HARD CLAM

(06/05 ARCHIVE - NCDMF)

Stock Status – *Unknown* - Very little data on the hard clam have been collected in North Carolina. A new sampling program has been initiated where individual catches of clams are characterized.

Average Commercial Landings and Value 1995-2004- 665,734 lbs. of meat/\$4,361,915

2004 Commercial Landings and Value -548,628 lbs. of meat/\$3,397,661

Average Recreational Landings 1995-2004 and 2004-Unknown

Status of Fisheries Management Plan -A state Fishery Management Plan (FMP) was approved August 2001 by the N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission.

Research and Data Needs-Stock assessment, abundance estimates, recreational harvest, recruitment studies, effects of cultch.

Current Minimum Size Limit- 1-inch thick

Harvest Season (2005) - By hand, season is open year round. Commercial harvest limits are no more than 6,250 clams (25 bags at 250 clams per bag) per fishing operation may be taken from public bottom. Mechanical harvest season is December 1-March 31. No more than 15 bags at 250 clams per bag may be taken per fishing operation in North River, Newport River and Bogue Sound, while no more than 25 bags at 250 clams per bag may be taken in New River. Core and Pamlico sound limits are no more than 20 bags. Recreational limits are 100 clams per person, per day with no more than 200 per vessel.

Size and Age at Maturity-1.5 inches, (shell height)/ 1.5 years

Historical and Current Maximum Age-45 years/ unknown

Juvenile Abundance Indices Average 1994-2003 and 2003-N/A

Habits/Habitats-Hard clams are mostly estuarine dependent mollusks found in sandy bottom, as well as in vegetated bottom. Hard clams spawn from May through November when water temperatures reach between 68 degrees and 86 degrees. The larvae go through several pelagic stages before settling onto a suitable substrate. Hard clams are suspension-feeding bivalves and feed on diatoms.

For more information, see **DMF Species Leads page**