

KINGFISH

(06/98 ARCHIVE - NCDMF)

Stock Status--Unknown

Average Commercial Landings and Value 1987-1997--796,061 lb., \$645,418

1997 Commercial Landings and Value--873,320 lb., \$864,470

Average Recreational Landings 1987-1997 and 1997--301,797 lb., 355,476 lb.

Average Number of Award Citations (>1.5 lb) 1987-1997 and 1997--102, 244

Status of Fishery Management Plan--No existing fishery management plan.

Research and Data Needs--Studies to determine distribution and composition of the three kingfish species found in N.C., habitat utilization, migration studies (tagging), maturity and fecundity studies, age and growth studies, juvenile abundance indices.

Current Minimum Size Limit--None

Harvest Season--Open year round

Size and Age at Maturity--9 inches, 1 year old

Historical and Current Maximum Age--6 years old, 6 years old

Juvenile Abundance Indices--Not available

Habits/Habitats--Three species of kingfish occur in North Carolina; southern, northern, and gulf. The southern kingfish is the most abundant of the three species and like the northern kingfish prefers mud or sand-mud bottom types. Gulf kingfish prefer the sandy bottoms of the surf zone. All species are relatively short-lived, demersal members of the drum family which also includes Atlantic croaker, spot, red drum, black drum, spotted seatrout and weakfish. Kingfish exhibit seasonal movement from estuarine and nearshore ocean waters to deeper offshore waters when water temperature cools. Spawning takes place in the ocean from April-August. Kingfish are also known as sea mullet, Virginia mullet, whiting and roundhead.

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