

## **HARD CLAM**

(06/02 ARCHIVE - NCDMF)

**Stock Status**— *Unknown*-Very little data on the hard clam have been collected in North Carolina. A new sampling program where individual catches of clams are characterized has been initiated.

**Average Commercial Landings and Value 1992-2001**--712,113 lbs of meat, \$4,478,453

**2001 Commercial Landings and Value**--763,508 lbs of meat, \$5,006,796

**Average Recreational Landings 1992-2001 and 2001**--Unknown

**Status of Fisheries Management Plan**-- A state Fishery Management Plan (FMP) was approved August 2001 by the Marine Fishery Commission along with the Eastern Oyster FMP.

**Research and Data Needs**--Stock assessment, abundance estimates, recreational harvest, recruitment studies, effects of cultch.

**Current Minimum Size Limit**-- 1 inch thick

**Harvest Season**--By hand, season is open year round. No more than 6,250 clams (25 bags at 250 clams per bag) per fishing operation may be taken from public bottom. Mechanical harvest season is December 1-March 31. No more than 15 bags at 250 clams per bag may be taken per fishing operation in North River, Newport River and Bogue Sound while no more than 25 bags at 250 clams per bag may be taken in Core Sound and New River.

**Size and Age at Maturity**-- 1.5 inches, (shell height), 1.5 years old

**Historical and Current Maximum Age**-- 45 years old, unknown

**Juvenile Abundance Indices Average 1992-2001 and 2001**--N/A

**Habits/Habitats**-- Hard clams are mostly estuarine dependent mollusks found in sandy bottom as well as in vegetated bottom. Hard clams spawn from May through November when water temperatures reach between 68 and 86 degrees. The larvae go through several pelagic stages before settling onto a suitable substrate. Hard clams are suspension-feeding bivalves and feed on diatoms.

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