shark Conservancy) which displays white shark acoustic detections.

*Currently only displays Massachusetts specific data

White Shark Tagging

In late summer of 2020, the DMR made its first attempts to fish for white sharks in Maine state waters with the intention of deploying acoustic transmitters for tracking. Although no white sharks have yet to be captured on these expeditions, the DMR has gained valuable insights into the methodology for future fishing efforts. Much of the difficulty in locating white sharks along Maine's coastline stems from the dark turbidity of our waters, which limits visibility to only a few feet near the surface. Additionally, these animals have been monitored along the southern parts of the state for a very short time, and thus we lack the long-term data needed to identify potential "hot-spots" that might exist, and thus where fishing may be more successful. It is the hope of the DMR and its research partners that continued deployment of acoustic receivers along the coastline of Maine will elucidate trends in habitat use and dispersal of white sharks. As more information is gathered, the DMR and its partners may re-visit fishing efforts aimed at tagging white sharks as they move through our waters.

To read about DMR's other research project, please visit [DMR's Science & Research page](#).

