

AMERICAN SHAD

(06/04 ARCHIVE - NCDMF)

Stock Status--Concern— Commercial landings have increased with 2003 landings the highest reported since 1984. Juvenile abundance also increased in 2003 to the highest values recorded since the survey began in 1972, however, the current seine survey is inadequate as a stand alone indicator of American shad juvenile abundance. The DMF is currently conducting fishery dependent and independent work.

Average Commercial Landings and Value 1994-2003-231,364 lbs., \$168,003

2003 Commercial Landings and Value-395,251 lbs., \$251,532

Average RCGL Landings--2002-2003- 22,928 lbs. **2003**- 32,158 lbs.

Status of Fishery Management Plan-- An ASMFC Fishery Management Plan for American Shad and River Herring was approved in 1985. Amendment #1 of this plan was approved October 1998. DMF currently collects some fishery dependent and independent data to comply with ASMFC FMP.

Data/Research Needs- All types of fishery dependent and independent data

Current Regulations- None

Harvest Season- The MFC adopted a rule in 1995 establishing a commercial harvest season of January 1-April 14; it is unlawful to take American shad and hickory shad by any method except hook-and-line from April 15-December 31, bag limits for American (and hickory) shad of 10 fish aggregate (American and hickory shad combined) per person per day.

Size and Age at Maturity-Males- 12-17.5 inches FL, Females- 15-19 inches FL, Males- 3-5 years old, Females- 4-6 years old

Historical and Current Maximum Age-10 years old, 9 years old

Juvenile Abundance Index Average (numbers of individuals per unit of effort) **1972-2003**-(unvalidated) 0.4, **2003**-4.6 largest since survey began in 1972.

Habits/Habitats-American shad are an anadromous (spending majority of life in the ocean, returning to fresh water to spawn) species. Spawning occurs from March - mid-June, primarily in the main stream portions of rivers where there is sufficient current to suspend and move the eggs. Juveniles spend their first growing season in their natal river and sound systems until the water temperatures decrease, triggering emigration to the ocean. American shad will remain in the ocean until reaching sexual maturity, then return to fresh water to spawn.

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