

DEPARTMENT OF MARINE RESOURCES

Chapter 42: STRIPED BASS

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42.01 Statewide Striped Bass Size Restrictions, Harvest Methods

1. Method of Taking

- A. It is unlawful to fish for or take striped bass in territorial waters, except by hook and line. It is unlawful to use a gaff to land any striped bass.
- B. It is unlawful to use multiple (more than two) barbed or barbless treble hooks on any artificial lure or flies while fishing for striped bass in territorial waters.
- C. It is unlawful to use any hook other than a circle hook when using bait. For purposes of this chapter the definition of circle hook means “a non-offset hook with a point that points 90° back toward the shaft of the hook”. Striped bass incidentally caught on any unapproved hook type must be returned to the water immediately without unnecessary injury.

For the purposes of this section, bait is defined as any marine or freshwater organism live or dead, whole or parts thereof, and earthworms, including but not limited to, night crawlers (*Lumbricus terrestris*).

Exception: Rubber or latex tube rigs will be exempt from the circle hook restriction as long as they conform with the following: the lure must consist of a minimum of 8” of latex or rubber tubing with a single hook protruding from the end portion of the tubing where bait may be attached. Willow leaf spinner rigs will also be exempt from the circle hook restriction as long as they are fished with no more than two barbless hooks. A willow leaf spinner rig is comprised of leaf-shaped attractor blades which are longer than they are wide. Use of treble hooks is not allowed with any of these exempted rigs.

- D. Any striped bass legally taken from the territorial waters shall be immediately released alive into the water from which it was taken, or killed at once. Any striped bass killed becomes part of the daily bag limit in accordance with Chapter 42.02.

2. Size Restrictions

It is unlawful to take or possess striped bass which are less than 28 inches long or greater than 31 inches long, in total length. It is unlawful to possess striped bass unless the fish are whole with head on, and are between 28 inches and 31 inches, inclusive.

Exception: Operators and crew onboard for-hire vessels may fillet legal sized striped bass for their customers dockside provided that:

- A. A striped bass carcass may not be mutilated to the extent that the total length or species of fish cannot be determined.
- B. No more than two fillets taken from legal striped bass are in the possession of each customer of that trip, representing the equivalent of one fish per angler.
- C. Any striped bass fillet shall have the skin still attached for the purpose of identification of the fillet as striped bass.
- D. All striped bass carcasses must be retained and available for inspection until all passengers from that trip have left the vessel and dock area.
- E. All striped bass carcasses from any previous trip shall be disposed of before any person begins to fish on a subsequent trip.
- F. Filleting by operators and crew onboard for-hire vessels is not permitted at-sea.

42.02 Striped Bass - Limits, Personal Use

It is unlawful for any person to fish for, take or possess striped bass in or from territorial waters, except for personal use. The sale of wild striped bass caught for personal use or by commercial fisheries in other States or jurisdictions is prohibited in the State of Maine.

It is unlawful for any person to take or possess more than one (1) striped bass each day.

Exception for Hybrid Striped Bass:

This section shall not apply to the possession and sale of hybrid striped bass under the following conditions:

1. **Hybrids** (*Morone saxatillis x Morone chrysops*). Whole aquaculture-raised striped bass shall have a tag or label affixed to each fish container holding fish.
2. **Fillets**. Fillets from aquaculture-raised hybrid striped bass shall have the skin attached.
3. **Tags and Labels**. All tags and labels affixed to containers of whole aquaculture-raised hybrid striped bass and fillets from aquaculture-raised hybrid striped bass shall be clearly marked "Hybrid Striped Bass" and provide the following information:
 - A. State of origin

- B. Name and address of shipping and receiving dealers
 - C. Permit number of shipping and receiving dealers
 - D. Date shipped
 - E. Net weight of container
4. **Nomenclature.** It is unlawful for any person to market, promote, advertise, or sell whole hybrid striped bass or hybrid striped bass fillets as "striped bass." Only the term "hybrid striped bass" shall be used when marketing, promoting, advertising, or selling at retail hybrid striped bass and hybrid striped bass fillets.

42.03 Striped Bass - Closed Area and Closed Season

- A. Except as provided in 42.03(B), from the 1st day of December to June 30, inclusive, it is unlawful for any person to take and retain any striped bass from the tidal waters of the Kennebec River inside and upstream of a line drawn from the outer extremity of Cape Small to the outer extremity of Salter Island, thence to the outer extremity of Cape Newagen and including Merrymeeting Bay and tributaries, the tidal waters of the Sheepscot River, Androscoggin River, Sasanoa River, and all other tidal tributaries of the Kennebec River. From July 1 through November 30, statewide regulations apply to this area.
- B. **Special Hook and Release Season/Area.** From May 1 to June 30, it shall be lawful to fish for striped bass in the waters described in 42.03(A) with a hook and line and single hooked artificial lures. Any striped bass caught during this special season/area fishery shall be immediately released and returned alive, without further injury, to the waters from which they were taken.
- C. **Waters Seasonally Closed to the Use of Bait.** From May 1 to June 30, inclusive, it is unlawful to possess or use bait while hook and line fishing for any finfish species in waters described in 42.03(A). During this closed season (May 1 to June 30), possession of hook and line fishing gear and bait on waters described in 42.03(A) is prima facie evidence of violating this regulation. For purposes of this section, "bait" is defined as any live or dead marine organism, or part thereof.

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May 15, 1989

AMENDED:
June 11, 1990

May 10, 1992

May 25, 1994

August 9, 1995 - Sec. 2

April 20, 1997 - Sections 1 and 2

September 16, 1997 - Sections 1 and 3

April 23, 2000-Sections 1, 2 and 3

December 20, 2010 – Sections 01 and 02

April 16, 2013 – Section 01(1)(C)

May 13, 2015 – Section 01(2); 2

March 15, 2020 – Section 01(2); 02

December 16, 2020-EMERGENCY-section .01(C), expires March 16, 2021

June 1, 2021-EMERGENCY-section .01(C), expires August 30, 2021

August 10, 2021-section .01(C)

May 18, 2023 – EMERGENCY section 01(2)

August 13, 2023 – Section 01(2)

April 22, 2025 – Section 01(2)