

RED DRUM

(06/00 ARCHIVE - NCDMF)

Stock Status --*Overfished* -- based on low recruitment of juvenile fish to adult stocks

Average Commercial Landings/Value 1990-1999—186,910 lb, \$163,623

1999 Commercial Landings and Value--372,795 lb, \$398,126

Average Recreational Landings 1990-1999 -- 254,590 lb. **1999** -- 326,303 lb

Average Number of Award Citations 1990-1999 -- 636 **1999** -- 1073

Status of Fishery Management Plan--The ASMFC first developed a non-regulatory plan in 1985. The most recent stock assessment (1999) shows an improved recruitment rate of juveniles to adult population over the prior study period (1995). However, the stock remains in an overfished state. The SAFMC continues to divert overfishing on Atlantic Coast by preventing the harvest of red drum in the EEZ. State plan is currently being developed. Recently implemented regulations (1998) at the state level should further aid in recovery of red drum stocks.

Data/Research Needs--Estimates of discard mortality from commercial and recreational fisheries, fisheries independent data on recruitment of juvenile fish to adults, assessment of adult stocks, estimates of fecundity for females, and validation of juvenile abundance indices.

Current Size Limits--18 inch total length (TL) minimum and 27 inch TL maximum for recreational and commercial fishermen. One fish per day for recreational anglers. A 100 pound daily trip limit for commercial fishing operations is also in effect. No possession of fish >27 inches TL.

Harvest Season--Open year round.

Size and Age at Maturity--30-32 inches TL at 3-4 years

Historical and Current Maximum Age--62

Juvenile Abundance Index Average (numbers of individuals per unit of effort) **1991-1999** – 7.8, **1999** – 1.8

Habits/Habitats--Red drum are estuarine dependent members of the drum family that includes Atlantic croaker, spot, black drum, weakfish, and spotted sea trout. Large red drum (up to 90 lbs.) inhabit the coastal waters of North Carolina throughout the year, often observed in the surf during the spring and fall seasons and commonly found in the Pamlico Sound during the summer months. Spawning takes place in the fall around coastal inlets. Larval and juvenile drum utilize various shallow estuarine habitats in coastal sounds and rivers during the first few years of life. Upon maturity, red drum move out of the estuaries to join the adult spawning stock in the ocean.

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