

BLACK SEA BASS (South of Hatteras)

(06/09 ARCHIVE - NCDMF)

Stock Status – Depleted - Based on the 2006 revised South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (SAFMC) stock assessment, the spawning stock biomass is 27% of the SSBMSY (spawning stock biomass at maximum sustainable yield) and the rate of fishing (F) is 6.15*FMSY. Since the southern stock is overfished and experiencing overfishing, reductions were enacted to reducing F and allow the stock to rebuild.

Average Commercial Landings and Value 1999-2008 – 410,757 lbs./ \$665,886

2008 Commercial Landings and Value – 275,754 lbs./ \$565,076

Average Recreational Landings 1999-2008* - 167,106 lbs., **2007***– 90,977 lbs.

Average Number of Award Citations (4 lbs.) 1999-2008* – 124, **2007*** - 35

Status of Fisheries Management Plan (FMP) - In North Carolina, the stock of black sea bass found south of Cape Hatteras are currently included in the Interjurisdictional FMP, which defers to SAFMC FMP compliance requirements. Amendment 13C was approved by SAFMC in December 2005 and became effective in October 2006. It established a commercial quota and additional pot restrictions as well as recreational allocation and increased the recreational minimum size and reduced the bag limit.

Research and Data Needs - continue monitoring of catches, continue federal tagging projects, develop age information, alternative biological reference points, juvenile abundance index is needed.

Current Regulations – recreational: 12 inches (TL) minimum size/15-fish bag limit; commercial: 10 inches (TL). Recreational and commercial quota for the South Atlantic is 409,000 lbs and 309,000 pounds gutted weight, respectively.

Harvest Season – all year until quota is met.

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

Historical and Current Maximum Age - 20 years (northern stock)/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 old. 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 south of Cape Hatteras are generally found closer to shore than snappers, groupers, grunts and porgies. Black sea bass north of Cape Hatteras move inshore and north in the summer and offshore and south in the winter.

*Includes black sea bass landed north and south of Cape Hatteras.

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