

RED DRUM

(06/08 ARCHIVE - NCDMF)

Stock Status - Recovering – The updated stock assessment indicates that current regulations have been effective at preventing overfishing on juvenile fish since 1999. The adult spawning stock continues to be protected by prohibiting harvest of red drum greater than 27 inches total length (TL).

Average Commercial Landings and Value 1998-2007 – 185,506 lbs./\$217,635

2007 Commercial Landings and Value – 243,227 lbs./\$353,773

Average Recreational Landings 1998-2007 – 256,233 lbs., **2007** – 320,338 lbs.

Average Number of Award Citations (40-inch release only) 1998-2007 – 1,290, **2007** – 2,009

Average Recreational Commercial Gear License (RCGL) Landings 2002-2007 – 7,294 lbs., **2007** – 8,767 lbs.

Status of Fishery Management Plan (FMP) – The most recent stock assessment was completed in 2007 and indicates that for the period of 1999 to 2005, red drum in North Carolina have not been experiencing overfishing. Prior to this period, overfishing had been occurring since at least 1986, the first year that data were available to assess the stock status. The 2001 N.C. Red Drum FMP was the catalyst for the current regulations and based on the assessment, were successful in achieving their intended effect. Amendment 1 to the NC red drum FMP is currently being reviewed and is scheduled for approval in the fall of 2008. Current restrictions for both the commercial and recreational fisheries are unlikely to change. Steps are being considered to reduce the impact of mortality associated with regulatory discards. These include requiring circle hooks in some of the adult red drum recreational fisheries and expanding on the current small mesh gill net attendance requirements in the commercial fishery. In addition to the state FMP, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) Amendment 2 to the red drum FMP (June 2002) requires states to implement management measures that prevent overfishing and achieve optimum yield. As a result of the proactive steps taken by North Carolina under the 2001 state FMP, NC has achieved this goal. Amendment 2 requires that states maintain a management program that continues to meet this goal.

Research and Data Needs – commercial discard estimates, information on the size distribution of recreational releases, fisheries independent data on recruitment of juvenile fish to adults, assessment of adult stocks, estimates of fecundity for females, and validation of sub-adult abundance indices

Current Regulations – 18 inches TL minimum and 27 inches TL maximum for recreational and commercial fishermen; 1 fish/day for recreational anglers. The commercial fishery is limited to a bycatch allowance that is set by proclamation. The current proclamation allows a commercial fishing operation to harvest 4 fish/day provided that at least 50% of the catch by weight is either flounder or striped mullet. The commercial fishing season is monitored from September 1 to August 31 with a 250,000-lb. cap. There is no possession of fish greater than 27 inches TL is allowed.

Harvest Season - year round

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

Historical and Current Maximum Age - 62 years

Juvenile Abundance Index 1998-2007 – 4.8, **2007** – 5.6

Habits and Habitats - Red drum are estuarine dependent members of the drum family that includes 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](#).