

## Stock status of important coastal fisheries in North Carolina, 2007

Species and Stock	Status					Comments
	Viable	Recovering	Concern	Depleted	Unknown	
<b>Bass, Black Sea</b>						
N. of Hatteras						Not overfished north of Hatteras based on the NEFSC survey. However, concerns resulted in the rejection of a 2006 Stock Assessment.
S. of Hatteras						Overfished south of Hatteras, based on SAFMC assessment.
<b>Bass, Striped</b>						
Albemarle-Roanoke						A management plan was approved in May 2004 to manage a recovered stock.
Atlantic Ocean						ASMFC is currently managing under Amendment 6 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Striped Bass. Addendum I to Amendment 6 is in the public comment stage of implementation, and addresses the issue of striped bass discards in all sectors of the striped bass fishery.
Central/Southern						Stocks are much lower than historical levels. Despite stocking efforts, there are few mature fish on the spawning grounds. Analysis of data collected on the spawning grounds indicates that the stock is being overfished. A management plan was approved in May 2004. Two unresolved issues remaining from the 2004 FMP, recreational creel limits and large mesh gill net discards, are being addressed.
<b>Bluefish</b>						The Atlantic stock of bluefish is not overfished and is not experiencing overfishing (2006 ASMFC/MAFMC stock assessment update). The Bluefish Technical Monitoring Committee continues to work on improving and refining the bluefish stock assessment.
<b>Catfishes (A)</b>						Independent and dependent sampling began March 2004 to fulfill data/research needs for upcoming FMP.
<b>Croaker, Atlantic</b>						Population in the mid-Atlantic region is currently not overfished and overfishing is not occurring on the spawning stock biomass based on the ASMFC assessment.
<b>Dolphin</b>						SAFMC plan approved in 2004.
<b>Drum, Red</b>						Updated stock assessment indicates that overfishing is no longer occurring and management action taken as a result of the 2001 N. C. Red Drum FMP appears to have been effective. The plan is currently being reviewed to determine if revisions are needed to the current management program.
<b>Eel, American</b>						The ASMFC benchmark stock assessment was reviewed in February 2006. The management board accepted the stock assessment as complete but did not approve this document for management purposes. It should be noted the status of the stock in the unapproved stock assessment was still unknown.
<b>Flounder, Southern</b>						Stock is overfished and overfishing is still occurring based on the 2004 stock assessment. A North Carolina FMP was approved and management measures implemented in 2005.
<b>Flounder, Summer</b>						Improvements in age class structure, spawning stock biomass, and fishing mortality have occurred since the early 1990s. However, overfishing is occurring.
<b>Grouper, Gag</b>						According to the latest stock assessment (2006) from SAFMC, gag is experiencing overfishing, but is not overfished.

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<b>Herring, River (A)</b>						
Albemarle Sound						In response to continued stock decline, the MFC through the 2007 Draft North Carolina River Herring FMP, Amendment 1 (final approval of the FMP expected June 2007) implemented a no harvest (commercial or recreational) provision for the joint and coastal waters of the state (beginning with the 2007 season), with up to 7,500 pounds set aside for research at the DMF Director's discretion. The WRC also implemented a no harvest provision in 2006 for all inland waters of the state for river herring greater than 6 inches.
Other Areas						No current sampling program.
<b>Kingfishes (A)</b>						A North Carolina FMP will be finalized in late 2007.
<b>Mackerel, King</b>						Based on the 2003 stock assessment update the south Atlantic king mackerel stock is considered healthy and not overfished. Concern over estimates of Atlantic and Gulf stock mixing rates in south Florida and addition of up to date aging data has delayed approval of the most recent stock assessment. A new stock assessment is planned for 2008.
<b>Mackerel, Spanish</b>						Based on the most recent stock assessment the spawning stock biomass is above target and fishing mortality is below target. The South Atlantic Spanish mackerel stock is considered healthy and not overfished.
<b>Menhaden, Atlantic</b>						The stock is not overfished, nor is overfishing occurring. Commercial landings have decreased because there is no longer a reduction fishery in North Carolina.
<b>Monkfish</b>						FMP developed in 1999 by NE/MAFMC - 10-year rebuilding period
<b>Mullet, Striped</b>						The stock is not overfished. Landings for 2006 were within management threshold limits. Historically, the commercial fishery has had sustained landings similar to current levels.
<b>Perch, White</b>						Independent and dependent sampling began March 2004 to fulfill data/research needs for upcoming FMP
<b>Perch, Yellow</b>						Significant increase in effort and landings since 1991. Fish are targeted during the winter and early spring during spawning within specific river systems.
<b>Reef Fish (B)</b>						Of the 73 species (including black sea bass) in the SAFMC unit, 17 are considered overfished.
<b>Scup</b>						In 2005, the NEFSC 3-year Spring Spawning Biomass index value decreased to 0.69 kg/tow, indicating that the stock was again below the minimum biomass. Stock status with respect to overfishing cannot currently be evaluated and is pending an updated stock assessment.
<b>Shad, American</b>						Commercial landings decreased again in 2006. Juvenile abundance was the lowest reported since 1998. ASMFC Shad and River Herring FMP is in place and a coastwide stock assessment for American shad is being conducted and will be completed late 2007. DMF is collecting fishery dependent and independent data.
<b>Shad, Hickory</b>						Commercial landings decreased significantly in 2006, and were the lowest reported since 2002. The juvenile abundance index for hickory shad decreased in 2006, and is also the lowest reported since 2002. The DMF has not conducted any assessment work since 1993.

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Sharks						The ASMFC is developing a Coastal Shark FMP. Recent assessment results indicate great uncertainty about the various shark species, but the status is changed to concern because of the overfished status of sandbar shark, the target species.
Spiny Dogfish						MA/NEFMC plan for federal waters and ASMFC plan for state waters. The 2006 benchmark assessment indicates that the stock is not overfished, and overfishing is not occurring. Continued decrease in female abundance, imbalance in sex ratio, and low estimates of recent recruitment are highlighted concerns for the current stock status.
Spot						The ASMFC PRT will be analyzing available data to determine possible causes for the coastwide decline in the landings of spot.
Spotted Seatrout						Stock status heavily dependent upon environmental conditions. ASMFC FMP developed (1984); a North Carolina FMP is scheduled to begin July 2007.
Sturgeon, Atlantic						ASMFC is responsible for managing this species and considers the stocks to be depleted along the Atlantic coast. Coastwide prohibition on possession.
Tautog						Based on the 2006 stock assessment overfishing is not occurring from Massachusetts through Virginia. This is the last year that tautog will be listed in the stock status because North Carolina no longer participates in the management of the stock.
Weakfish						The weakfish stock along the Atlantic coast is currently at a level of low abundance. Coastwide landings are at their lowest levels on record. The most recent assessment indicates that the cause is likely due to factors other than fishing mortality. ASMFC has set landings limits in response to the decline in an effort to aid in stock recovery.
Shellfish and Crustaceans						
Clam, Hard						Data are currently insufficient to evaluate status. An update of the 2001 FMP is in development.
Oyster, Eastern						Concern status due to high mortality from Dermo infections, evidence of increased oyster habitat loss, low catch-per-unit-effort, and reduced spatfall in the northern area. NC FMP approved 2001.
Scallop, Bay						Environmental disturbances, fishing effort, and predation may have limited the spawning stocks to maintain the population.
Crab, Blue						Blue crabs continue to support North Carolina's most valuable commercial fishery, topping the list for overall pounds harvested. However, the 2006 fishery yielded the second lowest landings and lowest value during the 10-year period 1997-2006. Significantly reduced landings of hard blue crabs for 2000-2002 and 2004-2006, following the historically record high landings observed during 1996-1999, has caused increased industry concern for the health of the resource and fishery.
Shrimp(C)						Annual Stock. Abundances may be greatly affected by environmental conditions.
<b>Totals</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	
<b>Change Symbols</b>		Stock status improved since last report		Stock status downgraded since last report		

(A) Catfishes includes 5 species, Kingfishes (Sea Mullet) includes 3 species, and there are two species of river herring. (B) The reef fish group includes about 75 species, while there are more than 40 species of sharks. Within these groups, individual species range from Viable to Overfished. The status indicated is for the group as a whole. (C) Shrimp consists of 3 species - brown, pink, and white.