

BLACK SEA BASS (South of Hatteras)

(06/08 ARCHIVE - NCDMF)

Stock Status – *Depleted* - Based on recent South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (SAFMC) stock assessment, the spawning stock biomass is 22 % and the southern stock is heavily exploited with a decline over time and a 62% reduction in harvest is needed.

Average Commercial Landings and Value 1998-2007 – 432,511 lbs./ \$673,290

2007 Commercial Landings and Value – 277,451 lbs./ \$600,766

Average Recreational Landings 1998-2007* - 174,866 lbs., **2007***– 196,008 lbs.

Average Number of Award Citations (4 lbs.) 1998-2007* – 130, **2007*** - 69

Status of Fisheries Management Plans (FMP) - In North Carolina, the stock of black sea bass found south of Cape Hatteras are currently included in the Interjurisdictional FMP, which defers to SAFMC FMP compliance requirements. Amendment 13C was approved by SAFMC in December 2005 and became effective in October 2006. It established a commercial quota and additional pot restrictions as well as recreational allocation and increased the recreational minimum size and reduced the bag limit.

Research and Data Needs - continue monitoring of catches, continue federal tagging projects, develop age information, alternative biological reference points

Current Regulations – recreational: 12 inches (TL) minimum size/15-fish bag limit; commercial: 10 inches TL. Commercial quota for South Atlantic is 309,000 pounds gutted weight.

Harvest Season – all year

Size and Age at Maturity - 7.7 inches TL/2 years

Historical and Current Maximum Age - 20 years/8 years

Juvenile Abundance Index - not available

Habits and Habitats - Black sea bass change 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, reef and rock outcroppings. Black sea bass south of Cape Hatteras are generally found closer to shore than snappers, groupers, grunts and porgies. Black sea bass north of Cape Hatteras move inshore and north in the summer and offshore and south in the winter.

*Includes all landings north and south of Cape Hatteras

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