

## **KINGFISH**

(06/02 ARCHIVE - NCDMF)

**Stock Status**--Unknown- All three species of kingfish (southern, gulf and northern) are highly sought after by commercial and recreational fishermen in North Carolina.

**Average Commercial Landings and Value 1992-2001**--717,520 lb., \$572,970

**2001 Commercial Landings and Value**--489,727 lb., \$501,983

**Average Recreational Landings 1992-2001 and 2001**--303,315 lb., 444,236 lb.

**Average Number of Award Citations (>1.5 lb) 1992-2001 and 2001**--159/102

**Status of Fishery Management Plan**--No existing fishery management plan.

**Research and Data Needs**--Studies to determine distribution and composition of the three kingfish species found in N.C., habitat utilization, migration studies (tagging), maturity and fecundity studies, age and growth studies, juvenile abundance indices.

**Current Minimum Size Limit**--None

**Harvest Season**--Open year round

**Size and Age at Maturity**--9 inches, 1 year old

**Historical and Current Maximum Age**--6 years old,6 years old

**Juvenile Abundance Indices**--Not available

**Habits/Habitats**--Three species of kingfish occur in North Carolina; southern, northern, and gulf. The southern kingfish is the most abundant of the three species and like the northern kingfish prefers mud or sand-mud bottom types. Gulf kingfish prefer the sandy bottoms of the surf zone. All species are relatively short-lived, demersal members of the drum family which also includes Atlantic croaker, spot, red drum, black drum, spotted seatrout and weakfish. Kingfish exhibit seasonal movement from estuarine and nearshore ocean waters to deeper offshore waters when water temperature cools. Spawning takes place in the ocean from April-August. Kingfish are also known as sea mullet, Virginia mullet, whiting and roundhead.

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