

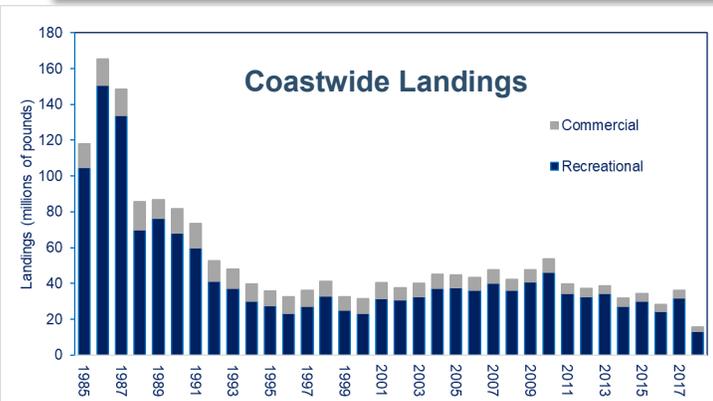


BLUEFISH BITES

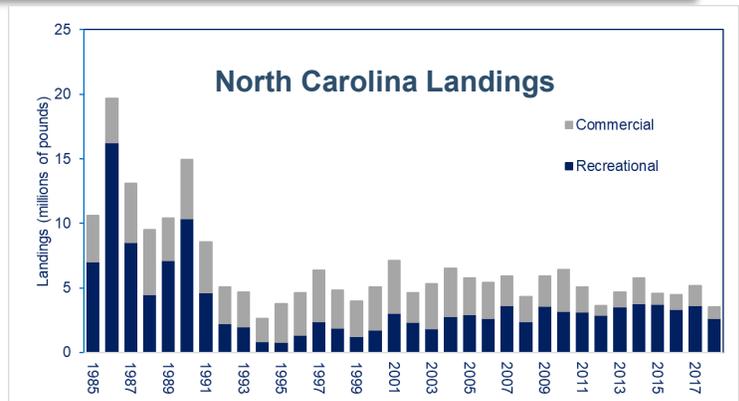
Bluefish are managed as an interstate species through the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC) due to their migratory nature. Bluefish is one of the most common species encountered in North Carolina and is an important component of both the recreational and commercial fisheries in our state. While common in our state waters for most of the year, bluefish are migratory, occurring seasonally along the Atlantic coast from Maine to Florida. Regulations in North Carolina are implemented to comply with the coastwide plan.



Bluefish Landings

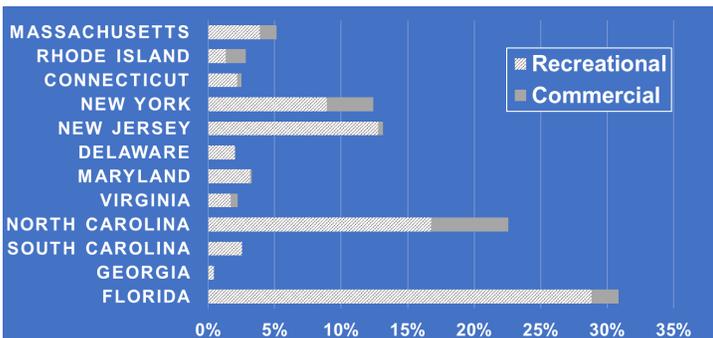


Coastwide bluefish harvest since 1985 has been 84% recreational and 16% commercial.

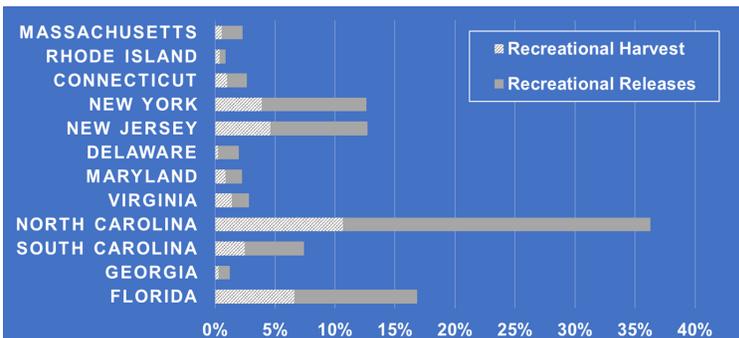


North Carolina bluefish harvest since 1985 has been 57% recreational and 43% commercial.

Bluefish harvest in weight by state for 2018

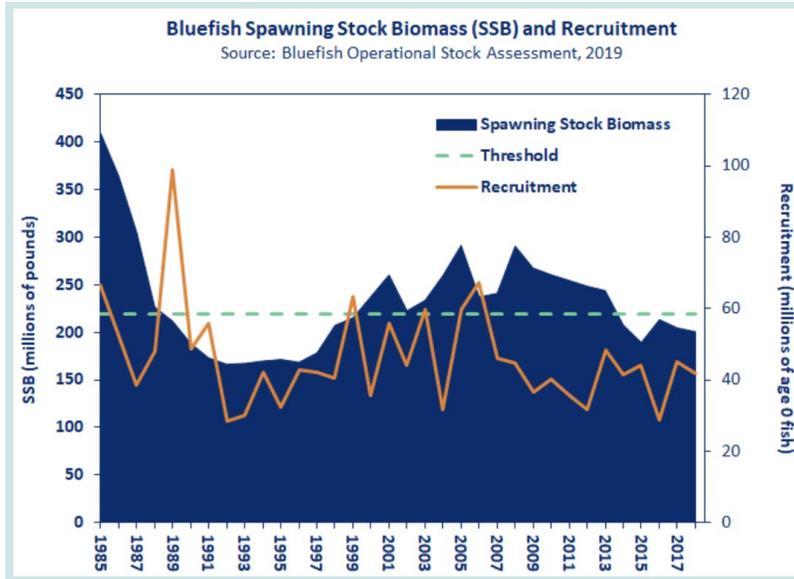


Recreational bluefish harvest and release in numbers for 2018



Bluefish Stock Status

The 2019 stock assessment indicates that the Atlantic coast bluefish stock is currently overfished. Overfished means the biomass of spawning size bluefish has decreased below the level needed to sustain the fishery over the long-term. As a result, the Acceptable Biological Catch for bluefish on the Atlantic coast has been decreased for 2020. Reductions in harvest are required for the 2020 fishing year and will result in coastwide regulatory changes for all states. In addition to 2020 reductions, the ASMFC and MAFMC are working on an Amendment to the interjurisdictional Bluefish Fishery Management Plan to establish a long-term rebuilding plan for this species and review allocations and quota transfer processes.



New 2020 North Carolina Bluefish Regulations

RECREATIONAL (effective February 1, 2020)

- 3-fish bag limit (private boats, piers, shore, or any recreational method other than for-hire)
- 5-fish bag limit (applies only to for-hire trips)
 - ⇒ The 2020 coastwide Recreational Harvest Limit was reduced by 18% from 2019

COMMERCIAL

- Coastwide quota for 2020: 2.77 million pounds
 - ⇒ North Carolina's quota allocation is 32% or 888,000 pounds
 - ⇒ The 2020 coastwide quota was reduced 64% from 2019



**Want to
Know More?**

Bluefish species page: <http://www.asmfc.org/species/bluefish>

Contact NCDMF bluefish biologist, Lee Paramore at 252-473-5734 or Lee.Paramore@ncdenr.gov.