



North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources
Division of Marine Fisheries

Beverly Eaves Perdue
Governor

Dr. Louis B. Daniel III
Director

Dee Freeman
Secretary

MEMORANDUM

**To: N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission
Dr. Louis Daniel, Director**

From: Kathy Rawls, Biological Review Team Chair

Subject: 2011 Stock Status Report

Date: June 27, 2011

Attached is the N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries 2011 Stock Status Report. This annual report is intended to serve as an overview of the overall health of North Carolina's fisheries resources. The information contained in the stock status report is used to prioritize development of fishery management plans and subsequent plan amendments. The species with status changes for 2011 are outlined below and include summer flounder, striped bass in the central/southern management area, Atlantic menhaden and bay scallop. All other species status's remained the same.

Summer flounder improved from recovering to viable. The 2010 National Marine Fisheries Service's, Northeast Fisheries Science Center stock assessment indicates the stock is not overfished and overfishing is not occurring based on the current biological reference points. Fishing mortality has steadily decreased since the early 1990s and spawning stock biomass has generally increased since that time period.

Striped bass in the Central/Southern Management Area changed from depleted to concern. Stocks lack a quantified stock assessment. The updated 2010 catch curve analysis contained a significant lack of precision which made it unusable for stock status determination. The stock continues to show a truncated size and age distribution, low abundance and an absence of older fish. Improved data collection must be conducted before an accurate stock assessment can be made.

Atlantic menhaden have moved from viable to concern. Based on the corrected version of the 2010 benchmark stock assessment, the Atlantic menhaden stock is found to be experiencing overfishing, but is not considered overfished. The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission has tasked its Technical Committee to develop alternative reference points for the stock.

Bay Scallop has been moved from recovering to concern. Independent sampling in 2010 showed low abundance in all areas. The main harvest season was not opened in 2011 due to limited availability of scallops. Environmental change and predation can cause significant variability in annual abundance.

Species with N.C. Fishery Management Plans being developed or amended in 2011-2012 include striped bass, speckled trout, striped mullet, blue crab and southern flounder. Additional species to monitor that have upcoming amendments or assessments through Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission or federal councils include Atlantic striped bass, American eel and Atlantic menhaden.