ATLANTIC CROAKER
(06/98 ARCHIVE - NCDMF)

Stock Status--Stressed Recovering, Increased commercial CPUE’s, landings, and age structure in ocean suggests stock is in recovery. However the recreational hook and line as well as the commercial fisheries occurring in the inside waters show no improvement.

Average Commercial Landings and Value 1987-1997--6,284,451 lb, $2,506,433

1997 Commercial Landings and Value--10,711,672 lb, $4,116,448

Average Recreational Landings 1987-1997--360,910 lb and 1997--296,311 lb

Average Number of Award Citations (3 lbs) 1987-1997--1 and 1997--3


Research and Data Needs--Continued collection of information on the biology and population dynamics including (growth, age structure, reproductive biology, migration, mortality, and stock structure).

Current Minimum Size limit--none

Harvest Season--Year around

Size and Age at Maturity--5-9 inches and ages 2-3 for males, 7-9 inches and ages 2-3 for females.

Historical and Current Maximum Age-- 15 years old,--10 years old

Juvenile Abundance Index Average 1987-1997 and 1997 (JAI-validated)-----Pamlico Sound Survey 240.7 (number of individuals per unit of effort), 334.4 (number of individuals per unit of effort).

Habits/Habitats--Inhabit both mud and sand-bottom areas, feed chiefley on crustaceans, worms, mollusks, detritus, and small fishes. Atlantic croakers have a protracted spawning season with a peak during October in North Carolina. The pelagic eggs and recently hatched larvae drift passively toward land. Later, the advanced larval stages and juveniles continue their landward migration by actively swimming into estuarine nursery areas. Maximum recruitment of juvenile fish is in the spring, however, sometimes maximum recruitment is only in the fall for the northern Pamlico Sound area.

For more information, see DMF Species Leads page