

## **SPOT**

(06/07 ARCHIVE - NCDMF)

**Stock Status – *Concern***– Commercial landings and effort have generally been decreasing in the major North Carolina fisheries. Catch per unit effort in the long haul and gill net fisheries decreased in 2006. Juvenile abundance indices decreased in 2006 and were among the lowest in the last 15 years. Recreational landings decreased in 2006 to a level below their 10-year average. Spot are the primary coastal catch, by number, for recreational fishermen in North Carolina.

**Average Commercial Landings and Value 1997-2006** - 2,283,439 lbs./\$1,042,233

**2006 Commercial Landings and Value** - 1,364,583 lbs./\$997,930

**Average Recreational Landings 1997-2006** - 1,188,935 lbs., **2006** – 953,192 lbs.

**Average Number of Award Citations (1 lb.) 1997-2006** – 75, **2006** - 24

**Average Recreational Commercial Gear Landings 2002-2006** - 244,201,  
**2006** - 179,748

**Status of Fishery Management Plan (FMP)** - In North Carolina, spot are currently included in the Interjurisdictional FMP, which defers to Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) FMP compliance requirements. An ASMFC spot FMP was approved in 1987. Management measures were reviewed in October 2006 by the South Atlantic State Federal Fisheries Management Board. In the review, the board stated their concern over declining coastwide landings. The board directed the Plan Review Team (PRT) to evaluate spot effort and landing trends in the major commercial fisheries of Maryland, Virginia and North Carolina. Although the results were inconclusive, they seemed to indicate a long slow decline in abundance. The PRT will continue analyzing available data to learn more about the stock's status.

**Research and Data Needs** - Coastwide stock assessment analysis, migration studies (tagging), maturity and fecundity studies.

**Current Regulations (2007)** - None

**Harvest Season** - year round

**Size and Age at Maturity** - 7-8 inches/2–3 years

**Historical and Current Maximum Age** - 5 years

**Juvenile Abundance Index 1997-2006** – 256, **2006** - 125 (validated)

**Habits and Habitats** - Spot are short-lived estuarine-dependent members of the drum family, that include Atlantic croaker, red drum, black drum, spotted seatrout and weakfish. Spot spawn in the ocean from late fall to early spring. Wind and currents carry the young into the upper reaches of the estuaries, where they remain throughout the spring. Adult spot migrate seasonally between estuarine and near-shore ocean waters, but are seldom found in the upper reaches of the estuary. Spot are most susceptible to commercial and recreational fishing activity during the fall when schools migrate from estuarine to ocean waters.

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