

WEEKLY NEWSLETTER: 11/08/2019
NORTH CAROLINA FISHERIES ASSOCIATION
"Serving the Commercial Fishing Families of North Carolina since 1952"
PO Box 86; Morehead City, NC 28557
Phone: (252) 726-NCFA (6232) Fax: (252) 726-6200
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LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Nothing new to report, other than an update on the email that was circulated last week to all legislators about the beach seine situation in Dare County.

I've spoken to the fisherman who got the ticket as well as another fisherman who participates in that fishery. Of course, the others are very concerned that the actions of one could jeopardize all. There are only about 6 crews that participate in the beach seine fishery. The incident involved not cleaning up the beach after legally harvesting the catch. The fisherman was very apologetic when I talked to him and said it would never happen again. In addition to a fine by the National Park Service for the violation, he could lose his beach driving permit, but not sure if that will happen or not. Obviously, it's a very visible fishery and usually gets a lot of attention by the public, most of who are fascinated by it and enjoy watching. One of the fishermen told me he uses it as a teaching moment and explains what they do and why they do it.

This is a perfect example of why all of us need to be aware of our actions and be sensitive to public opinion, both real and perceived.

ASMFC

As noted last week, the ASMFC voted to deem Virginia out of compliance for menhaden. Omega wasn't happy about the vote. The opinion I'm writing here is just that: my opinion. NCFA's Board will address it at the December Board meeting. As for me, I think Omega has every reason to fight it. I think most commercial fishermen who have followed the ASMFC process over the years will support them as well, not because of menhaden but because of the ASMFC process. For years, NCFA has opined that our state should not cave to the non-compliance threat IF the science is on our side. In

the case of menhaden, it's about as clear as any that the ASMFC acted more for political concerns than scientific.

The action last week is a result of Virginia's menhaden fishery surpassing a cap on harvest in the Chesapeake Bay. Heck, the ASMFC's own Technical Committee didn't agree with that provision as one of its members stated "The TC stands by its original recommendations that there has not appeared to be any biological benefit to the Chesapeake Bay reduction cap since it was implemented".

The ASMFC can only recommend to the US Secretary of Commerce with advice and counsel from NOAA and NMFS. Omega has stated whatever the Secretary's decision is, they will adhere to it.

Some confuse this issue as the bait guys think Omega could do a better job regarding fishing in the Bay. That may be, but that's a conversation that should be made with Omega. The fishery management plan measures are supposed to be predicated on science. However, in this case it's all politics.

For the Secretary to hold Virginia non-compliant for this fishery, he must make as a finding of FACT, that what they did would harm that fishery. Based on the science, I can't see how in anyone's wildest imagination, that he can do that.

So, what does that mean for the fishermen of North Carolina? In my opinion looking at the big picture, it's to North Carolina's interest to hold the ASMFC's feet to the fire regarding process. If these decisions are to be made politically rather than scientifically, we're all toast.

Personally, I applaud Omega!

Jerry

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**MEDIA ADVISORY: Division of Marine Fisheries
announces scoping period on southern flounder**

MOREHEAD CITY – The N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries will hold a public scoping period Dec. 4-18 to solicit public comments on potential management strategies for an upcoming amendment to the Southern Flounder Fishery Management Plan.

The primary management strategy for Amendment 3 is long-term sustainable harvest in the southern flounder fishery. The South Atlantic Southern Flounder Stock Assessment update (containing data through 2017) indicated the stock is overfished and overfishing is occurring.

Fisheries stakeholders can provide in-person comments at two scoping meetings that will be held:

Dec. 9 at 6 p.m.

N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries
Central District Office

5285 Highway 70 West, Morehead City Dec. 17 at 6
p.m.

Dare County Government Complex
Commissioners Meeting Room
954 Marshall C. Collins Dr., Manteo

Beginning Dec. 4, comments can also be submitted through the division's website with an online form or by mail. A news release will be issued closer to the scoping period providing details on how the public can participate.

A scoping document outlining the potential management strategies can be found on the Southern Flounder Amendment Information Page.

**North Carolina Fisheries
Association's**

**3rd Annual Maritime Angels Fundraiser Kicks Off
November 1, 2019**

Clothing & Toy donations can be dropped off at any of the Following Locations: Gift cards are encouraged for older children (Amazon, Best Buy, Walmart, etc.)

Gift cards can be mailed to:

NCFA- Maritime Angels -PO Box 86, Morehead City, NC 28557

Beaufort Inlet Seafood, Beaufort, NC NCFA Office,
Morehead City, NC

Core Sound Museum Store, Morehead City,
NC Core Sound Museum, Harkers Island, NC

Blackburn Brothers 19929 NC Hwy 210 Rocky Point, NC

Fulcher's Point Pride Seafood, Oriental, NC

Fulcher's Seafood, Alliance, NC

Pamlico Packing Company, Grantsboro, NC

Paradise Shores Seafood, Merritt, NC

B&J Seafood, James City, NC

Wanchese Fish Company, Wanchese, NC

O'Neal's Sea Harvest, Wanchese, NC

Willie R. Ethridge Seafood, Wanchese, NC

Or you can donate on our website

<https://ncfish.org/donate/>

Donation Deadline: December 18th to allow for delivery