

BLUEFISH

(06/03 ARCHIVE - NCDMF)

Stock status--*Recovering.* Biomass models infer reduced fishing mortality should result in stabilization of the stock.

Average Commercial Landings and Value 1993-2002-- 3,024,529 lbs, \$892,316

2002 Commercial Landings and Value--2,323,717 lbs, \$776,521

Average Recreational Landings 1993-2002-- 802,641 lbs **and 2002:** 740,611 lbs.

Average Number of Award Citations (17 lbs) 1993-2002-- 20 **2002:** 1

Status of Fisheries Management Plan-- The joint Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission/Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (ASMFC/MAFMC) Bluefish Fishery Management Plan (FMP) was adopted in 1989, and Amendment 1 to the FMP was developed, approved, and implemented in July 2000. Amendment 1 includes a nine-year plan for rebuilding the stock through a graduated reduction in the fishing mortality rate (F). Operator permits for commercial, party, and charter boats; vessel permits for commercial, party and charter boats, as well as, dealer permits are required by Amendment 1. The Amendment establishes a state-by-state quota system where state quotas are based on historic proportion of commercial and recreational landings for the period 1981-1989: 17% of the total allowable landings will be allocated to the commercial fishery, and 83% of the total allowable landings would be allocated to the recreational fishery . Each state is required to close its waters to fishing when its share of the commercial quota is landed. For 2002, North Carolina's commercial quota remained status quo at 3,072,386 lbs. The recreational fishery is managed through an annual framework of possession limits, size limits, and seasonal closures . A 2-year projection of the bluefish stock biomass was conducted in 2001, and results indicated that the bluefish stock will increase substantially in the next 2 years with commensurate increases in recreational harvest limit. However, since recreational landings decreased in the past 2 years, the Mid-Atlantic Council recommended an increase in the recreational possession limit from 10 to 15 fish in 2001. North Carolina increased the bluefish bag limit to 15 fish (proclamation effective 6/19/2001). The NC Marine Fisheries Commission also adopted a rule whereby only 5 of the 15 fish bag limit can be >24" TL (effective 4/01/2003); a conservation measure to prevent the potential waste of larger, older fish.

Research and Data Needs-- validated age data, surf zone seine survey for index of juvenile abundance, fishery independent data, commercial bycatch and recreational mortality estimates, and reproductive ecology.

Current Minimum Size Limit-- Fifteen fish bag limit per person per day taken by hook and line. Only 5 of the 15 fish bag limit can be >24" TL.

Harvest Season-- Open year round.

Size and Age at Maturity-- 13 inches FL/2 year old.

Historical and Current Maximum Age-- 14 years/12 years old

Juvenile Abundance Index-- unknown

Habits/Habitats-- Bluefish is a pelagic species important to saltwater fishermen throughout the world. Bluefish school by size and make seasonal migrations north in the spring and south in winter. Large fish tend to congregate in the northern part of the range. There are two spawning groups: one that spawns at sea during the spring, and the young spend their first year in coastal bays and sounds; and the other spawns at sea in the summer, and the young remain offshore.

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