

## **AMERICAN SHAD**

(06/00 ARCHIVE - NCDMF)

**Stock Status**--*Unknown* - DMF has not conducted any assessment work since 1993.

**Average Commercial Landings and Value 1987-1999**--241,377 lb, \$174,300

**1999 Commercial Landings and Value**--131,620 lb, \$108,142

**Average Recreational Landings 1987-1999 and 1999**--Unknown

**Average Number of Citations 1987-1999 and 1999**--N/A

**Status of Fisheries Management Plan**--ASMFC Fishery Management Plan for American Shad and River Herrings approved 1985, Amendment #1 of this plan was approved October 1998, DMF currently collects some Fishery Dependent and Independent data to comply with ASMFC FMP.

**Research and Data Needs**--All types of Fishery Dependent and Independent Data

**Current Minimum Size Limit**--None

**Harvest Season**--MFC adopted a rule in 1995 establishing a commercial harvest season January 1-April 14; unlawful to take American shad and hickory shad by any method except hook-and-line from April 15-December 31, bag limits for American (and hickory) shad of 10 fish aggregate (American and hickory combined) per person per day.

**Size and Age at Maturity**--Males- 12-17.5 inches, Females- 15-19 inches, Males- 3-5 years old, Females- 4-6 years old

**Historical and Current Maximum Age**--10 years old, 9 years old

**Juvenile Abundance Indices (Albemarle Sound Area) Average 1972-1999**--(un-validated) 0.24, **1999**-0.34

**Habits/Habitats**--American shad are anadromous (spending majority of life in the ocean, returning to fresh water to spawn) species. Spawning occurs from March - mid-June, primarily in the main stream portions of the rivers where there is sufficient current to suspend and move the eggs. Juveniles spend their first growing season in their natal river and sound systems until the water temperatures decrease, triggering emigration to the ocean. American shad will remain in the ocean until reaching sexual maturity, then return to fresh water to spawn.

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