

BLUEFISH

(06/00 ARCHIVE - NCDMF)

Stock status----*Recovering*. Biomass models infer reduced fishing mortality should result in stabilization of the stock.

Average Commercial Landings and Value 1990-1999-- 3,182,115 lbs, \$788,451

1999 Commercial Landings and Value---2,758,553 lbs, \$877,231

Average Recreational Landings 1990-1999: 1,079,787 lbs **and 1999**: 420,705 lbs.

Average Number of Citations (17 lbs) 1990-1999: 61 **1999**:16

Status of Fisheries Management Plan- The joint ASMFC/MAFMC bluefish plan was adopted in 1989. In 1996 the Commission and Mid-Atlantic Council began the development of Amendment 1 to the 1989 Bluefish FMP. October 1998, ASMFC approved and the Mid-Atlantic Council adopted Amendment 1, and it currently pends approval by the Secretary of Commerce. The Amendment modifies the overfishing definition for bluefish and provides a number of commercial and recreational management measures that could be used to conserve the bluefish resource:

To achieve the goals of the FMP, Amendment 1 includes a nine-year plan for rebuilding the stock. Rebuilding will be accomplished through a graduated reduction in the fishing mortality rate (F) such that F will remain at the current level (F=0.51) for the first two years of the rebuilding plan (1999-2000) then will be reduced to F=0.41 in years 3-4 (2001-2003), and finally to F=0.31 in years 6-9(2004-2007).

Operator permits for commercial, party, and charter boats; vessel permits for commercial, party and charter boats, as well as, dealer permits will be required by Amendment 1. To help eliminate duplication of state and federal permits, the Amendment will allow states with a permit system in place to implement mechanisms consistent with the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP).

The Amendment establishes a state-by-state quota system where states quotas are based on historic proportion of commercial and recreational landings for the period 1981-1989: 17% of the total allowable landings will be allocated to the commercial fishery, and 83% of the total allowable landings would be allocated to the recreational fishery . Each state will be required to close its waters to fishing when its share of the quota is landed. Based on the 1979 to 1997 data, the 1999 commercial share was projected to equal or exceed the limit during the upcoming year. Therefore, the FMP required that a commercial quota be implemented for 1999.

The Amendment continues the current 10 fish recreational possession limit. Management options not yet utilized but may be used to control recreational and/or commercial fishing mortality include: trip limits, seasonal closures, minimum mesh and/or fish size.

Research and Data Needs- validated age data, surf zone seine survey for indice of juvenile abundance, fishery independent data, commercial by catch and recreational mortality estimates, and reproductive ecology.

Current Minimum Size Limit- Ten fish bag limit per person per day taken by hook-n-line.

Harvest Season- Open year round.

Size and Age at Maturity- 13 inches FL/2 year old.

Historical and Current Maximum Age- 14 years/12 years old

Juvenile Abundance Index- unknown

Habits/Habitats- Bluefish is a pelagic species important to saltwater fishermen throughout the world. Bluefish school by size and make seasonal migrations north in the spring and south in winter. Large fish tend to congregate in the northern part of the range. There are two spawning groups: one that spawns at sea during the spring, and the young spend their first year in coastal bays and sounds; and the other spawns at sea in the summer, and the young remain offshore.

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