**SPOTTED SEATROUT**
(06/00 ARCHIVE - NCDMF)

**Stock Status--** *Viable*. Recreational and commerial landings fluctuate over the years, but representative year classes appear stable.

**Average Commercial Landings/Value 1990-1999 --**418,629 lbs / $457,168

**1999 Commercial Landings/Value--**545,442 lbs / $668,926

**Average Recreational Landings 1990-1999**: 438,052 lbs **and 1999**: 690,606 lbs
Recreational landings in 1999 were the highest recorded.

**Average Number of Award Citations (4 lbs) 1990-1999**: 276 **and 1999***:*695
The largest 1999 citation spotted seatrout was 11 lbs.

**Status of Fisheries Management Plan--** The ASMFC fishery management plan for spotted seatrout was approved in 1984, and the stock determined to be healthy. The FMP applies to all states from Florida through Maryland, and all are in compliance. The ASMFC plan review team agreed that since the spotted seatrout population appears to be comprised of several stocks throughout its range, it would be best to manage spotted seatrout through separate estuarine regional management plans, and not to continue towards achieving full implementaion of the FMP. The FMP will be reviewed periodically (every 3 yrs) and updated to incorporate new data and research findings and to assess the status of stocks and the fisheries. Amendment Number 1, approved by Policy Board November, 1991, added an objective of maintainig a spawning potential ratio (SPR) of at least 20% to minimize the possibility of recruitment failure.

**Research and Data Needs--** validated indice of juvenile abundance, fishery independent data, commercial and recreational mortality estimates.

**Current Minimum Size Limit--**12" TL. Ten fish bag limit per person per day taken by hook and line.
**Harvest Season--** Open year round.

**Size and Age at Maturity--** 7-9 inches FL/ <1 year old.
Males mature at a younger age, smaller size, and earlier in the season than females.

**Historical and Current Maximum Age--** 12 years/ 9 years old.
Age composition of spotted seatrout sampled from recent archeological investigations indicate that a maximum age of 12 years is more approprate for use in calculating SPRs than 15 yrs.

**Juvenile Abundance Indices--** unknown

**Habits/Habitats--** Estuarine dependent members of the Sciaenidae family that includes kingfish, spot, croaker, red drum, black drum, and weakfish. Peak catches occur in the fall, although May and June are also productive months. North Carolina spotted seatrout have a protracted spawning season which extends from late April through early October. Juveniles are dependent on estuarine habitat, as seagrass habitats are critical nursery areas. Spotted seatrout “sub-stocks” generally remain within estuaries of respective state jurisdictions. However, populations north of North Carolina tend to leave the estuaries in early winter and return the next spring, and this may be true of spotted seatrout in northernmost areas of North Carolina.

For more information, see DMF Species Leads page