

STRIPED MULLET, *MULLUS BARBATUS PONTICUS* ESSIPOV

The striped (red) mullet is a widespread fish species on the Black Sea shelf. It is a warm-water and commercially valuable fish species for the inshore fishery. Two types of striped mullet exist: "sedentary" and "migratory". The former inhabits primarily the south-eastern part of the Black Sea (Batumi), making only local migrations. The second type undertakes migrations in spring to the Kertch Strait, with a considerable portion of its stock entering the Sea of Azov. In autumn it returns to its wintering grounds along the Crimean and northern Caucasian coast.

The major part of the catch is based on the migratory north Caucasian stock fished in the area from the Kertch Strait to Adler and in the Sea of Azov. Two peaks in the catches, in June-July and in October-November are recorded.

During the 1940s and 1950s the migratory striped mullet abundance was high, yielding significant annual catches of 1 600-1 700 tonnes. From the late 1960s till now, a sharp decline in the species' biomass occurred along the former USSR coasts, and the catches dropped to 40-690 tonnes (the former USSR catches) (Table 94). During the period 1925-1962 Bulgarian catches ranged from 0.0 to 64.0 tonnes (Konstantinov, 1964; Ivanov, 1964).

The strong anthropogenic impact and the outburst of the ctenophore *Mnemiopsis* must in part be the cause of weak 1988-1991 year classes. In the past few years the combined biomass of the two types on the former USSR shelf was estimated at 1 000 tonnes

**TABLE 94.** Striped mullet catches in the Black Sea during the period 1967-1992 (in tonnes)

Years	former USSR	Turkey	Year	former USSR	Turkey
1967	100.0	1625.6	1981	440.0	2047.0
1968	100.0	1148.2	1982	400.0	2436.0
1969	200.0	1547.9	1983	260.0	1915.0
1970	100.0	2203.1	1984	690.0	1812.0
1971	100.0	342.1	1985	100.0	3381.0
1972	100.0	1037.0	1986	420.0	3667.0
1973	-	1161.1	1987	290.0	3528.0
1974	100.0	675.2	1988	150.0	3601.0
1975	200.0	702.7	1989	460.0	5641.0
1976	60.0	611.2	1990	240.0	2344.0
1977	50.0	920.4	1991	60.0	2712.0
1978	150.0	1576.5	1992	40.0	2214.0
1979	210.0	650.3	Average	199.2	1973.2
1980	160.0	1803.0	%	9.17	90.83