

Know Before You Go

- Every angler age 16 and older needs a valid license.
- Know the catch limits and minimum sizes for your target species and area – **if you don't know, let it go!**
- Treat all fish respectfully – don't kill any fish that you aren't going to keep.
- Use safe-handling techniques for hook removal and safe release.
- Limit time out of the water for fish you are releasing.
- Limit boat and vessel use to designated areas to protect sensitive habitat.

Better Data = Better Fishing

- Provide accurate fishing information if asked by a fisheries official in person or by mail.

Are You a Responsible Angler?



[greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/
sustainable/recfishing/](https://greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/sustainable/recfishing/)

Protected and Endangered Species May Be Nearby

- Sea turtles, seals, whales, and Atlantic and shortnose sturgeon are protected species found in our waters.
- If you see a protected species that needs help, call **(866) 755-6622** or contact the Coast Guard on **CH16**.
- Maintain a safe distance from protected species – no selfies!

Properly Dispose of Waste

- Recycle monofilament.
- Avoid spilling or dumping into or near the water.
- Do not throw trash, especially plastics, into the water.

Licensing: Check your state’s fishing agency for licensing requirements. If you have a state license, you do not need a federal one unless you fish for highly migratory species, like tuna, shark, and swordfish. Visit hmspermits.noaa.gov or call (888) 872-8862 for more information.

Regulations: You need to know both state and federal regulations for the fish you catch. Smartphone apps, such as **FishRules**, are very helpful.

Safe Handling: Any fish you do not keep should be released as quickly and safely as possible.

- Select your fishing spot to promote safe release and targeted fishing.
- Use the right sized hooks and line strength for your target species. Consider using circle hooks to minimize gut hooks.
- Minimize fight time.
- Use the right tool for hook removal.
- Take your photo as quickly as possible.
- If the eyes or swim bladder are protruding (barotrauma), use the right tool to release the fish at an appropriate depth.

Monofilament Recycling: Many fishing docks and areas provide recycling bins for used monofilament. If you would like to build a bin, check boatus.org/monofilament to learn more.

Protected Species: Visit our website at greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/protected for more information or search for “GARFO Protected Resources.”

Safe Boating: Even strikes from small boats can kill or seriously injure a whale or other protected species. Keep a safe distance from all whales, and use caution near feeding whales. Green patches of water can mean that a whale is about to surface.

Entanglements: Call (866) 755-6622 or contact the Coast Guard on **CH16** to report your location, the type of species, and its condition. If possible, stand by until help arrives.

- Sea turtles – While waiting for a response team, keep your hands away from its mouth and flippers. Leave hooks in place. If you can safely cut the entangled line, leave at least two feet of line attached.
- Mammals (seals, dolphins, whales) – Do not touch the animal and keep a safe distance of at least 100 yards away. It is normal for seals to rest on shore; **do not disturb them.**

Data Collection: Data about your fishing trip is vital to the development of our fisheries science and management. Provide accurate fishing information if asked by a fisheries official in person or mail. Remember: **Better data = better fishing!**

Questions? Contact Moira Kelly, Recreational Fisheries Coordinator, (978) 281-9218 or Moira.Kelly@noaa.gov, or one of our local Port Agents: greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/sed/portagents/portagents (or search NOAA GARFO port agents).

greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/sustainable/recfishing/