

AMERICAN EEL

(06/99 ARCHIVE - NCDMF)

Stock Status--*Unknown* - DMF does not have a directed sampling program and coastwide data is limited and not uniform in coverage or collection protocols.

Average Commercial Landings and Value 1988-1998--86,908 lb, \$167,437

1998 Commercial Landings and Value--91,084 lb, \$231,505

Average Recreational Landings 1988-1998 and 1998--Unknown

Average Number of Citations 1988-1998 and 1998--N/A

Status of Fisheries Management Plan- ASMFC draft FMP for American eel scheduled for adoption in 1999. Data are insufficient to evaluate status.

Research and Data Needs-- All types of Fishery Dependent and Independent Data

Historical and Current Minimum Size Limit--6 inch total length (TL)

Size and Age at Maturity--Males 12 inches at age 4-8, Females 18 inches at age 7-12

Historical Maximum Age- 40 years old

Indices of Juvenile Abundance-- Unknown

Habits/Habitats-Catadromous life cycle, migrating back to spawn in the ocean (Sargasso Sea) in the winter and early spring and spending the majority of its life in brackish and freshwater. Larvae (leptocephali) develop at sea and change from glass eels into young (elvers) in nearshore waters and estuaries. Around age 2 the juvenile or yellow eel stage resembles the adult form. They inhabit estuaries, rivers, streams, and lakes and feed on invertebrates and smaller fish. Prefer areas with soft bottom and vegetation to hide in. The mature silver eel life state occurs at the time of downstream migration, leaving the estuary for the open ocean to spawn then die. Seaward migration occurs in late summer and fall.

For more information, see [DMF Species Leads page](#)