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Virginia Seafood Sustainability

*A report requested by the
Virginia Marine Products Board*

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VIMS Marine Resource Report No. 2015-5

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Virginia Seafood Sustainability¹

Virginia's commercial fisheries operate sustainably under a suite of management tools based upon information received from marine scientists and fishery managers who regularly conduct biological sampling of fish while tracking commercial landings and other gathering of required information. Analyses of fishing effort and overall stock conditions, as well as formulas designed to calculate threshold limits for maintaining sustainable stocks are regularly performed. Restrictions on seasons, size, days at sea, and gear are imposed as needed to achieve management supporting long term biological sustainability.

Virginia's marine fisheries are managed by the Virginia Marine Resources Commission (VMRC). Virginia wild fisheries have plans to sustain harvests and to rebuild stock sizes fallen below scientifically derived target sustainability levels. Producers provide mandatory information on their harvest levels and practices and are subject to operational monitoring to ensure compliance. The VMRC and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) maintain cooperative law enforcement at the harvest and wholesale distribution levels, enforcing regulations which insure the chain of custody of seafood products is documented with harvesters and seafood dealers.

All migratory fish moving through Virginia coastal waters are co-managed with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC). Through interstate fishery management Plans, the ASMFC oversees 22 species of marine fish (including 7 species of shark) and promulgates regulations for those species that all Atlantic Coast states must follow. Fish that primarily inhabit offshore waters (more than 3 miles off the Virginia coast) are managed by the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC), part of the National Marine Fisheries Service. Other states represented in the Mid-Atlantic region include North Carolina, Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New York. The MAFMC currently manages 13 offshore marine fish species, including Atlantic mackerel, butterfish, spiny dogfish, surf clam, tilefish, bluefish, summer flounder, and black sea bass. Highly migratory species, such as swordfish, are managed in federal waters directly by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). Additionally other import products such as the Atlantic Sea Scallop are co-managed by the MAFMC and the New England Fishery Management Council (NEFMC).

¹ Source: Marine Advisory Service, Virginia Institute of Marine Science, College of William & Mary. May 2015.

Summary of Sustainability Measures for Primary Virginia Marine Fishery Products²

Common Name	Scientific Name	Most local FMP	Size Limit	Quota	Overfishing occurring	Gear Limits	Seasonal closures
Black Sea Bass	<i>Centropristis striata</i>	Virginia	Y	Y	N (in Mid-Atl)	Y	N
Bluefish	<i>Pomatomus saltatrix</i>	Virginia		Y	N (in Mid-Atl)	N	N
Butterfish	<i>Peprilus triacanthus</i>	Mid Atlantic			N		
Catfish, Blue	<i>Ictalurus furcatus</i>	N/A	N/ 1 fish > 32"	N	N	N	N
Crab (blue)	<i>Callinectes sapidus</i>	Virginia	Y	Y		Y	Y
Crab (red)	<i>Chaceon quinquegens</i>	Federal			N		
Croaker	<i>Micropogonias undulates</i>	Virginia					
Dogfish (spiny)	<i>Squalus acanthias</i>	Mid Atlantic		Y	N	N	N
Eastern Oyster (aquaculture)	<i>Crassostrea virginica</i>	Virginia BMPS		NA	N	Y	N
Eastern Oyster (wild)	<i>Crassostrea virginica</i>	Virginia	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y
Flounder (summer)	<i>Paralichthys dentatus</i>	Mid Atlantic	Y	Y	N	N	N
Grey Trout (weakfish)	<i>Cynoscion regalis</i>	Virginia	Y	Y		Y	Y
Hard Clam (aquaculture)	<i>Mercenaria mercenaria</i>	Virginia BMPS	Y		N	Y	N
Hard Clam (wild)	<i>Mercenaria mercenaria</i>	None	Y	NA	NA		
Monkfish/Goosefish	<i>Lophius americanus</i>	Mid Atlantic		Y	N	N	N
Scallop (sea)	<i>Placopecten magellanicus</i>	Federal	N	Y	N	Y	N
Spot	<i>Leiostomus xanthurus</i>	Virginia					
Spotted Seatrout/ Speckled Trout	<i>Cynoscion nebulosus</i>	Atlantic States	Y	Y		N	N
Striped Bass	<i>Morone saxatilis</i>	Virginia	Y	Y	N	N	Y
Whelk (channeled)	<i>Busycotypus canaliculatus</i>	None	Y	Y		Y	N

Resources

Black Sea Bass, Bluefish, Butterfish, Dogfish (spiny), Flounder (summer), Monkfish/Goosefish - <http://www.mafmc.org/species/species.htm>

Black Sea Bass, Bluefish, Butterfish, Dogfish (spiny), Flounder (summer), Monkfish/Goosefish - http://mafmc.org/MAFMC_Stock_Status_CURRENT.pdf

Black Sea Bass, Bluefish, Butterfish, Dogfish (spiny), Flounder (summer), Monkfish/Goosefish, Scallop (sea), Crab (red) - http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/domes_fish/FMPS2.htm

Black Sea Bass, Bluefish, Dogfish (spiny), Flounder (summer), Grey Trout (weakfish), Monkfish/Goosefish, Spotted Seatrout/Speckled Trout - <http://www.mrc.state.va.us/regulations/commercialfishingrules.shtm>

Bluefish - <http://www.mrc.state.va.us/regulations/fr450.shtm>

² Sources: N.O.A.A. National Marine Fisheries Service. Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council. Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. Virginia Marine Fisheries Commission.

Bluefish, Croaker, Grey Trout (weakfish), Spot, Crabs (blue), Striped Bass, Eastern Oyster (wild) - <http://www.mrc.state.va.us/fmac/fmoverview.shtm>

Catfish, Blue <http://safinacenter.org/documents/2015/02/blue-catfish-chesapeake-bay-full-species-report-2.pdf>

Crab (blue) - <http://www.mrc.state.va.us/regulations/fr300.shtm>

Crab (blue) - <http://www.mrc.state.va.us/regulations/fr270.shtm>

Crab (red) - <http://www.msc.org/track-a-fishery/certified/north-west-atlantic/Atlantic-deep-sea-red-crab/Atlantic-deep-sea-red-crab>

Crab (red) - <http://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/publications/crd/crd0902/Deep%20Sea%20red%20crab/Deep%20Sea%20red%20crab%20Text.pdf>

Croaker, Grey Trout (weakfish), Spot, Spotted Seatrout/Speckled Trout, Striped Bass - <http://www.asmfc.org/managedSpecies.htm>

Dogfish (spiny) - <http://www.mrc.state.va.us/regulations/fr490.shtm>

Eastern Oyster (wild) - http://www.chesapeakebay.net/content/publications/cbp_12889.pdf

Eastern Oyster (wild) - <http://www.mrc.state.va.us/regulations/er720.shtm>

Eastern Oyster (aquaculture) and Hard Clam (aquaculture) - http://web.vims.edu/adv/aqua/MRR%202008_10.pdf?svr=www

Flounder (summer) - <http://www.mrc.state.va.us/regulations/fr620.shtm>

Grey Trout (weakfish) - <http://www.mrc.state.va.us/regulations/fr380.shtm>

Monkfish/Goosefish - <http://www.mrc.state.va.us/regulations/fr1080.shtm>

Scallop (sea) - http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/fishwatch/species/atl_sea_scallop.htm

Spotted Seatrout/Speckled Trout - <http://www.mrc.state.va.us/regulations/fr280.shtm>

Striped Bass - <http://www.mrc.state.va.us/regulations/fr252.shtm>

Striped Bass - http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/fishwatch/species/atl_striped_bass.htm

Whelk (channeled) - <http://www.mrc.state.va.us/regulations/fr890.shtm>