

## **ATLANTIC CROAKER**

(06/00 ARCHIVE - NCDMF)

**Stock Status** -- *Concern*, Increased commercial CPUE's, landings, and age structure suggests the ocean stock is in recovery. However, the recreational hook and line as well as the commercial fisheries occurring in the inside sound waters show no improvement.

**Average Commercial Landings and Value 1989-1999** -- 6,769,464 lb., \$2,513,124

**1999 Commercial Landings and Value** -- 10,184,934 lb., \$3,119,655

**Average Recreational Landings 1989-1999** -- 304,577 lb., **1999** -- 213,128 lb.

**Average Number of Award Citations 1989-1999** -- 2, **1999** -- 7.

**Status of Fisheries Management Plan** -- ASMFC FMP 1987, ASMFC review of FMP in 1992, ASMFC review of FMP and research needs 1998, updated coastwide stock assessment planned for some time in 2000.

**Research and Data Needs** -- Continued collection of information on the biology and population dynamics including (growth, age structure, reproductive biology, migration, mortality, and stock structure).

**Current Minimum Size limit** -- none

**Harvest Season** -- Year around.

**Size and Age at Maturity** -- 5-9 inches and ages 2-3 for males, 7-9 inches and ages 2-3 for females.

**Historical and Current Maximum Age** -- 15 years old -- 9 years old

**Juvenile Abundance Index Average 1989-1999** -- 333.5 \* (number of individuals per unit of effort), **1999** -- 525.2 (validated)

**Habits/Habitats** -- Inhabit mud and sand-bottom areas, feed chiefly on crustaceans, worms, mollusks, detritus, and small fishes. Atlantic croakers have a protracted spawning season with a peak during October in North Carolina. The pelagic eggs and recently hatched larvae drift passively toward land. Later, the advanced larval stages and juveniles continue their landward migration by actively swimming into estuarine nursery areas. Maximum recruitment of juvenile fish is in the spring, however, sometimes maximum recruitment is only in the fall for the northern Pamlico Sound area.

\*Pamlico Sound Survey arithmetic JAI.

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