

## **AMERICAN SHAD**

(06/07 ARCHIVE - NCDMF)

**Stock Status – Concern** – Commercial landings decreased in 2006, again falling below the 10-year average. The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) Shad and River Herring Fishery Management Plan required a five-year phase out of the ocean intercept fishery for American shad, which was initiated January 1, 2000. The total closure of the ocean intercept fishery began January 1, 2005. Juvenile abundance in 2006 decreased significantly, being the lowest Catch Per Unit Effort (CPUE) reported since 1998. However, the current juvenile seine survey is inadequate as a stand-alone indicator of American shad juvenile abundance. The Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) is currently collecting fishery dependent and independent data.

**Average Commercial Landings and Value 1997-2006** – 244,301 lbs./\$180,999

**2006 Commercial Landings and Value** – 184,965 lbs./\$201,026

**Average Recreational Landings 1997-2006** – Unknown, **2006** - Unknown

**Average Recreational Commercial Gear Landings 2002-2006** –14,458 lbs., **2006** - 5,756 lbs.

**Average Number of Award Citations 1997-2006** - N/A, **2006** – N/A

**Status of Fishery Management Plan (FMP)** - In North Carolina, American shad are currently included in the Interjurisdictional FMP, which defers to ASMFC FMP compliance requirements. An ASMFC FMP 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, which will be completed late 2007. DMF collects some fishery dependent and independent data to comply with the ASMFC FMP.

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

**Current Regulations (2007)** – No size limits; Harvest season and recreational creel limit

**Harvest Season** - The NC Marine Fisheries Commission adopted a rule in 1995 establishing a commercial harvest season of January 1-April 14; it is unlawful to take American shad and hickory shad by any method except hook-and-line from April 15-December 31. Recreational bag limits for American and hickory shad are 10-fish aggregate (American and hickory shad combined) per person per day.

**Size and Age at Maturity** – Males: 12-17.5 inches Fork Length (FL)/3-5 years; Females: 15-19 inches FL/4-6 years

**Historical and Current Maximum Age** -10 years/8 years

**Juvenile Abundance Index 1997-2006** - (unvalidated) 0.97, **2006** - 0.24

**Habits and 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](#)