

## **STRIPED BASS – Albemarle Sound Management Area (ASMA)/Roanoke River Management Area (RRMA)**

**Stock Status - *Viable*** – The N.C. Estuarine Striped Bass Fisheries Management Plan is currently under review. A new statistical catch at age model, the Age Structured Assessment Program (ASAPII) is being used to determine the status of the stock. Currently the stock is not experiencing overfishing. Fishing mortality on age 4-6 striped bass has declined steadily since 2004. Juvenile abundance indices continue to fluctuate around the average observed since the stocks were declared recovered in 1997. The age structure of the stock continues to expand, with an overall increase in abundance of age 9+ fish in the population. Estimated abundance of age 4-6 striped bass in the stock increased steadily until 1999, remained steady through 2003, declined slightly through 2006, and has risen steadily since. This decrease in age 4-6 abundance in the stock has also been reflected in overall landings. Landings peaked in 2005, declined through 2008, and increased slightly in 2009.

**Average Commercial Landings and Value 2000-2009** – 201,591 lbs./\$320,949 (quota managed)

**2009 Commercial Landings and Value** – 96,134 lbs./\$232,699 (quota managed)

**Average Recreational Landings 2000-2009** – ASMA – 67,125 lbs (quota managed)  
RRMA – 86,432 lbs (quota managed)

**2009 Recreational Landings** – ASMA – 37,313 lbs (quota managed)  
RRMA – 69,581 lbs (quota managed)

**Average Number of Award Citations\* (35 lbs./45 inches^)** 2000-2009\*– 343 (150 releases), 2009\*–137 (3 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. The N.C. Estuarine Striped Bass FMP is currently being reviewed. Advisory committees are holding meetings for the Albemarle/Roanoke and Central/Southern stocks.

**Research and Data Needs** – Update maturation schedule, release mortality estimates for various gears, and age-1 abundance estimates.

**Current Regulations** – ASMA Recreational: 18 inches minimum TL coastal, joint and inland waters, 3 fish daily creel limit. ASMA Commercial: 18 inches minimum TL and daily landing limit set by proclamation. Annual commercial quota set at 275,000 lbs. RRMA Recreational: 18 inches minimum TL and no striped bass between 22 and 27 inches in Roanoke River. Two fish daily creel limit and only 1 fish in daily creel may be greater than 27 inches TL recreational. RRMA closed to commercial harvest.

**Harvest Season** – ASMA Recreational: Spring (January 1 – April 30); Fall (October 1 – December 31). ASMA Commercial: Spring (January 1 – April 30); Fall (October 1 – November 30). RRMA: March 1 – April 30

**Size and Age at Maturity** – Males: 12 – 18 inches/2 – 3 years; Females: 18 – 24 inches/3 – 6 years

**Historical and Current Maximum Age** – 29 years/ 18 years

**Juvenile Abundance Index 2000-2009** - 12.3, **2009** – 0.40

**Habits and Habitats** - Striped bass are anadromous, spending the majority of their adult life stage in the high salinity waters of the near-shore ocean and estuaries, 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 often over-winters off the Outer Banks. 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.

\*Includes ASMA, CSMA, and the Atlantic Ocean

^Citation release length requirement increased from 35 inches to 45 inches in 2008

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