HARD CLAM
(06/04 ARCHIVE - NCDMF)

Stock Status—*Unknown*-very little data on the hard clam have been collected in North Carolina. A new sampling program where individual catches of clams are characterized has been initiated.

Average Commercial Landings and Value 1994-2003—681,293 lbs. of meat, $4,387,039

2003 Commercial Landings and Value—535,279 lbs. of meat, $3,354,572

Average Recreational Landings 1994-2003 and 2003—Unknown

Average RCGL Landings 2002-2003—Not applicable

Status of Fisheries Management Plan—A state Fishery Management Plan (FMP) was approved August 2001 by the Marine Fisheries Commission.

Research and Data Needs—Stock assessment, abundance estimates, recreational harvest, recruitment studies, effects of cultch.

Current Regulations—Size limits are 1 inch thick. By hand, season is open year round. Commercial harvest limits are no more than 6,250 clams (25 bags at 250 clams per bag) per fishing operation may be taken from public bottom.

Harvest Season— Mechanical harvest season is December 1-March 31. No more than 15 bags at 250 clams per bag may be taken per fishing operation in North River, Newport River and Bogue Sound while no more than 25 bags at 250 clams per bag may be taken in New River. Core Sound and Pamlico Sound limits are no more than 20 bags. Recreational limits are 100 clams per person per day with no more than 200 per vessel.

Size and Age at Maturity— 1.5 inches (shell height), 1.5 years old

Historical and Current Maximum Age— 45 years old, unknown

Juvenile Abundance Indices Average 1994-2003 and 2003—N/A

Habits/Habitats—Hard clams are mostly estuarine dependent mollusks found in sandy bottom as well as in vegetated bottom. Hard clams spawn from May through November when water temperatures reach between 68 and 86 degrees. The larvae go through several pelagic stages before settling onto a suitable substrate. Hard clams are suspension-feeding bivalves and feed on diatoms.

For more information, see DMF Species Leads page