AMERICAN SHAD
(06/98 ARCHIVE - NCDMF)

Stock Status--Unknown - DMF has not conducted any assessment work since 1993.

Average Commercial Landings and Value 1987-1998--250,524 lb, $179,814

1998 Commercial Landings and Value--327,353 lb, $233,661

Average Recreational Landings 1987-1998 and 1998--Unknown

Average Number of Citations 1987-1998 and 1998--N/A

Status of Fisheries Management Plan--ASMFC Fishery Management Plan for American Shad and River Herrings approved 1985, Amendment #1 of this plan was approved October 1998, DMF currently does not have an American shad assessment program.

Research and Data Needs--All types of Fishery Dependent and Independent Data

Current Minimum Size Limit--None

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

Size and Age at Maturity--Males- 12-17.5 inches, Females- 15-19 inches, Males- 3-5 years old, Females- 4-6 years old

Historical and Current Maximum Age--10 years old, 9 years old

Juvenile Abundance Indices Average 1972-1998--(un-validated) 0.23, 1998-0.18

Habits/Habitats--American shad are anadromous (spending majority of life in the ocean, returning to fresh water to spawn) species. Spawning occurs from March - mid-June, primarily in the main stream portions of the rivers where there is sufficient current to suspend and move the eggs. Juveniles spend their first growing season in their natal river and sound systems until the water temperatures decease, triggering emigration to the ocean. American shad will remain in the ocean until reaching sexual maturity, then return to fresh water to spawn.

For more information, see DMF Species Leads page