

AMERICAN SHAD

(06/06 ARCHIVE - NCDMF)

Stock Status – Concern – Commercial landings decreased in 2005, falling below the 10-year average. The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) Shad and River Herring Fishery Management Plan required a five-year phase out of the ocean intercept fishery for American shad, which was initiated January 1, 2000. The total closure of the ocean intercept fishery began January 1, 2005. Juvenile abundance in 2005 increased significantly, being the third highest Catch Per Unit Effort reported since the survey began in 1972. However, the current seine survey is inadequate as a stand-alone indicator of American shad juvenile abundance. The Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) is currently collecting fishery dependent and independent data.

Average Commercial Landings and Value 1996-2005 – 245,712 lbs./\$178,057

2005 Commercial Landings and Value - 191,261 lbs./\$205,300

Average Recreational Landings 1996-2005 – Unknown, **2005** - Unknown

Average Recreational Commercial Gear Landings 2002-2005 –16,634 lbs., **2005**- 10,185 lbs.

Average Number of Award Citations 1996-2005 N/A, **2005** – N/A

Status of Fishery Management Plan (FMP) - In North Carolina, American shad is currently included in the Interjurisdictional FMP, which defers to ASMFC FMP compliance requirements. An ASMFC FMP for Shad and River Herring was approved in 1985 and Amendment 1 of this plan was approved October 1998. ASMFC is currently conducting a coastwide stock assessment for American shad. DMF collects some fishery dependent and independent data to comply with the ASMFC FMP.

Data/Research Needs - All types of fishery dependent and independent data

Current Regulations (2006) – No size limits

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

Size and Age at Maturity –Males: 12-17.5 inches Fork Length (FL)/3-5 years; Females: 15-19 inches FL/4-6 years

Historical and Current Maximum Age -10 years/8 years

Juvenile Abundance Index 1996-2005 -(unvalidated) 0.95, **2005**- 1.67

Habits/Habitats -American shad are anadromous, spending majority of life in the ocean, returning to fresh water to spawn. Spawning occurs from March to mid-June, primarily in the high flow portions of 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 and then return to fresh water to spawn.

Comment: Commercial landings decreased in 2005. However, juvenile abundance was the third highest reported since the juvenile survey began in 1972. ASMFC Shad and River Herring FMP is in place and a coastwide stock assessment for American shad is currently being conducted. DMF is collecting fishery-dependent and independent data.

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