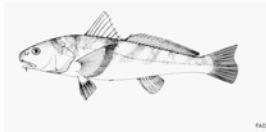


Purpose

The Fisheries Reform Act of 1997 (FRA) requires the North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries to prepare Fishery Management Plans for adoption by the North Carolina Marine Fisheries Commission for all commercially and recreationally significant species or fisheries that comprise state marine or estuarine resources. The goal of these plans is to ensure long-term viability of these fisheries. Each plan shall:

- Contain necessary information pertaining to the fishery or fisheries, including management goals and objectives, status of the relevant fish stocks, stock assessments for multi-year species, fishery habitat and water quality considerations consistent with Coastal Habitat Protection Plans, social and economic impact of the fishery to the State, and user conflict.
- Recommend management actions pertaining to the fishery or fisheries.
- Include conservation and management measures that will provide the greatest overall benefit to the State, particularly with respect to food production, recreational opportunities, and the protection of marine ecosystems, and that will produce a sustainable harvest.
- Specify a time period, not to exceed 10 years from the date of the adoption of the plan, for ending overfishing and achieving a sustainable harvest. This subdivision shall only apply to a plan for a fishery that is overfished. This subdivision shall not apply to a plan for a fishery where the biology of the fish or environmental conditions make ending overfishing and achieving a sustainable harvest within 10 years impracticable.



Sustainable Harvest

Sustainable harvest is defined in the FRA as the amount of fish that can be taken from a fishery on a continuing basis without reducing the stock biomass of the fishery or causing the fishery to become overfished.

North Carolina Kingfish Fishery Management Advisors

Recreational Advisors

Rande Banks - Kill Devil Hills
Bill Berryhill - Raleigh/Outer Banks
Cam Lee - Wallace/Topsail
Jeffrey Weeks - Holly Springs/ Brunswick Co.

Commercial Advisors

Paul Biermann - Beaufort
Sammy Corbett - Hampstead
Michael Cowdrey - Sneads Ferry
Charlie Locke - Wanchese

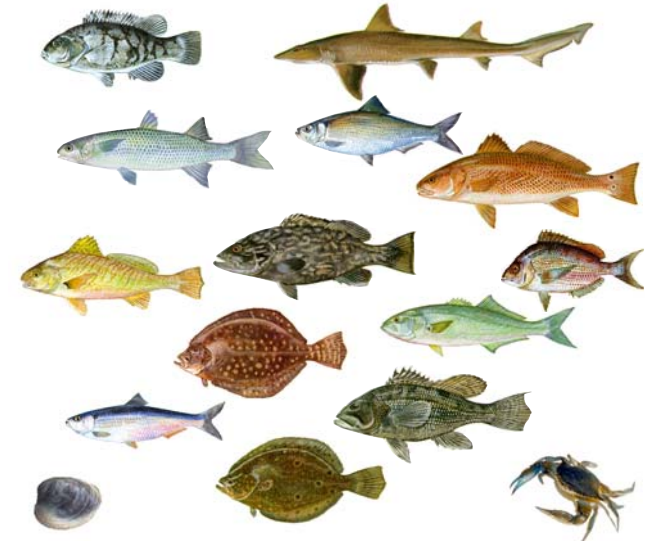
Scientist

Dr. Tom Lankford - Wilmington



North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries
P.O. Box 769
3441 Arendell Street
Morehead City, NC 28557

North Carolina Fishery Management Plans



The FMP Process

This document serves to provide information concerning the upcoming Fishery Management Plan (FMP) on the species described within. The FMP is currently being developed by the North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries (NCDMF), with the aid of an Advisory Committee (AC) consisting of representatives from the commercial and recreational fishing, and scientific communities.

The initial draft of the FMP will include a list of issues surrounding the fishery, in addition to possible solutions to resolve those issues. As this draft is completed, a series of public meetings will be held to provide the public an opportunity to comment. The NCDMF and the AC will then review and incorporate comments received, as necessary, and produce a final draft of the FMP. A second round of public meetings will be held to invite public review and comment on the final draft prior to the adoption of the FMP by the North Carolina Marine Fisheries Commission.

Kingfishes
(Sea Mulletts)



Stock Status

Stock Status: Unknown¹

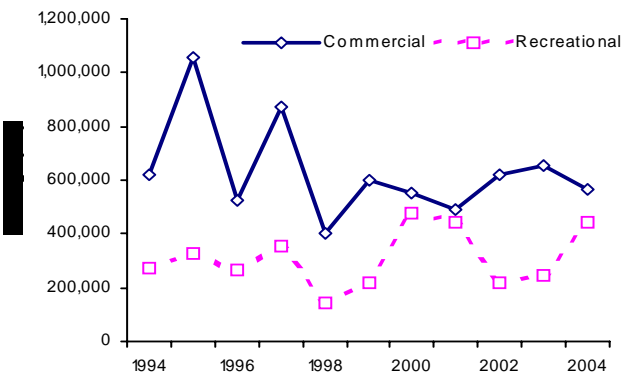
Three species of kingfishes (also known as sea mullet, Virginia mullet, or whiting) occur in NC. These include the southern, northern, and gulf kingfishes. A lack of data on kingfishes has limited the determination of stock status.

Currently, the NC commercial landings of kingfish are the largest along the Atlantic and Gulf states, averaging 630,000 lbs (1994-2004). Gillnets, the predominant gear, have shown an increasing trend in the percent contribution of the commercial harvest. The shrimp trawl fishery also harvests a substantial portion of the harvest and averages approximately 20% of the commercial harvest.

The recreational fishery has shown a slight increase in harvest. North Carolina recreational fishermen have averaged 588,000 fish (310,000 lbs) per year from 1994-2004. This ranks 4th in number of fish caught recreationally for all fishes in North Carolina. The recreational fishery generally occurs in the ocean from the beach and piers.

The management unit for the Kingfish FMP will include all kingfishes harvested in NC. The unit will be managed based upon a stock assessment of southern kingfish, the dominant species in the recreational and commercial fisheries. The stock assessment will include NC harvest trends and will examine the impact harvest has on the population dynamics of the stocks. The status of the stock will be determined by combining biological information such as recruitment, growth rates, reproductive potential, and natural mortality with harvest rates.

¹ Stocks for which insufficient data are available over a sufficient time period to conduct a scientifically valid stock assessment are classified as UNKNOWN. Kingfishes have been classified as UNKNOWN since the inception of the Stock Status Report.



Kingfishes (Sea Mullet)

Issues

The NCDMF has identified these issues:

Biological Issues: Is the stock sustainable for the foreseeable future? Are there enough older age classes to buffer against a series of poor recruitment events?

Management Options: Given information about its biological status, economic value, and social issues, how should the stock be regulated to maintain a sustainable harvest?

Commercial Bycatch and Discards: What level of mortality on the stock is caused by bycatch and discards of kingfishes in commercial fisheries? What are the bycatch and discards in the sinknet fishery targeting kingfishes?

Habitat Issues: What are the important habitats for kingfishes and how are these areas being affected?

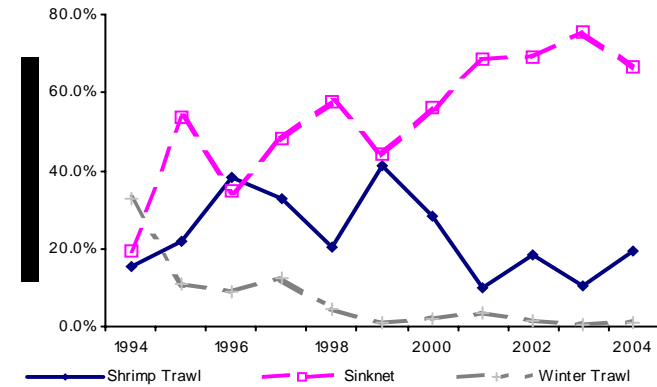


What are important management issues to you?

Please send any suggestions to the following address:

Kingfishes FMP
North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries
127 Cardinal Dr, Wilmington, NC 28405
(910) 796-7215 or (800) 248-4536
John.Schoolfield@ncmail.net or Chip.Collier@ncmail.net

Commercial Harvest



Goals and Objectives

Goal: Determine the status of the stock and ensure long-term sustainability for the kingfishes stock in North Carolina.

Objectives:

1. Develop an objective management program that provides conservation of the resource and sustainable harvest in the fishery.
2. Ensure that the spawning stock is of sufficient capacity to prevent recruitment-overfishing.
3. Address socio-economic concerns of all user groups.
4. Restore, improve, and protect important habitats that affect growth, survival, and reproduction of the NC stock of kingfishes.
5. Evaluate, enhance, and initiate studies to increase our understanding of kingfishes biology and population dynamics in NC.
6. Promote public awareness regarding the status and management of the NC kingfishes stock.

Commercial Species Composition

