

Saltwater Fishing

General Information

The following laws pertain mainly to noncommercial saltwater fishing, shrimping, crabbing and shellfishing for personal consumption.

Individuals (age 16 and older) harvesting oysters or clams or individuals fishing for marine finfish from privately owned boats must purchase an annual or temporary Saltwater Recreational Fisheries License.

Fishing piers and chartered vessels charging a fee for fishing and those offering fishing boats for rent must purchase a Marine Recreational Fisheries license annually. Applications for Pier and Charter Vessel Licenses are available from the DNR office in Charleston.

Any person engaged in selling any fish or fishery product, including bait, must first obtain a license from the Marine Resources Division. Regulations concerning commercial saltwater fishing are provided with commercial licenses and are available through Marine Resources Division at the address below.

For more information contact: SCDNR, Marine Resources Division, P.O. Box 12559, Charleston, SC 29422, (843) 953-9300.

For federal fishery limits and regulations, contact: South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, One Southpark Circle, Suite 306, Charleston, SC 29407, (843) 571-4366.

Annual License Fees

Saltwater Recreational Fisheries License	
Annual Resident License.....	\$10
Annual Non-Resident License	\$35
Temporary Resident License (14 days) .	\$5
Temporary Non-Resident License (14 days)	\$11
Shrimp Baiting License	
Resident License.....	\$25
Non-Resident License	\$500
Commercial Pier License (>100).....	\$350
Commercial Pier License (≤100).....	\$150
Charter Vessel License	
(6 or less passengers).....	\$150
(7-49 passengers)	\$250
(50 or more passengers)	\$350
Rental Boat License	\$40

Saltwater Fishing Methods & Devices

Hook and Line

Permits/License: Saltwater Recreational Fisheries License required when fishing from privately owned boats or when transporting catch in privately owned boats. Federal Highly Migratory Species Permit required when fishing for sharks in federal waters, or when fishing for tuna, billfish and swordfish in both state and federal waters.

Seasons: No closed season

Restrictions:

- It is unlawful to fish from a boat within 300 feet of commercial fishing piers extending into the Atlantic Ocean.
- Fishing from the shore in the waters under or within 50 feet on either side or beyond the end of any ocean fishing pier in Horry County is prohibited.

Gigging

Permits/Licenses: Saltwater Recreational Fisheries License.

Restrictions:

- It is unlawful to gig red drum or spotted seatrout during Dec., Jan. and Feb.
- It is unlawful in Georgetown County to gig for fish in salt waters from the northern tip of North Island to the northern tip of Magnolia Beach during daylight hours.

Bangsticks

• It is unlawful to take, have in one's possession or to land or sell any species of fish taken by means of a bangstick or similar device.

Cast Nets (Other than Shrimp)

Permits/Licenses: Saltwater Recreational Fisheries License.

Seines & Gill Nets

(Anchor, Set, Stake & Drift Nets)

Permits/Licenses:

- Gill nets, haul seines (except shrimp seines under 40 ft.), \$10 for each 100 net ft. or fraction thereof.
- Powerboats transporting nets or other commercial fishing equipment must have vessel decals.

Seasons: No closed season in saltwater; (except shad, sturgeon and herring).

Restrictions:

- Red drum and spotted seatrout may not be taken by nets. Sharks may not be taken by gill nets
- Gill nets no longer than 100 feet with a 3-inch minimum stretched mesh size may be used only in unrestricted areas of the Atlantic Ocean. Gill nets no longer than 100 yard with 3-inch minimum stretched mesh size may be used only in special designated inshore areas.
- Gill nets must be marked with one end bouy that is international orange in color with the name and address of owner. Operator must be within 500 feet of the net and have visual contact with the net at all times when deployed.
- Nets may not be set more than halfway across any waterway at any time.
- Stationary or fixed nets, including gill nets, may not be set or placed within 600 feet of a net previously set.
- Gill net users must be within 500 feet or hauling distance of the net at all times.
- It is unlawful to use any seine or gill net in

any waters within a state park; except, small hand seines and cast nets for taking shrimp are allowed.

Size & Catch Limits for Saltwater Fish

Note: Fishery Regulations are subject to change.

TL=Total Length, FL=Fork Length
State Waters extend from the saltwater-freshwater dividing line to the 3-mile limit.
AIW=Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway
Federal Waters extend from the 3-mile limit to 200 miles offshore (international waters).

All species in this section must be landed with head and tail intact.

Sport Fish

Red Drum (Channel Bass/Spottail)

Limit: 2 per person per day (state waters)
0 (federal waters)

Size: 15-inch minimum (TL) and 24-inch maximum (TL) (state waters)

Seasons/Restrictions:

- May be taken only by rod & reel year-round or by gigging March through November.
- May not be harvested from federal waters.
- South Carolina native caught fish may not be sold (state waters).

Spotted Seatrout

Limit: 10 per person per day (state waters)
Size: 13-inch minimum (TL) (state waters)

Seasons/Restrictions:

- May be taken only by rod & reel year-round or by gigging March through November.
- South Carolina native caught fish may not be sold (state waters).

Flounders (Southern & Summer)

Limit: Rod & reel or gigging only - 20 per person per day (state waters)

Size: 12-inch minimum (TL) (state waters)

Seasons/Restrictions:

- Size limits apply to both recreational & commercial fishing.

Striped Bass

Limit: 10 per person per day except 5 per day in Wando & Cooper rivers and Santee River downstream to the AIW.

Size: None in salt waters, except 21-inch minimum in the Wando & Cooper rivers and Santee River above the AIW.

Seasons/Restrictions:

- May be taken only by rod & reel year-round & may not be sold (state waters).
- Unlawful to take in saltwaters of the Savannah River.

Bluefish

Limit: 15 per person per day (all waters)

Size: No size limit

Seasons/Restrictions: No closed season

King Mackerel

Limit: 3 per person per day (all waters)

Size: 24-inch minimum (FL) (all waters)

Seasons/Restrictions:

- January 1 to December 31, fishery may be closed to all harvest if total allowable catch is exceeded (state & federal waters).

Spanish Mackerel

Limit: 15 per person per day (all waters)

Size: 12-inch minimum (FL) (all waters)

Seasons/Restrictions:

- January 1 to December 31, fishery may be closed to all harvest if total allowable catch is exceeded (state & federal waters).

Cobia

Limit: 2 per person per day (all waters)

Size: 33-inch minimum (FL) (all waters)

Seasons/Restrictions:

- No closed season

Tarpon

Limit: 1 per person per day (state waters)

Size: No size limit

Seasons/Restrictions:

- May be taken only by rod & reel & may not be sold.

Greater Amberjack

Limit: 1 per person per day (all waters)

Size: 28-inch minimum (FL) (all waters)

Seasons/Restrictions:

- Commercial harvest restrictions during April. Prohibits sale of fish harvested under bag limit when season is closed.

Sheepshead, Spadefish

Catch Limit: No more than 20 per person per day in aggregate with the snapper grouper complex species listed on this page.

Seasons/Restrictions:

- Bluerunners and tomtates are excluded from the bag limit.

Dolphin

Limits: 10 per person or 60 per boat per day (all waters); headboats have no boat limit.

Size: No size limit

Seasons/Restrictions: No closed season

Wahoo

Limits: 2 per person per day

Size: No size limit

Seasons/Restrictions: No closed season

Atlantic Tunas

Yellowfin Tuna

Limit: 3 per person per day.

Size: 27-inch minimum (FL)

Seasons/Restrictions:

- Federal Permit required.

Bigeye, Bluefin Tuna

Limits: Check current Federal Regulations by calling 1-888-USA-TUNA or checking www.nmfspermits.com.

Size: 27-inch minimum (FL)

Seasons/Restrictions:

- Check current Federal Regulations by calling 1-888-USA-TUNA or checking www.nmfspermits.com.
- Federal Permit required.

Albacore, Skipjack

Limit: None

Size: No size limit

Seasons/Restrictions:

- Federal Permit required.

Porgies & Snappers

Red Porgy

Seasons/Restrictions:

- 1 per person per day.
- 14-inch minimum (TL).

Vermilion Snapper

Limit: 10 per person per day (all waters) (recreational)

Size: 11-inch minimum (TL) recreational size limit; 12-inch minimum (TL) commercial size limit

Seasons/Restrictions:

- No closed season

Other Snappers

(Excluding Vermilion)

Red Snapper	20-inch minimum (TL) No closed season
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Lane Snapper	8-inch minimum (TL) No closed season
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Black Snapper	No size limit No closed season
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Blackfin, Cubera, Dog, Yellowtail, Gray, Mahogany, Silk, Schoolmaster & Queen Snapper	12-inch minimum (TL) No closed season
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Mutton Snapper	16-inch minimum (TL) No closed season
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Limit:

- 10 per person per day from this group (including all snapper species except Vermilion), and no more than 2 Red Snapper may be included in the total (state & federal waters).

Hogfish

Limit: None

Size: 12-inch minimum (FL) (all waters)

Seasons/Restrictions:

- No closed season

Sea Bass, Grouper & Tilefish

Black Seabass

Limit: 20 per person per day

Size: 10-inch minimum (TL) (all waters)

Seasons/Restrictions:

- No closed season

Grouper Tilefish Combinations

Gag & Black	24-inch minimum (TL)
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Grouper	
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Scamp, Red,	20-inch minimum (TL)
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Yellowfin &	
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Yellowmouth Groupers	
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Snowey Grouper	
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Yellowedge Grouper	
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Golden Tilefish	No size limit
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Sand Tilefish	
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Blueline Tilefish	
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Limits:

- 5 per person per day from this group, and no more than 2 Gag or Black Groupers may be included in the total (state & federal waters).

Restrictions:

- No closed season

Warsaw, Speckled Hind Groupers

Limit: 1 warsaw and 1 speckled hind per vessel per trip

Size: No size limit

Seasons/Restrictions:

- No closed season.

Nassau Grouper, Goliath

Limit: Possession is prohibited

Seasons/Restrictions:

- No open season

All Other Snapper Grouper Complex Species Combined

Species: Including but not limited to: Gray, Queen and Ocean Triggerfish; Whitebone, Knobbed, Jolthead, Saucereye, Grass and Longspine Porgies; Scup, Sheepshead, Almaco, Bar, Crevalle and Yellow Jacks; Lesser Amberjack; Banded Rudderfish; Bluestripe, White, Smallmouth, French and Spanish grunts; Black Margate; Margate; Porkfish; Cottonwick; Sailors Choice; Spadefish; Puddingwife; Bank Sea Bass; Rock Sea Bass

Limit: 20 per person per day from this group

Size: No size limit

Seasons/Restrictions:

- Bluerunners and tomtates are excluded from the bag limit.
- No closed season.

Sharks

Permits/Licenses: Federal Highly Migratory Species Permit required in federal waters.

Dogfish (Spiny & Smooth)

Limit: None (all waters)

Size: No size limit

Atlantic Sharpnose

Limit: 1 per person per day (federal waters)

2 per person per day (state waters)

Size: No size limit

Bonnethead

Limit: 1 per person per day (all waters)

Size: No size limit

Sandbar, Silky, Blacktip, Spinner, Bull, Tiger, Lemon, Nurse, Scalloped Hammerhead, Great Hammerhead, Smooth Hammerhead, Blacknose, Finetooth, Shortfin Mako, Thresher, Porbeagle, Oceanic Whitetip and Blue Sharks

Limit: 1 shark per boat per trip from this group.

Size: 54-inch minimum (FL)

Sand Tiger, Bigeye Sand Tiger, Whale, Basking, White, Dusky, Bignose, Galapagos, Night, Caribbean Reef, Narrowtooth, Caribbean Sharpnose, Smalltail, Atlantic Angel, Longfin Mako, Bigeye Thresher, Sevengill, Sixgill and Bigeye Sixgill Sharks

Limit: Possession is prohibited

Seasons/Restrictions:

- No open season. Sharks from this group may not be kept. If caught, sharks from this group must be released immediately.

Special Information

Special Management Zones - The following Artificial Reefs have been declared "Special Management Zones" and are protected by federal regulations: *BP-25, Beaufort 45, Betsy Ross, Bill Perry, C.J. Davidson, Cape Romain, Capers, Charleston 60, Comanche, Eagles Nest, Edisto 40, Edisto 60, Edisto Offshore, Fripp Island, Georgetown, Greenville, Hilton Head, Hunting Island, Kiawah, Little River Offshore, North Inlet, Paradise, Pawley's Island, Ten Mile, Vermilion, Wayne Upchurch, Will Goldfinch and Y-73.* Fishing may be conducted only with hook and line gear and spearfishing gear (excluding powerheads). The use of fish traps, longlines, gill nets, and trawls is prohibited. Powerheads (bangsticks) are prohibited except for safety purposes. It is unlawful to possess, land, or sell any species of fish taken with a bangstick (reef and non-reef areas).

Unlawful to Sell Gamefish - The following species have been declared gamefish and native caught fish may not be sold; red drum (channel bass), spotted seatrout, striped bass and tarpon. The purchase, barter, trade, or sale of billfish, including marlin, sailfish and spearfish, is unlawful regardless of where taken or landed. Swordfish may be sold under commercial laws only.

Prohibited Practices - The use of dynamite, gun

powder, lime or any other explosive in or about any waters of this state is unlawful.

It is unlawful to sell or offer for sale any sea turtles or to offer for sale, sell or destroy any sea turtle eggs. Sea turtles are protected by the Federal Endangered Species Act. It is unlawful to display, feed, net, trap, harpoon, molest or otherwise interfere with the well-being or normal activity of marine mammals of the orders Cetacea, Sirenia and Pinnipedia, including but not limited to bottlenose dolphin, spotted dolphin, common dolphin, manatee, porpoise, harbor seal and any species of whale in any waters of the state. Marine mammals are also protected by federal law.

Billfish

Federal Highly Migratory Species Permit required

Blue Marlin

Size: 99-inch minimum (FL) (all waters)

Seasons/Restrictions:

- May be taken only by rod & reel and may not be sold.

White Marlin

Size: 66-inch minimum (FL) (all waters)

Seasons/Restrictions:

- May be taken only by rod & reel and may not be sold.

Sailfish

Limit: None

Size: 63-inch minimum (FL) (all waters)

Seasons/Restrictions:

- May be taken only by rod & reel-no sale

Swordfish

Limit: 1 per person per day up to 3 per vessel per trip

Size: 47-inch minimum from lower jaw (FL) (state & federal waters)

Seasons/Restrictions:

- May be taken only by rod & reel.

Recreationally taken fish may not be sold

Sturgeon & Shad

Shortnose sturgeon

Limit: Possession is prohibited

Seasons/Restrictions:

- Unlawful to catch, buy, sell, possess or ship. Classified as an endangered species.

Atlantic sturgeon

Limit: Possession is prohibited (state waters)

Seasons/Restrictions:

- No open season until further notice.

Unlawful to catch, buy, sell, possess or ship.

American Shad, Herring

Limit: 10 Shad per person per day except in Santee River and Rediversion canal (20 per person per day).

1 U.S. bushel of Herring per person per day.

Size: No size limit

Seasons/Restrictions:

- No closed season for recreational fishing with castnet or hook & line, including rod & reel. Skimbow nets allowed Feb. 1 through Apr. 30. Gill nets allowed as for commercial use.

Shrimp Harvesting

Catch Limits for Shrimp

Certain exemptions apply to permitted charter vessels and licensed bait dealers. For information contact SCDNR, Marine Resources Division, P.O. Box 12559, Charleston, SC 29422 or call 843-953-9300.

Taking Shrimp Without Bait

Permits/Licenses: None for personal use

Limits/Seasons:

- 48 quarts whole or 29 quarts headed shrimp per boat, or per person per day if no boat is used or among seining parties. May 1 - Dec. 15.
- 12 dozen dead or live shrimp per boat Dec. 16 through April 30

Shrimp Baiting

Permits/Licenses: Shrimp Baiting License and pole marker tags required. A license is not required for residents assisting license holders. Permits available after August 1.

Seasons: 60-day period set by SCDNR beginning at 12:00 noon on the last Friday on or before Sept. 15.

Limits:

- 48 quarts whole or 29 quarts headed shrimp per boat, or per person per day if no boat is used or among seining parties.

Restrictions:

- Shrimp caught over bait cannot be sold.
- No more than 10 poles can be used per day. Poles may not exceed 1-inch in diameter, and must have a numbered tag attached which corresponds with the shrimp baiting license. Each pole must also be marked with reflective tape.
- All poles must be set within 100 yards, and the distance between each set of poles must be at least 25 yards. Poles may not be set within 50 yards of any dock, public landing or boat ramp. Unattended poles will be confiscated.
- The owner of a private dock or person with written permission may bait from that dock once properly licensed.
- Shrimp pots or traps are prohibited.
- Individuals who are: 1) officers of a corporation which, owns a vessel specified on a trawl license application; 2) masters of a vessel specified on a trawl license application; 3) licensed to use a channel net; 4) licensed to use a cast net for a commercial purpose; or 4) licensed as a wholesale seafood dealer may not obtain a shrimp baiting license.
- Cast nets used for taking shrimp over bait must have a minimum mesh size of ½ inch square.

Shrimp Seines

Permits/Licenses: None for personal use

Seasons: No closed season

Restrictions:

- Maximum length of shrimp seine, 40 feet; minimum mesh size, 1/2 inch square mesh nylon (9/16 inch square mesh cotton).
- Tail bags or pockets are not allowed on seines when pulled by hand.
- Staked seines are considered commercial channel net devices, and allowances and restrictions are provided with the purchase of a commercial license.
- One limit per seine per day.

Trawling

Permits/Licenses: Commercial Fishing, Boat Decal, and Gear License required.

Restrictions: Trawling for personal use is restricted to the same license requirements, areas and seasons as commercial trawling. This information is provided with license.

Crab, Lobster & Shellfish Harvesting

Blue crabs

Limit: None (state waters)

Size: 5-inch minimum carapace width (point to point)

Restrictions:

- Female blue crabs with egg mass (sponge) must be returned to water unharmed immediately.
- Not more than two pots or traps per person, with owner's name attached to a yellow float, for recreational purposes.

Stone crabs

Limit: None (state waters)

Size: Claws must be 2 3/4-inch minimum forearm (propodus)

Restrictions:

- Only the larger of two claws may be kept.
- It is unlawful to possess any stone crab body, live or dead.
- No claw may be removed from a female with egg mass.

Spiny lobster

Limit: 2 per person per day (all waters)

Size: Carapace must be over 3 inches

Restrictions:

- No closed season.

- Removal of tail at sea prohibited.
- No harvest of berried females is allowed.
- No explosives, poisons, spears, or piercing devices other than fishing hooks are allowed.

Oysters

Limit: 2 U.S. bushels per person per day from public or state shellfish grounds. No person may harvest oysters recreationally on more than two calendar days per any seven day period. No boat or vehicle, or boat and vehicle combination may contain more than three personal limits regardless of the number of persons on the boat or in the vehicle. In order to possess three personal limits there must be three persons on the boat or in the vehicle. If there are four or more persons on the boat or in the vehicle there is a maximum possession limit of three personal limits.

Size: No Limit

Restrictions:

- Season typically Sept. 16 through May 14; may be shortened or extended by the DNR.
- A person may harvest recreationally no more than two days per seven day period.

Permits/Licenses: Saltwater Recreational Fishing License required.

Clams

Limit: 1/2 U.S. bushel per person per day from public or state shellfish grounds. No person may harvest clams recreationally on more than two calendar days per any seven day period. No boat or vehicle, or boat and vehicle combination may contain more than three personal limits regardless of the number of persons on the boat or in the vehicle. In order to possess three personal limits there must be three persons on the boat or in the vehicle. If there are four or more persons on the boat or in the vehicle there is a maximum possession limit of three personal limits.

Size: 1-inch minimum thickness

Restrictions:

- Season typically Sept. 16 through May 14; may be shortened or extended by the DNR.
- A person may harvest recreationally no more than two days per seven day period.

Permits/Licenses: Saltwater Recreational Fishing License required.

Crab & Shellfish Methods & Devices

Crab Pots (Traps)

Permits/Licenses: None for up to two pots. A Commercial Fishing License, Boat Decal, and Gear License are required for over two pots. (Other information is provided with licenses.)

Seasons: No closed season

Restrictions:

- If unattended, each pot must bear name or license number of owner.
- No crab pot shall be left unattended in coastal waters more than 5 days.
- No crab trap or pot may be set within 100 yards of a public boat landing or launching area or set so as to be left dry at low tide.
- A float attached to a crab pot or trap must be made of solid, buoyant material which does not sink upon being punctured or cracked. The floats must be constructed of plastic, PVC Spongex, plastic foam, or cork. The primary float for a recreational pot or trap must be yellow in color and at least ten inches in length if rectangular, cylindrical, or conical and at least five inches in diameter or width. Round or spherical floats must be at least six inches in diameter. Buoy lines for crab pots must be made of nonfloating material.

Gathering Shellfish (Oysters & Clams)

Permits/Licenses: Saltwater Recreational Fisheries License

Seasons: Typically Sept. 16 through May 14 (1/2 hour before sunrise to 1/2 hour after sunset)

Restrictions:

- It is unlawful to use scoops, scrapes, tongs, or dredges to take shellfish without a permit.
- Shellfish may be harvested recreationally from State shellfish grounds and Public shellfish grounds. Most Public and State shellfish grounds are marked with signs. Recreational harvesting is allowed on Culture permit grounds (formerly leases), but only when the harvester has in possession, written permission from the Culture permit holder. License must be in possession while harvesting.

Maps of areas where oysters and clams may be gathered in season for recreation may be found on the web at www.dnr.state.sc.us or by writing Marine Resources at PO Box 12559, Charleston, SC 29422.

SHRIMP BAITING LICENSE APPLICATION

South Carolina Department of Natural Resources

Social Security No. _____

Name _____

Mailing Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

County _____ Telephone _____

Drivers License No. _____ State _____

Date of Birth _____ Sex (M) (F) Race _____

I understand that persons whose recreational privileges are suspended are not eligible to apply for, hold, or use SCDNR recreational licenses, permits, stamps, or tags.

Signature _____ Date _____

Please complete the above information, sign and return with the appropriate fee to the mailing address above.

Note: Applications with incomplete information will not be processed and will be returned to the applicant.

Residents: Submit \$25.00 check or money order payable to SCDNR with application. (Non-residents, \$500.00 Cashiers Check or Money Order only.)

SCDNR License Office:
PO Box 11710
Columbia, SC 29211
(803) 734-3833



DNR

2004 Saltwater Recreational Fisheries License Report

Introduction

During 2002/03, the program underwent some major changes. Effective 1 July, 2002 the cost and structure of the saltwater license was changed by the SC Legislature to mirror the State's Freshwater license. This gives residents and out-of-state anglers a variety of license options to choose from. It also provided a doubling of the revenues which are being used for activities of importance to the State's saltwater recreational anglers. Another significant event was the end of the saltwater stamp and print program. Due mainly to dwindling sales, the decision was made to cancel the annual art contest after it's tenth season. The final and tenth edition to the art series was won by Florida artist Tom Krause. To commemorate this final edition the species that was featured was the most popular saltwater inshore gamefish in the State and also the species chosen on the First of State saltwater print done back in 1992, the "red drum", locally known as the spottail bass.

Since it's effective date of 1 July 1992, we estimate that the program has sold approximately 1,066,877 stamps/licenses to fishermen and 48,557 stamps to collectors. Art collectors and conservationists have purchased approximately 12,891 limited edition and medallion prints by artists such as Diane Peebles, Tom Krause and South Carolina's own Barnie Slice and Matt Constantine.

During the period July 1, 2002 through June 30, 2003 approximately \$1.15M total was generated by the program. The law stipulates that no more than 25% of the revenues generated for a given year may be used for administration and law enforcement activities. In addition, all "new" monies generated by the fee increase will be used for projects and activities that support recreational saltwater fishing and shellfishing in SC only. This means that \$27,941 was set aside to administer the program, \$111,763 was provided for coastal law enforcement, leaving approximately \$1M to fund eligible coastal saltwater projects and activities (see below).

2003 Activities

Artificial Reefs –Seventeen offshore artificial reef construction projects were completed on twelve different permitted sites as of January 2004. This included the sinking of 100 subway cars, 500 concrete reef cones, tons of concrete rubble, 13 submarine camels and the dispersal of pieces and parts of what was once of the old Limehouse Bridge onto three different reef sites. Nine damaged or missing buoys were replaced. In addition, work began on moving the reef program inshore. Two inshore reef sites have been permitted in the Winyah Bay area and another application is pending for a site in St. Helena Sound - \$230K

Marine Fish – SCDNR's Marine Gamefish Tagging Program continues to promote angler ethics and conservation with the support of license funds. Last year, 622 participants tagged 4,024 fish. We received information from 495 recaptured fish, the top two species were red and black drum. An effort to specifically tag dolphinfish continued this year. A total of 1,700 dolphin have been tagged so far and 34 recaptured. The most notable was a fish tagged in the Florida Keys and recovered 93 days later off the New Jersey coast, 995 miles to the north. Another important component in SCDNR's effort to maintain high quality fishing opportunities are our efforts to monitor and track stocks of recreationally important species. In this regard, we have staff assigned to collect size, age and reproductive information from a variety of species. We do this by using our own gear to catch and record this data in a standardized repeatable fashion using long lines to catch large adult red drum offshore, trammel nets to catch the smaller juvenile red and black drum, flounders, sheepshead and seatrout inshore and even electroshocking. Staff also visit fishing tournaments and

manage freezers in several locations where participating anglers can donate specimens for science. During 2003 staff visited 7 fishing tournaments and were able to obtain information on 638 fish representing 6 species. Anglers also donated 429 additional fish in the freezer program. Another popular program that has been given a boost from the saltwater license is SCDNR's red drum stocking program. Most of this work goes on behind closed doors. It takes time and patience to manage a healthy brood stock and condition them to spawn on cue. Larvae that are produced must then be carefully maintained in ponds or tanks, marked with a chemical agent, so they can later be identified as hatchery fish and then transported to the stocking area. During 2003 approximately 547,000 juvenile red drum were released into the North Edisto River and 625,000 fish released in the May River. These juvenile red drum were about 1" in length and it is hoped that fish able to survive the riggers of life in the salt marsh will be available to the anglers creel by fall/winter 2004. - \$467K

Oysters –. Over 28,660 bu of shell were planted on 6 public grounds during 2003 including two sites on the Folly River, Leadenwah Creek, Johnson Cr. Pinckney Is and Clam Bank Flats in Murrell's Inlet. Two new shell drop off facilities were build for shell recycling, one on St. Helena Is. and the other by the Hwy. 17 bridge in Georgetown. We are also testing new and better ways to enhance and restore some of our local shellfish beds. Staff are testing different ways to place shell on banks, covering some of the shell with different materials to reduce erosion and using volunteers to build and monitor oyster reefs in different areas and under different conditions. Shellfish maps are available to the public free of charge by writing: Recreational Shellfish Maps, Office of Fisheries Management, SCDNR, P.O. Box 12559, Charleston S.C. 29422-2559 or by calling (843) 953-9854 or from the SCDNR Web site ([HTTP://WWW.DNR.STATE.SC.US](http://WWW.DNR.STATE.SC.US)) - \$249K

Education and Information – A new saltwater license website has been developed ([HTTP://SALTWATERFISHING.SC.GOV](http://SALTWATERFISHING.SC.GOV)) to keep the public updated on a number of issues including changes in the rules and regulation, saltwater fishing related news and related information. The website averages about 30,000 hits per month. Educational activities and outreach programs including presentations and trips on the Educational Vessel *Discovery*, continue to be a popular activity with local clubs and schools and allow us to display the benefits of the License Program. - \$40K

