



STOCK OVERVIEW REPORT



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July 31, 2020

MEMORANDUM

TO: N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission

FROM: Lee Paramore, Biological Review Team Chair

SUBJECT: 2020 Species Stock Overview Report

Issue

To inform the N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission of the 2020 Species Stock Overview Report (based on 2019 data).

Findings

- The Division of Marine Fisheries 2020 Species Stock Overview Report summarizes available information by species stock to determine the overall condition of North Carolina's fishery resources. It is available on the division website at <http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/mf/stock-overview>.
- The report provides information for each species stock based on data through 2019.
- To better inform the public on management responsibility, the report continues to partition the 14 species or species groups solely managed by North Carolina from the 23 species or species groups where management is deferred to other principal entities, including the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council.
- The online report provides a short summary on recent changes to each state managed species or species group while also providing a direct link to the more comprehensive and informative annual Fishery Management Plan Review for each one.
- For each species stock where a peer-reviewed stock assessment is available, assignment of stock status is made based on the overfishing and overfished/depleted state of that species stock. For species stocks without overfished/overfishing determinations, all pertinent information on trends and management of the species stock is provided.

Overview

The Division of Marine Fisheries 2020 Species Stock Overview Report was released to the public via the division website on July 22, 2020. The report links the public directly to the Fishery Management Plan Review for each species stock. The Fishery Management Plan Review provides a comprehensive look at trends in catch and biological data. The division continues to aid the public's understanding of management of these species by partitioning the 14 species or species groups managed solely by North Carolina from the other 23 species or species groups where management

is deferred to the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council.

Highlights from this year's stock overview for state managed species include:

- **Estuarine Striped Bass** – Amendment 2 to the N. C. Estuarine Striped Bass Fishery Management Plan is being jointly developed with the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission, and results from a peer-reviewed benchmark stock assessment utilizing data through 2017 are expected in 2020.
- **Shrimp** – Additional gear restrictions were implemented in 2019 as part of the Shrimp Fishery Management Plan Amendment 1 to reduce bycatch in all shrimp trawls (except skimmer trawls) in the Pamlico Sound and portions of the Pamlico, Bay and Neuse rivers. Development of Amendment 2 is underway.
- **Southern Flounder** – The 2019 stock assessment of southern flounder in the south Atlantic indicated that the stock is overfished and overfishing is occurring. Amendment 2 to the Southern Flounder Fishery Management Plan was approved in August 2019 resulting in commercial and recreational season closures, as well as other management measures, to reduce harvest and end overfishing. Development of Amendment 3 is underway.
- **Spotted Seatrout** – Recreational and commercial landings in 2019 increased compared to the previous years, but there is no indication that the stock is at risk. The 2014 stock assessment indicated that the spotted seatrout stock in North Carolina and Virginia was not overfished and that overfishing was not occurring in the terminal year (2012). A benchmark stock assessment for spotted seatrout is underway in 2020 coinciding with the scheduled fishery management plan review, and it will incorporate data through 2019.
- **Blue Crab** – Results of the 2018 benchmark stock assessment indicate the blue crab stock is overfished and overfishing is occurring. The assessment passed peer review and the model was accepted for use in management. Amendment 3 to the Blue Crab Fishery Management Plan was approved in February 2020, and management measures were implemented to address the overfished status and end overfishing.

Action Needed

For informational purposes only, **no action is needed.**