

Industry Funded Economic Survey-

It is very important that all fishermen fill out this survey when they receive it in the mail. This information is so NC can get an accurate value for our fishing industry. If you have any questions, feel free to call Glenn Skinner at 252-646-7742. Deadline will be March 20, 2020.

State to Review Small Mesh Gill Net Regulations

RALEIGH- The Secretary of the Department of Environmental Quality has directed the Division of Marine Fisheries to conduct a thorough review of the regulations governing the use of small mesh gill nets in North Carolina fisheries. After decades of actions by numerous Marine Fisheries Commissions (MFC), the department, the division and federal agencies, the regulations have become complex, difficult for stakeholders to understand and create an enforcement challenge.

A review to simplify the regulations with a goal to reduce bycatch and sustain our stocks is important to commercial and recreational fishermen. The Division of Marine Fisheries will:

- Begin a review of existing MFC small mesh (less than 4 inches) gill net rules and proclamations to identify potential amendments with respect to minimum mesh size, total yardage and attendance requirements; and
- Issue a proclamation this spring to limit yardage for small mesh nets with reasonable upper limits based on analysis of average, minimum and maximum yardages currently used and address attendance requirements in certain 'hot spot' areas.
- Present rule change options to the MFC later this year.

Division of Marine Fisheries to begin survey of shrimp trawl fishermen

(This is an industry funded survey and all members are strongly encouraged to participate)

MOREHEAD CITY – The N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries will begin contacting shrimp trawl and skimmer trawl vessel operators in the coming weeks for a survey about the types of gear they use.

The division wants to know what bycatch reduction devices and turtle excluder devices are currently used in the North Carolina commercial shrimp fishery. The survey also includes questions about overall gear configurations, as well as some socioeconomic information, such as costs and revenues of the shrimping business.

Information from the survey will aid the division in understanding impacts of potential management strategies pertaining to the shrimp fishery.

The survey is being conducted at the request of the Marine Fisheries Commission and the commercial fishing industry. The survey is funded by the North Carolina Commercial Fishing Resource Fund, which receives money from commercial fishing license sales and supports a grant program that is managed by commercial fishing industry stakeholders.

The division will begin calling a random sample of trawl/skimmer vessel operators on Feb. 24. Letters have been sent to shrimp trawl and skimmer trawl vessel operators in the state to inform them that they may receive a call.

Those contacted will have the option to take the survey then or rescheduling for another time. For the survey results to be truly representative of the North Carolina

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shrimp industry, it is important that those contacted participate in the survey and answer as many questions as possible.

Individual answers to questions will be kept confidential; however, a summary of collective results from participants will be included in a written report that will be available to the public.

Vessel operators who receive a survey call can verify that the person on the line is a division employee by asking the employee to confirm his or her license number, vessel name, or vessel registration number.

For more information, contact Chris Stewart, the division's shrimp species lead, at 910-796-7370 or Chris.Stewart@ncdenr.gov, or David Dietz, the division's economist, at 919-707-8573 or David.Dietz@ncdenr.gov.

N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission
Feb. 19-21, 2020
Motions

Motion by Martin Posey to approve the meeting agenda as amended. Seconded by Sam Romano.
Motion carries with no objection.

Motion by Sam Romano to approve the minutes of the November 2019 meeting. Seconded by Doug Cross.
Motion carries with no objection.

Initiation of the Rulemaking Process for Small Mesh Gill Nets

Motion by Martin Posey that the MFC endorse the DMF initiation of the rulemaking process for small mesh gill nets. Seconded by Doug Cross.
Motion carries unanimously.

Final Adoption of the Blue Crab FMP Amendment 3

Motion by Sam Romano to table the vote on the Blue Crab FMP until the stock assessment is updated with 2019 landings. Second by Doug Cross.
Motion fails.

Motion by Sam Romano to accept the Marine Fisheries Commission recommendation for achieving sustainable harvest and ending overfishing. Seconded by Martin Posey.

Motion by Doug Cross to amend the previous motion by removing the 6.75-inch maximum size limit on mature female crabs and replacing it with a 5-inch minimum size limit on female crabs statewide. Seconded by Mike Blanton.
Motion carries with one abstention.

Motion by Martin Posey to amend the Romano motion to delete the language stating "update stock assessment with 2019 data." Seconded by Mike Blanton.
Motion carries with no opposition.

Motion by Sam Romano, as amended, to accept the Marine Fisheries Commission recommendation for achieving sustainable harvest and ending overfishing, removing the 6.75-inch maximum size limit on mature females and adding a 5-inch minimum size limit statewide on mature females and omitting the update of the stock assessment once 2019 data is available. Seconded by Martin Posey.
Motion carries 8-0 with one abstention (Sam Romano).

Motion by Sam Romano to accept the Marine Fisheries Commission recommendation to use science on locally specific pot funnel designs to reduce terrapin interaction and identify individual areas with terrapin hotspots that would be closed to potting unless an excluder is used.
Motion ruled out of order by the chairman.

Motion by Pete Kornegay that the MFC adopt the criteria presented by the DMF for identifying diamondback terrapin management areas, adding a step to bring proposed management areas back to the MFC following committee meetings at the next regularly scheduled meeting for approval. Seconded by Tom Roller.
Motion carries with one dissent and one abstention.

Motion by Martin Posey that the MFC adopt Blue Crab FMP Amendment 3 as amended. Seconded by Robert McNeill.
Motion carries with one dissent.

Approval of Goal and Objectives for Southern Flounder FMP Amendment 3

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Motion carries with no opposition.

Motion by Martin Posey to approve the goal and objectives for the Southern Flounder FMP Amendment 3 as presented by DMF. Seconded by Tom Roller.
Motion carries with no objection.

Approval of Goal and Objectives for Shrimp FMP Amendment 2

Motion by Robert McNeill to approve the goal and objectives for the Shrimp FMP Amendment 2 as presented by DMF. Second by Martin Posey.
Motion carries without objection.

Rulemaking – Final Approval of Tarpon and License and CFVR Transfers

Motion by Pete Kornegay to approve 15A NCAC 03M .0509 (Tarpon). Seconded by Robert McNeill.
Motion carries 5-4.

Motion by Mike Blanton to adopt 03O 0108 (License and Commercial Fishing Vessel Registration Transfers).
Seconded by Doug Cross.
Motion carries with no objection.

Rulemaking – Shrimp SSNA to SNA Issue

Motion by Pete Kornegay to select Option 2 as the preferred management option for the Shrimp FMP Amendment 1 Special Secondary Nursery Area Issue Paper.
Seconded by Robert McNeill.
Motion carries 6-2 with one abstention.

Shellfish Aquaculture Bill – User Conflict Study Update and Rulemaking

Motion by Tom Hendrickson to approve the recommended language for 15A NCAC 03O .0201, 03O .0202, and 03O .0204 to address user conflicts as required by the Shellfish Aquaculture Bill adding “or a shore-based structure” to 15A NCAC 03O .0201(a)(2) following “250 feet to a developed shoreline”. Seconded by Mike Blanton.

SAMFC & NOAA Dolphin Wahoo Participatory Workshops.

Monday, March 9, 2020 315 Front St, Beaufort NC
Tuesday, March 10, 2020 Coastal Studies institute, Rm 242
850 NC 345, Wanchese, NC
Wednesday, March 11, 2020 Surf Rider-Cypress Point
928 Diamond Springs Rd., Virginia Beach, VA
Workshops are from 9am-4pm.
Coffee and Lunch are provided!
RSVP: Mandy Karnauskas, NOAA Fisheries
305-361-4592 mandy.karnauskas@noaa.gov
Or online:
<https://safmc.wufoo.com/forms/mqhuxe91dv0ft6>