

NEW CLOSURE DATES FOR LOBSTER
PROGRESS ON ARTIFICIAL REEF ISSUE

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) has approved new closure dates for Lobster for Area 4 (Atlantic Ocean for New York and part of New Jersey) after Area 4 failed to make a 10% reduction. The NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife has extended that closure for all of New Jersey to avoid two different closure areas and dates for the state.

The new closure dates for 2015 are April 30th to May 31st for New Jersey.
The New closure dates will be enforced!

Regarding the artificial reef issue, the NJ Register published a proposed rule on February 2nd from Fish and Wildlife amending the Artificial Reef regulations for New Jersey waters. The proposal would limit commercial and recreational fixed gear (pots) to three small sections of the Sandy Hook and Axel Carlson Reefs. The Sandy Hook (1 zone) and the Axel Carlson (2 zones) reefs will have small sections known as full access zones where potting will be permitted. Limitations on size of strings, times for attending the pots, and penalties are included in the proposal. The rest of these two reefs will be hook and line and spear only.

In addition, the Division of Fish and Wildlife is considering a new recreational reef only about 2.2 miles out of Manasquan Inlet, but this is not part of the February 2nd NJ Register proposal. This is all part of a compromise plan to be able to use Sport Fish Restoration funds again to build artificial reefs. The NJ Council of Diving Clubs is supporting the artificial reefs proposals in order to end the deadlock in New Jersey's Artificial Reef Program.

Respectfully,
Jack Fullmer
Legislative Committee
New Jersey Council of Diving Clubs