

BLUEFISH

(06/01 ARCHIVE - NCDMF)

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

Average Commercial Landings and Value 1991-2000-- 3,059,167 lbs, \$808,856

2000 Commercial Landings and Value---3,362,624 lbs, \$1,102,121

Average Recreational Landings 1991-2000: 888,637 lbs **and 2000:** 665,966 lbs.

Average Number of Citations (17 lbs) 1991-2000: 45 **2000:**0

Status of Fisheries Management Plan- The joint ASMFC/MAFMC bluefish plan was adopted in 1989, and Amendment 1 to the FMP was developed, approved, and implemented in July 2000. Amendment 1 modifies the overfishing definition for bluefish and provides a number of commercial and recreational management measures that could be used to conserve the bluefish resource. Amendment 1 includes a nine-year plan for rebuilding the stock where rebuilding will be accomplished 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 will be 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 will be required to close its waters to fishing when its share of the quota is landed. Amendment 1 continues the current 10 fish recreational possession limit and no minimum size limit. 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. The 2001 commercial quota is unchanged from the commercial quota specified by the ASMFC for 1999 and 2000, and as North Carolina's allocation is 3,072,386 lbs.

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- Ten fish bag limit per person per day taken by hook and line.

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](#)