

Management Overview Working Paper

Abstract: This working paper provides the current management unit and area definitions, a management and regulatory history, and the current management criteria for Atlantic coast red drum.

Management Unit and Area Definitions

The management unit is defined as the red drum (*Sciaenops ocellatus*) resource throughout the range of the species within U.S. waters of the northwest Atlantic Ocean from the estuaries eastward to the offshore boundaries of the Exclusive Economic Zone. The selection of this management unit is based on the biological distribution of the species along the Atlantic coast and historical patterns which have identified fisheries for red drum extending north through New Jersey.

The management area is the entire Atlantic coast distribution of the resource from Florida through New Jersey. The management area is divided into a southern region which includes the waters of the Atlantic coast of Florida north to the North Carolina/South Carolina border. The northern region extends from the North Carolina/South Carolina border north through New Jersey (ASMFC 2002).

Management History

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

Interjurisdictional management of Atlantic coast red drum began in 1984 when the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) adopted the Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Red Drum (ASMFC 1984). The interstate FMP provided recommended management measures to achieve its objectives for the states from Maryland through Florida. The ASMFC updated the interstate FMP in 1991 with Amendment 1 for consistency with measures recommended in the federal FMP for state waters. In 1994, the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act (ASFCMA) provided the ASMFC with a means to enforce state adoption of required elements of fishery management plans. Subsequently, the ASMFC adopted Amendment 2 in June 2002 (ASMFC 2002), which required management measures to achieve its objectives in all states from New Jersey through Florida.

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council

In 1990, the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (SAFMC) adopted an FMP for red drum in the exclusive economic zone (3-200 nautical miles offshore; SAFMC 1990). The SAFMC adopted new definitions of the federal plan's management criteria in 1998. In 1999, the SAFMC recommended that management authority for red drum in federal waters be transferred from the SAFMC, in cooperation with the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, under the Magnuson-Stevens Conservation and Management Act to the ASMFC under the ACFCMA. The final rule to fulfill this recommendation became effective November 5, 2008 (73 FR 58059).

Regulatory History

Table 1 provides a regulatory history for the ASMFC, the SAFMC, and each state in the management area. Actions are grouped by the responsible state or agency.

State/ Agency	Regulatory Description	Action	Effective Date
ASMFC	Recommends measures for Maryland-Florida to attain OY: 14" TL minimum size limit with comparable mesh size regulations in directed fisheries (defined as containing at least 60% red drum by weight), possession limit of 2 fish > 32" TL, prohibition of purse seining.	Original FMP	October 1984
ASMFC	Recommends that all Atlantic coast states implement measures to present the development of northern markets.	ISFMP Policy Board request	1988
ASMFC	Adopts the Federal FMP and recommends complimentary management measures for states (New Jersey - Florida) to achieve OY, starting with an interim 10% SSBR. Recommended measures are either, 1) 18-27" TL and 5 fish, including one >27", and 2) 14-27" TL and 5 fish.	Amendment 1	October 1991
ASMFC	Defined the goal of OY as the harvest associated with a 40% static SPR. Overfishing is defined as the fishing mortality rate that exceeds F30% SPR, and the target as F40% SPR. States are required to implement recreational regulations that achieve F30% SPR, and to maintain any existing (or more conservative) commercial regulations. Maximum size limit set at 27" TL.	Amendment 2	January 1, 2003
SAFMC	Defined optimum yield as the harvest amount that can be taken while maintaining SSBR at or above 30% and overfishing as the fishing mortality rate that will, if continued, reduce SSBR below 30%. Recommended that states implement measures necessary to achieve at least 30% escapement (estimated as necessary to achieve 30% SSBR). Prohibited the harvest of red drum in the EEZ.	Original FMP	November 9, 1990
SAFMC	Defined OY as the harvest associated with a 40% static, MSY as 30% static SPR, overfishing at less than 30% static SPR, and threshold overfishing at 10% static SPR.	Amendment 1	October 1998
New Jersey	18" minimum size limit, possession limit of 1 fish greater than 27" TL.		May 15, 1994
New Jersey	18" minimum size limit, 27" maximum size limit, 1 fish creel limit.	N. J. A. C. 7:25-18.1	November 1, 2002

Delaware	18" TL minimum size limit, 27" TL maximum size limit, 5 fish possession limit with 1 fish allowed > 27" TL.	Tidal Finfish Regulation 11	June 11, 1994
Delaware	20" TL minimum size limit, 27" TL maximum size limit, 5 fish possession limit.	Tidal Finfish Regulation 11	March 10, 2003
PRFC	14" TL minimum size limit.	Reg. III, Sec. 11(a)(13)	July 1, 1990
PRFC	18" TL minimum size limit, possession limit of 1 fish >27" TL.	Reg. III, Sec. 11(a)(13)	July 1, 1993
PRFC	18" TL minimum size limit, 27" TL maximum size limit, 5 fish possession limit with 1 fish allowed > 27" TL.	Order 96-2	January 1, 1996
PRFC	18" TL minimum size limit, 25" TL maximum size limit, 5 fish possession limit.	Order 2003-04	January 1, 2003
Maryland	14" TL minimum size limit, possession limit of 2 fish > 32" TL.	Md. Code Ann. Nat. Res. Section 4-734(12)	1991
Maryland	18" TL minimum size limit, 5 fish possession limit with 1 fish allowed > 27" TL (Chesapeake Bay Red Drum Fishery Management Plan incorporated into regulation)	COMAR 08.02.01.01, COMAR 08.02.05.16, 21:18 Md. R. 1257	September 12, 1994
Maryland	18" TL minimum size limit, 27" TL recreational maximum size limit, 25" TL commercial maximum size limit, 1 fish recreational possession limit, 5 fish commercial possession limit.	COMAR 08.02.05.16, emergency provision 30:13 Md. R. 850, amendment 30:16 Md. R. 1073	June 9, 2003 (emergency provision; permanent August 18, 2003)
Virginia	Possession limit of 2 fish > 32" TL.	Code of Virginia § 28.2-304	July 1, 1960
Virginia	14" TL minimum size limit, possession limit of 2 fish > 32" TL.	VR450-01-0037	June 1, 1986
Virginia	18" TL minimum size limit, 27" TL maximum size limit, 5 fish possession limit, with 1 fish allowed > 27" TL.	VR450-01-0037 as amended	March 1, 1992
Virginia	18" TL minimum size limit, 26" TL maximum size limit, 3 fish possession limit.	4 VAC 20-280-10 et seq. amended	January 1, 2003
North Carolina	14" TL minimum size limit, possession limit of 2 fish > 32" TL.	Rule NCAC 3B .0105	February 1, 1976
North Carolina	14" TL minimum size limit, 32" maximum size limit, 1 fish allowed >32" TL, 5 fish recreational possession limit, 300,000 pound commercial cap.	Rule NCAC 3B .0105 (Commercial Cap under Proclamation M-1-89/90)	January 1, 1990

North Carolina	18" TL minimum size limit, 32" maximum size limit, 1 fish allowed >32" TL, 5 fish recreational possession limit, 250,000 pound commercial cap.	Rule NCAC 3M .0501 (Commercial Cap under Proclamation FF-11-91)	August 26, 1991
North Carolina	18" TL minimum size limit, 27" maximum size limit, 1 fish allowed >27" TL (no sale >27" TL), 5 fish recreational possession limit, 250,000 pound commercial cap.	Rule NCAC 3M .0501 (Commercial Cap under Proclamation FF-8-92)	April 1, 1992
North Carolina	18" TL minimum size limit, 27" maximum size limit, 1 fish recreational possession limit, 100 pound daily commercial trip limit, 250,000 pound commercial cap.	Rule 3M .0501 & 3J .0103	October 22, 1998
North Carolina	18" TL minimum size limit, 27" maximum size limit, 1 fish recreational possession limit, 5 fish commercial trip limit (due to cap overages in 1999 and 2000), 250,000 pound commercial cap.	Proclamation FF-32-00	July 22, 2000
North Carolina	18" TL minimum size limit, 27" maximum size limit, 1 fish recreational possession limit, 5 fish commercial trip limit, the total weight of red drum can not exceed 50% total marketable catch (excluding menhaden), 250,000 pound commercial cap.	Proclamation FF-33-2001	March 31, 2001
North Carolina	Establishes authority for Director to adjust commercial trip limit as needed to avoid annual cap overages. Shifts commercial season to be monitored from September 1 through August 31.	Rule 3M .0501	May 1, 2001
North Carolina	18" TL minimum size limit, 27" maximum size limit, 1 fish recreational possession limit, 7 fish commercial trip limit, total weight of red drum can not exceed 50% total marketable catch (excluding menhaden), 250,000 pound commercial cap.	Proclamation FF-47-2001	September 6, 2001
South Carolina	14" TL minimum size limit from June 1 to September 1, possession limit of 1 fish > 32" TL	Amendment to Section 50-17-55, SC Code of Laws	June 9, 1986
South Carolina	14" TL minimum size limit from June 1 to September 1, possession limit of 1 fish > 32" TL, 20 fish possession limit, gamefish status (prohibiting the sale of native fish, except maricultured fish).	Amendment adding Section 50-17-56 to SC Code of Laws	June 30, 1987

South Carolina	14" TL minimum size limit from June 1-October 1, possession limit of 1 fish > 32" TL, 20 fish possession limit, gamefish status.	Amendment to Section 50-17-55, SC Code of Laws	April 5, 1988
South Carolina	14" TL minimum size limit, 32" TL maximum size limit, possession limit of 1 fish >32" TL, 20 fish possession limit, gamefish status.	Amendment to Section 50-17-510, SC Code of Laws	June 6, 1990
South Carolina	14" TL minimum size limit, 32" TL maximum size limit, possession limit of 1 fish >32" TL, 5 fish possession limit, gamefish status.	Amendment to Section 50-17-520, SC Code of Laws	April 29, 1991
South Carolina	14" TL minimum size limit, 27" TL maximum size limit, 5 fish possession limit, gamefish status.	Amendment to Section 50-17-510, SC Code of Laws	June 11, 1993
South Carolina	15" TL minimum size limit, 24" TL maximum size limit, 2 fish possession limit.	Amendment to Section 50-5-1705 and -1710, SC Code of Laws	August 31, 2001
South Carolina	15" TL minimum size limit, 23" TL maximum size limit, 3 fish possession limit.	Amendment to Section 50-5-1705 and -1710, SC Code of Laws	June 15, 2007
Georgia	14" TL minimum size limit, possession limit of 2 fish > 32" TL.	Game and Fish Law. 27-4-10 and -11	1986
Georgia	14" TL minimum size limit, possession limit of 2 fish > 32" TL, 10 fish daily possession limit.	"Saltwater Finfishing Rule" O.C.G.A. 27-4-130.1	September 13, 1989
Georgia	14" TL minimum size limit, possession limit of 1 fish > 27" TL, 5 fish daily possession limit.	Board of Natural Resources Action	August 19, 1991
Georgia	14" TL minimum size limit, 27" TL maximum size limit, 5 fish daily possession limit.	O.C.G.A 27-4-130.1	August 15, 1993
Georgia	14" TL minimum size limit, 23" TL maximum size limit, 5 fish daily possession limit.	O.C.G.A 27-4-130.1(b) and DNR Rule 391-2-4-.04	July 1, 2002
Florida	Prohibition on red drum harvest by out-of-state citizens or for industrial purposes		Before 1925
Florida	12" FL minimum size limit		1925
Florida	15" FL minimum size limit		1953
Florida	12" FL minimum size limit		1955
Florida	Length definition changed to TL		1971
Florida	Length definition changed back to FL		1973
Florida	18" TL minimum size limit, possession limit of 1 fish >32" TL, protected species designation.	CH 46-22, F.A.C.	September 12, 1985

Florida	Prohibition of harvest in state waters and any sale of native fish.	Emergency Rule, CH 46ER86-3, F.A.C.	November 7, 1986
Florida	Emergency rule lifted, 18" TL minimum size limit, possession limit of 1 fish >32" TL, March-April closure, must be landed whole, snatch hooking and use of treble hooks while fishing with natural bait prohibited.	CH 46-22, F.A.C.	February 12, 1987
Florida	Prohibition of harvest in state waters and any possession, transportation, buying, selling or exchanging of native fish	Emergency Rule, CH 46ER87-1, F.A.C, and CH 46-22, F.A.C	May 1, 1987
Florida	Temporary season opening, 18" TL minimum size limit, 27" TL maximum size limit, commercial possession limit of 5 fish, recreational possession limit of 1 fish, use of treble hooks while fishing with natural bait prohibited, "restricted species" designation, must be landed whole.	CH 46-22, F.A.C.	October 1, 1987
Florida	Statewide harvest closure resumes, sale of native redfish allowed until January 5, 1988.	CH 46-22, F.A.C.	January 1, 1988
Florida	Fishery reopens with prohibition on sale of native red drum, 18" minimum size limit, 27" maximum size limit, March-May closed season, 1 fish possession limit.	CH 46-22, F.A.C.	January 1, 1989
Florida	"Protected species" designation, gigging and spearing prohibited. Above rules continued indefinitely.	CH 46-22, F.A.C.	June 3, 1991
Florida	Prohibition on sale of native red drum, 18" minimum size limit, 27" maximum size limit, no closed season, 1 fish possession limit, must be landed whole.	CH 46-22, F.A.C.	January 1, 1996
Florida	Tournament exemptions to exceed bag limit defined	CH 68B-22, F.A.C.	March 17, 2004
Florida	Definition of total length clarified	CH 68B-22, F.A.C.	July 1, 2006

Table 2 provides a timeline of major regulatory changes (size limits, creel limits, commercial quotas, etc.) for red drum in the state waters of the management unit. Note that federal waters were closed to the harvest or possession of red drum on November 9, 1990. All lengths are total length (TL) unless reported as fork length (FL).

	1925	~	1953	~	1955	~	1960	~	1976	~	1985	1986	1987
New Jersey													
Delaware													
Maryland													
Potomac River													
Virginia							Only 2 fish > 32"					14" min., only 2 fish > 32"	
North Carolina									14" min., only 2 fish > 32"				
South Carolina												14" min. June - August, only 1 fish > 32"	No sale, 14" min. June-August, only 1 fish > 32", 20 fish limit
Georgia												14" min., only 2 fish > 32"	
Florida	12" FL min.		15" FL min.		12" FL min.						18" min., only 1 fish > 32"	Nov-Dec: Fishery Closed	Feb: 18" min., only 1 fish > 32". March-Sept: closed. Oct-Dec: 18" min., 27" max., 5 fish com., 1 fish rec.

	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	~
New Jersey							18" min., only 1 fish > 27"	
Delaware							18" min., only 1 fish > 27", 5 fish	
Maryland				14" min., only 2 fish > 32"			18" min., only 1 fish > 27", 5 fish	
Potomac River			14" min.			18" min., only 1 fish > 27"		
Virginia					18" min., only 1 fish > 27", 5 fish			
North Carolina			14" min., only 1 fish > 32", 5 fish rec., 300,000 lb com. cap	18" min., only 1 fish > 32", 5 fish rec., 250,000 lb com. cap	18" min., only 1 fish > 27", 5 fish rec., 250,000 lb com. cap			
South Carolina	No sale, 14" min. June-September, only 1 fish > 32", 20 fish limit		No sale, 14" min., only 1 fish > 32", 20 fish limit	No sale, 14" min., only 1 fish > 32", 5 fish limit		No sale, 14" min., 27" max., 5 fish limit		
Georgia		14" min., only 2 fish > 32", 10 fish limit		14" min., only 1 fish > 27", 5 fish limit		14" min., 27" max., 5 fish limit		
Florida	Fishery Closed	No sale, 18" min., 27" max., 1 fish limit, closed March-May						

Current Management Criteria

Definition of Overfishing

Overfishing for red drum is defined as a fishing mortality rate (F) in excess of the fishing mortality rate at 30% Static Spawning Potential Ratio (SPR) or F30% SPR. The target fishing mortality rate is the fishing mortality rate at 40% Static Spawning Potential Ratio (SPR) or F40% SPR (ASMFC 2002).

References

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC). 1984. Fishery Management Plan for Red Drum. Washington (DC): ASMFC. Fishery Management Report No. 5. 107 pp.

ASMFC. 1994. Fishery Management Plan for Red Drum - Amendment #1. Washington (DC): ASMFC. Fishery Management Report No. 19. 123 pp.

ASMFC. 2002. Amendment 2 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Red Drum. Washington (DC): ASMFC. Fishery Management Report No. 38. 142 pp.

Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic; Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act Provisions; Atlantic Coast Red Drum Fishery off the Atlantic States; Transfer of Management Authority, 73 Fed. Reg. 58059 (2008) (to be codified at 50 CFR Parts 622 and 697)

SAFMC (South Atlantic Fishery Management Council). 1990. The Atlantic Coast Red Drum Fishery Management Plan. Charleston (SC): SAFMC. 106pp.