

# The Biology of Bluefish

## NORTH CAROLINA FISHERIES

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Bluefish are characterized by a blue-green back with silvery sides and belly, a pointed snout and sharp, compressed teeth. They are found along the U.S. Atlantic coast from Maine to Florida. Bluefish are aggressive predators and feed on squid and fish, especially menhaden.

Bluefish can live as long as 12 years, reach up to 39 inches in length and weigh as much as 21 pounds. They migrate seasonally according to changes in water temperature. During winter, large bluefish tend to remain in the mid-Atlantic region and then move south to North Carolina around March. Small bluefish will move farther south during winter. As water temperatures rise, they will migrate northward.

Bluefish are important to both recreational and commercial fishermen. Approximately 60 percent of bluefish are caught with hook and line, which has relatively low bycatch rates. This species is managed by the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. In the Atlantic Ocean, bluefish populations are high and overfishing is not occurring.

For more information on bluefish, go to:

<http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/fishwatch/species/bluefish.htm>.

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