

## BLUEFISH

(06/04 ARCHIVE - NCDMF)

- **Stock status—*Recovering***- Biomass models infer reduced fishing mortality should result in stabilization of the stock.
- **Average Commercial Landings and Value 1994-2003**-- 3,101,036 lbs., \$902,926
- **2003 Commercial Landings and Value**—3,470,100 lbs., \$767,566
- **Average Recreational Landings 1994-2003**—781,261 lbs. **2003** - 803,380 lbs.
- **Average Number of Award Citations 1994-2003**-- 20 **2003** – 6
- **Average RCGL Landings 2002-2003**—22,032 lbs. **2003** – 14,215 lbs.
- **Status of Fisheries Management Plan**—The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) and the Mid-Atlantic Fisheries Management Council (MAFMC) jointly manage bluefish under Amendment 1 to the Bluefish Fishery Management Plan (FMP). This Amendment established a schedule to rebuild the stock to a biomass level that would support harvests at or near the maximum sustainable yield (MSY) by the year 2007, preferably by eliminating overfishing through a gradual reduction in the fishing mortality rate (F). The FMP allows a state-by-state commercial quota system and recreational harvest limits to reduce fishing mortality; both are adjusted annually by the ASMFC/ MAFMC. Amendment 1 also outlines a series of permitting and reporting requirements. North Carolina's commercial quota (32 %) increased slightly to 3,334,913 lbs for 2004. The most recent stock status information (Lazar 2002) indicates that bluefish are overfished but overfishing is not occurring. Fishing mortality peaked in 1987 (46% exploitation rate) and has steadily declined to 0.184 (15% exploitation rate) in 2002. It was projected that the 2003 biomass would exceed the plan's biomass threshold of 118.5 million pounds. A peer reviewed stock assessment was conducted in 2004 by the ASMFC, and is pending review by the Stock Assessment Review Committee (SARC).
- **Data/Research Needs**-- validated age data, seine survey for index of juvenile abundance, fishery independent data, commercial bycatch and recreational mortality estimates, and reproductive ecology.
- **Current Regulations**-- Fifteen fish bag limit per person per day taken by hook and line. Only 5 of the 15 fish bag limit can be >24" TL.
- **Harvest Season**-- Open year round.
- **Size and Age at Maturity**-- 13 inches FL, 2 years
- **Historical and Current Maximum Age**—14,12
- **Juvenile Abundance Index**-- unknown
- **Habits/Habitats**—Bluefish are pelagic and important to saltwater fishermen throughout the world. Bluefish school by size and make seasonal migrations north in the spring and south in winter. Large fish tend to congregate in the northern part of the range. There are two spawning groups: one that spawns at sea during the spring and the other spawns at sea in the summer.

\*blurb change: ASMFC/MAFMC FMP. Biomass models infer fishing mortality has steadily declined since 1987. A 2004 stock assessment is pending review.

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