

INTERSTATE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Red Drum

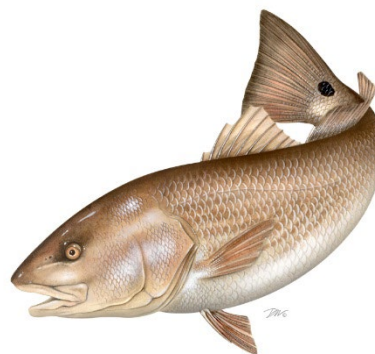
Species Range

Historically, Massachusetts through Florida, but few fish have been reported north of Chesapeake Bay in recent years

Management Unit

New Jersey – Florida

Divided into northern (New Jersey – North Carolina) and southern (South Carolina – Florida) regions



Stock Status

[The 2017 Red Drum Stock Assessment and Peer Review Report](#) indicates overfishing is not occurring for red drum for either the northern or southern 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 (2011-2013) 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.

Involved States and Jurisdictions

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

Active Boards/Committees

Sciaenids Management Board, Red Drum Technical Committee, Red Drum Plan Review Team, South Atlantic Species Advisory Panel, Red Drum Stock Assessment Subcommittee

Chairs

Board, Chair – Doug Haymans (02/2024); Vice-Chair – Ben Dyers

Technical Committee, Chair – Ethan Simpson; Vice-Chair – Cara Kowalchuk

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

Stock Assessment Subcommittee, Chair – Joey Ballenger

Staff Lead

Tracey Bauer, tbauer@asmfc.org

Management Plan History

[Fishery Management Plan for Red Drum \(October 1984\)](#)

The Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Red Drum is adopted. Despite being a highly sought after fish, red drum biological and fisheries data were too limited to effectively manage the resource. Additional concerns about user conflict were raised as well. With the major goals of helping the states avoid overfishing and increase data availability, the FMP recommends a 14" TL minimum size limit with comparable mesh size regulations in directed fisheries, a possession limit of two fish greater than 32"TL, a prohibition on purse seining, and data collection for assessment and monitoring.

1990 – The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) adopts a federal FMP for red drum, which establishes a definition of overfishing and optimum yield, prohibits the harvest of red drum in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ), and recommends that states implement measures necessary to provide the target level of at least 30 percent escapement.

[Fishery Management Plan for Red Drum - Amendment 1 \(October 1991\)](#)

Amendment 1 is adopted in response to the federal FMP. It includes a goal to attain optimum yield, which is defined as the amount of harvest that could be taken while maintaining 30 percent spawning stock biomass per recruit (SSBR). An interim goal of 10 percent SSBR is allowed. Most states implemented or maintained strict regulations. Later, the 2000 stock assessment indicated that the interim SPR goal was met.

1998 – The Council adopts new definitions of optimum yield (harvest associated with a 40 percent static spawning potential ratio, or SPR) and overfishing (F at SPR less than 30 percent, with a threshold of F at 10 percent SPR). Several states implemented substantial changes to their regulations.

[Amendment 2 to the Fishery Management Plan for Red Drum \(June 2002\)](#)

Amendment 2 is adopted to establish a 30 percent SPR threshold and 40 percent SPR target. States are required to implement recreational regulations to achieve the goal, whereas commercial regulations can be maintained or made more conservative. A maximum size limit of 27" is also required. All required states have implemented the plan.

2008 – Effective November 5, management authority for red drum in federal waters is transferred from the Council to the Commission.

[Addendum I \(August 2013\)](#)

The Addendum revises Amendment 2's habitat section to include current information on red drum spawning habitat and habitat by life stage (egg, larval, juvenile, sub-adult, and adult). It also identifies and describes the distribution of key habitats and habitats of concern, including threats, habitat bottlenecks (habitat or habitat characteristics that limit the sustainability or recovery of red drum), and ecosystem considerations.

Pending Management Action

None

Annual Events

- Red drum compliance reports are due July 1st with a reminder distributed 90 days prior.
- The Plan Review Team reviews state compliance within 30 days of the deadline and the Board determines state compliance within 60 days of the deadline.
- State compliance is reported in the annual Fishery Management Plan Review produced by the Plan Review Team.
- The Advisory Panel receives an update after each Board meeting, and should meet at least once per year.