

## **RED DRUM**

(06/09 ARCHIVE - NCDMF)

**Stock Status - Recovering** – The most recent stock assessment indicates that current regulations have been effective at preventing overfishing on juvenile fish since 1999. The adult spawning stock continues to be protected by prohibiting harvest of red drum greater than 27 inches total length (TL).

**Average Commercial Landings and Value 1999-2008** < 179,093 lbs./\$224,101

**2008 Commercial Landings and Value** – 229,809 lbs./\$352,426

**Average Recreational Landings 1999-2008** – 223,067 lbs., **2008** – 261,968 lbs.

**Average Number of Award Citations (40-inch release only) 1999-2008** – 1,323 **2008** – 938

**Average Recreational Commercial Gear License (RCGL) Landings 2002-2008** – 7,522 lbs., **2008** – 8,896 lbs.

**Status of Fishery Management Plan (FMP)** – The most recent stock assessment was completed in 2007 and indicates that for the period of 1999 to 2005, red drum in North Carolina have not been experiencing overfishing. Prior to this period, overfishing had been occurring since at least 1986, the first year that data were available to assess the stock status. The 2001 N.C. Red Drum FMP was the catalyst for the current regulations. Based on assessment results, the current regulations have achieved their intended effect. Amendment 1 to the NC red drum FMP was approved in 2008. Current restrictions on harvest limits for both the commercial and recreational fisheries were not changed in the plan. Steps were taken to reduce the impact of mortality associated with regulatory discards. These include requiring circle hooks in some of the adult red drum recreational fisheries and expanding the current small mesh gill net attendance requirements in the commercial fishery. In addition to the state FMP, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) Amendment 2 to the red drum FMP (June 2002) requires states to implement management measures that prevent overfishing and achieve optimum yield. As a result of the proactive steps taken by North Carolina under the 2001 state FMP, NC has achieved this goal. Amendment 2 requires that states maintain a management program that continues to meet this goal. A new assessment is currently being conducted by the ASMFC for red drum along the Atlantic coast, including North Carolina. Results of this assessment will be available in the fall of 2009.

**Research and Data Needs** – commercial discard estimates, information on the size distribution of recreational releases, fisheries independent data on recruitment of juvenile fish to adults, assessment of adult stocks, estimates of fecundity for females, and validation of sub-adult abundance indices

**Current Regulations** – 18 inches TL minimum and 27 inches TL maximum for recreational and commercial fishermen; 1 fish/day for recreational anglers. The commercial fishery is limited to a bycatch allowance that is set by proclamation. Check with NCDMF for the most recent proclamation on red drum. The commercial fishing season is monitored from September 1 to August 31 with a 250,000-lb. cap. No possession of fish greater than 27 inches TL is allowed.

**Harvest Season** - year round

**Size and Age at Maturity** – 30-32 inches TL/3-4 years

**Historical and Current Maximum Age** - 62 years

**Juvenile Abundance Index 1999-2008** – 4.1, **2008** – 1.6

**Habits and Habitats** - Red drum are estuarine dependent members of the drum family that includes Atlantic croaker, spot, black drum, weakfish, and spotted sea trout. Large red drum (up to 90 lbs.) inhabit the coastal waters of North Carolina throughout the year, often observed in the surf during the spring and fall seasons and commonly found in the Pamlico Sound during the summer months. Spawning takes place in the fall around coastal inlets. Larval and juvenile drum utilize various shallow estuarine habitats in coastal sounds and rivers during the first few years of life. Upon maturity, red drum move out of the estuaries to join the adult spawning stock in the ocean.

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