

DOLPHIN

(06/08 ARCHIVE - NCDMF)

Stock Status - *Viable* - The status of dolphin is based on trends in landings data. Although dolphins are fast growing and mature early, there is concern about the potential for new fisheries (primarily longlines) to compromise historical allocations in the fishery. The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (SAFMC) Fishery Management Plan (FMP) addresses these concerns.

Average Commercial Landings and Value 1998-2007 – 199,659 lbs./ \$342,760

2007 Commercial Landings and Value – 369,472 lbs./ \$726,111

Average Recreational Landings 1998-2007 – 4,890,195 lbs., **2007** - 5,520,400 lbs.

Average Number of Award Citations (35 lbs.) 1998-2007 - 299, **2007** - 218

Status of Fisheries Management Plan (FMP) - Dolphin is currently included in the North Carolina Interjurisdictional FMP, which defers to SAFMC FMP compliance requirements. The SAFMC approved an FMP for dolphin in 2004. The goal of the FMP is to maintain the current level of harvest. The allocation set in the FMP is 87% recreational and 13% commercial.

Research and Data Needs - stock identification studies, migration, diet, batch fecundity, direct validation through mark and recapture to confirm scale annuli, collection of small, fishery-independent samples to accurately describe first year growth rates

Current Regulations - 10 fish/day for recreational anglers, charter vessel limit 60/trip, no recreational sale, permits for charter and commercial vessels

Harvest Season - open year round, however, landings are seasonal

Size and Age at Maturity - 23 inches Total Length (TL)/4-6 months

Historical and Current Maximum Age - 4 years/3 years

Juvenile Abundance Index 1998-2007 – unknown, **2007** - unknown

Habits and Habitats – Dolphins are a Coastal/Oceanic highly migratory pelagic species. The current hypothesis suggests dolphins migrate from the central Caribbean through the mid-Atlantic to Bermuda and back to the central Caribbean, however the occurrence of year-round dolphins off the coast of North Carolina suggests dolphins likely have a more complex stock structure than originally thought. Dolphins are extremely fast growing (3.78 mm/day in the first 6 months), mature early, and have a protracted spawning season (year round, with highest levels from January through June).

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