

SPOTTED SEATROUT

(06/98 ARCHIVE - NCDMF)

Stock Status-- viable. Recreational and commercial landings fluctuate over the years, but representative year classes appear stable.

Average Commercial Landings/Value 1989-1998 --409,327 lbs , \$ 433,888

1998 Commercial Landings/Value-- 392,099 lbs , \$404,015

Average Recreational Landings 1989-1998: 390,304 lbs **and 1998:** 428,918 lbs

Average Number of Award Citations (4 lbs) 1989-1998: 201 **and 1998:**332

Status of Fisheries Management Plan-- The ASMFC fishery management plan for spotted seatrout was approved in 1984, and the stock determined to be healthy. The FMP applies to all states from Florida through Maryland, and all are in compliance. The ASMFC plan review team agreed that since the spotted seatrout population appears to be comprised of several stocks throughout its range, it would be best to manage spotted seatrout through separate estuarine regional management plans, and not to continue towards achieving full implementation of the FMP. The FMP will be reviewed periodically (every 3 yrs) and updated to incorporate new data and research findings and to assess the status of stocks and the fisheries.

Research and Data Needs-- validated indice of juvenile abundance, fishery independent data, commercial and recreational mortality estimates.

Current Minimum Size Limit--12" TL.

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

Harvest Season-- Open year round.

Size and Age at Maturity-- 7-9 inches FL/ <1 year old.

Males mature at a younger age, smaller size, and earlier in the season than females.

Historical and Current Maximum Age-- 15 years/ 9 years old

Juvenile Abundance Indices-- unknown

Habits/Habitats-- Estuarine dependent members of the Sciaenidae family that includes kingfish, spot, croaker, red drum, black drum, and weakfish. Peak catches occur in the fall, although May and June are also productive months. North Carolina spotted seatrout have a protracted spawning season which extends from late April through early October. Juveniles are dependent on estuarine habitat, as seagrass habitats are critical nursery areas. Spotted seatrout "sub-stocks" generally remain within estuaries of respective state jurisdictions, but populations north of North Carolina tend leave to the estuaries in early winter and return the next spring.

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