

Distribution and Abundance of Juvenile Striped Bass (*Morone saxatilis*) in Albemarle Sound, North Carolina

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ABSTRACT: Juvenile trawl surveys to determine year class strength of striped bass have been conducted in Albemarle Sound, North Carolina, for many years but little emphasis has been placed on habitat utilization, and how habitats may change over the season during growth. In 1996, water quality and fish abundance data were collected over a five-month period at selected locations throughout Albemarle Sound. As summer progressed, abundance of Age 0 striped bass decreased in the western sound and increased in the eastern sound suggesting an eastward migration. Fish in the eastern portion of the sound were larger than western counterparts. There was no apparent influence of water temperature on fish abundance, but dissolved oxygen, turbidity (secchi visibility), salinity and submerged aquatic vegetation appear to play a role in site selection by juvenile striped bass.