



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

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MEMORANDUM

TO: American Eel Management Board

FROM: Caitlin Starks, Senior FMP Coordinator

DATE: April 28, 2026

SUBJECT: 2020-2025 Yellow Eel Landings

This memorandum serves as a review of 2020-2025 yellow eel landings information. The information is provided to aid the Board in annually evaluating landings relative to the coastwide cap.

Yellow Eel Fishery Coastwide Cap

Addendum V (2018) implemented a yellow eel coastwide landings cap of 916,473 pounds as well as a new management trigger and Cap overage policy. In 2024, Addendum VII implemented a new coastwide cap of 518,281 starting in 2025. The coastwide cap is established using *I_{TARGET}*, an index-based method that provides management advice based on abundance indices and catch information, as well as management goals specified by the Board. The coastwide landings cap for yellow eel of 518,281 pounds remains in place for three years (2025-2027). After three years, prior to the 2028 fishing year, the Board may update the coastwide cap with additional years of catch and abundance data, or maintain the same coastwide cap.

The coastwide landings are annually evaluated against a two-year management trigger. If the coastwide cap is exceeded by 10% (10% of the coastwide cap = 51,828 pounds; coastwide cap + 10% = 570,109 pounds) for two consecutive years, then only states with landings greater than 1% of the coastwide landings, in the year(s) when the management trigger is tripped, will be responsible for reducing their landings to achieve the coastwide cap in the subsequent year. States with landings greater than 1% of the coastwide landings will work collectively to achieve an equitable reduction to the coastwide cap. For states with landings less than 1% of the coastwide landings, if in subsequent years a state's landings exceeds 1% of the coastwide landings after reductions have been applied, that state must reduce their individual state landings in the subsequent year to return to the less than 1% level.

Summary of Recent Landings Trends

Preliminary yellow eel landings from ACCSP indicate that total coastwide landings in 2025 were 260,348 pounds, excluding confidential data. This is a 19% decrease from 2024 and well below the coastwide cap, however, Massachusetts landings (which have been below 1,000 pounds per year since 2021) are unavailable at this time. Table 1 shows each jurisdiction's landings from 2020-2025. A number of factors may have driven the decline in yellow eel landings in recent

years, including international market demand for food fish, decline in demand for yellow eels as bait, a depleted stock, and the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 1. Jurisdiction yellow eel landings from 2020-2025

Year	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025*
Maine	7,012	1,368	921	1,104	C	C
New Hampshire	<i>Time series average of less than 400</i>					
Massachusetts	NA	269	138	851	NA	NA
Rhode Island	1,425	1,863	605	2,859	1,928	1,067
Connecticut	2,783	3,255	3,755	1,468	3,448	1,205
New York	9,860	20,022	22,874	13,860	15,439	9,476
New Jersey	23,742	26,273	52,586	48,683	30,387	26,408
Delaware	1,942	4,433	2,967	11,090	8,910	5,868
Maryland	159,816	204,701	187,810	135,266	198,973	183,523
Potomac River Fisheries Commission	24,971	10,439	12,814	20,229	11,316	704
Virginia	21,916	43,228	35,515	50,970	6,206	31,025
North Carolina	3,291	5,505	3,602	1,109	2,469	1,072
South Carolina	<i>Time series average of less than 400</i>					
Georgia	<i>Time series average of less than 400</i>					
Florida	499	9,050	NA	1,960	2,080	999
Total	257,257	330,406	323,587	312,629	281,156	260,348

*2025 landings are preliminary and subject to change.

Due to confidential data, information for New Hampshire, South Carolina, and Georgia have been removed. Massachusetts 2020, 2024, and 2025 landings and Florida 2022 landings are not available.