BAY SCALLOP
(06/08 ARCHIVE - NCDMF)

Stock Status – Depleted — In recent years, harvest has decreased to essentially no landings because of recruitment failure resulting from a red tide event in 1987, several hurricanes in the 1990’s, fishing effort, and cownose ray predation. Fishery independent sampling showed low abundance in Core and Bogue sounds. The main harvest season was not opened in 2007 due to limited availability of scallops.

Average Commercial Landings and Value 1998-2007 – 18,933 lbs. of meat/ $59,828

2007 Commercial Landings and Value – no open harvest season


Status of Fisheries Management Plan (FMP) - The bay scallop FMP was adopted in November 2007. The FMP implemented an indefinite prohibited take period until an independent sampling indicator can determine re-opening with further measures in place before re-opening to ensure spawning is complete and the economic yield is at an optimum for fishermen. Improving data collection on the biology, harvest, environment, and socioeconomic aspects relative to bay scallops is recommended throughout the FMP to provide more comprehensive information for assisting in future management decisions.

Data and Research Needs - stock identification, recreational landings, recruitment, population abundance, and socioeconomic data, enhancement, cownose ray predation, habitat alterations and water quality impacts to bay scallop survival are recommended research items

Current Minimum Size Limit - none

Harvest Season – There is no open commercial or recreational harvest season until an independent sampling indicator can determine re-opening.

Size and Age at Maturity - 1.5 inches, (shell height)/6 months

Historical and Current Maximum Age - 2 years/1.5 years

Abundance Indices 2007
Core Sound- 1.58 (July), 0.50 (Oct.) per two-minute tow
Bogue Sound- 6.75 (July), 0.75 (Oct.) per two-minute tow

Habits and Habitats - Bay scallops are estuarine dependent mollusks found in grass beds. Bay scallops are hermaphroditic (contain both sex cells) bivalve and mature and spawn in a year. Their lifespan is only 12-26 months. In North Carolina, bay scallops spawn predominantly from August through January and again in March through May. The larvae go through several swimming stages before attaching to a suitable substrate such as seagrass. Upon reaching a size of approximately 1 inch (20-30 mm), bay scallops drop to the bottom. Although other benthic structures can be utilized for attachment, bay scallops utilize seagrass beds almost exclusively, and are therefore highly dependent on this habitat for successful recruitment. Bay scallops are filter feeders and feed on benthic diatoms. Predators of the bay scallop include cownose rays, blue crabs, starfish, whelks, and herring gulls.

For more information, see DMF Species Leads page.