

ATLANTIC STURGEON

(06/00 ARCHIVE - NCDMF)

Stock status--*Overfished.* The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) is responsible for managing this species and considers the stocks to be depleted along the Atlantic coast. Landings have been low since 1960. In 1991 the NC Marine Fisheries Commission made it illegal to possess sturgeon in North Carolina

Average Commercial Landings and Value 1987-1999--7715 lb (1987-91), \$5529

1999 Commercial Landings and Value-- 0

Average Recreational Landings 1987-1999-- 0

Average Number of Award Citations 1987-1999-- 0

Status of Fisheries Management Plan-- In 1990, ASMFC adopted a Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Sturgeon. The goal was to restore sturgeon to fishable abundance throughout its range. As of April 1998, all Atlantic coast states had implemented total closures in state waters. An Amendment to the Plan was passed in June 1998. Objectives of the Amendment are to establish at least 20 protected year classes of females in each spawning stock. In May 1999, the National Marine Fisheries Service extended the ban on sturgeon fishing into federal waters.

Data and Research Needs-- Monitor population status through juvenile indices and abundance and age composition of spawning population, characterize the incidence of bycatch in various fisheries and associated mortalities, conduct tag/recapture studies for estimates of bycatch loss.

Current Minimum Size Limits-- None. No possession of sturgeon allowed.

Harvest Season-- None. Total coastwide moratorium.

Size and Age at Maturity-- Not known for North Carolina. Males in Florida first mature at 7-10 years, whereas males in the Hudson River mature at age 12 or older. Youngest females in the Hudson River were 18-19 years old; average age was 20 years. Mature males in New York were 47-78 inches FL and females were 71-94 inches FL.

Historical and Current Maximum Age-- 60 years old, 40 years old.

Juvenile Abundance Indices Average 1987-1999 and 1999-- None available.

Habits/Habitats-- Anadromous species which requires upriver access to fresh water which is critical to spawning success. Juveniles generally remain in rivers and estuaries for first 6 years before migrating into the ocean to mature.

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