

AMERICAN SHAD

(06/05 ARCHIVE - NCDMF)

Stock Status - *Concern*— Commercial landings decreased slightly in 2004, but remained above the 10-year average. The ASMFC Shad and River Herring FMP required a five-year phase out of the ocean intercept fishery for American shad initiated January 1, 2000. The total closure of the intercept fishery began January 1, 2005. Juvenile abundance in 2004 decreased from the historical high recorded in 2003 to slightly above the 1972-2004 average; however, the current seine survey is inadequate as a stand alone indicator of American shad juvenile abundance. The DMF is currently conducting fishery dependent and independent work.

Average Commercial Landings and Value 1995-2004 -247,173 lbs./\$176,381

2004 Commercial Landings and Value -269,063 lbs./\$179,486

Average Recreational Landings 1995-2004 – Unknown, **2004** - Unknown

Average RCGL Landings 2002-2004 -18,783 lbs., **2004**- 8,703 lbs.

Status of Fishery Management Plan - In North Carolina, American shad is currently included in the Interjurisdictional Fisheries Management Plan, which defers to ASMFC FMP compliance requirements. An ASMFC Fishery Management Plan for Shad and River Herring was approved in 1985 and Amendment 1 of this plan was approved October 1998. ASMFC is currently conducting a coastwide stock assessment for American shad. DMF collects some fishery dependent and independent data to comply with the ASMFC FMP.

Data/Research Needs - All types of fishery dependent and independent data

Current Regulations (2005)- Harvest season and recreational creel limit.

Harvest Season (2005)- The MFC adopted a rule in 1995 establishing a commercial harvest season of Jan. 1- April 14; it is unlawful to take American shad and hickory shad by any method except hook-and-line from April 15-Dec. 31, recreational bag limits for American and hickory shad of 10 fish aggregate (American and hickory shad combined) per person per day.

Size and Age at Maturity—Males: 12 inches-17.5 inches FL/3 years -5 years; Females: 15 inches-19 inches FL/4 years-6 years

Historical and Current Maximum Age -10 years/8 years

Juvenile Abundance Index Average (# of individuals per unit of effort) **1972-2004** -(unvalidated) 0.41, **2004**- 0.58

Habits/Habitats -American shad are anadromous, spending majority of life in the ocean, returning to fresh water to spawn. Spawning occurs from March to mid-June, primarily in the high flow portions of rivers where there is sufficient current to suspend and move the eggs. Juveniles spend their first growing season in their natal river and sound systems until the water temperatures decrease, triggering emigration to the ocean. American shad will remain in the ocean until reaching sexual maturity and then return to fresh water to spawn.

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