

Possible New Jersey Seafood Selections

New Jersey commercial fishermen and aquatic farmers produce over 100 different species of fish and shellfish. Seafood harvests in New Jersey are regulated by state, regional, national, and international bodies that develop strategies to ensure the sustainability of the resource so that future generations can continue to enjoy the bounty of our waters.

Listed below are some species to consider for your entries. These species are all harvested locally. The NOAA Fisheries Service requires any species that is managed under a United States fishery management plan to meet 10 national standards for conservation and sustainable management. If you would like to use a species that is not on the list, please contact the New Jersey Department of Agriculture (jerseyseafood@ag.state.nj.us or 609-984-6757) to ascertain its appropriateness.

Remember, that the national competition will be held in August, so consider adjusting your recipe to include local Jersey Fresh fruits and vegetables.

American Lobster (*Homarus americanus*) Although most people think of Maine when they think of lobster, New Jersey harvested over \$2.5 million worth of lobster in 2006. Lobster fishing in state waters is managed under a plan developed through the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC), an industry body that includes state, federal, and industry representatives. Lobster fishing in federal waters is managed under rules that are compatible with the interstate plan. This unified approach helps to maintain the health and sustainability of the resource.

Atlantic Mackerel (*Scomber scombrus*) was one of the first fish harvested in the original thirteen colonies and still represents a healthy fishery. Atlantic mackerel is managed by the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council.

Atlantic Sea Scallop (*Placopecten magellanicus*) scallops are managed using a combined approach of effort reduction and rotating harvest areas. This strategy maximizes scallop yields while protecting beds of young scallops. Sea scallop populations are high and over-fishing is not occurring. In 2006, sea scallops were the most lucrative marine fishery in New Jersey, valued at over \$58.5 million.

Atlantic Surf Clams (*Spisula solidissima*) Populations are high and this species is not in danger of over-fishing. The fishery is managed through Individual Transferable Quotas (ITQs). New Jersey is the leading harvester of surf clams in the nation and produces over 75 percent of these clams worldwide. In 2006, we harvested 43.6 million pounds of surf clam meat.

Bigeye Tuna (*Thunnus obesus*) Atlantic tunas are managed under the dual authority of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and the Atlantic Tunas Convention Act (ATCA). ATCA authorizes the Secretary of Commerce to implement the binding

recommendations of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT).

Black Sea Bass (*Centropristes striata*) Stocks are jointly managed by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council through annual quotas, size limits and gear restrictions. Landings in the commercial fishery have remained stable.

Blue Crab (*Callinectes sapidus*) Blue crabs are an important fishery for commercial and recreational harvesters alike. The harvest is regulated by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection.

Bluefin Tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*) Atlantic tunas are managed under the dual authority of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and the Atlantic Tunas Convention Act (ATCA). ATCA authorizes the Secretary of Commerce to implement the binding recommendations of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT).

Bluefish (*Pomatomus saltatrix*) is one of the most popular fish with recreational fishers. It is managed by the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council. Because the meat is so oily, it makes an excellent smoked fish.

Eastern Oyster (*Crassostrea virginica*) New Jersey has some of the finest oysters harvested anywhere in the world. Many of the oysters harvested in New Jersey are farm-raised. The production of oysters and clams actually provides positive environmental impacts. Because of their three dimensional structure, oysters form habitats for other bottom dwelling organisms adding to the important biodiversity of the marine environment. Molluscan shellfish also absorb nutrients from the water by filtering free-floating algae and particulate matter out of the water. This helps to maintain good water quality and minimizes the loss of oxygen.

Hard Clams (*Mercenaria mercenaria*) actually improve water quality. Many of the littlenecks harvested in New Jersey are farm-raised and hand-harvested. Efforts are underway to try to “Re-Clam” Barnegat Bay.

Mahi-Mahi (*Cryphaena hippurus*) is a great choice. Most people think of this as a southern fish but it is harvested off New Jersey as well. Populations are estimated to be high and it is not considered overfished in the Atlantic. Fishing methods have minimal effects on the environment. Longline vessels comply with sea turtle protection measures.

Monkfish (*Lophius americanus*) is managed by the New England and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Councils. Current regulatory measures include mesh size restrictions, trip limits, minimum size limits and other measures. New Jersey harvested over \$4.5 million worth of monkfish in 2006.

North Atlantic Swordfish (*Xiphias gladius*). Because swordfish is a highly migratory species, it is managed both in the United States and at the international level. Longline gear has few impacts on open water habitat. North Atlantic swordfish is not considered overfished.

Skate (*Leucoraja erinacea*) There are a number of different species of skate fished in the northeast including barndoor, clearnose, little, rosette, smooth, thorny and winter. Of these species, only the thorny skate is considered overfished. In 2003, the New England Fishery Management Council instituted a plan for skates to help ensure the sustainability of the resource.

Squid (*Loligo paeli*, *Ilex illecebrosus*) is managed by the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council through measures such as Total Allowable Catch and seasonal quotas. The squid fishery began in the late 1800's as a source of bait and has since grown to one of New Jersey's most important fisheries.

Summer Flounder (*Paralichthys dentatus*) Populations are rebuilding and government scientists expect the stock to be fully rebuilt by 2013. Management measures include shortened seasons, reduced catch limits and increased size limits are yielding rapid increases in population size. Vessels fishing in certain areas are required to use turtle exclusion devices to eliminate any by-catch of sea turtles.

Tilefish (*Lopholatilus chamaeleonticeps*) is managed by the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council. Barnegat Light used to be considered the tilefish capital of the United States. Tilefish is a deepwater fish that was first harvested at this port and the local fishermen were active in promoting the species and building its reputation as a great eating fish.

Yellowfin tuna (*Thunnus albacares*) Atlantic tunas are managed under the dual authority of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and the Atlantic Tunas Convention Act (ATCA). ATCA authorizes the Secretary of Commerce to implement the binding recommendations of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT).