



# Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

## NEWS RELEASE

Vision: Sustainably Managing Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

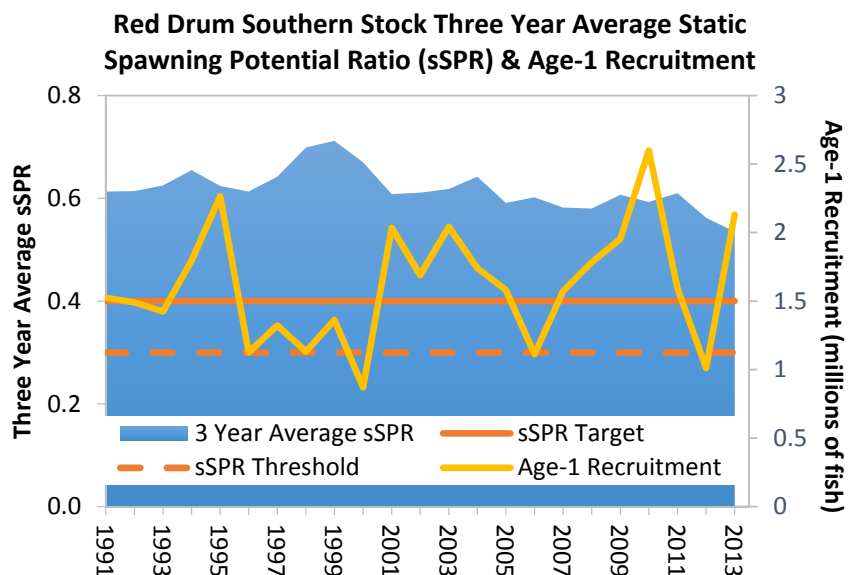
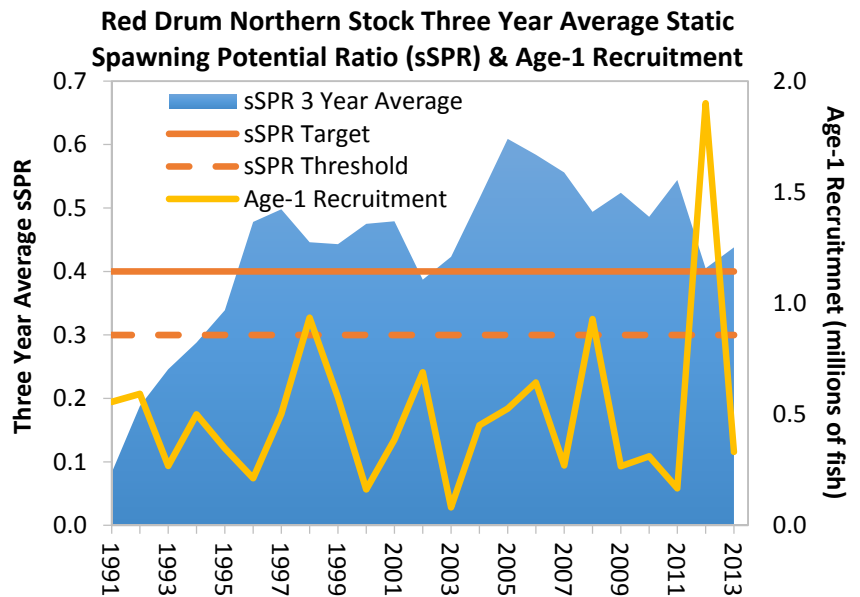
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
February 7, 2017

PRESS CONTACT: Tina Berger  
703.842.0740

### Red Drum Stock Assessment Indicates Overfishing Not Occurring

Alexandria, VA – The 2017 Red Drum Stock Assessment and Peer Review Report indicate overfishing is not occurring for red drum in either the northern (North Carolina-New Jersey) or southern (South Carolina-Florida) stocks. The assessment was unable to determine an overfished/not overfished status because population abundance could not be reliably estimated due to limited data for the older fish (ages 4+) that are not typically harvested due to the current fishery measures (slot-limits). The Board accepted the stock assessment and peer review report for management use. No management action was taken at this time since overfishing is not occurring.

The assessment estimates annual static spawning potential ratios (sSPR) measured against previously established reference points for red drum. Overfishing is occurring if the three-year average sSPR is less than a threshold of 30%, with a management target of 40% sSPR. sSPR is a measure of spawning stock biomass survival rates when fished at the current years fishing mortality rate relative to the spawning stock biomass survival rates if no fishing mortality was occurring. In 2013 (the last year for which data were available), the three-year (2011-



The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission was formed by the 15 Atlantic coastal states in 1942 for the promotion and protection of coastal fishery resources. The Commission serves as a deliberative body of the Atlantic coastal states, coordinating the conservation and management of nearshore fishery resources, including marine, shell and anadromous species.

2013) average sSPR was 43.8% for the northern stock and 53.5% for the southern stock, both above the target and threshold values.

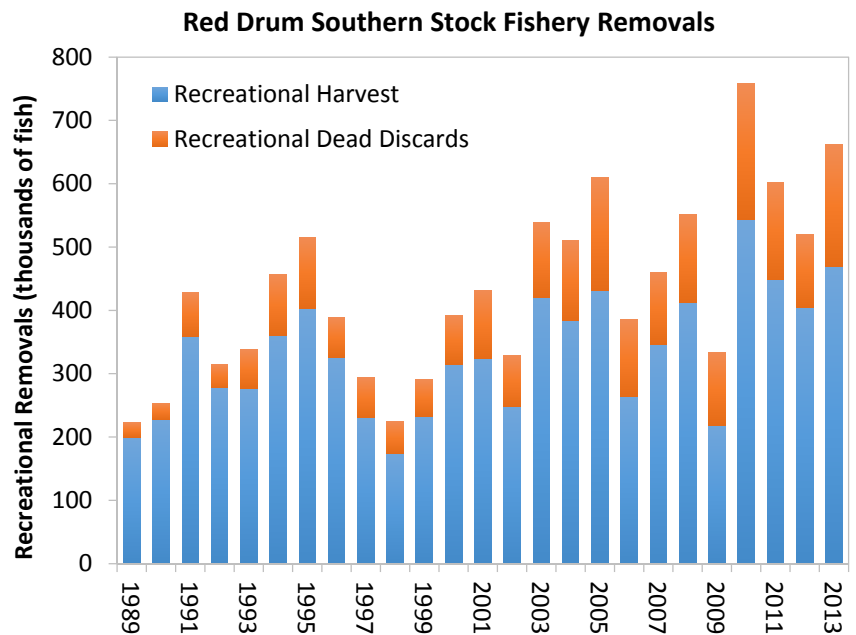
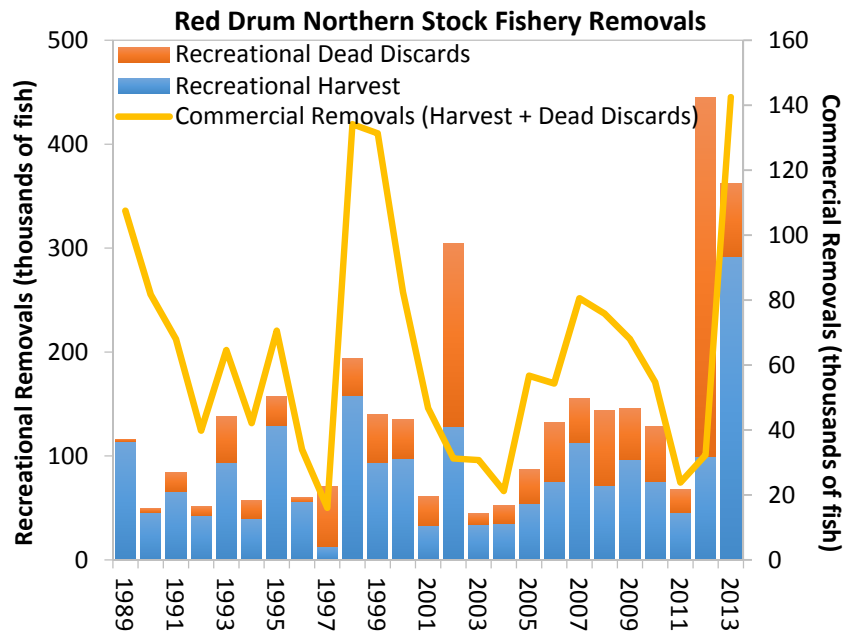
Recruitment (age-1) has fluctuated around averages of 476,579 and 1.57 million fish in the northern and southern stocks, respectively. In more recent years, the largest recruitment occurred in 2012 for the northern stock and 2010 for the southern stock.

Commercial harvests occur only from the northern stock with landings showing considerable fluctuation throughout the catch time series, and peaking in 1999 and 2013. Most of the commercial landings are caught using gill nets and beach seines, with North Carolina typically contributing over 90% of annual commercial landings.

The recreational fishery contributes the majority of total harvest for both stocks, in part because states in the southern portion of the fishery reserve red drum harvest strictly for recreational anglers. Recreational harvest of the northern stock has fluctuated throughout the time series from 1989-2013, with a large increase in harvest in 2013. North Carolina is responsible for the majority of harvest. Discards from the northern stock have also fluctuated throughout the time series, though not always in conjunction with recreational harvest. Based on previous studies, an 8% mortality rate is assumed for recreational discards in both stocks.

Recreational harvest of the southern stock has shown a general increase throughout the time series with the majority of harvest occurring in Florida. Discards from the southern stock generally increased throughout the time series, following similar fluctuations as recreational harvest.

A more detailed description of the stock assessment results is being developed and will be available on the Commission's website, [www.asmfc.org](http://www.asmfc.org), on the Red Drum page. The final assessment and peer review report is available at [http://www.asmfc.org/uploads/file/589a2059RedDrumStockAssessment\\_PeerReviewReport\\_2017.pdf](http://www.asmfc.org/uploads/file/589a2059RedDrumStockAssessment_PeerReviewReport_2017.pdf). For more information on the stock assessment, please contact Jeff Kipp, Senior Stock Assessment Scientist, at [jkipp@asmfc.org](mailto:jkipp@asmfc.org); for more information on red drum management, please contact Michael Schmidtke, FMP Coordinator, at [mschmidtke@asmfc.org](mailto:mschmidtke@asmfc.org).



###