KINGFISHES
(06/05 ARCHIVE - NCDMF)

Stock Status - *Unknown* – North Carolina biologists are currently gathering life history data necessary to manage these three species. A North Carolina FMP will begin July 2005.

Average Commercial Landings/Value - 1995-2004 - 634,743 lbs./$587,989

2004 Commercial Landings and Value - 566,659 lbs./$491,584

Average Recreational Landings 1995-2004 - 312,932 lbs., **2004** - 442,788 lbs.

Average Number of Award Citations 1995-2004 – 197, **2004** - 208

Status of Fishery Management Plan - State FMP will begin in 2005

Data/Research Needs - Studies to determine distribution and composition of the three kingfish species found in North Carolina, habitat utilization, migration studies (tagging), maturity and fecundity studies, age and growth studies, juvenile abundance index.

Current Regulations (2005) - No minimum size or bag limit, 300 lb. trip limit for trawlers.

Harvest Season -- Open year round

Size and Age at maturity – 7 inches-9 inches/1 year

Historical and Current Maximum Age – 8 years

Juvenile Abundance Index - Should be available in 2005

Habits/Habitats -Three species of kingfish occur in North Carolina; southern, northern, and gulf. The southern kingfish is the most abundant of the three species and like the northern kingfish prefers mud or sand-mud bottom types. Gulf kingfish prefer the sandy bottoms of the surf zone. All species are relatively short-lived demersal members of the drum family that include Atlantic croaker, spot, red drum, black drum, spotted seatrout and weakfish. Kingfish move from estuarine and nearshore ocean waters to deeper offshore waters when water temperature cools. Spawning takes place in the ocean from April-October. Kingfish are also known as sea mullet, Virginia mullet, whiting and roundhead.

For more information, see DMF Species Leads page