

## **ATLANTIC CROAKER**

(06/01 ARCHIVE - NCDMF)

**Stock Status** -- *Concern*, Increased commercial CPUE's, landings, and age structure suggests the ocean stock is in recovery. However, the recreational hook and line as well as the commercial fisheries occurring in the inside sound waters show no improvement.

**Average Commercial Landings and Value 1991-2000** -- 7,198,519 lbs., \$2,428,917

**2000 Commercial Landings and Value** -- 10,122,610 lbs., \$2,986,810

**Average Recreational Landings 1991-2000** -- 256,751 lbs., **2000** -- 185,980 lbs.

**Average Number of Award Citations 1991-2000** -- 3, **2000** -- 8.

**Status of Fisheries Management Plan** -- An ASMFC FMP was created in 1987. The ASMFC review of the FMP in 1992 and again in 1998 determined research needs. The research needs included an updated stock assessment and an amendment to the FMP. A coastwide stock assessment was completed and is currently under review by the Atlantic croaker technical committee.

**Research and Data Needs** -- Continued collection of information on the biology and population dynamics including (growth, age structure, reproductive biology, migration, mortality, and stock structure).

**Current Minimum Size limit** -- none

**Harvest Season** -- Year around. Banned flynet fishing in ocean waters south of Cape Hatteras in 1994 along with the introduction of BRDs in shrimp trawls and culling panels in long haul seines have indirectly reduced the catch of juvenile croaker.

**Size and Age at Maturity** -- 5-9 inches and ages 2-3 for males, 7-9 inches and ages 2-3 for females.

**Historical and Current Maximum Age** -- 15 years old -- 9 years old

**Juvenile Abundance Index Average 1990-2000** -- 343.9\* (number of individuals per unit of effort), **2000** -- 251.1(validated)

**Habits/Habitats** -- Inhabit mud and sand-bottom areas, feed chiefly on crustaceans, worms, mollusks, detritus, and small fishes. Atlantic croakers have a protracted spawning season with a peak during October in North Carolina. The pelagic eggs and recently hatched larvae drift passively toward land. Later, the advanced larval stages and juveniles continue their migration inshore by actively swimming into estuarine nursery areas. Maximum recruitment of juvenile fish is in the spring; however, sometimes maximum recruitment is only in the fall for the northern Pamlico Sound area.

\*Pamlico Sound Survey arithmetic JAI.

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