

**ATLANTIC MENHADEN**  
(06/98 ARCHIVE - NCDMF)

**Stock Status:** Viable (from AMAC report, May 1998)

**Average Commercial Landings and Value 1987 - 1998--** 64,331,000 lb/ \$3,247,333

**1998 Commercial Landings and Value--** 57,412,905 lb/ \$4,071,043

**Average Recreational Landings 1987 - 1998 --** Not a recreational species, except as bait

**1998 Recreational Landings--** Not applicable

**Average Number of Citations 1987 - 1998 and Current Number--** Not a citation species

**Status of Fisheries Management Plan--** No North Carolina FMP. Revised ASMFC FMP approved in 1992. Annual review of stock and fishery relative to six defined biological triggers, state management actions, and Internal Waters Processing requests. Amendment to FMP underway in 1999-2000. Recruitment has declined in recent years to below trigger level for 1996 - 1998 year classes due to unknown environmental causes, not due to fishing. Spawning stock among the largest on record. Atlantic coast fishing effort in 1998 fell by 29% because of company consolidation and fleet reduction in Virginia.

**Data/Research Needs--** Develop coast wide juvenile abundance index; data from bait fisheries (size, age, effort); evaluate bait demand, supply, and value; evaluate environmental factors affecting recruitment to age 1.

**Current minimum size limit:** None

**Harvest Season:** Always open in ocean beyond one mile of beach (with some specific exceptions); Various closures in estuaries and ocean within one mile of beach (see MFC Rule Book).

**Size and Age at Maturity:** 7-9 in FL; 2 years old

**Historic and current maximum age:** 12 years old/ 7 years old

**Average and Current Juvenile Abundance Index (1987-1998):** Unknown. Research is underway to evaluate juvenile data from North Carolina and other Atlantic coast states.

**Habits/Habitat:** Atlantic menhaden are estuarine-dependent with a single stock along the Atlantic coast. They spawn during fall-winter in the ocean from the Virginia capes to south of Cape Lookout. Menhaden migrate north from unspecified south Atlantic wintering areas in the spring, with larger/older fish going farthest north.

**Use of menhaden:** About 90% of the annual Atlantic coast catch is processed into fish meal and oil, while the rest is used for bait in the crab and lobster pot fisheries and for sport fishing bait.

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