

ATLANTIC MENHADEN

(06/05 ARCHIVE - NCDMF)

Stock Status – *Viable* - The status of F and population fecundity in the 2003 ASMFC stock assessment suggest fishing mortality rate is near, but slightly above the F-target and population fecundity is well above the fecundity target. The Atlantic menhaden technical committee reviewed both CPUE and proportion of age 2-4 fish in the reduction fishery and concluded a full assessment did not need to be conducted in 2004.

Average Commercial Landings and Value 1995 – 2004 -59,172,412 lbs./\$4,558,238

2004 Commercial Landings and Value - 50,576,903 lbs./\$4,530,048

Average Recreational Landings 1995 - 2004 --Not applicable

2004 Recreational Landings - Not applicable

Status of Fisheries Management Plan - In North Carolina, menhaden is currently included in the Interjurisdictional Fisheries Management Plan, which defers to ASMFC FMP compliance requirements. Revised ASMFC FMP approved in 1992; Addendum 1 of Amendment 1 was approved in August 2004 to modify the biological reference points, stock assessment schedule and revise the habitat section. The 2003 stock assessment uses a new model with a fecundity-based biological reference point to determine stock status. Draft Addendum II has been approved for public comment and proposes a suite of management options to limit catch of menhaden in both the Chesapeake Bay and coastwide, including harvest caps, timeframes and gears. It also proposes research to determine menhaden populations in the Chesapeake Bay and whether localized depletion is occurring

Data/Research Needs -Develop coast-wide juvenile abundance index; evaluate environmental factors affecting recruitment to age 1; data from bait fisheries (size, age, effort); evaluate bait demand, supply, and value.

Current minimum size limit - None

Harvest Season (2005) - Always open in ocean beyond one mile of beach (with some specific exceptions); various closures in estuaries and ocean within one mile of beach (see MFC Rule Book).

Size and Age at Maturity – 7 inch-9 inch FL/3 + years

Historic and current maximum age -10 years/8 years

Current Juvenile Abundance Index (2004) -17.21 (number of individuals per unit effort).

Habits/Habitat -Atlantic menhaden are estuarine-dependent with a single stock along the Atlantic coast. They spawn during fall-winter in the ocean from the Virginia capes to south of Cape Lookout. Menhaden migrate north from unspecified south Atlantic wintering areas in the spring, with larger/older fish going farthest north. Menhaden are unique in their dependence as adults on phytoplankton for food that they strain from the water while swimming in schools near the surface. Recent research indicates that year-class strength is probably determined by environmental factors (currents, temperature, predation, others) acting on larvae as they approach and enter inlets and nursery areas.

Use of menhaden -About 85 percent – 90 percent of the annual Atlantic coast catch is processed into fishmeal for animal feed, and oil as an industrial base and for food additives. The rest is used for bait in the crab and lobster pot fisheries, as well as for sport fishing bait.

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