

Bay Anchovy



The bay anchovy is a species whose numbers are decreasing at an alarming rate. These fish are typically one of the most abundant species in the Delaware estuary and are a primary food source for many fish inhabiting the bay, including weakfish, bluefish and striped bass. The numbers caught in this survey peaked in 1998, with an average of 254 fish per tow. Numbers have been decreasing ever since. The lowest average was recorded in 2006, with catches averaging 48 fish per tow. The potential impact from this decrease has yet to be recognized, but a recent decline in the Delaware Bay's weakfish population may be an indication of a food chain imbalance within this estuary. The average number per tow in 2010 was 138 fish, which is the largest average since 2004. The 2011 average dropped again to 72 fish per tow, which is still higher than the series low in 2006. The Division will continue to conduct research and analyze data to assess the population status.

