



## Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council

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# 2022 Unmanaged Commercial Landings Report

## June 2022 Council Meeting

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

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

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

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

Common Name	Code	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Avg
<b>MOLLUSKS NK</b>	804	678,936	129,909	272,061	183,138	165,369	191,365	211,972	261,821
<b>HERRING (NK)</b>	167	C	49,567	C	C	54,697	95,999	823	50,272
<b>SILVERSIDE, NK</b>	363	61,286	120,019	37,976	28,314	13,482	33,319	16,528	44,418
<b>SILVERSIDE, ATL</b>	362	20,810	32,470	23,132	16,805	68,371	54,914	61,732	39,748
<b>HERRING, ATL THREAD</b>	174	C	C	30,482	11,515	13,432	C	C	18,476
<b>HERRING, ROUND</b>	166	0	0	C	C	70	844	41,824	8,548
<b>SQUIDS, LOLIGINIDAE</b>	803	659	10,940	4,526	C	1,393	1,936	1,981	3,573
<b>EEL, SAND (LAUNCE)</b>	206	3,367	C	C	C	C	0	C	1,684
<b>BAY ANCHOVY</b>	6	C	C	C	C	C	C	223	223
<b>ARGENTINE</b>	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
<b>CATFISH, BLUE</b>	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
<b>TRIGGERFISH, GRAY</b>	457	0	0	C	898	2,121	1,456	2,461	1,156
<b>CUTLASSFISH, ATL</b>	99	183,313	61,042	50,840	158,763	287,906	514,328	1,150,385	343,797
<b>MULLETS</b>	234	10,480	15,408	28,951	7,864	11,737	30,720	42,516	21,097
<b>PIGFISH</b>	258	8,153	2,754	4,585	3,961	8,627	4,690	10,922	6,242
<b>CUNNER</b>	93	4,692	3,863	4,516	3,424	7,220	3,523	5,319	4,651
<b>HOUNDFISH</b>	20	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C

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

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