

Commercial crabber fined for failure to report harvest

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DNREC Natural Resources Police, Division of Fish and Wildlife Enforcement agents cited commercial fisherman Travis J. Mick, 31, of Milford, for failure to report horseshoe crab landings within a 24-hour limit as required by state regulations. Enforcement's investigation found that Mick had harvested approximately 3,000 horseshoe crabs over a two-day period without reporting his take. Mick subsequently submitted his harvest report after he was fined by Fish and Wildlife Enforcement.

To harvest horseshoe crabs in Delaware, commercial fishermen must obtain a permit from DNREC's Division of Fish and Wildlife. Delaware adheres to an annual harvest limit set by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, as part of the Commission's Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Horseshoe Crabs.

Delaware fisheries regulations require commercial fishermen to report their horseshoe crab harvest within 24 hours; failure to do so results in a fine and possible suspension of their harvest permit until the report is submitted. The Division of Fish & Wildlife's Fisheries Section monitors horseshoe crab harvest numbers until ASMFC's annual quota is reached, at which time the season closes. With this year's quota of 160,435 crabs reached, DNREC closed the 2014 horseshoe crab harvest at 12:01 a.m. June 19.

Horseshoe crabs are harvested in Delaware for use as bait in the whelk (conch) and American eel fisheries, and their copper-based blood plays a key role in pharmaceutical testing. Horseshoe crabs also are vital to the ecology of the Delaware Bay. Notable among their ecological role is the fact that migratory shorebirds rely on horseshoe crab eggs to fuel their long distance migrations to their arctic breeding grounds.

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