

BLACK SEA BASS

(06/05 ARCHIVE - NCDMF)

Stock Status -

Viable- North of Hatteras- The 2004 stock assessment specifies the stock is no longer overfished and overfishing is not occurring.

Overfished- South of Hatteras- Based on recent South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (SAFMC) stock assessment, the spawning stock biomass is 22 percent and the southern stock is heavily exploited with a decline over time.

Average Commercial Landings and Value 1995-2004 - 691,962 lbs. (64 percent were caught south of Hatteras in last 4 years)/ \$1,070,753

2004 Commercial Landings and Value - 881,233 lbs./\$1,485,618

Average Recreational Landings 1995-2004 - 161,083 lbs., **2004** - 274,878 lbs.

Average Number of Award Citations 1995-2004 –106, **2004** -121

Status of Fisheries Management Plans - In North Carolina, the stock north of Cape Hatteras is currently included in the Interjurisdictional Fisheries Management Plan, which defers to ASMFC/MAFMC FMP compliance requirements. Management measures include commercial quotas, minimum mesh sizes for trawls, escape vents for pots, and minimum fish size limits. Amendment 13 to the FMP established the implementation of a state-specific allocation of the coastwide quota. The council and board recommended a 3percent increase in the coastwide TAL to 8.2 million lb. for 2005. Based on landings data from 1983-1992, 49percent of the TAL is allocated to the commercial fishery and 51percent is allocated to the recreational fishery. Research set-aside is then subtracted from the TAL, and the quotas are further adjusted for overages. As such, North Carolina's preliminary commercial quota (11 percent) for north of Cape Hatteras for 2005 is ~ 436,078 lbs. Black sea bass found south of Cape Hatteras are currently included in the Interjurisdictional Fisheries Management Plan, which defers to SAFMC FMP compliance requirements. Amendment 9 to the Snapper-Grouper FMP sets minimum fish sizes and bag limits.

Data/Research Needs - continue monitoring of catches, continue tagging project (NOAA,MARFIN), develop age information.

Current Regulations (2005)-11 inches (TL) minimum size north of Cape Hatteras, 10 inches (TL) minimum size /20- fish bag limit south of Cape Hatteras.

Harvest Season (2005) - North of Cape Hatteras, the commercial season closes after quota is met.

Size and age at maturity - 7.7 inches/2 years

Historical and Current maximum age - 20 years/8 years

Juvenile Abundance Index - not available

Habits/Habitats -Black sea bass reverse sex from female to male between the ages of 2 years and 4 years. Black sea bass north and south of Cape Hatteras are recognized as different stocks. Black sea bass inhabit irregular hard-bottom areas such as wrecks, artificial reefs, reefs and rock outcroppings. Black sea bass north

of Cape Hatteras move inshore and north in the summer and offshore and south in the winter. Black sea bass south of Cape Hatteras are found inshore of snappers, groupers, grunts and porgies.

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