

STRIPED BASS

(06/06 ARCHIVE - NCDMF)

Stock Status:

Atlantic Ocean Migratory Stock – *Viable* - The stock is not overfished and overfishing is not occurring. Age structure of stock continues to expand, with an increased number of age 13+ fish in the population since the adoption of Amendment 6 of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) Striped Bass Fishery Management Plan in 2003. Spawning Stock Biomass (SSB) is leveling off at approximately 54.8 million pounds, above the target of 38.6 million pounds. Age-1 recruitment continues to be around the average observed since stocks were declared recovered in 1995. Addendum I is in review by the technical committee.

Albemarle Sound/Roanoke River Management Area (ASMA/RRMA) – *Viable* - The stock is not overfished and overfishing is not occurring. The overall age structure of the stock continues to expand, with an overall increase in abundance of older fish observed during the spawning ground survey as well. SSB is continuing to increase (approximately 1.7 million pounds in 2004) and has been above the recommended threshold since 2002. Age-1 recruitment has been variable, with a slight decline in the 1982-2001 long-term average of 270,500 since 2003.

Central/Southern Management Area (CSMA) – *Overfished* - The stock is overfished and overfishing is occurring. Due to lack of funding, there is still a need for dependent and independent data for an improved stock assessment.

Average Commercial Landings and Value 1996-2005

Atlantic Ocean – 356,580 lbs./\$482,998

ASMA – 196,001 lbs./\$256,493

CSMA - 31,586 lbs./\$40,353

2005 Commercial Landings and Value

Atlantic Ocean – 588,601 lbs./\$1,142,651

ASMA – 232,645 lbs./\$448,096 (quota managed)

CSMA – 26,932 lbs./\$81,071 (quota managed)

Average Recreational Landings 1996-2005

*Atlantic Ocean – 1,252,521 lbs.

ASMA – 72,437 lbs.

RRMA – 81,683 lbs.

CSMA (2004-2005) – 19,158 lbs.

*Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey initiated sampling of wave 1 (January-February) in 2004, which increased the estimated total harvest for NC.

2005 Recreational Landings

Atlantic Ocean – 2,199,558 lbs.

ASMA - 63,477 lbs. (quota managed)

RRMA – 107,530 lbs. (quota managed)

CSMA – 15,357 lbs.

Average Recreational Commercial Gear Landings – 2002-2005 – 6,497 lbs., 2005 – 3,058 lbs.

Average Number of Citations 1996-2005 (35 lbs.) – 284 (185 releases), 2005 - 361 (137 releases)

Status of Fisheries Management Plan (FMP) - An amended N.C. Estuarine Striped Bass FMP was adopted in May 2004 by the N. C. Marine Fisheries Commission to address the striped bass fisheries in all internal coastal waters of the state. Atlantic striped bass is currently included in the state's Interjurisdictional FMP, which defers to ASMFC FMP compliance requirements. Amendment 6 of the Interstate FMP for Atlantic Striped Bass by the ASMFC was completed in 2003. Addendum I to Amendment 6 is in the public comment stage of implementation, and addresses the issue of striped bass discards in all sectors of the striped bass fishery.

Research and Data Needs -Expand commercial and recreational sampling in areas other than the northern coastal counties (i.e. ASMA and ocean). Fisheries dependent and independent sampling in central/southern areas.

Current Regulations (2006)

Atlantic Ocean – 28 inches Total Length (TL)

ASMA - 18 inches TL coastal, joint and inland waters

RRMA - 18 inches TL and no striped bass between 22 inches and 27 inches in Roanoke River

CSMA - 18 inches TL coastal, joint and inland waters

Recreational Harvest Season

Atlantic Ocean - year-round

ASMA - Spring (January – April); Fall (October–December)

RRMA - March-April

CSMA - year-round

Size and Age at Maturity – Males: 11 inches/2-3 years, Females: 22 inches/3-6 years

Historical and Current Maximum Age – 29 years/18 years

Juvenile Abundance Index Average (ASMA only) – 1996-2005- 15.07, 2005 - 34.6 (validated)

Habits/Habitats -Striped bass are anadromous spending the majority of their adult life stage in high salinity waters, migrating to fresh water to spawn in the spring. Striped bass require flowing, fresh water habitats in order to spawn successfully, allowing the eggs to remain suspended until they hatch, and to transport larvae to the nursery areas. Spawning takes place during late April until early June. North Carolina is host to several different stocks of striped bass. One is the Atlantic migratory stock that over winters off the Outer Banks each year. These striped bass originate principally from the Chesapeake Bay, Delaware and Hudson River systems. They remain in their natal systems from two to three years, then begin migrating along the Atlantic Coast, northward in the summer and southward during the winter. The Albemarle Sound-Roanoke River area supports the largest spawning population in North Carolina. Other populations are found in the Neuse, Tar/Pamlico, and Cape Fear rivers.

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