

RED DRUM

(06/03 ARCHIVE - NCDMF)

Stock Status — *Recovering* – current regulations are designed to divert overfishing on juvenile fish, while adult spawning stock is protected by prohibiting harvest of red drum >27 inches total length.

Average Commercial Landings/Value 1993-2002 — 196,315 lb, \$194,040

2002 Commercial Landings and Value — 81,092 lb, \$88,894

Average Recreational Landings 1993-2002 — 263,323 lb **2002** - 183,531 lb

Average Number of Award Citations 1993-2002 — 884 **2002** – 1,330

Status of Fishery Management Plan— The most recent stock assessment (1999) showed improved recruitment of juveniles to the adult population over the prior study period (1995) but still indicated that the stock was overfished. Emergency management measures implemented by NC in 1998 and approved as part of the NC Fishery Management Plan (FMP) in March 2001 made necessary changes to help prevent overfishing on NC red drum stocks. Most recently ASMFC updated the federal red drum FMP through Amendment 2 (June 2002). The plan requires that states implement management measures that divert overfishing. As a result of the proactive steps taken by North Carolina under the state FMP, no new management measures were necessary under amendment 2. Amendment 2 does however prevent any relaxation of the commercial restrictions (i.e. the 7 fish commercial trip limit). The SAFMC continues to divert overfishing on the Atlantic Coast by preventing the harvest of red drum in the EEZ.

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 daily commercial trip limit for commercial fishing operations is set at 7 fish per day and requires that at least 50% of the catch by weight be edible finfish other than red drum. The commercial fishing season is monitored from September 1 to August 31 with a 250,000 lb cap. 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) **1993-2002** – 5.8, **2002** – 2.2

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](#)