

SHARKS

(06/00 ARCHIVE - NCDMF)

Stock Status -- *Overfished*--Although federal, commercial and recreational harvest restrictions have been in place since 1993, and a state commercial retention prohibition since 1997, no conclusive evidence exist to suggest that stocks as a whole are recovering for these slow growing, late maturing animals.

Average Commercial Landings and Value 1990-1999 --1,721,499 lb, \$667,355

1999 Commercial Landings and Value -- 1,706,084 lb, \$738,251

Average Recreational Landings 1990-1999 -- 6,788 lb 1999 -- 26,288 lb

Average Number of Award Citations 1990-1999 --17 1999 -- 14

Status of Fisheries Management Plan -- No State Plan. Federal Plan in place since 1993

Data/Research Needs -- Nursery Ground Delineation and Commercial Fisheries observation.

Current Recreational Bag/Size Limits -- The possession of any shark species, excluding; smooth dogfish (*Mustelus canis*), and spiny dogfish (*Squalus acanthias*), is limited to **one (1) shark per vessel per day**, for vessels other than charter and head boat vessels for hire. The possession limit for charter and head boat vessels, excluding; smooth dogfish, and spiny dogfish, is **one (1) shark per person per day** excluding captain and crew. The sale of a charter or head boat vessel possession limit is prohibited. The catch cannot be transferred from individual anglers to the captain or crew. If no vessel is involved, the possession limit is **one (1) shark per person per day**. All sharks except Atlantic sharpnose (*Rhizoprionodon terraenovae*), smooth dogfish, and spiny dogfish retained under the possession limit must be a **minimum size of 54 inches fork length**. The possession of all sharks, except for tiger (*Galeocerdo cuvieri*), thresher (*Alopias vulpinus*), bigeye thresher (*Alopias superciliosus*), shortfin mako (*Isurus oxyrinchus*) and hammerhead species, genus (*Sphyrna*), **greater than 84 inches fork length is prohibited**. All sharks not retained under the possession limit must be returned to the water in a manner to ensure the highest likelihood of survival.

Recreational Harvest Season -- There is no recreational harvest season.

Commercial Harvest Limits and Seasons -- Contact the NC-Division of Marine Fisheries for details on regulations affecting the commercial harvest of sharks.

Size and Age at Maturity -- Variable from species to species.

Historical /Current Maximum Age --Variable from species to species.

Juvenile Abundance Indices Average and 1998 Index -- Juvenile Index is unknown except for some species in certain geographic areas of the Western Atlantic.

Habits and Habitats -- The two most abundant sharks in North Carolina waters are the sandbar and Atlantic sharpnose sharks. The **sandbar shark** is found in all warm temperate waters of the world. This is the most numerous of the large sharks of the mid-Atlantic Bight. Sandbars are known to seasonally migrate along the eastern seaboard, moving north with the warming temperatures in the summer and southward again in the fall. They are most abundant in North Carolina during the spring and fall months. Males and females remain in sexually segregated schools outside the mating season with males usually occurring in deeper water. They feed heavily on blue crabs in addition to numerous small fishes as juveniles, and fishes, skates, and crustaceans as sub-adults and adults. The **Atlantic sharpnose shark** inhabits nearly the entire northeastern coast of North America. It is a year-round resident in the South Atlantic. In North Carolina the Atlantic sharpnose shark is

found year round in continental shelf waters and near the beaches from May-October. It aggregates into large schools uniformly grouped by size and sex. Usually four to seven pups are born in the estuaries and shallow coastal waters during early June and are 9 to 14 inches in length. It feeds on shrimp, mollusks, and small fishes.

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