

2024 LICENSE AND STATISTICS ANNUAL REPORT



Prepared By:

North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries

License and Statistics Section

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Dedication

To Larry Kraus – We are grateful for Larry’s valuable contributions to the recreational fisheries information presented in this report. His dedication and enthusiasm as a hard-working member of the Marine Recreational Information Program will be missed. Larry passed away in March of 2022. His passion for fishing and commitment to fisheries conservation serves as an inspiration to all who knew him.

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LICENSE AND STATISTICS SECTION OVERVIEW

Introduction

The North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries (NCDMF) is responsible for the stewardship of the state's marine and estuarine resources. The Division's jurisdiction begins at three miles offshore and extends inward through coastal and joint waters in North Carolina. NCDMF's mission is to ensure sustainable marine and estuarine fisheries and habitats for the benefit and health of the people of North Carolina. The NCDMF is comprised of eight sections that collectively carry out this mission.

The License and Statistics Section collects, processes, and analyzes commercial and recreational fisheries and license data, assesses social and economic impacts, and is responsible for the sale of fishing licenses and issuance of agency permits at all NCDMF license offices. This section also administers the Marine Fisheries Commission's license eligibility process.

The section is made up of the following programs:

- License Program
- Commercial Statistics Program
- Coastal Angling Program
- Fisheries Economics Program

The License and Statistics Section consists of about 60 employees: just under 40 permanent employees and varying numbers of temporary employees depending on funding and current project schedules. Employees are funded by state appropriations, commercial license sales receipts, recreational license sales receipts, and federal grant monies.

Section Mission

Our mission is to license fishery participants, obtain accurate and timely data on fishery catch and effort, determine fishery social and economic importance, and to analyze and distribute these data for evaluation and establishment of fishery management plans.

Annual Report Purpose

This document provides summaries of commercial landings and recreational harvest data, as well as commercial and recreational fishing licenses issued for the State of North Carolina. The purpose is to disseminate the data in formats most often requested and to illustrate the types of information collected through the various programs within the License and Statistics Section of the NCDMF. Separate and distinct summary reports for each program are released on an annual basis.

Take caution when averaging the landings data for commercial, recreational, and socioeconomic statistics over large periods of time because of changes in management policies and data collection methods. Creating such an average may not indicate the true

characteristics of the fishery. These factors should be considered when summarizing these data.

When reviewing data provided for 2020, be aware that unexpected trends in the data or missing data may be due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic began in Spring 2020 and brought about numerous precautionary guidelines, as well as state, local, and federal mandates, that limited the ability to collect and process data.

The NCDMF's License and Statistics Section published its first Annual Report in 2005. These reports have traditionally included data back to 1887, but through the years, this report has grown substantially. For efficiency, the Section decided to focus the 2024 Annual Report on data from the last 10 years. Historical data published in previous reports, along with a digital version of the 2024 report can be found on our website::
<https://www.deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/marine-fisheries/science-and-statistics/fisheries-statistics>.

More detailed statistics are available upon request by contacting:

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Contacts for specific data related to commercial, recreational, economics, or license information can be found in each chapter of this document.