

STRIPED BASS -Atlantic Ocean Migratory Stock

Stock Status – Viable – The statistical catch at age (SCA) model estimates that the resource remains at a high level with female spawning stock biomass (SSB) well above the SSB target and threshold. Estimates of recruitment (age-1 abundance) in 2005–2007 decreased from the all time high in 2004 and were below the average for the post-recovery time period (1995–present), although the 2008 recruitment estimate is above that average. While biomass estimates have remained relatively stable from the continued growth of previous strong cohorts, stock abundance has declined since 2004, although there was a small increase from 2007 to 2008. The decline, as reflected by landings, is more prevalent in areas largely dependent on the Chesapeake Bay stock than areas dominated by the Hudson River stock.

Average Commercial Landings and Value 2000-2009 – 332,777 lbs./\$549,806 (quota managed)

2009 Commercial Landings and Value – 189,963 lbs./\$458,779 (quota managed)

Average Recreational Landings 2000-2009 – 1,436,725 lbs., **2009** – 209,858 lbs.

Average Number of Award Citations* (35 lbs./45 inches[^]) 2000-2009*– 343 (150 releases), **2009***–137 (3 releases)

Status of Fisheries Management Plan (FMP) – Atlantic striped bass are currently included in the state's Interjurisdictional FMP, which defers to the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) Atlantic Migratory Striped Bass FMP compliance requirements. Addendum I to Amendment 6 addresses bycatch concerns in all sectors of the striped bass fishery and was approved by the ASMFC Striped Bass Management Board in November 2007. For more information about the status of the Atlantic Coastal Migratory stocks visit the ASMFC website at www.asmfc.org.

Research and Data Needs – Increase accuracy of discard mortality estimates in all sectors of the fishery.

Current Regulations – Recreational: 28 inches minimum Total Length (TL), 2 fish daily creel limit. Commercial: Initiated for the 2009/2010 season, participants must obtain an Atlantic Ocean Striped Bass Commercial Gear Permit. The permit requires fishermen to declare which of the three fisheries (beach seine, gill net, or trawl) they will be participating in. Once declared, they must remain in that fishery for the next three years. The annual commercial quota is set at 480,480 lbs. Bag limits will be set based on number of participants. The seasons will be opened and closed by proclamation.

Harvest Season – Year round recreational. Opened and closed by proclamation for commercial.

Size and Age at Maturity – Males: 12 – 22 inches/2 – 4 years; Females: 22 – 28 inches/5 – 8 years

Historical and Current Maximum Age – 35 years/ 35 years

Juvenile Abundance Index 2000-2009 – Hudson River – 13.61; Delaware River – 1.33; Chesapeake Bay Maryland – 5.69; Chesapeake Bay Virginia – 11.75, **2009** - Hudson River – 10.36; Delaware River – 1.93; Chesapeake Bay Maryland – 3.92; Chesapeake Bay Virginia –

8.42.

Habits and Habitats – Striped bass are anadromous, spending the majority of their adult life stage in the high salinity waters of the near-shore ocean and estuaries, migrating to fresh water to spawn in the spring. Striped bass require flowing, fresh water habitats in order to spawn successfully, allowing the eggs to remain suspended until they hatch, and to transport larvae to the nursery areas. Spawning takes place during late April until early June. North Carolina is host to several different stocks of striped bass. One is the Atlantic migratory stock that often over-winters off the Outer Banks. These striped bass originate principally from the Chesapeake Bay, Delaware and Hudson River systems. They remain in their natal systems from two to three years then begin migrating along the Atlantic coast, northward in the summer and southward during the winter. The Albemarle Sound-Roanoke River area supports the largest spawning population in North Carolina. Other populations are found in the Neuse, Tar/Pamlico, and Cape Fear rivers.

*Includes ASMA, CSMA, and the Atlantic Ocean

^Citation release length requirement increased from 35 inches to 45 inches in 2008

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