

NEWS

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Bob Martin, Commissioner

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CHRISTIE ADMINISTRATION TO LAUNCH FREE WEB-BASED SALTWATER FISHING REGISTRY

(11/P62) TRENTON - The Christie Administration on Wednesday will launch the state's free web-based saltwater fishing registry, keeping recreational saltwater fishing in New Jersey a sport that anyone can enjoy without having to pay fees.

"This registry allows us to comply with a federal mandate to have a system in place to collect better data from recreational anglers and better manage fishery resources that are so important to our economy, at the same time exempting our anglers from fees and keeping saltwater fishing in New Jersey free," said Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Bob Martin.

Governor Christie signed legislation creating a free state saltwater registry on Feb. 22. Commissioner Martin signed an Administrative Order creating the registry.

The DEP's free, web-based saltwater fishing registry replaces a fee-based federal registry that New Jersey was required to participate in and which has been in effect since January. All saltwater anglers and for-hire vessel operators will now be able to register through the no-fee State system rather than the fee-based federal system.

Anglers still must register with the state system even if they have already registered with the federal system.

Those who fish from a for-hire party or charter fishing vessel that is registered with the New Jersey Saltwater Recreational Registry Program are not required to file for an individual registration.

Everyone 16 or older must register and carry the printed registration with them when fishing. People who fish for shellfish such as crabs, clams or lobster are not required to register, though existing license or permit requirements may be required depending on the gear used.

The National Marine Fisheries Service, the federal agency that manages national fisheries resources, will not refund the \$15 fee that New Jersey anglers have already paid by registering with that agency.

The DEP's Division of Fish and Wildlife has developed an entirely web-based registration system that anglers can use to register and print their registration, any time of day or night. This automated system will save significant implementation costs.

This web site is designed to allow a registrant to print a duplicate copy should the original registration be lost. The registry will be used to develop a database of anglers that the National Marine Fisheries Service will be able to contact in collecting information about the numbers and species of fish recreational anglers catch. The agency will use this information to improve the quality of data used to make fisheries management decisions.

"I strongly encourage all anglers to take part in these surveys when contacted," Commissioner Martin said. "Their willing and honest participation will improve the science that is used to help protect the sport they enjoy so much, not only today but for future generations as well."

Upward of one million people fish in New Jersey's abundant and ecologically rich salt waters. Saltwater fishing provides 38,000 jobs and a \$1.2 billion annual boost to the state's economy, noted Commissioner Martin.

To learn more about the registry and to register, visit: www.saltwaterregistry.nj.gov.