

# Maine Department of Marine Resources

## Recreational Saltwater Fishing Newsletter

Spring 2023



# 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 2022 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**

| <b>Recreational Fisheries Programs</b>         |   |
|--|---|
| <i>Public Participation Programs</i>           | <i>Recreational Research Projects</i>                 |
| <b>Tackle-Buster Club</b>                      | <b>Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP)</b> |
| <b>Volunteer Angler Logbook Program</b>        | Access Point Angler Intercept Survey (APAIS)          |
| <b>Maine State Saltwater Game Fish Records</b> | For-Hire Telephone Survey (FHTS)                      |
|  | Fishing Effort Survey (FES)                           |
|  | <b>Large Pelagic Survey (LPS)</b>                     |
|  | Large Pelagic Intercept Survey (LPIS)                 |
|  | Large Pelagic Telephone Survey (LPIS)                 |



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.**

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <b>MRIP</b><br>Since 2008;<br>MRFSS<br>(1979-2008) | <b>Access Point Angler Intercept Survey (APAIS)</b> | 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.<br><b>Conducted by ME DMR on behalf of NOAA Fisheries, May through October (in Maine).</b>                                 |
|  | <b>Fishing Effort Survey (FES)</b>                  | 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.<br><b>Conducted by an outside NOAA Fisheries contractor.</b>                    |
|  | <b>For-Hire Telephone Survey (FHTS or FHS)</b>      | 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.<br><b>Conducted by ME DMR on behalf of NOAA Fisheries, May through October (in Maine).</b> |
| <b>LPS</b><br>Since 1992                           | <b>Large Pelagic Intercept Survey (LPIS)</b>        | 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.<br><b>Conducted by ME DMR on behalf of NOAA Fisheries, July through October.</b>   |
|  | <b>Large Pelagic Telephone Survey (LPTS)</b>        | 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.<br><b>Conducted by ME DMR on behalf of NOAA Fisheries, June through October for boats with CH/HB HMS permit.</b> 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.countryfish.noaa.gov](http://www.countryfish.noaa.gov) , HMS [www.fisheries.noaa.gov/topic/atlantic-highly-migratory-species](http://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/topic/atlantic-highly-migratory-species)

## Data Collection Results

The following sections provides an overview of the 2022 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/LPS

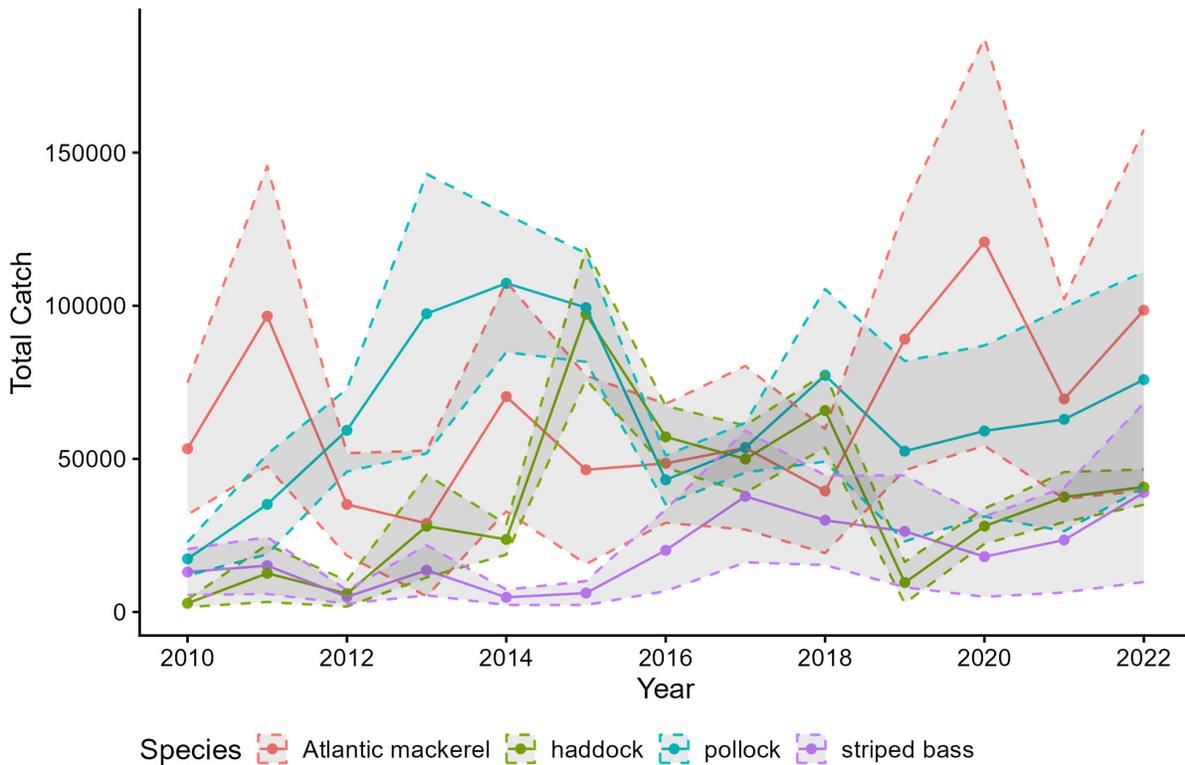
The table below indicates the number of anglers field staff were able to intercepted for APAIS throughout the 2022 season. Head boat ride alongs were scheduled but due to short staff issues on DMR and for-hire side, ride alongs were not able to be completed. The graphs below show select for-hire fishing 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 2022 APAIS and LPS by month and mode.

|                      | May | June | July | August | September | October | Total |
|----------------------|-----|------|------|--------|-----------|---------|-------|
| Charter boat anglers | 0   | 26   | 74   | 41     | 17        | 5       | 163   |
| Head boat anglers    | 0   | 0    | 0    | 0      | 0         | 0       | 0     |
| Private anglers      | 67  | 136  | 288  | 132    | 79        | 5       | 707   |
| Shore anglers        | 35  | 69   | 120  | 74     | 31        | 2       | 331   |
| LPS intercepts       | -   | -    | 3    | 0      | 16        | 7       | 26    |

LPS survey starts in July.

### Maine's Total Catch Estimates from For-Hire Fleet (2010-2022)



Maine's Total Catch Estimates from For-Hire Fleet (2010-2022)

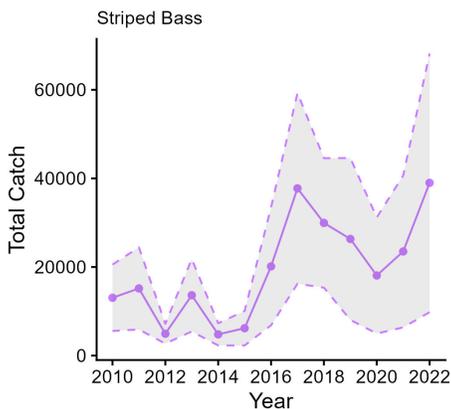
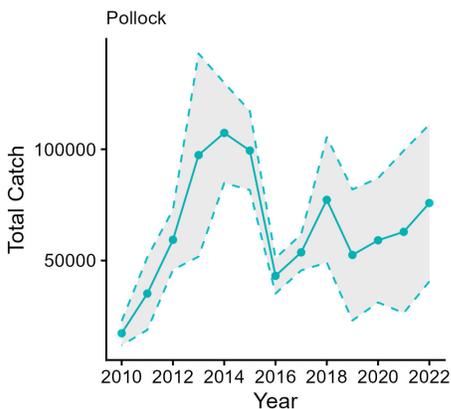
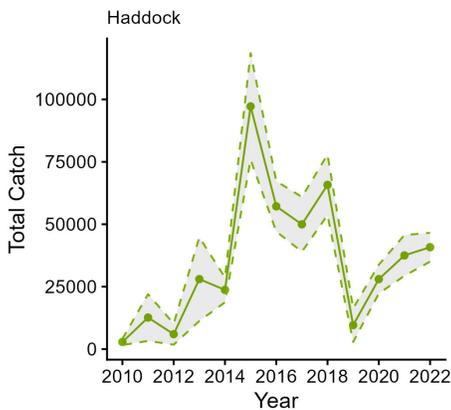
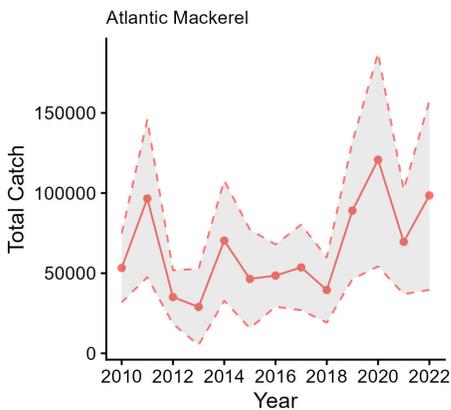


Photo courtesy of Greg Brown



Photo courtesy of Renee Allocca

# Your Data Makes a Difference

The for-hire community is essential to **sound fisheries science and management**, and a **major contributor** to our coastal economies.

You and your clients are the **primary source of data** for NOAA Fisheries' estimates of recreational catch and trips. When you participate in our telephone, mail, and in-person surveys, you help **improve our estimates** and **support sustainable fishing** for today, tomorrow, and for generations to come.



Credit: Shea-Lady/Chaser Fishing

## For-Hire Fishing in the United States Supports:

**\$3.5**  
billion  
sales

**\$1.2**  
billion  
income

Source: NOAA Fisheries

[countmyfish.noaa.gov](http://countmyfish.noaa.gov)



Have questions about MRIP?  
Scan the QR code below to  
access NOAA's Ask MRIP  
webpage.



# 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](mailto:victoria.batter@maine.gov) if you would like to sign up.



## 2022 preliminary data:

### Effort data

The **42 logbook keepers** reported **1,141 fishing trips** which, resulted in **1,311 individual angler-trips** and **over 4,300 angler hours** over the course of the season. **70% (803) targeted striped bass** as the primary or secondary target.

### Catch data - striped bass

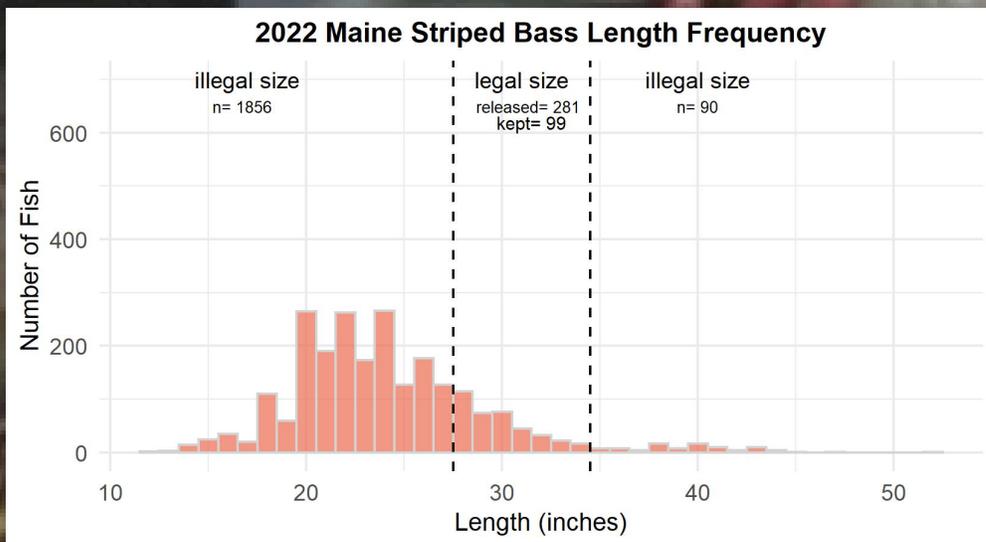
**1.32 striped bass was caught per angler-hour** on all trips with complete catch information and striped bass as the primary or secondary target (803 trips). A total of **2,437 striped bass** were caught on 537 trips, **5% (114) were kept** and **95% (2,323) were released**.

### Length data – striped bass

**2,326 (95%) striped bass** had their length measured. **16.34% (380)** of the stripers with estimated or measured lengths were  $\geq 28''$  and  $< 35''$  (legal size). Of these, **26% (99) were kept**, **74% (281) were released**. The **average size** for measured striped bass was **24''**. The **largest was 52''** and the **smallest was 12''**. **83.66% (1,946)** 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)

Photo courtesy of Sue Daignault



**John/Jane Doe**  
Trips Made this Season: X trips

Average Time of Fishing Trips this Season: X hours

Season Totals for Caught Fish:

| Species      | Total |
|--------------|-------|
| mackerel     | X     |
| striped bass | X     |

Maximum Striped Bass Caught in One Trip: X

Season Totals for Measured Striped Bass: X

Length Range of Caught Striped Bass: X to X inches

Average Length of Caught Striped Bass: X inches

**Lengths of Measured Striped Bass**



## 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.

### 2022's Largest Fish in Each Category

| Species          | # Submitted | Weight    | Length      | Angler                | Date       |
|------------------|-------------|-----------|-------------|-----------------------|------------|
| Acadian redfish  | 4           | 2.5 lbs   | 17 inches   | Walt Inman            | 6/19/2022  |
| Atlantic halibut | 1           | 116.5 lbs | 61 inches   | Jake Higgins          | 6/14/2022  |
| bluefin tuna     | 3           | 443 lbs   | 97 inches   | Josh Riley/Larry Gray | 10/23/2022 |
| cusk             | 8           | 21 lbs    | 37.5 inches | Kris Hiltz            | 6/19/2022  |
| haddock          | 5           | 9 lbs     | 28.5 inches | Steve Selmer          | 6/21/2022  |
| pollock          | 2           | 28 lbs    | 38.5 inches | Kurt Gilmore          | 9/20/2022  |
| striped bass     | 5           | 38 lbs    | 44 inches   | Deb Henry             | 7/8/2022   |
| white hake       | 31          | 44 lbs    | 45.5 inches | Josamar Domigos       | 10/30/2022 |
| whiting          | 5           | 4.5 lbs   | 26 inches   | Clinton Sousa         | 7/20/2022  |

### 2022's Minimum Qualification

|                |                      |                       |                      |
|----------------|----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| black sea bass | 2 lbs.               | pollock               | 25 lbs.              |
| bluefin tuna   | 300 lbs.             | porbeagle shark       | 200 lbs.             |
| bluefish       | 15 lbs.<br>or 36 in. | redfish               | 2 lbs.               |
| cod            | 25 lbs.              | shad                  | 21 in.               |
| cusk           | 12 lbs.              | striped bass          | 25 lbs.<br>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.               |

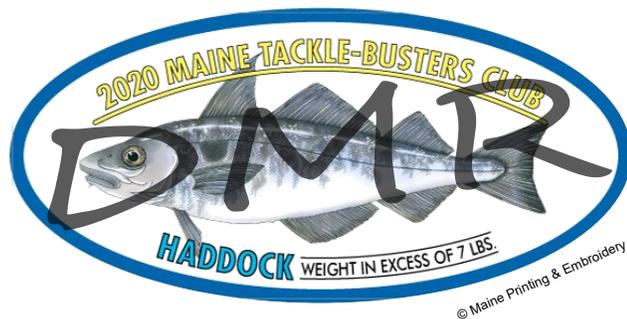


Photo courtesy of Greg Brown

Photos courtesy of Tim Tower