



Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council

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2023 Unmanaged Commercial Landings Report

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Background

The Council requested annual updates on commercial landings of unmanaged species as a follow on action to the Unmanaged Forage Omnibus Amendment. The goal is to monitor for signs of developing unmanaged commercial fisheries in the Mid-Atlantic. New or growing fisheries could develop in response to changing species distributions, changing markets, changes in other fisheries, or for other reasons. The information contained in these annual reports can serve as a high level summary to help determine if further evaluation is needed and if consideration of a management response may be warranted.

The tables on the following pages summarize commercial landings of unmanaged species from Maine through North Carolina. This information was compiled by staff at the Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office (GARFO) Analysis and Program Support Division.

In this context, “unmanaged landings” refers to landings only in locations where the species is not managed at the state or federal level with a possession limit, size limit, seasonal closure, and/or limited access. For example, the blue crab landings in this report represent only those landings in states where blue crab are not managed.

Data

The data in this report were pulled from the Catch Accounting and Monitoring System (CAMS) on May 2, 2023. The data account for state-only permitted dealers in Maine through North Carolina, as well as all dealers and vessels with commercial permits from GARFO, regardless of location.

Virginia Marine Resources Commission staff provided data on landings in their limited access commercial penaeid shrimp fishery off Virginia Beach. This managed component of the fishery is not shown in the totals in this report.

Table 1 shows the top 25 unmanaged species by weight landed during 2016-2022. Table 2 shows the top 25 unmanaged finfish species by weight landed. Table 3 lists landings of Mid-Atlantic Council ecosystem component species (i.e., those species subject to the possession limit implemented through the Unmanaged Forage Omnibus Amendment). Table 4 shows species with increasing rank order of landings every year from 2018 through 2022. Table 5 shows species with increasing landings (though not necessarily increasing rank order) every year from 2018 through 2022.

In all tables, species are listed in descending order of average 2016-2022 landings. Confidential values are not included in the averages.

Changes Since 2022 Report

States provided updates on management measures through 2022. New management measures effective in 2022 and accounted for in this report include measures for tidewater silverside, Atlantic silverside, sand lance/sand eels, bay anchovy, channeled whelk, and knobbed whelk in Connecticut as well as management measures for penaeid shrimp in Maryland.

Previous versions of this report used dealer data from the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program. Due to some differences in how the CAMS data are compiled, the values in this report may differ slightly from previous years. For example, CAMS includes landings reported on Vessel Trip Reports as not sold to dealers (e.g., caught on a commercial trip but retained for personal consumption or used for other purposes). This may result in slightly higher landings than the dealer data in some cases. In addition, a different species coding system is used in CAMS (i.e., “ITIS”) compared to the dealer data (i.e., “nespp3”). This may result in some differences in how some species are categorized. However, any differences between the dealer data and CAMS data are expected to be minor.

Species with Highest or Increasing Unmanaged Commercial Landings

Blue catfish had the highest unmanaged commercial landings each year for the most recent four years (2019-2022) and was in the top 10 species every year from 2015-2022 (Table 1; 2015 is not shown in the tables below due to space constraints; years prior to 2015 were not examined for these rankings). Some states have programs to encourage harvest of this invasive species.

Blue mussels had the highest unmanaged landings each year from 2015-2017 and were in the top 10 species every year from 2015-2022. Other species in the top 10 highest annual landings each year from 2015-2022 include unclassified whelk/conch, unclassified skates (family Rajidae), hagfish, and smooth dogfish (Table 1).

When ranked from lowest to highest unmanaged commercial landings, 12 species had an increasing or stable rank every year during 2018-2022: blue catfish, striped mullet, Atlantic cutlassfish, green crab, spotted sea trout, American pompano, octopus, mummichog, queen triggerfish, marbled grouper, northern quahog, and unclassified sea bass (genus *Centropristis*). Landings of these species are shown in Table 4.

Changes in rank order can indicate species with noteworthy increases in landings relative to other species from one year to the next. However, species with steady but more incremental increases in landings may also be of interest. Spotted sea trout, mummichog, northern quahog and unclassified sea bass (genus *Centropristis*) had both increasing landings each year from 2018 through 2022 (Table 5) and increasing rank order in those years (Table 4). Sugar kelp, false quahog, and razor clams had increasing landings each year during 2018-2022 (Table 5), but not increasing rank order.

Of the species with increasing/stable rank order or increasing landings in recent years, only blue catfish, striped mullet, and Atlantic cutlassfish had landings that exceeded one million pounds in at least one recent year (Table 4). As stated above, blue catfish are an invasive species and some states have programs to encourage harvest. Nearly all the striped mullet landings during 2015-2022 occurred in North Carolina. Most Atlantic cutlassfish landings during 2015-2022 also occurred in North Carolina, with lesser amounts in Virginia. Landings of these two species also occurred in a few other states, but in negligible amounts.

Table 1: Top 25 Unmanaged Species Annual Landings, 2016-2022

Values are in pounds. Cells marked with a 'C' are confidential. Averages do not include confidential data.

Common Name	Code	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Avg
MUSSEL, BLUE	79454	11,578,836	10,480,326	5,642,701	879,771	1,486,785	C	5,276,183	7,241,004
CATFISH, BLUE	163997	4,123,824	5,199,117	5,093,143	5,120,580	4,778,063	6,909,340	7,562,032	5,309,837
ROCKWEED	11329	C	6,166,155	9,228,619	C	C	0	C	5,131,591
SKATE	160845	2,042,793	2,999,086	1,988,486	964,441	743,947	648,005	1,476,392	2,053,960
HAGFISH	159753	1,871,110	1,558,255	C	C	2,248,887	1,321,527	C	1,840,876
WHELK/CONCH	72554	637,991	1,141,947	2,356,279	1,839,724	1,153,229	1,462,175	1,578,521	1,513,706
MULLET, STRIPED	170335	461,742	778,353	832,924	896,851	691,531	1,225,434	1,745,312	905,610
FINFISH	914179	1,326,414	732,296	890,175	735,921	193,148	231,193	199,565	781,627
KING WHITING	169273	603,991	841,548	337,555	512,955	448,161	511,765	664,020	561,477
CUTLASSFISH, ATL	172385	61,042	50,843	158,763	287,906	514,418	1,150,385	1,034,479	430,144
CRAB	98276	106,262	304,579	703,303	925,424	403,624	125,227	22,032	344,258
CONCH	74069	129,909	272,061	182,361	165,369	191,365	361,146	210,789	273,973
SHRIMP, N. WHITE	551680	147,183	C	171,843	C	447,251	582,809	C	269,817
TUNA, LITTLE	172402	222,374	280,381	232,617	252,816	260,400	119,495	148,626	216,221
DORY, JOHN	166284	214,663	250,586	125,259	104,418	64,196	73,821	57,500	137,389
DEALFISH	166342	39,313	25,992	C	159,984	225,264	63,015	250,219	128,866
KELP, SUGAR	11222	C	101,571	99,301	256,646	C	C	C	114,380
FINFISH	161030	15,394	13,411	2,745	666	23,398	457,512	337,473	107,290
CLAM, BLOOD ARC	79342	104,888	212,303	98,894	128,054	97,976	48,079	24,034	103,444
PERCH, WHITE	167678	139,261	79,294	99,327	117,733	87,908	65,936	83,223	100,988
CLAM, N. QUAHOG	81495	180,655	159,961	57,390	23,238	41,186	108,939	44,067	91,661
SCALLOP, BAY	79737	C	C	C	68,775	257,249	C	23,353	87,344
SEA ROBIN	166972	201,521	147,470	80,085	76,732	32,386	20,041	25,503	86,307
HARVESTFISH	172566	115,112	68,791	98,258	74,044	78,428	55,560	35,133	86,305
CRAB, GREEN	98734	23,885	14,964	52,659	64,887	132,675	173,717	142,107	78,971

Table 2: Top 25 Unmanaged Finfish Species Annual Landings, 2016-2022

Values are in pounds. Cells marked with a 'C' are confidential. Averages do not include confidential data.

Common Name	Code	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Avg
CATFISH, BLUE	163997	4,123,824	5,199,117	5,093,143	5,120,580	4,778,063	6,909,340	7,562,032	5,309,837
SKATE	160845	2,042,793	2,999,086	1,988,486	964,441	743,947	648,005	1,476,392	2,053,960
HAGFISH	159753	1,871,110	1,558,255	C	C	2,248,887	1,321,527	C	1,840,876
MULLET, STRIPED	170335	461,742	778,353	832,924	896,851	691,531	1,225,434	1,745,312	905,610
FINFISH	914179	1,326,414	732,296	890,175	735,921	193,148	231,193	199,565	781,627
KING WHITING	169273	603,991	841,548	337,555	512,955	448,161	511,765	664,020	561,477
CUTLASSFISH, ATL	172385	61,042	50,843	158,763	287,906	514,418	1,150,385	1,034,479	430,144
TUNA, LITTLE	172402	222,374	280,381	232,617	252,816	260,400	119,495	148,626	216,221
DORY, JOHN	166284	214,663	250,586	125,259	104,418	64,196	73,821	57,500	137,389
DEALFISH	166342	39,313	25,992	C	159,984	225,264	63,015	250,219	128,866
FINFISH	161030	15,394	13,411	2,745	666	23,398	457,512	337,473	107,290
PERCH, WHITE	167678	139,261	79,294	99,327	117,733	87,908	65,936	83,223	100,988
SEA ROBIN	166972	201,521	147,470	80,085	76,732	32,386	20,041	25,503	86,307
HARVESTFISH	172566	115,112	68,791	98,258	74,044	78,428	55,560	35,133	86,305
PUFFER, NOTHERN	173290	103,185	101,063	70,710	89,427	36,787	14,757	12,009	64,921
EEL, CONGER	161326	54,880	61,693	94,842	55,773	57,676	45,046	62,865	60,408
CUSK	164740	59,349	57,487	50,115	44,143	51,423	70,046	57,377	59,175
HARVESTFISH	172564	94,731	104,202	31,796	25,145	24,489	20,302	37,026	51,209
BONITO, ATLANTIC	172409	48,656	54,953	42,791	64,304	61,024	23,475	13,415	47,423
SILVERSIDE	165984	120,019	37,976	27,934	13,466	33,319	22,085	C	45,155
SILVERSIDE, ATL	165994	32,471	23,132	16,810	68,371	54,914	61,732	73,128	43,976
RIBBONFISH	166339	15,366	11,591	C	49,228	38,855	38,199	73,490	37,591
HERRING	161700	49,567	C	53,235	1,947	95,999	841	2,097	33,948
MULLET	170333	33,541	41,225	9,283	14,529	30,952	65,634	25,870	29,765
SPADEFISH	553178	23,727	35,898	26,012	30,492	26,122	29,756	26,580	27,538

Table 3: MAFMC Ecosystem Component Species Annual Landings, 2016-2022

Values are in pounds. Cells marked with a 'C' are confidential. Averages do not include confidential data.

Common Name	Code	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Avg
SILVERSIDE	165984	120,019	37,976	27,934	13,466	33,319	22,085	C	45,155
SILVERSIDE, ATL	165994	32,471	23,132	16,810	68,371	54,914	61,732	73,128	43,976
HERRING	161700	49,567	C	53,235	1,947	95,999	841	2,097	33,948
HERRING, ATL THREADFIN	161748	C	30,482	11,515	13,432	C	C	C	18,476
HERRING, ROUND	161743	0	C	C	70	844	41,893	8,815	8,604
SQUID	82369	10,940	4,526	C	1,393	2,131	1,981	2,403	3,463
ANCHOVY, BAY	161839	926	C	C	C	C	223	19	389
SAND LANCE	171671	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	0
ARGENTINE	162057	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SQUID	82367	0	C	0	C	C	C	C	0

Table 4: Species with Stable or Increasing Rank of Landings Every Year During 2018-2022

Species were excluded if they had no landings during 2018-2021.

Values are in pounds. Cells marked with a 'C' are confidential. Averages do not include confidential data.

Common Name	Code	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Avg
CATFISH, BLUE	163997	4,123,824	5,199,117	5,093,143	5,120,580	4,778,063	6,909,340	7,562,032	5,309,837
MULLET, STRIPED	170335	461,742	778,353	832,924	896,851	691,531	1,225,434	1,745,312	905,610
CUTLASSFISH, ATL	172385	61,042	50,843	158,763	287,906	514,418	1,150,385	1,034,479	430,144
CRAB, GREEN	98734	23,885	14,964	52,659	64,887	132,675	173,717	142,107	78,971
SEA TROUT, SPOTTED	169239	3,018	4,055	943	1,770	5,379	8,345	9,905	4,774
POMPAÑO, AMERICAN	168602	473	490	1,189	947	1,327	2,206	1,998	1,233
OCTOPUS	82590	762	348	79	129	124	274	277	285
MUMMICHOG	165647	C	C	C	C	C	C	232	232
TRIGGERFISH, QUEEN	173139	30	C	C	77	C	C	241	116
GROUPEr, MARBLED	167744	C	0	32	C	32	80	79	45
CLAM, N. QUAHOG	81496	0	0	0	0	0	C	C	C
UNCLASSIFIED SEABASS	167686	C	0	0	0	0	C	C	C

Table 5: Species Increasing Landings Every Year During 2018-2022

Species were excluded if they had no landings during 2018-2021.

Values are in pounds. Cells marked with a 'C' are confidential. Averages do not include confidential data.

Common Name	Code	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Avg
KELP, SUGAR	11222	C	101,571	99,301	256,646	C	C	C	152,506
SEA TROUT, SPOTTED	169239	3,018	4,055	943	1,770	5,379	8,345	9,905	4,774
MUMMICHOG	165647	C	C	C	C	C	C	232	232
CLAM, N. QUAHOG	81496	0	0	0	0	0	C	C	C
UNCLASSIFIED SEABASS	167686	C	0	0	0	0	C	C	C
CLAM, FALSE QUAHOG	81501	C	0	0	0	0	C	C	C
CLAM, RAZOR	81022	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C