



## NORTHERN PUFFER

*Sphoeroides maculatus*

### **Description:**

- ◇ dark olive to gray above with tiny dark spots on back, sides and cheeks
- ◇ yellowish white belly
- ◇ dark vertical bands on sides
- ◇ black bar between eyes
- ◇ squared caudal fin
- ◇ beak like mouth
- ◇ small spines/prickles cover the body
- ◇ small dorsal fin set back just before caudal fin

### **Size:**

- ◇ up to 14 inches; more commonly 8-10 inches

### **Range:**

- ◇ Newfoundland to northeast Florida

### **Facts:**

- ◇ prefer bays, estuaries and protected coastal waters
- ◇ most puffers are poisonous, but these are not
- ◇ sold at fish markets in the north as “sea squab”
- ◇ feed on small crustaceans and other invertebrates
- ◇ bottom dwellers
- ◇ inflate by swallowing water or air as defense mechanism

- ◇ spawn May through August
- ◇ females release sticky eggs over sand or mud bottoms
- ◇ males fertilize and guard eggs

#### **NORTHERN PUFFER CATCH TOTALS**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total</b>
1991	13
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>13</b>

\*northern puffers were only caught during the years shown

NJ Department of Environmental Protection  
Division of Fish and Wildlife  
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