

INTERSTATE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PROGRAM OVERVIEW

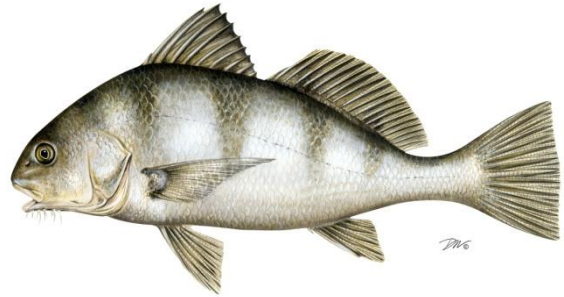
Black Drum

Species Range

Nova Scotia to Florida; Gulf of Mexico; southern Caribbean coast; Orinoco to Argentina

Stock Unit

New Jersey through Florida



Stock Status

The 2023 Black Drum Benchmark Stock Assessment and Peer Review Report, which was approved for management use in May 2023, indicates black drum are not overfished and not experiencing overfishing. Management action was not taken because there are no major concerns with the stock.

The assessment model uses recreational CPUE as an index of abundance, total fishery removals (commercial landings, recreational harvest, and recreational dead discards), life history information, and selectivity information to estimate black drum spawning biomass and exploitation (i.e., the proportion of stock biomass removed by fishing), as well as their associated thresholds. The assessment model estimated increasing spawning biomass, which has remained above the spawning biomass threshold throughout the time series. Exploitation has remained below the exploitation threshold throughout the time series. Exploitation was estimated to be relatively high in the mid-1980s, followed by lower levels throughout the 1990s. Exploitation increased around 2000 and remained at a higher, stable level throughout the remainder of the time series. Overall, black drum remains a data poor stock and the assessment acknowledges a relatively high level of uncertainty in available data sets and population estimates, although there is greater certainty in qualitative stock status determinations.

Due to data limitations and assessment uncertainty, a suite of indicators from black drum data sets developed as part of this assessment will be used to annually monitor the stock for any concerning trends and identify the need for an expedited stock assessment. Indicators include eight indices of abundance, one index of range expansion, and six indices of fishery characteristics (i.e., regional catch time series). The assessment reviewed the indicators through 2020. The indicators show increased fishery removals in the last twenty years and less frequent large recruitment events in the Mid-Atlantic in the last ten years. There are no clear indications of a declining trend in abundance from abundance indicators, but there is a declining trend in the final two years of the recreational releases time series that may be reflective of abundance in addition to other factors. There is some indication of northern range expansion. Overall, stock indicators do not appear negative at this time.

Involved States and Jurisdictions

NJ, DE, MD, DC, PRFC, VA, NC, SC, GA, FL, NMFS, USFWS

Active Boards/Committees

Sciaenid Management Board, Black Drum Technical Committee, South Atlantic Advisory Panel

Chairs

Board, Chair – Chris Batsavage (02/2022); Vice-Chair – Doug Haymans

Technical Committee, Chair – Harry Rickabaugh (11/2015)

Advisory Panel, Chair – Craig Freeman (11/2019)

Staff Lead

Tracey Bauer, tbauer@asmfc.org

Management Plan History

[Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Black Drum \(June 2013\)](#)

The Plan required all states to maintain current regulations for black drum and implement a maximum possession limit and minimum size limit (of no less than 12 inches) by January 1, 2014. States were required to further increase the minimum size limit (to no less than 14 inches) by January 1, 2016. Further, the FMP establishes a management framework to address future concerns or changes in the fishery or population.

[Addendum I \(May 2018\)](#)

The Addendum allowed Maryland to reopen its black drum commercial fishery in the Chesapeake Bay with a daily vessel limit of up to 10 fish and a 28-inch minimum size. Maryland was required to develop a management plan for the commercial fishery with implementation by April 1, 2019.

Annual Events

- Compliance reports due August 1 with reminders distributed 90 days earlier
- PRT reviews compliance within 30 days of deadline and Board determines compliance within 60 days of deadline
- Compliance reported in annual FMP review produced by PRT
- The TC updates indicators to be presented to the Board