

SPOT

Stock Status – Concern – Commercial landings and effort have generally been decreasing in the major fisheries. This decrease accelerated in 2006, 2007, and 2008, however 2009 showed a slight increase. Commercial catches in 2009 were up 27% from a historical low in 2008. Catch per unit effort in the long haul, inshore gill net, and offshore gillnet fisheries increased in 2009 relative to historic lows in 2008. In contrast to the commercial data, the juvenile abundance index decreased in 2009. Recreational landings decreased 50% from the 2008 level, however the mean catch per angler trip increased. Spot is the primary coastal catch, by number, for recreational fishermen in North Carolina.

Average Commercial Landings and Value 2000-2009 – 1,817,032 lbs./\$893,257

2009 Commercial Landings and Value – 1,006,485 lbs./\$601,835

Average Recreational Landings 2000-2009 – 1,191,066 lbs. **2009** – 401,480 lbs.

Average Number of Award Citations (1 lb.) 2000-2009 – 76, **2009** – 0

Status of Fishery Management Plan (FMP) – In North Carolina, spot is currently included in the Interjurisdictional Fisheries Management Plan, which defers to Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) FMP compliance requirements. An ASMFC Spot FMP was approved in 1987. Management measures were reviewed in 2007 by the ASMFC scientific and statistical committee. In the review, the committee prioritized research and management recommendations and directed the Plan Review Team to evaluate trends in the major commercial fisheries.

Research and Data Needs – Coastwide stock assessment analysis, migration studies (tagging), and maturity and fecundity studies

Current Regulations – None

Harvest Season – Year round

Size and Age at Maturity – 7-8 inches total length (TL)/1–2 years

Historical and Current Maximum Age – 6 years

Juvenile Abundance Index 2000-2009 – 354, **2009** - 365

Habits and Habitats – Spot are short-lived estuarine dependent members of the drum family, that include Atlantic croaker, red drum, black drum, spotted seatrout and weakfish. Spot spawn in the ocean from late fall to early spring. Wind and currents carry the young into the upper reaches of the estuaries, where they remain throughout the spring. Adult spot migrate seasonally between estuarine and near-shore ocean waters, but are rarely found in the upper reaches of the estuary. Spot are most susceptible to commercial and recreational fishing activity during the fall when schools migrate from estuarine to oceanic waters.

For more information, contact Kevin Brown at kevin.h.brown@ncdenr.gov (800-682-2632 or 252-808-8089).