

**RULES
OF
GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
COASTAL RESOURCES DIVISION**

CHAPTER 391-2-4

SALTWATER FISHING REGULATIONS

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(1) **Purpose.** The purpose of these Rules is to implement the authority of the Board of Natural Resources to promulgate rules and regulations based on sound principles of wildlife research and management, establishing the seasons, methods of fishing, and disposition; size, possession, and creel limits; and gear and landing specifications for certain finfish.

(2) **Definitions.**

(a) "Daily creel limit" means the lawful amount of a species of finfish that a person may take in one day or possess at any one time, except at one's place of abode or at a commercial storage facility provided the Board has not prohibited sale of that species.

(a.1) "Landed" means to bring fish to shore in this state, regardless of the jurisdiction from which they were taken or harvested.

(b) "Minimum size" means the species' specific size in length, specified as fork length, lower jaw fork length or total length, below which size it is unlawful to possess that finfish species.

(b.1) "Maximum size" means the species' specific size in length, specified as fork length, lower jaw fork length or total length, above which size it is unlawful to possess that finfish species.

(c) "Open Season" means that specified period of time during which one may take from any of the waters of this state certain finfish species.

(d) "Sharks" means all species of sharks other than those comprising the small shark composite as defined in subparagraph 2(e), hammerhead sharks as defined in subparagraph 2(g), and prohibited sharks as defined in subparagraph 2(h).

(e) "Small Shark Composite" means a group of sharks inclusive of Atlantic sharpnose shark (*Rhizoprionodon terraenovae*), bonnethead (*Sphyrna tiburo*), and spiny dogfish (*Squalus acanthias*).

(f) "Handline" means a mainline to which no more than two hooks are attached and which is retrieved by hand without the aid of mechanical devices.

(g) "Hammerhead Sharks" means a group of sharks inclusive of great hammerhead (*Sphyrna mokarran*), scalloped hammerhead (*Sphyrna lewini*) and smooth hammerhead (*Sphyrna zygaena*).

(h) "Prohibited Sharks" means a group of sharks inclusive of sand tiger (*Carcharias Taurus*), sandbar shark (*Carcharhinus plumbeus*), silky shark (*Carcharhinus falciformis*), bigeye sand tiger (*Odontaspis noronhai*), whale shark (*Rhincodon typus*), basking

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shark (*Cetorhinus maximus*), white shark (*Carcharodon carcharias*), dusky shark (*Carcharhinus obscurus*), bignose shark (*Carcharhinus altimus*), Galapagos shark (*Carcharhinus galapagensis*), night shark (*Carcharhinus signatus*), reef shark (*Carcharhinus perezii*), narrowtooth shark (*Carcharhinus brachyurus*), Caribbean sharpnose shark (*Rhizoprionodon porosus*), smalltail shark (*Carcharhinus porosus*), Atlantic angel shark (*Squatina dumeril*), longfin mako (*Isurus paucus*), bigeye thresher (*Alopias superciliosus*), sharpnose sevengill shark (*Heptranchias perlo*), bluntnose sixgill shark (*Hexanchus griseus*), and bigeye sixgill shark (*Hexanchus nakamurai*).

(3) Seasons, Daily Creel and Possession Limits, Minimum and Maximum Size Limits. The following species may be taken in accordance with the seasons, daily creel and possession limits, and minimum and maximum size limits set forth below, except as otherwise specifically provided herein:

SPECIES	SEASON	Daily Creel and Possession Limit	Minimum Size (inches)	Maximum Size (inches)
(a) Amberjack	All Year	1	28 FL	
(b) Atlantic croaker	All Year	25		
(c) Atlantic sturgeon	No Open Season has been established by the Board of Natural Resources.			
(d) Black drum	All Year	15	14 TL	
(e) Black sea bass	All Year	15	12 TL	
(f) Blue marlin	No Open Season has been established by the Board of Natural Resources.			
(g) Bluefish	All Year	15	10 TL	
(h) Cobia	All Year March 1 – October 31	2 1 per person not to exceed 6 per boat.	33 36 FL	
(i) Dolphin	All Year	10 per person not to exceed 60 per boat.	20 FL	
1. Headboats with a valid certificate of inspection are allowed 10 dolphin per paying passenger.				
(j) Flounder (<i>Paralichthys spp.</i>)	All Year	15	12 TL	
(k) Gag grouper	All Year	2	24 TL	
(l) King mackerel	All Year	3	24 FL	
(m) Red Drum	All Year	5	14 TL	23 TL
(n) Red Porgy	All Year	3	14 TL	
(o) Red Snapper	All Year	2	20 TL	
(p) Sailfish	No Open Season has been established by the Board of Natural Resources.			
(q) Prohibited Sharks	Unlawful to possess.			

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(r) Sharks	All Year	1 per person or boat	54 FL	
(s) Sheepshead	All Year	15	10 TL	
(t) Small Shark Composite	All Year	1	30 FL	
(u) Spanish mackerel	All Year	15	12 FL	
1. A catch of Spanish mackerel under the minimum size limit is allowed equal to five percent by weight of the total catch of Spanish mackerel on board a trawler.				
(v) Spot	All Year	25		
(w) Spotted sea trout	All Year	15	14 TL	
(x) Tarpon	All Year	1	68 FL	
(y) Tripletail	All Year	2	18 TL	
(z) Weakfish	All Year	1	13 TL	
(aa) White marlin	No Open Season has been established by the Board of Natural Resources.			
(bb) American eel	All Year	25	9 TL	
(cc) Hammerhead Sharks	All Year	1 per person or boat	78 FL	

(4) Restrictions on Sale. It shall be unlawful for any person in this state to sell, purchase, or barter any of the following species or part thereof, except as otherwise specifically provided herein:

(a) No person operating as a dealer may buy or sell sharks, small shark composite species, and hammerhead sharks caught in state waters without first obtaining a federal Commercial Shark Dealer Permit and when state or federal quotas for species within those groups have been reached.

(b) Tarpon.

(c) ~~From April 1 through April 30, no~~ No person may sell ~~amberjack~~ any fish managed under federal law and harvested from either Georgia waters or from the South Atlantic Exclusive Economic Zone except when the catch of such fish is allowed by applicable federal law. ~~The~~ This prohibition ~~on of sale during April~~ does not apply to ~~amberjack fish that were~~ harvested, landed ashore, and sold prior to April 1 in compliance with applicable federal law and were held in cold storage by a seafood dealer or processor. This prohibition also does not apply to a seafood dealer's purchase or sale

of amberjaek fish harvested from waters ~~another management area~~ other than those of Georgia or the South Atlantic Exclusive Economic Zone, provided such fish is accompanied by documentation of legal harvest ~~outside of Georgia waters or the South Atlantic~~.

~~—(d) From March 1 through April 30, no person may sell gag grouper harvested from Georgia waters or from the South Atlantic Exclusive Economic Zone. The prohibition on sale from March 1 through April 30 does not apply to gag grouper that were harvested, landed ashore, and sold prior to March 1 and were held in cold storage by a dealer or processor. This prohibition also does not apply to a dealer's purchase or sale of gag grouper harvested from another management area other than Georgia or the South Atlantic Exclusive Economic Zone, provided such fish is accompanied by documentation of harvest outside of Georgia waters or the South Atlantic.~~

~~—(e) From January 1 through April 30, no person may sell red porgy harvested from Georgia waters or from the South Atlantic Exclusive Economic Zone. The prohibition on sale from January 1 through April 30 does not apply to red porgy that were harvested, landed ashore, and sold prior to January 1 and were held in cold storage by a dealer or processor. This prohibition also does not apply to a dealer's purchase or sale of red porgy harvested from another management area other than Georgia or the South Atlantic Exclusive Economic Zone, provided such fish is accompanied by documentation of harvest outside of Georgia waters or the South Atlantic.~~

(5) Possession and Landing Specifications.

(a) All fish subject to restrictions specified in this Rule may be possessed in state waters or landed only with head and fins intact,

except that when landed for commercial purposes, all sharks, small shark composite species, and hammerhead sharks may have the heads removed but fins and tail must remain naturally attached.

(b) It shall be unlawful to transfer at sea in State waters from a fishing vessel to any other vessel or person any fish caught which are subject to the restrictions specified in this Rule.

(c) Except as otherwise provided by law, it shall be unlawful to fish for sharks, small shark composite species, or hammerhead sharks for recreational purposes with any gear other than rod and reel or handline as defined in subparagraph (2)(f) above.

(d) Except as otherwise provided by law, trawlers fishing for shrimp for human consumption pursuant to Code Section 27-4-133 shall be exempt from the creel and possession limits for spot and Atlantic croaker.