

AMERICAN SHAD

(06/01 ARCHIVE - NCDMF)

Stock Status--*Concerned* - DMF currently conducting fishery dependent and independent work being conducted.

Average Commercial Landings and Value 1991-2000--218,701 lb, \$170,615

2000 Commercial Landings and Value--297,882 lb, \$212,929

Average Recreational Landings 1991-2000 and 2000--Unknown

Status of Fisheries Management Plan--ASMFC Fishery Management Plan for American Shad and River Herrings approved 1985, Amendment #1 of this plan was approved October 1998, DMF currently collects some fishery dependent and independent data to comply with ASMFC FMP.

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

Current Minimum Size Limit--None

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

Size and Age at Maturity--Males- 12-17.5 inches, Females- 15-19 inches, Males- 3-5 years old, Females- 4-6 years old

Historical and Current Maximum Age--10 years old, 9 years old

Juvenile Abundance Indices (Albemarle Sound Area) Average 1972-2000--(unvalidated) 0.24, **2000**-0.25

Habits/Habitats--American shad are an anadromous (spending majority of life in the ocean, returning to fresh water to spawn) species. Spawning occurs from March - mid-June, primarily in the main stream 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, then return to fresh water to spawn.

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