

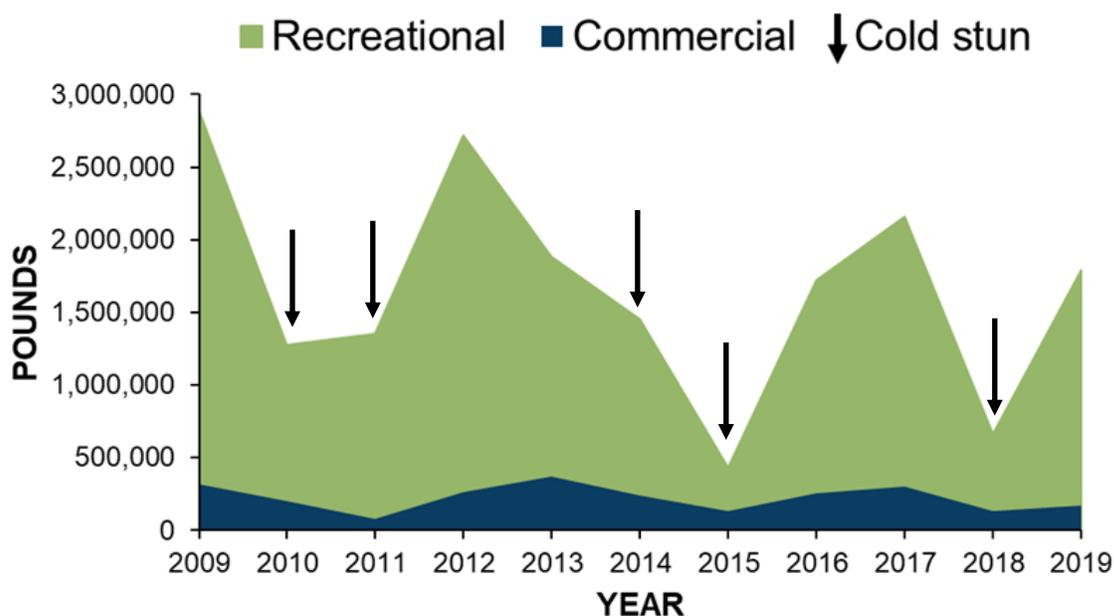


# SPECS ON SPOTTED SEATROUT

Spotted seatrout, or speckled trout, is one of the most targeted recreational fish species in North Carolina. Primarily found in the coastal rivers and sounds, anglers catch these fish year-round. Here are some facts about the spotted seatrout fishery in North Carolina and ways to contribute to ongoing research on this important fish species.



## Spotted Seatrout Commercial and Recreational Landings



Spotted seatrout landings have varied through the time series, with lower harvest observed during cold stun event years. Landings in 2019 are preliminary and incomplete (January-October 2019).

From 2009 to 2018, recreational harvest ranged between 77% to 95% of the total spotted seatrout harvest. Commercial fishermen in the past five years harvested between 5% and 23% of the total spotted seatrout harvest.

# Current Spotted Seatrout Regulations



## RECREATIONAL

- 14-inch minimum size limit (since 2009)
- 4-fish bag limit (since 2011)

## COMMERCIAL

- 14-inch minimum size limit (since 2009)
- 75-fish trip limit (since 2011)
- Unlawful to set gill nets in joint fishing waters on weekends (since 2011)

## Spotted Seatrout Tagging Studies

Tagging studies conducted by North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries and North Carolina State University have shown that for spotted seatrout, natural mortality (fish mortality caused by predation, old age, environmental factors like cold stuns, etc.) makes up the majority of the total mortality (natural mortality + fishing mortality). Between 2015 and 2018, natural mortality comprised from 62% to 97% of the total mortality of spotted seatrout.

Fishermen can participate in this research by reporting any tagged fish they catch. Anglers who catch a tagged spotted seatrout (either red or yellow tags) should cut off the tag(s) and report it on either the division website or by calling the number on the tag to get a reward!

For more information, go to <http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/mf/fish-tagging-program-r> or scan the QR code below.

### REWARD!

If you catch a tagged spotted seatrout (with a red or yellow tag), cut the tag(s) off, and report it on either our website, or call the number on the tag, and get a reward!



SCAN ME



## Donate Carcasses to Science

Anglers can donate their filleted fish carcasses to the division at freezers at designated sites across the coastal area. Biologists can get length, age, and sex data from the carcasses that can be used in stock assessments.

For freezer locations, go to <http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/mf/carcass-collection>.

## Report a Cold Stun

To report a spotted seatrout cold stun, contact Marine Patrol at 800-682-2632 or during regular business hours the division spotted seatrout biologist :

Tracey Bauer  
252-808-8159

[Tracey.Bauer@ncdenr.gov](mailto:Tracey.Bauer@ncdenr.gov)

Read more about cold stuns at:

<http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/mf/cold-stun-facts>

## Want to Know More?

Spotted Seatrout 2018 Fishery Management Plan update: <http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/mf/species-index>

For any other questions related to spotted seatrout, contact the division spotted seatrout biologist Tracey Bauer at 252-808-8159 or [Tracey.Bauer@ncdenr.gov](mailto:Tracey.Bauer@ncdenr.gov).