

## **RED DRUM**

(06/98 ARCHIVE - NCDMF)

**Stock Status**--Stressed declining-based on low survivability of juvenile fish to adult stocks

**Average Commercial Landings/Value 1987-1997**--176,934 lb, \$127,001

**1997 Commercial Landings and Value**--52,564 lb, \$57,007

**Average Recreational Landings 1987-1997 and 1997**--223,906 lb, 38,327 lb

**Average Number of Award Citations (45 lb or 40" release) 1987-1997 and 1997**--513, 737

**Status of Fishery Management Plan**--The ASMFC first developed non-regulatory plan in 1985. A stock assessment conducted in 1989 stated that intense fishing pressure on juvenile drum was a threat to the health of the stock. To divert overfishing on Atlantic Coast the SAFMC developed a FMP for red drum in 1990 preventing the harvest of red drum in the EEZ. Current size and bag limits in North Carolina have improved stock conditions, but recovery has been slow and additional management measures may be necessary.

**Data/Research Needs**--Estimates of discard mortality from commercial and recreational fisheries, independent data on survivability of juvenile fish to adults, assessment of adult stocks, estimates of fecundity for females, and validation of juvenile abundance indices.

**Current Size Limits**--18 inch total length (TL) minimum/27 inch TL maximum for recreational and commercial fishermen. A five fish daily bag limit (one fish >27 inches TL may be kept) for recreational anglers. No sale of fish >27 inches.

**Harvest Season**--Open year round.

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

**Historical/Current Maximum Age**--62

**Juvenile Abundance Indices**--Unknown

**Habits/Habitats**--Red drum are estuarine dependent members of the drum family that include 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](#)