

## 2019 NORTH CAROLINA DIVISION OF MARINE FISHERIES STOCK OVERVIEW - STATE MANAGED SPECIES (July 2019, based on 2018 Data)

Species	Comments
<p data-bbox="228 338 526 411"><u><a href="#">Bay Scallop</a></u> (Closed to fishing)</p> 	<p data-bbox="605 317 1453 730">Bay scallops are a short-lived species that are managed as an annual crop. They are sensitive to environmental change and may experience high levels of predation, which can impact annual abundance. As a result, a stock assessment is not an effective tool for management. Harvest has not been allowed since 2013 because abundance levels have not met the thresholds to open the season. Amendment 2 to the Bay Scallop Fishery Management Plan was adopted in February 2015. For more information, contact Jeff Dobbs at <a href="mailto:Jeffrey.Dobbs@ncdenr.gov">Jeffrey.Dobbs@ncdenr.gov</a>.</p>
<p data-bbox="302 806 451 842"><u><a href="#">Blue Crab</a></u></p> 	<p data-bbox="605 753 1435 1129">Results of the 2018 benchmark stock assessment indicate the blue crab stock is overfished and overfishing is occurring. The assessment passed peer review and the model was accepted for use in management. Development of Amendment 3 to the Blue Crab Fishery Management Plan is underway in conjunction with an advisory committee and is scheduled to be completed in early 2020. For more information contact Jason Rock at <a href="mailto:Jason.Rock@ncdenr.gov">Jason.Rock@ncdenr.gov</a>.</p>
<p data-bbox="261 1249 492 1285"><u><a href="#">Eastern Oyster</a></u></p> 	<p data-bbox="605 1157 1453 1608">A stock assessment could not be conducted due to limited data; therefore, population size and the rate of removals from the population are not known. Commercial landings from public bottom have been variable, and landings from private bottom in the past few years have increased significantly due to more interest in aquaculture. Work is underway with N. C. State University and the Nature Conservancy to develop methodologies to determine stock status. Amendment 4 to the Oyster Fishery Management Plan was adopted in February 2017. For more information, contact Joe Facendola at <a href="mailto:Joe.Facendola@ncdenr.gov">Joe.Facendola@ncdenr.gov</a>.</p>

<p><b><u>Estuarine Striped Bass:</u></b>  <b>Albemarle Sound/  Roanoke River  Management Area</b></p> 	<p>The 2016 Albemarle/Roanoke striped bass stock assessment update indicates overfishing is not occurring and the stock is not overfished. Although the stock is not overfished, the abundance of mature females in the population has declined steadily since the peak in 2003. While very large, the estimate of abundance in the final year of the assessment (2014) is the most uncertain and should be viewed with caution. The estimate will likely decrease as additional years of data are added to the model. The fishery management plan review for estuarine striped bass is currently underway and results from a benchmark stock assessment utilizing data through 2017 are expected in late 2019. This is a joint plan with the Wildlife Resources Commission. For more information, contact Sean Darsee at <a href="mailto:Sean.Darsee@ncdenr.gov">Sean.Darsee@ncdenr.gov</a>.</p>
<p><b><u>Estuarine Striped Bass:</u></b>  <b>Central/Southern  Management Area</b></p> 	<p>The Central Southern Management Area stocks include the Tar-Pamlico, Neuse, and Cape Fear rivers. Based on genetic analysis, a high percentage of the fish in these systems are hatchery reared (stocked) with very limited natural reproduction occurring. Agency data in 2018 suggested there were two recent naturally spawned year classes. In February 2019, Supplement A to Amendment 1 to the N. C. Estuarine Striped Bass Fishery Management Plan was adopted instituting a recreational and commercial no-possession limit in the CSMA. The no-possession management is a temporary measure to provide additional protection for the non-hatchery fish until Amendment 2 to the N. C. Estuarine Striped Bass Fishery Management Plan is adopted. The division will use multiple stock assessment techniques to determine the overfished/overfishing status for each stock as well as continue with drafting Amendment 2 to the N. C. Estuarine Striped Bass Fishery Management Plan. This is a joint plan with the Wildlife Resources Commission. For more information, contact Todd Mathes at <a href="mailto:Todd.Mathes@ncdenr.gov">Todd.Mathes@ncdenr.gov</a>.</p>
<p><b><u>Hard Clam</u></b></p> 	<p>A stock assessment cannot be conducted due to limited data; therefore, population size and the rate of removals from the population are unknown. Harvest fluctuates, often in response to changes in demand, improved harvesting methods, and increases in polluted shellfish area closures. Amendment 2 to the Hard Clam Fishery Management Plan was adopted in February 2017. For more information, contact Jeff</p>

	Dobbs at <a href="mailto:Jeffrey.Dobbs@ncdenr.gov">Jeffrey.Dobbs@ncdenr.gov</a> .
<p style="text-align: center;"><a href="#"><u>Kingfishes</u></a></p> 	<p>A stock assessment is not available due to lack of migration data, so an annual trend analysis with management triggers is used to monitor the stock. Though one management trigger was activated in 2018, no action is required because two triggers must be activated for two consecutive years to warrant further evaluation and possible management change. The Kingfish Fishery Management Plan Information Update was approved in December 2015. For more information, contact Kevin Brown at <a href="mailto:Kevin.H.Brown@ncdenr.gov">Kevin.H.Brown@ncdenr.gov</a>.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><a href="#"><u>Red Drum</u></a></p> 	<p>The regional benchmark stock assessment (North Carolina and all states north), conducted by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission in 2017, indicates that overfishing is not occurring and that management targets continue to be met. The size of the fish stock (overfished status), however, continues to be unknown due to limited data available for the adult population. The Red Drum Fishery Management Plan Update was approved in August 2017. For more information, contact Lee Paramore at <a href="mailto:Lee.Paramore@ncdenr.gov">Lee.Paramore@ncdenr.gov</a>.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><a href="#"><u>River Herring</u></a> (Closed to fishing)</p> 	<p>An Atlantic coastwide stock assessment update for river herring was completed in August 2017, with data through 2015, by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. The North Carolina portion of the coastwide stock assessment is for the Albemarle Sound blueback herring stock only, due to the long-term data available for this area. River herring in other parts of the state are currently listed as unknown by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission due to the lack of data for these systems. The stock assessment update found that the North Carolina stock in the Albemarle Sound was not experiencing overfishing due to the harvest moratorium, but the stock remains overfished. The factors leading to this recommendation of stock status remain largely unchanged since the 2012 stock assessment, despite negligible fishing pressure. The spawning stock biomass remains at 12 % of the amount necessary to replace itself in the complete absence of fishing. Amendment 2 to the River Herring Fishery Management Plan was adopted in February 2015. For more information, contact Holly White at <a href="mailto:Holly.White@ncdenr.gov">Holly.White@ncdenr.gov</a>.</p>

<p><a href="#"><u>Sheepshead</u></a></p> 	<p>No stock assessment is currently available for sheepshead. Landings trends and other biological data prompted the Marine Fisheries Commission to implement new harvest restrictions in June 2015. The division continues to monitor landings and collect data on the stock. In 2018, the commercial landings were below the 10 year average; however, recreational landings were above the 10 year average. For more information, contact Anne Markwith at <a href="mailto:Anne.Markwith@ncdenr.gov">Anne.Markwith@ncdenr.gov</a>.</p>
<p><a href="#"><u>Shrimp</u></a></p> 	<p>The stock is considered an annual crop that consists of three species of shrimp (brown, pink, white). The population size is determined mainly by the number of shrimp entering the population each year, which is driven by environmental conditions. Therefore, a stock assessment is not an effective tool for management. The division is continuing to collaborate with the industry on bycatch reduction in the shrimp trawl fishery. At its May 2018 meeting, the Marine Fisheries Commission adopted management measures to reduce bycatch by implementing new gear restrictions in all shrimp trawls, except skimmer trawls, used in the Pamlico Sound and portions of the Pamlico, Bay and Neuse rivers. The management measures were effective July 1, 2019. Amendment 1 to the Shrimp Fishery Management Plan was adopted in February 2015. For more information, contact Chris Stewart at <a href="mailto:Chris.Stewart@ncdenr.gov">Chris.Stewart@ncdenr.gov</a>.</p>
<p><a href="#"><u>Southern Flounder</u></a></p> 	<p>The 2019 stock assessment of southern flounder in the south Atlantic indicated that the stock is overfished and overfishing is occurring. This recent assessment passed peer review and the model was accepted for use in management. Adoption of Amendment 2 to the Southern Flounder Fishery Management Plan is scheduled for August 2019. Development of Amendment 3 will begin upon adoption of Amendment 2. For more information, contact Michael Loeffler at <a href="mailto:Michael.Loeffler@ncdenr.gov">Michael.Loeffler@ncdenr.gov</a>.</p>
<p><a href="#"><u>Spotted Seatrout</u></a></p> 	<p>The 2014 stock assessment indicated that the spotted seatrout stock in North Carolina and Virginia was not overfished and that overfishing was not occurring in the terminal year (2012). Recreational and commercial landings in 2018 declined compared to the previous years but there is no indication that the stock is at risk. Due to widespread cold stun events in early 2018, the division closed the spotted seatrout fishery until the summer of 2018. Cold stuns are natural events that occur when there is a sudden drop</p>

	<p>in water temperature or prolonged periods of cold weather that make fish sluggish. Many fish die or fall prey to birds and other predators. The fishery was closed to allow surviving fish an opportunity to spawn. A benchmark stock assessment for spotted seatrout is underway in 2019 coinciding with the scheduled plan review. For more information, contact Tracey Bauer at <a href="mailto:Tracey.Bauer@ncdenr.gov">Tracey.Bauer@ncdenr.gov</a>.</p>
<p><a href="#"><u>Striped Mullet</u></a></p> 	<p>The 2013 stock assessment indicated overfishing was not occurring but could not determine the overfished status. Though commercial landings and abundance from independent indices in 2017 were near historic lows, an update of the 2013 stock assessment model with data through 2017 indicated overfishing is not occurring. The striped mullet commercial fishery primarily targets mature females during the fall when they are migrating to the ocean to spawn which could lead to poor recruitment. Amendment 1 to the Striped Mullet Fishery Management Plan was adopted in November 2015. Review of 2018 commercial landings indicated neither the maximum (2.76 million pounds) or minimum (1.13 million pounds) triggers had been exceeded. For more information contact, Daniel Zapf at <a href="mailto:Daniel.Zapf@ncdenr.gov">Daniel.Zapf@ncdenr.gov</a>.</p>

[> Return to top of page](#)

[Click here for information about individual species](#)