

STRIPED BASS

Central/Southern Management Area (CSMA)

(06/08 ARCHIVE - NCDMF)

Stock Status - *Depleted* – Surveys on the spawning grounds show very low relative abundance and truncated age structures, with very few older fish in the population. Due to lack of funding, there are additional dependent and independent data that must be collected before an accurate stock assessment can be made.

Average Commercial Landings and Value 1998-2007 – 30,092 lbs./\$43,091

2007 Commercial Landings and Value – 25,258 lbs./\$51,434 (quota managed)

Average Recreational Landings 2004-2007 – 14,117 lbs., **2007** – 10,796 lbs.

Average Number of Citations 1998- 2007 (35 lbs.) – 0

Average Recreational Commercial Gear License (RCGL) Landings – 2003-2007 – 2,587 lbs., **2007** – 2,500 lbs.

Status of Fisheries Management Plans (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 will undergo revision starting in July 2008. The two unresolved issues remaining from the 2004 FMP, large mesh gill net discards and recreational creel limits, have been addressed through proclamation and regulation. A proclamation issued April 28, 2008, taking effect May 1, 2008, for internal fishing waters west of the 76° 28.0000'W longitude line requires the use of a 3 foot tie down in large mesh (>5 in stretch mesh) gill nets and the maintenance of a minimum distance from shore of 50 yards for these nets, except RCGL large mesh nets may be set within 50 yards of shore if attended at all times. These restrictions would be in place after the commercial TAC is met (spring) through 31 December of each year. Regulations pending final review propose the following for the recreational sector: maintain the harvest restriction to the months of October-April and lower the creel limit to 2 fish in internal coastal waters; maintain the harvest restriction to the months of October-April, lower the creel limit to 2 fish, maintain the 18 inch TL minimum size and introduce a slot limit of 22-27 inches in joint and inland waters; and place a moratorium on the possession of striped bass taken from joint waters of the Cape Fear River for both commercial and recreational sectors.

Research and Data Needs - expand commercial, recreational, and independent sampling in the CSMA

Current Regulations –18 inches minimum total length (TL) coastal, joint, and inland waters; 3 fish daily creel limit; **as of July 1 2008**, 18 inches minimum TL and 2 fish daily creel limit in internal coastal waters of the CSMA; joint and inland waters of the Tar/Pamlico and Neuse rivers, 18 inches minimum TL, 2 fish daily creel limit, and no striped bass between 22 and 27 inches TL. There will be a total harvest moratorium in Cape Fear River for recreational and commercial sectors.

Recreational Harvest Season – year round; as of 1 July 2008, total harvest moratorium in Cape Fear River, and Spring (January – April) and Fall (October – December) seasons in remainder of CSMA internal coastal, joint, and inland waters.

Size and Age at Maturity – males: 12 – 18 inches TL/2 – 3 years; females: 18 – 24 inches TL/3 – 6 years

Historical and Current Maximum Age – 29 years/ 18 years

Juvenile Abundance Index – No JAI for CSMA.

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, Del. 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](#).