

WEEKLY UPDATE: 8/22/2016
NORTH CAROLINA FISHERIES ASSOCIATION
"Serving the Commercial Fishing Families of North Carolina since 1952"
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SYNOPSIS OF LAST WEEK'S MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION MEETING
from David Bush:

- **Sea Turtle Advisory Committee:** Sammy directed that the committee be dissolved, stating that folks have a difficult time in attending all of the meetings of the different committees, and that existing committees such as the Northern and Southern Finfish Committees can take on this issue.
- **SCFL:** Standard Commercial Fishing License Eligibility Report/Set Eligibility Pool Cap: Set at 100. The average over recent years is well below 100, and the additional licenses required by those transferring from the shellfish endorsement, have already begun applying, and they still have a while before those regulations will require them to have a SCFL. It is not expected to have a negative impact, since the cap has rarely been met over the last 8 years.
- **Striped Bass:** Central Southern Management Area Striped Bass Meeting Update: Presentation given by Charleton Godwin. Fin clippings sent to South Carolina for genetic analysis in October and should have some answers by November. Said that there was little natural reproduction, but could not point to a specific issue. They were stocking 100,000 fish in each river each year. Sammy mentioned that over this many years of stocking in the Cape Fear with no commercial fishing pressure, they should be pretty thick; however, they are not. So the low numbers should not automatically be attributed to fishing pressure. Chuck suggested a 50% reduction in both sectors on striped bass in other rivers, but Sammy argued that based on estimates of hook and release mortality as high as 70%-80% in warmer months would effectively equate to a gillnet ban due to dead discards. Chuck said he was not asking for that, but Sammy said that is how it would end up. Mike Wicker mentioned water quality was a key issue here that should not be overlooked, including oxygenation issues, and water temps from outlets. He suggested the division look into oxygenators and move the FMP up. They concluded by agreeing to move the FMP up.
- **Director's Report:** Braxton Davis provided his report, which included the following:
 - **Poundnets:** Concerns have been raised by Phillip Reynolds, the commission's counsel, regarding the commission's authority to require daily landings reports through a Flounder Pound Net Dealer Permit. The department's Office of General Counsel agrees that the concerns are valid based on statutory direction that seafood dealers must report landings on a monthly basis. Based on that guidance, the division has rescinding Proclamation M-14-2016 requiring the dealer permit. Any dealers who have already been issued the permit will be notified that it is no longer valid. The revised approach will be to require all pound net permit holders to report daily flounder pound net landings by the following business day, beginning Sept. 1, 2016, and to submit a minimum of weekly reports in the case of zero landings (in accordance with 15A NCAC 03J .0505 (c), daily reporting may be a condition of the permit for a pound net set for fisheries managed under a quota). The division will issue new pound net permit condition forms outlining the specific reporting requirements for the pound net flounder fishery under the total allowable landings (quota) specified by the commission. These new permit conditions, along with a cover letter, will be sent to all pound net permit holders that have had flounder landings in the past five years, and to any new permit holders in 2016. Pound net permit holders will need to sign and return a form to the division stating they have read and understand the permit condition requirements, including daily reporting whenever they land flounder. At last count, there were approximately 87 pound net permit holders participating in the pound net flounder fishery; this number may be slightly higher depending on the number of new permit holders in 2016. This approach will not alter the six monitoring groups previously established. The permit holder will be responsible for reporting all pound net flounder landings, whether they or their designees landed the fish. The division will reschedule two public outreach workshops in late August to explain the reporting requirements and process to fishermen and answer any questions they may have.

- **Landings Corrections:** During the development of the recent flounder pound net quota, several commercial fishermen were concerned that the pound net harvest was under reported resulting in a smaller quota. Some commercial fishermen reported that landings of flounder from their trips were incorrectly recorded as being from gill net gear and not pound net gear. Staff sent out 163 certified mail letters on May 27, 2016. Shortly after the letters were mailed and delivered, staff started receiving calls from fishermen asking about the letter and how they needed to proceed. Fishermen were instructed to review the data mailed to them and send any potential corrections to Trip Ticket staff. Some fishermen visited their seafood dealers about corrections and received signed letters from the dealers attesting the use of flounder pound nets and gill nets. Several fishermen worked with the Trip Ticket Program's commercial port agents to review the data and determine the appropriate corrections. Corrections were also verified with Marine Patrol officers who were familiar with the fishing practices of many of the fishermen as well as confirmed with fisheries management biological sampling staff. Once corrections were identified, data were edited by Trip Ticket staff. The Trip Ticket Program received the last set of corrections from fishermen on July 1, 2016. Corrections primarily focused on gear codes changes (e.g., gill nets being corrected to poundnets) and some incorrect license numbers. In total, the division received corrections from 16 commercial fishermen. The corrections resulted in an overall increase of 4 percent for the total southern flounder pound net quota. Quota Monitoring Group 2 saw the largest increase in the quota when looking at specific groups, increasing by 22 percent. Quota Monitoring Group 6 also saw a slight increase of 7 percent. Quota Monitoring Group 5 saw a very slight decline in their quota amount of roughly 1 percent. There were no changes for Quota Monitoring Groups 1 or 4.
- **Fisheries Workshop:** Braxton also informed the Commission of the work by NCFA to develop and deliver a fisheries workshop. He said NCFA has the support of the division, and he was very glad to see efforts by some to make things better.
- **Other Motions Approved:**
 - Motion by Alison to accept the FMP schedule as presented by DMF with the exception of moving the blue crab FMP Review up to 2016-2017, to include a review of 2016.
 - Motion by Janet Rose to move up the Southern Flounder FMP Review to begin as soon as a valid stock assessment is available.
 - Motion by Mike Wicker to ask the commission chairman to send a letter (based on provided draft template) to the ASMFC Weakfish Management Boards to address weakfish age 0 bycatch mortality in the Pamlico Sound NC shrimp fishery during their next assessment
 - Motion by Chuck to ask the DMF to develop an issue paper evaluating the need for state management of false albacore, and send it to the advisory committee to provide feedback to the commission by 2017.

For complete details, the Reports can be found at: <http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/mf/08-2016-briefing-book>

DMF TO HOLD PUBLIC MEETINGS FOR FLOUNDER PERMIT AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:

Two meetings will be held:

August 23rd at 6:00pm at the Dare County Multipurpose Room in Manteo

and

August 24th at 6:00pm at the DMF Central District Office in Morehead City

From David:

NC Fisheries Workshop Update:

I will send out an update later. In the meantime, if you have an questions, please send an email at davidbush@ncfish.org, or call: 910-777-1605.

David Bush
 Fisheries Biologist,
 NC Fisheries Association

(910)777-1605

FISHERMEN'S WORKGROUP TO MEET:

NCFA is hosting two meetings for a Fishermen's Workgroup on Protected Species. Details were sent out recently, but if you did NOT receive them in the mail and want more information, call or send us a note. The meetings are scheduled for:

August 30th: 1:00pm at the Wanchese Community Center in Wanchese

August 31st: 2:00pm at the Sanitary Restaurant in Morehead City

SEA TO TABLE:

Allies for Cherry Point's Tomorrow (ACT), in collaboration with the Culinary School at Carteret Community College, is sponsoring a SEA TO TABLE Dinner on Thursday, September 8th at 6:00pm at the Crystal Coast Civic Center in Morehead City.

You'll enjoy a three-course meal fresh from local waters and farmland and prepared by Chef Ross Ragonese and students at the Culinary School. All proceeds benefit Allies for Cherry Point's Tomorrow in their efforts to protect and grow Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point.

Tickets are \$75. For more information and reservations: www.alliesforcherry.com or (252) 631-5021.

CALENDAR

Aug 23; 6:00pm; DMF public meeting on flounder permits/reporting; Dare County; Manteo

Aug 24; 6:00pm; DMF public meeting on flounder permits/reporting; DMF Central Ofc; Morehead City

Aug 30: Fishermen's Workgroup; 1:00pm; Wanchese Community Center in Wanchese

Aug 31: Fishermen's Workgroup; 2:00pm; Sanitary Restaurant in Morehead City

Sept 8: Sea to Table Dinner; local seafood and farm; 6:00pm; Crystal Coast Civic Center, Morehead City

Sept 12 – 16: SAFMC meeting; Myrtle Beach, SC