

## SHARKS

(06/99 ARCHIVE - NCDMF)

**Stock Status--*Overfished***--Although federal, 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 1987-1998**--1,423,812 lb, \$547,771

**1998 Commercial Landings and Value**--1,165,136 lb, \$408,057

**Average Recreational Landings 1987-1998** -- 68,899 lb **1998** -- 25,631 lb

**Average Number of Award Citations 1987-1997** --37 **1997** -- 19

**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**-- No recreational bag limits. No size limits.

**(Recreational and Commercial Size Limits are Expected to Become Effective in May 99)**

**Harvest Season**--State waters are closed to the retention of sharks taken by Commercial Gear to protect juvenile sandbar and dusky sharks. **(This Regulation is Expected to be Modified in May 99)**. 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. 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 1998 Index**--Juvenile Index is unknown except for some species in certain geographic areas of the Western Atlantic.

**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](#)