

STRIPED MULLET

(06/02 ARCHIVE - NCDMF)

Stock status -- *Concern*. Historically, the primary effort for this species had been relegated to the fall fishery for roe mullet. Over recent years an increasing effort for non-roe striped mullet has led to the development of an expanded year-round fishery. This year-round activity, coupled with the traditional fall gillnet and stop net/beach seine fishery for roe mullet, has created concern for this economically important species.

Average Commercial Landings and Value 1992-2001 – 2,193,390 lbs., \$1,367,055

2001 Commercial Landings and Value – 2,317,530 lb., \$1,181,833

Average Recreational Landings – Unknown.

Status of Fisheries Management Plan (FMP) – Draft preparations of the NC FMP will begin ~June 2002.

Data/Research Needs – Continued life-history information (age structure of the NC population, maturity, and migratory patterns), and long-term fishery-independent surveys. Recreational catch statistics.

Current Size Limit – No restrictions.

Harvest Season – No restrictions.

Size and Age at Maturity – 11.2 inches (males), 13.2 inches (females); 2 years old.

Current Maximum Age – 11 years old.

Juvenile Abundance Index – None Available.

Habits and Habitats – Aside from its considerable economic importance, striped mullet also serve as a vital ecological linkage between a wide range of trophic levels. Mullet are well adapted to utilize microorganisms, microalgae, and decaying plant material as its major food items. In turn, top predators such as birds, fish, sharks, and dolphins feed on striped mullet. Striped mullet are highly fecund (upwards of 4 million eggs for a large female) and spawn near inlets to offshore areas in large aggregations following mass migrations in the fall. The spawning season spans September to January, however peak spawning activity occurs in October to early December. Striped mullet are found in a wide range of depths and habitats, in freshwater, estuarine, and marine environments.

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