

## **DOLPHIN**

(06/03 ARCHIVE - NCDMF)

**Stock Status--*Viable*.** The status of dolphin is based on trends analysis of landings that shows no declining trend along with consistent size distributions over time. Concerns over dolphin are primarily based on the potential for new fisheries (primarily longlines) to compromise historical allocations in the fishery. The South Atlantic Fisheries Management Council (SAFMC) Fishery Management Plan (FMP) (detailed below) has addressed these concerns.

**Average Commercial Landings and Value 1993-2002--**181,431 lbs./\$277,854

**2002 Commercial Landings and Value--**168,377 lbs./\$243,434

**Average Recreational Landings 1993-2002--**3,632,033 lbs.

**2002 Recreational Landings--** 6,356,944 lbs.

**Average Number of Citations 1993-2002 and 2002 (Weight  $\geq$  35lbs.)--**332/409

**Status of Fisheries Management Plan--** The SAFMC, has developed an FMP for dolphin (the FMP also includes wahoo) that is awaiting approval by the Secretary of Commerce and should be in place before the end of 2003. The goal of the FMP is to maintain the current level of harvest and prevent effort shifts or new fisheries from compromising the allocation of dolphin between recreational and commercial user groups. The allocation is set in the FMP at 87% recreational and 13% commercial. In 2002, the recreational fishery accounted for 97.4% of all dolphin landed in North Carolina.

**Data/Research Needs--**Stock identification studies, age and growth, reproduction, migration, diet.

**Current minimum size limit--**None.

**Harvest Season--**Open year round, however, landings are seasonal.

**Size and Age at maturity--**24 inches TL/ 4-6 months old.

**Historical and Current Maximum Age--**4 years old/ 4 years old (needs validation).

**Average and Current Juvenile Abundance Index (1992-2001)--**Unknown.

**Habits/Habitats--**Coastal/Oceanic migratory pelagic species. Current hypothesis suggests that dolphin migrate from the central Caribbean northward through the mid-Atlantic to Bermuda and back to the central Caribbean. Fast growing, early maturing species that spawns over a protracted time period.

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