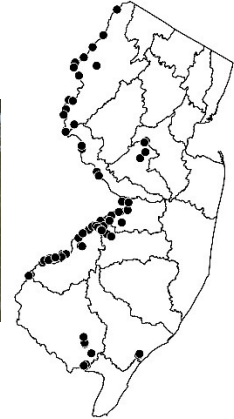


# American Shad (*Alosa sapidissima*)

Historical Presence	Abundance	Life History	Management
Native	Common	Anadromous	Sportfish/Conservation

## General Information

A shad species similar in appearance to Hickory Shad, American Shad have a non-projecting lower jaw, a cheek deeper than wide, and are distinctly narrower ventrally. Once historically abundant, it faced significant declines due to a combination of fishing pressure and damming of coastal rivers resulting in loss of spawning habitat. Increased pollution control and dam removals across its range in the past 30 years has reversed the decline in some areas. In NJ, fishing for American Shad is closed year-round except in the Delaware River.



## Geographic Range

Atlantic Coast from Sand Hill R., Labrador, to St. Johns R., FL. Introduced to Sacramento R., CA, and has spread along Pacific Coast from Kamchatka, Russia, to Todos Los Santos Bay, Mexico. Within NJ, primarily found in the Delaware R. and its major tributaries.

## Habitat Description

Pelagic schooling in open ocean, ascends large coastal rivers during spawning migrations.

## Optimum Habitat Requirements

Dissolved Oxygen	> 4 mg/L (river)
Temperature	7 – 13 °C (ocean)
pH	
Turbidity	
Current	0.3 – 0.7 m/s (river)

## Diet

Fry	Zooplankton
Juveniles	Zooplankton, crustaceans, insects
Adults	Zooplankton, algae, ostracods, insects, fish eggs, mollusks, fishes

**Notes:** Adults feeding during spawning run is considered sporadic.

## Reproduction

Time of Year	March – May	Age Males Mature	3 – 5
Temperature Range	14 – 24.5 °C	Age Females Mature	4 – 5
Water Depth	0.45 – 4 m	Nest	None
Substrate	Sand/silt/muck/gravel/boulders	Egg Type	Semi-demersal
Time of Day	Night/daylight	Parental Care	None
Critical pH	5.5 – 9.5	Days to Hatching	5 – 9
Velocity Range	0.3 – 0.9 m/s	Oxygen Level	> 5 mg/L

**Notes:** Iteroparous (multiple spawns) in northern extent of range, semelparous (die after spawning) south of NC. Return to natal (birthplace) river to spawn.

## Size and Growth

Growth and maturity vary geographically and between sexes. Females larger. Maximum longevity is 10 years of age. Adults typically 350-550 mm up to a maximum of 750 mm.