

SUMMER FLOUNDER

(06/98 ARCHIVE - NCDMF)

Stock Status--Stressed/Recovering. Although the population is comprised of mainly young fish the percentage of age three and older fish has increased significantly since the early 1990's. The aggregate weight of mature females is the highest since 1983. However, since the bulk of these mature fish are less than age three, the fishery is still primarily dependent on recruitment.

Average Commercial Landings and Value 1987-1997-- 3,738,180 lb, \$5,147,996

1997 Commercial Landings and Value --1,509,265 lb (quota managed), \$2,846,987

Average Recreational Landings 1987-1997 and 1997-- 363,542 lb, 349,383 lb (size and bag limit)

Average Number of Citations 1987-1997 -- not available

Status of Fisheries Management Plan-- Currently managed under Amendment 10 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, life history parameters of South Atlantic Bight fish, age comparisons of northern and southern fish using scales and otoliths

Current minimum size limit-- 13 inches internal, 15 inches ocean

Harvest Season--Commercial season closes when 70% of the annual NC quota is reached, re-opens November 1st. Presently, there is no closed recreational season.

Size at maturity, age at maturity-- 12.7 inches, 1 year old

Historical maximum age, current maximum age-- 15 years old, 7 years old

Average juvenile index 1987-1997-4.1, 1997 value 6.4

Habits/Habitats--Summer flounder are estuarine dependent members of the left-eyed flounder family that 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](#)