

GAG

(06/05 ARCHIVE - NCDMF)

Stock Status – *Viable* - According to the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (SAFMC), the stock is recovered. The spawning stock ratio from the 2001 assessment is 30 percent. In 1995, only 5.5 percent of the fish captured were male, versus 19.6 percent from 1976-1982. Also called black grouper or gray grouper.

Average Commercial Landings and Value 1995-2004 -241,008 lbs./\$586,407

2004 Commercial Landings and Value -215,890 lbs./\$563,948

Average Recreational Landings 1995-2004 -46,985 lbs., **2004** -177,195 lbs.

Average Number of Award Citations 1995-2004/2004 only -Not recorded by species.

Status of Fisheries Management Plan - In North Carolina, gag is currently included in the Interjurisdictional Fisheries Management Plan, which defers to SAFMC Snapper Grouper FMP compliance requirements, which was initially approved in 1983. Amendment 4, effective in 1992, established a 20-inch TL minimum size; Amendment 9, effective 1999, increased the minimum size to 24 inches TL, created a 2 fish recreational bag and a March-April closure (bag limit only, no sale).

Data and Research Needs -Develop juvenile index, assess release mortality values, conduct population assessment, expand age and growth studies, determine migration patterns.

Current Minimum Size Limits (2005) - State and federal: 24 inches TL

Harvest season (2005) - Year round, except no more than 2 fish per person can be caught in March and April by recreational and commercial fishermen

Size and Age at Maturity - First mature as females at 5 years, possibly 4 years, when fish are greater than 26 inches TL. Transformation to the male generally occurs around 10 years and greater than 39 inches TL.

Historical and Current Maximum Age -22 years

Juvenile Abundance Indices - None available

Habits/Habitats -Large juveniles and adults occur on hard or “live” bottom on the outer continental shelf. Larval gag are estuarine dependent. Spawning occurs offshore and pelagic larvae are carried into estuaries where they reside in sea grass beds or oyster rocks. The juveniles emigrate in the fall to nearshore reefs.

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