

DOLPHIN

(06/04 ARCHIVE - NCDMF)

Stock Status—*Viable*- The status of dolphin is based on trends analysis of landings that shows no declining trend along with consistent size distributions over time. Concerns over dolphin are primarily based on the potential for new fisheries (primarily longlines) to compromise historical allocations in the fishery. The South Atlantic Fisheries Management Council (SAFMC) Fishery Management Plan (FMP) (detailed below) has addressed these concerns.

Average Commercial Landings and Value 1994-2003--194,783 lbs.,\$306,670

2003 Commercial Landings and Value--186,262 lbs.,\$329,370

Average Recreational Landings 1994-2003--4,277,635 lbs.

2003 Recreational Landings-- 3,544,410 lbs.

Average Number of Citations 1994-2003 --332 **2003** - 409

Status of Fisheries Management Plan-- The SAFMC, has developed an FMP for dolphin (the FMP also includes wahoo) that was approved by the Secretary of Commerce in June 2004 and should be in place by the end of the year. The goal of the FMP is to maintain the current level of harvest and prevent effort shifts or new fisheries from compromising the allocation of dolphin between recreational and commercial user groups. The allocation is set in the FMP at 87% recreational and 13% commercial. In 2003, the recreational fishery accounted for 95% of all dolphin landed in North Carolina.

Data/Research Needs--Stock identification studies, age and growth, reproduction, migration, diet.

Current minimum size limit--None.

Harvest Season--Open year round, however, landings are seasonal.

Size and Age at maturity--24 inches TL/ 4-6 months old

Historical and Current Maximum Age--4 years old/ 4 years old (needs validation)

Average and Current Juvenile Abundance Index (1992-2001)--Unknown

Habits/Habitats--Coastal/Oceanic migratory pelagic species. Current hypothesis suggests that dolphin migrate from the central Caribbean northward through the mid-Atlantic to Bermuda and back to the central Caribbean. Fast growing, early maturing species that spawns over a protracted time period.

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