

BLACK SEA BASS (North of Hatteras)

(06/08 ARCHIVE - NCDMF)

Stock Status – Concern — The average biomass index from the Northeast Fishery Science Center (NEFSC) 2006 spring survey biomass index (0.98 kg/tow) is above the biomass threshold (0.90 kg.tow) and therefore the stock is not overfished. However, Stock Assessment Review Committee (SARC) panelists rejected the 2006 Stock Assessment based on concerns about the soundness of the current biological reference points. Overfishing is unknown because discard losses in the commercial fisheries are not estimated and remain an uncertain component of the fishery.

Average Commercial Landings and Value 1998-2007 – 234,937 lbs./\$524,344

2007 Commercial Landings and Value – 195,460 lbs./\$594,018 (quota managed)

Average Recreational Landings 1998-2007* - 174,866 lbs., **2007*** – 196,008 lbs.

Average Number of Award Citations (4 lbs.) 1998-2007* – 130, **2007*** - 69

Status of Fisheries Management Plans (FMP) - In North Carolina, the stock north of Cape Hatteras is currently included in the Interjurisdictional FMP, which defers to Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission/Mid-Atlantic Fisheries Management Council FMP compliance requirements. Management measures include commercial quotas, minimum mesh sizes for trawls, escape vents for pots, and minimum fish size limits. Amendment 13 to the FMP established the implementation of a state-specific allocation of the coastwide quota. North Carolina's allocation of the commercial quota is 11%. The Commission and Council approved increases in the minimum sizes for circular vents (now 2.5" in diameter) and the number of vents in traps and pots, and all traps and pots are required to have at least two vents in the parlor portion of the trap to help increase escapement of sub-legal fish (January 1, 2007 implementation).

Research and Data Needs - continue monitoring of catches, continue federal tagging projects, develop age information, alternative biological reference points

Current Regulations – recreational: 12 inches total length (TL) minimum size/25-fish bag limit, commercial: 11 inches TL.

Harvest Season - The commercial season closes after quota is met.

Size and Age at Maturity - 7.7 inches TL/2 years

Historical and Current Maximum Age - 20 years/8 years

Juvenile Abundance Index - not available

Habits and Habitats - Black sea bass change sex from female to male between the ages of 2 years and 4 years. Black sea bass north and south of Cape Hatteras are recognized as different stocks. Black sea bass inhabit irregular hard-bottom areas such as wrecks, artificial reefs, reef and rock outcroppings. Black sea bass north of Cape Hatteras move inshore and north in the summer and offshore and south in the winter. Black sea bass south of Cape Hatteras are generally found closer to shore than snappers, groupers, grunts and porgies.

*Includes all landings north and south of Cape Hatteras

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