

How this information is used:

The N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries regularly collects information about fish stocks in state waters. Information, such as age, size and reproductive potential, is vital to assess the number of fish in the population. Age information about fish are collected by analyzing scales or hard body parts, such as otoliths (ear bones) and spines, for annual growth rings. By determining the age of a fish, biologists can begin to get an idea about the age-structure of the population and the growth rate of the fish. In a healthy population age-structure, fish of all ages are represented, while missing age classes may indicate a problem with that stock.



Left—Biologist removing otoliths from a carcass
Right—Spotted seatrout whole otoliths

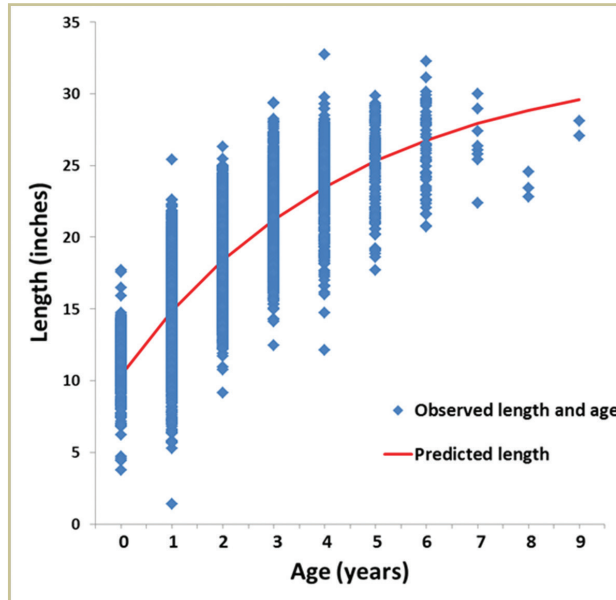
This information is then used in stock assessments and fishery management plans to help officials better manage the fisheries resources of the state.



Otolith section of a spotted seatrout under a microscope (7 years)

Current Species Accepted:

Black Drum	Black Sea Bass
Cobia	Croaker
Gray Trout	Red Drum
Sea Mullet (Kingfish)	Sheepshead
Snapper/Grouper	Spanish Mackerel
Spotted Seatrout	Striped Bass
Triggerfish	



Age-length key for spotted seatrout harvested in North Carolina

Contact Age Lab Staff at
252-808-8081 or via email at
saltwater.citations@ncdenr.gov
for comments or questions about the program.
<http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/mf/carcass-collection>

500 copies of this brochure were printed at a cost of \$0.223 per copy.



Getting to the Bones of the Catch



Carcass Collection Program

Step-by-Step Guide to Donate a Carcass

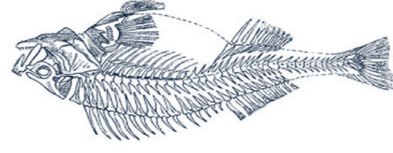
The Carcass Collection Program is a statewide effort funded by proceeds from sales of the N.C. Coastal Recreational Fishing License. Carcasses donated by recreational fisherman are a critical source of data for the N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries. The division has placed freezers at designated sites across coastal areas to allow anglers to donate filleted fish carcasses. From fish that are donated to the program, biologists can collect length, age, and sex data that can be used in stock assessments to better manage the fisheries resources of the state. As the program continues to expand, there will be additional collection sites available to anglers. For a complete list of current locations or for additional program details, please visit <http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/mf/carcass-collection> or scan the QR code with a smart phone.



Carcass should be left with guts, head and tail intact

Step 1. Once back to the dock, fillet your fish. If you are part of a charter or headboat party please let your fish cleaner know you'd like to donate your carcass.

Carcass Collection Program



Getting to the Bones of the Catch
Official Collection Site



Step 2. Keep the head and tail intact and, if possible, leave the guts in the fish. This is important to the biologist collecting data.

Step 3. While your catch is still fresh, take the carcass to the nearest donation location. For a list of the current locations, refer to the website at: <http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/mf/carcass-collection>).

NC Division of Marine Fisheries Carcass Collection Program

Please Complete Form in Pencil ONLY/Directions on back of card

Trip Information		Carcass Information	
Month / Day / Year	Fishing Depth	Coastal Species	Offshore Species
Waterbody / Fishing Location	ft.	Number	Number
Trip Type (check one)		Black Drum	Almaco Jack
<input type="checkbox"/> Private Boat	<input type="checkbox"/> Headboat	Sea Mullet	Red Porgy
<input type="checkbox"/> Bank/surf	<input type="checkbox"/> Pier	Gray Trout	Scamp
<input type="checkbox"/> Bridge	<input type="checkbox"/> Charterboat	Golden Tilefish	White Grunt
		Red Drum	Vermilion Snapper
		Sheepshead	
		Spotted Seatrout	
		Spanish Mackerel	
		Striped Bass	
Vessel Name			
Name			
Street			
City/State/Zip			
Email			

When you can't provide a carcass you can still contribute by recording trip information online at www.NCcrfish.com. Click on "Surveys and Reporting", then "Carcass Collection Program"

Step 4. Use a pencil to fill out the provided carcass card in full. Please include as much information about your trip and number of species harvested as possible.



Step 5. Place the fish carcass or carcasses AND the completed catch card into the plastic bags provided. If more than one bag is needed, please include a catch card in each bag.

Step 6. Tie the bag closed, and place your closed bag in the collection freezer. All supplies will be inside of the freezer.

Freezers will contain all carcass donation supplies

Some Reminders

Make sure that you and everyone in your party who is fishing have or are covered by a valid North Carolina Coastal Recreational Fishing License and practices ethical angling.

Check for changes to regulations before your trip. Current size and bag limits can be found on our website at: <http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/mf/recreational-fishing-size-and-bag-limits>.

Anglers seeking citations through the N.C. Saltwater Fishing Tournament are still required to have their catch certified at a weigh station.