

SCUP

(06/08 ARCHIVE - NCDMF)

Stock Status - *Concern* - Based on the Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC) Spring Spawning Biomass estimates; the index values for 2004-2006 were below the minimum stock size threshold, and therefore overfished. Together with the lack of recent stock assessment information, discards in the directed scup fishery continue to create uncertainty regarding the status of the scup stock.

Average Commercial Landings and Value 1998-2007 – 126,159 lbs./\$72,127

2007 Commercial Landings and Value – 66,979 lbs./\$42,756 (quota managed)

Average Recreational Landings 1998-2007 – 1,946 lbs., **2007** – 3,638 lbs.

Status of Fisheries Management Plan (FMP) - Scup are currently included in the Interjurisdictional FMP, which defers to Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC)/Mid-Atlantic Fisheries Management Council (MAFMC) FMP compliance requirements. The board adopted Amendment 14 (May 2007) that set a rebuilding plan for scup from an overfished condition to a level associated with maximum sustainable yield. The rebuilding plan and timeline for the scup stock remains undefined at this time.

The most recent assessment on scup (2002), indicated scup were no longer overfished (due to strong recruitment and some rebuilding of age structure), but could not be evaluated with respect to overfishing. The primary concerns identified by the assessment were excessive scup discards. Insufficient data for the scup fishery has prevented a more recent successful peer review for scup. The NEFSC Spring Spawning Biomass estimates for the most recent index values (2004, 2005, 2006) were below the minimum stock size threshold, and therefore the stock was considered overfished.

A coastwide quota regulates the winter period (November-April), while state-by-state quotas regulate the summer period (May-October). Specific management measures for the commercial fishery include minimum size limits, minimum mesh requirements for trawls, and closed season. Recreational fishery management measures are developed annually and include a combination of minimum size limits, bag limits and fishing seasons.

Research and Data Needs – There is a need to continue monitor catches and increase sampling of strata that have substantial landings of scup. Reliable estimates of scup discards are essential. The uncertainty associated with discards prevents reliable estimates of discard at age in the commercial fishery, and seriously impedes development of a reliable analytic assessment, as well as forecasts of catch and biomass for the stock.

Current Regulations – commercial: 9 inches total inches (TL); recreational: 8 inches TL/50 per day

Harvest Season - Federal possession limit in Winter I is 30,000 lbs. per trip, with states implementing a two week landing limit of 30,000 pounds. When 80% of the TAC is reached, the possession limit will drop to 1,000 pounds per day. Winter II landing limit is 1,500 lbs. per day. North Carolina commercial and recreational seasons close by proclamation.

Size and Age at Maturity – 50% maturity: 6.1 inches TL/2 years, both sexes.

Historical and Current Maximum Age - 20 years/10 years

Juvenile Abundance Index - not available

Habits and Habitats - Scup are a schooling continental shelf species found in depths from 40 fathoms to 100 fathoms, distributed primarily between Cape Cod, Mass. and Cape Hatteras, N.C., and assumed to constitute a single unit stock. Scup migrate south and offshore in autumn as the water temperature decreases, arriving in offshore wintering areas by December, but generally not commercially landed in North Carolina until the coldest winter months (January-April). Spawning occurs from May through August and peaks in June. Scup have been characterized as slow-growing, relatively long-lived fish.

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