

**State of Connecticut
Regulation of
Department of Energy and Environmental Protection
Concerning
Sport Fishing in the Marine District**

Section 26-159a-2 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies is amended by adding subsection (h) as follows:

(NEW)(h) All persons fishing for striped bass with whole, cut, or live natural baits shall use an in-line circle hook, defined as a fishing hook on which the point and barb of the hook are not offset from the plane of the shank and bend, and the point is turned perpendicularly back towards the shank.

R-39 Rev. 02/2012

Statement of Purpose

This new subsection mandates the use of circle hooks by recreational anglers when fishing for striped bass with natural baits (as opposed to artificial lures). Atlantic striped bass populations are currently overfished and in need of conservation. Post-release or “discard” mortality of striped bass released by recreational anglers is a major contributing factor to the depleted state of striped bass populations. Use of circle hooks is a scientifically-proven method of minimizing hooking injury and thus increasing odds of post-release survival. To reduce discard mortality, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) has added a provision to the Interstate Fisheries Management Plan (FMP) for Atlantic Striped Bass requiring Atlantic coastal states to implement rules by January 1, 2021 mandating use of circle hooks when fishing for striped bass with bait. The Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act of 1993 mandates that Atlantic coastal states implement the provisions of ASMFC FMPs or face a federally-imposed fisheries moratorium. The proposed regulation will therefore provide conservation of economically-important striped bass populations, and ensure compliance with the ASMFC striped bass FMP.