REVIEW OF THE INTERSTATE FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR

SPOT

(Leiostomus xanthurus)

2006 FISHING YEAR



Prepared by Nichola Meserve (ASMFC)

The Spot Plan Review Team

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I. Status of the Fishery Management Plan

<u>Date of FMP Approval</u>: October 1987

Management Areas: The Atlantic coast distribution of the resource from Florida

through Delaware

Active Boards/Committees: South Atlantic State/Federal Fisheries Management Board; Spot

Plan Development Team

The Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Spot was adopted in 1987 and includes the states from Delaware through Florida (ASMFC 1987). In reviewing the early plans created under the Interstate Fisheries Management Plan process, the Spot FMP was seen by ASMFC as in need of review and possible revision. A Wallop-Breaux grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service was provided to conduct a comprehensive data collection workshop for spot. The October 1993 workshop at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science was attended by university and state agency representatives from six states. Presentations on fishery-dependent and fishery-independent data, population dynamics, and bycatch reduction devices were made and discussed. All state reports and a set of recommendations were included in the workshop report (ASMFC 1993).

Subsequent to the workshop and independent of it, the South Atlantic State/Federal Fisheries Management Board of ASMFC reviewed the status of several plans in order to define the compliance issues to be enforced under the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act (ACFCMA). The Board found recommendations in the plan to be vague and perhaps no longer valid, and recommended that an amendment be prepared to the Spot FMP to define the management measures necessary to achieve the goals of the FMP. In their final schedule for compliance under the ACFCMA, the ISFMP Policy Board adopted the finding that the FMP does not contain any management measures that states are required to implement. To date, no amendment has been prepared.

II. Status of the Stock

No coastwide assessment has been performed for spot; however, spot are a target or component of several state surveys using trawl, gillnet, or seine net to sample. In addition to these surveys, commercial and recreational catch-per-unit effort (CPUE) data provide indices of relative spot abundance.

In 2007, the Spot Plan Review Team compiled fishery CPUE data and fishery-independent survey data from Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina, the three states that harvest the majority of spot (Rickabaugh, 2007; Grist, 2007; Schoolfield, 2007). Since 1994, commercial CPUE has generally increased over time in Maryland, varied without trend in Virginia, and been relatively stable in North Carolina. Maryland recreational CPUE has generally decreased with a few spikes and a small amount of potential recovery in 2003-2005, while Virginia recreational CPUE has been variable around the time series average, exceeding it in 2005 and 2006, and North Carolina recreational CPUE has shown a general increase over time. Juvenile abundance

indices have generally declined with a few spikes in abundance in Maryland's portion of the Chesapeake Bay, shown a slight downward trend in abundance in other Maryland Bays, declined nearly consistently since 1992 in Virginia's portion of the Chesapeake Bay, and fluctuated without trend in North Carolina's Pamlico Sound and other estuaries. An adult abundance index in North Carolina shows little fluctuation for the five years that the survey has been conducted.

In addition, Delaware conducts two trawl surveys for juvenile fish in Delaware Estuary and the state's inland bays, both of which are highly variable, but below the time series averages in 2006. Florida evaluated the abundance of spot in the Indian River Lagoon in 1997 with commercial CPUE data and survey indices (McRae *et al.* 1997). Findings included variable commercial CPUE, stable juvenile abundance between 1990 and 1996, except for a very high 1993 index, and stable adult abundance during the same time series.

III. Status of the Fishery

Total landings of spot in 2006 are estimated at 7.35 million pounds, the second lowest value since 1981 (see Tables 2 and 5). The commercial fishery harvested approximately 43 percent of this total by pounds of fish, and the recreational fishery about 57 percent. In all previous years since 1981, the commercial fishery has landed more pounds of spot than the recreational fishery (Figure 1).

Commercial spot landings have fluctuated between 3.2 and 14.5 million pounds from 1950-2006 (Figure 1). During this time series, landings have been over 10 million pounds thirteen times, four of those occurring during the peak of landings from 1972-75, and the last occurring in 1982. From 1983 to 2006, commercial landings have averaged 6.6 million pounds. Landings in 2006 are estimated at 3.2 million pounds, the lowest value in the time series, for an estimated value of \$2.6 million (Table 2, Figure 1). Coastwide, the majority of spot are taken in gillnets (64.2% in 2006 by pounds of fish; Table 3). Small spot are also a major component of the bycatch in haul seine and pound net fisheries in the Chesapeake Bay and in North Carolina, as well as a part of the bycatch of the South Atlantic shrimp trawl fishery. Virginia landed nearly 53% of the commercial harvest (by pounds) in 2006, followed by North Carolina's 43% of the harvest.

Between 1981 and 2006, the recreational harvest of spot from along the Atlantic coast has varied between 3.6 and 20.1 million fish (1.7 to 5.0 million pounds; Tables 4 and 5). Recreational harvest had not exceeded 10.0 million fish since 1994, until 2006, when anglers harvested an estimated 11.1 million fish (4.2 million pounds). This value continues a gradual increase of recreational spot harvest since the low harvest of 1999 (Figure 2). The estimated number of spot released annually by recreational anglers from 1981 has remained relatively constant, ranging from 2.0 to 6.4 million fish with the exception of 1981 (11.1 million fish), 1990 (7.3 million fish), and 1991 (10.6 million fish) (Table 6). The number of fish released alive in 2006 is the forth highest in the time series at 6.4 million fish (Figure 2).

IV. Status of Assessment Advice

A formal stock assessment of spot has not been conducted. The 1987 FMP recognized the lack of biological and fisheries data necessary for stock assessment and effective management of the

resource. Spot life history information and fisheries data have generally been localized and conducted at different levels of population abundance. Commercial and recreational catch and effort data have only recently begun to be analyzed in hopes of determining the relationship between landings and abundance. An additional problem is the non-quantifiable incidental bycatch and discard mortality of small spot in non-directed fisheries.

Following its review of fishery-dependent and fishery-independent indices of abundance in 2007, the Spot Plan Review Team is now attempting to develop age-length and catch-at-age matrices. When complete, these analyses will provide more insight as to the health of the fishery, and will suggest whether state-specific or a coastwide assessment can be conducted.

V. Status of Research and Monitoring

Catch and effort data are collected by the commercial and recreational statistics programs conducted by the states and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). Recruitment indices are available from ongoing juvenile surveys in Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, and Florida. An adult index of abundance is available in North Carolina, although the time series is short. Efforts are now underway to develop a comprehensive abundance index utilizing fishery-dependent CPUE data and fishery-independent survey data from many states.

Age data are available from several states. North Carolina annually ages 400-500 spot across all fisheries. Virginia has aged more than 300 spot per year since 2001, except 2006 when 228 were aged. Maryland is beginning an ageing program in 2007. Age validation studies need to be conducted. In 2007, these three states are beginning efforts to produce age-length keys that can be applied to length-frequency data to develop catch-at-age matrices.

Fishery-independent spot data are collected in a number of other cooperative programs. The Southeast Area Monitoring and Assessment Program (SEAMAP) program collects spot data from Cape Hatteras to Cape Canaveral. Additionally, the Northeast Area Monitoring and Assessment Program (NEAMAP) is scheduled to begin spring and fall surveys between Martha's Vineyard and Cape Hatteras starting in the fall of 2007, following a pilot survey in the fall of 2006. The CHESMAP trawl survey, developed by Virginia Institute of Marine Science, and the CHESFIMS survey, conducted by the University of Maryland and Maryland DNR, provide data on spot in Chesapeake Bay including estimates of adult population size, distribution, length-frequency, age-structure, and diet composition.

VI. Status of Management Measures and Issues

The FMP for Spot identified two management measures for implementation: 1) promote the development and use of bycatch reduction devices through demonstration and application in trawl fisheries, and 2) promote increases in yield per recruit through delaying entry to spot fisheries to age one and older.

Considerable progress has been made on developing bycatch reduction devices (BRDs) and evaluating their effectiveness. Proceedings from a 1993 spot and croaker workshop summarized much of the experimental work on bycatch reduction, and many states have conducted

subsequent testing. For example, North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries (NCDMF) conducted research on the four main gear types (shrimp trawl, flynet, long haul seine, and pound net) responsible for the bulk of the scrap fish landings in order to reduce the catch of small fish. State testing of shrimp trawl BRDs achieved finfish reductions of 50-70% with little loss of shrimp. The Virginia Marine Resources Commission investigated the use of culling panels in pound nets and long haul seines to release small croaker, spot, and weakfish. The Potomac River Fisheries Commission (PRFC) also investigated the use of culling panels in pound nets, finding that the panels allowed the release of 28% of captured spot less than six inches in length. A target reduction in bycatch of spot may be a suitable objective in a plan amendment.

Following favorable testing, devices have been made mandatory or recommended in several states' fisheries. The use of BRDs is required in all penaeid shrimp trawl fisheries in the South Atlantic. The PRFC recommends the use of culling panels in pound nets and allows those nets with panels to keep one bushel of bycatch of flounder and weakfish. In North Carolina, escapement panels have been required in the bunt nets of long haul seines in an area south and west of Bluff Shoals in the Pamlico Sound since April 1999. However, evaluation of the beneficial effects of BRDs to spot stocks continues to need further study.

General gear restrictions, such as minimum mesh sizes or trawling bans, have helped protect some age classes of spot. However, only Georgia has implemented a minimum size limit aimed at protecting immature spot.

VII. Implementation of FMP Compliance Requirements for 2006

• There are no compliance requirements for this FMP.

VIII. Recommendations of the Plan Review Team

Management and Regulatory Recommendations

 Continue to support the Plan Review Team's work to develop age-length keys and catchat-age matrices.

Research and Monitoring Recommendations

High Priority

- State monitoring and reporting on the extent of unutilized bycatch and fishing mortality on fish less than age-1 in fisheries that take significant numbers of spot.
- Evaluate the effects of mandated bycatch reduction devices on spot catch in those states with significant commercial harvests.
- Develop fishery-dependent and fishery-independent size and sex specific relative abundance estimates.
- Cooperative coastwide spot juvenile indices should be developed to clarify stock status.
- Monitor long term changes in spot abundance, growth rates, and age structure.
- Continue monitoring of juvenile spot populations in major nursery areas.

- Improve spot catch and effort statistics from the commercial and recreational fisheries, along with size and age structure of the catch, in order to develop production models.
- Conduct age validation studies.
- Investigate the degree of mixing between state stocks during the annual fall migration.
- Cooperatively develop criteria for aging spot otoliths and scales.
- Develop age-length key(s)
- Develop catch-at-age matrices

Medium Priority

- Develop stock assessment analyses appropriate to current data.
- Cooperatively develop a yield-per-recruit analysis.
- Develop stock identification methods.
- Determine migratory patterns through tagging studies.
- Determine the onshore vs. offshore components of the spot fishery.

IX. References

- ASMFC (Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission). 1987. Fishery Management Plan for Spot. ASMFC Fisheries Management Report No. 11, Washington, DC.
- ASMFC. 1993. Proceedings of a Workshop on Spot (*Leiostomus xanthurus*) and Atlantic Croaker (*Micropogonias undulatus*). ASMFC Special Report #25, Washington, DC.
- Grist, J. 2007. Spot Harvest and Index Report for Virginia: A Report to the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries commission. Unpublished, Virginia Marine Resources Commission, Fisheries management Division, 9 pp.
- McRae, G., R.G. Muller, and R. Paperno. 1997. 1997 Update on Florida's spot Fishery. Florida Marine Research Institute Report to the Marine Fisheries Commission, St. Petersburg, FL.
- Rickabaugh, H. 2007. Development and Evaluation of Maryland Commercial and Recreational CPUE and Juvenile Indices for Spot. Unpublished, Maryland DNR Fisheries Service, 22 pp.
- Schoolfield, J. 2007. Spot Harvest and Index Report for North Carolina: A Report to the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. Unpublished, North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries, 9 pp.

X. Figures

Figure 1. Spot commercial and recreational landings (pounds), 1950-2006 (Recreational landings available from 1981-present; see Tables 2 and 5 for values and sources)

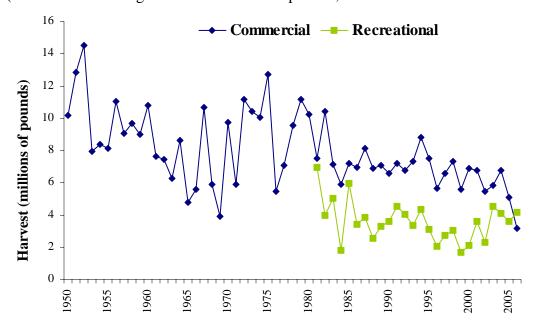
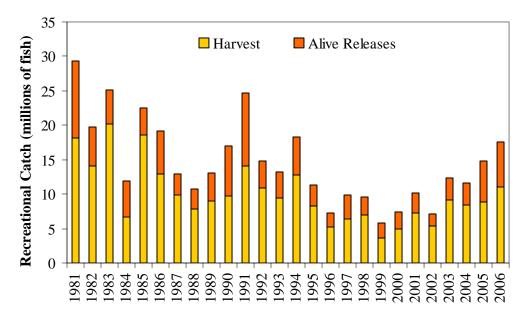


Figure 2. Spot recreational harvest and releases (numbers of fish), 1981-2006 (See Tables 4 and 6 for values and sources)



XI. Tables

Table 1. Summary of state regulations for spot, 2006

| State | Recreational | Commercial |
|----------------|--|---|
| New York | None | License Required |
| New Jersey | None | License Required. Trawling prohibition 0-2mi. |
| Delaware | None | License Required |
| Maryland | Sport fishing license is required in Chesapeake Bay. | License Required. Trawling restrictions in Chesapeake Bay. |
| PRFC | Sport fishing license | License Required. Recommended pound net BRD. |
| Virginia | Sport fishing license | License Required. No trawling in state waters. |
| North Carolina | None | License Required. Trawl TED/BRD requirement. |
| South Carolina | Sport fishing license | License Required. Trawl TED/BRD, culling panel and various mesh size requirements. |
| Georgia | 8" TL; 25 fish limit and Sport fishing license | License Required. 8" TL; 25 fish limit. Trawl TED/BRD requirement. No trawling in sounds; trawl closures. |
| Florida | Sport fishing license | License required if landing more than 100 lbs. or 2 fish/person/day. Trawl TED/BRD requirement. Net ban in state waters. Max shrimp trawl size. |

Table 2. Commercial landings (pounds) and estimated value (ex-vessel) of spot, 1981-2006 (Source: NMFS Fisheries Statistics Division, queried 8/27/07)

| Year | NY | NJ | DE | MD | VA | NC | SC | GA | FL | Total | Value |
|------|-------|---------|---------|---------|-----------|-----------|---------|-------|-----------|------------|-------------|
| 1981 | | 6,000 | 11,100 | 14,200 | 1,025,800 | 3,511,574 | 127,384 | 7,721 | 2,798,881 | 7,502,660 | \$1,949,238 |
| 1982 | | 1,800 | 2,500 | 6,200 | 1,017,100 | 4,918,763 | 62,562 | 292 | 4,431,239 | 10,440,456 | \$2,629,992 |
| 1983 | | 800 | | 129,400 | 1,567,900 | 2,952,295 | 240,096 | | 2,266,296 | 7,156,787 | \$2,034,211 |
| 1984 | | 100 | | 43,200 | 735,200 | 3,481,920 | 130,265 | | 1,508,552 | 5,899,237 | \$1,709,041 |
| 1985 | | 2,400 | 17,200 | 7,700 | 1,561,739 | 4,043,843 | 142,755 | | 1,399,819 | 7,175,456 | \$2,059,771 |
| 1986 | | 6,600 | 86,400 | 104,400 | 1,839,500 | 3,354,191 | 655,378 | 124 | 918,875 | 6,965,468 | \$2,008,712 |
| 1987 | | 15,900 | 140,100 | 251,800 | 3,721,100 | 2,806,041 | 220,553 | 1,528 | 943,713 | 8,100,735 | \$2,288,900 |
| 1988 | | 1,600 | 38,700 | 58,000 | 1,985,500 | 3,080,258 | 376,221 | 644 | 1,344,276 | 6,885,199 | \$2,103,710 |
| 1989 | | 8,200 | 29,000 | 115,800 | 2,468,100 | 3,254,473 | 31,472 | 361 | 1,144,639 | 7,052,045 | \$2,447,602 |
| 1990 | | 9,039 | 24,900 | 127,882 | 1,630,735 | 3,455,460 | 39,957 | 43 | 1,275,729 | 6,563,745 | \$2,280,712 |
| 1991 | | 54,433 | 236,200 | 216,035 | 2,539,340 | 3,047,305 | 31,787 | | 1,051,532 | 7,176,632 | \$2,341,850 |
| 1992 | | 102,213 | 95,000 | 331,837 | 2,497,622 | 2,826,138 | 171,959 | 261 | 740,048 | 6,765,078 | \$1,903,514 |
| 1993 | 63 | 10,900 | 22,000 | 182,198 | 3,349,399 | 2,672,164 | 251,225 | 1,276 | 826,312 | 7,315,537 | \$2,902,373 |
| 1994 | | 31,408 | 100,400 | 166,246 | 4,269,402 | 2,937,355 | 288,241 | | 1,002,887 | 8,795,939 | \$3,326,892 |
| 1995 | 22 | 30,151 | 62,000 | | 3,622,954 | 3,006,885 | 209,132 | 247 | 558,087 | 7,489,478 | \$2,572,195 |
| 1996 | 318 | 1,149 | | 256,711 | 2,982,083 | 2,290,040 | 60,574 | | 56,423 | 5,647,298 | \$2,237,567 |
| 1997 | 189 | 6,175 | 35,686 | 120,331 | 3,465,507 | 2,627,977 | 87,170 | | 227,097 | 6,570,132 | \$2,810,144 |
| 1998 | 579 | 27,582 | 140,363 | 225,937 | 4,277,256 | 2,397,025 | 63,912 | | 161,205 | 7,293,859 | \$2,838,921 |
| 1999 | | 7,822 | 51,534 | 223,463 | 2,961,890 | 2,262,213 | 9,393 | | 72,898 | 5,589,213 | \$2,204,565 |
| 2000 | 939 | 13,852 | 32,290 | 176,946 | 3,764,679 | 2,829,818 | 8,519 | | 57,946 | 6,884,989 | \$3,562,693 |
| 2001 | 160 | 20,034 | 78,272 | 283,488 | 3,248,212 | 3,093,921 | 12,950 | | 33,056 | 6,770,093 | \$2,835,318 |
| 2002 | 5,737 | 1,326 | 13,780 | 138,640 | 3,062,211 | 2,184,076 | 23,151 | | 20,586 | 5,449,507 | \$2,297,333 |
| 2003 | 35 | 6,003 | 77,031 | 184,437 | 3,471,484 | 2,043,421 | 17,181 | | 9,337 | 5,808,929 | \$2,747,351 |
| 2004 | 98 | 1,652 | 58,502 | 43,729 | 4,338,082 | 2,317,215 | 1,876 | | 12,792 | 6,773,946 | \$3,350,476 |
| 2005 | 435 | 769 | 157,563 | 114,987 | 3,102,816 | 1,713,935 | 3,385 | | 21,156 | 5,115,046 | \$3,307,678 |
| 2006 | 2,959 | 3,646 | 62,934 | 35,082 | 1,695,985 | 1,364,637 | 1,876 | | 22,500 | 3,189,619 | \$2,614,136 |

Table 3. Commercial landings of spot in 2006 by gear

(Source: NMFS Fisheries Statistics Division, queried 8/27/07)

| Gear | Landings (lbs) | % of total |
|------------|----------------|------------|
| Gill Nets | 2,047,482 | 64.22% |
| Haul Seine | 968,238 | 30.37% |
| Pound Net | 120,525 | 3.78% |
| Trawl | 19672 | 0.62% |
| Other | 32,363 | 1.02% |
| Total | 3,188,280 | |

Table 4. Recreational harvest (number of A + B1 fish) of spot by state, 1981-2006 (Source: NMFS Fisheries Statistics Division, queried 8/27/07)

| Year | NY | NJ | DE | MD | VA | NC | SC | GA | FL | Total |
|------|---------|---------|---------|-----------|------------|-----------|-----------|---------|---------|------------|
| 1981 | 44,278 | 28,006 | 17,508 | 948,931 | 11,662,684 | 4,023,934 | 562,750 | 124,057 | 799,226 | 18,211,374 |
| 1982 | | 387,582 | 82,094 | 2,864,603 | 4,526,847 | 4,124,465 | 1,230,253 | 84,153 | 735,398 | 14,035,395 |
| 1983 | | | 14,464 | 1,600,362 | 12,059,247 | 4,880,268 | 970,747 | 112,123 | 488,029 | 20,125,240 |
| 1984 | | 8,501 | 15,553 | 904,793 | 1,489,795 | 2,758,366 | 724,925 | 363,841 | 396,402 | 6,662,176 |
| 1985 | 15,494 | 12,692 | | 1,028,391 | 5,491,918 | 8,789,391 | 2,355,044 | 62,338 | 861,700 | 18,616,968 |
| 1986 | 3,824 | 9,587 | 12,178 | 3,789,796 | 4,229,191 | 2,646,049 | 2,007,386 | 137,782 | 96,803 | 12,932,596 |
| 1987 | | | | 3,180,704 | 3,864,151 | 2,129,146 | 599,807 | 79,487 | 73,833 | 9,927,128 |
| 1988 | | 348,593 | 2,360 | 277,964 | 2,028,768 | 2,558,322 | 1,951,157 | 57,786 | 663,681 | 7,888,631 |
| 1989 | 602 | 1,128 | 45,853 | 1,154,314 | 3,714,855 | 2,924,299 | 1,078,570 | 34,977 | 67,506 | 9,022,104 |
| 1990 | | 25,927 | 44,362 | 2,120,655 | 5,354,294 | 1,986,601 | 142,271 | 17,730 | 7,252 | 9,699,092 |
| 1991 | | 88,393 | 138,113 | 1,841,555 | 8,820,075 | 2,317,095 | 598,290 | 10,281 | 269,628 | 14,083,430 |
| 1992 | | 20,443 | 90,053 | 1,671,897 | 6,317,539 | 1,271,416 | 1,190,757 | 25,788 | 357,678 | 10,945,571 |
| 1993 | 1,168 | 7,788 | 3,263 | 1,880,043 | 2,836,534 | 2,057,440 | 1,437,809 | 228,606 | 946,757 | 9,399,408 |
| 1994 | 19,275 | 144,589 | 92,352 | 1,761,701 | 3,395,503 | 5,929,269 | 1,329,997 | 9,587 | 137,067 | 12,819,340 |
| 1995 | | 2,949 | 51,695 | 1,099,658 | 2,731,242 | 3,329,981 | 875,189 | 27,842 | 140,231 | 8,258,787 |
| 1996 | | 23,954 | 955 | 591,300 | 1,109,237 | 2,007,071 | 1,423,352 | 14,131 | 64,337 | 5,234,337 |
| 1997 | | 20,148 | 126,089 | 713,657 | 3,328,144 | 1,440,661 | 680,842 | 5,471 | 31,987 | 6,346,999 |
| 1998 | | | 96,389 | 1,327,259 | 2,023,756 | 2,865,190 | 489,068 | 6,788 | 120,389 | 6,928,839 |
| 1999 | | | 19,911 | 655,289 | 569,250 | 1,308,167 | 801,785 | 5,578 | 264,233 | 3,624,213 |
| 2000 | 498,470 | 281,481 | 65,952 | 1,389,505 | 527,259 | 1,924,107 | 246,291 | 2,950 | 40,908 | 4,976,923 |
| 2001 | | | 51,096 | 1,088,997 | 1,056,365 | 3,650,711 | 735,551 | 3,681 | 652,975 | 7,239,376 |
| 2002 | | | 22,013 | 690,515 | 1,601,837 | 2,586,313 | 393,597 | 6,987 | 25,907 | 5,327,169 |
| 2003 | | | 30,165 | 3,300,594 | 1,441,002 | 3,796,557 | 524,513 | 11,524 | 84,685 | 9,189,040 |
| 2004 | | | 26,831 | 1,375,285 | 2,323,007 | 4,058,426 | 656,920 | 2,320 | 10,826 | 8,453,615 |
| 2005 | | 41,324 | 202,657 | 2,006,925 | 2,993,635 | 3,125,897 | 464,510 | 2,999 | 41,671 | 8,879,618 |
| 2006 | | 42,143 | 149,783 | 2,654,033 | 3,510,253 | 2,770,151 | 1,957,703 | 2,823 | 17,306 | 11,104,195 |

Table 5. Recreational harvest (pounds of A + B1 fish) of spot by state, 1981-2006 (Source: NMFS Fisheries Statistics Division, queried 8/27/07)

| Year | NY | NJ | DE | MD | VA | NC | SC | GA | FL | Total |
|------|---------|--------|--------|-----------|-----------|-----------|---------|---------|---------|-----------|
| 1981 | 20,348 | 6,175 | 8,047 | 554,986 | 4,625,985 | 1,193,537 | 144,600 | 50,734 | 311,406 | 6,915,818 |
| 1982 | | 85,446 | 19,281 | 656,245 | 1,563,396 | 1,093,047 | 313,177 | 20,199 | 236,027 | 3,986,818 |
| 1983 | | | 4,017 | 354,788 | 2,520,125 | 1,630,882 | 293,161 | 28,023 | 167,294 | 4,998,290 |
| 1984 | | 3,768 | 5,714 | 361,850 | 404,533 | 650,386 | 169,346 | 81,758 | 122,585 | 1,799,940 |
| 1985 | 3,415 | 4,255 | | 193,266 | 1,955,039 | 3,120,532 | 441,808 | 13,071 | 213,042 | 5,944,428 |
| 1986 | 1,327 | 2,114 | 3,836 | 1,139,871 | 1,205,158 | 536,443 | 455,836 | 23,369 | 25,360 | 3,393,314 |
| 1987 | | | | 1,545,691 | 1,336,387 | 690,653 | 226,701 | 14,601 | 32,835 | 3,846,868 |
| 1988 | | 84,941 | 1,876 | 80,547 | 720,609 | 802,320 | 632,868 | 14,645 | 184,602 | 2,522,408 |
| 1989 | 132 | 606 | 10,368 | 633,150 | 1,400,728 | 929,188 | 288,591 | 7,798 | 23,254 | 3,293,815 |
| 1990 | | 5,644 | 11,821 | 791,264 | 2,103,751 | 613,904 | 50,525 | 6,259 | 1,737 | 3,584,905 |
| 1991 | | 19,528 | 48,100 | 634,894 | 2,729,698 | 727,463 | 245,661 | 1,786 | 107,256 | 4,514,386 |
| 1992 | | 8,788 | 36,799 | 724,279 | 2,278,309 | 403,775 | 397,677 | 6,978 | 167,845 | 4,024,450 |
| 1993 | 315 | 2,264 | 844 | 636,032 | 951,766 | 812,810 | 461,447 | 109,317 | 396,632 | 3,371,427 |
| 1994 | 7,198 | 20,364 | 34,795 | 676,687 | 1,217,036 | 1,842,360 | 469,518 | 2,687 | 57,234 | 4,327,879 |
| 1995 | | 1,186 | 22,919 | 485,682 | 1,067,637 | 1,247,995 | 242,973 | 7,701 | 42,851 | 3,118,944 |
| 1996 | | 10,966 | 789 | 294,404 | 492,982 | 710,086 | 494,448 | 5,445 | 26,953 | 2,036,073 |
| 1997 | | 8,609 | 50,781 | 401,275 | 1,263,447 | 722,868 | 254,794 | 2,072 | 13,962 | 2,717,808 |
| 1998 | | | 36,658 | 631,422 | 866,619 | 1,249,543 | 228,502 | 2,088 | 47,196 | 3,062,028 |
| 1999 | | | 10,886 | 272,292 | 244,499 | 646,662 | 391,402 | 2,275 | 84,511 | 1,652,527 |
| 2000 | 130,649 | 46,244 | 32,968 | 600,302 | 252,885 | 893,835 | 128,669 | 1,402 | 14,129 | 2,101,083 |
| 2001 | | | 20,110 | 629,861 | 523,202 | 1,773,671 | 346,878 | 1,720 | 284,706 | 3,580,148 |
| 2002 | | | 10,871 | 336,660 | 829,972 | 984,898 | 140,164 | 2,857 | 7,840 | 2,313,262 |
| 2003 | | | 14,385 | 1,690,503 | 875,729 | 1,714,158 | 227,821 | 5,710 | 26,504 | 4,554,810 |
| 2004 | | | 10,756 | 549,091 | 1,447,697 | 1,846,688 | 245,991 | 721 | 3,338 | 4,104,282 |
| 2005 | | 19,610 | 90,863 | 756,392 | 1,434,965 | 1,103,830 | 158,407 | 917 | 12,751 | 3,577,735 |
| 2006 | | 15,086 | 54,831 | 897,173 | 1,463,056 | 978,181 | 745,772 | 1,166 | 6,067 | 4,161,332 |

Table 6. Recreational releases (number of B2 fish) of spot by state, 1981-2006 (Source: NMFS Fisheries Statistics Division, queried 8/27/07)

| Year | NY | NJ | DE | MD | VA | NC | SC | GA | FL | Total |
|------|---------|---------|---------|-----------|-----------|-----------|---------|--------|---------|------------|
| 1981 | | 25,740 | 1,502 | 1,331,316 | 8,905,412 | 735,408 | 82,035 | 5,975 | 64,344 | 11,151,732 |
| 1982 | | 974,847 | 5,061 | 1,677,415 | 1,618,065 | 806,851 | 366,650 | 44,091 | 205,387 | 5,698,367 |
| 1983 | | 57,556 | | 1,114,795 | 2,715,522 | 634,107 | 192,240 | 39,798 | 186,615 | 4,940,633 |
| 1984 | | | 13,260 | 1,150,599 | 2,607,693 | 952,816 | 346,003 | 17,897 | 130,493 | 5,218,761 |
| 1985 | 22,220 | 2,979 | | 735,873 | 2,051,793 | 429,914 | 515,106 | 17,316 | 170,060 | 3,945,261 |
| 1986 | | 79,712 | | 2,720,343 | 2,250,794 | 816,204 | 331,290 | 20,863 | 10,351 | 6,229,557 |
| 1987 | | | 1,104 | 248,973 | 1,736,228 | 593,937 | 304,127 | 28,434 | 57,437 | 2,970,240 |
| 1988 | | 110,698 | 4,501 | 716,258 | 762,504 | 995,806 | 110,498 | 16,951 | 110,003 | 2,827,219 |
| 1989 | | 4,503 | 40,193 | 730,580 | 2,519,034 | 524,897 | 138,834 | 1,630 | 22,425 | 3,982,096 |
| 1990 | | 14,504 | 10,120 | 1,811,434 | 4,441,195 | 921,849 | 13,709 | 4,079 | 30,937 | 7,247,827 |
| 1991 | | 91,991 | 59,770 | 2,123,582 | 7,041,156 | 946,564 | 100,666 | 14,629 | 168,284 | 10,546,642 |
| 1992 | | 1,324 | 12,553 | 493,597 | 2,091,001 | 841,163 | 279,044 | 16,791 | 64,738 | 3,800,211 |
| 1993 | | | 35,987 | 1,573,486 | 1,374,950 | 528,449 | 130,055 | 47,667 | 185,226 | 3,875,820 |
| 1994 | 8,140 | 160,380 | 53,078 | 1,037,498 | 2,142,198 | 1,363,884 | 320,921 | 22,434 | 335,647 | 5,444,180 |
| 1995 | | 22,162 | 14,195 | 253,827 | 1,166,428 | 1,035,361 | 331,781 | 9,799 | 268,765 | 3,102,318 |
| 1996 | 7,178 | 39,448 | 1,128 | 208,897 | 577,847 | 924,204 | 212,920 | 5,329 | 65,083 | 2,042,034 |
| 1997 | | 21,512 | 88,751 | 1,316,341 | 1,365,809 | 450,663 | 245,349 | 990 | 18,102 | 3,507,517 |
| 1998 | | 12,542 | 75,985 | 633,914 | 900,352 | 650,157 | 307,480 | 12,286 | 58,264 | 2,650,980 |
| 1999 | | | 15,789 | 618,742 | 339,988 | 633,112 | 86,894 | 10,675 | 530,849 | 2,236,049 |
| 2000 | 157,991 | 16,633 | 30,522 | 1,080,310 | 502,923 | 481,995 | 115,682 | 17,376 | 54,388 | 2,457,820 |
| 2001 | | 2,040 | 13,139 | 577,417 | 968,976 | 1,143,695 | 154,077 | 11,714 | 74,232 | 2,945,290 |
| 2002 | 2,127 | 3,331 | 27,220 | 501,111 | 481,765 | 671,669 | 103,914 | 20,038 | 44,584 | 1,855,759 |
| 2003 | | 39,049 | 13,273 | 670,382 | 933,842 | 1,132,992 | 231,612 | 31,055 | 106,918 | 3,159,123 |
| 2004 | | | 38,330 | 577,223 | 975,455 | 1,237,386 | 252,384 | 12,545 | 20,167 | 3,113,490 |
| 2005 | | 6,755 | 170,723 | 2,185,865 | 1,799,399 | 1,539,531 | 127,820 | 8,604 | 52,048 | 5,890,745 |
| 2006 | | 42,558 | 156,141 | 1,470,847 | 921,131 | 3,147,752 | 645,379 | 7,233 | 51,929 | 6,442,970 |