

CHAPTER 194

AN ACT designating the striped bass (*Morone saxatilis*) as the New Jersey State Saltwater Fish and redesignating the brook trout (*Salvelinus fontinalis*) as the New Jersey State Freshwater Fish, amending the title and body of P.L.1991, c.342, and supplementing chapter 9A of Title 52 of the Revised Statutes.

WHEREAS, The rich marine resources of this State offer a variety of recreational opportunities for residents and visitors and provide the basis for tourism, one of the State's most vital industries; and

WHEREAS, Included in these marine resources are striped bass, which provide enjoyment for those interested in saltwater fishing; and

WHEREAS, The striped bass (*Morone saxatilis*), also known as the “striper” or “rockfish,” is easily identified by the dark horizontal stripes across its silver body; and

WHEREAS, Striped bass can grow to lengths of more than 48 inches, weigh over 50 pounds, and live up to 30 years; and

WHEREAS, Striped bass are native to the Atlantic coastline of North America, ranging from the St. Lawrence River in Canada to the St. Johns River in Florida; and

WHEREAS, The Hudson and Delaware Rivers are important bodies of water for breeding stocks of striped bass; and

WHEREAS, New Jersey’s own Navesink River was used to seine the striped bass that were transported to California by train, allowing the successful introduction of the fish to the Pacific coast in 1879; and

WHEREAS, The striped bass has always been an important recreational fish and has helped control the population of non-native gizzard shad (*Dorosoma cepedianum*); and

WHEREAS, In the early 1980s, overfishing significantly reduced the population of striped bass, requiring strict management measures — including the designation in 2007 of striped bass as a protected game fish and a prohibition on the sale of striped bass caught in certain federal waters — in order to return it to a healthy population status; and

WHEREAS, In 1991, the State of New Jersey prohibited the sale in the State of wild caught striped bass; and

WHEREAS, Striped bass are now at sustainable population levels and able to be enjoyed by many in this State; and

WHEREAS, In acknowledgement of the recreational and environmental importance of this fish, it is fitting and appropriate to designate the striped bass as the official saltwater fish of the State of New Jersey; now, therefore,

BE IT ENACTED *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

C.52:9A-6.1 Striped bass designated NJ State Salt Water Fish.

1. The striped bass (*Morone saxatilis*) is designated as the New Jersey State Saltwater Fish.

Title amended.

2. The title of P.L.1991, c.342 is amended to read as follows:

AN ACT designating the brook trout as the New Jersey State Freshwater Fish.

3. Section 1 of P.L.1991, c.342 (C.52:9A-6) is amended to read as follows:

C.52:9A-6 Designation of State Freshwater Fish.

1. The brook trout (*Salvelinus fontinalis*) is designated as the New Jersey State Freshwater Fish.

4. This act shall take effect immediately.

Approved August 7, 2017.