

SUMMER FLOUNDER

(06/00 ARCHIVE - NCDMF)

Stock Status--*Recovering*. The estimated percentage of age four and older fish increased significantly since the early 1990's. The estimated spawning stock biomass in 1999 was the highest in the 18-year time series. The fishing mortality in 1999 was estimated at 0.32 compared to 1.31 in 1994. The stock appears to be near a viable status.

Average Commercial Landings and Value 1991-2000—3,248,925 lb, \$5,188,365

2000 Commercial Landings and Value —3,386,578 lb (quota managed), \$5,991,402

Average Recreational Landings 1991-2000 -- 359,053 lb. **1999** -- 432,485 lb

Status of Fisheries Management Plan-- Currently managed under Amendment 12 to the joint ASMFC/MAFMC Fishery Management Plan for Summer Flounder. Management measures include commercial quotas, minimum mesh sizes for trawls, minimum fish size limits, recreational bag limits, and a moratorium on new entrants into the fishery.

Research and Data Needs-- bycatch mortality estimates, age comparisons of northern and southern fish using scales and otoliths

Current minimum size limit--non-ocean-13 inches, ocean-15 and 1/2 inches recreational, 14 inches commercial

Harvest Season--Commercial season opens January 1 and closes when 70% of the annual NC quota is reached, re-opens November 1st. The recreational season is closed from May 1 through May 14, 2001.

Size at maturity, age at maturity--10.9 inches, 1.5 years old

Historical maximum age, current maximum age-- 15 years old, 10 years old

Average juvenile index 1991-2000 -9.6, **2000** 3.9 (number of individuals per unit of effort)

Habits/Habitats--Summer flounder are estuarine dependent members of the left-eyed flounder family that also include southern flounder and gulf flounder. Summer flounder migrate offshore and north during winter and early spring and inshore and south during summer and fall. Summer flounder spawn from November through March when water temperatures are between 53 and 67 degrees. Larval summer flounder enter inlets and settle on sandy bottoms in higher-salinity areas of estuaries. After or towards the end of their first year, summer flounder move into ocean waters to spawn and join coastal migratory groups.

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