

Bluefish (*Pomatomus saltatrix*)***Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) for Bluefish:***

- **Eggs:** 1) North of Cape Hatteras, EFH is pelagic waters found over the Continental Shelf (from the coast out to the limits of the EEZ) at mid-shelf depths, from Montauk Point, NY south to Cape Hatteras in the highest 90% of the area where bluefish eggs were collected in the MARMAP surveys. 2) South of Cape Hatteras, EFH is 100% of the pelagic waters over the Continental Shelf (from the coast out to the eastern wall of the Gulf Stream) through Key West, Florida at mid-shelf depths. Bluefish eggs are generally not collected in estuarine waters and thus there is no EFH designation inshore. Generally, bluefish eggs are collected between April through August in temperatures greater than 64 °F (18 °C) and normal shelf salinities (>31 ppt).
- **Larvae:** 1) North of Cape Hatteras, EFH is pelagic waters found over the Continental Shelf (from the coast out to the limits of the EEZ) most commonly above 49 ft (15 m), from Montauk Point, New York south to Cape Hatteras, in the highest 90% of the area where bluefish larvae were collected during the MARMAP surveys. 2) South of Cape Hatteras, EFH is 100% of the pelagic waters greater than 45 feet over the Continental Shelf (from the coast out to the eastern wall of the Gulf Stream) through Key West, Florida. 3) EFH also includes the "slope sea" and Gulf Stream between latitudes 29° 00 N and 40° 00 N. Bluefish larvae are not generally collected inshore so there is not EFH designation inshore for larvae. Generally, bluefish larvae are collected April through September in temperatures greater than 64 °F (18 °C) in normal shelf salinities (>30 ppt).
- **Juveniles:** 1) North of Cape Hatteras, EFH is pelagic waters found over the Continental Shelf (from the coast out to the limits of the EEZ) from Nantucket Island, Massachusetts south to Cape Hatteras, in the highest 90% of the area where juvenile bluefish are collected in the NEFSC trawl survey. 2) South of Cape Hatteras, EFH is 100% of the pelagic waters over the Continental Shelf (from the coast out to the eastern wall of the Gulf Stream) through Key West, Florida. 3) EFH also includes the "slope sea" and Gulf Stream between latitudes 29° 00 N and 40° 00 N. 4) Inshore, EFH is all major estuaries between Penobscot Bay, Maine and St. Johns River, Florida. Generally juvenile bluefish occur in North Atlantic estuaries from June through October, Mid-Atlantic estuaries from May through October, and South Atlantic estuaries March through December, within the "mixing" and "seawater" zones (Nelson *et al.* 1991, Jury *et al.* 1994, Stone *et al.* 1994). Distribution of juveniles by temperature, salinity, and depth over the continental shelf is undescribed (Fahay 1998).
- **Adults:** 1) North of Cape Hatteras, EFH is the pelagic waters found over the Continental Shelf (from the coast out to the limits of the EEZ), from Cape Cod Bay, Massachusetts south to Cape Hatteras, in the highest 90% of the area where adult bluefish were collected in the NEFSC trawl survey. 2) South of Cape Hatteras, EFH is 100% of the pelagic waters over the Continental Shelf (from the coast out to the eastern wall of the Gulf Stream) through Key West, Florida. 3) Inshore, EFH is all major estuaries between Penobscot Bay, Maine and St. Johns River, Florida. Adult bluefish are found in North Atlantic estuaries from June through October, Mid-Atlantic estuaries from April through October, and in South Atlantic estuaries from May through January in the "mixing" and "seawater" zones (Nelson *et al.* 1991, Jury *et al.* 1994, Stone *et al.* 1994). Bluefish adults are highly migratory and distribution varies seasonally and according to the size of the individuals comprising the schools. Bluefish generally found in normal shelf salinities (> 25 ppt).