HICKORY SHAD
(06/06 ARCHIVE - NCDMF)

Stock Status – Unknown – Commercial landings decreased slightly in 2005, but are the third-highest reported since 1972. Juvenile abundance increased and is the highest reported since 1998, and the fourth-highest reported since the survey began in 1972. However, the current alosine seine survey is not a reliable stand-alone indicator of juvenile abundance for hickory shad. The Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) has not conducted any assessment work since 1993.

Average Commercial Landings and Value 1996-2005 -127,788 lbs./$26,231

2005 Commercial Landings and Value - 173,779 lbs./$39,673


Status of Fishery Management Plan (FMP) - The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) FMP for Shad and River Herring was approved in 1985 and Amendment 1 of this plan was approved in October 1998. DMF currently does not have a hickory shad assessment program.

Data/Research Needs - All types of fishery dependent and independent data

Current Regulations (2006) - Harvest season and recreational creel limit

Harvest Season - The Marine Fisheries Commission (MFC) adopted a rule in 1995 establishing a commercial harvest season January 1-April 14; it is unlawful to take hickory shad and American shad by any method except hook-and-line from April 15-December 31; recreational bag limits for hickory (and American) shad of 10-fish aggregate (hickory and American combined) per person per day.

Size and Age at Maturity – Males: 11.5 inches fork length (FL)/3-4 years; Females: 12.5 inches FL/4-5 years

Historical and Current Maximum Age - 8 years

Juvenile Abundance Index 1996-2005 - (unvalidated) - 0.23, 2005 - 0.27

Habits/Habitats - Hickory shad are anadromous, spending the majority of their life in the ocean, returning to fresh water to spawn. Spawning occurs from March - May in the coastal rivers and tributaries. It is thought juvenile hickory shad do not use the same nursery areas as river herring and American shad, but move quickly to more saline waters. Hickory shad will remain in the ocean until reaching sexual maturity, returning to fresh water to spawn.

For more information, see DMF Species Leads page