

## SHARKS

(06/98 ARCHIVE - NCDMF)

**Stock Status**--Depressed--Though commercial and recreational harvest restrictions have been in place since 1993, no conclusive evidence exist to suggest that stocks as a whole, are recovering.

**Average Commercial Landings and Value 1987-1997**--1,446,642 lb, \$559,779

**1997 Commercial Landings and Value**--1,488,170 lb, \$512,449

**Average Recreational Landings 1987-1997 and 1997**--40,113 lb Average and 22,912 in 1997

**Average Number of Award Citations 1987-1997 and 1997**--38 Average, 13 in 1997

**Status of Fisheries Management Plan**--No State Plan. Federal Plan in place since 1993

**Data/Research Needs**--Nursery Ground Delineation and Commercial Fisheries Observation

**Current Size Limit**--In North Carolina, the retention of sharks taken by Commercial Gear in State Waters, is prohibited. No possession of fins in excess of 5% of carcass weight, no dried fins onboard, and no possession of fins without carcasses. No recreational bag limits. No size limits.

**Harvest Season**--State waters are closed to the retention of sharks taken by Commercial Gear to protect juvenile sandbar and dusky sharks. Federal season and quota for the Commercial Fisheries starts January 1, and July 1.

**Size and Age at Maturity**--Variable

**Historical /Current Maximum Age**--Variable

**Juvenile Abundance Indices Average and 1997 Index**--Juvenile Index is unknown except for some species in certain geographic areas.

**Habits and Habitats**--The two most abundant sharks in North Carolina waters are the sandbar and Atlantic sharpnose sharks. The **sandbar shark** is found in all warm temperate waters of the world. This is the most numerous of the large sharks of the mid- Atlantic Bight and Gulf of Mexico region. Sandbars are known to seasonally migrate along the eastern seaboard, moving north with the warming temperatures in the summer and southward again in the fall. They are most abundant in North Carolina during the spring and fall months. Males and females remain in sexually segregated schools outside the mating season with males usually occurring in deeper water. They feed heavily on blue crabs in addition to numerous small fishes as juveniles, and fishes, skates and crustaceans as sub-adults and adults. The **Atlantic sharpnose shark** inhabits nearly the entire northeastern coast of North America. It is a year-round resident in the South Atlantic. In North Carolina the Atlantic sharpnose shark is found year round in continental shelf waters and in the estuaries from May-October. It aggregates into large schools uniformly grouped by size and sex. Usually four to seven pups are born in the estuaries and shallow coastal waters during early June and are 9 to 14 inches in length. It feeds on shrimp, mollusks, and small fishes.

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