

Sec. 26-142a-8a. Species restrictions

(a) **Blue Crabs.** No person shall take or attempt to take any blue crabs in any waters of this state except by scoop or scap net, handline or manually operated and personally attended devices described below:

(1) Manually closed, caging devices similar to the Star Crab Trap manufactured by the Cuba Specialty Manufacturing Company, Houghton, New York.

(2) Circular, topless traps not exceeding twenty-six (26) inches in diameter.

(3) Semicircular cylindrical traps not exceeding twelve (12) inches in diameter with hinged entrances or ends controlled by drawstrings.

No person shall take, offer for sale or possess at any time any female blue crab bearing eggs visible thereon or from which the egg pouch or bunion has been removed. No person shall take, offer for sale or possess any hard shell blue crab measuring less than five inches across the shell (carapace) from tip to tip of spikes; but soft shell blue crabs not less than three and one-half inches across the shell from tip to tip of spikes may be taken, sold and possessed. No person on the waters of this state or on any parcel of land, structure, or portion of a roadway abutting tidal waters shall possess any uncooked blue crab meat without the shell (carapace) attached. No more than two claws per crab may be possessed.

Any blue crabs taken contrary to these regulations shall, without avoidable injury, be returned immediately to the water from which taken.

(b) **Minimum Legal Length.** No person shall possess any fish taken by any commercial fishing gear or for commercial purposes less than the lengths specified below measured from the tip of the snout to the end of the tail and, notwithstanding section 26-159a-4 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies, no person shall buy, sell, offer for sale or possess in a place where fish are offered for sale, any of said species less than the minimum legal length stated herein.

(1) Atlantic tomcod (frostfish) (*Microgadus tomcod*) - 7 inches

(2) Tautog (blackfish) (*Tautoga onitis*) - 14 inches

(3) Scup (porgy) (*Stenotomus chrysops*) - 9 inches

(4) Black sea bass (*Centropristis striata*) - 11 inches

(5) Winter flounder (*Pseudopleuronectes americanus*) - 12 inches

(6) Bluefish (*Pomatomus saltatrix*) - 9 inches

(7) Summer flounder (fluke) (*Paralichthys dentatus*) - 14 inches

(8) Atlantic cod (*Gadus morhua*) - 22 inches

(9) Weakfish (*Cynoscion regalis*) - 16 inches

(10) Yellowtail flounder (*Pleuronectes ferrugineus*) - 13 inches

(11) Haddock (*Melanogrammus aeglefinus*) - 22 inches

(12) Pollock (*Pollachius virens*) - 19 inches

(13) Witch flounder (*Glyptocephalus cynoglossus*) - 14 inches

(14) American plaice (*Hippoglossoides platessoides*) - 14 inches

(15) Redfish (*Sebastes marinus*) - 9 inches

(16) (A) Channeled whelk (*Busycotypus canaliculatus*) – Effective August 1, 2022, 4.75 inches in shell length or 1 15/16 inches in shell height; effective January 1, 2024, 5 inches in shell length or 2 inches in shell height; effective January 1, 2026, 5 ¼ inches in shell length or 2 inches in shell height; and effective January 1, 2028, 5 ½ inches in shell

length or 2 ¼ inches in shell height.

(B) Knobbed whelk (*Busycon carica*) - Effective August 1, 2022, 4.75 inches in shell length or 1 15/16 inches in shell height; effective January 1, 2024, 5 inches in shell length or 2 inches in shell height; effective January 1, 2026, 5 ¼ inches in shell length or 2 1/8 inches in shell height; and effective January 1, 2028, 5 ½ inches in shell length or 2 ¼ inches in shell height.

(C) For whelk species, shell length shall be defined as the longest length of the shell from the spire apex to the siphonal canal and shell height shall be the distance along a straight perpendicular line from a point on the opercular side of the shell to the farthest point of the top of the shell. Shell height is measured with the whelk retracted, and shell placed with the operculum stably positioned against a flat surface. To properly measure shell height using a gauge: Minimum legal shell height shall be the shell height specified in this subdivision between opposing parallel surfaces, measured with the whelk retracted and shell placed with the operculum stably positioned against one of the parallel surfaces. The whelk shall be considered legal-sized if it does not fit between the opposing parallel surfaces.

Any of said species less than the minimum legal length taken by any commercial fishing gear shall, without avoidable injury, be returned immediately to the water from which taken. No person on board any vessel engaged in commercial fishing or landing species taken by commercial fishing gear shall possess any summer flounder fillet less than the minimum total length for the species unless the carcass of the fish from which the fillet was removed has been retained and meets the minimum length. This subsection shall not be construed to prevent filleting of fish on shore or at the dockside. Whelk measuring less than the minimum shell length or shell height shall not comprise by number more than three percent of whelk in possession by any person, except holders of a commercial whelk fishing license may possess whelk measuring less than the minimum size provided: any such licensee is actively fishing in a designated shellfishing area with written permission of the shellfish lease holder, any whelk measuring less than the minimum size are stored in a container separate from all other catch, such whelk are kept covered with a fabric wetted with sea water, and such whelk are released, without avoidable injury, to the waters of Long Island Sound on the same day that they were taken and prior to landing or off loading, provided no such whelk shall be released onto any shellfishing ground leased by another shellfisherman under section 26-149 of the Connecticut General Statutes and designated under the provisions of section 26-227 of the Connecticut General Statutes. Holders of a license to harvest shellfish issued by the Department of Agriculture pursuant to section 26-192c of the Connecticut General Statutes who are in possession of clams or oysters harvested from a designated shellfishing area may possess and land whelk measuring less than the minimum size provided: any whelk measuring less than the minimum size are stored in containers with clams and oysters prior to landing, such whelk are separated from clams and oysters after landing and held in cages stored in sea water, and such whelk are released, without avoidable injury, to the waters of Long Island Sound not later than 24 hours after landing, provided no such whelk shall be released onto any shellfishing ground leased by another shellfisherman under section 26-149 of the Connecticut General Statutes and designated under the provisions of section 26-227 of the Connecticut General Statutes.

Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies

(Effective May 19, 1995; Amended June 27, 1997; Amended October 23, 1997; Amended July 1, 2002; Amended March 31, 2003; Amended February 26, 2004; Amended May 11, 2022)