

BLUE CRAB

(06/99 ARCHIVE - NCDMF)

Stock Status----- Concern. Preliminary estimates of maximum sustainable yield (MSY) for the blue crab are between 48 and 60 million pounds. MSY has been exceeded in two of the last three years. Additionally, there has been a decline in spawning stock biomass in recent years. A complete stock assessment is currently being conducted for the blue crab resource in North Carolina.

Average Commercial Landings and Value 1988-1998--49,251,586 lb, \$25,334,585

1998 Commercial Landings and Value--62,068,133 lb, \$44,952,263

Average Recreational Landings 1988-1998 and 1998-- Unknown

Average Number of Award Citations (?) 1987-1998 and 1998-- N/A

Status of Fisheries Management Plan--North Carolina FMP adopted by the MFC on December 11, 1998.

Research and Data Needs-- Research and data needs are listed in the FMP.

Current Minimum Size Limit-- 5 inches from tip of spike to tip of spike except mature females, soft and peeler crabs. A tolerance of not more than 10 percent by number in any container shall be allowed.

Harvest Season-- Open year round

Size and Age at Maturity-- Most are mature at 5 inches, 12 to 18 months

Historical Maximum Age-- 5 to 8 years old, Current Maximum Age---- 2 to 3 years old

Juvenile Abundance Indices Average (JAI)-- 7.29 crabs per minute (1987-1998) (unvalidated) Despite variability in abundance, there is no general downward or upward trend in recruitment.

Habits/ Habitats-- Migration and movement among various habitats are seasonal, depending on life age, sex, maturity, and associated salinity preferences. Many different habitats are used during migrations from high-salinity ocean waters to the lower-salinity and freshwaters of the coastal sounds, rivers and creeks.

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