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Stock Status Report 2016

(Based on 2015 statistics)

Read the stock status [news release](#).

Status definitions can be [found here](#) | Glossary of fisheries terms can be [found here](#).

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Species and Stock	Status					
	Viabile	Recovering	Concern	Depleted	Unknown	Comments
Bass, Black, Sea						
 North of Hatteras Species managed by Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission and by Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council						The stock was declared rebuilt in 2009 based on a 2008 stock assessment. However, due to unique life history characteristics (e.g., the species changes sex from female to male) and other data concerns, the 2011 and 2012 assessments were not formally accepted for stock status determination. From 2010 to 2015, black sea bass have been managed under a constant catch approach. In a departure from this strategy, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council recently approved a 21-percent increase in the Acceptable Biological Catch for 2016 and 2017. The increase is based on updated catch and survey information. A new benchmark stock assessment is scheduled for late 2016.
						Black sea bass, south of Hatteras, are part of the the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council's snapper

South of Hatteras						grouper complex. The stock is recovered and considered viable after going through a federally-managed rebuilding plan, which went into place in 2006. The 2013 stock assessment indicated the stock is not overfished and had met the rebuilding plan's target prior to its 2016 deadline.
Species managed by South Atlantic Fishery Management Council						
Bass, Striped						
	Viable	Recovering	Concern	Depleted	Unknown	Comments
 Albemarle Sound and Roanoke River						The 2014 Albemarle/Roanoke striped bass benchmark stock assessment indicates the resource is not overfished or experiencing overfishing relative to new reference points. Although the stock is not overfished, female spawning stock biomass has declined steadily since its peak in 2003. Landings in all sectors have also continued to decline since the peak in 2004. Fishing mortality is estimated at just above the target.
Species managed by North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries and by Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission						
 Atlantic Ocean Migratory Stock						The 2015 Atlantic striped bass stock assessment update indicates the resource is not overfished or experiencing overfishing. Although the stock is not overfished, female spawning stock biomass has continued to decline since the peak in 2006. Spawning stock biomass remains above the threshold that would require management action.
Species managed by Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission						
 Central/Southern						The lack of adequate data causes the Central Southern Management Area stocks to be quantitatively assessed as unknown and listed as "concern." The need for continued conservation management efforts is supported by the truncated size and age distributions, low overall abundance, and the absence of older fish in spawning ground surveys.
Species managed by North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries						
Bluefish						
	Viable	Recovering	Concern	Depleted	Unknown	Comments
 Bluefish						A new benchmark stock assessment, completed in 2015, indicates that

Species managed by Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission and by Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council						bluefish are not experiencing overfishing and are not overfished. The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission Bluefish Technical Committee continues to work on improving bluefish age data and refining the bluefish stock assessment.
Croaker, Atlantic						
	Viable	Recovering	Concern	Depleted	Unknown	Comments
 Croaker, Atlantic Species managed by Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission						Based on the results of the 2010 stock assessment, Atlantic croaker is not experiencing overfishing. Estimates of spawning stock biomass were too uncertain to precisely determine overfished stock status. However, given that biomass was increasing and the age structure of the population has been expanding since the late 1980s, it is unlikely the stock is in trouble. The Atlantic croaker Traffic Light Analysis, used to monitor the stock between stock assessments, did not indicate management action is needed at this time. However, analysis shows declining trends in indexes of abundance and commercial and recreational harvest. The next benchmark stock assessment is scheduled for completion in late 2016..
Dolphin						
	Viable	Recovering	Concern	Depleted	Unknown	Comments
 Dolphin Species managed by South Atlantic Fishery Management Council						The status of dolphin is based on trends in landings data. The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council's Dolphin Wahoo Fishery Management Plan is currently managed under recent Amendment 8 (2016). Amendment 8 revises commercial and recreational sector allocations for dolphin in the Atlantic.
Drum						
	Viable	Recovering	Concern	Depleted	Unknown	Comments
 Drum, Black (D)						The 2015 Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission Black Drum Stock Assessment determined that the stock is not overfished and not experiencing overfishing. Based on

Species managed by Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission						the results of the stock assessment, the median biomass was estimated to be well above the median biomass that produces maximum sustainable yield, thus no additional management measures are needed beyond those established in the 2013 Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission fishery management plan.
 Drum, Red Species managed by North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries and by Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission						The regional benchmark stock assessment (North Carolina and all states north), conducted by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission in 2009, indicated that regulations have been effective at preventing overfishing. However, the overfished status for the stock remains undetermined. A new benchmark stock assessment aimed at determining the overfished status, scheduled for completion in the fall of 2015, has been delayed until the fall of 2016.
Eel, American						
	Viable	Recovering	Concern	Depleted	Unknown	Comments
 Eel, American Species managed by Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission						The stock was declared depleted by the 2012 Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission benchmark stock assessment. Stock status is poorly understood due to non-standard sampling protocols across the species' range. Reliable indexes of abundance of this species are scarce. The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission approved Addendum IV to the American Eel Interjurisdictional Fishery Management Plan to address issues with the glass eel fishery, glass eel aquaculture and establish a coast-wide catch cap for yellow eels.
Flounder						
	Viable	Recovering	Concern	Depleted	Unknown	Comments
 Flounder, Southern Species managed by North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries						The Division of Marine Fisheries 2014 stock assessment of southern flounder in North Carolina Waters was not approved for management due to mixing of the stock on a regional scale (i.e. the U.S. South Atlantic). There are concerns about the sustainability of current harvest levels due to coastwide trends in

						juvenile and adult abundance and the high percentage of immature fish in the harvest. A regional stock assessment is underway including partners from Florida, Georgia, South Carolina and North Carolina and is scheduled to be completed in 2017.
 <p>Flounder, Summer</p> <p>Species managed by Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission and by Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council</p>						The 2015 National Marine Fisheries Service's Northeast Fisheries Science Center benchmark stock assessment for U.S. waters north of Cape Hatteras indicated the stock was not overfished but overfishing was occurring. The annual fishing mortality rate was estimated to be 16 percent above the overfishing threshold in 2014. As a result of the overfishing status, the Acceptable Biological Catch in 2016 was reduced by approximately 29 percent.
Grouper, Gag						
	Viable	Recovering	Concern	Depleted	Unknown	Comments
 <p>Grouper, Gag</p> <p>Species managed by South Atlantic Fishery Management Council</p>						Gag are part of the the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council's snapper grouper complex. A federal management plan is in place restricting harvest to prevent overfishing from occurring, and the stock is currently considered to be recovering.
Herring						
	Viable	Recovering	Concern	Depleted	Unknown	Comments
 <p>Herring, River</p> <p>Species managed by North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries and by Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission</p>						The coastwide stock assessment, completed in 2012, found that river herring stocks are depleted to near historic low levels. Many factors contribute to the stock's failure to recover, including bycatch in offshore fisheries, degraded water quality and reductions in spawning habitat due to dams and other blockages. Despite a fishing moratorium implemented in 2007, river herring in North Carolina are still considered depleted. The Division of Marine Fisheries continues to monitor all stock recovery indicators and conduct sampling to identify and enhance spawning and nursery area habitats.
Other Areas						No current sampling program.

Kingfishes						
	Viable	Recovering	Concern	Depleted	Unknown	Comments
 Kingfishes (A) Species managed by North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries						Trends in relative fishing mortality and fishery independent data are used to track the stock condition because a regional stock assessment is not currently available. Commercial landings and recreational landings were above their series average. In 2015 all management triggers were at acceptable levels for sustainability.
Mackerel						
	Viable	Recovering	Concern	Depleted	Unknown	Comments
 Mackerel, King Species managed by South Atlantic Fishery Management Council						Based on the 2014 South Atlantic Fishery Management Council stock assessment, the South Atlantic king mackerel stock is not overfished and overfishing is not occurring. The 2014 stock assessment is an improvement from the 2008 stock assessment where overfishing could not be determined.
 Mackerel, Spanish Species managed by South Atlantic Fishery Management Council and by Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission						Based on the 2012 South Atlantic Fishery Management Council stock assessment, the Spanish mackerel stock in the South Atlantic is not overfished and is not undergoing overfishing.
Menhaden, Atlantic						
	Viable	Recovering	Concern	Depleted	Unknown	Comments
 Menhaden, Atlantic Species managed by Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission						Commercial landings were comparable to 2014 landings, valued above the 10-year average. The 2015 benchmark stock assessment indicated that Atlantic menhaden are neither overfished nor experiencing overfishing. Atlantic Menhaden are managed under Amendment 2 to the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission Fishery Management Plan, approved in 2012, which established total allowable catch managed landings.

Mullet, Striped						
	Viable	Recovering	Concern	Depleted	Unknown	Comments
 Mullet, Striped Species managed by North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries						Based on the results of the 2013 stock assessment the stock is not experiencing overfishing, the overfished status could not be determined. Landings for 2015 were within management limits established in Amendment 1 to the fishery management plan. However, 2015 landings were the lowest since 1994. Declining landings, and declining trends in population indicators will continue to be closely monitored.
Seatrout, Spotted						
	Viable	Recovering	Concern	Depleted	Unknown	Comments
 Seatrout, Spotted Species managed by North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries and by Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission						The 2014 North Carolina Spotted Seatrout Stock Assessment indicated that the North Carolina and Virginia stock is not overfished and overfishing is not occurring. However, there is uncertainty about the current stock status because two cold stun events occurred during the assessment process, and were not included in the analysis. The next fishery management plan review is scheduled to start in 2017.
Scup						
	Viable	Recovering	Concern	Depleted	Unknown	Comments
 Scup Species managed by Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission and by Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council						The 2015 stock assessment update for U.S. waters north of Cape Hatteras indicates that the stock is not overfished and overfishing is not occurring. Fishing mortality rates have been greatly reduced since 1998, and the stock was considered rebuilt in 2009. Given the success of the latest modeling approach, the stock is no longer considered data poor.
Shad						
	Viable	Recovering	Concern	Depleted	Unknown	Comments
 Shad, American Species managed by Atlantic States Marine Fisheries						Commercial landings decreased in 2015 under the Sustainable Fishery Management Plan enacted in 2013, and were below the 10-year average due to changes in management. A coastwide stock assessment for American shad was completed in

Commission						August 2007, which indicated stocks in the Albemarle Sound and tributaries were low but remained stable, and stock status in other systems of the state was unknown.
 Shad, Hickory Species managed by Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission						Commercial landings increased in 2015 and the price per pound is consistent with the 10-year average. The Division of Marine Fisheries has not conducted any directed sampling for hickory shad since 1993.

Sharks

	Viable	Recovering	Concern	Depleted	Unknown	Comments
 Sharks Species managed by Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission						In North Carolina coastal fishing waters, sharks are included in the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Coastal Sharks, implemented in August 2008. This plan was implemented to compliment the National Marine Fisheries Service Consolidated Atlantic Highly Migratory Species Fishery Management Plan that include sharks in federal waters. Recent assessment results indicate great uncertainty about the various shark species. The current status is concern because of the overfished, overfishing, or unknown status of sandbar, dusky, blacknose, blacktip, porbeagle and bonnethead sharks.

Sheepshead

	Viable	Recovering	Concern	Depleted	Unknown	Comments
 Sheepshead Species managed by North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries						The stock status of sheepshead is currently unknown, but landings trends and other biological information prompted the Marine Fisheries Commission to implement new harvest restrictions effective June 1, 2015. In 2015, recreational landings were below their 10-year average, while commercial landings were slightly above their 10-year average.

Snapper-Grouper Complex

	Viable	Recovering	Concern	Depleted	Unknown	Comments
						Of the 59 species in the South

 <p>Snapper- Grouper Complex (B) (Reef Fish)</p> <p>Species managed by South Atlantic Fishery Management Council</p>						<p>Atlantic Fishery Management Council unit, some stocks are sustainable, but several stocks are overfished or are undergoing overfishing. The overfished stocks, common to North Carolina, include snowy grouper, red porgy and red snapper. Stocks experiencing overfishing are red snapper, blueline tilefish, speckled hind and Warsaw grouper.</p>
Spiny Dogfish						
 <p>Spiny Dogfish</p> <p>Species managed by Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission and by Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Viable</p> 	<p style="text-align: center;">Recovering</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Concern</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Depleted</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Unknown</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Comments</p> <p>Spiny dogfish are currently managed under a joint Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council and New England Fishery Management Council fishery management plan in federal waters and under the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission Spiny Dogfish Interstate Fishery Management Plan in state waters. The 2015 stock assessment update, conducted by the National Marine Fisheries Service Northeast Fisheries Science Center, estimates spiny dogfish along the Atlantic coast are not overfished and not experiencing overfishing. Female spawning stock biomass estimates from 2009 to 2015 exceeded the biomass reference point.</p>
Spot						
 <p>Spot</p> <p>Species managed by Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Viable</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Recovering</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Concern</p> 	<p style="text-align: center;">Depleted</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Unknown</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Comments</p> <p>The current fishery management plan uses a precautionary management framework that requires annual evaluation of the spot Traffic Light Analysis, which consists of harvest and abundance indicators. If the harvest and abundance indicators meet pre-determined thresholds for two consecutive years, management action is triggered. The annual evaluation this year found that management thresholds were not exceeded. However, analysis shows declining trends in indexes of abundance and commercial and recreational harvest. Because there is no accepted stock assessment, stock status cannot be reliably estimated. A benchmark stock</p>

						assessment is scheduled for completion in late 2016.
Sturgeon, Atlantic						
	Viable	Recovering	Concern	Depleted	Unknown	Comments
 Sturgeon, Atlantic Species managed by Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission						The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission is responsible for managing this species and considers the stocks to be depleted along the Atlantic Coast. There is a coastwide prohibition on possession. On April 5, 2012, the National Marine Fisheries Service listed the Carolina Distinct Population Segment of Atlantic sturgeon as a federally endangered species. A new stock assessment is scheduled for completion in 2017.
Weakfish / Gray Trout						
	Viable	Recovering	Concern	Depleted	Unknown	Comments
 Weakfish (Gray Trout) Species managed by Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission						The weakfish stock along the Atlantic coast is at a level of low abundance. Coast- wide landings are near the lowest levels on record. The most recent assessment indicates that the cause is likely due to factors other than fishing mortality. As a result, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission Weakfish Management Board implemented strict coastwide harvest limits intended to limit fishing pressure and aid in stock recovery. A new benchmark stock assessment was completed in 2016 and approved for management, but it is awaiting review by the Weakfish Management Board to determine if changes to management are needed.

Species and Stock	Status					
Shellfish and Crustaceans						
	Viable	Recovering	Concern	Depleted	Unknown	Comments
 Clam, Hard Species managed by North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries						Data limitations prevent conducting a hard clam stock assessment and calculating sustainable harvest. The best available information indicates commercial hand and mechanical harvest levels in most areas are increasing or stable except in Pamlico Sound. Amendment 2 of the fishery management plan is scheduled for completion in 2017.

 <p>Crab, Blue</p> <p>Species managed by North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries</p>					<p>Despite increased landings in 2014 and 2015, landings still fell below the 10-year average for 2006-2015. The Blue Crab Fishery Management Plan uses an adaptive management framework that requires annual evaluation of a Traffic Light Analysis, which consists of three biological indicators. Results of the 2015 Traffic Light update met the moderate management trigger for adult abundance identified in Amendment 2 to the N.C. Blue Crab Fishery Management Plan. As such, adaptive management measures were implemented in June 2016 to improve the condition of the blue crab stock.</p>
 <p>Oyster, Eastern</p> <p>Species managed by North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries</p>					<p>There are insufficient data to conduct a traditional stock assessment or estimate sustainable harvest for the Eastern oyster. Commercial oyster landings have been in decline for most of the past century. Oysters are vulnerable to overharvest because of other factors such as habitat disturbance, pollution and biological and environmental stressors. Amendment 4 of the fishery management is scheduled for completion in 2017.</p>
 <p>Scallop, Bay</p> <p>Species managed by North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries</p>					<p>High natural mortality from environmental change and predation cause annual variability in abundance. Sampling showed low abundance in all areas in 2015. The main harvest season (late January to March) was not opened in 2016 in any region because of low abundance levels.</p>
 <p>Shrimp (C)</p> <p>Species managed by North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries</p>					<p>Annual shrimp abundance is determined by environmental conditions and recruitment (the annual abundance of juvenile shrimp). Natural mortality far outweighs fishing mortality. The division is continuing to collaborate with the industry on bycatch reduction in the shrimp trawl fishery. A live bait permit to allow fishermen to fish until noon on Saturdays is under development; rule changes to implement this permit are expected</p>

						to be effective May 1, 2017.
Totals	14	2	13	4	4	

(A) Kingfishes (Sea Mullet) includes 3 species, and there are two species of river herring.

(B) The Snapper-Grouper Complex includes about 60 species, while there are more than 40 species of sharks. Within these groups, individual species range from Viable to Overfished. The status indicated is for the group as a whole.

(C) Shrimp consists of 3 species – brown, pink, and white.

(D) Black drum was added to the stock status report in 2012.

All federally-managed and regionally-managed species without a dedicated state plan fall under the N.C. Interjurisdictional Fishery Management Plan.

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