



Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council

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2022 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 Species 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 is not managed.

Data

The data were accessed from the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program Data Warehouse. The data account for state-only permitted dealers located in Maine through North Carolina, as well as all dealers with GARFO permits, regardless of location.

Table 1 contains the top 25 unmanaged species by weight landed during 2015-2021. Table 2 contains 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 Species Omnibus Amendment). Table 4 shows species with increasing rank order of landings every year from 2018 through 2021. Table 5 shows species with increasing landing (though not necessarily increasing rank order) every year from 2018 through 2021.

In all tables, species are listed in descending order of average 2015-2021 landings. Confidential values are not counted in the averages.

Changes Since 2021 Report

This report does not include aquaculture landings, as recorded in the dealer data. Previous versions of the report did not filter out aquaculture landings.

States provided updates on management measures through 2021. This required only two changes to the report compared to previous years. Specifically, sand lance landings in Rhode Island in 2021 were filtered out to account for a possession limit which became effective in 2021.

In addition, landings in Virginia's limited access penaeid shrimp fishery were also filtered out. Virginia has allowed an experimental penaeid shrimp fishery in recent years and developed regulations for a limited access commercial fishery off Virginia Beach, which became effective in August 2021. The limited access fishery includes gear, season, and licensing requirements. The Eastern Shore area remains an experimental fishery given low participation and limited data. Most penaeid shrimp landings in Virginia are of white shrimp and to a lesser extent exotic tiger shrimp and brown shrimp.

Maryland developed a commercial permit for penaeid shrimp, with associated gear restrictions and reporting requirements. These requirements became effective in March 2022 and will be reflected in future updates to this report.

Species with Highest or Increasing Unmanaged Commercial Landings

Blue catfish had the highest unmanaged commercial landings in 2019-2021 (Table 1). Some states have programs to encourage harvest of this invasive species.

Mussels had the highest unmanaged landings each year from 2015-2018. Conchs, hagfish, and striped mullet were all in the top five species each year during 2019-2021 (Table 1).

When ranked from lowest to highest unmanaged commercial landings, seven species had an increasing or stable rank every year during 2018-2021: blue catfish, gray triggerfish, Atlantic cutlassfish, mullets, pigfish, cunner, and houndfish. Landings of these species are summarized in Table 4.

Virginia has discussed the potential for managing gray triggerfish but has not yet determined their preferred path forward.

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. Atlantic cutlassfish, mullets, and houndfish had both increasing landings each year from 2018 through 2021 (Table 5) and increasing rank order in those years (Table 4). Sugar kelp, green crab (an invasive species), sea urchins, razor clams, blackfin tuna, shrimp (NK), and bank sea bass had increasing landings each year during 2018-2021 (Table 5), but not increasing rank order.

Table 1: Top 25 Unmanaged Species Annual Landings, 2015-2021

Report Run on: 2022-05-10. Values are in pounds.

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

Common Name	Code	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Avg
MUSSELS	781	15,342,427	11,578,754	10,480,326	5,642,701	879,771	1,486,785	3,394,199	6,972,138
CATFISH, BLUE	67	3,692,594	4,123,824	5,199,117	5,093,143	5,120,580	4,778,063	6,238,031	4,892,193
CONCHS	775	2,639,808	1,057,427	1,141,947	2,356,279	1,839,724	1,152,292	6,091,239	2,325,531
HAGFISH	150	2,204,603	1,871,105	1,558,251	C	C	C	C	1,877,986
QUAHOG	748	3,113,556	3,028,273	159,961	57,390	23,238	41,186	109,257	933,266
CRAB, BLUE	700	2,580,077	3,450,444	0	0	0	0	0	861,503
STRIPED MULLET	235	612,729	461,742	778,353	832,924	896,851	691,529	1,225,428	785,651
OTHER FISH	526	1,810,527	1,291,616	656,646	844,650	569,152	97,582	149,204	774,197
WHITING, KING	197	564,373	582,919	814,345	327,744	487,377	435,127	446,181	522,581
CUTLASSFISH, ATL	99	183,313	61,042	50,840	158,763	287,906	514,328	1,150,385	343,797
CRUSTACEANS NK	834	0	160,171	C	170,342	527,696	447,931	582,809	314,825
MOLLUSKS NK	804	678,936	129,909	272,061	183,138	165,369	191,365	211,972	261,821
TUNA, LITTLE	468	212,072	220,244	279,355	232,494	246,982	259,370	119,138	224,236
KELP, SUGAR	833	0	C	101,571	99,301	256,646	C	594,875	210,479
HARVEST FISH	165	237,082	209,841	172,931	130,037	99,184	102,916	75,862	146,836
JOHN DORY	188	206,857	209,695	246,233	122,198	102,405	61,267	69,352	145,430
CLAM, BLOODARC	743	113,270	104,888	212,229	98,894	128,054	97,976	47,894	114,744
PERCH, WHITE	506	135,060	139,261	79,294	99,326	117,733	87,888	62,012	102,939
SEA ROBINS	341	122,316	206,341	149,469	77,456	70,893	31,546	17,804	96,546
OYSTERS	789	0	44,409	79,442	105,637	141,905	125,238	138,884	90,788
CATFISH(SEA)	69	122,786	94,736	C	50,650	C	C	C	89,391
CRAB, ROCK	712	376,418	57,746	41,900	43,332	10,989	13,706	6,174	78,609
PUFFER, NORTHERN	429	91,413	102,934	100,928	70,606	88,374	36,665	12,188	71,873
CRAB, GREEN	708	26,873	23,849	14,888	52,592	64,727	130,606	173,598	69,590
SHRIMP (PENAEID)¹	738	C	C	C	12,629	44,529	218,195	544	68,974

¹ The “species landed lbs” field in the dealer data was used for this species. “Species live lbs” was used for all other species.

Table 2: Top 25 Unmanaged Finfish Species Annual Landings, 2015-2021

Report Run on: 2022-05-10. Values are in pounds.

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

Common Name	Code	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Avg
CATFISH, BLUE	67	3,692,594	4,123,824	5,199,117	5,093,143	5,120,580	4,778,063	6,238,031	4,892,193
HAGFISH	150	2,204,603	1,871,105	1,558,251	C	C	C	C	1,877,986
STRIPED MULLET	235	612,729	461,742	778,353	832,924	896,851	691,529	1,225,428	785,651
OTHER FISH	526	1,810,527	1,291,616	656,646	844,650	569,152	97,582	149,204	774,197
WHITING, KING	197	564,373	582,919	814,345	327,744	487,377	435,127	446,181	522,581
CUTLASSFISH, ATL	99	183,313	61,042	50,840	158,763	287,906	514,328	1,150,385	343,797
TUNA, LITTLE	468	212,072	220,244	279,355	232,494	246,982	259,370	119,138	224,236
HARVEST FISH	165	237,082	209,841	172,931	130,037	99,184	102,916	75,862	146,836
JOHN DORY	188	206,857	209,695	246,233	122,198	102,405	61,267	69,352	145,430
PERCH, WHITE	506	135,060	139,261	79,294	99,326	117,733	87,888	62,012	102,939
SEA ROBINS	341	122,316	206,341	149,469	77,456	70,893	31,546	17,804	96,546
CATFISH (SEA)	69	122,786	94,736	C	50,650	C	C	C	89,391
PUFFER, NORTHERN	429	91,413	102,934	100,928	70,606	88,374	36,665	12,188	71,873
CUSK	96	82,397	58,323	56,440	48,825	42,774	50,775	68,874	58,344
EEL, CONGER	116	44,874	47,459	57,568	90,772	49,819	54,939	42,233	55,381
BONITO	33	69,033	47,030	51,819	41,514	63,544	59,969	22,401	50,759
HERRING (NK)	167	C	49,567	C	C	54,697	95,999	823	50,272
SILVERSIDE, NK	363	61,286	120,019	37,976	28,314	13,482	33,319	16,528	44,418
SILVERSIDE, ATL	362	20,810	32,470	23,132	16,805	68,371	54,914	61,732	39,748
RIBBONFISH	98	36,573	15,376	11,615	6,459	49,869	39,601	38,890	28,340
SPADEFISH	381	21,664	23,690	35,844	25,988	30,485	26,122	29,756	27,650
MULLETS	234	10,480	15,408	28,951	7,864	11,737	30,720	42,516	21,097
HERRING, ATL THREAD	174	C	C	30,482	11,515	13,432	C	C	18,476
TUNA, BLACKFIN	464	14,834	11,361	15,255	15,882	19,985	19,996	30,837	18,307
POMPAÑO, COMMON	272	13,975	17,301	11,041	13,364	20,700	9,204	11,063	13,807

Table 3: MAFMC Ecosystem Component Species Annual Landings, 2015-2021

Report Run on: 2022-05-10. Values are in pounds.

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Other ecosystem component species had no reported commercial landings during 2015-2021.

Common Name	Code	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Avg
MOLLUSKS NK	804	678,936	129,909	272,061	183,138	165,369	191,365	211,972	261,821
HERRING (NK)	167	C	49,567	C	C	54,697	95,999	823	50,272
SILVERSIDE, NK	363	61,286	120,019	37,976	28,314	13,482	33,319	16,528	44,418
SILVERSIDE, ATL	362	20,810	32,470	23,132	16,805	68,371	54,914	61,732	39,748
HERRING, ATL THREAD	174	C	C	30,482	11,515	13,432	C	C	18,476
HERRING, ROUND	166	0	0	C	C	70	844	41,824	8,548
SQUIDS, LOLIGINIDAE	803	659	10,940	4,526	C	1,393	1,936	1,981	3,573
EEL, SAND (LAUNCE)	206	3,367	C	C	C	C	0	C	1,684
BAY ANCHOVY	6	C	C	C	C	C	C	223	223
ARGENTINE	171	C	0	0	0	0	0	0	C

Table 4: Species with Stable or Increasing Rank of Landings Every Year During 2019-2021

Report Run on: 2022-05-10. Values are in pounds.

Cells marked with a 'C' are confidential. Confidential data were accounted for in the rankings, but not in the averages shown below.

Common Name	Code	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Avg
CATFISH, BLUE	67	3,692,594	4,123,824	5,199,117	5,093,143	5,120,580	4,778,063	6,238,031	4,892,193
TRIGGERFISH, GRAY	457	0	0	C	898	2,121	1,456	2,461	1,156
CUTLASSFISH, ATL	99	183,313	61,042	50,840	158,763	287,906	514,328	1,150,385	343,797
MULLETS	234	10,480	15,408	28,951	7,864	11,737	30,720	42,516	21,097
PIGFISH	258	8,153	2,754	4,585	3,961	8,627	4,690	10,922	6,242
CUNNER	93	4,692	3,863	4,516	3,424	7,220	3,523	5,319	4,651
HOUNDFISH	20	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C

Table 5: Species Increasing Landings Every Year During 2018-2021

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Common Name	Code	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Avg
CUTLASSFISH, ATL	99	183,313	61,042	50,840	158,763	287,906	514,328	1,150,385	343,797
KELP, SUGAR	833	0	C	101,571	99,301	256,646	C	594,875	210,479
CRAB, GREEN	708	26,873	23,849	14,888	52,592	64,727	130,606	173,598	69,590
SEA URCHINS	805	49,941	56,548	C	23,984	26,044	28,370	36,145	36,839
CLAM, RAZOR	760	36,453	C	C	C	C	C	C	36,453
MULLETS	234	10,480	15,408	28,951	7,864	11,737	30,720	42,516	21,097
TUNA, BLACKFIN	464	14,834	11,361	15,255	15,882	19,985	19,996	30,837	18,307
SHRIMP (NK)	735	C	38,838	74,123	C	C	C	C	56,481
SEA BASS, BANK	328	0	0	0	0	390	1,017	2,503	559
HOUNDFISH	20	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C