



BAY ANCHOVY

Anchoa mitchilli

Description:

- ◆ silvery forage fish
- ◆ short head and snout with long jaw
- ◆ single dorsal fin above or just before anal fin
- ◆ faint silvery stripe down sides of fish

Size:

- ◆ up to 4 inches

Range:

- ◆ Gulf of Maine to Florida
- ◆ Gulf of Mexico to Yucatan

Facts:

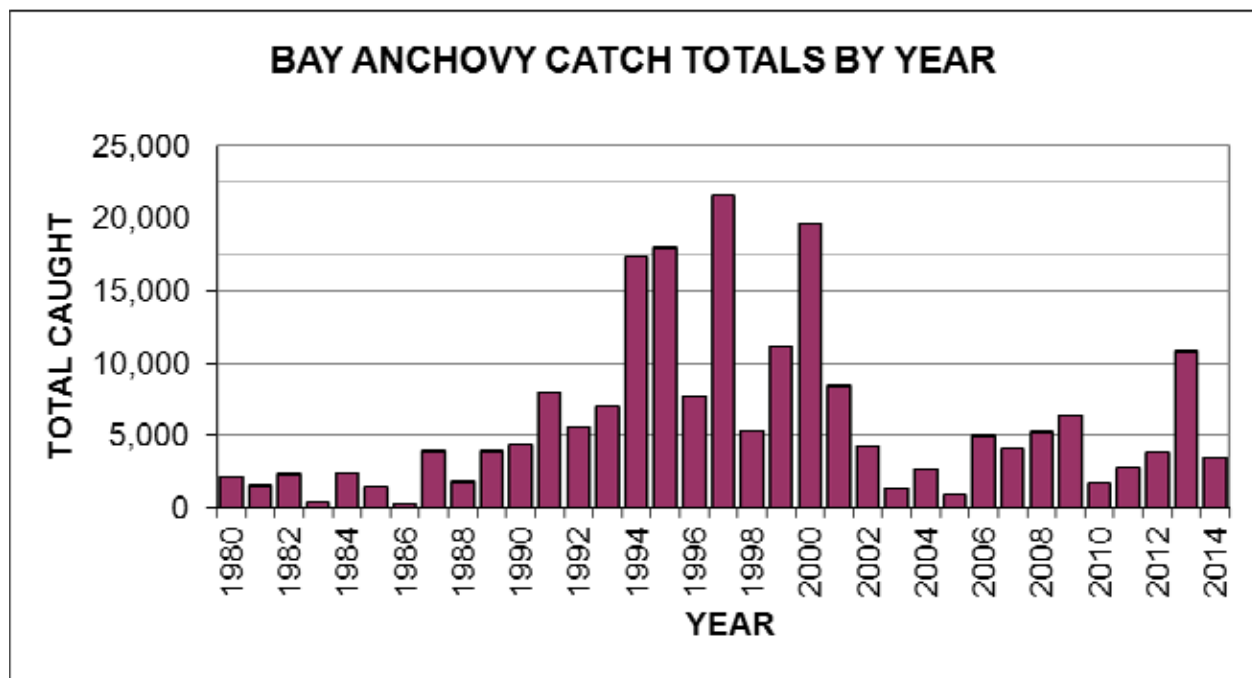
- ◆ spawn in late spring and summer
- ◆ prefer shallow waters in bays and estuaries
- ◆ live up to 3 years
- ◆ tolerant of wide ranges of temperature and salinity

The bay anchovy is a species whose numbers have been decreasing at an alarming rate. These fish are usually one of the most abundant species in the Delaware estuary and are

a primary food source for many fish inhabiting the river, including weakfish, bluefish and striped bass. The average number caught per seine haul in this survey has been declining since 2000. Bay anchovy data correlates well with data from New Jersey Fish and Wildlife's [Finfish Trawl Survey](#) in Delaware Bay, which also indicates a bay anchovy decline since 1998.

The potential impact from this decrease has yet to be recognized, but the recent decline in the Delaware Bay's weakfish population may be an indication of a food chain imbalance within this estuary. Continued monitoring of the estuary's bay anchovy population is important. Biologists will continue to conduct research and analyze data to assess the status of the anchovy population and relationships to prey fish populations.

For more information about forage fish in the Delaware River, please read the 2009 Marine Digest article, [Importance of Forage Fish in the Delaware River](#). (pdf, 1.3mb)



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