

WEEKLY UPDATE: 9/22/2017
NORTH CAROLINA FISHERIES ASSOCIATION
"Serving the Commercial Fishing Families of North Carolina since 1952"
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FISHERIES REFORM ACT SUMMIT NEXT WEEK

Next Wednesday, September 27th, there will be a summit about the Fisheries Reform Act, sponsored by Outer Banks Catch. It's a discussion about the history of the FRA of 1997, how it came about and will include a discussion about the good points and the bad ones. The forum will be moderated by Todd Miller of the NC Coastal Federation.

The event will take place at the Civic Center in Washington NC from 10 till 3. Coffee and donuts at 9:30 and lunch will be provided. There is a \$10 registration fee which covers lunch.

Panelists include but are not limited to Jess Hawkins, fisheries biologist who was then liaison to the MFC; Bill Ross, former Secretary of DENR; Bill Holman, then representing environmental organizations and later director of Clean Water Trust Fund; BJ Copeland, then Sea Grant director; Bob Lucas, then MFC and Moratorium Steering Committee chairman; Susan West, commercial fishing activist and member of Steering Committee; and Anne Deaton, DMF Habitat Protection Section chief.

To register, go to this link:

<https://www.outerbankscatch.com/fisheries-refrom-act-summit/>

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE:

The General Assembly is scheduled to come back October 4th.

MENHADEN HEARING ON WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27th

This coming Wednesday, September 27th, the Division of Marine Fisheries will conduct a hearing on Draft Amendment 3 to the Menhaden Fishery Management Plan. The fishery is managed by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, or ASMFC.

North Carolina no longer has a fishery for the larger scale reduction fishery as the state legislature banned the purse seining of menhaden in 2012 upon the recommendation of the Marine Fisheries Commission. The last remaining menhaden reduction plant in North Carolina, Beaufort Fisheries, ceased operations in 2005. Omega Protein operates its facility in Reedville, Virginia.

The science behind menhaden management indicates that the current menhaden quota could be increased substantially with no adverse effect on the stocks. It's the politics of menhaden management that causes the problem. The management agencies are very quick to reduce quotas, drastically at times, if the science indicates a problem with any fisheries stock. However, they can be very, very slow to increase quotas even when the science shows that quotas can/should be increased. In the case of menhaden, the science indicates that the quota could be increased by 20% even by very conservative standards.

While it's true that North Carolina does not currently have a reduction fishery, we have participated in that fishery for decades. Years ago in addition to Beaufort Fisheries, there were plants in our state operated by AMPRO and Standard Products. The menhaden quote should be increased substantially and likewise North Carolina's share of the quota due to the need for bait. Our state should not be required to import its bait for the crab and other fisheries from other states.

If you are a fisherman that fishes for bait or interested in participating in the bait fishery or if you are a crabber that relies on an ample supply of bait at a reasonable cost, you should plan to attend the menhaden hearing next Wednesday, and request that our ASMFC representatives work hard to increase the menhaden quota substantially and assure that we have a bait fishery!

The hearing begins at 6:00pm on Wednesday, September 27th, at the Division of Marine Fisheries Central office on Arendell Street in Morehead City.

CALENDAR

Sept. 25 – 29; South Atlantic Council meeting; Charleston, SC

Sept. 27; 6:00pm; Menhaden hearing; DMF Central Ofc; Morehead City

Oct. 10 – 12; Mid Atlantic Council meeting; Long Island NY